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THE COMPREHENSIVE COMMENTARY ON THE HOLY BIBLE.

Nathan and David

"Thou art the man"

II SAMUEL XII.

BRATTLEBORO'

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THE

COMPREHENSIVE COMMENTARY

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CONTAINING

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SCOTT'S MARGINAL REFERENCES;

MATTHEW HENRY'S COMMENTARY,

CONDENSED, BUT RETAINING EVERY USEFUL THOUGHT;

THE PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS OF REV. THOMAS SCOTT, D. D.

WITH EXTENSIVE

EXPLANATORY, CRITICAL, AND PHILOLOGICAL NOTES,

SELECTED FROM

SCOTT, DODDRIDGE, GILL, ADAM CLARKE, PATRICK, POOLE, LOWTH, BURDER, HARMER, CALMET, STUART, ROBINSON, BUSH, ROSENMUELLER, BLOOMFIELD, AND MANY OTHER WRITERS ON THE SCRIPTURES.

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EDITED BY

REV. WILLIAM JENKS, D. D.

PASTOR OF GREEN ST. CHURCH, BOSTON.

EMBELLISHED WITH

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EDITORIAL NOTICE.

THROUGH 'the good hand of GOD' upon the Editor, and his valued assistants, (who have been the same in this vol. as the preceding,) another stage is reached, in this undertaking of great labor and high responsibility. Grateful to GOD and to the religious community, for the degree of favor accorded to the portions of the work already published, the Editor trusts, that the present volume will not be found less valuable in its preparation and accompaniments than the others. While it is not intended, as has been observed in the general Preface, to be a work of controversy, it could not but be, that, as a faithful exposition of GOD's Word, it should exhibit a distinct doctrinal character, for which, of course, no apology is offered. But that it should answer all the wishes of mere scholars, could hardly be expected by any judicious, reflecting individual. The long and patient investigations of critical questions, in which many modern writers have meritoriously indulged, as they could be appreciated only by persons acquainted with exegetics, and the original languages of the SS. have been but rarely followed out; yet, it is hoped, are occasionally, and as the greatly limited space assigned could permit, so alluded to, the sources of further information so indicated, and the results of biblical research in such manner reported, as will accommodate the wishes and necessities of those classes of readers, for whom the plan of the work was originally designed, and who are found among its patrons and friends.

That GOD may continue to bless the effort, and render it instrumental in promoting a more eager investigation of his Word, cause it to blend delight and interest with the inquiry, and glorify Himself in its usefulness, is, while he asks the continued prayers of the friends of Divine Truth, the hearty desire of the Editor,

WILLIAM JENKS.

BOSTON, May 11th, 1836.

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☞ The future volumes of the Comprehensive Commentary will be illustrated by numerous authentic views of places mentioned in the Scriptures, (including several of Petra, &c.) as they exist at the present day; from a large collection in the hands of the publishers.

☞ See a notice of BUSH'S ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE, (*forming a companion to this work*,) in this volume.

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COMPANION TO THE COMMENTARY.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES,

DERIVED PRINCIPALLY FROM THE MANNERS, CUSTOMS, ANTIQUITIES, TRADITIONS, AND FORMS OF SPEECH, RITES, CLIMATE, WORKS OF ART, AND LITERATURE, OF THE EASTERN NATIONS; EMBODYING ALL THAT IS VALUABLE IN THE WORKS OF ROBERTS, HARMER, BURDER, PAXTON, CHANDLER, AND THE MOST CELEBRATED ORIENTAL TRAVELLERS; EMBRACING ALSO THE SUBJECT OF THE FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY, AS EXHIBITED BY KEITH AND OTHERS. WITH DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PRESENT STATE OF COUNTRIES AND PLACES MENTIONED IN THE SACRED WRITINGS, ILLUSTRATED BY NUMEROUS LANDSCAPE ENGRAVINGS, FROM SKETCHES TAKEN ON THE SPOT.
EDITED BY REV. GEORGE BUSH, PROFESSOR OF HEBREW AND ORIENTAL LITERATURE IN THE NEW YORK CITY UNIVERSITY.

Next in worth and importance to the possession, is doubtless to be estimated the correct interpretation of the sacred volume. Indeed, it is the latter which gives its value to the former. A revelation not understood, or not intelligible, is no revelation, as far as its recipients are concerned. The position, therefore, that the meaning of the Bible *is* the Bible, we consider as unquestionably true, and consequently any new accession of light, which goes to clear up its obscurities, and cause its genuine sense to stand forth in bolder relief upon the inspired page, is in reality enriching us with a larger amount of its treasures, and virtually bestowing upon us added communications of the Divine will. In this view, the progressive elucidation of the scriptures, whether by the expository labors of critics, the researches of travellers, or the fulfilments of prophecy, may be compared to the gradual rolling away of the morning mist from a splendid landscape. As the sun advances, the shades retire, and new and interesting features of the prospect are continually opening upon the delighted eye of the spectator. Or, it may be said to resemble the slow, but momentous process of unfolding the ancient papyri, which the ravages of time and fire have spared among the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Here, as every successive word and letter, which can be redeemed from the crisp and crumbling texture of the blackened parchment, is noted down with the most scrupulous care, as forming a part of the continuous record, and going to make out its entire sense; so the sense of the sacred volume is gradually elicited, item by item, and needs only to be collected and treasured up with equal solicitude, in order to constitute a possession of infinitely more value than the choicest literary relics of antiquity. Perhaps it may safely be affirmed, that the materials are at this moment in existence, for the satisfactory solution of nearly every obscure passage of holy writ: but the great desideratum is to have them brought together—to collect them from their wide dispersion over a countless multitude of writings, in various languages, which the great majority of Christians can neither procure nor understand. It is only in this way that they can be made really available to the great end which they are calculated to subserve; and far from idle are the claims of any one who professes to bring from scattered sources a new quota to the general stock of biblical illustration.

As the Bible, in its structure, spirit, and costume, is essentially an Eastern book, it is obvious that the natural phenomena, and the moral condition of the East, should be made largely tributary to its elucidation. In order to appreciate fully the truth of its descriptions, and the accuracy, force, and beauty of its various allusions, it is indispensable that the reader, as far as possible, separate himself from his ordinary associations, and put himself, by a kind of mental transmigration, into the very circumstances of the writers. He must set himself down in the midst of oriental scenery—gaze upon the sun, sky, mountains, and rivers of Asia—go forth with the nomade tribes of the desert—follow their flocks—travel with their caravans—rest in their tents—lodge in their khans—load and unload their camels—drink at their watering-places—pause during the heat of the day under the shade of their palms—cultivate the fields with their own rude implements—gather in or glean after their harvests—beat out and ventilate the grain in their open thrashing-floors—dress in their costume—note their proverbial or idiomatic forms of speech, and listen to the strain of song or story, with which they beguile the vacant hours. In a word, he must surround himself with, and transfuse himself into, all the forms, habitudes, and usages of oriental life. In this way only can he catch the sources of their imagery, or enter into full communion with the genius of the sacred penmen.

While, therefore, we readily concede the very high importance of critical and philological research in dissipating the obscurities of the scriptures, and fixing their exact sense, we cannot, at the same time, but think that the collateral illustrations derived from this source, are deserving of at least equal attention from the student of revelation. The truth is, the providence of God, which is never more worthily employed than about his Word, seems now to be directing the eyes of his servants, as with pointed finger, to the immense stores of elucidation constantly accumulating from this quarter. The tide of travel within a few years has turned remarkably to the East. Animated either by the noble spirit of missionary enterprise, of commercial speculation, of military adventure, or laudable curiosity, men of intelligence and observation have made their way into every region on which the light of revelation originally shone; exploring its antiquities, mingling with its inhabitants, detailing its manners and customs, and displaying its physical, moral, and political circumstances. From these expeditions they have returned laden with the rich results of their industry, and the labors of the pen and the pencil have made thousands partakers of the benefits of their toils. Little more than half a century ago, when the justly celebrated Observations of Harmer were given to the public, the range of materials to which he had access was comparatively limited. The travels of Chardin, Pococke, Shaw, Maundrell, Pitts, D'Arvieux, with Russel's Natural History of Aleppo, were his principal authorities—authorities, it is true, which have not yet been wholly superseded. But since his time, what an immense accession has the department of oriental travels received! The names of Volney, Niebuhr, Mariti, Clarke, Chateaubriand, Porter, Burckhardt, Buckingham, Morier, Seetzen, De Lamartine, Laborde, exhaust but a small part of the list of eastern tourists, whose labors have gone to make us familiarly acquainted with the land of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles. How desirable that the scattered gleams of illustrative light, which shine in their works, should be concentrated into one focus of illumination! This is the task which we have essayed in the present volume.

In entering upon and advancing in this task, we have been more and more impressed with the remarkable fact of the permanence of eastern usages. To the question, therefore, whether the state of things in the East, as described by modern travellers, really coincides with that which existed at the time the scriptures were written, so that one may be cited as conveying a correct idea of the other; we may reply, in the words of *Sir John Chardin*, one of the most respectable and authentic of the number:—"The language of that divine book (especially of the Old Testament) being oriental, and very often figurative and hyperbolical, those parts of scripture which are written in verse, and in the prophecies, are full of figures and hyperboles, which, as it is manifest, cannot be well understood without a knowledge of things from whence such figures are taken, which are natural properties and particular manners of the countries to which they refer. I discerned this in my first voyage to the Indies: for I *gradually found a greater sense and beauty in divers passages of scripture than I had before*, by having in my view the things, either natural or moral, which explained them to me; and in perusing the different translations which the greatest part of the translators of the Bible had made, I observed that every one of them (to render the expositions, as they thought, more intelligible) used such expressions as would accommodate the phrase to the places where they writ: and which did not only many times pervert the text, but often rendered the sense obscure, and sometimes absurd also. In fine, consulting the commentators upon such kind of passages, I found very strange mistakes in them, and that they had long guessed at the sense, and did but grope (as in the dark) in search of it. And from these reflections I took a resolution to make my remarks upon many passages of the scriptures; persuading myself that they would be equally agreeable and profitable for use. And the learned, to whom I communicated my design, encouraged me very much, by their commendations, to proceed in it: and more especially when I informed them, that *it is not in Asia, as in our Europe, where there are frequent changes, more or less, in the form of things, as the habits, buildings, gardens, and the like. In the East they are constant in all things; the habits are at this day in the same manner as in the preceding ages;* so that one may reasonably believe, that in that part of the world, the exterior form of things (as their manners and customs) are the same now as they were two thousand years since, except in such changes as have been introduced by religion, which are, nevertheless, very inconsiderable."—(Preface to Travels in Persia, p. 6.) *Morier*, an eastern traveller, says, "The manners of the East, amid all the changes of government and religion, *are still the same;* they are living impressions from an original mould: and at every step, some object, some idiom, some dress, or some custom of common life, reminds the traveller of ancient times, *and confirms, above all, the beauty, the accuracy, and the propriety of the language and the history of the Bible.*" * * *

This steadfast resistance to the spirit of innovation and change, which thus remarkably distinguishes the nations of the East, will probably, in the providence of God, remain unsubdued, till it shall have answered all the important purposes of biblical elucidation, when it will give way to the all-pervading, all-regenerating influence of the Bible itself, borne upon the bosom of a new tide of civilization and improvement, which shall, ere long, set in upon the East from the nations of Europe, and the great continent of the West.

In the mean time, while the inevitable doom of revolution and transformation that awaits the East, lingers, it behooves us to make the most, for useful purposes, of that state of society which still exists, but which, ere long, will have passed away. With this view, we have endeavored to embody in the present volume a large mass of oriental illustration. The work is strictly of an eclectic character. Postponing the claims of originality to those of practical utility, the Editor, after arraying before him the amplest store of materials which he could command, set himself to the task of selecting and arranging the most valuable portions which he could bring within the limits of his plan. The kindred works of Harmer, Burder, Paxton, Taylor's edition of Calmet, (five vols. 4to.,) scarcely any of which are in common accessible to the majority of biblical students, have been diligently gleaned, and all their important contents transferred to our pages. As these works are not likely ever to be reprinted in this country, there appeared no other way to arrest their progress to oblivion, and to secure a larger and wider circulation to the valuable matter which they contain.

But the range of selection has been by no means confined to the works now mentioned. So prolific has been the press within the last twenty or thirty years, of books of eastern travels, illustrative of manners, customs, and religion, that our resources in this department have been almost indefinitely multiplied.

As the present work is designed to be marked by somewhat of the same *Comprehensive* character which distinguishes the other biblical works lately issued from the press of the Publishers, the illustrations bear upon numerous other points than those relating to manners and customs.

The subject of the Fulfilment of Prophecy cannot well be lost sight of by any one conversant at once with the scriptures and the reports of modern travellers. The topographical descriptions of many of the most noted places of scripture, a department to which particular attention has been given in the ensuing pages, suggests at once the divine predictions bearing upon their future doom. The researches of tourists, both skeptics and Christians, have poured a flood of light upon this subject. It is perfectly astonishing, to one who has never examined the subject, to find how *literally* and *minutely* the prophetic declarations of scripture have been fulfilled, so that even infidel travellers and historians, as Volney and Gibbon, in their accounts of nations and countries, have unwittingly used for *description*, almost the words of scripture in which the events are foretold. Volney, particularly, (one of the bitterest opposers of Christianity,) in his published travels in the East, has afforded, unwillingly and unthinkingly, a wonderful attestation to the truth of the Bible, in the relation of facts which came under his own eye. There needs no better witness. Indeed, it is impossible for the most determined infidel carefully to examine and weigh this subject, and not be forced to feel that the Bible is divine: or, in the words of Bishop Newton, "he is reduced to the necessity, either to renounce his senses, deny what he reads in the Bible, and what he sees and observes in the world, or acknowledge the truth of prophecy, and consequently, of divine revelation." The researches of travellers in Palestine have been abundant, and the prophecies thereby verified are numerous and distinct, so that the facts may be related literally in the language of the prophecy. To use the words of a late writer in the London Quarterly Review, "we confess that we have felt more surprise, delight, and conviction, in examining the accounts which the travels of Burckhardt, Mangles, Irby, Leigh, and Laborde, have so recently given of Judea, Edom, &c. than we have ever derived from any similar inquiry. It seems like a miracle in our own times. Twenty years ago we read certain portions of the prophetic scriptures, with a belief that they were true, because other similar passages had, in the course of ages, been proved to be so, and we had an indistinct notion,

that all these (to us) obscure an indefinite denunciations had been—we knew not very well when or how—accomplished: but to have graphic descriptions, ground plans, and elevations, showing the actual existence of all the heretofore vague and shadowy denunciations of God against Edom, does, we confess, excite our feelings, and exalt our confidence in prophecy, to a height that no *external* evidence has hitherto done. . . . . Here we have—bursting upon our age of incredulity, by the labors of accidental, impartial, and sometimes incredulous" (infidel) "witnesses—the certainty of existing facts, which fulfil what were considered hitherto the most vague and least intelligible of the prophecies. The value of one such contemporaneous proof is immense." Indeed, it would seem that in regard to such places as Babylon, Nineveh, Tyre, Moab, Edom, and others, the providence of God was no less conspicuous in bringing to light, in these latter ages, the *evidence* of the accomplishment of those prophecies, than formerly in working the *accomplishment itself*. The valuable labors of Keith in this department, arranged in accordance with our general plan, so as to exhibit the commentary under its appropriate text, will be found to have added much to the interest and profit of the reader in perusing our pages.

The numerous highly finished engravings, executed by distinguished artists, from sketches taken on the spot, will go also greatly to enhance the value of this portion of the illustrations.

A critical note is occasionally thrown in, where the point of a passage seemed capable of a happy explication, especially from a more exact analysis of the import of the original terms.

As a prominent object aimed at throughout has been, not only to increase the facilities for a complete understanding of the inspired volume, but also to multiply the evidences, and vindicate the claims of its divine original, a portion of our pages has been allotted to the direct consideration of infidel objections and cavils. The most important extracts of this description have been taken from the valuable and now rare "Life of David," by Chandler, in which the insinuations of Bayle against the character of David, are canvassed and refuted with distinguished ability, though perhaps somewhat more verbosely than is consistent with the taste either of modern writers or readers.

The original and acute remarks of Michaelis, on many points of the Mosaic laws and ritual, though sometimes bordering upon the fanciful, disclose a profound acquaintance with the genius of the East, and are generally entitled to deep attention.

As the authorities employed in the preparation of the ensuing pages are usually quoted in a very general way—for the most part merely by citing the writer's name—it will probably be rendering an important service to many of our readers, to give a more ample conspectus of the sources upon which we have drawn for materials. The list is by no means complete, nor, as many have served us at second hand, is it perhaps practicable or necessary that it should be.

Harmer's *Observations on various Passages of Scripture, with additions by Adam Clarke, LL. D.* Charlestown, 1811.
Paxton's *Illustrations*, 3 vols. 8vo. Edinburgh, 1825.
Burder's *Oriental Customs*, 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1816.
" *Oriental Literature, with Rosenmuller's Additions*, 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1822.
Roberts' *Oriental Illustrations*, 8vo. London, 1835.
Calmet's *Dictionary*, Taylor's Edition, 5 vols. 4to. London, 1829.
Shaw's *Travels through Barbary and the Levant*, folio. London, 1738.
Maundrell's *Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem*, 8vo. Oxford, 1749.
Volney's *Travels through Egypt and Syria*, 8vo. New York, 1798.
Mariti's *Travels through Cyprus, Syria, and Palestine*, 2 vols. 8vo. Dublin, 1793.
Baron De Tott's *Memoirs on the Turks and Tartars*, 3 vols. 12mo. Dublin, 1785.
Russel's *Natural History of Aleppo*, 2 vols. 4to. London, 1794.
Clarke's *Travels in the Holy Land*, 12mo. Philadelphia, 1817.
Tournefort's *Voyage to the Levant*, 3 vols. 8vo. London, 1741.
Buckingham's *Travels in Mesopotamia*, 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1827.
" *Travels among the Arab Tribes*, 4to. London, 1825.
Burckhardt's *Travels in Arabia*, 4to. London, 1829.
" *Travels in Nubia and Egypt*, 4to. London, 1822.
Madden's *Travels in Turkey, Egypt, and Palestine*, 2 vols. 12mo. Philadelphia, 1830.
Madox's *Excursions in the Holy Land, Egypt, Nubia, Syria, &c.*, 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1834.
Callaway's *Oriental Observations*, 12mo. London, 1825.
Campbell's *African Light*, 12mo. London, 1835.
Anderson's *Tour through Greece*, 12mo. Boston, 1831.
Hardy's *Notices of the Holy Land*, 12mo. London, 1835.
Chateaubriand's *Travels*, 8vo. New York, 1814.
Keppel's *Narrative of a Journey from India to England*, 8vo. Philadelphia, 1827.
Morier's *Journey through Persia*, 8vo. Philadelphia, 1816.
Smith and Dwight's *Researches in Armenia*, 2 vols. 12mo. Boston, 1833.
Jowett's *Christian Researches in Syria and the Holy Land*, 8vo. London, 1825.
Modern Traveller, *Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor*, 3 vols. 12mo. Boston, 1830.
Heeren's *Asiatic Nations*, 3 vols. 8vo. Oxford, 1833.
Waddington's *Travels in Ethiopia*, 4to. London, 1827.
Hoskin's *Travels in Ethiopia*, 4to. London, 1835.
Burnes's *Travels in Bokhara*, 2 vols. 12mo. Philadelphia, 1835.
Munroe's *Summer Ramble in Syria*, 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1835.
Hogg's *Visit to Alexandria, Damascus, and Jerusalem*, 2 vols. 12mo. London, 1835.
Wilkinson's *Thebes, and General View of Egypt*, 8vo. London, 1835.
Arundell's *Discoveries in Asia Minor*, 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1834.
De Lamartine's *Pilgrimage to the Holy Land*, 2 vols. 12mo. Philadelphia, 1835.
Stackhouse's *History of the Bible*, 2 vols. folio. London, 1755.
Chandler's *Life of David*, 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1766.
Michaelis's *Commentaries on the Laws of Moses*, 4 vols. 8vo. London, 1814.
Gleig's *History of the Bible*, 3 vols. 12mo. New York, 1831.
Horsley's *Sermons*, 8vo. London, 1830.
Pococke's *Theological Works*, 2 vols. folio. London, 1740.
Newcome's *Minor Prophets*, 8vo. Pontefract, 1809.
Keith's *Evidence of Prophecy*, 12mo. New York, 1833.
Good's *Translation of Job*, 8vo. London, 1812.
Finden's *Landscape Illustrations*. London, 1835.

☞ The importance of the present work must be obvious, and being altogether *illustrative*, without reference to doctrines, or other points in which Christians differ, it is hoped it will meet with favor from all who love the sacred volume, and that it will be sufficiently interesting and attractive to recommend itself, not only to professed Christians of *all* denominations, but also to the general reader. The arrangement of the texts illustrated with the notes, in the order of the chapters and verses of the authorized version of the Bible, will render it convenient for reference to particular passages, while the *copious Index* at the end, will at once enable the reader to turn to every subject discussed in the volume.

PUBLISHERS' ADVERTISEMENT.

In presenting the public with another of their *Comprehensive* volumes, the publishers take the opportunity to acknowledge the favor which their efforts to circulate useful and religious knowledge in a condensed and cheap form have hitherto met with. "The Comprehensive Commentary on the Bible," "The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge," and "The Polyglott Bible" edited by the Rev. Mr. Warne, have met with a sale far surpassing that of any other work of equal magnitude in the United States, *or in the world*, in the same length of time. The *Vermont Chronicle* well remarks, that they might be all bound to match, and appropriately entitled,

"THE COMPREHENSIVE LIBRARY OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE."

Encouraged by the great popularity of those works, the same publishers have been induced to bring forward the present volume, in the hope that it may find equal favor with the public, as they have no doubt that it is equally deserving of it.

It will be seen from a slight examination, that this, like its predecessors, is *comprehensive* in its character, embracing the substance and value of more than fifteen octavo volumes, together with a great amount of matter illustrative of the Scriptures, drawn from biblical writers, the accounts of oriental travellers, periodicals, &c. &c. (*See the Preface for an explanation of the plan and a list of authors quoted.*) The value of the materials of which the volume is composed, will be readily seen, and it would be superfluous to remark upon the peculiar qualifications of the editor.

☞ *This volume is not designed to take the place of commentaries, but is a distinct department of biblical illustration, and may be used as a companion to the Comprehensive or any other Commentary, or the common Bible.*

THE ENGRAVINGS

in the volume, it is believed, will form no small part of its attractions. No pains have been spared to procure such as should embellish the work, and at the same time illustrate the text. Objections that have been made to the pictures commonly introduced into the Bible, as being mere creations of fancy and the imagination, often unlike nature, and frequently conveying false impressions, cannot be urged against the pictorial illustrations of this volume. Here the fine arts are made subservient to utility, the landscape views being, without an exception, MATTER OF FACT *views of places mentioned in Scripture, as they appear at the present day;* thus in many instances exhibiting in the most forcible manner *to the eye*, the strict and *literal* fulfilment of the remarkable prophecies; "the present ruined and desolate condition of the cities of Babylon, Nineveh, Selah, &c., and the countries of Edom and Egypt, are astonishing examples, and so completely exemplify, in the most minute particulars, every thing which was foretold of them in the height of their prosperity, that no better description can now be given of them than a simple *quotation* from a chapter and verse of the Bible written two or three thousand years ago." The publishers are enabled to select from several collections lately published in London, the proprietor of one of which says, that "several distinguished travellers have afforded him the use of nearly *Three Hundred Original Sketches*" of Scripture places, made upon the spot. "The land of Palestine, it is well known, abounds in scenes of the most picturesque beauty. Syria comprehends the snowy heights of Lebanon, and the majestic ruins of Tadmor and Baalbec."

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AN EXPOSITION,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, AND NOTES,

ON THE BOOK OF

RUTH.

AS a practical comment on the genuine effect of the Mosaic institutions on human welfare, as illustrating their spirit, and showing to how much happiness they naturally and necessarily led when properly observed, this sweet picture of agricultural life is a rich oriental gem, sparkling with clear and beautiful lustre, far down to us, from the distant, mutilated, dark and bloody records of the early history of our race! How ill could we spare it! How could the view of the Mosaic polity have been perfect without it! Let us receive with thankfulness, into *good and honest hearts*, the hoarded wealth of instruction this little book conveys! Even the infidel *Voltaire* says, 'The history of Ruth is written with a natural and affecting simplicity. We know nothing in either Homer or Herodotus that goes to the heart like this answer of Ruth to her mother, "Whither thou goest, I will go," &c. (1: 16, 17.) There is a sublimity in this simplicity. . . . . We have often said, that these times and manners have nothing in common with our own, whether good or bad, their spirit is not ours; their good sense is not ours. It is on this very account that the Pentateuch, the books of Joshua and Judges, are a thousand times more instructive than Homer and Herodotus.' Ex.

This short history of the domestic affairs of one particular family, fitly follows the book of Judges, (the events related here happening in the days of the Judges,) and fitly goes before the books of Samuel, because in the close it introduces David: yet the Jews, in their Bibles, separate it from both, and make it one of the five *Megilloth*, or *Volumes*, which they put together toward the latter end; in this order, *Solomon's Song*, *Ruth*, *Lamentations*, *Ecclesiastes*, and *Esther*. Probably, Samuel wrote it. [And so the Talmudists think; which is most probable, and most generally received. Gill: so Gray, &c. Scott thinks 'Samuel wrote it after he had anointed David.'] It relates the afflictions first, and afterward the comfort, of Naomi; the conversion first, and afterward, the preferment, of Ruth. Many such events have happened, which perhaps we may think as well worthy to be recorded. But God saw fit to transmit the knowledge of these to us; and even common historians think they have liberty to choose their subject. The design of this book is, I. To lead to Providence; to show us how conversant it is about our private concerns, and to teach us in them all to have an eye to it, acknowledging God in all our ways, and in all events that concern us. See 1 Sam. 2: 7, 8. Ps. 113: 7—9. II. To lead to Christ, who descended from Ruth, and part of whose genealogy concludes the book, out of which it is fetched into Matt. 1. Let us remember the scene is laid in Beth-lehem, where our Redeemer was born. Henry.

It is not easy to fix the chronology of these events, there being no evidence to determine exactly under which of the Judges they occurred. Scott. The chief difficulty arises from the genealogical account of Matthew, which states that Boaz, the husband of Ruth, and great grandfather of David, was son of Salmon by Rachab; for if by Rachab we understand, as is usual, Rahab, the harlot, who protected Joshua's spies about A. M. 2552, it is difficult to conceive that only three persons, Boaz, Obed, and Jesse, should have intervened between her and David, who was not born till about 2919. We must however in this case conclude, either with the learned Usher, that the ancestors of David, as eminent for righteousness, or as designed to be conspicuous, because of the lineage of the Messiah, were blessed with extraordinary length of life, or else that the sacred writers mentioned in the genealogy only such names as were distinguished and known among the Jews. If, however, Boaz be considered as the grandfather of David, the history cannot by any computation be assigned to the time of Eli, under whose jurisdiction it is placed by Josephus, but at some earlier period, perhaps under Shamgar, agreeably to Usher, who places it in A. M. 2686, about 133 years after the conquest of Canaan. Gray.

The Jews thought it disgraceful to David to have derived his birth from a Moabitess, and with this they suppose Shimei reproached him. This book, therefore, contains intrinsic proof of its own verity, as it records a circumstance so little flattering to the sovereign of Israel. Hewlett, and Gray, after *Jerome*, and *Calm.*

The principal design of the book is, to give the genealogy of David, whom Samuel had anointed to be king of Israel, and from whom the Messiah was to come, and who therefore may be said to be the aim and scope of it, as He is of all Scripture; and whereby it appears that He sprung both from Jews and Gentiles, and is the Savior of both, and there is a good foundation for both to hope in Him; and the call and conversion of Ruth the Moabitess may be considered as a shadow, emblem, and pledge, of the conversion of the Gentiles. [This interesting and instructive narrative] furnishes out examples of bearing afflictions patiently, of industry, courteousness, kindness to strangers, and young converts; and none can doubt of the divine authority of this book that considers the use made of it in the genealogies of Christ by Matthew and Luke. [So also *Scott* and *Henry* (in substance) &c.] Gill.

A. M. 2682. B. C. 1322.

CHAP. I.

Elimelech induced by famine to sojourn in Moab, dies there, 1—3. His two sons, having married women of Moab, die without children; and Naomi, Elimelech's widow, prepares to return to Israel, 4—6. Orpah and Ruth, her daughters-in-law, propose to accompany her; she dissuades them, and Orpah returns back, 7—14. Ruth determines to go with her, 15—18. They arrive at Beth-lehem, and Naomi answers the inquiries of her neighbors, 19—22.

NOW it came to pass, in the days when the judges *ruled, that

a Judg. 2:16. * Heb. *judged.*

Chap. I. V. 1—5. In this ch. we have Naomi's afflictions, 1. as a distressed housekeeper, forced by famine to remove into the land of Moab; 2. as a mournful widow and mother, bewailing the death of her husband and her two sons; 3. as a careful mother-in-law, desirous to be kind to her two daughters, but at a loss how to be so, when she returns to her own country. Orpah she parts with in sorrow, Ruth she takes with her in fear. 4. As a poor woman sent back to the place of her first settlement, to be supported by the kindness of her friends. All these things were melancholy, and seemed against her, and yet all were working for good.

The first words give all the date we have of this story. It must be toward the beginning of the Judges' time, for Boaz, who married Ruth, was born of Rahab, who received the spies in Joshua's time. Some think it was in the days of Ehud, others of Deborah; Patrick thinks it was in the days of Gideon, because in his days only we read of a famine, Judg. 6: 3, 4. While the Judges were ruling, some one city, and some another, Providence takes particular cognizance of Beth-lehem, and has an eye to a King, to Messiah Himself.

Here is, I. *A famine in* that land *flowing with milk and honey.* This was one of the judgments God had threatened for their sins, Lev. 26: 19, 20. A *fruitful land is turned into barrenness*, to correct and restrain the luxury and wantonness of them that dwell therein.

II. A particular family in distress; that of *Elimelech*, which signifies *my God a King;* agree-

NOTES.

Chap. I. V. 1. *When the judges ruled.*] '28 years after the death of Joshua.' Du Pin *in Patrick.* *Beth-lehem-judah.*] 'There were two Bethlehems, one in Judah, the other in Zebulon. They had their names from great fruitfulness, which argues this famine to have been very sore, that even in these places there was a scarcity

there was [b] a famine in the land: and a certain man of [c] Beth-lehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.

2 And the name of the man *was* Elimelech, and the name of his wife [d] Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, [e] Ephrathites of Beth-lehem-judah: and they came into the country of Moab, and * continued there.

3 And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; [f] and she was left, and her two sons.

4 And they took them [g] wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one *was* Orpah, and the name of the other [h] Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.

B. C. 1312. 5 And [i] Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; [k] and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab, how that the LORD had [l] visited his people [m] in giving them bread.

7 Wherefore [n] she went forth out of the place where she was,

b Gen. 12:10. 26:1. 43:1. Lev. 26:19. Deut. 28:23,24,38. 2 Sam. 21:1. 1 Kings 17:1—12. 18:2. 2 Kings 8:1, 2. Ps. 105:16. 107:34. Jer. 14:1. Ez. 14:13,21. Joel 1:10,11,18—20. Am. 4:6.
c Judg. 17:8. 19:1,2. d 20.
e Gen. 35:19. 1 Sam. 1:1. 17:12. Mic. 5:2.
* Heb. *were.*
f 2 Kings 4:1. Ps. 34:19. Heb. 12:6, 10,11.
g Deut. 7:3. 23:3. 1 Kings 11:1,2.
h Matt. 1:5.
i Deut. 32:39. Ps. 89:30—32. Jer. 2: 19.
k Is. 49:21. Matt. 22:25—27. Luke 7: 12.
l Gen. 21:1. Ex. 3:16. 4:31. 1 Sam. 2:21. Luke 1:68. 19:44. 1 Pet. 2: 12.
m Gen. 28:20. 48:15. Ex. 16:4—6. Ps. 104:14,15. 111:5. 132:15. 145: 15. 146:7. Prov. 30:8. Is. 55:10. Matt. 6:11. 1 Tim. 6:8.
n 2 Kings 8:3.

able to the state of Israel when the Judges ruled, for the Lord was their king; and comfortable to him and his family in their affliction, for God was theirs, and He reigns for ever. *Naomi* signifies *my amiable* or *pleasant* one. *Mahlon* and *Chilion*, *sickness* and *consumption*, perhaps because weakly, and not likely to be long-lived. Such are the productions of our pleasant things, weak and infirm, fading and dying.

III. Their removal, *v.* 1, 2. It seems there was plenty in Moab, when there was scarcity in Israel. Common gifts of Providence are often bestowed in greater plenty on those that are strangers to God, than on those that know and worship Him. *Moab is at ease from his youth*, while Israel is *emptied from vessel to vessel;* Jer. 48: 11. not because God loves Moabites better, but because they have *their portion in this life.* Thither Elimelech goes to sojourn during the dearth, as Abraham, on the like occasion, to Egypt, and Isaac to the land of the Philistines. Now here, 1. Elimelech's care to provide for his family, and his taking his wife and children with him, were, without doubt, commendable. *If any provide not for his own, he hath denied the faith.* When in his straits he was not as the ostrich, Job 39: 16. he did not forsake his house. But, 2. I see not how his removal into the country of Moab could be justified. Abraham and Isaac were only sojourners in Canaan, and it was agreeable to their condition to remove; but the seed of Israel were now fixed, and ought not to remove into the territories of the heathen. What reason had Elimelech to go, more than his neighbors? If by any ill husbandry he had wasted his patrimony, and sold his land, or mortgaged it, (as it should seem, *ch.* 4: 3, 4.) which brought him into a more necessitous condition than others, the law of God had obliged his neighbors to relieve him; (Lev. 25: 35.) but that was not his case, for he went out full, *v.* 21. By those who tarried at home, it appears the famine was not so extreme, but that there was sufficient to support life; and his charge was but small, only two sons. But if he could not be content with the short allowance his neighbors took up with, nor live in hope, nor wait with patience, it was his fault, and by it he did dishonour God, and the good land He had given them, *weaken the hands of his brethren*, with whom he should have been willing to take his lot, and set an ill example to others. If all should do as he did, Canaan would be dispeopled. Note, It is an evidence of a discontented, distrustful, unstable spirit, to be weary of the place in which God hath set us, and to be for leaving it immediately, whenever we meet with any uneasiness or inconvenience in it. It is folly to think of escaping that cross, which, being laid in our way, we ought to take up. It is our wisdom to make the best of that which is, for it is seldom that changing our place is mending it. Or, if he would remove, why to Moab? Probably he would have found plenty in some of the tribes of Israel, those, for instance, on the other side Jordan, bordering on Moab; if he had that zeal for God and his worship, and that affection for his brethren, which became an Israelite, he would not have persuaded himself so easily to go to sojourn among Moabites.

IV. The marriage of his two sons to two of the daughters of Moab after his death, *v.* 4. All agree this was ill done: the Chaldee says, *They transgressed the decree of the Word of the Lord, in taking strange wives.* Those that bring young people into bad acquaintance, and take them out of the way of public ordinances, though they may think them well-principled, and armed against temptation, know not what they do, nor *what will be the end thereof.* It does not appear that the women they married, were proselyted to the Jewish religion, for Orpah is said to return to *her* gods, *v.* 15. It is a groundless tradition of the Jews, that Ruth was the daughter of Eglon king of Moab, yet the Chaldee paraphrast inserts it; but this and their other tradition, which he inserts likewise, cannot agree, that Boaz, who married Ruth, was the same with Ibzan who judged Israel 200 years after Eglon's death, Judg. 12.

V. The death of Elimelech and his two sons, and the consequent disconsolate condition of Naomi. Her husband died, *v.* 3. and her two sons, *v.* 5. soon after their marriage; the Chaldee says, *Their days were shortened*, because they transgressed the law in marrying strange wives. See here, we cannot expect to prosper when we go out of the way of duty. *He that will save his life* by any indirect courses *shall lose it.* One in a family is taken away, and that affliction is not duly improved, therefore God sends another of the same kind. Uncertain and transient are all our enjoyments here. It is wisdom then to make sure of those comforts that will be made sure, which death cannot rob us of. But how desolate was the condition, and how disconsolate the spirit, of poor Naomi! God alone has wherewithal to comfort.

V. 6—18. See here, I. The good affection Naomi bore the land of Israel, *v.* 6. Observe,

1. God, at last, returned in mercy to his people; for He will not contend always. At length God graciously *visited his people in giving them bread.* Plenty is God's gift, and it is his visitation which, by bread, the staff of life, *holds our souls in life.* Though this mercy be more striking when it comes after famine, yet if we have constantly enjoyed it, and never knew what famine meant, shall we think it the less valuable?

2. Naomi had often inquired of the state of her people, and still the tidings were discouraging; but, at last, she has good news of plenty in Bethlehem, and then she can think of no other than returning in duty thither again. Note, Forced absence from God's ordinances, and forced presence with wicked people, are great afflictions, but when the force ceases, and it is continued of choice, then it becomes a great sin. It should seem, she began to think of returning immediately on the death of her two sons: (1.) Because she looked upon that affliction to be a judgment on her family for lingering in the country of Moab. When death comes into a family, it ought to be improved for the reforming of what is amiss in it: when relations are taken away from us, we are put upon inquiry, whether, in some instance or other, we are not out of the way of our duty, that we may return to it. (2.) Because the land of Moab was now become a melancholy place to her. It is with little pleasure she can breathe in that air in which her husband and sons had expired; or go on that ground in which they lay buried out of her sight, but not out of her thoughts; now she will go to Canaan again. Earth is imbittered to us, that heaven may be endeared.

II. The good affection of her daughters-in-law, one of them especially, and her generous return of their good affection.

1. They were both so kind as to accompany her, some part of the way at least, when she returned toward the land of Judah. If she was resolved to go home, they would pay her all possible civility and respect at parting; and this was one instance of it, they would *bring her on her*

of provision.' PATRICK.—'Bethlehem was formerly called Ephratha, Gen. 48: 7. likewise the land wherein Bethlehem lay, Micah, 5: 2. Hence Mahlon and Chilion (*v.* 2.) are called Ephrathites.' DUTCH ANN.

Verses 4, 5.

There is no reason to think, that either Orpah or Ruth was proselyted to the religion of Israel, before marriage; and consequently Mahlon and Chilion directly violated the divine law; for which some think their premature death without children was a punishment. (*Lev.* 20: 20, 21.) Probably Elimelech died soon after he came into the land of Moab, and his two sons followed him before ten years were expired; but it does not appear, how long after their marriage this took place. SCOTT.

(4.) *Ten years.*] 'I. e. after their marriage.' PATRICK.

Verses 6—10.

Perhaps Naomi had staid in Moab contrary to her inclination, from regard to her husband while he lived, and afterwards to her sons. She seems to have been a person of eminent faith and piety. SCOTT.

(6.) 'It is imagined, not without probability, that Mahlon and Chilion are the same with Joash and Saraph, mentioned, 1 Chron. 4: 22.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(7.) 'Here we may learn that resolutions formed in grace lead to practice: effectual grace leads to effectual practice. The mere feelings of nature, originating only in nature, can never rise above their source. When the spring ceases to flow, the streams die away.' HAWKER

(8.) *Return*, &c.] 'It seems it was usual in Moab, as well as in Israel, for widows to dwell with their parents; and the women had

and her two daughters-in-law with her: and [o] they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.

8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, [p] Go, return each to her mother's house: [q] the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with [r] the dead, and with me.

9 The LORD grant you that ye may find [s] rest, each *of you* in the house of her husband. Then [t] she kissed them: and they lifted up their voice, and wept.

10 And they said unto her, [u] Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.

11 And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters; why will ye go with me? *are* there yet *any more* sons in my womb, [x] that they may be your husbands?

12 Turn again, my daughters, go *your way;* for I am [y] too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, *if* * I should have an husband also to-night, and should also bear sons;

13 Would ye † tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters: for ‡ it grieveth me much for your sakes, that [z] the hand of the LORD is gone out against me.

14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and [a] Orpah kissed her mother-

o 10,14. Ex. 18:27.
p Josh. 24:15,&c. Luke 14:25,&c.
q Phil. 4:18,19. 2 Tim. 1:17,18.
r 5. 2:20. Eph. 5:22. 6:2,3. Col. 3: 18,24.
s 3:1.
t Gen. 27:27. 29.11. 45:15. Acts 20: 37.
u Ps. 16:3. 119:63. Zech. 8:23.
x Gen. 38:11. Deut. 25:5.
y Gen. 17:17. 1 Tim. 5:9.
* Or, *I were with an husband.*
† Heb. *hope.*
‡ Heb. *I have much bitterness.*
z Deut. 2:15. Judg. 2:15. 1 Sam. 5: 11. Job 19:21. Ps. 32:4. 38:2. 39: 9,10.
a Gen. 31:28,55. 1 Kings 19:20. Matt. 10:37. 19:22. 2 Tim. 4:10.

way, and help her as far as they went, for it does not appear she had any servant to attend her, *v.* 7. So Naomi, as became an Israelite, had been very kind and obliging, and had won their love, in which she is an example to all mothers-in-law; and Orpah and Ruth have a just sense of her kindness. Though they retained an affection to the gods of Moab, (*v.* 15.) and Naomi was still faithful to the God of Israel, yet that was no hinderance on either side to love and kindness, and all the good offices the relation required. Mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law are too often at variance, (Matt. 10: 35.) therefore it is the more commendable if they live in love; let all in that relation aim at the praise of doing so.

2. When they had gone a little way with her, Naomi, with great affection, urged them to go back, *v.* 8, 9. Naomi suggests that their own mothers would be more agreeable to them than a mother-in-law, especially when their own mothers had houses, and their mother-in-law was not sure she had a place to lay her head in, which she could call her own.

She dismisses them, (1.) *With commendation:* Note, When we and our relations are parting, by death or otherwise, it is very comfortable, if we have both their testimony, and the testimony of our own consciences for us, that while we were together, we carefully endeavoured to do our duty in the relation; this will help to allay the bitterness of parting, and while we are together we should labor so to conduct ourselves. 2. *With prayer.* It is very proper for friends, to part with prayer. She sends them home with her blessing; and the blessing of a mother-in-law is not to be slighted. In this blessing she twice mentions the name *Jehovah*, that she might direct her daughters to look up to Him as the only Fountain of all good. It may be expected and prayed for in faith, that God will deal kindly with those that have dealt kindly with their relations; and, in particular, that they might be happy in marrying again. Note, [1.] It is very fit, that, according to the apostle's direction, the younger women, (and he speaks of young widows,) should *marry, bear children,* and *guide the house.* And it is a pity those who have approved themselves good wives, should not again be blessed with good husbands, especially those that, like these widows, have no children. [2.] The married state is a state of rest, such as this world affords, rest in the house of a husband, more than can be expected in the house of a mother, or a mother-in-law. [3.] This rest is God's gift. If any content and satisfaction be found in our outward condition, God must be acknowledged in it. Persons unequally yoked, find little rest even in the house of a husband. Let their affliction make those the more thankful, to whom the relation is comfortable; yet let God be the Rest of the soul, and no perfect rest thought of on this side heaven. (3.) She dismissed them *with great affection; she kissed them;* wished she had somewhat better to give them, but silver and gold she has none. However, this parting kiss shall be the seal of such a true friendship, as (though she never see them more) she will, while she lives, retain the pleasing remembrance of. If relations must part, let them thus part in love, that they may (if they never meet again in this world) meet in the world of everlasting love.

3. The two young widows could not think of parting with their good mother-in-law, so much had the good conversation of that pious Israelite won upon them; they not only lifted up their voice and wept, as loath to part, but professed a resolution to adhere to her, *v.* 10. Even Orpah, who afterward went back to her gods, now seemed resolved to go forward with Naomi. The sad ceremony of parting, and the tears shed, drew from her this protestation, but it did not hold. Strong passions, without a settled judgment, commonly produce weak resolutions.

4. Naomi sets herself to dissuade them from going with her, *v.* 11—13. If she had had any sons in Canaan, or any near kinsmen, whom she could have expected to marry the widows, it might have been some encouragement to them to hope for a comfortable settlement at Beth-lehem. Yet this was not all, she not only could not propose to marry them, but she knew not how to maintain them. The greatest grievance of that poor condition to which she was reduced, was, that she was not in a capacity to do for them as she would *It grieveth me* more *for your sakes,* than for my own, *that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me.* Observe, She judges *herself* chiefly aimed at in the affliction: 'I am the sinner, it is with me God is contending, I take it to myself.' This will become us when under affliction; though many others share in the trouble, yet we must hear as if it spoke only against us, and to us. She laments most the trouble that redounded to them. She was the sinner, but they the sufferers. *It grieveth me much for your sakes.* A gracious, generous spirit can better bear its own burden, than see it a grievance to others. 'Therefore *turn again, my daughters,* for alas, I am in no capacity to do you any kindness.'

But did Naomi do well, thus to discourage her daughters from going with her, when, by taking them with her, she might save them from the idolatry of Moab, and bring them to the faith and worship of the God of Israel? Naomi, no doubt desired to do that. But, she would not have them come on her account; (those that profess religion, only to oblige their friends and relations, or for the sake of company, will be converts of small value and of short continuance;) but she would have them make it their deliberate choice, and sit down first and count the cost, as it concerns those to do, that take up a profession of religion. It is good for us to be told the worst; our Savior took this course with him who, in the heat of zeal, spoke that bold word, *Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.* Thoughts, ripened into resolves by serious consideration, are likely to be kept always in the imagination of the heart; whereas what is soon ripe, is soon rotten.

5. Orpah was easily persuaded to yield to her own corrupt inclination. They both lifted up their voices and wept again, (*v.* 14.) being much affected with the tender things Naomi had said; but it had a different effect on them; to Orpah it was a savor of death unto death; and served as an excuse for her apostasy. But, it strengthened Ruth's resolution, and her good affection to Naomi, with whose wisdom and goodness she was never so charmed, as on this occasion; thus to her it was a savor of life unto life. (1.) *Orpah kissed her mother-in-law;* i. e. took an affectionate leave of her, bid her farewell for ever, which showed she was loath to part from her; yet she did not love her well enough to leave her country for her sake. Thus, many have a value and affection for Christ, and yet come short of salvation by Him, because they cannot find in their hearts to forsake other things for Him. They love Him, and yet leave Him, because they do not love Him enough, but love other things better. Thus the young man went away from Christ, sorrowful Matt. 19: 22. But, (2.) *Ruth clave unto her.* Whether, when she came from home, she was resolved to go forward with her or no, does not ap-

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their apartments distinct from the men, where the daughters lived with their mothers, as the sons with their fathers.' PATRICK.—The widow had no legal right to a share in the estate of the deceased. The sons, however, or other relations were bound to afford her an adequate maintenance, unless it had been otherwise arranged in the *will.* She sometimes returned back again to her father's house, particularly if the support which the heirs gave her, was not such as had been promised, or was not sufficient. See Gen. 38: 11.' JAHN.

(9.) *Rest,* &c.] 'A quiet, happy life, free from those cares, vexations, encumbrances, and troubles, which widows are in a special manner exposed to.' POOLE.

Verses 11—14.

The custom of the surviving brother marrying the widow of the deceased, who had left no children, seems to have prevailed in other countries besides Israel. SCOTT.

(11.) 'This shows, that the custom of marrying their brother's widow when he left no issue (which was before the law of Moses, Gen. 38.) was so ancient, that it was derived into other countries not descended from Abraham.' PATRICK.

in-law, but [b] Ruth clave unto her.

[*Practical Observations.*]

15 And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law [c] is gone back unto her people, and unto [d] her gods: [e] return thou after thy sister-in-law.

16 And Ruth said, [*] Entreat me not [f] to leave thee, *or* to return from following after thee: for [g] whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: [h] thy people *shall be* my people, and [i] thy God my God.

17 Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried: [k] the LORD do so to me, and more also, *if aught* [†] but death part thee and me.

18 When she saw that she † was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

19 So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that [°] all the city was moved about them; and they said, [p] *Is* this Naomi?

20 And she said unto

b Deut. 4:4. 10:20. Prov. 17:17. 18:24. Is. 14:1. Zech. 8:23. Matt. 16:24. John 6:66—69. Acts 17:34. Heb. 10:39.
c Ps. 36:3. 125:5. Zeph. 1:6. Matt. 13:20,21. Heb. 10:38. 1 John 2:19.
d Judg. 11:24.
e Josh. 24:15. 2 Sam. 15:19,20. Luke 14:26—33.
* Or, *Be not against me.*
f 2 Kings 2:2,4,6. Acts 21:13.
g 2 Sam. 15:21. Matt. 8:19. John 13:37. Rev. 14:4.
h 2:11,12. Ps. 45:10. Is. 14:1. Josh. 24:18. Dan. 2:47. 3:29. 4:37. Hos. 13:4. 2 Cor. 6:16—18. 1 Thes. 1:9.
k 1 Sam. 3:17. 25:22. 2 Sam. 3:9,35. 19:13. 1 Kings 2:23. 19:2. 20:10. 2 Kings 6:31. Acts 11:23. 20:24.
† Heb. *strengthened herself.* Acts 2:42. Eph. 6:10.
° Matt. 21:10.
p Is. 23:7. Lam. 2:15.

pear; perhaps she was before determined what to do, out of a sincere affection to the God of Israel, and to his law, of which, by the good instructions of Naomi, she had some knowledge.

6. Naomi persuades Ruth to go back, urging, as a further inducement, her sister's example, *v.* 15. Now, *return;* i. e. 'If ever thou wilt return, return now. This is the greatest trial of thy constancy; stand this trial, and thou art mine for ever.' Such offences as that of Orpah's revolt, must needs come, that they which are perfect and sincere, may be made manifest, as Ruth was on this occasion.

7. Ruth ends the debate, by a most solemn profession of her immovable resolution never to forsake her, *v.* 16, 17. Nothing could be said more fine, more brave, than this; she seems to have had another spirit, and another speech, now her sister was gone, and it is an instance of the grace of God, inclining the soul to the resolute choice of the better part. *Draw me* thus, and *we will run after thee.* Her mother's dissuasions make her the more resolute; as when Joshua said to the people, *Ye cannot serve the Lord*, they said it with the more vehemence, *Nay, but we will.*

(1.) She begs her mother-in-law to say no more against her going, *v.* 16. Note, It is a great vexation and uneasiness to those that are resolved for God and religion, to be tempted and solicited to alter their resolution. They that would not think of it, would not hear of it. *Entreat me not.* The margin reads, *Be not against me.* Note, We are to reckon those against us, and really our enemies, that would hinder us in our way to the heavenly Canaan Our *relations* they may be, but they cannot be our *friends.*

(2.) She is very particular in her resolution, and speaks the language of one resolved for God and heaven. She is so in love with her mother's wisdom, and virtue, and grace, which remained with her, even in her present poor and melancholy condition, that she resolves to cleave to her. [1.] She will travel with her; '*Whither thou goest I will go*, though to a country I never saw, and which I have been trained up in a low and ill opinion of; though far from my own country, yet with thee every road shall be pleasant.' [2.] She will dwell with her; '*Where thou lodgest I will lodge*, though it be a lodging no better than Jacob had, when he had the stones for his pillow.' [3.] She will unite interests with her, *Thy people shall be my people.* From Naomi's character she concludes certainly, that that great nation was a *wise and understanding people;* she judges of them all by her good mother, who, wherever she went, was a credit to her country, (as all those should study to be, who profess relation to the better country, i. e. the heavenly,) therefore she will think herself happy if she may be reckoned one of them. [4.] She will join in religion with her; thus she determined to be hers, *to the very altars.* I will adore the God of Israel, the only living and true God, trust in Him alone, serve Him, and in every thing be ruled by Him; this is to take the Lord for our God. [5.] She will gladly die in the same bed, *Where thou diest will I die:* she takes it for granted they must both die, and that, in all probability, Naomi, as the elder, would die first, and resolves to continue in the same house, if it might be, till her days also were fulfilled; intimating likewise a desire to partake of her happiness in death; she wishes to die in the same place, in token of her dying after the same manner. [6.] She will desire to be buried in the same grave, and to lay her bones by hers; *There will I be buried;* not desiring to have so much as her dead body carried back to the country of Moab, in token of any remaining kindness for it; but Naomi and she having joined souls, she desires they may mingle dust, in hopes of rising together, and being together for ever in the other world.

(3.) She backs her resolution to adhere to Naomi with a solemn oath, which was an ancient form of imprecation; this would leave a lasting obligation on her, never to forsake that good way. [1.] It is implied that death would separate between them for a time. A dying hour is a parting hour, and should be so thought of by us, and prepared for. [2.] It is resolved that nothing else should part them; kindness from her own people, or unkindness from Israel.

'I will *never leave thee.*'

Now this is a pattern of a resolute convert to God and religion; thus must we be at a point. We must take the Lord for our God. 'This God is *my God for ever and ever:* I have avouched Him for mine.' We must take his people for our people in all conditions; though poor and despised, yet, if they be his, they must be ours. We must be willing to fare as they fare; submit to the same yoke, and draw in it faithfully; take up the same cross, and carry it cheerfully; go where God would have us to go, lodge where He would have us to lodge, die where He will have us to die. We must resolve to continue and persevere, and herein our adherence to Christ must be closer than that of Ruth to Naomi; she resolved that nothing but death should separate them; but we must resolve that death itself shall not separate us from Christ, sure that then death itself shall not separate us from our happiness in Him. We must bind our souls with a bond never to break these pious resolutions, and swear unto the Lord that we will cleave to Him. Fast bind, fast find. He that means honestly, does not start at assurances.

Lastly, Naomi, when she saw she had gained her point, was well satisfied, and *left off speaking.* She could desire no more than that solemn protestation Ruth had just now made. See the power of resolution, how it puts temptation to silence. Those that are unresolved, and go in religious ways without a steadfast mind, tempt the tempter, and stand like a door half open, which invites a thief; but resolution shuts and bolts the door, resists the devil, and forces him to flee.

V. 14—22. Naomi and Ruth, after many a weary step, came at last to Beth-lehem very seasonably, *in the beginning of the barley harvest*, which was the first of their harvests, that of wheat following it. Now Naomi's own eyes might con-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—14. No judgment can be formed from mere outward circumstances, whether we have, or have not, 'found favor with God;' for whom He loves He often chastens for their profit, and leaves his enemies to be hardened in prosperity.—Those who, by inconveniences or hardships, are easily induced to change their situations, prove that they do not understand the real causes of their uneasiness. For the displeasure of God, and the pride and impatience of our hearts, cannot be avoided by change of place or situation; and while these remain, they will produce misery whithersoever we remove. Better would it be to be pinched with poverty, and worn down with labor, in the Lord's land, than to live in luxury and ease by hazarding the religion of those who depend on us. (*Ps.* 37: 3, 16, 17.) For our earthly trials or enjoyments are of short continuance; and we cannot too decidedly prefer those advantages which shall endure for ever. In every situation and relation in life, especially among such as are strangers to the truths of the Gospel, believers should aim to 'adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.' (*Tit.* 2: 9, 10.) —Many feel an affection for such believers as have been kind to them, and entertain favorable sentiments of religion, who are not decided in renouncing all their worldly pleasures, connections, and prospects, and joining themselves to the poor and despised people of God, for the sake of Christ and his salvation.

SCOTT.

(14.) *Kissed.*] 'The Jews observe three sorts of kisses that were usual and commendable; the kiss of reverence, that at meeting friends, [still used in France, Italy, &c.] and at parting: all others were wanton. *Drusius* thinks there was another, the kiss of prayer, in use in the primitive church.' CARPZOV, &c.

Verse 15.

'The conversion of Ruth probably now commenced.' GREENFIELD.

Verse 16.

'This was an extraordinary attachment, evidently without any secular motive.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 19—21.

Perhaps Naomi considered herself as guilty, in not having left Moab immediately on the death of her husband. SCOTT.

(17.) *The Lord do so*, &c.] 'This was a common form of an oath in those days and long after, both by God's people and the heathen

them, Call me not * Naomi, call me † Mara: for [q] the Almighty hath [r] dealt very bitterly with me.

21 I went out full, [s] and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why *then* call ye me Naomi, seeing [t] the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Beth-lehem in [u] the beginning of barley-harvest.

CHAP. II.

Ruth is led, without design, to glean in the field of Boaz, 1—3. He comes to see his reapers, and piously salutes them, and is saluted by them, 4. He shows kindness to Ruth; who behaves respectfully towards him, 5—10. He states what he had heard of her, prays for her, and shows her further kindness, 11—17. She returns to Naomi, and informs her of what had passed, 18—23.

AND Naomi had a [a] kinsman of her husband's, [b] a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name *was* [c] Boaz.

2 And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and [d] glean ears of corn

* That is, *Pleasant.*
† That is, *Bitter.*
q Gen. 17:1. 43:14. Job 5:17. 11:7. Rev. 1:8. 21:22.
r Job 6:4. 19:6. Ps. 73:14. 88:15. Is. 38:13. Lam. 3:1—20. Heb. 12: 11.
s 1 Sam. 2:7,8. Job 1:21.
t Job 10:17. 13:26. 16:8. Mal. 3:5.
u 2:23. Ex. 9:31,32. 2 Sam. 21:9.
a 3:2,12.
b Deut. 8:17,18. Josh 1:3. 31:25.
c 1 Chr. 2:10—12. Matt. 1:5. Luke 3:32. *Booz.*
d Lev. 19:9,16. 23:22. Deut. 24:19—21.

vince her of what she had heard that *the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread*, and Ruth might see this good land in its best state; and now they had opportunity to provide for winter. Our *times are in God's hands;* both the events and the time of them.

Her old acquaintance gathered about her, to inquire after her state, and bid her welcome to Beth-lehem again; or perhaps, through fear lest she should be a charge to the town, she looked so bare. By this it appears she had formerly lived respectably, else she had not been so much noticed. *Is this Naomi?* The women of the city said it, for the word is feminine. They could scarcely believe her to be the same person they had formerly seen, so fresh, and fair, and gay; If any asked this question in contempt, upbraiding her with her miseries, their temper was very base and sordid: nothing more barbarous than to triumph over those that are fallen. But we may suppose the generality asked it in compassion and commiseration. Note, Afflictions will make great and surprising changes in a little time. God, by his grace, fit us for all such changes, especially the great change!

The composure of Naomi's spirit is noticed. If some upbraided her with her poverty, she was not *moved against them*, as she would have been, had she been poor and proud; but, with much pious patience, bore that and all the other melancholy effects of her affliction, *v.* 20, 21. Thus does she bring her mind to her condition, which we all ought to do, when our condition is not in every thing to our mind. Observe,

1. How her change of state is described, with a pious regard to the divine providence, without any passionate murmurings or complaints. (1.) She *went out full;* so she thought herself when she had her husband with her, and two sons. Much of the fulness of our comfort in this world arises from agreeable relations. But she now *came home again empty*, a widow, and childless; probably, she had sold her goods, and of all the effects she took with her, brought home no more than the clothes upon her. So uncertain is all we call fulness in the creature, 1 Sam. 2: 5. Even in the fulness of that sufficiency we may be in straits. But there is a fulness, a spiritual and divine fulness, we can never be emptied of; a good part which shall not be *taken from those that have it.* (2.) She acknowledges the hand of God, his mighty hand, in the affliction. Nothing conduces more to satisfy a gracious soul under an affliction, than the consideration of the hand of God in it. 1 Sam. 3: 18. Job 1: 21. Especially to consider, that He who afflicts us, is *Shaddai*, the *Almighty*, with whom it is folly to contend, and to whom it is our duty and interest to submit. It is that name of God by which He enters into covenant with his people, *God All-sufficient*, Gen. 17: 1. He afflicts as a God in covenant, and his all-sufficiency may be our support and supply under all our afflictions. He that emptics us of the creature, knows how to fill us with Himself. (3.) She speaks very feelingly of the impression the affliction had made on her; He has *dealt very bitterly with me.* The cup of affliction is a bitter cup; even that which afterward *yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness*, yet, for the present, is *not joyous, but grievous.* Job complains, *Thou writest bitter things against me.* (4.) She owns the affliction to come from God as a controversy; *The Lord hath testified against me.* Note, When God corrects us, He *testifies against us*, and contends with us, (Job 10: 17.) intimating that He is displeased with us. Every rod has a voice, the voice of a witness.

2. Many that are debased and impoverished, yet affect to be called by the empty names and titles of honor they have formerly enjoyed. Naomi did not so; her humility regards not a glorious name in a dejected state; if God deal bitterly with her, she accommodates herself to the dispensation, and is willing to be called *Mara, bitter.* Note, It well becomes us to have our hearts humbled under humbling providences. When our condition is brought down, our spirits should be brought down with it. And then our troubles are sanctified to us, when we thus comport with them; for it is not an affliction in itself, but an affliction rightly borne, that does us good. *So many calamities have been lost upon you, if you have not yet learned how to suffer.* Sen. ad Helv. *Tribulation works patience.*

CHAP. II.—There is scarcely a ch. in all the sacred history, that stoops so low as this, to take cognizance of so humble a person as Ruth, a poor Moabitish widow, so humble an action as her gleaning corn in a neighbor's field, and the minute circumstances thereof. But all this was in order to her being grafted into the line of Christ, and taken in among his ancestors, that she might be a figure of the espousals of the Gentile church to Christ, Is. 54: 1. And this makes the story remarkable; and many of the passages of it are instructive, and very improvable.

V. 1—3. Naomi had now gained a settlement in Bethlehem among her old friends; and here we have an account,

I. Of her rich kinsman, Boaz, *v.* 1. The Chaldee reads, *mighty in the law;* If he was both, it was a most rare and excellent conjunction; to be mighty in wealth, and mighty in the Scriptures too, is to be mighty indeed. He was grandson of Nahshon, prince of Judah in the wilderness, and son of Salmon, probably a younger son, by Rahab, the harlot of Jericho; he carries might in his name, *Boaz, in him is strength;* and he was of the family of Elimelech, now reduced so low. 1. Let not those that are great in the world, be ashamed to own their kindred that are poor and despised, lest they be

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 15—22. Nothing but a deep sense of the importance of eternal things, and a conviction of our guilt, and need of a Savior; nothing but that faith, which is inseparably connected with true repentance and hatred of sin, and which works by love of Christ, and his people, his truth, ordinances, and precepts; will, in such a world as this, carry a man through all possible temptations. Therefore the Lord proves those who profess themselves his disciples, by setting the consequences before them in his word, and by some experience of them in his providence.—We ought indeed greatly to desire the increase of true Christians; yet we should be cautious in our endeavors to multiply *professors*, lest we engage those who will betray the cause, which they are expected to defend. (*Notes, Deut.* 20: 5—9. *Judg.* 7: 2—7.) Especially we ought to examine, whether we ourselves are thus steadfastly minded, and determined to cast in our lot with the people of God, however poor, despised, or persecuted; and that living and dying, and for ever. We should inquire, whether this be our aim and prayer; whether the prospect of secular advantage have not some influence upon our minds; and whether, if that were withdrawn, or changed, we should not be tempted to draw back. But if we are thus decided in our judgment for the Lord, and his service and salvation, He will assuredly accept and provide for us; and while many 'draw back unto perdition, we shall believe unto the saving of our souls.' SCOTT.

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also, by which they imprecated some great evil to befall them if they did otherwise than they said.' ASSEMB. ANN.

Verse 22.

Barley harvest.] 'About the time of the passover, for they began to cut barley after the offering of the sheaf, Lev. 23: 10, 11. on the second day of unleavened bread.' PATRICK. 'The month Nisan, answering to our March and a part of April. It is used here as an introduction to the ensuing story.' ID.

NOTES.

CHAP. II. V. 1. *M. R.—Job* 1: 2, 3. SCOTT.

Verse 2.

Naomi was probably unable to endure the fatigue and heat of such an employment, as gleaning, and the Lord indeed intended other things for Ruth: but He was pleased thus to prove her sincerity, humility, industry, and patience; and her dutiful affection to Naomi for his sake. Orpah could not have stood this trial: but had she been assured of a settlement in Israel, as desirable as that which Ruth at length obtained, she would have come also, and have made a hypocritical profession of religion for the sake of secular advantage. (*Matt.* 8: 18—20.) SCOTT.

'The scene here presents a pleasing instance of the simplicity and religion of ancient times.' DODD. *Gleaners of corn.*] 'This, formerly, was the general custom in England, and supposed to be recognised by the common law; but it has lately been decided, by the court of Common Pleas, that any person may prevent it on his own grounds.' TOMLIN'S *Law Digest.*

after *him*, in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.

3 And she went, and came, and [e] gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her * hap was to light on a part of the field *belonging* unto Boaz, who *was* of the kindred of Elimelech.

4 And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, [f] The LORD *be* with you. [g] And they answered him, The LORD bless thee.

5 Then said [h] Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel *is* this?

6 And [i] the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, [k] It *is* the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab:

7 And she said, [l] I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath [m] continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house.

8 Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, [n] my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but

e 1 Thes. 4:11,12. 2 Thes. 3:12.
* Heb. *hap, happened.* 2 Kings 8:5. Esth. 6:1,2. Matt. 10:29. Luke 10: 31.
f Ps. 118:26. 129:8. Luke 1:28. 2 Thes. 3:16. 2 Tim. 4:22. 2 John 10, 11.
g 4 ft. Gen. 18:19. Josh. 24:15. Ps. 133:1—3. 1 Tim. 6:2.
h 4:21. 1 Chr. 2:11,12.
i Gen. 15:2. 24:2. 39:4. Matt. 20:8. 24:45.
k 1:16,19,22.
l Prov. 15:33. 18:23. Matt. 5:3. Eph. 5:21. 1 Pet. 5:5,6.
m Prov. 13:4. 22:29. Ec. 9:10. Rom. 12:11. Gal. 6:9.
n 1 Sam. 3:6,16. 2 Kings 5:13. Matt. 9:2,22.

found therein proud, scornful, and unnatural. 2. Naomi, though a poor, despised widow, had rich relations, whom yet she neither boasted of, nor was burdensome to, nor now expected any thing from. Poor people that have rich relations, ought to know that it is the wise providence of God that makes the difference, (in which we ought to acquiesce,) and that to be proud of our relation to such, is a great sin, and to trust to it, is great folly.

II. Ruth's condition was very low and poor; a great trial to the faith and constancy of a young proselyte. The Bethlehemites had done well, had they by turns invited Naomi and her daughter-in-law to their houses; (it would have been a great support to an aged widow, and a great encouragement to a new convert;) but, instead of tasting the dainties of Canaan, they have no way of getting necessary food, but by gleaning corn; and otherwise, for aught that appears, they might have starved. Note, *God has chosen the poor of this world;* and poor they are like to be, for though God has chosen them, commonly men overlook them. She had now a fair occasion to return to Moab again; but no, the God of Israel shall be her God, and though He slay her, yet will she trust in Him and never forsake Him. Her request is, *Let me go to the field and glean.* Those that are well born, and have been well brought up, know not what straits they may be reduced to, nor what employments they may be obliged to get their bread by, Lam. 4: 5. When the case is thus melancholy, let Ruth be remembered, who is a great example,

1. Of humility; when Providence had made her poor, she did not say, 'To glean, which is in effect to beg, I am ashamed;' but she cheerfully stoops to the meanness of her circumstances, and accommodates herself to her lot. High spirits can more easily starve than stoop; Ruth was none of those. She does not tell her mother she was never brought up to live on crumbs. Nay, it is her own motion, not her mother's injunction; humility is one of the brightest ornaments of youth, and one of the best omens. Before Ruth's honor was this humility. Observe, how humbly she speaks of herself, in her expectation of leave to glean; 'Let me glean after him, *in whose sight I shall find grace:*' that is, liberty to glean. Note, Poor people must not demand kindness as a debt, but humbly ask it, and take it as a favor, though in ever so small a matter. It becomes the poor to use entreaties.

2. Of industry. She does not say to her mother-in-law, 'Let me now go a visiting, or go a walking in the fields to take the air, and be merry, I cannot sit all day moping with you.' She was one of those virtuous women that love not to eat the bread of idleness. This is an example to young people; let them learn betimes to labor, and *what their hands find to do, do it with their might;* a disposition to diligence bodes well, both for this world and the other. Love not sleep, love not sport, love not sauntering, but love business. It is also an example to poor people to work for their living, and not beg that which they are able to earn. We must not be shy of any honest employment, though it be mean. *Labor is no reproach.* Sin is a thing below us, but we must not think any thing else so that Providence calls us to.

3. Of regard to her mother, though but her mother-in-law; being loosed by death from the law of her husband, she might easily suppose herself thereby loosed from the law of her husband's mother, yet she is dutifully observant of her. She will not go out without letting her know, and asking her leave. This respect young people ought to show to their parents and governors; it is a part of the honor due to them. She did not say, 'Mother, if you will go with me, I will go glean;' but, 'Do you sit at home, and take your ease, and I will go abroad, and take pains.' *Youth should work.* Let young people take *advice* from the aged, but not *put them upon toil.*

4. Of dependence on Providence; intimated in that, I will *glean after him, in whose sight I shall find grace.* She knows not which way to go, nor whom to inquire for, but will trust Providence to raise her up some friend or other that will be kind to her. Let us always keep up good thoughts of the divine providence, and believe, that while we do well, it will do well for us.

It did well for Ruth; *her hap was to light on the field of Boaz, v.* 3. To her it seemed casual, she knew not whose field it was, nor had she any reason for going to that more than any other, therefore it is said to be *her hap;* but Providence directed her steps. Note, God wisely orders small events; and those that seem altogether contingent, serve his own glory, and the good of his people. Many a great affair is brought about by a little turn, which seemed fortuitous to us, but was directed by Providence with design.

V. 4—16. Boaz himself appears, with great decency of carriage, both toward his own servants, and this poor stranger.

I. Toward his own servants, and the many employed for him in reaping and gathering in his corn, in busy harvest-time. Boaz is here an example of a good master.

1. He had a servant set over the reapers, *v.* 6. In great families, it is requisite there should be one to oversee the rest of the servants, and appoint to each their portion, both of work and meat. Ministers are such servants in God's house, and it is requisite they be both wise and faithful, and *show their Lord all things,* as he here, *v.* 6.

2. Yet he came himself, to see how the work went forward, if he found any thing amiss, to rectify it, and to give further orders. This was both for his interest, (the master's eye makes a fat horse,) and for the encouragement of his servants. Masters that live at ease, should think with tenderness of those that toil for them, and bear the burden and heat of the day.

3. Kind and pious salutations were interchanged between Boaz and his reapers, *v.* 4. Hereby they expressed, (1.) Their mutual respect; he to them as good servants, and they to him as a good master. He did not fall a chiding them, as if he came only to find fault and exercise his authority, but he prayed for them; '*The Lord be with you,* prosper you, and give you health and strength, and preserve you from any disaster:' nor did they, as soon as ever he was out of hearing, fall a cursing him, as some ill-natured servants that hate their master's eye; but they returned his courtesy, '*The Lord bless thee,* and make our labors serviceable to thy prosperity!' Things are likely to go on well

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Verse 3.

Her hap.] (*M. R.—Notes, Ec.* 9: 11, 12. *Luke* 10: 30—37, *conclusion.*) SCOTT.

Verse 4.

The LORD be with you.] *Ps.* 129: 6—8.—This emphatical expression occurs here for the first time in Scripture.—(*M. R.* f.)—The pious and affectionate language interchanged between Boaz and his reapers, and which appears to have been familiar to them, shows that there were many godly persons in Israel, notwithstanding national defections: and it beautifully illustrates the genuine effect of true religion, in producing affability in superiors, and respect and affection in inferiors, and mutual, unaffected good will in all.—It is lamentably true, that such language as this is seldom heard in our fields, while the bounty of Providence is gathering in: but frequently the reverse; yea, whatever can inflame the passions and corrupt the morals. So that a stranger, who should be occasionally present, would be apt to form a very different opinion respecting the religion of England, than Ruth did concerning that of Israel, from the conversation and conduct of Boaz and his reapers. ED.

When will the time arrive, that an employer shall go forth to his field, and give and receive these sensible salutations, without being accused of hypocrisy, and laughed at for singularity, and that too by *Christians?* That is, when will a universal reference of ourselves to the Almighty, in every act, become so much a habit of thought, feeling, and action to *this nation,* as to form the *foundation* and *frame-work* of our manners? Compare the insignificant salutations of our daily intercourse, the 'how d'ye dos' and 'how are yous,' with those of 'Boaz and his reapers.' Why is it so fashionable in these modern times to appear to be *ashamed of God?* How absurd and monstrous must such a state of general society be in the view of angels! ED.

Verses 5—10.

There is a beautiful simplicity in this narrative.—It seems evident, the same language was understood by all parties, whether Moab, as descended from Lot and Heber, retained the language of their ancestors, or a dialect of it; or whether Ruth had learned the language of Israel, in Elimelech's family. (*Gen.* 11: 6—9. *Neh.* 13: 23—30.) SCOTT.

(5.) *His servant.*] 'A person set over the reapers to see that they

[o] abide here fast by my maidens.

9 *Let* thine eyes *be* on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not [p] touch thee? and when thou art athirst, [q] go unto the vessels, and drink of *that* which the young men have drawn.

10 Then she [r] fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, [s] Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, [t] seeing I *am* a stranger.

[*Practical Observations.*]

11 And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been showed me, [u] all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband; and *how* [x] thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore.

12 The LORD [y] recompense thy work,

o Matt. 10:7—11. Phil. 4:8.
p Gen. 20:6. Job 19:21. Ps. 105:15. Prov. 6:29. 1 Cor. 7:1. 1 John 5:18.
q Gen. 24: 18—20. Matt. 10:42. John 4:7—11. r Gen. 18:2. 1 Sam. 25:23.
s 2:13. 2 Sam. 9:8. 19:28. Luke 1: 43,48. Rom. 12:10.
t Is. 58:3—8. Matt. 15:22—28. 25:35. Luke 7:6,7. 17:16—18.
u 1:11,16,17. Is. 37:5 6.
x Is. 45:10. Luke 5:11,28. 14:33. 18: 29,30. Heb. 11:8,9,24—26.
y 1 Sam. 24:19 Ps. 18:11. 58:11. Prov. 11:18. 22:13. *Marg.* Matt. 5:12. 6:1. 10:41,42. Luke 6:35. 14:12—14. Col. 2:18. 2 Tim. 1: 16. 4:8. Heb. 6:10. 11:6,26.

in a house where there is such good-will as this between masters and servants. (2.) Their joint dependence on the divine providence; they express their kindness to each other by praying one for another. They show not only their courtesy, but their piety, and an acknowledgment that all good comes from the presence and blessing of God, which therefore we should value and desire above any thing else, both for ourselves and others. Let us hence learn to use, [1.] Courteous salutations, as expressions of a sincere good-will to our friends. [2.] Pious ejaculations, lifting up our hearts to God for his favor, in such short prayers as these. Only, we must take heed that they do not degenerate into formality, lest in them we *take the name of the Lord our God in vain;* but if we be serious in them, we may in them keep up our communion with God, and fetch in mercy and grace from Him. It appears to have been the usual custom, thus to wish reapers good speed, Ps. 129: 7, 8.

4. He took an account from his reapers concerning a stranger he met with in the field, and gave necessary orders concerning her, that they should not touch her, *v.* 9. nor reproach her, *v.* 15. He also ordered them to be kind to her, and *let fall some of the handfuls on purpose for her.* Masters should not tie up their servants from being charitable, but give them allowance for that, with prudent directions.

II. Boaz was very kind to Ruth, and showed her a great deal of favor, induced to it by the report he had of her, and what he observed: God also inclining his heart to countenance her. Here is a very particular note of what passed concerning her.

1. The steward gave Boaz a very fair account, proper to recommend her, *v.* 6, 7. She was a stranger, therefore one of those that by the law of God were to *gather the gleanings of the harvest,* Lev. 19: 9, 10. she is the Moabitish damsel. She was allied to his family; she came back with Naomi, the wife of Elimelech, a kinsman of Boaz. She was a proselyte, for she came out of the country of Moab, to settle in the land of Israel. She was very modest, and had not gleaned till she had asked leave. She was very industrious, and had continued close to her work, from morning even until now: (the poor, if industrious and willing to take pains, are fit to be encouraged:) in the heat of the day, she tarried a little in the house, or booth, set up in the field, to repose herself, or, as some, for devotion; but she was soon back, and, except that, kept close to her work, all day, though it was not what she was used to. Servants should be just in the characters and reports they give to their masters, and take heed they do not misrepresent any person, nor without cause discourage their masters' charity.

2. Boaz was hereupon extremely civil to her. (1.) In ordering her to attend his reapers in every field they gathered in, for she should not need to go any where else to mend herself; (*v.* 8.) *Abide here fast by my maidens;* for those of her own sex were her fittest company. (2.) He charged all his servants to be very tender of her, and respectful to her, who, no doubt, would be so to one whom they saw their master kind to. (3.) He bid her welcome to the entertainment provided for his servants: ordered her, not only to drink of the water drawn for them, (for that seems to be the liquor he means, *v.* 9. from the famous well of Bethlehem, by the gate, the water David longed for, 2 Sam. 23: 15.) but *at meal-time* to *come eat of their bread;* (*v.* 14.) yea, and she should be welcome to their sauce too, *Come dip thy morsel in the vinegar,* to make it savory; for God allows us, not only nourishing but relishing food, not for necessity only, but for delight. And, for encouragement to her, and direction to the servants, he himself, happening to be present when the reapers sat down to meat, *reached her parched corn to eat.* It is no disparagement to the finest hand, to be *reached forth to the needy,* and to be employed in serving the poor. Observe, Boaz was not scanty in his provision for his reapers, but sent them so much more than enough for themselves as would be entertainment for a stranger. Thus *there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth.* (4.) He commended her for her dutiful respect to her mother-in-law, which, though he did not know her by sight, yet he had heard of, *v.* 11. Note, Those that do well, ought to have the praise of it. But what especially he commended her for, was, that she had left her own country, and was become a proselyte to the Jewish religion; for so the Chaldee expounds it. Those that leave all, to embrace true religion, are worthy of double honor. (5.) He prayed for her; *v.* 12. *The Lord recompense thy work.* Her strong affection to the commonwealth of Israel, to which she was by birth an alien, was such a work of divine grace in her, as would certainly be crowned with a full reward by Him *under whose wings she was come to trust:* the Jews describe a proselyte to be one that is *gathered under the wings of the divine majesty;* and those who by faith come under these wings may be sure of a full recompense of reward for so doing. *Lastly,* He encouraged her to go on in her gleaning, and did not offer to take her off from that: for the greatest kindness we can do our poor relations, is, to assist and encourage their industry. Boaz ordered his servants to let her glean among the sheaves, where other gleaners were not allowed to come, and not to reproach her, i. e. call her *thief,* or to suspect her of taking more than was allowed her, *v.* 15. All this shows Boaz to have been a man of a generous spirit, and one that, according to the law, considered the heart of a stranger.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—10. The distinctions we are apt to form concerning the persons and affairs of men, do not comport with the judgment of the Lord: the gleaning of a poor Moabitess, who trusted in Him, was deemed more worthy of his condescending notice, than the transactions of the greatest princes then living, which are now almost entirely consigned to oblivion! We ought not therefore to 'mind high things, but to condescend to men of low estate.'—True religion will teach men to behave with propriety in every circumstance and relation of life.—With what gratitude to God and liberality to the poor, should the bounty of a kind Providence be received by us unworthy sinners! and how inexcusable are those who abuse plenty in intemperance, or covetously neglect the indigent, or allow themselves in wickedness, when they are thus experiencing the goodness of the Lord!—In showing kindness to the destitute, we ought ourselves to avoid, and try to prevent in others, every thing that may appear like reproaching them: for a generous mind in distress has very exquisite sensibilities.

SCOTT.

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did the work, had suitable provision, and were paid their wages.' HORNE.—'The servant that was found most faithful and discreet was placed over the others.' JAHN.

(8.) *Hearest thou not, my daughter?*] 'A kind interrogation, sweetened with loving humanity.'—*Maidens.*] 'Not gleaners, but either reapers, or those that gathered up the corn, and bound it into sheaves.' *Assemb. Ann.*—'Maidens reaped as well as men, though some think they only came to bring provisions.' PATRICK.

(10.) '*To take knowledge* in Scripture, frequently signifies to *show* kindness.' DODD.

Verses 11, 12.

(*Marg. Ref. Note, Matt.* 23: 37—39.) In all ages and nations, conversion is substantially the same: irreligion or false religion is exchanged for the spiritual worship of the true God, through the appointed Mediator, and in his instituted ordinances; the practice of sin, for the pursuit of true holiness; self-dependence, for reliance in every thing on the mercy, grace, and providence of God; the expectation of felicity from the world, for his favor as our portion; and the company of the workers of iniquity, for the society of those who love and serve Him. But many *circumstances* depend on men's outward situation. Such as have godly parents and relations, are engaged in lawful and useful employments, and live in peaceable times, will not be immediately required to make the same sacrifices, as those who are called out of the families of imbittered opposers, from occupations inconsistent with the precepts of Scripture, or in times of furious persecution. The more, however, men venture, renounce, or suffer for the Lord's sake, the clearer evidence they have, that their faith is genuine, and that they shall 'receive a full reward.' The principle and the precept are in all cases alike; but the application varies, according as different trials are allotted in the providence of God. (*Heb.* 11: 8—10, 24—26.) SCOTT.

(12.) *Wings,* &c.] 'A metaphor taken from the cherubim,' so some; or 'a comparison taken from the young of birds, seeking shelter and protection under the wings of their dams,' so others. See note, Ex. 25: 18. Wings were an Egyptian symbol of protection. ED.

and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose [z] wings thou art come to trust.

13 Then she said, * Let me find favor in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken † friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be [a] not like unto one of thine handmaidens.

14 And Boaz said unto her, [b] At meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her [c] parched *corn*, and [d] she did eat, and was sufficed, and left.

15 And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and ‡ reproach her not:

16 And [e] let fall also *some* of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave *them*, that she may glean *them*, and rebuke her not.

17 So [f] she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an [g] ephah of barley.

18 And she took *it* up, and went into the city; and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that [h] she had reserved, after she was sufficed.

19 And her mother-in-law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to-day? and where wroughtest thou? [i] blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she showed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to-day *is* [k] Boaz.

3. Ruth received his favors with great humility and gratitude, and conducted herself with as much propriety in her place, as he in his, little thinking she should shortly be the mistress of the field she was now gleaning in. (1.) She paid all possible respect to him, according to the usage of the country, *v.* 10. Note, Good breeding is a great ornament to religion; and we must render *honor to whom honor* is due. (2.) She humbly owned herself unworthy of his favors; *I am a stranger*, (*v.* 10.) and *not like one of thy handmaidens*; (*v.* 13.) not so well dressed, nor so well taught: not so neat, nor so handy. Note, It well becomes us all to think meanly of ourselves, and to notice that in ourselves, which is diminishing, esteeming others better than ourselves. (3.) She gratefully acknowledged his kindness to her; though no great expense to him, nor much more than what he was obliged to by the divine law, yet she magnifies and admires it, *v.* 10. (4.) She begs the continuance of his good-will, *v.* 13. and owns that what he had said, had been a cordial to her. Those that are great, and in high places, know not how much good they may do to their inferiors with a kind look, or by speaking friendly to them; and so small an expense, one would think, they should not grudge, when it shall be put upon the score of their charity. (5.) When Boaz gave her her dinner with his reapers, she did not, under pretence either of her want, or of her labor, eat more than was convenient, and so unfit her for work in the afternoon, but only so much as would suffice, leaving the rest, and rising up immediately to glean, *v.* 14, 15. Temperance is a friend to industry; and we must eat and drink to strengthen us for business, not to indispose us to it. [See on Jude, *v.* 12.]

V. 17—23. Here, I. Ruth finishes her day's work, *v.* 17. 1. She took care not to lose time, for she gleaned until even. We must not be weary of well-doing, because in due season we shall reap. She scarcely used, much less abused the kindness of Boaz, he ordered his servants to leave handfuls for her, but she still gleaned the scattered ears. 2. She took care not to lose what she had gathered, Prov. 12: 27. She had gathered it ear by ear, but altogether, it was an ephah, about four pecks. It is an encouragement to industry, that in all labor, even that of gleaning, there is profit; but the *talk of the lips tendeth only to penury*. She, herself, carried her corn into the city, though, had she asked them, it is likely some of Boaz's servants would have done that for her. We should study to be as little as possible troublesome to those that are kind to us.

II. She paid her respects to her mother-in-law; went straight home to her, and did not go to converse with Boaz's servants; *showed her what she had gleaned*, that she might see she had not been idle.

1. She entertained her with what she had left of the good dinner Boaz gave her, *v.* 18. which refers to *v.* 14. If she had any thing better than another, her mother should have part with her. Thus, having showed industry abroad, she showed piety at home; so children's maintaining of their parents is called, (1 Tim. 5: 4.) and it is part of the honor due to them by the fifth commandment, Mat. 15: 6.

2. She gave her an account of her day's work, and how a kind Providence had favored her in it, which made it very comfortable to her; for the gleanings that a righteous man hath, are better than the harvests of many wicked, Ps. 37: 16.

(1.) Naomi asked her where she had gleaned. Note, Parents should inquire into the ways of their children, how, where, and in what company they spend their time. This may prevent many extravagances which children, left to themselves, run into, by which they bring both themselves and their parents to shame. If not our *brethren's*, surely we are our *children's* keepers: and we know what a son Adonijah proved, that never had been chidden. Parents should examine their children, not to frighten or discourage them, so as to make them hate home, or tempt them to tell a lie, but to commend them if they have done well, and with mildness to reprove and caution them if they have done otherwise. It is a good question for us to ask ourselves in the close of every day, '*Where have I gleaned to-day?* What improvements have I made in knowledge and grace? What have I done or gotten, that will turn to a good account?'

(2.) Ruth gave her a particular account of the kindness of Boaz, (*v.* 19.) and her hopes of further kindness from him, *v.* 21. Note, Children should consider themselves accountable to their parents, and to those that are over them, and not think it a disparagement to be examined. Ruth told her mother what kindness Boaz had showed her, that she might take occasion to acknowledge it, and return him thanks; but she did not tell her how Boaz had commended her, *v.* 11. Humility teaches us, not only not to praise ourselves, but not to be forward to publish others' praises of us.

(3.) Hereupon, [1.] Naomi prayed heartily for her daughter's benefactor, even before she knew who it was, (*v.* 19.) shooting the arrow of prayer at a venture. But more particularly, when she was told who it was, *v.* 20. Note, The poor must pray for those that are kind and liberal to them, and thus requite them, when not capable of any other requital. Let the *loins of the poor bless* those that *refresh them*. And He that hears the cries of the poor against their oppressors, (Ex. 22: 27.) it may be hoped, will hear the prayers of the poor for their benefactors. She now remembered the former kindnesses Boaz had showed her husband and sons, and joins those to this; he has not left *off his kindness to the living and to the dead*.

[2.] She acquainted Ruth with their family relation to Boaz. It should seem she had been so long in Moab, she had forgotten her kindred in Israel, till by this providence God brought it to her mind. At least, she had not encouraged Ruth

z 1:16. Ps. 17:8. 36:7. 57:1. 61:4. 63:7. 91:4. Matt. 23:37.
* Or, *I find favor*. Gen. 33:8,10,15. 43:14. 1 Sam. 1:18. 2 Sam. 16:4.
† Heb. *to the heart*. Gen. 34:3. Judg. 19:3. *Marg.*
a 1 Sam. 25:41. Prov. 15:33. Phil. 2:3.
b Job 31:16—22. Prov. 11:24,25. Is. 32:8. 58:7,10,11. Luke 14:12—14.
c 1 Sam. 17:17. 25:18. 2 Sam. 17:28.
d Deut. 8:10. 11:15. 2 Kings 4:43,44. Matt. 14:20.
‡ Heb. *shame her not*.
e Deut. 24:19—21. Ps. 112:9. Prov. 19:17. Matt. 25:40. Rom. 12:13. 2 Cor. 8:5—11. Philem. 7. Heb. 6:10. 1 John 3:17,18.
f Prov. 31:27. 2 Thes. 3:10.
g Ex. 16:36. Ex. 45:11,12.
h 14. John 6:12,13. 1 Tim. 5:4.
i 10. Ps. 41:1. 2 Cor. 9:13—15.
k 1 Kings 7:21.

Verse 13.

'Nothing can be more amiable than this humility of Ruth.' DODD.

Verse 14.

(*M. R.*) 'The *Midrasch*,' (an ancient Jewish book,) 'makes these words, "Come thou hither," to signify as much as *Come to thy kingdom*; and the morsel dipt in vinegar, to denote *the reproaches and torments of the Messiah*. Which is an argument, that they expected such a King as should be exposed to such sufferings, as our blessed Savior endured; who saith in the Psalmist, "They gave me vinegar to drink."' *Patrick*. The interpretation is indeed most absurd; yet it is remarkable as tending to prove that point. SCOTT.

Vinegar.] 'The Hebrews had two kinds of vinegar: the one, a weak [red] wine, used for common drink in the harvest field, as the Spaniards, Italians [&c.] do still; the other, a sharp acid like ours.' HORNE.—'Not simple vinegar, but vinegar mingled with a small portion of oil.' HEWLETT. 'A drink made from pure wine and *sikera*.' JAHN.—*Reapers*.] 'I. e. the women who reaped.' PATRICK.—*Parched corn*.] 'Corn was eaten at first without any preparation of it at all. After the use of fire was known, it was parched, [as is now very common in Turkey,] and breaking it in pieces with stones or pieces of wood, suggested the idea of mortars, and eventually of mills.' JAHN.

Verse 17.

Beat, &c.] 'At first, grain was beaten out with cudgels. [See the Egyptian monuments.] Afterwards this method was retained only in respect to the smaller kinds of grain, and in threshing small quantities. At a later period, it was trodden out by the hoofs of oxen, or beaten out with machines such as are now used in the east.' [Cut, Deut. 25: 4.] ID.

Verse 18.

Brought forth.] 'Out of her scrip, or bag. So the Chaldee.' *Assemb. Ann.*—*That she had reserved*.] Most understand it, with Henry, of what she had reserved 'of the good dinner Boaz gave her, *v.* 14. but some, as *Poole*, of what she had gleaned.' ED.

20 And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, [l] Blessed *be* he of the LORD, who [m] hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man *is* near of kin unto us, * one of our next kinsmen.

21 And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, [n] Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest.

22 And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, [o] *It is* good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they † meet thee not in any other field.

23 So she [p] kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley-harvest and of wheat-harvest; and dwelt with her mother-in-law.

CHAP. III.

By Naomi's instruction Ruth lies down in the night at the feet of Boaz, 1—7. He acknowledges that he owes the duty of a kinsman, but shows that another has a prior claim, 8—13. He sends her away in the morning with six measures of barley, and she confers with Naomi, 14—18.

THEN Naomi her mother-in-law said unto her, My daughter, [a] shall I not seek rest for thee, that it [b] may be well with thee?

3:10. 2 Sam. 2:5. Job 29:12,13. 2 Tim. 1:16—18.
m 2 Sam. 9:1. Prov. 17:17. Phil. 4:10.
* Or, *one that hath a right to redeem.* 3:9. 4:6. Lev. 25:25. Deut. 25:5—7. Job 19:25.
n 7.8,22.
o Prov. 27:10. Cant. 1:8.
† Or, *fall not upon thee.*
p Prov. 6:6—8. 13:1. Eph. 6:1—3.
a 1:9. 1 Cor. 7:36. 1 Tim. 5:8,14.
b Gen. 40:14. Deut. 4:40. Ps. 128:2. Jer. 22:15,16.

with it; so unlike was humble Naomi to many, who, though fallen into decay themselves, are continually boasting of their great relations. Nay, observe the chain of thought here, and in it a chain of providences, bringing about what was designed concerning Ruth. Ruth names Boaz as one that had been kind to her; and that reminds Naomi who he was; 'He is *our next kinsman; our Goel,* who has the right to redeem our mortgaged estate, from whom therefore we may expect further kindness. That is the likeliest man in all Bethlehem to set us up.' Thus God brings things to our mind, sometimes of a sudden, that prove to have a wonderful tendency to our good.

[3.] She appointed Ruth to continue her attendance in the fields of Boaz, (*v.* 22.) '*Let them not meet thee in any other field,* for that will be construed a contempt of his courtesy.' Has the Lord dealt bountifully with us? Let us not be found in any other field, nor seek for happiness and satisfaction in the creature. Tradesmen take it ill, if those that are in their books, go to another shop. We lose divine favors, if we slight them. Some think Naomi gave her daughter-in-law a tacit rebuke; (*v.* 21, 22.) but they are too critical: Ruth spake of the young men, because they were the principal laborers, and to them Boaz had given directions concerning her; and Naomi takes it for granted, while she attended the young men, her society would be with the maidens, as was fit. Ruth dutifully obeyed. And when the harvest was ended, (as Patrick expounds it,) she did not gad abroad, but kept her aged mother company at home. Dinah went out to see the daughters of the land, and we know what disgrace her vanity ended in; Ruth kept at home, and helped to maintain her mother, and went out on no other errand than to get provision for her; and we shall find afterward what preferment her humility and industry ended in, *Seest thou a man diligent in his business?* Honor is before him.

CHAP. III. V. 1—5. We found it very easy, in the former ch. to applaud the decency of Ruth's behavior, and to show what good use we may make of the account given us of it; but, in this ch. we shall have much ado to vindicate it from the imputation of indecency, and to save it from having an ill use made of it; but the goodness of those times was such, as saves what is recorded here from being [accounted] ill done; and yet the badness of these times is such, as that it will not justify any now in doing the like.

I. Naomi's care for her daughter's comfort, is, without doubt, very commendable, and recorded for imitation. She had no thoughts of marrying, herself, (*ch.* 1: 12.) for she was old, yet she would not restrain her daughter-in-law, that was young. Age must not make itself a standard to youth. On the contrary, she is full of contrivance how to get her well married. Her wisdom projected that for her daughter, which her daughter's modesty forbade her to project for herself, *v.* 1. This she did, 1. In justice to the dead, to preserve the family from being extinct. 2. In kindness and gratitude to her daughter-in-law, who had conducted herself very dutifully and respectfully to her, that she might live plentifully and pleasantly, and not spend all her days in the low and melancholy condition she now lived in. Note, (1.) A married state is, or should be, a state of rest to young people; wandering affections are then fixed, and the heart must be at rest: it is at rest in the house of a husband, and in his heart, *ch.* 1: 9. Those are giddy indeed, that marriage does not compose. (2.) Those that marry should desire *it may be well with them;* in order to which, they must choose well; otherwise, instead of rest, it may prove the greatest uneasiness. Parents, in disposing of their children, must have this in their eye, *that it may be well with them.* And be it always remembered, *That is best for us, which is best for our souls.* (3.) Parents should seek this rest for their children, and do all that is fit for them to do, in due time, in order to it. And the more dutiful and respectful they are to them, though they can the worse spare them, yet they should the rather prefer them, and the better.

II. The course she took, in order to her daughter's preferment, was very extraordinary, and looks suspicious. If there was any thing improper in it, the fault must lie on Naomi, who put her daughter upon it, and who knew, or should know, the laws and usages of Israel better than Ruth. 1. It was true, Boaz, being near of kin to the deceased, and (for aught that Naomi knew to the contrary) the nearest of all now alive, was obliged by the divine law to marry the widow of Mahlon, who was the eldest son of Elimelech, and was dead without issue, *v.* 2. 2. It was a convenient time to remind him of it, now that he had got so much acquaintance with Ruth, by her constant attendance on his reapers during harvest; and he also, by the kindness he had showed to Ruth in less matters, had encouraged Naomi to hope he would not be unkind, much less unjust, in this greater matter. And she thought it a good opportunity to apply to him, when he made a winnowing-feast at his threshing-floor, (*v.* 2.) completing the joy of the harvest, and treating his workmen like a kind master; as Nabal and Absalom at their sheep-shearing. 3. Naomi thought Ruth the most proper person to do it herself; and perhaps it was the usage in that country, that in this case the woman should make the demand, so much is intimated by the law, Deut. 25: 7—9. Naomi therefore orders her daughter-in-law to make herself neat, not fine; (*v.* 3.) '*Wash thyself and anoint,* not paint thee; (as Jezebel;) put on thy raiment, but not the attire of the harlot, and go down to the floor,' whither, probably, she was invited to the supper there made; but she must not make herself known, i. e. not make her errand known, (she herself could not but be very well known among Boaz's reapers,) till the company was dispersed, and Boaz was retired. And,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 11—23. All persons should be careful what connections they form, and what places they frequent; but especially young women, both for conscience' and credit's sake.—In the path of duty is safety; and we should keep close to those employments and situations, in which the Lord has blessed us, without being desirous of change, or fearful of loss, or want of support.—A tender concern for each other's welfare, affectionate and edifying conversation, with true piety and contentment, will render the lowest circumstances and the meanest fare comfortable.—But to accommodate this subject, ought not parents to ask their children what they have *gleaned* from the sermons which they have heard, the books which they have read, and the conversation they have joined in? May we not also ask ourselves the same question? He that would increase in wisdom must be always thus *gleaning,* and call himself frequently to account respecting it; determining, if possible, to get some profitable hint from every person and occurrence. And those, who thus daily collect knowledge from others, and keep close to the word and ordinances of God, will become 'thoroughly furnished for every good work.'—Finally, let us, in the kindness of Boaz to Ruth, contemplate the kindness of Jesus to poor sinners; to whose meanness He most freely condescends; on whom, though most unworthy, He liberally confers his benefits; and whom He neither upbraids Himself, nor suffers others to upbraid, with their former transgressions. SCOTT.

Verse 21.

Young men.] 'Though the word in the original be of the masculine gender, yet it signifies all young people, and particularly maidens.' PATRICK.—So HEWLETT, and the *Sept.* and *Chal.* See on *v.* 14. *Reapers.* ED.

Verse 22.

If Ruth had gone into any other field to glean, it would have seemed an evidence of an inconstant temper of mind, which might have given Boaz and his family an unfavorable opinion of her. (*Matt.* 10: 11—15.) Ruth persevered in her labor, and endeavored to maintain herself and Naomi, by her industry, for a considerable time; and was evidently prepared to do it permanently, before a favorable turn, as to her, wholly unexpected, was given to her affairs. SCOTT.

Verse 23.

Wheat harvest.] 'About a month after the barley harvest, which was now concluding.' WILLIAMS.

NOTES.

CHAP. III. V. 1—6. The law, concerning a man's marrying his brother's widow when he died childless, was by custom extended, as it seems, to the other near relations, when there were no brethren:

2 And now [c] *is* not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? behold, he winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing-floor.

3 Wash thyself therefore, and [d] anoint thee, and [e] put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: *but* make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking.

4 And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and * uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do.

5 And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do.

6 And she went down unto the floor, [f] and did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her.

7 And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and [g] his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down.

8 And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and † turned himself; and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.

9 And he said, Who

c 2:20—23. Deut. 25:5,6. Heb. 2:11—14.
d 2 Sam. 14:2. Ps. 104:15. Matt. 6. 17.
e Esth. 5:1. 1 Tim. 2:9,10.
* Or, *lift up the clothes that are on his feet.* 1 Thes 5:22.
f Ex. 20:12. Prov. 1:8. John 2:5. 15: 14.
g Gen. 43:34. Judg. 16:25. 19:6,9,22. 2 Sam. 13:28. Esth. 1:10. Ps.104:15. Ec. 2:24. 3: 12, 13. 1 Cor. 10:31. Eph. 5:18,19.
† Or, *took hold on.*

on this occasion, she would have an easier access to him in private, than she could have at his own house. And thus far was well enough. But, 4. Her coming to lie at his feet, when he was asleep in his bed, had such an appearance of evil, was such a dangerous approach towards it, and might have been such occasion of it, that we know not well how to justify it. Many expositors think it unjustifiable, particularly the excellent Mr. Poole. We must not do evil that good may come. All agree it is not to be drawn into a precedent; neither our laws [our manners] nor our times are the same that were then; yet I am willing to make the best of it. If Boaz was, as they presumed, the next kinsman, she was his wife before God, (as we say,) and there needed but little ceremony to complete the nuptials; and Naomi did not intend that Ruth should approach to him any otherwise than as his wife; she knew Boaz to be not only an old man, (she would not have trusted to that alone in venturing her daughter-in-law so near him,) but a grave, sober man, a virtuous and religious man, and one that feared God. She knew Ruth to be a modest woman, *chaste, and a keeper at home.* Naomi herself designed nothing but what was honest and honorable, and her charity (which *believeth all things* and *hopeth all things*) banished and forbade all suspicion, that either Boaz or Ruth would offer any thing but what was likewise honest and honorable. If what she advised, had been then as indecent and immodest (according to the usage of the country) as it seems now to us, we cannot think, that if Naomi had had so little virtue, (which yet we have no reason to suspect,) that she should have had so little wisdom, as to put her daughter upon it, since that alone might have marred the match, and have alienated the affections of so grave and good a man as Boaz from her. We must therefore think the thing did not look so ill then as it does now. Naomi referred her daughter-in-law to Boaz for further directions. When she had thus made her claim, Boaz, who was more learned in the laws, would *tell her what she must do.*

We may be sure, if Ruth had apprehended any evil in what her mother advised her to, she was a woman of too much virtue, and too much sense, to promise as she did, (*v.* 5.) *All that thou sayest unto me I will do.* Thus must *the younger submit to the elder*, and to their grave and prudent counsels, when they have nothing worth speaking of to object against it.

V. 6—13. Here is, 1. Boaz's good management of his common affairs; it is probable, according to the common usage, 1. When his servants winnowed, he was with them, to prevent, not their stealing, (he had no reason to fear that,) but their waste, through carelessness in winnowing. Masters may sustain great losses by heedless though honest servants, which is a reason why men should be diligent to *know the state of their own flocks*, and look well to them. 2. When he had more than ordinary work to be done, he treated his servants with extraordinary entertainments, and, for their encouragement, did *eat and drink with them.* It well becomes the rich and great, to be generous to, and also familiar with, those that are under them, and employed for them. 3. When Boaz had supped with his workmen, and been a while pleasant with them, he *went to bed in due time*, so early, that by midnight he had his first sleep, (*v.* 8.) thus he would be fit for his business betimes next morning. Good husbands will keep good hours, and not indulge themselves or their families in unseasonable mirth. The Chaldee paraphrase tells us, (*v.* 7.) *his heart was good*, (and so the Heb. is,) *and he blessed the name of the Lord, who had heard his prayers, and taken away the famine from the land of Israel.* So he went sober to bed, his heart was in a good frame, and not overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness. Nor did he go to bed without prayer; and it was well, for he had an unusual temptation before him, though he knew it not. 4. He laid *at the end of the heap of corn;* that he might be near his work, and ready for it next morning, and show that, like his father Jacob, he was a plain man, that, on occasion, could make his bed in a barn, and, if need were, sleep contentedly in the straw.

II. Ruth observed her mother's orders, went and laid her down, not by his side, but over-cross his feet, in her clothes, and kept awake, waiting for an opportunity to tell her errand. When he awaked in the night, and perceived there was somebody at his feet, and inquired who it was, she told him her name, and then her errand, (*v.* 9.) that she came to put herself under his protection, as the person appointed by the divine law to be her protector. '*Spread thy skirt over me*, be pleased to espouse me and my cause.' See

The good acceptance Ruth gained. What she did had no ill effect, so Naomi was not mistaken in her good opinion of her kinsman. He knew her demand was just and honorable, and treated her accordingly. Boaz knew it was not any sinful lust brought her thither, and therefore maintained both his own honor and hers. He did not put any ill construction on what she did, did not reproach her as impudent, and unfit to make an honest man a wife; she having approved herself well in the fields, and all her conduct having been modest and decent, he would not, from this instance, entertain the least suspicion of her character, or seem to do so; perhaps blaming himself that he had not offered the service of a kinsman to these distressed widows, and saved her this trouble, and ready to say as Judah concerning his daughter-in-law, *She is more righteous than I.* He says, (*v.* 10.) Thou hast *showed more kindness in the latter end, than at the beginning, ch.* 2: 11. in that she consulted not her own fancy, but her husband's family, in marrying again. She received not the addresses of *young men* (much less did she seek them) *whether poor or rich*, but was willing to marry as the law directed, though to an old man, because it was for the honor and interest of the family into which she had matched, and for which she had an entire kindness. Young people must aim, in disposing of themselves, not so much to please their own eye, as to please God and their parents.

He promised her marriage, *v.* 11. Note, [1.] Exemplary virtue ought to have its due praise, (Phil. 4: 8.) and it will recommend both men and women to the esteem of the wisest and best. Poverty often obscures the lustre of virtue: yet Ruth's virtues, even in a mean condition, were generally

and it required the woman to do several things, widely different from modern usages. (*Deut.* 25: 5—10.) This law gave Ruth, now proselyted to the true religion, a legal claim upon Boaz, as Naomi supposed; who either did not know of another nearer kinsman, or was aware that it would be in vain to apply to him. (*Note*, 4: 1—8.) It was customary for widows to assert this claim; and, considering Boaz's character and superiority of station, she supposed that this was best done in a private manner. When all allowances are made, perhaps neither party can be entirely exculpated. Though their plan was graciously rendered successful, it was not recorded for imitation in the present state of society; nor must it be judged of by modern customs and maxims. (*M. R.*) Scott.

(2.) *Behold, he winnoweth*, &c.] 'I. e. observe how God by his providence offers a fair opportunity of accomplishing thy desire by becoming better acquainted with Boaz.' *Assemb. Ann.—Winnoweth.*] 'Probably what was threshed out in the day was winnowed in the evening, when the sea-breeze, common in Palestine, set in.' Dr. A. Clarke.—*Threshing-floor.*] 'In some elevated part of the field, but destitute of walls and covering, and indeed nothing more than a circular space 30 or 40 paces in diameter, where the ground had been levelled and beaten down.' [1 Sam. 23: 1.] Jahn.—'The floors were not in an open field, but in barns where owners and laborers feasted in time of harvest, and afterwards laid down to rest.' *Assemb. Ann. Patrick* and *Hewlett* think, they were covered at top and closed by doors at night, though open on all sides by day; but no rain fell in harvest time in Palestine, and it is common now to sleep in the open air there. 'The sun,' observes Roberts, 'is so hot and pernicious, in the east, that many farmers plough and irrigate their fields and gardens long after it has set, or before it rises. The wind also is generally stronger in the night, which might induce Boaz to prefer it.' Ed.

(3.) *Down to the floor.*] 'Some place near it, where she might see what was done and not be observed.' Patrick.—But *Poole* thinks she was, with Boaz's laborers, invited to the feast: hence he infers a reason why she should wash, anoint, and dress neatly, which, otherwise, there could be no object in her doing, as she was to go by night, when she could not be seen. Her not making herself *known* also, he understands to relate only to the business she was sent upon, which she was not to make known till after the feast. Id.

Verse 7.

Merry.] Or, 'good;' and it may mark his cheerfulness and thankfulness for the plenty the Lord had sent, after the famine. Scott.

Verse 9.

Spread ... thy skirt.] This is supposed to have been a customary ceremony in contracting marriage, and implied the woman's being taken under the protection of her husband, and admitted to share all

art thou? and she answered, I *am* [h] Ruth thine handmaid: [i]spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou *art* [*] a near kinsman.

10 And he said, [k] Blessed *be* thou of the LORD, my daughter; *for* thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than [l] at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich.

11 And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for [m] all the [†] city of my people doth know that thou *art* a virtuous woman.

12 And now it is true that I *am thy* near kinsman: howbeit, [n] there is a kinsman nearer than I.

13 Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, *that* [o] if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, *as* [p] the LORD liveth: lie down until the morning.

14 And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he said, [q] Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.

15 Also he said, bring the [‡] veil that *thou hast* upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, [r] he measured six *measures* of barley, and laid *it* on her: and she went into the city.

16 And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, Who *art* thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her.

17 And she said, These six *measures* of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law.

18 Then said she, [s] Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.

h 2:10—13. 1 Sam. 25:41. Luke 1:11.
i Ez. 16:8.
* Or, *one that has right to redeem.* 12. 2:20.
k 2:4,20. 1 Cor.13:4,5.
l 1:8.
m Prov. 12:4. 31:10,29—31.
† Heb. *gate.*
n 4:1. Matt. 7:12. 1 Thes. 4:6.
o 2:20. 4:5. Deut. 25:5—9. Matt. 22:24—27
p Judg. 8:19. Jer. 4:2. 2 Cor. 1:23. Heb. 6:16.
q Ec. 7:1. Rom. 12:17. 14:16. 1 Cor. 10:32. 2 Cor. 8:21. 1 Thes. 5:22. 1 Pet. 2:12.
‡ Or, *sheet*, or, *apron.*
r Is. 32:8. Gal. 6:10.
s Ps.37:3—5. Is.28:16. 30:7.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The word of God has pronounced 'marriage honorable in all;' and therefore those who choose to abide in a single state, should not condemn those, who prefer a married life. If they are imprudent, they 'will have trouble in the flesh: but their brethren should spare them,' and not censure what the divine law does not condemn. (1 *Cor.* 7: 25—28. 1 *Tim.* 5: 13—15.)—The more willing any one is, for conscience' sake, to renounce worldly interests, the greater care should others employ in promoting his advantage.—But good intentions will not justify improper means; and it is well for us, that we have to do with a God of mercy, who takes better care of our interest, purity, credit, and peace, than we often do of our own and of each other's.—Parents should be very cautious what injunctions they lay upon their children; lest filial affection and deference should ensnare their consciences, and lead them into temptation: for the authority even of a parent will not justify a sinful action.—Few men have such command of their passions, and candor of mind, as to injure neither the virtue nor the reputation of females, who indiscreetly put themselves in their way: and yet to take advantage of a woman's affection and confidence, for her irreparable detriment, is much baser than defrauding those who implicitly trust in us. They, however, who value either their chastity or their character, should flee from such situations; in which they can be preserved only by the same Power, that preserved the young men in the fiery furnace.—All our plenty should be shared with the poor and industrious: and all our feasting should be so moderated, that it may neither unfit us for our ordinary employments, nor for the exercises of devotion. When, in such circumstances, men can retain the dominion over their passions, and conduct themselves with tenderness, prudence, piety, justice, and regard to the law of God, their wealth may be pronounced blessed, and their use of it honorable.—We must not, however, rest satisfied even with a clear conscience in the sight of God; but should endeavor to preserve a clear character, and to avoid whatever may occasion slander, or excite suspicion: (2 *Cor.* 8: 20, 21. 1 *Thes.* 5: 22.) and we ought to be as tender of the reputation of others as of our own.—But without any impropriety, we poor polluted sinners may apply to Jesus Christ, to take us under his almighty care; and when we have applied to Him, He will not rest till He has accomplished our desires; while in the meantime He will communicate blessings to us and ours, in answer to our prayers: nor can we too earnestly desire and seek this same rest for our children and friends, that it may be well with them also. (*Matt.* 11: 28—30.) SCOTT.

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his comforts. (*Ez.* 16: 6—8.) It was therefore a direct claim upon Boaz to marry her; which she grounded on the law of God, and on his being the nearest relation of her deceased husband. SCOTT. 'Even to the present day, when a Jew marries a woman, he throws the skirt or end of his *talith* over her, to signify that he hath taken her under his protection.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 10—13.

The conduct of Boaz in this transaction is worthy of the highest encomiums. SCOTT. 'Nothing can be more honorable than Boaz's testimony to the character of Ruth here and in the next verse, which, while it removes all suspicions from her reputation, proves that he acted on principle, and was a man of true discernment and real piety.' DODD.

(11.) *I will do thee all that thou requirest.*] 'That is, satisfy thy request according to God's law, in procuring for thee such an husband and redeemer as it requireth. See ch. 2: 20.' ASSEMB. ANN.

Verse 15.

Veil.] *Mitpachath.* Sept. *apron*, Vulg. *cloak*; but CALMET thinks, it may have been the oriental head-dress represented in the cut. ED. It is not known of what quantity these *measures* consisted. SCOTT.

Verse 16.

Who art thou?] Or, 'What hast thou done?' *What has passed?* For so the words may be interpreted. ID.

CHAP. IV.

Boaz proposes to the kinsman, of whom he had spoken, to redeem Elimelech's land, and to marry Ruth; which he declines to do, 1—8. Boaz buys the inheritance and marries Ruth, 9—12. She bears Obed, the grandfather of David, 13—17. The genealogy from Pharez to David, 18—22.

THEN went Boaz up [a] to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, [b] the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, [c] Ho, such a one, turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down.

2 And he took ten men of [d] the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down.

3 And [e] he said unto the kinsman, Naomi that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land which *was* our brother Elimelech's:

4 And * I thought to advertise thee, saying, [f] Buy *it* [g] before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem *it*, redeem *it;* but if thou wilt not redeem *it*, *then* tell me, that I may know: [h] for *there is* none to redeem *it* beside thee; and I *am* after thee. And he said, I will redeem *it*.

5 Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy *it* also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, [i] to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

a Deut. 16:18. 17:5. 21:19. 25:7. Job 29:7. 31:21. Am. 5:10—12,15.
b 3:12.
c Is. 55:1. Zech. 2:6.
d Ex. 18:21,22. Deut. 29:10. 31:28. 1 Kings 21:8. Prov. 31:23. Lam. 5:14. Acts 6:12.
e Ps. 112:5. Prov. 13:10.
* Heb. *I said I will reveal* in *thine ear.*
f Jer. 32:7—9. Rom. 12:17. 2 Cor. 8:21. Phil. 4:8.
g Gen. 23:18. Jer. 32:10—12.
h Lev. 25:25—29.
i 3:13. Gen. 38:8. Deut. 25:5,6. Matt. 22:24. Luke 20:28.

scious of an unspotted purity, but because few could have come so near the fire as they did, and not be scorched. Had it been known, it would have occasioned suspicions in some, and reflection from others; good people would have been troubled, and bad people would have triumphed, therefore *let it not be known*. Note, We must always take care, not only to keep a good conscience, but a good name: either we must not do that, which, though innocent, is liable to be misinterpreted, or if we do, we must *not let it be known*. We must avoid not only sin, but scandal. There was likewise a particular reason for concealment here; if this matter should take wind, it might prejudice the freedom of the other kinsman's choice, and he would make this his reason for refusing Ruth, that Boaz and she had been together. 2. He dismissed her with a good present of corn, which would be very acceptable to her poor mother at home, and an evidence that he had not sent her away in dislike, which Naomi might have suspected, had he sent her away empty. He gave it her in her *veil*, or *apron*, or *mantle;* gave it her by measure; like a prudent corn master, he kept an account of all he delivered out; it was *six measures*, i. e. six omers, as is supposed, ten of which made an ephah; whatever the measure was, probably he gave her as much as she could well carry, *v.* 15.

II. How she was welcomed by her mother-in-law. She asked her, '*Who art thou, my daughter?* A bride or no? Must I give thee joy?' So Ruth told her how the matter stood, *v.* 16, 17. Whereupon her mother, 1. Advised her to be satisfied in what was done; *Sit still, my daughter, till thou know how the matter will fall*, *v.* 18. *How it is decreed in heaven*, the Chaldee reads, for marriages are made there. She had done all that was fit for her to do, and now must patiently wait the issue, and not be perplexed about it. Let us learn hence to cast our care on providence, to follow that, and attend the motions of it, composing ourselves into an expectation of the event, with a resolution to acquiesce in it, whatever it be; sometimes that proves best done for us, that is least our own doing. 2. She assured her that Boaz, having undertaken this matter, would approve himself a faithful, careful friend; *He will not be at rest, till he have finished it*. Though it was a busy time with him in the fields and the floor, yet having undertaken to serve his friend, he would not neglect the business. Much more reason have good Christians to be *careful for nothing*, but *cast their care on God*, because He has promised to *care for them*. '*Sit still and see how the matter will fall*, for *the Lord will perfect that which concerns thee*, and will make it to work for good to thee.' Ps. 37: 4, 5.—138: 8. *Your strength is to sit still*, Isa. 30: 7.

CHAP. IV. In this ch. we have the wedding between Boaz and Ruth, in the circumstances of which there was something uncommon, which is kept on record, for the illustration, not only of the law concerning the marrying of a brother's widow, (*Deut.* 25: 5, &c. cases help to expound laws,) but of the gospel too, for from this marriage descended David, and the Son of David, whose espousals to the Gentile church were hereby typified. So the book concludes with the pedigree of David, *v.* 18—22. Perhaps, to oblige him, the blessed Spirit directed the insertion of this story in the sacred canon, he being desirous the virtues of his great-grandmother, Ruth, together with her Gentile extraction, should be transmitted to posterity, and the singular providence that attended her.

V. 1—8. Here, 1. Boaz calls a court immediately. Probably he was himself one of the elders (or aldermen) perhaps the father of the city, for he seems here to have gone up to the gate, as one having authority, and not as a common person: like Job, *ch.* 29: 7, &c. We cannot suppose him less than a magistrate. But why so hasty, why so fond of the match? Ruth was not rich, but lived on alms; not honorable, but a poor stranger; never said to be beautiful; and if ever so, weeping, and travelling, and gleaning, had now withered her lilies and roses. It was, then, that all her neighbors agreed she was a virtuous woman; this set her price with him *far above rubies*. Therefore, he thinks, if, by marrying her, he might do her a kindness, he should also do himself a greater; he will therefore bring it to a conclusion immediately. It was not court-day, but he got ten men of the elders of the city to meet him in the [open place, by the] gate, where public business used to be transacted, *v.* 2. So many, it is probable, by the custom of the city, made a full court. Boaz, though a judge, would not be a judge in his own cause, but desired the concurrence of other elders. Honest intentions dread not a public cognizance.

2. He summons his rival to come and hear the matter that was to be proposed to him; (*v.* 1.) '*Ho, such a one*, sit down here.' He called him by his name, no doubt, but the divine historian thought not fit to record it.

3. He proposes to this kinsman the redemption of Naomi's land, which, it is probable, had been mortgaged for money to buy bread during the famine; (*v.* 3.) '*Naomi has a parcel of land to sell*, namely, the equity of the redemption of it out of the hands of the mortgagee, which she is willing to part with;' or, as some think, it was her jointure for life, and wanting money, she would for a small matter sell her interest to the heir at law, who was the fittest to be a purchaser. This he gives the kinsman legal notice of, (*v.* 4.) that he might have the refusal of it. Boaz, though fond enough of the purchase, would not do so mean a thing, as to take a bargain over another's head; and we are taught, by his example, to be not only just and honest, but fair and honorable, in all our dealings, and to do nothing which we are unwilling should see the light, but be above-board.

4. The kinsman seemed forward to redeem the land, (*v.* 4.) till told, that if he did, he must marry the widow, and then he flew off. He liked the land well enough, and, probably, caught at that the more greedily, because he hoped the poor widow being under a necessity of selling, he might have so much the better bargain. But Boaz told him there was a young widow in the case, and if he have the land, he must take her with it: *The estate passes with this encumbrance:* either the divine law or the usage of the country would oblige him to it, or Naomi insisted she should not sell the land, but on this condition, *v.* 5. Some think this does not relate to that law of marrying the brother's widow, (for that seems to oblige only the children of the same father, (Deut. 25: 5.) unless by custom it was afterward made to extend to the next of kin,) but refers to the law of redemption of inheritances, (Lev. 25: 24, 25.) for a *Goel*, a *redeemer*, is here inquired for; and if so, it was not by law, but by Naomi's own resolution, that the purchaser was to marry the widow. He refused,

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NOTES.

CHAP. IV. V. 1—8. Considerable difficulties arise, in explaining this transaction consistently with the laws before given; and indeed it does not appear in whose possession the estate of Elimelech was at this time. It is however probable, that it had been sold till the year of jubilee: (*Lev.* 25: 14—17. 25—28.) and as Elimelech had no male issue surviving, and it could not be alienated from his family, the nearest relation would have a right to redeem it, by repaying the proportion of the purchase-money; except as Ruth, Elimelech's daughter-in-law, was entitled to his inheritance, according to the law given in the case of those who left daughters only. (*Num.* 27: 1—11.)—To obviate therefore all doubt and difficulty in this matter, Boaz proposed to this kinsman of Elimelech, that he should both redeem the estate and marry Ruth; in which case the estate would certainly belong to his eldest son by her: but if he was unwilling to do it, he desired him to renounce his claim, and he would marry her, and redeem the land for himself. This transaction respects all the several laws above referred to; and doubtless the whole was settled in the most regular, legal, and customary manner.—The manner in which Boaz brought forward this business, evinced a strict regard to openness, fairness, and equity; and also an affection for Ruth, whom it is evident he was desirous of marrying, provided the kinsman was willing to relinquish his prior claim. SCOTT.

(1.) *Came by.*] 'A remarkable instance of God's providence, that the man whom he waited for should come by just at the time he wanted to see him.' *Assemb. Ann.* See on ch. 2: 4. ED. *Ho, such a one!*] 'Heb. *Peloni Almoni:* words of no proper signification, but used by the Hebrews to note a person whose name they knew not, or had forgotten.' *Assemb. Ann.* [So '*fulano*' is still used in Italy and Spain.]—'Used when the *person* of an individual is known, but *not* his *name* or *residence*.' DR. A. CLARKE.

(2.) *Ten men.*] 'This number of witnesses was necessary for the ratification of marriages, divorces, the purchase and acquittance of slaves, and the conveyance of right and property.' DODD.—'How simple, how rational this mode of proceeding! A question of this kind in our courts of justice, in these enlightened times, would re-

6 And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem *it* for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem *it*.

7 Now this *was the manner* in former time in Israel, concerning redeeming, and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; [k] a man plucked off his shoe, and gave *it* to his neighbor: and this *was* a testimony in Israel.

8 Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy *it* for thee: so he drew off his shoe.

9 And Boaz said unto the elders, and *unto* all the people, [l] Ye *are* witnesses this day, that I have bought all that *was* Elimelech's, and all that *was* Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.

10 Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, [m] have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: [n] ye *are* witnesses this day.

11 And all the people that *were* in the gate, and the elders, said, *We are* witnesses. [p] The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like [q] Rachel and like Leah, which two did [r] build the house of Israel: and [*] do thou worthily in [s] Ephratah, and † be famous in Beth-lehem:

k Deut. 25:7—10.
l Gen. 23:16—18 Jer. 32:10—12.
m Gen. 29: 18, 19, 27. Prov. 18:22. 19: 14. 31: 10, 11. Hos. 3: 2. 12: 12. Eph. 5:25.
n Josh. 7: 9. Ps. 34: 16. 109: 15. Is. 48:19. Zech. 13:2.
o Is. 8:2,3. Mal. 2:14. Heb. 13:4.
p Gen. 24:60. Ps. 127:3—5. 128:3—6.
q Gen. 29: 32—35. 30: 1—24. 35: 16—20. 46:8—27. Num. 26:
r Deut. 25:9. Prov. 14:1.
* Or, *get thee riches*, or, *power*.
s 1:2. Gen. 35:19. Ps. 132:6. Mic. 5: 2. Matt. 2:6.
† Heb. *proclaim* thy *name*.

v. 6. Perhaps he thought it would be a disparagement to him to marry such a poor widow from a strange country; that her eminent virtues were not sufficient in his eye to balance this; or, he had another wife, and if he should take Ruth, it might occasion strife and contention in his family; (so the Chaldee;) or, he thought she might bring him a great many children, and they would all expect shares of his estate, which would scatter it too much, so that his family would make the less figure. So, many refuse the great redemption; they are not willing to espouse religion; they have heard well of it, and have nothing to say against it; they will give it their good word, but at the same time are willing to part with it, and cannot be bound for it, for fear of marring their own inheritance in this world. Heaven they could be glad of, but holiness they can dispense with; it will not agree with the lusts they have already espoused, therefore let who will purchase heaven at that rate, they cannot.

5. The right of redemption is fairly resigned to Boaz. In those ancient times it was not the usage to pass estates by writings, as afterwards, (Jer. 32: 10, &c.) but by some sign or ceremony, as with us by livery and seisin; that is, the delivery of seisin, seisin of a house by giving the key, of land by giving turf and a twig. The ceremony here used, was, he that surrendered, *plucked off his shoe*, (the Chaldee says, the *glove of his right hand*,) and gave it to him to whom he made the surrender, intimating thereby, that whatever right he had to tread or go upon the land, he conveyed and transferred it, on a valuable consideration, to the purchaser; this was a *testimony in Israel; v.* 7. and it was done in this case, *v.* 8. If this kinsman was obliged by the law to marry Ruth, and his refusal had been a contempt of that law, Ruth must have *plucked off his shoe*, and *spit in his face*. Deut. 25: 9. But though his relation should in some measure oblige him to the duty, yet the distance of it might serve to excuse him from the penalty, or Ruth might very well dispense with it, since his refusal was all she desired from him. But Patrick, and the best interpreters, think this had no relation to that law, and that the drawing off of the shoe was not any disgrace, as there, but a confirmation of the surrender, and an evidence that it was not fraudulently or surreptitiously obtained. Note, Fair and open dealing in all matters of contract and commerce, all must make conscience of, that would approve themselves Israelites indeed, without guile. How much more honorably and honestly does Boaz come by this purchase, than if he had secretly undermined his kinsman, and privately struck a bargain with Naomi, unknown to him. Honesty will be found the best policy.

V. 9—12. Boaz now sees his way clear, therefore delays not to perform his promise, but, in the gate of his city, before the elders and people, publishes a marriage-contract between himself and Ruth the Moabitess, and therewith the purchase of all the estate of the family of Elimelech. If he had not been (*ch.* 2: 1.) *a mighty man of wealth*, he could not have compassed his redemption, nor done this service to his kinsman's family. What is a great estate good for, but that it enables a man to do so much the more good in his generation, and especially to those of his own household, if he have but a heart to use it so?

I. This marriage was solemnized, or at least published, before many witnesses, *v.* 9, 10. The value of the land was computed by the number of years to the year of jubilee, (Lev. 25: 15.) when it would have returned of course to Elimelech's family. The more public the sales of estates are, the better they are guarded against frauds. Ruth had no portion; what jointure she had, was incumbered, and he could not have it without giving its worth for it; therefore he might well say, he purchased her, and yet, being a virtuous woman, he reckoned he had a good bargain. *House and riches are the inheritance of fathers*, but *a prudent wife* is more valuable, *is from the Lord*, as a special gift. He designed, in marrying her, to preserve the memory of the dead, and this history being preserved for the sake of the marriage and the issue of it, it proved an effectual mean to perpetuate the name of Mahlon, even beyond the thought or intention of Boaz, to the world's end. God will be well pleased with, and will surely recompense, a tender and generous concern for the honor of the dead, and the comfort of poor widows and strangers, neither of which can return the kindness, Luke 14: 14. Our Lord Jesus is our *Goel*, our *Redeemer;* at a vast expense He redeemed the heavenly inheritance for us, which by sin was forfeited, and we could never have redeemed. He likewise purchased a peculiar people, whom He would espouse to Himself, though strangers and foreigners. He ventured to mar his own inheritance, to do this, for though rich, yet for our sakes He became poor; but He was abundantly recompensed for it by his Father, who hath highly exalted, and given Him a name above every name. Let us own our obligations, make sure our contract, and study all our days how to do Him honor.

Boaz, by a public declaration of this marriage and purchase, not only secured his title against all pretenders, but honored Ruth, showed that he was not ashamed of her, her parentage, and poverty, and left a testimony against clandestine marriages. Such regard was then had, even to the contemned crowd, that not only the elders, but all the people in the gate, passing and repassing, were appealed to, (*v.* 9.) and hearkened to, (*v.* 11.) when they said, *We are witnesses.*

II. It was attended with many prayers, (*v.* 11, 12.) Ruth, it should seem, was now sent for, for they speak of her (*v.* 12.) as present, *this young woman.* And very heartily they pray for the new-married couple. The senior elder, it is likely, made this prayer, and the rest of the elders, with the people, joined in it, therefore it is spoken of, as made by them all; for in public prayers, though but one speaks, we must all pray. Observe, Marriages ought to be blessed, and accompanied with prayer, because every creature and every condition are that to us, and no more, that God makes them to be. It is civil and friendly to wish all happiness to those who enter into that condition; and what good we desire, we should pray for from the Fountain of all good. The minister who gives himself to the word and prayer, as he is the fittest person to exhort, so he is the fittest to bless and pray for, those that enter into this relation. We ought to desire and pray for the prosperity one of another, so far from envying or grieving at it. Now here,

1. They pray for Ruth; that she might be like Rachel and Leah, rather than like Sarah and Rebekah; for Sarah had but one son, and Rebekah but one in covenant; Esau was rejected: but Rachel and Leah did *build up the house of Israel;* all their children were in the church, and their offspring numerous. 'May she be a flourishing, fruitful, faithful *vine by thy house side.*'

2. They pray for Boaz, that he might continue to do worthily in the city, to which he was an ornament, and might there be more and more

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quire many days' previous preparation of the attorney, and several hours' arguing between counsellors, till even an enlightened and conscientious judge would find it extremely difficult to decide whether Naomi might *sell* her *own land*: and whether *Boaz* or *Peloni* might *buy* it! Glorious uncertainty of modern law! Dr. A. CLARKE.

(5.) 'Boaz prudently conceals the name of Ruth, till the kinsman has consented to buy the land, and then tells him whom he must take along with it.' PATRICK.

Verses 9, 10.

As Orpah had preferred her connections in Moab to her prospects in Israel, she was not considered in this transaction; and Naomi transferred all her claim to Ruth. Consequently, when the nearest kinsman, before the elders of his city, by legal process, gave up his claim; Boaz, by marrying Ruth, possessed the whole right of Elimelech. Yet according to the law of God, and the custom in Israel, the eldest son of this marriage must be considered as the heir of Elimelech, and of Mahlon the former husband of Ruth: so that the land would be called by the name of one of them, and not by that of Boaz, that the family might not be considered as extinct. SCOTT.

Verses 11, 12.

Gate.] (*M. R.* on *v.* 1, a.—*Job* 29: 7—11.) The public recognition of Boaz's taking Ruth to wife, by the elders of his city, accompanied by benedictions and prayers, may be considered as the customary method of distinguishing honorable marriage from illicit connections. ID.

'The nuptial blessing appears anciently to have been the only

12 And let thy house be like [t]the house of Pharez, ([u]whom Tamar bare unto Judah,) of [x]the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman.

13 ¶ So Boaz [y]took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, [z]the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son.

14 And [a]the women said unto Naomi, [b]Blessed *be* the LORD, [c]which hath not *left thee this day without a [†]kinsman, [d]that his name may be famous in Israel.

15 And he shall be unto thee a restorer of *thy* life, and [‡]a nourisher of thine old age: [e]for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is [f]better to thee than seven sons, hath born him.

16 And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.

17 And [g]the women her neighbors gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he *is* the father of Jesse, the father of David.

18 ¶ Now these *are* the generations of Pharez: [h]Pharez begat Hezron,

19 And Hezron begat [i]Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab,

20 And Amminadab begat [k]Nahshon, and Nahshon begat [§]Salmon,

21 And [l]Salmon begat Boaz, [m]and Boaz begat Obed,

22 And Obed begat [n]Jesse, and Jesse begat [o]David.

famous. Observe, The way to be famous, is to do worthily. Great reputation must be got by great merits. It is not enough not to do unworthily, to be harmless and inoffensive, but we must be useful and serviceable to our generation.

3. They pray for the family; *let thy house be like the house of Pharez;* i. e. 'Let it be very numerous, let it greatly increase and multiply, as the house of Pharez did.' The Beth-lehemites were of the house of Pharez, and knew well how numerous it was; in the distribution of the tribes, that grandson of Jacob had the honor which none of the rest had but Manasseh and Ephraim, that his posterity was subdivided into two distinct families, Hezron and Hamul, Num. 26: 21.

V. 13—22. Here is, 1. Ruth a wife; Boaz took her, with the usual solemnities, to his house, and *she became his wife, v.* 13. All the city, no doubt, congratulated the preferment of a virtuous woman, purely for her virtues.

He that forsakes all for Christ, shall find more than all with Him; it shall be recompensed a hundred-fold in this present time. Boaz had prayed that this pious proselyte might receive a full reward of her courage and constancy from the God of Israel, *under whose wings she was come to trust;* and now he became an instrument of that kindness, which was an answer to his prayer, and helped to make his own words good. Now she had the command of those servants with whom she had associated, and of those fields in which she had gleaned. Thus *God raiseth up the poor out of the dust to set them with princes.*

2. Ruth a mother; *the Lord gave her conception, for the fruit of the womb is his reward.* He sometimes makes the woman that had been long barren, to be a joyful mother of children, Ps. 113: 9. Isa. 54: 1.

3. Ruth is still a daughter-in-law to Naomi, who, so far from being forgotten, was a principal sharer in these new joys. The good women present at this child's birth, congratulated Naomi upon it, more than either Boaz or Ruth, because she was the match-maker; and it was the family of her husband that was hereby built up. See here, as before, what an air of devotion then attended the common expressions of civility among the Israelites; prayer to God at the marriage, (*v.* 11.) and praise to Him at the birth of the child. What pity such pious language should either be disused among Christians, or degenerate into formality. '*Blessed be the Lord* that has sent thee this grandson,' *v.* 14, 15. (1.) The preserver of the name of her family, and who, they hoped, would be famous, because his father was so. (2.) Who, they hoped, would be dutiful and kind to her; because his mother was so. If he but took after her, he would be a comfort to his aged grandmother, a restorer of her life, and, should there be occasion, would have wherewith to nourish her old age. Observe, They say of Ruth, that she loved Naomi, and therefore was better to her than seven sons. See how God in his providence sometimes makes up the want and loss of relations from whom we expected most comfort, in those from whom we expected least. The bonds of love prove stronger than those of nature, and there is a *friend that sticks closer than a brother.* See what wisdom and grace will do.

The good women would have the child called *Obed, a servant, v.* 17. either in remembrance of the poverty of the mother, or in prospect of his being hereafter serviceable to his grandmother. It is no dishonor to those that are ever so well born, to be servants to God, their friends, and their generation. The motto of the prince of Wales is, *Ich dien—I serve.*

4. Ruth has hereby that greatest honor, to be brought in among the ancestors of David and Christ.

t Gen. 46:12. Num. 26:20—22.
u Gen. 38:29. 1 Chr.2:4. Matt. 1:3.
x 1 Sam. 2:20.
y 3:11.
z 19. Gen.21:1—3. 25:21. 29:31. 30: 2,22,23. 33:5. 1 Sam. 1:27. 2:5. Ps. 113:9. 127:3.
a Luke 1:58. Rom. 12:15. 1 Cor. 12:26.
b Gen.29:35. Ps. 34:1—3. 103:1,2. 1 Thes. 5:18. 2 Thes. 1:3.
c Gen 24:27.
* Heb. *caused to cease unto thee.*
† Or, *redeemer.*
d 21,22. Gen.12:2. Is. 11:1—4. Matt. 1:5—10.
‡ Heb. *to nourish thy gray hairs.* Gen. 45:11.47:12. Ps. 55:22. Is. 46:4.
e 1:16—18.
f 1 Sam. 1:8. Prov. 18:24.
g Luke 1.58—63.
h 1 Chr. 4:1. Matt. 1:3. Luke 3:33. *Phares. Esrom.*
i 1 Chr. 2:9,10. Matt. 1:4. Luke 3:33. *Aram. Aminadab.*
k Num. 1:7. Matt. 1:4. Luke 3:32. *Naasson.*
§ Or, *Salmah.*
l 1 Chr. 2: 11. *Salma.* Matt. 1: 5. Luke 3:32.
m 1 Chr. 2:12. Matt. 1:5. Luke 3:32. *Booz.*
n 1 Sam. 16:1. Is. 11:1.
o 1 Chr. 2:15. Matt. 1:6. Luke 3:31.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Diligence in business, punctuality to engagements, integrity, and fair dealing in the affairs of common life, not only adorn a profession of godliness, but tend to prosperity in the ordinary course of Providence.—Men are generally ready to embrace opportunities of increasing their estates, but few know the value of godliness. Indeed, selfishness not only obliterates all charity and justice, but extinguishes natural affection; and causes men to treat with disdain their nearest relatives, however excellent, if poor and in need of their assistance. But the loss, in the final event of things, will be entirely their own; as the Lord will raise up other friends for such as love and trust in Him, and especially for those who have shown themselves willing to bear hardship for his sake. Nay, such persons, however poor, are a blessing to all connected with them. Especially they are to be valued in the marriage-relation. (*Notes, Prov.* 19: 14. 31: 10.)—As marriage is honorable in the sight of God, it ought to be publicly contracted and recognised, that it may be distinguished from those deeds of darkness which require concealment: and it is likely to be comfortable when the law of God is regarded, and his blessing supplicated. In this important concern, (as in all others,) pious people should pray for each other, that the parties may live together in peace, be good examples, do worthily in the church and in the world, and train up families for future usefulness.—The birth of children also calls for united prayers, that they may be indeed a comfort to their parents, blessings to society, and blessed themselves: for without the blessing of God, none of these things can be expected; and the general disuse of this pious language and behavior, by professing Christians, too plainly evinces that true religion is at a low ebb among us.—We should never promise ourselves much comfort from any earthly object; but if these streams are so refreshing, what may we not expect from the Fountain?

SCOTT.

ceremony performed at the consummation of marriage.' JAHN.—*Bethlehem.*] The same with Ephratah. See ch. 1: 2. ED.

(13—15.) Naomi was congratulated more than Boaz or Ruth; as she had the ruins of her family thus providentially repaired, and her old age solaced after the death of her husband and sons. The piety of the language, and the conduct of all parties on this occasion, should not pass unnoticed.—The term *kinsman*, or *redeemer*, seems here applied to Naomi's grandson, as inheriting the rights of the whole family. (14, 15.) SCOTT.

(16.) *Naomi took the child.*] 'This might do for Naomi, but was bad for the child. The *aged* gain refreshment and energy by sleeping with the *young*, but it is at the expense of the young, and the hazard of premature decrepitude. Young children should never sleep habitually with the aged.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(17.) *Father of Jesse*, &c.] 'These words point out what appears to have been the principal design of this book, namely, to inform them of the origin of David's family, and consequently of that of the Messiah.' Lord CLARENDON, in Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 18—22.

Pharez was born about 1714 B. C. and David about 680 years after, and ten generations seem too few for such a length of time. But the difficulty is very greatly increased, when it is recollected, that Salmon married Rachab, (doubtless the same as Rahab, *Matt.* 1: 5.) about 1450 B. C. leaving 365 years or more, to only 4 generations! Some learned men have attempted to show, that *possibly* Salmon, Boaz, Obed, and Jesse, were remarkably longlived; and that Boaz, Obed, Jesse, and David were born in the extreme old age of their respective fathers: but this at least is not *probable*, and it is certain that Jesse lived till David arrived at full manhood. (1 *Sam.* 17: 12, 13. 22: 3, 4.) It is therefore much more natural to suppose, that some names are omitted in the genealogy; as we know the case to have been in the genealogies given by the evangelists. (*Matt.* 1: 2—17.) [See GRAY in Preface to Ruth.] SCOTT.

(19.) *Ram.*] 'In the Sept. and in Mat. *Aram.*' Dr. A. CLARKE.

AN EXPOSITION,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS AND NOTES,

UPON THE FIRST BOOK OF

SAMUEL.

This book, and the following, bear the name of *Samuel*, not because he wrote them, (except to ch. 25 of the first, in which we have an account of his death,) but because the first begins with a large account of his birth, childhood, life and government; and the rest of the two contains the history of the reigns of *Saul* and *David*, both anointed by him. [He indeed figures as a principal person in this new epoch, formed by the change of government from judges to kings.] And because the history of these two kings takes up the greatest part of these books, the Vulgate Latin calls them the *first* and *second Books of the Kings;* and the two that follow, the *third* and *fourth*, which the titles of our English Bibles notice. The LXX call them the first and second Books *of the Kingdoms:* but there is no occasion to vary from the Hebrew verity. These two books contain the history of the last two judges, *Eli* and *Samuel*, who were not, as the rest men of war, but priests; and so much of them is an entrance on the history of the kings. They contain a considerable part of the sacred history, are sometimes referred to in the New Testament, and often in the title of *David's* Psalms, which, if placed in their order, would fall in, in these books. It is uncertain who was the penman of them; probably *Samuel* wrote the history of his own time, and, after him, some of the prophets that were with *David*, (*Nathan*, as likely as any,) continued it. [It is very reasonable to conclude [from 1 Chr. 29: 29.] that Samuel wrote the *first acts* of David; and after Samuel's death, Nathan and Gad, his *last acts*, and that the whole was formed into one book, which was ascribed to Samuel, as the more eminent person, and as the latter part formed a sort of appendix to the history he began.—Scott.] The first book gives us a full account of *Eli's* fall, and *Samuel's* rise and good government, *ch.* 1—8. Of *Samuel's* resignation of the government, and *Saul's* advancement and mal-administration, *ch.* 9—15. The choice of *David*, his struggles with *Saul*, *Saul's* ruin at last, and the opening of the way for *David* to the throne, *ch.* 16—31. And these things are written for *our learning*. Henry.

It is not agreed, how many years elapsed during the events [communicated in these books of Samuel]; some think 80, and others more, and some even 115 years. It is evident they were extant when 1 Kings was written, (Comp. 2: 35, 36. with 1 Kings 2: 27.) Almost every subsequent part of Scripture refers to the events recorded here as of undoubted certainty: especially very many of the Psalms are poems made on occasion of one or other of them.—Our Lord and his apostles quote them as a part of the Sacred Oracles. (Matt. 12: 3, 4. Acts 7: 45, 46. 13: 21, 22.)—[The sacred writer illustrates the characters, and describes the events of his history in the most engaging manner. The weak indulgence of Eli is well contrasted with the firm piety of Samuel. The rising virtues of David, and the sad depravity of Saul, are strikingly opposed. The sentiments and instructions scattered through the work are excellent.—Gray.] The history of David, the Son of Jesse, forms a sort of introduction to all the prophecies concerning his family; and especially concerning Christ, who sprang from the root of Jesse, was distinguished as the Son of David, and inherited the throne of David. (Ps. 2: 72. 89: 19—37. Is. 9: 6, 7. 11: 1—10. Acts 2: 25—31.) The narrative itself may in some sense be considered as *prophetical*, recording many typical events, which had their accomplishment in Christ. The books likewise contain several direct prophecies concerning the families of Eli and Saul, which were speedily fulfilled: and the song of Hannah concludes with a prophecy of our Lord, in which He is, for the first time, predicted expressly as the Messiah, the Anointed of God, (2: 10.) Scott.

'Mr. *Reeves* conjectures, that, as it appears from 1 Sam. 22: 5, that Gad was then with David in the secret hold; and since it is thought that Gad, being bred under Samuel, was privy to his having anointed David king, and had therefore resolved to accompany him in his troubles—the history of what happened to David, from the death of Samuel to his being made king at Hebron, (i. e. the last 7 chs. of 1 Sam. and first 4 of 2 Sam. with the first part of ch. 5.) were penned by Gad. He seems the most proper person, having been an eye-witness to most of the transactions.

'The prophet Nathan is first mentioned in 2 Sam. 7: 2. (a short time after David was settled at Jerusalem,) and frequently in the subsequent part of David's reign. He was one of those appointed by David to assist at the anointing of Solomon. (1 Kings 1: 32.) As this event took place not long before David's death, it is probable that Nathan might survive him: and, knowing all the transactions of his reign, from his settlement at Jerusalem to his death, it is most likely he wrote the history of the latter part of David's reign; especially as there is no mention of Gad, after the pestilence, for the numbering was about 2 years before the king's death, during which interval Gad might have died. Gad must have been advanced in years, and might leave the continuation of the national memoirs to Nathan. For these reasons it is thought that Nathan wrote all the chs. of 2 Sam. after the first five.

'Another opinion deserves consideration, viz. that these books are more recent than the persons already named, Samuel, Nathan, and Gad; but that they were *composed out of their memoirs:* some of the most learned Jews think by Jeremiah, and that the style nearly resembles his prophecies. That they were by an author more recent than Samuel, &c. *Grotius* thinks evident, because the names of the *months* are comparatively *modern*, and were not known among the ancient Jews. Others have attributed them to David, Hezekiah, or Ezra, on his return from Babylon.

'*Calmet's* opinion is, that they were written by the same hand, though composed out of memoirs left by persons contemporary with the transactions recorded; and that the compiler has generally used the terms he found in these memoirs; adding here and there something by way of illustration. The equality of the *style*, the frequent eulogiums on the character and conduct of Samuel, the connection of the materials, particular quotations and remarks on certain events, he thinks, prove this. It is clear that these books contain remarks and expressions which could proceed only from a contemporary author, and others which are evidences of a much later age. (1.) In 3: 1. we read, The word of the Lord was precious in those days; "there was no open vision," i. e. in the days of Eli; hence the author must have lived when prophecy was more common, which in fact it was after Samuel, under David and the succeeding kings of Judah and Israel. (2.) *Bethel*, in the author's time, was called *Beth-aven*, 13: 5. which name was given after Jeroboam placed the calves there. (3.) At 6: 18. it is said, the ark was set down in the field of Joshua, where it remained to the time of this author; yet in 7: 15. he speaks of Samuel, as already dead: and Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. (4.) Samuel would not have spoken of himself as at 2: 26. but if he were dead, any author might have added this. (5.) In 17: 6. Achish gives Ziklag to David, "wherefore Ziklag pertaineth to the *Kings of Judah* unto this day." This proves, that when this book was written, the kingdoms of Judah and Israel were separated, &c. *See Calmet.* We may rest satisfied with three things. (1.) The books of Sam. were constructed out of original and authentic documents. (2.) That the compiler was not contemporary with the facts he narrates. (3.) Both the author, and the time in which he compiled his history, though comparatively more recent than the facts themselves, are nevertheless uncertain.'—See Dr. A. *Clarke*, and *Crit. Biblica.*

CHAP. I.

Elkanah, a Levite, has two wives, 1, 2. He goes yearly to worship at Shiloh, 3. He favors and comforts Hannah, when insulted by Peninnah on account of her barrenness, 4—8. Hannah in grief prays for a son, and vows to devote him to God as a perpetual Nazarite, 9—11. Eli through mistake at first rebukes, but afterwards blesses her, 12—18. She bears Samuel, stays till he is weaned, and then presents him to God, according to her vow, 19—28.

NOW there was a certain man of [a] Ramathaim-zophim, of [b] mount Ephraim, and his name *was* [c] Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an [d] Ephrathite:

2 And he had [e] two wives; the name of the one *was* Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, [f] but Hannah had no children.

3 And this man went up out of his city [*] yearly [g] to worship, and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in [h] Shiloh: and the [i] two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, *were* there.

4 And when the time was that Elkanah [k] offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions.

5 But unto Hannah he gave a [†] worthy portion: for [l] he loved Hannah: but the LORD had [m] shut up her womb.

6 And her [n] adversa-

a 19. Matt. 27:57. *Arimathea.*
b Judg. 17:1. 19:1.
c 1 Chr. 6:25—27,34.
d 17:12. Ruth 1:2. 1 Kings 11:26.
e Gen. 4:19. 29:23—29. Judg. 8:30. Matt. 19:3.
f Gen. 16:1,2. 25:21. 29:31. Judg. 13:2. Luke 1:7.
* Heb. *from year to year.* Ex. 23:14, 17. 34:23. Deut. 16:16. Luke 2:41.
g Deut. 12:5—7,11—14.
h Josh. 18:1. Judg. 18:31. Ps. 78:60. Jer. 7:12—14.
i 9. 2:12—17,34. 3:13. 4:4,11,17,18.
k Lev. 3:4,5. 7:15. Deut. 12:17,18. 16:11.
† Or, *double.* Gen. 43:34. 45:22.
l Gen. 29:30,31. Deut. 21:15.
m Gen. 20:18. 30:2.
n Lev. 18:18. Job 6:14.

CHAP. I. V. 1—8. The history of Samuel, as that of Samson, and, afterwards, that of John the Baptist, and our blessed Savior, begins even before he was born. It is true of all, what God says of the prophet, Jer. 1: 5. But some great men, as Samue , were brought into the world with more observa on than others, and were more early disting shed from common persons. The story of Samson introduces him as a child of *promise*, Judg. 13. that of Samuel, as a child of *prayer*. Both together intimate what wonders are produced by the Word and prayer.

Samuel's father's name was Elkanah, a Levite of the family of the Kohathites, (the most honorable house of that tribe,) as appears, 1 Chron. 6: 33, 34. His ancestor Zuph was an Ephrathite, i. e. of Bethlehem-Judah, called *Ephrathah*. Ruth 1: 2. There this family was first seated, but one branch of it, in process of time, removed to mt. Ephraim, from which Elkanah descended: Perhaps their being originally Ephrathites is noticed, to show their alliance to David. This Elkanah lived at Ramah, or Ramathaim, *double Ramah*, the higher and lower, the same with Arimathea of which Joseph was, here called *Ramathaim-zophim*. Zophim signifies *watchmen*; probably, they had one of the schools of the prophets there, for prophets are called *watchmen*; the Chaldee paraphrase calls Elkanah *a disciple of the prophets*. But it seems to me prophecy was revived in Samuel; before his time there being, for a great while, no open vision, *ch.* 3: 1. Nor is there any mention of a prophet of the Lord from Moses to Samuel, except Judg. 6: 8. So that we have no reason to think there was any nursery or college of prophets here, till Samuel himself founded one, *ch.* 19: 19, 20.

I. Samuel's family was devout. Ministers should be patterns of family religion. I think this is the first time in Scripture, that God is called *the Lord of hosts*, (*v.* 3.) *Jehovah Sabaoth*, a name by which He was afterward very much called and known. Probably, Samuel first used this title, for the comfort of Israel, when in his time their hosts were few and feeble, and those of their enemies many and mighty. Elkanah was a country Levite, and, for aught that appears, had not any place or office which required his attendance at the tabernacle, but he went up as a common Israelite, with his own sacrifices, to encourage his neighbors, and set them a good example. When he sacrificed, he worshipped, joining prayers and thanksgivings with his sacrifices, and this constantly.

Elkanah kept his integrity, while others were remiss, and some worshipped idols. Hophni and Phinehas, Eli's sons, were the men now chiefly employed in the service of the house of God; and they conducted themselves very ill in their place; yet Elkanah went up to sacrifice. God had then tied his people to one place and one altar, therefore, in pure obedience, he attended at Shiloh; if the priests did not do their duty, he would do his: the validity and efficacy of the sacraments depend not on the purity of him that administers them.

II. Yet Samuel's was a divided family, and its divisions carried with them both guilt and grief. Where there is piety, it is pity but there should be unity. The joint devotions of a family should put an end to divisions in it.

The cause of this division, was Elkanah's marrying two wives, a transgression of the original institution of marriage; Matt. 19: 5, 8. It made mischief in Abraham's family, and Jacob's, and here in Elkanah's; how much better the law of God provides for our comfort and ease in this world, than we should, if left to ourselves! Probably Elkanah married Hannah first, and because he had no children by her so soon as he hoped, he married Peninnah, who bare him children, indeed, but was in other things a vexation to him. Thus are men often beaten with rods of their own making. The two wives could not agree. They had different blessings; Peninnah, like Leah, was fruitful, which should have made her easy and thankful, though but a second wife, and less beloved; Hannah, like Rachel, was childless indeed, but very dear to her husband, who took all occasions to let both her and others know it, (*v.* 5.) which should have made her easy and thankful. But they were of different tempers; Peninnah could not bear being fruitful, but grew haughty and insolent; Hannah could not bear being barren, but grew melancholy and discontented; and Elkanah had a difficult part to act between them, yet he kept up his attendance at God's altar, notwithstanding this unhappy difference, and took his wives and children, that if they could not agree in other things, they might agree to worship God together. If the devotions of a family prevail not to put an end to its divisions, yet let not the divisions put a stop to the devotions.

He did all he could, to encourage Hannah, and to keep up her spirits under her afflictions, *v.* 4, 5. Observe, 1. Elkanah loved his wife never the less for her being barren. *Christ loves his church*, notwithstanding her infirmities, her barrenness; and *so ought men to love their wives*. To abate our just love to any relation, for the sake of any infirmity which they cannot help, and which is not their sin, but their affliction, is to make God's providence quarrel with his precept, and very unkindly to add affliction to the afflicted. 2. He studied to show his love so much the more, because she was afflicted, insulted, and low-spirited. It is wisdom and duty to support the weakest, and to hold up those that are run down. 3. He showed his great love to her, by the share he gave her of his peace-offerings. Thus we should testify our affection to our friends and relations, by abounding in prayer for them. The better we love them, the more room let us give them in our prayers.

Peninnah was extremely peevish and provoking. 1. She upbraided Hannah with her affliction, despised her as barren, and taunted her as one whom Heaven did not favor. 2. She envied her interest in Elkanah's love, and the more kind he was to her, the more was she exasperated against her; which was all over base and barbarous. 3. She did this most when they *went up to the house of the Lord*, perhaps, because then they were more together than at other times, or because then Elkanah showed his affection most to Hannah. But it was very sinful at such a time, to show her malice, when pure hands were to be lifted up at God's altar, *without wrath* and quarrelling. It was, too, very unkind to vex Hannah then, not only because then they were in company, and others would notice it, but then Hannah was to mind her devotions, and desired to be most calm, composed, and free from disturbance. The great adversary to our purity and peace is then most industrious to ruffle us, when we should be most composed.

NOTES.

CHAP. I. V. 1. 'Zophim' signifies *watchmen*, perhaps because some watch-towers and watchmen were stationed there; for 'Ramah' signifies *exaltation*: or it might be so called from Zuph, Elkanah's ancestor. SCOTT.—'No doubt two contiguous hills, on which watch-towers were built, and in which watchmen kept continual guard for the safety of the country; and which afterwards gave name to the place.' [See further, note, Josh. 19: 25.] DR. A. CLARKE.

Verse 3.

The stated worship at Shiloh was observed, but probably in an irregular manner; otherwise Elkanah, a Levite, would have had employment at the sanctuary. The Israelites were confined to one place, one altar, and one priesthood; and therefore Elkanah could not go elsewhere. But, though the wickedness of ministers does not deprive the pious Christian of the blessing, nor furnish a sufficient excuse for neglecting the ordinances of God; yet we, not being under a similar limitation, should certainly prefer attending on the ministry of those, who appear at least to be walking heaven-ward themselves, as well as teaching others the true way thither; and not countenance either heretical teachers, or ungodly men. (*Prov.* 19: 27. 1 *John* 4: 1—3. 2 *John* 7—11.) SCOTT.

In Shiloh.] 'That town or place was considered peculiarly *holy*, in which the tabernacle was fixed.—Shiloh was situated on a pleasant mountain, 23 miles [others say 15,] north of Jerusalem, in the tribe of Ephraim.' JAHN.

Verses 4—7.

After the other appointed sacrifices had been brought, the peace-offerings were presented, on part of which the offerer feasted with his family, having given to each a portion. On these occasions, Elkanah showed his peculiar attention to Hannah by the customary indications; which probably excited the envy and jealousy of Peninnah, as well as her proud contempt of Hannah's barrenness; and thus great uneasiness was occasioned. (*Gen.* 16: 4—6. 37: 3.) SCOTT.

ry also * provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb.

7 And *as* he did so ° year by year, † when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her: therefore she wept, and did not eat.

8 Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, [p] why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? [q] *am* not I better to thee than ten sons?

[*Practical Observations.*]

9 ¶ So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk: (now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of [r] the temple of the LORD:)

10 And she *was* ‡ in bitterness of soul, and [s] prayed unto the LORD, [t] and wept sore.

11 And she [u] vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed [x] look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and [y] remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine

* Heb. *angered her,*
° 2:19.
† Or, *from the time that she, &c.* Heb. *from the going up.*
p 2 Sam. 12:16,17. 2 Kings 8:12. Job 6:14. John 20:13,15. 1 Thess. 5:14.
q Ruth 4:15. Ps. 43:4. Is. 54:1,6.
r 3:3,15. 2 Sam. 7:2.
‡ Heb. *bitter of soul.* Ruth 1:20. 2 Sam. 17:8. Job 7:11. 9:18. 10:1. Is. 38:15. 54:6. Lam. 3:15.
s Ps. 50:15. 91:15. Luke 22:44. Heb. 5:7.
t Gen. 50:10. Judg. 21:2. 2 Sam. 13:36. 2 Kings 20:3. Jer. 13:17. 22:10.
u Gen. 28:20. Num. 21:2. 30:3—8. Judg. 11:30. Ec. 5:4.
x Gen. 29:32. Ex. 4:31. 2 Sam. 16:12. Ps. 25:18.
y 19. Gen. 8:1. 30:22. Ps. 132:1,2.

When the *sons of God* come to *present themselves before the Lord, Satan* will be sure to *come among them.* 4. She continued to do this from year to year, it was her constant practice; neither deference to her husband, nor compassion to Hannah, could break her of it; and *Lastly*, What she designed, was, to make her fret; perhaps in hopes to break her heart, that she might possess her husband's heart solely. Or, because she took a pleasure in her uneasiness: nor could Hannah gratify her more than by fretting. Note, It is an evidence of a bad disposition, to delight in grieving those that are melancholy and of a sorrowful spirit, and in putting those out of humor, that are apt to fret and be uneasy. We ought to bear one another's burdens, not add to them.

Hannah (poor woman) could not bear the provocation, *v.* 7. It made her uneasy to herself and to all her relations. Her trouble took away her appetite, made her unfit for any company, and a jar in the harmony of family-joy. It was of the *feast upon the sacrifice* that she *did not eat*, for they were not to *eat of the holy things in their mourning*, Deut. 26: 14. Lev. 10: 19. Yet it was her infirmity, so far to give way to the sorrow of the world, as to unfit herself for holy joy in God. Those that are of a fretful spirit, and are apt to lay provocations too much to heart, are enemies to themselves, and strip themselves very much of the comforts both of life and godliness. We find God noticed this ill effect of discontents and disagreements in the conjugal relation; the parties aggrieved *covered the altar of the Lord with tears, insomuch that He regarded not the offering*, Mal. 2: 13.

Elkanah said what he could to comfort her. She did not upbraid him as Sarah did Abraham, nor did she render to Peninnah railing for railing, but took the trouble wholly to herself, which made her an object of much compassion. Elkanah showed himself extremely grieved at her grief, *v.* 8. They that by marriage are made one flesh, ought thus far to be of one spirit too, to share in each other's troubles, so that one cannot be easy while the other is uneasy. He gives her a loving reproof for it. *Why weepest thou? And why is thy heart grieved?* As many as God loves He rebukes, and so should we. He puts her on inquiring into the cause of her grief; let her consider whether she had reason to be troubled to such a degree; especially so much as to be taken off by it from eating of the holy things. Note, Our sorrow on any account is then sinful and inordinate, when it diverts us from our duty to God, and imbitters our comfort in Him; when it makes us unthankful for the mercies we enjoy, and distrustful of the goodness of God to us in further mercies; when it casts a damp on our joy in Christ, and hinders us from doing the duty, and taking the comfort, of our particular relations. He intimates that nothing should be wanting on his part to balance her grief. '*Am not I better to thee than ten sons?* Thou knowest thou hast my affection entire, and let that comfort thee.' Note, We ought to notice our comforts, to keep us from grieving excessively for our crosses; for, our crosses we deserve, but our comforts we have forfeited. If we would keep the balance even, we must look at that which is for us, as well as that which is against us, else we are unjust to Providence, and unkind to ourselves. *God hath set the one over-against the other*, and so should we.

V. 9—18. Here we find the good effect of Elkanah's gentle reproof.

Hannah did not harden herself in sorrow, nor grow sullen when reproved for it; but perceiving her husband uneasy, cheered up as well as she could, and came to table. It is as great a piece of self-denial to control our passions, as our appetites

Elkanah's saying, *Am not I better to thee than ten sons?* perhaps occasioned her to think, 'Whether *he* be so or no, *God* is, and therefore to Him will I apply myself.' If ever she will make a more solemn address than ordinary to the throne of grace on this errand, now is the time. They are at Shiloh, at the door of the tabernacle, where God had promised to meet his people, and which was the *house of prayer.* They had lately offered their peace-offerings, to obtain the favor of God and all good, and in token of communion with Him; and, taking the comfort of being accepted, they had feasted on the sacrifice, and now it was proper to put up her prayer in virtue of that sacrifice; for the peace-offerings typified Christ's mediation, as well as the sin-offerings; for by it not only atonement is made for sin, but the audience and acceptance of our prayers, and an answer of peace to them, are obtained for us: to that Sacrifice, in all our supplications, we must have an eye.

This good use we should make of our afflictions, they should make us the more lively in our addresses to God, *v.* 10. Our blessed Savior Himself, *being in an agony, prayed more earnestly.*

She was very particular, and yet very modest, in her petition, *v.* 11. God gives us leave, not only to ask good things in general, but to mention that special good we most need and desire. Yet she says not, as Rachel, *Give me children.* She will be very thankful for *one.*

Her son would be, by birth, a Levite, and so devoted to the service of God; but he should be, by her vow, a Nazarite, and his very childhood sacred. Probably she had acquainted Elkanah with her purpose before, and had his consent and approbation. Note, (1.) Parents have a right to dedicate their children to God, as living sacrifices and spiritual priests; and an obligation is thereby laid on them to serve God faithfully *all the days of their life.* (2.) It is very proper, when in pursuit of any mercy, to bind our souls with a

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—8 Experience universally evinces the kindness, as well as equity, of the original institution of marriage, and the divine law concerning it: for every deviation makes way for domestic contention, envy, malice, impatience, and every evil work, to the interruption of the worship of God, and the ruin of family religion.—If Satan can induce us to yield to discouragement in one respect, he will attempt it in another, and never cease to harass us, when engaged in the duties of religion, till he has driven us from every mean of grace, and solemn act of holy worship: so that resolute resistance and perseverance, with earnest cries to the Lord for his assistance, are our only successful weapons: and we should not in the least degree 'give place to the devil.'—The human heart can neither bear prosperity without insolence, nor adversity without impatience: could we change conditions in every respect with others, we should generally increase our uneasiness; whereas impartial reflection on our own situation in life, compared with our unworthiness, and with the condition of others, would silence our complaints, or convert them into thankful praises.—All inordinate passions are irrational, as well as inimical to our comfort; yet even pious Christians, who are shocked at the thought of yielding to other temptations, often rebelliously and ungratefully indulge excessive grief, against which they ought especially to watch and pray. But if our earthly comforts, when duly estimated, being greater than our sorrows, should console us under our trials; surely the favor of God is better to his people, than all beloved relations or outward satisfactions, and sufficient to compensate for the loss or the want of them all.—Every one should comfort those who are in bitterness of soul: yet a mild and tender rebuke is frequently the greatest kindness, when we see our friends forgetting their mercies, or their duty. SCOTT.

Verses 9—11.

The tabernacle, now become stationary, was sometimes called 'the temple.' (3: 3. *Ps.* 27: 4. 29: 9.)—[Some, as Calmet, Dr. A. Clarke, (see next note,) &c. suspect from the use of the word 'temple' that the books of Samuel were not *compiled* till the first temple was built. *Patrick* remarks, 'It is not unusual to call the tabernacle by the name of a temple: as the temple is called a tabernacle, Jer. 10: 20. Lam. 2: 6.' ED.]—Some learned men compute that Samuel was born before Samson, whom God thus separated to Himself, and for a special purpose, before his birth; but others think he was born about the same time, or a few years after him. The chronology of this part of the history, however, is extremely obscure, and the attempts of learned men to elucidate it are peculiarly unsatisfactory, and often widely discordant from each other. SCOTT.

(9.) *Temple.*] 'I think this is the first place where this is mentioned, which gives room for a strong suspicion, that the books of Samuel were not compiled till the first temple was built, or after the days of Solomon.' [See the Pref. &c.] Dr. A. CLARKE.

handmaid * a man-child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and [z] there shall no razor come upon his head.

12 And it came to pass, as she † continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth.

13 Now Hannah, she [a] spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought [b] she had been drunken.

14 And Eli said unto her, [c] How long wilt thou be drunken? [d] put away thy wine from thee.

15 And Hannah answered and said, [e] No, my lord; I *am* a woman ‡ of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have [f] poured out my soul before the LORD.

16 Count not thine handmaid for [g] a daughter of Belial; for [h] out of the abundance of my § complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.

17 Then Eli answered and said, [i] Go in peace: and [k] the God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou hast asked of him.

18 And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman [m] went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more *sad*.

[*Practical Observations.*]

19 ¶ And [n] they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, that if God give it us, we will devote it to his honor, and cheerfully use it in his service. Not that hereby we can pretend to merit the gift, but thus we are qualified for it, and the comfort of it. In hope of mercy, let us promise duty.

She spoke all this so softly, that none could hear her, *v.* 13. Hereby she testified her belief of God's knowledge of the heart and its desires. Thoughts are words with Him, nor is He one of those gods that must be cried *aloud* to. It was likewise an instance of her humility and holy shame-facedness in her approach to God; she was none of those that *made her voice to be heard on high*, Isa. 58: 4. It was a secret prayer, though made in a public place, not as the Pharisees' *to be seen of men*. True, we have no reason to be ashamed of prayer, but we must avoid all appearances of ostentation. Let what passes between God and our souls, be kept to ourselves.

Eli was now high priest, and judge of Israel: he sat upon a seat in the temple, to receive addresses, and oversee and direct what was done there, *v.* 9. The tabernacle is here called the *temple*, because it was now fixed, and served all the purposes of a temple. Somewhere, probably in a private corner, he espied Hannah at her prayers, and, by her unusual manner, fancied she was drunken, *v.* 14.—the very imputation Peter and the apostles fell under, when the Holy Ghost *gave them utterance*. Perhaps, in this degenerate age, it was no strange thing to see drunken women at the door of the tabernacle; for, otherwise, one would think the vile lust of Hophni and Phinehas could not have found so easy a prey there, *ch.* 2: 22. Eli took Hannah for one of these. It is one bad effect of the abounding of iniquity, and its becoming fashionable, that it often gives occasion to suspect the innocent. When a disease is epidemical, every one is suspected to be tainted with it.

Now, (1.) this was Eli's fault, and a great fault, to pass so severe a censure without better observation or information. His fault was the worse, that he was the priest of the Lord, who should have had *compassion on the ignorant*, Heb. 5: 2. Note, It ill becomes us to be rash and hasty in our censures of others, and forward to believe people guilty, while either the matter of fact, on which the censure is grounded, is doubtful and unproved, or is capable of a good construction. Charity commands us to hope the best concerning all, and forbids censoriousness. Paul had very good information, when he did but *partly believe*, (1 Cor. 11: 18.) hoping it was not so. Especially we ought to be cautious how we censure the devotion of others, lest we call that *hypocrisy*, *enthusiasm*, or *superstition*, which is really the fruit of honest zeal, and accepted of God.

(2.) Hannah had been reproved by Elkanah, because she would not eat and drink; and now to be reproached by Eli, as if she had eaten and drunk too much, was very hard. It is no new thing for those that do well, to be ill thought of Hannah bore it admirably well; she did not retort the charge, and upbraid him with the debauchery of his own sons; did not tell him how ill it became one in his place, thus to abuse a poor sorrowful worshipper at the throne of grace. When at any time unjustly censured, we need set a double watch before the door of our lips, that we do not recriminate, and return censure for censure. Hannah thought it enough to vindicate herself, and so must we, *v.* 15, 16. In justice to herself, she expressly denies the charge; but in justice to him, she accounts for the manner which had given occasion to his suspicion. Note, When unjustly censured, we should endeavor, not only to clear ourselves, but to satisfy our brethren, by giving them a just and true account of that which they misapprehended.

Eli did not (as many are apt to in such a case) take it for an affront to have his mistake rectified, nor did it put him out of humor. But, on the contrary, he now encouraged Hannah's devotions, as much as before he had discountenanced them; not only intimated he was satisfied of her innocency, by those words, *Go in peace*, but being high-priest, as one having authority, he blessed her in the name of the Lord, and though he knew not what the particular blessing was, she had been praying for, yet he puts his *Amen* to it, so good an opinion had he now conceived of her prudence and piety. *The God of Israel grant thee thy petition*, whatever it is, *that thou hast asked of Him*. Note, By our meek and humble carriage toward those that reproach us, because they did not know us, we may perhaps make them our friends, and turn their censures into prayers.

Hannah now went away, with great satisfaction of mind, *v.* 18. Whence came this sudden, happy change? She had by prayer committed her case to God, and left it with Him, and now was no more perplexed about it. She had prayed for herself, and Eli had prayed for her; and she believed God would either give her the mercy she had prayed for, or make up the want of it to her some other way. Note, Prayer is heart's ease to a gracious soul; the seed of Jacob have often found it so, being confident that God will never say to them, *Seek ye Me in vain*. See Phil. 4: 6, 7.

V. 19—28. Elkanah and his family had a journey before them, and a family of children with them, yet they would not stir till they had worship-

* Heb. *seed of men.*
z Num. 6:5. Judg. 13:5.
† Heb. *multiplied to pray.* Luke 11:8—10. 18:1. Eph. 6:18. Col. 4:2. 1 Thes. 5:17. Jam. 5:16.
a Gen. 24:42—45. Neh. 2:4. Ps. 25:1. Rom. 8:26.
b Zech. 9:15. Acts 2:13. 1 Cor. 13:7.
c Josh. 22:12—20. Job 8:2. Ps. 62:3. Prov. 6:9. Matt. 7:1—3.
d Job 11:14. 22:23. Prov. 4:24. Eph. 4:25,31.
e Prov. 15:1. 25:15.
‡ Heb. *hard of spirit.*
f Ps. 42:4. 62:8. 142:2,3. 143:6. Lam. 2:19.
g 2:12. 10:27. 25:25. Deut. 13:13.
h Job 6:2,3. 10:1,2. Matt. 12:34,35.
§ Or, *meditation.*
i 25:35. 29:7. Judg. 18:6. 2 Kings 5:19. Mark 5:34. Luke 7:50. 8:48.
k 1 Chr. 4:10. Ps. 20:4,5.
l Gen. 32:5. 33:8,15. Ruth 2:13.
m Ec. 9:7. John 16:24. Rom. 15:13. Phil. 4:6,7.
n 9:26. Ps. 5:3. 55:17. 119:147. Mark 1:35.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 9—18. Nothing can give solid comfort to those who are in anguish of spirit, but the assurance and experience of the love of God in their hearts; nor will that cordial in general be communicated, till they have 'poured out their souls' repeatedly in earnest secret prayer. Yet, through Satan's temptations, and the evil of our hearts, we are often reluctant to begin, slight in presenting, and hasty in concluding our petitions! Hence it is that we go mourning all the day long, instead of 'casting our burden on the LORD:' and our miseries will increase upon us, till we take this course. (*Phil.* 4.5—7. 1 *Pet.* 5:5—7.)—The more we experience the sweet consolations which are communicated while the soul is poured out before the Lord, the more we shall determine 'to call upon Him as long as we live.' (*Ps.* 116: 2.)—Among the various trials, to which we are exposed, none is in general more bitter, than the suspicions and censures of those whom we love and esteem. But while God hears our prayers, we may bear even this with patience, and answer it with meekness: for if our loving Father sees that correction needful, and favors us with the assurance of his acceptance, and the light of his countenance, we may thankfully submit to his will.—Even before those blessings which we have asked in prayer are vouchsafed, or expected with certainty, He sometimes communicates such supports to the soul, as exceed every temporal advantage, can be destroyed by no outward trouble, and give a relish for those mercies which before we undervalued or overlooked.—We are also most likely to obtain all our warranted desires, when we are rendered most willing to submit them to the will of God.

SCOTT.

Verse 15.

Hannah emphatically described the nature of fervent prayer: 'I have poured out my soul before the LORD.' (*M. R.* f.) Prayer does not consist merely in using good words, but in opening before the Lord the inmost soul, and, in unreserved confidence, pouring out before Him all our fears, sorrows, desires, and purposes; as a child would before a loving father, from whom alone he had expectations of relief, and who, he was satisfied, was able and disposed to help him. SCOTT.

Verses 17, 18.

The character of Eli was very defective; yet there are several traces in it of true piety, and this answer is one. (*M. R.*) ID.

Verses 19—22.

Probably Elkanah established Hannah's vow, in a solemn act of worship, before he left Shiloh. (*Note, Num.* 30: 3—8.) ID.

fore the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; [o] and the LORD remembered her.

20 Wherefore it came to pass, [*] when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name † Samuel, *saying*, [p] Because I have asked him of the LORD.

21 And [q] the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow.

22 But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, *I will not go up* until the child be weaned, [r] and *then* I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, [s] and there abide [t] for ever.

23 And Elkanah her husband said unto her, [u] Do what seemeth thee good: tarry until thou have weaned him; only [x] the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her [y] son suck until she weaned him.

24 And when she had weaned him, [z] she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the [a] house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child *was* young.

25 And they slew a

o 11. Gen. 8:1. 21:1. Ps. 25:7. 136: 23. Luke 23:42.
* Heb. *in revolution of days.*
† That is, *Asked of God.*
p Gen. 4:25. 5:29. 16:11. 29:32—35. 30:6—24. 41:51,52. Ex. 2:10,22. Matt. 1:21.
q 3. Gen. 18:19. Josh. 24:15. Ps. 101:2.
r Deut. 16:16. Luke 2:22,41,42.
s 11,28. 2:11,18. 3:1. Ps. 23:6. 27:4.
t Ex. 21:6. Lev. 25:23. Josh. 4:7. 1 s. 110:4. Is. 9:7.
u Num. 30:7—11.
x 2 Sam. 7:25. Is. 44:26.
y Gen. 21:7,8. Ps. 22:9. Matt. 24:19. Luke 11:27.
z Num. 15:9,10. Deut. 12:5,6,11. 16: 16.
a 4:3,4. Josh. 18:1.

ped God together. Prayer and provender hinder no journey. They had now spent several days in religious worship, yet attended once more. We should not be weary of well-doing.

At length the Lord remembered Hannah. Though God seems long to forget his people's burdens, troubles, cares, and prayers, yet He will at length make it to appear they are not out of his mind. Some make *Samuel* to be much the same with *Ishmael, heard of God*, because the mother's prayers were remarkably heard, and he was an answer to them. Others, because of the reason she gives for the name, make it to signify *asked of God;* it comes nearly to the same; she designed by it to perpetuate the remembrance of God's favor in answering her prayers. Note, Mercies in answer to prayer, are to be remembered with peculiar expressions of thankfulness, as Ps. 116: 1, 2. Hannah intended by this name to put her son in mind of his obligation to be the Lord's, in consideration that he was asked of God, and at the same time dedicated to Him. A child of prayer is, in a special manner, bound to be a good child. Lemuel's mother reminds him, that he was the *son of her vows.*

Hannah closely attended to nursing him, not only because he was dear to her, but because he was devoted to God. We ought to take care of our children, not only with an eye to the law of nature, as they are ours, but with an eye to the covenant of grace, as they are given up to God. See Ezek. 16: 20, 21. This sanctifies the nursing of them, when it is done as unto the Lord.

Elkanah went up every year to worship at the tabernacle, and particularly to perform his vow; perhaps one distinct from Hannah's, if God would give him a son by her, *v.* 21. But Hannah, though she had been accustomed to go, now excused herself. 1. Because she would not be so long absent from her nursery: if she had gone any whither, she would have gone to Shiloh. Note, God will have mercy, and not sacrifice. Persons detained from public ordinances, by the nursing and tending of little children, may believe, that if they do that with an eye to God, He will graciously accept them therein. 2. Because she would not go up to Shiloh till her son was big enough, not only to be taken thither, but to be left there; for if once she took him thither, she thought she could never find it in her heart to bring him back again. Note, Those who are steadfastly resolved to pay their vows, may yet see good cause to *defer* the payment of them. *Every thing is beautiful in its season.* Lev. 22: 27. Elkanah agrees to what she proposes, *v.* 23. *How good and pleasant it is*, when yoke-fellows thus draw even in the yoke, each thinking well of what the other does, especially in works of piety and charity. He adds a prayer, *Only the Lord establish his word;* i. e. 'God preserve the child through the perils of his infancy, that the solemn vow which God signified his acceptance of, by giving us the child, may be performed in its season, and so the whole matter be accomplished.' Note, Those that have in sincerity devoted their children to God, may with comfort pray for them, that God will establish the word sealed to them, at the same time they were sealed for Him.

Here is the solemn entering of this child into the service of the sanctuary. We may take it for granted he was presented to the Lord at 40 days old, as all the first-born were; (Luke 2: 22, 23.) but that is not mentioned, because in nothing singular; but now that he was weaned, he was presented, not to be redeemed. Some think it was as soon as he was weaned from the breast, which, the Jews say, was not till he was three years old, *v.* 23. Others think it was not till he was weaned from childish things, at eight or ten years old. But I see no inconvenience in admitting such an extraordinary child as this, into the tabernacle, at three years old, to be educated among the children of the priests. It is said, *v.* 24. *The child was young;* but, being intelligent above his years, he was no trouble. None can begin too soon to be religious. *The child was a child*, so the Hebrew reads it, in his learning-age. Isa. 28: 9.

Observe how she presented her child.

1. With a sacrifice; no less than three bullocks, with a meat-offering for each, *v.* 24. A bullock, perhaps, for each year of the child's life. Or, one for a burnt-offering, another for a sin-offering, and the third for a peace-offering: So far was she from thinking that, by presenting her son to God, she made God her debtor. All our covenants with God for ourselves, and ours, must be made by sacrifice, the great Sacrifice.

2. With a grateful acknowledgment of God's goodness in answer to prayer. This she makes to Eli, because he had encouraged her to hope for an answer of peace; *v.* 26, 27. 'You have forgotten me, my lord; but I, who now appear so cheerful, am the woman, that, three years ago, stood here, weeping and praying, and this was the child I prayed for.' Answers of prayer may thus be humbly triumphed in, to the glory of God. Here is a living testimony for God, 'I am his witness that He is gracious.' See Ps. 66: 16—19. 34: 2, 4, 6. Hannah does not remind Eli of it by adverting to the suspicion he had formerly expressed. Good men ought not to be upbraided with their infirmities and oversights; they have themselves repented of them, let them hear no more of them.

3. With a full surrender of all her interest in this child unto the Lord, *v.* 28. And she repeats it, because she will never revoke it, *he shall be* (a deodand) *lent* or given *to the Lord.* Not that she designed to call him back, as we do what we lend, but she uses this word, *Shaol, he lent*, because it is the same word she had used before, *v.* 20. *I asked*, only in another conjugation. And, *v.* 27. the Lord gave me the petition *I asked*, (*Shaalti*, in Kal, therefore *I have lent him; Hishilti*, the same word in Hiphil:) and so it gives another etymology of his name, *Samuel*, not only *asked of God*, but *lent to God.* And observe, (1.) Whatever we give to God, may, on this account, be said to be *lent* from Him. All our gifts to Him were first gifts to us. *Of thine own, Lord, have we given Thee*, 1 Chron. 29: 14, 16. (2.) Whatever we give to God, may, on this account, be said to be *lent* to Him; that though we may not recall it as a thing lent, yet He will certainly repay it with interest, to our unspeakable advantage, particularly what is given *to his poor*, Prov. 19: 17. When by baptism we dedicate our children to God, let us remember that they were his before by a sovereign right, and that they are ours still so much the more to our comfort. Hannah resigns him to the Lord, not for a certain term of years, as children are sent apprentices, but *as long as he liveth;* a Nazarite for life. Such must our covenant with God be, a marriage-covenant; as long as we live, we must be his and never forsake Him.

Lastly, The child Samuel did his part beyond what could have been expected from his years;

V. 19. *Returned.*] To reconcile this with the expression, 'went her way,' *v.* 18. *Boothr.* following the Sept. reads that *v.* thus, 'So the woman went her way to her own lodgings,' &c. 'For Hannah did not now [*v.* 18.] go on her way home, but abode all night at Shiloh; and on the following day, after having performed their devotions, they all returned together.' ED.

Verse 23.

Establish his word.] As no promise of God respecting Samuel is recorded, it is thought the clause may be rendered, 'Only the LORD complete his work,' namely, in accepting the child given in answer to prayer, as his devoted servant all his days. (9: 11.) SCOTT.

Until thou have weaned him.] 'Some think 3 years; but it is not improbable 6 or 7, as Lyra conjectures. And so long I remember one to have sucked, in the place where I was born.' PATRICK.

Verses 24, 25.

After the burnt-offering had been sacrificed, they seem to have presented Samuel to Eli, before the other offerings were slain.—The original words rendered, 'The child was young,' seem to imply that he was exceedingly dear to his parents; who exercised great self-denial, in leaving him at the sanctuary at so early an age. (2: 18, 19. *Gen.* 21: 8—12.) SCOTT.

(24.) *Three bullocks.*] 'The Sept. Syr. and Arab. read *a bullock of three years old:* and this is probably correct, because we read, *v.* 25. that they slew THE *bullock.*' [A *steer* (*hphr*, and not *steers*, *hphrim*) and So *Houbigant*, *Dathe* and *Boothroyd.*] Dr. A. CLARKE.

bullock, and [b] brought the child to Eli.

26 And she said, O my lord! [c] *as* thy soul liveth, my lord, I *am* the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD.

27 [d] For this child I prayed; and [e] the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him:

28 Therefore also I have * lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth † he shall be lent to the LORD. And [f] he worshipped the LORD there.

CHAP. II.

Hannah's thankful song of praise, 1—10. The sin of Eli's sons, 11—17. Samuel ministers before God, 18, 19. Eli blesses Elkanah; and Hannah, who bears more children, 20, 21. Eli reproves his sons, but far too gently, 22—25. A prophet foretells the ruin o Eli's house, 27—36.

AND Hannah [a] prayed, and said, [b] My heart rejoiceth in the LORD; [c] mine horn is exalted in the Lord; [d] my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies: because [e] I rejoice in thy salvation.

2 *There is* [f] none holy as the LORD; for

b Luke 2:22. 18:15,16.
c 17:55. 20:3. Gen. 42:15. 2 Sam. 11:11. 14:19. 2 Kings 2:2,4,6. 4:30.
d 1—13. Matt. 7:7.
e Ps. 66:19. 116:1—5. 118:5. 1 John 5:15.
* Or, *returned him, whom I have obtained by petition, to the LORD.*
† Or, *he whom I have obtained by petition shall be returned.*
f Gen. 24:26,48. 2 Tim. 3:15.
a Neh. 11:17. Hab. 3:1. Phil. 4:6.
b Luke 1:46,47. Rom. 5:11. Phil. 3:3. 4:4. 1 Pet. 1:8.
c Is. 18:2. 89:17. 92:10. 112:9. Luke 1:69.
d Ex. 15:1,21. Judg. 5:1,2. Ps. 51:15. 71:8. Rev. 18:20.
e Is. 9:14. 13:5. 20:5. 35:9. 118:14. Is. 12:2,3. Hab. 3:18.
f Ex. 15:11. Deut. 32:4. Ps. 99:5,9. 111:9. Is. 6:3. 57:15. 1 Pet. 1:16. Rev. 4:8. 15:4.

for of him that seems to be spoken, *He worshipped the Lord there;* i. e. *he said his prayers.* He was, no doubt, extraordinarily forward, (we have known children that have discovered some sense of religion very young,) and his mother, designing him for the sanctuary, took particular care to train him up to that which was to be his work in the sanctuary. Note, Little children should learn betimes to worship God. Their parents should instruct them in it, and bring them to it; put them upon doing it as well as they can, and God will graciously accept them, and teach them to do better.

CHAP. II. V. 1—10. We have here Hannah's thanksgiving, dictated, not only by the spirit of prayer, but by the spirit of prophecy. Observe in general, 1. When she had received mercy from God, she owned it, with thankfulness. Not like the nine lepers, Luke 17: 17. 2. The mercy was an answer to prayer, therefore she thought herself especially obliged to give thanks for it. What we win by prayer, we may wear with comfort, and must wear with praise. 3. Her thanksgiving is here called a *prayer;* for thanksgiving is an essential part of prayer. In every address to God, we must express a grateful regard to Him as our Benefactor. Nay, and thanksgiving for mercies received, shall be accepted as a petition for further mercy. 4. From this particular mercy which she had received, she takes occasion, with an elevated and enlarged heart, to speak glorious things of God, and of his government of the world, for the good of his church. 5. Her *prayer* was mental, but her *thanksgiving* vocal. She spake, that all might hear. She made her supplication *with groanings that could not be uttered,* but now her lips were opened, to *show forth God's praise.* 6. This thanksgiving is here left on record for the encouragement of those of the weaker sex to attend the throne of grace; God will regard their prayers and praises. Mary's song has great affinity with this of Hannah, Luke 1: 46.

Three things we have in this thanksgiving.

I. Hannah's triumph in God, in his glorious perfections, and the great things He had done for her, *v.* 1—3. Every stream should lead us to the Fountain. *There is none beside Thee.* Note, God is to be praised as a peerless Being, and of unparalleled perfection; this glory is due unto his name. Ps. 18: 31. 1. Hannah here celebrates four of God's glorious attributes. (1.) *His unspotted purity.* When Israel triumphed over the Egyptians, God was praised, *as glorious in holiness.* So here, *There is none holy as the Lord.* It is the rectitude of his nature, his infinite agreement with Himself, and the equity of his government and judgment, in all the administrations of both. At the remembrance of this, we ought to give thanks. (2.) *His almighty power.* Hannah had experienced a mighty support by staying herself on Him, and therefore speaks as she had found, and seems to refer to that of Moses, Deut. 32: 31. (3.) *His unsearchable wisdom.* He clearly and perfectly sees into the character of every person, and the merits of every cause, and He gives knowledge and understanding to those that seek it of Him. (4.) *His unerring justice. By Him actions are weighed.* His own, in his eternal counsels; the actions of the children of men, in the balance of his judgments; so He will *render to every man according to his work,* and is not mistaken in what any man is, or does.

2. How she solaces herself in these things. We may take the comfort of that, of which we give God the glory. *She rejoiceth in the Lord;* not so much in her son, as in her God; in his *salvation,* the salvation of Israel. '*My horn is exalted;* not only my reputation saved by my having a son, but greatly raised by having such a son.' The horn was an instrument of music, in praising God; (1 Chron. 25: 5.) so, *My horn is exalted,* means, 'My praises are very much elevated to an unusual strain.' [But see notes.] *My mouth is enlarged;* this is, 'Now I have wherewith to answer them that reproached me;' he that has his house full of children, shall not be ashamed to *speak with the enemy in the gate,* Ps. 127: 5.

3. How she herewith silences those that set up themselves as rivals with God, and rebels against Him, *v.* 3. Let not Peninnah and her children upbraid her any more. See Mic. 7: 10. *Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her that said, Where is thy God?* Or, perhaps, it was below her to take so much notice of Peninnah, but she intended to check the insolence of the Philistines, and other enemies of God and Israel, Ps. 73: 9.

II. The notice she takes of the wisdom and sovereignty of the divine providence, in its disposal of the affairs of the children of men; such are the vicissitudes of them, and such the strange and sudden turns and revolutions of them, that it is often found a very short step between the height of prosperity and the depth of adversity; Eccl 7: 14. that we may *rejoice as though we rejoiced not,* and *weep as though we wept not.*

1. The strong are soon weakened, and the weak soon strengthened, when God pleases, *v.* 4. On the one hand, if He speak, *the bows of the mighty men are broken.* Or, on the other hand, if He speak, they who stumble through weakness, who were so feeble they could not go straight or steady, are *girded with strength,* in body and mind, and are able to bring great things to pass.

2. The rich are soon impoverished, and the poor strangely enriched of a sudden, *v.* 5. This is not to be ascribed to fortune, nor merely to men's wisdom or folly, Eccl. 9: 11. nor is it always men's own fault that they become poor. Are

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 19—28. No temporal satisfaction can be durably comfortable, which we cannot name, 'Asked of the LORD;' and which we do not receive from Him with gratitude as an answer to our prayers, and uprightly desire to use to his glory and in his service. If He give us children, we shall have the most comfort in them, when they are most entirely his: and therefore we should devote them to Him from the first; bring them up for Him; and pray continually that we may see early proofs of his having received them into his family, and made them his to serve Him all their days.—There are times, when domestic employments may render it a duty to be occasionally absent from public ordinances: but those seasons should abound the more in the exercises of secret devotion; and when special blessings have been conferred, and restraints are removed, the true believer will go with more longing desires to the courts of the Lord, to pay his vows, and render his grateful praises. With what transport then will he at last leave this distant land below, to ascend to the courts above, to receive the full answer of all his prayers, and to offer everlasting praises, with an uninterrupted flow of holy affections and ineffable delight! SCOTT.

Verses 26, 27.

The words rendered, 'as thy soul liveth,' are supposed by some to have been intended merely as an expression of good will; *May thy soul live.* (*M. R.* c.) SCOTT. JAHN considers it an oath. ED.

NOTES.

CHAP. II. V. 1. The word *prayer* is sometimes used for any act of devotion. (*M. R.* a.) (*Notes, Hab.* 3: 17—19. *Luke* 1: 46—55. *Phil.* 4: 4.) SCOTT.

Mine horn is exalted.] 'There may be an allusion in these passages [where "the horn" is spoken of as in this ch.] to a very common part of female dress in some parts of the east. *Buckingham,* describing a female's ornaments at Tyre, says, "She wore also on her head a hollow silver horn, rearing itself upwards obliquely from her forehead, being 4 or 5 inches in diameter at the root, and pointed at its extreme." ' ROBINSON. The same accomplished traveller and distinguished philanthropist, quoted by Robinson above, remarked in conversation, that the Druses of Mt. Libanus have "horns" of gold, silver, &c. according to the rank of the wearer, and mentioned a ceremony in which these were "exalted." The cut is from *Bruce,* who noticed them, ('denoting strength and power, as the chief defence and strength of many beasts is in their horns,') bound on the foreheads of Abyssinian chiefs. The Sipahis (Sepoys) of India retain a similar ornament upon their military caps. Comp. too the cut, Ex 17: 10. ED.

there is [f] none beside thee; neither *is there* any [h] rock like our God.

3 Talk no more so exceeding proudly; [i] let *not* [k] arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD *is* [l] a God of knowledge, and [l] by him actions are weighed.

4 The [m] bows of the mighty men *are* broken, and they that [n] stumbled are girded with strength.

5 *They that were* [o] full, have hired out themselves for bread; and *they that were* hungry ceased: so that [p] the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is [q] waxed feeble.

6 The LORD [r] killeth, and maketh alive: [s] he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.

7 The LORD [t] maketh poor, and maketh rich: he [u] bringeth low, and lifteth up.

8 He raiseth up [x] the poor out of the dust, *and* lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to [y] set *them* among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for [z] the pillars of the earth *are* the LORD's, and he hath set the world upon them.

9 He [a] will keep the feet of [b] his saints, and the wicked shall [c] be silent in darkness; for [d] by strength shall no man prevail.

10 The [e] adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out

we poor? *God made us poor*, which is a good reason why we should be content, and reconcile ourselves to our condition. Are we rich? *God made us rich*, which is a good reason why we should be thankful, and serve Him cheerfully in the abundance of good things He gives us. It may be understood of the same person; those that were rich God makes poor, and after a while makes rich again, as Job. Let not the rich be proud and secure, for God can soon make them poor; let not the poor despond and despair, for God can in due time enrich them again.

3. Empty families are replenished, and numerous families made few. Job. 12: 23. Ps. 107: 38, &c. This instance comes close to the occasion of the thanksgiving. *The barren hath borne seven*, meaning herself, for though at present she had but one son, yet that one being a Nazarite, devoted to God, and employed in his immediate service, he was to her as good as seven. Or, it is the language of her faith; and she was not disappointed, she had five more; (*v.* 21.) so that if we reckon Samuel but for two, as we may well, she has the number she promised herself.

4. God is the sovereign Lord of life and death; *v.* 6. Understand it, (1.) Of God's sovereign dominion and universal agency, in lives and deaths. He presides in births and burials, for in his hand are the *keys of death and the grave*, and *to Him belong the issues from death.* (2.) Of the distinction He makes between some and others; He *killeth* some, and *maketh*, i. e. keepeth others *alive* that were in the same danger, in war, suppose, or pestilence. Two in a bed together, it may be; one taken by death, and the other yet alive; *even so, Father, because it seemed good in thine eyes.* Living and dying do not go by likelihoods. (3.) Of the changes He makes with one and the same person. *He killeth and bringeth down to the grave;* i. e. He brings even to death's doors, and then revives and raises up, when even life was despaired of, and a sentence of death received, 2 Cor. 1: 8, 9. *He turns to destruction*, and then says, *Return*, Ps. 90: 3.

5. Advancement and abasement are both from Him. He brings some *low*, and *lifts* up others; (*v.* 7.) Or, it may be understood of the same persons; those whom He had brought low, when they are sufficiently humbled, He lifteth up. This is enlarged upon, *v.* 8. See Ps. 113: 7, 8. Promotion comes not by chance, but from the counsel of God, which often prefers those that were very unlikely, and that men thought very unworthy. Joseph and Daniel, Moses and David, were thus strangely advanced, from a prison to a palace, from a sheep-hook to a sceptre. Let not those whom Providence has thus preferred, be upbraided with the meanness they are raised out of, for the meaner their beginnings were, the more are they favored, and God glorified, in their advancement, if it be by lawful and honorable means.

Lastly, A reason is given for all these dispensations, which obliges us to acquiesce in them, how surprising soever they are, *for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's.* If we understand it literally, it bespeaks God's almighty power, which cannot be controlled: if figuratively, it bespeaks his incontestable sovereignty, which cannot be disputed. The princes and great ones of the earth, the directors of states and governments, are the *pillars of the earth*, Ps. 75: 3. On these hinges the affairs of the world seem to turn, but they are the *Lord's*, Ps. 47: 9. From Him they have their power, therefore He may advance whom He pleases; and who may say, *What dost Thou?*

III. A prediction of the preservation and advancement of all God's faithful friends, and the destruction of all his and their enemies. Having testified her joyful triumph in what God had done, and is doing, she concludes with joyful hopes of what He would do, *v.* 9, 10. Pious affections (says Patrick) in those days rose up many times to the height of prophecy, whereby God continued in that nation his true religion, in the midst of their idolatrous inclinations. This prophecy may refer, 1. More immediately to the government of Israel by Samuel, and David whom he was employed to anoint. The birth of Samuel was introductory to an extraordinary change. But, 2. We have reason to think the prophecy looks further, to the kingdom of Christ, and the administration of that kingdom of grace. Here we first meet with the name *Messiah*, or *his Anointed.* The ancient expositors, both Jewish and Christian, make it look beyond David, to the Son of David; glorious things are here spoken of the kingdom of the Mediator, both before and since his incarnation; for the method of the administration of it, both by the eternal Word, and by that Word made flesh, is much the same.

Concerning that kingdom we are here assured, (1.) That all the loyal subjects of it shall be carefully and powerfully protected, *v.* 9. There are a people in the world that are God's saints, his select and sanctified ones; and He will keep *their feet*, i. e. all that belongs to them shall be under his protection. If He will keep their feet, much more their head and hearts; or, He will keep their feet, i. e. secure the ground they stand on, and establish their goings, guard their affections and actions, that their feet may neither wander out of the way, nor stumble in the way. When their feet are ready to slip *his mercy holdeth them up*, and *keepeth them from falling*, Jude 24. While we keep God's ways, He will keep our feet. See Ps. 37: 23, 24.

(2.) That all the powers engaged against it shall not be able to effect its ruin.

(3.) That all its enemies will certainly be broken and brought down, *v.* 9. they shall be struck both blind and dumb. Damned sinners are sentenced to utter darkness, and in it they will be for ever speechless, Matt. 22: 12, 13. The wicked are called, *The adversaries of the Lord*, and it is foretold, *v.* 10. that they *shall be broken to pieces.*

[f] Deut. 4:35. 2 Sam. 22:32. Ps. 73:25. Is. 43:10,11. 44:6,8.
[h] Deut. 3:24. 32:30,31,39. Ps. 18:2. 71:3,19. 89:8. 89:6. Is. 40:18. Jer. 10:6.
[i] Ps. 94:4. Prov. 8:13. Is. 37:23. Dan. 4:30,31,37. Mal. 3:13. Jude 15,16.
[k] Heb. *hard.*
[l] 1 Kings 8:39. Ps. 44:21. 94:7—10. 147:5. Jer. 17:10. Heb. 4:12,13. Rev. 2:23.
[l] Job 31:6. Is. 20:7. Dan. 5:27.
[m] Ps. 37:15,17. 46:9. 76:3.
[n] Is. 10:4. Jer. 37:10. 2 Cor. 4:9,10. 12:9,10. Eph. 6:14. Phil. 4:13. Heb. 11:34.
[o] Ps. 34:10. Luke 1:53. 16:25.
[p] 1:20. Ps. 113:9.
[q] 1:6. Is. 54:1. Jer. 15:9. Gal. 4:27.
[r] Deut. 32:39. 2 Kings 5:7. Job 5:18. Ps. 68:20. Hos. 6:1,2. John 5:25—29. 11:25. Rev. 1:18.
[s] 20:3. Ps. 116:3. Is. 26:19. Jon. 2: 2—6. Matt. 12:40. 2 Cor. 1:9,10.
[t] Deut. 8:17,18. Job 1:21. 5:11. Ps. 102:10.
[u] Is. 75:7. Is. 2:12. Jam. 1:9,10. 4: 10.
[x] Job 2:8. 42:10—12. Ps. 113:7,8. Dan. 4:17. Luke 1:51,52.
[y] 15:17. Gen. 41:14,40. 2 Sam. 7:8. Job 36:6,7. Ec. 4:14. Dan. 2:48. 6: 3. Jam. 2:5. Rev. 1:6. 3:21. 5:10. 22:5.
[z] Job 38:4—6. Ps. 24:2. 102:25. 104: 5. Heb. 1:3.
[a] Job 5:24. Ps. 37:23,24. 91:11,12. 94:18. 121:3,5,8. Prov. 16:9. 1 Pet. 1:5.
[b] Deut. 33:3. Ps. 37:28. 97:10. Prov. 2:8. Jude 1,3.
[c] Job 5:16. Ec. 5:17. Jer. 8:14. Zeph. 1:15. Matt. 3:12. 22:12,13. Rom. 3:19. 2 Pet. 2:17. Jude 13.
[d] 17:49,50. Ps. 33:16,17. Ec. 9:11. Jer. 9:23. Zech. 4:6.
[e] Ex. 15:6. Judg. 5:31. Ps. 2:9. 21: 8,9. 68:1,2. 92:9. Luke 19:27.

Verse 3.

Hannah seems here to address the enemies of true religion; who, confiding in numbers, courage, or ability, glory in themselves and insultingly despise believers.—The last clause may be rendered, 'By Him works are regulated:' He orders every thing in perfect wisdom and power, and none can defeat his purposes. Or, still more exactly according to the text, *Are not works by* Him *regulated?* (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verses 4—8.

The events which these verses speak of, are often called the caprices of blind fortune: but they in fact are the settled purposes of God, thus manifesting his own perfections by saving those who trust in Him; and pouring contempt on all the distinctions, in which ungodly men confide and glory.—These things are equally applicable to the dispensations of his kingdom of grace; in which He respects, not men's wisdom, learning, greatness, or imagined excellency, but selects the base, the poor, the foolish of the world, having taught them to feel their guilt and misery, and to value his free and precious salvation: and all this 'according to the eternal purpose, which He hath purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.' (*Matt.* 19: 29, 30. 1 *Cor.* 1: 26—31. *Eph.* 1: 3—12.) SCOTT.

Verse 10.

When Hannah spake this song, there was no king over Israel, so that her words here must be prophetical, both of David the type, and Christ the Anti-type.—'Who doth not see that the spirit of this woman (whose name was *Anna*, which signifies *grace*,) prophesied of the Christian religion, the city of God, whose King and Founder is Christ; and of the grace of God, from which the proud are estranged, that they may fall; but the humble are filled with it that they may rise?' *Augustin.*—'One cannot but think Hannah had a respect to something higher than the quarrel between her and Peninnah, &c.' *Ep. Patrick.*—This indeed is *expressly* saying very little: but it shows what the mind of the writer had in contemplation.—As to Peninnah, on any interpretation, she can be considered no further, than merely as having given *an occasion* for this most sublime and sacred

of heaven shall [f] he thunder upon them: the LORD shall [g] judge the ends of the earth; and [h] he shall give strength unto his King, and [i] exalt the horn of his [k] Anointed.

[*Practical Observations.*]

11 ¶ And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house; and the child did [l] minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest.

12 Now [m] the sons of Eli *were* [n] sons of Belial; they [o] knew not the LORD.

13 And the priests' custom with the people *was, that* when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a flesh-hook of three teeth in his hand;

14 And he struck *it* into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; [p] all that the flesh-hook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither.

15 Also [q] before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not

f 7:10. 12:18. Job 40:9. Isa. 13:13,14.
g Ps. 50:1—6. 96:13. 98:9. Ec. 11:9. 12:14. Matt. 25:31,32. John 5:21, 22. Rom. 14:10—12. 2 Cor. 5:10. Rev. 20:11—15.
h 12:13. 15:29. 16:1. 2 Sam. 7:8,13. Ps. 2:8. 21:1,7. Is. 32:1. 45:24. Matt. 25:34. 28:18. Ps. 89:17,24. 92:10. 148:14. Luke 1:69.
k 12:3. Ps. 2:2. 20:6. 28:8. 45:7. Acts 4:27. 10:38.
l 18. 1:28. 3:1,15.
m Hos. 4:6—9. Mal. 2:1—9.
n 10:27. 25:17. Deut. 13:13. Judg. 19:22. 1 Kings 21:10,13. 2 Cor. 6: 15.
o 3:7. Judg. 2:10. Jer. 2:8. 22:16. John 8:55. 16:3. 17:3. Rom. 1:28 —30.
p 29. Ex. 29:27,28. Lev. 7:34. Is. 56:11. Mal. 1:10. 2 Pet. 2:13—15.
q Lev. 3:3—5,16. Rom. 16:18. Phil. 3:19. Jude 12.

(4.) That the conquests and commands of this kingdom shall extend themselves to distant regions, *v.* 9. David's victories and dominions reached far, but the *uttermost parts of the earth* are promised to the Messiah for his *possession*, Ps. 2:8.

(5.) That the power and honor of Messiah the Prince shall grow and increase more and more. *He shall give strength unto his King* for the accomplishing of his great undertaking, Ps. 89: 21. Luke 22: 43. Lift up the horn, the power and honor of his *Anointed*, and *make Him higher than the kings of the earth*, Ps. 89: 27. This crowns the triumph, and is, more than any thing, the matter of her exaltation. This secures the hope; the subjects of Christ's kingdom will be safe, and the enemies of it will be ruined, for the Anointed, the Lord Christ, is girt with strength, and is able to save and destroy unto the uttermost.

V. 11—26. In these verses we have Elkanah's and Eli's families observably interwoven; as if the historian intended to set the one over against the other, that they might set off one another. The devotion and good order of Elkanah's family aggravated the iniquity of Eli's; while the wickedness of Eli's sons made Samuel's early piety shine the more bright and illustrious.

I. How well things went in Elkanah's family.

1. Eli dismissed them with a blessing, *v.* 20. To give one out of many would not have been so rare, but to give up the only one, her Isaac, should by no means lose its reward. As when Abraham had offered Isaac, he received the promise of a numerous issue, (Gen. 22: 16, 17.) so did Hannah, when she had presented Samuel unto the Lord, a living sacrifice. What is lent to the Lord will certainly be repaid with interest, to our unspeakable advantage, and oftentimes in kind, *v.* 21.

2. they returned to their own habitation; (*v.* 11. and again *v.* 20.) it was very pleasant to attend at God's house, to bless Him, and to be blessed of Him. But they have a family at home that must be looked after, and thither they return, cheerfully leaving the dear little one behind them, knowing they left him in a good place; and it does not appear that he cried after them, but was as willing to stay as they were to leave him, so soon did he *put away childish things*, and behave like a man.

3. They kept up their constant attendance at the house of God, with their yearly sacrifice, *v.* 19. Having found the benefit of drawing near to God, they would omit no appointed season for it; and now they had one motive more to go than formerly. We may suppose they went to see their child oftener than once a year, for Shiloh was not ten miles from Ramah, but their annual visit is noticed, because then they brought their yearly sacrifice; and then Hannah fitted up her son (and some think oftener than once a year) with a new suit of clothes, *a little coat*, (*v.* 19.) and every thing belonging to it. Parents must take care that their children want nothing that is fit for them, whether they are with them or from them; but those that are dutiful and hopeful, and minister to the Lord, must be thought worthy of double care and kindness.

4. The child Samuel did very well. Four several times he is mentioned in these verses, and two things we are told of:

(1.) The service he did (*v.* 11, 18.) according to his capacity. Some little services perhaps he was employed in about the altar, though much under the age appointed by the law for the Levites' ministration; and because he did this with a pious disposition of mind, it is called *ministering to the Lord*, and great notice is taken of it. After awhile, he did his work so well, Eli appointed he should minister with a *linen ephod* as the priests did, (though he was no priest,) because he saw God was with him. Note, Little children must learn betimes to *minister to the Lord;* parents must train them up to it, and God will accept them; particularly, let them learn to respect their teachers, as Samuel did Eli. None can begin too soon to be religious. See Ps. 8: 2. and Matt. 21: 15, 16.

(2.) The blessing he received, *He grew before the Lord*, (*v.* 21.) and *grew on* (*v.* 26.) in strength and stature, and especially in wisdom and understanding, and fitness for business. Note, Those young people that serve God as well as they can, He will enable to improve, that they may serve Him better. They that are planted in God's house, shall *flourish*. *He was in favor with God and with man.* Note, It is a great encouragement to children to be tractable and virtuous, and good betimes, that if they be, both God and man will love them. Such children are the darlings both of heaven and earth. What is here said of Samuel, is said of our blessed Savior, that great Example, Luke 2: 52.

II. How ill things went in Eli's family, though seated at the very door of the tabernacle. The nearer the church, the further from God.

1. The abominable wickedness of Eli's sons, *v.* 12. It is emphatically expressed. Nothing appears to the contrary, but that Eli himself was a very good man, and, no doubt, had educated his sons well, giving them good instructions, setting them good examples, and putting up many a good prayer for them; yet, when they grew up, they proved *sons of Belial*, profane wicked men, arrant rakes; *They knew not the Lord.* They could not but have a notional knowledge of God and his law, a form of knowledge; (Rom. 2: 20.) yet because their practice was not accordingly, they are spoken of as wholly ignorant of God; they lived as if they knew nothing at all of God. Note, Parents cannot give grace to their children, nor does it run in the blood. Many, sincerely pious themselves, live to see their children notoriously impious and profane; *the race is not to the swift.* Eli was high priest and judge in Israel; his sons were priests by their birth; their character was sacred and honorable, and obliged them, for their reputation's sake, to observe decorum: they were resident at the fountain-head both of magistracy and ministry, yet they were *sons of Belial*, and their honor, power, and learning, made them so much the worse. They did not go to *serve other gods*, as those did that lived at a distance from the altar, for from the house of God they had their wealth and dignity; but, which

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—10. The mercies we receive in answer to prayers, should not only be acknowledged with thankful praise, but should lead us to rejoice in the Lord, as the Fountain of felicity and the God of salvation; and to anticipate with cheerful hope our complete deliverance, and victory over all the enemies of our souls.—An established judgment, concerning his perfect wisdom, power, love, and faithfulness, as exercised with sovereign authority, in the whole administration of his kingdom of providence and grace; and an habitual regard to his operations in all those events, which take place through the instrumentality of second causes, or rational agents, of whatever kind or character; will confirm our belief, that they, and they only, are safe and happy, who trust in Him and enjoy his favor; and that the present success, boastings, and confidence of the wicked, will shortly terminate in disappointment, misery, and despair; and the troubles of every humble believer, in triumph and exultation.—Vain and transitory are all distinctions, except that between the godly and the ungodly, which will swallow up the rest, and endure to all eternity. SCOTT.

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song, which may bear a comparison, or even competition, with the most beautiful and magnificent productions of any other inspired writer. SCOTT.

Verse 11.

The Levites were not called to any of their peculiar services, until they were 25 years of age. (*Num.* 8: 24—26.) ID.

Verse 12.

The sons of Eli had been brought up in the courts of God, and instructed out of the law, and probably had some general speculative knowledge of God and divine things: yet being sons of Belial, men of a rebellious and disobedient spirit.' (*M. R.* n. *Note, Deut.* 13: 13—18.) it is said, 'they knew not the LORD.' SCOTT.

Verse 14.

Pan ... kettle ... caldron .. pot .. flesh-hook.] See cuts, Ex. 25: 29. and Lev. 11: 32, 35. ED.

have sodden flesh of thee, but raw.

16 And *if* any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat * presently, and *then* take *as much* as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, *Nay;* but thou shalt give *it me* now: and if not, [r]I will take *it* by force.

17 Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great [s]before the LORD; for men [t]abhorred the offering of the LORD.

18 ¶ But Samuel [u]ministered before the LORD, *being* a child, girded with [x]a linen ephod.

19 Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought *it* to him [y]from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

20 And Eli [z]blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman, for the † loan which is lent to the LORD. And they went unto their own home.

21 And the LORD [a]visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel [b]grew before the LORD.

22 ¶ Now Eli [c]was very old, and heard all that his sons [d]did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that ‡ assembled *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

23 And he said unto them, [e]Why do ye such things? for § I hear of your evil dealings [f]by all this people.

24 Nay, my sons; for *it is* [g]no good report that I hear: [h]ye make the LORD'S people to ‖ transgress.

25 If one man [i]sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but [k]if a man sin against the LORD, who shall entreat for him? Notwithstanding they [l]hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them.

26 And the child Samuel [m]grew on, and [n]was in favor both with the LORD, and also with men.

[*Practical Observations.*]

* Heb. *as on the day.* Lev. 8:16. 7:23—26.

r Judg. 18:25. Neh. 5:15. Mic. 2:1,2. 3:5. 1 Pet. 5:2,3.

s Gen. 6:11. 10:9. 13:13. 2 Kings 21:6. Ps. 51:4. Is. 3:8.

t Mal. 2:8,13. Matt. 18:7.

u 11. 3:1.

x 22:18. Ex. 28:4. Lev. 8:7. 2 Sam. 6:14.

y 1:3,21. Ex. 23:14.

z Gen. 14:19. 27:27—29. Num. 6:23—27. Ruth 2:12. 4:11.

† Or, *petition which she asked,* &c. 1:27,28.

a 1:19,20. Gen. 21:1. Luke 1:68.

b 26. 3:19. Judg. 13:24. Luke 1:80. 2:40,52.

c 3:1.

d 13—17. Jer. 7:9,10. Ez. 22:26. Hos. 4:9—11.

‡ Heb. *assembled by troops.* Ex. 38:8.

e 1 Kings 1:6. Acts 9:4. 14:15.

§ Or, *I hear evil words of you.*

f Is. 3:9. Jer. 3:3. 8:12. Phil. 3:19.

g Acts 6:3. 2 Cor. 6:3. 1 Tim. 3:7. 3 John 12.

h 17,22. Ex. 32:21. 1 Kings 13:18—21. 15:30. 2 Kings 10:31. Mal. 2:8. Matt. 18:6. 2 Pet. 2:18. Rev. 2:20.

‖ Or, *cry out.*

i Deut. 17:8.—12. 25:1—3.

k 3:14. Num. 15:30. Ps. 51:4,16. Heb. 10:26.

l Deut. 2:30. Josh. 11:20. 2 Chr. 25:16. Prov. 15:10. John 12:39,40.

m 21.

n Prov. 3:4. Luke 1:80. 2:40,52. Acts 2:47. Rom. 14:18.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 11—26. We have great encouragement to devote our children to the Lord in prayer from their birth, yea from their conception, to bring them early to his courts, and to train them up in his ways; for in this manner He generally takes them into his service, and gives them that *spiritual* and *experimental* knowledge of Himself, which fortifies the heart against temptation, and is the source of all godliness. (1 *Chr.* 28: 9.)—The neglect of properly educating children, and the indulgence of their wayward inclinations, is a sin which God severely chastises in his own people: because it seems to imply a contempt of his authority and special favor, and a disregard to his glory, as well as to *their* immortal souls; and because it tends to the most fatal crimes and apostasies, and to the utter decay of true religion. None are generally more abandoned, than the degenerate offspring of pious persons: and when such children of Belial have been admitted into the sacred ministry, and are allowed to go on with the forms of godliness, for the sake of emolument or authority; they prove the most fatal enemies to the cause of God, and the most destructive murderers of the souls of men.—Abuses, when once introduced, are soon sanctioned by custom; and *customs* and *precedents* acquire *authority* in the church, which it is deemed by a great majority very sinful to dissent from, or object to, even in the most peaceful manner.—When wicked men have thus gained one point for their own lucre or ambition, they will attempt another, and not shrink from the basest crimes to serve their selfish purposes. And is it not evident, that the whole system of papal antichristianity grew up, in this manner, to its full stature of spiritual domination and iniquity?—The beginnings should therefore be steadily resisted; and the rulers of the church are bound, by the strongest responsibility, to exercise their spiritual authority, in excluding from the sacred office the immoral of every description.

SCOTT.

Verses 20, 21.

It seems Elkanah and Hannah, having so hopeful a son, (whom however they seldom saw,) were satisfied, though for several years they had no more children. It appears also that Eli, notwithstanding his misconduct in respect of his sons, really loved those who loved the Lord; and was so pleased with the conduct of Samuel, and with the piety of his parents, that his heart was enlarged in blessing them, and in praying that they might be recompensed, for devoting their only son to the service of God's sanctuary, by the comfort of more children. SCOTT.

Verse 22.

These 'women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle,' are said by some writers to have dedicated themselves, by courses, to the service of the sanctuary, doing any work pertaining to it, which belonged to their sex; such as spinning, weaving curtains, washing the garments, and various services of a similar nature: and by their attendance for these purposes, the priests at the sanctuary had an opportunity of forming an acquaintance with them. Their business, however, was doubtless professedly of a religious nature: but when those, who ought to have been their instructers in piety, used their influence to solicit them to wickedness, the most shameful consequences followed.—A more horrible abomination can scarcely be conceived: and it could hardly have been deemed credible, did not every age produce examples similar and not less atrocious, to the great dishonor of the Gospel, and to the hardening and rejoicing of the hearts of infidels and profligates. (*Jer.* 23: 13—15. *Hos.* 6: 8—10. *Matt.* 18: 7—9. 2 *Pet.* 2: 12—14.) SCOTT.

Verses 23—25.

This last enormity induced Eli to reprove his sons; which he did in language very reasonable, and suited to the case of those who, though faulty, possess a tender conscience; but far too mild for such atrocious offenders. Indeed no *words* ought in this case to have sufficed; the execution of condign punishment upon them was absolutely due to the insulted honor of God, and needful to counteract, by a salutary example, the fatal effects of their crimes upon the minds of the people. To have finally excluded them from the execution of every priestly office, was the least that Eli, as the high priest and the judge of Israel, ought to have done: and if he had imitated the zeal of his tribe, 'who said to his father and mother, I have not seen him, neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor know his own children;' (*Ex.* 32: 27—29. *Deut.* 33: 9.) and if he had honored God more than his ungodly sons, he would have done it. (20.) There were priests enough without employing such monsters of iniquity.—The original signifies, that *it was pleasing* to the Lord to slay them. ID.

(25.) *Because.*] 'Rather *therefore.* See Critica Biblica.' [See also Noldius.] CARPENTER.

27 ¶ And there came [o] a man of God unto Eli and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, [p] Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt, in Pharaoh's house?

28 And [q] did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel *to be* my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and [r] did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel?

29 Wherefore [s] kick ye at my sacrifice, and at mine offering, which I have commanded *in my* [t] habitation; and [u] honorest thy sons above me, to [x] make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?

30 Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, [y] I said indeed *that* thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, [z] Be it far from me, for [a] them that honor me, [b] I will honour, and they [c] that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

31 Behold, the days come that [d] I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's

o 9:6. Deut. 33:1. Judg. 6:8. 13:6. 1 Kings 13:1. 1 Tim. 6:11. 2 Pet. 1: 21.
p Ex 4:14,27.
q Ex. 28:1,4,6—30. 29:4, &c. 39:1, &c. Lev. 8:7,8. Num. 16:5. 17:5—8. 18:1—7. 2 Sam. 12:7.
r Lev. 2:3,10. 6:16. 7:7,8,32,35. 10: 14,15. Num. 5:9,10. 18:8—19. Deut. 18:1—8.
13—17. Deut. 32:15. Mal. 1:12,13. Deut. 12:5,6. Josh. 18:1.
s Lev. 19:15. Deut. 33:9. Matt. 10: 37. 22:16. Luke 14:26. 2 Cor. 5:15. Jam. 3:17.
t 13—16. Is. 56:11,12. Ez. 13:19. 34: 2. Hos. 4:8. Mic. 3:5. Rom. 16:18.
u Ex. 28:43. 29:9. Num. 25:11—13.
x Num. 45:34. *Marg.* 2 Chr. 15:2. Jer. 18:9,10.
y Judg. 9:9. Ps. 50:23. Prov. 3:9. Is. 29:13. Dan. 4:34. Mal. 1:6. John 5:23. 8:49. 13:31,32. 17:4,5.
z Ps. 91:14. John 5:44. 12:26. 1 Cor. 4:5. 1 Pet. 1:7.
a Num. 11:20. 2 Sam. 12:9,10. Mal. 2:3.
b 4:2,11,17—20. 14:3. 22:17—20. 1 Kings 2:26,27. Job 22:9. Ps. 37:17. Ez. 30—21:24.

have the people's sin to answer for, as well as their own. He warns them of the danger they brought themselves into by it; (*v.* 25.) he intimates to them what God afterward told him, that the *iniquity* would not be *purged with sacrifice nor offering*, *ch.* 3: 14. *If one man sin against another*, the judge, i. e. the priest, who was appointed to be the judge in many cases, (Deut. 17: 9.) *shall judge him*, undertake his cause, arbitrate the matter, and make atonement; *but if a man sin against the Lord*, i. e. if a priest profane the holy things of the Lord, if a man that deals with God for others, do himself affront Him, *who shall entreat for him?* Their condition was deplorable indeed, when their own father could not appear for them. Sins against the remedy, the atonement itself, are most dangerous; *treading under foot the blood of the covenant;* for then there *remains no more sacrifice*, Heb. 10: 26.

Eli's reproof was too mild and gentle. Their crimes deserved a sharp rebuke, their temper needed it; the softness of his dealing would but harden them the more. When he said, *It is no good report:* he should have said, 'It is a shameful, scandalous thing, and not to be suffered!' Whether he dealt thus tenderly because he loved, or feared them, it certainly evinced his want of zeal for the honor of God and his sanctuary. He bound them over to God's judgment, but should have taken cognizance of their crimes himself, as high priest and judge, and have restrained and punished them. What he said was right, just and rational, but not enough. Note, It is sometimes necessary to put an edge on reproof. There are those that must be *saved with fear*, Jude 23.

3. Their obstinacy. They had long hardened their hearts, and now God, in righteous judgment, hardened their hearts, seared their consciences, and withheld the grace they had resisted and forfeited. Note, Those that are deaf to the reproofs of wisdom, are manifestly marked for ruin. The Lord has *determined to destroy them*, 2 Chron. 25: 16. See Prov. 29: 1. Immediately on this, Samuel's tractableness is again mentioned, *v.* 26. to shame their obstinacy. God's grace is his own; He denied it to the sons of the high priest, and gave it to the child of an obscure country Levite.

V. 27—36. Eli did not threaten his sons as he should, therefore God sent a prophet to reprove and threaten him, for strengthening their hands, by his indulgence, in their wickedness. If good men be wanting in their duty, and thereby contribute to the sin of sinners, they must expect both to hear of it, and to smart for it. Eli's family was now nearer to God than all *the families of the earth, therefore He will punish them.* The message is sent to Eli himself, because God would bring him to repentance and save him; not to his sons, whom He had determined to destroy. And it might have been a mean of awakening him to do his duty at last, and so prevent the judgment; but we do not find it had any great effect on him.

I. The prophet reminds him of the great things God had done for the house of his fathers, and for his family, *v.* 28. He advanced him to the priesthood, and entailed it on his family, thereby dignifying it above any of the families of Israel. He gave him honorable work, and settled upon him an honorable maintenance, a share out of *all the offerings made by fire*, *v.* 28. What could He have done more to engage them to be faithful to Him? Note, Distinguishing favors, especially those of the spiritual priesthood, are great aggravations of sin, and will be remembered against us in the day of account, if we profane our crown, and betray our trust, Deut. 32: 6. 2 Sam. 12: 7, 8.

II. He connived at his children, and thereby involved himself in their guilt; the indictment therefore runs against them all, *v.* 29. 'Thou *honorest thy sons above Me;*' i. e. 'Thou hadst rather see my offerings disgraced by their profanation of them, than see thy sons disgraced by a legal censure which ought to have been inflicted, even to suspension and deprivation.' Those that allow and countenance their children in any evil way, and do not use their authority to restrain and punish them, do in effect *honor them more than God*, being more tender of their reputation [and their own feelings] than of his glory, and more desirous to humor them than to honor Him. It is to be feared, that Eli himself, though he disliked and reproved the abuses, yet did not forbear to eat of the roast meat they sacrilegiously got; (*v.* 15.) he was a *fat, heavy man*, (*ch.* 4: 18.) therefore it is charged upon the whole family, (though Hophni and Phinehas were principally guilty,) *Ye make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings.* God gave them sufficient to feed them, but they made themselves fat, and served their lusts, with that which God was to be served with. See Hosea, 4: 8.

III. He declares the cutting off of the entail of the high-priesthood from his family, *v.* 30. *I said, indeed, thy house, and the house of thy father* Ithamar, (for from that younger son of Aaron, Eli was descended,) *should walk before me for ever;* but know now, thy commission is revoked. On what occasion the dignity of the high-priesthood was transferred from the family of Eleazar to that of Ithamar, does not appear; but it seems it had been done, and Eli stood fair to have that honor perpetuated to his posterity; but observe, the promise carried its own condition along with it, *They shall walk before me for ever;* i. e. They shall have the honor, provided they faithfully do the service; *walking before God* is the great condition of the covenant, Gen. 17: 1. Some think there is a further reach in this recall of the grant, not only in the deposing shortly of the posterity of Eli, when Zadok, who descended from Eleazar, was put in Abiathar's room, but in the total abolition of the Levitical priesthood by the priesthood of Christ.

IV. He gives a good reason for this revocation, taken from a settled and standing rule of God's government, according to which, all must expect to be dealt with; (like that by which Cain was tried, Gen. 4: 7.) *Them that honor Me, I will honor; and they that despise Me, shall be lightly esteemed.* See Ps. 18: 25, 26. Particularly be it spoken, 1. To the everlasting reputation of religion and serious godliness, that it gives honor to God, and puts honor on men. The way to be truly great, is to be truly good. If we humble and deny ourselves in any thing to honor God, and have a single eye to Him in it, we may depend on this promise, He will put the best honor on us. See John 12: 26. 2. Be it spoken to the everlasting reproach of impiety and profaneness, that this dishonors God, and will bring dishonor on men, for they that despise God shall be lightly esteemed. They shall see themselves despised by all mankind, their names a reproach; when they are gone, their memory shall rot, and when they rise again, it shall be to everlasting shame and contempt, Ps. 79: 12.

V. He foretells the particular judgments, which should come on his family, to its perpetual ignominy. A terrible curse it is; and shows how jealous God is in the matters of his worship, and how ill He takes it, when those who are obliged,

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Verse 29.

Eli, as high priest and judge, was bound to repress wickedness without partiality, and to maintain the worship of God in purity; so that he was deemed an accomplice in the crimes of his sons, because he connived at them: whereas he ought not to have 'known his own children,' but to have disregarded even their lives; suppressing paternal tenderness, in his zeal for God and his ordinances. (*M. R.*—2 *Cor.* 5: 16. 1 *Tim.* 5: 20—22. *Jam.* 3: 17, 18.) SCOTT.

Verse 30.

(*M. R.* b, c. *Notes*, 2 *Chr.* 24: 15, 16. 31: 20, 21. *Mal.* 2: 1—9.) —*For ever.*] *Note*, *Gen.* 17: 7, 8. ID.

Verses 31—36.

The concurrence of the priests of Aaron's line with the kings of David's family, while they thus walked before the anointed of the Lord, typified the union of the kingly and priestly offices in Jesus Christ: which seems also to have been predicted. No mention had been made of *anointing* a king over Israel, when this prophecy was delivered. (10. *Deut.* 17: 14, 15.) SCOTT.

(32.) *Thou shalt see*, &c.] BOOTHR transl. 'And with envy thou shalt see a rival,' meaning Samuel, 'who in everything shall do good to Israel.' The Vulg. has 'rival.' ED.

house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house.

32 And thou shalt see * an enemy *in my* habitation, in all *the wealth* which *God* shall give Israel: and there shall not be [e] an old man in thine house for ever.

33 And the man of thine *whom* I shall not cut off from mine altar, *shall be* [f] to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die † in the flower of their age.

34 And this *shall be* [g] a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; [h] in one day they shall die both of them.

35 And [i] I will raise me up a faithful priest, *that* shall do according to *that* which *is* in mine heart, and in my mind: and [k] I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before [l] mine anointed for ever.

36 And it shall come to pass, *that* every one that [m] is left in thine house shall come *and* crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, ‡ Put me, I pray thee, into § one of the priests' offices, that I may [n] eat a piece of bread.

CHAP. III.

The Lord reveals Himself to the child Samuel, and informs him of his purposes against the house of Eli, 1—14. Samuel, adjured by Eli, tells him the vision; and Eli answers submissively, 15—18. Samuel is established to be a prophet of the Lord, 19—21.

AND [a] the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And [b] the word of the LORD was precious in

by their character and profession, to preserve and advance the interests of his glory, are false to their trust, and betray them. If God's ministers be vicious and profane, *how much sorer punishment will they be thought worthy of*, here and for ever, than other sinners! Let such read the doom here passed on Eli's house, and tremble.

The arm should be cut off, which was not stretched out to restrain and punish. Instead of using the wisdom, gravity, experience, and authority, of his age, for the service of God and the support of religion, he had suffered the infirmities of age to make him more cool and remiss in his duty, therefore none of his posterity should live to be old, (*v.* 31—33.) but should all die in the midst of the years of their service; so that though the family should not be extinct, yet it should never be considerable, nor should any of it come to be eminent in their day. Patrick relates, out of some Jewish writer, that, long after this, there being a family in Jerusalem, none of which commonly lived above 18 years, upon search it was found that they descended from the house of Eli.

All their comforts should be imbittered. (1.) The comfort in the sanctuary, its wealth and prosperity; which was fulfilled in the Philistines' invasions, and their mischiefs, by which the country was impoverished, (*ch.* 13: 19.) and, no doubt, the priests' incomes were thereby very much impaired. The captivity of the ark was such an act of hostility, committed on God's habitation, as broke Eli's heart. As it is a blessing to a family to see *peace on Israel*, (Ps. 128: 5, 6.) so the contrary is a sore judgment on a family, especially of priests. (2.) Comfort of their children. 'The *man of thine, whom I shall not cut off by an untimely death*, shall live to be a blot and burden to the family, a scandal and vexation to his relations; he shall be to *consume thine eyes*, and *grieve thine heart*, either for his foolishness, sickliness, wickedness, or poverty.' Grief for a dead child is great, but for a bad child often greater.

Their substance should be wasted, and they reduced to extreme poverty, *v.* 36. '*He that is left* alive *in thy house*, shall have little joy of his life.' (1.) He shall beg for the smallest alms, *a piece of silver*, and the word signifies the *least* piece, and *a morsel of bread*. See how this answered the sin. Note, Those who could not be content without dainties and varieties, are brought, they or theirs, to want necessaries, and the Lord is righteous in it. (2.) He shall beg for the meanest office; *Put me into somewhat belonging to the priesthood*, so the original, *make me as one of the hired servants;* the fittest place for a prodigal. Plenty and power are forfeited, when abused. This, it is probable, was fully accomplished, when Abiathar, who was of Eli's race, was deposed by Solomon for treason, and he and his turned out of office in the temple, (1 Kings 2: 26, 27.) by which it is easy to think his posterity were reduced to the extremities here described.

God would shortly begin to execute these judgments in the death of Hophni and Phinehas, the sad tidings of which Eli himself should live to hear; *This shall be a sign to thee*, *v.* 34. It was fulfilled, ch. 4: 11.

Lastly, In the midst of all these threatenings against the house of Eli, here is mercy promised to Israel, *v.* 35. *I will raise me up a faithful priest.* 1. This was fulfilled in Zadoc, one of the family of Eleazar, who came into Abiathar's place, in the beginning of Solomon's reign, and was faithful to his trust; and the high priests were of his posterity as long as the Levitical priesthood continued. Note, The wickedness of ministers, though it destroy themselves, yet shall not destroy the ministry. The high priest is here said to *walk before God's anointed*, i. e. David and his seed, because he wore the breast-plate of judgment, which he was to consult, not in common cases, but for the king, in affairs of state. 2. It has its full accomplishment in the priesthood of Christ, that merciful and faithful High Priest, whom God raised up when the Levitical priesthood was thrown off, who in all things did his Father's mind, and for whom God would build a sure house, build it on a rock, so that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it.

CHAP. III. V. 1—10. In the foregoing ch. we had Samuel a young priest, in this, a young prophet; God in an extraordinary manner revealing Himself to him, and in him reviving, if not commencing, prophecy in Israel.

To make way for the account of God's revealing Himself first to Samuel, we are here told, 1. How industrious Samuel was in serving God, according to his place and capacity, *v.* 1. And it was a preparative for the honors God intended him; he that was thus faithful in a little, was soon after intrusted with much more. Let those that are young, be humble and diligent, and they will find that the surest way to preferment. Those are fittest to rule, that have learned to obey. 2. How scarce a thing prophecy then was; *The word of the Lord was precious in those days.* Now and then a man of God was employed, on an extraordinary occasion, (as *ch.* 2: 27.) but there was no settled prophet. And the rarity of prophecy made it the more precious, in the account of all those that knew how rightly to value it. It was precious, for what there was, (it seems,) was private, *there was no open vision*, that is, none were publicly known to have visions. Perhaps, the impiety and impurity that prevailed in the tabernacle, and, no doubt, corrupted the whole nation, had provoked God, as a token of his displeasure, to withdraw the Spirit of prophecy.

1. Eli was retired, *v.* 2. he went to bed betimes, being unfit for business, and soon weary of it, or perhaps loving his ease too well. Probably, he kept his chamber much, which gave his sons the greater liberty. And he sought retirement the more, because his eyes began to wax dim, a just affliction for winking at his sons' faults.

* Or, *the affliction of the tabernacle, for all the wealth which God would have given Israel.* 4:4,11,22. Ps. 78:59—64.
e Zech. 8:4.
f 22:21—23. 1 Kings 1:7,19. 2:26,27. Matt. 2:16—18.
† Heb. *men.*
g 3:12. 1 Kings 13:3. 14:12.
h 4:11,17.
i 1 Kings 1:8,45. 2:35. 1 Chr. 29:22. Ez. 34:23. 44:15. Heb. 2:17. 7:26—28.
k 25:28. Ex. 1:21. Num. 25:13. 2 Sam. 7:11,27. 1 Kings 11:38. 1 Chr. 6:8—15. Neh. 12:10,11.
l Ps. 2:2. 18:50.
m 1 Kings 2:27. Ez. 44:10—12.
‡ Heb. *Join.*
§ Heb. *somewhat about the priesthood.*
n 29,30. Mal. 1:13.
a 15. 2:11,18.
b 21. Ps. 74:9. Is. 13:12. Am. 8:11, 12.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 27—36. If the servants of God yield to temptation, and repeatedly commit iniquity; He will persevere in his rebukes and chastenings, till He has brought them to repentance: and in this process the offenders will suffer unspeakable anguish.—That improper regard to the interests of his family, which induces a man to offend God, often proves the immediate cause of its ruin; whilst a disregard, shown by any one, to all personal or relative interests, when the glory of God is concerned, forms the best method of promoting the welfare of his posterity.—Many of the Lord's offending people live to witness terrible effects of their misconduct; but how would it grieve their hearts, if they could foresee all the future consequences of every kind, to their families, and to the church, and in hardening sinners to their destruction! Let us endeavor to conceive of them, that we may be led to greater abhorrence and dread of sin, and more constant watchfulness and prayer: for these things were written for our warning, that we might strive against the beginnings of iniquity, and train up our families for the Lord. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. III. V. 1. Samuel is supposed at this time to have been about 12 years of age; and he was early prepared to enter on the prophetical office, for which the Lord intended him. (*Jer.* 1: 5.)—From the death of Moses, no more than two prophets have been mentioned; (except Deborah, called a prophetess,) and these only delivered an occasional message, and then retired; so that their names are not recorded. (2: 27. *Judg.* 6: 8—10.) Samuel was therefore the first eminent prophet after Moses; and with him prophecy was openly established: so that for several ages prophets were raised up in Israel by a regular succession. SCOTT.

Precious.] 'Rather, rare, scarce; and so *Poole.*' BOOTHROYD.

those days; *there was* no open vision.

2 And it came to pass at that time, when Eli *was* laid down in his place, and [c] his eyes began to wax dim, *that* he could not see;

3 And ere [d] the lamp of God went out in [e] the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God *was*, and Samuel was laid down *to sleep;*

4 That the LORD [f] called Samuel: and he answered, Here *am* I.

5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

6 And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, [g] my son; lie down again.

7 * Now Samuel [h] did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

8 And the LORD called Samuel again [i] the third time. And he arose, and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.

9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down; and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, [k] Speak, LORD, for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went, and lay down in his place.

10 And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak, for thy servant heareth.

11 And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold,

II. Samuel was laid down to sleep, near to Eli's room, ready within call, if the old man should want any thing in the night, perhaps to read to him, if he could not sleep. He thus chose Samuel, because of the towardly disposition he observed in him. Let those that are afflicted in their children, thank God if they have any about them, in whom they are comforted. It should seem he lay somewhere near the holy place, and went to bed before the branch-lamps of the candlestick went out, (the main lamp never went out,) probably, toward midnight; till that time, Samuel had been employing himself in some good exercise or other, reading and prayer, or perhaps cleaning or making ready the holy place; and then went softly to his bed. *Then* we may expect God's gracious visits, when we are constant and diligent in our duty.

III. God called him by name, and he took it for Eli's call, *v.* 4: 5. Patrick thinks the call was out of the most holy place; and so the Chaldee, *A voice was heard out of the temple of the Lord;* but Eli, though it is likely he lay nearer, heard it not; yet, possibly, it might come some other way. Samuel's industry, and readiness to wait on Eli, are a good example to servants, to come when called; and to the younger, not only to submit to the elder, but to be careful and tender of them. Unacquainted with the visions of the Almighty, he took that to be only Eli's call, which was really the call of God. Such mistakes we make oftener than we think of. God calls by his Word, and we take it to be only the call of the minister; calls by his providences, and we look only at the instruments. His voice cries, and the impressions of it are soon lost; sinners lie down again, and their convictions come to nothing: but here and there a man of wisdom understands it to be his voice

IV. The same call was repeated, and the same mistake made, a second and third time, *v.* 6—9. The call which divine grace designs to make effectual, shall be repeated till it is so; i. e. till we come at the call, for the purpose of God, according to which we are called, shall certainly stand. Samuel did not yet apprehend, (*v.* 7.) the way in which God reveals Himself to his servants the prophets; perhaps he had been sooner aware of a divine revelation, had it come in a dream or a vision; but this was a way he had not only not known himself, but not heard of. The witness of the Spirit in the hearts of the faithful, is often thus mistaken, by which means they lose the comfort of it; and the strivings of the Spirit with the consciences of sinners are likewise often mistaken, and so the benefit of their convictions is lost: *God speaketh once, yea twice,* but *man perceiveth it not,* Job 33: 14. Samuel went to Eli this second and third time; But there was a special providence in it, for hereby, at length, *Eli perceived the Lord had called the child, v.* 8. He had reason to look upon this as a further token of God's displeasure. It would also put him on inquiring what it was God said to Samuel, and abundantly satisfy him of the truth and certainty of what should be delivered. Thus even the infirmities and mistakes of those whom God employs, are overruled by Infinite Wisdom, and made serviceable to his purposes.

V. At length, Samuel was put into a posture to receive a message from God. Eli, perceiving it was the voice of God, Samuel heard, gave him instructions what to say, *v.* 9. This was honestly done; for, though slighted himself, he directed Samuel how to entertain God's call; whereas, had he been envious of the honor done to Samuel, he would have done what he could to deprive him of it; but he was of a better spirit; he gave him the best advice he could, to forward his advancement. Thus the elder should, without grudging, do the utmost to assist and improve the younger that are rising up, though they see themselves likely to be darkened and eclipsed by them, John 1: 30. He must call himself God's servant, must desire to know the mind of God. Note, *Then* we may expect God will speak to us, when we set ourselves to hearken to what He says, Ps. 85: 8. Hab. 2: 1. When we read and hear the Word of God, we should be thus disposed, submitting our souls to the commanding light and power of it; *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.* It would seem God spake the fourth time, in a way somewhat different from the other; *He stood and called;* which intimates, there was now some visible appearance of the divine glory, a vision that stood before Samuel, like that before Eliphaz, though he *could not discern the form thereof,* Job 4: 16. This satisfied him it was not Eli, for he now *saw the voice that spake with him,* as it is expressed, Rev. 1: 12. His call was powerful and effectual, when He called him by name, and so brought it particularly to him, as *Saul, Saul.* Thus God called to Abraham by name, Gen. 22: 1. Samuel said as he was taught, *Speak, for thy servant heareth.* Note, Good words should be put into children's mouths betimes, and apt expressions of pious and devout affections, by which they may be prepared for a better acquaintance with divine things, and trained up to a holy converse with them. Teach young people what they shall say, for *they cannot order their speech by reason of darkness.* Samuel now lay still and listened. The more sedate and composed our spirits are, the better prepared they are for divine discoveries. Let all tumultuous thoughts and passions be kept under, and every thing be quiet and serene in the soul, and then we are fit to hear from God. All must be silent, when He speaks. Samuel was by this brought acquainted with the words of God, and visions of the Almighty; and this *ere the lamp of God went out,* (*v.* 3.) *in the temple of the Lord,* which some of the Jewish writers put a mystical sense upon: i. e. say they, Ere God make the sun of one righteous man to set, He makes the sun of another righteous man to rise. *Smith, ex Kimchi.*

V. 11—18. I. The message is short. The memories of children must not be overcharged, no not with divine things. But it is sad, a message of wrath, to ratify that in the former ch. be-

c 2:22. 4:15. Gen. 27:1. 48:10. Ps. 90:10. Ec. 12:3.

d Ex. 27:20,21. 30:7,8. Lev. 24.2—4. 2 Chr. 13:11.

e 1:9. Ps. 5:7. 27:4. 29:9.

f Gen. 22:1. Ex. 3:4. Ps. 99:6. Acts 9:4. 1 Cor. 12:2.—11,28. Gal. 1:15, 16.

g 4:16. Gen. 43:29. 2 Sam. 18:22. Matt. 9:2.

* Or, *Thus did Samuel before he knew the LORD, and before the word of the LORD was revealed unto him.*

h Jer. 9:24. Acts 19:2.

i Job 33:14,15.

k Ex. 20:19. Ps. 85:8. Is. 6:8. Dan. 10:19. Acts 9:6.

Verses 2, 3.

The lamp in the sanctuary, ought to have been constantly kept burning. (*M. R.—Notes, Ex.* 27: 20, 21. 30: 7, 8.) SCOTT.

(3.) *Ere the lamp of God went out.*] 'The meaning is, "ere it was day."' PATRICK.—*Laid down.*] 'Not when he first lay down, but whilst he was lying there.' POOLE.

Verses 4—6.

(*M. R.* f.) Eli, probably, often disturbed Samuel in the night through the infirmities of old age.—His respectful and affectionate assiduity, in waiting on the aged high priest, is well worthy of our notice. SCOTT.

(4.) *Here am I.*] 'A form of speech implying attention to what was said, and readiness to execute what was commanded.' DODD.

Verses 8, 9.

Eli could not but consider the preference, the Lord thus showed to a child, as a severe and humiliating rebuke; especially as he had reason to forebode that the message would be a denunciation of judgments on him and his family; yet, without envy, resentment, or impatience, he gave Samuel proper directions.—*Speak,* LORD. (9.) Or, 'Speak, O JEHOVAH.' SCOTT.

Verse 10.

And the Lord came and stood.] '*Kimchi* supposes in some bodily shape, or bright splendor; *Scott* says, it seems to imply a visible appearance; *Gill* observes, the passage means, that the voice seemed nearer, so as to sound in Samuel's ear; Dr. *A. Clarke* thinks the voice was stationary.' EVANG. SYN.

Verse 11.

Shall tingle.] As very loud and stupendous noises are used to do. (*M. R.*—4: 13—22. *Is.* 28: 17—19.) SCOTT. 'A phrase used to signify such a great horror and astonishment on the hearing of some terrible accident, as weakens the very sense and organs of hearing; like a sudden clap of thunder, or the report of a cannon going off near the ear.' ASSEMB. ANN.

[l] I will do a thing in Israel, at which [m] both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

12 In that day [n] I will perform against Eli all *things* which I have spoken concerning his house: [*] when I begin, I will also make an end.

13 † For I have told him, that [o] I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity [p] which he knoweth; because [q] his sons made themselves ‡ vile, and he § restrained them not.

14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that [r] the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

15 ¶ And Samuel lay until the morning, and [s] opened the doors of the house of the LORD: and Samuel [t] feared to show Eli the vision.

16 Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here *am* I.

17 And he said, What *is* the thing that *the LORD* hath said unto thee? [u] I pray thee hide *it* not from me: [x] God do so to thee,

[l] Is. 29:14. Am. 3:6,7. Hab. 1:5. Acts 13:41.
[m] 2 Kings 21:12. Is. 28:19. Jer. 19:3. Luke 21:26.
[n] 2:27—36. Num. 23:19. Josh. 23:15. Zech. 1:6. Luke 21:33.
[*] Heb. *beginning and ending.*
† Or, *And I will tell,* &c. 2:27. &c.
[o] 2 Chr. 20:11. Ez. 7:3. 18:30. Joel 3:12.
[p] 1 Kings 2:44. Ec. 7:22. 1 John 3:20.
[q] 2:12—17,22.
‡ Or, *accursed.*
§ Heb. *frowned not upon them.* 2:23—25. 1 Kings 1:6. Prov. 19:18. 23:13,14. 29:15. Matt. 10:37.
[r] 2:25. Num. 15:30,31. Is. 22:14. Jer. 7:16. 15:1. Ez. 24:13. Heb. 10:26—31.
[s] 1:9. Mal. 1:10.
[t] Jer. 1:6—8. 1 Cor. 16:10,11.
[u] Ps. 141:5. Dan. 4:19. Mic. 2:7.
[x] 20:13. Ruth 1:17. 2 Sam. 3:35. 19:13. 1 Kings 22:16. Matt. 26:63.

cause perhaps Eli did not give so much regard to that as he ought to have done. Divine threatenings, the less they are heeded, the surer they will come, and the heavier they will fall. 1. It is the *iniquity that he knoweth, v.* 13. The man of God told him of it, and many a time his own conscience had told him of it. O what a great deal of guilt and corruption is there in us, concerning which we may say, 'It is the iniquity *which our own heart knoweth;* we are conscious to ourselves of it!' *His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.* Or, as the Heb. he *frowned not upon them;* he did not show his dislike to the degree he ought to have done: he did not punish them, nor deprive them of their power to do mischief, which, as a father, high priest, and judge, he might have done. Note, (1.) Sinners do by their own wickedness make themselves vile. (Jam. 1: 14.) Sin is vile, and vilifies more than any thing, Ps. 15: 4. (2.) Those that do not restrain the sins of others, when in their power, make themselves partakers of the guilt, and will be charged as accessaries. Those in authority will have a great deal to answer for, if they make not the sword they bear, a *terror to evil workers.*

2. The punishment, is *that I have spoken concerning his house;* (*v.* 12, 13.) that a curse should be entailed on his family from generation to generation. The particulars of this curse we had before; they are not here repeated, but it is added, (1.) That when that sentence began to be executed, every Israelite would be struck with terror and astonishment, (*v.* 11.) to hear of the slaying of Eli's sons, the breaking of Eli's neck, and the dispersion of Eli's family. Lord, how terrible art Thou in thy judgments! If this be done in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? Note, God's judgments on others should affect us with a holy fear, Ps. 119: 120. (2.) That these direful first-fruits of the execution would be certain earnests of the progress and full accomplishment of it, *v.* 12. It is intimated it might, possibly, be some time before He would begin, but let them not call that forbearance an acquittance; for when at length He does begin, He will make thorough work of it, and though He stay long, He will strike home. (3.) That no room should be left for hope that this sentence might be reversed, and the execution stayed or mitigated, *v.* 14. God would not revoke the sentence, nor come to a composition for the forfeiture. This was the imperfection of the legal sacrifices, that there were iniquities which they would not purge; *but the blood of Christ cleanses from sin,* and secures all those that by faith are interested in it, from that eternal death which is the wages of sin.

II. The delivery of this message to Eli. Observe, 1. Samuel's modest concealment of it, *v.* 15. (1.) He *lay till the morning,* and, we may well suppose, awake, pondering on what he had heard. After we have received the spiritual food of God's Word, it is good to compose ourselves, and give it time to digest. (2.) *He opened the doors of the house of the Lord,* in the morning, as he used to do, being up first in the tabernacle. Note, Those to whom God manifests Himself, He makes and keeps low in their own eyes, and willing to stoop to any thing by which they may be serviceable to his glory, though but as door-keepers in his house. One would have expected that Samuel should have been so full of his vision, as to tell it among his companions; but he modestly keeps it to himself, and silently goes on in his business. Our secret communion with God is not to be proclaimed on the house tops. (3.) *He feared to show Eli the vision.* Perhaps he was afraid Eli would be angry with him, and chide him: we will suppose it was rather because he was afraid to grieve and trouble the good old man. If he had run immediately with the tidings to Eli, it would have looked as if he desired the woful day, and hoped to build his own family upon the ruin of Eli's, therefore it became him not to be forward to do it; no good man can take pleasure in bringing evil tidings, especially not Samuel to Eli, the pupil to the tutor whom he loves and honors.

2. As soon as ever Eli heard Samuel stirring, he called for him, probably, to his bed-side; and having perceived before, that God had spoken to him, he obliged him, not only by importunity, but by an adjuration, to tell him what it was God had told him. A good man desires to be acquainted with all the will of God, whether it make for him, or against him. His adjuration, *v.* 7. may intimate the fearful doom of unfaithful watchmen; if they warn not sinners, they bring on themselves that wrath and curse, which they should have denounced, in God's name, against those that *go on still in their trespasses.*

3. Samuel's faithful delivery of his message at last, *v.* 18. *He told him every whit;* when he saw he must tell him, he never minced the matter, to blunt what was sharp, or gild what was bitter, but delivered the message as plainly and fully as he received it, *not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God.* Christ's ministers must deal thus faithfully.

4. Eli's pious acquiescence in it. He understood the sentence to intend only a temporal punishment, and the entail of disgrace and poverty on his posterity, not a final separation of them from the favor of God, therefore he did not repine, because he knew the demerits of his family; nor intercede to reverse the sentence, because God had ratified it with a solemn oath, of which He would not repent: but humbly resigns himself to God's will, as Aaron, in a case not much unlike; (Lev. 10: 3.) *He held his peace.* He lays down this satisfying truth, '*It is the Lord;* from whose bar there lies no appeal, and against whose sentence there lies no exception; whose power cannot be resisted, or justice arraigned, or sovereignty contested. *It is the Lord,* who will thus sanctify and glorify Himself, and it is highly fit He should. *It is the Lord,* with whom there is no unrighteousness, who never did nor ever will do any wrong to any of his creatures, nor exact more than their iniquity deserves.' He infers from it this satisfying conclusion, '*Let Him do what seemeth Him good;* I have nothing to say against his proceedings; He is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works, therefore *his will be done. I will bear the indignation of the Lord,*

Verse 12.

(2: 27—36.) Probably this message was sent to Eli some years before his death; and this forbearance of God tended to harden the hearts of Eli's sons, in presumptuous expectations of impunity. SCOTT.

In that day.] 'About 20 or 30 years after this threatening,' says *Poole;* but *Scott,* (see chronol. above,) makes it 8 years. ED.

Verse 14.

The sins of pious individuals among Eli's posterity would be pardoned, through the sacrifice of Christ, for their eternal salvation: but the Lord had irrevocably determined, that no number of sin-offerings or oblations should prevail with Him, to continue that family in the high priesthood, or to deliver them from the awful temporal judgments which had been denounced; as perhaps both Eli and his sons hoped would be the case. (*Num.* 15: 30, 31. *Is.* 22: 8—14.) SCOTT.

Verse 15.

In the morning, Samuel opened the gates of the court of the tabernacle, into which the people came to worship, as if nothing had occurred; neither elated with the distinction, nor neglecting his business, nor mentioning the matter, nor showing the least disrespect to Eli; but rather, through his great deference and affection for him, being reluctant to inform him of the distressing message. SCOTT.

House.] 'In the wilderness the tabernacle had no doors; but now it was fixed in Shiloh, it seems it was enclosed with a solid building.' [See 1 Chr. 18: 5. & 1 K. 8: 4. ED.] ASSEMB. ANN.

Verses 16—18.

Eli was solicitous to know the revelation which God had made to Samuel, and afraid that he would not *fully* inform him of it: but he must no doubt have been greatly alarmed and distressed, when he heard the awful message, from the mouth of a child, who was so respectfully affectionate to him, and dependent on him; and whom he could not possibly suspect of artifice, or corrupt motives, or harshness of language. Yet his answer is very remarkable. He reflected on the wisdom, justice, truth, and goodness of God, as well as on his sovereignty. He acknowledged He had a right to do as He saw good, and was assured He would do nothing wrong. He was conscious that he deserved the terrible sentence, and acquiesced in the will of God, casting himself entirely on his mercy.—The meekness, patience, and humility of these words are very admirable, and prove that Eli was truly penitent and pious: (*M. R.* y.—*Lev.* 10: 3. *Job* 1: 20, 22. *Ps.* 39: 9, 10.) though in his old and infirm age, he had not sufficient

and * more also, if thou hide *any* † thing from me, of all the things that he said unto thee.

18 And Samuel told him ‡ every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, [y] It *is* the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good.

19 And Samuel [z] grew, and [a] the LORD was with him, and did [b] let none of his words fall to the ground.

20 And all Israel, from [c] Dan even to Beer-sheba, knew that Samuel *was* § established *to be* a prophet of the LORD.

21 And the LORD [d] appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh, by [e] the word of the LORD.

CHAP. IV.

The Israelites, smitten by the Philistines, send for the ark, 1—4. The Philistines are affrighted on account of it; but encourage one another, 5—9. Israel is again smitten, with great slaughter; the ark is taken, and Eli's two sons are slain, 10, 11. On hearing these tidings, Eli falls and breaks his neck, 12—18. The wife of Phinehas travails, names the child I-chabod, and dies, 19—22.

AND the word of Samuel ‖ came to

* Heb. *so add.*
† Or, *word.*
‡ Heb. *all the things*, or, *words.*
y Gen. 18:25. Judg. 10:15. 2 Sam. 16:10—12. Job 1:21. 2:10. Ps. 39:9. Is. 39:8. Lam. 3:39. 1 Pet. 5:6.
z 2:21. Judg. 13:24. Luke 1:80. 2:40,52.
a 18:14. Gen. 39:2,21—23. Is. 43:2. Matt. 1:23. Luke 1:28. 2 Cor. 13:11,14. 2 Tim. 4:22.
b 9:6. 1 Kings 8:56. Is. 44:26.
c Judg. 20:1. 2 Sam. 3:10. 17:11.
§ Or, *faithful.* 1 Tim. 1:12.
d Gen. 12:7. 15:1. Num. 12:6. Am. 3:7. Heb. 1:1.
e 1,4.
‖ Or, *came to pass.* Heb. *was.* 3:11.

because I have sinned against Him.' Thus we ought to quiet ourselves under God's rebukes, and never to *strive with our Maker.*

V. 19—21. We have here an account of the further honor done Samuel as a prophet.

1 *The Lord was with him.* All our increase in wisdom and grace, is owing to the presence of God with us; it is all in all to our growth. God honored Samuel, (I.) By further manifestations of Himself to him. Samuel had faithfully delivered the messages he was intrusted with, therefore God employed him again in his service, *v.* 21. Note, God will graciously repeat his visits to those that receive them right. (2.) By fulfilling what He spake by him; *v.* 19. Whatever Samuel said, as a prophet, proved true, and was accomplished in its season. Probably, there were some remarkable instances of the truth of his predictions, that happened soon after, which confirmed those that were afterward to be fulfilled, and gave general satisfaction as to his mission. (Isa. 44: 26.)

2. Israel did him honor. They all knew, and owned, *that Samuel was established to be a prophet*, *v.* 20. Early piety will be the greatest honor of young people, and bring them, as much as any thing, and as soon, into reputation. Them that honor God He will honor. He that began betimes to *be* good, soon came to *do* good. His established commission from God, and established reputation with the people, gave him a great opportunity of shining as a light in Israel. When old Eli was rejected, young Samuel was established; for God will never leave Himself without a witness, nor his church without a guide.

CHAP. IV. V. 1—9. The predictions in the foregoing ch. concerning the ruin of Eli's house, here begin to be fulfilled; how long after, does not appear; but it was not long. With such sinners God often makes quick work.

The first words, *Samuel's words came to all Israel*, seem not to have any reference to the following story, as if it was by any direction of Samuel's, that the Israelites went out against the Philistines; had they consulted him, it might have stood them in more stead than the ark did; but perhaps they despised his youth, and he did not as yet interpose in public affairs; nor do we find any mention of his name henceforward, till some years after; (*ch.* 7: 3.) only *his word came to all Israel;* i. e. the piously disposed, from all parts, had recourse to him as a prophet, and advised with him. Perhaps, it is meant of his prophecy against the house of Eli, that was generally known and talked of, and all that were serious and observing, compared the events here related, when this came to pass, with that prophecy, and saw it accomplished in them.

I. This war with the Philistines, *v.* 1. was to throw off their yoke, and would have succeeded better, had they first repented and reformed, and so begun their work at the right end. It is computed, this was about the middle of the 40 years' dominion of the Philistines over Israel, (Judg. 1: 31.) soon after the death of Samson; so Patrick, who thinks the slaughter he made at his death, might encourage this attempt: but Lightfoot reckons it 40 years after Samson's death, for so long Eli judged, *v.* 18.

But sin, the accursed thing, was in the camp, and gave their enemies all the advantage against them, they could wish for, *v.* 2.

II. The measures they concerted for another engagement; a council of war was called, and, instead of resolving to fast and pray, and amend their lives, so ill taught were they, (and no wonder, when they had such teachers,) that, 1. They quarrelled with God for appearing against them; (*v.* 3.) *Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us?* They needed not to go far to find out the cause of God's displeasure; it was plain enough Israel had sinned, though they were not willing to see it and own it. Note, The foolishness of man perverts his way, and then his heart *frets against the Lord*, and finds fault with Him. 2. They imagined they could oblige Him to appear for them the next time, by bringing the ark into their camp. So they sent to Shiloh for the ark, and Eli had not courage enough to oppose it, but sent his ungodly sons, Hophni and Phinehas, along with it, at least permitted them to go, though he knew that wherever they went, the curse of God went along with them. Now see here, (1.) The profound veneration they had for the ark. It was, by institution, a visible token of God's presence; and now they thought, by paying great respect to it, they should prove themselves to be Israelites indeed, and effectually engage God Almighty to appear in their favor. Note, It is common for those that have estranged themselves from the vitals of religion, to discover a great fondness for the ritual and external observance of it; for those that even *deny the power of godliness*, care not to have, but to have in admiration, the form of it. And yet indeed they did but make an idol of the ark, and looked upon it to be as much an image of the God of Israel, as those which the heathen worshipped, were of their gods. To worship the true God, and not to worship Him as God, is, in effect, not to worship Him at all. (2.) Their egregious folly, in thinking that if they had that in their camp, it would certainly *save them out of the hands of their*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We, who are favored with the written Word, and the public preaching of the Gospel by ministers of varied talents and endowments, can scarcely conceive how greatly our forefathers, in days of ignorance and persecution, valued a Bible, or the opportunity of hearing a faithful sermon; and how much numbers still value them in different parts of the world. (*Deut.* 31: 10—13.) This should teach us to be thankful, and to improve our privileges, lest the Lord should show us their *preciousness*, by the *loss* of them.—He disposes of his special favors in wise and holy sovereignty, without confining Himself to age, station, or office in his church; but He orders every thing so as to correct or punish such as offend Him, and to 'honor those who honor Him.'—Docility, diligence, and a humble, self-denying disposition in youth, are happy indications of an honorable and useful life.—Young persons ought to behave with assiduous and attentive kindness to the aged; and to show a submissive respect to their superiors, even when faulty, and under divine rebukes. But no deference to men, because every way superior to themselves, must influence those, whom the Lord employs as his messengers, to conceal or mutilate their message: and they are most unwise in their spiritual concerns, who wish to be flattered; nay, who do not desire above all things to know the whole of the revealed will of God, and the worst of their own state and case.—Presumptuous hopes of impunity, because the Lord is long-suffering, ruin multitudes who postpone repentance till God hath 'sworn in his wrath that they shall not enter into his rest.'—If temporal sufferings may be so terrible, as to 'cause the ears of all who hear of them to tingle,' what will be the everlasting punishment of the wicked! Let us then humble ourselves before God, ere the door of mercy be for ever shut: let us accept of his chastisement; submit to his sovereignty; cast ourselves on his mercy, and seek his salvation; and study to show our repentance, not only by good words, but by good works; even restraining others from sin, and even *frowning* upon them, and faithfully improving every talent committed to us. SCOTT.

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courage, vigor, or even authority, to execute punishment on his sons, who would now set him at defiance. (2 *Sam.* 3: 38, 39. 2 *Chr.* 33: 15—17.) SCOTT.

(18.) *Whit.*] 'From the Anglo-Saxon *wiht*, signifying a person or thing.' GREENF.

Verses 19—21.

Samuel, it seems, was after this frequently favored with revelations from God, which he delivered to the people: and as these were punctually accomplished, his appointment to be 'a prophet of the LORD,' was known and acknowledged, throughout the land. (*M. R.*) 'The word of the LORD,' may either mean, an audible voice from God; or the appearance of Him, 'whose name is called the WORD OF GOD.' SCOTT.

(19.) *Words.*] 'Either of Samuel, or of God, which is the same.' PATRICK.—*Words fall.*] 'A metaphor taken from arrows shot out of a bow, which hit the mark,' so *Patrick*; or, 'from precious liquors, which, where spilled, are useless and ineffectual,' so *Poole*; or, from things which by falling perish, as glass or water,' so *Assemb. Ann.* ED

NOTES.

CHAP. IV. V. 1. Some are of opinion, that these events happened about the middle of the 40 years, during which the Philistines oppressed Israel: but on that supposition, Samson must have been born at least 20 years before that oppression began, which does not accord with the narrative: (*Notes, Judg.* 13: 1, 4, 5.) and if his exploits only made way for the defeats recorded in this chapter; how could it

all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside [a] Eben-ezer: and the Philistines pitched in [b] Aphek.

2 And the Philistines [c] put themselves in array against Israel: and when * they joined battle, [d] Israel was smitten before the Philistines; [e] and they slew of † the army in the field about four thousand men.

3 And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, [f] Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to-day before the Philistines? [g] Let us ‡ fetch [h] the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that when it cometh among us, [i] it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

4 So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, [k] which dwelleth *between* [l] the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, [m] Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there [n] with the ark of the covenant of God.

5 And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, [o] all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.

6 And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, [p] What *meaneth* the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp.

7 And the Philistines [q] were afraid; for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Wo unto us! for there hath not been such a thing § heretofore.

8 Wo unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these *are* the Gods that [r] smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

9 [s] Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, [t] as they have been to you: ‖ quit yourselves like men, and fight.

10 And the Philistines fought, and [u] Israel was smitten, and they fled [x] every man into his tent; and there was [y] a very great slaughter: for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.

a 5:1. 7:12.
b 29:1. Josh. 19:30. 1 Kings 20:30.
c 17:8,21.
* Heb. *the battle was spread.*
d Josh. 7:5—8,12. Ps. 44:9,10.
e Ps. 79:7,8. 106:40,41. Lam. 3:40.
† Heb. *the army.*

enemies, and bring victory back to their side. Moses prayed, when the ark set forward; but here were no proper means used to engage God to favor them; what good then would the ark do them, the shell without the kernel? God had plainly enough intimated in his law, that when they were settled in Canaan, his ark should be settled in the place He should choose, (Deut. 12: 5, 11.) and that they must come to it, and not it to them. How then could they expect any advantage by it, when they had not a just and legal possession of it, nor any warrant to stir it from its place? Instead of honoring God by what they did, they really affronted Him. Nay, had there been nothing else to invalidate their expectations, how could they expect it should bring a blessing, when Hophni and Phinehas brought it? It would have given too much countenance to their villany, had the ark done any kindness to Israel, while in the hands of those graceless priests.

III. The camp of Israel, when the ark was brought into it, *v.* 5. Now, sure of victory, they gave a triumphant shout, as if the day was without fail their own, intending by this to animate themselves and to intimidate their adversaries. The two armies lay so near, that the Philistines heard the shout of the Israelites. They soon understood what it was they triumphed in, (*v.* 6.) and were afraid of the consequences. Natural conscience suggests this, that those are in a woful condition, who have God against them; yet see what gross notions they had of the divine presence, as if the God of Israel was not so much in the camp before the ark came thither; which may very well be excused in them, since the notions the Israelites themselves had of that presence were no better. In the days of old, it had wrought wonders, *v.* 8.

Here they were as much out in their history as in their divinity; the plagues of Egypt were inflicted before the ark was made, and before Israel came into the wilderness; but some confused traditions they had of wonders wrought by or for Israel, when this ark was carried before them, which they attributed, not to Jehovah, but to the ark; taking the ark for God, as well they might, when the Israelites themselves idolized it. Yet it should seem they scarcely believed themselves, when they spoke thus formidably of *these mighty gods*, but only bantered; for, instead of retreating, or proposing conditions of peace, they stirred up one another to fight so much the more stoutly; (*v.* 9.) the commanders inspiring bold and generous thoughts in the minds of their soldiers, when they bid them remember how they had lorded it over Israel, and what an intolerable grief and shame it would be, if they flinched now, and suffered Israel to lord it over them.

V. 10—11. Here is a short account of the issue of this battle.

I. Israel was smitten, the army dispersed, and totally routed, not retiring into the camp as before, (*v.* 2.) when they hoped to rally again, but returning to their tents, every man shifting for his own safety, and making the best of his way home, desparing to make head any more, and 30,000 slain in the field of battle, *v.* 10. they failed, for *the Rock had sold them.* A good cause often suffers for the sake of the bad men that undertake it. External privileges will secure none that abuse them, and do not live up to them. The ark in the camp will add nothing to its strength, when there is an Achan in it.

II. The ark itself was taken by the Philistines; and Hophni and Phinehas, who, it is likely, kept close to it, and when it was in danger, ventured far in the defence of it, because by it they got their living, were *both slain*, *v.* 11. To this sad event the Psalmist refers; (Ps. 78: 61, 64.)

f Deut. 29:24. Ps. 74:1,11. Is. 50:1,2. 58:3.
g 14:18. Num. 31:6. Josh. 6:4,5. 2 Sam. 15:25. Is. 1:11—15. Jer. 7:4,8—15. Matt. 3:9,10.
‡ Heb. *take unto us.*
h Num. 10:33. Deut. 31:26. Josh. 4:7. 1 Chr. 17:1. Jer. 3:16. Heb. 9:4.
i Jer. 7:8—11. Am. 5:21,22. Matt. 23:25—28. Rom. 2:28,29. 1 Cor. 10:1—5. 2 Tim. 3:5. 1 Pet. 3:21. Jude 5.
k 2 Sam. 6:2. 2 Kings 19:15. Ps. 80:1. 99:1.
l Ex. 25:18—22. Num. 7:89.
m 2:12—17,22. Ps. 50:16,17. Mal. 1: 9. Acts 19:15,16.
n Num. 4:5, 15.
o Judg. 15:14. Job 20:5. Jer. 7:4. Am. 6:3. Mic. 2:11.
p Ex. 32:17,18.
q Ex. 14:25. 15:14—16. Deut. 32:30.
§ Heb. *yesterday*, or *the third day.*
r Ex. 7:5. 9:14. Ps. 78:43—51.
s 2 Sam. 10:12. 1 Cor. 16:13. Eph. 6: 10,11.
t Deut. 28:47,48. Judg. 10:7. 13:1. Is. 14:2. 33:1.
‖ Heb. *be men.*
u 2. Lev. 26:17. Deut. 28:25. Ps. 78: 9,62.
x 2 Sam. 20:1. 1 Kings 12:16. 22:36. 2 Kings 14:12.
y 2 Sam. 18:7. 2 Chr. 13:17,28. 5,6. Is. 10:3—6.

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be said, tha the began to deliver Israel?—Others, however, think that the 40 years, during which the Philistines oppressed Israel, ended about seven months after Eli's death, when the ark of God was restored: and in that case the subsequent oppression by the Philistines must be considered, as distinct from that mentioned in the book of Judges. The chronology of these times is, in fact, to us abstruse and uncertain. [See *Hales'* table, vol. 1, p. 330.] (*Notes*, *Judg.* 3: 11. 11: 26.)—Perhaps Samuel was at this time about 20 years of age.
SCOTT.

And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.] 'This clause certainly belongs to the preceding ch. So the Vulg. Sept. Syr. and Arabic.' Dr. A. CLARKE.—*Ebenezer.*] 'This name was not given till more than 20 years after this battle. See ch. 7: 12. another proof that this book was compiled *after* the time and transactions it records.'
ID.

Aphek.] 'In Judah, and is probably Aphekah, Josh. 15: 53. it must be distinguished from that near Jezreel, and another in Asher.'
GREENF.

Verse 3.

These elders seem to have been miserably sunk in ignorance and formality, which was the genuine consequence of the impiety of the priests. Though the nation was ripe for dreadful judgments, they had no idea that the defeat they had received was intended as a warning to repent; and they proposed a very ignorant and presumptuous expedient to secure the assistance of JEHOVAH. But not only papists, by worshipping the bread, but protestants, by trusting in the outward and visible sign, to the neglect of the inward and spiritual grace; do much as did the Israelites here, in trusting to the mere presence of the ark. (*M. R.* i.)
SCOTT.

'It was customary with all nations to take their *gods* and *sacred ensigns* with them to war.'
Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 4, 5.

Hophni and Phinehas were, doubtless, much pleased with the service, and proud of coming as the supposed deliverers of Israel, bearing the ark of the covenant. (*Notes*, *Lev.* 10: 1—3.)—It is very doubtful, whether it was ever lawful to carry the ark into the army, without the express command of God. (14: 16—23. 2 *Sam.* 11: 10, 11.)
SCOTT.

Verses 7—9.

The Philistines probably thought, that JEHOVAH was indeed a God, the God of Israel; but then so was dagon a god, the god of Philistia. (5: 1, 2. *Judg.* 16: 23, 24.) This therefore did not destroy their hope of gaining the mastery by the help of their god; and it tended on this occasion to increase their intrepidity and resolution. (*M. R.*)
ID.

Verse 10.

Footmen.] 'Horsemen are not mentioned, either because they had few or none. God having forbidden the multiplication of horses. Deut. 17: 16. and the Philistines having taken away what they had: or because they had fled away, whilst the footmen were more easily overtaken.'
POOLE.

11 And [z] the ark of God was taken, and [a] the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, * were slain.

12 And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day, [b] with his clothes rent, and [c] with earth upon his head.

13 And when he came, lo, Eli [d] sat upon a seat by the way-side, watching: for [e] his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city and told *it*, all the city cried out.

14 And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, [f] What *meaneth* the noise of this tumult? and the man came in hastily, and told Eli.

15 Now Eli was [g] ninety and eight years old; [h] and his eyes † were dim, that he could not see.

16 And the man said unto Eli, I *am* he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army. And he said, [i] What ‡ is there done, [k] my son?

17 And the messenger answered and said, [l] Israel is fled before the Philistines: and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people; and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead; and the ark of God is taken.

18 And it came to pass, [m] when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward, by the side of the gate, and [n] his neck brake, and he died; for he was an old man, and heavy: and he had judged Israel forty years.

19 ¶ And his daughter-in-law, Phinehas's wife, was with child, *near* to § be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of the God was taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains ‖ came upon her.

20 And about the

z 2:32. Ps. 78:61.
a 2:34. Ps. 78:64. Is. 3:11.
* Heb. *died.*
b 2 Sam. 1:2.
c Josh. 7:6. 2 Sam. 13:19. 15:32. Neh. 9:1. Job 2:12.
d 1:9.
e Josh. 7:9. Neh. 1:3,4. Ps. 79:1—9. 137:4—6.
f 6.
g 3:2. Ps. 90:10.
h *See on* Gen. 27:1.
† Heb. *stood.*
i 2 Sam. 1:4.
‡ Heb. *is the thing?*
k *See on* 3:6. Josh. 7:19.
l 10,11. 3:11.
m 21,22. Ps. 26:8. 42:3,10. 69:9. Lam. 2:15—19.
n 2:31,32. 3:12,13. Lev. 10:3. 1 Cor. 11:30—32. 1 Pet. 4:17,18.
§ Or, *cry out.*
‖ Heb. *were turned.*

1. The slaughter of the priests, considering their bad character, was no great loss to Israel, but it was a dreadful judgment on the house of Eli. The word which God had spoken, was fulfilled in it, *ch.* 2: 33, 34. *The Lord is known by those judgments which He executeth.* It is true, the sword devours one as well as another, but these were waited for of the sword, marked for vengeance. They were out of their place; what had they to do in the camp? When men leave the way of their duty, they shut themselves out of God's protection. But this was not all; they had betrayed the ark, by bringing it into danger, without a warrant from God, and this filled the measure of their iniquities. But, 2. The taking of the ark was a very great judgment on Israel, a certain token of God's hot displeasure against them. Now they are made to see their folly in trusting to external privileges, when their wickedness had forfeited them. Now they are convinced God will not be prescribed to by vain and foolish men, and that though He has bound us to his ark, He has not bound Himself to it, but will rather deliver it into the hands of his sworn enemies, than suffer it to be profaned by his false friends, and countenance their superstition. Let none think to shelter themselves from the wrath of God, under the cloak of a visible profession, for there will be those cast into utter darkness, that have *eaten and drunken in Christ's presence.*

V. 12—18. Tidings are here brought to Shiloh of the fatal issue of the battle. Ill news flies fast. No place was so nearly concerned as Shiloh; thither therefore an express posted away immediately: as it was a man of Benjamin, the Jews fancy it was Saul; *he rent his clothes, and put earth upon his head;* by these signs to proclaim to all that saw him as he ran, the sorrowful news, and to show how much himself was affected with it, *v.* 12. Here we are told,

I. How the city received it. *Eli sat in the gate, v.* 13, 18. but the messenger was loath to tell him first, therefore passed him by, and told it in the city, with all the aggravating circumstances; and now *both the ears of every one that heard it, tingled*, as was foretold; their hearts trembled, and every face gathered blackness. *All the city cried out, v.* 13. and well they might; for besides that this was a calamity to all Israel, it was a particular loss to Shiloh, and the ruin of that place. For though the ark was soon rescued out of the hands of the Philistines, yet it never returned to Shiloh again; their candlestick was removed out of its place, because they had *left their first love*, and their city dwindled, and sunk, and came to nothing. Now God *forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh*, they having driven Him from them; and the tribe of Ephraim, which had for 340 years been blessed with the presence of the ark in it, lost the honor, Ps. 78: 60, 67.) and, some time after, it was transferred to the tribe of Judah, the *mt. Zion which He loved*, as it follows there, *v.* 68. because the men of Shiloh knew not *the day of their visitation.* This abandoning of Shiloh, Jerusalem is long after reminded of, and bid to take warning by, *Go see what I did to Shiloh.*

II. What a fatal blow it was to old Eli. 1. Though old, blind, and heavy, yet he could not keep his chamber, when sensible the glory of Israel lay at stake, but placed himself by the way-side, to receive the first intelligence; for *his heart trembled for the ark of God, v.* 13. And now the threatening comes to his mind, that he should *see an enemy in God's habitation; ch.* 2: 32. and perhaps his heart reproached him for not using his authority, to prevent the carrying of the ark into the camp. Note, All good men lay the interests of God's church nearer their hearts, than any secular interest or concern of their own, and cannot but be in pain and fear for them, if, at any time, they are in peril. How can we be easy, if the ark be not safe? 2. With what grief he received the tidings. He is told, there is an express come from the army, who relates the story to him very distinctly, and with great confidence, having himself been an eye-witness of it, *v.* 16, 17. He does not interrupt the narrative with any passionate exclamations, though it informs of the defeat of the army, of the death of his two sons, but waits to hear of the ark; and if the messenger could but have said, 'Yet the ark of God is safe, and we are bringing that home,' his joy for that would have overcome his grief for all the other disasters, and have made him easy; but when the messenger concludes his story with, *The ark of God is taken*, he is struck to the heart, his spirits fail, and, it should seem, he swooned away, fell off his seat, and partly with the fainting, and partly with the fall, he died immediately, and never spoke a word more. What pious Israelite can live with any comfort when God's ordinances are removed? Farewell all in this world, even life itself, if the ark be gone So fell the high priest and judge of Israel, when he had lived within two of 100 years, and judged Israel about 40 years; thus did his sun set under a cloud, thus were the folly and wickedness of sons whom he had indulged, his ruin at last. Thus does God sometimes set marks of his displeasure on good men in this life, who have misconducted themselves, that others may hear, and fear, and take warning.

V. 14—22. We have here another melancholy story that carries on the desolations of Eli's house. The tidings cost the wife of Phinehas her life, (though young,) as well as her father-in-law; for many a *green* head, as well as many a *hoary* head, has been brought by sorrow to the grave; it work-

Verse 11.

'It is likely (so Josephus) Eli parted with the ark from the tabernacle very reluctantly, but, when he could not help it, charged his sons rather to die than lose it.' PATRICK.

Verse 12.

Clothes rent, &c.] 'These were signs of *sorrow* and *distress* among all nations.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 13—18.

Eli's death, under a divine rebuke for his sins, has been a salutary warning to others, even to this present day: yet, in the circumstances of it he testified his supreme regard to the honor of God, and the interests of religion, above all personal and relative considerations; and notwithstanding all his faults, he died in a lively exercise of love to God and his ordinances, and even by occasion of it. SCOTT.

(18.) 'Samuel seems to have been a judge only in the south-west of Israel.' DODD.

Seat—backward.] This was probably a stone seat, like those still common at the gates in the east,—sometimes shaded by trees or rendered refreshing by the vicinity of a fountain. Some, thinking, needlessly, that the seat had a back to it, find difficulty in explaining this very plainly told event. Should it be objected, that Eli was old, a judge needing a throne, &c. we may refer to the law of Persia, even, which forbids any but the king alone to have a back to his movable seat. ED.

Verses 19—22.

The presence and ordinances of God were the chief glory of Israel; and the loss of them was the departure of that glory. But if the wife of Phinehas supposed the Lord had finally departed from Israel, she greatly mistook. From Shiloh indeed the ark, the glory of Israel, was finally removed; for probably the inhabitants of that city had too much resembled the abandoned priests; as is generally the case, when such examples of sacerdotal impiety and profligacy are exhibited: but it was restored to Israel, and established in another place. (*Ps.* 78: 61—64, 67—69. *Jer.* 7: 12—15.) Neither was the ruin of Eli's family the destruction of the Aaronic priesthood. (2: 35, 36.) SCOTT.

time of her death, the women that stood by her, said unto her, [p] Fear not, for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, * neither did she regard *it*.

21 And she named the child † I-cha-bod, saying, [p] The glory is departed from Israel: (because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law, and her husband:)

22 And she said, [q] The glory is departed from Israel; for the ark of God is taken.

CHAP. V.

The Philistines place the ark in the temple of Dagon at Ashdod, 1, 2. Dagon falls down before it, and is broken in pieces, 3—5. The Philistines are smitten with emerods at Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron, when the ark is brought to those cities, 6—12.

AND the Philistines [a] took the ark of God, and brought it from [b] Ebenezer unto [c] Ashdod.

2 When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of [d] Dagon, and set it by Dagon.

3 And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, [e] Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the earth, before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and [f] set him in his place again.

4 And when they arose early on the morrow-morning, behold Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD; and [g] the head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands, *were* cut off upon the threshold; only ‡ *the stump of* Dagon was left to him.

eth death. I. She was of a very tender spirit. The amazing news coming at this unhappy juncture, it put her into labor, as great frights or other strong passions sometimes do. Those who are drawing near to that needful hour, have need to treasure up for themselves comforts from the covenant of grace, to balance, not only the usual sorrows, but any thing extraordinary, that may add to the grief which they do not foresee. Faith, at such a time, will keep from fainting. Ps. 27: 13. She was of a very gracious spirit, *v.* 22. *She said, The glory is departed from Israel;* not lamenting so much the sinking of that particular family to which she was related, as the general calamity of Israel in the captivity of the ark. This, this was it, that was her grief, her death. The women that attended her, who, it is likely, were some of the first rank in the city, encouraged her, thinking her concern was mostly about the issue of her pains, *but she answered not, neither did she regard it.* The sorrows of her travail, had she had no other, would have been *forgotten, for joy that a man child was born into the world.* But what is that joy, to one that feels herself dying? No joy but that which is spiritual and divine, will stand us in any stead then; death is too serious a thing to admit the relish of an earthly joy, it is all flat and sapless then. What is it to one that is lamenting the loss of the ark? Small comfort could she have of a child born in Israel, in Shiloh, when the ark is gone, and is a prisoner in the land of the Philistines.

II. This made her give her child a name which should perpetuate the remembrance of the calamity, and her sense of it. *Where is the glory?* Or, *Alas for the glory!* or, *There is no glory;* (*v.* 21.) which she thus explains with her dying lips, (*v.* 22.) '*The glory is departed from Israel; for the ark of God is taken.* Never let the name of an Israelite, much less a priest, carry glory in it any more, now that the ark is taken.' Note, (1.) The purity and plenty of God's ordinances, and the tokens of his presence in them, are the glory of any people, much more so than their wealth, and trade, and interest among the nations. (2.) Nothing is more cutting, more killing, to a faithful Israelite, than the want and loss of these. If God go, the glory goes, and all good goes. Wo unto us, if He depart!

CHAP. V. V. 1—5. I should have thought the next news would have been, that all Israel, from Dan to Beer-sheba, had gathered together as one man, with a resolution to bring back the ark, or die in the attempt: but we find no motion of that kind, so little zeal or courage was there left. Nay, we do not find that they desired a treaty with the Philistines about the ransom of it, or offered any thing in lieu of it; 'It is gone, and let it go.' If the ark will help itself, it may, for they will not help it. Unworthy they were of the name of Israelites, that could thus tamely part with the glory of Israel. God would therefore take the work into his own hands, and plead his own cause, since men would not appear for Him.

Here is, I. The Philistines' triumph over the ark; they were the more pleased, the more proud, to be masters of it now, because, before the battle, they were possessed with a great fear of it. God restrained them, that they did not offer any violence to it; and whether their curiosity led them to open it, and to read what was written on the two tables of stone in it, we are not told; perhaps they looked no further than the golden outside, and the cherubims that covered it, like children that are more affected with the fine binding of their Bibles, than with the precious matter contained in them. They carried it to Ashdod, one of their five cities, and that in which Dagon's temple was; there they placed it, *by Dagon, v.* 2. Either, as a sacred thing, they designed to pay some religious respect to, in conjunction with Dagon; for the gods of the heathen were never looked upon as averse to partners: or, rather, as a trophy of victory, in honor of Dagon, to whom, no doubt, they intended to offer a great sacrifice, as when they had taken Samson; (Judg. 16: 23, 24.) boasting, that as then they had triumphed over Israel's champion, so now over Israel's God. What a reproach this to God's great name! But so it is, because God

o Gen. 35:17,18. John 16:21.
* Heb. *and set not her heart.* Ps. 77:2.
† That is, *Where is the glory?* Or, There is *no glory.* 14:3.
p Ps. 26:8. 73:24. 106:20. Jer. 2:11. Hos. 9:12.
q Ps. 137:5,6. John 2:17.

a 4:11,17,18,22. Ps. 78:61.
b 4:1. 7:12.
c Josh. 11:22. Acts 8:40. *Azotus.*
d Judg. 16:23. 1 Chr. 10:10. Dan. 5: 2,23. Hab. 1:11,16.
e Ex. 12:12. Ps. 97:7. Is. 19:1. 46:1, 2. Zeph. 2:11. Mark 3:11. Luke 10:18—20. 2 Cor 6:14—16.
f Is. 40:20. 41:7. 44:17—20. 46:7. Jer. 10:3.
g Is. 2:18,18. 27:9. Jer. 10:11. 50:2. Ez. 6:4—6. Dan. 11:8. Mic. 1:7.
‡ Or, *the fishy part.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

God will rather let his avowed enemies triumph for a season, than encourage hypocrites, whose crimes still more dishonor his holy name.—The most avowed infidels and atheists, and the most atrocious and desperate offenders, have their pangs of conviction and disquietude of mind: with all their efforts, they cannot utterly exclude forebodings of fatal effects from their rebellion against the God of heaven; and though they conceal and quiet this apprehension for a time, and even prosper in their ungodliness; yet their fear will come upon them, and even far worse than they ever foreboded. (*Prov.* 10: 24.)—When death, in its most formidable shape, finds men humbled for their sins, crying for mercy, and more anxious for the cause of God and truth, than for the most valued earthly comforts, it will eventually prove a blessing; yea, every dispensation is mercy, which rescues the immortal soul from hell. (*P. O. Dan.* 4: 28—37.)—What miseries do some ungodly men entail on all connected with them! And what an awful lesson is here for parents, who are tempted to connive at the first appearances of vice in their children! Let them reflect on Eli's death, on the far more dreadful condition of his sons, on the dying agonies and sorrows of Phinehas's wife, on the slaughter of Israel, the ark taken captive, 'the glory departed,' and Shiloh forsaken; and let them tremble to think 'how great a matter a little fire kindleth.' (2 *Kings* 11: 1, 2. 2 *Chr.* 13: 1. 19: 2. 21: 3, 4.)—'In the midst of life we are in death:' some situations, however, peculiarly remind those who are placed in them to be ready for a sudden call; and few more than pregnancy.—Though the glory may successively be withdrawn from sinful nations, cities, or villages; yet it shall never depart from Israel, but shall shine forth in one place, when it has been eclipsed in another: for Jesus, our High Priest, ever liveth to maintain his own cause, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against his church; whatever may be the triumphing boasts of his enemies, or the desponding fears of his people. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. V. V. 1, 2. Besides the other wickedness of Israel, the idolatry of the Danites yet remained unpunished and unrepressed: and this might be one reason why the Lord was pleased to deliver his ark into the hand of these idolaters. (*Judg.* 18: 30, 31. 20: 8—11, 20—25.) SCOTT.

(1.) *Ashdod.*] 'Called Azotus by the Greeks, was one of the 5 satrapies of the Philistines, and a place of great strength and consequence. It was situated near the Mediterranean, between Ashkelon and Jamnia, 34 ms. N. Gaza, according to *Diod. Sic.* and the Antonine and Jerusalem Itineraries. It is now called *Shdood;* and Dr. *Richardson* says they neither saw nor heard of any ruins there. "The ground," he observes, "around Ashdod is beautifully undulating, but not half stocked with cattle. The site of the town is on the summit of a grassy hill; and, if we are to believe historians, was anciently as strong as it was beautiful." GREENF.

'Bp. *Wilson* observes, that in this ch. all the attributes of God are displayed: his *justice*, in punishing his own people for their sins; his *goodness*, in thus manifesting Himself to them that knew Him not; his *power*, in making the idols fall before Him; his *truth*, in vindicating Himself upon the Israelites for their sins, and the Philistines for their idolatry and false gods.' BOOTHR.

Verse 4.

Head and hands.] 'The former, the seat of wisdom; the latter, the instruments of action.' POOLE.

5 Therefore [h] neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, [i] tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day.

6 ¶ But [k] the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with [l] emerods, *even* Ashdod, and the coasts thereof.

7 And when the men of Ashdod [m] saw that *it was* so, they said, [n] The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and [o] upon Dagon our god.

8 They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, [p] What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto [q] Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about *thither*.

9 And it was *so*, that after they had carried it about, [r] the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction: and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, [s] and they had emerods in their secret parts.

10 Therefore they sent the ark of God to [t] Ekron. And it came to pass as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to * us, to slay us and our people.

11 So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay † us not, and our people: for there was [u] a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.

12 And the men that [x] died not were smitten with the emerods; and will show of how little account the ark of the covenant is, if the covenant itself be broken and neglected: so it is for a time, that God may have so much the more glory, in reckoning with those that thus affront Him, and get Him honor upon them. Having punished Israel that betrayed the ark, by giving it into the hands of the Philistines, He will next deal with those that abused it, and will fetch it out of their hands again. Thus even the *wrath of man shall praise Him;* and He is bringing about his own glory, even then when He seems to neglect it, Ps. 76: 10.

II. The ark's triumph over Dagon. 1. Once and again, Dagon was made to fall before it. Great care was taken in setting up the images of their gods, to fix them; (the prophet notices it, Isa. 41: 7. 46: 7.) Note, The kingdom of Satan will certainly fall before the kingdom of Christ, error before truth, profaneness before godliness, and corruption before grace, in the hearts of the faithful. When the interests of religion seem to be run down, and ready to sink, yet even then we may be confident the day of their triumph will come. Great is the truth, and it will prevail.

2. The priests that found their idol on the floor, make all haste, before it be known, to set him in his place again. A sorry, silly thing to make a god of, which, when he was down, wanted help to get up again; and sottish wretches those, that could pray for help from that idol that needed, and, in effect, implored, their help. But they are resolved Dagon shall be their god still, and therefore set him up in his place. Bishop Hall observes hence, It is just with God, that those who want grace, shall want wit too; and it is in the power of superstition to turn men into the stocks and stones they worship. *They that make them, are like unto them.* What is it that the great upholders of the anti-christian kingdom are doing at this day, but heaving Dagon up, and laboring to set him in his place again, and healing the deadly wound that has been given to the beast; but if the reformation be the cause of God, before which it has begun to fall, it shall not prevail, but shall surely fall before it.

3. The next night Dagon fell the second time, *v.* 4. and, to their great confusion, they find his case now worse than before; the head and hands were *cut off from the threshold.* So that nothing remained but the stump, or, as the marg. *the fishy part* of Dagon; for (as many learned men conjecture) the upper part of this image was in a human shape, the lower, in the shape of a fish; as mermaids are painted. An admirable figure, very ridiculous, and worthy to be despised, Dagon made now, when the fall had anatomized him, and showed how the human part and the fishy part were artificially put together, which, perhaps, the ignorant devotees had been made to believe was done by miracle. His losing his head and hands, proved him utterly destitute both of wisdom and power, either to advise or act for them. *Gird yourselves,* but *ye shall be broken to pieces.*

4. The threshold of Dagon's temple was ever after looked upon as sacred, and not to be trodden on, *v.* 5. Some think reference is had to this superstitious usage of Dagon's worshippers, (Zeph. 1: 9.) where God threatens to punish those, who, in imitation of them, leaped over the threshold. One would have thought this should have convinced the Philistines of their folly, in worshipping such a senseless thing, and that henceforward they should have paid their homage to the Conqueror; but, instead of being reformed, they were hardened in their idolatry, and, as *evil men and seducers* are wont, became *worse and worse.* Instead of despising Dagon, for the threshold's sake that beheaded him, they are almost ready to worship the threshold, because it was the block on which he was beheaded; shaming those who *tread under foot the blood of the covenant,* and trample on things truly sacred. Yet this superstition would help perpetuate the remembrance of Dagon's disgrace; for, with the custom, the reason would be transmitted to posterity. Thus God would have honor, even out of their superstition.

V. 6—12. The downfall of Dagon, if the people had made a good use of it, might have prevented the vengeance God here proceeds to take on them for the indignities done to his ark, and their obstinate adherence to their idol, in defiance of the plainest conviction. If they will not see the glory, they shall feel the weight, of God's hand, for so the Philistines did; (*v.* 6.) and He not only convinced them of their folly, but severely chastised their insolence.

1. *He destroyed them,* i. e. cut off many by sudden death, those, we may suppose, that had most triumphed in the captivity of the ark. This is distinguished from the disease with which others were smitten. At Gath, it is called *a great destruction,* (*v.* 9.) *a deadly destruction, v.* 11. And it is expressly said, (*v.* 12.) that those who were *smitten with the emerods, were the men that died not* by the other *destruction,* which, probably, was the pestilence. Note, Those that contend with God, his ark, and his Israel, will infallibly be ruined by it at last. If conviction conquer not, destruction shall.

2. Those that were destroyed, *He smote with emerods,* (*v.* 6, 9, 12.) Ps. 78: 66. both a painful and shameful disease; a vile disease for vile deserts; by it God would humble their pride, and put contempt on them, as they had on his ark. The disease was epidemical, and, perhaps, among them, a new disease.

3. The men of Ashdod were soon aware it was *the hand of God, the God of Israel, v.* 7. And thus constrained to acknowledge his power and dominion, and themselves within his jurisdiction, yet they would not renounce Dagon, and submit to Him; but rather, now that He touched their bone and their flesh, they were ready to curse Him, to his face; and, instead of making their peace with Him, and courting the stay of his ark on better terms, they desired to get clear of it, as the Gadarenes, when they had lost their swine, desired Christ to *depart out of their coasts.* Carnal hearts, when they smart under the judgments of God, would rather, if it were possible, put Him far from them, than enter into covenant and communion with Him, and make Him their friend.

4. 'What,' they say, 'shall we do with the ark?' At last, it was agreed it should be carried to Gath. Some superstitious conceit they had, that the fault was in the place, and the ark would be better pleased with another lodging, further off from Dagon's

h Ps. 115:4—7. 135:15—18.
i Josh. 5:15. Zeph. 1:9.
k Ex. 9:3. Ps. 32:4. Acts 13:11.
l 9,11. 6:5. Deut. 28:27. Job 31:3. Ps. 78:66.
m 4:8. Ex. 8:8,28. 9:28. 10:7. 12:33.
n 6:20. 2 Sam. 6:9. 1 Chr. 13:11—13. 15:13.
o *See on* 3,4.—Jer. 46:25. 48:7.
p Zech. 12:3.
q 17:4. Amos 6:2.
r 6. 7:13. 12:15. Deut. 2:15. Am. 5:19. 9:1—4.
s 6. 6:4,5,11. Ps. 78:66.
t Josh. 15:45. Judg. 1:18. 2 Kings 1:2. Am. 1:8.
* Heb. *me, to slay me and my people.*
† Heb. *me not, and my people.*
u Is. 13:7—9. Jer. 48:42—44.
x 1 Kings 19:17. Am. 5:19.

Verse 5.

Unto this day.] 'Hobbes and such-like writers frame an argument, (here-from) that this book was not written by Samuel, not considering that these things happened when Samuel was but a youth, and that this was written when he was old; so that there was a considerable space of time between them.' PATRICK.

Verses 6—12.

The emerods are supposed to have been the worst sort of disease, now called *the piles.*—['Probably the *bleeding piles;* which appear to have been accompanied with dysentery, bloody flux, and ulceration.' DR. A. CLARKE.—'It appears to be a corrupt spelling of hemorrhoides.' HEWLETT.] While the Israelites were so degenerate, as to make no attempt for the recovery of this sacred symbol of JEHOVAH'S gracious presence, and indeed were utterly unworthy of being honored in such a service; He Himself rendered the Philistines willing to send back the ark; and so over-ruled these events, as to expose idolatry to the deepest contempt, and to convince the obstinate idolaters, that they could not profane his sacred institutions with impunity. (*Notes, Josh.* 7: 6—9. *Ps.* 115: 1, 2.) SCOTT.

[y] the cry of the city went up to heaven.

CHAP. VI.

At the end of seven months the Philistines consult about sending back the ark, 1—9. They bring it on a new cart, with oblations, to Beth-shemesh, 10—18. The Beth-shemites are smitten for looking into it, 19,20. They send to the men of Kirjath-jearim to fetch it, 21.

AND [a] the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months.

2 And the Philistines [b] called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the LORD? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place.

3 And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not [c] empty; but in any wise return him [d] a trespass-offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be [e] known to you, why his hand is not removed from you.

4 Then said they, What *shall be* the trespass-offering which we shall return to him? They answered, [f] Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, *according to* the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague *was* on * you all, and on your lords.

y Ex. 12:30. Is. 15:3—5. Jer. 25:34. 48:3.
a 5:1,3,10,11. Ps. 78:61.
b Gen. 41:8. Ex. 7:11. Is. 47:12. Dan. 2:2. 5:7. Matt. 2:4.
c Ex. 23:15. 34:20. Deut. 16:16.
d Lev. 5:6,15—19. 6:6. 7:1—7.
e 9. 5:7,9,11.
f 5,17,18. 5:6,9. Ex. 12:35. Josh. 13:3. Judg. 3:3.
* Heb. *them.*

temple; therefore, instead of returning it, as they should have done, to its own place, they contrive to send it to another place. *Gath* is pitched upon, but the men of that city were smitten, *both small and great*, (*v.* 9.) dwarfs and giants; all alike to God's judgments; none so great as to overtop them, none so small as to be overlooked by them.

5. The ark had the tables of the law in it; and nothing more welcome to faithful Israelites than the Word of God; to them it is a *savor of life unto life:* but to uncircumcised Philistines, that persist in enmity to God, nothing more dreadful or unwelcome; to them it is *a savor of death unto death.* Note, God can easily make Jerusalem a burdensome stone to all that heave at it. Zech. 12: 3.

CHAP. VI. V. 1—9. The first words of the chapter tell us how long the ark was in captivity *in the country* or *field* (so the original) *of the Philistines;* from which some gather that, having tried it in all their cities, and found it a plague, they at length sent it into the open fields, upon which, mice (*v.* 5.) sprang up out of the ground in great multitudes, and destroyed the corn which was now nearly ripe, and marred the land. So God let them know, that, wherever they carried the ark, so long as they carried it captive, they should find it a curse to them. But most take it to signify, as we render it, *The country of the Philistines.* Now, 1. Seven months *Israel was* punished with the *absence* of the ark, that special token of God's presence. A melancholy time, no doubt, to the good people, particularly Samuel; but they had this comfort, as we have in like distress, when deprived of public ordinances, that, wherever the ark is, *the Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven*, and by faith and prayer we may have access with boldness to Him there. 2. Seven months the *Philistines* were punished with the *presence* of the ark; so long it was a plague to them, because they would not send it home sooner. Note, Sinners lengthen out their own miseries, by obstinately refusing to part with their sins. Egypt's plagues had been fewer than ten, had not Pharaoh's heart been hardened not to let the people go.

But at length it is determined the ark must be sent back, there is no remedy, they are undone if they detain it.

1. The priests and the diviners are consulted, *v.* 2. as supposed best acquainted both with the rules of wisdom, and the rites of worship and atonement. And the Israelites being their neighbors, and famed above all people for the institutions of their religion, they had, no doubt, the curiosity to acquaint themselves with their laws and usages; therefore it was proper to ask them, *What shall we do to the ark of Jehovah?* They give their advice very fully, and seem very unanimous in it. It was a wonder they did not, as friends to their country, give it, *officially*, before they were asked. It seems they were well acquainted with the Mosaic history, and could cite precedents out of it. This good use we should make of the remaining records of God's judgments on obstinate sinners, we should by them be warned, not to harden our hearts as they did. It is much cheaper learning by other people's experience than by our own.

2. They advise, that they should send a trespass-offering back with it, *v.* 3. Whatever the gods of other nations were, they knew the God of Israel was a jealous God, and therefore, thought to make this return. Injured justice demands satisfaction; so far natural light instructed men; but when they began to contrive what that satisfaction should be, they became wretchedly vain in their imaginations: we know but one that can take away sin.

3. They direct, that this trespass-offering should be an acknowledgment of the punishment of their iniquity; by which they might take shame to themselves, as conquered and yielding, and guilty before God, and might *give glory to the God of Israel*, as their mighty Conqueror; and most just Avenger, *v.* 5. They must make images of the *emerods* and *mice*, and so make their reproach perpetual by their own act; (Ps. 78: 66.) owning thereby the almighty power of the God of Israel, who could chastise and humble them, even in the day of their triumph. These images must be made of gold, to intimate that they would gladly purchase their peace with the God of Israel, at any rate; nor think it bought too dear with gold, *with much fine gold.* The *golden emerods* must be five, according to the *number of the lords*, who, it is likely, were all afflicted with them, and were content thus to own it: it was advised, that the *golden mice* should be five too; but because the whole country was infested with them, it should seem, on second thoughts, they sent more of them, *v.* 18. Their proposal to offer a *trespass-offering*, was conformable enough to divine revelation at that time; but to send such things as these for trespass-offerings, was very foreign, and showed them grossly ignorant of the methods of reconciliation appointed by the law of Moses; for there it appears all along, that *it is blood*, and not gold, that makes atonement for the soul.

4. They encourage them to hope, that thereby they would take an effectual course to get rid of the plague, *v.* 3. For, it seems, the disease ob-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord may for a season permit his cause to be run down, in order to expose the hypocrisy, to undermine the vain confidence, or to chastise the wickedness, of his professed people: for He knows how, without any human help, and in defiance of all enemies, to recover it from the ruins, and to establish it in greater splendor; and this may account for the successes of infidels and atheists, through so many countries, which have long professed Christianity, but have corrupted and disgraced it. But the short-lived triumphings of the wicked, on such occasions, will terminate in their deeper disgrace, and more dreadful punishment.—Men may be convinced by the judgments of God, that He is a terrible enemy, and that it is in vain to contend with Him; and they may be constrained to render Him a feigned submission: (*Ps.* 66: 1—3. 81: 14, 15.) but nothing, except his renewing grace, will produce genuine repentance, faith, and love, and conversion from every idol to his worship and service. It is equally dangerous to oppose those partial revivals of true religion, which take place from age to age: for the ark of God will cause every Dagon to fall down before it, till all of them be broken in pieces.—The zeal and pertinacity, with which the grossest idolatries and most stupid superstitions have been supported against the cause of God and truth, display the blindness of fallen man's understanding, as much as the depravity of his affections.—Thus, convinced sinners also, with perverse assiduity, set up again those false confidences and worldly idols, which seemed to be thrown down under the preaching of the Gospel: or when the old delusion will no longer soothe their consciences, they exchange it for another equally absurd, as long as they continue to love sin, and to hate the spiritual service and humbling truth of God. But when Christ, the true Ark of the covenant, really enters the heart of fallen man, (which is indeed Satan's temple,) all idols will fall before his presence and power; every endeavor to set them up again will be in vain; all iniquity will be forsaken; all unrighteous gain restored; and the Lord will claim and possess the throne. Yet pride, self-love, and worldly lusts, though dethroned and crucified, still remain within us. Let us then watch and pray against their prevalency; let us seek to have them more entirely destroyed; and let us consider death, through the mercy of God, and the grace of the Gospel, as attended by the final destruction of our worst enemy, 'the sin that dwelleth in us.' SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI. V. 1. It was far more honorable to the Lord, to constrain the Philistines to send back the ark of their own accord, than that war should wrest it, or money ransom it, out of their hands. (*Note*, 5: 6—12.) SCOTT.

Verses 2—9.

It has been conjectured, that when the emerods and pestilence exceedingly afflicted the inhabitants of each city, to which the ark was carried, the Philistines placed it in the open field: and that then great numbers of mice began to destroy their crops and spoil the land. They were reluctant to conclude that their afflictions were from God, and framed an artful device for putting it to the trial: In short, they evinced how unwilling they were to yield, and how unable to resist. SCOTT.

(2.) *Diviners.*] 'A kind of prophets, pretending to know the will of God, and to foretell future events.' BP. PATRICK.—'In what their

5 Wherefore, ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your [e] mice that mar the land; and ye shall [h] give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will [i] lighten his hand from off you, and from [k] off your gods, and from off your land.

6 Wherefore then do ye [l] harden your hearts, as [m] the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When he had wrought * wonderfully among them, [n] did they not let † the people go, and they departed?

7 Now therefore make a [o] new cart, and take two milch-kine, [p] on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them:

8 And take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the [q] jewels of gold, which ye return him *for* a trespass-offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go.

9 And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to [r] Beth-shemesh, *then* ‡ he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that *it is* [s] not his hand *that* smote us; it *was* [t] a chance *that* happened to us.

10 ¶ And the men did so; and took two milch-kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home:

11 And [u] they laid the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods.

12 And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh, *and* went along the high-way, lowing as they went, and turned not aside *to* the right hand or *to* the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Beth-shemesh.

13 And *they of* Beth-shemesh *were* reaping

g Ex. 8:5,17,24. 10:14,15. Joel 1:4—7. 2:25.
h Josh. 7:19. Ps. 18:44. 66:3. *Marg.* Is. 42:12. Jer. 3:13. 13:16. Mal. 2: 2. John 9:24. Rev. 11:13. 16:9.
i 5:6,11. Ps. 32:4. 39:10.
k 5:3,4,7. Ex. 12:12. Num. 33:4. Is. 19:1.
l Job 9:4. Ps. 95:8. Rom. 2:5. Heb. 3:13.
m Ex. 7:13. 8:15. 9:16,17,34,35. 10: 3. 14:17. 15:14—16.
* Or, *reproachfully.*
n Ex. 12:31—33.
† Heb. *them.*
o 2 Sam. 6:3. 1 Chr. 13:7.
p Num. 19:2.
q 4,5.
r Josh. 15:10. 21:16.
‡ Or, if.
s Is. 26:11.
t 2 Sam. 1:6. Ec. 9:11. Luke 10:31.
u 2 Sam. 6:3. 1 Chr. 13:7. 15:13—15.

That cattle unaccustomed to the yoke should draw so even, so orderly, and still go forward; that without any driver, they should go from home, to which all tame creatures have a natural inclination, and from their own calves, to which they had a natural affection; that, without any director, they should go the straight road to Beth-shemesh, a city eight or ten miles off, never miss the way, never go aside into the fields to feed themselves, nor turn back home to feed their calves: they went on lowing for their young ones, by which it appeared that they had not forgotten them, but that nature was sensible of the grievance of going from them; the power of the God of nature therefore appeared so much the greater, in overruling one of the strongest instincts of nature. These two kine, says Lightfoot, knew their Owner, their great Owner, (Isa. 1: 3.) whom Hophni and Phinehas knew not; to which I may add, they brought home the ark, to shame the stupidity of Israel, that made no attempt to fetch it home. God's providence is conversant about the motions even of brute creatures, and serves its own purposes by them. The lords of the Philistines, with a suitable retinue, no doubt, went after them, wondering at the power of the God of Israel; thus they who thought to triumph over the ark, were made to go like menial servants after it.

III. How it was welcomed to the land of Israel, *v.* 13. They were going on with their worldly business, in no care about the ark; made no inquiries what was become of it; but were as careless as the people that *ceiled their own houses*, and *let God's house lie waste.* Note, God will, in his own time, deliver his church, though fought against by its enemies, and neglected by its friends. Some observe, that the returning ark found the men of Beth-shemesh not idling or sporting in the streets of the city, but busy, reaping their corn: thus the tidings of the birth of Christ were brought to the shepherds, when they were *keeping their flock by night.* The devil visits idle men with his temptations; God visits industrious men with his favors. 1. When the reapers *saw the ark*, (*v.* 13.) their joy for that was greater than

V. 10—18. We are here told,

I. How the ark that was carried into the land of the Philistines, a trophy of their victory, carried back with it trophies of its own, and lasting monuments of the disgrace of the Philistines. Note, God will be no loser in his glory, at last, by the successes of the church's enemies against the ark, but will get Him honor from those that seek to do Him dishonor.

II. How the kine brought it to the land of Israel, *v.* 12. This was a wonderful instance of the power of God over the brute creatures, and, all things considered, no less than a miracle.

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pretended art consisted we do not know.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(4.) *Golden emerods and mice.*] 'It was a very ancient usage, when a plague or other calamity infected a country, for the magicians to form an image of the *destroyer*, or of things on which the plague particularly rested, in gold, silver, ivory, wax, &c. under certain configurations of the heavens: and to set this up in some proper place, that the evils thus represented might be driven away. These consecrated images were the same that are called *talismans* or *telesms* among the Asiatics.' Dr. A. CLARKE.—'These astrologers, [diviners *v.* 2.] who knew the history of the Israelites, see *v.* 6. had perceived that this God had been pleased with the brazen serpent which Moses set up upon a pole in the wilderness.' DODD.

'*Herodotus* seems to have had some knowledge of this history; but has assigned another cause. He says, the Scythians having plundered the temple of Askalon, a celebrated city of the Philistines, the goddess who was worshipped there afflicted them with a peculiar disease. The Philistines, perhaps, thus related the story; but it evidently passed for truth, that this disease was ancient, and had been sent by some avenging deity. . . . The heathen frequently offered to their gods [as *Roberts* asserts they do in India now] figures representing those parts of the body which had been diseased; and such kinds of *ex votis* are still frequent in Catholic countries; being consecrated in honor of some saint, who is supposed to have wrought the cure: they are images of wax or of metal, exhibiting those parts of the body in which the disease was situated.'

ROBINSON'S CALM.

Respecting this judgment inflicted on the Philistines, JAHN dissents entirely from the common view, that it was *dysentery*, or *hæmorrhoides*, see note, ch. 5: 6. and, following *Lichtenstein* in Eichhorn's Bibliothek, supposes the word rendered *mice*, *v.* 5, 11, 18. to mean *venomous solpugas*, a species of spider, yet so large, and so similar in form to mice, as to admit their being denominated by the same word. 'They destroy,' he says, 'and live upon, scorpions. They also bite men, whenever they can have an opportunity. The probable supposition then is, that *solpugas* were at this time multiplied among the Philistines, by the special providence of God, and that, being very venomous, they were the means of destroying many individuals.

ED.

Mice.] 'Some think the *jerboa*, or field-mouse, which does vast damage by eating the sprouts of young corn. *William* of Tyre records, that in the 12th century a penitential council was held at Naplouse, where 25 canons were framed to correct the manners of the Christian kingdom of Jerusalem, who they apprehended had provoked God to bring upon them the calamities of earthquakes, war, and famine. This last he ascribes to locusts and devouring *mice*, which had for 4 years together so destroyed the fruits of the earth, as to cause almost a total failure of their crops.' GREENF.

(7.) *Milch-kine.*] From this it appears, that *cows* were wont to be used in the labors of agriculture, as well as bulls and asses. See *Jahn.*

ED.

(8.) *Jewels.*] 'The golden emerods and mice.'—*By the side.*] 'They durst not open the ark to put them into it.' ASSEMB. ANN.

(9.) *Chance.*] 'This word is often used improperly, to signify such an occurrence as is not under the divine government; but properly signifies an event that naturally arises from such concurring causes as, in the order and nature of things, must produce it.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 10—16.

The presumption of the Philistines, in requiring this additional proof of JEHOVAH'S power, was very great; but it was over-ruled

their wheat-harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see *it*.

14 And the cart came into the field of Joshua a Beth-shemite, and stood there, where *there was* a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and [v] offered the kine a burnt-offering unto the LORD.

15 And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that *was* with it, wherein the jewels of gold *were*, and put *them* on the great stone: and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt-offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD.

16 And when [x] the five lords of the Philistines had seen *it*, they returned to Ekron the same day.

17 And these *are* the golden emerods, which the Philistines returned *for* a trespass-offering unto the LORD; [y] for Ashdod one, [z] for Gaza one, [a] for Askelon one, [b] for Gath one, [c] for Ekron one.

18 And the golden mice, *according to* the number of all the cities of the Philistines *belonging* to the five lords, *both* of fenced cities, and of country-villages, even unto the * great *stone of* Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD; *which stone remaineth* unto this day in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite.

19 And [d] he smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had

v 7:9,17. 11:15. 20:29. Ex. 20:24. Judg. 6:26. 21:4. 2 Sam. 24:18,25. 1 Kings 18:30—38.
x 4,12. Judg. 3:3. 16:5,23—30.
y 5:1. 2 Chr. 26:6. Jer. 25:20. Zech. 9:6.
z Judg. 16:1,21.
a Judg. 1:18. Zech. 9:5.
b 5:8. 2 Sam. 1:20. 21:22. Am. 6:2.
c 5:10. 2 Kings 1:2. Am. 1:8.
* Or, *great stone*.
d Ex. 19:21. Lev. 10:1—3. Num. 4:4, 5,15,20. Deut. 29:29. 2 Sam. 6:7. Col. 2:18. 1 Pet. 4:17.

the joy of harvest. Note, The return of the ark, and the revival of holy ordinances, after days of restraint and trouble, cannot but be matter of great joy to every faithful Israelite.

2. They offered up the kine for a burnt-offering, using the wood of the cart for fuel; (*v.* 14.) which probably, the Philistines intended, when they sent them, should be a part of their trespass-offering, to make atonement, *v.* 3, 7. However, the men of Beth-shemesh thought it proper to use them, because it was by no means fit they should ever be put to any other use; and, no doubt, they were accepted, though the animals were females, whereas, in strictness, every burnt-offering was to be male.

3. They deposited the ark, with the chest of jewels the Philistines presented, on the great stone in the open field. The intrinsic grandeur of instituted ordinances ought not to be diminished, in our eyes, by the meanness and poverty of the place where they are administered.

4. They offered the sacrifices of thanksgiving to God, some think, on the great stone, more probably, on an altar of earth made for the purpose, *v.* 15. And the case being extraordinary, the law for offering at the altar in the court of the tabernacle was dispensed with, and the more easily, because Shiloh was now dismantled. Beth-shemesh, though it lay within the lot of the tribe of Dan, yet belonged to Judah, so that this accidental bringing of the ark hither, was an indication of its designed settlement there, in process of time. Ps. 78: 67, 68. It was one of those cities assigned out of the lot of Judah to the *sons of Aaron*, Josh. 21: 16. Whither should the ark go, but to a priest's city? And it was well they had those of that sacred order ready, (for though they are here called *Levites*, (*v.* 15.) yet it should seem they were priests,) both to take down the ark, and to offer the sacrifices.

V. 19—21. Here is, 1. The sin of the men of Beth-shemesh, *v.* 19. Every Israelite had heard great talk of the ark, and been possessed with a profound veneration for it; but they had been told, it was lodged within a veil, and even the high priest himself might not look upon it but once a year, and then through a cloud of incense. Perhaps, this made many say, (as we are apt to covet what is forbidden,) they would give a great deal for a sight of it. Some of these Beth-shemites, we may suppose, for *that* reason *rejoiced to see the ark*, (*v.* 13.) more than for the sake of the public. Yet this did not content them; they would go further, and take off the covering, and look into it; under pretence of seeing whether the Philistines had not taken the two tables out of it, or some way damaged them; but really to gratify a sinful curiosity of their own, which intruded into things God had thought fit to conceal from them. Note, It is a great affront to God, for vain men to pry into, and meddle with, the secret things which belong not to them, Deut. 29: 29. Col. 2: 18. We were all ruined by an ambition of forbidden knowledge. What made this looking into the ark a great sin, was, it proceeded from a very low and mean opinion of the ark. The familiarity they had with it, on this occasion, bred contempt and irreverence. Perhaps, they presumed on their being priests; but the dignity of the ministerial office will be so far from excusing, that it will aggravate, a careless and irreverent treatment of holy things. They should, by their example, have taught others to keep their distance, and look on the ark with a holy awe. Perhaps, they presumed on the kind entertainment they had given it, and the sacrifices they had now offered to welcome it home with; but let no man think that service done for God will justify him in any instance of disrespect or irreverence toward the things of God. Or, it may be, they presumed on the present mean circumstances the ark was in, newly come out of captivity, and unsettled; now that it stood upon a cold stone, they thought they might make free with it; they should never have such another opportunity of being familiar with it. But it is an offence to God, if we think meanly of his ordinances, because of the mean manner of their administration. Had they looked with an understanding eye on the ark, and not judged purely by outward appearance, they would have thought it never shone with greater majesty than now, when it had triumphed over the Philistines, and come out of its house of bondage (like Christ out of the grave) by its own power; had they considered this, they would not have looked into it thus, as a common chest.

2. Their punishment for this sin; *He smote the men of Beth-shemesh, many of them, with a great slaughter.* How jealous is God for the honor of his ark! *He smote* 50,000 *and* 70 *men*. This account of their numbers smitten, is expressed in a very unusual manner in the original, which, beside the improbability that so many should be guilty, and so many slain, occasions many learned men to question, whether we take the matter right. In the original it is, *He smote in* (or among) *the people, threescore and ten men;* 50,000 *men*. The Syriac and Arabic read it, 5,070 *men;* the Chaldee, 70 *men of the elders, and* 50,000 *of the common people*. 70 *men as valuable as* 50,000 so some, because they were priests. Some think the 70 were the Beth-shemites slain for looking into the ark, and the 50,000 those slain by the ark, in the land of the Philistines. *He smote* 70 *men*, that is, 50 *out of a thousand;* which was one in 20, a half decimation; so some understand it. The Septuagint read it much as we do, *He smote* 70 *men, and* 50,000 *men*. Josephus says only 70 were smitten.

3. The terror struck upon the men of Beth-shemesh, by this severe stroke, *v.* 20. Some think, it bespeaks their murmuring against God, as if He had dealt hardly and unjustly with them. Instead of quarrelling with themselves, and their own sins, they quarrelled with God and his judgments; as *David was displeased*, in a case not much unlike, 2 Sam. 6: 8, 9. I rather think it bespeaks their awful and reverent adoration of God, as the Lord God, as a holy Lord God, a God before whom none is able to stand. Thus they infer from the tremendous judgment, 'Who is able to stand before the God of the ark?' To stand before God to worship Him, blessed be his name, is not impossible; we are through Christ invited, encouraged, and enabled to do it; but to stand before God, to contend with Him, we are not able.

4. Their desire, hereupon, to be rid of the ark, *v.* 20. They begin to be as weary of it as the Philistines had been; whereas, if they had treated it with due reverence, who knows, but it might have taken up its residence among them, and they had all been blessed for the ark's sake? But thus, when the Word of God works with terror on sinners' consciences, they, instead of taking the blame and shame to themselves, quarrel with the Word, and put that from them, Jer. 6: 10. Thus do foolish men run from one extreme to the other, from presumptuous boldness to slavish shyness. Kirjath-jearim, i. e. *the city of woods*, belonging to Judah; (Josh. 15: 9, 60.) it lay in the way from Beth-shemesh to Shiloh; so that when they sent to them to fetch it, we may suppose they in-

for the manifestation of his glory, and to their deeper condemnation in still cleaving to idolatry.—Placing the ark on a great stone, rather than taking it into their houses, or preparing a tent for it, seems to have been improper. The inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim gave it a different reception, and were accepted in so doing. (7: 1, 2.)
SCOTT.

Verse 18.

It seems evident, that no more than five golden mice were sent (4); but the inhabitants of the villages, as well as of the cities, contributed to the expense.—The great stone of *Abel*, or *weeping*, being so called, probably, on account of the mourning of the people over those who were smitten (19), seems to have been the boundary, at that time, between the land of the Philistines and that of Israel. SCOTT.

Abel.] Rather *Aben* (stone); so the Sept. Chal and 4 mss.
BOOTHR.

Verses 19—21.

The number, [i. e. of the slain] as it stands in our version, is so very large, to be found in one small city, and the expression in the original is so uncommon, that it is generally allowed some mistake is made. The passage may be rendered, 'He smote ... seventy men,

looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men. And the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten *many* of the people with a great slaughter.

20 And the men of Beth-shemesh said, [e] Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and [f] to whom shall he go up from us?

21 And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of [g] Kirjath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD; come ye down, *and* fetch it up to you.

CHAP. VII.

The ark is removed to Kirjath-jearim, and remains there a long time, 1, 2. At Samuel's exhortation the Israelites repent, and humble themselves before God at Mizpeh, 3—6. The Philistines prepare to assault them: but, while Samuel prays and sacrifices, the Lord discomfits them with thunder before Israel, 7—11. Samuel calls the place Eben-ezer, and sets up a stone for a memorial, 12. The Philistines are subdued, and Samuel judges Israel, 13—17.

AND the men of [a] Kirjath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of [b] Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified

e Num. 17:12,13. 2 Sam. 6:9. 1 Chr. 13:11—13. Mal. 3:2. Luke 5:8. 8: 37.
f 5:8—12.
g Josh. 18:14. Judg. 18:12. 1 Chr. 13: 5,6. Ps. 78:60. Jer. 7:12—14.
a 6:21. Josh. 18:14. 2 Sam. 6:2. 1 Chr. 13:5,6. Ps. 132:6.
b 2 Sam. 6:3,4. 1 Chr. 13:7.

tended that thence the elders of Shiloh should fetch it, but God intended otherwise. Thus was it sent from town to town, and no care taken of it by the public; a sign there was no king in Israel.

CHAP. VII. V. 1—2. 1. We here attend the ark to Kirjath-jearim, to hear no more of it, till David fetched it thence, above 40 years after, (1 Chron. 13: 6.) except once. The Beth-shemites were no better pleased to be rid of it, than they were to receive it. Note, The judgments of God on those who profane his ordinances, should not make us afraid of the ordinances, but of profaning them, and making an ill use of them. But, at Kirjath-jearim,

2. They carefully provided (for the decent entertainment of the ark.) (1.) A proper place to receive it; no public building, but the house of Abinadab, which stood upon the highest ground, and, probably, was the best in their city; or, perhaps, the master of it was the most eminent man they had for piety, and best affected to the ark. None of the men of Beth-shemeth, though a city of priests, received it into his house; but the men of Kirjath-jearim, though common Israelites, gave it house-room, and, no doubt, the best furnished room in the house. Note, God will find a resting place for his ark; if some will not receive it, others will; and even Christ and his apostles preached from house to house, when they could not have public places at command. Sometimes priests are ashamed and outdone in religion by common Israelites. (2.) A proper person to attend it; *Eleazar*, not the father, because aged and infirm, or pressed with the care of his house and family; but the son, probably a very pious, devout young man, zealously affected toward the best things; his business was to keep the ark, not only from being seized by malicious Philistines, but from being touched or looked into by too curious Israelites. He was to keep the room clean and decent, in which the ark was, that, though an obscure place, it might not look neglected and unlooked after. It does not appear that this Eleazar was of the tribe of Levi, much less of the house of Aaron, nor was it needful he should be, for there was no altar either for sacrifice or incense, only we may suppose some devout Israelites would come and pray before the ark, and those that did so, he was there ready to attend and assist. For this purpose, they sanctified him, i. e. (by his own consent,) obliged him to make this his business, and to give a constant attendance to it; they set him apart for it in the name of all their citizens. This was irregular, but excused by reason of the present distress. When the ark is but newly come out of captivity, we cannot expect it to be, of a sudden, in its usual solemnity, but must take things as they are, and make the best of them.

3. The time of its continuance here in this remote place was long, very long; *v.* 2. It was very strange, that, all the time Samuel governed, the ark was never brought to its place in the holy of holies, an evidence of the decay of holy zeal among them. God suffered it to be so, to punish them for their neglect of the ark when it was in its place; and to show that the great stress which the institution laid on the ark, was but typical of Christ, and those *good things to come, which cannot be moved*, Heb. 9: 23.—12: 27. It was a just reproach to the priests, that not one of their order was sanctified to keep the ark.

4. Twenty years of the time were passed, before the house of Israel was sensible of the want of the ark. The Sept. read it, somewhat more clearly than we do; *And it was* 20 *years, and* (i. e. when) *the whole house of Israel looked up again after the Lord.* While it was absent from the tabernacle, the token of God's special presence was wanting, nor could they keep the day of atonement, as it should be kept; but so it was: they were content with the altars without the ark; so easily can formal professors rest satisfied in a round of external performances, without any tokens of God's presence or acceptance. But at length they bethought themselves, and began to lament after the Lord, stirred up to it, probably, by Samuel's preaching, with which an extraordinary working of the Spirit of God set in. A general disposition to repentance and reformation now appears throughout all Israel, and they begin to *look unto Him whom they had slighted, and to mourn.* Lightfoot thinks this was a matter and time as remarkable as almost any we read of in Scripture; and that that great conversion, Acts 2. and 3. is the only parallel to it. Note, True repentance and conversion begin in lamenting after the Lord; we must be sensible that by sin we have provoked Him to withdraw, and are undone if we continue in a state of distance from Him: and be restless till we have recovered his favor, and obtained his gracious returns. It was better with the Israelites, when they wanted the ark, and were lamenting after it, than when they had the ark, and were prying into it, or priding themselves in it. Better see people longing in the scarcity of the means of grace, than loathing in the abundance of them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Those convictions, which spring from terror without humiliation, never produce more than a reluctant and submissive obedience: and the indignant hearts of proud rebels avail themselves of every pretence to ascribe afflictions to *chance*, rather than to the hand of God, and to infer that it is not absolutely necessary to part with every sin.—If correction be withdrawn, while the heart is thus disposed, the respite proves an encouragement to proceed in transgression: if the affliction be continued after a partial amendment, this is deemed an argument that repentance and reformation are useless. Thus every dispensation of Providence eventually occasions increasing guilt and condemnation.—Faith alone, appropriating the information of the sacred Scriptures, can discover what oblation God will accept, or in what way He will be approached by his sinful creatures. (*Mic.* 6: 6—8.)—Many appear joyful at the revival of religion, and favorable to its truths and ordinances, who are too busy about the world to be at much trouble or expense about them: and numbers unite in external observances, who have no inward reverence for the Divine Majesty. —The true glory of religion consists in its spiritual excellency: and that simplicity, which the carnal mind despises, forms its highest ornament.—We are not under the same dispensation as Israel was; yet 'our God is still a consuming fire,' and must be 'worshipped with reverence and godly fear.' (*Heb.* 12: 26—29.) Instead of this reverence, the carnal heart substitutes a slavish fear; and when rebuked for presumption and contempt, or alarmed with discoveries of the justice and holiness of God, it will, with the Gadarenes, or these Beth-shemites, request the Savior to depart, and vainly seek to escape the Lord's displeasure, by an entire forgetfulness of Him. (*Matt.* 8: 33, 34.) In like manner, numbers, alarmed by the danger of 'eating and drinking unworthily' in the Lord's supper, vainly expect security, by habitual and wilful disobedience to the dying command of Him, whom they still continue to call their Lord and their Savior. (1 *Cor.* 11: 23—34.) In these ways, many smother up and silence their convictions, and put away salvation from them; and by running into one extreme or another, the very truths and ordinances of God, which are the means of life and salvation to some, become the occasion of deeper condemnation to others. SCOTT.

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even fifty *out of* a thousand men;' which suppose that about 1400 persons were present, and that a twentieth part was slain: and this appears to be the genuine meaning of the passage. The Beth-shemites were not duly humbled for their offence; but they were so terrified, that, like the Philistines, they wanted to have the ark removed from them, and solicited the men of Kirjath-jearim to fetch it; though that was not a city of the priests. (*M. R. e. Num.* 17: 12, 13. 2 *Sam.* 6: 3—11.) SCOTT. 'This explanation,' says *Carpenter*, 'proposes to insert a letter into the text; but, without that, on the principle of Arabic notation, (note, Num. 1: 44—47.) it may mean 1170 men.' ED.

(19.) *Smote.*] '*Taylor* doubts if any died, and certainly *smiting* does not always imply death. The orig. is applied to striking a flesh-hook into a pot, 2: 14. and in Ex. 7: 25. to smiting the Nile: frequently also to smiting with blindness, Gen. 19: 11.—with pestilence, &c. Num. 14: 12.—with emerods, 1 Sam. 5: 6.' COTT. BIB.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII. V. 1, 2. Kirjath-jearim lay in the road between Beth-shemesh and Shiloh. (*M. R.* a.) It does not appear that Abinadab, and Eleazar his son, were either priests or Levites; though some expositors take it for granted that they were. But it may be questioned, whether an intended neglect of that tribe, for their ungodliness and wickedness, was not shown on this occasion; so that no notice was taken of them in a matter, which otherwise peculiarly and entirely belonged to them.—Here, however, the ark remained, till David removed it in the beginning of his reign over all Israel: (2 *Sam.* 6: 2, 3.) but it is not agreed how many years intervened, certainly many

Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

2 And it came to pass while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel [c] lamented after the LORD.

3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do [d] return unto the LORD with all your hearts, *then* [e] put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and [f] prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and [g] serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

4 Then the children of Israel did put away [h] Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.

5 And Samuel said, [i] Gather all Israel to [j] Mizpeh, and [k] I will pray for you unto the LORD.

6 And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and [l] drew water, and poured *it* out before the LORD, and [m] fasted on that day, and said there, [n] We have sinned against the LORD.

And Samuel [o] judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

[*Practical Observations.*]

V. 3—6. We may well wonder where Samuel was, and what he was doing, all this while, for we have not had him so much as named till now, since *ch.* 4: 1. Not as if he were unconcerned, but his labors are not mentioned, till there appears the fruit of them. When he perceived they began to *lament after the Lord*, two things he endeavored to do for them.

I. To separate between them and their idols, for *there* reformation must begin, *v.* 3. Going, as it should seem, from place to place, (for we find not that they were gathered together till *v.* 5.) wherever he came, this was his exhortation, '*If you do indeed return to the Lord*, as you seem inclined to do, then know,' 1. 'You must renounce and abandon your idols, *put away the strange gods*, for God will admit no rival; put them away, each one for himself, nay, put them *from among you*, do what you can, in your places, to rid them out of the country. Put away Baalim, the strange gods, and Ashtaroth the strange goddesses,' Or, Ashtaroth is particularly named, because the best beloved idol. True repentance strikes at the darling sin, and will, with a peculiar zeal and resolution, put away that; the sin which most *easily besets us*. 2. 'You must make a solemn business of returning to God, and do it with serious consideration and steadfast resolution, for both are included in *preparing the heart*, directing, disposing, establishing, the heart unto the Lord.' 3. 'You must be entire for God, for Him and no other, *serve Him only*, else you do not serve Him at all, so as to please Him.' 4. 'This is the only way, and a sure way, to prosperity and deliverance. For it was because you forsook Him, and served other gods, that He delivered you into the *Philistines'* hands.' This was the purport of Samuel's preaching, and it had a wonderfully good effect, *v.* 4. Hos. 13: 8. Isa. 30: 22.

II. To engage them for ever to God and his service.

1. He summons all Israel, at least by their elders, as representatives, to meet him at Mizpeh, (*v.* 5.) and there he promised to pray for them. Note, Ministers should pray for those to whom they preach, that God by his grace would make the preaching effectual. And when we come together in religious assemblies, we must remember, it is as much our business to join in public prayers, as it is to hear a sermon. Ministers would profit their people more, if they did but pray more for them.

2. They obey his summons, and appear well disposed, *v.* 6. *They poured out water before the Lord;* signifying, their humiliation and contrition for sin: the Chaldee reads it, *They poured out their hearts in repentance before the Lord*, their earnest prayers and supplications to God, for mercy: and their universal reformation; they thus expressed their willingness to part with all their sins. Israel is now *baptized from their idols:* so Lightfoot. And some think it signifies their joy in the hope of God's mercy, which Samuel had assured them of. This ceremony was used with that signification at the feast of tabernacles, John 7: 37, 38. and see Isa. 12: 3. Taking it in this sense, it must be read, *They drew water after they had fasted.* In the close of their humiliation they thus expressed their hope of pardon and reconciliation. *They fasted*, abstained from food, afflicted their souls; so expressing repentance, and exciting devotion. They made a public confession, *We have sinned;* so giving glory to God, and taking shame to themselves. And if we thus confess our sins, we shall find our God *faithful and just to forgive us our sins.*

3. Samuel judged them at that time in Mizpeh; i. e. he assured them, in God's name, of the par-

c Judg. 2:4. Jer. 3:13,22—25. 31:9. Zech. 12:10,11. Matt. 5:4. 2 Cor. 7: 10,11.
d Deut. 30:2—10. 1 Kings 8:48. Is. 55:7. Hos. 6:1,2. 14:1. Joel 2:13.
e Gen. 35.2. Josh. 24:14,23. Judg. 2: 13. 10:6.
f Deut. 30:6. 1 Chr. 22:19. 28:9. 2 Chr. 30:19. Prov. 16:1. Jer. 4:3,4. Ez. 18:31. Matt. 15:8.
g Deut. 6:13. 10:20. 13:4. Matt. 4: 10. 6:24. Luke 4:8.
h 3. Judg. 2:11,13. 10:15,16. 1 Kings 11:33. Hos. 14:3,8.
i Neh. 9:1. Joel 2:16.
j 12,16. 10:17. Josh. 15:38. Judg. 20:1. 2 Kings 25:23.
k 12:23.
l 1:15. Job 16:20. Ps. 6:6. 42:3. 119: 136. Jer. 9:1. Lam. 2:11,18. 3:49.
m 2 Chr. 20:3. Ezra 8:21—23. Neh. 9:1—3. Dan. 9:3. Joel 2:12. Jon. 3:
n Lev. 26:40. Judg. 10:10. 1 Kings 8: 47. Ezra 9:5—10. Job 33:27. 40:4. 42:6. Ps. 38:3—8. 106:6. Jer. 31:19. Luke 15:18.
o Judg. 3:10. Neh. 9:27. Ez. 20:4.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—6. When the stated ministers of God's Word neglect their duty and disgrace their profession, He will render them contemptible in the eyes of the people, (*Mal.* 2: 8, 9.) and employ others to reform religion, and uphold his worship: for it is better that external institutions should be dispensed with, than that irreligion should be permitted to diffuse its baneful influence. (*P. O.* 1 *Cor.* 11: 23—34.)—When the cause of God is deserted in one place, it will be supported in another: and, though the public and regular administration of divine ordinances is highly desirable; yet the same blessing may redound to individuals, when they are unavoidably driven into corners, and confined to private houses.—The Word of God may be faithfully preached, and other proper means used, for a long time, without producing visible or extensive effects: but those who are employed in this important service, should sow the seed in faith and hope, and water it with prayers and tears: they should be 'instant in season and out of season;' persevere without weariness or yielding to despondency, and wait the Lord's time; and their labor will not be in vain. (1 *Tim.* 4: 11—16.) Nay, perhaps, the seed, which has been long sown and considered as lost, will at length spring up with so large an increase, as to exceed their own most sanguine expectations.—It is a pleasing prospect to the faithful laborer, when he perceives men deeply convinced of their sins, and mourning under the tokens of the Lord's displeasure: and this will also afford him the long desired opportunity, of still more closely and particularly addressing their consciences; that such good impressions may not wear off through procrastination, or produce only a partial or external reformation; but that the people may be prevailed upon, to 'return to the LORD with all their hearts, and to serve Him only;' expecting all their salvation and comfort from Him, and renouncing every false dependence and worldly idol. This blessed frame of mind is the effect of divine grace, but it is *our duty;* and, in the use of means, we are required to prepare our hearts, and arm our souls with a steadfast determination thus to trust and serve the Lord. (*Acts* 11: 23, 24. 1 *Pet.* 4: 1, 2.)—When, in the first place, every one has 'taken heed to himself,' he ought next to employ his best endeavors to engage his family, and his neighbors also, in the service of God: and when those in high stations and public employments unite in using their influence and authority, in a mild, intelligent, and scriptural manner, for these purposes, the most extensive blessings may be expected. (*Note*, 2 *Chr.* 30: 12.) SCOTT.

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more than 20; so that the expression 20 *years*, clearly refers to the time that passed previously to the events recorded in the rest of this chapter.—Some learned men think that the *tabernacle* had before this been removed from Shiloh, perhaps to Nob. (21: 1.) SCOTT. 'This ch. contains the transactions of 20 years, but we know not the date of each event.' Verses 3, 4. Dr. A. CLARKE.

Few words are used, but so expressive, that we cannot hesitate to pronounce this one of the most general and effectual revivals of religion, which ever took place in the church of Israel. SCOTT.

Verses 5, 6.

(*Note*, *Judg.* 20: 1, 2.) The ceremony of 'drawing water, and pouring it out before the LORD,' might be an emblem of the effects of divine grace upon the heart: which disposes it to pour forth itself as water before the Lord, in penitential confessions, with tears of godly sorrow, and in fervent prayers and thanksgiving. (*M. R.* 1.)—Some think, the water was used in a kind of baptismal ablution or purification; others, that it was an expression of their holy joy in God; and others, that it was intended to purify the ground on which the altar was built.—On this occasion Samuel began publicly to act as judge, or chief magistrate, in settling differences; and perhaps in punishing criminals and obstinate idolaters: though he seems to have previously exercised authority in a more private manner. SCOTT.

(5.) *Gather*, &c.] It is supposed by Dr. *A. Clarke*, that this 'was an *armed* assembly; Samuel,' he remarks, 'knew, an *unarmed* assembly could not safely be convened in the vicinity of the Philistines.—The assembly was held for religio-politico-military purposes.' ED.

(6.) *Poured*, &c.] 'Pouring water was a part of the ceremonial of fasting.' DODD. *Roberts* mentions 'pouring out water' as an ancient Hindoo sacred ceremony, for *confirmation* of an oath, &c. ED. 'This exhibited the atonement and expiation of their sins, which passed away like water to be remembered no more, as *Kinchi*; or rather signified that they thoroughly renounced idolatry, that nothing of it should remain; as when water is poured out of a cask there remains no smell, as there does when other liquors are poured out.' GILL.

7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard *it*, they were [p] afraid of the Philistines.

8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, [*] Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

9 And Samuel took [q] a sucking lamb, and offered *it for* a burnt-offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel [r] cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD † heard him.

10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD [s] thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and [t] discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.

11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until *they came* under Bethcar.

12 Then Samuel [u] took a stone, and set *it* between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it ‡ Eben-ezer, saying, [x] Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

13 ¶ So the Philis-

p 13:6. 17:11. Ex. 14:10. 2 Chr. 20:3.
* Heb. *Be not silent from us from crying.* 12:19—24. Is. 37:4. 62:1,6, 7. Jam. 5:16.
q 17. 6:14,15. 9:12. 10:8. 16:2. Judg. 6:26,28. 1 Kings 18:30—38.
r Ps. 50:15. 99:6. Jer. 15:1.
† Or, *answered.*
s 2:10. 12:17. Ex. 9:23—26. Judg. 5:3,20. Ps. 18:11—14. 77:16—18. 97:3,4. Rev. 16:18—21.
t Deut. 20:3,4. Josh. 10:10. Judg. 4: 15. 5:20. Zech. 4:6.
u Gen. 28:18. 31:45—52. 35:14. Josh. 4:9,20—24. 24:26,27. Is. 19:19,20.
‡ That is, *The stone of help.* 4:1. 5: 1. Gen. 22:14. Ex. 17:15.
x Ps. 71:6,17. Is. 46:3,4. Acts 26:22. 2 Cor. 1:10.

tines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

14 And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coast thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places.

17 And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.

CHAPTER VII.

1 The ark is brought to Kirjath-jearim. 3 Samuel judges Israel. 5 He gathers them to Mizpeh, and prays for them. 7 The Philistines come against them. 10 They are discomfited by thunder. 13 Samuel's victory. 15 His judicature. 16 His circuit. 17 His house and altar.

1 And the men of Kirjath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

2 And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was *twenty* years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

4 Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.

5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD.

6 And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured *it* out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard *it*, they were afraid of the Philistines.

8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered *it for* a burnt-offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him.

10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.

11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until *they came* under Bethcar.

12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set *it* between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

14 And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coast thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places.

17 And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.

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[a] Heb. *Be not silent from us from crying.* 12:19—24. Is. 37:4. 62:1,6, 7. Jam. 5:16.
[b] 17. 6:14,15. 9:12. 10:8. 16:2. Judg. 6:26,28. 1 Kings 18:30—38.
[c] Ps. 50:15. 99:6. Jer. 15:1.
[d] Or, *answered.*
[e] 2:10. 12:17. Ex. 9:23—26. Judg. 5:3,20. Ps. 18:11—14. 77:16—18. 97:3,4. Rev. 16:18—21.
[f] Deut. 20:3,4. Josh. 10:10. Judg. 4: 15. 5:20. Zech. 4:6.
[g] Gen. 28:18. 31:45—52. 35:14. Josh. 4:9,20—24. 24:26,27. Is. 19:19,20.
[h] That is, *The stone of help.* 4:1. 5: 1. Gen. 22:14. Ex. 17:15.
[i] Ps. 71:6,17. Is. 46:3,4. Acts 26:22. 2 Cor. 1:10

RAMAH OR ARIMATHEA.—1 Sam. vii. 17.—xxv. 1.: Jer. xxxi. 15.: Matt. xxvii 57.: John xix. 38.

tines were [y] subdued, and they [z] came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was [a] against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

14 And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coast thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines: and there was [b] peace between Israel and the Amorites.

15 ¶ And Samuel [c] judged Israel all the days of his life.

16 And he went from year to year * in circuit to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places.

17 And [d] his return *was* to Ramah; for there *was* his house; and there he judged Israel; and there [e] he built an altar unto the LORD.

CHAP. VIII.

Samuel, when old, makes his sons judges; who behave ill, and give the people an occasion of desiring a king, 1—5. Samuel is displeased, and prays concerning it; but the Lord requires him to comply, and to show them the manner of a king, 6—18. They persist in their request; and Samuel by divine direction yields to them, 19—22.

AND it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he [a] made his [b] sons judges over Israel.

2 Now the name of his first-born was [c] Joel, and the name of his second Abiah: *they were* judges in Beer-sheba.

y Judg. 13:1.
z 13:1—5.
a 14:6—16,20—23. 17:49—53. 23:3—5. 31:1—7.
b Deut. 7:2,16. Judg. 4:17. Ps. 106: 34.
c 6. 12:1. 25:1. Judg. 2:16. 3:10,11.

2. In recovering the public rights, *v.* 14. By his influence, Israel had courage to demand the cities the Philistines had unjustly taken, and long detained; and the Philistines not daring to contend with one that had so great an interest in heaven, tamely yielded, and restored (some think) even Ekron and Gath, two of their capital cities, though afterward they retook them; others think, some small towns between Ekron and Gath, which were forced from the Philistines. It is added, *There was peace between Israel and the Amorites*, i. e. the Canaanites, the remains of the natives. Not that Israel made any league with them, but they were quiet; and not so mischievous as sometimes. Thus, *when a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.*

3. In administering public justice, *v.* 15, 16. *He judged Israel:* as a prophet, he taught them duty, and reproved their sins, called *judging*, Ezek. 20: 4.—22: 2. Moses judged Israel, when he *made them know the statutes of God, and his laws;* (Ex. 18: 16.) and thus Samuel judged them to the last, even after Saul was made king; so he promised them then, when Saul was inaugurated, *ch.* 12: 23. *I will* not cease to *teach you the good and right way.* As a magistrate, he received appeals from the inferior courts, and gave judgment; tried causes, and determined them, prisoners, and acquitted or condemned them, according to the law. When in his prime, he rode the circuit, kept courts at Beth-el, Gilgal, and Mizpeh, all in the tribe of Benjamin; but his constant residence was at Ramah, his father's city, and there he judged Israel, whither they resorted for justice from all parts, *v.* 17.

4. In keeping up the public exercises of religion; for at Ramah he built an altar to the Lord, not in contempt of that at Nob, or Gibeon, or wherever the tabernacle was; but divine justice having laid Shiloh waste, and no other place being yet chosen for them to bring their offerings to, (Deut. 12: 11.) he looked upon the law which confined them to one place, to be for the present suspended, and therefore, being a prophet, and under divine direction, he did as the patriarchs did, built an altar where he lived, both for the use of his own family, and for the good of the country that resorted to it. Great men should use their wealth, power, and interest, to keep up religion in the places where they live.

CHAP. VIII. V. 1—3. Two *sad* things, but not *strange*, we find here.

1. A good and useful man growing old and unfit for service, *v.* 1. Samuel is reckoned to have been now about 60, not over, and perhaps not so much; but he was a man betimes; and the fruits that are first ripe, keep the worst. He had spent his strength and spirits in the fatigue of public business, and now finds himself old and infirm. Persons in the prime of life, ought to be busy in the work of life; for as they go into years, they will find themselves less disposed to it, and less able for it.

2. The children of a good man going to naught, and not treading in his steps. Samuel had given his sons so good an education, and they had given him such good hopes, and gained such a reputation, that he made them judges, assistants awhile, and afterward deputies at Beer-sheba, remote from Ramah, *v.* 2. probably in accommodation to the southern districts: we have reason to think Samuel commissioned his sons, not because they were his, (he had no ambition to entail the government on his family, any more than Gideon had,) but because, for aught that yet appeared, they were men very fit for the trust; and none so proper to ease the aged judge, as (*other things being equal*) his own sons, who, no doubt, were respected for their good father's sake, and, having such an advantage at setting out, might soon have been great, had they been but good. But, alas! their character was the reverse of his, (*v.* 3.) and their relation to so good a man, which otherwise had been their honor, was really their disgrace. *A good extraction is a reproach to him that degenerates from it.* Note, Many that have begun well, and promised fair, so that their parents and friends have had great hopes of them, yet afterward have been the grief of those of whom they should have been the joy. When Samuel's sons were settled at a distance from him, then they discovered them-

Acts 13:20,21.
* Heb. *and he circuited.* Judg. 5:10. 10:4. 12:14. Ps. 75:2. 82:3,4.
d 1:1,19. 8:4. 19:18—23.
e 11:15. Gen. 12:7,8. 33:20. 35:7. Judg. 21:4. 1 Kings 18:30—36.
a Deut. 16:18,19. Judg. 8:22,23. 2 Chr. 19:5,6. Neh. 7:2. 1 Tim. 5:21.
b Judg. 5:10. 10:4. 12:14.
c 1 Chr. 6:28,33. *Vashni.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 7—17. The more men know of God and of themselves, the more earnestly will they desire and value the prayers of every Christian, especially of those who are most eminent for faith and holiness, and particularly in seasons of temporal or spiritual distress.—When we are employed in earnest devotion, Satan and his agents may be especially excited to assault us, as both hating our holy engagements, and envying our felicity: but they can do us no harm, unless they can affright us from our duty. Nor can any hostile preparations prevail against that nation, which, in a spirit of true repentance and reformation, and the fervent prayer of faith, has intrusted itself to the Lord's protection.—Through successive generations, the church of God has had occasion to set up EBENEZERS for renewed deliverances: for neither outward persecutions, nor internal corruptions have yet prevailed against her; because 'hitherto the LORD hath helped her;' and He will help her even unto the end of the world.—Every believer should review the records of this preservation, and these deliverances, with admiring gratitude and joyful love; and then, looking back on his own experience, he will find an abridgment of the same history. (2 *Cor.* 1: 8—11.)—At stated seasons, as at the conclusion of the year, when about to approach the Lord's table, or when we have received some remarkable mercy, we shall find it peculiarly useful thus to review our ways, and to wait upon the Lord to renew our strength: and in so doing we may hope ere long to set up our last Eben-ezer in the realms above, and to begin our eternal songs of joyful praise to Him, who hath helped us quite through, and made us more than conquerors. SCOTT.

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rejected Samuel, and Saul was made king; and the Philistines were constantly defeated by Israel, till after the death of Samuel. SCOTT.

Verse 15.

Some understand the passage as meaning, that Samuel was so diligent in the discharge of his office, that he sat to judge causes every day. SCOTT.

All the days of his life.] 'Samuel is supposed to have lived 100 years. He must have been judge 60 years, and consequently the whole of Saul's reign. He seems in many respects to have been considered the *governor of the people*, while Saul was the *general of the armies.*' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 16.

'When at *Beth-el*, Ephraim and all the N. of the country could have easy access to him; when at *Gilgal*, Benjamin, and those beyond Jordan; when at *Mizpeh*, Judah, Simeon, and Gad.' GREENF.

Verse 17.

It is very remarkable, that in this great revival of religion, the ark was neither removed to Shiloh, nor placed with the tabernacle in any other situation.—It is uncertain whether or not the sanctuary-service was carried on at Shiloh, or Nob, or elsewhere, during all this period, but probably it was either neglected, or very improperly conducted. As the ark, the glory even of the tabernacle, was departed, the more pious Israelites seem to have disregarded it; and to have preferred joining with Samuel in the sacrifices and worship, which, doubtless by divine direction, he performed near his own house. This disregard to the Levitical institutions clearly intimated, that the typical meaning formed their chief use; and, when this was overlooked, they became a lifeless carcass, by no means to be compared with repentance, faith, and love to God and man. (9: 12—14. 2 *Kings* 3: 20. *Ps.* 50: 7—15.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII. V. 1—5. As we do not find that either God or the people censured Samuel, for 'making his sons judges;' we may infer, that he had properly educated them, and that they appeared well qualified for the office, and were appointed to it for the good and by the approbation of the people. (*M. R.—Ex.* 23: 6—9. *Prov.* 17: 8, 23. *Am.* 5: 10—15. *Mic.* 3: 8—12. 7: 1—4.)—It is probable, the people in general, and especially the superior persons, were grown weary of being ruled by pious judges and prophets, raised up by God

3 And [d] his sons walked not in his ways, [e] but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.

4 Then all [f] the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,

5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now [g] make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

6 But the thing * displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel [h] prayed unto the LORD.

7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, [i] Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for [k] they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

8 According [l] to all the works which they have done, since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods; so do they also unto thee.

9 Now therefore, † hearken unto their voice; ‡ howbeit, yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them [m] the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

10 ¶ And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people, that asked of him a king.

11 And he said, [n] This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: [o] He will take your sons, and appoint *them* for himself, for his chariots, and *to be* his horsemen; and *some* [p] shall run before his chariots.

12 And he will [q] appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties, [r] and *will set them* to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.

13 And he will take your daughters *to be* confectionaries, and *to be* cooks, and *to be* bakers.

14 And he will [s] take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive-yards, *even* the best *of them*, and [t] give *them* to his servants.

d 2 Sam. 15:4. 1 Kings 12:6—11. 2 Kings 21:1—3. Ec. 2:19. Jer. 22:15—17.
e Ex. 18:21. Deut. 16:19. Ps. 15:5. 26:10. Is. 33:15. 1 Tim. 3:3. 6:10.
f Ex. 3:16. 24:1. 2 Sam. 5:3.
g 6—8. 12:17. Num. 23:9. Deut. 17: 14,15. Hos. 13:10,11. Acts 13:21.
* Heb. *was evil in the eyes of.* 41:17.

selves. Thus, many that have conducted well while under their parents' eye, when they have gone abroad into the world, and set up for themselves, have proved bad. Let none therefore be secure, either of themselves or theirs, but depend on divine grace. Many that have done well in a state of meanness and subjection, have been spoiled by preferment and power. Honors change men's minds, and, too often, for the worse. Samuel's sons were not so profane and vicious as Eli's; but, whatever they were in other respects, they were corrupt judges, they *turned aside after lucre*, after *the mammon of unrighteousness*, so the Chaldee. Note, *The love of money is the root of all evil;* pernicious in any, but especially in judges.

V. 4—22 Perhaps a kingly government had been often talked of among them by persons given to change, and that affected what looked great: but we do not find it was ever till now publicly proposed and debated. Abimelech was little better than a titular king, though he is said to reign over Israel; (Judg. 9: 22.) and perhaps his fall had rendered the title of king odious hitherto, as that of Tarquin did among the Romans.

Here is, I. The elders' address to Samuel, *v.* 4, 5. Not in a riotous, tumultuous manner, but with due respect they came to his house at Ramah with their address, containing,

1. A remonstrance of their grievances; a small thing will serve factious spirits for a color to desire a change. *Thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways.* True, Samuel was old, but he had grown old in their service, was the more wise and experienced for his age, and on that account the fitter to rule. And it was very unkind, ungrateful, nay, unjust, to cast him off when he was old. God had saved his youth from being despicable, (*ch.* 3: 20.) yet they make his old age so, which should have been counted worthy of double honor. If old people be upbraided with their infirmities, and laid aside for them, let them not think it strange. True, his sons did not walk in his ways; the more was his grief, but they could not say it was his fault; he had not, like Eli, indulged them in their badness, but was ready to receive complaints against them. And if that had been the thing desired, we may well suppose, on the making out of the charge of bribery against them, he would have superseded their commissions and punished them. But this would not content the elders, they had another project in view.

2. A petition for the redress of these grievances, by setting a king over them: *Make us a king to judge us like all the nations.* Thus far was well, that they did not rise in rebellion against Samuel and set up a king for themselves *by force;* but applied to Samuel, God's prophet, and humbly begged him to do it. But it appears by what follows, it was a bad motion, ill made, and displeasing to God. God designed them a king, a man after his own heart, when Samuel was dead; but they would anticipate God's counsel, and have one now. They had a prophet to judge them, that had immediate correspondence with Heaven, and therein they were great and happy above any nation, none having God *so nigh unto them.* Deut. 4: 7. But this would not serve, they must have a king to judge them with external pomp and power, like *all the nations.* They knew it was in vain to court Samuel to take upon him the title and dignity of a king, but he must appoint them one. They do not say, 'Give us a king that is wise and good, and will judge better than thy sons do,' but, 'Give us a king,' any body that will but make a figure. Thus foolishly did they forsake their own mercies, and, under pretence of advancing the dignity of their nation to that of their neighbors, did really thrust themselves down from their own excellency, and profane their crown by *casting it to the ground.*

II. Samuel's resentment of this address, *v.* 6. Let us see how he took it: 1. It cut him to the heart. Probably, it was a surprise to him, which made it the more grievous. When they upbraided him with his own infirmities, and his children's irregularities, he could patiently bear it, but it *displeased him when they said, Give us a king to judge us,* because that reflected on God and his honor. 2. It drove him to his knees; so making himself easy. When any thing disturbs us, it is our interest, as well as our duty, to show God our trouble, Phil. 4: 6. and He gives us leave to be humbly free with Him.

III. God's instruction. They that in straits seek to God, shall find Him nigh, and ready to direct them. He tells him,

1. What would be an allay to his displeasure. (1.) He must not think it hard, they had slighted him, for they had herein slighted God Himself, *v.* 7. Note, If God interest Himself in the indignities done us, and the contempts put on us, we may well afford to bear them patiently; nor need

h 15:11. Ex. 32:31,32. Num. 16:15, 22,46. Ezra 9:3—5. Ps. 109:4. Luke 6:11,12. Phil. 4:6. Jam. 1:5.
i Num. 22:20. Ps. 81:11,12. Is. 66:4. Hos. 13:11.
k 10:19. 12:17—19. Ex. 16:8. Matt. 10:24,25. Luke 10:16. 19:14,27. John 13:16. 15:20,21.
l Ex. 14:11,12. 16:3. 17:2. 32:1. Num. 14:2—4. 16:2,3,41. Deut. 9:24. Judg. 2:2,3,20. 4:1. 6:1. 13:1. Ps. 78:56—59. 106:14—21,34—40. Acts 7:51—53.
† Or, *obey.*
‡ Or, *notwithstanding when thou hast solemnly protested against them, then thou shalt show, &c.* Ex. 3:18.
m 11—18. 2:13. Ez. 45:7,8. 46:18.
n Deut. 17:14—20.
o 14:52. 1 Kings 9:22,23. 10:26. 12:4, 10. 2 Chr. 26:10—15.
p 2 Sam. 15:1. 1 Kings 1:5. 18:46.
q 1 Chr. 27:1—22.
r 1 Kings 4:7,22,23,27,28. 2 Chr. 32: 28,29.
s 1 Kings 21:7,19. Ez. 46:18.
t 22:7.

to reform religion. (13: 22.) So that the misconduct of Samuel's sons merely served them for an *occasion* of proposing this measure to Samuel. SCOTT.

(1.) *Made his sons judges.*] 'Some think, wrongfully in diverse respects as in that he did not consult God about it, but did it of himself, without precedent, made them chief judges, and did not depose them for mal-administration, all which was aggravated by the example of Eli, then fresh in memory.' POOLE.

(5.) *Old.*] 'They feared Samuel would not live long, and that either he through infirmity and indulgence might leave the government in his sons' hands, or that they would invade and keep it after their father's death.' ID.

Verse 7.

'These are the words of an angry sovereign, as much as to say, let them have their will.' PATRICK.

Verses 10—18.

Under the government of Moses, Joshua, and the Judges, the people had been exempt from oppression, nay, as far as can be learned by the history, even from taxes of all kinds: (12: 2—7. *Num.* 16: 15. 31: 47.) but kingly government, like that of the nations, could not possibly be thus supported. (*M. R.*) And as these [burdensome exactions and cruel oppressions] are the natural effects of absolute authority intrusted with a fallen creature, prone to selfishness and folly; we ought consequently to prefer those limitations and restrictions, which are equally beneficial to the governors and the governed. SCOTT.

'It is not precisely known to us what the terms of the covenant between the king and the people were, (ch. 10: 25.) but it certainly did not give the king the liberty of exacting from the people all the various services which are here enumerated.' JAHN.

(13.) 'The king of Ceylon hath many *women*, belonging to his *kitchen*, choosing to have his meat dressed by them. Several times he hath sent into the countries a command to gather handsome young women of the Chingulayes to recruit his kitchen, with no exception whether married or unmarried; and they never return back again.' *Knox*, in GREENF.

Tenth. (15, 17.) A second, or rather third, tithe out of the clear

15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his * officers, and to his servants.

16 And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put *them* to his work.

17 He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.

18 And ye shall [u] cry out in that day, because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD [x] will not hear you in that day.

19 Nevertheless, the people [y] refused to obey the voice of Samuel: and they said, Nay, but we will have a king over us;

20 That [z] we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

21 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and [a] he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD.

22 And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken [b] unto their voice, and make them a king.

And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

* Heb. *eunuchs.* Gen. 37:36. Is. 39:7. Dan. 1:3,7—10,18.
u Is. 8:21.
x Job 27:9. Ps. 18:41. Prov. 1:27,28. 21:13. Is. 1:15. Mic. 3:4. Luke 13:25.
y Ps. 81:11. Jer. 7:13. 44:16. Ez. 33:31.
z 5. Ex. 33:16. Lev. 20:24—26. Num. 23:9. Deut. 7:6. Ps. 106:35. John 15:19. Rom. 12:2. 2 Cor. 6:17. Phil. 3:20. 1 Pet. 2:9.
a Judg. 11:11.
b 7. Hos. 13:11.

we think the worse of ourselves, if *for his sake we bear reproach,* (Ps. 69: 7.) but rather rejoice, and count it an honor, Col. 1: 24. God *reigns over the heathen,* over all the world, but the government of Israel had hitherto been, in a more peculiar manner than ever any government was, a Theocracy, a divine government. As the constitution, so the administration, of their government, was by, *Thus saith the Lord;* this method they were weary of, though it was their honor and safety, above any thing, so long as they kept in with God; they were indeed so much the more exposed to calamities, if they provoked God to anger by sin, and they could not transgress at so cheap a rate as other nations could, which, perhaps, was the true reason why they desired to stand on the same terms with God that other nations did. (2.) He must not think it strange, for they do as they always have done, *v.* 8.

2. He tells him an answer to their demand. *They shall have a king. Hearken to the voice of the people, v.* 7, 9. Not that God was pleased with their request, but as sometimes He crosses us, in love, so at other times He gratifies us, in wrath; He did so here. See Hos. 13: 10, 11. Ps. 106: 15.—78: 29. God knows how to bring glory to Himself, and serve his own wise purposes, even by their foolish counsels.

But he must tell them, at the same time, they will soon have enough of a king, and will, when too late, repent their choice. This he must *protest solemnly to them; v.* 9. Note, Those that set their hearts inordinately upon any thing in this world, to moderate their desires, ought to consider the inconveniences, as well as conveniences, that will attend it. Those that submit to the government of the world and the flesh, are told plainly, what hard masters they are, and what a tyranny the dominion of sin is; yet they will exchange God's government for it.

IV. Samuel's faithful delivery of God's mind to them, *v.* 10. He *told them all the words of the Lord,* how ill He resented it; that He construed it into a rejecting of Him, and compared it with their serving other gods; and that if they had any reason left them, and would allow themselves to consult their own interest, they would withdraw their petition, and beg to continue as they were He lays before them, very particularly, what would be the *manner of the king that should reign over them,* according to the pattern of the nations, *v.* 11. He does not speak (so Patrick) of a just and honest right of a king to do these things, this is quite otherwise described in Moses' law concerning the king's duty, but such a right as the kings of the nations had then arrogated.

If they will have such a king as the nations have, let them consider,

(1.) He must have a great retinue, abundance of servants, grooms, chariots, horses, gentlemen, and footmen. This is the chief grandeur of princes, and the imaginary glory of great men, to have a multitude of attendants. And whom take but your sons, *v.* 11. They that used to work for their parents and themselves, must work for him, *ear his ground, and reap his harvest,* (*v.* 12.) and count it their preferment too, *v.* 16. This would be a great change.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

No instructions or examples can overcome the bias of our fallen nature to evil; and the Lord communicates his sanctifying grace by wise and righteous rules, of which He does not deign to inform us: duty is our part, and consequences must be left with Him.—External restraints may produce appearances which impose on the most discerning; yet when they are withdrawn, and temptations occur, the evil heart will discover itself; and prosperity has a natural tendency to increase bad propensities. Parents should therefore prepare to bear with resignation disappointments in their children; and not be anxious to prefer or enrich them, lest they should assist in inflaming their passions.—'The love of money is the root of all evil,' and peculiarly odious and mischievous in magistrates and ministers. (*Note,* 1 *Tim.* 6: 6—10. *P. O.* 6—12.)—Grace subdues and mortifies, and convictions restrain, human depravity; but in itself it is the same from generation to generation. Discontent, fondness of change, a desire of conformity to the world, and of outward splendor, are natural to man, and follow him from the cradle to the grave, unless regenerated and new created by the Holy Spirit. No change of circumstances can cure these diseases; and neither the counsels of wise men, nor the testimony of God, will suppress these inordinate desires. When the mind is thus disposed, the slightest circumstance serves as a pretext for rushing upon gratification, yet a pious man would grieve to give others by his conduct even an *occasion* of sin.—When our grief or displeasure leads us to more fervent prayer and intercession in behalf of those who grieve us, nothing can injure or even long distress us; for the consolation of God will richly repay the injuries of men.—Under the troubles which Providence has allotted us, we may expect the supports of grace: but if we resolutely persist in choosing for ourselves; when we have exchanged slight inconveniences for real grievances, we shall have the aggravation of an accusing conscience, and the divine rebuke. And this will often be the case; for those things which at a distance look *pleasant,* are generally most *bitter* when in actual possession.—The *law of God,* and the *manner of men,* are widely different; the former should be the *rule of our conduct* in the several relations of life; the latter *the measure of our expectations* from others.—As magistracy is the appointment of God, and a great blessing, and as every form is liable to abuses; it is our wisdom to be thankful for the advantages, and patient under the inconveniences, of that government under which we live: and it is our duty to pray continually for our rulers, that they may govern us in the fear of God, and that we may live in all godliness and honesty; thus 'honoring God and the king, and not meddling with them that are given to change,' or disposed, upon every imaginary grievance, or indeed on any account, to speak evil of the ruler of the people. (*Rom.* 13: 1—6. *Tit.* 3: 1, 2. 1 *Pet.* 2: 13—17. 2 *Pet.* 2: 10, 11.)—But the Lord's servants should behave so unexceptionably, that even those who injure them may not be able to impeach their integrity, or to withhold from them respect and confidence. And it is a hopeful symptom, even in the evidently distempered state of individuals, or collective bodies, when their desires of worldly objects can brook delay; and they can refer the time and manner of their being granted to the determination of Providence. SCOTT.

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produce of their lands. (*Notes, Gen.* 47: 23—26. *Num.* 18: 21. *Deut.* 14: 22—29.) SCOTT.

(11.) 'It is very well known, that all the eastern nations were under despotic government. It is therefore such a kind of government that Samuel sets forth in the following verses. This is very evident, from the 18th verse particularly.' DODD.

(15.) 'From this it may be inferred, that other nations paid the tithe of their income to their kings.' JAHN.

Verses 19—22.

They did not perceive that it was their peculiar privilege to be *unlike* other nations, especially in this respect. (*Note, Num.* 23: 9. *Rom.* 12: 2.)—Amidst the sin and folly of this conduct, it should however be noted to their commendation, that they showed great respect to Samuel. They did not attempt to set up a king of their own choosing, but sought his counsel and concurrence: and on an intimation from him, that their request would be granted, they put such entire confidence in him, that they departed quietly to their own houses. The history of the world cannot produce another instance, in which a public determination was formed to appoint a king; and yet no one proposed either himself or any other person to be king, but referred the determination entirely to God. (*Note, Deut.* 17: 15.) Ambition of royal authority certainly was not the motive, in the leading men who supported this measure. The whole of their proceedings, even in this highly improper determination, showed, how fully they were convinced, that the law of Moses was from God; and that, even in appointing a king, his directions must be observed; or rather, that the decision must be referred implicitly to God Himself. SCOTT.

CHAP. IX.

The ancestry and personal qualifications of Saul, 1, 2. He is sent to seek his father's asses; but not finding them, he, by the counsel of his servant, purposes going to Samuel, 3—10. He is directed by young maidens where to find him, 11—14. Samuel, prepared by a revelation from God, expects him, and entertains him with great respect, 15—24. On the morrow he privately discourses with him, and brings him on his way, 25—27.

NOW there was a man of Benjamin, whose name *was* [a] Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, [*] a Benjamite, a mighty man of [†] power.

2 And he had a son whose name *was* Saul, a [b] choice young man, and a goodly: and *there was* not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: [c] from his shoulders and upward *he was* higher than any of the people.

3 And [d] the asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost; and Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses.

4 And he passed through [e] mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of [f] Shalisha, but they found *them* not: then they passed through the land of [g] Shalim, and *there they were* not; and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found *them* not.

5 *And* when they were come to the land of [h] Zuph, Saul said to his servant that *was* with him, Come, and let us return; lest my father leave *caring* for the asses, and [i] take thought for us.

a 14:51. 1 Chr. 8:30—33. 9:36—39. Acts 13:21. *Cis.*
* Or, *the son of a man of Jemini.*
† Or, *substance.* 25:2. 2 Sam. 19:32. Job 1:3.
b 16:7. Gen. 6:2. 2 Sam. 14:25,26. Jer. 9:23.
c 10:23. 17:24. Num. 13:33.
d 10:2. Judg. 5:10. 10:4.
e Judg. 17:1. 19:1.
f Kings 4:42.
g Gen. 33:18. John 3:23. *Salim.*
h 1:1.
i 10:2. Matt. 6:25,28,34. Luke 12:11, 22.

(2.) 'He must keep a great table; he will not be content to dine with his neighbors on a sacrifice, as Samuel used to do, (*ch.* 9: 13.) but he must have variety of dainty dishes, forced-meats, and sweet-meats, and delicate sauces; and who must prepare these but your daughters, the most ingenious and handy of them, whom you hoped to prefer to houses and tables of their own?'

(3.) 'He must needs have a standing army, for guards and garrisons; (*v.* 12.) and your sons, instead of being elders of your cities, and living in quiet and honor at home, must be disposed of here at the pleasure of the sovereign.'

(4.) 'You may expect he will have great favorites, *servants* to be your *masters*, whom, having dignified and ennobled, he must enrich, and give estates suitable to their honor; and which way can he do that, but out of your inheritances? *v.* 14, and how will you like that?'

(5.) 'He must have great revenues to maintain his grandeur and power with; and whence must he have them but from you? *v.* 15, 17. You think the tenths, the double tenths, which God has appointed to support the church, grievous enough, and grudge the payment of them; but, if you have a king, another tenth will be levied with more rigor, to support the royal dignity. Consider the expense with the magnificence, and whether it will quit cost.'

These would be their grievances; and, while they would have none but God to complain to, when they complained to Him, He *would not hear them;* (*v.* 18.) nor could they expect that He should. Note, when we bring ourselves into distress by our own irregular desires and projects, we justly forfeit the comfort of prayer, and the benefit of divine aids; and, if God be not better to us than we deserve, we must have our relief in our own hands, and then it is bad with us.

V. The people's obstinacy in their demand, *v.* 19, 20. One would think, such a representation of the consequences as this, coming from God Himself, who can neither deceive, nor be deceived, should have prevailed with them to waive their request: but their hearts were upon it, right or wrong, good or evil. See the absurdity of inordinate desires, and how they rob men of their reason. They could not stay God's time. God had intimated in the law, that, in due time, Israel should have a king, (Deut. 17: 14, 15.) and, perhaps, they had some intimation the time was at hand; but they are all in haste. 'We, in our day, will have this king over us.' Could they but have waited ten or twelve years, they had had David, a king of God's giving in mercy, and all the calamities attending the setting up of Saul had been prevented. Sudden resolves and hasty desires make work for long and leisurely repentance. What they aimed at, was, not only as before, that they might be like the nations, level with them, above whom God had so far advanced them; but that they might have one to judge them, and to go out before them when they took the field, and to fight their battles. Foolish people, and unwise! Could they ever desire a battle better fought for them than the last was, by Samuel's prayer, and God's thunder? *ch.* 7: 10. So sick, it seems, were they of their privileges, and what was the issue? Their first king was slain in battle, which none of their judges ever were; so was Josiah, one of the last and best.

CHAP. IX. V. 1—2. Samuel had promised Israel, from God, that they should have a king; it is strange the next news is not of candidates setting up for the government. Why does not the prince of the tribe of Judah look about him now, remembering Jacob's entail of the sceptre on that tribe? Is there never a bold, aspiring man in Israel, to say, 'I will be king, if God will choose me?' No, none appears; whether it is owing to a culpable mean spiritedness, or a laudable humility, I know not; but sure it is what can scarcely be paralleled in the history of any kingdom; a crown, such a crown, set up, and nobody bids for it. Most governments began in the ambition of the prince to rule, but Israel's in the ambition of the people to be ruled. Had any of those elders which petitioned *for* a king, afterward petitioned to *be* a king, I should have suspected that person's ambition to have been at the bottom of the motion; but now, (let them have the praise of what was good in them,) it was not so, God having in the law undertaken to choose their king. (*Deut.* 17: 15.) they all sit still, till they hear from heaven, as in this ch. which begins the story of Saul, their first king, and, by strange steps of Providence, brings him to Samuel to be anointed privately, and so to be prepared for an election by lot, and a public commendation to the people; which follows in the next. And these beginnings had been very hopeful and promising, had it not been that the sin of the people was the spring of this great affair.

We are here told, 1. What a good family Saul was of, *v.* 1. He was of the tribe of Benjamin; so was the New Testament Saul, who also was called *Paul*, and he mentions it as his honor, for Benjamin was a favorite, Rom. 11: 1. Phil. 3: 5. That tribe had been reduced to a very small number by the fatal war with Gibeah, and is here called, with good reason, *the smallest of the tribes of Israel; v.* 21. His father was *Kish, a mighty man of power*, or, as the margin reads it, *in substance;* in spirit stout, in body strong, in estate wealthy. The whole lot of the tribe of Benjamin coming to be distributed among 600 men, we may suppose their inheritances were much larger than theirs who were of other tribes; an advantage which somewhat helped to balance the disadvantage of the smallness of their number.

2. What a good figure Saul made, *v.* 2. No mention is here made of any of the accomplishments of his mind, but only of his body, that he was a tall, proper, a good shape, and a good presence, graceful and well proportioned. When God chose a king after his own heart, he pitched upon one not at all remarkable for the height of his stature, or any thing in his countenance, but its innocency and sweetness, *ch.* 16: 7, 12. But when He chose a king after the people's heart, who aimed at nothing so much as stateliness and grandeur, He pitched upon this huge tall man, who, if he had no other good qualities, yet would look great. They would have a king like the nations, and the nations commonly chose portly men for their kings.

V. 3—10. Here is, I. A great man rising from small beginnings. Most that are advanced, rise gradually; but Saul, from the level with his neighbors, stepped at once into the throne; according to that of Hannah, He *raiseth up the poor out of the dust, to set them among princes.* Saul, it should seem, was married, and had children grown up, yet lived in his father's house, and was subject to him. Promotion comes not by chance or human probabilities, but God is the Judge.

II. A great event rising from small occurrences. How low the history begins! as low as any we meet with of those called to preferment.

1. Saul's father sends him with one of his servants, to seek some asses he had lost. It may be,

NOTES.

CHAP. IX. V. 1, 2. (*M. R.* a.) The words translated 'a choice young man, and a goodly,' may literally be rendered, a chosen and goodly person, there being nothing in the original for *young.*
SCOTT.

(1.) 'Here is a difficulty, because 1 Chron. 8: 37. 9: 39. *Ner* is said to have *begat* Kish. But, by begetting there, must be meant giving him his breeding and education; for *Ner* was *Kish's* brother. 1 Sam. 14: 51.'
PATRICK.

(2.) 'Nobleness of aspect and dignity of person was carefully provided for in kings in ancient times. The Lacedemonians *fined* their king Archidamus for marrying a wife of low stature, who was likely to bring them, not *kings*, but *kinglings*, to reign over them.'
PATRICK.

Verses 3—5.
(*Marg. Ref.*)
SCOTT.

(3.) *Go seek the asses.*] 'Baron *De Tott* represents searches for stray animals as very common in the east,' (for fields and pastures were without fences in general) 'and often lasting for several days Each owner, also, has a particular mark imprinted on his animals.'
WILLIAMS.

6 And he said unto him, Behold now, *there is* in this [k] city a man of God, and *he is* [l] an honorable man; [m] all that he saith, cometh surely to pass: now, let us go thither; peradventure he can show us our way that we should go.

7 Then said Saul to his servant, But, behold, *if* we go, [n] what shall we bring the man? for the bread is [*] spent in our vessels, and *there is* not a present to bring to the man of God: what [†] have we?

8 And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, [‡] I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver; *that* will I give to the man of God, to tell us our way.

9 (Before-time in Israel, when a man went to [o] inquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for *he that is* now *called* a Prophet, was before-time called [p] a Seer.)

10 Then said Saul to his servant, § Well said; come, let us go: so they went unto the city where the man of God *was*.

11 ¶ *And* as they went up [‖] the hill to the city, they [q] found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here?

12 And they answered them, and said, He is; behold *he is* before you: make haste now, for he came to-day to the city; for *there is* a ¶ sacrifice of the people to-day in [r] the high place.

13 As soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, because [s] he doth bless the sacrifice; *and* afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get you up; for about [**] this time ye shall find him.

14 And they went up into the city: *and* when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place.

15 Now [t] the LORD had [††] told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying,

they had no way then to give public notice of strayed or stolen property. A very good law they had to oblige men to bring back an ox or an ass that went astray, but it is to be feared that was, as other good laws, neglected and forgotten. It is easy to observe here, that they who have, must expect to lose; that it is wisdom to look after what is lost; that no man should think it below him to know the state of his flocks; that children should be forward to serve their parent's interests; though Saul's taking care of the asses is to be ascribed, not so much to the humility of his spirit, as to the plainness and simplicity of those times. But his obedience to his father in it, was very commendable. The servant of Kish would be faithful only as a servant, but Saul as a son, in his own business, therefore he was sent too. Saul missed what he sought, but had no reason to complain, for he met with the kingdom, which he never dreamed of.

2. When he could not find them, he determined to return to his father, in consideration of his father's tender concern for him; *v.* 5. Children should take care to do nothing to grieve or alarm their parents, but be tender of their tenderness.

3. His servant moved, (for it should seem he had more religion than his master,) that since they were now at Ramah, they should call on Samuel, and take his advice. Wherever we are, we should improve our opportunities of acquainting ourselves with those that are wise and good. But there are many that will consult a man of God, if he comes in their way, that would not go a step out of their way to get wisdom.

The servant spoke very respectfully of Samuel, though he knew him, by common fame only, *v.* 6. Men of God are honorable men, and should be so in our eyes. Acquaintance with the things of God, and serviceableness to the kingdom of God, put true honor on men, and make them great. Samuel's honor, as a man of God, was, that *all he saith, cometh surely to pass*. This was observed of him, when young, (*ch.* 3: 19.) and still held true.

They would be advised, whether to return home, or, if there was yet any hope of finding the asses, which way to go next; a poor business to employ a prophet about! Had they said, 'Let us give up the asses for lost, and now that we are so near the man of God, let us go and learn from him the good knowledge of God, since we may not have such another opportunity, the proposal had been such as became Israelites; but, to make prophecy, that glory of Israel, serve so mean a turn as this, discovered too much what manner of spirit they were of. Note, Most people would rather be told their fortune, than their duty; how to be rich, than how to be saved. If it were the business of the men of God to direct for the recovery of lost asses, they would be consulted much more than they are, now that it is their business to direct for the recovery of lost souls; so preposterous is the care of most men.

Saul was thoughtful, what present they should bring the man of God, what fee they should give him for his advice, *v.* 7. The servant bethought himself, that he had the fourth part of a shekel, about sevenpence half-penny in value, and *that* he would give, *v.* 8. 'That will do,' says Saul, *let us go*, *v.* 10. Some think when Saul talked of giving Samuel a fee, he measured him by himself, or by his sons, as if he must be hired to do an honest Israelite a kindness, and were like the false prophets, that *divined for money*. But it rather seems to be agreeable to the general usage of these times, as it is to natural equity, that those who sowed spiritual things, should reap not only eternal things, from Him that employs them, but temporal things, from those for whom they are employed. When the servant generously offered to be at the charge, Saul says, 'Let us go.' Most people love a cheap religion, and like it best, when they can devolve the expense of it on others.

The historian here notices the name then given the prophets, *Seers*, or *seeing men*; (*v.* 9.) not but that the name *prophet* was then used, and applied to such persons, but that of *seers* was more in use.

V. 11—17. Gibeah of Saul was not 20 miles from Ramah where Samuel dwelt, and was near to Mizpeh where he often judged Israel; and yet, it seems, Saul had lived so very privately, and taken so little notice of public affairs, that he had never seen Samuel, *v.* 18. Yet I do not think it any commendation to Saul, that he was a stranger to Samuel. The maid-servants knew him, and

k 2:27. Deut. 33:1. 1 Kings 13:1. 2 Kings 6:6. 1 Tim. 6:11.
l 1 Thes. 2:10. 5:13.
m 3:19,20. Is. 44:26. Zech. 1:5,6. Matt. 24:35.
n Judg. 6:18. 13:15,16. 1 Kings 14:3. 2 Kings 4:42. 5:5. 8:8.
* Heb. *gone out of*. † Heb. is *with us*
‡ Heb. *there is found in my hand*.
o Gen. 25:22. Judg. 1:1.
p 2 Sam. 24:11. 2 Kings 17:13. 1 Chr. 26:28. 29:29. 2 Chr. 16:7,10. Is. 29:10. 30:10. Am. 7:12.
§ Heb. *Thy word is good*. 2 Kings 5: 13,14.
‖ Heb. *in the ascent of the city*.
q Gen. 24:11,18—20. Ex. 2:16. Judg. 5:11.
¶ Or, *feast*. 16:2. Gen. 31:54. Deut. 12:6,7. 1 Cor. 5:7,8.
r 1 Kings 3:2—4. 1 Chr. 16:39.
s Matt. 26:26. Mark 6:41. Luke 24: 30. John 6:11,23. 1 Cor. 10:30. 1 Tim. 4:4.
** Heb. *to-day*.
t 17. Ps. 25:14. Am. 3:7. Mark 11:2 —4. 14:13—16.
†† Heb. *revealed the ear of Samuel*. 20: 2. 2 Sam. 7:27. Job 33:16. *Marg*

Verses 6—10.

V. 9. was evidently inserted in after ages, perhaps by Ezra, supposed to have set forth a correct edition of the Scriptures then extant, under the superintendence of the Spirit of prophecy. The word *prophet* had been used of Abraham: (*Gen.* 20: 7.) but in Samuel's time, in common conversation, *Seer* was more used: for men of God were also called prophets. (3: 20.) At length, the name *Seer* sunk into disuse. SCOTT.

A present.] 'Not *hire*, but a customary token of honor. *Pococke* tells us of a present of 50 *radishes*. Other authors [as *Roberts*, &c.] mention a flower, an orange, or similar trifles; and *Bruce* says, that one who wished to solicit a favor from him, presented him with about a *score of dates*. "I mention this trifling circumstance," says B. "to show how *essential* to human and civil intercourse presents are considered in the east: without them an inferior will never be at peace in his own mind, or think he has hold of his superior for protection." But superiors give no presents [thus?] to their inferiors.' GREENF.

(8.) *Fourth of a Shekel.*] 'If the shekel was 66 cents, this was about 16½ cts.' COTT. BIB.

(9.) 'Houbigant justly places this v. *after* v. 11.' DODD.

Verses 11—14.

(*Note*, 7: 17.) Shiloh, which God first chose, to place his name there, had forfeited that distinction: no other place was appointed; the tabernacle, wherever at this time situated, did not contain the ark; and at Kirjath-jearim, where the ark remained, was no tabernacle or altar. (*Note*, 7: 1, 2.)

These circumstances occasioned a kind of temporary suspension of the law: (*Lev.* 17: 3—7. *Deut.* 12: 5—7.) and the cities of the priests and Levites, where the people resorted for instruction, seemed the most proper. The highest parts of these cities were generally selected for sacrifice: and from this circumstance, the subsequent pertinacious attachment of the Israelites to 'high places' seems to have been derived. SCOTT.

(11.) *Maidens*, &c.] Such may still be seen in the E. *Niebuhr* gives the drawing of an Arab girl thus occupied. ED.

(12.) *High place.*] '*Corn. Bertram* imagines, from this example, high places came to be in use in after ages, for this is the first time we read of a high place. Yet we read of the thing though not of the name. See Judges 6: 20. 13: 19. and Abraham was directed to mount Moriah to offer his son. He thinks too (as also Thorndike) that this was the beginning of synagogues and schools.' PATRICK.

16 To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and [u] thou shalt anoint him *to be* captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have [x] looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.

17 And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, [y] Behold the man whom I spake to thee of: this same shall * reign over my people.

18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house *is*.

19 And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I *am* the seer; go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to-day, and to-morrow I will let thee go, [z] and will tell thee all that *is* in thine heart.

20 And as for thine asses that were lost [†] three days ago, [a] set not thy mind on them, for they are found. And [b] on whom *is* all the desire of Israel? *is it* not on thee, and on all thy father's house?

21 And Saul answered and said, *Am* not I [c] a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and [d] my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou [‡] so to me?

22 And Samuel took Saul [1] and his servant, and brought them into the parlor, and made them sit [e] in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which *were* about thirty persons.

were very particular in their directions, *v.* 12, 13. We should always be ready to assist inquirers after God's prophets, and further them in their inquiries. Bp. Hall observes, of their knowledge of all these particulars, That, 'where there is practice and example of piety in the better sort, there will be a reflection of it on the meanest. It is no small advantage to live in religious places; for we shall be much to blame if all goodness fall beside us.' When the sacrifice was offered, Samuel blessed it; i. e. prayed over it, and offered up spiritual sacrifices with it. Let the soul first be served.

Saul very opportunely met Samuel, *v.* 14. This seemed purely accidental, but the wise God serves very great and certain purposes, by very small and casual occurrences. A sparrow falls not to the ground without our Father.

Samuel is informed concerning Saul, by an extraordinary revelation. He *told him* a secret whisper to his mind; or, perhaps, a still small voice to his ear, probably, when praying in secret for direction in that and other affairs of the nation. Perhaps, it was in expectation of it, that he appointed the feast and the sacrifice, to implore God's blessing on this great and important affair, though he might keep the particular occasion in his own breast. The Heb. is, *He uncovereth the ear;* to which some allude, to explain the way of God's revealing Himself to us; He not only speaks, but *uncovers our ear*. We have naturally a covering on our ears, so that we perceive not what God says; (Job. 33: 14.) but when God will manifest Himself to a soul, He uncovers the ear, says, *Ephphatha, Be opened;* He takes *the veil from off the heart*.

Saul being a man of unusual stature, it is natural to think Samuel fixed his eyes on him at a distance, and perhaps, looked the more wistfully toward him, because the hour was now come; that he might be fully satisfied, God told him expressly, *That is the man* that shall *restrain in* (for magistrates are heirs of restraint) *my people Israel*.

V. 18—27. Providence having at length brought Samuel and Saul together, we have here an account of what passed between them in the gate, at the feast, and in private. Samuel appeared, in all respects, so much a common person, that Saul, though told he should meet him, never suspected it was he. Thus is great worth oftentimes hid under a very despicable appearance.

Saul had nothing in his mind but to find his asses; but Samuel would take him off from that, and dispose him to the exercises of piety. He satisfies him about his asses, *v.* 20. and by this, Saul might perceive he was a prophet, that he could answer the inquiry he had not yet made; and thence he might infer, If a man of God can do this, much more doth God Himself *understand our thoughts afar off*. He surprises him with an intimation of preferment before him, *v.* 20. It does not appear that the country had yet any eye on him, because they had left it wholly to God to choose for them; but such a one they wished for; and his advancement would advance his family and relations, as Abner, and others.

To this strange intimation Saul returns a very modest answer, *v.* 21. The historian says (*v.* 1.) his father was a *mighty man of power*, yet he himself speaks diminishingly of his tribe and family, *v.* 21. Gideon had expressed himself thus, Judg. 6: 15. An humble disposition is a good presage of preferment.

Though the advancing of Saul would be the deposing of himself, yet Samuel envied him not, but was the first to honor him, in compliance with the will of God.

We may suppose the magistrates were with Samuel, who in their own city would claim precedency; yet the master of the feast made Saul and his servant too (who, if he were a king, must be respected as his prime minister of state) *sit in the chiefest place*, *v.* 22. Note, Civil respects must be paid those, who, in civil things, have the precedency by divine providence.

The right shoulder of the peace-offering was to be given to the priests, who were God's receivers: (Lev. 7: 32.) the next in honor, was the left shoulder, which, probably, was always allotted to those at the upper end of the table, and was wont to be Samuel's mess at other times; so that his giving it to Saul now, (*v.* 23, 24.) was an implicit resignation of his place to him.

Conversation passed between them in private, that evening and the next morning, on the flat roof of the house, *v.* 25, 26. We may suppose Samuel now told him of the people's desire of a king, the grounds of their desire, and God's grant of it; to all which, Saul, living very private, was perhaps a stranger; he satisfied him he was the person God had pitched upon for the government; and, we may suppose, gave him all the assurance he could desire, of his willingness to resign.

23 And Samuel said unto the cook, [f] Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee.

24 And the cook took up [g] the shoulder, and *that* which *was* upon it, and set *it* before Saul. And *Samuel* said, Behold that which is § left, set *it* before thee, *and* eat; for unto this time hath it been kept for thee, *since* I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day.

25 And when they were come down from the high place into the city, *Samuel* communed with Saul upon [h] the top of the house.

26 And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, [i] Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad.

27 *And* as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, [k] Bid the ser-

u 10:2. 15:1. 16:3. 1 Kings 19:15,16. 2 Kings 9:3—6.
x Ex. 2:25. 3:7—9. Ps. 25:18.
y 16:6—12.
* Heb. *restrain in.* 3:13. 2 Sam. 23: 6,7. Neh. 13:19,25. Rom. 13:3,4.
z John 4:29. 1 Cor. 14:25.
† Heb. *to-day three days.* 3.
a 4:20. *Marg.* 1 Chr. 29:3. Ps. 62: 10. Col. 3:2.
b 8:5,19. 12:15.
c Judg. 20:46—48. Ps. 68:27.
d 10:21. 15:17. 18:19,23. Judg. 6:14, 15. Hos. 13:1. Luke 14:11. Eph. 3:3.
‡ Heb. *according to this word.*
e Gen. 43:32. Luke 14:10.
f 1:5. Gen. 43:34.
g Lev. 7:32,33. Ez. 24:4.
§ Or, *reserved.*
h Deut. 22:8. 2 Sam. 11:2. Neh. 8: 16. Jer. 19:13. Matt. 10:27. Acts 10:9.
i Gen. 19:14. 44:4. Josh. 7:13. Judg. 19:28.
k 20:38,39. John 15:14,15.

Verse 16.

(*M. R.*)—*Save*, &c.] When Israel grew slack in serving God, the Philistines recovered their authority: and though Saul did not reform the religion of Israel, yet in many instances he successfully fought their battles. (14: 17:) SCOTT.

Verses 17—24.

(*M. R.*) Samuel, as superintending the sacred feast, seems to have allotted to each guest his portion. ID.

(20.) *And on whom is all the desire of Israel*, &c.] 'The meaning is, To whom shall the general desire of all Israel, of having a king to rule over them in royal dignity, be appropriated by God's special designation, but to thee and thy father's house? Others read it, *Whose shall be all the things desirable*, i. e. the choicest and best things, *in all Israel, but thine*, as ch. 8: 11.' ASSEMB. ANN.

(24.) *The shoulder.*] 'The *royal portion*, the arm and shoulder being symbols of strength and fortitude.'

Philo and *Josephus* in PATRICK.

Since I said, &c.] *Boothroyd*, after *Geddes*, transposes this clause to *v.* 23. where he reads 'set it by thee,' when I said, I had invited the people. ED.

Verses 25—27.

(*M. R.* h.) All the circumstances of these transactions were calculated to prepare Saul's mind for what followed, and to show him the interposition of God in it. (2 *Kings* 9: 1—13.) SCOTT.

(25.) The Sept. and Vulg. (which Boothr. adopts) add after house; "for in the roof a bed had been made for Saul in which he slept." A common practice on the flat roofs of the east. ED.

vant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still * a while, ¹ that I may show thee the word of God.

CHAP. X.

Samuel anoints Saul, and dismisses him with directions, and with tokens which came to pass accordingly, 1—13. Saul answers the inquiries of his uncle, but conceals the matter of the kingdom, 14—16. Samuel convenes the people at Mizpeh, where Saul is chosen king by lot, 17—25. A few honorably attend him, but others despise him, 26, 27.

THEN Samuel took [a] a vial of oil, and poured *it* upon his head, and [b] kissed him, and said, *Is it* not because the LORD hath anointed thee *to be* [c] captain over [d] his inheritance?

2 When thou art departed from me to-day, then thou shalt find two men by [f] Rachel's sepulchre, in the border of Benjamin, at [g] Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, [h] The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the † care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, say-

* Heb. *to-day.*
1 15:16. 2 Kings 9:5,6.
a 2:10. 9:16. 16:13. 24:6. 26:11. 2 Kings 9:3—6. Acts 13:21. Rev. 5:8.
b 1 Kings 19:18. Ps. 2:12. Hos. 13:2.
c 8:9,19. 13:14. Josh. 5:14,15. 2 Sam. 5:2. 2 Kings 20:5. Heb. 2:10.
d Ex. 19:5,6. Deut. 32:9. Ps. 78:71. 135:4. Jer. 10:16.
f Gen. 35:19,20. Jer. 31:15.
g Josh. 18:28.
h 16. 9:3—5.
† Heb. *business.*

Early in the morning, he sent him toward home, brought him a part of the way, bade him send his servant before, that they might be private, (*v.* 27.) and there, as we find in the beginning of the next ch. anointed him, and therein showed him the *word of the Lord;* i. e. gave him full satisfaction that he was the person chosen to be king.

CHAP. X. V. 1—8. A great work is here doing, the setting up not only of a monarch, but of a monarchy itself, in Israel; therefore in all the advances towards it, much of God is seen.

Samuel here executes the office of a prophet, and assures Saul from God, that he should be king, as he accordingly was afterward.

I. He *anointed* and *kissed him*, *v.* 1. not in a solemn assembly, but by divine appointment, which made up the want of all external solemnities, nor was it ever the less valid for its being done in private. God's institutions are great and honorable, though the circumstances of their administration be ever so mean. 1. Samuel, by anointing Saul, assured him it was God's act to make him king, *Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee?* The high priest was anointed to his office, which signified the conferring on him of the gifts requisite for the discharge of his office; and this was intimated in the anointing of kings. These sacred unctions, then used, pointed at the great Messiah, or anointed One, the King of the church, and High Priest of our profession, who was anointed with the oil of the Spirit, not by measure, but without measure, and above all the priests and princes of the Jewish church. No doubt, Samuel used common oil, and we read not of his blessing it. 2. By kissing him, he assured him of his own approbation of the choice; not only his consent, but his complacency, though it abridged his power, and eclipsed his glory, and the glory of his family. It was likewise a kiss of homage and allegiance; and in this sense we are commanded to *kiss the Son*, Ps. 2: 12. Samuel reminds him, (1.) Of the nature of the government of which he is anointed to be captain, which bespeaks care, toil, and danger. (2.) The origin of it; *The Lord hath anointed thee.* By Him he ruled, therefore he must rule for Him, in dependence on Him, and with an eye to his glory. (3.) Of the end of it; it is over his inheritance, to take care of that, protect it, and order all the affairs of it for the best, as a steward whom a great man sets over his estate, to manage it for his service, and give an account of it to him.

II. For further satisfaction, he gives him such signs, as would not only confirm the word of Samuel in general, but this word to Saul, that he should be king.

1. He directed him first to the sepulchre of one of his ancestors; there he must read a lecture of his own mortality, and now that he had a crown in his eye, must think of his grave, in which all his honor would be laid in the dust. Here two men would meet him, perhaps sent on purpose to look after him. It is good to eye Providence in favorable conjunctures, (though the matter be minute,) and to be encouraged to trust in greater matters.

2. He should next meet others going to Beth-el, where, it should seem, there was a high place for religious worship, and these men were bringing their sacrifices thither, *v.* 3, 4. It was a token for good to one designed for the government of Israel, wherever he came, to meet with people going to worship God. It is supposed the kids and loaves, and bottle of wine, the three men had, were designed for sacrifice, with the meat-offerings and drink-offerings to attend the sacrifice; yet Samuel tells Saul they would give him two of their loaves, and he must take them. This would look now like relieving a beggar. Saul must hereafter remember when he received alms, and therefore be humble and charitable. But, perhaps, it would *then* be construed, a fit present for a prince; and as such, Saul must receive it, the first brought him, by such as knew not what they did, nor why they did it; but God put it into their hearts, which made it the more fit to be a sign to him. This first tribute paid this new-anointed king, might serve to admonish him, not to spend the wealth of his crown in luxury, but still to be content with plain food.

3. The most remarkable sign would be his joining with a company of prophets he should meet, under the influence of a spirit of prophecy which should at that time come upon him. What God works in us by his Spirit serves much more to confirm faith, than any thing wrought for us by his providence. This would happen *at the hill of God*, supposed to be near Gibeah, his own city, for there was the Philistines' garrison, *ch.* 13: 3. Perhaps Samuel agreed they should have a garri-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are never more likely to be unhappy, than when we have our outward portion or connections, according to the choice of our own hearts: we ought therefore to beg of God in every thing to choose for us, and to teach us to acquiesce in his appointment.—True excellence of character does not result from external accomplishments; nor true felicity, from prosperous circumstances and outward splendor: and inattention to these obvious truths occasions the most fatal mistakes.—Diligence in business, and good behavior in relative life, are commendable, but no sure tokens of genuine piety, or acceptance with God.—We sensibly feel our temporal losses, and bestow much pains to retrieve them: but how little do we attempt the salvation of our souls, and how speedily are we weary in seeking it! Many speak of ministers as men of God, and honorable men, whose words will certainly come to pass, who neither comply with their exhortations, nor imitate their examples: and, being conscious that they do not choose to be at any expense in religion, they suspect, that the servants of God teach for hire, and will do nothing without pay. Indeed there have always been so great a majority of this character, that inattentive observers cannot readily understand the difference between *mercenary diviners*, and those who 'seek not theirs but them;' or between blind watchmen and guides, and those who are *Seers* indeed. But the *seeing eye* and the hearing ear are, in this sense also, from the Lord; and to those that wait on Him, He will communicate the truths, which He would have them communicate to the people. But how shall those who are *blind* themselves, be *seers* for other men; or point out to them that Savior, of whom they have no knowledge? (*Is.* 56: 9—12. *Matt.* 15: 12—14.)—True grace teaches us to honor those whom God has honored, though their advancement be attended by our degradation; but that respect should be shown in such a way, as may best tend to bring them acquainted with the truths and worship of God.—Without fervent prayer and praise, springing from a penitent, believing heart, a solemn sacrifice would have degenerated into a profane meal; and with them an ordinary meal becomes a spiritual sacrifice: but those who eat their food without thanking the Lord for it, or seeking his blessing on it, are scarcely distinguishable from brutes, or from atheists; and the examples of eminent persons, in such matters as these, may have a salutary effect on those around them.—How different are the Lord's purposes concerning us, from our intentions for ourselves! Many have taken long voyages and journeys, or moved their habitations, to seek riches and pleasures, who have been guided to places, where they have found the salvation of their souls; having met with those who addressed them, as if informed of the secrets of their lives and hearts; and having been thus led seriously to regard the message of the Lord delivered by them. If this has been our case, though our worldly projects have all been frustrated, let us cease caring about it; for the Lord has given us that which is infinitely better. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. X. V. 1. (*M. R.* a. *Notes*, 2: 35, 36. 16: 13.)—The priests were anointed to their office, as types of Christ, and as implying their need of the communication of the Holy Spirit, to furnish them for their sacred work; and for the same reason the kings also were anointed. (*Note, Ex.* 29: 1—7.)—The law of Moses is silent as to the anointing of kings: but it seems to have been an ancient custom; (*Judg.* 9: 8.) and when prophets conformed to it by divine command, it obtained the force of a law. SCOTT.

'This anointing appears to have been done in the open field.—There was no order of God, that we read of, for the anointing of kings; but it had been an ancient custom, 200 years before this time, as appears from the parable of Jotham.' PATRICK.—'By the anointing of the Jewish kings, we are to understand the same as their *inauguration*. Private anointings were only prophetic symbols that the persons thus anointed should *eventually* receive the kingdom. As far as we are informed, however, *unction*, as a sign of investiture with the royal authority, was bestowed only on the first two kings who ruled the Hebrews, viz. Saul and David; and, subsequently, on Solomon and Joash, who ascended the throne under such circumstances, that there was danger of their right to the succession being forcibly disputed.' JAHN.

ing, What shall I do for my son?

3 Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of [i] Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to [k] Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine.

4 And they will [*] salute thee, and give thee two *loaves* of bread, which thou shalt receive of their hands.

5 After that, thou shalt come to the [m] hill of God, where *is* the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet [n] a company of prophets coming down from the high place, with [o] a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy:

6 And the [p] Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into [q] another man.

7 And [†] let it be, when these [r] signs are come unto thee, [‡] *that* thou do as occasion shall serve thee; for [s] God *is* with thee.

8 And thou shalt go down before me [t] to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt-offerings, *and* to sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings: [u] seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and show thee what thou shalt do.

9 ¶ And it was *so*, that when he had turned his [§] back to go from Samuel, God [‖] gave him [x] another heart:

son there; or rather, after having been subdued, they got ground again, so far as to force this garrison into that place, and thence God raised up the man that should chastise them. There was a place called the *hill of God*, because one of the schools of the prophets was built on it; and such respect did even Philistines pay religion, that a garrison of their soldiers suffered a school of God's prophets to live peaceably by them, and did not only not dislodge them, but not restrain or disturb the public exercises of their devotion. These prophets were not (as it should seem) divinely inspired, but employed themselves in the study of the law, in instructing their neighbors, and in acts of piety, especially in praising God, wherein they were wonderfully assisted and enlarged by the Spirit of God. It was happy for Israel, they had such helpers in religion at this time. Now the Word of the Lord was not so precious, as when Samuel was first raised up, who had been instrumental in founding these colleges, whence, probably, the synagogues took their rise. What a pity, that Israel should be weary of the government of such a man! Music was then used to dispose the mind to receive the impressions of the good Spirit, as it did Elisha's; (2 Kings 3: 15.) but we have no reason to look for the same benefit by it now. These prophets had been at the high place, probably, offering sacrifice, and now came back singing psalms. We should come from holy ordinances with hearts greatly enlarged in holy joy and praise. Ps. 138: 5. Saul should find himself strongly moved to join them, and be turned thereby *into another man* from what he had been while in a private capacity. The Spirit of God, by his ordinances, wonderfully transforms men; Saul, by praising God in the communion of saints, became another man, but whether a new man or no, may be questioned.

III. He must follow Providence in ordinary cases; (*v.* 7.) but, in an extraordinary strait thereafter to befall him at Gilgal, and the most critical juncture, when he would have special need of divine aids, he must wait for Samuel *seven days*, *v.* 8. How his failing in this matter proved his fall we find afterwards, *ch.* 13: 11. It was a plain intimation, that he was upon his good behavior, and must act under the direction of Samuel. The greatest must own themselves in subjection to God and his Word.

V. 9—16. The signs Samuel gave came to pass very punctually; but what gave him the greatest satisfaction, was, he found immediately that God had given him *another heart*. A new fire was kindled in his breast; fighting the Philistines, redressing the grievances of Israel, making laws, administering justice, and providing for the public safety: these are the things that now fill his head. He never thought of such bravery and boldness before. He has no longer a heart selfish, low,

[i] Josh. 19:12,22. Judg. 4:6,12. 8:18. Ps. 89:12.
[k] Gen. 28:19,22. 35:6,7.
[l] Lev. 1:10. 3:6,12. 7:13. 23:13. Num. 15:5—12.
[*] Heb. *ask thee of peace.* Judg. 18:15. *marg.*
[m] 10. 13:3.
[n] 19:20. 2 Kings 2:3,5,15. 4:38. 6:1.
[o] Ex. 15:20,21. 2 Kings 3:15. 1 Chr. 13:8. 15:19—21,27,28. 16:5,42. 25: 1—6. 2 Chr. 29:25—27. Ps. 49:4. 150:3—6.
[p] 16:13. 19:23. Num. 11:25. Judg. 3:10. Matt. 7:22.
[q] 9—12.
[†] Heb. *it shall come to pass, that when.*
[r] Ex. 4:8. Luke 2:12. John 16:4.
[‡] Heb. *do for thee as thine hand shall find.* Judg. 9:33.
[s] Gen. 21:20. Deut. 20:1. Judg. 6:12. Is. 7:14. 45:1,2. Matt. 1:23. 28:20.
[t] 11:14,15. 13:4. 15:33.
[u] 13:8—15.
[§] Heb. *shoulder.*
[‖] Heb. *turned.*
[x] 6.

Verse 3.

Plain of Tabor.] Tabor, in the lot of Zebulun, or Issachar, (*M. R.* I.) in the northern part of the land, lay so remote from Saul's journey from Ramah to Gibeah, (26. 1: 1. 9: 5.) that it is most likely some place in the neighborhood of these cities was called 'the plain of Tabor,' from its resemblance to the vicinity of mount Tabor. SCOTT.

Tabor.] 'Two miles distant from Jerusalem.' JAHN.

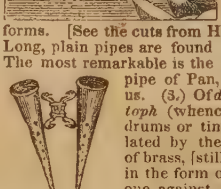
Verses 5—10.

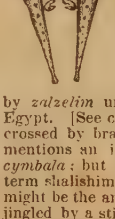
From the time of Samuel, it appears there were seminaries, where pious young men were educated, under the tuition of some approved prophets, in the knowledge of divine things; upon whom God was frequently pleased to bestow the Spirit of prophecy: and they were very useful in preserving some sense of true religion in the land, when the priests and Levites neglected their duty; as it must be concluded that they generally did at this time. (1 *Kings* 19: 20, 21. 2 *Kings* 2: 1, 3. 4: 1.)—The prophets frequently used solemn music, to compose their minds for the illapses of the Spirit of God; and many think they were immediately inspired to praise God in suitable hymns accompanying the music. (1 K. 3: 15. 1 Cor. 14: 26 —33.) In these Saul was supernaturally enabled to join. SCOTT.

(5.) *Prophets.*] 'Probably, the scholars of the prophets; for of the prophets, as accredited teachers, there appears not to have been any other at this time, besides Samuel.' Dr. A. CLARKE.—'By prophets here and in such places, we are to understand persons wholly devoted to religious studies and exercises, such as preaching, praying, and praising God; for the term *prophesying* is given, not only to the most eminent act of it, foretelling things to come, but also to preaching, as Rom. 12: 6. 1 Cor. 14: 31, 32. 1 Thess. 5: 20., and to the making or singing of psalms, or songs of praise to God, as 1 Chron. 25: 1—3. They that wholly attend upon these things are often called *sons* of the prophets.' POOLE.

Psaltery ... tabret ... pipe ... harp.] *Nebel*, *toph*, *halil*, *kinnor*. 'The MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS OF THE HEBREWS were; (1.) *Stringed*, as the *nabel*, and the psaltery, or *psanneterim*. These three names apparently signify nearly, or altogether, the same thing. They considerably resembled the harp; the ancient *cythara*, or the *ashur*, or the ten-stringed instrument; both were nearly of the figure of a triangle: but the *nablum*, or *psaltery*, was hollow toward the top, and played on toward the bottom; whereas the cythara, or ten-string instrument, (cut, Ps. 33: 2.) was played on at the upper part, and was hollow below: both were touched with a small bow, or fret,

or by the fingers. The *kinnor*, or ancient lyre, [or harp,] had sometimes 6, sometimes 9 strings, strung from top to bottom; and sounded by means of a hollow belly over which they passed: they were touched with a small bow, or fret, or the finger. The ancient symphony was nearly the same as our viol. The sambuc was a stringed instrument, nearly the same as the modern psaltery. (2.) *Wind instruments.* We discover in Scripture various sorts of trumpets and flutes; of which it is difficult to ascertain the forms. [See the cuts from Herculaneum, &c. here, and 2 Sam. 6: 5. Long, plain pipes are found also on ancient Egyptian monuments.] The most remarkable is the ancient organ, Heb. *uggab*; the ancient pipe of Pan, (cut, Gen. 4: 21.) now common among us. (3.) Of *drums* there were many kinds. The Heb. *toph* (whence *tympanum*) is taken for all kinds of drums or timbrels. The *zalzelim*, commonly translated by the Sept. and Vulg. *cymbala*; instruments of brass, [still used,] of a very clattering sound, made in the form of a cap, or hat, and struck [the edge of] one against [the edge of] the other, while held one in each hand; [cut, 2 Sam. 6: 5.] Later interpreters by *zalzelim* understand the *sistrum*; anciently very common in Egypt. [See cut, 2 Sam. 6: 5.] It was nearly of an oval figure, and crossed by brass wires, which jingled on being shaken. The Heb. mentions an instrument called *shalishim*, which the Sept. transl. *cymbala*: but Jerome *sistra*. It is found only in 1 Sam. 18: 6. The term shalishim suggests, that it was of three sides, (triangular,) and it might be the ancient triangular instrument carrying on each side rings jingled by a stick, and giving a sharp, rattling sound; [cut, 18: 6.] the *mezilothaim* were of brass, and of a sharp sound. The word is generally translated *cymbala*: but by some, tintinnabula, little bells, countenanced by Zech. 14: 20. as anciently bells were worn by horses trained for war, to accustom them to noise.' CALM. by ROB.





(5—10.) 'When a school or class of Mohammedan boys have finished the study of the Koran, they are seated upon the choicest steeds; musicians go before them, the same as in the procession of kings; and, surrounded with an escort of shouting fellow students, they are conducted through the city.' JAHN.

(8.) The deliverance of Israel from the Philistines, though one great end of Saul's appointment to the kingdom, was not attempted till the second year of his reign. And at that time, Saul at Gilgal neglected to wait for Samuel, according to directions given him, which in some respects correspond with these. (13: 8—15.)—Saul was confirmed in the kingdom at Gilgal, when Samuel was present: (11: 14, 15.) and it is probable, Samuel purposed to seek direction, and a blessing

MOUNT TABOR.—Judges iv. 6. 12. 14.; 1 Sam. x. 3.; Psalm lxxxix. 12.; Jer. xlvi. 18.; Hosea v. 1.

and [y] all those signs came to pass that day.

10 And when [z] they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.

11 And it came to pass, [a] when all that knew him before-time saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said * one to another, [b] What *is* this *that* is come unto the son of Kish? [c] *Is* Saul also among the prophets?

12 And one † of the same place answered and said, But [d] who *is* their Father? Therefore it became a proverb, *Is* Saul also among the prophets?

13 And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.

14 And Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant, Whither went ye? [e] And he said, To seek the asses: and when we saw that *they were* [f] no where, we came to Samuel.

15 And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you?

16 And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But [g] of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not.

[*Practical Observations.*]

17 ¶ And Samuel called the people together [h] unto the LORD to Mizpeh;

18 And said unto the children of Israel, [i] Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, *and* of them that oppressed you.

mean, narrow, concerned only about corn and cattle; but a heart fit for a statesman, a general, a prince. Whom God calls to service He will make fit for it. If he advance to another station, He will give another heart, to those who sincerely desire to serve Him with their power.

When he came near home, to *the hill*, (*v.* 10.) i. e. *Gibeah*, or *Geba*, which signifies *a hill;* (so the Chald. here takes it as a proper name;) he met the prophets, as Samuel had told him, and the Spirit of God came upon him; strongly and suddenly, so the word signifies; but not so as to rest and abide upon him. He immediately joined with the prophets in their devotion.

Now, 1. His prophesying was publicly noticed, *v.* 11, 12. His acquaintance, when they saw him among the prophets, called one to another to come and see a strange sight. This school was near his father's house, but he had never associated with them, nor showed them any respect, perhaps had sometimes spoken slightly of them; and now to see him prophesying among them, was a surprise to them, as, long after, when his namesake, in the N. T. preached that Gospel he had before persecuted, Acts 9: 21. Where God gives another heart, it will soon show itself. One of them, wiser than the rest, asked, '*Who is their father*, or instructer? Is it not God? And is He limited? Cannot He make Saul a prophet, as well as any of them, if He pleases?' Or, 'Is not Samuel their father?' Under God, he was so; and Saul had now lately been with him, which, by his servant, he might know. No marvel for him to prophesy, who lay, last night, under Samuel's roof. It became a proverb in Israel, when they would express their wonder at a bad man's either becoming good, or, at least, being found in good company, *Is Saul among the prophets?* Let not the worst be despaired of, yet let not an external show of devotion, and a sudden change for the present, be too much relied on; for Saul among the prophets, was Saul still.

But, 2. His being anointed was kept private. When he had done prophesying, it should seem he uttered all his words before the Lord, and recommended the affair to his favor, *v.* 13. but he industriously concealed it from his relations, *v.* 14, 15. This was an instance of humility, and of prudence. Thus it appears he had another heart, a heart fit for government. He leaves it to God to carry on his own work by Samuel.

V. 17—27. Saul's nomination to the throne is here made public, in a general assembly of the elders, the representatives of the respective tribes, at Mizpeh. Probably this convention was called as soon as conveniently it might be, after Saul was anointed, for, if there must be a change in their government, the sooner the better. The people being met in a solemn assembly, in which God was, in a peculiar manner, present, (and therefore it is said, they were *called together unto the Lord*, *v.* 17.) Samuel acts for God among them.

He reproves them for casting off the government of a prophet, and desiring that of a captain. He knew the peevishness of that people, and that there were those who would not acquiesce in the choice, if it depended on his single testimony; therefore, that every tribe, and every family of the chosen tribe, might please themselves with having a chance for it, he calls them to the lot, *v.* 19, 21. By this method it would appear to the people, as it already appeared to Samuel, that Saul was appointed of God to be king, for *the disposal of the lot is of the Lord.* It would also prevent all disputes and exceptions, for *the lot causeth contention to cease, and parteth between the mighty.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—16. Many are employed in outward services to the Lord's people, who have not the unction of his sanctifying grace: yet the most eminent Christians and ministers must honor and obey God's authority in them.—The attentive believer, comparing the dispensations of Providence with the Word of God, will perceive his hand in the most ordinary concerns of life, as fulfilments of the Scripture, answers of prayer, and evidences of the Lord's peculiar kindness.—A superior *care*, in common life, swallows up an inferior one: but we are especially reminded, that a due concern about eternal things would moderate our care about the interests of this life.—Many changes may take place in the language, conduct, and disposition of him, who is not born of God: another man he may become, and yet not *a new creature;* another heart he may have, but not a *holy* heart: he may be qualified for ruling or preaching, and yet not be 'made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light;' nay, he may prophesy and work miracles, and yet be a child of the devil.—Sudden changes are generally to be suspected: but when we consider who makes the Christian and the prophet, we need not be offended, should some of our former ungodly acquaintance become professors or even preachers of the Gospel: true conversion makes a great change in a man's character.—We should enter on every enterprise, with a reference to God's authority and worship, and depending on the guidance of the Holy Spirit.—We may freely speak of those things which are honorable to others; but in general it is best to be silent, as to those transactions which tend to our own reputation. SCOTT.

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y 2—5. Judg. 6:21,36—40. 7:11. Is. 38:7,8. Mark 14:16.
z 5:19,20—24.
a John 9:8,9. Acts 3:10.
* Heb. *A man to his neighbor.*
b Matt. 13:55. John 7:15. Acts 2:7,8. 4:13. 9:21.
c 19:24.
† Heb. *from thence.*
d Is. 54:13. John 6:45. 7:16. Jam. 1:17.
e 9:3—10.
f 2 Kings 5:25.
g 9:27. Ex. 4:18. Judg. 14:6. Prov. 29:11.
h 7:5,6. Judg. 20:1.
i Judg. 2:1. 6:8,9. Neh. 9:9—12,27,28.

from God, by solemn sacrifices, before Saul made war upon the Philistines; but he was prevented by Saul's precipitancy.—Perhaps the instruction was intended as a general rule, on every great emergency. SCOTT. (15: 1—3.)

Tarry, &c.] 'This may be understood in the light of a standing rule, for Saul to observe, while Samuel lived. His violation of it was not till two years after the time in which the direction was here given.' POOLE.

(9.) *Another heart.*] Saul was inspired with fortitude and resolution; and his mind was enlarged to great designs: he was also brought under religious impressions; and indeed his conduct, for a season, appeared very promising, though he afterwards became atrociously wicked. (*Matt.* 12: 43—45. 2 *Pet.* 2: 20—22.) He was 'turned into another man:' but it is not said, he was made 'partaker of a new heart, and a right spirit.' The effects and nature of the change which took place in Saul at this time, will be viewed by readers in general according to their different sentiments on some points of doubtful disputation; which, after all, can never be decided by this, or any other *example;* but from a comprehensive knowledge of the sacred oracles, and the nature and securities of God's everlasting covenant. (2 *Sam.* 23: 5. *Is.* 55: 4, 5. *Jer.* 32: 38—41.) SCOTT.

(10.) *Prophesied.*] I. e. was inspired with such thoughts and affections that he became like one of them, viz. a *psalmist;* able in an instant to compose hymns of praise to God, or to accompany them in their melodies, which he had never learnt.' PATRICK.—Dr. *A. Clarke* thinks no more can be meant, than earnest, importunate prayer, accompanied probably with edifying hymns of praise and thanksgiving and he argues, that this is the primary meaning of the word *to prophesy*, from Gen. 20: 7. Note, v. 5. ED.

Verse 12.

But who is their father?] 'Houbigant renders this verse. *But* one of those who were present said thus, for who is his father? Is not Kish?—And he observes, that the Syriac, Arabic and other versions, read *his father.*' DODD.

Verse 13.

When Saul had prophesied for a time, he seems to have gone to the high place, to perform his devotions before he returned home. SCOTT. *End.*] 'Herein he differed from the prophets who met him, that he prophesied but for a short time, this not being his office.' PATRICK.

(14.) *Uncle.*] 'I think the Heb. means some familiar friend.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 17—23.

'God, in the character of King, had governed the Israelites for sixteen ages. He ruled on terms which He Himself, through the agency of Moses, had proposed to them, viz. that if they observed their allegiance to *Him*, they should be prosperous: if *not*, adversity and

19 And [k] ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations: and ye have said unto him, *Nay*, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD [l] by your tribes, and by your thousands.

20 And when Samuel had [m] caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken.

21 When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken, and when they sought him he could not be found.

22 Therefore they [n] inquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath [o] hid himself among the stuff.

23 And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, [p] he was higher than any of the people, from his shoulders and upward.

24 And Samuel said to all the people, [q] See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that *there is* none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, *God save the king.

With much ado, and not without further inquiries of the Lord, Saul is at length produced. When every one expected he should answer to his name at the first call, none could find him, (*v.* 21.) he had *hid himself among the stuff*, *v.* 22. So little fond was he now of that power, which yet, when he was in possession of, he could not without the utmost indignation think of parting with. We may suppose he was at this time really averse to the government, because conscious of unfitness: because it would expose him to envy: because he understood, by what Samuel had said, that the people sinned in asking a king, and it was in anger God granted their request: and because the affairs of Israel were at this time in a bad posture: the Philistines were strong, the Ammonites threatening.

But the congregation, believing the choice well made, which God Himself made, would leave no way untried to find him out, on whom the lot fell. *v.* 23. Note, None will be losers at last by humility and modesty. Honor, like the shadow, follows those that flee from it, but flees from those that pursue it.

Samuel presents him to the people, and they accept of him, *v.* 23. 'Look you,' said Samuel, 'what a king God has chosen for you, just such a one as you wished for; *there is none like him among all the people*, that has so much majesty in his countenance, and such a graceful stateliness in his mien; he is in the crowd like the cedar among the shrubs. Let your own eyes be judges, is he not a brave and gallant man?' The people hereupon signified their approbation of the choice, and their acceptance of him; *Let the king live;* i. e. let him long reign over us, in health and prosperity.' Subjects were wont to testify their affection and allegiance to their prince, by their good wishes, and those turned (as our translation does this) into addresses to God, Ps. 72: 15.

Samuel settles the original contract between them, and leaves it on record, *v.* 25. He had before told them *the manner of the king*, (*ch.* 8: 11.) how he would abuse his power; now he tells them *the manner of the kingdom*, or rather, the law, or judgment, or constitution, of it; what power the prince might challenge, and the utmost the subject might claim. Let them rightly understand one another at first, and let the agreement remain in black and white; that will preserve a good understanding between them ever after. Patrick thinks, he now repeated and registered what he had told them, (*ch.* 8: 11.) of the arbitrary power their kings would assume, that it might hereafter be a witness against them, that they had drawn the calamity on themselves.

25 Then Samuel told the people [r] the manner of the kingdom, and

The convention was dissolved when the solemnity was over; *Samuel sent every man to his house.* Here were no votes past, nor, for aught that appears, so much as a motion made, for the raising of money to support the dignity of their new elected king; if therefore he afterward think fit to take what they do not think fit to give, (which it was necessary he should have,) they must thank themselves. Saul returns to Gibeah, to his father's house; but there he had no palace, no throne, no court. Such a humble spirit as this, puts a beauty and lustre on great advancements. The condition rising, and the mind not rising with it, behold, how good and pleasant it is!

But how did the people stand affected to their new king? The generality of them, it should seem, did not show themselves much concerned; their own domestic affairs lay nearer their hearts, than any interests of the public. But, 1. There were some so faithful as to attend him, *v.* 26. Not the body of the people, but *a band*, a small company, who, either because fond of their own choice of a king, or because pleased with God's choice of this king, or because they had so much more sense than their neighbors, as to conclude, that if he were a king, he ought to be respected accordingly, went with him to Gibeah, as his lifeguard. They were those *whose hearts God had touched*, in this instance, to do their duty. Note, Whatever good there is in us, or done by us, at any time, it must be ascribed to the grace of God.

k 8:7—9,19. 12:17—19.
l Num. 17:2. Josh. 7:14. Mic. 5:2.
m 14:41,42. Josh. 7:16—18. Acts 1: 24—26.
n 23:2—4,11,12. Num. 27:21. Judg. 1:1. 20:18,23,28.
o 9:21. 15:17. Luke 14:11.
p 9:2. 16:7. 17:4.
q Deut. 17:15. 2 Sam. 21:6.
* Heb. *Let the king live.* 1 Kings 1: 25,31. 2 Kings 11:12. Matt. 21:9.
r 8:11—18. Deut. 17:14—20. Ez. 45: 9,10. 46:18—18. Rom. 13:1—7. 1 Tim. 2:2. Tit. 3:1. 1 Pet. 2:13,14.

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misery should be the consequence. We learn from the whole book of Judges, and from the first eight chapters of Samuel, how exactly the result, from Joshua to Samuel, agreed with these conditions. But now, in point of form, the government was changed into a monarchy.' JAHN.

(17—22) (*M. R.—Notes*, 8: 1—9.)—The narrative implies, that the elders inquired of the Lord, either by the high priest, or by Samuel; and that they received an express answer (22).—Saul hid himself, probably from criminal diffidence, and distrust of God; yet some suppose, he was alarmed by hearing, that the Lord was displeased with the people for asking a king. SCOTT.

(21.) 'Their king was chosen from Benjamin, the least tribe, and descended from the youngest son of Jacob, because given in anger; and God was pleased thus to express his dislike of their being set to have a king, as well as to take them off from dependence on their king, and teach them to depend on Him.' PATRICK.

Verse 25.

The manner of the kingdom.] Probably this writing contained the rules of the government; or, in modern language, the prerogatives of the prince, and the privileges of the people. 'The manner of the kingdom' would differ considerably from 'the manner of the king,' before mentioned: the one being the appointment of God, and the other the effect of human depravity, when intrusted with absolute authority. (8: 10—18. *Deut.* 17: 14—18.) SCOTT.

'*Duties of the Heb. Kings.* At first, kings acted as generals, as judges, and as high-priests, Gen. 14: 18, 19. Hence *cohen* means both a priest, and the supreme civil magistrate, Ex. 2: 16. 3: 1. and so at 2 Sam. 8: 18. comp. 1 Chron. 18: 19. The Heb. kings were not however allowed to exercise the sacred functions, 2 Sam. 15: 1, &c. 2 Chron. 26: 16, &c. They had the oversight of them, nevertheless, so far as to see that all things were done rightly, a privilege well used by David, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah, but abused by others to introduce idolatry. The Hebrews were accustomed to expect of their kings the fulfilment of two offices at least, those of judge and chieftain; these they did fulfil, either themselves, or by others they had chosen, 1 Sam. 8: 5. 12: 12. comp. 2 Chr. 26: 21. Is. 16: 5. The Mosaic institutions recognised inferior judges, and the kings had only the trouble of selecting them, and seeing that they did their duty, 1 Chr. 23: 4. 26: 29, &c. 2 Chr. 19: 5—11. It was the duty of the king to try appeals from these judges: a much better course than to try all or most causes himself, 2 Sam. 15: 2, &c. 1 Sam. 17: 9—19.

'*Extent of royal power and prerogatives.* Asiatic kings exercise most unlimited and arbitrary power; yet it was not always so in all instances, for the power of the Phœnician and Philistine kings was restricted. (Moses Deut. 17: 14—20.) imposed certain conditions on after-kings, and the "elders of Israel," i. e. those who had the principal civil management, exacted conditions in writing, respecting the manner of exercising government, both from David and Saul, which they received with an oath for themselves and their successors, 1 Sam. 10: 25. 2 Sam. 5: 3. comp. 1 K. 12: 1—18. The heads of tribes, or princes, possessed of themselves also very great power, and *so far* may be considered as having a negative on the authority of the king. The prophets too, felt at liberty, in the character of divine messengers, to reprove those monarchs, who had violated their prerogative by doing wrong. But still many kings abused power. As he was vicegerent of Jehovah, (a point very clearly established in the Mosaic Institutes,) it was the king's duty and right, of course, to secure obedience to the laws of the state, and to punish the violations of them. From 2 Sam. 14. we infer that the Heb. kings sometimes dispensed, on their own authority, with the infliction of the penalty threatened by the Mosaic laws; but this liberty was certainly rarely taken by those kings who had a well founded claim to be called *religious*. Comp. David's conduct, 2 Sam. 21: 1—14, and 1 K. 2: 1—9.

'*Laws were promulgated* to the people, in Moses' and Joshua's time by *genealogists*. (Eng. vers. *officers*.) The laws of the kings were proclaimed by criers, (Jer. 34: 8, 9. Joh. 3: 5—7.) Dan. 3: 4. 5: 29. They were made known in distant provinces, towns, and cities, by messengers, 1 Sam. 11: 7. Am. 4: 5. 2 Chr. 36: 22. Ezra 1: 1. This message was publicly announced when the messenger arrived in the gate of the city, or in some other public place: at Jerusalem, in the temple, where were always many assembled: whence also the prophecies were uttered here, being *edicts* of God, the *supreme* King. Here too the learned, the Savior Himself, and the Apostles taught, Jer. 7: 2, &c. Matt. 26: 25. Acts 5: 11.

'*The royal revenues.* Conquerors exacted both tribute and menial services of the conquered, but it does not appear that kings exacted of their *own* people, arbitrarily, either labor, or burdens, Gen. 47: 13—27. Herod. III. 97. In fact the Hebrews were so tenacious of their rights in this respect, that they defined, in express terms, by a particular agreement, what services should be rendered to the king, and what he could *legally* require, 1 Sam. 10: 25. 2 Sam. 5: 3. We know not precisely what these terms were, but they certainly did not

wrote *it* in a book, and laid *it* up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.

26 And Saul also went home to [s] Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, [t] whose hearts God had touched.

27 But the [u] children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? and they despised him, and [x] brought him no presents: but * he held his peace.

CHAP. XI.

Nahash, the Ammonite, encamps against Jabesh-gilead, and offers the inhabitants most cruel and disgraceful terms; who obtain seven days' respite, 1—3. They send messengers to Gibeah, and Saul delivers them, and smites the Ammonites, 4—11. Saul will not allow his despisers to be punished, 12, 13. He is made king in Gilgal, 14, 15.

THEN [a] Nahash the Ammonite came up and encamped against [b] Jabesh-gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, [c] Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.

One touch is enough, when divine. 2. There were others so spiteful as to affront him. Thus differently are men affected to our exalted Redeemer. God hath set Him King on the holy hill of Zion. A remnant submit to Him, rejoice in Him, bring Him presents, and follow Him wherever He goes; and they are such *whose hearts God has touched*, whom He has made willing in the day of his power: but others despise Him, who ask, *How shall this man save us?* They are offended in Him, stumble at his external meanness, and they will be broken by it.

Saul *held his peace;* marg. *Was as though he had been deaf.* So far from resenting it, he seemed not to notice it. Which evinced both his humility, modesty, and mercifulness, and also, that he was well satisfied with his title; for those are commonly most jealous of their honor, and most revengeful of affronts, that gain their power by improper means.

CHAP. XI. V. 1—4. In this ch. we have the first-fruits of Saul's government, in the glorious rescue of Jabesh-gilead out of the hands of t' e Ammonites. Let not Israel thence infer, they t erefore did well to ask a king.

1. The Ammonites were bad neighbors to the tribes of Israel next them, though descendants from just Lot, and, for that reason, ostensibly civil to Israel. See Deut 2: 19. Jephthah, in his time, had humbled them, but now Israel's sin had prepared the way for them to make head again, and avenge that quarrel. Jabesh-gilead had been, some ages ago, destroyed by Israel, for not appearing against the wickedness of Gibeah; (Judg. 21: 10.) and now being replenished again, probably, by the posterity of those that then escaped the sword, it is in danger of being destroyed by the Ammonites, as if some bad fate attended the place. Nahash, king of Ammon, (1 Chron. 19: 1.) laid siege to it, and they ask the terms of surrender to him. Had they not broken their covenant with God, and forsaken his service, they needed not thus to have courted a covenant with a Gentile nation, and offered themselves to serve them.

2. The besiegers offer them base and barbarous conditions; their abject concessions make them more insolent in their demands; they cannot be content to have them their servants, but, must torment them, disable them for war, and render them incapable, though not of labor, which would have been their loss, yet of bearing arms; for in those times they fought with shields in their left hands, which covered their left eye, so that a soldier without his right eye, was, in effect, blind: thus they would put a *reproach on all Israel*, as weak and cowardly, that would suffer the inhabitants of one of their chief cities to be thus miserably used, and not offer to rescue them.

3. The besieged desire, and obtain, seven days' time to consider this proposal, *v.* 3. Had not Nahash granted this respite, we may suppose, in view of the horror of the proposal, they would rather have died with their swords in their hands, than have surrendered; but Nahash, not imagining it possible they should in so short a time have relief, in a bravado, gave them seven days, that the reproach on Israel, for not rescuing them, might be the greater, and his triumph the more illustrious. But there was a providence in it, that his security might be his infatuation and ruin.

4. Notice of this is sent to Gibeah. Not finding Saul, the messengers told their news to the

s 11:4. 15:34. Josh. 18:28. Judg. 19: 12—16. 20: 2 Sam. 21:6.
t Ezra 1:5. Ps. 110:3. Acts 7:10. 13: 48.
u 2:12. 11:12. Deut. 13:13. 2 Sam. 20:1. Acts 7:35. 51, 52.
x 2 Sam. 8:2. 1 Kings 4:21. 10:25. 2 Chr. 17:5. Ps. 72:10. Matt. 2:11.
* Or, *he was as though he had been deaf.* Ps. 38:13. Is. 36:21. Matt. 27:12—14.
a 12:12. Judg. 10:7. 11:8, &c.
b 31:11—13. Judg. 21:8, 10.
c Gen. 26:28. Ex. 23:32. Deut. 23:3. 1 Kings 20:34. Job 41:4. Ez. 17:13.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 17—27. The Lord will bring to a seasonable determination those affairs, which are referred to Him: but the gratification of inordinate desires is short-lived, and expires in disappointment and vexation. It is good to be conscious of our unworthiness and insufficiency for the services to which we are called; and to avoid ostentation, and whatever may excite envy and opposition: but we should be careful not to run into the opposite extreme, by refusing the employments to which the Lord calls us, through meanness of spirit and unbelief. Indeed, high stations are heavy burdens, when the duties of them are conscientiously attended on: and the comfort of them is but small; for the heart of man is prone to envy all who are preferred. (18: 6—9. *Ec.* 4: 4—6.) Our natural enmity to God disposes us to despise and oppose the instruments He selects for the government of states, and for promoting his cause: and if some approve, honor, and help them, they will be reviled and contemned by others. But we should wait his will with patience, and without discouragement; bear scorn and malice in silent meekness; and attend to the duties of our station, acording to the manner of it: thus the fatal effects of discord will be prevented, and in due season the Lord will plead our cause, and all opposition will fall before us.—Men seldom receive that with thankfulness, which they sought with too great eagerness: for their expectations are not exactly answered, and this occasions dissatisfaction and sullen discontent. And when any welcome with gratitude the appointments of God, and set themselves cordially to promote his cause; (even the cause of Christ our anointed King, whom so many 'children of Belial' despise;) they are those alone, whose hearts He has touched by his grace; and to Him all the praise belongs. (*Ezra* 1: 1—4. *John* 6: 41—46.)

SCOTT.

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give what is enumerated in 1 Sam. 8: As there is nothing peculiar [said on the subject], it would seem the sources of revenue to the Heb. kings were nearly the same with those in other oriental countries; as (1.) Presents, given voluntarily, 1 Sam. 10: 27. 16: 20. (2.) The produce of the royal flocks, 1 Sam. 21: 7, 8. 2 Sam. 13: 23. 2 Chron. 26: 10. 32: 28, 29. comp. Gen. 47: 6. (3.) The royal demesnes, vineyards, and olive-gardens, taken up from a state of nature by the authority of the sovereign, or confiscations; they were tilled by slaves, or conquered nations, 1 K. 21: 9—16. Ez. 46: 16—18. 1 Chr. 27: 28. 2 Chr. 26: 10. (4.) That the Heb. by agreement promised to pay certain tributes appears from 1 Sam. 17: 25. Perhaps they were the same with the tithe of their income, paid, we infer from 1 Sam. 8: 15. to other kings. The collection and management of imposts and taxes appear to have been committed to the officers mentioned, 1 K. 4: 6—9. 1 Chr. 27: 25. The tax was increased in the reign of Solomon; and the people at his death wished it diminished, 1 K. 12: 13. A ready money tribute, (*minchah, present,*) appears also to have been paid to the king, 2 Chr. 17: 5. comp. Ezek. 45: 13—18. (5.) The most precious of conquered spoils. Thus David collected most of his treasures. Subdued nations likewise paid tribute, (called *minchah,*) partly in cash, partly in flocks, grain, &c. 1 K. 4: 21. Ps. 72: 10. 2 Chr. 27: 5. (6.) The tribute imposed upon merchants, who passed through the Heb. territories, 1 K. 10: 15. [In Persia, Darius the Mede (Cyaxares 2.) first enforced a system of *taxation*, Dan. 6: 2, 3.] Other sources of revenue to the king, were the *excise (belo)* or tax on articles of consumption, and the toll, *(helak)* Ezra 4: 14, 19, 20.

'*Magistrates under the Monarchy.* Judges, genealogists, the heads of families or clans, and those who, from the relation they sustained to the common class of people, may be called the *princes* of the tribes, retained their authority after, as well as before, the monarchy, and acted as a legislative assembly to the respective cities, in or near which they resided, 1 K. 12: 1—24. 1 Chr. 23: 4. 26: 29 &c. 28: 1—21. 29: 6. The judges and genealogists were appointed by the king, as were other *royal officers*, the principal of whom were as follows. (1.) *The royal counsellors*, 1 K. 12: 6—12. 1 Chr. 27: 32. Is. 3: 3. 19: 11—13. Jer. 26: 11. (2.) *The prophets*, who were consulted by *pious* kings, 2 Sam. 7: 2. 1 K. 22: 7, 8. 2 K. 19: 2—20. 22: 14—20. Others imitated heathen kings, and called in to their aid soothsayers and false prophets, 1 K. 18: 22. 22: 6., comp. Ex. 7: 11. 8: 18. Dan. 1: 20. 2: 2. 5: 8. Jer. 27: 9. (3.) *The secretary or scribe*, (*hammazkir,*) who committed to writing not only the edicts and sayings of the king, but every thing of a public nature that related to the kingdom; and whose business it was likewise to present to the king in writing an account of the state of affairs, 2 Sam. 8: 16. 20: 24. 1 K. 4: 3. 2 K. 18: 18, 37. 1 Chr. 18: 15. 2 Chr. 32: 8. Is. 36: 3. Est. 3: 12. 6: 1. 10: 2., comp. *Herod.* VI. 100. VII. 9. VIII. 90. (4.) *The high priest* is to be reckoned among those who had access to the king in the character of counsellors, 2 Sam. 8: 17. 1 Chr. 18: 16. as one would naturally expect from the prevalent notions in respect to a theocracy.' JAHN.

In a book.] What a precious relic were this *first written constitution* of *the first constitutional monarchy*—although we have papyrus mss. of an age 600 yrs. previous! But let our regrets for its loss be swallowed up in thankfulness, that the most valuable of all records, one too which gratifies a curiosity infinitely higher and nobler, is still left to us, not *laid up*, or a fountain sealed, but an open well-spring of eternal life. ED.

Verse 27.

Presents.] 'Arab chiefs are now, when on a march or excursion supplied with every necessary by *free will offerings*, or *presents*, in the villages, or places where they encamp. Probably, however, tribute is meant by the word *present.*' Dr. A. CLARKE.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI. V. 1—3. The Ammonites probably renewed the claims

2 And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, [d] On this *condition* will I make *a covenant* with you, that [e] I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it *for* [f] a reproach upon all Israel.

3 And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, * Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel: and then, if *there be* no man to save us, we will come out to thee.

4 Then came the messengers to [g] Gibeah of Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people; and all the people [h] lifted up their voices and wept.

5 And, behold, Saul came [i] after the herd out of the field; and Saul said, [j] What *aileth* the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh.

6 And the [k] Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and [l] his anger was kindled greatly.

7 And he took a yoke of oxen, and [m] hewed them in pieces, and sent *them* throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, [n] Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And [o] the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out † with one consent.

8 And when he numbered them in [p] Bezek, [q] the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

9 And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, To-morrow, by *that time* the sun be hot, ye shall have ‡ help. And the messengers came and showed *it* to the men of Jabesh; and they were glad.

10 Therefore the men of Jabesh said, [r] To-morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you.

people, who fell a weeping upon it, *v.* 4. as despairing to help the men of Jabesh-gilead, and fearing, lest, if that frontier city were lost, the enemy would penetrate into the very bowels of their country.

V. 5—11. Observe here,

I. Saul's humility. Though anointed king, and accepted, he did not think it below him to know the state of his own flocks, *v.* 5. This was an evidence he was not puffed up, as those are most apt to be, that are raised from a mean estate. Providence had not yet found him business as a king, he left all to Samuel. He had no revenues settled on him to support his dignity, and he would not be burdensome to the people; therefore, like Paul, he worked with his hands. Solomon gives it as a reason why men should look well to their herds, because *the crown doth not endure to every generation*. Saul's did not, he must therefore provide something surer.

II. His concern for his neighbors; *v.* 5. (good magistrates are in pain, if their subjects be in tears;) and zeal for the safety and honor of Israel. When he heard of the insolence of the Ammonites, and the distress of a city, a mother in Israel, *the Spirit of God came upon him*, and put great thoughts into his mind, *v.* 6. He was angry at the insolence of the Ammonites, at the mean and sneaking spirit of the men of Jabesh-gilead, and that they had not sent him notice sooner of their extremity. He was angry to see his neighbors weeping, when it had been fitter to have prepared for war. It was a brave and generous fire that was now kindled in his breast, and such as became his high station.

III. The power he exerted, on this important occasion; he soon let Israel know, that, though retired to his privacy, he had a care for the public, and knew how to command *men*, as well as *cattle*, *v.* 5, 7. He summoned all Israel, to show the extent of his power beyond his own tribe, even all the tribes, and ordered all the military men forthwith to appear in arms at Bezek Observe, 1. His modesty, in joining Samuel in commission with himself; he would not execute the office of a king, without a due regard to that of a prophet. 2. His mildness, in the penalty threatened against those that should disobey. Their *oxen* only, not *themselves*, should be hewed in pieces if they did not obey. God had threatened it as a great judgment, Deut. 28: 31. It was necessary the command should be enforced with some penalty, but this was not near so severe as that affixed to the like order by the whole congregation, Judg. 21. 5. Saul wished to show, his government was more gentle than that they had been under. He did not affect to make them fear him, but they were influenced to observe his orders by the fear of God, who had made him their king, and them members one of another. Note, Religion and the fear of God will make men good subjects, good soldiers, good friends to the public interests of their country. They that fear God, will make conscience of their duty to all men, particularly to their rulers.

IV. His prudent proceedings, *v.* 8. In this muster, it seems, Judah, though numbered by itself, made no great figure, for as it was one tribe of twelve, so it was but an eleventh part of the whole number; though the rendezvous was at Bezek, in that tribe, they wanted either the numbers, or the courage, or the zeal, that that tribe used to be famous for; [or, as is perhaps more likely, were jealous of the power of Benjamin;] so low was the tribe, just before the sceptre was brought into it in David.

V. His faith and confidence, and (grounded on that) his courage and resolution, in this enterprise. It should seem the messengers which brought the tidings from Jabesh-gilead, Saul sent into the country to raise the militia, and them he now sends back to their distressed countrymen, with the assurance of relief the next day, *v.* 9. (in which, probably, Samuel encouraged him). Saul knew he had a just cause, therefore doubted not of success.

VI. His industry and close application to this business. Had he been bred to war from his youth, and led regiments as often as he had followed droves, he could not have gone about an affair of this nature more dexterously, or diligently. The Spirit of the Lord upon men, makes them expert, even without experience. A vast army (especially in comparison with present usage) Saul had now at his foot, and a long march before him, near 60 miles, over Jordan too; no cavalry, but all infantry, in three battalions, *v.* 11. And observe, here, with what incredible swiftness he flew to the enemy; in a day and a night. He had passed his word, and would not break it: nay, he was better than his word, he promised help next day, *by that time the sun was hot*, (*v.* 9.) but brought it before day, *v.* 11. Whom God helps He *helps right early*.

Lastly, To complete his honor, God crowned all these virtues with success, *v.* 11. We may

[d] 2 Kings 18:31.
[e] Judg. 16:21. Esth. 3:6. Prov. 12:10 Jer. 39:7.
[f] 17:26. Gen. 34:14.
[g] 10:26. 14:2. 15:34. 2 Sam. 21:6.
[h] 30:4. Judg. 2:4. 21:2. Rom. 12:15. 1 Cor. 12:26. Gal. 6:2. Heb. 13:3.
[i] 9:1. 1 Kings 19:19. Ps. 78:71.
[j] Gen. 21:17. Judg. 18:23. Is. 22:1.
[k] 10:10. 16:13. Judg. 3:10. 6:34. 11: 29. 13:25. 14:6.
[l] Ex. 32:19. Num. 12:3. Mark 3:5. Eph. 4:26.
[m] Judg. 19:29.
[n] Judg. 21:5,8—11.
[o] Gen. 35:5. 2 Chr. 14:14. 17:10.
† Heb. *as one man*. Judg. 20:1.
[p] Judg. 1:4,5.
[q] 13:15. 15:4. 2 Sam. 24:9. 2 Chr. 17:12—19.
‡ Or, *deliverance*. Ps. 18:17.
[r] 2.

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which had been made in the days of Jephthah. (*Notes, Judg.* 11: 12 -28.)—Some apprehension of this war had induced the Israelites to desire a king: (*Note*, 12: 11—13.) but the unsettled state of affairs both encouraged the Ammonites, and disheartened the men of Jabesh-gilead. SCOTT.

(*d.*) *Nahash.*] 'We know little about Nahash. There was a king of this name among the Ammonites in the time of David, 2 Sam. 10: 2, but probably not the same person. Nahash might have been a common name of the Ammonitish kings.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(2.) *Reproach.*] 'HANWAY [travelling in N. Persia, &c.] saw several instances of such mutilation. The *Asiatic Researches* mention a town called *Naskatapir*, "the town of cut noses," from the inhabitants being [thus] deprived of their noses. *Taylor* thinks Nahash meant to call Jabesh "the town of men who lost their right eyes." The Gorchians too threatened the inhabitants of Lelith Pattan [India] with the loss of their *right hands*, unless they surrendered in 5 days.' WILLIAMS.

Verse 4, 5.

In this chapter Saul looks as great as the much celebrated Roman dictator from the plough, and indeed greater. For Saul followed his herds, after he was appointed to the kingdom by God Himself; yet when called forth to action, his vigor and success were not at all inferior to those of the renowned Roman. SCOTT.

(4.) *Gibeah of Saul.*] 'So called after Saul was made king of Israel, but at first Gibeah of Benjamin.' DUTCH ANN.

(5.) *Came from the herd.*] 'It is not enough considered, that, in ancient times, *agriculture* was the *only* employment. *Trade* and *commerce* were scarcely known. Therefore all descriptions of official dignities must be chosen out of this class; there was none other to choose from.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 6—11.

Through the immediate influence of God on their hearts, a very great multitude assembled with surprising celerity.—In this public service, it is said, that 'the Spirit of God came on Saul,' and in this alone. (10: 5—7. 16: 13, 14.) SCOTT.

(7.) See on Judges 19: 29. 'Sir Walter Scott, in his works, refers to a practice very similar among the Highlanders and Scandinavians. The Highlanders slew a goat, and stained with its blood "the fiery cross" that was sent to summon their ancient warriors; and disobedience was punished with death, or the burning of their houses.' WILLIAMS.

(8.) 'Some think an invasion at this time on the west was the reason why so few of Judah came in, but Sir John Marsham looks upon it as the beginning of a schism.' PATRICK.

11 And it was *so* [s]on the morrow, that Saul put the people [t]in three companies, and they came into the midst of the host in the [u]morning-watch, and [x]slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, [y]so that two of them were not left together.

12 ¶ And the people said unto Samuel, [z]Who *is* he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death.

13 And Saul said, [a]There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to-day [b]the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel.

14 Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and [c]let us go to Gilgal, and [d]renew the kingdom there.

15 And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king [e]before the LORD in Gilgal; and [f]there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace-offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel [g]rejoiced greatly.

CHAP. XII.

Samuel, before Israel, avows his integrity, and the people fully justify him, 1—5. He expostulates with them, for their ingratitude, in rejecting the government of God, and warns them against disobedience, 6—15. To show their guilt in asking a king, he calls for thunder and rain in time of harvest, which greatly dismays them, 16—18. He promises to instruct and pray for them, and encourages them to cleave to the service of God, and to trust in his mercy, 20—25.

AND Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, [a]I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and [b]have made a king over you.

2 And now, behold, the king [c]walketh before you: and [d]I am old and gray-headed; and, behold, [e]my sons *are* with you: and [f]I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day.

s Gen. 22:14. Ps. 46:1.
t Judg. 7:16. 9:43.
u Ex. 14:24.
x 2. Judg. 1:7. Matt. 7:2. Jam. 2 13.
y 30:17,18. Judg. 4:16.
z 10:27. Ps. 21:8. Luke 19:27.
a 2 Sam. 19:22.
b 19:5. Ex. 14:13,30. Ps. 44:4—8. 1 Cor. 15:10.
c 7:16. 10:8.
d 10:24. 2 Sam. 5:3. 1 Chr. 12:38,39.
e 10:17.
f Ex. 24:5. 1 Chr. 29:21—24.
g 8:19. 12:13—15,17. Hos. 13:10,11. Jam. 4:16.
a 8:5—8,19—22.
b 10:1,24. 11:14,15.
c 8:20. Num. 27:17.
d 8:1,5. Ps. 71:18. Is. 46:3,4. 2 Tim. 4:6. 2 Pet. 1:14.
e 2:22,29. 3:13. 8:3.
f 3:19,20.

suppose Saul was the more vigorous in this matter, 1. Because there was some alliance between the tribe of Benjamin and the city of Jabesh-gilead. That city had declined joining the rest of Israel to destroy Gibeah, which was then punished as their crime, but, perhaps, was now remembered as their kindness. Further, two thirds of the Benjamites that then remained, were provided with wives from that city, (Judg. 21: 14.) so that most of the mothers of Benjamin were daughters of Jabesh-gilead; for it therefore Saul, (a Benjamite,) had a particular kindness; and we find they returned his kindness, *ch.* 31: 11, 12. 2. Because it was the Ammonites' invasion that induced the people to desire a king, (so Samuel says, *ch.* 12: 12.) so that if he had not done his part in this expedition, he had disappointed their expectations, and had for ever forfeited their respect.

V. 12—15. I. The people took this occasion to show their jealousy of the honor of Saul, and their resentment of the indignities done him. Saul's good fortune (as foolish men commonly call it) thus went further to confirm his title, than either his choice by lot, or Samuel's anointing him. They had not courage to persecute opposers till now that his victory made him look great, but now, nothing will serve but they must be put to death.

II. Saul took this occasion to give further proofs of his clemency, for, without waiting for Samuel's answer, he himself quashed the motion, *v.* 13. *There shall not a man be put to death this day*, no, not those men, those bad men, that had abused him, and therein reflected on God Himself. It was a day of joy and triumph, and he hoped they were now convinced that, under God, he could save them: and, if they be but reclaimed, he is secured from receiving any disturbance by them; if an enemy be made a friend, that is more to our advantage than to have him slain. And all good princes consider that their power is for edification, not for destruction.

III. Samuel took this occasion to call the people together *before the Lord in Gilgal*, *v.* 14, 15. that they might publicly give God thanks for their late victory, and confirm Saul in the government, more solemnly than it had been yet done, to prevent his retiring again to his obscurity. Samuel would have the kingdom renewed; he would renew his resignation, and the people should renew their approbation; and so, in concurrence with, or rather in attendance on, the divine nomination, they made Saul king, making it their own act and deed to submit to him.

CHAP. XII. V. 1—5. We left the general assembly of the states together, in the close of the ch. foregoing; in this, we have Samuel's speech to them, when he resigned the government to Saul This is his farewell sermon to that august assembly, and Saul's coronation sermon.

I. Samuel gives a short account of the late revolution, and of the present posture of government by way of preface, *v.* 1, 2. For his own part, he had spent his days in their service; he began as soon as he was illuminated with the light of prophecy in his early days, and had continued till now he was *old and gray-headed;* therefore they were the more unkind to cast him off; yet therefore he was the more willing to resign. Old, and therefore the more able to advise them; the more observant they should be of what he said, for *days shall speak*, and *the multitude of years shall teach wisdom;* and there is a particular reverence owing to the aged, especially aged magistrates and aged ministers 'Old, and therefore not likely to live long; perhaps may never have an opportunity of speaking to you again, therefore note what I say.' As for his sons: '*Behold,*' (says he,) '*they are with you;* on a level with you, subjects to the new king as well as you; if you can prove them guilty of any wrong, prosecute them now by a due course of law, punish them, and oblige them to make restitution.' As for your new king, I have gratified you in setting him over you, *v.* 1. '*I have hearkened to your voice in all that ye said to me*, being desirous to please you, if it were possible, and make you easy, though to the discarding of myself and family; and now, will you hearken to me, and take my advice?' And the change is now perfected; '*Behold, the king walketh before you;* (*v.* 2.) he appears in public, ready to serve you. Now that you have made yourselves like the nations in your civil government, and cast off the divine administration, take heed lest you make yourselves like the nations in religion, and cast off the worship of God.'

II. He solemnly appeals to them concerning his own integrity in the administration of the government, *v.* 3. There is a just debt which every man owes to his own good name, especially men in public stations, which is, to guard against unjust aspersions and suspicions, that we may finish our course with honor, as well as joy. He designed also to leave a good name behind him,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Hasty settlements among bad neighbors often produce multiplied calamities: (*Note, Num.* 32: 29.)—To save their lives men often part with their liberty, and will even consent to lose their eyes: how much more then is it our wisdom, to part with our right eye, rather than to be cast into hell-fire!—The Lord, in providence, will make way for those, whom He has designed and prepared for usefulness: nor shall any repent of humbly waiting in obscurity and honest industry, till He is pleased to call them forth. —The reproach of the Gospel, the distresses of the Lord's people, and the insulting triumphs of their enemies, should not only excite our sympathizing sorrows, but our most decisive exertions in our several stations, yea, our warm and generous indignation. But magistrates in all cases should be sparing of the lives of their subjects, and only punish them in their property, where that can be made effectual.—Humility and clemency add superior lustre to the most splendid actions; he who forgives his enemies, when he has them in his power, obtains the noblest victory; (*Prov.* 16: 32.) and by giving the praise of illustrious exploits to God, a man acquires the most solid honor.—The Lord delights to plead the cause of those, who are dumb under injuries, and plead not for themselves; to put to silence those who contend with his servants; and to work by instruments man contemns.—Thus the despised Savior will at length be universally acknowledged as the Lord's anointed King, with songs of triumph and praise: at present, before the mercy-seat, He receives the submissions and pleads the cause of rebels, who are willing He should reign over and save them; but shortly, from his righteous tribunal, He will condemn to everlasting ruin all who persist in contempt of Him and opposition to Him.

SCOTT.

Verses 12—15.

In all this, Saul's conduct was unexceptionable; and the whole concludes with such humanity and apparent piety, as promised far better effects than those which followed. (*M. R.—Note, Ps.* 36: 3, 4.)

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII. V. 2—7. Samuel might be about 18 years of age when Eli was slain, and 38 when he assembled the people at Mizpeh, (7: 1—12.) and perhaps 60 at this time.

SCOTT.

(2.) *My sons are with you.*] 'It is generally agreed that these

3 Behold, here I *am:* witness against me before the LORD, and before [s] his anointed: [h] whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received *any* * bribe to † blind mine eyes therewith? and [i] I will restore it you.

4 And they said, [k] Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand.

5 And he said unto them, [l] The LORD *is* witness against you, and [m] his anointed *is* witness this day, that [n] ye have not found ought [o] in my hand. And they answered, *He is* witness.

6 And Samuel said unto the people, [p] *It is* the LORD that ‡ advanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt.

7 Now therefore stand still, that I may [q] reason with you before the LORD, of all the § righteous acts of the LORD, which he did ‖ to you and to your fathers.

8 When [r] Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers [s] cried unto the LORD, then the LORD [t] sent Moses and Aaron, which [u] brought forth your fathers out of Egypt and [x] made them dwell in this place.

9 And when they [y] forgat the LORD their God, [z] he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor, and into the hand [a] of the Philistines, and [b] into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them.

10 And [c] they cried unto the LORD, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served [d] Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now [e] deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee.

11 And the LORD sent [f] Jerubbaal, and [g] Bedan, and [h] Jephthah, and [i] Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled safe.

12 And when ye saw that [k] Nahash the king of the children of Ammon, came against you, ye said unto me, [l] Nay, but a king shall reign over us; [m] when the LORD your God *was* your King.

13 Now therefore [n] behold the king [o] whom ye have chosen, *and* whom ye [p] have desired! and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you.

14 If [q] ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the ¶ commandment of

g 5. 10:1. 24:6. 2 Sam. 1:14—16. Matt. 22:21. Rom. 13:1—7.
b Num. 16:15. Acts 20:33. 1 Thes. 2: 5,10. 1 Pet. 5:2.
* Heb. *ransom.*
† Or, *that I should hide mine eyes at him.* Ex. 23:8. Deut. 16:19.
i Lev. 6:4. Luke 19:8.
k 1's. 37:5,6. Dan. 6:4. 3 John 12.
l Job 31:35—40. 42:7.
m 26:9.
n John 18:38. Acts 23:9. 1 Cor. 4:4. 2 Cor. 1:12.
o Ex. 22:4. Ps. 17:3.
p Ex. 6:26. Neh. 9:9—14. Ps. 77:19, 20. 78,12,&c. 99:6. 105:26,41. Is. 63:7—14. Hos. 12:13.
‡ Or, *made.*
q Is. 1:18. 5:3,4. Ez. 18:25—30. Mic. 6:2—4. Acts 17:3.
§ Heb. *righteousnesses*, or, *benefits* Judg. 5.11.
‖ Heb. *with.*
r Gen. 46:5—7. Num. 20:15. Acts 7: 15.
s Ex. 2:23,24. 3:9.
t *See on* 6.—Ex. 3:10. 4:14—16,27—31. 6:26.
u Ex. 12:51. 14:30,31.
x Josh. 1:2—4,6. 3:10—13. Ps. 44:1—3. 78:54,55. 105:44.
y Deut. 32:18. Judg. 3:7. Ps. 106:21. Jer. 2:32.
z Deut. 32:30. Judg. 2:14. 3:8. 4:2. Is. 50:1,2.
a Judg. 10:7. 13:1.
b Judg. 3:12. Is. 63:10.
c 7:2. Judg. 3:9,15. 4:3. 6:7. 10:10, 15. Ps. 78:34,35. 106:44. Is. 26:16.
d Judg. 2:13. 3:7.
e Judg. 10:15,16. Is. 33:22. Luke 1: 74,75. 2 Cor. 5:14,15.
f Judg. 6:14,32. 8:29,35.
g Judg. 13:—16:
h Judg. 11:1,&c.
i 7:13.
k 11:1.
l 8:5,6,19,20. Judg. 9:18,56,57.
m 8:7 10:19. Gen. 17:7. Ex. 19:5,6. Num. 23:21. Ps. 74:12. Is. 33:22. Hos. 13:10.
n 10:24. 11:15.
o 8:5. 9:20.
p Ps. 78:29—31. Hos. 13:11. Acts 13: 21.
q Lev. 26:1—13. Deut. 28:1—14. Josh. 24:14. Ps. 81:13,14. Is. 3:10. Rom. 2:7.
¶ Heb. *mouth.*

1: 18. The work of ministers is, to reason with people; not only to exhort and direct, but to persuade; to convince the judgment, and so gain the will and affections. Let reason rule men, and they will be good. He reasons of the righteous acts of the Lord. His favors are called *his righteous acts*, (Judg. 5: 11.) because in them He is just to his own honor. He not only reminds them of what God had done for them in their days, but of what He had done of old, in the days of their fathers, because the present age had the benefit of God's former favors. We may suppose his discourse was much larger than as here related. We read not of Bedan, elsewhere: he might be some eminent person, instrumental of salvation to them, though not recorded in the book of Judges; (such a one as Shamgar, of whom it is said, that he *delivered* Israel, but not that he *judged* them, Judg. 3: 31.) perhaps, he guarded and delivered them on one side, at the time some other judge appeared and acted for them on the other. Some think it was the same with Jair, so Mr. Poole; others, the same with Samson, who was Ben Dan, a son of Dan; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, Be-Dan, in Dan, in the camp of Dan. Samuel mentions himself, not to his own praise, but to the honor of God, who had made him an instrument.

At last, he reminds them of God's late favor to the present generation, in gratifying them with a king, when they would prescribe to God, by such a one, to save them out of the hand of Nahash, king of Ammon, *v.* 12, 13. He told them God was Commander-in-chief in all their wars, and they needed no other.

II. He shows them, they were now on their good behavior, they and their king; let them not think they had cut themselves off from all dependence on God, and that now, having a king of their own, the making of their own fortunes (as men foolishly call it) was in their own hands; no, still

words intimate that Samuel had deprived them of their public employment, and reduced them to the level of the common people.'
Dr. A. Clarke.

Verses 11—13.

(*M. R.—Notes, Judg.* 6:—11:) Bedan may be considered as a contraction of *Ben-dan*, or *the son of Dan*; and it is probable that Samson is intended. (*Judg.* 13:—18: The Sept. has Barak.—Samuel joins himself to the number of those, by whom the Lord had delivered the people; to impress more deeply on their minds the conviction, that, in rejecting him, they had refused to continue any longer under the immediate government of God, by judges of his appointment, which had been their honor and happiness. Scott.

(11.) *Bedan.*] 'Jair, the Manassite, Judg. 10: 3. so some, because here named *after* Gideon and *before* Jephthah; and because he was the grandson of Machir the Manassite, who is called Bedan, 1 Chron. 7· 17. a name given him to distinguish him from an elder Jair, descended from Manasseh, Num. 32: 41.' Assemb. Ann.—'Houbigant, on the authority of the Sept. reads, "Barak," instead of Bedan; and, following the Syriac and Arabic versions, substitutes 'Samson" for "Samuel." Indeed it is not probable Samuel would enumerate himself. Therefore the list of names was originally, perhaps, Jerubbaal, Deborah, and Barak, Jephthah and Samson. This seems confirmed, in some measure, by the author of Heb. 11: 20.' Hewlett.

(12.) 'The word *nay* seems to signify that Samuel told them God would be with them to deliver them; or that he offered himself to be their leader under God; but they refused his offer, and continued to demand a king.' Patrick.

Verse 14.

Following, &c.] Depending on God, adhering to his worship and service, and protected by Him; and so, a holy and happy people. (15: 11. *Num.* 14· 24. *Hos.* 6: 1—3.) Scott.

the LORD, then shall both ye, and also the king that reigneth over you, * continue following the LORD your God.

15 But if [r] ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD; then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as *it was* [s] against your fathers.

16 Now therefore [t] stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes.

17 *Is it* [u] not wheat-harvest to-day? [x] I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that [y] your wickedness *is* great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king.

18 So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD [z] sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly [a] feared the LORD and Samuel.

19 And all the people said unto Samuel, [b] Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins *this* evil, to ask us a king.

20 And Samuel said unto the people, [c] Fear not: (ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart;

21 And [d] turn ye not aside: for *then should ye go* after * vain *things*, which [f] cannot profit nor deliver; for they *are* vain:)

22 For [g] the LORD will not forsake his people [h] for his great name's sake; because [i] it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.

23 Moreover, as for me, [k] God forbid that I should sin against the LORD † in ceasing to pray for you: but [l] I will teach you [m] the good and the right way.

24 Only [n] fear the LORD, and serve him [o] in truth with all your heart: for [p] consider ‡ how great *things* he hath done for you.

25 But [q] if ye shall still do wickedly, ye

their judgment must proceed from the Lord. He tells them plainly,

Their obedience to God would certainly be their happiness, *v.* 14. but observe how the promise is expressed, *Then ye shall continue following the Lord your God;* i. e 'Ye shall continue in the way of your duty to God, which will be your honor and comfort.' Note, Those that follow God faithfully, God will enable to continue following Him. And observe, Following God is a work that is its own wages. Their disobedience would as certainly be their ruin; (*v.* 15.) We mistake if we think we can evade God's justice by shaking off his dominion. If God shall not rule us, yet He will judge us.

V. 16—25. Two things Samuel here aims at:

I. To convince the people of their sin in desiring a king. They were now rejoicing before God, on the occasion of having a king; and this perhaps made them think that there was no harm in their asking a king, but that really they had done well in it; therefore Samuel here charges it upon them as their sin, as wickedness, *great wickedness in the sight of the Lord, v.* 17. Note, Though we meet with prosperity and success in a way of sin, yet we must not therefore think the more favorably of it. Samuel made it appear that this thunder and rain was designed by God, to convince them they had done very *wickedly*, not only by its coming in an unusual time, in wheat harvest, and this on a fair, clear day, but by his giving notice of it before, *v.* 16, 17. He had bidden them *stand and hear*, (*v.* 7.) but because he did not see that his reasoning with them affected them, now he bids them *stand and see.* He appealed to this as a sign.

This storm startled the people very much, as well it might. (1.) *They greatly feared the Lord and Samuel.* They had a king, and were ready to think they must fear him only, but God made them know that *He* is *greatly to be feared*, and his prophets for his sake. (2.) They own their sin and folly in desiring a king, *v.* 19. Samuel did not extort this confession from them till the matter was settled, and the king confirmed, lest it should look as if he designed by it rather to establish himself in the government, than to bring them to repentance. (3.) They earnestly begged Samuel's prayers, *v.* 19. Now they see their need of him whom awhile ago they slighted. Thus many that will not have *Christ to reign over them*, would yet be glad to have Him to intercede for them, to turn away the wrath of God. And the time may come, when those that have despised and ridiculed praying people, will value their prayers, and desire a share in them. '*Pray*' (said they) '*to the Lord thy God;* we know not how to call Him ours, but if thou have any interest in Him, improve it for us.'

II. He aims to confirm the people in their religion, and engage them for ever to cleave unto the Lord. The design of his discourse is much the same with Joshua's, *ch.* 23. and 24.

1. He would not that the terrors of the Lord should frighten them *from* Him, for they were intended to frighten them *to* Him, *v.* 20. *Fear not;* i. e. 'Despair not, fear not with amazement; the weather will clear up after the storm. Fear not; though God will frown upon his people, yet He will not forsake them, (*v.* 22.) *for his great name's sake;* do not you forsake Him then.' Every transgression in the covenant, though it displease the Lord, yet does not throw us out of covenant, and therefore God's just rebukes must not drive us from our hopes in his mercy. The fixedness of God's choice is owing to the freeness of it; we may *therefore* hope He will not forsake his people, because it has *pleased Him to make them his people.* Had He chosen them for their good merits, we might fear He would cast them off for their bad merits: but, choosing them *for his name's sake*, for his name's sake He will not leave them.

2. He cautions them against idolatry, and so far from upbraiding them with their disrespect to him, he promises them much more than they asked. (1.) They asked his prayers as a favor; he promised them as a duty, and startles at the thought of neglecting to pray for them. Note, It is a sin against God, not to pray for the Israel of God, especially those under our charge: and good men are afraid of the guilt of omissions. (2.) They asked him to pray for them at this time, and on this occasion, but he promises to continue his prayers for them, as long as he lived. Our rule is, to *pray without ceasing;* we sin if we restrain prayer in general, and in particular if we cease

* Heb. *be after.*

r Lev. 26:14—39. Deut. 28:15—68. Josh. 24:20. Is. 1:20. 3:11. Rom. 2:8,9.

s *See on* 9.

t 7. 15:16. Ex. 14:13,31.

u Prov. 26:1.

x 7:9,10. Josh. 10:12. Ps. 99:6. Jer. 15:1. Jam. 5:16—18.

y *See on* 8:7.

z Ex. 9:23—25. Rev. 11:5,6.

a Ex. 14:31. Ezra 10:9. Ps. 105:12,13.

b 7:5,8. Gen. 20:7. Ex. 9:28. 10:17. Job 42:8. Ps. 78:34,35. Mal. 1:9. Acts 8:24. 1 John 5:16.

c Ex. 20:19,20. 1 Pet. 3:6.

d Deut. 11:16. 31:29. Josh. 23:6. Ps. 40:4. 101:3. 125:5.

e Deut. 32:21. Jer. 2:5,13. 10:8,15. 14:22. 16:19. Jon. 2:8. Hab. 2:18. 1 Cor. 8:4.

f Ps. 115:4—8. Is. 41:23,24. 44:9,10. 45:20. 46:7. Jer. 10:5.

g Deut. 31:17. 2 Kings 21:14. 1 Chr. 28:9. 2 Chr. 15:2. Ps. 94:14. Is. 41:17. 42:16. Jer. 33:24—26. Lam. 5:20. Heb. 13:5.

h Ex. 32:12. Num. 14:13—19. Deut. 32:26,27. Josh. 7:9. Is. 37:35. 43:25. 48:11. Jer. 14:7,21. Ex. 20:9, 14. Eph. 1:6,12.

i Ex. 19:5,6. Deut. 7:7,8. 9:5. 14:2. Mal. 1:2. Matt. 11:26. John 15:16. Rom. 9:13—18. 11:29. 1 Cor. 4:7. Phil. 1:6.

k Acts 12:5. Rom. 1:9. Col. 1:9. 1 Thes. 3:10. 2 Tim. 1:3.

† Heb. *from ceasing.*

l Ps. 34:11. Prov. 4:11. Ec. 12:10. Acts 20:20. Col. 1:28.

m 1 Kings 8:36. 2 Chr. 6:27. Jer. 6:16.

n Job 28:28. Ps. 111:10. Prov. 1:7. Ec. 12:13. Heb. 12:29.

o Is. 119:80. John 1:47.

p Ezra 9:13,14. Is. 5:12. Rom. 12:1.

‡ Or, *what a great* thing, &c. Deut. 10:21. Ps. 126:2,3.

q Deut. 32:15,&c. Josh. 24:20. Is. 3:11.

Verses 16—19.

Their guilt did not consist in preferring the authority of kings to any other kind of government; but in rebelliously and ungratefully determining to be governed in a different manner, from that God Himself had chosen for them. And if, afterwards, when God had expressly appointed David to rule over them, the people had required a change of government, and wanted again to be ruled by judges as their fathers had been, they would have been guilty of a similar rebellion. (1 *Kings* 12: 16.) SCOTT.

(16.) *Stand.*] 'He intends, not the posture of their bodies, but the consistency of their minds, by serious and fixed considerations.' POOLE.

(17.) 'In Palestine, and in the torrid zone, the seasons are more distinctly marked than with us; and as the rainy season is a period of almost uninterrupted rain, so summer or harvest is a period of dry weather, without a shower, and almost without a cloud.' HEWLETT. Note, Deut. 11: 14. In this view, the miracle wrought by Samuel was the more striking. ED.

Verse 20.

Fear not, &c.] Samuel repeatedly exhorted the people to 'fear the Lord;' (14, 24.) yet here he exhorted them *not to fear;* that is, not to be dismayed by the dread of immediate destruction. (*Note, Ex.* 20: 18—20.)—Reverence of the majesty and authority of God, and fear of his displeasure, when counterpoised by the hope of his favor, quicken men in seeking and serving Him: but such a fear of wrath, as occasions despondency and hard thoughts of Him, drives men from their duty, and exposes them to manifold temptations. (*Gen.* 45: 5. *Ps.* 130: 3, 4. 2 *Tim.* 1: 6—8. 1 *John* 4: 18.) SCOTT.

Verse 22.

In preferring the seed of Jacob to other families, the Lord acted as a sovereign, who is not bound, and does not deign, to assign his reasons: but having made them his people, the honor of his perfections required, that He should not entirely forsake them till the promised Seed arose, however severely He corrected them; nor even then, finally and absolutely; and this consideration was suited to excite and encourage their obedience. (*M. R.—Ps.* 94: 12—14. *Is.* 41: 8, 9. *Jer.* 33: 23—26. *Rom.* 11: 1—10, 25—32.) ID.

Verse 23.

In these respects, [i. e. praying for them, and devoting the remnant of life to their service,] he judged them all the days of his life. (7: 15.) —Nothing can be well imagined, more expressive of genuine excellency of character, and a right state of heart, than this simple but

shall be consumed, both [r] ye and your king.

CHAP. XIII.

Saul chooses a select band, and dismisses the people, 1, 2. Jonathan, his son, smites a garrison of the Philistines, and Saul summons the people to Gilgal, 3, 4. The Philistines gather a great army; and Israel is distressed and scattered, 5—7. Saul, weary of waiting for Samuel, sacrifices, 8, 9. Samuel comes and reproves him, and shows that God has rejected him; while Saul in vain excuses himself, 10—14. A small company attend Saul; and three bands of Philistines waste the land, 15—18. The policy of the Philistines, who suffer no smith in Israel, 19—23.

SAUL * reigned one [a] year: and when he had reigned two years over Israel,

2 Saul [a] chose him three thousand *men* of Israel, *whereof* two thousand were with Saul in [b] Michmash, and in mount Beth-el, and a thousand were with Jonathan [c] in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent.

3 And Jonathan smote [d] the garrison of the Philistines that *was* in † Geba: and the

r 31:1—5. Deut. 28:36. Hos. 10:3.
* Heb. *the son of one year in his reigning.* Ex. 12:5. Mic. 6:6. *Marg.*
a 8:11. 14:52.
b 5,23. 14.5.31. Is. 10:28.
c 10:25. 15:34. Josh. 18:28. Judg. 19: 12. 2 Sam. 21:6. Is. 10:29.
d 10:5. 14:1—6. 2 Sam. 23:14.
† Or, *the hill.* Josh. 18:24. *Gaba.* 21:17. Is. 10:29. Zech. 14:10.

praying for the church. (3.) He promises not only to pray for them, but to teach them.

3. He concludes with an earnest exhortation to practical religion and serious godliness, *v.* 24, 25. *Fear the Lord* He had said, (*v.* 20.) '*Fear not* with a slavish fear,' but here, 'Fear the Lord with a filial fear. As the fruit and evidence of this, serve Him in the duties of religious worship, and of a godly conversation; in truth and sincerity, not in show and profession only, but with your heart, *with all your heart*, not dissembling, not dividing.' And two things he urges by way of motive; (1.) *Gratitude*, considering *what great things God had done for them*, to engage them for ever to his service. (2.) *Interest*, considering what great things God would do against them, if they should *still do wickedly.*

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CHAP. XIII. While Samuel was joined in commission with Saul, things went well; (ch. 11: 7.) but now that Saul began to reign alone, all went to decay, and Samuel's words began to be fulfilled. *Ye shall be consumed, both you and your king;* for never was the state of Israel further gone in a consumption than in this ch. Saul appears here a very silly prince; infatuated in his councils; invaded by his neighbors; deserted by his soldiers; disordered in his own spirit, and sacrificing in confusion; chidden by Samuel; and rejected of God from being a king: and the people appear a very miserable people; disheartened and dispersed; diminished; plundered; disarmed. This they got by casting off God's government, and making themselves *like the nations;* all their glory departed from them.

V. 1—7. We are not told wherein Israel offended God, but doubtless they left God, else He had not left them, as here it appears He did; for,

I. Saul was very weak and impolitic, and did not order his affairs with discretion. *Saul was the son of one year*, so the original; a phrase which ordinarily signifies the date of one's birth: therefore some understand it figuratively, he was as innocent and good as a child of a year old; so the Chal. he was *without fault, like the son of a year.* But if we admit a figurative sense, it may as well intimate that he was ignorant and imprudent, and as unfit for business as a child of a year old: and the following particulars make that more his character, than the former. But we take it rather as our translation has it, *Saul reigned one year*, and nothing considerable happened; it was a year of no action; but in his second year he did as follows:

1. He chose him a band of 3000 *men*, two for himself and one for Jonathan, and dismissed the rest, (*v.* 2.) too many, if only to guard and attend him; too few, if for a standing army; and, perhaps, the confidence he put in this select number, and his disbanding the rest of that brave army with which he lately beat the Ammonites, (*ch.* 11: 8, 11.) was looked upon as an affront to the kingdom, gave a general disgust, and was the reason he had so few at his call when he had occasion for them. The prince that relies on a particular party, weakens his own interest in the whole community.

2. He ordered his son Jonathan to surprise and destroy the garrison of the Philistines near by in Geba, *v.* 3. treacherously, I suspect, because it is said, for doing it, *Israel was had in abomination, with the Philistines*, (*v.* 4.) as men void of common honesty, whose word could not be relied on. Nothing makes the name of Israel so odious to them that are without, as the fraud and dishonesty of those that are called by that worthy name. If professors of religion cheat and overreach, break their word, and betray their trust, religion suffers by it, and is *had in abomination with the Philistines.* Whom may one trust, if not an Israelite? one that, it is expected, should be *without guile.*

3. When he had thus exasperated the Philistines, then he began to raise forces, which, if he had acted wisely, he would have done before. *Let the Hebrews hear;* (*v.* 3.) and so, as many as thought fit came to Saul to Gilgal, *v.* 4. But the generality, we may suppose, drew back, either in dislike of his politics, or in dread of the Philistines, who, if he had summoned them sooner, would have been as ready at his beck, as they were when he marched against the Ammonites. We often find that after-wit would have done much better before, and have prevented much inconvenience.

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PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The favored few, who have walked before God from childhood to old age, while they look back on their past lives with gratitude, as the sure evidence of acceptance, and as confirming their expectation of eternal glory; may receive this satisfaction, and the 'rejoicing in the testimony of their consciences,' as a gracious recompense from the Lord; and may speak of them, in order to induce young persons to seek and serve Him without delay.—The honor, rendered to those who are concluding their course, differs widely from the applause and congratulation which many receive, when they first step forth before the public eye. This indeed often terminates in disgrace and contempt: it is therefore unworthy of our wishes, and ought surely never to move a wise man's envy or discontent, though rendered to others at his expense. (2 *Sam.* 15. 1—6. 18: 9—18. 1 *Chr.* 29: 20, 26—28.)—God's servants, though ill-treated, should be careful not to expostulate too much with those by whom they have been injured; but to 'reason with them of the righteous acts of the LORD,' of his truth and mercy, and of their conduct towards Him, for their humiliation.—Our safe and happy state consists in a willing dependence on God, and subjection to Him: but we are apt to affect independence, and to refuse obedience, by which we exchange substantial good for an empty shadow.—Disobedience ensures misery from generation to generation, whatever be our station or circumstances in life: and to continue 'following the LORD,' as his accepted servants, is the highest privilege we can enjoy.—The most useful benefactors of mankind, who have spent their lives, and worn out their constitutions, in unceasing labors for the good of others, must not be surprised, if they are at length cast off with neglect and ingratitude: but when the perverseness of their brethren prevents them from doing all that good which they desired to do, they should still do all the good they can. This is a general rule for all; and no provocations should tempt us to sin against God in ceasing to pray for our children, relations, friends, people, fellow sinners, or even our inveterate enemies. Yet the prayers of the church, and the intercession of Christ, will in the event appear to have been united against impenitent sinners; yea, the whole creation will shortly be armed against them. The belief of this should 'warn them to flee from the wrath to come,' to confess their sins, to obey the Gospel, and to desire the prayers and counsels of its ministers.—In the day of judgment all those things which men have inordinately loved, and for which they have forsaken God, will be found '*vain*, and such as cannot profit or deliver,' even though they were 'the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.' Happy then are they, whom the Lord has pleased to make his people! 'He will never leave nor forsake them,' but will glorify his great name in their eternal salvation. None, however, can know assuredly, that these blessings belong to them, except they attend to 'the good and the right way, and fear the LORD, and serve Him with all their heart:' (*Notes, Jer.* 32: 38—41. *John* 10 26—31. 1 *Pet.* 1: 3—5.) and if 'we consider what great things He hath done for us,' especially in the work of our redemption and regeneration, we cannot want motive, or encouragement, or assistance for so doing. SCOTT.

solemn declaration. Though ungratefully rejected by Israel, and degraded from his high station; he would yet think himself most criminal before God, should he decline any service, which he was in his inferior station capable of rendering them. This entirely coincides with Paul's avowal to the Corinthians. (2 *Cor* 12: 14, 15.)

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII. V. 1, 2. (*Marg.*)—The passage seems to refer to the transactions at Gilgal recorded in the former chs. Perhaps those events did not take place, till the second year after he had been first appointed by the Lord to be king over Israel. (*Notes*, 10: 1, 17—27. 11: 6—15. 12: 1.) SCOTT.

(1.) *One year.*] 'I. e. from the time he was elected king at Mizpeh to the time he was anointed and crowned at Gilgal; in which year, Nahash was defeated, the siege raised before Jabesh-Gilead, the people assembled at Gilgal, and Samuel's inaugural and valedictory discourse delivered, as mentioned in the two former chs.' ASSEMB. ANN.

Boothroyd, after Houbigant, (following 1 ms.) for 'Saul reigned one year,' reads 'Saul, when he began to reign, was 30 years old. Geddes reads the v. "Saul was .... years old when he was made king and reigned ... years over Israel." '—Supposing the true reading to be lost. ED.

(2.) *Michmash.*] 'East of Bethaven or Bethel, and about 9 miles from Jerusalem towards Rama.' *Eusebius*, in WILLIAMS.

Verses 3, 4.

After Saul had defeated Nahash, and had been confirmed in the

Philistines heard *of it:* and Saul [e]blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear.

4 And all Israel heard say *that* Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and *that* Israel also [*]was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul [f]to Gilgal.

5 And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people [g]as the sand which *is* on the sea-shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from [h]Beth-aven.

6 When the men of Israel saw that they were [i]in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves [k]in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.

7 And *some of* [l]the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of [m]Gad and Gilead: as for Saul, he *was* yet in Gilgal, and all the people [†]followed him trembling.

8 And he [n]tarried seven days according to the set time that Samuel *had appointed:* but Samuel came not to Gilgal, and the people were scattered from him.

9 And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt-offering to me, and peace-offerings. And [o]he offered the burnt-offering.

II. Never did the Philistines appear in such a formidable body as now; we may suppose they had great assistance from their allies; (*v.* 5.) horses, in those times, were not so much used in war as they now are, and here was a great body, the number of chariots, also, was incredible: most of them, we may suppose, carriages for baggage, not chariots of war. Their foot was *innumerable as the sand of the sea-shore;* so jealous were they for the honor of their nation, and so much enraged at the baseness of the Israelites in destroying their garrison. Had Saul asked counsel of God before he had thus provoked the Philistines, he and his people might the better have borne this threatening trouble. But they had brought it on themselves by their own folly.

III. Never were the Israelites so faint-hearted, so very cowardly, as now. Many, it may be, came to Saul to Gilgal, but, hearing of the Philistines' numbers and preparations, their spirits sunk; some think, because they did not find Samuel there with Saul. They that, awhile ago, were weary of him, and wished for a king, now had small joy of their king, unless they could see him under Samuel's direction. Sooner or later, men will be made to see that God and his prophets are their best friends. 1. Some absconded, *v.* 6. See what work sin makes; it exposes men to perils, and then dispirits them. A single person, by faith, can say, *I will not be afraid of ten thousand;* but here, thousands of degenerate Israelites trembled at the approach of these Philistines. Guilt makes men cowards. 2. Others fled, *v.* 7. *went over Jordan to Gilead*, as far as they could from the danger, where they had lately been victorious over the Ammonites: where they had triumphed, they hoped to be sheltered. 3. Those that stayed with Saul, *followed him trembling*, expecting no other than to be cut off, and having their hands and hearts weakened by the desertion of so many of their troops. And, perhaps, Saul himself, though he in honor stood his ground, yet had no courage to spare, wherewith to inspire his trembling soldiers.

V. 8—14. Here is, I. Saul's offence in offering sacrifice before Samuel came. See *ch.* 10: 8. It is plain he understood he was to stay till Samuel came, else he would not have made so many excuses as he did, for not staying, *v.* 11. But he had not patience to wait till the end of the seventh day; perhaps, he began to reproach Samuel as false to his word, careless of his country, and disrespectful to his prince; and thought it more fit Samuel should wait for him, than he for Samuel: so he offered sacrifice; as if, because he was a king, though he was neither priest nor prophet, he might do any thing; a piece of presumption, king Uzziah paid dear for, 2 Chron. 26: 16, &c. Samuel had promised to *show him what he should do*, but he determined to engage the Philistines without Samuel's directions. So self-sufficient was Saul, that he thought it not worth while to stay for a prophet of the Lord, either to pray for him, or advise him.

This was Saul's offence, and what aggravated it, was, 1. He did not send any messenger to Samuel, to know his mind, though he had enough about him that were swift of foot. 2. When Samuel came, he rather boasted of what he had done, and seemed pleased with the opportunity of letting Samuel know that he could do well enough without him. He went out to *bless him*, so the word is, as if he now thought himself a complete priest, empowered to bless as well as sacrifice, whereas he should have gone out to be blessed by him. 3. He charged Samuel with breach of promise, (*v.* 11.) therefore if any thing was amiss, Samuel must bear the blame; whereas Samuel did come according to his word, before the seven days were expired. Thus the *scoffers of the latter days* think the promise of Christ's coming is broken, because He does not come in their time, though it is certain He will come at the set time. 4. When charged with disobedience, he justified himself in what he had done, and gave no sign at all of repentance for it. It is not sinning that ruins men, but sinning and not repenting; falling and not getting up again. See what excuses he made, *v.* 11, 12. He would have this act of disobedience pass, (1.) For an instance of his prudence; the people were most of them scattered from him, and he had no other way, to keep those with him, and to prevent their deserting too. If Samuel neglected the public concerns, he would not. (2.) For an instance of his piety; he would be thought very devout, and in great care not to engage the Philistines till he had by prayer and sacrifice engaged God on his side. Thus he covered his disobedience to God's command, with a pretence of concern for God's favor. Hypocrites lay great stress on the external performances of religion, thinking thereby to excuse their neglect of the *weightier matters of the law*. And yet, lastly, he owns it went against his conscience to do it; *I forced myself, and offered a burnt-offering;* perhaps boasting he had broken through his convictions, and got the better of them; or, at least, thinking this extenuated his fault, that he knew he should not have done as he did, but did it with reluctancy. Foolish man! to think God would be well pleased with sacrifices offered in direct opposition both to his general and particular command.

II. The sentence passed on Saul for this offence: Samuel found him standing by his burnt-offering; but, instead of an answer of peace, he let him know *the sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord*, much more when he brings it, as Saul did, *with a wicked mind*. 1. He shows him the aggravations of his crime; and says to this king, *Thou art wicked;* which it is not for any but a prophet of the Lord to say, Job 34: 18. He charges him with being an enemy to himself and his interest. *Thou hast done foolishly;* and rebelled against God and his government, '*Thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God*, that command wherewith He intended to try thy obedience.' Note, Those that disobey the command-

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e Judg. 3:27. 6:34. 2 Sam. 2:28. 20:1. Neh. *did stink.* Gen. 34:30. 46:34. Ex. 5:21. Zech. 11:8.
f 10:8. 11:14,15. Josh. 5:9.
g Gen. 22:17. Josh. 11:4. Judg. 7:12. 2 Chr. 1:9. Is. 48:19. Jer. 15:8. Rom. 9:27.
h 14:23. Josh. 7:2. 18:12. Hos. 4:15. 5:8. 10:5.
i Ex. 14:10—12. Josh. 8:20. Judg. 10: 9. 20:41. 2 Sam. 24:14. 1 Chr. 21:13.
k 14:11. 23:19. 24:3. Judg. 6:2. Is. 42:22. Heb. 11:38.
l Lev. 26:17,36,37. Deut. 28:25.
m Num. 32:1—5,33—42. Deut. 3:12. Josh. 13:24—31.
† Heb. *trembled after him.* Deut. 20:8. Judg. 7:3. Hos. 11:10,11.
n 10:8.
o 14,13. 14:18. 15:21,22. Deut. 12:6. 1 Kings 3:4. Ps. 37:7. Prov. 15:8. 20:22. 21:3,27. Is. 66:3.

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kingdom, and after he had joined with Samuel in offering sacrifices, and had obtained the benefit of his prayers; it must be concluded that he ought to have marched directly with his victorious army against the Philistines, who possessed strong-holds in the land, and had become very formidable; and that true policy required this of him. (9: 16. 11: 12—15.) But it is probable, that he was elated with success, pleased with the show of royalty, and disposed to ease and indulgence. Thus the favorable opportunity was lost, the ardor of his followers was suffered to abate, and perhaps some of them were disgusted: and the Philistines, doubtless learning that a king had been chosen, with a view to deliver Israel from their power; assiduously employed the time given them, in preparing for war, and in weakening and disarming the Israelites. SCOTT.

(3.) *The Hebrews.*] 'Lit. "those beyond," i. e. the Jordan: as the use of the word, *v.* 7. shows. So *Mich. Dathe*, &c.' BOOTHROYD.

Verse 5.

Thirty thousand chariots.] Many here read, (which the Hebrew will bear) *three* for *thirty;* but even 3,000 chariots is incredible. *Patrick* therefore prefers to understand most to have been carriages for baggage. 'Mithridates' army,' he observes, 'had but 100 chariots, Darius' 200, and Antiochus Epiphanes' but 300.' *Poole*, with greater probability still, perhaps, suggests that '*chariots* here may be used by way of *metonymy*, for the *men* who rode in, and fought from, them; as 2 Sam. 10: 18. where it is said, in the Heb. David slew 700 chariots; that is, 700 men which fought from chariots, as explained, 1 Chron. 19: 18. and 1 Kings 20: 21.' This use of language is common, as he shows. See Deut. 28: 5, 17 32: 11. and Jer. 49: 12. 1 Cor. 10: 21. ED.

Thirty.] Heb. *Shlshym.* This same word is transl. 'captains' at Ex. 14: 7. and in the note, Ex. 15: 4. it is shown to refer most probably to a kind of chariots, (see cut there,) in use anciently in Egypt Considering then the word to be the name of this sort of war-chariot, may we understand 'Of the *Shalishim* kind, 1000 chariots,' &c.? This the construction might admit (see Stuart's gram. sect. 461). For 30,000 the Syr. and Arab. read 3,000, the rest 30,000. Sir *Isaac Newton*, who places this affair at about 1100 B. C. supposes the Hycshos, (notes, c. p. 14, vol. 1. and end of Gen.) now finally expelled from Egypt, to have greatly augmented the Philistine army. ID.

Verses 8, 9.

(10: 8.) As no priest is mentioned, it has been thought that Saul

10 And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt-offering, behold, Samuel came; and [p] Saul went out to meet him, that he might [*] salute him.

11 And Samuel said, [q] What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* thou camest not within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered themselves together at [r] Michmash;

12 Therefore [s] said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not [†] made supplication unto the LORD: [t] I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt-offering.

13 And Samuel said to Saul, [u] Thou hast done foolishly: [x] thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

14 But [y] now thy kingdom shall not continue; [z] the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him *to be* [a] captain over his people, because thou hast not kept *that* which the LORD commanded thee.

15 And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people *that were* [‡] present with him, [b] about six hundred men.

16 And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people *that were* present with them, abode in [§] Gibeah of Benjamin: but the Philistines encamped in Michmash.

17 [¶] And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines, [c] in three companies: one company turned unto the way *that leadeth to* [d] Ophrah, unto the land of [e] Shual:

18 And another company turned the way *to* [f] Beth-horon: and another company turned *to* the way of the border, that looketh to the valley of [g] Zeboim, toward the wilderness.

19 Now [h] there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make *them* swords or spears:

20 But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock.

21 Yet they had [‖] a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to [¶] sharpen the goads.

22 So it came to pass in the day of battle, that [i] there was neither sword nor spear found

p 15:13.
* Heb. *bless him.* 15:13. Ruth 2:4. Ps. 129:8.
q Gen. 3:13. 4:10. Josh. 7:19. 2 Sam. 3:24. 2 Kings 5:25.
r 2,5,16,23. 14:5. Is. 10:28.
s 1 Kings 12:26,27.
† Heb. *intreated the face of,* &c.
t 2:27. Ps. 66:3. Am. 3:5. 2 Cor. 9:7.
u 2 Sam. 12:7—9. 1 Kings 18:18. 21:20. 2 Chr. 16:9. 19:2. 25:15,16. Job 34:18. Prov. 19:3. Matt. 14:3,4.
x 15:11,22. Ps. 50:8—15.
y 2:30. 15:28.
z 16:1,12. 2 Sam. 7:15,16. Ps. 78:70. 89:19,20,&c. Acts 13:22.
a 9:16. 2 Sam. 5:2. 2 Kings 20:5. Heb. 2:10.
‡ Heb. *found.*
b 2,6,7. 14:2.
§ Heb. *Geba. See on* 3.
c 11:11.
d Josh. 18:23.
e Josh. 19:3.
f Josh. 10:11. 16:3,5. 18:13. 1 Chr. 6:68. 2 Chr. 8:5.
g Gen. 14:2. Neh. 11:34. Hos. 11:8.
h Judg. 5:8. 2 Kings 24:14. Jer. 24:1.
‖ Heb. *a file with mouths.*
¶ Heb. *set.*
i 17:47,50. Judg. 5:8. Zech. 4:6. 1 Cor. 1:27—29. 2 Cor. 4:7.

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presuming on his kingly authority, usurped the priesthood also: but this is doubtful. It is certain, however, that he took too much upon him. SCOTT.

Verses 13—15.

This commandment of the Lord by Samuel, was probably intended as a test of Saul's disposition: and his transgression proved, that he did not regard the word of God, when it greatly interfered with his own inclinations or sentiments; by which it appeared that he was unfit to rule, as the vicegerent of the Lord over his people. He was 'weighed in this balance, and found wanting.' Had he behaved properly, the kingdom would have been permanently confirmed in his family; and it is probable Samuel came to Gilgal, expecting to make this settlement of the kingdom by divine authority: but now, Saul was sentenced to be removed, to make way for one of a more obedient disposition. This the omniscient God foresaw: but his secret purpose was not the motive of Saul's conduct; which to the Searcher of hearts doubtless appeared much more aggravated than it does to us. (*Notes, Gen.* 2: 16, 17. 3: 6.)—Samuel on this occasion departed from Saul; yet, as he went to Gibeah of Saul, and not to Ramah, and as he came to him afterwards, (15: 1, 13, 34, 35.) it is conjectured that the sentence was not irreversible; but that, if Saul had repented of this sin, and been more obedient in future, he might notwithstanding have been continued in the kingdom. ID.

(14.) *After his own heart.*] 'David could not be thus characterized on account of his private virtues; but for his public conduct, particularly with respect to religion; for his abhorrence of superstition and idolatry, when surrounded with examples of both, and for his zealous, uninterrupted attachment to the worship of the true God. The expression also will be further qualified, by considering it as applied to David by way of contrast to the fickle character of the wretched, wavering, disobedient Saul.' HEWLETT.

Verse 17.

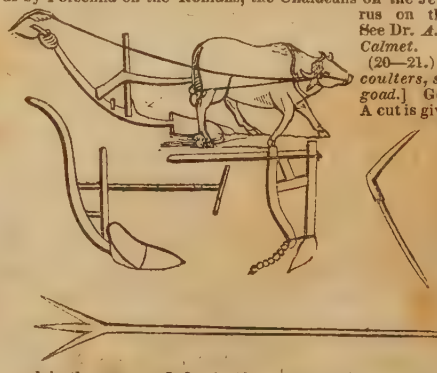
Ophrah.] 'In the tribe of Benjamin, Josh. 18: 23. or rather, as others, in Manasseh, where Gideon was born.—*Shual.*] So called because it abounded with foxes; so Bochart.' PATRICK.

Verse 18.

Valley of Zeboim.] 'I. e. the *valley of vipers*; so the Chald. *Zeboa* signifying a sort of speckled serpent, abundant in this valley, which lay towards the wilderness of Jericho in Benjamin.' ID.

Verses 19—21.

Similar restrictions were imposed in other instances by conquerors; as by Porsenna on the Romans, the Chaldeans on the Jews, and Cyrus on the Lydians. See Dr. *A. Clarke*, and *Calmet*. ED.



(20—21.) *Mattocks . . coulters, share, forks, goad.*] Gen. 41: 57. A cut is given of oriental ploughs, a mattock, from Niebuhr, and also a fork from the ancient Egyptian monuments. See a description of the *goad*, in the note on Judg. 4: 31 ED.

in the hand of any of the people that *were* with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found.

23 And the * garrison of the Philistines went out to the [k] passage of Michmash.

CHAP. XIV.

Jonathan, attended only by his armor-bearer, smites the garrison of the Philistines, 1—14. who are seized with terror, and destroy one another, 15, 16. Saul, seeing the tumult, inquires of God: but without waiting for an answer, he assaults the Philistines; being joined by the Hebrews who had deserted or hid themselves, 17—23. His rash course, against such as ate that day, hinders the completion of the victory; and Jonathan, not knowing what had passed, violates it, 24—30. The people fly upon the spoil, and are hardly restrained from eating with the blood, 31—34. Saul builds an altar; and asks counsel of God, but is not answered, 35—37. Jonathan, taken by lot and sentenced to die, is rescued by the people, 38—46. Saul's victories and family, 47—52.

NOW † it came to pass upon a day, that [a] Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison that *is* on the other side: but [b] he told not his father.

2 And Saul tarried [c] in the uttermost part of Gibeah, under a pomegranate-tree, which *is* in Migron: and the people that *were* with him *were* about six hundred men;

3 And [d] Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, * I-chabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD'S priest in Shiloh, [f] wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone.

4 And between [g] the passages by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistines' garrison, *there was* a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: and the name of the one *was* Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh.

5 The ‡ fore-front of the one *was* situate northward over against Michmash, and the other southward over against Gibeah.

* Or, *standing camp.* 3. 14:4.

k 2,5. 14:1,4,5.
† Or, *there was a day.*
a 39—45. 13:2,22. 18:1—4. 2 Sam. 1:4,5,25,26.
b 25:19. Judg. 6:27. 14:6. Mic. 7:5.
c 13:15,16. Is. 10:28,29.
d 22:9—12,20. *Ahimelech.*
e 4:21.
f 2:28. Ex. 28:26—32.
g 13:23.
‡ Heb. *tooth.*

SHOPS, transplanted the smiths into their own country, and forbade any Israelite, under severe penalties, to work in brass or iron, though they had rich mines of both, (Deut. 8: 9.) in such plenty, that it was said of Asher, *His shoes shall be iron and brass;* they must go to them, i. e. to some or other of their garrisons, dispersed in the country, to have all their iron work done, and no more might an Israelite do than use a file; (*v.* 20, 21.) and no doubt the Philistines' smiths brought the Israelites long bills for work done. For Saul, that pretended to be a king, like the kings of the nations, it was very impolitic not to redress this grievance, and arm his people from the Ammonites' spoil, and could by no means be excused. How slothful and mean-spirited were the Israelites, that suffered this. Surely they were reduced to it, or began to be so, in Samson's time, for we never find him with a sword or spear in his hand. Had they not been dispirited, they could not have been disarmed, but sin made them naked to their shame.

CHAP. XIV. We left Israel in a very ill posture, in the close of the foregoing chapter; yet here we find a happy turn, that still Samuel's words 12: 22. may be made good.

V. 1—15. We must here notice, I. God's goodness in restraining the Philistines, a vast army of stout men, from falling upon that little handful of timorous people Saul had with him. An invisible power sets bounds to the malice of the church's enemies.

II. Saul's weakness, who seems here to have been quite at a loss, and unable to help himself.

1. He durst not stay at Gibeah, but got into some obscure place, in the uttermost part of the city, and pitched his tent under a pomegranate tree, (*v.* 2.) under *Rimmon*, so the word is, *Ha-Rimmon*, that Rimmon near Gibeah, in the caves of which those 600 Benjamites that escaped, hid themselves, Judg. 20: 47. Some think he took shelter there from meanness of spirit, now that he was fallen under God's displeasure, every hour expecting the Philistines upon him, and, thereby, the accomplishment of Samuel's threatening, *ch.* 13: 14. Those can never think themselves safe, that see themselves cast out of God's protection.

2. Now he sent for a priest from Shiloh, and the ark from Kirjath-jearim, *v.* 3, 18. He had once offended by offering sacrifice himself; (*ch* 13: 9.) now he resolves never to fall into that error again, and hopes to compromise the matter with God by a partial reformation, as many do, whose hearts are unhumbled and unchanged. Ahiah will not make him stay for him, nor reprove him, as Samuel had done, but will do just as he bids him, *v.* 18, 19. Many love to have just such ministers as will be what they would have them to be, and prophesy smooth things to them; and by caressing them because they are priests, they hope to atone for their enmity to those ministers that deal faithfully and plainly with them. He will also have the ark brought, in hopes *that* would make up the deficiency of his forces. It is common for those that have lost the substance of religion, to be most fond of the shadows of it, as here a deserted prince courts a deserted priest.

III. Jonathan's bravery and piety, who was much fitter than his father to wear the crown. A sweet imp, (says Bp. Hall) out of a crab stock.

1. He resolved to go *unknown* into the camp of the Philistines; he did not acquaint his father, for he knew he would forbid him; nor the people, for he knew they would all discourage him, *v.* 1, 3. Nor had he so great an opinion of the priest, as to consult him, but, being conscious of a divine impulse putting him on it, he threw himself into the mouth of danger, in hopes of doing service to his country. The way to the enemies' camp is described (*v.* 4, 5.) as peculiarly difficult, and their natural intrenchments seemed impregnable; yet that only hardens and whets his resolution. Great and generous souls are animated by opposition, and take pleasure in breaking through it.

2. He encouraged his armor-bearer to go with him, *v.* 6. 'They are uncircumcised,' said he, 'and have not the seal of the covenant in their flesh, as we have.' If such as are enemies to us, are also strangers to God, we need not fear them. '*There is no restraint to the Lord, to save by many or by few;*' a truth easily granted in general, and yet not so easily put in practice in a difficult case. However, he proceeded: 'Who knows, but He that *can* use us for his glory, *will* do it? *It may be the Lord will work for us*, work with us, work a sign or miracle for us;' so the Chaldee. Perhaps he thought of Deut. 32: 30. An active faith will venture far in God's cause on an, *It may be.*

His armor-bearer, or esquire, as if he had learned once offended by offering sacrifice himself; (*ch* 13: 9.) now he resolves never to fall into that error again, and hopes to compromise the matter with God by a partial reformation, as many do, whose hearts are unhumbled and unchanged. Ahiah will not make him stay for him, nor reprove him, as Samuel had done, but will do just as he bids him, *v.* 18, 19. Many love to have just such ministers as will be what they would have them to be, and prophesy smooth things to them; and by caressing them because they are priests, they hope to atone for their enmity to those ministers that deal faithfully and plainly with them. He will also have the ark brought, in hopes *that* would make up the deficiency of his forces. It is common for those that have lost the substance of religion, to be most fond of the shadows of it, as here a deserted prince courts a deserted priest.

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PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When men are lifted up in self-sufficiency, they are often left to the most unaccountable infatuation.—The chief advantages of the enemies of the church are derived from the misconduct of its professed friends. Yet, while sinners are meditating revenge, the Lord often restrains their malice by invisible hindrances, and uses their machinations for the chastisement of his people.—Our observance of the Lord's directions, will always be proportioned to our simplicity of dependence on his promises, and submission to his will: and those who are most dilatory in doing their duty, are commonly the most impatient of delay in waiting his time of deliverance.—Our disposition to obey or disobey will often be decisively proved by our behavior in apparently small things: (*Note, Gen.* 3: 6.) and such as most neglect the duties of their own station, are most forward to censure the supposed negligence of others. We have, by sin, forfeited felicity; but unbelief and impenitence ratify that forfeiture: and those who have undeniably broken the commandments of God, and yet persist in excusing and justifying themselves, are evidently both impenitent and unbelieving. The trouble of all such as continue in this spirit, must certainly increase; and as they refuse to submit to God, they must be reduced to misery in the slavery of sin. But, while the Lord 'pours contempt upon princes, and brings to nought all the honorable of the earth,' He will deliver his people by his own power: and while He shames such as trust in man, and aspire to greatness and pre-eminence in outward things; He will honor those who humbly and in faith expect help from Him alone. SCOTT.

Verse 23.

It is supposed, that between Michmash and Gibeah, each situated on a hill, there was a valley, called 'the passage of Michmash;' into which the garrison of the Philistines 'went out,' either to challenge the Israelites to battle, or in order to make an assault upon Gibeah. (15, 16. 14: 4, 5.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV. V. 2, 3. (13: 15, 16. *Note*, 22.) Ahiah, or Ahimelech, was greatgrandson of Eli, the LORD'S priest in Shiloh. Ahitub was the elder brother of I-chabod; (*Note*, 4: 19—22.) and his son was at this time high priest, and so wore the ephod, and the breast-plate of judgment, with Urim and Thummim. (*M. R.—Notes, Ex.* 28: 30.) SCOTT.

(2.) *Pomegranate tree.*] 'Rimmon might be the name of a place, see Josh. 15: 32. If we likewise recollect, that the pomegranate tree is of a low growth, and consequently very improper to have a tent pitched under it, the rendering the word by a proper name will clear the passage from an objection which might otherwise be urged against it.' Sir T. BROWN. in *Hewlet'.*

Verse 5.

Fore-front.] 'Heb. *tooth*; i. e. the one pointed N. and the other S.' WILLIAMS.

6 And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these [h] uncircumcised: [i] it may be that the LORD will work for us; [j] for *there is* no restraint to the LORD, to save by many or by few.

7 And his armor-bearer said unto him, [k] Do all that *is* in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I *am* with thee according to thy heart.

8 Then said Jonathan, Behold, [l] we will pass over unto *these* men, and we will discover ourselves unto them.

9 If [m] they say thus unto us, * Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them.

10 But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the LORD hath delivered them into our hand: and [n] this *shall be* a sign unto us.

11 And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth [o] out of the holes, where they had hid themselves.

12 And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armor-bearer, and said, [p] Come up to us, and we will show you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armor-bearer, [q] Come up after me, for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel.

13 And Jonathan [r] climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armor-bearer after him: and they [s] fell before Jonathan; and his armor-bearer slew after him.

14 And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were † an half acre of land, *which* a yoke *of oxen might plough.*

15 And [t] there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people; the garrison, and [u] the spoilers, they also trembled; and [x] the earth quaked: so it was a ‡ very great trembling.

16 ¶ And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked: and behold the multitude [y] melted away, and they went on [z] beating down *one another.*

17 Then said Saul

ed to carry, not Jonathan's arms only, but his heart, promised to stand by him, wheresoever he went, *v.* 7.

3. How bold soever his resolution, he resolved to follow Providence in the execution of it, and to be determined by that. 'Come,' (says he to his confidant,) 'we will discover ourselves to the enemy, as those that are not afraid, (*v.* 8.) and then, if they bid us stand, we will take that for an intimation of Providence, that God would have us act defensively, and prepare, as well as we can, to give them a warm reception: (*v.* 9.) but if they challenge us, and the first sentinel we meet with bids us march on, we will push forward, and make as brisk an onset, assuredly gathering thence that God would have us act offensively, and then, not doubting but He will *stand by us;*' (*v.* 10.) and upon this issue he puts it, firmly believing, as we all should, that God governs the hearts and tongues of all men, even of those that have no regard to Him, and serves his own purposes by them, though they mean not so, neither doth their heart think so. God will, some way or other, direct the steps of those that *acknowledge him in all their ways,* and seek unto Him for direction, with full purpose of heart to follow his conduct. Sometimes we find most comfort in that which is least our own doing, and into which we have been led by the unexpected, but well observed, turns of Providence.

Providence gave him the sign he expected, *v.* 11. The guards of the Philistines disdained them, as a regiment of the sneakers. If some of Christ's soldiers play the coward, others that play the man may, perhaps, be upbraided with it. They defied them; (*v.* 12.) *Come, and we will show you a thing;* meaning, as Goliath, (*ch.* 17: 44.) that they would *give them as meat to the fowls of the air.* They bantered them, not doubting to make a prey of them. This greatly emboldened Jonathan. With it he encouraged his servant; he had spoken with uncertainty, (*v.* 6.) but now with assurance; (*v.* 12.) *The Lord has delivered them,* not into our hand, (he sought not his own glory,) but *into the hand of Israel;* for he aimed at nothing but the advantage of the public.

4. His wonderful success. The Philistines unaccountably fell; i. e. many were slain; (*v.* 14.) 20 fell presently. It was not so much the name of Jonathan, that made them yield so tamely, though some think he was become terrible to them, since he smote one of their garrisons, (*ch.* 13: 3.) but it was God's right hand, and his arm, that got him this victory.

The rest were put to flight, and fell foul upon one another, *v.* 15. It is called *a trembling of God,* so the original, signifying, not only, as we render it, *a very great trembling* which they could not resist, nor reason themselves clear of, but that it was supernatural, immediately from God. He that made the heart, knows how to make it tremble. To complete the confusion, even the earth quaked. Those that will not fear the eternal God, He can make afraid of a shadow. See Prov. 28: 1. Isa. 33: 14.

V. 16—23. The Philistines were, by the power of God, set against one another, *v.* 16, 20. They were very secure, for all the swords and spears were in their hands, except what Saul and Jonathan had; but now God showed them the folly of that confidence, by making their own swords and spears the instruments of their destruction, and more fatal in their own hands, than if in the hands of Israel. See the like done, Judg. 7: 22. 2 Chron. 20: 23.

1. Those that stood sentinel at Gibeah, (*v.* 16.) were aware the enemy was in great confusion, and a great slaughter made among them, yet, on search, they found only Jonathan and his servant absent, (*v.* 17.) which, no doubt, greatly animated them, and assured them it could be no other than the Lord's doing, when there was no more of man's doing, than those two could do against a great host.

2. Saul began to inquire of God, but soon desisted. He was not humbled enough to consult

h 17:26,36. Gen. 17:7—11. Judg. 15: 18. 2 Sam. 1:20. Jer. 9:23—26. Eph. 2:11,12. Phil. 3:3.
i 2 Sam. 16:12. 2 Kings 19:4. Am. 5: 15. Zeph. 2:3.
j Deut. 32:30. Judg. 7:4—7. 2 Chr. 14:11. Ps. 115:1—3. Zech. 4:6. Matt. 19:26. Rom. 8:31.
k 10:7. 2 Sam. 7:3. Ps. 46:7. Zech. 8:23.
l Judg. 7:9—14.
m Gen. 24:13,14. Judg. 6:36—40.
* Heb. *Be still.*
n 10:7. Is. 7:11—14.
o 22. 13:6. Judg. 6:2.
p 10. 17:43,44. 2 Sam. 2:14—17. 2 Kings 14:8.
q Gen. 24:26,27,42,48. Judg. 4:14. 7: 15. 2 Sam. 5:24.
r Ps. 18:29. Heb. 11:34.
s Lev. 25:7,8. Deut. 28:7. 32:30. Josh. 23:10. Rom. 8:31.
† Or, *half a furrow of an acre.*
t Josh. 2:9. Judg. 7:21. 2 Kings 7:6,7. Job. 18:11. Is. 14:5.
u 13:17,23.
x Ex. 19:18. Matt. 24:7. 27:50,51.
‡ Heb. *trembling of God.* Gen. 35:5. Lev. 26:36,37. 2 Sam. 5:24. Dan. 5:6.
y Ps. 58:7. 68:2.
z 20. Judg. 7:22. 2 Chr. 20:22—25. Is. 19:2.

Verses 6—10.

The faith of Jonathan was doubtless in general very strong, and his armor-bearer was a man of the same spirit as himself; but such extraordinary attempts and triumphs of faith, directed by immediate divine monition, are recorded for our admiration, and our encouragement in more ordinary services; and not for our imitation. SCOTT.

(9.) 'No doubt the sign here was suggested to Jonathan by the Spirit of God.' ASSEMB. ANN.

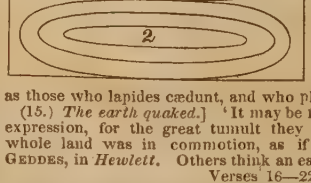
Verses 11—15.

It is probable, Jonathan and his armor-bearer left the camp of Saul, unobserved, during the night (3); and that early in the morning, they placed themselves in the view of the Philistines. *Climbed up.*] 'Not in the view of the Philistines, but by some difficult way, which none was ever known to go. And so perhaps they came behind them and surprised them.' *Bp. Patrick.* This might be the case; but the sacred historian does not mention it.—The army being constituted, as it is supposed, of different nations, (20. 13: 5.) the confusion might excite mutual jealousies and suspicions, which proved the occasion of their common destruction. (*Judg.* 7: 22. 1 *Kings* 20: 14—21. 2 *Chr.* 14: 9—15. 20: 20—25.) SCOTT.

(13.) *They.*] 'The guards, a sort of outpost, or advanced guard to the garrison.—*Slew after him.*] The meaning seems to be, Jonathan knocked them down, and the armor-bearer despatched them.'

DR A. CLARKE.

(14.) *An half acre of land.*] Or *half a furrow of an acre of land.* *Roberts* gives the following cut of the method of making the furrows in India. 'The square represents the field: they therefore begin at the W. and plough in circles towards the E. The places 1 and 2 within the circles are called *sali.*' The *Chal.* has 'about the space of the half of a walking of a yoke of oxen in a field.' *Boothroyd,* considering the Heb. text which he transl. lit. 'as in the half of a furrow of a yoke of a field,' unintelligible, adopts the Sept. (as does *Kennicott,*) with spears, pebbles and flints of the field' The *Syr.* has, 'as lapicides, and as if driving a yoke of oxen in a field.' The *Arab.* has, after '20 men; and that, since they were to him as those who lapides cædunt, and who plough with oxen.' ED.



(15.) *The earth quaked.*] 'It may be no more than a metaphorical expression, for the great tumult they were in.' PATRICK.—'The whole land was in commotion, as if panic-struck by God.' DR. GEDDES, in *Hewlett.* Others think an earthquake occurred. ED.

Verses 16—22.

Probably the ark of the covenant was brought into the field on this occasion. Yet some think, that the coffer, or chest, in which the

unto the people that *were* with him, Number now, and see who is gone from us. And when they had numbered, behold Jonathan and his armor-bearer *were* not *there*.

18 And Saul said unto Ahiah, [a] Bring hither the ark of God. For [b] the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel.

19 And it came to pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, that the * noise that *was* in the host of the Philistines went on and increased; and Saul said unto the priest, [c] Withdraw thine hand.

20 And Saul and all the people that *were* with him † assembled themselves, and they came to the battle: and behold [d] every man's sword was against his fellow, *and there was* a very great discomfiture.

21 Moreover, [e] the Hebrews *that* were with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp, *from the country* round about, even they also *turned* to be with the Israelites that *were* with Saul and Jonathan.

22 Likewise all the men of Israel which had [f] hid themselves in mount Ephraim, *when* they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle.

with Samuel, though, probably, he was near him, for (*ch.* 13: 15.) he was come to Gibeah; but he called for the ark, (*v.* 18.) to know whether it would be safe now to attack the Philistines. Many will consult God about their safety, that would never consult Him about their duty. But perceiving by his scouts that the noise in the enemy's camp increased, he commanded the priest that officiated, to break off abruptly, *v.* 19. Some think he forbade him to lift up his hands in prayer; but it is rather a prohibition to his inquiring of the Lord, either, (1.) Because now he thought he did not need an answer, the case was plain enough. And yet the more evident it was that God did all, the more reason he had to inquire, whether He would give him leave to do any thing. Or, (2.) Because now he would not stay for it; he was in such haste to fight a falling enemy. A little thing will divert a vain and carnal mind from religious exercises. He that believeth will not make such haste as this, nor reckon any business so urgent, as not to allow time to take God along with him.

3. He, and all the little force he had, made a vigorous attack on the enemy: and all the people *were cried together*, so the word is; *v.* 20. for want of the silver trumpets, Numb. 10: 9. they summoned them together by shouting, and now they seem bold and brave, when the work is done to their hands. Our Lord Jesus has conquered our spiritual enemies, routed and dispersed them, so that we are cowards indeed, if we will not stand to our arms, when it is only to pursue the victory and divide the spoil.

4. Every Hebrew now turned his hand against the Philistines. 1. Those that had deserted to the enemy, now fought against them; *v.* 21. some think, they were such as had been taken prisoners by them: it rather seems, they went in to them voluntarily. 2. Those that had run their colors, and hid themselves in the mountains, returned to their posts, and joined the pursuers, *v.* 22. hoping thus to atone for their former cowardice. It was not much to their praise to appear now, but it would have been more to their reproach had they not appeared.

23 So [g] the LORD saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over unto [h] Beth-aven.

[*Practical Observations.*]

24 ¶ And the men of Israel were distressed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, saying, [i] Cursed *be* the man that eateth *any* food until evening, that [k] I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted *any* food.

25 And [l] all *they of* the land came to a wood; and there was [m] honey upon the ground.

26 And when the people were come into the wood, behold the honey dropped: but no man put his hand to his mouth; for [n] the people feared the oath.

Thus all hands were at work against the Philistines, and every Israelite slew as many as he could, without sword or spear; yet it is said, *v.* 23. it was *the Lord that saved Israel that day*. He did it by them, for without Him they could do nothing. *Salvation is of the Lord.*

V. 24—35. We have here an account of the distress of Israel, even in the days of their triumphs.

I. Saul forbade the people, under the penalty of a curse, to taste any food that day, *v.* 24. And suppose he did it with a good intention, lest the people, who perhaps had been kept short for some time, when they found plenty of victuals in the deserted camp of the Philistines, should fall greedily upon that, and so lose time in pursuing the enemy, and some of them, it may be, glut themselves so, as not to be fit for any more service that day; yet his making this severe order was very impolitic, and very unwise; for if it gained time, it lost strength for the pursuit. It was imperious, and disobliging, worse than *muzzling the mouth of the ox, when he treads out the corn*. To forbid them to feast had been commendable, but to forbid them so much as to taste, though so hungry, was barbarous. It was impious, to enforce the prohibition with a curse and an oath. Had he no penalty less than an anathema, wherewith to support his military discipline? Though superiors may chide and correct, they may not curse their inferiors; our rule is, *Bless, and curse not*. When David speaks of an enemy he had that loved cursing, perhaps he meant Saul, Ps. 109: 17, 18.

II. The people observed his order, but it had many inconveniences attending it. Yet, for fear of the curse, they did not so much as taste the honey, *v.* 25, 26. Those are worthy the name of Israelites, that can deny themselves, even when the temptation is strongest. Let us never *feed* ourselves, much less feast ourselves, *without fear*. Jonathan fell under the curse. It was through ignorance, and therefore he might justly be looked upon as exempted from the charge, and not intended in it. But it seems it was taken for granted, and he himself did not object, though absent on so good

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* Heb. *tumult.*
† Heb. *were cried together.*

a 4:3—5. 30:8. Num. 27:21. Judg. 20:18,23,27,28. 2 Sam. 11:11. 15:24—26.
b 5:2. 7:1.
c 24. 13:11. Josh. 9:14. Ps. 106:13. Is. 28:16.
d 16. Judg. 7:22. Is. 9:19—21.
e 29:4. Judg. 7:23.
f 13:6. 31:7.
g Ex. 14:30. Judg. 2:18. 2 Kings 14:27. Is. 44:6—8. Hos. 1:7.
h 13:5.
i 27—30. Lev. 27:29. Num. 21:2. Deut. 27:15—26. Josh. 6:17—19,26. Judg. 11:30,31. 21:1—5. Prov. 11:9. Rom. 10:2. 1 Cor. 16:22.
k Judg. 5:2. 16:28. Ps. 18:47.
l Deut. 9:28. Matt. 3:5.
m Ex. 3:8. Num. 13:27. Matt. 3:4.
n Ec. 9:2.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—23. Hypocrites often expose their indifference, even about the religion which they professedly choose; for as it has no practical energy upon them, a small matter induces them to dispense with the useless form.—Yet, blessed be God, every age also produces illustrious instances of those, who being strong in faith give glory to God; and its triumphs are proportioned to its strength.—While we are obeying the commands of God, trusting his protection, and seeking his glory, neither the sense of our own weakness, nor the power of our enemies should dismay us; 'for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.' We are not indeed warranted at present to expect *miraculous* interpositions: yet the feeblest instrument, who sincerely and in faith uses the appointed means, in order to subvert Satan's kingdom of ignorance, error, and wickedness, is authorized to expect considerable success; for 'it may be that the LORD will work with him:' and then the weapons of his warfare will prove mighty, and no force of the enemies of our God and his Christ can stand before him. (1 *Cor.* 1: 20—25. 2 *Cor.* 4: 7. 10: 1—6.) SCOTT.

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ephod and breast-plate were kept, is meant. (4: 4, 5. 2 *Sam.* 11: 10, 11.) SCOTT.

(21.) *Hebrews.*] 'With them by constraint, as servants: or in policy, to gain them favor and protection.' POOLE.

Verse 23.

The battle passed, &c.] 'The fight continued till they came to this place, which lay W. from Michmash;' (and nearer to Philistia;) 'and there the Philistines threw down their arms, and fled as fast as they could towards their own country.' *Bp. Patrick.*—Thus the Israelites would at once be supplied with arms in abundance. (13: 22.) SCOTT.

Verses 24—34.

(*M. R.* i. *Note, Lev.* 27: 28, 29.) It was the more inexcusable, in that he did not say, 'that the LORD may avenge Israel on *his* enemies,' but 'that I may be avenged on *mine* enemies.'—Jonathan had reason to complain, that his 'father had troubled the land,' (1 *Kings* 18: 17—20.) as his conduct in every way obstructed the complete success of Israel. SCOTT.

(25.) *Honey.*] 'This was not the honey of bees, found in the fissures of rocks; nor was it the liquid manna, called *terengabin*, although this manna was formerly comprehended under the common word for honey. It is what has been called the *honey dew*, i. e. the excrements, which certain little insects, called by Linnæus, *aphides*, emit very copiously upon the leaves of trees, so much that it flows down upon the ground.' JAHN. 'Bees are left in a wild state in the east, and the forests literally flow with honey; large combs, full of

27 But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that *was* in his hand, and dipped it in an honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and [o] his eyes were enlightened.

28 Then answered one of the people, and said, Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, [p] Cursed *be* the man that eateth *any* food this day. And the people were * faint.

29 Then said Jonathan, [q] My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey.

30 How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to-day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for [r] had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?

31 And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to [s] Aijalon: and the people were very faint.

32 And the people [t] flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew *them* on the ground: and the people [u] did eat *them* with the blood.

33 Then they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against the LORD, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have † transgressed: roll a great stone unto me this day.

34 And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people, and say unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay *them* here, and eat; and sin not against the LORD in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox ‡ with him that night, and slew *them* there.

35 And Saul [v] built an altar unto the LORD: § the same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD.

36 ¶ And Saul said, [x] Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning-light, and [y] let us not leave a man of them. And they said, Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee. Then [z] said the priest, Let us draw near hither unto God.

37 And Saul asked counsel of God, [a] Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But [b] he answered him not that day.

38 And Saul said, [c] Draw ye near hither all the ‖ chief of the people: and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day.

39 For *as* [d] the LORD liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But *there was* not a man among all the people *that* answered him.

40 Then said he unto all Israel, Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said unto Saul, [e] Do what seemeth good unto thee

41 Therefore Saul said unto the LORD God of Israel, ¶ give a perfect *lot*. [f] And Saul

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o 29. 30:12. p See on 24.43
* Or, *weary*. q 1 Kings 18:18
r Ec. 9:18.
s Josh. 10:12. 19:42. t 15:19
u Gen. 9:4. Lev. 3:17. 7:26,27. 17:10—14. 19:26. Deut. 12:16,23,24. Acts 15:20,29.
† Or, *dealt treacherously*. Matt. 7:5. Rom. 2:1. ‡ Heb. *in his hand*.
v 7:9,17. Judg. 21:4. Hos. 8:14. 2 Tim. 3:5.
§ Heb. *that altar he began to build*.
x Josh. 10:9—14,19. Jer. 6:5.
y 11:11. Josh. 11:14.
z Num. 27:21. Ps. 73:28. Is. 48:1,2. 58:2. Mal. 2:7 Jam. 4:8.
a 23:4,9—12. 30:7,8. Judg. 1:1. 20: 18,28. 2 Sam. 5:19,23. 1 Kings 22: 5,6,15. b 28:6 Ez. 14:3—5. 20:3.
c 10:19,20. Josh. 7:14.
‖ Heb. *corners*. Num. 24:17. Judg 20:2. 2 Sam. 18:3. Ps. 47:9. Zech 10:4. Matt. 21:42. Eph. 2:20.
d 24,44. 19:6. 20:31. 22:16. 28:10 2 Sam. 12:5. Ez. 9:2.
e 7,36. 2 Sam. 15:15.
¶ Or, *Show the innocent*. Prov. 16:33 Acts 1:24.
f 10:20,21. Josh. 7:16,18. Jon. 1:7.

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aside from God, yet now he begins to build altars, being most zealous (as many are) for the form of godliness, when he was denying the power of it. See Hos. 8: 14. *Israel has forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples.* Some read it, *He began to build that altar;* he laid the first stone, but was so hasty to pursue his victory, that he could not stay to finish it.

V. 36—46. Here is, I. Saul's boasting against the Philistines, *v.* 36. in which was much zeal, but little discretion; for his army, thus fatigued, could as ill spare a night's sleep, as a meal's meat. But it is common for rash and foolish men, to consider no body but themselves, and, so they may but have their humor, not to care what hardships they put upon those under them. However, his people were so obsequious, they would by no means oppose the motion. *Do whatsoever seemeth good to thee.* Only the priest thought it convenient to go on with the devotions that were broken off abruptly, (*v.* 19.) and to consult the oracle, *Let us draw hither unto God.* Princes and great men have need of such about them, as will thus be their remembrancers, wherever they go, to take God along with them. And when the priest proposed it, Saul could not, for shame, reject the motion, *v.* 37.

II. His falling foul on his son Jonathan: and the rest of this paragraph is wholly concerning him; for while he is prosecuted, the Philistines made their escape. We know not what mischief may ensue on one rash resolve.

1. God, by giving an intimation of his displeasure, put Saul upon searching for an accursed thing. When, by the priest, he consulted the oracle, God *answered him not, v.* 37. Note, When God denies our prayers, it concerns us to inquire what the sin is that has provoked him to do so, (*v.* 38.) for God's ear is not heavy that it cannot hear, but sin separates between us and Him. Saul swears by his Maker, whoever was the Achan he should certainly die, though it were Jonathan himself; i. e. ever so dear, little thinking Jonathan was the man, *v.* 39. But none of the people answered him; i. e. none would inform against Jonathan.

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honey, hanging on the trees as the passengers pass.' *Roberts.* 'Honey is found in great abundance in the deserts of the Holy Land.' SHAW.

(31.) '*Calmet* makes the distance to be 3 or 4 leagues.' GREENF.

(32.) 'So they who make conscience of the king's commandment for fear of the curse, make no scruple of transgressing God's commandment.' ID.

Verses 36—44.

(*M. R.* x—b.) If Saul had been humbly sensible of the evil of his own past conduct, he would have concluded himself to be the culprit. (28: 6. *Ez.* 14: 1—5. 20: 1—3.) The Lord, however, was pleased, that the conduct of Jonathan should be discovered, as the cause why he did not answer the high-priest's inquiries: that the people might understand how much they were interested in the conduct of their king; and be convinced of their folly in rejecting the government of a pious prophet, whose prayers brought down blessings, for that of a king, whose curses brought down wrath upon them. (7: 8:) SCOTT.

Verses 37—45.

'The sacred lot, called *Urim* and *Thummim*, was employed in a particular manner for *judicial* purposes. It was used likewise in *criminal* trials, though only to *discover*, not to *convict*, as here Jonathan's confession is annexed. See also Josh. 7: 14—18. the only other such case in which its use occurs.' JAHN.

and Jonathan were taken: but the people * escaped.

42 And Saul said, Cast *lots* between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken.

43 Then Saul said to Jonathan, [g] Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, [h] I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that *was* in mine hand, *and*, lo, I must die.

44 And Saul answered, [i] God do so, and more also: for [k] thou shalt surely die, Jonathan.

45 And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, [l] who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: *as* the LORD liveth, [m] there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for [n] he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not.

46 Then Saul went up from following the Philistines: and the Philistines went to their own place.

47 ¶ So Saul [o] took the kingdom over Israel, and [p] fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of [q] Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of [r] Zobah, and against the Philistines, and whithersoever he turned himself he vexed *them*

2. Jonathan was discovered by lot to be the offender. Saul would have cast lots between himself and Jonathan on the one side, and the people on the other, perhaps, because he was as confident of Jonathan's innocency, as of his own, *v.* 40. The people acquiesce. '*Do as seemeth good unto thee.*' But first he prayed that *God would give a perfect lot;* (*v.* 41.) i. e. make a full discovery; or, as in the margin, show the innocent. This was with an air of impartial justice. Judges should desire the truth may come out, whoever may suffer by it. Lots should be cast with prayer, because they are a solemn appeal to Providence, and by them we beg of God to direct and determine us; (Acts 1: 24.) for which reason some have condemned games, that depend purely upon lot or chance, as making too bold with a sacred thing. Jonathan at length was taken; (*v.* 42.) Providence designing hereby to support lawful authority, and to honor the administration of public justice in general, reserving another way to bring off one that had done nothing worthy of death.

3. Jonathan ingenuously confesses the fact, and Saul, with an angry curse, passes sentence on him. Jonathan thinks it hard he must *die for it*, *v.* 43. He might have pleaded his ignorance of the law, or have insisted on his merit, but he submitted to the necessity with a great and generous mind, 'God's and my father's will be done.' It is as brave to yield in some cases, as it is in other cases to fight. Saul is not mollified by his filial submission, nor the hardness of his case; but, as one that affected to be thought firm to his word, and much more to his oath, even then when it bound him hardest, with another imprecation gives judgment upon Jonathan, *v.* 44. But he passed sentence too hastily, without consulting the oracle; Jonathan had a very good plea in arrest of the judgment; what he had done was not *bad in itself;* and he, being ignorant of the prohibition, could not be charged with rebellion or disobedience. Had Jonathan been worthy to die, yet it had become a judge, much more a father, to pass sentence with tenderness and compassion, and not with such an air of triumph, and in fury, like a man perfectly divested of all humanity and natural affection. Justice is debased, when administered with wrath and bitterness. He backed it with a curse on himself, if he did not see the sentence executed; and this curse did return on his own head; Jonathan escaped, but God did so to Saul, and more also; for he was rejected of God, and made an anathema. Let none on any occasion dare use such imprecations as these, lest God say Amen to them, and *make their own tongues to fall upon them.* Yet we have reason to think Saul's bowels yearned toward Jonathan, [and if so, it was a noble act in some respects,] so that he really punished himself, and very justly, when he seemed so severe on Jonathan. God made him feel the smart of his own rash edict, which might make him fear being again guilty of the like. By all these vexatious accidents, God did likewise correct him for his presumption, in offering sacrifice without Samuel. An expedition so ill begun, could not end without some rebukes.

4. The people rescued Jonathan, *v.* 45. Hitherto they had expressed themselves very observant of Saul, (*v.* 36, 40.) but when Jonathan is in danger, Saul's word is no longer law, but with the utmost zeal they oppose the execution of his sentence; '*Shall Jonathan die?* That blessing, that darling, of his country? Shall that life be sacrificed to a punctilio of law and honor, which was so bravely exposed for the public service, and to which we owe our lives and triumphs? No, we will never stand by, and see *him* thus treated, whom God delights to honor.' It is good to see Israelites zealous for the protection of those whom

48 And he † gathered an host, and [s] smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them.

49 Now the sons of Saul were [t] Jonathan, and Ishui, and Melchishua: and the names of his two daughters *were these;* the [u] name of the first-born Merab, and the name of the younger Michal:

50 And the name of Saul's wife *was* Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz; and [x] the name of the captain of his host *was* ‡ Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle.

51 And [y] Kish *was* the father of Saul; and Ner the father of Abner *was* the son of Abiel.

52 And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul: and [z] when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him.

* Heb. *went forth.*
g Josh. 7:19. Jon. 1:8—10. h 27.
i 25:22. Ruth 1:17. 2 Sam. 3:9. 19:13.
k See on 39.—Gen. 38:24. 2 Sam. 12:5,31.
l 23. 19:5. Neh. 9:27.
m 2 Sam. 14:11. 1 Kings 1:52. Matt. 10:30. Luke 21:18. Acts 27:34.
n Is. 13:3. Acts 14:27. 15:12. 21:19. Rom. 15:18. 1 Cor. 3:9. 2 Cor. 6:1. Rev. 17:14. 19:14. o 13:1.
p 2 Kings 14:27. q 11:11. 12:12.
r 2 Sam. 10:6. 1 Kings 11:23.
† Or, *wrought mightily.*
s 15:3—7. Ex. 17:14. Deut. 25:19.
t 31:2. 1 Chr. 8:33. 9:39.
u 18:17—21. 25:44. 2 Sam. 3:13—16. 6:20—23.
x 17:55. 2 Sam. 2:8. 3:27.
‡ Heb. *Abiner.*
y 9:1. z 8:1.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 24—52. In the midst of the most glorious success, 'one sinner' often 'destroyeth much good:' and rash zeal is as hurtful as timid inaction.—There is neither prudence nor piety in restraining men from partaking of the bounty of God's providence, when it is so used as to prepare them for his service, and encourage rather than hinder them in it. They are indeed 'troublers of Israel,' who prohibit such use of those good things which 'God giveth us richly to enjoy:' the curses, with which they sanction their antichristian mandates, will fall on their own heads; and they will be answerable for all the consequences: for restraints from things lawful generally prove temptations to forbidden indulgences, and a superstitious zeal about externals has often hindered men from performing essential services to the church. (1 *Tim.* 4: 1—5.)—An unhumbled heart suspects every other person, and looks every where but to himself, for the sinful cause of calamity!—Those who are indulgent to their own sins, are generally severe in animadverting on the faults of others: and such as most disregard God's authority, are most impatient when their own commands appear to be slighted, or their reputation eclipsed.—Those who delight in cursing, are in extreme danger of falling under the awful curse of God: (*Ps.* 109: 6—20.) and the habit of swearing will certainly involve a man in the guilt of perjury, as well as of profaneness; for though now concealed, his iniquity will be 'sure to find him out.'—No oath can bind us to commit injustice: but the rash swearer should repent of his iniquity, and not add one crime to another. In the midst of mercy the Lord will rebuke his people for their sins; and by mismanagement men lose the comfort of their successes, and are discontented, and filled with vexation, in the midst of blessings.—But the Lord employs even wicked men as instruments of providential good to his people: in temporal prosperity they forget their sins, and the threatened wrath of God: and thus they blaze for a moment, like a meteor, and then are put out in utter darkness. O Lord, let us rather be chastened here, than thus prosper and be condemned with the world! SCOTT.

Verses 47—52.

After the decided victory over the Philistines, Saul's authority as king was re-established: and though the Lord was displeased with him, and purposed to set aside his family; yet He prospered him in the wars which he carried on against the several nations which oppressed Israel.—It is evident that many important transactions of his reign are passed over in silence; and that in general it was more active and successful, (in the former part of it especially,) than it appears at first sight to have been. But, to the end of his life, Saul was unable to prevail against the Philistines, having missed the opportunity which God had afforded him: so that, after having had sore war with him all his days, the three sons here mentioned fell at last by their hands, and he was driven to murder himself. (*M. R.*)

The sons of Saul. (49) Jonathan, Ishui, (called *Abinadab*, 31: 2.) and Melchi-shua, the sons of Saul, 'were ... fit to accompany him in his wars, and on that account are alone mentioned here; ... though he had another son (Ish-bosheth) who is mentioned 1 *Chr.* 8: 33. under the name of Eth-baal.' *Bp. Patrick.* (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

(47.) *Kings of Zobah.*] 'Those that ruled in that part of Syria called *Aram Zobah*, bounded east by the Euphrates and Damascus, and west by Canaan.' PATRICK.

CHAP. XV.

Saul is sent to destroy Amalek, 1—3. He gathers a large army, favors the Kenites, and smites the Amalekites, 4—7. He spares Agag and the best of the spoil, 8, 9. Samuel is sent to declare unto him, that God has rejected him for his disobedience; and Saul in vain attempts to excuse himself, 10—21. He is convicted of rebellion; and partially humbles himself, but cannot get the sentence reversed, 22—31. Samuel kills Agag, and finally leaves Saul, 32—35.

SAMUEL also said unto Saul, [a] The LORD sent me to anoint thee *to be* king over his people, over Israel: now therefore [b] hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD.

2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, [c] I remember *that* which [d] Amalek did to Israel, how he laid *wait* for him in the way when he came up from Egypt.

3 Now go, and smite Amalek, and [e] utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but [f] slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, [g] ox and sheep, camel and ass.

4 And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in [h] Telaim, [i] two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah.

5 And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and [*] laid wait in the valley.

6 And Saul said unto [k] the Kenites, [l] Go, de-

a 17:18. 9:16. 10:1.
b 16. 12:14. 13:13. 2 Sam. 23:2,3. 1 Chr. 22:12,13. Ps. 2:10,11.
c Jer. 31:34. Hos. 7:2. Am. 8:7.
d Ex. 17:8—16. Num. 24:20. Deut. 25:17,19.
e Lev. 27:28,29. Deut. 13:15,16, 20:16—18. Josh. 6:17—21.
f Ex. 20:5. Num. 31:17. Is. 14:21,22.
g Gen. 3:17,18. Rom. 8:20—22.
h Josh. 15:24. *Telem.*
i 13:3. 13:15.
* Or, *fought.*
k 27:10. Num. 24:21,22. Judg. 1:16. 4:11. 5:24. 1 Chr. 2:55.
l Gen. 18:25. 19:12—16. Num. 16:26, 27,34. Prov. 9:6. Acts 2:40. 2 Cor. 6:17. Rev. 18:4.

God has made instruments of public good. They oppose their oath to Saul's: they did not rescue him by violence, but by reason and resolution; and Josephus says, they made their prayer to God, that he might be loosed from the curse. They plead for him, that *he has wrought with God this day;* i. e. 'he has owned God's cause, and God has owned his endeavors, therefore his life is too precious to be thrown away upon a nicety.' We may suppose, Saul had not so perfectly forgotten the relation of a father, but that he was willing enough to have Jonathan rescued, and well pleased to have that done, which yet he would not do himself: and he that knows the heart of a father, knows not how to blame him.

Lastly, The design against the Philistines is quashed by this incident; (*v.* 46.) and so an opportunity was lost of completing the victory. When Israel's shields are clashing together, the public safety and service suffer by it.

V. 47—52. Here is a general account of Saul's court and camp.

1. Of his court. The names of his sons and daughters, *v.* 49. and of his wife, and his cousin-german that was general of his army, *v.* 50. There is mention of another wife of Saul's, 2 Sam. 21: 8. Rizpah, a secondary wife, and of the children he had by her.

2. Of his camp. *When he saw any strong, valiant man,* remarkably fit for service, *he took him unto him, v.* 52. as Samuel had told them the manner of the king would be; (*ch.* 8: 11.) and if he must have a standing army, it was his prudence to fill it up with the ablest. With this army he guarded his country against the insults of its enemies on every side, and prevented their incursions, *v.* 47, 48. It is supposed he acted only defensively against those that used to invade the borders of Israel, *and whithersoever he turned himself,* as there was occasion, *he vexed them,* by checking and disappointing them. He struggled most with the Philistines, with them he had *sore war all his days, v.* 52. He had little reason to be proud of his royal dignity, nor had any of his neighbors cause to envy him, for he had little enjoyment of himself after he took the kingdom. He could not vex his enemies without some vexation to himself, such thorns are crowns quilted with.

CHAP. XV. In this ch. we have the final rejection of Saul from being king, for his disobedience to God's command, in not utterly destroying the Amalekites. By his wars and victories, he hoped to magnify and perpetuate his own name and honor; but, by his mismanagement of them, he ruined himself, and laid his honor in the dust.

V. 1—9. Here, I. Samuel, in God's name, solemnly requires Saul to obey the command of God, and plainly intimates he was now about to put him on a trial, in one particular instance, whether he would be obedient or no, *v.* 1. This very much aggravated his disobedience. He reminds him of what God had done for him, and tells him, in general, that, in consideration of this, whatever God commanded him to do, he was bound to do it. *Now therefore hearken to the voice of the Lord.* Note, God's favors to us lay strong obligations on us, to be obedient to Him. This we must render, Ps. 116: 12.

II. He appoints him a particular service, in which he must now show his obedience, more than in any thing he had done yet. Samuel promises God's authority to the command, as *the Lord of hosts,* of all hosts, of Israel's hosts: he also gives him a reason for the command, that the severity he must use might not seem hard, *I remember what Amalek did to Israel, v.* 2. Ex. 17: 8, &c. and the crime is aggravated, Deut. 25: 18. God then swore He would have *war with Amalek from generation to generation,* and that, in process of time, he would *utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek;* that is the work Saul is now appointed to do, *v.* 3. He is expressly commanded to kill and slay all before him, *man, woman, infant, suckling, ox, sheep, camel, ass;* he is not to spare out of pity nor out of covetousness. Note, 1. Injuries done to God's Israel, will certainly be reckoned for sooner or later, especially the opposition given them, when coming out of Egypt. 2. God often bears long with those that are marked for ruin. 3. Though He bear long, He will not bear always. The year of recompense will come, slow, yet sure. 4. The longer judgment is delayed, many times the more severe it is when it comes. 5. God chooses instruments to do his work, that are fittest for it. This bloody work, therefore, Saul, a rough, severe man, must do.

III. Saul hereupon musters his forces, and makes a descent on Amalek; an immense army, *v.* 4. When he was to engage the Philistines and the success was hazardous, he had but 600; (*ch.* 13: 15.) but now he was to attack the Amalekites, by express order from Heaven, in which he was sure of victory, he had thousands at his call. It was not now for the honor of Judah, that their forces were numbered by themselves, their quota was scandalously short, (whatever the reason,) but a twentieth part of the whole, (10,000,) when the other ten tribes (for I except Levi) were 200,000. Judah's honor was near, but not yet. *Telaim* signifies lambs. Saul numbered them *like lambs,* so the Vulg. numbered them *by the paschal lambs,* so the Chaldee, allowing ten to a lamb, a way of numbering used by the Jews in the latter times of their nation. *Amalek* was the metropolis, and Saul drew his forces there, (*v.* 5.) that he might provoke them to give him battle.

IV. He gave friendly advice to the Kenites, to separate themselves from the Amalekites, *v.* 6. This was prudent and pious, and, probably, according to Samuel's direction. The Kenites were of the family of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, a people that dwelt in tents, which made it easy to them, on every occasion, to remove; a hardy people that could live any where, and preferred fastnesses, Num. 24: 21. Balaam had foretold, they should be wasted; (*v.* 22.) however, Saul must not waste them. But, 1. He acknowledges the kindness of their ancestors. Jethro and his family had been very helpful and serviceable to Israel; and this is remembered to their posterity many ages after. Thus a good man leaves the divine

NOTES.

CHAP. XV. V. 1—3. Probably Saul had scarcely noticed Samuel at all for some years. (See note on external *policy* of Heb. govt. from JAHN, p. 661, vol. 1, and notes, Ex. 17: 8.) Perhaps he resented the sharp rebuke he had before received: and Samuel did not intrude himself. But now, he was sent to Saul with an express command, to go and utterly destroy the Amalekites. (14: 48.) In delivering his message he seemed to intimate, that unless Saul 'hearkened to the voice of the words of the LORD,' he should be authorized to denounce the sentence of rejection against him; and he gave him his instructions in the most explicit and particular manner. The Amalekites had long before been condemned; (*Notes, Ex.* 17: 8—16. *Deut.* 25: 17—19.) [and extermination seems the only method in which their inveterate plundering habits could be guarded against;] but the nation had been spared, till it had filled up the measure of its iniquities.—The righteous Lord certainly did no injustice to individuals; [note, Josh. 23: 3—10.] and the example was of a salutary tendency, to deter others in future ages from 'meddling to their hurt' with the servants of the living God. (*M. R.—Notes, Num.* 31: 2. *Josh.* 6: 21.)

SCOTT.

(3.) *Now go and smite,* &c.] 'The Amalekites took care to deserve excision, by continuing to manifest the most hostile disposition to the Heb. nation, by attacking them whenever they had an opportunity, and joining their enemies on all occasions, to oppress and enslave them. They joined the Canaanites, and destroyed many of the people, [in manifest contempt of God's power and justice lately displayed,] upon their attempts to enter Canaan. They united with the Moabites, and smote Israel, dispossessed them of the city of palm trees, and helped to reduce them to an 18 yrs. servitude. They oppressed them also with the Midianites, and utterly impoverished them by their rapines and plunders; destroying the increase of the earth, leaving no sustenance for Israel, neither for the sheep, the oxen, or asses; and afterwards attacked them in battle as confederates with the Midianitish army. Under Saul's reign they continued their ravages, and spoiled the people, and when he had repulsed them he received command utterly to extirpate them.' *Chandler,* in WILLIAMS.

Verse 4.

The disproportionate number of Judah, might perhaps be the effect of their dissatisfaction with a king of another tribe. [See note on *Union of the tribes,* p. 660, vol. 1.] SCOTT.

In Telaim.] 'This word occurs nowhere in Scripture as the name of a place; but, as it means lambs, or kids, the conjecture is extremely probable, that these men were numbered as they count lambs, by suffering them to pass through a narrow place, one at a time.' HEWLETT.

Verse 5.

A city.] 'Their chief city, as is likely,' says *Poole,* 'from *v.* 8. Others think it not probable they should have their royal city on the very borders of their enemies.' ED.

part, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for [m]ye showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.

7 And Saul [n]smote the Amalekites from [o]Havilah *until* thou comest to [p]Shur, that *is* over against Egypt.

8 And he took [q]Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and [r]utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and [s]the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of [*] the fatlings, and the lambs, and all *that was* good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing *that was* vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

10 ¶ Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying,

11 It [t]repenteth me that I have set up Saul *to be* king: for he is [u]turned back from following me, and [x]hath not performed my commandments. And [y] it grieved Samuel; and [z]he cried unto the LORD all night.

12 And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to [a]Carmel, and, behold, [b]he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal.

13 And Samuel came to Saul; and Saul said unto him, [c]Blessed *be* thou of the Lord: [d]I have performed the commandment of the LORD.

blessing for an inheritance to his children's children. God is not unrighteous to forget the kindness shown his people; they shall be remembered another day, at furthest in the great day; *I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat.* God's remembering the kindness of the Kenites' ancestors, now when punishing the injuries done by the ancestors of the Amalekites, helped to clear his righteousness in that dispensation. If He entail favors, why may He not frowns? He espouses his people's cause, so as to *bless those that bless them;* and therefore so as to *curse those that curse them,* Num. 24: 9. Gen. 12: 3. 2. He desires them to remove from among the Amalekites. When destroying judgments are abroad, God will separate between the precious and the vile, and hide the meek of the earth in the day of his anger. It is dangerous to be found in the company of God's enemies, and it is our duty and interest to *come out from among them,* lest we share in their sins and plagues, Rev. 18: 4. The Jews have a saying, *Woe to the wicked man, and woe to his neighbor.*

V. Saul prevailed against the Amalekites, for it was rather an execution than a war; the issue could not be dubious when the cause was just, and the call so clear; *He smote them,* (*v.* 7.) *utterly destroyed them, v.* 8. Now they paid dear for the sin of their ancestors; God sometimes *lays up iniquity for the children.* They were idolaters, and guilty of many other sins; yet when God would reckon with them, He fastened on the sin of their ancestors in abusing his Israel, as the ground of his quarrel. Lord, how unsearchable are thy judgments, yet how incontestable thy righteousness!

VI. Yet Saul did his work by halves, *v.* 9. 1. *He spared Agag,* because a king like himself, and, perhaps, in hope to get a great ransom for him. 2. He spared the best of the cattle, and destroyed only the refuse, that was good for little. Many, we may suppose, made their escape, with their effects, into other countries, therefore we read of Amalekites after this, but that could not be helped; it was Saul's fault, that he did not destroy such as came to his hands, and were in his power. What was now destroyed, was, in effect, sacrificed to the justice of God, as the God to whom vengeance belongeth; and for Saul to think the torn and the sick, the lame and the lean, good enough for that, while he reserved for his own fields, and his own table, the firstlings and the fat, was really to honor himself more than God.

V. 10—23. Remarkable instances we have here of the strictness of God's justice, and the treachery and deceitfulness of man's heart. We are here told,

I. God determines Saul's rejection, and acquaints Samuel with it. *It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king.* Repentance in God is not, as in us, a change of mind, but a change of method or dispensation. He does not alter his will, but wills an alteration. The change was in Saul, *he is turned back from following Me;* this construction God put upon the partiality of his obedience, and the prevalency of his covetousness. *It grieved Samuel* that Saul had forfeited God's favor, and God had resolved to cast him off; and he *cried unto the Lord all night,* spent a whole night in interceding for him. He did not thus deprecate his own exclusion from the government. The rejection of sinners is the grief of good people. God delights not in their death, nor should we.

II. Samuel being sent of God to Saul with these heavy tidings, went to meet him, perhaps according to an appointment, when Saul went forth on this expedition, for Saul was come to Gilgal, (*v* 12.) the place where he was made king, (*ch.* 11· 15.) and where now he would have been confirmed, had he approved himself well in this trial of his obedience. But Samuel was informed Saul had, 1. Set him up a triumphal arch, or some monument of his victory, at Carmel, a city in the mountains of Judah, seeking his own honor more than the honor of God, for he set up this place (or *hand,* as the word is) for himself: he had more need to have been repenting of his sin, and making his peace with God, than boasting of his victory. 2. That he had marched in great state to Gilgal, for that seems to be intimated in the manner of expression, he is *gone about* and *passed on,* and *gone down,* with a great deal of pomp and parade. There Samuel met him.

(1.) Saul boasts to Samuel of his obedience, because that was the thing by which he was now to signalize himself, *v.* 13. and by this he hoped to prevent Samuel's reproving him. Thus sinners think, by justifying themselves, to escape being *judged of the Lord;* whereas the only way to do that, is, by *judging ourselves.* They that boast most of their religion, may justly be suspected of partiality and hypocrisy in it.

(2.) Saul would needs have it thought God was wonderfully beholden to him for the good service he had done; but Samuel shows him God was so far from being a debtor to him, that He had just cause of action against him, and produces for evidence the *bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen,* which, perhaps, Saul appointed to bring up the rear of his triumph, but Samuel appeals to them as witnesses against him. Note, It is no new thing for the plausible professions and protestations of hypocrites to be contradicted and disproved by plain and undeniable evidence. Many boast of their obedience to the command of God; but what mean then their indulgence of the flesh, their love of the world, their passion and uncharitableness, and their neglect of holy duties, which witness against them?

(3.) Saul insists on his own justification, *v.* 15. [1.] It was not his fault; *the people spared them;* as if they durst have done it without the express orders of Saul, when they knew it was against the express orders of Samuel. Note, Those that are willing to justify themselves, are commonly

14 And Samuel said, [e]What *meaneth* then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

m Ex. 18:9,10,19. Num. 10:29—32.
n 14:48. Job. 21:30. Ec. 8:13.
o Gen. 2:11. 25:18.
p 27:8. Gen. 16:7.
q 3. Num. 24:7. 1 Kings 20:34—42. Esth. 3:1.
r 27:8. 30:1. Josh. 10:39. 11:12.
s 3,15,19. Josh. 7:21.
* Or, *the second sort.* 2 Sam. 6:13.
t 35. Gen. 6:6. 2 Sam. 24:16. Ps. 110:4. Jer. 18:7—10. Am. 7:3. Jon. 3:10. 4:2.
u Josh. 22:16. 1 Kings. 9:6. Ps. 36:3. 78:41,57. 125:5. Zeph. 1:6. Matt. 24:13. Heb. 10:38.
x 3,9. 13:13.
y 35. 16:1. Ps. 119:136. Jer. 9:1,18. 13:17. Luke 19:41—44. Rom. 9:1—3.
z 12:23. Ps. 109:4. Matt. 5:44. Luke 6:12.
a 25:2. Josh. 15:55.
b 7:12. Josh. 4:8,9. 2 Sam. 18:18.
c 13:10. Gen. 14:19. Judg. 17:2. Ruth 3:10.
d 9,11. Prov. 27:2. 31:31. Luke 17: 10. 18:11.
e Ps. 36:2. 50:16—21. Jer. 2:18,19,22, 23,34—37. Mal. 3:13—15. Luke 19: 22. Rom. 3:19. 1 Cor. 4:5.

Verse 7.

The region occupied by the Amalekites, lay between Havilah on the N. E. and Shur on the S. W.: and Saul carried his victorious arms through the whole extent of this district. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

'Havilah and Shur are constantly opposed, as the most opposite terms of Arabia.' BOCHART in *Patrick.*—*Over against Egypt.*] 'Josephus says, the Amalekites occupied that tract of country which extends from Pelusium to the Red Sea. The wilderness of Shur cannot be said to be "over against Egypt," though it is "near" to it; and in many places where our translation has, "over against," we should now read, "near."' HEWLETT.

Verse 11.

(*Note, Gen.* 6: 6, 7.) The Lord's change of conduct towards Saul was similar to that change in our conduct, which springs from repentance; though by means of all He accomplished his own wise and righteous purposes. (*Jer.* 13: 15—17. 18: 19, 20. *Luke* 19: 41—44. *Rom.* 9: 1—3.) SCOTT.

Verse 12.

Set him up a place.] '*Absalom's pillar* is called the *hand of Absalom,* 2 Sam. 18: 18.' Dr. A. CLARKE.—'Memorial pillars were anciently much in use; and the figure of a hand, by its emblematical meaning, [of power,] was well adapted to preserve the remembrance of a victory.' HEWLETT.

Verses 13, 14.

Perhaps Saul was in some degree conscious of having done wrong; and he therefore addressed Samuel in this respectful language, in order to conciliate his good will, and to ward off the rebuke which he feared. Some however think he was so insensible of having committed any fault, that he was disposed to boast of his obedience, and expected to be congratulated and commended by the prophet. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: [f] for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, [g] to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

16 Then Samuel said unto Saul, [h] Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

17 And Samuel said, [i] When thou *wast* little in thine own sight, *wast* thou not *made* the head of the tribes of Israel, and [j] the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?

18 And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go, and utterly destroy [k] the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until [*] they be consumed.

19 Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst [l] fly upon the spoil, and [m] didst evil in the sight of the LORD?

20 And Saul said unto Samuel, [n] Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and [o] have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

21 But [p] the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.

[*Practical Observations.*]

22 And Samuel said, [q] Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to [r] obey *is* better than

f 9,21. Gen. 3:12,13. Ex. 32:22,23. Job 31:33. Prov. 28:13.
g Matt. 2:8. Luke 10:29.
h 9:27. 12:7. 1 Kings 22:16.
i 9:21. 10:22. Judg. 6:15. Hos. 13:1. Matt. 18:4.
j 1—3. 10:1.
k Gen. 13:13. 15:16. Num. 16:38. Job 31:3. Prov. 10:29. 13:21.
* Heb. *They consume them.*
l Prov. 15:27. Jer. 7:11. Hab. 2:9—12. 2 Tim. 4:10.
m 2 Chr. 33:2,6. 36:12.
n 13. Job 33:9. 34:5. 35:2. 40:8. Matt. 19:20. Luke 10:29. 18:11. Rom. 10:3.
o 3,8.
p See on 15.—Gen. 3:13. Ex. 32:22,23.
q Ps. 50:8,9. Prov. 21:3. Is. 1:11—17. Jer. 7:22,23. Hos. 6:6. Am. 5:21—24. Mic. 6:6—8. Matt. 9:13. 12:7. 23:23. Heb. 10:6—9.
r Ex. 19:5. Jer. 7:23. 11:4,7. 26:13.

forward to condemn others, and to lay blame on any rather than themselves. It is a sorry subterfuge of an impenitent heart that will not confess its guilt, to blame those that were either tempters, or partners, or only followers in it. [2.] It was with a good intention: '*to sacrifice to the Lord thy God.*' But this was false, both Saul and the people designed their own profit in sparing the cattle; and if not, it was frivolous, for God hates robbery for burnt-offering; God appointed these cattle to be sacrificed to Him in the field, and therefore will give no thanks to those that bring them to be sacrificed at his altar: He will be served in his own way, according to the rule He Himself has prescribed. Nor will a good intention justify a bad action.

(4.) Samuel overrules, or rather overlooks, his plea, and proceeds, in God's name, (*v.* 16.) to give judgment against him. Those who complain that their ministers are too harsh with them, should remember, that, while they keep to the Word of God, they are but messengers, and must say as they are bidden; and therefore be willing, as Saul himself here was, that they should *say on.* He delivers his message faithfully. [1.] He reminds him of the honor God had done him in making him king, *v.* 17. Note, Those that are advanced to honor and wealth, ought often to remember their mean beginnings, that they may never think highly of themselves, but always study to do great things for the God who has advanced them. [2.] He lays before him the plainness of the orders he was to execute, *v.* 18. *The Lord sent thee on a journey;* so easy was the service, and so certain the success, that it was rather to be called a *journey,* than a *war;* and had he denied himself, so far as to have destroyed all that belonged to Amalek, God would, no doubt, have made it up to him, so that he should have no need of spoil. Therefore, [3.] He shows him how inexcusable he was, in aiming to make a handle of this expedition, and to enrich himself by it, *v.* 19. See of what evil the love of money is the root; but see what is the sinfulness of sin, and that in it which above any thing else makes it evil in the sight of the Lord: disobedience; *thou didst not obey the Lord.*

(5.) Saul repeats his vindication of himself, as what, in defiance of conviction, he resolved to abide by, *v.* 20, 21. He denies the charge, *v.* 20. He had done all he thought he needed to do, so much wiser was he in his own eyes than God Himself; God bade him kill all, and yet he puts in among the instances of his obedience, that he had brought Agag alive, which he thought was as good as if he had killed him. Thus carnal, deceitful hearts think to excuse themselves from God's commandments with their own equivalents. He insists, that he has *utterly destroyed the Amalekites* themselves, which was the main thing intended: but as to the spoil, he owns it should have been *utterly destroyed;* so he knew his *Lord's will,* and was under no mistake about the command: but he thought that would be wilful waste; the cattle of the Midianites was taken for a prey in Moses' time, Num. 31: 22. and why not the cattle of the Amalekites now? Better it should be a prey to the Israelites, than to the fowls of the air and the wild beasts; therefore he connived at the people in carrying it away; but it was their doing, not his; and besides, it was for *sacrifice to the Lord* here at Gilgal, whither they were now bringing them. See what a hard thing it is to convince the children of disobedience of their sin, and to strip them of their fig-leaves.

(6.) Samuel fully answers his apology. *v.* 22, 23. He appeals to his own conscience, *Has the Lord as great delight in sacrifices as in obedience?* Saul was not a man of any great acquaintance with religion, yet he could not but know [1.] That nothing is so pleasing to God as obedience, no, not sacrifice and offering, and the fat of rams. What we should aim at in all the exercises of religion, is acceptance with God. If God be well pleased with us, and our services, we are happy, otherwise, *to what purpose is it?* Isa. 1: 11. Here we are plainly told, that humble, sincere, conscientious obedience to the will of God, is more pleasing and acceptable to Him than *all burnt-offering and sacrifices.* A careful conformity to moral precepts recommends us to God more than all ceremonial observances. Mic. 6: 6—8. Hos. 6: 6. Obedience is enjoined by the eternal law of nature, sacrifice only by a positive law: obedience was

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—21. Those who have not learned to obey God, are not well qualified to rule over others, especially over the Lord's people.—When He calls us to our work, and his time is come, He will provide us helpers, and give us success; but He will at the same time make trial of our spirits. We must not *avenge* ourselves without express command; but we may at any time *requite* the kindness of our benefactors: and those who do good to the worshippers and servants of God for his sake, treasure up blessings for their posterity.—It is dangerous to live among wicked people; and if we would not perish with them, we must keep separate from them, as far as consists with our various duties.—The pride of man's heart can admit the blasphemous idea of being *more merciful than God,* and of censuring the threatened punishment of sinners as too severe! while covetousness deems the 'vile and refuse' good enough to be spent wholly in religion; (*Mal.* 1: 12—14.) Many observable circumstances betray the hypocrisy of some confident professors of godliness; and it will always be necessary to drive sinners from their subterfuges, to show them the malignity and aggravation of their offences, to silence their objections and excuses, and to urge conviction upon their hearts: though the convincing Spirit of God alone can render the means effectual. (*Note, John* 16: 8—11.) SCOTT.

Verse 15.

It is not probable, that either Saul or the people had fully purposed to sacrifice all the cattle which they had reserved. SCOTT

Verse 19.

Fly, &c.] 'With great greediness, as a hungry bird or beast upon his prey.' *Patrick.* Ib.

Verse 20.

Agag.] 'This was the common name for the kings of the Amalekites.' JAHN.

Verse 22.

Submission to the authority of God, must be essential to true religion under every dispensation: but there is a great difference between the submission of a *holy,* and that of a *sinful* creature. External obedience, even to moral precepts, is good in the sight of God, only when it springs from a willing submission of the soul to the divine authority. To profess a belief of the Gospel is good, only when it arises from submission to the divine teaching, to the justice of the condemnation under which sinners are concluded, and to the wisdom, suitableness, and grace of the method of salvation there revealed. All instituted worship derives its obligation from the express appointment of God, from the honor which it renders to his name, from the disposition of the worshipper, and from the grace and spiritual blessings which are communicated by it. Sacrifices especially declared the desert of the offender, and typified the sufferings of the Savior: their value resulted entirely from the appointment of God, [note, Lev 10: 1. *last part*]; and they were not acceptable, except offered in *obedience* to Him, and with a penitent, believing, and pious mind. (*Jer.* 7: 21—23.) When therefore they were substituted in the place of true piety, or trusted in as meritorious; when the *means* were used to compensate for the neglect of the *end,* and the *sign* was exalted into the place of the thing *signified;* they became an abomination, however costly and numerous they were.—Had Saul offered thousands of bullocks and rams, not of the spoils of Amalek, but from his own herds and flocks, exactly according to the divine ritual, in an im-

sacrifice; *and* to hearken, than the fat of rams.

23 For [s]rebellion *is as* the sin of [*] witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry: because [t]thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king.

24 And Saul said unto Samuel, [u]I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words; because [x]I feared the people, and [y]obeyed their voice.

25 Now therefore, I pray thee, [z]pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD.

26 And Samuel said unto Samuel, [a]I will not return with thee: for [b]thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.

27 And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent.

28 And Samuel said unto him, [c]The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and [d]hath given it to [e]a neighbor of thine, *that is* better than thou.

29 And also [f]the † Strength of Israel [g]will not lie, nor repent: for he *is* not a

s 12:14,15. Num. 14:9. Deut. 9:7,24. Josh. 22:18—19. Job 34:37. Ps. 107: 11. Jer. 28:16. 29:32. Ez. 2:5—8.
* Heb. *divination.* Ex. 22:18. Lev. 20:6,27. Deut. 18:10,11. Is. 8:19. 19:3.
t 2:30. 13:14. 16:1. 2 Kings 17:15—20. 1 Chr. 28:9.
u 30. Ex. 9:27. 10:16. Num. 22:34. 2 Sam. 12:13. Matt. 27:4.
x 9:15. Ex. 23:2. Job 31:34. Prov. 29:25. Is. 51:12,13. Luke 23:20—25. Rev. 21:8.
y 2:29. Gen. 3:12,17. Jer. 38:5.
z Ex. 10:17.
a 31. Gen. 42:38. 43:11—14. Luke 24:28,29.
b See on 23.—13:14. 16:1. Jer. 6:19. Hos. 4:6.
c 28:17,18. 1 Kings 11:30,31.
d 2:7,8. Jer. 27:5,6. Dan. 4:17,32. John 19:11. Rom. 13:1.
e 13:14. 16:12. Acts 13:22.
f Ps. 29:11. 68:35. Is. 45:24. Joel 3: 16. 2 Cor. 12:9,10. Phil. 4:13.
† Or, *Eternity*, or, *Victory*. Deut. 33: 27.
g Num. 14:28:29. 23:19. Ps. 95:11. Ez. 24:14. 2 Tim. 2:13. Tit. 1:2. Heb. 6:18.

the law of innocency; sacrifice supposes sin, and is but a feeble attempt to take that away which obedience would have prevented. God is more glorified, and self more denied, by obedience than by sacrifice. It is much easier to bring a bullock or lamb to be burnt on the altar, than to bring *every high thought into obedience* to God, and the will subject to his will. Obedience is the glory of angels, Ps. 103: 20. and will be ours. [2.] That nothing is so provoking to God as disobedience, setting up our wills in competition with his, here called *rebellion* and *stubbornness*, and said to be as bad as *witchcraft* and *idolatry*, *v.* 23. It is as bad to set up other gods, as to live in disobedience to the true God. They that are governed by their own corrupt inclinations, in opposition to the command of God, do, in effect, consult the *Teraphim*, (as the word here is for idolatry,) or the diviners. It was disobedience that made us all sinners; Rom. 5: 19. and this is the malignity of sin, that it is the *transgression of the law*, and consequently *enmity to God*, Rom. 8: 7.

Lastly, He reads his doom, in short, '*Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord*, hast *despised it*, so the Chald. hast *made nothing of it*, so the Sept. hast cast off the government of it; therefore He has *rejected thee*, despised and made nothing of thee, but cast thee off *from being king*.' Those are unfit and unworthy to rule over men, who are not willing that God should rule over them.

V. 24—31. Saul is at length put into the dress of a penitent; but too evidently only in semblance. Observe,—

1. How poorly he expresses his repentance. It was with much ado he was made sensible of his fault, and not till he was threatened with being deposed; that touched him in a tender part, then he began to relent, *v.* 24. But his confession was not ingenuous, but extorted only, and forced.

Observe the bad signs of its hypocrisy; it came short even of Ahab's.

1. He made his application to Samuel only, and seemed most solicitous to stand right in his opinion, and to gain his favor. He makes a little god of him, only to preserve his reputation with the people, because they all knew Samuel to be a prophet, and the man that had been the instrument of his preferment. Thinking it would please Samuel, and be a sort of bribe to him, he puts it into his confession, *I have transgressed the commandments of the Lord, and thy word;* as if he had been in God's stead, *v.* 24. David, though convinced by the ministry of Nathan, yet in his confession, has his eye to God alone, not to Nathan; *Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned:* but Saul, ignorantly enough, confesses his sin as a transgression of Samuel's word; whereas his word was no other than a declaration of the *commandment of the Lord*. He also applies to Samuel for forgiveness, *v.* 25. as if any could forgive sin but God only. Those wretchedly deceive themselves, who, when fallen into scandalous sin, think it enough to make their peace with the church and their ministers, by the show and plausible profession of repentance, without caring to make their peace with God by the sincerity of it. The most charitable construction we can put on this of Saul here, is, to suppose he looked on Samuel as a sort of mediator between him and God, and intended an address to God in his application to him: however, it was very weak.

2. He excused his fault even in the confession of it, and that is never the fashion of a true penitent; *v.* 24. '*Because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.*' We have reason enough to think it was purely his own doing, not the people's; if they were forward to do it, he knew how to keep up his authority, and stood not in awe of them: the excuse was false and frivolous; whatever he pretended, he did not really fear the people. But it is common for sinners, in excusing their faults, to plead the thoughts and workings of their own minds, because, how groundless soever, no man can disprove them; but they forget that God searcheth the heart.

3. All his care was to save his credit, and preserve his interest in the people, lest they should revolt from him, or at least despise him; *v.* 25, 27. not that he cared for Samuel, but he feared, if Samuel forsook him, the people would do so too. Many seem zealously affected to good ministers and good people, only for the sake of their own interest and reputation, while in heart they hate them. But his expression was very gross when he said, (*v.* 30.) *I have sinned, yet honor me, I pray thee, before my people.* Is this the language of a penitent? No, but the contrary; '*I have sinned*, shame me now, for to me belongs shame, and no man can loathe me so much as I loathe myself.' Yet how often do we meet with the copies of this hypocrisy of Saul! It is very common for those who are convinced of sin, to show themselves very solicitous to be honored before the people. Whereas he that has lost the honor of an innocent, can pretend to no other than that of a penitent, and it is the honor of a penitent to take shame to himself.

II. How little he got by these thin shows of repentance. 1. Samuel repeated the sentence passed on him, so far was he from giving him any hopes of the repeal of it, *v.* 26. the same with *v.* 23. *He that covers his sins, shall never prosper.* Samuel refused to turn back with him, but *turned about to go away*, *v.* 27. As the thing appeared at first, he thought it altogether unfit so far to countenance one whom God had rejected, as to join him in giving thanks to God for a victory, which was made to serve rather Saul's covetousness than God's glory. Yet afterward he did turn again with him, (*v.* 31.) on further thoughts, and, probably, by divine direction, either to prevent a mutiny among the people, or perhaps, not to honor Saul, (for though Saul worshipped the Lord, (*v.* 31.) it is not said Samuel presided in that worship,) but to do justice on Agag, *v.* 32.

2. He illustrated the sentence by a sign, which Saul himself, by his rudeness, gave occasion for. When Samuel was turning from him, he tore his clothes to detain him, (*v.* 27.) so loath was he to

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penitent and self-confident disposition, God would have abhorred them: how much more then, when the animals to be sacrificed were spared, in direct disobedience to his express command!—Samuel did not therefore mean to exalt one part of *external* religion by depreciating another, as many seem to suppose; but to show that a right state of the heart is essential to the acceptable performance of every service. (*M. R.*—*Ps.* 50: 7—15. *Prov.* 15: 8, 9. *Is.* 1: 10—15. *Am.* 5: 21—24.) SCOTT.

Verse 23.

The heinousness of any sin is not to be judged of, by the magnitude of the object about which it is committed, or the grossness of the outward action; but from the deliberate and determined disobedience of the will, whence it takes [its character]. (*Note, Gen.* 3: 6.) When the Lord expressly says, 'Thou shalt;' and his rational creature dares to persist in saying, 'I will not;' whether the contest be about an apple or a kingdom, it is *stubbornness* and *rebellion*, a contempt of the commandment of God, and a daring insult to his majesty and authority; and has in it all the essential malignity, which constitutes idolatry or witchcraft, or crimes punishable by death according to the divine law. Therefore Saul for this rebellion was condemned to lose his kingdom. (13: 13—15.) ID.

Witchcraft.] Probably Saul had before this shown much zeal against those who practised witchcraft; (28: 3.) and this circumstance would add poignancy to Samuel's reproof. SCOTT.

Verses 26—28.

(*M. R. Note*, 28: 12—19.) It does not appear that Saul had any real attachment to Samuel. ID.

(27.) *Mantle.*] 'It was a four-square garment, covering the breast and the back: knit at the shoulder, but open on the sides, as Jo. Brannius has shown.' PATRICK.

Verse 29.

The Strength of Israel.] Or, '*The victory of Israel.*' (*M.*) Saul took the honor of the victory, and of Israel's protection, to himself, and raised a trophy of it (12): but Samuel seems to have indirectly rebuked his vanity, and reminded him that the eternal God was indeed 'Israel's Strength and Victory.'—'The LORD repented of having set up Saul to be king;' (*Note*, 11.) for, not having confirmed his promise of the kingdom to him by an oath, an opening was left for the change of measures intended by this expression. But Saul had now provoked Him to pass sentence against him, and as with a solemn oath to declare that it was irreversible. In that case, God is never said to *repent*; nay, it is spoken of as an impossibility that He should. (*Num.* 14: 27—30. *Ps.* 95: 9—11. 110: 4. *Heb.* 3: 14—19. 6: 13—20. 7: 20—22.) SCOTT.

man, that he should repent.

30 Then he said, I have sinned; *yet* [h] honor me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, [i] that I may worship the LORD thy God.

31 So Samuel turned again after Saul, and Saul worshipped the LORD.

32 ¶ Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag, the king of the Amalekites: and Agag came unto him delicately. And [k] Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past.

33 And Samuel said, [l] As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel [m] hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

34 Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house to [n] Gibeah of Saul.

35 And [o] Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death; nevertheless, [p] Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD [q] repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

CHAP. XVI.

God sends Samuel to Bethlehem, to anoint a king out of Jesse's sons, and directs him to conceal his business by a sacrifice, 1—5. Seven of Jesse's sons pass by, and are not approved, 6—10. David is called from the flock, and anointed, 11—13. An evil spirit troubles Saul; who, counselled by his servants, sends for David, and is relieved by his music, 14—23.

AND the LORD said unto Samuel, [a] How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, [b] seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine [c] horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to [d] Jesse the Beth-

h Hab. 2:4. John 5:44. 12:43.
i Is. 29:13. Luke 18:9—14. 2 Tim. 3:5.
k Jer. 48:44. 1 Thes. 5:3. Rev. 18:7.
l Gen. 9:6. Judg. 1:7. Matt. 7:2. Jam. 2:13. Rev. 16:6. 18:6.
m Num. 25:7,8. 1 Kings 18:40. Is. 34:6. Jer. 48:10.
n 11:4.
o 19:24.
p 11. 16:1. Ps. 119:136,158. Jer. 9:1, 2. Rom. 9:2,3. Phil. 3:18.
q See on 11. Gen. 6:6.
a 15:11,35.
b 13:13,14. 15:23,26. Jer. 6:30. 14:11, 12. 15:1. 1 John 5:16.
c 9:16. 10:1. 2 Kings 9:1,3,6.
d 13:14. Gen. 49:8—10. Ruth 4:18—22. 1 Chr. 2:10—15. Ps. 78:68—71. 89:19,20. Is. 11:1,10. Acts 13:21,22. Rom. 15:12.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V 22—35. In exercising the sacred ministry, nothing is of more importance, than an accurate knowledge of the relative and comparative value of the truths, precepts, and ordinances of religion; about which hypocrites greatly mistake, and thus impose upon themselves.—When the sentence of final rejection is irreversibly denounced, repentance will be unavailing: and though our God is now ready to forgive, He will hereafter neither repent, nor change his purposes of vengeance; for the 'Strength of Israel' will be *eternally* engaged to punish his stoutest and proudest foes. —The mighty of the earth are so accustomed to flattery and distinction, that they can scarcely suppose any will dare to withhold it from them: but 'with God there is no respect of persons;' and, while He requires his servants to honor those who are in authority, He teaches them to be of his judgment concerning comparative excellency.—Our warfare indeed is of a different nature from Saul's: but if we spare one domineering lust, or profitable iniquity, we shall forfeit the promised kingdom with deep disgrace; as our sincerity must be approved by devoting every sin to utter destruction, by the power of God's grace, and for the glory of his name. For this, in all ages and nations, is the line of distinction between Samuel and Saul, between the Christian and the hypocrite; that the one levels his whole force against Agag against that sinful propensity, which, by constitution and custom, has the greatest ascendency, that he may hew it in pieces before the Lord; while the other is anxious to preserve his master-sin, however willing he may appear to mortify, or refrain from, those sins, to which he has been less addicted, and to which he feels less temptation. SCOTT.

Strength.] 'Ntsh; this root denotes superiority, being "above," over, or "beyond." "The excellency, or strength of Israel," i. e. "the giver of superiority, excellency, victory, or strength to Israel." *Parkhurst.* "The Triumpher in Israel." *Vulg.* "He who gives victory to Israel." *Patrick.* "The Eternal One." *Bates.* "He who presides over Israel." *Houbigant.* "The true God of Israel." *Geddes.* COND. COMM.

(30, 31.) Perhaps Saul thought, God would accept his worship, if Samuel was present, but not otherwise. SCOTT.

Verses 32, 33.

Agag was indeed the chief person who ought to have been slain, both as the head of the devoted nation, and for his own cruelties. Thus the prophet, who was of a lenient spirit, and prayed all night for Saul, did not hesitate to execute that sentence of God upon this condemned criminal, which Saul, who afterwards proved himself exceedingly cruel, had not done. SCOTT.

(32.) *Delicately.*] '"Bound in chains and fetters of iron," according to the use of the word in Job 38: 31.'

BEN GERSON, in *Cond. Comm.*

(33.) 'To Agag Samuel holds language very different [from that to Saul]. He does not speak to him of a divine commission, nor of the duty or disobedience of Saul, but of human merits or demerits—the merits and deserts of Agag—the demands of *natural justice.* The sacred penman is careful to inform us that it was *as* a notorious public murderer he was put to death, (and probably by a public executioner). Cavillers have called his being put to death "in cold blood.' "cruel:" it was just as "cruel" as the hanging of a murderer "in cold blood," and no more so.' CARPENTER. *Before the Lord.*] 'I. e. openly, Gen. 13: 13.' WILLIAMS.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI. V. 1—3. It is probable, the events recorded in this ch. happened some time after those before related. Probably Samuel

lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

2 And Samuel said, [e] How can I go? if Saul hear *it*, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer [*] with thee, and say, [f] I am come to sacrifice to the LORD;

3 And [g] call Jesse to the sacrifice, [h] and I will show thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt [i] anoint unto me *him* whom I name unto thee.

4 And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Beth-lehem: and the elders of the town [j] trembled at his [†] coming, and said, [k] Comest thou peaceably?

5 And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD; [l] sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

6 And it came to pass when they were come, that he looked on [m] Eliab, and said, [n] Surely the LORD's anointed *is* before him.

7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, [o] Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the* LORD [p] *seeth* not as man seeth; for man [q] looketh on the [‡] out-

e Ex. 3:11. 1 Kings 18:9—14. Matt. 10:16. Luke 1:34.
* Heb. *in thine hand.* 9:12.
f Jer. 33:26,27.
g 9:12,13. 2 Sam. 15:11. Matt. 22:1—4.
h Ex. 4:15. Acts 9:6.
i 12,13. 9:16.
j 21:1. 2 Sam. 6:9. 1 Kings 17:18. Hos. 6:5. 11:10. Luke 5:8. 8:37.
† Heb. *meeting.*
k 1 Kings 2:13. 2 Kings 9:22. 1 Chr. 12:17,18.
l Ex. 19:10,14,15. Lev. 20:7,8. Num. 11:18. Josh. 3:5. 7:13. 2 Chr. 30: 17—20. Job 1:5. Ps. 26:2—6. Joel 2:16. 1 Cor. 11:28.
m 17:13,28. 1 Chr. 2:13.—27:18. *Elihu.*
n Judg. 3:18.
o 9:2. 10:23,24. 2 Sam. 14:25. Ps. 147:10,11. Prov. 31:30.
p Job 10:4. Is. 55:8. Luke 16:15. 1 Pet. 2:4. 3:4.
q John 7:24. 2 Cor. 10:7,10.
‡ Heb. *eyes.*

the history of David, one that makes as great a figure in the sacred history, as almost any of the worthies of the Old Testament; one that both with his sword and with his pen served the honor of God, and the interests of Israel, as much as most ever did, and was as illustrious a type of Christ.

Samuel was retired to Ramah, resolved to appear no more in public, but to addict himself wholly to instructing and training up the sons of the prophets, over whom he presided, as we find, *ch.* 19: 20. and we do not find that, to his dying day, God called him out to any public action relating to the state, but only here to anoint David.

I. God reproves him for continuing so long to mourn for the rejection of Saul. He does not blame him for mourning, but for exceeding in his sorrow, *v.* 1. He must recover himself, and not go mourning to his grave. 1. Because he ought to acquiesce in the divine justice, and forget his affection to Saul; if God will be glorified in his ruin, Samuel ought to be satisfied. Besides, to what purpose should he weep? The decree is gone forth, and all his prayers and tears cannot prevail to reverse it, 2 Sam. 12: 22, 23. 2. Because Israel shall be no loser by it, and Samuel must prefer the public welfare before his own private affection to his friend. 'Mourn not for Saul, for I *have provided Me a king.* The people provided them a king and he proved bad, now I will provide Me one, *a man after my own heart.*' See Ps. 89: 20. Acts 13: 22.

II. He sends him to Beth-lehem, to anoint one of the sons of Jesse, a person, probably, not unknown to Samuel. Samuel objects the peril of going, *v.* 2. By this it appears, 1. Saul was grown very wicked and outrageous since his rejection, else Samuel would not have mentioned this. What impiety would he not be guilty of, who durst kill Samuel? 2. Samuel's faith was not so strong as one would have expected, else he had not thus feared Saul. But the best men are not perfect in their faith, nor will fear be wholly cast out any where on this side heaven. But this may be understood as Samuel's desire of direction how to manage this matter prudently, so as not to expose himself, or any other, more than needed.

III. God orders him to cover his design with a sacrifice. It was proper he should *sacrifice*, when he came to anoint a king, *ch.* 11: 15. As a prophet, he might sacrifice when and where God appointed; and it was not at all inconsistent with the laws of truth, to say, he came to sacrifice, when really he did so, though he had also a further end, which he thought fit to conceal. Let him notify a sacrifice, and invite Jesse (probably the principal man of the city) and his family to come to the feast on the sacrifice; and, says God, *I will show thee what thou shalt do.* Those that go about God's work in God's way, shall be directed step by step, wherever they are at a loss, to do it in the best manner.

IV. Samuel went accordingly to Beth-lehem, not in pomp, or with any retinue, only a servant to lead the heifer, which he was to sacrifice; yet *the elders of Beth-lehem trembled at his coming*, fearing it was an indication of God's displeasure, and that he came to denounce judgment on them for the iniquities of the place; or, that it might be an occasion of Saul's displeasure against them, for, probably, they knew how much he was exasperated at Samuel, and feared he would pick a quarrel with them for entertaining him. They asked him, '*Comest thou peaceably?* in peace thyself, not flying from Saul? at peace with us, not come with a message of wrath?' Samuel kept at home, and it was a strange thing to see him so far from his own house; they therefore concluded it must needs be some extraordinary occasion that brought him, and feared the worst till he satisfied them; (*v.* 5.) and bid them *sanctify themselves*, and prepare to join with him in the sacrifice he was about to offer. Note, Before solemn ordinances there must be a solemn preparation. When we are to offer spiritual sacrifices, it concerns us, by sequestering ourselves from the world, and renewing the dedication of ourselves to God, to sanctify ourselves. When our Lord Jesus came into the world, though men had reason enough to tremble, (and *all Jerusalem was troubled*,) fearing his errand was to condemn the world, yet He gave full assurance that He came peaceably, for He came to sacrifice, and brought his offering with Him; *a body hast thou prepared Me;* let us sanctify ourselves, that we may have an interest in his sacrifice. Samuel said, 'I come peaceably, for I come to sacrifice.' Note, Religious exercises must not be performed tumultuously.

V. He had a particular regard to Jesse and his sons, for with them his private business lay, with which, it is likely, he acquainted Jesse at his first coming, and took up his lodging at his house. He spoke to all the elders to *sanctify themselves*, but he *sanctified Jesse, and his sons*, by praying with them and instructing them. It appears, *ch.* 20: 29. it was a devout, religious family. Samuel assisted them in their family preparations for the public sacrifice, and, it is probable, chose out David, and anointed him, at the family solemnities, before the sacrifice was offered, or the holy feast solemnized. Perhaps he offered private sacrifices, like Job, *according to the number of them all*, and, under color of that, called for them all to appear before him. When signal blessings are coming into a family, they ought to sanctify themselves.

V. 6—13. I. How all the elder sons of Jesse were passed by, who stood fairest for the preferment. Eliab, the eldest, was privately presented first, probably none being present but Jesse, and Samuel thought he must needs be the man, *v.* 6. The prophets themselves, when from under the divine direction, were as liable to mistake as other men; as Nathan, 2 Sam. 7: 3. But God rectified Samuel's mistake, by a secret whisper to his mind, *v.* 7. It was strange he, who had been so wretchedly disappointed in Saul, whose countenance and stature recommended him as much as any man's could, should be so forward to judge of a man by that rule. When God would please the people with a king, He chose a handsome man, but when He would have one after his own heart, He would not choose him by the outside; men judge by the sight of the eyes, but God *looks on the heart*; i. e. He knows it. 1 Pet. 3: 4.

II. After all, David, the youngest son, at length was pitched upon. His name signifies *beloved*, for he was a type of the Beloved Son. Observe,

1. How he was now employed, *v.* 11. The youngest are commonly fondlings, but, it should seem, David was least set by of all the sons of Jesse; either they did not discern, or did not duly value, his excellent spirit. Many a great genius lies buried in obscurity and contempt; and God often exalts those whom men despise. The Son of David was He whom men despised, *the Stone which the builders refused*, and yet has *a name above every name.* David was taken *from following the ewes, to feed Jacob*; (as Moses from keeping the flock, to lead Israel;) an instance of his humility

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sacrificed, from time to time, in many different places. *Notes*, 7: 9, 17. 9: 12—14. SCOTT.

'Jehovah here gives proof, that He still retained, and was disposed to exercise, the right of appointing the ruler under Him.' JAHN.

(1.) *Horn.*] 'It is the custom of Iberia, Colchis, and the adjacent country, where the arts are little practised, to keep liquors in horns, and to drink out of them.' HEWLETT.—Dr. A. Clarke says, horns appear to have been the *ancient* drinking vessels of all nations. ED.

(2.) *Take ... and ... say ...* &c.] 'No man, in any circumstances should ever *tell a lie*; yet, in all circumstances he is not obliged to tell the *whole* truth; though in every circumstance he must tell *nothing but the truth*; and, in every case, *so* tell that truth that the hearer shall not believe a lie by it.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 4.

(*M. R.*] *Note, Matt.* 8: 33, 34.) (*Notes*, 21: 1, 2. 22: 19—19.) SCOTT.

Verses 6, 7.

Samuel had, probably, informed none except Jesse of his principal object in coming to Bethlehem.—It is evident, the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel, on this and other occasions, by direct and immediate suggestion. (9: 1, 2. 17: 28.) *The Lord seeth not*, &c. (7.) *M. R.* o, p, q. ID.

(6.) *When they were come.*] 'I. e. into some private place, where Jesse brought his sons before Samuel, one after another.' ASSEMB. ANN.

(7.) *The Lord said unto Samuel*, &c.] 'What a state of holy

ward appearance, but the LORD looketh [r] on the heart.

8 Then Jesse called [a] Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.

9 Then Jesse made [t] Shammah to pass by: and he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.

10 Again, Jesse made [u] seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these.

11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all *thy* children? And he said, [x] There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit [*] down till he come hither.

12 And he sent and brought him in. Now he *was* [y] ruddy, *and* withal † of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, [z] anoint him: for this *is* he.

13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and [a] anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and [b] the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

14 ¶ But [c] the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and [d] an evil spirit from the LORD ‡ troubled him.

and industry, both which God delights to honor. We should think a military life, but God saw a pastoral life, (which gives advantage for contemplation, and communion with heaven,) the best preparative for kingly power, at least for those graces of the Spirit, necessary to the due discharge of the trust which attends it.

2. What appearance he made when he came. No doubt his clothing was according to his employment, mean and coarse, and he did not change his clothes as Joseph did; but he had a very honest look, not stately, as Saul's, but sweet and lovely, (*v.* 12.) that is, a clear complexion, a good eye, and a lovely face; the features extraordinary, and something in his looks very charming. Though far from using any art to help his beauty, and his employment exposed it to the sun and wind, yet nature kept its own, and, by the sweetness of his aspect, gave manifest indications of an amiable temper and disposition of mind. Perhaps his modest blush, when brought before Samuel, and received by him with surprising respect, made him look much the handsomer.

3. The anointing of him. The Lord told Samuel in his ear, (as He had done, *ch.* 9: 15.) this was he whom he must anoint, *v.* 12. Samuel objected not to the meanness of his education, his youth, or the little respect he had in his own family, but, in obedience to the divine command, took his horn of oil, and *anointed* him, (*v.* 13.) signifying thereby, a divine designation to the government, after the death of Saul, of which hereby he gave him a full assurance; and a divine communication of gifts and graces, to fit him to govern, and to make him a type of Him who was to be the Messiah, the Anointed One, who received the spirit, not *by* measure, but *without measure*. He is said to be anointed *in the midst of his brethren*, who yet, possibly, did not understand it as a designation to the government, and therefore did not envy David, as Joseph's brethren did him; because they saw no further marks of dignity put upon him. But Patrick reads it, *He anointed him from the midst of his brethren*, i. e. singled him out from the rest, and privately anointed him, but with a charge to keep his own counsel, and not to let his own brethren know it, as by what we find (*ch.* 17: 28.) it should seem, Eliab did not. It is computed David was now about 20 years old; if so, his troubles by Saul lasted 10 years, for he was 30 when Saul died. Lightfoot reckons him about 25, and that his troubles lasted but 5 years.

4. The happy effects of this anointing, *v.* 13. The anointing was not an empty ceremony, but a divine power went along with it; so that David found himself inwardly advanced in wisdom and courage, and concern for the public, with all the qualifications of a prince, though not at all advanced in his outward circumstances. This would abundantly satisfy him that his election was of God. The best evidence of our being predestinated to the kingdom of glory, is, our being sealed with the Spirit of promise, and our experience of a work of grace in our hearts. Some think the courage, by which he slew the lion and the bear, and his extraordinary skill in music, were the effects and evidences of the Spirit's coming upon him. However, this made him the sweet psalmist of Israel, 2 Sam. 23: 1. Samuel, having done this, went to Ramah in safety, and we never read of him again but once, (*ch.* 19: 18.) till we read of his death; now he retired to die in peace, since his eyes had seen the salvation, even the sceptre brought into the tribe of Judah.

V. 14—23. We have here Saul falling, and David rising.

I. Saul is made a terror to himself, *v.* 14. Having forsaken God and his duty, God, in righteous judgment, withdrew from him those assistances of the good Spirit with which he was directed, animated, and encouraged in his government and wars. He lost all his good qualities This was the effect of his rejecting God, and an evidence of his being rejected by Him. Now God took his mercy from Saul, (as it is expressed, 2 Sam. 7: 15.) for when the Spirit of the Lord departs from us, all good goes. When men grieve and quench the Spirit, by wilful sin, He departs, and will not always strive. The consequence of this was, that *an evil spirit from God troubled him.* They that drive the good Spirit away from them, become of course a prey to the evil spirit. If God and his grace do not rule us, sin and Satan will The devil, by the divine permission, troubled and terrified Saul, by means of the corrupt humors of his body, and passions of his mind. He grew fretful, peevish, discontented; timorous and suspicious, ever and anon starting and trembling; sometimes, says Josephus, as if he had been choked

[r] 1 Kings 8:39. 1 Chr. 28:9. 2 Chr. 16:9. Ps. 7:9. 139:2. Prov. 15:11. 16:2. Jer. 11:20. 17:10. 20:12. Acts 1:24. Heb. 4:13. Rev. 2:23.
[s] 17:13. 1 Chr. 2:13.
[t] 17:13.—2 Sam. 13:3. *Shimeah.* 1 Chr. 2:13. *Shimma.*
[u] 1 Chr. 2:13—15.
[x] 17:12—15,28. 2 Sam. 7:8. 1 Chr. 17:7. Ps. 78:70,71.
[*] Heb. *round.*
[y] 17:42. Cant. 5:10. Lam. 4:7. Acts 7:20. Heb. 11:23.
† Heb. *fair of eyes.* 7.
[z] Ps. 2:2,6. 89:19,20. Acts 4:27.
[a] 10:1. 2 Kings 9:6.
[b] 18. 10:6,10. Num. 11:17. 27:18. Judg. 3:10. 11:29. 13:25. 14:6. Is. 11:1—3. John 3:34. Heb. 1:9.
[c] 18:12. 28:15. Judg. 16:29. Ps. 51: 11. Hos. 9:12.
[d] 18:10. 19:9,10. Judg. 9:23. 1 Kings 22:22. Acts 19:15,16.
‡ Or, *terrified.*

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familiarity does this argue between God and the prophet! I believe Moses himself was not more highly favored than Samuel.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 10, 11.

David being young, (not more than 18 or 20 years of age,) and being of a contemplative disposition, was perhaps thought by Jesse to be less capable of public business than his other sons, and so was not kept at home on this occasion. (*M. R.—Jer.* 30: 5—9. *Ez.* 34: 23—31. 37: 25. *Hos.* 3: 4, 5.)—These transactions seem to have occurred, between the offering of the sacrifice, and the feast on it which followed. SCOTT.

Verse 13.

In the midst of his brethren.] 'This proves not, that his brethren stood by and saw it done, but may be otherwise understood, namely, that among all Jesse's sons, Samuel, by God's appointment, anointed David; or, that he took him from among his brethren and anointed him king.' ASSEMB. ANN.

Verse 14.

When the Spirit of God came on David, it became evident He had departed from Saul, nay, that an evil spirit was *judicially* permitted to impel him to the most furious sallies of rage or jealousy; to oppress his spirits with a deep melancholy; to excite distressing terrors, alarms and suspicions; and to render him at times distracted. (*M. R.* d.) SCOTT.

An evil spirit, &c.] 'Whether this was a diabolical possession, or a mere mental malady, the learned are not agreed: it seems to have partaken of both. There is too much of apparent *nature* in it, to permit us to believe it was all *spiritual*, and too much of apparent *spiritual* influence in it, to suffer us to believe it was all *natural*.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

'Saul, by his disobedience, had provoked God, so that He no longer directed and prospered him; but left him a prey to his own gloomy mind. [And in the history of Saul (whose moral character, seeming at first to have been about equally balanced between vice and virtue, is a type of that of perhaps nearly half the human race) let us trace the progress of moral deterioration, in the plain story of his life as here recorded. "Every time a man does wrong, i. e. yields to his lower propensities, [in preference to his higher sentiments, where their impulses clash,] he loses self-control; he gives to his passions power over him; he weakens [too] the practical supremacy of *conscience*, and becomes more perfectly a slave. The design of the Christian religion, in this respect, is, to bring us under the dominion of conscience enlightened by revelation, and deliver us from the slavery of evil propensity." ... {for} "by every act of vicious indulgence, we give our passions more uncontrolled power over us, and diminish the power of reason and conscience, ... according to the universal law of our faculties, that they are strengthened by use, and weakened by disuse. ... Thus, by every act of sin, we not only incur new guilt, but we strengthen the bias towards sin, during the whole of our subsequent being. Hence every vicious act renders our return to virtue more difficult, and more hopeless. The tendency of such a course is, to give to habit the power which ought to be exerted by our will. And, hence, it is not improbable, that the conditions of our being may be such, as to allow of arriving at a state, in which reformation may be actually impossible. That the Holy Scriptures allude to such a condition, [comp. Ex. 4: 21. 14: 4, &c. Josh. 11: 20. 1 Sam. 18: 12. 28: 6, &c.] during the present life, is evident. Such, also, is probably the condition of the wicked in another world." Pres. WAYLAND. Elts. Mor. Science.] Conscious guilt, foreboding the loss of his dominion, and perhaps the destruction of his house, made him jealous, sanguinary, and irritable; and occasionally melancholy This was the evil spirit which troubled him; and his courtiers properly advised music to soothe his mind, and mitigate his complaint. Had he been possessed by a demon, music would have had no effect.' BOOTHROYD. Let

15 And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee.

16 Let our lord now command thy servants, *which are* [e] before thee, to seek out a man *who is* a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall [f] play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.

17 And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring *him* to me.

18 Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, *that is* cunning in playing, and [g] a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in [*] matters, and a comely person, and [h] the LORD *is* with him.

19 Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which *is* [i] with the sheep.

20 And Jesse took [k] an ass *laden* with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent *them* by David his son unto Saul.

21 And David came to Saul, and [l] stood before him: and he [m] loved him greatly; and he became his armor-bearer.

22 And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me: for he hath found favor in my sight.

23 And it came to pass, when [n] the *evil* spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so [o] Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

e 21,22. Gen. 41:46. 1 Kings 10:8.
f 23. 10:5. 2 Kings 3:15.
g 17:32—36. 2 Sam. 17:8.
* Or, *speech*.
h 3:19. 10:7. 18:12—14. Gen. 39:2, 23. Matt. 1:23. 28:20.
i 11. 17: 15,33,34. Ex. 3: 1—10. 1 Kings 19:19. Ps. 78:70—72. 113:8. Am. 1:1. 7:14,15. Matt. 4:15—22.
k 10:27. 17:18. 25:18. Gen. 43:11. 2 Sam. 16:1,2. Prov. 18:16.
l Gen. 41:46. Deut. 1:38. 10:8. Prov. 22:29.
m Ps. 62:9. 118:9. 146:3.
n See on 14,16.
o 18:10,11. Matt. 12:43—45. Luke 11: 24—26.

I. Saul's servants have the honesty and courage to tell him his distemper, and prescribe music, as a cure. How much better friends had they been to him, had they advised him, to make his peace with God, by true repentance, to send for Samuel to pray with him, and to intercede for him; then might he not only have had some present relief, but the good Spirit would have returned. But their project is to make him merry, and so cure him. Many whose consciences are convinced and startled, are for ever ruined by such methods as these, which drown all care of the soul in the delights of sense. Yet Saul's servants did not amiss to send for music, as a help to cheer up the spirits, if they had but withal sent for a prophet to give him good counsel.

2. One recommended David for this. A very high character this servant of Saul here gives of David, (*v.* 18.) he was not only fit for his purpose as a comely person, and cunning in playing, but a man of courage and conduct, a mighty valiant man, and prudent in matters, fit to be further preferred, and (which crowned his character) *the Lord is with him*. By this it appears, that though David, after he was anointed, returned to his country-business, and there remained, yet the workings of the Spirit could not be hid, but made him shine in obscurity, so that all his neighbors observed with wonder the great improvements of his mind on a sudden. David, even in his shepherd's garb, is become an oracle, a champion, and every thing great. His fame reached the court soon, for Saul was inquisitive after such young men, *ch.* 14: 52.

3. David's father, very willing to part with him, sent him very readily, and with a present, to Saul; (*v.* 20.) according to the usage of those times, bread and wine, (comp. *ch.* 10: 3, 4.) therefore acceptable, because expressive of the homage and allegiance of him that sent it. Probably, Jesse, who knew what his son David was designed for, was aware Providence was herein fitting him for it, and therefore followed Providence very cheerfully, when he saw it plainly putting him in the way of preferment.

Saul became very kind to him, (*v.* 21.) *loved him greatly*, and designed to *make him his armor-bearer*, and (contrary to the manner of the king, *ch.* 8: 11.) asked his father's leave to keep him in his service, *v.* 22. And good reason he had to respect him, for he did him great service with his music, *v.* 23. His instrumental music with his harp is the only kind mentioned, but it should seem by the account Josephus gives of it, that he added vocal music to it, and sung hymns, probably divine hymns, songs of praise, to his harp. Music has a natural tendency to compose and ex-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our most reasonable and disinterested sorrow may be so excessive, as to imply rebellion against the righteous will of God; and He will then rebuke us, as well as encourage us under our distresses.—The most eminent believers are not entirely superior to the fear of man, when dangerous services are assigned them. But the Lord will inwardly strengthen and outwardly protect them: and, without immediate revelation, He can, by his Word and Spirit, show them step by step what they ought to do.—The guilty conscience trembles at a message from Heaven: yet the ministers of Christ come peaceably, proposing salvation through the sacrifice of a Redeemer, and speaking terror to none, except to those who neglect so great salvation. (*Matt.* 10: 11—15. *P. O.* 7—15.)—The Lord values nothing, in comparison with that holy faith, fear, and love, which are implanted in the heart beyond the reach of human penetration; and his method of educating men for important stations of usefulness, differs much from those which human wisdom has devised.—When sinners, by resisting the Holy Spirit, have provoked Him finally to depart, they are exposed to every incursion of Satan: indeed we none of us have the least security, either for our bodies or souls, against the malignity of evil spirits, except in the protection of that God, whom, alas! we are continually provoking. (*P. O. Job* 1: 6—12.)—When conscious guilt, and fears of divine vengeance, disorder the minds of men, nothing can effect a real cure, except the blood of Christ applied in faith, and the sanctifying Spirit sealing the pardon by his holy comforts: all other expedients to dispel religious melancholy, are sure methods of increasing distress, either in this world or in the next, and perhaps in both.—Every endowment, which may be usefully exercised in subserviency to godliness, is to be ascribed to the energy of the divine Spirit: opportunities will be afforded for its being displayed; and if the Lord be graciously with us, they will be suitably improved: while good behavior in inferior stations is the best introduction to higher advancement.—Thus Jesus was obedient unto death, before He was exalted to his glorious throne: and thus He trains up his people, by obedience, in the midst of temptation and trouble, for their future inheritance in the regions of purity and felicity.

SCOTT

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this wretched state of Saul caution us to be watchful, to cultivate the habit of ever obeying the monitions of conscience, to pause at its slightest touches, laying aside all pretences; and at whatever consequence, resolutely to keep its laws. ED.

Verses 15—23.

Saul's courtiers evidently perceived the change which had taken place, and ascribed it to the right cause: though their language seems less accurate than that of the historian; the original words being, 'an evil spirit of God,' meaning one whom God permitted to trouble Saul SCOTT.

(16.) 'Music has been found to be medicine to various diseases, not only for curing the bite of vipers and of the tarantula, but for easing the pains of the sciatica, and for helping persons laboring under the disorders of the frenzy; and Pythagoras used to compose the mind, and remove the perturbations of it, by the use of *the harp*.' GILL.

(18.) 'Warburton supposes the story is anticipated [so Dodd and others] from *v.* 14 to 23; and that the true chronology of this part of David's life is the following: 1. David is anointed by Samuel. 2. Carries provisions to his brethren in the army. 3. Fights with and kills Goliath. 4. Is received into the king's court. 5. Contracts a friendship with Jonathan. 6. Incurs Saul's jealousy. 7. Retires to his father's house. 8. Is after some time sent for by Saul to soothe his melancholy with the harp. 9. Again excites Saul's jealousy; who endeavors to smite him with his javelin. This anticipation between the 14th and 23d verse, comes in, in the order of time, between verses 9 and 10. of ch. 18. where the breach is apparent.' Dr. A. CLARKE. —Dr. C. in another connection confesses himself not satisfied with Bp. Warburton's attempts here to rectify the chronology. ED.

(20.) *An ass laden with bread.*] 'Laden with' is added by our translators. 'The original is "an ass bread;" or, "an ass of bread;" meaning, it is probable, not an animal, but a vessel, containing bread. This helps to account for the calumny, that the Jews worshipped an ass in their temple; i. e. the pot which contained the manna was that kind of vase called "an ass."' HEWLETT. The *Sept.* translate it, 'a homer of bread, or cakes.' ED.

CHAP. XVII.

The armies of Israel and of the Philistines are drawn out to battle, 1—3. Goliath challenges, defies, and dismays the Israelites, 4—11. David is sent to the army to visit his brethren, 12—19. He hears the challenge of Goliath and expresses indignation at it, 20—27. Eliab rebukes him, and he answers mildly, 28—30. He is brought before Saul, accepts the challenge, and states the grounds of his confidence, 31—37. He refuses Saul's armor; and takes only his staff, a sling, and stones, 38—40. Goliath disdains and curses him, 41—44. David answers, expressing his assured confidence in God, 45—47. He kills Goliath and cuts off his head, 48—51. The Philistines are routed, 52, 53. David returns with Goliath's head in his hand; and answers Saul's inquiries concerning him, 54—58.

NOW the Philistines [a] gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at [b] Shochoh, which *belongeth* to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and [c] Azekah, in [*] Ephes-dammim.

2 And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by [d] the valley of Elah, and [†] set the battle in array against the Philistines.

3 And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and *there was* a valley between them.

4 And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named [e] Goliath [f] of Gath, [g] whose height *was* six cubits and a span.

5 And *he had* an helmet of brass upon his head, and he *was* [‡] armed with a coat of mail: and the weight of the coat *was* five thousand shekels of brass.

6 And *he had* greaves of brass upon his legs, and a [§] target of brass between his shoulders.

a 7:7. 13:5. 14:46,52. Judg. 3:3.
b Josh. 15:35. *Socoh.* 2 Chr. 11:7. *Shoco.* 28:18. *Shocho.*
c Josh. 10:11. Jer. 34:7.
* Or, *the coast of Dammim.* 1 Chr. 11:13. *Pas-dammim.*
d 19. 21:9.
† Heb. *ranged the battle.*
e 23. 21:9,10. 2 Sam. 21:19. 1 Chr. 20:5.
f 27:4. Josh. 11:22. 2 Sam. 21:16—22. 1 Chr. 20:4—8.
g Deut. 3:11. 1 Chr. 11:23. Am. 2:9.
‡ Heb. *clothed.*
§ Or, *gorget.* 1 Kings 10:16. 2 Chr. 9:15.

Chap. XVII. David is the man whom God now delights to honor, for he is a man after his own heart. We read in the foregoing ch. how, after he was anointed, Providence made him famous in the court; we read in this, how Providence made him much more famous in the camp, and, by both, not only marked him for a great man, but fitted him for the throne to which he was designated.

V. 1—11. Not long ago the Philistines were soundly beaten before Israel, and would have been totally routed, had not Saul's rashness prevented; but here we have them making head again. Observe,

I. They *defied Israel, with their armies*, *v.* 1. They made a descent upon Israel, and possessed themselves, as it should seem, of a part of their country, for they encamped in a place *which belongeth to Judah.* Probably they had heard how Samuel had fallen out with Saul, and no longer assisted and advised him, and how Saul was grown melancholy, and unfit for business, and this encouraged them to make this attempt to retrieve their lately lost credit. The enemies of the church are watchful to take all advantages, and they never have greater, than when her protectors have provoked God's Spirit and prophets to leave them.

Saul mustered his forces, and faced them, *v.* 2, 3. And here we must notice, 1. The evil spirit, for the present, through God's mercy to Israel, had left Saul, *ch.* 16: 23. David's harp having given him some relief, perhaps, the alarms and affairs of the war prevented the return of the distemper. Business is a good antidote against melancholy. Let the mind have something without to fasten on, and employ itself about, and it will be less in danger of preying upon itself. 2. David was returned to Beth-lehem, *v.* 15. a rare instance, in a young man that stood so fair for preferment, of humility, and affection to his parents. None more fit for honor than he, nor that deserved it better, yet none more dead to it.

II. They defied Israel, *with their champion Goliath*, concerning whom observe, 1. His prodigious size. He was of the sons of Anak, (who at Gath kept their ground in Joshua's time, Josh. 11: 22 and kept up a race of giants there,) and, probably, one of the largest; in height *six cubits and a span*, *v.* 4. i. e. (so bishop Cumberland,) 11 ft. 4 in. reckoning a cubit 21 inches, and a span half a cubit: a monstrous stature, which made him very formidable, especially if he had strength and spirit proportionable.

2. His armor. He was well furnished with defensive armor, *v.* 5, 6. A *helmet of brass on his head, a coat of mail*, made of brass plates laid over one another, like the scales of a fish; and because his legs would lie most within the reach of an ordinary man, he wore brass boots, and a large corselet of brass about his neck. The coat is said to weigh 5,000 shekels; (a shekel was half an ounce avoirdupois;) but some think, not the *weight*, but the *value* of the coat, is meant. His offensive weapons were extraordinary, of which the spear only is here described, *v.* 7. His arm could manage what an ordinary man could scarcely heave. His shield only, which was the lightest of all his accoutrements, was carried before him by his esquire, probably, for state; for, clad in brass, he little needed a shield.

3. His challenge. He offers to put the war

NOTES.

Chap. XVII. V. 1. (*M. R.*) It is uncertain how long this was after the transactions before recorded; but probably three or four years had elapsed. To suppose, as many have done, that this invasion preceded David's first appearance at court, gives a needless and inadmissible disturbance to the narrative. (15: 55—58.) Scott.

'Calmet thinks this war happened 8 years after the anointing of David, and 10 or 12 after the Amalekite war.' Dr. A. Clarke.

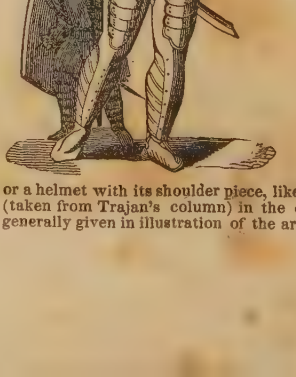
Verses 4—7.

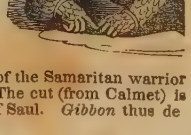
(*M. R.*) *A champion.* (4) Or, *a dueller*; one who *came between the two armies*, as wishing to distinguish himself in single combat. (*Note, Ps.* 9: *title.—Goliath*) (*Josh.* 11: 21—23. *Judg.* 1: 10—15. 2 *Sam.* 21: 15—22.) On the *most moderate computation* he was above ten feet high: His coat of mail weighed above 200 pounds troy weight, and his spear's head in proportion. (*Tables.*)—Some suppose, the price or value was meant: but the value of any thing is generally, if not always, computed by shekels of silver or gold, not of brass.—Probably, men in general were about the same size as at present; for such giants then caused as much surprise as they would now. (*Note, Num.* 13: 33.) Scott.

(4.) 'When Joshua rooted the Anakims out of the land of Canaan, several of them fled to Gath. Comp. note, Num. 13: 33.' Dodd.—'A man named *John Middleton* was born at Hale, near Warrington, Lancashire, in the reign of James I. whose hand, from the carpus to the end of the middle finger, was 17 in. his palm 8½ in. broad, and his whole height 9 ft. 3 in.' Plott, in *Hewlett.*

'The coffin of Orestes, son of Agamemnon, is said to be 7 cubits long; and Eleazar, a Jew, called a "giant," presented by Artabanus, king of the Parthians, to Tiberius Cæsar, is said by Josephus to be 7 cubits high; and one Gabbarra of Arabia, in the times of Claudius Cæsar, measured 9 ft. 9 in. so Pliny, who elsewhere speaks of a people in Ethiopia, called Syrbote, 8 cub. high; the Sept. make Goliath to be 4 cub. and a span, and so Josephus, i. e. about 8 feet.' Gill.

(5—7.) *Greaves.*] 'They covered the *shin* from the knee down, and were buckled with straps behind; but were commonly worn on the right leg only.' Dr. A. *Clarke.—Vulg.* ocreas in cruribus. *Arab.* crura ænea. *Chald.* ocreæ super pedes. *Syr.* tibialia. Is there here an allusion to 'the frontal piece' of armor, resting upon the hips—represented in the cut, 1 Kings 22: 34, to defend the belly and thighs? No other armor for the legs appears in the Egyptian monuments: and Sir W. Scott asserts it as disgraceful, among the Northern barbarians of Britain, to 'strike below the knee.' Ed.—*Target.*] 'Some think a *javelin* or *dart*; others, a *lance*; some, a *club*; and others a *sword*. It is certainly distinguished from the shield, *v.* 41. and is translated a spear, Josh. 8: 18.' Dr. A. *Clarke.* The Heb. is *kidon*, Sept. *aspis*, Vulg. clypeus. Arab. 'and upon his head a brazen covering, coming down to the extremity of his shoulders.' Syr. *humerale* (shoulder-piece). The derivation of the word is not known. *Gesenius* transl. here, and in Job and Josh. a *dart*, a *javelin*. At v. 45. all the versions have *shield.* 'The Targum has at v. 6. "a spear or shield of brass which came out of the helmet, and a weight of brass upon his shoulders." *Jarchi* says the same, and that it was in the form of a spear to defend the neck from the sword, it seems to be a corslet of brass worn between the helmet and coat of mail for the defence of the neck, supposed to weigh thirty pounds.' [Comp. the right hand fig. in the cut, Ex. 17: 10.] Gill. Perhaps, as the shoulders are mentioned, the thing intended is that head and neck armor seen on an ancient Etruscan vase, (see *Rob. Calm.* and comp. the head-dress, cut Ex. 25: 18.)





or a helmet with its shoulder piece, like that of the Samaritan warrior (taken from Trajan's column) in the cut. The cut (from Calmet) is generally given in illustration of the armor of Saul. *Gibbon* thus de

7 And [h] the staff of his spear *was* like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head *weighed* six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him.

8 And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set *your* battle in array? *am* not I a Philistine, and ye [i] servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.

9 If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, than shall ye be our servants, and [k] serve us.

10 And the Philistine said, [l] I defy the armies of Israel this day; [m] give me a man that we may fight together.

11 When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were [n] dismayed, and greatly afraid.

12 ¶ Now [o] David *was* the son of that [p] Ephrathite of Bethlehem-Judah, whose name *was* Jesse; and he had [q] eight sons: and the man went among men *for* an old man in the days of Saul.

13 And the three eldest sons of Jesse went *and* followed Saul to the battle: and [r] the names of his three sons that went to the battle *were* Eliab the first born, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third [s] Shammah.

14 And David *was* the youngest: and the three eldest followed Saul.

entirely on the issue of the duel he proposes; 'If your champion kills me, we will be your servants; if I kill him, you shall be ours.' This (says Patrick) was only a bravado, for no nation would be willing thus to venture its all on the success of one man, nor is it justifiable; notwithstanding Goliath's stipulation here, when he was killed, the Philistines did not stand to his word, nor submit themselves servants to Israel. When he boasts, *I am a Philistine, and you servants to Saul*, he would have it thought a great piece of condescension in him, a chief ruler, to enter the lists with an Israelite; for he looked on them as no better than slaves.

4. Israel's terror, *v* 11. The people would not have been dismayed, but that they observed Saul's courage failed him; and it is not to be expected, that, if the leader be a coward, the followers should be bold. We found before, when the Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul, (*ch.* 11: 6.) none could be more daring, more forward, to answer the challenge of Nahash the Ammonite; but now that *Spirit was departed*, even the big looks and big words of a single Philistine made him change color. But where was Jonathan all this while? Why did not he accept the challenge, who, in the late war, had so bravely engaged a whole army of Philistines? Doubtless, he felt not himself stirred up of God to it, as then. As the best, so the bravest men, are no more than what God makes them. Jonathan must now sit still, because the honor of engaging Goliath is reserved for David. In great and good actions, the wind of the Spirit blows when and where He listeth. Now the pious Israelites lament their king's breach with Samuel.

V. 12—30. We have in these verses,

I. The present state of David's family. His father was old, *v.* 12. so old as to be noticed for his great age, above what was usual at that time, therefore excused from public services. David's three elder brethren, who perhaps envied his place at court, had got their father to send for him home, and let them go to the camp, where they hoped to signalize themselves, and eclipse him; (*v.* 13, 14.) while David himself, far from being proud of the services he had done his prince, or ambitious of further preferment, had returned from court to the obscurity of his father's house, and to the care, and toil, and (as it proved, *v.* 34.) the peril, of *keeping his father's sheep*. Now he had that opportunity of meditation and prayer, and other acts of devotion, which fitted him for what he was destined to, more than all the military exercises of that inglorious camp could do.

II. The orders his father gave him to go visit his brethren in the camp. He did not himself ask leave to go, to satisfy his curiosity, or to gain experience and make observations; but his father sent him on a mean and homely errand, which any of his servants might have done, *v.* 17, 18. David must still be the drudge of the family, though he was to be its greatest ornament. Jesse, we thought, was privy to his being anointed, and yet industriously kept him thus mean and obscure, probably, to hide him from the eye of suspicion and envy, knowing he was anointed to a crown in reversion. He must observe how his brethren fared, whether they were not reduced to short allowance, now that the encampment continued so long. And he must take their pledge, i. e. if they had pawned any thing, he must redeem it; *notice their company*, so some, observe whom they associate with, and what sort of life they lead; perhaps David, like Joseph, had formerly brought to his father their evil report, and now he sends him to inquire concerning their manners. See the care of pious parents about their children when abroad, especially in places of temptation; they are solicitous how they conduct themselves, and particularly what company they keep. Let children think of this, and conduct themselves accordingly, remembering, that, when from under their parents' eye, they are still under God's eye.

III. David's dutiful obedience to his father's command. He was up early, *v.* 20. yet would not leave his sheep without a keeper, so faithful was he in a few things, and therefore the fitter to be made ruler over many; and so well had he learned to obey, before he pretended to command. God's providence brought him to the camp very seasonably, *v.* 21. Both sides were now preparing to fight. Jesse little thought of sending his son to the army, just at that critical juncture, but the wise God orders the times and circumstances, so as to serve his designs of securing the interests of Israel, and advancing the man after his own heart. What articles David brought, he honestly took care of, and left them with those that had the charge of the baggage; but though he had come a long journey with a great load, he *ran into the army*, to see what was doing there, and to pay his respects to his brethren. Now the armies were drawn out into a line of battle, Goliath appeared first to renew his challenge, vainly imagining he was in the eager chase of his own glory and triumph, whereas he was but courting his own destruction.

1. Saul bids high for a champion. Though he was the tallest of all Israel, and, if he had not been so, while he kept close to God, might himself have safely taken up the gauntlet, yet the Spirit of the Lord being departed from him, he durst not do it, nor press Jonathan to do it. The bold adventurer, if he come off, shall marry the king's daughter, and have a good portion with her: but, as it should seem, whether he come off or no, his *father's house shall be free in Israel*, from all toll, tribute, custom, and services to the crown; or shall be ennobled, and advanced to the peerage.

2. David is much concerned to assert the honor of God and Israel against the impudent challenge. He asked what reward was promised to him that

15 But David went, and [t] returned from Saul, to feed his father's sheep at Beth-lehem.

h 2 Sam. 21:19. 1 Chr. 11:23. 20:5.
i 26. 8:17. 2 Sam. 11:11. 1 Chr. 21:3. k 11:1.
l 25,26,36,45. Num. 23:7,8. 2 Sam. 21:21. 23:9. Neh. 2:19.
m Job 40:9—12. Ps. 9:4,5. Prov. 16: 18. Jer. 9:23. Dan. 4:37.
n Deut. 31:8. Josh. 1:9. Ps. 27:1. Prov. 28:1. Is. 51:12,13. 57:11.
o 58. 16:1,18. Ruth 4:22. Matt. 1:6. Luke 3:31,32.
p Gen. 35:19. Ps. 132:6. Mic. 5:2. Matt. 2:1,6.
q 16:10,11. 1 Chr. 2:13—16.
r 28. 16:6—9.
s 2 Sam. 13:3,32. 21:21. *Shimeah.*
t 6:11,12. Gen. 25:23. u 16:19—23.

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scribes the arms of the Roman imperial legion, 'an *open* helmet with a lofty crest: a breast-plate, or coat of mail; greaves on their legs, and on the left arm an ample buckler, 4ft. in length, and 2½ in breadth, of light wood frame, covered with a bull's hide, and strongly guarded with plates of brass. Besides a lighter spear, the legionary soldier grasped in his right hand the formidable *pilum*, a ponderous javelin, whose utmost length was about 6 ft. and which was terminated by a *massy, triangular point of steel, of the length of eighteen inches*, formerly much longer. This *pilum* was thrown when at the distance of 10 or 12 paces, and when well thrown no cavalry durst venture within its reach, nor could any shield or corslet sustain the impetuosity of its weight. As soon as the *pilum* was thrown, the soldier rushed forward with his *short*, double-edged sword, suited to striking or pushing.' Comp. cuts, 2 Sam. 1: 9. 1 Kings 22: 34. Ex. 17: 10, &c. Ed.

(5.) 5000 *shekels.*] 'About 78 pounds.' Boothr. 156 lbs. 4 ozs. avoirdupois. Dr. *A. Clarke*, after Bp. Cumberland's tables. *Haak* thinks 78 lbs. 2 ozs. and that the helmet was copper. *Coat of mail.*] '*Shirion kaskassim*, a coat of mail formed of thin plates of brass, overlapping each other like the scales of a fish, or tiles of a house.' Dr. A. Clarke. Comp. cut, 2 Sam. 1: 9. 1 K. 22: 34. Ed.

(6.) *Between his shoulders.*] 'When not actually engaged, soldiers threw their shields behind their backs, so that they seemed to rest between their shoulders.' Dr. A. Clarke.

(7.) *Spear's head, 600 shekels.*] 'About nine pounds.' *Boothr.* '18 lbs. 12 ozs.—Taking the proportion of things *unknown* to those *known*, the armor of Goliath is supposed to have weighed not less than 272 lbs. 13 ozs. the ordinary weight of a soldier's panoply being, according to Plutarch, 60 lbs.' Dr. A. Clarke.

Verses 12—32.

'In these vs. we have a strange and incoherent narrative. That they formed no part of the original, has been proved by arguments unanswerable. The Vatican copy of the Sept. contains none of these vs. and *Kennicott* has shown that the Alex. did not, till Origen inserted them. *Mich. Dath. Houbigant*, and the best modern critics consent, that the whole passage is interpolated.' Boothr. 'It is impossible to make a clear, consistent sense of the history, unless these vs. are omitted. Let any one read *v.* 11. in connection with *v.* 32. (leave out *v.* 41. and connect *v.* 54. with *v.* 6. of ch. 18.) and he will be convinced there is nothing wanting to make the sense complete.' Dr. A. Clarke. 'It must be owned there are difficulties in these 20 vs. and that the connection of *v.* 11. with *v.* 32. is very clear and consistent, as also is *v.* 50. left out in the same version [the Vat. Sept.];

16 And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself [v] forty days.

17 And Jesse said unto David his son, [x] Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this [y] parched *corn*, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren:

18 And [z] carry these ten *cheeses unto the captain of †*their* thousand, and [a] look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge.

19 Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, *were* in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

20 ¶ And David rose up early in the morning, and [b] left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him: and he came to the ‡trench as the host was going forth to the §fight, and shouted for the battle.

21 For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army.

22 And David left ‖his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and ¶saluted his brethren.

23 And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, (the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name,) out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake [c] according to the same words: and David heard *them*.

24 And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from **him, and were [d] sore afraid.

25 And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, *that* the man who killeth him, [e] the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house [f] free in Israel.

26 And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the [g] reproach from Israel? for who *is* this [h] uncircumcised Philistine, that he should [i] defy the armies of the living God?

27 And the people answered him after this manner, saying, [k] So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.

28 And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and [l] Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and [m] with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? [n] I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art

v Matt. 4:2. Luke 4:2.
x Matt. 7:11. Luke 11:13.
y 25:18. Ruth 2:14. 2 Sam. 17:28.
z 16:20.
* Heb. *cheeses of milk*. 2 Sam. 17:29. Job 10:10.
† Heb. *a thousand*.
a Gen. 37:14. Acts 15:36. 1 Thes. 3:5,6.
b 28. Eph. 6:1,2.
‡ Or, *place of the carriage*. 26:5. Luke 19:43.
§ Or, *battle-array*, or, *place of fight*.
‖ Heb. *the vessels from upon him*.
¶ Heb. *asked his brethren of peace*. Gen. 37:14. Judg. 18:15. Matt. 10:12,13. Luke 10:5,6.
c 4—10.
** Heb. *his face*. 13:6,7.
d See on 11.—Lev. 26:36. Num. 13:33. Deut. 32:30. Is. 7:2. 30:17.
e 18:17—27. Josh. 15:16. Rev. 2:7,17. 3:5,12,21.
f Ezra 7:24. Matt. 17:26.
g 11:2. Josh. 7:8,9. 2 Kings 19:4. Neh. 5:9. Ps. 44:13. 74:18. 79:12. Dan. 9:16. Joel 2:19.
h 36. 14:6.
i 10. Deut. 5:26. Jer. 10:10. Thes. 1:9. 1 John 5:20.
k 25.
l 16:13. Gen. 37:4,8,11. Prov. 18:19. 27:4. Ec. 4:4. Matt. 10:36. 27:18. Mark 3:21.
m 29.
n 16:7. Ps. 35:11. Jude 10.

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and likewise the last 4 vs. of the chapter, and 5 with which the next begins.' GILL.

(12.) Verses 12—31., inclusive, are wanting in the Se pt. as also v. 41. and from the 54th to the end, with the vs. 1—5. inclusive, of ch. 18th, and v. 9—11. inclusive, and vs. 17—19. inclusive, of the same. Mr. Pilkington and Dr. Kennicott suppose them to be an interpolation by some rabbinical writer, added to the Hebrew text at a very early age. See Dr. *A. Clarke*, who gives their views at length. ED.

(15.) Probably David had been appointed Saul's armor-bearer, merely as an honorary distinction, and had never been employed in actual service. (16: 15—23.)—Josephus says, Saul sent him home in the beginning of this war, being contented with the three sons of Jesse who followed him; but it seems more probable, he had returned home some time before: and Josephus had no other authentic information, as to the history of Israel, than we at present possess; so that neither his *opinions*, nor the traditions he had received from those who lived before him, are of any authority, except when they accord with the sacred Scriptures. SCOTT.

David went and returned, &c.] 'On sudden invasions, like the one here, all able to bear arms were summoned to meet at an appointed rendezvous; where, a choice being made of the most fit to serve, the rest were sent back again to their homes. Among the men of Bethlehem came Jesse and his 8 sons; the eldest three were enrolled, and the rest returned. But David is particularly named, as the history related particularly to him.' DODD.

(16.) Had the Philistines thought themselves able to force the camp of Israel, they would not have spent so much time in this manner. SCOTT.

(17.) As Jesse had several other sons, it must be ascribed to a special interposition of Providence, that David was selected. ID.

(18.) *Pledge.*] Probably some concerted token of welfare, usual in those times, while epistolary correspondence was infrequent. ID.

'A person [of India] in a distant country sends to those who are interested in his welfare a ring, a lock of hair, or a piece of his nail. This is his "*pledge*" of health and prosperity. A man who has returned from a far country, in calling upon an old friend, should he not be at home, will leave a handkerchief, as a token, to testify that he had called.' ROBERTS.

Cheeses.] 'Slices of coagulated milk which had been strained through a leathern strainer, and after it had grown hard, cut into pieces, as it was found necessary to use them.' JAHN.—'Cheese in the east differs little from *curds*. It is highly salted, and pressed but little. They carry it in a rush basket.' Dr. A. CLARKE.—*Pledge.*] 'Some think they went to war in those days, at their own charge, and that Jesse's sons had sent to him for a supply of provisions by a certain token; which their father bids David take with him, to know if it were theirs.' PATRICK.

Cheeses.] *Haritsey hekalab*: formellas lactis. Vulg. *little baskets of cheese*. *Burder* thinks, this was what *Shaw* thus describes: 'In Barbary, after turning the milk with the flowers of the great-headed thistle, or wild artichoke, they put the curds into small baskets, made with rushes or with the dwarf palm, and bind them up close and press them.' The substance thus formed is white, sweet, and a very refreshing substitute for butter or cheese. It is common throughout the Mediterranean, and Turkey — and called in Sicily *ricotto*, and in Turkey *yaoort*. The form of one of these small rush-baskets, about 8 or 10 in. long, is given. ED.

(22.) *His carriage.*] Or the provisions he *carried*, or had brought, for his brethren and their captain. (*M.—Acts* 21: 15.)—'The keeper of the carriage' seems to mean the person, who was appointed over those who guarded the baggage: and who would take the charge of what David had brought, till he returned. [Some think allusion is made to a line of defence, formed of the baggage wagons around the camp: like the Tartar method.]—'With his servant.' *Bp. Patrick.* It does not however appear, that David was attended by a servant. SCOTT.

come down, that thou mightest see the battle.

29 And David said, [o] What have I now done? *Is there* not a cause?

30 And he turned from him towards another, and spake after the same * manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner.

[*Practical Observations.*]

31 ¶ And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed *them* before Saul; and he † sent for him.

32 And David said to Saul, [p] Let no man's heart fail because of him: [q] thy servant will go, and fight with this Philistine.

33 And Saul said to David, [r] Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: [s] for thou *art but* a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.

34 And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion and a bear, and took a ‡ lamb out of the flock;

35 And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered *it* out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught *him* by his beard, and [t] smote him, and slew him.

36 Thy servant slew both the lion, and the bear: and [u] this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing [x] he hath defied the armies of the living God.

37 David said moreover, [y] The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, [z] Go, and the LORD be with thee.

38 ¶ And Saul armed § David with his armor, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.

39 And David girded his sword upon his armor, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved *it*. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved *them*. And David [a] put them off him.

herd, *v.* 20. David could appeal to God concerning his humility and sincerity, (Ps. 17: 3.—131: 1.) and at this time gave proofs of both, and yet could not escape this hard character from his own brother. See the folly, absurdity, and wickedness, of a proud and envious passion; how groundless its jealousies are, how unjust its censures, how unfair its representations, how bitter its invectives, and how indecent its language. God, by his grace, keep us from such a spirit!

But it was only a trial of David's meekness, patience, and constancy; a short trial too, and he approved himself well in it: for, (1.) He bore the provocation with admirable temper, *v.* 29. 'What fault have I committed, for which I should thus be chidden? *Is there not a cause* for my coming to the camp, when my father sent me? *Is there not a cause*, for my resenting the injury done to Israel's honor by Goliath's challenge?' This conquest of his own passion was, in some respects, more honorable than that of Goliath. *He that hath rule over his own spirit, is better than the mighty.* It was no time for David to quarrel with his brother, when the Philistines were upon them. The more threatening the church's enemies are, the more forbearing her friends should be with one another. (2.) He broke through the discouragement with admirable resolution. Those that undertake great and public services, must not think it strange if they be discountenanced and opposed by those from whom they had reason to expect support and assistance; but must humbly go on with their work, in the face not only of their enemies' threats, but of their friends' slights and suspicions.

V. 31—39. David is at length presented to Saul for his champion, (*v.* 31.) and bravely undertakes to fight the Philistine, *v.* 32. It would have reflected too much upon the valor of his prince, had he said, *Let not thy heart fail;* therefore he speaks generally, *Let no man's heart fail.* David desires a commission from Saul to go and fight with the Philistine, but says nothing of the reward proposed, because that was not the thing he was ambitious of, but only the honor of serving God and his country: nor would he seem to question Saul's generosity.

Two things David had to do with Saul;

I. To get clear of his objection to his undertaking. And, as he had answered his brother's passion with meekness, so here he answered Saul's fear with faith. We have reason to fear Saul had no great acquaintance with, or regard to, the word of God, therefore David, in reasoning with him, argues from experience; though he was but a youth, and never in the wars, yet perhaps he had done as much as the killing of Goliath came to; *v.* 34—36. and hereby he gives Saul to understand, that he was not so unexperienced in hazardous conflicts, as he took him to be; having killed a lion once, and another time a bear.

1. He tells his story like a man of spirit; he is not ashamed to own that he kept his father's sheep, which his brother had just now upbraided him with; nay, he fetches thence the experience that now animated him. But he lets those about him know he was no ordinary shepherd. Whatever our profession or calling is, be it ever so mean, we should labor to excel in it, and do the business of it in the best manner. When David kept sheep, (1.) He approved himself very careful and tender of his flock, though not his own, but his father's. This temper made him fit to be a king, to whom the lives of his subjects should be dear, and their blood precious, (Ps. 72: 14.) and fit to be a type of Christ, the good Shepherd, *who gathers the lambs in his arms, and carries them in his bosom*, and who not only ventured, but *laid down, his life for the sheep.* Thus too was David fit to be an example to ministers, with the utmost care and diligence to watch for souls, that they be not a prey to the roaring lion. (2.) He approved himself very bold and brave in the defence of his flock. This was what he was now concerned to prove, and better evidence could not be demanded than this! 'Thy servant not only rescued the lambs, but, to revenge the injury, *slew both the lion and the bear.*'

2. He applies his story like a man of faith. He owns (*v.* 37.) it was *the Lord that delivered him*

o 17,32. Prov. 15:1. Acts 11:2—4. 1 Cor. 2:15. 1 Pet. 3:9.
* Heb. *word.* 26,27.
† Heb. *took him.* Prov. 22:29.
p Num. 13:30. 14:9. Deut. 20:1—3. Is. 35:3. Heb. 12:12.
q 14:6. 16:18. Josh. 14:12. Ps. 3:6 —3.
r N. 13:31. Deut. 9:2. Ps. 11:1 Rev. 3:4.
s 42:56.
‡ Or, *kid.*
t Judg. 14:5,6. 2 Sam. 23.20. Ps. 91: 13. Dan. 6:22. Am. 3:12. Acts 28: 4—6. 2 Tim. 4:17,18.
u 26. Ez. 32:19,27—32. Rom. 2:28,29.
x See on 10.—Is. 10:15. 36:8—10,15,18. 37:22,23,28,29. Zech. 2:8. 12:3. Acts 5:38,39. 9:4,5. 12:1,2,22,23.
y 7:12. Ps. 63:7. 138:3,7,8. 2 Cor. 1: 9,10. 2 Tim. 4:17,18.
z 20:13. 24:19. 26:25. 2 Sam. 10:12.
§ Heb. *clothed David with his clothes.* 5.
a Hos. 1:7. Zech. 4:6. 2 Cor. 10:4,5.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—30. In human accomplishments, the opposers of the truth of God have frequently possessed an undisputed superiority: (*Ez.* 15: 6—8. *P. O.*) confiding in this, they have defied, and still do defy, the advocates of spiritual truth to engage with them; and they dream of a total and decided victory. But they have 'the armies of the living God,' and their invincible Captain Himself, to contend with; and 'who are these uncircumcised Philistines,' that a true Israelite should fear them? Any believer in the divine Savior may predict that their triumphing will be short: and, if fairly called to it, we need not fear to go forth with the plain testimonies of holy Scripture, unadorned by eloquence, and unsupported by human learning, against the most formidable of them; trusting in Him who has all power in heaven and earth. And the hope of being an instrument of good, and of being accepted by the Lord, will animate the faithful servant of God in every undertaking; while the expectation of a reward from man, or the fear of human censure, will be with him a very inferior consideration. SCOTT.

(25, 26.) It does not appear, that Saul consulted the Lord, or offered sacrifice, or even made supplications, on this occasion: but he offered great rewards to him, who should kill Goliath.—To this conduct, David's speech, glowing with confidence in God, zeal for his glory, and indignant resentment of Israel's disgrace, formed a noble contrast. The very inquiry (26) implied the most pointed reproof of the unbelief and cowardice of Saul, and indeed of the whole army.—*Free in Israel.* (25) *Note, Ezra* 7: 24—26. SCOTT.

(28.) It can hardly be supposed, that Eliab was entirely ignorant of David's having been anointed by Samuel; and he must have understood this transaction, as at least an indication of his future superiority. (*Note*, 16: 13.) ID.

Verses 34—37.

Several extraordinary actions of this kind, no doubt, obtained David that great character, with which he had first been introduced to Saul. (16: 18.) SCOTT.

Verses 38—40.

This was likewise from the Lord, who would have it made manifest that his servant fought and conquered by faith, and that the victory was from Him, who works by the most despised means and instruments. (*Josh.* 6: 3—5. *Judg.* 3: 31. 7: 16—22. 15: 14—17. *Zech.* 4: 4—7. 1 *Cor.* 1: 20—31. 2 *Cor.* 4: 7.) ID.

(39.) *Coat of mail.*] See the cut, 2 Sam. 1: 9. ED.

(40.) *His sling.*] 'A shepherd in the east, (especially on the conti-

40 And he took his [b]staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the *brook, and put them in a shepherd's †bag which he had, even in a scrip, and his sling *was* in his hand; and he drew near to the Philistine.

41 And the Philistine came on, and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield *went* before him.

42 And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, [c]he disdained him; for he was *but* [d]a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

43 And the Philistine said unto David, [e]*Am* I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine [f]cursed David by his gods.

44 And the Philistine said to David, [g]Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

45 Then said David to the Philistine, [h]Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee [i]in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast [k]defied.

46 This day [l]will the LORD ‡deliver thee into mine hand, and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee, and I will give the [m]carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that [n]all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

47 And all this assembly shall know that the LORD [o]saveth not with sword and spear: for [p]the battle *is* the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands.

48 And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that [q]David hasted and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang *it*, and [r]smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

from the lion and the bear; to Him he gives the praise, and thence he infers, *He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.* Note, Our experiences ought to be improved by us, as our encouragements to trust in God, and venture in the way of duty. He that has delivered, does and will deliver. By the care common Providence takes of the inferior creatures, and the protection they are under, we may be encouraged to depend on that special Providence which surrounds the Israel of God. Paul seems to allude to this of David, 2 Tim. 4: 17, 18. And perhaps David here encouraged himself with the story of Samson; for his slaying a lion was a happy presage of his many illustrious victories over the Philistines in single combat.

Thus David gained a commission to fight the Philistine, with which Saul gave him a hearty good wish, *Go, and the Lord be with thee:* a good word, if it was not spoken customarily, and in a formal manner, as too often it is.

II. But David has somewhat to do likewise, to get rid of Saul's armor, *v.* 38. *He armed David with his armor;* not that he wore himself, the disproportion of stature would not admit that, but some he kept in his armory; little thinking that he, on whom he now put his helmet and coat of mail, must shortly inherit his crown and robe. David being not yet resolved which way to attack his enemy, *girded on his sword*, not knowing, as yet, but he should have occasion to use it; but he found the armor would but incumber him, and be rather his burden than his defence, therefore he desires leave of Saul to put them off again. *I have not proved them*, i. e. 'I have never been accustomed to such accoutrements as these.' Those that aim at things above their education and usage, and covet the attire and armor of princes, forget that that is best for us, which we are fit for and accustomed to. 'We cannot go with these;' we had therefore better go without them.

V. 40—47. We are now coming near this famous combat, and have in these vs. the preparations and remonstrances on both sides.

I. The preparations. The Philistine was already fixed, as he had been daily for the last 40 days; well might *he* go with his armor, for he had sufficiently proved it. Only we are told, (*v.* 41.) he *came on and drew near;* a signal, it is likely, being given that his challenge was accepted, and, as if he distrusted his helmet and coat of mail, a man went before him, *carrying his shield;* for his own hands are full with his sword and spear, *v.* 45. But what arms and ammunition is David furnished with? Truly none but what he brought with him as a shepherd, *v.* 40. By this it appeared his confidence was purely in God, not in any sufficiency of his own, and that, now at length, He who put it into his heart to fight the Philistine, put it into his head with what weapons to do it.

II. The conference. 1. With what scorn Goliath looks on his adversary, *v.* 42. Now he feared the contemptibleness of the champion he contended with would lessen the glory of his victory. He noticed he was but a youth, not come to his strength, *ruddy and of a fair countenance*, fitter to accompany the virgins of Israel in their dances, (if mixed dancing was then in use,) than to lead on the men of Israel in their battles. He noticed his array with great indignation, *v.* 43. '*Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?* Dost thou think to beat me, as easily as thou dost thy shepherd's dog?' With what confidence he presumed on his success! He cursed David by his gods, imprecating the impotent vengeance of his idols against him, and therefore, in confidence of that, darts his menaces, as if threatening words would kill, *v.* 44. '*Come to me, and I will give thy flesh to the fowls of the air;* it will be a tender and delicate feast for them.' Thus the security and presumption of fools destroy them.

2. How very pious David was. His speech savors nothing of ostentation, but God is all in all in it, *v.* 45—47. He derives his authority from God, relying on the *name of God*, as Goliath did on his sword and spear. See Ps. 20: 7.—118: 10, 11. He depends for success on God, *v.* 46. He speaks with as much assurance as Goliath had done, but on better ground; it is the language of his faith. He devotes the praise and glory of all to God. He did not, like Goliath, seek his own honor, but the honor of God; not doubting but by the success of this action, (1.) All the world should be made to know that *there is a God*, and that the *God of Israel* is the one only living and true God, and all other pretended deities vanity and a lie. (2.) All Israel (whom he calls not *this army*, but *this assembly*, or church, because they were now religiously attending the *goings of their God and King*, as they used to do *in the sanctuary*) all Israel shall *know, that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear*, (*v.* 47.) but can, when He pleases, save without either, and against both, Ps. 46: 9. David addresses himself to this combat, rather as a priest going to offer a sacrifice to the justice of God, than as a soldier going to engage an enemy of his country.

V. 48—58. Here is, 1. The engagement between the two champions, *v.* 48. The Philistine advanced with great state and gravity: if he must encounter a pigmy, yet it shall be with the magnificence of a giant and a grandee. This is intimated in the manner of expression. He *arose, and came, and drew nigh*, like a stalking mountain, overlaid with brass and iron, *to meet David*. David advanced with no less activity and cheerfulness, as one that aimed more to do execution, than to make a figure; he *hasted, and ran*, being lightly clad, to *meet the Philistine*. We may imagine with what tenderness and compassion the Israelites saw such a pleasing youth as this

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b Judg. 3:31. 7:16—20. 15:15,16. 20: 16. 1 Cor. 1:27—29.
* Or, *valley.*
† Heb. *vessel.* Matt. 10:10.
c 1 Kings 20:18. 2 Kings 18:23,24. Neh. 4:2—4.
d 33. 16:12.
e 24:14. 2 Sam. 3:8. 9:8. 16:9. 2 Kings 8:13.
f Gen. 27:29. Num. 22:6,11,12. Judg. 9:27. Prov. 26:2.
g 1 Kings 20:10,11. Prov. 18:12. Ec. 9:11,12. Jer. 9:23. Ez. 28:2,9,10. 39:17—20.
h Ps. 44:6.
i 2 Sam. 22:33—35. 2 Chr. 32:8. Ps. 3:8. 18:2. 20:5—7. 118:10,11. 124: 8. Prov. 18:10. Phil. 4.13. Heb. 11:33,34.
k 10:26,36. Is. 37:23,28.
l Deut. 7:2,23. 9:2,3. Josh. 10:8.
‡ Heb. *shut thee up.* Ps. 31:8.
m 44. Deut. 28:26. Is. 56:9. Rev. 19: 17,18.
n Ex. 9:16. 15:14,15. Josh. 4:24. 1 Kings 8:43. 18:36,37. 2 Kings 19:19. Is. 52:10. Dan. 2:47. 3:29. 6:26,27.
o Ps. 33:16,17. 44:6,7. Prov. 21:30, 31. Hos. 1:7.
p 14:6. 2 Chr. 20:15—17. Ps. 46:11. Is. 9:7. Zech. 4:6. Rom. 8:31,37.
q Ps. 27:1. Prov. 28:1.
r 1 Kings 22:34. 2 Kings 9:24. 1 Cor. 1:27,28.

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nent) carries a sling and stones to keep off the enemies of his flock, and also to chastise any of his charge which might go astray.' ROBERTS.

Verses 42—44.

Perhaps David might at this time be 22 or 23 years of age; (33. *Note*, 16: 10, 11.) *Cursed.* (43.) The Romans used thus to curse their enemies: 'All the gods and goddesses destroy thee!' (*Note*, *Num.* 22: 6.) SCOTT.

(43.) *With staves.*] 'Men of high caste [in India] will not strike a low caste with the hand, lest the touch defile, but beat them with a stick. Hence, to offer to strike one with a stick is very provoking, and one so struck will exclaim, "am I a dog."' *Cursed David by his gods.*] 'So do these people [of India] curse each other by their gods. The epithets of filthiness, of sin, and hell, are put under contribution, to furnish epithets and allusions for their execrations.' ROBERTS.

Verses 45—47.

Nothing can exceed the modesty, the faith, the piety, and the zeal for the glory of God, and the cause of Israel and of true religion, which glow in this most beautiful speech. SCOTT.

Verse 49.

'*Died. Sic.* relates that the Baleares' slingers would even in battle break in pieces shields, helmets, and all kinds of armor.' GILL.

50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; [s] but *there was* no sword in the hand of David.

51 Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took [t] his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they [u] fled.

52 And [x] the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the [y] valley, and to the gates of Ekron: and the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron.

53 And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and [z] they spoiled their tents.

54 ¶ And David [a] took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem: but he put his armor in his tent.

55 And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, [b] Whose son *is* this youth? And Abner said, *As* thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.

56 And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling *is*.

57 And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul, [c] with the head of the Philistine in his hand.

58 And Saul said to him, Whose son *art* thou, *thou* young man? And David answered, [d] *I am* the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite.

throwing himself into the mouth of destruction; but he knew Whom he had believed, and for Whom he acted.

2. The fall of Goliath. He was in no haste, because in no fear; confident he should soon at one stroke cleave his adversary's head: but while preparing to do it solemnly, David did his business effectually, without any parade, *v.* 49. He knew there were famous slingers in Israel, (Judg. 20: 16.) yet was either so forgetful or presumptuous, as to go with the beaver of his helmet open; and thither, to the only part left exposed, not so much David's art, as God's providence, directed the stone. See how frail and uncertain life is, even then when it thinks itself best fortified, and how easily the passage may be opened for life to go out and death to enter. Goliath himself *has not power over the spirit to retain the spirit.* Let not the strong man glory in his strength, nor the armed man in his armor. See how God resists the proud, and pours contempt on those that bid defiance to Him and his people. None ever hardened his heart against God, and prospered. To complete the execution, he drew Goliath's own sword, a two-handed weapon for David, and with it *cut off his head*, *v.* 51. What need had David to take a sword of his own? His enemy's sword shall serve his purpose. God is greatly glorified, when his proud enemies are cut off with their own sword, and He makes *their own tongues to fall upon them.* David's victory over Goliath was typical of the triumphs of the Son of David over Satan and all the powers of darkness, whom He *spoiled, and made a show of them openly;* and we through Him are *more than conquerors.*

3. The defeat of the Philistines' army hereupon. They relied wholly on the strength of their champion, therefore, when they saw him slain, they did not, as Goliath had offered, throw down their arms and surrender themselves servants to Israel, (*v.* 9.) but took flight, being wholly dispirited, and thinking it to no purpose to oppose one before whom such a mighty man was fallen: *they fled*, (*v.* 51.) and this put life into the Israelites; they *shouted and pursued them*, (*v.* 52.) David, it is probable, leading them on in the pursuit, even to the gates of their own cities. In their return from the chase, they seized their baggage, plundered their tents, (*v.* 53.) and enriched themselves with spoil.

4. David's disposal of his trophies, *v.* 54. He brought the head of the Philistine to Jerusalem, to be a terror to the Jebusites, who held the stronghold of Zion: probably he carried it in triumph to other cities; *his armor he laid up in his tent;* only the sword was preserved behind the ephod in the tabernacle, as consecrated to God, and a memorial of the victory to his honor, *ch.* 21: 9.

5. The notice taken of David. Though he had been at court formerly, yet, having been for some time absent, (*v.* 15.) Saul had forgotten him, being melancholy and mindless, and little thinking his musician should have spirit enough to be his champion; therefore, as if he had never seen him before, he asked whose son he was. Abner was a stranger to him, but brought him to Saul himself: (*v.* 57.) and he gave a modest account of himself, *v.* 58. And now he was introduced to the court with much greater advantages than before; in which he owned God's hand performing all things for him.

CHAP. XVIII. In the close of the foregoing chapter, we left David in triumph; now in this we have, 1. The improvement of his triumphs; he soon became Saul's constant attendant, Jonathan's

CHAP. XVIII.

Jonathan loves David, and covenants with him, 1—4. David gains favor with the people and the servants of Saul, 5. The praises bestowed on David excite Saul's envy, 6—9. Saul attempts to kill him, 10, 11. David's prudence and success make Saul afraid of him, 12—16. He offers to give him his elder daughter, hoping to ensnare him; but gives her to another, 17—19. He promises him Michal, his younger daughter, finding that she loved him; and David brings two hundred foreskins of the Philistines, being double the stipulated dowry, and marries her, 20—27. Saul's hatred and David's reputation increase, 28—30.

AND it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that [a] the soul of

s 39. 13:22.
t 21:9. 2 Sam. 23:21. Esth. 7:10. Ps. 7:15,16. Heb. 2:14.
u Heb. 11:34.
x 14:21,22. Judg. 7:23. 2 Sam. 23:10.
y Josh. 15:33—36,45,46.
z 2 Kings 7:7—16. Jer. 4:20.
a 21:9. Ex. 16:33. Josh. 4:7,8.
b 58. 16:21,22.
c 54.
d 12. 16:18,19.
a 14:1—14,45. Gen. 44:30. Judg. 20: 11. 1 Chr. 12:17. Ps. 86:11. Col. 2:2.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 31—58. In the service of our common Lord, we are not all qualified to handle the same weapons, or to fill up the same stations: none should therefore be set up in all things as models, nor ought any of us *indiscriminately* to imitate the most approved characters. Rules and methods, which are useful and natural to one man, may prove encumbrances to another: and we do best, when we cultivate our own peculiar talent, taking hints from every body, and not attempting exact conformity to any. But faith, and prayer, and truth, and righteousness, 'the whole armor of God,' and 'the mind which was in Christ,' are equally needful for all his servants.—Those who trust in the Lord, and simply seek his glory, shall never be ashamed: in their hands the feeblest means shall be successful, and before them the most formidable opposition shall come to nothing.—Human favor is of small value, for men soon forget those who have been most useful to them; and they alone are happy, who enjoy the favor of Him, who never forgets or forsakes the meanest of his true people.—Finally, in David's victory over the champion of the Philistines, we may see a faint shadow of the Redeemer's victory over Satan, who for ages had defied the armies of the living God, and, from the fall of Adam to the coming of Christ, found no one able in his own strength to stand against him: but Jesus overcame him on his own ground, and foiled him with his own weapons, and still goes on by his despised Gospel to pursue the victory; while all the hosts of the true Israel join in his conquests, and share the benefits; and they shall ere long meet in heaven, to celebrate his triumphs with everlasting songs of praise. SCOTT.

Verse 51.

Champion.] The original word is not the same here as in the 4th verse. SCOTT.

Verse 54.

Either David, after a time, carried the head of Goliath to Jerusalem, as a terror to the Jebusites; and put his armor in his own tent, until it was removed to the tabernacle of God: (21: 8, 9.) or this is spoken by anticipation; and means, that afterwards Goliath's skull and armor were preserved at Jerusalem, as a monument of the victory, and to the glory of God, in the tent which David there formed for the ark. (2 *Sam.* 6: 17.) ID.

Verses 55—58.

It has been argued, from the circumstance of Saul's not recollecting David, that the history is inconsistent: and to answer this objection many learned men, by a very unnatural transposition, place this ch. in order of time, before the preceding. But it should be considered that David was young when he went to the court of Saul: and a few years, with change of dress, (from that of a *courtier*, to that of a *shepherd*,) make a very great alteration in the appearance of young persons. Kings, especially such kings as Saul, are served by so many fresh faces, that they often *literally* forget their old acquaintance. Yet it is evident, that Saul had some confused and imperfect recollection of David; though he could not certainly remember whose son he was. (*Notes*, 1, 15.) SCOTT. See on *v.* 18. ch. 16. ED.

(55.) 'When a person [in India] has to ask a number of questions, though he *know well* the name of the individual he has to address, he often begins by asking, "whose son are you." Many people are only known as "the son of" such a person.' ROBERTS.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII. V. 1—4. 'Instances of very cordial friendship are given by *Plutarch*, as in Theseus and Pirithous, Achilles and Patroclus, Orestes and Pylades, Pythias and Damon, Epaminondas and Pe-

Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan [b] loved him as his own soul.

2 And Saul [c] took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

3 Then Jonathan and David [d] made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

4 And Jonathan [e] stripped himself of the robe that *was* upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

5 And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, *and* * behaved himself [f] wisely: and Saul set him over [g] the men of war; and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

6 ¶ And it came to pass, as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the † Philistine, that [h] the women came out of all cities of Israel, sing ng and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with † instruments of music.

7 And the women [i] answered *one another* as they played, and said, [k] Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

b 19:2. 20:17. Deut. 13:6. 2 Sam. 1: 26. Prov. 18:24.
c 16:21—23. 17:15.
d 20:8—17,42. 23:18. 2 Sam. 9:1—3. 21:7.
e Gen. 41:42. Esth. 6:8,9. Is. 61:10. Luke 15:22. 2 Cor. 5:21. Phil. 2:7,8.
* Or, *prospered.* 14,15,30. Gen. 39: 2,3,23. Ps. 1:3. Acts 7:10.
f Matt. 10:16. Eph. 5:17. Col. 4,5. 1 Pet. 3:2. 14:52.
† Or, *Philistines.*
h Ex. 15:20. Judg. 11:34. Ps. 68:25. Jer. 31:11—13.
† Heb. *three-stringed instruments.* Ex. 15:21. Ps. 24:7—10.
i 21:11. 29:5.

covenant friend, and the darling of his country. 2. The allays of his triumphs; this vanity accompanies even a right work, that for it a man is envied. So David was. Saul hated him, and sought to kill him. He feared him, and contrived how he might do him some mischief. He proposed to marry his daughter to him; but cheated him of the eldest to provoke him, and gave him the younger, on conditions which would endanger his life. But David performed them bravely, and grew more and more esteemed. Still he is rising, but (as all that aim at the crown of life must expect) he had to grapple with great difficulty and opposition.

V. 1—5. David was anointed to the crown, to take it out of Saul's hand, and over Jonathan's head; and yet here we find,

I. Saul, in possession of the crown, reposed confidence in him, God so ordering it, that he might, by preferment at court, be prepared for future service, *v.* 2. David having signalized himself above the men of war, in taking up the challenge they declined, *Saul set him over the men of war; (v. 5.)* not made him general, (Abner was in that post,) but perhaps captain of the life-guard; or, he ordered him, though youngest, to have the precedency, in recompense of his great services. He employed him in the affairs of government; *and David went out whithersoever Saul sent him,* showing himself as dutiful as he was bold and courageous.

II. Jonathan, who was heir to the crown, entered into covenant with him: God so ordering it, that David's way might be the clearer, when his rival was his friend.

1. Jonathan fell perfectly in love with him, *v.* 1. Whether it refers to his conference with Saul before the battle, (*ch.* 17: 34—37.) or to that after, (*v.* 58.) in which it is probable much more was said than is there set down, is uncertain. But in both David expressed himself with so much prudence, modesty, piety, and felicity, with so much boldness and yet so much sweetness, and all so natural and unaffected, and the more surprising because of the disadvantages of his education and appearance, *that the soul of Jonathan was* immediately *knit* unto the *soul of David.* Jonathan had set upon a Philistine army with the same faith and bravery as David showed in attacking a Philistine giant: so there was between them a very near resemblance of affections, dispositions, and counsels, which made their spirits unite so easily, so quickly, so closely, that they seemed but as one soul in two bodies. None had so much reason to dislike David as Jonathan, yet none regards him more. Those that are governed in their love by principles of wisdom and grace, will not suffer their affections to be alienated by any secular regards or considerations: the greater thoughts will swallow up and overrule the less.

2. He testified his love to David by a generous present, *v.* 4. a robe, for him as a courtier, and a sword and bow, with either a belt or a sash, as a soldier; and, which made the present much more obliging, they were the same he himself had worn, a presage of what would follow. Saul's he put off, because he would first earn, and then wear them; but now that he had given proofs of the spirit of a prince and soldier, he was not ashamed to wear the habits of one. David is seen in Jonathan's clothes, that all may notice he is Jonathan's second self. Our Lord Jesus thus showed his love to us, stripped Himself to clothe us, emptied Himself to enrich us; nay, more, clothed Himself with our rags, whereas Jonathan did not put on David's.

3. He endeavored to perpetuate his friendship: so entirely satisfied were they in each other, even at first, that they made a covenant, *v.* 3. Their mutual affection was sincere; and he that bears an honest mind startles not at assurances. True love desires to be constant. Those who love Christ as their own souls, will be willing to join themselves to Him in an everlasting covenant.

III. Both court and country agree to bless him: they seldom agree in their favorites; yet did in David, *v.* 5. The people cordially loved him, and even *Saul's servants* could not for shame but caress and compliment him. And it was certainly a great instance of the power of God's grace in David, that he was able to bear all this respect and honor flowing in upon him of a sudden, without being lifted up above measure. Those that climb so fast, have need of good heads and good hearts: it is harder to know how to abound, than how to be abased.

V. 6—11. Now begin David's troubles.

I. He was too much magnified by the common people. Some time after the victory, Saul went a triumphant progress through the cities, next him, to receive the congratulations of the country. But the women, most forward to show respect, *v.* 6. had got a song, which they sang in their dances, (made by some great admirer of David, more just than wise, in giving his achievements the preference before Saul's,) whose burden was, *Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.* Such a difference Moses made, between the numbers of Ephraim and Manasseh, Deut. 33: 17.

II. Saul was mightily displeased, and envied David, *v.* 3, 9. He ought to have considered tha they referred only to this late action, and so did but give David his due. Perhaps the composer only used a poetical license, not intending any invidious comparison; and it was below a great mind to notice such a reflection on his honor, when it appeared that the glory of the public was sincerely intended. But Saul was very wroth, and presently suspected some treasonable design at the bottom of it: *What can he have more but the kingdom?* This made him eye David, as one he was jealous of, and sought advantages against; (*v.* 9.) his countenance was not toward him as it had been. Proud men cannot endure to hear any praised but themselves, and think all the honor lost that goes by themselves. It is a sign the Spirit of God is departed from men, if they be peevish in their resentment of affronts, envious and suspicious of all about them, and ill-natured in their conduct; for the wisdom from above makes us quite otherwise.

III. In his fury he aimed to kill David, *v.* 10, 11. *Jealousy is the rage of a man;* it made Saul outrageous against David, and impatient to get him out of the way.

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l pilas; but none equal to this.' Gill. The author of Anastasius mentions an oath of brotherhood, pledging life for life, as sometimes taken by young men among the modern Greeks: reminding of their ancestors' custom, and also of that of the middle ages. Ed.

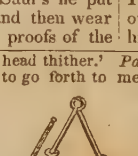
(1.) This disinterested friendship was the effect of that grace of God, which produces in all true believers 'one heart and soul,' and causes them to delight in each other's converse and comfort: (1 *Pet.* 1: 22—25. 1 *John* 3: 18—15. *M. R.*) Scott.

(2.) Saul did not at first know David, but soon recollected him. Hence it is manifest, that he had before returned to pastoral employments, but from this time went back no more to them. (17: 55—58.) Id. 'It appears David did not live always at court, but when Saul was well, went to his father's.' Patrick.

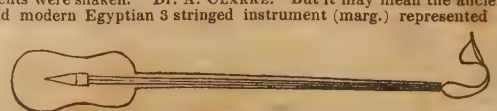
(4.) *Stripped.*] 'This, as I apprehend, was no more than doing a high honor to an inferior, in the eyes of Saul's servants, according to modern eastern custom.' Dodd.—'Presents of clothes or rich robes, as tokens of friendship, are frequent in the east.' Dr. A. Clarke.

Verses 6—9.

After the death of Goliath, and the consequent victory over the Philistines, Saul, and David with him, went to several of the cities of Israel. 'I suppose, Saul and the whole court thought fit to honor David, by accompanying him to Jerusalem when he carried Goliath's head thither.' *Patrick.* It was the custom of the times, for women to go forth to meet conquerors with instruments of music, singing odes composed on the occasion. (*Judg.* 11: 34. —*Ex.* 15: 1, 20, 21. *Judg.* 5: 1. *Ps.* 68: 24, 25.) The language of this ode might have given umbrage to a mind less propense to envy and suspicion, than Saul's. Scott.



(6.) *Instruments of music.*] *Shalishim,* note 10: 5. and cut here. Instruments well known among the ancient Egyptians, made of brass, [see cut, 2 Sam. 6: 5.] with three or more rods across, which, being loose, made a jingling noise when the instruments were shaken.' Dr. A. Clarke. But it may mean the ancient and modern Egyptian 3 stringed instrument (marg.) represented in



the cut, from the sculptures at Thebes. Ed

8 And Saul was very wroth, and [l]the saying [*]displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *but* thousands: [m]and *what* can he have more but the kingdom?

9 And Saul [n]eyed David from that day and forward.

10 And it came to pass on the morrow, that [o]the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he [p]prophesied in the midst of the house; and David [q]played with his hand, as at other times: and *there was* a javelin in Saul's hand.

11 And Saul [r]cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall *with it.* [s]And David avoided out of his presence twice.

12 And Saul was [t]afraid of David, because [u]the LORD was with him, and was [v]departed from Saul.

13 Therefore Saul [w]removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and [x]he went out and came in before the people.

14 And David [†]behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and [z]the LORD *was* with him.

15 Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very [a]wisely, he was afraid of him.

1. His fits of frenzy returned upon him. The very next day after he conceived malice against David, the evil spirit from God, that had formerly haunted him, seized him again. Those that indulge themselves in envy and uncharitableness, *give place to the devil*, and prepare for the re-entry of the unclean spirit, with seven others more wicked. Where envy is, there is confusion. Saul pretended a religious ecstasy; *he prophesied in the midst of the house;* i. e. he had the gestures and motions of a prophet, and humored the thing well enough to decoy David into a snare, so that he might be fearless of any danger, and off his guard; and, perhaps, designing, if he could but kill him, to impute it to a divine impulse, and to charge it upon the spirit of prophecy, with which he seemed to be animated; but really it was a hellish fury that actuated him.

2. David disdained not, for his master's service, to return to his harp. Let not the highest think any thing below them, whereby they may do good, and be serviceable to those they are obliged to.

3. He took this opportunity to endeavor the death of David, not in a sudden passion, but deliberately: *I will smite David to the wall;* with such a desperate force did he throw his javelin. Justly does David complain of his enemies, that they hated him with *a cruel hatred.* No life is thought too precious to be sacrificed to malice. Compare David, with his harp in his hand, aiming to serve Saul; and Saul, with his javelin in his hand, aiming to slay David; and observe the sweetness and usefulness of God's persecuted people, and the brutishness and barbarity of their persecutors. *The blood-thirsty hate the upright, but the just seek his soul.*

4. David happily avoided the blow twice, namely, now, and afterwards, *ch.* 19: 10. not fighting, but flying, for his own preservation, though he had both strength and courage enough, and color of right, to make resistance, and to revenge the injury. David, no doubt, had a watchful eye on Saul's hand, and the javelin in it; yet his safety must be ascribed to the watchful eye of God's providence; and by this narrow escape he seemed designed for something extraordinary.

V. 12—30. I. Saul expresses his malice against David. 1. He was *afraid of him, v.* 12. Perhaps he pretended to be afraid David would force his way to the crown; but David's withdrawing, (*v.* 11.) was a plain evidence he was far from such a thought. However, he really stood in awe of him, as Herod feared John, Mark 6: 20. He was sensible he had lost the favorable presence of God himself, and that David had it, and for this reason, he feared him. Note, Those are truly great, and to be reverenced, that have God with them. The more *wisely David behaved himself,* the more *Saul feared him, v.* 15. and again, *v.* 29. Men think, the way to be feared is, to hector and threaten, which makes them feared by fools only, but despised by the wise and good; whereas, the way to be both feared and loved is, to *behave ourselves wisely.* Wisdom makes the face to shine, and commands respect.

2. He removed him from court, and gave him a regiment in the country, *v.* 13. that he might be from under his eye, because he hated the sight of him; and that he might not secure the interest of the courtiers. Yet herein he was impolitic; for he gave David an opportunity of ingratiating himself with the people, who therefore *loved him,* (*v.* 16.) because he *went out and came in before them;* that is, he presided in the business of his country, civil as well as military, and gave universal satisfaction.

3. He stirred him up to quarrel with the Philistines, and engage them, (*v.* 17.) insinuating, that hereby he would do good service to his prince and to his God, and a kindness to himself too; for hereby he would qualify himself for the honor he designed him, which was to marry his eldest daughter. This he had merited by killing Goliath, (*ch.* 17: 25.) but was so modest, as not to demand it; and now, when Saul proposed it, it was with design of mischief, to make him venture on hazardous attempts, saying in his heart, *Let the hand of the Philistines be upon him,* hoping they would sometime or other be the death of him,—yet how could he expect this, when he saw God was with him?

4. He did what he could to provoke him to discontent and mutiny, by breaking his promise, and giving his daughter to another, when the time was come she should be given to him, *v.* 19. This was as great an affront as he could possibly put on him, and touched him both in his honor and in his love: he therefore thought David's resentment would certainly break out in some word or deed, which might give him an advantage to take him off by course of law. Thus evil men seek mischief.

5. Disappointed in this, he proffered his other daughter, (who it seems had a secret kindness for David, *v.* 20.) but with this design, that she might be *a snare to him, v.* 21. Perhaps he hoped she would, even after her marriage, take part with her father against her husband, and give the opportunity of doing an unkindness. However, the condition of the marriage, he hoped, would be his destruction; for (so zealous will Saul seem against the Philistines) David must needs kill a hundred of them, and, as proofs that those he had slain were uncircumcised, he must bring their foreskins; this would be a reproach on the Philistines, who hated circumcision, as it was an ordinance of God; and perhaps David, in doing this, would the more exasperate them against him, and make them seek to be revenged on him, which was the thing Saul desired and designed, much more than to be avenged on the Philistines: *For Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines, v.* 25. See here, (1.) What cheats men have put upon themselves. Saul's conscience would not suffer him, except when the evil spirit was actually upon him, to aim at David's life himself; but he thought that to expose him to the Philistines had nothing bad in it; (*v.* 17.) whereas the malicious design against him was as truly murder before God, as if he had slain him with his own hands. (2.) What cheats men put upon the world. Saul pretended extraordinary kindness for David, even then when he aimed at his ruin, and was actually plotting it: *Thou shalt be my son-in-law,* says he, (*v.* 21.) notwithstanding he hated him implacably. Perhaps David refers to this, when he speaks of his enemy, as one whose words were *smoother than butter, but war was in his heart.* Probably Saul's employing his servants to persuade David to enter into a treaty of a match with his daughter Michal, (*v.* 22.) arose from an apprehension, that, either his having cheated him about his elder daughter, (*v.* 19.) or the hardness of the terms he now proposed would make him decline it.

II. David still conducts himself *wisely in all his ways, v.* 14, 15. very cautious not to offend; he did not complain of hard measure, nor head a party, but managed all his affairs, as one that made it his business to do real service to his king and country, looking on that to be the end of his preferment. And then *the Lord was with him,* to give him success in all his undertakings. 1. Though he contracted Saul's ill-will by it, yet he obtained God's favor. Compare this with Ps. 101: 2.

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l Esth. 3:5. Prov. 13:10. 27:4. Ec. 4:4. Jam. 4:5.
[*] Heb. *was evil in his eyes.* Num. 11: 1. 22:34. *Margine.*
m 13:14. 15:28. 16:13. 20:31. 1 Kings 2:22.
n Gen. 4:5,6. 31:2. Matt. 20:15. Mark 7:22. Eph. 4:27. Jam. 5:9.
o 16:14,15. 19:9. 26:19.
p 19:24. 1 Kings 18:29. 22:12,20—23. Jer. 28:2—4,11. Zech. 13:2—5. Acts 16:16. 2 Thes. 2:11. q 16:16,23.
r 19:9,10. 20:33. Prov. 27:4. Is. 54:17.
s Luke 4:30. John 8:59. 10:39.
t 15,20. 16: 4. Ps. 48: 3—6. 53:5. Mark 6:20. Luke 8:37. Acts 24:25.
u 16:13,18. 22:13. Acts 7:9.
v 16:14. 28:15. Ps. 51:11. Hos. 9:12. Matt. 25:41.
w 17,25. 8:12. 22:7.
x 16. Num. 27:16,17. 2 Sam. 5:2. Ps. 121:8.
† Or, *prospered.* See on 5.
z 10:7. 16:18. Gen. 39:2,3,23. Josh. 6:27. Matt. 1:23. 28:20. Acts 18:10.
a Ps. 112:5. Dan. 6:4,5. Col. 4:5. Jam. 1:5. 3:17.

(9—11.) The Vatican Sept. omits these verses. ED.

(9.) Hewlett remarks, after Fawkes, that, 'these omissions and alterations' (meaning those of Pilkington and Dr. Kennicott referred to ch. 16: 18.) 'are such as fully clear the narrative from all inconsistencies, improbabilities, difficulties, and obscurities.' ED.

(10.) *Javelin.*] See cut, Ex. 17: 10. ID.

Prophesied.] 'I see not why this word should not retain the signification here, which it has in other places: that he sung divine songs.' PATRICK.

(10. 11.) Saul being under a supernatural though malignant influence, behaved in some respects as the prophets did, when the spirit of inspiration came upon them; yet from a contrary cause. It is not indeed certain whether he *assumed* this appearance to cloak his attempting to murder David, or whether Satan really wrought upon him till he seemed to prophesy.—David evidently suspected some mischief from the javelin in Saul's hand; and was enabled to avoid the blow, both at this time and on another occasion. (19: 8—10.) SCOTT.

Verse 12.

Afraid.] 'I. e. that David would be king in his [Saul's] room.' ASSEMB. ANN.

16 But [b] all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

17 ¶ And Saul said to David, Behold, my elder daughter Merab, [c] her will I give thee to wife; only be thou [*] valiant for me, and fight [d] the LORD'S battles: for Saul said, [e] Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.

18 And David said unto Saul, [f] Who *am* I? and what *is* my life, *or* my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?

19 But it came to pass, at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, that she was given unto [g] Adriel the [h] Mehola-thite to wife.

20 And Michal, Saul's daughter, [i] loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing † pleased him.

21 And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be [k] a snare to him, and that [l] the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou shalt [m] this day be my son-in-law in *the one of* the twain.

22 And Saul [n] commanded his [o] servants, *saying*, Commune with David secretly, and say, Behold the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee: now therefore be the king's son-in-law.

23 And Saul's servants spake those words in the ears of David. And David said, Seemeth it to you *a* light *thing* to be a king's son-in-law; seeing that I *am* [p] a poor man, and lightly esteemed?

24 And the servants of Saul told him, saying, ‡ On this manner spake David.

25 And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any [q] dowry, but a hundred [r] foreskins of the Philistines, [s] to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul [t] thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

26 And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law: and [u] the days were not § expired.

27 Wherefore David arose, and went, he and [v] his men, and [x] slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife.

28 And Saul [y] saw and knew that the LORD *was* with David, and *that* Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him.

29 And Saul was [z] yet the more afraid of David; and [a] Saul became David's enemy continually.

30 Then the princes of the Philistines [b] went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name was much set by.

b 5. Luke 19:48. 20:19.
c 17:25. Ps. 12:2. 55:21.
* Heb. *a son of valor.*
d 17:47. 25:28. Num. 32:20,27,29.
e 21,25. Deut. 17:7. 2 Sam. 11:15. 12:9.
f 23. 9:21. Ex. 3:11. Ruth 2:10. 2 Sam. 7:18. Prov. 15:33. 18:12. Jer. 1:6.
g Judg. 14:20. 2 Sam. 21:8.
h Judg. 7:22.
i 28. Gen. 29:18,20. 34:3. Judg. 16: 4,15. 2 Sam. 13:1. 1 Kings 11:1,2. Hos. 3:1.
† Heb. *was right in his eyes.*
k Ex. 10: 7. Ps. 7: 14—16. 38: 12. Prov. 26:24—26. Jer. 5:26. 9:8.
l 17. 19:11,12.
m 26.
n Ps. 36:1—3. 55:21.
o 2 Sam. 13:28,29. Prov. 29:2.
p 9:21. Prov. 14:20. 19:6,7. Ec. 9: 15,16.
‡ Heb. *According to these words.*
q Gen. 29:18. 34:12. Ex. 22:16,17.
r 17:26,36. Gen. 17:11—14. Josh. 5:3
s 14:24.
t 17. 2 Sam. 17:3—11.
u 21.
§ Heb. *fulfilled.*
v 13.
x Judg. 14:19. 2 Sam. 3:14.
y 24:20. 26:25. Gen. 30:27. 37:3—11. 39:3. Rev. 3:9.
z 12,15. Ps. 37:12,13. Ec. 4:4. Jam. 2:19.
a Gen. 4:4—8. John 11:53. 1 John 3: 12—15.
b 2 Sam. 11:1.

1. When it was proposed to him to be son-in-law to the king, he once and again received the proposal with all possible modesty and humility. When Saul proposed his eldest daughter to him, (*v.* 18.) he said, *Who am I, and what is my life?* When the courtiers proposed the younger, he took no notice of the affront Saul had given him in disposing of the elder from him, but continued in the same mind, *v.* 23. He knew Michal loved him, yet did not offer to improve his interest in her affections, to gain her without her father's consent, but waited till it was proposed to him. And then see, how highly he speaks of the honor offered him. *To be son-in-law to the king!* Though the king was but an upstart, in his origin as mean as himself, in his management no better than he should be, yet, being a crowned head, he speaks of him and the royal family with all due respect. Note, Religion is so far from teaching us, that it does not allow us, to be rude and unmannerly. We must *render honor to whom honor is due.* How humbly he speaks of himself. *Who am I?* This did not proceed from a low, abject, sneaking spirit, for, when there was occasion, he made it appear he had as high a sense of honor as most men; nor was it from his jealousy of Saul, (though he had reason enough to suspect him of evil,) but from his true and deep humility. *Who am I? A poor man and lightly esteemed!* David had as much reason as any man to value himself. He was of an ancient and honorable family of Judah, a comely person, a great statesman and soldier; his achievements were great; he had won Goliath's head and Michal's heart: he [loved God's will,] knew himself destined by the divine counsels to the throne of Israel, and yet, *Who am I, and what is my life?* Note, It well becomes us, however God has advanced us, always to have low thoughts of ourselves. *He that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.* And if David thus magnified the honor of being son-in-law to the king, how should we magnify the honor of being sons (not in law, but in gospel) to the King of kings! *Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us!* Who are we, that we should be thus dignified?

3. When the slaying 100 Philistines was made the condition of David's marrying Saul's daughter, he readily closed with it; (*v.* 26.) and, before the time given for the action expired, doubled the demand, and slew 200, *v.* 27. As if Saul had meant to consult his honor, he cheerfully undertook it, as became a brave soldier and a true lover, though we may suppose it uneasy to Michal. David hereby discovered likewise, (1.) A great confidence in the divine protection; so that, whatever Saul hoped, David did not fear falling, though he must needs expose himself. (2.) A great zeal for the good of his country, which he would not decline any occasion of serving, though with hazard of life. (3.) A right notion of honor, which consists not so much in being preferred, as in deserving to be so.

4. Even after he was married, he continued his good services to Israel. When the princes of the Philistines began to move towards another war, he was ready to oppose them, and *behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul, v.* 30. The law dispensed with men from going to war the first year after they were married, (Deut. 24: 5.) but David loved his country too well to make use of that dispensation. Many, forward to serve the public, when in pursuit of preferment, have declined it on gaining their point; but David acted from more generous principles.

Lastly, Observe how God brought good to David out of Saul's projects against him. 1. Saul gave him his daughter to be a snare, but she proved a blessing to him. 2. He sent him to fight the battles of the Lord, hoping he would fall by the hand of the Philistines, but he returned victorious. 3. He put him upon desperate adventures, hoping he would perish in them, but he came off with honor. Thus God can bring light out of darkness, and good out of evil.

Verses 17—19.

Saul appears to have been influenced, in this purpose, by fear of exciting a revolt among the people, rather than by the fear of God, or reluctance to commit murder with his own hand. (2 *Sam.* 11: 14—17.) SCOTT. The Vatican Sept. omits these vs. ED. See, in the chr. table, the plan of *Townsend* and others, to reconcile the chronology here.

Verse 22.

'David seems not forward to accept Saul's offer.' PATRICK.

Verse 23.

The Dutch Ann. understand David to allude here to his inability to give a dowry suitable for a king's daughter, and say the dowry, in common cases, was 12½ English crowns. But in some countries it was and is a very great sum: note, Gen. 34: 11, 12. ED.

Verse 25.

Philistines.] 'Why Philistines? Because Saul did not know but [was willing to suspect] David might cut off the heads of his own subjects, and he would be sure he killed so many enemies.' *Procopius Gazæus, in Patrick.*—'Saul would also the more exasperate the Philistines, as an uncircumcised people.' PATRICK. The Egyptian monuments show that barbarous manner of reckoning the slain to have been very ancient. ED.

Verses 26, 27.

'It has been objected, that the destruction of these Philistines stains David's moral character, and represents him as inhuman and delighting in blood. But it should be considered that the Hebrews and the Philistines were in a perpetual state of war during the whole reign of Saul: ch. 14: 52.' DODD.—The Philistines too were, in some sense, under the curse of Jehovah. Some think them the very people who oppressed the Heb. in Egypt: they certainly were their most inveterate, and powerful, hereditary enemies. ID.

Verse 30.

Behaved more wisely.] 'By discovering, I suppose, the designs of

pass, after they went forth, *that* David [c] behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much [*] set by.

CHAP. XIX.

Saul orders David to be slain. Jonathan informs David; and, pleading for him with Saul, effects a reconciliation, 1—7. David's success in war renders Saul again jealous; he seeks to kill David, who escapes by flight, 8—10. Saul sends to kill him in his house; but Michal favors his escape, and deceives Saul by an image in the bed, 11—17. David goes to Samuel, 18. Saul sends messengers after him to Naioth; and then goes himself; but first his messengers are seized by the Spirit of prophecy, and afterwards he also, 19—24.

AND [a] Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David.

2 But Jonathan, Saul's son, [b] delighted much in David: and [c] Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret *place*, and hide thyself:

3 And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou *art*, and I will commune with my father of thee; and [d] what I see, that I will tell thee.

4 And Jonathan [e] spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king [f] sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and [g] because his works *have been* to thee-ward very good.

5 For he did [h] put his life in his hand, and [i] slew the Philistine, and the LORD [k] wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest *it*, and didst rejoice; wherefore then wilt thou [l] sin against innocent blood, to slay David [m] without a cause?

6 And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul [n] sware, *As* the LORD liveth, [o] he shall not be slain.

ed a kindness to him, in that his being Saul's son-in-law, made his succeeding him much less invidious, especially when so many of his sons were slain with him, *ch.* 31: 2. Saul thought, by putting him on dangerous services, to have him taken off, but that very thing confirmed his interest in the people; for the more he did against the Philistines, the better they loved him, so that *his name was much set by*, (*v.* 30.) which would make his coming to the crown the more easy. Thus God makes even the wrath of man to praise Him, and serves his designs of kindness to his own people by it.

CHAP. XIX. Immediately after David's marriage, which should have secured him Saul's affection, we find his troubles coming on him faster than ever, and Saul's enmity to him the cause of all. His death was vowed, and four fair escapes of his are recorded in this ch. Thus God has many ways of preserving his people. Providence is never at a loss.

V. 1—7. Saul and Jonathan appear here in their different characters, with reference to David.

I. Never was an enemy so unreasonably cruel as Saul, *v.* 1. His projects to take David off had failed; therefore he proclaims him an outlaw, and charges all about him, on their allegiance, to take the first opportunity to kill him. It is strange he was not ashamed thus to avow his malice, when he could give no reason for it; but there is least danger from this undisguised malice. Strange that he who knew how well Jonathan loved him, should expect him to kill David; but he thought, that, as heir to the crown, he must needs be as envious at David as himself. And Providence ordered it thus, that he might befriend David's safety.

II. Never was friend so surprisingly kind as Jonathan. (*A friend in need is a friend indeed.*) 1. He took care for his present security, by letting him know his danger, *v.* 2. Jonathan knew not but some of the servants might be either so obsequious to Saul, or so envious at David, as to put Saul's orders into execution, if they could light on David.

2. He took pains to pacify his father, and reconcile him to David. The next morning, he ventured to commune with him concerning David; (*v.* 3.) not that night, either because he observed Saul to be drunk, and not fit to be spoken to, or because he hoped, that, when he had slept upon it, he would himself revoke the order; or because he could have no opportunity of speaking to him till morning. His intercession for David was (1.) Very prudent, managed with great meekness of wisdom, and he showed himself faithful to his friend by speaking good of him, though in danger of incurring by it his father's displeasure. A rare instance of valuable friendship! He pleads, [1.] The good services David had done to the public, and particularly to Saul, *v.* 4. by which it appeared he was a favorite of Heaven, and a friend to Israel, as well as a good servant to Saul, so that to order him to be slain, was not only base ingratitude to so good a servant, but a great affront to God, and a great injury to the public. [2.] He pleads his innocency: had he been chargeable with any crime, it had been another matter, but *he has not sinned against thee;* (*v.* 4.) his *blood is innocent*, (*v.* 5.) and if he be slain, it is without cause. And Jonathan had *therefore* reason to protest against it, because he could not entail any thing upon his family more pernicious than the guilt of innocent blood. (2.) His intercession, being thus prudent, was prevalent. God inclined Saul to hearken to Jonathan. Note, We must be willing to hear reason, and to take all reproof and good advice even from our inferiors; parents from their own children. How forcible are right words! Saul was, for the present, so far convinced of the unreasonableness of his enmity to David, that, [1.] He recalled the bloody warrant for his execution, *v.* 6. Whether Saul swore here with due solemnity or no, does not appear; perhaps he did, and it was needed if he did; but, at other times, he swore rashly and profanely, which made the sincerity of this oath justly questionable:

[a] 18:1—3. Ps. 16:3. John 15:17—19. 1 John 3:12—14.
[b] 20:2. Prov. 17:17. Acts 9:24. 23:16.
[c] 20:9,13.
[d] 20:32. 22:14. Prov. 24:11,12. 31:8, 9. Jer. 18:20.
[e] 2:25. Gen. 9:6. 42:22. 2 Chr. 6:22. 1 Cor. 8:12. 1 John 3:15.
[f] Ps. 35:12. 109:4,5. Prov. 17: 13. Jer. 18:20.
[g] 28:21. Judg. 9:17. 12:3. Ps. 119: 109. Acts 20:24. Phil. 2:30.
[h] 17:49—51.
[i] 11:13. 14:45. 17:52,53. Ex. 14:13. 1 Chr. 11:14. Heb. 2:3.
[k] 20:32. Jer. 26:15. Matt. 27:4,24.
[l] Ps. 25:3. 69:4. John 15:25.
[m] 14:39. 28:10. Ps. 15:4. Jer. 5:2.
[n] 10,11.
[o] 5. Dan. 1:20. Luke 21:15. Eph. 5: 15.
[*] Heb. *precious.* 2:30. 26:21. 2 Kings 1:13. Ps. 116:15. 1 Pet. 2:4,7.
[a] 18:8,9. Prov. 27:4. Ec. 9:3. Jer. 9: 3. 2 Tim. 3:13.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

True religion teaches us to love real excellency; to rejoice in it, though it eclipse our own reputation; and to delight in the society of those whom the Lord loves and honors, who bear his image and are zealous for his glory, regardless of inferiority of station, or selfish considerations. This union of souls, resulting from participation of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, prepares men for filling up their several stations in the church of God, in harmony, sympathy, and love, as the several members do in the natural body; and, when it shall be perfected in heaven, will for ever exclude envy and discontent, and render the felicity of each favored inhabitant an accession to the joy of all the rest. (*Cor.* 12: 12—31.) But how different is the nature of fallen man! When the Lord is provoked to leave us, and Satan is permitted to excite our propensities, we become capable of envying and hating those especially who are most amiable, and who have done the most to serve us, with malignity proportioned to their meekness and wisdom; the commendations bestowed upon them are considered as an injury and reproach to us; and even the peculiar favor of God for them will greatly aggravate malice and envy, and incite to revenge.—For every great and good work a man must expect to be envied by his neighbor: no distinction or pre-eminence can be so unexceptionably obtained, but it will expose the possessor to slander and malice, and perhaps to the most fatal consequences. But such trials are very useful to those who love God, both to prepare them for those stations in which they are to be employed, and to open their way to them: for in due time modest merit will shine forth with double lustre. But humility, industry, faithfulness, silence under injuries, and a backwardness to seek great things for ourselves, are requisite to safety and comfort in the public scenes of life; and retired stations are far more favorable to our own inward peace. Lavish commendations of those whom we love and admire, in such a world as this, often prove a real injury: and in all cases every thing should be avoided, which can excite envy or opposition; except the performance of our duty to God and man.

SCOTT.

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the Philistines, and preventing them; for we do not read that they came to battle.'

PATRICK.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX. V. 1—3. (*Notes*, 18: 1, 3, 4, 28—30.) As Saul doubtless knew, that 'Jonathan delighted much in David,' it must be ascribed to a peculiar interposition of Providence, that he did not attempt to conceal his designs from him. (*M. R.*)

SCOTT.

(1.) 'Nothing less than the special interposition of God could have saved David's life, when every officer about the king's person, and every soldier had positive orders to despatch him.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 4—7.

(*M. R.*—17: 42—53. *Ps.* 25: 2, 3. *John* 15: 22—25.) David could not indeed greatly confide in Saul's assurances; but he was willing to keep in the way of his duty, and to put his trust in God.

SCOTT.

7 And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan showed him all those things: and Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence [p] as [*] in times past.

8 ¶ And there was war again: and [q] David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled from † him.

9 And [r] the evil spirit from the LORD was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand: and David played with *his* hand.

10 And Saul [s] sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but [t] he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night.

11 Saul also [u] sent messengers unto David's house [v] to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou shalt be slain.

12 So Michal [x] let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped.

13 And Michal took ‡ an image, and laid *it* in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' *hair* for his bolster, and covered *it* with a cloth.

14 And when Saul sent messengers to take David, [y] she said, He *is* sick.

15 And Saul sent the messengers *again* to see David, saying, [z] Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him.

16 And when the messengers were come in, behold, *there was* an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' *hair* for his bolster.

17 And Saul said unto Michal, [a] Why hast thou deceived me so, and sent away [b] mine enemy, that he is escaped? And Michal answered Saul, [c] He said unto me, Let me go; [d] why should I kill thee?

18 ¶ So David fled, and escaped, and came [e] to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth.

19 And [f] it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David *is* at Naioth in Ramah.

for it may be feared that those who can so far jest with an oath, as to make a by-word of it, and prostitute it to a trifle, have not such a due sense of the obligation of it, but that, to serve a turn, they will prostitute it to a lie. Some suspect he had a malicious design to bring David within his reach again, intending, the first opportunity, to slay him: but as bad as Saul was, we can scarcely think so ill of him; and therefore we suppose he spake as he thought, for the present, but the convictions soon wore off, and his corruptions again prevailed. [2.] He renewed the grant of his place at court, *v.* 7.

V. 8—10. Here, 1. David continues his good services to his king and country. Those that are ill paid for doing good, must not be *weary in well-doing*, remembering what a bountiful Benefactor our Heavenly Father is, even to the froward and unthankful.

Notwithstanding Saul's many affronts to David, yet we find him, (1.) As bold as ever in using his sword for his country, *v.* 8. War broke out again with the Philistines, and he again signalized himself: he charged them with great bravery, and came off victorious, slaying many, and putting the rest to flight (2.) As cheerful as ever in using his harp for the service of his prince, *v.* 9. An humble, good man will think nothing below him by which he may do good, and will render good for evil; and trust God with his safety, in the way of his duty. See how David was affected when his enemy was sick, Ps. 35: 13, 14. which, perhaps, refers to Saul's sickness.

2. Saul continues his malice against David. He who but the other day had sworn, by his Maker, that he *should not be slain*, now endeavors to slay him himself: so deceitful and desperately wicked is the heart of man without the grace of God, Jer. 17: 9. David's fresh honors, instead of extinguishing Saul's ill-will to him, and confirming his reconciliation, revived his envy, and exasperated him yet more. And when he indulged this wicked passion, no marvel that *the evil spirit came upon him;* (*v.* 9.) when we *let the sun go down on our wrath, we give place to the devil*, (Eph. 4: 26, 27.) we make room for him and invite him. Discomposures of mind, though helped forward by the agency of Satan, commonly owe their original to men's own sins and follies. Saul's fear and jealousy made him a torment to himself, so that he could not sit in his house without a javelin in his hand, pretending it was for his preservation, but designing it for David's destruction, *v.* 10. So strong was the devil in him, so strong his own rage and passion. Perhaps he thought, if he had killed him now, he had been excusable both before God and man, as being *non compos mentis—not right in his mind*, and that it would have been imputed to his distraction. But God cannot be deceived by pretences, however men may be.

p 16:21. 18:2,10,13.
q Heb. *yesterday, third day.* Gen. 31: 2. Ex. 4:10. 1 Chr. 11:2. Is. 30:33. *Margins.*
r 16:14. 18:10,11.
s 6. Hos. 6:4. Matt. 12:43—45. Luke 11:24—26. 2 Pet. 2:20—22.
t 20:33. Job 5:14,15. Ps. 18:17. 34: 19. Prov. 21:30. Is. 54:17. Luke 4: 30. John 10:39.
u Ps. 59: *title.* 3,4,6,15,16.
v Judg. 16:2.
x Josh. 2:15. Acts 9:24,25. 2 Cor. 11: 32,33.
‡ Heb. *teraphim.* Gen. 31:19. *marg.* Judg. 17:5. 18:14,17. Hos. 3:4.
y Josh. 2:5. 2 Sam. 16:17—19. 17:20.
z 6. Job 31:31. Ps. 37:12. Prov. 27: 3,4. Rom. 3:15.
a 22:17. 28:12. Matt. 2:16.
b 1 Kings 21:20. Gal. 4:16.
c 14. Ex. 1:17—19.
d 2 Sam. 2:22.
e 7:17. 15:34. 23:3. Ps. 116:11. Jam. 5:16.
f 22:9,10. 23:19. 26:1. Prov. 29:12.

Verse 8.

'All these battles were only between parties; for David commanded 1000 men only, ch. 18: 13. and if the whole army of the Philistines had been gathered together, Abner would have commanded Israel, for he was of the host.' PATRICK.

Verses 9, 10.

'What sad breaks in the history are those melancholy instances of the evil spirit's dominion over Saul. And such, reader, would be his dominion over you and me, did not sovereign grace restrain.' HAWKER.

(9.) *Played with his hand on his harp.*] The cut represents a *harp* from the sculptures on the tombs of the valley of 'Biban el Molook' (the chambers or gates of the kings) near Thebes in Egypt. They, as well as the other Egyptian monuments from which illustrations have been given, are of very remote antiquity, but the exact date of their erection is still a dispute among archæologists—most of whom assign them to an age previous to the exodus. The royal palaces of neighboring nations were, doubtless, supplied with furniture from the country where the arts of life were in the most flourishing state, and all antiquity accords this honor to Egypt; so that the cut may well represent the harp used in Saul's palace, or the one afterwards attuned by the royal psalmist to the praise of the One True God. The other cuts already given from Egyptian monuments, may also well be looked upon as the best illustrations now accessible of the state of the domestic arts in those remote ages. The climate of Egypt, and the excellence of the colors, combine to preserve the vividness of the paintings. ED.

Verses 13—17.

Michal's fidelity to her husband was commendable: nay, if the cause had been more doubtful, it would have been her duty to unite with him, while no harm was intended to Saul, and David merely aimed to preserve his life. (*Gen.* 31: 15, 16.) Her stratagem also to gain time, was allowable: but her direct falsehood in vindicating her conduct to Saul, had not even the excuse of necessity. (*Note, Ex.* 1: 19.)—*Mine enemy.* (17.) 18: 29. 24: 19. *Note,* 1 *Kings* 21: 20. SCOTT.

An image.] (*M.* and *M. R.*)—It can hardly be thought that *teraphim*, for idolatrous purposes, were permitted in David's family: and it is therefore supposed, that this image was merely a statue for ornament. In. 'Image in the pl. is *teraphim;* which we may suppose were sacred images, nearly equivalent to the penates, or household gods, of the Greeks and Romans. The Israelitish women seem to have had a strong propensity to this sort of superstition, notwithstanding the express law of Moses against it.' [See note and cut, Gen. 31: 19. also Judg. 17: 5.] *Hewlett.* 'It does not signify one made for superstitious uses, but a simple image,' says *Patrick*, 'of a man's head.' 'The Heb. means,' says Dr. *A. Clarke*, 'any kind of image.' *Pillow.*] 'Or, bag.' Dr. *A. Clarke. Cloth.*] 'A kind of net. This is a close curtain of gauze, or fine linen, used all over the east, by people of better fashion, to keep out the flies.' SHAW, in *Cond. Comm.*

Verses 19—24.

(*Notes,* 2 *Kings* 1: 9—14. *John* 7: 31—36, 40—53.)—Probably the other prophets laid aside their upper garments, and Saul's messengers along with them: (*M. R.*) and in an ecstasy, during the whole day and night, he involuntarily joined in speaking of divine things, or in singing hymns of praise, without any power of executing the base purpose of his journey. After which, finding himself baffled, he probably returned home extremely chagrined, without taking any notice of Samuel.—This second time of Saul being among the prophets was noted, as being indeed more wonderful than the former. (10: 10—13.) SCOTT.

(24.) *Stripped off.*] 'It may be meant only of his upper garment, whatever it was.'—*Naked.*] 'By naked is meant only, as before, stripped off his royal robe. (Note, John 21: 7.)' PATRICK. But *Roberts* thinks this alludes to the shameless idolatrous customs of worshipping. 'In those lascivious rites arising from the Satte-Poosy,

20 And Saul [g] sent messengers to take David: and [h] when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing *as* appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied.

21 And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise: and Saul [i] sent messengers again the third time, and they [k] prophesied also.

22 Then went he also to Ramah, and came to a great well that *is* in Sechu: and he asked and said, Where *are* Samuel and David? and *one* said, Behold, *they be* at Naioth in Ramah.

23 And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and [l] the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on and prophesied, [m] until he came to Naioth in Ramah.

24 And he [n] stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and * lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, [o] *Is* Saul also among the prophets?

g 11,14.
h 10:5,6,10. Num. 11:25,26. John 7: 45,46.
i 2 Kings 1:9—13. Prov. 27:22. Jer. 13:23.
k Joel 2:28.
l 20. 10:10. Num. 23:5. 24:2. Matt. 7:22. John 11:51. 1 Cor. 13:2.
m Prov. 16:9. 21:1.
n 2 Sam. 6:14,20. Is. 20:2. Mic. 1:8.
* Heb. *fell.* Num. 24:4.
o 10:11,12. Acts 9:21.

3. God continues his care of David, and still watches over him for good. Saul missed his blow; David was too quick for him and fled, and by a kind providence *escaped that night*. To these preservations, among others, David often refers in his Psalms, when he speaks of God being his Shield and Buckler, his Rock and Fortress, and delivering his *soul from death*.

V. 11—17. Here is,

I. Saul's further design of mischief to David. When he had escaped the javelin, supposing he went straight to his own house, as indeed he did, he sent some of his guards after him, to lay wait at the door, and assassinate him in the morning as soon as he stirred out, *v.* 11. Well might David complain, that his enemies were *bloody men*. See Ps. 59: 2, 3, 7.

II. David's wonderful deliverance out of this danger through Michal. Saul gave her to be a snare, but she proved his protector and helper; often is the devil out-shot with his own bow. How she came to know his danger, does not appear; perhaps notice was sent her from court, or, rather, she was herself aware of the soldiers about the house, when they were going to bed, though they kept so still and silent, that they said, *Who does hear?* as David notices in that Psalm, *v.* 7. She, knowing her father's great indignation at David, soon suspected the design, and bestirred herself for her husband's safety.

1. She got David out of the danger, *v.* 11, 12. David himself was better versed in fighting than flying, and, had it been lawful, would have easily cleared his house, by dint of sword, from those that haunted it. And now it was, either in his own closet before he went, or in the hiding-place to which he fled, he penned that 59th Psalm, which shows that, in his fright and hurry, his mind was composed, and, in this great danger, his faith strong and fixed on God; and whereas the plot was to slay him *in the morning*, he speaks there with the greatest assurance, (*v.* 16.) *I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning*.

2. She deceived Saul, and those whom he employed to be the instruments of his cruelty, *v.* 14. She can by no means be justified in telling a lie, and covering it thus with a cheat; God's truth needed not her lie: but she intended hereby to keep Saul in suspense for a while, that David might have time to secure himself, not doubting but those messengers would pursue him, if they found he was gone. The messengers had so much humanity as not to offer him any disturbance, when they heard he was sick; for to them that are in that misery, pity should be shown; but Saul, when he heard it, gave positive orders that he should be brought to him, sick or well, *v.* 15. It was base and barbarous thus to vow the death of one who, for aught he knew, was dying by the hand of nature. So earnestly did he thirst after his blood, and so greedy was his revenge, that he could not be pleased to see him dead, unless he himself was the death of him; though a while ago he said, *Let not mine hand be upon him*. Thus, when men give loose to their passions, they grow more and more outrageous. When the messengers were sent again, the cheat was discovered, *v.* 16. But, by this time, it was to be hoped David was safe, and therefore Michal was not then much concerned at the discovery. Saul chid her for helping David to escape, *v.* 17. What a base spirit, to expect that, because Michal was his daughter, she must therefore betray her own husband to him unjustly! Those that themselves will be held by no bonds of reason or religion, are ready to think others should as easily break those bonds. But, in answering Saul's chiding, Michal was again false, when she insinuated she would have hindered David's flight, but that he threatened her, *He said, Let me go, why should I kill thee?* This was a very unjust and unworthy reflection on him, and might confirm Saul in his rage. David was far from being so barbarous a man, and so imperious a husband, so brutish in his resolves, and so haughty in his menaces, as she here represented him. But David suffered both from friends and foes, and so did the Son of David.

V. 18—24. Here is,

I. David's place of refuge. He fled not to Bethlehem, to his relations, or to any of the cities of Israel that had caressed and cried him up, to make an interest in them for his own preservation; but he ran straight to Samuel, and *told him all that Saul had done to him*, *v.* 18. 1. Because it was Samuel that had given him assurance of the crown, in which his faith now began to fail; he was ready to say in his haste, (or, *in his flight*, as some read it, Ps. 116: 11.) '*All men are liars*, not only Saul that promised me my life, but Samuel himself that promised me the throne.' In flying to Samuel, he made God his Refuge, trusting in the *shadow of his wings;* where else can a good man think himself safe? 2. Because Samuel, as a prophet, was best able to advise him what to do. In the Psalm he penned the night before, he had lifted up his prayer to God; and now he takes the first opportunity of waiting on Samuel, to receive direction and instruction from God. If we expect answers of peace to our prayers, we must have our ears open to God's Word. 3. Because with Samuel there was a college of prophets, with whom he might join in praising God, and the pleasure of that would be the greatest relief imaginable in his present distress. And, doubtless, what little pleasure is to be had in this world, they have it, that live a life of communion with God: so David retired in the time of trouble, Ps. 27: 4—6.

II. David's protection in this place. *He and Samuel went and dwelt* (or *lodged*) *in Naioth*, where the school of the prophets was, in Ramah, as in a privileged place, for the Philistines themselves would not disturb that meeting, *ch.* 10: 10. But Saul, having notice of it by some of his spies, (*v.* 19.) set officers to seize David, *v.* 20. When they did not bring him, he sent more; when they returned not, he sent the third time; (*v.* 21.) and hearing no tidings of these, he went himself, *v.* 22. It was below the king, to go himself on such an errand, but persecutors will stoop to any thing,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The most vehement anger, when excited by real or supposed injuries, may be pacified by concessions, kindness, and continued good behavior: but envious rage is exasperated by excellency of character and conduct, and generally is implacable.—Absolute princes are so seldom opposed in their designs, and so few venture to plead in behalf of those whom they envy and hate, that they often conclude all men to be alike selfish, and ready to execute any lucrative schemes of villany. But that friendship, which is cemented by mutual faith and piety, will influence those, who feel its sacred energy, to renounce their highest temporal interests, and venture the displeasure of their superiors, in pleading the cause of injured worth.—Ungovernable passions easily break through the most solemn oaths, when the fear of God does not possess the heart. A fresh temptation soon rouses the dormant corruption: and, by indulging malignant passions, men give Satan his full advantage, and may be answerable for multiplied murders, without actually perpetrating any.—The servants of God however should keep to their place and duty, though hated for so doing; give honor to their earthly superiors, however they behave; and persevere in their endeavors to 'overcome evil with good.' The Almighty has innumerable methods of protecting them in the most imminent dangers: He can preserve them by the kindness even of those persons, whose conduct deserves marked disapprobation; He can change the hearts, or bind the hands of their enemies, or shame them for a season out of their malicious purposes.—In some instances, a persecutor, by coming among the people of God, has been apprehended, as it were, by converting grace; and, like Saul of Tarsus, has professed and 'preached the faith, that once he sought to destroy:' (*Gal.* 1: 15—24. *Phil.* 3: 12—14. 1 *Tim.* 1: 12—16.) but far more, like king Saul, have for a time been apparently changed, have exercised spiritual gifts, and been numbered among the prophets, whose malice has remained unsubdued, and whose 'last state has been worse than the first.' SCOTT.

the persons engaged are always naked. Vast numbers of devotees also in India walk about entirely naked.' So the Turkish santons, see *Savary* and *Henniker*. A son of the editor saw one in Egypt, called there a *marabout*, (who appeared to be an idiot,) entirely naked, walking under the care o a keeper. The Turks much respect *naturals*, believing them to be under direct divine influences. ED.

CHAP. XX.

David consults with Jonathan how to provide for his safety, 1—10. They renew the covenant of friendship, and confirm it by oath, 11—17. They agree on a token, 18—23. David absents himself from the king's table, and is excused by Jonathan, whom Saul abuses and attempts to kill, 24—34. Jonathan shows David his danger, and most affectionately takes leave of him, 35—42.

AND David [a] fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, [b] What have I done? what *is* mine iniquity? and what *is* my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?

2 And he said unto him, [c] God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing, either great or small, but that he will * show it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? It *is* not *so*.

3 And David [d] sware moreover and said; Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly, [e] *as* the LORD liveth and [f] *as* thy soul liveth, *there is* [g] but a step between me and death.

4 Then said Jonathan unto David, † Whatsoever thy soul ‡ desireth, I will even do *it* for thee.

5 And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to-morrow *is* the [h] new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, [i] that I may hide myself in the field unto the third *day* at even.

6 If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked *leave* of me, that he might run to [k] Beth-lehem his city; for *there is* a yearly § sacrifice there for all the family.

7 If he say thus, [l] *It is* well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be very wroth, *then* be sure that [m] evil is determined by him.

8 Therefore thou and stick at nothing, to gratify their malice. Saul lays aside all public business to hunt David. But how was David delivered?

1. When the messengers came where David was among the prophets, the *Spirit of God* came upon them, and *they prophesied;* i. e. joined the rest in praising God. Thus, (1.) God secured David: either they were put into such an ecstasy they forgot their errand, and never minded David; or they were, for the present, put into so good a frame, that they could not entertain the thought of doing so bad a thing. (2.) He honored the sons of the prophets, and the communion of saints, and showed how He can, when He pleases, awe even the worst of men, by the tokens of his presence in the assemblies of the faithful, and force them to acknowledge, that *God is with them of a truth,* 1 Cor. 14: 24, 25. And where may the influence of the Spirit be expected, but in the congregations of the saints? (3.) He magnified his power over the spirits of men.

2. Saul himself was likewise seized with the spirit of prophecy, before he came to the place. One would have thought, so bad a man had been in no danger of being turned into a prophet; yet, when God will take this way of protecting David, even Saul prophesies, as did his messengers, *v.* 23. He stripped off his royal robe and warlike habiliments, as either too fine, or too heavy, for this service, and fell into a trance, as it should seem, or into a rapture, which continued all that day and night. The saints at Damascus were delivered from the rage of the New Testament Saul, by a change wrought on his spirit, but of another nature from this. This was only amazing, but that sanctifying. This was for a day, that for ever. Note, Many have great gifts, and yet no grace; prophesy in Christ's name, and yet are disowned by Him, Mat. 7: 22. Now the proverb recurs, *Is Saul among the prophets?* See *ch.* 10: 12. Then it was *different* from what it had been, but now *contrary.* He is rejected of God, and actuated by an evil spirit, and yet *among the prophets.*

CHAP. XX. David, having several times narrowly escaped Saul's fury, begins to consider at last, whether it were not necessary for him to retire into the country, and take up arms in his own defence; but he will not do so daring a thing, without consulting his faithful friend Jonathan: how that was done, and what passed between them, we are told in this chapter, where we have as surprising instances of supernatural love, as we had in the ch. before of unnatural hatred.

V. 1—8. Here, I. David represents his present troubles to Jonathan. While Saul lay bound by his trance at Naioth, David escaped to the court, and got to speak with Jonathan. And it was happy he had such a friend at court, when he had such an enemy on the throne. If there be those that hate and despise us, let us not be disturbed at that, for there are those also that love and respect us; God hath set the one over against the other, and so must we. Now, 1. David appeals to Jonathan concerning his innocency, and desires, if he knew of any just offence he had given his father, he would tell him, that he might humble himself, and beg his pardon, *v.* 1. 2. He endeavors to convince him, that, notwithstanding his innocency, Saul sought his life. Jonathan, from filial respect to his father, was very loath to believe he designed, or would ever do, so wicked a thing, *v.* 2. He knew nothing of any such design; and he had usually been made privy to all his counsels. As became a dutiful son, he endeavored to cover his father's shame, as far as was consistent with justice and fidelity to David. Charity is not forward to think evil of any, especially of a parent, 1 Cor. 13: 5. David therefore gives him the assurance of an oath concerning his own danger; swears the peace on Saul, that he was in fear of his life by him, *v.* 3. And as for Saul's concealing it from Jonathan, it was easy to account for that; he knew the friendship between him and David, and therefore, though in other things he advised with him, yet not in that. None more fit than Jonathan to serve him in every design that was just and honorable; but he knew him to be a man of more virtue, than to be his confidant in so base a design as the murder of David.

II. Jonathan generously offers him his service; (*v.* 4.) *Whatsoever thou desirest,* he needed not insert the provision of lawful and honest, (he knew David too well to think he would ask any thing otherwise,) *I will even do it for thee.* This is true friendship. Thus Christ testifies his love to us, *Ask, and it shall be done for you:* and we must testify ours to Him, by keeping his commandments.

III. David only desires him to satisfy himself, and then to satisfy him, whether Saul did really design his death or no. Perhaps David proposed this, more for Jonathan's conviction than his own, for he himself was well satisfied.

1. The method of trial he proposes, was very natural, and would certainly discover how Saul stood affected to him. The next two days, Saul was to dine publicly, on occasion of the solemnities of the new moon, when extraordinary sacrifices were offered, and feasts made on the sacrifices. At these solemn feasts, Saul had either all his *children* to sit with him, and David had a seat as one of *them;* or all his *great officers,* and David had a seat as one of *them.* However it was, David resolved his seat should be empty, (which never used to be at a sacred feast,) those *two days,* (*v.* 5.) and he would abscond till the solemnity was over, and put it upon this issue; If Saul admitted an excuse for his absence, he would conclude he was reconciled; but if he resented it, it was easy to conclude he designed him a mischief, since it was certain he did not love him so well as to desire his presence for any other end, than that he might have opportunity to do him mischief, *v.* 7.

2. The excuse he desires Jonathan to make for his absence, we have reason to think, was true; *v.* 6. A day of thanksgiving was kept in his father's family, for the comforts they enjoyed, and a prayer, for the continuance of them. By this it appears that the family David was of, was a very religious family, a house that had a church in it.

3. The arguments he uses with Jonathan, to persuade him to this kindness, are very pressing, *v.* 8. He had entered into a league of friendship with him, at Jonathan's own proposal; (*Thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the Lord*

9 And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee?

10 Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me? or what if thy father answer thee roughly?

11 And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field.

12 And Jonathan said unto David, O LORD God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about to-morrow any time, or the third *day*, behold, if there be good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and show it thee;

13 The LORD do so and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will show it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father.

14 And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not:

15 But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth.

16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the LORD even require it at the hand of David's enemies.

17 And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

18 Then Jonathan said to him, To-morrow *is* the new moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.

19 And when thou hast stayed three days, then thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business *was in hand*, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel.

20 And I will shoot three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark.

21 And, behold, I will send a lad, saying, Go, find the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows *are* on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for there *is* peace to thee, and no hurt; as the LORD liveth.

22 But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows *are* beyond thee; go thy way: for the LORD hath sent thee away.

23 And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD *be* between thee and me for ever.

24 So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat.

25 And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon a seat by the wall: and Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty.

26 Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he *is* not clean; surely he *is* not clean.

27 And it came to pass on the morrow, which *was* the second day of the month, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to-day?

28 And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked *leave* of me to go to Beth-lehem:

29 And he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me to be there: and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table.

30 Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness?

31 For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die.

32 And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?

33 And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David.

34 So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

35 And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him.

36 And he said unto his lad, Run, find now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.

37 And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, Is not the arrow beyond thee?

38 And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.

39 But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

40 And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry *them* to the city.

41 And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded.

42 And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed, for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

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a 19:19—24. 23:26—28. Ps. 124:6—8.
b 2 Pet. 2:9.
c 12:3. 24:11,17. Ps. 7:3—5. 18:20—24. 2 Cor. 1:12. 1 John 3:21.
d 14:45. *See on* Gen. 44:7. Josh. 22: 29. 24:16. Luke 20:16.
e Heb. *uncover mine ear.* 12. 9:15. *marg.* Ps. 40:6. Is. 50:5. John 15: 15. 17:8.
f Deut. 6:13. Jer. 4:2. Heb. 6:16.
g 25:26. 2 Sam. 15:21. 2 Kings 2:2, 4,6. † 1:26. 17:55. Jer. 38:16.
h 27:1. Deut. 28:66. Ps. 116:3. 1 Cor. 15:30,31. 2 Cor. 1:9.
† Or, *Say what is thy mind, and I will,* &c.
‡ Heb. *speaketh,* or, *thinketh.*
h Num. 10:10. 28:11. 2 Kings 4:23 Ps. 81:3. Col. 2:16.
i 19. 19:2. Ps. 55:12. Prov. 22:3 John 3:59. Acts 17:14.
k 17:58. John 7:42.
§ Or, *feast.* 9:12. 16:2—5.
l Deut. 1:23. 2 Sam. 17:4.
m 9. 25:17. Esth. 7:7.
o Gen. 24:49. 47:29. Josh. 2:14. Ruth 1:8. Prov. 3:3. p 16. 18:3. 23:18
q Josh. 22:22. 2 Sam. 14:32. Ps. 7 4,5. Acts 25:11.
r 1 Chr. 12:17. Ps. 116:11.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX. V. 1, 2. After Saul had sworn not to slay David, (19: 4—7.) it may be supposed he had said no more to Jonathan on that subject; and perhaps Jonathan had not heard of Saul's late violent attempts against David. (*Notes,* 19: 13—24.) SCOTT.

(5—7.) (*Notes,* 19, 25. 19: 19—24.) ID.

Verse 8.

'If,' says he, 'I am guilty of any great offence which violates our covenant, such as treason against Saul; slay me thyself, but betray me not to thy father.' This was finely conceived, to touch the tenderest feelings of Jonathan's heart. SCOTT.

bring me to thy father?

9 And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, [s] then would I not tell it thee?

10 Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me? or what *if* thy father [t] answer thee roughly?

11 And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field.

12 And Jonathan said unto David, [u] O LORD God of Israel, when I have *sounded my father about to-morrow any time, *or* the third *day*, and, behold, *if there be* good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and † show it thee;

13 [v] The LORD do so and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father *to do* thee evil, then I will show it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace; and [x] the LORD be with thee, as [y] he hath been with my father.

14 And thou shalt not only, while yet I live, show me [z] the kindness of the LORD, that I die not;

15 But *also* [a] thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David, every one from the face of the earth.

16 So Jonathan ‡ made *a covenant* with the house of David, *saying*, [b] Let the LORD even require *it* at the hand of David's enemies.

17 And Jonathan caused David to swear again, § because he loved him: [c] for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

18 Then Jonathan said to David, To-morrow *is* the [d] new moon; and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be ‖ empty.

19 And *when* thou hast stayed three days, *then* thou shalt go down ¶ quickly, and come to the place where thou didst [e] hide thyself ** when the business was *in hand*, and shalt remain by the stone †† Ezel.

20 And I will shoot three arrows on the side *thereof*, as though I shot at a mark.

21 And, behold, I will send a lad, *saying*, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows *are* on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for *there is* peace to thee, and †† no hurt, *as* [f] the LORD liveth.

22 But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows *are* beyond thee; go thy way: for the LORD hath sent thee away.

23 And *as touching*

with thee,) and his cause was just; otherwise he would not urge him to espouse it. '*If there be iniquity in me*, I am so far from desiring or expecting that the covenant between us should bind thee to be a confederate with me in that iniquity, that I freely release thee from it, and wish that thy hand may be first upon me: *slay me thyself.*' No honest man will urge his friend to do a dishonest thing for his sake.

V. 9—23. Here, I. Jonathan protests his fidelity to David in his distress. Notwithstanding David's strong confidence in Jonathan, yet, because he might fear lest his father's influence, and his own interest, should warp or cool, Jonathan thought it requisite solemnly to renew his professions of friendship to him, *v.* 9, 11. So he faithfully promises to let him know how, on trial, he found his father affected toward him, and to make the matter neither better nor worse than it was; (*v.* 12, 13.) thus would he deliver him from the evil, if it were real, and from the fear of evil, if it were but imaginary. For the confirmation of his promise, he appeals to God, 1. As a Witness, *v.* 12. The strength of his passion made the manner of his speaking concise and abrupt. 2. As a Judge, *v.* 13. He expresses himself thus solemnly, that David might be abundantly assured of his sincerity. And thus God has confirmed his promises to us, that we might have *strong consolation*, Heb. 6: 17, 18. Jonathan adds to his protestations his hearty prayer, '*The Lord be with thee*, to protect and prosper thee, *as He has been* formerly *with my father*, though now He be withdrawn.' This intimates his belief, that David would be in his father's place, and his good wishes, that he might prosper in it better than his father now did.

II. He provides for the entail of the covenant of friendship with David on his posterity, *v.* 14—16. He engages David to be a friend to his family when he was gone, *v.* 15. This he spoke from a natural affection he had to his children. It also bespeaks his firm belief of David's advancement, and that it would be in his power to do a kindness or unkindness to his seed; for, in process of time, *the Lord would cut off his enemies*, Saul himself not excepted. The house of David must likewise be bound to the house of Jonathan from generation to generation, *v.* 16. Note, True friends cannot but covet to transmit to theirs after them their mutual affections. *Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not.* He calls it *the kindness of the Lord*, because the Lord shows such to those whom He takes into covenant with Himself; He is a God to them, and to their seed; they are *beloved for their father's sake.* He secures it by an imprecation, *v.* 16. *The Lord require it at the hand of David's seed*, (for of David himself he had no suspicion,) if they prove so far David's enemies, as to deal wrongfully with the posterity of Jonathan. He feared lest David, or some of his, should hereafter be tempted to do by his seed, as Abimelech had done by the sons of Gideon, Judg. 9: 5. But the reason given (*v.* 17.) is purely generous, and has nothing of self in it; it was because *he loved him as he loved his own soul*, therefore he desired he and his might be loved by him. David, though now in disgrace at court, and in distress, was as amiable in the eyes of Jonathan as ever; so pure were the principles on which his friendship was built. Having himself sworn to David, he caused David to swear to him, and (as we read it) *to swear again*, which David consented to; to swear by his love to him, which he looked upon as a sacred thing. Jonathan's heart was so much upon it, that, when they parted this time, he concludes with a solemn appeal to God, *The Lord be between thee and me for ever;* (*v.* 23.) i. e. 'God Himself be Judge between us and our families for ever, if on either side this league of friendship be violated.' It was in remembrance of this covenant, that David was kind to Mephibosheth. 2 Sam. 9: 7.—21: 7. It will be a kindness to ourselves and ours, to secure an interest in those whom God favors, and to make his friends ours.

III. He settles the method of intelligence, *v.* 18—22. He would be missed the first day, or at least the second day of the new moon, and would be inquired after, *v.* 18. On the third day, by

s 38,42. 19:2.
t 30—34. 25:10,14,17. Gen. 42:7,30. 1 Kings 12:13. Prov. 18:23.
u Josh. 22:22. Job 31:4. Ps. 17:3. 139:1—4.
* Heb. *searched*, Prov. 20:5. 25:2,3.
† Heb. *uncover thine ear.* 2.
v 3:17. 25:22. Ruth 1:17. 2 Sam. 3: 35. 19:13. 1 Kings 19:2. 20:10.
x 17:37. Josh. 1:5. 1 Chr. 22:11,16. Matt. 28:20. Phil. 4:9.
y 10:7. 11:6—13. 14:47. 2 Sam. 7:15.
z 2 Sam. 9:3. Eph. 5:1,2.
a 24:21. 2 Sam. 9:1—7. 21:7.
‡ Heb. *cut.* 18:3. Gen. 15:18.
b 25:22. 31:2. 2 Sam. 4:7,8. 21:3.
§ Or, *by his love toward him.*
c 18:1,3. Deut. 13:6. 2 Sam. 1:26. Prov. 18:24.
d See on 5.
‖ Heb. *missed.*
¶ Or, *diligently.* Heb. *greatly.*
e 5. 19:2.
** Heb. *in the day of the business.*
†† Or, *that showeth the way.*
‡‡ Heb. *not* any *thing.*
f Jer. 4:2. 5:2. 12:16. Am. 8:14.

Verses 12, 13.

Jonathan knew Samuel had anointed David, and believed he would certainly be king: and he had no thoughts of opposing the purpose of God, but rejoiced that so pious and able a person was chosen to reign over Israel; and prayed that the Lord might be with him, as he had been with Saul. For, as it became a dutiful son, he drew a veil over his father's misconduct, and only adverted to his former good management and success. (*Notes*, 11: 4—15.)—The whole is emphatically the language of strong affection and emotion; and this appears in the broken and interrupted language employed. SCOTT.

(12.) 'There is most evidently something wanting in this v. The Sept. has, "The Lord God of Israel doth *know*;" the Syr. and Arab. have, *is witness*; and two of Kennicot's mss. read *liveth*. Either makes good sense, but the last the best.' Dr. A. CLARKE.—*Patrick* thinks the clause an *exclamation*, and the Assemb. Ann. include what follows it *in a parenthesis* to 'do so,' &c. ED.

Verses 14—17.

It has been very common, in disputed successions, for the reigning prince to clear the title of his own family, by cutting off all competitors: Jonathan therefore prudently proposed to extend the personal covenant, before made with David, to their posterity also. When we consider David's distress, Saul's enmity, and Jonathan's prospects, we can never sufficiently admire the strength of his faith, and the force of his disinterested love. (18: 1. *John* 15: 12—16.) It is observable that Jonathan did not desire, that the Lord should require it of David or his posterity, if any failure took place, but 'at the hand of David's enemies.' SCOTT.

Verse 19.

It must be supposed, David went to Bethlehem: but the original words seem to intimate, that he should come three days successively, from the place of his retirement to the spot where he and Jonathan had discoursed on the business, in order to learn whether any thing had been discovered. Perhaps he stayed but one day at Bethlehem. ID.

Stone of Ezel.] 'Stone of *going*, or *travelling*, i. e. which directs travellers in the way.' POOLE.—'Probably there was here some *cave*, or *hiding-place*.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

[e] the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold [h] the LORD *be* between thee and me for ever.

[*Practical Observations.*]

24 ¶ So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the [i] king sat him down to eat meat.

25 And the king sat upon his seat, [j] as at other times, *even* upon a seat by the wall: and Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty.

26 Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, [k] he *is* not clean; surely he *is* not clean.

27 And it came to pass on the morrow, *which was* the second *day* of the month, that David's place was empty; and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, [l] Wherefore cometh not [m] the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday nor to-day?

28 And Jonathan [n] answered Saul, David earnestly asked *leave* of me *to go* to Bethlehem:

29 And he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and [o] my brother, he hath commanded me *to be there:* and now, if I have found favor in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren: therefore he cometh not unto the king's table.

30 Then [p] Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, [*] Thou son of the perverse rebellious *woman*, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse

which time he would be returned from Beth-lehem, he must be at such a place, (*v.* 19.) and Jonathan would come toward that place with his bow and arrows to shoot for diversion; (*v.* 20.) would send his lad to fetch his arrows, and if they were shot short of the lad, David must take it for a signal of safety, and not be afraid to show his head; (*v.* 21.) but if he shot beyond the lad, it was a signal of danger, and he must shift for his safety, *v.* 22. This expedient he fixed upon, lest he should not have the opportunity, which yet it proved he had, of talking with him, and making the report by word of mouth.

V. 24—34. Jonathan is here effectually convinced of that which he was so loath to believe, that his father had an implacable enmity to David, and would certainly be the death of him if it were in his power; and he had like to have paid very dear himself for the conviction.

I. David is missed from the feast on the first day, but nothing is said of him: yet Saul had his heart as full as ever of envy and malice against David. He should first have been reconciled to him, and then come and offered his gift; but, instead of that, he hoped, at this feast, to drink his blood. What an abomination was that sacrifice, which was brought with such a wicked mind as this! Prov. 21: 27. But David's place was empty. It did not use to be so. None more constant than he in attending holy duties; nor had he been absent now, but that he must have come at the peril of his life; and we ought not to throw ourselves into the mouth of danger. Christ Himself absconded often, till He knew his hour was come. But that day Saul took no notice that he missed David, but said within himself, *Surely he is not clean, v.* 26. He knew what conscience David made of the law, and that he would rather keep away from the holy feast, than come in his uncleanness. Blessed be God, no uncleanness is now a restraint on us, but what we may by faith and repentance be washed from in the Fountain opened, Ps. 26: 6.

II. He is inquired for the second day, *v.* 27. Saul asked Jonathan, who he knew was his confidant; but he calls him in disdain, *the son of Jesse.* He asks for him, as if he were not pleased he should be absent from a religious feast: and so it should be an example to masters of families to see to it, that those under their charge be not absent from the worship of God, either in public or in the family. It is a bad thing for us, except in case of necessity, to omit any opportunity of statedly attending on God in solemn ordinances. Thomas lost a sight of Christ, by being once absent from a meeting of the disciples. But what displeased him was, that hereby he missed the opportunity he expected, of doing David a mischief.

III. Jonathan makes his excuse, *v.* 28, 29. 1. That he was absent upon a good occasion; being sent for by his elder brother, to keep the feast with his relations, for the promotion of brotherly love; and no master would deny a servant liberty to do that at proper times. He pleads, 2. That he did not go without leave, humbly asked and obtained from Jonathan, who, as his superior officer, was proper to be applied to for it. Thus he represents David, as not wanting in any instance of respect and duty to the government.

IV. Saul, hereupon, breaks out into a most extravagant passion, and rages like a tiger disappointed of his prey. David was out of his reach, but he falls upon Jonathan for his sake; (*v.* 30, 31.) and abuses him shamefully; in effect calls him, 1. A bastard; tells him he was born *to the confusion of his mother;* i. e. he had given the world cause to suspect he was illegitimate, because he loved him whom Saul hated, and supported him who would be the destruction of their family. 2. A traitor: *Thou son of perverse rebellion,* so the word is; i. e. 'Thou perverse rebel.' At other times, no counsellor or commander was more trusty and well-beloved; yet now, he represents him as dangerous to his crown and life. 3. A fool: *Thou hast chosen the son of Jesse* for thy friend, *to thine own confusion,* for, while he lives, *thou shalt never be established.* It is probable Saul knew David was anointed to the kingdom, by the same hand that anointed him, and then, not Jonathan, but himself, was the fool, to think to defeat the counsels of God. Yet nothing will serve him but David must die, and Jonathan must fetch him to execution. See how ill Saul's passion looks, and let it warn us against the indulgence of any thing like it in ourselves. Anger is madness, *and he that hates his brother, is a murderer.*

V. Jonathan is sorely grieved, and put into disorder, by his father's barbarous passion; and the more, because he had hoped better things, *v.* 2. He was troubled for his father, that he should

[e] 14,15.
[h] 42. Gen. 16:5. 31:50.
[i] 1 s. 50:16—21. Prov. 4:17. 15:17. 17:1. 21:3,27. Is. 1:11—15. Zech. 7:6. John 18:28.
[j] Judg. 16:20.
[k] Lev. 7:21. 11:24,27,31,40. 15:5,16, 17,19—21. Num. 19:16.
[l] 18:11. 19:9,10,15.
[m] 22:7—9,13,14. 25: 10. Is. 11: 1,2. Matt. 13:55. 1 Pet. 2:4.
[n] 8.
[o] 17:28.
[p] Job 5:2. Prov. 14:29. 19:19. 21:24. 25:28. 27:3. Jam. 1:19,20.
[*] Or, *Thou perverse rebel.* Heb. *Son of perverse rebellion.* Prov. 15:2. 21:24. Matt. 5:22. Eph. 4:31. 6:4.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—23. Next to the consolations of true religion, nothing is more supporting to an afflicted mind, than the converse of a pious friend: and it is highly desirable to avoid misconstructions of our conduct, by those whom we love and esteem; lest we should lose the comfort of their friendship, and throw temptations in their way.—A clear conscience, an unblemished reputation, and the favor of God, are unspeakable advantages in trying circumstances. (1 *Pet.* 3: 13—18. 4: 12—16.)—Friendly and pious persons are always backward to suspect others of deep malignity; and pious children will veil the faults of their parents as far as consists with other duties, and truth permits. But it is shameful when parents deliberately devise wickedness, which they must studiously conceal from their children, lest they should in them meet with obstacles to their criminal designs.—At some times it *appears to us,* 'there is but a step between us and death: at all times we are sensible it may be so, and should be expecting and preparing for that event; 'for, as sure as the LORD liveth, and as our souls now live' in the body, we shall ere long remove into the eternal world.—But let dangers appear ever so imminent, we cannot die, till the purpose of God concerning us be accomplished; and, if we are believers, till 'we have served our generation according to his will.' (*Acts* 13: 24—37.)—True friendship, grounded on the covenant of the Lord, possesses inconceivable force: it is stronger than death, and able to silence the voice of emulation, ambition, self-love, and even relative affection. Who then can comprehend the love of Jesus, who gave Himself a sacrifice unto God for us rebellious and polluted sinners! And what ought to be the force and effects of our love to Him! SCOTT.

Verse 25.

When Saul entered the room, Jonathan *arose,* and took his seat next to him; and Abner probably, as a near relation of Saul and commander of his forces, sat next to Jonathan.—It must be supposed, that Saul had before this returned to Gibeah, and that the incidents here recorded took place there. SCOTT.

'The Israelites sat at meat (as did the Greeks and Romans in after times) in a half round, or circle: the middle place of which was the most honorable.—The custom of lying along, leaning on their elbows, was not yet introduced, but they sat as we do.' PATRICK.

Verse 27.

As the exact time when the new moon happened was uncertain, it seems to have been customary to observe two days as festivals; so that those who were unclean on the first day, might observe the second. (*Num.* 28: 11—15.) For many of these ceremonial uncleannesses lasted only till the evening. (*M. R.—Lev.* 15:) SCOTT.

Verse 30.

(*M.* and *M. R.*)—Considering Saul's rank, and Jonathan's relation to him, his eminent services and excellent character, and the public and sacred occasion at which it occurred, this speech may give some idea of the furious passions which Saul indulged; as the terms used by him seem to contain the most scurrilous abuse the language afforded. (27. 16: 14. *Jam.* 3· 3—6.) ID.

to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness?

31 For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom: wherefore now [s] send and fetch him unto me, for he [*] shall surely die.

32 And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, [r] Wherefore shall he be slain? [t] what hath he done?

33 And Saul [t] cast a javelin at him to smite him: [u] whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David.

34 So Jonathan arose from the table [v] in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for [x] he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

35 ¶ And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field [y] at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him.

36 And he said unto his lad, [z] Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. *And* as the lad ran, he shot an arrow † beyond him.

37 And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, *Is* not the arrow beyond thee?

38 And Jonathan cried after the lad, [a] Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.

39 But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

40 And Jonathan gave his ‡ artillery unto § his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry *them* to the city.

41 *And* as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of *a place* toward the south, [b] and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: [c] and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until [d] David exceeded.

42 And Jonathan said to David, [e] Go in peace, ‖ forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. [f] And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

q 8. 19:6,12—15.
[*] Heb. is *the son of death.* 26:16. 2 Sam. 19:28. 1 s. 79:11. *Marg.*
r 19:5. Prov. 24:11,12. 31:8,5. John 7:51.
s Matt. 27:23. Luke 23:22.
t 18:11. 19:10,11. Prov. 22:24. Ec. 9:3. Jer. 17:9.
u 7. Ec. 7:9.
v Ec. 7:20. Eph. 4:26.
x Mark. 3:5.
y 19. 2 Sam. 20:5.
z 20,21.
† Heb. *to pass over him.*
a Ps. 55:6—9. Prov. 6:4,5. Matt. 24: 16—18. Mark 13:14—18. Luke 17:31, 32.
‡ Heb. *instruments.*
§ Heb. *the lad that* was *his.*
b 25:23. Gen. 43:28. 2 Sam. 9:6.
c 16:1. Gen. 29:11,13. 45:15. 2 Sam. 19:39. Acts 20:37.
d 18:3. 2 Sam. 1:26.
e 22. 1:17. Num. 6:26. Luke 7:50. Acts 16:36.
‖ Or, the LORD be witness of that *which*, &c. 23.
f 23:18.

V. 35—42. Here is, 1. Jonathan's faithful performance of his promise to give David notice of the success of his dangerous experiment; which, having done, (*v.* 35—37.) and finding the coast clear, and no danger of a discovery, he presumed on one minute's personal conversation with David, after he had bid him flee for his life.

2. The most sorrowful parting of these two friends, who, for aught that appears, never came together again but once, and that was by stealth *in a wood, ch.* 23: 16. (1.) David addressed himself to Jonathan with the reverence of a servant rather than the freedom of a friend, (*v.* 41.) as one deeply sensible of his obligations to him for the good services he had done him. (2.) They took leave of each other with the greatest affection imaginable, *v.* 41. The separation of two such faithful friends, was equally grievous to them both, but David's case was the more deplorable: for when Jonathan was returning to his family and friends, David was leaving all his comforts, even those of God's sanctuary, and therefore his grief exceeded Jonathan's; or, perhaps, it was because his temper was more tender, and his passions stronger. (3.) They referred themselves to the covenant of friendship that was between them, both of them comforting themselves with that in this mournful separation. '*We have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord*, for ourselves and our heirs, that we and they will be faithful and kind to each other, from generation to generation.' Thus, while we are at home in the body, and absent from the Lord, this is our comfort, that He has *made with us an everlasting covenant.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 24—42. The formal professor is sometimes more constant at divine ordinances, than even the zealous believer: for discomposure of mind will occasionally prevent the attendance of a believer; while the purpose or the practice of the vilest crimes does not interrupt those, who trust in the mere external observance.—When envious and angry passions are indulged, men are pushed on by Satan into the most indecent excesses, without respect even to character, or the most sacred obligations: nor are they, at one moment, aware of the outrages, which they shall commit the next. Let us then fear giving place to the devil in the smallest degree.—Under great provocations, the meekest cannot always refrain from anger; but when its emotions are felt, it is our wisdom to withdraw in silence: and it is generous, to be more grieved for our insulted friends, than for ourselves.—Every comfort on earth is counterpoised with some sorrow; and the dearest friends must experience the most painful separations. But Christians need not, and should not, 'sorrow as men without hope:' for, being one with Christ, they are one with each other; and will soon meet in his presence to part no more, where all tears shall be wiped from their eyes. SCOTT.

Verses 32—34.

(*M. R.*) When Jonathan had before reasoned with Saul, he was reduced to a better temper; but now he would not hearken to a word: and though, in order to induce Jonathan's concurrence in killing David, he professed a great zeal for his establishment in the kingdom; yet when his purposes were opposed, he madly attempted to kill Jonathan also!—He seems to have used a javelin instead of a sceptre; for he had it always ready at hand. SCOTT.

It has been suggested, that the words of these verses do not mean, that Saul cast a javelin at Jonathan; but only that 'he *had* cast a javelin' at David, which Jonathan at this crisis recollected. It must, however, be admitted, that this is by no means an obvious construction of the original. Nor can it be readily thought, that merely a recollection of a fact which formerly had taken place, could induce Jonathan to leave his place 'in fierce anger;' when he had, at this time, borne the most provoking language of his father without expressing any indignant perturbation; and had also, subsequent to some of Saul's attempts on David's life, calmly expostulated with Saul, and induced him to engage, by a solemn oath, that he would not slay David. (19: 4—7.)—But the atrocity of such an attempt on the life of his own son, seems to some persons totally incredible. Yet Saul's stern and rigorous conduct, respecting Jonathan, after he had miraculously prevailed to rescue him and Israel from the greatest straits and disgrace, shows that the self-will and severity of his mind had overcome, even at that favorable crisis, his natural affection. (14: 36—44.) And the transient violence of his furious rage, in attempting to murder his son, on the occasion recorded in these verses, bears no proportion to his subsequent deliberate, impious, and most barbarous murder of the priests, and their wives, and children; because they were supposed to favor David. (*Notes*, 22: 11—19.) Nor can any thing be deemed too atrocious for a man to commit, whom God had given up, and left, in a kind of desperate madness, under the power of Satan, and of his own passions, till he plunged himself into destruction with his own hands. (28: 6—25. 31: 3—6.) SCOTT.

Verses 41, 42

(*Notes*, 23: 16—18.) ID.

(42.) *City.*] 'I. e. Gibeah of Saul.' ASSEMB. ANN.

CHAP. XXI.

David comes to Nob, and obtains from Ahimelech hallowed bread, 1—6. Doeg, an Edomite, is present, 7. David takes also Goliath's sword, 8, 9. He flees to Gath, and feigns himself mad, and is sent away, 10—15.

THEN came David to [a] Nob, to [b] Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was [c] afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why *art* thou alone, and no man with thee?

2 And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, [d] The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed *my* servants to such and such a place.

3 Now therefore what is [e] under thine hand? give *me* five *loaves of* bread in mine hand, or what there is * present.

4 And the priest answered David, and said, *There is* no common bread under mine hand, but there is [f] hallowed bread; [g] if the young men have kept themselves at least from women.

5 And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women *have been* kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and [h] the vessels of the young men are holy, and *the bread is* [i] in a manner common, † yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel.

a 22:19. Neh. 11:32. Is. 10:32.
b 14:3. *Ahiah.* 22:9—19. Mark 2:26. c 16:4.
d 19:17. 22:22. Gen. 27:20,24. 1 Kings 13:18. Ps. 119:29. Gal. 2:12, 13. Col. 3:9.
e 4. Judg. 9:29. Is. 3:6.
* Heb. *found.*
6. Ex. 25:30. Lev. 24:5—9. Matt. 12:3,4.
g Ex. 19:15. Zech. 7:3. 1 Cor. 7:5.
h Acts 9:15. 1 Thes. 4:3,4. 2 Tim. 2: 20,21. 1 Pet. 3:7.
i Lev. 24:9.
† Or, *especially when this day there is other sanctified in the vessel.*

CHAP. XXI. David has now quite taken leave, both of Saul's court, and camp; has bid farewell to his beloved Jonathan; and henceforward to the end of this book, is looked upon as an outlaw and traitor; we still find him shifting from place to place for his safety, and Saul pursuing him. His troubles are very particularly related, not only to be a key to the Psalms, but that he might be, as other prophets, *an example* to the saints, in all ages, *of suffering affliction, and of patience;* and, especially, a type of Christ, who, being anointed to the kingdom, *humbled Himself,* and was *therefore highly exalted:* only the example of the suffering Jesus was a copy without a blot, but David's not so; witness the records of this chapter, where we find him, in his flight, imposing, 1. on Ahimelech, the priest, to get victuals and arms, and, 2. on Achish, king of Gath, by feigning himself mad. Justly are troubles called *temptations,* for many are by them drawn into sin.

V. 1—9. Here, I. David, in distress, flies to the tabernacle of God, now pitched at Nob, supposed to be a city in the tribe of Benjamin. The ark still remained at Kirjath-jearim. Neither Samuel the prophet nor Jonathan the prince could protect him; he therefore has recourse next to Ahimelech the priest. He foresees he must now be an exile, therefore comes to the tabernacle, 1. To take an affecting leave of it, for he knows not when he shall see it again, and nothing will be more afflictive to him in his banishment, than his distance from the house of God, and his restraint from public ordinances, as appears by many of his Psalms. 2. To beg direction from the Lord in the way of duty and safety; his case being difficult and dangerous. That this was his business, appears, *ch.* 22: 10. where it is said that *Ahimelech inquired of the Lord for him,* as he had done formerly, *v.* 15. It is a great comfort to us in a day of trouble, to go to God, to whom we may open our case, and from whom we may ask and expect direction.

II. Ahimelech is surprised to see him in so poor an equipage; and afraid of incurring Saul's displeasure by entertaining him. *Why art thou alone?* He had some with him, (as appears, Mark 2: 26.) but they were only his servants, not his courtiers as aforetime, when he came to inquire of the Lord. He says, (Ps. 42: 4.) he was wont to *go with a multitude;* and, having now but two or three with him, Ahimelech might well ask, *Why art thou alone?* He that was suddenly advanced, is now as soon reduced, and *alone like a sparrow on the house-top.* Such changes are there in this world, and so uncertain are its smiles!

III. David, under pretence of being sent by Saul on public services, solicits Ahimelech to supply his present wants, *v.* 2, 3. Here David did not behave like himself; he told Ahimelech a gross untruth. What shall we say to this? The Scripture does not conceal it, and we dare not justify it: it was ill done, and proved of bad consequence, as David afterward confessed with regret, *ch.* 22: 22. It was needless thus to dissemble, for, had he told the truth, the priest, we may suppose, would have sheltered and relieved him as readily as Samuel did, and would have known the better how to advise him, and inquire of God for him. People should be free with their faithful ministers. David was a man of great faith and courage, yet now both failed him, and he fell thus foully, through fear and cowardice. Had he trusted God aright, he would not have used such a sorry, sinful shift to preserve himself. It is written not for our imitation, no, not in the greatest straits, but for our admonition. *Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall;* and let us all pray daily, *Lord, lead us not into temptation.* Let us all take occasion hence to lament, 1. The weakness and infirmity of good men; the best are imperfect in this world. There may be true grace, where yet there are many failings. 2. The wickedness of bad times, which forces good men into such straits as prove temptations too strong for them. Oppression makes a wise man do foolishly.

Two things David begged of Ahimelech, *bread* and a *sword.*

(1.) He wanted *bread, five loaves, v.* 3. Travelling was then troublesome; men generally carried their provisions with them, having little money, and no public houses, else David had not now been to seek for bread. It seems he had known the *seed of the righteous begging bread,* occasionally, but not constantly, Ps. 37: 25.

The priest objected he had but *hallowed bread, shew-bread,* which had stood a week on the golden table in the sanctuary, and was taken thence for the use of the priests and their families, *v.* 4. He thinks, too, the young men might not eat of this bread, unless they had kept continence three days, a thing we never find, (except when the law was first given, Ex. 19: 15.) made the matter of any ceremonial purity or pollution; therefore the priest here seems to be over-nice, not to say, superstitious.

David pleads, that he and the young men, in this case of necessity, might lawfully eat of the hallowed bread, being not only able to answer his terms, but *holy, possessing* their bodies *in sanctification and honor at all times.* Poor and pious Israelites were, in effect, priests to God, and rather than be starved, might feed on the bread appropriated to the priests. Believers are spiritual priests, and the offerings of the Lord shall be their inheritance; they eat the bread of their God. He pleads that the bread is in a manner common, now that what was primarily the religious use of it, was over; especially (as our margin reads it) *when there is this day other bread* (*hot, v.* 6.) *sanctified this day in the vessel,* and put in the room of it on the table. This was David's plea, and the Son of David approves it, and shows from it that mercy is to be preferred to sacrifice: that ritual observances must give way to moral duties; and that that may be done in a case of an urgent providential necessity, which may not otherwise. He brings it to justify his disciples in plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath-day, for which the Pharisees censured them, Mat. 12: 3, 4.

Ahimelech hereupon supplies him; (*v.* 6.) and some think it was about this *he inquired of the Lord, ch.* 22: 10. This bread, we may suppose, was the more agreeable to David for its being hallowed, so precious were all sacred things to him. The shew-bread was but twelve loaves in all, yet out of this he gives David five, (*v.* 3.) though he had no more in the house; but he trusted in Providence.

(2.) He wanted *a sword.* It was a wonder Jonathan did not furnish him with his, as he had done, *ch.* 18: 4. However, it happened he had now no weapons with him, the reason of which he pretends to be, because he came away *in haste, v.* 8. Those that are furnished with the sword of the Spirit, and the shield of faith, cannot be disarmed of them, nor need they, at any time, be at a loss. But the priests, it seems, had no swords;

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI. V. 1, 2. Some think Ahimelech is only another name for Ahiah; (14: 3.) others, that Ahiah was dead, and that Ahimelech was his younger brother, and successor in the priesthood. (*Note,* 14; 2, 3.)—Nob was not originally allotted to the priests, but, as it seems, had afterwards been given to them. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

(1.) *Nob.*] 'A city of Benjamin, 12 miles from Gibeah, and not far from Anathoth, where the inheritance lay that belonged to the high priest of this family, as appears from 1 Kings 2: 26.'

ASSEMB. ANN.

(2.) 'It is well known, that, from all antiquity, it was held no crime to tell a lie in order to save life; but no Christian can act thus and save his soul; though he may, by so doing, save his life.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

'Here was a downright lie, aggravated, by its being told only to get a little food; and especially told to a high priest, and at the tabernable of God, and when David was come to inquire of the Lord there; and it was attended with a dreadful consequence, the slaughter of the Lord's priests there, which afterwards lay heavy on David's mind, ch. 22: 22. and is the very sin he is thought to refer to in Ps. 119: 28, 29.' GILL. Let us learn hence, that man must obey God's command expressed in the direct precepts of his Word, and leaving the event to Him who can see the end from the beginning, and permits us not, shortsighted as we are, to do evil, in the expectation of bringing good out of it. *Notes, Josh.* 2: 4, 5. *Rom.* 3: 8. ED.

Verses 3—6.

Jesus Christ has vindicated David in this matter; which proves that the *positive* institutions of religion may be dispensed with, when the preservation of life, or any other urgent necessity requires it. (*Hos.* 6: 6. *Matt.* 12. 3, 4.) SCOTT.

6 So the priest [*] gave him hallowed *bread:* for there was no bread there but the shew-bread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put [l] hot bread in the day when it was taken away.

7 Now a certain man of the servants of Saul *was* there that day, [m] detained before the LORD; and his name *was* [n] Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of [o] the herdmen that *belonged* to Saul.

8 And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste.

9 And the priest said, [p] The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in [q] the valley of Elah, behold, it *is here* wrapped in a cloth [r] behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take *it:* for *there is* no other save that here. And David said, *There is* none like that; give it me.

10 ¶ And David arose, and [s] fled that day for fear of Saul, and went [t] to * Achish the king of Gath.

11 And [u] the servants of Achish said unto him, *Is* not this David, [v] the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

12 And David [x] laid up these words in his heart, and was [y] sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath.

13 And he [z] changed his behavior before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and † scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.

14 Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man ‡ is mad: wherefore *then* have ye brought him to me?

15 Have I need of madmen, that ye have brought this *fellow* to play the madman in my presence? shall this *fellow* come into my house?

the weapons of their warfare were not carnal; there was not a sword to be found about the tabernacle, but the sword of Goliath, which he laid up behind the ephod, as a monument of David's victory over him; probably, David had an eye to that, when he asked the priest to help him with a sword; for that being mentioned, Oh! says he, *there is none like that, give it me, v.* 9. This he had made trial of, and done execution with; by this it appears he was well grown in strength and stature, that he could wear and wield such a sword as that. God had *taught his hands to war*, so he could do wonders, Ps. 18: 34. God had graciously given him this sword, as a pledge of his singular favor; and he had gratefully given it back to God, as a token of his thankfulness; and now in his distress it stood him greatly in stead. Note, What we devote to God's praise, and serve Him with, is most likely to redound, one way or other, to our own comfort and benefit. What we gave, we have from Him.

Thus was David well furnished with arms and victuals; but it fell out very unhappily, that one of Saul's servants, *Doeg* by name, was then attending before the Lord, who proved a base traitor, both to David and to Ahimelech. He was by birth an Edomite; (*v.* 7.) and though proselyted to the Jewish religion, to get preferment under Saul, yet he retained the ancient and hereditary enmity of Edom to Israel. He was master of the herds, which, perhaps, was then a place of as much honor as master of the horse is now. Some occasion or other he had at this time to wait on the priest, either to be purified from some pollution, or to pay some vow; but whatever his business was, it is said, he was *detained before the Lord.* He must attend, and could not help it, but he was sick of the service, *snuffed at it, and said, What a weariness is it!* He would rather have been any where else, and therefore, instead of minding the business he came about, was plotting to do David a mischief, and to be avenged on Ahimelech for detaining him. God's sanctuary could never secure itself from such wolves in sheep's clothing See Gal. 2: 4.

V. 10—15. Here is, 1. David's flight to Achish, king of Gath, *v.* 10. It should seem that, as, though the Israelites loved him, yet the king of Israel had personal enmity to him, which obliged him to leave his own country; so, though the Philistines hated him, yet the king of Gath had a personal kindness for him, valuing his merit, and, perhaps, the more for his killing Goliath of Gath who, it may be, had been no friend to Achish As afterward, (*ch.* 27: 2, 3.) so now, Achish would have protected him, but that he feared disobliging his own people by it. God's persecuted people have often found better usage from the Philistines than from Israelites; the king of Judah imprisoned Jeremiah, and the king of Babylon set him at liberty.

2. The disgust the servants of Achish took at his being there, and the complaint of it to Achish, *v.* 11. Achish, perhaps, had intimated to them,

k Matt. 12:3,4. Mark 2:25—27. Luke 6:3,4.
l Lev. 24:5—9.
m Jer. 7:9—11. Ez. 33:31. Am. 8:5. Matt. 15:8. Acts 21:26,27.
n 22:9. Ps. 52: *title.*
o 11:5. Gen. 13:7,8. 26:20. 1 Chr. 27:29. 2 Chr. 26:10.
p 17:51—54.
q 17:2,50.
r Ex. 28:6,&c.
s 27:1. 1 Kings 19:3. Jer. 26:21.
t 27:2.
* Or, *Ahimelech.* Ps. 34: *title.*
u Ps. 56: *title.*
v 16:1. 18:7,8. 29:5.
x Ps. 119:11. Luke 2:19,51.
y 10. Gen. 12:11—13. 26:7. Ps. 34:4. 56:3.
z 1 s, 34: *title.* Prov. 29:25.
† Or, *made marks.*
‡ Or, *playeth the madman.* Ec. 7:7.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When in the courts of kings a favorite falls, in general it is very rapidly: for out of fickleness, envy, malice, ambition, or fear, almost every one deserts or opposes him, disregarding the most unsullied reputation, eminent services, or personal obligations. Few conduct themselves in extreme difficulties, without taking some manifestly false step: we should therefore 'watch and pray, that we may not enter into temptation;' and especially seek that strength of faith in God, which may overcome the fear of man.—Ingenious falsehoods often promise present security; but they insure future disgrace and disquietude: and no impositions are more foolish and prejudicial, than those, which some men practise, in seeking counsel and comfort from the ministers of Christ.—In this world we must pass from one danger to another, and often meet with terror where we seek security; and those very honors, of which men are ambitious, and which are most gratifying at the time, expose them to manifold disadvantages and perils: nor can we expect our situation to be better, while the best of characters are so inconsistent and defective. But we may 'trust the LORD at all times;' He will supply our wants, and never forsake us notwithstanding our lamented infirmities: and the more simply we depend on Him and obey Him, the more comfortably and surely we shall walk through this troublesome world, to that 'rest which is reserved for the people of God.' SCOTT.

Verses 8, 9.

Either David fled with such precipitation, that he had not time to take his armor; or he left it, in order the better to conceal himself. SCOTT.

(9.) Commentators seem afraid that Goliath's sword was too heavy, and so consider that a short one which was in fact preferred. But David, we are to remember, was no longer a mere youth. ED.

Verses 10—15.

David expected Saul would pursue him into every part of the land of Israel, and he was not disposed to form a party against him. Perhaps Achish deemed it politic to draw off so able a commander from the service of Saul, and had given him some intimations that he would protect him. But his officers thought otherwise: and judging it impossible to fix him in their interest, perhaps intimated that he should be put to death. (29: 4—6.) This so alarmed David that he feigned himself mad, and mimicked the actions of lunatics; which gave Achish the opportunity of sending him away, without either employing or hurting him: but it is not certain, whether he really thought him mad, or was willing to avail himself of appearances, to get out of the difficulty.—David's conduct was, in some respects, degrading to his character, and discovers a wavering in his faith and courage. He soon, however, recovered his confidence and composure. (*Ps.* 34: *title.* 4—6. 56: *title.* 1—4.) SCOTT.

(13.) 'Some excuse this, in David. But I see little difference between speaking and doing what is false, seeing both are contrary to truth, and the one a real, as the other a verbal lie, especially when there is in both an intention to deceive. And though David's end was good, viz. to save his life; yet this cannot justify his using unlawful means.' *Assemb. Ann.*—'This action of David's proceeded from want of faith in God's promises and providence; as such it is not to be imitated by Christians, who are not willing to do any thing unbecoming their profession, even to avoid the greatest dangers,' Bp. WILSON referred to in *Hewlett.*—'Some suppose David was so terrified, that he was thrown into a kind of frenzy, accompanied with epileptic fits, and this opinion is countenanced by the Sept. It is worthy of remark, too, that the *spittle falling down upon the beard,* is a genuine concomitant of an epileptic fit. This view of the case would set the conduct of David in a clearer point of light than our translation does.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(13, 14.) *Feigned himself mad,* &c.] 'He changed his countenance before them, and fell convulsed into their hands, and hurt and marked himself against the posts of the gate, and frothed on his beard.' *The man is mad.*] 'Is epileptic.' *Sept. Dumont.* 'The 34th and 57th Psalms, composed on this occasion, thanking God that He had preserved him from guile, strongly indicates that his behavior was the effect of God's afflicting hand.' *Sut.* COND. COMM.

CHAP. XXII.

David escapes to Adullam, whither his kindred and others resort to him, 1, 2. At Mizpeh he commends his parents to the protection of the king of Moab, 3, 4. Admonished by the prophet Gad, he returns to the land of Judah, 5. Saul complains that his servants are unfaithful, 6—8. Doeg accuses Ahimelech; who is sent for with the priests, and answers the charge, 9—16. Saul's soldiers refusing to slay the priests at his command, Doeg executes it; and destroys their city with their wives and children, 17—19. Abiathar escapes to David, who blames himself, and assures him of protection, 20—23.

DAVID [a] therefore departed thence, and escaped to [b] the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard *it*, they went down thither to him.

2 And every one *that was* [c] in distress, and every one that *was* [*] in debt, and every one *that was* [†] discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became [d] a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

3 And David went thence to [e] Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto [f] the king of Moab, [g] Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, *and be* with you, [h] till I know what God will do for me.

4 And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was [i] in the hold.

5 And the prophet [j] Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; [k] depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed,

a 21:10—15. Ps. 34: *title*.
b Josh. 12:15. 15:35. 2 Sam. 23:13,14. 1 Chr. 11:15. Ps. 142: *title*. Mic. 1:15. Heb. 11:38.
c Judg. 11:3. Matt. 11:12,28.
* Heb. *had a creditor*. Matt. 18:25—34.
† Heb. *bitter of soul*. 1:10. 30:6. Judg. 18:25. 2 Sam. 17:8. Prov. 31: 6. *margine*.
d 9:16. 25:15,16. 30:22—24. 2 Sam. 5:2. 2 Kings 20:5. 1 Chr. 11:15—19. Ps. 72:12. Heb. 2:10.
e Judg. 11:29.
f 14:47. Ruth 1:1—4. 4:10,17.
g Gen. 47:11. Ex. 20:12. Matt. 15:4—6. 1 Tim. 5:4.
h 3:18. 2 Sam. 15:25,26. Phil. 2:23,24.
i 2 Sam. 23:13,14. 1 Chr. 12:16.
j 2 Sam. 24:11. 1 Chr. 21:9. 29:29. 2 Chr. 29:25.
k 23:1—5. Neh. 6:11. Ps. 11:1. Is. 8: 12—14.

that it would be policy to entertain David, because he was now an enemy to Saul, and he might be hereafter a friend to them; it is common for the outlaws of a nation to be sheltered by its enemies.

3. The fright this put David into. Though he had some reason to confide in Achish, yet, when he perceived the servants of Achish jealous of him, he began to fear Achish would deliver him up to them, and he was *sore afraid;* (*v.* 12.) and perhaps he was the more apprehensive of his own danger, when he was thus discovered, because he wore Goliath's sword, which, we may suppose, was well known at Gath. David now learned by experience what he has taught us, that *it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.* Men of high degree are a lie, and if we make them our hope, they may prove our fear. It was at this time David penned the 56th Psalm.

4. The course he took to get out of their hands. He *feigned himself mad;* (*v.* 13.) he used the gestures and fashions of a natural fool, or one out of his wits; supposing they would be ready enough to believe that the disgrace he was fallen into, and the troubles he was in, had driven him distracted. This dissimulation cannot be justified: it was mean and inconsistent, and therefore not becoming such a man as David: yet it was not a downright lie, but like a stratagem in war, by which he imposed on his enemies for the preservation of his own life. What David did here in pretence, and for his own safety, which made it partly excusable, drunkards do really, and only to gratify a base lust; they make fools of themselves, and change their behavior; their words and actions commonly are either as silly and ridiculous as an idiot's, or as furious and outrageous as a madman's, which has often made me wonder, that ever men of sense and honor should allow themselves in it.

5. His escape by this mean, *v.* 14, 15. I am inclined to think Achish was aware the delirium was counterfeit, but, being desirous to protect David, as we find afterward he was very kind to him, even when the lords of the Philistines favored him not, (*ch.* 28: 1, 2.—29: 6.) he pretended he really thought he was mad, and therefore had reason to question whether it was David or no; or, if it were, they needed not fear any harm he could do, now his reason was departed from him. They suspected Achish was inclined to entertain him; 'Not I,' says he, 'he is a madman, I'll have nothing to do with him, you need not fear I should employ him, or give him any countenance. But then you shall do him no hurt, for if he be a madman, he is to be pitied.' He therefore *drove him away,* as it is in the title of Ps. 34. which David penned on this occasion, and an excellent Psalm it is, and shows, he did not change his spirit when he changed his behavior, but even in the greatest difficulties and hurries, his *heart was fixed,* trusting in the Lord; and he concludes that Psalm with this assurance, that *none of them that trust in God shall be desolate,* though they may be, as he now was, solitary and distressed; *persecuted but not forsaken.*

CHAP. XXII. David, being driven from Achish, returns into the land of Israel to be hunted by Saul.

V. 1—5. Here, 1. David shelters himself in the cave of Adullam, *v.* 1. Whether it was a natural or artificial fastness, does not appear; probably the access to it was so difficult, David thought himself able, with Goliath's sword, to keep it against all the forces of Saul; therefore he waited to see (as he says, *v.* 3.) *what God would do with him.* The promise of the kingdom implied a promise of preservation to it, and yet he used proper means for his own safety, else he had tempted God. Perhaps the apostle refers to this instance of David, among others, when he speaks of some of the Old Testament worthies that *wandered in deserts, in dens and caves of the earth.* It was at this time David penned Ps. 142d. entitled, *A prayer when he was in the cave;* where he complains that *no man would know him,* and that refuge failed him, but hopes that shortly the *righteous should compass him about.*

2. Thither his relations flocked to him, *v.* 1. to be protected by him, to assist him, and to take their lot with him: Joab and Abishai, and other relations, to suffer and venture with him, in hopes shortly to be advanced with him; as they were. The first three of his worthies were those that first owned him when in this cave, 1 Chron. 11: 15, &c.

3. Here he began to raise forces in his own defence, *v.* 2. He found, by his late experiments, he could not save himself by flight, and therefore was necessitated to do it by force, wherein he never acted offensively, never offered any violence to his prince, nor gave any disturbance to the peace of the kingdom, but only used his forces as a guard to his own person. But whatever defence his soldiers were to him, they did him no credit, for they were not great men, or rich, or stout, no, nor good; but men *in distress, in debt, and discontented,* men of broken fortunes and restless spirits, that were put to their shifts, and knew not well what to do with themselves. See what weak instruments God sometimes uses to bring about his purposes. The Son of David is ready to receive distressed souls, that will appoint Him their Captain, and be commanded by Him.

4. He took care to settle his parents in a place of safety; no such place could he find in all Israel, while Saul was so bitterly enraged against him, and all that belonged to him, for his sake; he therefore puts them under the king of Moab's protection, *v.* 3, 4. Observe here, (1.) With what tender concern he provided for his aged parents. It was not fit they should be exposed, therefore he first finds *them* a quiet habitation, whatever might become of himself. Let children learn hence to *show piety at home, and to requite their parents,* (1 Tim. 5: 4.) in every thing consulting their ease and satisfaction, though ever so highly preferred, and ever so much employed. (2.) With what humble faith he expects the issue of his present distress, *Till I know what God will do for me.* He expresses his hopes modestly, as one that had entirely cast himself on God, and committed his way to Him, expecting a good issue, not from his own arts, or arms, or merits, but from what the wisdom, power, and goodness of God would do for him. Now David's father and mother forsook him, but God did not, Ps. 27: 10.

5. He had the advice of the prophet Gad, who, probably, was one of the sons of the prophets brought up under Samuel, and by him commended to David for his chaplain, or spiritual guide: being a prophet, he would pray for him, and instruct him in the mind of God; and David, though himself a prophet, was glad of his assistance. He advised him to go into the land of Judah, (*v.* 5.) as one confident of his own innocency, well assured of the divine protection, and desirous, even in his present hard circumstances, to do some service to his tribe and country. Let him not be ashamed to own his own cause, nor decline the succors that would be offered him. Animated by this word, there he determined to appear publicly. Thus are the *steps of a good man ordered by the Lord.*

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII. V. 1, 2. Probably David's instructions, devotions, and example, produced a great change in the temper and behavior of the larger part of the 400. (*M. R.*—25: 7, 8, 14—17. 30: 22—25. *Judg.* 11: 3.) SCOTT.

(1.) *Adullam.*] 'A city in the tribe of Judah, not far from Bethlehem, eight miles from Jerusalem south-west.' ASSEMB. ANN.

(2.) *Every one,* &c.] 'It was the manner in ancient times among the Gauls, for those who were in debt, or oppressed, to betake themselves to some great men, by whom, as they were maintained, so they devoted themselves to live and die with them.—Grotius observes, David did not entertain these men, till, in the judgment of Jonathan, and by many other certain arguments, his life appeared to be in imminent danger, and then he did no harm with them, but only served his country.' PATRICK.

Verses 3, 4.

The king of Moab, being at variance with Saul, was favorable to David; perhaps the more so, as David was descended from a Moabitess. (*Ruth* 4: 13—17.) SCOTT.

(4.) *In the hold.*] 'Either in Mizpeh of Moab, or in the cave of Adullam, or in hold from place to place.' POOLE.

and came into the forest of Hareth.

6 ¶ When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that *were* with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeah under a *tree in Ramah, having his [l]spear in his hand, and all his servants *were* standing about him;)

7 Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; Will [m]the son of Jesse [n]give every one of you fields and vineyards, *and* make you all [o]captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds;

8 That all of you have conspired against me, and *there is* none that †showeth me [p]that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and *there is* none of you that is sorry for me, or showeth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?

9 Then answered [q]Doeg the Edomite, (which was set over the servants of Saul,) and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub.

10 And [r]he inquired of the LORD for him, and [s]gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.

11 Then the king [t]sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that *were* in Nob: and they came

* Or, *grove in a high place.*
l 18:10. 19:9. 20:33.
m 9,13. 20:27,30. 25:10. 2 Sam. 20:1. 1 Kings 12:16. Is. 11:1,10.
n 8:14,15.
o 8:11,12.
† Heb. *uncovereth mine ear.* 20:2. Job 33:16. *marg.*
p 18: 3. 20: 8,13—17,30—34,42. 23:16—18.
q 21:7. Ps. 52: *title.* 1—5. Prov. 19: 5. 29:12. Ez. 22:9. Matt. 26:59—61.
r 13,15. 23:2,4,12. 30:8. Num. 27:21.
s 21:6—9.
t Rom. 3:15.

V. 6—19. We have seen the progress of David's troubles; now here we have the progress of Saul's wickedness. He seems to have laid aside all other business, and to have devoted himself wholly to the pursuit of David. He heard, at length, by the common fame of the country, that David *was discovered*, i. e. that he appeared publicly, and enlisted men in his service; and hereupon he called all his servants about him, and sat down under a tree, or grove, in the high place at Gibeah, with his spear in his hand for a sceptre; intimating the force by which he designed to rule, and the present temper of his spirit, or its distemper rather, which was to kill all that stood in his way.

In this bloody court of inquisition,

I. Saul seeks for information against David and Jonathan; (*v.* 7, 8.) thus he would wreak his malice on two of the best and most excellent men he had about him. He sought David's life, and therefore pretended David sought his, though he could not charge him with any overt act that gave the least umbrage or suspicion. His son Jonathan, too, as he would have it, was confederate with David; but this also was notoriously false. A league of friendship there was between David and Jonathan, but no conspiracy in any evil thing; no mischief to Saul. If Jonathan had agreed, after Saul's death, to resign to David, in compliance with the revealed will of God, that could do no harm to Saul. Yet thus the best friends to their prince and country have often been odiously represented as enemies to both; even Christ Himself was so. He takes it for granted Jonathan and David were in a plot against him, and is displeased with his servants that they do not inform him of it, supposing they could not but know it; whereas really there was no such thing. See the nature of a jealous malice, and its pitiful arts to extort discoveries of things that are not. He looks upon all about him as his enemies, because they do not just say as he says; he tells them, they are very unwise, and act against the interest both of their tribe, as Benjamites, and of their families; for David, being of Judah, would not honor them, if advanced, nor be able to give such rewards and preferments. He charges them with being unfaithful, and very unkind. He thought to work on their good nature, *There is none of you that is* so much as *sorry for me*, or *solicitous for me*, as some read it. By these reasonings he stirred them up to act vigorously, as the instruments of his malice, that they might take away his suspicions of them.

II. Though he could learn nothing from his servants against David or Jonathan, yet he got information from Doeg, against Ahimelech the priest. And, 1. Doeg himself is evidence against him, *v.* 9, 10. Perhaps, bad as he was, he would not have given it, had not Saul extorted it, for had he been very forward to it, he would have done it sooner: but now he thinks they must be all deemed traitors, if none of them be accusers, therefore he tells Saul what kindness Ahimelech had showed to David, which he himself happened to be an eye-witness of: all which was true, but not the whole truth; he ought to have told Saul further, that David had made Ahimelech believe he was then going on the king's business; so that what service he did to David, however it proved, was designed in honor to Saul, and this would have justified Ahimelech, whom Saul had in his power, and would have thrown all the blame on David, who was out of his reach.

2. Ahimelech is seized, or summoned rather to appear before the king, and on this indictment he is arraigned. He and all the priests suspected, not being conscious of guilt, and therefore not apprehensive of danger, *came all to the king*, (*v.* 11.) none attempted to escape, or to flee to David, as they would have done, had they been as much in his interest as Saul suspected. Saul arraigns him himself with the utmost disdain and indignation; (*v.* 12.) not so much as calling him by his name, much less giving him his title of distinction. By this it appears he had cast off the fear of God, that he showed no respect to his priests, but took a pleasure in insulting over them. Ahimelech does not demur to the jurisdiction of Saul's court, nor insist on an exemption as a priest, though a high priest, (to which office, that of the judge, or chief magistrate, had not long since been annexed,) but, in things pertaining to the king, lowers himself to a level with common Israelites. *Let every soul be subject* (even clergymen) *to the higher powers.*

3. His indictment is read, *v.* 13. That he, a false traitor, had joined himself with the son of Jesse in a plot to depose and murder the king. See what bad constructions the most innocent actions are liable to; how unsafe they are, that live under a tyrannical government, and what reason we have to be thankful for the happy constitution and administration of the government we are under.

4. He pleads Not guilty; (*v.* 14, 15.) owns the fact, but denies he did it with any design against the king. He pleads ignorance of any quarrel between Saul and David, and that he really took David to have been as much in favor at court as ever. Observe, He does not plead that David had imposed on him, though really it was so, because he would not proclaim the weakness of so good a man, no not for his own vindication, especially to Saul, who sought all occasions against him; but he insists on the settled reputation David had, as the most faithful of all the servants of Saul; the honor the king had put on him in marrying his daughter to him, the use the king had often made of him, and the trust he had reposed in him; he *goes at thy bidding, and is honorable in thy house*, therefore any one would think it a meritorious service to the crown, to respect him, so far from apprehending it to be a crime. He pleads, that he had been wont to *inquire of God for him*, when he was sent by Saul on any expedition, and did it now as innocently as ever. He protests his abhorrence of the thought of being in a plot against the king; '*Be it far from me*, I mind my own business, and meddle not with state-matters.' He begs the king's favor, *Let him not impute* any crime to us; and concludes with a declaration of his innocency, *Thy servant knew nothing of all this.* Could any man plead with more evidences of sincerity? Had he been tried by a jury of honest Israelites, he had certainly been acquitted, for who can find any fault in him? But,

5. Saul himself gives judgment against him, *v.* 16. What could be more unjust? Thus to give judgment in his own cause, without any appeal either to judge or prophet, privy-council, or council of war; so fair a plea to overrule and reject without giving any reason, or suffering any attempt to disprove the allegations of it, but purely with a high hand; to pass sentence so hastily and with so much precipitation; taking no time to consider, nor allowing the prisoner any time to move in arrest of judgment; to sentence not only Ahimelech himself, who was the only person accused by

Verse 6.

Standing about him.] 'Perhaps reference is here had to a sort of council of war, called by Saul for the purpose of delivering the speech recorded in the following vs.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 7, 8.

This language of Saul is very expressive of rage and jealousy. Probably he had heard that Jonathan had made a covenant with David; and, not being able to learn the particulars, he suspected that treason was implied in it. Perhaps Jonathan kept at a greater distance, and was more reserved than before. SCOTT.

Verses 9, 10.

There was no good reason why Doeg should at all mention Ahimelech's conduct, which he knew did not proceed from malice: but if he must report it, he should have declared, how Ahimelech was imposed upon by David, and that he intended to show respect to Saul in that very action. (21: 1—9.) But on the contrary, he spoke as if David came to take Ahimelech's advice about his subsequent proceedings, and as if Ahimelech was joined in a conspiracy with David against Saul; though nothing could be more contrary to the truth than this insinuation! Doeg therefore slandered Ahimelech, and bare false witness against him, though the general charges adduced accorded with facts. (*Ex.* 20: 16. *Matt.* 26: 57—62.)—It is observable, that Doeg, after Saul's example, did not deign to call David by his name, but contemptuously spoke of him, as 'the son of Jesse.' (8, 13. 20: 27, 30, 31.) SCOTT.

all of them to the king.

12 And Saul said, Hear now, [u] thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, * Here I *am*, my lord.

13 And Saul said unto him, [v] Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?

14 Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And [x] who *is so* faithful among all thy servants as David, which is [y] the king's son-in-law, and [z] goeth at thy bidding, and is honorable in thine house?

15 Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute *any* thing unto his servant, *nor* to all the house of my father: [a] for thy servant knew nothing of all this, † less or more.

16 And the king said, [b] Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, [c] thou and all thy father's house.

17 And the king said unto the ‡ footmen that stood about him, Turn and [d] slay the priests of the LORD; because their hand also *is* with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not show it to me. But the servants of the king [e] would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD.

18 And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And [f] Doeg the Edomite turned, and [g] he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day [h] fourscore and five persons that did wear [i] a linen ephod.

19 And [j] Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword; both [k] men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

20 ¶ And [l] one of the sons of Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, [m] escaped, and fled after David.

21 And Abiathar showed David, that Saul had slain the LORD's priests.

22 And David said unto Abiathar, I knew *it* that day, when Doeg the Edomite *was* there, that he would surely tell Saul: [n] I have occasioned *the death* of all the persons of thy father's house.

23 Abide thou with me, fear not: for [o] he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: [p] but with me thou *shalt be* in safeguard.

Doeg, but *all his father's house*, against whom nothing was alleged; and finally, to pronounce the sentence in passion, not for the support of justice, but for the gratification of his brutish rage.

6. He issues a warrant, (verbal only,) ordering his footmen to execute his bloody sentence; *v.* 17. hereby intending further to disgrace the priests. Never was the command of prince more barbarously given; *Slay the priests of the Lord.* This is spoken with such an air of impiety, as can scarce be paralleled. Had he seemed to forget their sacred office, it had intimated some regret that men of that character should fall under his displeasure; but to call them *the priests of the Lord*, and then order his footmen to cut their throats, looked as if, on that very account, he hated them. God having rejected him, and ordered another to be anointed in his room, he seems well pleased to avenge himself on the priests of the Lord, since God Himself was out of his reach. What wickedness will not the evil spirit hurry men to, when he gets the dominion! He alleges, in his order, what was utterly false, and unproved to him, that they knew when David fled; whereas they knew nothing of the matter. But they refused, and never was command of prince more honorably disobeyed. Though they might expect to be turned out of their places, if not put to death, for it, yet, come what would, they would not fall on the priests of the Lord; such a reverence had they for their office, and such a conviction of their innocence.

One would have thought the footmen's refusal should have awakened Saul's conscience, but his mind was blinded, and his heart hardened, and if they will not do it, the hands of the witness shall be upon them, Deut. 17: 7. The most bloody tyrants have found instruments of their cruelty as barbarous as themselves; Doeg is no sooner commanded to fall on the priests, than he does it willingly enough, and, meeting with no resistance, slays with his own hand (for aught that appears) on that same day 85 priests of the age of ministration, between 20 and 50, (*v.* 18.) and perhaps at this time before Saul in their habits, enough (one would think) to satiate the most blood-thirsty; but the horse-leech of persecution still cries, 'Give, give.' Doeg, by Saul's order, no doubt, having murdered the priests, went to their city, and put all to the sword there, (*v.* 19.) *men, women, and children*, and the cattle too. Barbarous cruelty, and such as one cannot think of without horror! Strange, it should ever enter the heart of man to be so impious, so inhuman!

We may see in this, 1. The desperate wickedness of Saul, when the Spirit of the Lord was departed from him. Nothing so vile, but they may be hurried to it, who have provoked God to give them up to their heart's lusts. 2. The accomplishment of the threatenings against the house of Eli; for Ahimelech and his family were his descendants. Though Saul was unrighteous in doing this, yet God was righteous in permitting it:

u 7,13.
* Heb. *Behold me.* 2 Sam. 9:6. Is. 65:1.
v 8. Ps. 119:69. Am. 7:10. Luke 23: 2—5.
x 19:4,5. 20:32. 24:11. 26:23. 2 Sam. 22:23—25. Prov. 24:11,12. 31: 8,9.
y 13. 17:25. 18:27. z 18:13. 21:2.
a Gen. 20:5,6. 2 Sam. 15:11. 2 Cor. 1:12. 1 Pet. 3:16,17.
† Heb. *little or great.* 25:36.
b 14:44. 20:31. 1 Kings 18:4. 19:2. Prov. 28:15. Dan. 2:5,12. 3:19,20. Acts 12:19.
c Deut. 24:16. Esth. 3:6. Matt. 2:16.
‡ Or, *guard.* Heb. *runners.* 8:11. 2 Sam. 15:1. 1 Kings 1:5.
d 13. 20:33. 25:17. 1 Kings 18:4.
e 14:45. Ex. 1:17. 2 Kings 1:13,14. Acts 4:19. f See on 9.
g 2 Chr. 24:21. Hos. 5:11. 7:3. Mic. 6:16. Zeph. 3:3. Acts 26:10,11.
h 2:30—33,36. 3:12—14.
i 2:28. Ex. 28:40.
j 9. 21:1. Neh. 11:32. Is. 10:32.
k 15:3,9. Josh. 6:17,21. Hos. 10:14. Jam. 2:13.
l 23:6. 30:7. 2 Sam. 20:25. 1 Kings 2:26,27.
m 2:33. 4:12. Job 1:15—17,19.
n 21:1—9. Ps. 44:22.
o 1 Kings 2:26. Matt. 24:9. John 15: 20,21. 16:2,3. Heb. 12:1—3.
p John 10:28—30. 17:12. 18:9.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Oppression often forces men into measures, from which they were entirely averse, and deprives the community of the services of its most useful members: yet the Lord amidst all dangers preserves his people for their appointed services. He can promote their good by the meanest instruments; and the Son of David receives all who come to Him, however sinful and miserable: He changes them all into a holy people, and employs them in his service; (*Is.* 11: 6—9.) and those who would reign with Him, must be contented first to suffer with Him.—True piety increases and purifies natural affection; and teaches men, however occupied or distressed, to be tender of their aged parents; and to be more ready to meet hardship or danger themselves, than to expose *them* to it.—In all our difficulties, we should wait till we know what 'God will do for us,' guard against excessive fear, venture readily where duty calls us, and, without yielding to resentment or despondency, persevere in looking out for opportunities of usefulness.—The progress of human nature, instigated by Satan's temptations, is from bad to worse with increasing rapidity. And unhappy indeed is it, when persons of unbridled and lawless passions, possess absolute authority.—Let us then bless God for a mild, equitable, and limited government, and study to fill up our places in society consistently with our peculiar advantages: and may the Lord continue them to our remotest posterity, and extend the same to all the nations of the earth!—We may also learn from this narration, that *needlessly* to report the truth to the disadvantage of others, often springs from malice, and produces mischief; that a partial statement of facts is effectually bearing false witness, and that a generous man is unwilling to repeat the faults of others; even for his own vindication. It is painful to a feeling heart, to occasion evil to others, especially by misconduct. We should likewise consider, that as unexpected bad consequences may arise from our actions, we should learn to walk the more circumspectly; and always to be ready for that stroke, which hurries men into eternity before they are aware. For 'the wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death.' SCOTT.

Verse 13.

Inquired of God, &c.] Saul, by this language, almost in direct terms, charged God Himself with counselling a traitor, by his high priest, how to prevail against his sovereign! (*Ec.* 9: 1—3. *John* 12: 9—11.)—As Ahimelech did not deny this part of the charge, it may be concluded to be true, though not mentioned in the narrative. SCOTT.

Verse 18.

The priests did not generally wear the linen ephod, except when actually officiating: but perhaps the whole company was arrayed in sacerdotal garments, as appearing before the king, and as intending thus to show their respect to him. SCOTT.

Verse 19.

No doubt they meant to intimidate all the Israelites, from showing the least favor to David. (*Ps.* 52: *title.* 1—4.) 'It was excellently said by Justin Martyr, Let us pray that kings and rulers, together with the royal power, may be found having a sober mind.' *Patrick.* ID.

CHAP. XXIII.

David, inquiring of God by Abiathar, defends Keilah and smites the Philistines, 1—6. Saul purposes to besiege him in Keilah; but the Lord showing David the treachery of the men of Keilah, he flees to Ziph, where Jonathan meets and comforts him, 7—18. The Ziphites inform Saul concerning him, who closely pursues him to Maon; but is called off by an invasion of the Philistines, 19—28. David dwells at En-gedi, 29.

THEN they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against [a] Keilah, and they [b] rob the threshing-floors.

2 Therefore David [c] inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.

3 And David's men said unto him, [d] Behold, we be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we come to Keilah, against the armies of the Philistines?

4 Then David inquired of the LORD [e] yet again. And the LORD answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; [f] for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

5 So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

6 And it came to pass, [g] when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, *that* he came down *with* [h] an ephod in his hand.

7 ¶ And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And

a Josh. 15:44. Neh. 3:17,18.
b Lev. 26:16. Deut. 28:33,51. Judg. 6:4,11. Mic. 6:15.
c 14:6,9—12. 30:8. Num. 27:21. Josh. 9:14. Judg. 1:1. 2 Sam. 5:19,23. 1 Chr. 14:10. Ps. 32:8. Prov. 3:5,6. Jer. 10:23.
d 15,23,26. Ps. 11:1. Jer. 12:5.
e 28:6. Judg. 6:39.
f Josh. 8:7. Judg. 7:7. 2 Sam. 5:19. 2 Kings 3:18.
g 22:20.
h 14:3,18,36,37. Ex. 28:30,31.

performing against Eli that, at which the ears of them that heard it, must needs tingle, *ch.* 3: 11—13. No word of God shall fall to the ground. 3. This may be considered as a great judgment on Israel, and the just punishment of their desiring a king before the time God intended them one. How deplorable the state of religion at this time in Israel! The worst enemy of their nation could not have done them a greater mischief, than Saul had done.

V. 20—23. Here is, 1. The escape of Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech. Probably, when his father went to Saul, he was left to attend the altar, by which means he escaped the first execution, and, before Doeg and his bloodhounds came to Nob, he had intelligence of the danger, and time to shift for his safety. And whither should he go but to David? *v.* 20. They that suffer for the Son of David, let them *commit the keeping of their souls to Him.*

2. David's resentment and grief at the melancholy tidings he brought, *v.* 21, 22. Note, It is a great trouble to a good man, to find himself any way an occasion of the calamities of the church and ministry.

3. The protection he granted Abiathar, *v.* 23. It is promised to the Son of David, that God will *hide Him in the shadow of his hand*, and with Him, all that are his, may be sure *they shall be in safeguard*, Ps. 91: 1. David had now not only a prophet, but a priest, a high priest, with him, to whom he was a blessing, and they to him, and both a happy omen of his success. Yet it appears, (*ch.* 28: 6.) Saul had a high priest too, for he had a Urim to consult; it is supposed, he preferred Ahitub, the father of Zadok, of the family of Eleazar; (1 Chron. 6: 8.) for even those that hate the power of godliness, yet will not be without the form. It must not be forgotten here, that David at this time penned the 52d Psalm, as appears by its title, wherein he represents Doeg not only as malicious, but false and deceitful: because, though what he said was, for the substance of it, true, yet he put false colors upon it, with a design to do mischief: yet even then, when the priesthood was become as a withered branch, he looks upon himself as a *green olive tree in the house of God*, *v.* 8. In this hurry and distraction David was continually in, he yet found both time and a heart for communion with God, and comfort in it.

CHAP. XXIII. Saul, having made himself drunk with the blood of the priests of the Lord, is here seeking David's life, who appears to be doing good, and suffering ill, at the same time.

V. 1—6. Now we find why the prophet Gad (by divine direction, no doubt) ordered David to go into the land of Judah; (*ch.* 22: 5.) it was, that, since Saul neglected the public safety, he might take care of it, notwithstanding ill treatment; for he must render good for evil, and therein be a type of Him who not only ventured, but laid down his life, for his enemies.

1. Tidings are brought to David, as to the patron and protector of his country's liberties, that the Philistines had made a descent on the city of Keilah, and plundered the country thereabouts, *v.* 1. Probably the departure of Gad and David from Saul, encouraged them to make this incursion. When princes begin to persecute God's people and ministers, they may expect vexation on all sides. The way for any country to be quiet, is, to let God's church be quiet in it.

2. David's generosity and public-spiritedness. Though he had enough to do, with the little force he had, to secure himself, yet he could not sit still to see his country ravaged; but was willing, to the utmost of his power, to serve Saul and his interests against the common enemy, and bravely abhorred the thought of sacrificing the common welfare to his private revenge. Those are unlike David, who sullenly decline to do good, because they have not been so well considered as their services deserved. David piously inquires of the Lord by the prophet Gad; for it should seem by *v.* 6. that Abiathar came not to him with the ephod till he was in Keilah. His inquiry is, *Shall I go and smite these Philistines?* He inquires concerning both the duty, whether he might lawfully act without a commission from Saul; and the event, whether he might safely venture against such a force as the Philistines had, with such a handful of men at his feet, and such a dangerous enemy as Saul, at his back. It is our duty, and will be our ease and comfort, whatever happens, to acknowledge God in all our ways, and to seek direction from Him.

3. God appointed him, once and again, to go against the Philistines, and promised him success, *v.* 2. His men opposed it, *v.* 3. Their hearts failed them. To satisfy them therefore, he *inquired of the Lord again*, and now received, not only a full commission, which would warrant him to fight, though he had no orders from Saul, but also a full assurance of victory, *v.* 4. This was enough to animate the greatest coward he had.

4. He went, accordingly, against the Philistines, routed them, and rescued Keilah; (*v.* 5.) and, it should seem, he made a sally into the country of the Philistines, for he carried off their cattle by way of reprisal. Here notice is taken, (*v.* 6.) that it was while David remained in Keilah, after he had cleared it of the Philistines, that Abiathar came to him with the ephod in his hand, i. e. the high priest's ephod, in which the Urim and Thummim were. It was a great comfort to David, in his banishment, that when he could not go to the house of God, he had some of its choicest treasures brought to him, the high priest, and the breast-plate of judgment.

V. 7—13. Here is, I. Saul contriving within himself the destruction of David, *v.* 7, 8. One would think, it should have put Saul on considering what honor and dignity should be done to David for his late exploit. But instead of that he catches at it as an opportunity of doing him a mischief. Ungrateful wretch! for ever unworthy to have any service or kindness done him. Well might David complain of his enemies, that they rewarded him *evil for good*, and that for his love they were his adversaries, Ps. 35: 12.—109: 4. Christ was used thus basely, John 10: 32. But observe, 1. How Saul abused the *God of Israel*, in making his providence to countenance his malicious designs, and thence promising himself success in them. *God hath delivered him into my hand;* as if he, who was rejected of God, were, in this instance, owned and favored by Him, and David infatuated. He impiously connects God with his cause, because he thought he had gained one point. Therefore David prays, (Ps. 140: 8.) *Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked; further not his wicked device, lest they exalt themselves.* We must not think that one smiling providence either justifies an unrighteous cause, or secures its success. 2. How Saul abused the *Israel of God*, in making them the servants of his malice against David. He called all the people together, to march with all speed to Keilah, pretending to oppose the Philistines, but intending to besiege David and his men; concealing that design, for it is said, (*v.* 9.) he *secretly practised mischief against*

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII. V. 1—6. David was at this time an inspired writer of the Holy Scriptures; yet the Lord spoke to him by his prophet, and then by the high priest, for the honor of his own institutions. (*M. R. h.*)—It is doubtful, whether David at this time inquired of God by the prophet Gad, or by Abiathar. It seems from the text, that Abiathar did not come to him, till he came to Keilah; yet perhaps this only means the neighborhood of that city. SCOTT.

(1.) *Then they told David.*] 'Or, *now they told David*, to wit, before he heard of the slaughter of the priests.' MATT. POOLE.—*Then.*] 'I. e. whilst he abode in the forest of Hareth, ch. 22: 5.' ASSEMB. ANN.—*Keilah.*] 'A fortified town in the tribe of Judah, near to Eleutheropolis, on the road to Hebron.'—*Threshing-floors.*] 'Make a threshing-floor thus: dig the place thoroughly; afterwards sprinkle it well with the lees of oil, and give it time to soak in. Then beat the clods very fine; make it level, and beat it well down with a pavier's rammer. When this is done, sprinkle afresh with the oil lees, and let it dry. This being done, the mice cannot burrow in it, no grass can grow through it, nor will the rain dissolve the surface, or raise the mud.' *Cato De Re Rustica* in DR. A. CLARKE.

(2.) 'In most cases, a man with David's wrongs would have joined with the enemies of his country; but he thinks of nothing but succouring Keilah. This is a rare instance of disinterested heroism.' DR. A. CLARKE.

Saul said, [i] God hath delivered him into mine hand: for [j] he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars.

8 And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men.

9 And David [k] knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod.

10 Then said David, O LORD God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to [m] destroy the city for my sake.

11 Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O LORD God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. [n] And the LORD said, He will come down.

12 Then said David, Will the men of Keilah [*] deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? and the LORD said, [o] They will deliver *thee* up.

13 Then David and his men, *which were* about [p] six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbare to go forth.

14 And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in [q] a mountain in the [r] wilderness of Ziph: and [s] Saul sought him every day; [t] but God delivered him not into his hand.

15 And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David *was* in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood.

16 And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and [u] strengthened his hand in God.

17 And he said unto him, [x] Fear not; for the hand of Saul my father [y] shall not find thee: and [z] thou shalt be king over Israel, and [a] I shall be next unto thee: and [b] that also Saul my father knoweth.

18 And [c] they two made a covenant before the LORD. And David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.

him. Miserable the people, whose prince is a tyrant; for while some are sufferers by his tyranny, others (which is worse) are made instruments of it.

II. David consulting with God concerning his preservation; where his address to God, is, 1. Very solemn and reverent. Twice he calls God, the *Lord God of Israel*, and thrice himself his *servant*, *v.* 10, 11. Those that address God, must know their distance, and whom they are speaking to. 2. Very particular and express. God allows us to be so in our addresses to Him. His representation of the case is so, *v.* 10. He seems more solicitous for the safety of the city than for his own. Generous souls are thus minded. He indeed inverts the due order of his queries, but God in his answer puts him into method. If he had asked the men (i. e. the magistrates or elders) of Keilah themselves, what they would do in that case, they could not have told him, not knowing their own minds, nor what they should do when it came to the trial, much less which way the superior vote of their council would carry it; or they might have told him they would protect him, and yet afterward have betrayed him; but God could tell him infallibly. Note, God knows all men better than they know themselves, knows their strength, what is in them, and what they will do, if they come into such and such circumstances. He therefore knows not only what *will* be, but what *would* be if it were not prevented; therefore He knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and how to render to every man according to his works.

David, thus notified of his danger, quitted Keilah, (*v.* 13.) his followers increased to 600, not knowing whither he went, but resolving to follow Providence, and put himself under its protection. When *Saul heard that David was escaped from Keilah, he forbore to go forth* with the body of the army, as he intended, (*v.* 8.) and resolved to take only his own guards, and go in quest of him. Thus God baffles the design of his people's enemies, and turns their counsels headlong.

V. 14—18. Here is, I. David absconding, *v.* 14, 15. We must here, 1. Commend his eminent virtues, his humility, modesty, fidelity to his prince, and patient attendance on the providence of his God, that he did not draw up his forces against Saul, fight him in the field, or surprise him by some stratagem, and so avenge his own quarrel and that of the Lord's priests upon him, and put an end to his own troubles, and the calamities of the country under his tyrannical government. No, he makes no such attempt; he keeps God's way, waits God's time, and is content to secure himself in woods and wildernesses, though with some it might seem a reproach to that courage for which he had been famous. But, 2. We must also lament his hard fate, that an innocent man should be thus put in fear of his life; a man of honor thus disgraced, a man of merit thus recompensed for his services, and a man that delighted in the service both of God and his country, thus debarred from both, and wrapped up in obscurity. What shall we say to this? Let it make us think the worse of this world, which often gives such bad treatment to its best men: let it reconcile even great and active men to privacy and restraint, if Providence make that their lot, for it was David's: and let it make us long for that kingdom, where goodness shall for ever be in glory, and holiness in honor, and the righteous shall shine as the sun.

II. Saul hunting him as his implacable enemy. He sought his life every day, so restless and cruel was his malice, *v.* 14, 15. As it had been from the beginning, it was now, and will be. *He that is born after the flesh, persecuteth him that is born after the Spirit.*

III. God defending him as his powerful Protector. God delivered him not into his hand, as Saul hoped; (*v.* 7.) and unless God had delivered him into his hand, he could not prevail against him, John 19: 11.

IV. Jonathan comforting him, as his faithful friend. True friends will find out means to get together; David, it is likely, appointed this interview, and Jonathan observed it, though had it been discovered it might have cost him his life. True friendship will not shrink from danger, but can easily venture; will not shrink from condescension, but can easily exchange a palace for a wood, to serve a friend. The very sight of Jonathan was reviving to David; but besides, he said what was very encouraging.

1. As a *pious* friend, he directed him to God, the Foundation of his confidence, and the Fountain of his comfort. He *strengthened his hand in God.* David, though a strong believer, needed the help of his friends, to perfect what was lacking in his faith; and herein Jonathan was helpful to him, by reminding him of God's promise, the holy oil wherewith he was anointed, God's presence with him hitherto, and his many experiences of God's goodness. Thus he strengthened his hands for action, by encouraging his heart, not in the creature, but in God.

2. As a *self-denying* friend, he takes pleasure in the prospect of David's advancement to that honor which was his own birthright, *v.* 17. I shall think it preferment enough to be next thee, near thee, though under thee; and will never pretend to be thy rival. Jonathan's resignation to David of his title, would be a great satisfaction to him, and make his way much the more clear. This, he tells him, Saul knew very well; Jonathan having sometimes heard him say as much. Whence it appears, how wicked Saul was, to persecute one whom God favored; and how foolish, in thinking to prevent what God had determined, and would certainly bring to pass.

3. As a *constant* friend, he renewed his league

i 14. 24:4—6. 26:8,9. Ps. 71:10,11.
j Ex. 14:3. 15:9. Judg. 16:2,3. Job 20:5. Luke 19:43,44.
k Jer. 11:18,19. Acts 9:24. 14:6. 23: 16—18.
l 6. 14:18. 30:7. Num. 27:21.
m 22:19. Gen. 18:24. Esth. 3:6. Prov. 28:15.
n Ps. 50:15. Jer. 33:3. Matt. 7:7,8.
* Heb. *shut up.* Ps. 31:8.
o 7. Ps. 62:1. 118:8. Ec. 9:14,15. Is. 29:15. Heb. 4:13.
p 22:2. 25:13. 30:9,10.
q Ps. 11:1—3.
r Josh. 15:55.
s 27:1. Ps. 54:3,4. Prov. 1:16. 4:16.
t 7. Ps. 32:7. Prov. 21:30. Jer. 36: 26. Rom. 8:31. 2 Tim. 3:11. 4:16, 18.
u Deut. 3:28. Neh. 2:18. Job 4:3,4. 16:5. Prov. 27:9. Ec. 4:9—12. Is. 35: 3. Ex. 13: 22. Luke 22: 32,43. Eph. 6:10. 2 Tim. 2:1. Heb. 12:12, 13.
x Is. 41:10,14. Heb. 13:6.
y Ps. 27:1—3. 46:1,2. 91:1,2. Prov. 14:26. Is. 54:17.
z Luke 12:32.
a Prov. 19:21. Acts 28:16. Rom. 15: 24.
b 20:31. 24:20. Acts 5:39.
c 18: 3. 20: 12—17,42. 2 Sam. 9: 1. 21:7.

(7, 8.) (*Notes*, 14. 24: 8—15.) SCOTT.

Verses 9—13.

The express and repeated answers given to the inquiries, which David made by the high priest, were in fact a divine attestation, that he was appointed to the kingdom. (1—6. *Ex.* 28: 30. *Num.* 27: 21.) Probably these were given in an audible voice from some tent, where the ephod was generally placed, and before which the inquiry was made. The prayer which David used, perhaps by the mouth of Abiathar, in inquiring of God, may be considered as an example of the manner in which pious princes conducted that solemn and important concern. SCOTT

(11, 12.) 'We may observe from this, that, however positive a declaration of God may appear, that refers to any thing in which man is to be employed, the prediction is not intended to *suspend*, or *destroy free agency*, but always comprehends in it some particular condition.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 14.

Wilderness of Ziph.] 'In the southern part of Judea, not far from Carmel.' Dr. A. CLARKE.—'There were two Ziphs; this near Maon, and another near Idumea, 22 miles from Jerusalem.' ASSEMB. ANN.

Verse 16.

(*Notes*, *Is.* 35 3, 4. *Luke* 22: 39—46. 5: 43. *Col.* 1: 9—14.) SCOTT.

19 ¶ Then came up [d] the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of [e] Hachilah, which *is* * on the south of † Jeshimon?

20 Now therefore, O king, come down, according to [f] all the desire of thy soul to come down; and [g] our part *shall be* to deliver him into the king's hand.

21 And Saul said, [h] Blessed *be* ye of the LORD; for ye have compassion on me.

22 Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his ‡ haunt is, *and* who hath seen him there: for it is told me *that* he dealeth very subtly.

23 See therefore, and [i] take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that [k] I will search him out throughout all [l] the thousands of Judah.

24 And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men *were* in the wilderness of [m] Maon, in the plain on [n] the south of Jeshimon.

25 Saul also and his men went to seek *him;* and they told David: wherefore he came down § into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard *that,* he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon.

26 And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and [o] David made haste to get [p] away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them.

27 But [r] there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for [s] the Philistines have ‖ invaded the land.

28 Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place ¶ Sela-hammahlekoth.

29 And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at [t] En-gedi.

d 22: 7,8. 26: 1. Ps. 54: *title.* 3,4. Prov. 29:12.
e 26:1,3.
* Heb. *on the right hand.*
† Or, *the wilderness.*
f Deut. 18:6. 2 Sam. 3:21. Ps. 112:10. Prov. 11:23.
g 1 Kings 21:11—14. 2 Kings 10:5—7. Ps. 54:3. Prov. 29:26.
h 22:8. Ps. 10:3. Is. 66:5. Mic. 3:11.
‡ Heb. *foot shall be.* Job 5:13.
i Mark 14:1,10,11. John 18:2,3.
k 2 Sam. 17:11—13. Prov. 1:16. Rom. 3:15,16.
l Num. 10:36. Mic. 5:2.
m 25:2. Josh. 15:55.
n 19.
§ Or, *from the rock.* 28. Judg. 15:8.
o 19:12. 20:39. 2 Sam. 15:14. 17:21, 22. Ps. 31:22.
p 2 Chr. 20:12. Ps. 17:9. 22:12,16. 118:11—13. 2 Cor. 1:8. Rev. 20:9.
r Gen. 22:14. Deut. 32:36. Ps. 116:3.
s 2 Kings 19:9. Rev. 12:16.
‖ Heb. *spread themselves upon.* 1 Chr. 14:13.
¶ That is, *The rock of divisions.*
t 24: 1. Josh. 15: 62. 2 Chr. 20:2. Cant. 1:14. Ez. 47:10.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The prayers of true believers are a barrier against hostile invasions; but persecution brings down the judgments of God on guilty nations. No ill usage should prompt us to revenge ourselves, or prevent us from doing good, as we have opportunity and ability, even when we are sure to meet with ingratitude, and to be exposed to further trouble, by so doing. Thus Jesus lived and died, 'and left us an example that we should follow his steps.'—The more particularly we seek direction from God in fervent prayer, and the more carefully we consult the sacred Scriptures, the safer will be our path.—In difficult circumstances, we shall often find the unbelief of our professed helpers a very discouraging hindrance: but the most effectual way of answering their objections, and securing their assistance, is to refer them to the precepts and promises of God.—No ties of honor, gratitude, or affection, can secure the heart, under powerful temptations: nay, we none of us know how we should act, if assailed by the terrors of impending death, and left without the immediate supports of divine grace. He, who made the human heart, can alone estimate its deceitfulness: we ought not therefore to confide in our own resolutions, or in the assurances of others; but depend on the Lord to guide and keep us: and if we meet with evil treatment, we need not wonder, and ought not to revile or murmur.—The kindness of those friends, whom He raises up where we could least expect them, may well countervail the malice of our enemies, and the ingratitude and fickleness of those whom we have served. And if the converse of one friend can, at one interview, give so much comfort and strength to our hearts; (*2 Cor.* 7: 5—7.) what may not be expected from the continual supports, and daily visits, and powerful love, of the sinner's Savior, the believer's covenanted Friend? And what will heaven be, where perfect and universal friendship reigns, without interruption, separation, or alloy?—The influence of wickedness, in those who fill exalted stations, widely and fatally diffuses itself among their inferiors, even throughout whole nations. Those therefore who are distinguished by this dangerous pre-eminence, have additional reasons for bridling their passions, and exercising themselves unto godliness; lest they should by their crimes occasion the ruin of multitudes, and thus aggravate their own condemnation.—But we must not expect much comfort in this evil world, which uses the best of men in so base a manner, and which once 'crucified the Lord of glory.' We should therefore study to pass through it as pilgrims; and to leave it, as those who are departing to a better country, that is, a heavenly.

SCOTT.

Verses 19—26.

'That life in grace will be peculiarly honored by the Lord, that is peculiarly marked with situations for the exercise of grace and faith, and the display of God's faithfulness in carrying the believer through them. If the Lord hath promised his presence to his people in affliction, must they not be brought into trouble, in order to have that precious promise realized?' HAWKER.

(19—21.) (*M. R.*) The Israelites in general were, it seems, averse to Saul's persecution of David, and backward to give him intelligence or assistance.—Saul still retained the language of piety, while perpetrating the most atrocious crimes. (*Ps.* 36: 1—4.) SCOTT.

(25.) *Wilderness of Maon.*] 'A mountainous district in the most southern parts of Judah.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 26—28.

Either the invasion of the Philistines was very formidable, and the case extremely urgent; or Saul feared the people's resentment, if they ravaged the country, while he was destroying its defender. (*M.*) SCOTT.

(27.) 'Behold the workings of providence! Here David was delivered by God, and in such a manner too as rendered the divine interposition visible.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(28.) *Sela-hammah-le-koth.*] 'That is, *the rock of divisions:* either because Saul was distracted here between two counsels, whether to pursue David, or go immediately against the Philistines; or because God divided Saul from David, when he was coming up close to him.' PATRICK.

Verse 29.

En-gedi.] 'Situated near the western coast of the Dead Sea, not far from Jeshimon, and literally the *kid's well;* was celebrated for its *vineyards,* Cant. 1: 14. also for its *balm;* reported mountainous and filled with caves: therefore fit for David.' PATRICK.—'Called also Hazezon Tamar, from the palm-trees abounding there, Gen. 14: 7. 2 Chron. 20: 2.' ASSEMB. ANN.

CHAP. XXIV.

David, in a cave, having Saul entirely in his power, cuts off his skirt, but spares his life, 1—7. He proves his innocency to Saul, 8—15. Saul owns his fault, requires an oath of David, and departs, 16—22.

AND it came to pass, [a] when Saul was returned from [*] following the Philistines, that [b] it was told him, saying, Behold, David *is* in [c] the wilderness of Engedi.

2 Then Saul took [d] three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and [e] went to seek David and his men upon [f] the rocks of the wild goats.

3 And he came to the sheep-cotes by the way, where *was* a cave; and Saul went in [g] to cover his feet: and [h] David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.

4 And [i] the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, [j] I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of † Saul's robe privily.

5 And it came to pass afterward, that [k] David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt.

6 And he said unto his men, [l] The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he *is* the anointed of the LORD.

a 23:28.
* Heb. *after.*
b 23:19. Prov. 25:5. 29:12. Ez. 22:9. Hos. 7:3.
c 23:20.
d 13:2.
e Ps. 37:32. 38:12.
f Ps. 104:18.
g Judg. 3:24.
h Ps. 57: *title.* 142: *title.*
i 26:8. 2 Sam. 4:8. Job 31:31.
j 10,18. 23:7. 26:23.
† Heb. *the robe which* was *Saul's.*
k 2 Sam. 12:9. 24:10. 2 Kings 22:19.
l 26:9—11. 2 Sam. 1:14. 1 Kings 21:3. Job 31:29,30. Matt. 5:44. Rom. 12: 14—21. 13:1,2. 1 Thes. 5:15.

them immediately, but thus Divine Providence gave David time to shift for himself, though Saul hoped to secure his game more certainly, *v.* 23.

3. The eminent peril David was now in. Upon intelligence that the Ziphites had betrayed him, he retired from the hill of Hachilah to the wilderness of Maon, (*v.* 24.) and at this time he penned Ps. 54. as appears by the title, wherein he calls the Ziphites *strangers*, though Israelites, because they used him barbarously; but he puts himself under the divine protection. '*Behold God is my Helper*, and then all shall be well.' Saul, having got intelligence of him, pursued him closely, (*v.* 25.) till there was but a mountain between them, *v.* 26. But this mountain was an emblem of the Divine Providence coming between David and the destroyer, like the pillar of cloud between the Israelites and the Egyptians; David was *concealed* by it, and Saul *confounded* by it. David now flees *as a bird to his mountain*, and finds God to him as the shadow of a great rock. Saul hoped to compass him in and his men; but the ground did not prove convenient, and so his design failed. A new name was given to the place, in remembrance of this, *v.* 28. *Sela-hammah-lekoth, the rock of division*, because it divided between Saul and David.

4. David's deliverance out of this danger. Providence gave Saul a diversion, when he was just ready to lay hold on him, (*v.* 27.) Probably, some private interests of his own were at stake, else he would not have noticed it, we have reason to think, from *v.* 5—8. God's overruling providence, which orders all events, made the Philistines' invasion very serviceable to him. The wisdom of God is never at a loss for ways and means to preserve his people. Saul of Tarsus was converted, just when he was *breathing out threatnings and slaughter against the saints of the Lord.*

Lastly, David having thus escaped, took shelter in some natural fortresses, in the wilderness of En-gedi. *v.* 29. i. e. (s) Lightfoot) the wilderness of Judah, in which he penned Ps. 63. which breathes as much pious and devout affection as almost any of his Psalms; for in all places, and in all conditions, he still kept up his communion with God.

CHAP. XXIV. We have hitherto had Saul seeking an opportunity to destroy David, and, to his shame, he could never find it. Here David had a fair opportunity to destroy Saul, but, to his honor, he did not use it; which was as great an instance of God's grace in him, as the preserving of his own life was of God's providence over him.

V. 1—8. Here, I. Saul renews his pursuit of David, *v.* 1, 2. so soon as he is come home from chasing the Philistines, and resolves to have another thrust at him, *as if he had been delivered to do all these abominations.* By the frequent incursions of the Philistines, he might have seen how necessary it was to restore David to his place in the army; but so far is he from that, that now, more than ever, he is exasperated against him, and goes in pursuit of him, even *upon the rocks of the wild goats*, where, one would think, David should not be envied an inhabitation, nor Saul be desirous to disturb him; for what harm could he fear from one no better accommodated? But Saul cannot be easy while David is alive.

II. Providence brings Saul alone into the same cave with David and his men. *v.* 3. In those countries there were very large caves in the sides of the rocks or mountains, partly natural, but, probably, much enlarged by art, for the sheltering of sheep from the heat of the sun; hence we read of places where the flocks rested at noon, (Cant. 1: 7.) and this cave seems to be spoken of as one of the sheep-cotes. In the sides of this cave David and his men remained; perhaps not the whole 600, but only some few of his particular friends, the rest being disposed of in similar retirements. Saul, passing by, turned in himself alone, not in search of David, but to *cover his feet*, i. e. to sleep awhile, it being a cool and quiet place, and very refreshing in the heat of the day: probably, he ordered his attendants to march before, reserving only a very few to wait for him at the mouth of the cave.

III. David's servants stir him up to kill Saul, upon so fair an opportunity, *v.* 4. They remind him that this was the day he had long looked for, and of which God had spoken to him in general when he was anointed to the kingdom, which should end his troubles, and open the passage to his advancement. But see how apt we are to misunderstand, 1. The promises of God. God had assured David he would deliver him from Saul, and his men interpret that as a warrant to destroy Saul. 2. The providences of God; because it was now in his power to kill him, they concluded he might lawfully do it.

IV. David *cut off the skirt of his robe*, but soon repented that he had done even that, *v.* 5. It did Saul no real hurt, and served David for a proof that it was in his power to kill him; (*v.* 11.) yet, it was an affront to Saul's royal dignity, and David wished he had not done it. Note, It is a good thing to have a heart that smites us for sins that seem little; it is a sign conscience is awake and tender, and will be the means of preventing greater sins.

V. He reasons strongly, both with himself and with his servants, against doing Saul any hurt, *v.* 6, 7. He considers Saul now, not as his enemy, and the only person in the way of his preferment, for then he would be induced to hearken to the temptation, but as God's anointed, i. e. the person whom God has appointed to reign as long as he lived, and who, as such, was under the particular protection of the divine law; and as his master, to whom he was obliged to be faithful. Let servants and subjects learn hence to be dutiful and loyal, whatever hardships are put upon them, 1 Pet. 2: 18. *v.* 7. He would not only not do this bad thing himself, but would not suffer those about him to do it. Thus did he render good for evil to him, from whom he had received evil for good; and was herein both a type of Christ, who saved his persecutors, and an example to all Christians, not to be *overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good.*

VI. He follows Saul out of the cave, and though he would not take his life, yet he wisely took the opportunity to slay, if possible, his enmity, by convincing him that he was not such a man as he took him for. 1. He testified that he had an honorable opinion of Saul. He had too much reason to believe that, let him say what he would, Saul would immediately be the death of him, as soon as he saw him, yet he bravely lays aside that jealousy, and thinks Saul so much a man of sense as to hear his reasoning. 2. His behavior was very respectful, he *stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself*, giving honor to whom honor was due, and teaching us to order ourselves lowly and reverently to all our superiors, even to those that have been most injurious to us.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV. V. 1—3. The manner of Saul's death might have been concealed, had David killed him, till David had taken proper measures to secure himself, and to seize the throne. (*Notes, Ps. 57: 142: titles.*) SCOTT.

(3.) *Cave.*] 'Some caves were exceeding large. Strabo mentions one that would contain 4000 men.' PATRICK. Pococke saw one in which 30,000 men once retired to escape bad air. See geographical note on Palestine, Josh. 12: 8.—'The rabbins have invented a curious conceit here to account for Saul's security. "God, foreseeing that Saul would come to this cave, caused a spider to weave her web over the mouth of it; which, when Saul perceived, he took for granted no person had lately been there, and consequently entered it without suspicion. This is a Jewish tradition, and one of the most elegant and instructive in their whole collection.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 4—7.

The Lord intended to give David an opportunity of exercising faith, patience, and generous kindness; of showing the tendency and efficacy of his religious principles, the tenderness of his conscience, and the steadfastness of his loyalty; for the confutation of his accusers, a rebuke to Saul, and an example to all who read it.—He was satisfied with performing his present duty; left his protection and future advancement to God; and deemed it an atrocious offence to 'stretch forth his hand,' to hurt even so wicked a prince as Saul, and in defence of his own life. SCOTT.

7 So David * stayed his servants with these words, and [m] suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on *his* way.

[*Practical Observations.*]

8 ¶ David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, [n] My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, [o] David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself.

9 And David said to Saul, [p] Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?

10 Behold, this day thine eyes have seen, how that the LORD had delivered thee to-day into mine hand in the cave: and *some* [q] bade *me* kill thee: but *mine eye* spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he *is* [r] the LORD's anointed.

11 Moreover, [s] my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see, that *there is* [t] neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee: yet [u] thou huntest my soul to take it.

V. 9—15. We have here David's warm and pathetic speech wherein he endeavors to convince Saul, he did him a great wrong in persecuting him thus, and to persuade him therefore to be reconciled.

1. He calls him *father;* (*v.* 11.) he was, in particular, his father-in-law For a prince to seek the ruin of any of his good subjects, is as unnatural as for a father to seek the ruin of his own children.

2. He lays the blame of his rage against him on his evil counsellors, *v.* 9. David had reason enough to think Saul persecuted him purely from his own envy and malice, yet he decently supposes others put him to it. Satan, the great accuser of the brethren, has his agents in all places, and particularly in the courts of those princes that encourage them and give ear to them, who make it their business to represent the people of God as enemies to Cæsar, and hurtful to kings and princes, that, being thus dressed up in bear skins, they may 'be baited.'

3. He solemnly protests his own innocence, *v.* 11. Perhaps about this time David penned Ps. 7. concerning the business of Cush the Benjamite, i. e. Saul, as some think, wherein he appeals to God, *v.* 3—5. putting in a parenthesis, with reference to the story of this ch.

4. He produces undeniable evidence, *v.* 11. 'Had that been true which I am accused of, I had now had thy head in my hand, and not the skirt of thy robe.' To corroborate this evidence, he shows him, (1.) That God's providence had given him an opportunity to do it. *The Lord delivered thee,* very surprisingly, *to-day into mine hand.* When Saul had but a very small advantage against David, he cried out, *God has delivered him into my hand,* (*ch.* 23: 7.) and resolved to make the best of that advantage; but not so David. (2.) That

12 The [x] LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee; but [y] mine hand shall not be upon thee.

13 As saith the proverb of the ancients, [z] Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked; but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

14 After whom is [a] the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? [b] after a dead dog, [c] after a flea?

15 The LORD therefore [d] be Judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and † deliver me out of thine hand.

16 And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, *Is this* thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept.

his counsellors and those about him had earnestly put him on to do it. He had blamed Saul for hearkening to men's words, and justly; 'for,' says he, 'if I had done so, thou hadst not been alive now.' (3.) That it was upon a good principle, he refused to do it, not from fear of Saul's attendants, but from the fear of God. Such a happy command he had of himself, that his nature, in the midst of the greatest provocation, was not suffered to rebel against his principles.

5. He declares it his fixed resolution never to be his own avenger. *The Lord avenge me of thee;* i. e. 'deliver me out of thy hand; but, whatever comes of it, *my hand shall not be upon thee;*' (*v.* 12. and again, *v.* 13.) *as saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked.* i. e. (1.) Men's own iniquity will ruin them at last. So some understand it. Give them rope enough, and they will hang themselves. In this sense it comes in very fitly as a reason why *his hand should not be upon him.* (2.) Bad men will do bad things; according as men's principles and dispositions are, accordingly will their actions be: this suits the connection. If David had been a wicked man, as he was represented, he would have done this wicked thing; but he durst not, because of the fear of God. Or thus: Whatever injuries bad men do us, yet we must not return them; never render railing for railing: though *wickedness proceed from the wicked,* yet let it not therefore proceed from us by way of retaliation. See Isa. 32: 6—8.

6. He endeavors to convince him, that as it was a bad thing, so it was a mean thing, for him to chase such an inconsiderable person as David was, *v.* 14. one of his own servants, bred a poor shepherd, now an exile; neither able nor willing to resist. To conquer him would not be to his honor, to attempt it was his disparagement. So far from aspiring, David was, in his own account, as

* Heb. *cut off.* Ps. 7:4.
m 25:33.
n 26:17.
o 20:41. 25:23,24. Gen. 17:3. Ex. 20:12. Rom. 13:7. 1 Pet. 2:17.
p 26:19. Ps. 101:5. Prov. 16:28. 17:4. 18:8. 25:23. 26:28. Ec. 7:21,22. Jam. 3:6.
q 4. 26:8.
r 26:9. Ps. 105:15.
s 16:21. 2 Kings 5:13. Prov. 15:1.
t 26:18. Ps. 7:3,4. 35:7. John 15:25.
u 23:14,23. 26:20. Job 10:16. Ps. 140: 11. Lam. 4:18. Ez. 13:18. Mic. 7:2.
x 26:23. Gen. 16:5. Judg. 11:27. Ps. 7:8,9. 35:1. 43:1. 94:1. Rom. 12: 19. 1 Pet. 2:23. Rev. 6:10.
y 26:11.
z Matt. 7:16—18. 12:33,34. 15:19.
a 2 Sam. 6:20. 1 Kings 21:7.
b 17:43. 2 Sam. 3:8. 9:8. 16:9.
c 26:20. Judg. 8:1—3.
d See on 12.—2 Chr. 24:22. Mic. 1:2.
† Heb. *judge.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—7. Wicked men are often interrupted in their evil courses; yet they return to them when the restraint is removed, as if delivered from trouble that they might commit more sins. (*Jer.* 7: 8—11.) But the Lord disappoints their malice; and by bringing them into danger, gives them manifest proof of their folly and wickedness.—An accurate knowledge of the divine law, an established judgment, and a holy state of heart, are requisite to mark out the path of duty, in many important cases. But it is always safe to deny the suggestions of revenge, covetousness, ambition, impatience, or other selfish principles.—We should perform all our relative duties *from regard to the authority of* GOD; when others violate his law in their conduct towards us, we must not do the same towards them; and in waiting for the performance of his promises, we must use lawful means alone. Under the deepest injuries we are not allowed, and ought not to be inclined, to avenge ourselves; but after the example of David, and of David's Lord, we should 'commit our cause to Him that judgeth righteously.' (1 *Pet.* 2: 18—25.)—Magistracy is the ordinance of God, and confers dignity on those advanced to it, who, in all ordinary cases and lawful things, should be honored and obeyed; and if they abuse their trust, the Lord will execute vengeance on them: and provided we have the opportunity, we should, along with the most loyal and unreserved submission in all things lawful, plainly warn them of their danger in this respect. If persecuted in one city we may flee to another, and use necessary means of self-preservation: but we must not lift up our hands, or adopt offensive measures, against those whom God has placed over us, though like even Saul or Nero. (*Rom.* 13: 1—7.) SCOTT.

Verse 8—15.

It may be supposed, David remained at so great a distance from Saul and his army, that he was in no danger of being immediately seized on by them; though Saul could both hear and see him. Yet, if Saul's heart should not be affected by his address, he would be more likely to crush him than before. But this, and all consequences, David trusted with God.—Nothing can be imagined more respectful, pathetic, and forcible, than his conduct and address on this occasion. At the same time he plainly and repeatedly warned Saul, that the Lord would judge between them, and both deliver him out of his hand, and avenge his cause upon him. (*Notes,* 26: 13—20.) SCOTT.

The imperative or optative mood, employed in these verses, might perhaps, with more strict conformity to the Hebrew, be changed for the future tense indicative:—'The Lord will judge ... will avenge, ... will be Judge, &c.' ID.

(8.) *Stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself.*] In the

peculiar form of oriental salutation of a superior; see the cut of the Persian manner. 'It is only on remarkable occasions that the *prostration* is made.' MORIER.

Verses 16—22.

These forcible words, and this generous behavior, produced a temporary conviction, in Saul's mind, of David's excellency, the righteousness of his cause, and the certainty of his advancement; and consequently, that himself was deeply criminal, and in a ruinous path. Probably, he was in some measure convinced of these things at other times, but they now more deeply affect-

ing these words unto Saul, that Saul said, [e] *Is* this thy voice, my son David? and [f] Saul lifted up his voice and wept.

17 And he said to David, [g] Thou *art* more righteous than I: for [h] thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.

18 And thou hast showed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when [i] the LORD had [*] delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not.

19 For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore, [j] the LORD reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day.

20 And now, behold, [k] I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand.

21 [l] Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that [m] thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house.

22 And David sware unto Saul, and Saul went home; but [n] David and his men gat them up unto [o] the hold.

CHAP. XXV.

Samuel dies, and is lamented and buried by all Israel; and David goes to Paran, 1. The character of Nabal, and of his wife Abigail, 2, 3. David sends to Nabal, most respectfully requesting some provisions; but, provoked by his answer, sets out to destroy him, 4—13. A servant warns Abigail, 14—17. She meets David with a present, and wisely pacifies him, 18—31. David blesses God for her interposition, and courteously dismisses her, 32—35. Nabal, hearing of the danger to which he had been exposed, is terrified, and dies, 36—38. David marries Abigail and also Ahinoam, 39—43. Michal is given to Phalti 44.

AND [a] Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and [b] lamented

[e] 26:17. Job 6:25. Prov. 15:1. 25:11. Luke 21:15. Acts 6:10.

a dead dog; Mephibosheth thus calls himself, 2 Sam. 9: 8. This humble language would have wrought upon Saul, if he had any spark of generosity in him. What credit would it be to Saul to trample on a dead dog? What pleasure to hunt a flea, one flea? so the Heb. Which, (as some have observed,) if it be sought, is not easily found, if it be found, not easily caught, and if it be caught, is a poor prize, especially for a prince.

7. He once and again appeals to God as the righteous Judge, *v.* 12, 15. Note, The justice of God is the refuge and comfort of oppressed innocence. If men wrong us, God will right us, at furthest, in the judgment of the great day. With Him David leaves his cause, and so rests satisfied, waiting his time to appear for him.

V. 16—22. Here is, I. Saul's penitent reply to David's speech. It was strange he had patience to hear him out, considering how outrageous he was against him, and how cutting David's discourse was: but God restrained him and his men: and we may suppose Saul struck with amazement at the singularity of the event, and much more when he found how much he had lain at David's mercy. His heart must have been harder than a stone, if this had not affected him.

1. He melted into tears; not counterfeit, we may suppose, but real expressions of his present concern at the sight of his own iniquity, so plainly proved upon him. He speaks as one quite overcome with David's kindness; *Is this thy voice, my son David?* And, as one that relented at the thought of his own folly and ingratitude, he *lifted up his voice and wept*, *v.* 16. Many mourn for their sins, that do not truly repent of them; weep bitterly for them, and yet continue in love and league with them.

2. He ingenuously acknowledged David's integrity, and his own iniquity, *v.* 17. Now God made good to David that word on which he had caused him to hope, that He would *bring forth his righteousness as the light*, Ps. 37: 6. They who take care to keep a good conscience, may leave it to God to secure them the credit of it. This fair confession was enough to prove David innocent, (even his enemy himself being judge,) but not enough to prove Saul himself a true penitent. He should have said, *Thou art righteous, but I am wicked;* but the utmost he will own is this, *Thou art more righteous than I:* bad men will commonly go no further in their confessions. He now owns himself mistaken concerning David, *v.* 18. We are too apt to suspect others to be worse affected towards us than really they are, and perhaps are proved to be: when, afterward, our mistake is discovered, we should be forward to recall our suspicions, as Saul does here.

3. He prays God to recompense David's generous kindness to him. He owns David's sparing him was an unparalleled instance of tenderness; no man would have done the like; therefore, either because he thought himself not able to give a full recompense, or, because he found himself not inclined to give any at all, he turns him over to God for his pay; *The Lord reward thee good*, *v.* 19. Poor beggars can do no less than pray for their benefactors, and Saul did no more.

4. He prophesies his advancement to the throne; *v.* 20. He knew it before, by Samuel's promise of it to him; and he had as much reason to say, concerning David, as David concerning him, *How can I put forth my hand against the Lord's anointed?* But now he knew it by the interest he found David had in the people, the special providence of God in protecting him, and the generous, kingly spirit he had now given proof of in sparing his enemy. Saul's acknowledgment here of David's incontestable title to the crown, was a great encouragement to David, and a support to his faith and hope.

5. He binds David with an oath, hereafter to show the same tenderness of his seed, and name, as he had now showed of his person, *v.* 21. David had more reason to bind Saul by an oath not to destroy him, yet he insists not on that; (if the laws of justice and honor would not bind him, an oath would not;) but Saul knew David to be a conscientious man. Though David might be tempted, not only in revenge, but in prudence, to extirpate Saul's family, yet he binds himself not to do it, (*v.* 22.) knowing God could and would establish the kingdom to him and his, without such bloody methods. This oath he afterward religiously observed; he supported Mephibosheth, and executed those as traitors, that slew Ishbosheth. The hanging several of Saul's posterity, for the destruction of the Gibeonites, was God's appointment, not David's act, and therefore not the violation of this oath.

II. Their parting in peace. 1. Saul, for the present, let fall the persecution: went home convinced, but not converted; ashamed of his envy, yet retaining that root of bitterness; vexed that, when at last he had found David, he could not find in his heart to destroy him. God has many ways to tie the hands of persecutors, when He does not turn their hearts. 2. David continued to shift for his own safety; he knew Saul too well to trust him, and therefore *got him up into the hold.* It is dangerous venturing on the mercy of a reconciled enemy. We read of those who believed in Christ, and yet He *did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men.* They that like David are innocent as doves, must thus like him be *wise as serpents.*

CHAP. XXV. We have here some intermission of David's troubles by Saul; and yet this ch.

[f] Gen. 33:4.
[g] 26:21. Gen. 38:26. Ex. 9:27. Ps. 37:6. Matt. 27:4.
[h] Matt. 5:44. Rom. 12:20,21.
[i] 10. 23:7. 26:23.
[*] Heb. *shut me up.* 23: 12. 26: 8. *margins.* Ps. 31:8.
[j] 23:21. 26:25. Judg. 17:2.
[k] 20:30,31. 23:17. 2 Sam. 3:17,18. Job 15:25. Matt. 2:3—6,13,16.
[l] 20: 14—17. Gen. 21: 23. 31: 48,53. Heb. 6:16.
[m] 2 Sam. 21:6—8.
[n] Prov. 26: 24,25. Matt. 10: 16,17. John 2:24. [o] 23:29.
[a] 28:3.
[b] Gen. 50:11. Num. 20:29. Deut. 34: 8. Acts 8:2.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 8—22. It is not enough that we avoid evil ourselves: we should use our influence to restrain others also, or we shall be chargeable before God for it.—Mild language and respectful behavior, even to wicked and injurious superiors, are ornamental to piety. It is also more prudent to abate envy by seeking to appear inconsiderable, than to excite it by boasting of dignity, or excellence, or of our past services.—The noblest of all victories consists in 'overcoming evil with good.' Flattering and slanderous favorites are the bane of princes: by hearing their words, they advance their enemies, and persecute their friends; because the *clamor* of their passions silences the *whisper* of their consciences.—The most atrocious sinners have seasons of remorse, when they perceive and are affected with their situation: Yet, as they are not truly humbled or changed, sin and the world reign in their hearts.—Those, who are *experimentally* acquainted with the grace of God, will place little dependence on these appearances, especially in those, who have long sinned against the light of their own consciences: for there is great reason to fear, that these transient affections also will subside, and leave the heart still harder than before. SCOTT.

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ed him; nor could he suppress his emotion, or refuse to acknowledge his convictions: But his conduct illustrates the behavior of the scribes and priests in their determined enmity to Christ, notwithstanding they could not resist the wisdom of his words, deny the reality of his miracles, or at all impeach his character. (*Matt.* 2: 3—6. *John* 11: 47, 48. 12: 9—11. *Acts* 5: 33—39.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXV. V. 1. If Samuel was 18 years of age at the death of Eli, he must have been at least 38 when he vanquished the Philistines at Ebenezer. (7: 1, 2.) But how many years elapsed, from that time, to his anointing Saul; how long he lived after Saul was made king; how long Saul survived him; or how long Saul reigned in all, are matters of conjecture or calculation, without any certain *data* to proceed upon. (*Acts* 13: 21.) Perhaps Saul survived Samuel 3 or 4 years.—Doubtless Samuel, to the end of his days, presided over the seminary of prophets, and, by his prayers, instructions, and example, was very useful in private; though he did not much intermeddle in public business. When he died, the people in general were deeply

him, and buried him [c]in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to [d]the wilderness of Paran.

2 ¶ And *there was* a man in [e]Maon, whose [*]possessions *were* in Carmel; and the [f]man *was* very great, and he had [g]three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was [h]shearing his sheep in [i]Carmel.

3 Now the name of the man *was* Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail: and *she was* a woman of [j]good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man [k]*was* churlish and evil in his doings: and he *was* of the house of Caleb.

4 And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep.

5 And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get ye up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and [†]greet him in my name:

6 And thus shall ye say to him that [l]liveth *in prosperity*, [m]Peace

c 7:17. 1 Kings 2:34. 2 Chr. 33:30. Is. 14:18.
d Gen. 14:6. 21:21. Num. 12:16. Ps. 120:5. e 23:24.
* Or, *business was.*
f Gen. 26:13. 2 Sam. 19:32. Ps. 17:14. 73:3—7. Luke 16:19—25.
g Gen. 13:2. Job 1:3. 42:12.
h Gen. 38:13. 2 Sam. 13:23,24.
i 30:5. Josh. 15:55.
j Prov. 14:1. 31:26,30,31.
k 10,11,17. Ps. 10:3. Is. 32:5—7.
† Heb. *ask him in my name of peace.* 17:22. Gen. 43:23.
l 1 Thes. 3:8. 1 Tim. 5:6.
m 2 Sam. 18:28. *marg.* 1 Chr. 12:18. Matt. 10:12,13. Luke 10:5. John 14:27. 2 Thes. 3:16.

instances other troubles; if one vexation seem to be over, we must not be secure.

V. 1. We have here a short account of Samuel's death and burial. 1. Though a great man, and one admirably qualified for public service, yet he spent the latter end of his days in retirement; not because superannuated, for he knew how to preside in a college of the prophets, (*ch.* 19: 20.) but because rejected by Israel, (God thus justly chastising them,) and because his desire was to be quiet, and now in his advanced years to enjoy himself and his God in acts of devotion. Let old people be willing to rest, though it look like burying themselves alive.

2. Though a fast friend to David, for which Saul hated him, as also for dealing plainly with him; yet he died in peace, even in the worst days of Saul's tyranny, who, he sometimes feared, would kill him, *ch.* 16: 2. Saul loved him not, yet feared him, as Herod did John: and feared the people, for all knew him to be a prophet. Thus is Saul restrained from hurting him.

3. All Israel lamented him; and had reason, for they all had a loss in him. His personal merits, and his former public services, made this respect to his name and memory a just debt; it had been very ungrateful to withhold it. The sons of the prophets had lost the founder and president of their college, and all Israel a constant intercessor, *ch.* 12: 23. The loss is the more grievous just now, when Saul is grown so outrageous, and David driven from his country; never more need of Samuel than now, yet now he is removed. We will hope Israel lamented his death the more bitterly, because they remembered against themselves their own sin and folly in rejecting him, and desiring a king. Those have hard hearts, who can bury their faithful ministers with dry eyes; who are not sensible of the loss of those who have prayed for them, and taught them the way of the Lord. When God's providence removes relations and friends, we ought to be humbled for our misconduct toward them, while with us.

4. They buried him not in the school of the prophets at Naioth, but in his own house, or perhaps in the garden pertaining to it, at Ramah, where he was born.

5. David, hereupon, went down to the wilderness of Paran, retiring, perhaps, to mourn the more solemnly Samuel's death. Or, rather, because now, having lost so good a friend, he apprehended his danger to be greater than ever; now it was he *dwelt in the tents of Kedar*, Ps. 120: 5. In some parts of this wilderness of Paran, Israel wandered when they came out of Egypt; the place would bring to mind God's care of them, and David might improve that for his own encouragement.

V. 2—11. Here begins the story of Nabal.

I. A short account of him. Observe, 1. His name: *Nabal; a fool*, so it signifies: and so indeed we all deserve to be called, when we come into the world; for *Man is born like the wild ass's colt*, and *foolishness is bound up in our hearts*. 2. His family: he was of the house of Caleb, and inherited his estate; for Maon and Carmel lay near Hebron, which was given to Caleb; (Josh. 15: 54, 55.—14: 14.) but he was far from inheriting his virtues. Indeed, he was a disgrace to his family. The Seventy, and some other ancient versions, read it appellatively: He was a dogged man, of a currish disposition, surly and snappish, and always snarling—*a cynic*. 3. His wealth: this was very great; riches are common blessings, which God often gives to Nabals, to whom He gives neither wisdom nor grace. 4. His wife: Abigail; a woman of great understanding. Her name signifies, *the joy of her father*; yet he could not promise himself much joy of her, when he married her to such a husband. Many a child is thrown away upon great wealth; married to that and to nothing else desirable. Wisdom is good with an inheritance, but an inheritance is good for little without wisdom. 5. His character: he had no sense either of honor or honesty, so he could but get and save. This is the character given of Nabal by Him who knows what every man is.

II. David's humble request to him, to send him some victuals for himself and his men.

1. David, it seems, was in distress. What little reason have we to value the wealth of this world, when so great a churl as Nabal was, abounds, and so great a saint, as David was, suffers want! Yet if Providence bring him to these straits, David will not say, that to beg he is ashamed. Yet see Ps. 37: 25.

2. He chose a good time to send. Nabal had many hands employed, for whom he was to make a plentiful entertainment. Had he sent at another time, Nabal would have pretended he had nothing to spare, but now he could not have that excuse. It was usual to make feasts at their sheep-shearings, as appears from Absalom's feast on that occasion; (2 Sam. 13: 24.) wool was one of the staple commodities of Canaan.

3. David ordered his men to deliver their message to him with great respect, *v.* 5. He puts words in their mouths; *v* 6. (our translators add, *in prosperity;*) as if those live indeed, that live as Nabal did, with abundance of wealth about them; whereas, in truth, those that *live in pleasure*, are *dead while they live*. This was too high a compliment to pass upon Nabal, to call him *the man that liveth*. David knew better things, that in God's favor is life, not in the world's smiles: and by the rough answer he was well enough served. Yet his good wishes were very commendable

4. He pleaded the kindness Nabal's shepherd.

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sensible of their loss, and of their sin and folly in rejecting him; which conviction the disastrous events of Saul's reign, and his capricious and tyrannical conduct, would enhance: so that, collecting themselves together, they made general lamentations for him, and honorably buried him. (*M. R.* d.) SCOTT.

'Samuel died in the 97th or 98th year of his age: he ruled 16 years, or, as others think, 20 ys. before the reign of Saul, and judged Israel, i. e. was their principal judge, about 40 ys. [See Acts 13: 21.] No wonder so righteous a ruler and just a judge should be universally lamented, especially when the wisdom and equity of his government, compared with Saul's tyranny and extravagances, made his memory more dear, and his loss more regretted. He was buried in his own house at Ramah, for the Jews had no places of public sepulture. Each family had their private sepulchres: which appears to have been the case from Abraham to Joseph of Arimathea.—How singular was the character and piety of Samuel! Devoted to God from his birth, and worthy to be so! Early dedicated to Him, and hallowed by his influence! Descended from prophets, himself a greater. The service of God was made the early business of his life, nor interrupted by any thing but the service of his country. No man in his senses, in the vigor of life, in the age of ambition and avarice, forced by no danger, urged by no guilt, and pressed by no infirmity of mind or body, ever yet, voluntarily, and of his own choice, resigned the supreme power, secluded his sons from the succession, and elected two strangers to it, in succession, neither of whom he had ever seen before. Samuel did all this; and therefore, when the Scriptures assure us he did it by the divine command, we cannot help believing them. The narration carries its own irresistible evidence along with it.—Happy Samuel! [who entirely merged his own will in that of the Almighty, exalted to supreme power without ambition; exerting it without oppression or avarice, and resigning it without reluctance, when his God commanded!] Retiring with undiminished dignity or, to speak more truly, with added honor, from the concurrent and universal testimony of his country to his equity and incorruption! Oh, would princes so use their power, or so resign it! ... It were hard to determine which was happiest, his life or his death. He lived to the noblest purposes, the glory of God and the good of his country; he died full of years and honors, universally lamented and desired. Such was SAMUEL! Such always were, and such always will be, in a good measure, all those, whose beginnings are laid in true religion: whose duty is their delight, and their God their glory.' DODD. 'Oh, how seldom in the annals of the world, from the assembled heads of the great body politic, can a departing prime minister hear, "Thou hast not defrauded us; thou hast not oppressed us; neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand." This voice can be heard from Gilgal: yet of what other minister can this be spoken but of *Samuel the seer*, who was the gift of God's mercy to the people of Israel; whose memory was too precious to be intrusted to public monuments, but stands, and alas, with the exception of *Daniel*, in his administration, almost alone in the BOOK OF GOD!' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 2.

Carmel.] 'There were two Carmels; one in the N. near the sea, in the confines of Ashur and Zebulon, to which Elijah was wont to resort; and another in the S. near Hebron, in the tribe of Judah, which is here meant.' PATRICK.

Verses 3—6.

(*M. R.*) *Of the house of Caleb.* (3.) The LXX render it, *a man like* A DOG; for the Heb. word *Caleb* signifies *a dog.—That liveth*, &c. (6.) In this friendly, and respectful, and highly benevolent salutation, David seems to have spoken unadvisedly, in calling a sottish and luxurious wicked man, 'him that liveth;' as if his own indigence scarcely deserved the name of life. (*Note*, 1 *Thess.* 3: 6—10, *v.* 8.) SCOTT.

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be both to thee, and peace *be* to thine house, and peace *be* unto all that thou hast.

7 And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, [n] we [*] hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel.

8 Ask thy young men, and they will show thee. Wherefore let the young men find favor in thine eyes: (for we come in [o] a good day:) give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to [p] thy son David.

9 And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and [†] ceased.

10 And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, [q] Who *is* David? and who *is* the son of Jesse? [r] There be many servants nowadays that break away every man from his master.

11 [s] Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my [‡] flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and [t] give *it* unto men [u] whom I know not whence they *be*?

12 So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and [x] came and told him all those sayings.

13 And David said unto his men, [y] Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword, and [z] David also girded on his sword, and there went up after David about four hundred men; [a] and two hundred abode by the stuff.

14 ¶ But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he § railed on them.

15 But the men *were* [b] very good unto us, and we were not ‖ hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields:

16 They were [c] a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.

17 Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for [d] evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he *is* such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him.

18 Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses.

19 And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal.

20 And it was so, as she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down against her; and she met them.

21 Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him: and he hath requited me evil for good.

22 So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light any that pisseth against a wall.

23 ¶ And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground,

24 And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid.

25 Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name *is*, so *is* he; Nabal *is* his name, and folly *is* with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.

26 Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.

27 And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let even be given unto the young men that follow my lord.

28 Forgive, I pray thee, the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days.

29 Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling.

30 And it shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel,

31 That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid.

32 ¶ And David said to Abigail, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me:

33 And blessed *be* thy advice, and blessed *be* thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand.

34 For in deed, as the LORD God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hasted and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any that pisseth against a wall.

35 So David received of her hand that which she had brought him, and said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person.

36 ¶ And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart *was* merry within him, for he *was* very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light.

37 But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone.

38 And it came to pass about ten days after, that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died.

39 ¶ And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed *be* the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife.

40 And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife.

41 And she arose, and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.

42 And Abigail hasted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife.

43 David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they were also both of them his wives.

44 But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, which *was* of Gallim.

n See on 3:6. 24:11.
o Heb. *rested.*
p 20:30. 22:7,8. Ex. 5:2. Judg. 9:28. 2 Sam. 20:1. 1 Kings 12:16. Ps. 123: 3,4.
q 22:2. Ec. 7:10.
r 3. 24:13. Deut. 3:17. Judg. 8:6. Job 31:17. Ps. 73:7,8. 1 Pet. 4:9.
s Heb. *slaughter.*
t Ec. 11:1,2. Gal. 6:10.
u 14,15. John 9:29,30. 2 Cor. 6:9.
x 2 Sam. 24:13. Is. 36:21,22. Heb. 13:17.
y Josh. 9:14. Prov. 14:29. 16:32. 19: 2,11. 25:8. Jam. 1:19,20.
z 24:5,6. Rom. 12:19—21.
a 30:9,10,21—24.
§ Heb. *flew upon them.* Mark 15:29.
b 7,21. Phil. 2:15.
‖ Heb. *shamed.*
c Ex. 14:22. Job 1:10. Zech. 2:5.
d 20:7,9,33. 2 Chr. 25:16. Esth. 7:7.

Verses 7, 8.

Nothing could be more modest, respectful, and friendly, than this message. SCOTT.

Verses 10, 11.

It is observable, that Nabal copied Saul's contemptuous way of calling David the son of Jesse, though he pretended he knew not whence he was! (20: 30. 22: 9, 10.) ID.

(10.) *Break away.*] 'A metaphor borrowed from restive horses and refractory cattle.' ASSEMB. ANN.

(11.) *Water.*] 'He mentions water, because it was very scarce in that hot and dry country, Gen. 21: 15. Or, water is here, as in other places, used for any drink.' ASSEMB. ANN. Did he not also mention it as being then the common drink of even the rich and luxurious? ED.

Verse 14.

Railed, &c.] 'The Hebrew word here is by similitude taken from a bird of prey, that violently and swiftly falls upon the carcass to rend it in pieces.' DUTCH ANN.

Verse 16.

A wall.] *Roberts* finds a similar metaphor still used in India. The same may be said of the phrase, 'bound in the bundle of life,' *v.* 29. They say of a just judge, 'he is bound up in the bundle of justice;' of an enamored young man 'he is bound up in the bundle of love;' 'Why do they act so? because they are bound up in the bundle of desire,' &c. So of the phrases, 26: 20. 'To seek a flea;' 27: 12. 'Abhor,' Heb. 'stink;' 28: 2. 'keeper of my head, and a thousand others,' &c. Roberts still finds them used in India in the same sense;

is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he *is such* [e]a son of Belial, [f]that *a man* cannot speak to him.

[*Practical Observations.*]

18 Then Abigail [g]made haste, and [h]took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched *corn*, and an hundred * clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid *them* on asses.

19 And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal:

20 And it was *so, as* she [k]rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down against her: and she met them.

21 Now David had said, [l]Surely in vain have I kept all that this *fellow* hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that *pertained* unto him: and [m]he hath requited me evil for good.

e 25. 2:12. Deut. 13:13. Judg. 19:22. 1 Kings 21:10,13. 2 Chr. 13:7.
f 20:32,33. 2 Kings 5:13,14.
g 34. Num. 16:26—48. Prov. 6:4,5. Matt. 5:25.
h Gen. 32:13—20. 43:11—14. 2 Sam. 17:28,29. Prov. 18:16. 21:14.
* Heb. *lumps*. 2 Sam. 16:1.
i Prov. 31:11,12,27.
k 2 Kings 4:24.
l See on 13.—Job 36:8. Ps. 37:3. Eph. 4:26,27,31. 1 Thes. 5:15. 1 Pet. 2: 21—23. 3:9.
m Gen. 44:4. Ps. 35:12. 38:20. 109:3—5. Prov. 17:13. Jer. 18:20. Rom. 12:21. 1 Pet. 2:20. 3:17.

know what is in their hearts! From Saul, David expected injuries, and against those he stood on his guard, and so kept his temper; but from Nabal he expected kindness, whose affront therefore took him off his guard, and put him for the present into disorder. What need have we to pray, *Lord, lead us not into temptation.*

III. The account given of this matter to Abigail, by one of the servants, more considerate than the rest, *v.* 14. Abigail, being a woman of good understanding, took cognizance of the matter, even from her servant.

V. 18—31. We have here, Abigail's prudent management to preserve her husband and family from the destruction just coming on them: in which, it was her wisdom, that, what she did she did quickly, *v.* 18. It was her wisdom, too, that what she did, she did herself: because, being a woman of great and very happy address, she knew better how to manage it than any servant she had. The virtuous woman will herself *look well to the ways of her household*, and not devolve it wholly on others.

Abigail must endeavor to atone for Nabal's faults. And, I. By a most generous present, she atones for his denial of David's request. She prepares the very best the house afforded, and abundance of it, (*v.* 18.) according to the usual entertainments of those times. Nabal grudged them *water*, but she took *two bottles of wine*, loaded her asses with provisions, and sent them before; for *a gift pacifieth anger:* Jacob thus pacified Esau. This she did, not only lawfully, but laudably, without her husband's knowledge, even when she had reason to think, that, if he had known he would not have consented to it; because it was not to gratify her own pride, or vanity, but for the necessary defence of him and his family, which otherwise had been inevitably ruined. Husbands and wives, for their common benefit, have a joint-interest in their worldly possessions; but if either waste, or unduly spend, it is robbing the other.

II. By a most obliging demeanor, and charming speech, she atones for Nabal's abusive language. She met David on the march, big with resentment, and meditating the destruction of Nabal; (*v.* 20.) but with all possible expressions of complaisance and respect she humbly begs his favor, and solicits him to pass by the offence. Her demeanor was very submissive, *v.* 23, 24. Yielding pacifies great offences. She puts herself into the place and posture of a penitent, and of a petitioner, and was not ashamed to do it. She humbly begs David will give her *audience*. But this was unnecessary; what she said was sufficient to command it; for certainly nothing could be more fine or more moving. No topic of argument is left untouched, every thing is well placed, and well expressed, most pertinently and pathetically urged, and improved to the best advantage, with such a force of natural rhetoric as cannot easily be paralleled.

1. She speaks to him all along with the deference and respect due to so great and good a man; calls him *My lord* over and over, to expiate her husband's crime, in saying, 'Who is David?' She does not upbraid him with the heat of his passion, though he deserved to be reproved for it; nor does she tell him how ill it became his character; but endeavors to soften him, and bring him to a better temper; not doubting but that then his own conscience would upbraid him with it.

2. She takes the blame of the ill treatment of his messengers upon herself, *v.* 24, 28. And, here she discovered the sincerity and strength of her conjugal affection, and concern for her family: whatever Nabal was, he was her husband.

3. She excuses her husband's fault by imputing it to his natural weakness and want of understanding, *v.* 23. 'It was owing to his folly, not his malice. He is simple, but not spiteful. Forgive him, for he knows not what he does.' What she said was too true; but she said it to excuse his fault and prevent his ruin, else she had not done well to give such a bad character of her own husband, whom she ought to make the best of, and not speak ill of him.

4. She pleads her own ignorance of the matter; intimating, that though her husband was foolish, and unfit to manage his affairs himself, yet he had so much wisdom as to take her advice.

5. She takes it for granted she had gained the point already, perhaps, perceiving by David's countenance, that he began to change his mind, *v.* 26. She depends not on her own reasonings, but God's grace, to mollify him, and doubts not but that grace would work powerfully on him. Perhaps she intimates it was below him to take vengeance on so weak and impotent an enemy as Nabal, for he need wish no more concerning his enemies, than that they might be as unable to resist him as Nabal was. Perhaps she refers to his sparing Saul, when, but the other day, he had him at his mercy. The very mentioning of what he was about to do, to shed blood, and avenge himself, was enough to work on such a tender, gracious spirit as David's; and it should seem, by his reply, (*v.* 33.) that it affected him.

6. She offers the present she had brought, but speaks of it as unworthy of David's acceptance; and therefore desires it might be given to the *young men that followed him*, (*v.* 27.) and particularly to those ten that were his messengers to Nabal, whom he had treated so rudely.

7. She applauds David for the good services he had done against the common enemies of his

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—17. The most honored servants of God have the measure and period of their usefulness appointed them: but those who persevere unto the end, walking with God, and living consistently with their profession, are happy, though rejected by men, and driven into retired and obscure situations. Indeed whole nations have cause to lament, when faithful instructers, holy men of God, and public intercessors, are taken away. But Jesus, our Prophet, Priest, Intercessor, and Judge, ever lives to take care of those who trust in Him.—To be descended from honorable ancestors forms one branch of man's foolish vanity (3); yet it frequently is a most severe reproach to the character and conduct of those who value themselves upon it.—It is incumbent on parents, in respect of their children, and on young persons in their own case, to resist all temptations to a conduct, which is likely to be so fatal in its consequences [as marriage for wealth.] But prudent and pious relations are an invaluable treasure, and often retard the ruin of those, who have not sense to know their worth:—and especially, 'a prudent wife is from the Lord.' (*Prov.* 19: 14.) Those, whom the Lord most honors, are frequently very destitute for a season; and, as they will not have recourse to fraud or violence, like others in similar circumstances; so they should be careful, lest they verge towards flattery, and pass such compliments as do not consist with truth, and as tend to confirm sinners in a favorable opinion of themselves.—Wordly men deem riches *their own;* but God declares they are *another's*, and that they must shortly give an account of their stewardship. (*Luke* 16: 12.)—In imitation of the Lord's example, we are commanded to do good to the evil and ungrateful; and wretched should we all be, if He dealt with us by those rules, which we are often disposed to adopt in our behavior to our poor brethren.—While we enjoy abundance, we should be liberal to the indigent. (*Luke* 14: 12—14.)—Silence is generally our wisdom, when assaulted by provoking language; otherwise we shall be betrayed into folly and sin: and when the messengers of the Son of David meet with abuse and railing for his sake, they must hold their peace, and report it to their Lord, who will surely and justly resent it.

SCOTT.

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and when we are surprised or disgusted with these phrases, we should recollect that they are orientalisms, adapted to the manners of the age, and that many of our phrases would sound no less strangely to an oriental; and yet infidels have often hung their hopes on these slender threads! ED.

Verse 18.

'The eastern bread is both *thin* and *small;* and answers to our cakes.' [Cut, Lev. 24: 5—9. Notes, Ex. 29: 10—15, &c.] Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 19, 20.

'The text intimates that David and Abigail met unawares.' DUTCH ANN.

Verses 21, 22.

It is probable, David's officers and men generally approved of his designs against Nabal, as expressive of a proper spirit on the occasion, and necessary to deter others from insulting them. SCOTT.

Any that, &c.] (22.) A proverbial expression then in common use, which may, with the utmost propriety, be read, 'every male.'

22 [n] So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, [o] if I leave of all that *pertain* to him, by the morning-light, [p] any that pisseth against the wall.

23 And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and [q] lighted off the ass, and [r] fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground.

24 And [s] fell at his feet, and said, [t] Upon me, my lord, *upon* me *let this* iniquity *be:* and [u] let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine * audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid.

25 Let not my lord, I pray thee, † regard this [x] man of Belial, *even* Nabal: for as his name *is*, so *is* he; ‡ Nabal *is* his name, and folly *is* with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.

26 Now therefore, my lord, [y] *as* the LORD liveth, [z] and *as* thy soul liveth, seeing [a] the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to *shed* blood, and [b] from § avenging thyself with thine own hand, now [c] let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.

27 And now this ‖ blessing, which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that ¶ follow my lord.

28 I pray thee [d] forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for [e] the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord [f] fighteth the battles of the LORD, and [g] evil hath not been found in thee *all* thy days.

29 Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be [h] bound in the bundle of life [i] with the LORD thy God, and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he [j] sling out, ** *as out* of the middle of a sling.

30 And it shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to my lord [k] according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel;

31 That this shall be no †† grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath [l] avenged himself: but when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then [m] remember thine handmaid.

32 And David said to Abigail, [n] Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me:

33 And [o] blessed *be* thy advice, and blessed *be* thou, [p] which hast kept me this day from coming to *shed* blood, and from [q] avenging myself with mine own hand.

34 For in very deed, *as* the LORD God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst [r] hasted and come to meet me, surely [s] there had not been left unto Nabal, by the morning light, any that pisseth against the wall.

35 So David received of her hand *that* which

8. She foretells the glorious issue of his present troubles. She speaks with assurance, (1.) That God would [w] keep him safe; God shall *keep thy soul in life*, (as the expression is, Ps. 66: 9,) as we hold those things tight which are bundled up, or which are precious to us, (Ps. 119: 15.) Thy soul shall be *treasured up in the treasure of lives*, so the Chaldee, under lock and key, as our treasure is. The Jews understand this, not only of the *life that now is*, but of that *which is to come*, even the happiness of separate souls, and therefore use it commonly as an inscription on their grave-stones. 'Here we have laid the body, but trusting that *the soul is bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord our God.*' (2.) That God would make him victorious over his enemies. Their souls He shall *sling out*, *v.* 29. The stone is in the sling only to be thrown out again: so the souls of the godly shall be bundled as corn for the barn, but the souls of the wicked as tares for the fire. (3.) That God would settle him in wealth and power; 'God will make thee great, and it is the glory of great men to pass by offences.'

9. She desires him to consider how much more comfortable it would be to him on reflection, to forgive this affront than to revenge it, *v.* 30, 31. She reserves this argument for the last, a very powerful one, with so good a man: That the less he indulged his passion, the more he consulted his peace, and the repose of his own conscience, which every wise man will be tender of. Many have done that in a heat, which they have a thousand times wished undone. The sweetness of revenge is soon turned into bitterness. When we are tempted to sin, we should consider how it will appear on reflection. Let us never do any thing for which our conscience will afterward upbraid us, and which we shall look back upon with regret. *My heart shall not reproach me.*

Lastly, She recommends herself to his favor; '*When the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid*, as one that kept thee from doing what would have disgraced thy honor, disquieted thy conscience, and made a blot in thy history.' We have reason to remember those with respect and gratitude, who have been instrumental to keep us from sin.

V. 32—35. *As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear.* Abigail was a wise reprover of David's passion, and he gave an obedient ear to the reproof, according to his own principle, (Ps. 141: 5.) *Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness.* Never was such an admonition either better given, or better taken.

1. David thanks God for sending him this happy check in a sinful way, *v.* 32. Note, God is to be acknowledged in all kindnesses our friends do us either for soul or body. Whoever meets us with counsel, direction, comfort, caution, or seasonable reproof, we must see God sending them.

2. He thanks Abigail. Most are ready to think it enough, if they take a reproof patiently; few take it thankfully, and commend those that give it, *v.* 33. Abigail did not rejoice more that she had been instrumental to save her husband and family from death, than David that she had been instrumental to save him and his men from sin.

3. He seems very apprehensive of the great danger he was in, which magnified the mercy of his deliverance. The more heinous any sin is, the greater mercy it is to be kept from it. He seems to aggravate the evil of his design with this, that it would have been an injury to so wise and good a woman; God has *kept me back from hurting thee*, *v.* 34. Or, perhaps, at the first sight of Abigail, he was conscious of a thought to do her a mischief for offering to oppose him; and therefore reckons it a great mercy God gave him patience to hear her speak. He speaks of his danger as very imminent; *Except thou hadst hasted.* The nearer we were to the commission of sin, the

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n 3:17. 14:44. 20:13,16. Ruth 1:17.
o 34.
p 1 Kings 14:10. 16:11. 21:21. 2 Kings 9:8.
q Josh. 15:18. Judg. 1:14.
r 20:41. 24:8.
s 2 Kings 4:37. Esth. 8:3. Matt. 18:29.
t 28. Gen. 44:33,34. 2 Sam. 14:9. Philem. 18,19.
u Gen. 44:18. 2 Sam. 14:12.
* Heb. *ears.*
† Heb. *lay it to his heart.* 2 Sam. 13:33. Is. 42:25. Mal. 2:2.
x See on 17,26.
‡ That is, *fool.*
y 34. 20:3. 2 Kings 2:2,4,6.
z See on 1:26.
a 33. Gen. 20:6.
b Rom. 12:19,20.
§ Heb. *saving thyself.* Ps. 18:47,48. 44:3.
c 2 Sam. 18:32. Jer. 29:22. Dan. 4:19.
‖ Or, *present.* 30:26. Gen. 33:11. 2 Kings 5:15. 2 Cor. 9:5.
¶ Heb. *walk at the feet of.* 42. *marg.* Judg. 4:10. 2 Sam. 16:2.
d 24.
e 15:28. 2 Sam. 7:11,16,27. 1 Kings 9:5. 1 Chr. 17:10,25.
f 17:47. 18:17. 2 Sam. 5:2. 2 Chr. 20:15. Eph. 6:10,11.
g 24:6,7,11,17. Matt. 5:16. Luke 23:41,47.
h 2:9. Gen. 15:1. Deut. 33:29. Ps. 66:9. 116:15. Matt. 10:29,30.
i John 10:27—30. 14:19. 17:21,23. Col. 3:3,4. 1 Pet. 1:5.
j Jer. 10:18.
** Heb. *in the midst of the bow of a sling.*
k 13:14. 15:28. 23:17. Ps. 89:20, &c.
†† Heb. *staggering*, or, *stumbling.* Prov. 5:12,13. Rom. 14:21. 2 Cor. 1:12.
l 33. 24:15. 26:23. 2 Sam. 22:48. Ps. 94:1. Rom. 12:19.
m 40. Gen. 40:14. Luke 23:42.
n Gen. 24:27. Ex. 18:10. Ezra 7:27. Ps. 41:12,13. Luke 1:68. 2 Cor. 8:16.
o Ps. 141:5. Prov. 9:9. 17:10. 25:12. 27:21. 28:23.
p 26.
q See on 26,31.—24:19. 26:9,10.
r 18. 11:11. Josh. 10:6,9.
s See on p. 22.

(*M. R.* p.) SCOTT. 'Not so much as a dog.' *Hall, Patr. Geddes, Boothr.* ED.

Verses 23—31.

The conduct and address of Abigail, on this emergency, are worthy of high admiration. Nothing seems to have been omitted which suited the occasion; nothing unsuitable added; all was expressed in the most persuasive manner; and the whole manifests Abigail to have been a woman of strong faith and great piety, as well as of singular prudence and ingenuity. SCOTT.

'This speech of Abigail's is full of such humble, pathetic, natural, and therefore artless eloquence, as is not, I verily think, to be paralleled in all antiquity.' DODD.

(29.) *Middle.*] *Kaph, hand, hollow;* see the cut, 2 K. 3: 25. ED.

Verse 34.

Though David only intended the death of *the men*: yet if Abigail and the other women had escaped the massacre, they must have been most deeply injured; therefore 'the LORD had kept him back from hurting her,' as well as Nabal and his men servants, or other assistants. SCOTT.

Verse 35. *M. R.—Note, Gen.* 33: 10. ED.

she had brought him, and said unto her, [t] Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have [u] accepted thy person.

36 ¶ And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held [x] a feast in his house like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart *was* [y] merry within him, for he *was* very drunken: wherefore [z] she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning-light.

37 But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife [a] had told him these things, that [b] his heart died within him, and he became *as* a stone.

38 And it came to pass about ten days *after*, that [c] the LORD smote Nabal, that he died.

39 And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, [d] Blessed *be* the LORD, that hath [e] pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath [f] kept his servant from evil: for the LORD [g] hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, [h] to take her to him to wife.

40 And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, [i] David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife.

41 And she arose, and bowed herself on greater was the mercy of a seasonable restraint: *Almost gone*, (Ps. 73: 2.) and yet upheld.

4. He dismissed her with an answer of peace, *v.* 35. He, in effect, owns himself overcome by her eloquence. Note, (1.) Wise and good men will hear reason, and let that rule them, though it come from persons every way their inferiors, and though their passions are up, and their spirits provoked. (2.) Oaths cannot bind us to what is sinful. David had solemnly vowed the death of Nabal; he did ill to make such a vow, but he had done worse had he performed it. (3.) A wise and faithful reproof is often better taken, and speeds better than we expected; such is the hold God has of men's consciences. See Prov. 28: 23.

V. 36—44. We are now to attend Nabal's funeral, and Abigail's wedding.

I. Nabal's funeral. The apostle speaks of some *twice dead*, Jude 12. We have here Nabal *thrice* dead, though just now wonderfully delivered; for the preservations of wicked men, are but reservations for some further sorer strokes of divine wrath. Here is,

1. *Nabal dead drunk*, *v.* 36. Abigail came home; (it should seem, he had neither missed her, nor the provisions she took;) but she found him in the midst of his jollity, little thinking how near he was to ruin, by one whom he had foolishly made his enemy. Sinners often feel most secure, when most in danger. *He held a feast like the feast of a king*, so magnificent and abundant, though his guests were but his sheep-shearers. It is very common for the most niggardly to be most profuse in gratifying a vain humor, or a base lust. A mite is grudged to God and his poor; but, to make a *fair show in the flesh, gold is lavished out of the bag*. Nabal, that never thought he could bestow too little in charity, never thought he could bestow too much in luxury. Abigail finding him in this condition, (and, probably, those about him little better, in view of his example,) had enough to do to set the house to rights, but told Nabal nothing of what she had done with reference to David, nothing of his folly in provoking David's anger, or of his deliverance; for, being drunk, he was as incapable to hear reason, as to speak it. To give good advice to those that are in drink, is to *cast pearls before swine;* better stay till they are sober.

2. Nabal dead with melancholy, *v.* 37. Some suggest, the expense of the satisfaction made to David, by Abigail's present, broke his heart: it seems rather, the apprehension he now had of the danger he had narrowly escaped, put him into a consternation, and seized his spirits, so that he could not recover it. He grew sullen, and said little, ashamed of his own folly, and put out of countenance by his wife's wisdom. How is he changed! His heart over-night merry with wine, next morning heavy as a stone; so deceitful are carnal pleasures; so transient the laughter of the fool; *the end of that mirth is heaviness*. Joy in God makes the heart always light.

3. Nabal, at last, dead indeed. *About ten days after*, when he had been kept so long under this pressure and pain, *the Lord smote him that he died;* (*v.* 38.) and, it should seem, he never held up his head. It is just with God, (says Bp. Hall,) that they who live without grace, should die without comfort; nor can we expect better, while we go on in our sins. Here is no lamentation for Nabal. *David*, when he heard of his death, *gave God thanks* for it, *v.* 39. He blessed God, (1.) That He had kept him from killing him. He rejoices that Nabal died a natural death, and not by his hand. We should take all occasions to mention and magnify God's goodness to us, in keeping us from sin. (2.) That He had thereby encouraged him, and all others, to commit their cause to God, when any way injured, with an assurance that, in his own time, He will right them, if they sit still, and leave it to Him.

II. Abigail's wedding. David was so charmed with the beauty of her person, and the uncommon prudence of her conduct and address, that, as soon as was proper, after he heard she was a widow, he informed her of his attachment to her, (*v.* 39.) not doubting, but that she who approved herself so good a wife to so bad a husband, would much more make him a good wife. She received his address with great modesty and humility, (*v.* 41.) agreed to his proposal, went with his messengers, took a retinue with her agreeable to her quality, and *became his wife*, *v.* 42. She did not

her face to the earth, and said, Behold, *let* [k] thine handmaid *be* a servant [l] to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.

42 And [m] Abigail hasted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went * after her; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife.

43 David also took Ahinoam of [n] Jezreel; and they were also [o] both of them [p] his wives.

44 But Saul had given [q] Michal his daughter, David's wife, to [r] Phalti the son of Laish, which *was* of [s] Gallim.

t 20:42. 2 Sam. 15:9. 2 Kings 5:19. Luke 7:50. 8:48.
u Gen. 19:21. Job 34:19.
x 2 Sam. 13:23. Esth. 1:3—7. Luke 14:12.
y 2 Sam. 13:28. 1 Kings 20:16. Prov. 20:1. 23:29—35. Ec. 2:2,3. Is. 28: 3,7,8. Jer. 51: 57. Dan. 5: 1—5. Nah. 1:10. Hab. 2:15,16. Luke 21: 34. Rom. 13:13. Eph. 5:18. 1 Thes. 5:7,8.
z 19. Ps. 112:5. Matt. 10:16. Eph. 5:15.
a 22,34.
b Deut. 28:28. Job 15:21,22.
c 33. 6:9. Ex. 12:29. 2 Kings 19:35. 2 Chr. 10:15. Acts 12:23.
d 32. Judg. 5:2. 2 Sam. 22: 47—49. Ps. 58:10,11. Rev. 19:1—4.
e Prov. 22:23. Lam. 3:58—60. Mic. 7:9.
f 26,34. Hos. 2:6,7. 2 Cor. 13: 7. 1 Thes. 5:23. * 2 Tim. 4:18.
g 2 Sam. 3:28,29. 1 Kings 2:44. Esth. 7:10. Ps. 7:16.
h Prov. 18:22. 19:14. 31:10,30.
i Gen. 24:37,38,51.
k Ruth 2:10,13. Prov. 15:33. 18:12.
l Gen. 18:4. John 13:3—5. 1 Tim. 5: 10.
m Gen. 24:61—67. Ps. 45:10,11.
* Heb. *at her feet.*
n Josh. 15:56. 2 Sam. 3:2.
o Gen. 2:24. Matt. 19:5,8.
p 27:3. 30:5. 2 Sam. 5:13—16.
q 18:20,27.
r 2 Sam. 3:14,15. *Phaltiel.*
s Is. 10:30.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 18—44. In urgent cases, despatch is as requisite as prudence: inferior interests should always be sacrificed to preserve the greater; our property to preserve our lives; our very lives for the salvation of our souls.—Every servant of God should duly estimate his own situation; what his obligations, professions, and prospects are; what his station in the church; what his former conduct and present character; that he may with great circumspection avoid every inconsistent word and action: for according to these things, will be men's expectations from him and censures of him. (*Ec.* 10: 1. *Matt.* 5: 14—16.)—Happy is the true believer! [t] his soul is bound up in the bundle of life with the LORD his God,' and because the Savior liveth, he shall live also; whilst all his foes shall be driven to destruction.—Our gratitude to God should precede, but not exclude, our gratitude to the instruments of his goodness.—Real penitents will not be backward to take shame to themselves, and to retract their rash expressions.—The people of God need not avenge their own cause, for He will surely do it for them: and sometimes more awfully than they could have desired: yet when his purpose is known, they will adore his justice, and bless Him for his kindness to them.—If the danger of a violent death be so terrifying, as to overwhelm the spirits in dismay and anguish, how should sinners tremble at the thoughts of eternal damnation, and flee without delay from the wrath to come!

SCOTT.

Verses 43, 44.

It is probable David had married Ahinoam, as soon as Michal was married to Phalti, and that he afterwards married Abigail also. (2 *Sam.* 3: 13—16.) In this he was carried away with the custom of the times, and was connived at in having more than one wife.

SCOTT.

(43.) *Jezreel.*] 'There were two places of this name: one in the tribe of Issachar, the other in the tribe of Judah.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

CHAP. XXVI.

Saul, informed by the Ziphites, pursues David to Hachilah, 1—4. David by night comes to Saul's tent, with Abishai, whom he hinders from slaying Saul; but he takes away his spear and cruse, 5—12. David at a distance reproves Abner's negligence, protests his own innocency, and expostulates with Saul, 13—20. Saul owns his sin, and returns home, 21—25.

AND the [a] Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, [b] Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, *which is* before Jeshimon?

2 Then [c] Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having [d] three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph.

3 And Saul pitched in the hill of [e] Hachilah, which *is* before Jeshimon, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness.

4 David therefore [f] sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come in very deed.

5 And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and [g] Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay in the * trench, and the people pitched round about him.

6 Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the [h] Hittite, and to [i] Abishai the son of [k] Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, [l] Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee.

7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping [m] within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him.

8 Then said Abishai to David, [n] God hath † delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear, even to the earth at once, and I will not *smite* him [o] the second time.

9 And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for [p] who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless?

10 David said furthermore, *As* [q] the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or [r] his day shall come to die; or [s] he shall de-

a Josh. 15:24,55.
b 3. 23:19. Ps. 54: *title.*
c 23:25—26. 24:17. Ps. 38:12. 140: 4—9.
d 24:2.
e 1. 23:19.
f Josh. 2:1. Matt. 10:16.
g 9:1. 14:50,51. 17:55. 2 Sam. 2:8, &c. 3:7,8,27,33—38. 1 Chr. 9:39.
* Or, *midst of his carriages.*
h Gen. 10:15. 15:20. 2 Sam. 11:6,21, 24. 12:9. 23:39.
i 2 Sam. 2:18. 16:9,10. 18:5. 23:18. 1 Chr. 2:16.
k 1 Chr. 2:15,16.
l 14:6,7. Judg. 7:10,11.
m 1 Thes. 5:2,3.
n 23. 23:14. 24:4,18,19. Josh. 21:44. Judg. 1:4.
† Heb. *shut up.* 24:18. Deut. 32:30. Ps. 31:8. Rom. 11:32. *marg.* Gal. 3: 22,23. *Gr.*
o Nah. 1:9.
p 24:6,7. 2 Sam. 1:14,16. Ps. 105:15.
q 24:15. 25:26,38. Is. 49:1,2,23. Luke 18:7. Rom. 12:19. Rev. 18:8.
r Gen. 47:29. Deut. 31:14. Job. 7:1. 14:5,14. Is. 37:10,13.
s 31:6. Deut. 32:35.

CHAP. XXVI. David's troubles from Saul here begin again; after Saul had owned his fault in persecuting David, and David's title to the crown, he revives the persecution; so perfectly lost was he to all sense of honor and virtue. The story is much like that in ch. 24. In both, David is delivered out of Saul's hand, and Saul out of David's.

V. 1—5. Here, 1. Saul gets information of David's motions, and acts offensively. David was now betrayed in the same place where he was formerly, *ch.* 23: 19. Perhaps Saul had intimated to the Ziphites, that he continued his design against David, and would be glad of their assistance: or, for aught we know, Saul would have continued in the same good mind he was in, (*ch.* 24: 17.) and would not have troubled David afresh, had not the Ziphites put him on. See what need we have to pray to God against temptation. Saul readily caught at the information, and went down with an army of 3000 men, to the place where David hid himself, *v.* 2. How soon do unsanctified hearts lose the good impressions their convictions have made on them.

2. David gets information of Saul's motions, and acts defensively; though he sought only his own safety, not Saul's ruin, and therefore *abode in the wilderness,* (*v.* 3.) thereby curbing the bravery of his own spirit by a silent retirement, showing more true valor than he could have done by an irregular resistance. (1.) He had spies who ascertained him of Saul's descent; (*v.* 4.) for he would not believe Saul would deal so basely till he had the utmost evidence of it. (2.) He observed with his own eyes how Saul was encamped, *v.* 5. He came toward Saul and his men, so near as to be able, undiscovered, to view their intrenchments, probably, in the dusk of the evening.

V. 6—12. Here is, I. David's bold adventure into Saul's camp in the night, accompanied only by his kinsman Abishai, the son of Zeruiah. Another of his confidants, (*v.* 6.) declined it as too dangerous, or, at least, was content that Abishai, who was forward to it, should risk it rather than himself. Whether David was prompted to this by his own courage, or by an extraordinary impression on his spirits, or by the oracle, does not appear, but, like Gideon, he ventured through the guards, with a special assurance of divine protection.

II. The posture he found the camp in. *Saul lay sleeping in the trench,* or, as some read it, *in his chariot, and in the midst of his carriages,* with *his spear stuck in the ground* by him, to be ready if his quarters should be beaten up, (*v.* 7.) and all the soldiers, even those that were appointed to stand sentinel, were *fast asleep, v.* 12. Thus were their eyes closed, and their hands bound, *for a deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them;* something extraordinary there was in it, that they should all be asleep together, and so fast asleep, that David and Abishai walked and talked among them, and yet none of them stirred. Sleep, when God gives it his beloved, is their rest and refreshment; but He can, when He pleases, make it to his enemies their imprisonment. Ps. 76: 5, 6. Rom. 11: 8. *The Lord* has the command of the powers of nature, and makes them serve his purposes as He pleases. Whom God will disable or destroy, He binds up with *a spirit of slumber.*

III. Abishai would not urge David to it himself, because he had declined before, when he had a like opportunity; but he begged earnestly he might do it, pleading that Saul was, not only cruel and implacable, but false and perfidious, whom no reason would rule, nor kindness work upon, and that *God had now delivered him into his hand,* and did, in effect, bid him strike. It was but accidental that Saul happened to enter the cave with him at the same time; but here was something extraordinary: the deep sleep on Saul and all his guards, was manifestly from the Lord, so now a special providence gave him this opportunity; he ought not therefore to let it slip.

IV. David's generous refusal, and resolute loyalty, *v.* 9. 1. It would be a sinful affront to God's ordinance. Saul was the Lord's anointed king of Israel, by the special appointment and nomination of the God of Israel; the power that was; and to resist him was to *resist the ordinance of God,* Rom. 13: 2. 2. It would be a sinful anticipation of God's providence; God had sufficiently showed

NOTES:

CHAP. XXVI. V. 5—7. It is probable, David was directed to this measure by the prophetical Spirit, in order that all Israel might be convinced how injuriously he was slandered by his enemies. Ahimelech was a proselyted Hittite, and Abishai, David's sister's son. (*M. R.* i. 14: 6—10.) SCOTT.

(5.) 'As David and his men knew the country, they had many advantages of Saul and his men; and no doubt could often watch them without being discovered.' Dr. A. CLARKE.—*Trench.*] So the Chal. The Heb. is from a root signifying roundness. The Vulg. transl. tent. Sept. lampene. Others, orbit, wheel-tracks. 'One can hardly imagine it signifies a *ditch* and *bank thrown up,* as might be supposed from the use here of the word *trench;* for no precautions appear to have been taken against David. Nor does it mean "a ring *of carriages,* [as *Schindler, Cocceius,* &c.] for they, probably, could not pass in that mountainous country. But it seems to mean the *round* or *circle* which the troops formed, in the midst of which, as the place of honor, Saul slept. With this agrees perfectly the view *D'Arvieux* gives of a modern Arab camp; for he tells us it is always round, the prince being in the middle,' &c. HEWLETT. ED.

Verses 8—12.

It has been suggested, David spared Saul, the LORD'S anointed, out of policy, that he might not teach the people a bad lesson against himself; but it is evident, he acted from higher motives. The Lord forbade

scend into battle, and perish.

11 The LORD forbid [t] that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that *is* at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go.

12 So David took [u] the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw *it*, nor knew *it*, neither awaked: for they *were* all asleep; because [v] a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them.

13 ¶ Then David went over to the other side, and stood on [x] the top of an hill afar off; a great space *being* between them:

14 And David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who *art* thou *that* criest to the king?

15 And David said to Abner, *Art* not thou a *valiant* man? and who *is* like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for [y] there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord.

16 This thing *is* not good that thou hast done. *As* the LORD liveth ye *are* [*] worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the [z] LORD's anointed. And now see where the king's spear *is*, and the cruse of water that *was* at his bolster.

17 And Saul knew David's voice, and said, [a] *Is* this thy voice, my son David? And David said, *It is* my voice, my lord, O king.

18 And he said, [b] Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for [c] what have I done? or what evil *is* in mine hand?

19 Now therefore, I pray thee, [d] let my lord the king hear the words of his servant: If the LORD have [e] stirred thee up against me, let him † accept an offering: but if *they be* the children of men, [f] cursed *be* they before the LORD; for [g] they have driven me out this day from ‡ abiding in [h] the inheritance of the LORD, saying, Go, serve other gods.

20 Now therefore, [i] let not my blood fall to the earth before the

t 24:6,12. 2 Sam. 1:14,16.
u 7. 24:4.

him, in Nabal's case, that, if he left it to Him to do him right, He would do it in due time. Therefore he resolves to wait till God shall avenge him, and will by no means *avenge himself*, *v.* 10. The temptation indeed was very strong; but if he yield, he sins against God, therefore he resists it with the utmost resolution, *v.* 11. Thus bravely does he prefer his conscience to his interest, and trust God with the issue.

V. The improvement he made of this opportunity, for the further evidence of his own integrity, *v.* 12. Had a physician given them the strongest opiate or stupefying dose, they could not have been faster asleep. Saul's spear for his defence, and his cup of water for his refreshment, were both stolen from him while he slept. Thus do we lose our strength and our comfort, when we are careless and secure, and off our watch.

V. 13—20. David being got safe from Saul's camp himself, and having brought with him proofs sufficient that he had been there, posts himself conveniently, so that they might hear him, and yet not reach him, (*v.* 13.) and then begins to reason with them on what had passed.

I. He reasons ironically with Abner, and keenly banters him. David knew well it was from the mighty power of God, that Abner and the rest of the guards were so deep asleep. But he reproaches Abner, as unworthy to be captain of the life-guards, who could sleep, when the king his master lay so much exposed. By *this* it appears the hand of God locked them up in this deep sleep, that, as soon as David was out of danger, a very little thing awakened them, even David's voice at a great distance, *v.* 14. David, to put Abner in confusion, tells him, 1. That he had lost his honor; (*v.* 15.) '*Art not thou a man?*' so the word is; 'a man in office, bound, by the duty of thy place, to inspect the soldiery? A sluggard call himself a general!' 2. That he had deserved to lose his head; (*v.* 16.) '*Ye are all worthy to die*, by martial law, for being off your guard, when you had the king himself asleep in the midst of you. *Behold this token.* See where the king's spear is, in the hand of him whom the king himself is pleased to count his enemy. They that took away this, might as easily and safely have taken away his life. Now see who are the king's best friends; you that neglected him and left him exposed, or I that protected him, when he was exposed. You pursue me as worthy to die, and irritate Saul against me; but who is worthy to die now?' Note, Sometimes those that unjustly condemn others, are justly left to fall into condemnation themselves.

II. He reasons seriously and affectionately with Saul; who was now so well awakened as to hear what was said, and discern who said it, *v.* 17. In the same manner he had expressed his relentings, *ch.* 24: 16. He had given his wife to another, and yet calls him *son;* thirsted after his blood, and yet is glad to hear his voice. Those are bad indeed that have never any convictions of good, nor any good impressions. David now enters into a close argument with him, concerning the trouble he still continued to give him, endeavoring to persuade him to let fall the persecution, and be reconciled.

1. He complains of the very melancholy condition he was brought into by the enmity of Saul against him. (1.) He was driven from his master, and from his business, *v.* 18. 'How gladly would I serve thee as formerly, if my service might be accepted; but, instead of being owned as a servant, I am pursued as a rebel; my lord is my enemy, and compels me to flee from him, whom I would follow with respect.' (2.) He was driven from his God and from his religion; and this was a much greater grievance than the former, *v.* 19. And what troubled him, was, not so much that he was driven out from his own inheritance, as that he was driven out from the *inheritance of the Lord*, the holy land. His enemies did, in effect, send him to *go serve other gods;* and perhaps he had heard that some of them had spoken to that purport of him. They that forbid our attendance on God's ordinances, do what in them lies to estrange us from God, and to make us heathens. If David had not been a man of extraordinary grace, and firmness to his religion, the ill usage he met with from his own prince and people, would have prejudiced him against the religion they professed, and have driven him to communicate with idolaters. We are to reckon that the greatest injury that can be done us, which exposes us to sin. Of those who thus led David into temptation, he here says, *Cursed be they before the Lord.* Those fall under a curse, that thrust out those whom God receives.

2. He insists on his own innocency, *v.* 18. He had the testimony of his conscience, that he had never done, nor ever designed, any mischief to the person, honor, or government, of his prince, nor to any of the interests of his country: he had lately had Saul's own testimony concerning him, *ch.* 24: 17. It was very unreasonable and wicked for Saul to pursue him as a criminal, when he could not charge him with any crime.

3. He endeavors to convince Saul his pursuit of him was not only wrong, but mean, and much

v Gen. 2:21. 15:12. Esth. 6:1. Is. 29:10.
x 24:8. Judg. 9:7.
y 8.
* Heb. *the sons of death.* 20:31. 2 Sam. 12:5. 19:28. Ps. 79:11. 102:20. *Margins.* Eph. 2:3.
z 9,11. 24:6.
a 24:8,16.
b 24:9,11—14. Ps. 7:3—5. 35:7. 69:4.
c 17:29. John 8:46. 10:32. 18:23.
d 25:24. Gen. 44:18.
e 16:14—23. 18:10. 2 Sam. 16:11. 24:1. 1 Kings 22:22. 1 Chr. 21:1.
† Heb. *smell.* Gen. 8:21. Lev. 26:31.
f Prov. 6:16—19. 30:10. Gal. 1:8,9. 5:12. 2 Tim. 4:14.
g Deut. 4:28. Josh. 22:25—27. Ps. 42:1,2. 120:5. Rom. 14:15.
‡ Heb. *cleaving.*
h 2 Sam. 14:16. 20:19.
i 2:9. 25:29.

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him to do it; (1 *Kings* 21: 3.) and 'no man could stretch forth his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless.' (24: 4—7.)—*A deep sleep.* (12.) (*M. R.* v.—*Ps.* 76: 5, 6. *Acts* 12: 5—11.)
SCOTT.

(12.) 'Who can help admiring David's magnanimity and piety? What man but David, with a crown so near, would have resisted the temptation? Glorious moderation and fortitude of mind! Was ever resolution more generous and loyal?'
DODD.

Bolster, cruse.] 'In this way do all eastern travellers sleep at this day. The bolster is round, about 8 in. in diam. and 20 long. In travelling, it is carried rolled up in the mat on which the owner sleeps.'
ROBERTS.

Spear stuck, &c.] 'It is usual in Arab camps for every man to have his lance stuck in the ground beside him, that he may be ready for action in a moment. The cruse of water resembled, in some measure, the canteens of our soldiers.' DR. A. CLARKE. 'In the E. a vessel filled with water is always near where a person sleeps, for a draught is very refreshing in the night.'
ROBERTS.

Verses 18—16.

David, by retiring to a place of safety before he called to Abner, seems to have manifested more entire distrust of Saul, than he had done on a former occasion. (24: 8—15.) Yet he desired Saul and all Israel should be informed of his conduct at this time.—Their *sound sleep* was supernatural (12); yet there might be a neglect of placing sentinels, arising from contempt of David's small company.
SCOTT.

Verses 17—19.

(*M. R.*) *Cursed be they.*] The clause might be rendered, 'they are accursed.'
ID.

Verse 20.

Hunt a partridge.] 'It is worthy of remark that partridges, being put up several times, soon become so weary as not to be able to fly,

face of the LORD: for [k] the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.

21 Then said Saul, [l] I have sinned: return, my son David: for [m] I will no more do thee harm, because [n] my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.

22 And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear; and let one of the young men come over and fetch it.

23 The LORD [o] render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the LORD delivered thee into *my* hand to-day, but [p] I would not stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed.

24 And, behold, [q] as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and [r] let him deliver me out of all tribulation.

25 Then Saul said to David, [s] Blessed *be* thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great *things*, and also shalt still [t] prevail. [u] So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

k 24:14. Matt. 26:47,55.
l 15:24,30. 24:17. Ex. 9:27. Num. 22: 34. Matt. 27:4.
m 27:4.
n 24. Ps. 49:8. 116:15.

below him, *v.* 20. He compares himself to a partridge, a very innocent harmless bird, which, when attempts are made on its life, flies if it can, but makes no resistance. And would Saul bring the flower of his army into the field, only to hunt one poor partridge? What a disparagement this to his honor! What a stain would it be on his memory! To trample on so weak and patient, as well as so innocent, an enemy. James 5: 6.

4. He desires the core of the controversy might be searched into, and some proper method taken to bring it to an end, *v.* 19. He was not willing to say (though it was very true) that Saul's own envy and malice put him on to persecute him; therefore he concludes it must be attributed either to the righteous judgment of God, or to the unrighteous designs of evil men. Now, (1.) '*If the Lord have stirred thee up against me*, in displeasure either to me, or to thee, if it be the effect of that evil spirit from the Lord which troubles thee, *let Him accept an offering* from us both; let us join in making our peace with God, and reconciling ourselves to Him, which may be done, by sacrifice; and then I hope the sin will be pardoned, whatever it is, and the trouble will end.' See the right method of peace-making: let us first make God our Friend, by Christ the great Sacrifice, and then all other enmities shall be slain, Eph. 2: 16. Prov. 16: 7. But, (2.) [x] If thou art put upon it by wicked men, that incense thee against me, *cursed be they before the Lord;*' that is, they are wicked people, and it is fit they should be abandoned as such, and excluded from the king's court and councils. He decently lays the blame on the evil counsellors who advised the king to what was dishonorable and dishonest, and insists on it, that they be removed, and forbidden his presence, as men cursed before the Lord, and then he hoped he should gain his petition, *v.* 20. Thus pathetically does David plead with Saul for his life, and, in order to that, for his favorable opinion of him.

V. 21—25. Here is, I. Saul's penitent confession of his fault and folly in persecuting David, and his promise to do so no more. This second instance of David's respect wrought more on him than the former, and extorted from him better acknowledgments, *v.* 21. 1. He owns himself melted and overcome by David's kindness; '[y] *My soul was precious in thine eyes this day*, which, I thought, had been odious.' 2. He acknowledges he had done very ill to persecute him: acted against God's law, *I have sinned;* and against his own interest, '*I have played the fool;* herein (says he) I have *erred exceedingly*, and wronged both thee and myself.' 3. He invites him to court again; *Return, my son David.* Those that understand themselves, will see it their interest to have those about them, that *behave themselves wisely*, as David did, and have God with them. 4. He promises him he would not persecute him as he had done, but protect him; *I will no more do thee harm.* We have reason to think, according to the mind he was now in, he meant as he said, and yet neither his confession nor his promise of amendment came from a principle of true repentance.

II. David's improvement of Saul's convictions and confessions, and the evidence he had to produce of his own sincerity. He desired one of the footmen might fetch the spear, (*v.* 22.) and then, *v.* 23. 1. He appeals to God, as Judge of the controversy; *The Lord render to every man his righteousness.* David, by faith, is sure He will do it, for He infallibly knows the true characters of all persons and actions, and is inflexibly just to render to every man according to his work; and, by prayer, he desires He would do it, wherein he does, in effect, pray against Saul, who had dealt unrighteously and unfaithfully with him; (Ps. 28: 4.) but he principally intends it for himself, that God would protect him in his righteousness and faithfulness, and reward him for it, since Saul so ill requited him. 2. He reminds Saul again of the proof he had now given of his respect to him, from a principle of loyalty; intimating the anointing oil was his protection, for which he was indebted to the Lord, and ought to express his gratitude to Him: had he been a common person, he would not have been so tender of him; and, perhaps, with this further suggestion, Saul knew, or had reason to think, David was the Lord's anointed too, and therefore, by the same rule, Saul ought to be as tender of David's life, as he had been of his. 3. Not relying much on Saul's promises, he puts himself under God's protection, and begs his favor; *v.* 24. which they may with a holy confidence do, that *do well and suffer for it.*

III. Saul's prediction of David's advancement. He commends him, *v.* 25. So strong was now his conviction of David's honesty, that he was not ashamed to condemn himself, and applaud David, even in the hearing of his own soldiers, who could not but blush to think they were come out so furiously against a man, whom their master, when he meets, caresses thus. He foretells his victories, and his elevation at last; *Thou shalt do great things.* Note, Those who make conscience of doing what is truly good, may come, by the divine assistance, to do what is truly great. He adds, '*Thou shalt also still prevail*, more and more;' he means, against himself, but was loath to speak that out. The princely qualities which appeared in David, his generosity in sparing Saul,

o 1 Kings 8:32. Neh. 13:14. [illegible] 7:8,9. 18:20—26.
p 9,11. 24:6,7.
q Ps. 18:25. Matt. 5:7. 7:2.
r Gen. 48:16. Ps. 18: *title.* 48. 34:17, 18. 144:2. Acts 14:22. Rev. 7:14.
s 24:19. Num. 24:9,10.
t Gen. 32:28. Hos. 12:4.
u 24:22. Prov. 26:25.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

One crime generally proves an inducement to another, and seems to render it necessary for self-preservation: and this again makes way for further, and still more atrocious vices.—After deep convictions and temporary reformations, men return to their sins, and become worse than ever.—The servants of God ought to persevere in a blameless conduct, however injured.—Confidence in God fortifies the soul against temptations to seek relief by sin: and it often requires as much resolution to restrain the excesses of misjudging, zealous friends, as to stand firm against the rage of incensed enemies.—If we would have outward blessings with comfort and reputation, we must patiently and quietly *wait* for them in the path of duty: and when wicked men obstruct the purposes of God, and the performance of his promises, He can easily remove them without our help.—We are exposed to so many dangers, whenever we close our eyes, that we should previously examine our state, whether we be ready for death; and then commit ourselves to the keeping of that Almighty Protector, who 'neither slumbereth nor sleepeth.' (1 *Thes.* 5: 1—3.)—The supposed friends of ungodly men are either incapable of serving them, or they treacherously neglect and expose them: and the pious people, whom they hate and revile, are their most valuable friends, as they persevere in prayers for them and kindness to them.—Evident integrity and consistency of conduct go further in producing conviction, than all the powers of eloquence without them: and for want of *this confirmation*, much sound reasoning and pathetic exhortation pass for unmeaning declamation.—Those who drive us from our duty, or tempt us to sin, are our worst enemies: and persecutors, besides murdering men's bodies, must give a dreadful account, as chargeable with murdering the souls of all whom they have driven to apostasy, or to do violence to their own consciences, by the terrors of exile, imprisonment, or death.—In sinning against God, men 'play the fool exceedingly.'—No good words, or fair professions, entitle those to our confidence, who have long sinned against the light: yet the confessions of obstinate sinners may be useful, in satisfying us that we are in the right way, and shall prevail; and in encouraging us to persevere, expecting our recompense from God alone.

SCOTT.

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and may be at last knocked down with a club. So the Arabs hunt them.' Dr. A. CLARKE.—*Partridge.*] 'A species of snipe, or woodcock unknown to us.' So *Bochart*, and *Le Clerc*, in *Hewlett*. *Hewlett* himself thinks 'the original answers better to the Bartavella, or Greek partridge.' He notices also 'the singular variation of the *Sept.* in making it the night-crow, or owl, a bird remarkable for calling her young together in the evening.' ED.—'A mountain bird [spoken of here and Jer. 17: 11. only] of no great value: in taking which the fowler spent his pains to little purpose.—Opinions of interpreters about it are various.' PATRICK.

CHAP. XXVII.

David escapes to Gath, and is received by Achish, 1—3. Saul seeks him no more, 4. He asks Ziklag of Achish, 5—7. He invades the adjacent countries; and disingenuously leads Achish to suppose that he warred against Judah, 8—12.

AND David [a] said in his heart, I shall now [*] perish one day by the hand of Saul: [b] *there is* nothing better for me, than that I should speedily escape [c] into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand.

2 And David arose, and he passed over, with [d] the six hundred men that *were* with him, unto [e] Achish, the son of Maoch, king of Gath.

3 And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, *even* David [f] with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife.

4 And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and [g] he sought no more again for him.

5 And David said unto Achish, If I have now found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in [h] some town in the country, that I may dwell there: for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee?

6 Then Achish gave him [i] Ziklag that day: wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day.

7 And † the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was ‡ a full year and four months.

8 ¶ And David and his men went up, and invaded [k] the Geshurites, and [l] the § Gezrites, and [m] the Amalekites: for those *nations were* of old the inhabitants of the land, [n] as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt.

9 And David smote the land, and [o] left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen,

a 16:1,13. 23:17. 25:30. Ps. 116:11. Prov. 13:12. Matt. 14:31. Mark 4: 40. 2 Cor. 7:5.
* Heb. *be consumed.*
b 22:5. Ex. 14:12. Num. 14:3. Prov. 3:5,6. Is. 30:15,16. Lam. 3:26,27.
c 10,11. 21:10—15, 28:1,2. 29:2—11. 30:1—3. d 25:13. 30:8.
e 21:10. 1 Kings 2:40.
f 25:3,18—35,42,43. 30:5.
g 26:21.
h Gen. 46:34. 2 Cor. 6:17.
i 30:1,14. Josh. 15:31. 19:5. 2 Sam. 1:1. 1 Chr. 4:30. 12:1,20. Neh. 11: 28.
† Heb. *the number of days.*
‡ Heb. a year of *days.* 29:3.
k Josh. 13:2,13. 2 Sam. 13:37, 38. 14. 23,32. 15:8. 1 Chr. 2:23.
l Josh. 16:10. Judg. 1:29. 1 Kings 9: 15—17.
§ Or, *Gerzites.*
m 15:7,8. 30:1. Ex. 17:14—16.
n 15:7. Gen. 16:7. 25:18. Ex. 15:22.
o 15:3. Deut. 25:17—19. Josh. 6:21.

CHAP. XXVII. David was a man after God's own heart, yet he had his faults, which are recorded, not for our imitation, but for our admonition; witness the story of this chapter.

V. 1—7. Here is, I. The prevalency of David's fear, the effect of the weakness of his faith, *v.* 1. He represented to himself the restless rage and malice of Saul, who could not be reconciled; the treachery of his own countrymen, the Ziphites, once and again; his own forces, how few they were, and no recruits had come in of a great while, nor could he perceive that he got any ground: unbelief is a sin that easily besets even good men. When *without are fightings, within are fears,* and it is hard to get over them. *Lord, increase our faith!*

II. The resolution he came to hereupon. Consulting his own heart only, and not the ephod or the prophet, he concludes, *There is nothing better for me, than to escape speedily into the land of the Philistines.* But, as Saul was his own enemy in driving David to this extremity, so David was no friend to himself in taking this course. See what need we have to pray, *Lord, lead us not into temptation.*

III. The kind reception he had at Gath; Achish bade him welcome, partly out of generosity, and partly out of policy. No doubt he gave David a solemn promise of protection. We may blush that the word of a Philistine should go further than the word of an Israelite, and the city of Gath be a place of refuge for a good man, when the cities of Israel refuse him a safe abode. David, 1. Brought his men with him, (*v.* 2.) as a guard, and that they might be safe; also to recommend himself the more to Achish, who hoped for service out of him.

IV. Saul's desisting from the further persecution of him, *v.* 4. Because he dares not come where he is, he resolves to let him alone. Thus many seem to leave their sins, but really their sins leave them; they would persist in them, if they could.

V. David's removes from Gath to Ziklag. He knew what it was to be envied in the court of Saul, and had much more reason to fear in the court of Achish, therefore he declines preferment there, and wishes for a settlement in the country. In a town of his own, he might have the more free exercise of his religion, keep his men better to it, and not be vexed, as at Gath, with the idolatries of the Philistines. He does not prescribe to Achish the place he would have, but only begs it might be in some town in the country; but he gives this reason, '*Why should thy servant dwell in the royal city,* to crowd thee, and disoblige those about thee?' Note, Those that would stand fast, must not covet to stand high; and humble souls aim not to dwell in royal cities.

The grant Achish made him, was very generous and kind, *v.* 6, 7. Hereby, (1.) Israel recovered their ancient right; for Ziklag was in the lot of Judah, Josh. 15: 31. and afterward was assigned, with some other cities, to Simeon, Josh. 19: 5. (2.) David gained a commodious settlement, not only at a distance from Gath, but bordering on Israel, where he might correspond with his own countrymen, and whither they might resort to him, at the revolution now approaching. We do not find that while Saul lived, he had more than his 600 *men,* (*ch.* 30: 10.) yet, immediately after Saul's death, that was the rendezvous of his friends. Nay, it should seem, while he kept himself close, because of Saul, multitudes resorted to him, at least, to assure him of their sincere intentions, 1 Chron. 12: 1—22. And this further advantage David gained, that Ziklag was annexed to the crown, at least the royalty of it pertained to the kings of Judah, ever after, *v.* 6. Note, There is nothing lost by humility and modesty, and a willingness to retire. Real advantages follow those that flee from imaginary honors. Here David continued 4 *months,* as it may very well be read, (*v.* 7.) or some days above 4 months. The Seventy read it, *some months;* so long he waited for the set time of his accession to the throne; for *he that believeth, shall not make haste.*

V. 8—12. Here is an account of David's actions, while in the land of the Philistines; a fierce attack he made on some remains of the devoted nations, his success in it, and the representation he gave of it to Achish.

1. In this, we may acquit him of cruelty and injustice, because the people he cut off, were such as Heaven had long since doomed to destruction. The Amalekites were to be all cut off; probably the Geshurites and Gezrites were branches of Amalek: Saul was rejected for sparing them; David makes up the deficiency of his obedience

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVII. V. 1, 2. David, while reflecting on the inveterate malice of Saul, and the neglect, cowardice, and treachery of his countrymen, lost sight of his having been anointed to be king of Israel, with the annexed promises of God, and the manifold deliverances which he had experienced. He went to Gath, perhaps invited by Achish, but evidently without inquiring of the Lord. (21: 10—15.) This measure was calculated to alienate the affections of the Israelites, and to give credit to the slanders of his accusers; he thus ran himself and his men into temptations to idolatry; and he laid himself under obligations to those, whom he could never favor, without betraying the cause of God. (26: 19. 28: 1, 2. 29: 2, 8—11. *Ps.* 141: 1—5.) SCOTT.

(2.) 'There is no circumstance in this transaction [going over to Achish, &c.] that is not blamable. I undertake no defence of his conduct. It is all defenceless: God vindicates him not.' Dr. A. CLARKE.—*Achish.*] 'Most writers agree, that this Achish to whom David fled, was not the Achish by whom he was inhospitably received, and from whom he so narrowly escaped, when he was before at Gath.' DODD.

Verse 6.

'This verse is a proof that this book was written long after the days of Samuel.' Dr. A. CLARKE.—*Unto this day.*] 'This and similar clauses seem added by some sacred writers, after the substance of the several books was written.' POOLE.

Verse 8.

'These people were in hostility with Achish, (see ch. 30: 16.) David therefore acted honorably for Achish in the attack he made on them.' *Dodd.* So *Hewlett,* after Dr. *Chandler.* Comp. note, v. 2. ED.

Verse 9.

Left neither man nor woman, &c.] 'This must be understood of the people of those parts only, for there were Amalekites still in other places.' PATRICK.

and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned and came to Achish.

10 And Achish said * Whither have ye made a road to-day? [p] And David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of [q] the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the [r] Kenites.

11 And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring *tidings* to Gath, saying, [s] Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David, and so *will be* his manner, all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines.

12 And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel [t] utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Achish, preparing war against Israel, places confidence in David, 1,2. Saul, after having destroyed those who had familiar spirits, at length, fearing the Philistines and being forsaken by God, goes to the witch of En-dor and engages to indemnify her, 3—10. She, by his desire, calls up Samuel, who predicts his ruin, 11—19. Saul falls down in despair; but, being prevailed on to take food, he returns to his army, 20—25.

B. C. 1056. AND it came to pass in those days, [a] that the [b] Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that [c] thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men.

2 And David said to Achish, [d] Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

3 ¶ Now * Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had [f] put away those that had before he succeeds him. He smote them, and *left none alive*, *v.* 8, 9. The service paid itself, for they carried off abundance of spoil, which served for the subsistence of David's forces.

2. Yet we cannot acquit him of dissimulation with Achish, in the account of this expedition.

(1.) David, it seems, was not willing he should know the truth; (*v.* 11.) not because he was ashamed of what he had done as a bad thing, but because he was afraid, if the Philistines knew it, they would be apprehensive of danger to themselves or their allies, by harboring him among them, and would expel him their coasts: therefore he industriously conceals it from them, which, it seems, he could do, by putting them all to the sword; for none of their neighbors would inform against him, nor, perhaps, would soon come to the knowledge of what was done; intelligence not being so readily communicated then as now.

(2.) He hid it from Achish, with an equivocation not at all becoming his character. *v.* 10. It was true, he had invaded the countries *south of Judah*, but he made Achish believe he had invaded those that lay *south* in *Judah*, the Ziphites, for example; so Achish understood him, and thence inferred he *had made his people Israel abhor him*, and so riveted himself in the interest of Achish. Achish's fidelity to him, and good opinion of him, aggravate his sin in deceiving him thus; which, with some other such instances, David seems penitently to reflect upon, when he prays, *Remove from me the way of lying.*

CHAP. XXVIII. Preparations are herein making for that war, which will put an end to the life and reign of Saul, and so make way for David to the throne.

V. 1—6. Here is, I. The Philistines' design against Israel. *v.* 1. If the Israelites had not forsaken God, there had been no Philistines remaining to molest them; if Saul had not forsaken Him, they had by this time been put out of all danger by them. The Philistines took an opportunity to make this attempt, when they had David among them, whom they feared more than Saul and all his forces.

II. Achish's expectation of assistance from David in this war, and the encouragement David gave him to expect it; '*Thou shalt go with me to battle*,' says Achish. David gave him an ambiguous answer. *v.* 2. Thus he keeps himself free from a promise to serve him, and yet keeps up his expectation of it. For Achish took it in no other sense, than as an engagement to assist him, and promised him, thereupon, that he would make him captain of the guards, protector, or prime minister of state.

III. The drawing of the armies, on both sides, into the field, *v.* 4. *The Philistines pitched in Shunem*, in Issachar, a great way north from their country. Israel was ill guarded, when the Philistines could march their army into the very heart of the country. Saul, while he pursued David, left his people naked and exposed. On some of the adjacent mountains of Gilboa, Saul musters his forces.

IV. Saul in terror and at loss on the occasion, *v.* 5. Had he kept close to God, he needed not have been afraid of an army of Philistines; but now that he had provoked God to forsake him, his interest failed, his armies dwindled, and looked mean, and, which was worse, his spirits failed, his heart sunk within him. A guilty conscience made him tremble; now he remembered the guilty Amalekites he had spared, and the innocent priests, he had slaughtered; his sins are set in

* Or, *Did ye not make a road, &c.*
p 21:2. Gen. 27:19,20,24. Josh. 2:4—6. 2 Sam. 17:20. Ps. 119:29,163. Prov. 29:25. Gal. 2:11—13. Eph. 4:25.
q 1 Chr. 2:9,25.
r 15:6. Num. 24:21. Judg. 1:16. 4:11. 5:24.
s 22:22. Prov. 12:19. 29:25.
t Heb. *to stink.* 13:4. Gen. 34:30.
a 7:7. 13:5. 17:1. 29:1.
b Judg. 3:1—4.
c 27:12. 29:2,3.
d 27:10. 2 Sam. 16:16—19. Rom. 12:9.
e 25:1. Is. 57:1,2.
f 9. Ex. 22:18. Lev. 19:31. 20:6,27. Deut. 18:10,11. Acts 16:16—19.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The strongest believers cannot wholly exclude the incursions of unbelief, during tedious trials, and when sense and reason bring in no report of deliverance. Many, under sharp temptations, have overlooked former mercies and experiences; forgotten the power and promise of the Lord; and feared that sin and Satan would finally prevail against them. When faith thus staggers, obedience wavers, and sinful expedients frequently are employed; which involve men more and more in difficulties and temptations.—If at any time we 'lean to our own understanding,' and do not ask counsel of God, we are sure to do wrong. (*Prov.* 3: 5, 6.)—We ought not to quit the path of duty, or to join interests with the enemies of religion, even for self-preservation, or out of care for our families: nor should we willingly contract obligations, where we cannot consistently make requitals of kindness.—It is our wisdom to shun notoriety, and to shelter ourselves from envy; for obscurity is commonly more safe and comfortable, and no less advantageous. Yet we must in no situation be wholly inactive, but attempt something in the cause of God and his people, even though ungratefully requited by those whom we would serve.—The fear of man is so ensnaring, that we should, if possible, keep out of those places, where doing our duty will expose us to danger or reproach.—An equivocation, which serves the purpose of a lie, bears the same relation to it, that a hypocrite does to a profane person; it is only *apparently* better, and therefore a *more dangerous cheat.* But though believers often betray their imperfections, they can never be prevailed upon deliberately to renounce the service of God, and to unite interests with his enemies, or to become the servants of sin and Satan. SCOTT.

Verse 10.

Whither have ye made a road to-day?] 'This seems to imply that he had probably been in the habit of making predatory excursions.' Dr. A. CLARKE.—'From this verse, and similar passages, we may observe the strict impartiality of the sacred Scriptures. They present us with the most faithful delineations of human nature, in an early age of the world; they exhibit the frailties and infirmities of kings, of priests and of prophets, with equal truth; and examples of vice and frailty, as well as of piety and virtue, are held up "for instruction in righteousness," that we might guard against those errors, to which the best men are exposed, and which we cannot avoid without the greatest vigilance and care.' HEWLETT.

Verse 11.

Lest they, &c.] This seems adverse to the opinion of Henry, Scott, &c. who commend David for destroying these devoted nations, as if he did it from regard to God, whereas he 'saved neither man nor woman alive, lest they should tell it at Gath,' &c. 'Shame on him,' says Dr. *A. Clarke*, 'who becomes the apologist of such conduct.' ED.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVIII. V. 1, 2. Achish, when determined to make war against Israel, required David's assistance: and David could not have refused it without the greatest danger. Yet if he had directly promised it, and had then either stood neuter, or gone over to the Israelites, he must have behaved with great ingratitude and treachery: and if he had fought against Israel, he would have been guilty of a very great sin, he would have alienated the affections of his people, and perhaps exposed himself to the reproach of having murdered Saul. It seemed therefore impossible that he should extricate himself, with a good conscience, and a clear reputation. He, however, returned an insincere and evasive answer, which was intended to gain time, but which Achish understood as a promise of effectual assistance; (*Notes*, 27: 8—12. 29: 8—11.) and on that account promised to make him captain of his guard, or some great officer about his person. SCOTT.

(1.) 'Sir Isaac Newton conjectures, that the Philistines had got a great increase to their armies, by vast numbers of men which Amasis had driven out of Egypt.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 3.

(25: 1.) Whatever Saul's motive was in putting away those that had familiar spirits and wizards, the measure itself was right. (*Notes*, *R.* e, f.) SCOTT

familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

4 And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in [g] Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in [h] Gilboa.

5 And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, [i] he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.

6 And when Saul [k] inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither [l] by dreams, nor [m] by Urim, nor [n] by prophets.

7 Then said Saul unto his servants, [o] Seek me a woman that hath [p] a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, *there is* a woman that hath a familiar spirit at [q] En-dor.

8 And Saul [r] disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, [s] I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and [t] bring me *him* up whom I shall name unto thee.

9 And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, [u] how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of

g Josh. 19:18. 2 Kings 4:8.
h 31:1. 2 Sam. 1:6,21. 21:12.
i Job 15:21. 18:11. Ps. 48:5,6. 73:19. Prov. 10:24. Is. 7:2. 21:3,4. 57:20, 21. Dan. 5:6.
k 14:37. 1 Chr. 10:14. Prov. 1:27,28. Ez. 20:1—3. John 9:31. Jam. 4:3.
l Gen. 28:12—15. 46:2—4. Num. 12: 6. Job 33:14—16. Jer. 23:28. Matt. 1:20.
m Ex. 28:30. Num. 27:21. Deut. 33:8.
n Ps. 74:9. Lam. 2:9. Ez. 20:3.
o 2 Kings 1:2,3. 6:33. Is. 8.19,20. Lam. 3:25,26. Hab. 2:3.
p 3. Deut. 18:11. Is. 19:3. Acts 16: 16.
q Josh. 17:11. Ps. 83:10.
r 1 Kings 14:2,3. 22:30,34. Job 24:13 —15. Jer. 23:24. John 3:19,20. 1 Chr. 10:13.
s 15.
t See on 3.

order before his eyes, they put him into confusion, embarrass all his counsels, and rob him of his courage; so that there remained only a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. Note, troubles are terrors to the wicked. In this distress, *Saul inquired of the Lord.* *v.* 6. Need drives those to God, who, in their prosperity, slighted his oracles and altars, Isa. 26: 16. Did ever any seek the Lord, and not find Him? Yes, Saul. *Should He be inquired of at all*, by such a one? Ezek. 14: 3. No, for, 1. He inquired in such a manner, as if he had *not inquired at all.* Therefore it is said, (1 Chron. 10: 14.) *He inquired not of the Lord*, for he did it faintly, and coldly, and with a secret design, if God did not answer him, to consult the devil. He did not inquire in faith, but with a double, unstable mind. 2. He inquired too late, when the days of his probation were over, and he finally rejected. *Seek the Lord while He may be found*, for there is a time when He will not be found. 3. He had forfeited the benefit of all the methods of inquiry. Could he that had hated and persecuted Samuel and David, who were both prophets, expect to be answered by prophets? Or he that had slain the high priest, to be answered by Urim? Or he that had sinned away the Spirit of grace, to be answered by dreams? No, *Be not deceived, God is not mocked.*

V. The mention of some things, that had happened a good while ago, to introduce the following story, *v.* 3: 1. The death of Samuel. This made the Philistines the more bold, and Saul the more afraid. 2. Saul's edict against witchcraft. He had put the laws in execution against *those that had familiar spirits*, who must not be *suffered to live.* Ex. 22: 18. Some think he did this in the beginning of his reign, while under Samuel's influence; others that it was lately done, for it is spoken of here, *v.* 9. as a late edict. Perhaps, when Saul was himself troubled with an evil spirit, he suspected he was bewitched, and, for that reason, cut off all that had familiar spirits. Many seem zealous against sin, when they themselves are any way hurt by it, who have no concern for the glory of God, nor any dislike of sin as sin. However, it was commendable thus to use his power. Note, Many seem enemies to sin in others, while they indulge it in themselves. Saul will drive the devil out of his kingdom, and yet harbor him in his heart, by envy and malice.

V. 7—14. Here, I. Saul seeks for a witch, *v.* 7. Herein he is chargeable with contempt of the God of Israel; as if any creature could do him a kindness, when God had left him, and frowned upon him. Now he has recourse to that as an oracle, which he had before condemned as an abomination. It is common for men to inveigh severely against those sins which they are in no temptation to, but suffer themselves afterward to be overcome by them. Who knows what mischiefs they will run into, that forsake God, and are forsaken of Him?

II. He goes to her by night, and in disguise, with only two servants, and probably on foot, *v.* 8. See how those that are led captive by Satan, are forced, 1. To disparage themselves. Never did Saul look so mean, as when he went sneaking to a sorry witch to know his fortune. 2. To dissemble. Evil works are works of darkness, and hate the light. Saul went in disguise, not only lest the witch herself, if she had known him, should have declined to serve him, either fearing he came to trepan her, or resolving to be avenged on him for his edict against those of her profession; but lest his own people should know it, and abhor him for it. Such is the power of natural conscience, that even those who do evil, blush, and are ashamed to do it.

III. He tells her his errand, and promises her impunity. 1. He hoped to serve his purpose by necromancy, or divination by the dead; *v.* 8. this was expressly forbidden by the law. Deut. 18: 11. This supposes, that it was generally taken for granted, that souls exist after death, and that great knowledge was attributed to separate souls. But to think that any good souls should come up at the beck of an evil spirit, or that God, who had denied a man the benefit of his own institutions, should suffer him to reap any real advantage by a cursed, diabolical invention, was very absurd. 2. She signifies her fear of the law, and her suspicion that this stranger came to draw her into a snare: *v.* 9. Providence ordered it so, that Saul should be told to his face of his edict against witches, at this very time when he was consulting one, for the greater aggravation of his sin. She insists on the peril of the law, perhaps to raise her price: for no doubt she demanded, and had a large one. Observe how sensible she is of danger from Saul, and careful against it; but not at all apprehensive of the obligations of God's law, and the terrors of his wrath. She fears a snare laid for her life, more than a snare laid for her soul. It is common for sinners to be more afraid of punishment from men, than of God's righteous judgment. But, 3. Saul promises with an oath not to betray her, *v.* 10. It was his duty, as a king, to punish her, and he knew it, yet he swears not to do it; as if he could by his own oath bind himself from doing that, which, by the divine command, he was bound to do. But he promised more than he could perform, when he said, *There shall no punishment happen to thee;* for he could not secure himself, much less her from divine vengeance.

IV. Samuel, who was lately dead, is the person Saul desired to talk with, and the witch, with her enchantments, gratifies his desire, and brings them together. Samuel had anointed him, and had formerly been his faithful friend and counsellor, therefore with him he wished to advise. While Samuel was living at Ramah, not far from Gibeah of Saul, presiding there in the school of the prophets, we never read of Saul's advising with him in any of his difficulties; but now he is dead, 'O for Samuel again! By all means, *bring me up Samuel.*' Note, Many despise and persecute God's saints and ministers when living, who would be glad to have them again, when dead. *Send Lazarus to me*, and *send Lazarus to my father's house.* The sepulchres of the righteous are garnished.

1. Here is a seeming defect or chasm in the story. One would have expected to be told how she performed the operation, but the Scripture conceals sinful art, that we may be *simple concerning evil.* We should not covet to *know the depths of Satan.*

2. The witch, upon sight of the apparition, was aware her client was Saul: her familiar spirit, it is likely, informing her of it, *v.* 12. Had she

Verse 6.

Saul inquired of the LORD,' under urgent terror, but without humiliation for sin, or purposes of repentance; and therefore God would not vouchsafe him any answer. He did not *inquire* till his doom was sealed; and then only in a hypocritical manner: therefore it was nearly the same as 'not inquiring.' (*Note*, 1 *Chr.* 10: 13, 14.) After Abiathar had fled to David, probably Saul appointed another high priest: yet neither by him, nor by any prophet, nor in any way, could he obtain an answer. (15. 14: 37.) This showed, that God was greatly displeased with him, and warned him to repent, and to cry for mercy with humble faith and perseverance. (*Note*, *Judg.* 10: 13—16.) It also proved, that God no longer regarded him as chief magistrate in Israel. (*Notes*, 23: 9—13. *Ex.* 28: 30. *Num.* 27: 21.)

SCOTT.

Verse 7.

En-dor.] 'A city in the valley of Jezreel, at the foot of mount Gilboa, where the army of Saul had now encamped.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Respecting the case here, interpreters seem to have three principal theories, neither of which, however, is entirely relieved of difficulty. The first and most generally sustained, especially by the older commentators, is that which considers the case as presenting no other than Satan personating Samuel; the second, which is sustained by Scott, and others of similar character, Dr. A. Clarke, &c. considers it as presenting Samuel actually called up by the miraculous power of God, who commissions him to denounce Saul, &c. and the third, which *Hewlett*, referring to 'the Companion of the Holy Bible,' and to Michaelis, inclines to, considers it as a case of the most ordinary deception by imposition, not requiring so much even as ventriloquism. Some regard it as a gross trick of Saul's courtiers and the hag, to deter Saul from hazarding a battle,—the courtiers being frightened at the array of the Philistines, and the witch well paid. ED.

Verses 9, 10.

Instead of being cut to the heart by the woman's suspicion, which implied the most severe reproof; Saul most profanely sware by the LORD, that the woman should not be punished for violating the divine

the land: [v] wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?

10 And Saul [x] sware to her by the LORD, saying, *As* the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.

[*Practical Observations.*]

11 Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? and he said, Bring me up Samuel.

12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for [y] thou *art* Saul.

13 And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw [z] gods ascending out of the earth.

14 And he said unto her, [*] What form *is* he of? And he said, An old man cometh up: and he *is* covered with [a] a mantle. And Saul perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he stooped with *his* face to the ground, and bowed himself.

15 And Samuel said

v 2 Sam. 18:13. 2 Kings 5:7.
x 14:39. 19:6. Gen. 3:5. Ex. 20:7. Deut. 18:10—12. 2 Sam. 14:11. Matt. 26:72. Mark 6:23.
y 3. 1 Kings 14:5.
z Ex. 4:16. 22:28. Ps 82:6. John 10:34,35.
* Heb. *What* is *his form?*
a 15:27. 2 Kings 2:8,13,14.

believed it was really Samuel whom she saw, she would have had more reason to fear him, who was a good prophet, than Saul, who was a wicked king. But the wrath of earthly princes is feared by most, more than the wrath of the King of kings.

3. Saul (who, we may suppose, was in the next room) bade her not be afraid of him, but go on with the operation, and inquired *what she saw? v.* 13. They called angels *gods*, because spiritual beings. But she speaks the language of the heathen, who had their *infernal* deities, and had them in veneration. Samuel's soul, if it became visible, was expected to appear in the usual resemblance of the body; and God permitted the devil, to answer the design, to put on Samuel's shape, that they who would not *receive the love of the truth*, might be *given up to strong delusion, and believe a lie.* That it could not be the soul of Samuel himself, they might easily apprehend, when it *ascended out of the earth;* for the *spirit of a man*, much more of a good man, *goes upward.* But if people will be deceived, it is just with God to say, 'Let them be deceived.' That the devil, by divine permission, should be able to personate Samuel, is not strange, since he can *transform himself into an angel of light:* nor is it strange he should be permitted to do it on this occasion; that Saul might be driven to despair, by inquiring of the devil, since he would not, in a right manner, inquire of the Lord, by which he might have had comfort. Saul, it seems, was not permitted to see any manner of similitude himself, but he must take the woman's word for it, that she saw *an old man covered with a mantle, or robe,* the habit of a judge, which Samuel had sometimes worn; and, some think, it was for the sake of that, and the majesty of its aspect, that she called this apparition *Elohim, a god,* or *gods;* for so magistrates are styled, Ps. 82: 1.

4. Saul perceiving, by the woman's description, that it was Samuel, *stooped with his face to the ground,* either, as it is generally taken, in reverence to Samuel, though he saw him not, or perhaps to listen to that soft and muttering voice which he now expected to hear; for they that had familiar spirits, *peeped and muttered;* (Isa. 8: 19.) and, it should seem, Saul bowed himself, (probably by the witch's direction,) that he might hear what was whispered, and listen carefully to it; for the *voice of one that has a familiar spirit, is said to come out of the ground, and to whisper out of the dust,* Isa. 29: 4. He would stoop to that, who would not stoop to the word of God.

V. 15—19. We have here the conference between Saul and Satan. Saul came in disguise, (*v.* 6.) and Satan soon discovered him, *v.* 12. Satan comes in disguise, and Saul discovers him not. Such is our disadvantage in wrestling with *the rulers of the darkness of this world;* they know us, while we are ignorant of their wiles and devices.

I. The spectre, or apparition, personating Samuel, asks why he is sent for, *v.* 15. To us this discovers that it was an evil spirit that personated Samuel; for (as Patrick observes) it is not in the power of witches to disturb the rest of good men, and to bring them back into the world when they please: nor would the true Samuel have acknowledged such a power in magical arts: but to Saul this was a proper device of Satan's to draw veneration from him, to possess him with an opinion of the power of divination, and so to rivet him in the devil's interests.

II. Saul makes his complaint to this counterfeit Samuel, mistaking him for the true; and a most doleful complaint it is, *v.* 15. He complained not of God's withdrawings till he fell into trouble, till the *Philistines made war against him*, and then he begins to lament God's departure. He that in his prosperity inquired not after God, in his adversity thought it hard that God answered him not. He does not, like a penitent, own the righteousness of God in this; but, like a man enraged, flies out against God as unkind, and flies off from Him; *therefore I have called thee:* as if Samuel, a servant of God, would favor those whom God frowned upon; or as if a dead prophet could do him more service than the living ones. One would think, from this, that he really desired to meet with the devil, and expected no other, (though under the covert of Samuel's name,) for he desires advice otherwise than from God, therefore from the devil, that is, a rival with God. 'God denies me, *therefore I come to thee.*' *If I fail with Heaven, I will succeed with hell.*

III. Cold comfort this evil spirit gave, and manifestly intended to drive Saul to despair and self-murder. Had it been the true Samuel, he

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—10. When we in the least deviate from the plain path of duty, every circumstance tends to draw us further aside, and to increase our perplexity and temptation.—When death has removed the ministers and servants of God, or persecution has banished them, a land is deprived of its best defence, and its enemies have their best opportunity of preparing war against it.—When habits of perjury, or profane swearing, have been contracted, the sacred name of God, and the most solemn oaths, are often introduced in the midst of the most horrible wickedness, and made the obligations and encouragements to the most enormous crimes! But the atrocious guilt of such impiety cannot be expressed.—Consulting witches, or diviners of any kind, real or pretended, is a malignant or ignorant attempt to gain intelligence or assistance from some creature, when it cannot be had, or is not sought, from the Lord in the path of duty; and is therefore *essentially* idolatry, and *virtually* the worship of the devil. (*Ex.* 22: 18. 1 *Chr.* 10: 13, 14.) SCOTT.

law! She would understand this merely as an engagement not to inform against her: but Saul expressly sware, that he would not perform *his duty.* Indeed both parties acted almost *atheistically;* when one engaged, and the other was satisfied with the engagement, that no punishment should happen to her! SCOTT.

Verse 11.

It is probable, that she expected to impose on Saul by some satanical apparition. ID.

Verses 12—19.

It is much disputed, who it was that appeared on this occasion; for the whole narrative manifests that it was no human imposture. Many expositors, ancient and modern, have maintained, that it was Satan personating Samuel; though the text does not give the least intimation of it. It is, however, by no means advisable, to give those men any countenance, who, to support a favorite system, put a forced construction upon the words of holy writ, very different from their obvious meaning: and scarcely any of their interpretations can sound harsher, than the insertion in every place, where Samuel is mentioned, 'that it was Satan personating Samuel.'—It is indeed argued, that the woman's incantations could have 'no power over a glorified saint:' but to this it may fairly be answered, that neither could an *evil* spirit appear at her call, without the Lord's permission. Though the woman was not the *cause* of Samuel's being sent, Saul's inquiry might be the *occasion* of it. The word *disquieted*, seems to be used merely in accommodation to the general notions of mankind: and the woman's surprise and terror proved, that it was an unusual and unexpected appearance, and not the ordinary effect of her art.—It is, however, further urged, that the apparition's discourse tended to drive Saul to despair, which is one of Satan's temptations; and that it contained no exhortations to repentance, which were usual with the prophets. But to this it may be replied, that Elijah's message to Ahaziah, Daniel's address to Belshazzar, and even Christ's discourse in the presence of Judas, were equally calculated to drive each of them to despair; and equally void of exhortations to repent, and proposals of mercy. (2 *Kings* 1: 15, 16. *Dan.* 5: 18—28. *Matt.* 26: 21—24.)—Saul had despised Samuel's solemn warnings in his lifetime; yet now he hoped, as it were, in defiance of God, to obtain some counsel and encouragement from him: and why might not God permit the soul of his departed prophet to appear, and confirm his former sentence, and denounce Saul's irrevocable doom? It was not beyond the power of God, nor, that I can see, at all unworthy of Him; but rather a declaration of his immutable and irreversible truth and justice.—Satan could not have predicted the several events, which came to pass accordingly, as far as we know, (*Note*, 30: 1—3.) without being inspired by God to do so: and it would give far more countenance to consulting witches, to suppose that He inspired Satan to prophesy by them, than to conclude that Samuel was sent with this tremendous message from God, when Saul consulted one of them. Indeed this would most powerfully discourage such attempts; as the request of the rich man in hell to Abraham, being entirely vain, is calculated to discourage praying to departed saints. (*Luke* 16: 24—26.) The local situation of departed spirits is so concealed from us, that the circumstance of the spirit *apparently* 'arising out of the earth,' forms no real objection against its being the soul of Samuel: and the expression, 'shalt thou and thy sons be with me,' means no more, than that they should be in the eternal world. The transaction was suited to impress the idea of a future state on the mind of all who should ever hear or read of it; and it determined nothing about the

to Saul, [b] Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, [c] I am sore distressed: for [d] the Philistines make war against me, and [e] God is departed from me, and [f] answereth me no more, neither by [*] prophets, nor by dreams: [g] therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.

16 Then said Samuel, [h] Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?

17 And the LORD hath done † to him [i] as he spake by ‡ me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to [k] thy neighbor, *even* to David:

18 Because thou [l] obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day.

19 Moreover, [m] the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines; and [n] to-morrow *shalt* thou and thy sons *be* with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.

20 Then Saul § fell straightway all along on the earth, and was [o] sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night.

21 And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and [p] I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me.

22 Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way.

23 But he refused, and said, [q] I will not eat: but his servants, together with the woman, [r] compelled him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed.

24 And the woman had [s] a fat calf in the house; and she hasted and killed it, and took

would have bid him repent, make his peace with God, and recall David from his banishment; and then have told him, he might hope to find mercy with God: but, he represents his case as helpless and hopeless, serving him as he did Judas, to whom he was first a tempter, and then a tormentor, persuading him first to sell his Master, and then to hang himself. He upbraids him with, 1. His present distress; (*v.* 16.) he tells him, not only that God was departed from him, but that He was become his enemy, and therefore he must expect no comfortable answer from him. 2. The anointing of David, *v.* 17. He could not have touched upon a more unpleasant string. Nothing is said to reconcile him to David, but all rather to exasperate him against David. Yet, to make him believe he was Samuel, he says, it was what God spake by him. The devil knows how to speak with an air of religion, and can teach *false apostles to transform themselves into the apostles of Christ*, and imitate their language. Those who use spells and charms, and plead, in defence of them, that they find nothing in them but what is good, may remember what good words the devil here spoke, and yet with what a malicious design. 3. Disobedience, in not destroying the Amalekites, *v.* 18. Satan had helped him palliate and excuse that sin, when Samuel was dealing with him to bring him to repentance; but now aggravates it, to make him despair of God's mercy. See what they get, that hearken to Satan's temptations! And see whom they resemble, that allure others to evil, and then reproach them for it! 4. He foretells his approaching ruin, *v.* 19. (1.) That his army should be routed by the Philistines. This is twice mentioned. This he might foresee, by considering the superior strength and number of the Philistines, the weakness of the armies of Israel, Saul's terror, and especially God's departure from them. Yet, to personate a prophet, he very gravely ascribes it once and again to God; *The Lord shall do it.* (2.) That he and his sons should be slain in the battle. *To-morrow*, i. e. in a little time, (and supposing it was now after midnight, I see not but it may be taken strictly for the very next day after that now begun,) *thou and thy sons shall be with me*; i. e. separate from the body. Had this been the true Samuel, he could not have foretold it, unless God had revealed it to him; and though an evil spirit, God might by him foretell it; as we read of an evil spirit that foresaw Ahab's fall at Ramoth-Gilead, and was instrumental in it, (1 K. 22: 20, &c.) as perhaps this evil spirit was, by divine permission, in Saul's destruction. That evil spirit flattered Ahab, this frightened Saul, and both, that they might fall; so miserable are they that are under the power of Satan; for *whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest*, Prov. 29: 9.

V. 20—25. We are here told how Saul received this terrible message. He desired to be told *what he should do*, (*v.* 15.) but was only told what he had not done, and what should be done to him. Those that expect any good counsel or comfort otherwise than from God, and in the way of his institutions, will be as wretchedly disappointed as Saul. Observe,

I. How he sunk under the load, *v.* 20. He was indeed unfit to bear it, having *eaten nothing all the day* before, nor *that night*. His fear of the Philistines (*v.* 5.) took away his appetite; or perhaps his struggle with his conscience, in entertaining the thought of consulting the witch, made him nauseate even his necessary food, though ever so dainty. This made him an easy prey to this fresh terror. Now he had enough of consulting witches, and found them miserable comforters. When God in his Word speaks terror to sinners, He opens to them, at the same time, a door of hope, if they repent: but they that apply themselves to the gates of hell for succor, must there expect darkness without a glimpse of light.

II. How he was persuaded to take so much relief, as was necessary to carry him back to the camp. The witch, it should seem, had left Saul alone with the spectre, but, she came to him, (*v.*

b 8,11.
c Prov. 5:11—13. 14:14. d 4.
e 16:13,14. 18:12. Judg. 16:20. Ps. 51:11. Hos. 9:12. Matt. 25:41.
f 6. 28:2,4,9,10.
* Heb. *the hand of prophets.*
g Luke 16:23—26.
h Judg. 5:31. 2 Kings 6:27. Ps. 68:1—3. Rev. 18:20,24. 19:1—6.
† Or, *for himself.* Prov. 16:4.
i 13:13,14. 15:27—29.
‡ Heb. *mine hand.*
k 15:28. 16:13. 24:20.
l 15: 9,23—26. 1 Kings 20: 42. Jer. 48:10. m 12:25. 1 Kings 22:20,28.
n Ex. 9:18. Jer. 28:16,17. Dan. 5:25—28. Matt. 26:24. Acts 5:5,9,10.
§ Heb. *made haste and fell with the fulness of his stature.*
o 5. 25:37. Job 15:20—24. 26:2. Ps. 50:21,22.
p 19:5. Judg. 12:3. Job 13:14.
q 1 Kings 21:4. Prov. 25:20.
r 2 Kings 4:8. Luke 14:23. 24:29. Acts 16:15. 2 Cor. 5:14.
s Gen. 18:7,8. Luke 15:23.

different conditions of the righteous and the wicked.—Upon the whole, there appears much solemnity in God's for once permitting the soul of a departed prophet to appear, as a witness from heaven, and in sending him to confirm the word he spoke on earth, (evincing that the words of the prophets would surely take effect,) and to sit in judgment on a proud enemy of God, who foolishly sought encouragement in his impenitency, by the most atrocious crimes.—This interpretation is certainly obvious, and suited to the apprehensions of the unlearned reader, and according to the general simplicity of the Scriptures: and nothing short of unanswerable arguments and objections, should constrain us to suppose, that when the Holy Spirit said *Samuel*, He meant *Satan*, not speaking by Samuel, as he did by the serpent and by the demoniacs; but actually counterfeiting his shape, and speaking with his voice, though Samuel himself was in every sense absent from the place.—The venerable appearance of Samuel, or something he spoke, convinced the woman, that it was Saul who consulted her (12).—'She perceived, by the reverence the spectre paid him, who he was: for so Abarbinel interprets it: he bowed with his face to the ground, in honor of Saul, whereby the woman concluded it was the king.' *Patrick.* Thus then if the devil personated Samuel, he worshipped Saul, not Saul him! A likely thing, truly, that either Samuel, or Satan personating him, should thus reverence Saul! It shows to what difficulties the supporters of the latter opinion are reduced. Saul's bowing down before Samuel, was not indeed an act of religious worship, any more than Abigail's bowing down before David. The answer of Samuel was in every respect suitable to his character, and to the occasion. It was entirely in vain for Saul to consult the servant, when the Lord was become his enemy: the Lord was only doing to *him*, or for *himself*, (17. *marg.*) as He declared He would: and as Samuel knew him to be finally given up, he neither gave him counsel nor comfort. (2 *Tim.* 4: 14, 15. *Heb.* 6: 4—6. 1 *John* 5: 16—18.)—The woman first saw the appearance; but afterwards Saul seems to have seen it, as well as to have heard the words spoken.—Some think, that neither Saul's servants, nor the woman, heard what passed. SCOTT.

(15.) '*Houbigant* observes very justly, that Samuel complains, not of the woman, but of *Saul* for disquieting: whence it seems to follow that he was not raised up by her magic arts, but by the will of God.' DODD.

(19.) *Shalt be with me.*] Dr. A. Clarke quotes C. Wesley, with approbation, as though Saul and his sons were to be in paradise: and adds: 'Thus say my *faith*, my *hope*, and my *charity*,—doth not the *mercy* of God say the same?' ED.

Verses 20, 21.

The son of Sirach is clearly of opinion with the sacred historian, that it was Samuel himself who foretold the fate of Saul and his house in this interview.' DELANY, in *Dodd.*

(20.) *Fell*, &c.] 'When people [in India] are under the influence of great sorrow or fear, they always do the same, and roll themselves along, making bitter lamentations.' ROBERTS.

flour, and kneaded *it*, and did bake unleavened bread thereof:

25 And she brought *it* before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

CHAP. XXIX.

David attends Achish, which offends the lords of the Philistines, 1—5. Achish dismisses him with commendations, 6—11.

NOW [a] the Philistines gathered together all their armies to [b] Aphek: and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which *is* in [c] Jezreel.

2 And [d] the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands: but [e] David and his men passed on in the rear-ward with Achish.

3 Then said the princes of the Philistines, What *do* these Hebrews *here*? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, *Is* not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me [f] these days, or these years, and I have [g] found no fault in him since he fell *unto me* unto this day?

4 And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, [h] Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? *should it* not *be* with the heads of these men?

5 *Is* [i] not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

6 Then Achish called David, and said unto

a 28:1.

21.) and importuned him to take some refreshment, that he might be able to get clear from her house, fearing that if he should be ill, especially if he should die there, she should be punished for it as a traitor, though she had escaped punishment as a witch. This, it is probable, rather than any sentiment of kindness, made her solicitous to help him. But what a deplorable condition had he brought himself to, when he needed so wretched a comforter!

However, he got back to the camp. And here Josephus much admires the bravery and magnanimity of Saul, that though assured he should lose both his life and honor, yet he would not desert his army, but resolutely returned to the camp, and stood ready for an engagement. I wonder more at the hardness of his heart, that he did not again apply himself to God by repentance and prayer, in hope to obtain, at least, a reprieve; but he desperately ran headlong upon his own ruin. Perhaps, indeed, now that rage and envy possessed him to the uttermost, he was the better reconciled to his hard fate, being told that his sons, and Jonathan among the rest, whom he hated for his affection to David, should die with him. If he must fall, he cared not what desolations of his family and kingdom accompanied his fall, hoping it would be the worse for his successor. He begged not, as David, 'Let thy hand be against me, but not against thy people.'

CHAP. XXIX. V. 1—5. Here is, I. David's great strait. The two armies of the Philistines and the Israelites were encamped, ready to engage, *v.* 1. Achish, who had been kind to David, had obliged him to come himself, and bring his forces to his service. David came accordingly, and, upon a review of the army, was found with Achish, in the post assigned him in the rear; (*v.* 2.) whence, should he retire when the armies engaged, he would fall under the indelible reproach, not only of cowardice and treachery, but of base ingratitude to Achish, an unprincipled thing, he could by no means persuade himself to do; or, should he, as was expected, fight for the Philistines against Israel, he would incur the imputation of being an enemy and a traitor to his country, make his own people hate him, and unanimously oppose his coming to the crown. If Saul should be killed (as it proved he was) in this engagement, it would be laid to David, as if he had done it; so that on each side there seemed to be both sin and scandal. This was his strait; and it is a greater strait to a good man, to see sin before him than to see trouble. But he was brought into it by his own unadvisedness, in quitting the land of Judah, and going among the uncircumcised. It is strange, if those that associate with wicked people, come off without guilt, or grief, or both. What he himself proposed to do, does not appear. Perhaps he designed to act only as a keeper to the king's head, the post assigned him, (*ch.* 28: 2.) and not to do any thing offensively against Israel. But it would have been hard to come so near the brink of sin, and not fall in. Therefore, though God might justly have left him in this difficulty, to chastise him for his folly, yet, because his heart was upright with Him, He would *not suffer him to be tempted above what he was able, but with the temptation made a way for him to escape.*

II. A door opened for his deliverance. God inclined the hearts of the princes of the Philistines to oppose his being employed in the battle, and to insist on his being dismissed. Thus their enmity befriended him, when no friend he had was capable of doing him such a kindness. '*What do these Hebrews here?* (*v.* 3.) was a proper question. 1. A *Hebrew is out of his place*, and, if he have the spirit of a *Hebrew*, *is out of his element*, when in the camp of the Philistines, and he deserves to be made uneasy there. David used to *hate the congregation of evil doers*, (Ps. 26: 5.) however he came now to be among them. 2. Achish, on this occasion, bore honorable testimony to David; by which it appears David had conducted very discreetly while he had been with the Philistines: We have need to *walk in wisdom toward them that are without, to keep our mouth when the wicked is before us*, and to be on the reserve. 3. Yet the princes are peremptory in it, that he must be sent home; and they give good reason for their insisting on it. (1.) Because he had been an old enemy to the Philistines; witness what was sung in honor of his triumphs over them, *Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands*, *v.* 5. Who would be fond of popular praise and applause, when even that may, another time, be turned against a man to his reproach? (2.) Because he might be a most dangerous enemy to them, and do them more mischief than all Saul's army could, *v.* 4. It is dangerous to put confidence in a reconciled enemy.

V. 6—11. Achish was but one of five, though

b 4:1. Josh. 19:30. 1 Kings 20:30.
c 28:4. Josh. 19:18. Judg. 6:33. 1 Kings 18:45,46. 21:1,23. 2 Kings 9: 36. Hos. 1:4—11.
d 6,7. 5: 8—11. 6: 4. Josh. 13: 3. Judg. 16:5,30.
e 28:2.
f 27:7.
g Dan. 6:5. John 19:6. Rom. 12:17. 1 Pet. 3:16.
h 14:21. 1 Chr. 12:18. Luke 16:8.
i 18:6,7. 21:11. Prov. 27:14.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 11—25. Wretched indeed are they, from whom God is for ever departed! What can they expect either from good or evil men, from holy or unholy spirits? Neither the servants nor the enemies of the Lord can do them any service, and every thing combines to drive them to desperation. In every age God sets up a few such beacons for a tremendous warning to their fellow sinners, not to listen to temptations, to sin against conviction, or despise the Word of God; and to beware of hypocrisy, apostasy, procrastination, and other great wickedness: for none are thus given up of God, who have not provoked Him to it by their previous crimes. (2 *Thes.* 2: 8—12.) But while one relenting thought remains, let no sinner ever suppose himself in this awful case. God will not indeed hear the prayer of the unhumbled and impenitent; and many inquire of Him in vain, because they are not decidedly in earnest: when therefore they do not meet with encouragement, they exhibit their own hypocrisy, by giving up their religious duties, plunging again into sin, and seeking help from this world, and 'the god of this world.' Let the discouraged, but sincere and earnest inquirer persevere in knocking at mercy's gate, until it be opened. Let us all learn 'to seek the LORD while He may be found, and to call upon Him while He is near,' (*Note*, *Is.* 55: 6, 7.) and without reserve to obey his voice and do his will.—Finally, though subjects suffer *with* their wicked governors, and children with their parents; either it is *for* their own sins, or else their sufferings 'will work for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIX. V. 1, 2. (*M. R.*) It may be reasonably supposed, that David was undetermined how to act on this occasion, and waited with a secret hope that the Lord would help him out of this very great difficulty; as indeed He did in a wonderful manner. (28: 1, 2.) He was far too much influenced by fear of man, in so readily consenting to attend Achish, when he might have framed very plausible excuses for declining that service. (*Prov.* 29: 25, 26.) SCOTT.

(1.) *Aphek.*] 'A place in the valley of Jezreel, between mount Tabor and Gilboa.—*Pitched by a fountain.*] To be near a *fountain*, or a *copious spring of water*, was of great importance, where water was scarce.' Dr. A. CLARKE.—'There were several cities called Aphek; one in Judah, one in Asher, and this in Issachar. Before, ch. 8: 4. the Philistines are said to have pitched in Shunem, and the Israelites in Gilboa; and now, one in Aphek and the other in Jezreel: not because they had now changed the place of their encamping, but because those places being very near one another, and their camps overspreading both alike, they are said promiscuously to have pitched, sometimes in one, and sometimes in the other.' ASSEMB. ANN.

Verses 4—6.

The high opinion Achish had of David, the confidence he reposed in him, and his commendations of him both before his face (9), and to the

him, Surely, *as* [k] the LORD liveth, [l] thou hast been upright, and [m] thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host, *is* good in my sight; for I have not found evil in thee, since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless * the lords favor thee not.

7 Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou † displease not the lords of the Philistines.

8 And David said unto Achish, [m] But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant, so long as I have been ‡ with thee unto this day, [n] that I may not go to fight against the enemies of my lord the king?

9 And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou *art* good in my sight, [o] as an angel of God: notwithstanding, the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle.

10 Wherefore [p] now rise up early in the morning, with thy master's servants that are come with thee: and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart.

11 So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. [q] And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

the chief, and the only one that had the title of king; accordingly, in a council of war, held on this occasion, he was out-voted, and obliged to dismiss David, though extremely fond of him.

1. Achish discharges him very honorably, not finally, but only from the present service. (1.) He signifies his great pleasure and satisfaction in him, and in his conversation, *v.* 9. Wise and good men will gain respect, wherever they go, from all that know how to make a right estimate of persons and things, though of different professions in religion. What Achish says of David, God, by the prophet, says *of the house of David*, (Zech. 12: 8.) that it shall be *as the angel of the Lord*. But the former is a court compliment; the latter a divine promise. (2.) He gives him a testimonial of his good behavior, *v.* 6. very full, and in obliging terms. God's people should behave themselves always so unoffensively, as, if possible, to get the good word of all they have dealings with: and it is a debt we owe to those who have acquitted themselves well, to give them the praise of it. (3.) He lays all the blame of his dismission on the princes, who would by no means suffer him to continue in the camp. He intimates a reason why they were uneasy; it was not so much for his own sake, as for the sake of his soldiers that attended him, whom he calls *his master's servants*, namely, Saul's; (*v.* 10.) they could trust him, but not them. (4.) He orders him to be gone early, as soon as it was light, (*v.* 10.) to prevent their further resentments, and the jealousies they would have been apt to conceive if he had lingered.

2. His reception of this discourse is very complimental; but, I fear, not without some degree of dissimulation. No one knows how strong the temptation is to compliment and dissemble, which they are in, that attend great men, and how hard it is to avoid it.

3. God's providence ordered it wisely and graciously for him. It proved the relief of his own city, though he did not know it wanted him. *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delighteth in his way.* What He does with us, we know not now, but we shall know hereafter, and shall see it was all for good.

CHAP. XXX.

David on his return finds that the Amalekites had burnt Ziklag, and carried captive the women and children, 1—3. David and his men are greatly distressed, 4, 5; but inquiring of God, he is encouraged to pursue them, 6—10. He obtains intelligence of them from an Egyptian slave, 11—15. He smites them, recovers all, and takes much spoil, 16—20. His law for dividing it, 21—25. He sends presents to his friends, 26—31.

AND it came to pass, when David and his men [a] were come to Ziklag on the third day, that [b] the Amalekites had invaded the south and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire;

2 And had taken the women captives, that *were* therein: they [c] slew not any, either great or small, but carried *them* away, and went on their way.

3 So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, *it was* [d] burned with fire; and

k 20:3. 28:10. Deut. 10:20. Is. 65:16. Jer. 12:16.
l Matt. 5:16. 1 Pet. 2:12. 3:16.
m Num. 27:17. 2 Sam. 3:25. Ps. 121:8.
* Heb. *thou* art *not good in the eyes of the lords.*
† Heb. *do not evil in the eyes of*, &c.
n 12:3. 17:29. 20:8. 26:18.
‡ Heb. *before.*
o 28:2. 2 Sam. 16:18,19. Ps. 34:13,14. Matt. 6:13.
p 2 Sam. 14:17,20. 19:27. Gal. 4:14.
q 30:1,2. Gen. 22:14. Ps. 37:23,24. 1 Cor. 10:13. 2 Pet. 2:9.
q See on 1. Josh. 19:18. 2 Sam. 4:4.
a 29:11. 2 Sam. 1:2.
b 15:7. 27:8—10. Gen. 24:62. Josh. 11:16.
c 19. 27:11. Job 38:11. Ps. 76:10. Is. 27:8,9.
d Ps. 34:19. Heb. 12:6. 1 Pet. 1:6,7. Rev. 3:9.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

While presumptuous sinners are given up to the effects of their own counsels, and driven headlong to destruction, the sins of the upright are repented of and pardoned; and the Lord takes care both of their peace and reputation. He has various methods of extricating us out of difficulties, when we can perceive no way of escaping: and while ungodly men pursue their own purposes, and follow their own judgments, He secretly influences them to such determinations, as subserve the good of his people.—Reputation, esteem, and affection, frequently become snares to us; whilst reproaches, contempt, and injurious suspicions prove beneficial: and the ill usage of the wicked, by which we are driven from them, is much better for us, than that friendship which draws us among them.—When worldly people have no evil thing to say of us, but will bear testimony to our uprightness, we need desire no more from them: and this we should aim to acquire by prudence, meekness, and a blameless life. But their *flattering* commendations are almost always purchased by improper compliances, or some measure of deception, and commonly may cover us with confusion.—It is seldom prudent to place great confidence in one who has changed sides; except as the fear of God influences a true convert to conscientious fidelity.—Obscurity is more safe, than a high station with the ungodly. David in the *cave* was far more worthy of our admiration and imitation, than when a favorite in the camp of king Achish: and he never had a greater deliverance, than when dismissed from that ensnaring service.

SCOTT.

CHAP. XXX. When David was dismissed from the army of the Philistines, he did not go over to the camp of Israel, but, being expelled by Saul, observed an exact neutrality, and silently retired to his own city Ziklag, leaving the armies ready to engage.

V. 1—6. Here is, I. The Amalekites' descent on Ziklag, in David's absence, and the desolations they made there; *v.* 1, 2. intending to avenge the like havoc David had lately made of them and their country, *ch.* 27. 8. They that made bold with others, must expect others will make as bold with them, and provide accordingly. Now observe in this, 1. The cruelty of Saul's piety (as it proved) in sparing the Amalekites; had he utterly destroyed them, as he ought to have done, these had not been in being to do this mischief. 2. How David was corrected for being so forward to go with the Philistines against Israel. God showed him he had better have staid at home, and looked after his own business. When we go abroad in the way of our duty, we may comfortably hope God will take care of our families in our absence, but not otherwise. 3. How wonderfully God inclined the hearts of these Amalekites to carry the women and children away captives, and not to kill them. When David invaded them, he put all to the sword; (*ch.* 27: 9.) and no reason can be given why they did not retaliate on this city, but that God restrained them; for He has all hearts in his hands, and says to the fury of the most cruel men, *Hitherto thou shalt come, and no further.* Thus he would use the Amalekites to correct, not to destroy the house of David.

II. The confusion and consternation David and his men were now in. The mention of David's wives, *Ahinoam and Abigail*, and their being carried captive, intimates that that went nearer his heart than any thing else. It is no disparagement to the boldest and bravest, to lament the calami-

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lords, would have been very honorable to David, if they had not been *in part* the effect of deception. (27: 8—12.) When Achish sware by JEHOVAH, (6) that he did not send David away for any suspicion he entertained of him, he showed that he had collected some *notions* at least concerning the true God and his worship. (9.) SCOTT.

Verses 8—11.

(*M. R.*) David could not but inwardly rejoice at this occurrence: yet he was unwilling Achish should think he did; and therefore he professed a desire 'to fight with the *enemies of his lord the king*.' (*Note*, 2 *Sam.* 16: 15—19.) Achish would understand these words to mean the Israelites; but they were ambiguous, as several of his speeches were on this occasion: so hard is it in such circumstances to avoid all insincerity and disingenuousness, either from fear or from courtesy! SCOTT.

(9.) 'There is some reason to think Achish had actually embraced, or was favorably disposed toward, the Jewish religion. It is possible he [as well as the king of Moab] might have learned many important truths from David, during the time he sojourned with him.' Dr. A. CLARKE. A character like that displayed in David's psalms, could not but have had much good influence on every associate; and David's intercourse, now, as well as his power afterwards, must have contributed to circulate his divine odes through every powerful nation of his times and vicinity. Note, Ex. 19: 6. ED.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXX. V. 1—3. It does not follow, that the battle was not fought on the *morrow* after Saul consulted the witch of En-dor, as some have thought; (28: 19.) for the narrative of Saul's conduct is perfectly distinct from that which relates to David and to the Philis-

their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives.

4 Then David and the people that *were* with him, [e] lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

5 And David's [f] two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail, the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.

6 And David [g] was greatly distressed; for [h] the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was * grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but [i] David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.

7 And David said to [k] Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David.

8 And David [l] inquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And [m] he answered him, Pursue; for thou shalt surely overtake *them*, and without fail recover *all*.

9 So David went, he and the six hundred men that *were* with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed.

10 But David pursued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred abode behind, which were [n] so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor.

11 And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and [o] gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water;

12 And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, [p] his spirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk *any* water, [q] three days and three nights.

13 And David said unto him, To whom *belongest* thou? and whence *art* thou? and he said, I *am* a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and [r] my master left me, because three days agone I fell sick.

ties of relations and friends. If, when we come off a journey, we find our *tabernacles in peace*, let the Lord be praised for it.

III. The mutiny and murmuring of David's men against him, *v.* 6. They looked upon him as the occasion of their calamities, by the provocation he had given the Amalekites, and his indiscretion in leaving Ziklag without a garrison in it. Thus apt are we, when in trouble, to fly into a rage against those who are, in any way, the occasion of our trouble, while we overlook, and have not that regard to, the operations of God's hand in it, which would silence our passions, and make us patient. Now they began to despair of that preferment which they promised themselves in following David, and threatened the life of him, on whom, under God, they had the greatest dependence. What absurdities will not ungoverned passions plunge men into! This was a sore trial to the man after God's own heart, and could not but go very near him. Great faith must expect severe exercises. But it is observable David was reduced to this extremity just before his accession to the throne; at this present time, perhaps, the stroke was struck, which opened the door to his advancement. Things are sometimes at the worst with the church and people of God, just before they begin to mend.

IV. David's pious dependence on the Divine Providence and grace, in this distress. David bore it better than his men, though he had more reason than any of them to lament it. Not offering to avenge their affront, nor terrified by their menaces, he *encouraged himself in the Lord his God;* believed and considered, with application to his present case, the power and providence of God, his justice and goodness, the method He commonly takes of bringing low, and then raising up; his care of his people that serve Him, and trust in Him, and the particular promises He had made to him of bringing him safe to the throne. Note, It is the duty and interest of all good people, whatever happens, to encourage themselves in God as their Lord and their God, assuring themselves that He can and will bring light out of darkness, peace out of trouble, and good out of evil, to all that love Him, and are *the called according to his purpose*, Rom. 8: 28. It was David's practice, and he had the comfort of it; *What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.* When he was at his wit's end, he was not at his faith's end.

V. 7—20. Many were David's troubles, but *the Lord delivered him out of them all;* and particularly out of this which here we have an account of.

I. He inquired of the Lord both concerning his duty, and the event, *v.* 8. It was a great advantage, that he had the high priest with him, and the breast-plate of judgment, which, as a public person, he might consult in all his affairs, Num. 27: 21. We cannot think he left Abiathar and the ephod at Ziklag, for then he and it would have been carried away by the Amalekites, unless we may suppose them hidden by a special providence. If we conclude David had them, it was certainly a great neglect in him, not to inquire of the Lord by them, concerning his engagement to Achish. Perhaps he was ashamed to own his religion so far among the uncircumcised; but now he begins to apprehend this trouble is brought on him to correct him for that oversight; therefore he first calls for the ephod. It is well if our afflictions remind us of neglected duties, and particularly if they quicken us to inquire of the Lord. See 1 Chron. 15: 13. David had no doubt his war against these Amalekites was just, and no want of motive to carry it on, when it was for the recovery of all most dear to him in this world; yet he would not go about it without asking counsel of God, thereby owning his dependence on God, and submission to Him. If we thus, in all our ways, acknowledge God, we may expect He will direct our steps, as He did David's here, answering him above what he asked, with an assurance that he should recover all.

II. He went himself in person, and took with him all the force he had, in pursuit of the Amalekites, *v.* 9, 10. See how easily, and effectually, the mutiny was crushed by his patience and faith. Had he dealt with the ringleaders as had been just, it might have been of pernicious consequence in this critical juncture; but when he, as a deaf man, heard not, the tumult of the people was stilled by his gentleness, and the power of God on their hearts; and, being thus mildly treated, they are now as ready to follow his foot, as they were but a little before to fly in his face. Meekness is the security of any government.

But he had to drop a third of his men, they were so fatigued with their long march. This was, 1. A great trial of David's faith, whether he could go on, in a dependence on the word of God, when so many of his men failed him. When we are disappointed and discouraged in our expectations from second causes, then to go on with cheerfulness, confiding in the divine power, is giving glory to God, by believing against hope, in hope. 2. A great instance of David's tenderness to his men, that he would by no means urge them beyond their strength, though the cause itself was so very urgent. The Son of David thus considers the frame of his followers, who are not all alike strong and vigorous in their spiritual pursuits and conflicts; but, where we are weak, there He is kind; nay more, there He is strong, 2 Cor. 12: 9, 10.

III. Providence threw one in their way, that gave them intelligence of the enemy's motions, and guided theirs; a poor Egyptian lad, scarcely alive, is made instrumental of great good to David. *God chooses the foolish things of the world*, with them *to confound the wise.* Observe, 1. His master had barbarously left him to perish. He might have brought him home, or, at least, have left him wherewith to support himself; but, *The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel:* he could willingly let him die in a ditch for want of necessaries, while he was *eating and drinking*, *v.* 16. Justly did Providence make this poor servant instrumental toward the destruction of a whole army of Amalekites, and his master among the rest; for God hears the cry of oppressed servants. 2. David generously relieved him, *v.* 11, 12. Though the Israelites were in haste, and had no great plenty for themselves, yet they would not *forbear*

e 4:13. 11:4. Gen. 37:33—35. Num. 14:1,39. Judg. 2:4. 21:2. Ezra 10:1.
f 1:2. 25:42,43. 27:3. 2 Sam. 2:2. 3:2,3.
g Gen. 32:7. Ps. 25:17. 42:7. 116:3,4, 10. 2 Cor. 1:8,9. 4:8. 7:5.
h Ex. 17:4. Num. 14:10. Ps. 62:9. Matt. 21:9. 27:22.
* Heb. *bitter.* 1:10.—Judg. 18:25. 2 Sam. 17:8. 2 Kings 4:27. *Margine.*
i Job 13:15. Ps. 27:1—3. 42:5,11. 56: 3,4,11. 62:1,5,8. 118:8—13. Prov. 18:10. Is. 37:14—20. Hab. 3:17,18. Rom. 4:18. 8:31. 2 Cor. 1:9,10. Heb. 13:6.
k 22: 20,21. 23: 6,9. 1 Kings 2: 26. Mark 2:26.
l 23:2,4,10—12. Judg. 20:18,23,28. 2 Sam. 5:19,23. Prov. 3:5,6.
m 14:37. 28:6,15,16. Num. 27:21. Ps. 50:15. 91:15.
n 14:30,31. Judg. 8:4,5.
o Deut. 15:7—11. 23:7. Prov. 25:21. Matt. 25:35. Luke 10:36,37. Rom. 12:20,21.
p 14:27. Judg. 15:19. Is. 40:28—31.
q 13. Esth. 4:16. Jon. 1:17. Matt. 27:63.
r Job 31:13—15. Prov. 12:10. Jam. 2: 13.

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tines: and it is not said at what time Saul went to En-dor.—The Lord had extricated David reputably from his ensnaring connection with Achish; but He severely rebuked him for his misconduct, by the calamity that came upon Ziklag in his absence. (2 *Chr.* 18: 30—34. 19: 1, 2.) *M. R.* SCOTT.

(1.) *Third day.*] 'I. e. after he had left the Philistine army at Aphek. Calmet supposes Ziklag more than 30 leagues from Aphek. —*Amalekites.*] Doubtless a travelling, predatory *horde.*' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 11—15.

The life of a fellow creature was rated at nothing. (*M. R.*)—This slave 'fell sick *on the third day*' before; (13. Heb.) yet it is said that

14 We made an invasion *upon* the south of [s]the Cherethites, and upon *the coast* which *belongeth* to Judah, and upon the south of [t]Caleb; and [u]we burned Ziklag with fire.

15 And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to this company? And he said, [x]Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, [y]nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company.

[*Practical Observations.*]

16 And [z]when he had brought him down, behold, *they were* spread abroad upon all the earth, [a]eating and drinking, and dancing, [b]because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah.

17 And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of [*]the next day: [c]and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men which rode upon camels, and fled.

18 And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives.

19 And [d]there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any *thing* that they had taken to them: David recovered all.

20 And David took all the flocks and the herds, *which* they drave before those *other* cattle, and said, [e]This *is* David's spoil.

21 And David came to the [f]two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that *were* with him: and when David [h]came near to the people, he [†]saluted them.

22 Then answered all the [i]wicked men and *men* of Belial, of [‡]those that went with David,

to deliver one that was drawn unto death, nor say, *Behold, we know it not*, Prov. 24: 11, 12. They are unworthy the name of Israelites, who shut up the bowels of their compassion from persons in distress. It was also prudent. It is a good reason why we should neither do an injury, nor deny a kindness, to any man, that we know not but, some time or other, it may be in his power to return either a kindness or an injury. David received intelligence from this poor Egyptian, concerning his party; what they had done, (*v.* 14.) and whither they were gone, *v.* 15. This he promised, on condition David would spare his life, and protect him from his master.

IV. David, being directed to the place where they lay, securely celebrating their triumphs, fell upon them, and, as he used to pray, *saw his desire on his enemies.*

1. The spoilers were cut off. Finding the booty rich, and being got with it (as they thought) out of the reach of danger, they were making themselves very merry with their booty, (*v.* 16.) *eating, drinking and dancing*, probably in honor of their idol-gods, to whom they gave the praise of their success. In this posture, David surprised them, which made the conquest of them the more easy to him, and the more dismal to them. Then are sinners nearest to ruin, when they cry, *Peace and safety*, and *put the evil day far from them.* Nor does any thing give our spiritual enemies more advantage against us than sensuality, and the indulgence of the flesh. *Eating and drinking, and dancing*, have been the soft and pleasant way in which many have gone down to the congregation of the dead. Finding them thus off their guard, and from their arms, he put them to the sword, and only 400 escaped, *v.* 17.

2. The spoil was recovered and brought off, and nothing was lost, but a great deal gotten. They retrieved all their own, *v.* 18, 19. David's *two wives* are mentioned particularly, because the rescue of them pleased David more than all the rest of his achievements. Providence had so ordered it, that the Amalekites carefully preserved all that they had taken; and, so it proved, there was nothing lacking, when they concluded all was gone; so much better is God oftentimes to us, than our own fears. But this was not all. They took all that belonged to the Amalekites besides, *v.* 20. *flocks and herds;* either such as were taken from the Philistines, and others which David had the disposal of by the law of war; or perhaps he made a sally into the enemy's country, and fetched off thence these flocks and herds as interest for his own. This drove was put in the van of the triumph, with the proclamation, '*This is David's spoil.*' This we may thank him for.' Those who lately spake of stoning David, now caressed him, and cried him up. Thus are the world, and its sentiments, governed by interest.

V. 21—31. We have here an account of the distribution of the spoil taken from the Amalekites. What God gives us, He designs we should do good with, and not serve our lust with it. In the distribution of the spoil,

I. David was just and kind to those who abode by the stuff. They came forth to meet the conquerors, and to congratulate them on their success, though they could not contribute to it; (*v.* 21.) for we should rejoice in a good work done, though Providence has laid us aside, and rendered us incapable of lending a hand to it.

1. There were those that opposed their coming in to share in the spoil, *v.* 22. We may suppose David had instructed his soldiers, and prayed with them, yet there were many among them that were wicked men; often terrified with the apprehensions of death, and yet wicked still; very covetous, and very barbarous to their brethren, to give them the mouths without the meat. What joy could they have of their families, if they had nothing to maintain them with? Was this to do as they would be done by? These are men of Belial indeed, who delight in putting hardships upon their brethren, and care not who is starved, so they may be fed to the full.

2. David would by no means admit this, but ordered that they who tarried behind, should share equally in the spoils with those that went to the battle, *v.* 23, 24. This he did, (1.) In gratitude to God. We have the spoil from God, and therefore must use under his direction, as good stewards. (2.) In justice to them. True, they tarried behind; but, it was not their fault; therefore they ought not to suffer for it. Besides, they had formerly done their part well; this therefore must be considered, now that there was something to enjoy. And even now they did good service, for they abode by the stuff, as a guard. Every post is not alike honorable, yet those that are any way

s 16. 2 Sam. 8:18. 1 Kings 1:38,44. 1 Chr. 18:17. Ez. 25:16. Zeph. 2:5.
t Josh. 14:13. 15:13.
u 1—3.
x 29:6. Josh. 2:12. 9:15,19,20. Ez. 17:13,16,19.
y Deut. 23:15,16.
z Judg. 1:24,25.
a 25: 36—38. Ex. 32: 6,17—19,27,28. Judg. 16:23—30. 2 Sam. 13:28. Is. 22:13. Dan. 5:1—4,30. Luke 12:19, 20. 17:27—29. 21:34,35. 1 Thes. 5: 8. Rev. 11:10—13.
b Job 20:5.
* Heb. *their morrow.*
c 11:11. Judg. 4:16. 1 Kings 20:29,30. Ps. 18:42.
d 8. Gen. 14: 14—16. Num. 31: 49. Job 1:10. Ps. 34:9,10. 1. 9,10. Matt. 6:33.
e 26. Num. 31:9—12. 2 Chr. 20:25. Is. 53:12. Rom. 8:37.
f 10.
h Heb. 13:1. 1 Pet. 3:8.
† Heb. *asked them how they did.* Judg. 18:15.
i 22:2. 25:17,25. Deut. 13:13. Judg. 19:22. 1 Kings 21:10,13.
‡ Heb. *the men.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—15. It is wisdom on all occasions to moderate our expectation of earthly comfort; lest we should, by being too sanguine, meet with the more distressing disappointments.—Many of our troubles may be traced back to our imprudence; all of them in one way or other originate from our sins.—'The LORD is rich in mercy, and ready to forgive;' so that the greatest sinner, when first he approaches the mercy-seat in the Redeemer's name, with penitent confessions and fervent prayers, may be encouraged to expect salvation for his soul, and assistance in all his troubles. But the believer, who has long trusted in his mercy, chosen Him for his Portion, walked with Him in his ordinances, sought his glory, and experienced his faithfulness, power, and love; notwithstanding failures and conscious unworthiness, may with confidence 'encourage himself in the LORD his God,' amidst the most extreme danger and distress.—When our sins are forgiven, and we act by the Lord's direction, we shall soon recover all, and be enriched by our very losses and trials: and even if our companions cannot or will not help us, 'the LORD of hosts will be for us, the God of Jacob will be our Refuge.'—Some of those, who are cordially attached to the cause of God, are less capable of hard services than others: but He mercifully accepts them, and so should their brethren. SCOTT.

he had been without meat and drink, *three days and three nights.* SCOTT.

(12. *Note, Matt.* 12: 40.)

(9.) *Brook Besor.*] 'It had its source in the mountain of Idumea, and fell into the Mediterranean Sea beyond Gaza. Some suppose it the same as the river of the wilderness or of Egypt.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(14.) *Cherethites.*] 'Aborigines of *Crete*, whence their name.' So Calmet, and others, cited by Dr. *A. Clarke.* Many, however, say simply 'Philistines.' See the *M. R.* and explanatory notes there. ED.

Verses 16—19.

(*M. R.*) Perhaps, coming near to the Amalekites in the evening, and witnessing their riotous conduct, they took some refreshment and rest, till the morning; and then at the twilight assaulted the Amalekites, when oppressed with drunkenness and sleep: or else David's company was supernaturally strengthened for these great exertions after all their preceding fatigue. SCOTT.

(17.) 'The text is ambiguous. The Sept. render, "From the morning twilight unto the evening, and on the morrow."' BOOTHR.

and said, [k] Because they went not with us, we will not give them *ought* of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead *them* away, and depart.

23 Then said David, Ye shall not do so, [i] my brethren, with that [m] which the LORD hath given us, [n] who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand.

24 For who will hearken unto you in this matter? [o] but as his part *is* that goeth down to the battle, so *shall* his part *be* that [p] tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike.

25 And it was *so* from that day [*] forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day.

26 ¶ And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, *even* [q] to his friends, saying, Behold a [†] present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the LORD;

27 To *them* which *were* in [r] Beth-el, and to *them* which *were* in [s] south Ramoth, and to *them* which *were* in [t] Jattir,

28 And to *them* which *were* in [u] Aroer, and to *them* which *were* in [v] Siphmoth, and to *them* which *were* in [x] Eshtemoa,

29 And to *them* which *were* in Rachal, and to *them* which *were* in the cities of the [y] Jerahmeelites, and to *them* which *were* in the cities of the [z] Kenites,

30 And to *them* which *were* in [a] Hormah, and to *them* which *were* in Chorashan, and to *them* which *were* in Athach,

31 And to *them* which *were* in [b] Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt.

serviceable to the common interest, though in a meaner station, ought to share in the common advantages; as in the natural body, every member has its use, and therefore its share of nourishment. Thus David overruled the wicked men, with reason, though with great mildness; he calls them *his brethren*, *v.* 23. Superiors often lose their authority by haughtiness, but seldom by courtesy and condescension. Thus he settled the matter for time to come, made it a statute of his kingdom, an ordinance of war, (*v.* 25.) that *as his part is that goes down to the battle*, and jeopards his life in the high places of the field, so shall his be that guards the carriages. Abraham returned the spoils of Sodom to the right owners, and quitted his title to them. If we help others recover their right, we must not think this alienates the property and makes it ours. God appointed that the spoil of Midian should be divided between the soldiers and the whole congregation, Num. 31: 27. The case here was somewhat different, but governed by the same general rule—that we are members one of another. The disciples, at first, *had all things common*, and we should still be *ready to distribute, willing to communicate.* When *kings of armies did flee apace, she that tarried at home did divide the spoil.*

II. David was generous and kind to all his friends. When he had given every one his own with interest, the overplus, which he had as general; probably the spoil of the tents of the Amalekites, plate and jewels; (Judg. 8: 24, 26.) those he thought fit to make presents of to his friends, even the *elders of Judah*, *v.* 26. It becomes gracious souls to be generous; *there is that scatters and yet increases.* And mark his gratitude: he sent presents to *all the places where he and his men were wont to haunt; v.* 31. naming Hebron last, as having an eye to that as fittest for his head-quarters. Note, Honesty, as well as honor, obliges us to requite the favors that have been done us, or, at least, make a real acknowledgment of them as far as is in the power of our hand. He calls it *a blessing;* for no present we give to our friends will be a comfort to them, but as it is made so by the blessing of God: it intimates that his prayers for them accompanied his present; also, that he sent them out of *the spoil of the enemies of the Lord*, (so he calls them, not *his* enemies,) that they might rejoice in the victory, for the Lord's sake, and join him in thanksgivings for it. He would lay them under obligation, too, to be ready to appear for him, on his accession to the throne, which he now saw at hand. *A man's gift maketh room for him.* He was fit to be a king, who thus showed the bounty and liberality of a king. Munificence recommends a man more than magnificence. The Ziphites had none of his presents, nor the men of Keilah; thus he showed, that, though he was such a saint as not to revenge affronts, yet he was not such a fool as not to take notice of them.

CHAP. XXXI. In the last chapter David appears a conqueror, and more than a conqueror. in this, Saul appears conquered, and more than a captive. One is set against the other, that men may see what comes of trusting in God, and what of forsaking Him.

V. 1—7. Saul must now account for the blood of the Amalekites, which he had sinfully spared, that of the priests, which he had more sinfully spilled; and that of David too, which he would have spilled. Now his day is come to fall, as David foresaw, *ch.* 26: 10. Come, and see the *righteous judgments of God.*

I. He sees his soldiers fall about him, *v.* 1. What advantages the Philistines had, we are not told; but they made the onset, and the Israelites fled and fell. Thus they who had followed Saul, and served him in his sin, go before him in his fall, and share with him in his plagues.

II. He sees his sons fall before him. His sons are named, (*v.* 2.) and Jonathan among them; so that the observation of Eliphaz does not hold, (Job 4: 7.) *Who ever perished, being innocent?* For here was one. What shall we say to it? 1. God would hereby complete the vexation of Saul in his dying moments, and the judgment to be executed on his house. If the family must fall, Jonathan, who is one of it, must fall with it. 2. He would hereby make David's way to the crown the more clear and open. For though Jonathan himself would have cheerfully resigned all his title

CHAP. XXXI.

Saul's army being defeated, and his sons slain, he and his armor-bearer kill themselves, 1—6. The Philistines seize the towns which the Israelites forsake; and insult over the dead bodies of Saul and his sons, 7—10. The men of Jabesh-gilead rescue and burn them, and bury the bones, 11—13.

NOW [a] the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and [b] fell down [‡] slain in mount [c] Gilboa.

k Matt. 7:12.
l Gen. 19:7. Judg. 19:23. Acts 7:2.
m 8. 2:7. Num. 31:49—54. Deut. 8: 10,18. 1 Chr. 29:12—14. Hab. 1:16.
n Ps. 44:2—7. 121:7,8.
o Num. 31:27. Josh. 22:8. Ps. 68:12.
p 25:13.
* Heb. *and forward.*
q 1 Chr. 12:1, &c. Ps. 35:27. 68:18. Prov. 18:16,24. Is. 32:8.
† Heb. *blessing.* 25:27. Gen. 33:11. 2 Kings 5:15. 2 Cor. 9:5.
r Gen. 28:19. Josh. 16:2. Judg. 1:22, 23. 1 Kings 12:29.
s Josh. 19:8. *Ramath.*
t Josh. 15:48.
u Josh. 13:16.
x Josh. 15:50. *Esthtemoh.*
y 27:10.
z Judg. 1:16.
a Josh. 19:4. Judg. 1:17.
b Josh. 14:13,14. 2 Sam. 4:1. 15:10. a 28:1,15. 29:1.
b 12:25. 1 Chr. 10:1—3.
‡ Heb. *wounded.*
c 28:4. 2 Sam. 1:21.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 16—31. The success and abundance of ungodly men, increasing their presumption, and being spent on their lusts, frequently accelerate their destruction: and sensual indulgence is a common introduction to 'weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.' (*P. O.* 2 *Sam.* 13: 15—39. *Notes, Luke* 16: 19—23.) But those, who consider the Lord as the Giver of their abundance, will dispose of it with equity and in liberality; and, instead of spending their wealth on their lusts, will share it with their friends, and with the poor; thus subserving their most important future interests, with the very 'mammon of unrighteousness!' (*Luke* 16: 9—13.)—Yet how far do they all come short of the Savior, who divides the spoil of his victories with the meanest of his followers! (*Ps.* 68: 18. *Eph.* 4: 11—13.) But, though the rebellious are now invited to accept of mercy and participate his favor; if they will not have Him to reign over them, they shall receive no benefit from his redemption, the blessings of which will be confined to his friends, who trust and love Him, and keep his commandments. SCOTT.

Verse 25.

'This law may seem to have been ordained before, Num. 31. but this was a very different law from that: and what was then done was not observed as a statute through all generations, but this was, till the time of the Maccabees, as appears from Macc. 8 : 28—30.'
PATRICK.

Verses 26—31.

It is evident from this, that some law or custom was established, which, in dividing the spoil, allotted a certain portion of it to the commander in the war.—It is evident, that some of the places, here mentioned, were not situated in the lot of Judah: and David had passed over Jordan, to place his parents under the protection of the king of Moab, whose kingdom was near to Aroer. (*M. R.* 28.) SCOTT.

(27.) *South Ramoth.*] 'So called, to distinguish it from Ramoth Gilead, beyond Jordan.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(31.) 'We are not to suppose that the transactions mentioned here, and in the preceding ch. took place after Saul's interview with the woman of En-dor: they were considerably antecedent to this, but how long we do not know. What is recorded in the following ch. must have taken place the next day after Saul left En-dor.' ID.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXI. V. 1. Here the writer returns to the history, from which he had digressed in the former chapter, 1 Chron. 10: 1.
ASSEMB. ANN.

2 And the Philistines [d] followed hard upon Saul, and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew [e] Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, [f] Saul's sons.

3 And the battle [g] went sore against Saul, and the * archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers.

4 Then said Saul unto his armor-bearer, [h] Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith, lest these [i] uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and † abuse me. But his armor-bearer would not; for [j] he was sore afraid: therefore [k] Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.

5 And when [l] his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him.

6 So [m] Saul died, and his three sons, and his armor-bearer, and all his men, that same day together.

7 ¶ And when the men of Israel that *were* on the other side of the valley, and *they* that *were* on the other side Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, [n] they forsook the cities and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

8 And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came [o] to strip the slain, that they

d 14:22. 2 Sam. 1:6.
e 13:2,16. 14:1—14,49. 18:1—4. 23: 17. 1 Chr. 8:33. 9:39.
f Ex. 20:5. 2 Kings 25:7.
g 2 Sam. 1:4—10. Am. 2:14.
* Heb. *shooters, men with bows, found him.* Gen. 49:23. 1 Kings 22:34.
h Judg. 9:54. 1 Chr. 10:4.
i 14:6. 17:26,36. 2 Sam. 1:20. Jer. 9:25,26. Ez. 44:7—9.
† Or, *mock.*
j 2 Sam. 1:14.

and interest to him, (we have no reason to suspect any other;) yet, very probably, many of the people would have used his name to support the house of Saul; or, at least, would have come in but slowly to David. If Ish-bosheth (who was now left at home as one unfit for action, and so escaped) had so many friends, what would Jonathan have had, who had been the darling of the people, and had never forfeited their favor? Besides, if Jonathan had lived, and could have prevailed to bring in all his interest to David, then it would have been said that Jonathan had made him king, whereas God was to have all the glory. *This is the Lord's doing.* 3. God would hereby show us, that the difference between good and bad is to be made in the other world, not in this. *All things come alike to all.* We cannot judge of the spiritual or eternal state of any, by the manner of their death; for in that *there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.*

III. He himself is sorely wounded by the Philistines, and then slain by his own hand. The archers hit him, (*v.* 3.) so that he could neither fight nor fly, and now he would, 1. Die by the hand of his own servant, rather than by the hand of the Philistines, lest they should abuse him as they did Samson. Miserable man! He finds himself dying, and all his care is, to keep his body out of the hands of the Philistines, but no care to resign his soul into the hands of God who gave it. As he lived, so he died, proud and jealous, and a terror to himself and all about him. They who rightly understand themselves, think it of small account, in comparison, how it is with them in death, so it may but be well with them after death. Those are in a deplorable condition indeed, who, being *bitter in soul, long for death, but it cometh not*, especially those, who, despairing of the mercy of God, like Judas, leap into hell before them, to escape a hell within them. 2. When he could not obtain that favor, he became his own executioner, thinking thereby to avoid shame, but running upon a heinous sin, and with it entailing on his own name a mark of perpetual infamy, as *a self-murderer.* Jonathan, who received his death-wound from the hand of the Philistines, and bravely yielded to the fate of war, died in the bed of honor; but Saul as a fool, a coward, a proud fool, a sneaking coward; as a man that had neither the fear of God, nor hope in God, neither the reason of a man, nor the religion of an Israelite, nor the resolution of a soldier. Let us all pray, *Lord, lead us not into temptation*, this temptation. His armor-bearer would not run him through, and he did well to refuse it; for no man's servant ought to be a slave to his master's lusts or passions of any kind: the reason given is, *he was sore afraid*, not of death, for he himself ran wilfully upon that immediately; but he could not so far conquer his reverence for the king his master; or perhaps he feared lest his trembling hand should give him but half a blow, and so put him to the greater misery.

IV. His armor-bearer, who refused to kill him, refused not to die with him, but *fell likewise upon his sword*, *v.* 5. This was an aggravating circumstance of the death of Saul, that, by the example of his wickedness, in murdering himself, he drew in his servant to be guilty of the same wickedness, and *perished not alone in his iniquity.* The Jews say, Saul's armor-bearer was Doeg, whom he preferred to that dignity for killing the priests, and if so, justly does his *violent dealing return on his own head.* David had foretold concerning him, that God would *destroy him for ever*, Ps. 52: 5.

V. The country was put into such confusion by the rout of Saul's army, that the inhabitants of the neighboring cities (*on that side Jordan*, as it might be read) quitted them, and the Philistines, for a time, had possession of them, till things were settled in Israel, *v.* 7. See what a king he proved, for whom they rejected God and Samuel. They still had done wickedly (it is to be feared) as well as he, and therefore *were consumed, both they and their king*, as the prophet had foretold concerning them, *ch.* 12: 25. And to this reference is had long after; *Where are thy saviors in all thy cities, of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes? I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath;* that is, he was a plague to thee, living and dying: thou couldst expect no other.

V. 8—13. Scripture makes no mention of the souls of Saul and his sons, what became of them after they were dead; (secret things belong not to us;) but of their bodies only.

I. How they were basely abused by the Philistines. Finding Saul's body, they will, in that, triumph over Israel's crown, and poorly gratify a barbarous and brutish revenge, by insulting the deserted corpse, of which, when alive, they had stood in awe.

They cut off his head, stripped him of his armor, (*v.* 9.) and sent that to be set up, as a trophy of their victory, in the house of Ashtaroth their goddess; (*v.* 10.) and we are told, 1 Chron. 10: 10. (though it is omitted here,) that they fastened his head in the temple of Dagon. Thus Ashtaroth, the idol, that Israel had many a time gone a whoring after, now triumphs over them. They sent expresses throughout their country, and ordered public notice to be given in the houses of their gods, of the victory they had obtained, (*v.* 9.) that public rejoicings might be made, and thanks given to their gods. This David regretted sorely; (2 Sam. 1: 20.) *Tell it not in Gath.* They fastened his body, and the bodies of his sons, (as appears, *v.* 12.) to the wall of *Bethshan*; a city not far from Gilboa, and very near to the river Jordan: here they were hung up in chains, to be devoured by the birds of prey. Saul slew himself, to avoid being abused by the Philistines, and never was royal corpse so abused as his. He that thinks to save his honor by sin, will certainly lose it. See to what a height of insolence the Philistines were arrived, just before David was raised up, who perfectly subdued them. When God has accomplished his whole work *by* them, He will accomplish it *upon* them. See Isa. 10: 6, 7.

II. How they were bravely rescued by the men of Jabesh-gilead. Little more than the river of

k 2 Sam. 1:9,10. 17:23. 1 Kings 16:18. 1 Chr. 10:13,14. Matt. 27:4,5. Acts 1:18. 16:27.
l 1 Chr. 10:5.
m 4: 10,11. 11: 15. 12: 17.25. 1 Chr. 10:6. Ec. 9:1,2. Hos. 13:10,11.
n 13:6. Lev. 26:32,36. Deut. 28:33. Judg. 6:2.
o 1 Chr. 10:8. 2 Chr. 20:25.

Verse 2.

Probably Saul never informed his sons, of what he had been told concerning his own and their approaching death. (28: 19.) SCOTT.

Verses 3—6.

Ahithophel and Judas the traitor murdered themselves: (*Notes*, 2 *Sam.* 17: 23. *Matt.* 27: 3—5.) and I do not recollect any other instances in Scripture of this practice; unless Abimelech be added, who, when mortally wounded, ordered his armor-bearer to despatch him; and Zimri, who burnt his palace and himself in it. (*M. R.*) For suicide, whether from real or supposed insanity, or otherwise, seems to have very rarely occurred in Israel; while suicide among the Greeks and Romans, and other Gentiles, was considered as *virtue*, and never ascribed to insanity. So that the very numerous instances of self-murder, in this and other Christian countries, and generally considered as lunacy, have, in fact, no *parallel*, either in Israel, or among idolaters; and seem to be occasioned in this *peculiar form*, by an association of the Christian sentiment, that suicide is *crime* and *murder*, with a vain attempt in all parties to extenuate it, by ascribing it to madness. But when the character of the suicides mentioned in Scripture is considered, it confirms the opinion, which has been advanced, of the enormous guilt and direful consequences of this crime. (*Ex.* 20: 13.) Men, either madly presuming on the mercy of God, or despairing of it, in order to escape temporal sufferings or disgrace, despise his gift of life, and thus rush uncalled unto his tribunal, by an act of direct rebellion against his authority, and in proud defiance of his justice, with the guilt of all their unrepented crimes on their heads! Yet so exceedingly has Satan blinded men's minds, that this worst of murders has been held honorable in very many ages, places, and situations, and has often been committed out of vain glory, in imitation of, or from affection to, those who have obtained renown among their fellow sinners.—Saul's sons and servants died in the performance of their duty to him and to their country: but he and his armor-bearer died in direct violation of God's commandment. SCOTT.

(4.) *Took a sword.*] 'Took *the* sword, that is, his armor-bearer's. If Doeg were his armor bearer, then Saul and his executioner both fell by that weapon, with which they had before massacred the priests of God. So *Brutus* and *Cassius* killed themselves with the same swords, with which they stabbed Cæsar; and *Calippus* was stabbed with the same sword, with which he stabbed Dio.' DELANY, *in Dr. A. Clarke.*

found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa.

9 And [p] they [q] cut off his head, and stripped off his armor, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, [q] to publish *it in* the house of their idols, and among the people.

10 And [r] they put his armor in the house of [s] Ashtaroth; and they fastened his body to the wall of [t] Beth-shan.

11 And when the inhabitants of [u] Jabesh-gilead heard [*] of that which the Philistines had done to Saul,

12 All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, from the wall of Beth-shan, and came to Jabesh, and [x] burnt them there.

13 And they took [y] their bones, and buried *them* under a tree at Jabesh, and [z] fasted seven days.

p 4. 17:51,54. 1 Chr. 10:9,10.

Jordan lay between Beth-shan and Jabesh-gilead, and Jordan was here fordable; by a bold adventure, the valiant men of that city passed the river in the night, took down the bodies, and gave them decent burial, *v.* 11—13. This they did out of a common concern for the honor of Israel, and out of a particular sense of gratitude to Saul, for his zeal and forwardness to rescue them from the Ammonites, when he first came to the throne, *ch.* 11. They had done Saul better service, had they sent their valiant men to him sooner, to strengthen him against the Philistines. But his day was come to fall, and now this is all the service they can do, in honor to his memory.

We find no general mourning made for Saul, as for Samuel, (*ch.* 25: 1.) only those Gileadites of Jabesh did him honor at his death; for, (1.) They made a burning for the bodies, to perfume them; (so some;) burnt spices over them, *v.* 12. And that it was usual thus to honor deceased friends, at least, princes, appears by the account of Asa's funeral, (2 Chron. 16: 14.) that *they made a very great burning for him.* Or, (as some,) they burnt the flesh because it began to putrefy. (2.) They buried the bodies, when, by burning over them, they had sweetened them, (or, if they burnt them, they buried the bones and ashes,) under a tree, which served for a monument. And, *lastly,* they *fasted seven days;* i. e. each day of the seven, they fasted till the evening; thus they lamented the death of Saul, and the present distracted state of Israel, and perhaps prayed therewithal for the re-establishment of their shattered state. Though *when the wicked perish, there is shouting,* i. e. it is to be hoped a better state of things will ensue, which will be matter of joy; yet humanity obliges us to show a decent respect to dead bodies, especially those of princes. This book began with Samuel's birth, and now ends with Saul's burial, the comparing of which together will teach us to prefer the honor that comes from God, before any honors of which this world pretends to dispose.

q Judg. 16:23,24.
r 21:9.
s Judg. 2:13.
t Judg. 1:27. 2 Sam. 21:12—14.
u 11:1—11. 2 Sam. 2:4—7.
* Or, *concerning him, that which &c.*
x 2 Chr. 16:14. Jer. 34:5. Am. 6:10.
y Gen. 35:8. 2 Sam. 2:4,5. 21:12—14.
z Gen. 50:10.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

How should we watch and pray, that we may not be given up to presumption or despair; but enabled patiently to bear the evils of life, and quietly to hope for the salvation of the Lord, that Satan may not tempt us to the horrible sin of self-murder!—To be anxious to avoid pain or disgrace from men, and not to 'fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell,' is the extreme of infatuation and impiety: yet even here also, ungodly men are often disappointed. Indeed, every worldly object inordinately craved, will become our trouble; and its desire, possession, and loss will all be sources of uneasiness! SCOTT.

(10.) *To the wall.*] Hooks are still seen on the outside walls of 'Fort Emperor,' the citadel of Algiers, on which naked criminals were thrown, and exposed both alive and dead. And see Dr. Shaw. The preservation of trophies of enemies in temples erected to the Deity, is still kept up; witness the flags, &c. now in the 'church of Alexander,' and other churches in St. Petersburg, 'St. Paul's' London, 'St. John's' Malta, that of the 'Hotel of the Invalids,' Paris, &c. ED.

(13.) Probably they burned the bodies, lest the Philistines should further abuse them: though burning was not customary, it was not prohibited. SCOTT. It was the Jews' custom to embalm, not burn, their dead and in parallel texts there is no mention of burning any thing but bones or bodies, except Am. 6: 10. might imply more, which, however, relates to a period 270 years after.—The word 'bones' frequently means the same with 'corpse.' Thus Joseph's embalmed body is called 'his bones,' Gen. 1: 25,26. Ex. 13: 19. So the lying prophet terms his body. 1 K. 13: 31. HEWLETT.

CAUSES OF THE FATAL DISSENSIONS OF THE HEBREW UNION.

Among 12 republics connected with each other, jealousies could not but sometimes arise; and less interests thereby stand in the way of the general welfare. The examples of Holland and Switzerland authorize us to believe this would be the case; and to confirm it I need not appeal to the constitution of the German empire, which, from the inequality of its constituent parts, is perpetually distracted by divisions, and often the scene of intestine hostilities. This mischievous jealousy would infallibly break out in Israel, (1.) If any *two* tribes became more powerful [or richer] than the others, in which event they would regard each other with suspicion and hatred; and, (2.) If any *one* tribe acquired considerable ascendency over the rest, of which the consequence would be mutual envy and opposition.

In the Israelitish republic, both cases *actually* occurred; and this forms, as it were, *the key to their whole history.* As they entered Palestine 600,000 strong, 50,000 obviously formed the medium number of each tribe. A tribe numbering more was to be accounted '*strong*;' if less, '*weak.*' Thus, at the 2d census, Num. 26: Joseph having 35,200, Judah, 76,000, Issachar, 64,300, Zebulun, 60,500, Ashur, 53,400, were all '*strong*' tribes. Dan having 46,400, Benjamin, 45,600, Naphtali, 45,400, Reuben, 43,730, Gad, 40,500, were '*weak*' tribes. And Simeon who had but 22,200 was '*very weak.*' From this it appears, that Judah and Joseph then rose very far above the medium strength. Joseph, indeed, on account of extraordinary numbers, and other advantages, was split into two half-tribes, of which the one, afterwards most turbulent, was now but weak, compared with the other; having but 32,500 warriors. Both, however, were still regarded in some measure as one tribe: and Ephraim must at this time have enjoyed some pre-eminences. These were probably founded merely on the predictions, (Gen. 48:19, 20. Deut. 33:17.) concerning his future extraordinary increase; or perhaps also, on birth, inasmuch as Joseph was by far the most illustrious among his brethren; or, again, because the tabernacle was to be at Shiloh, in Ephraim. Thus much appears from the history, that the pre-eminences which might have belonged to the tribe of Joseph at large, passed, as if by compact, to Joseph's younger son, Ephraim, and his descendants. From this period, between Ephraim and Judah we find a perpetual emulation. (See *Verschuir's* Diss.) In the wilderness, Moses gave Judah the preference, assigning to that tribe the first place in the camp. But immediately after his death, Ephraim gave the nation a leader in Joshua. While the tabernacle was so long at Shiloh, in Ephraim, that tribe obtained considerable advantages, not only in honor and respect, but in wealth and increase of numbers. For, wherever the whole people were assembled thrice a year to the high festivals, trade would increase, and, of course, marriages become more frequent. Ps. 78. represents Ephraim as the chief tribe; which, however, God is afterwards said to have rejected, when the ark and kingdom were transferred to Judah. But even while Ephraim continued powerful, Judah enjoyed a more extensive sway than the other tribes on this side Jordan. At last, Israel received a king from the weakest and youngest tribe, Benjamin. This was, in some measure, giving no preference to any tribe; for, by its disasters, (see Judg.) Benjamin had been extremely reduced, and could not boast of superiority. Only, because Benjamin and Joseph were of one mother, the Benjamites, as from their origin might be expected, included themselves in Joseph. Thus, although Shimei was of Benjamin, he said (2 Sam. 19:20.) he was the first of the house of Joseph that met David in his return. Ephraim, therefore, still maintained a degree of pre-eminence, while Saul the Benjamite was king: for then Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, (see Ps. 80. composed at that time,) seem the chief tribes. Under Saul, the rivalship of the tribes was remarkably displayed. In Judah, he could not have had great authority; for he traversed it often in search of David, who long found no reason to flee farther than from one end of it to another, and was at last but the victim of a rash resolution, when he fled out of the land altogether. Saul, on the other hand, was, as a king, extremely partial to his own tribe, and owned it; See 1 Sam. 22:7. 'Hear, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give all of you fields and vineyards, and make all of you captains of thousands and of hundreds?'—thus acknowledging that *he* did so, and counting on it as a claim to their gratitude. Saul fell; and David was at first recognised only by Judah; the other tribes still attaching themselves to Saul's family. But David's magnanimity so excited their admiration and love, that they all by degrees voluntarily submitted to his government. [And *Geddes* thinks, that 'relic of genuine elegiac poetry, the most precious of all antiquity, (2 Sam. 1:19—27.) containing an artful panegyric of Saul, his avowed enemy, and taught to Judah, could not but have been thus a powerful engine of reconciliation.'] Judah now became exceedingly powerful; and it was remarked above, that its numbers multiplied greatly, most probably by proselytes. About this period began the distinction of 'Israel' and 'Judah,' 2 Sam. 19:12,42—44. 20:1,2. Such titles could not but give birth to jealousies among a people, whose ideas were always influenced by genealogical considerations. David, indeed, most judiciously chose for his residence a city (Jerusalem) properly belonging to Benjamin, but close to Judah, long inhabited principally by men of that tribe, and accounted their chief city. This was well calculated to unite the Benjamites more closely with his family, and to extinguish, perhaps, the jealousies of the rival tribes. We find, nevertheless, not only a Benjamite (Shimei) transported with joy on David's flight from Absalom, but also a strife between Judah and the other tribes, as to which should recall him. This had well nigh occasioned the revolt of the eleven tribes from David; and here too, the prime mover was of Benjamin; 2 Sam. 16:5—8. 19:10—16. 20:1. All the tribes, for *at least* 73 yrs. continued in submission, first to David, and then to Solomon, kings of the house of Judah; yet the fire was all the while glowing under the ashes; and in consequence of the imprudent declaration of Rehoboam, Solomon's son, Jeroboam, an Ephraimite, began a revolt, when, in one day, ten whole tribes renounced allegiance to the kings of Judah, and had thenceforth a king of their own, always of Ephraim, though from different families. Benjamin alone, by David's policy noticed above, remained to Judah, forming one kingdom.' MICHAELIS.

AN EXPOSITION,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, AND NOTES,

UPON THE SECOND BOOK OF

SAMUEL.

THIS book is the history of the reign of David. We had, in the foregoing book, an account of his designation to the government, and his struggles with Saul, which ended at length in the death of his persecutor. This book begins with his accession to the throne, and is entirely taken up with the affairs of the government during the 40 years he reigned, and therefore is entitled, by the Seventy, *The Second Book of the Kings*. It gives us an account of David's triumphs and his troubles

I. His triumphs over the house of Saul; (*ch.* 1—4) over the Jebusites and Philistines; (*ch.* 5.) at the bringing up of the ark; (*ch.* 6 and 7.) over the neighboring nations that opposed him, *ch.* 8—10. And so far the history is agreeable to what we might expect from David's character, and the choice made of him. But his cloud has a dark side.

II. We have his troubles, the cause of them, his sin in the matter of Uriah, (*ch.* 11 and 12.) The troubles themselves from the sin of Amnon, (*ch.* 13.) the rebellion of Absalom, (*ch.* 14—19.) and of Sheba, (*ch.* 20.) and the plague in Israel for his numbering the people, (*ch.* 24.) beside the famine for the Gibeonites, (*ch.* 21.) His song we have, (*ch.* 22.) and his words and worthies, *ch.* 23. Many things in this history are very instructive; but for the subject of it, though, in many instances, he appears here very great, very good, and very much the favorite of Heaven, yet it must be confessed his honor shines brighter in his Psalms than in his Annals. HENRY.

Perhaps this book was named Samuel, because he anointed that king whose actions it records; or because the prophets by whom it was written were raised up in those seminaries, which he instituted.—The book most evidently continues the preceding narrative, and introduces that which follows: and its authenticity is considered as undoubted in every subsequent part of Scripture. The Psalms abound with references to the events recorded in it. (*Ps.* 3: *title.* 72. 78: 70—72: 89: 19—36. 132:) The narrative of David's fall in the matter of Uriah, related only in this book, is mentioned in other parts of Scripture. (1 *Kings* 15: 5. *Ps.* 51: *title. Matt.* 1: 6.) In short, wherever the covenant made with David, concerning the regal authority, as perpetuated in his family, and at length inherited by the Messiah to descend from him; or the promises made respecting Solomon, the especial type of Christ; or the Lord's choice of Jerusalem, and of mount Zion, as the place of his sanctuary, to which the Israelites should resort; or the building and continuance of the temple there, are mentioned; the events recorded in this book are divinely attested.—As containing the history of almost the whole of David's reign, and *exclusively* that of many important transactions, during this interesting period, there are perhaps more references directly or indirectly made to it in other parts of the Scripture, than to any other portion of the sacred narrative. The promises made to David were, both in the literal and typical sense of them, evident prophecies, the fulfilment of which, as recorded in the subsequent books of Scripture, and in the history of the church and kingdom of Christ even to this day, are a divine attestation, that it was written by inspiration of that God, 'to whom are known all his works from the beginning of the world.'—(7: 22: 23: 1—7.) SCOTT.

B. C. 1056.

CHAP. I.

An Amalekite brings Saul's crown and bracelet to David, informs him of the event of the battle, and asserts that he slew Saul, 1—10. David rends his clothes, weeps, and orders the messenger to be put to death as a murderer, 11—16. His poetical lamentation for Saul and Jonathan, 17—27.

NOW it came to pass after the death of Saul, [a] when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in [b] Ziklag;

2 It came even to pass on [c] the third day, that, behold, [d] a man came out of the camp from Saul, with [e] his clothes rent, and [f] earth upon his head: and *so* it was, when he came to David, that [g] he fell to the earth, and did obeisance.

3 And David said unto him, [h] From whence comest thou? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of Israel [i] am I escaped.

a 1 Sam. 30:17—26. b 1 Sam. 27:6.

CHAP. I. V. 1—10. Here is, I. David settling again in Ziklag his own city, *v.* 1. Thence he was now sending presents, to his friends, 1 Sam. 30: 26. and there he was ready to receive those that came into his interests; persons of quality in their country, *mighty men*, *men of war*, and *captains of thousands*, as we find, 1 Chron. 12: 1, 8, 20. God stirred up their hearts to do so, till he had a *great host*, *like the host of God*, as it is said there, *v.* 22. The secret springs of revolutions are unaccountable, and must be resolved into that Providence, which turns all hearts as the rivers of water.

II. Intelligence brought him hither of the death of Saul. It was strange he did not leave some spies, to bring him notice of the issues of the engagement, a sign that he desired not Saul's woful day, nor was impatient to come to the throne.

The messenger presents himself to David as an express, in the posture of a mourner for the deceased prince, and a subject to the succeeding one, (*v.* 2.) pleasing himself that he had the honor to be the first to do him homage as his sovereign; but it proved he was the first to receive from him sentence of death, as his judge. David was very desirous to know the issue of the battle, as one that had more reasons than any to be concerned for the public; and he told him Israel was routed, many slain, and, among the rest, Saul and Jonathan, *v.* 4. He names these only, because he knew David would be most solicitous to know their fate; Saul as the man whom he most feared, and Jonathan as the man whom he most loved.

Probably David had heard, by others, what the

c Gen. 22:4. Esth. 4:16. 5:1. Hos. 6: 2. Matt. 12:40. 16:21.
d 4:10.
e Gen. 37:29,34. Josh. 7:6. 1 Sam. 4: 12. Joel 2:13.
f 15:32. See on 1 Sam. 4:12.
g 14:4. Gen. 37:7—10. 43:28. 1 Sam. 20:41. 25:23. Ps. 56:3. Rev. 3:9.
h 2 Kings 5:25.
i Job 1:15—19.

NOTES.

CHAP. I. V. 1. David and his men had returned to Ziklag, and probably were employed in repairing its desolations, when tidings were brought him of the death of Saul. It does not appear that he made much inquiry concerning the event of the war, though he had every reason to be anxious about it. The decisive blow must have been given about the time when he was so exceedingly distressed. (1. *Sam.* 30: 1—6.) SCOTT.

Verses 2—10.

As it is expressly said, that the armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, before he slew himself, (1 *Sam.* 31: 5.) we must conclude that this man feigned many circumstances of his story. But happening to pass by the field of battle, and finding Saul's dead body, with the insignia of royalty on it, or near to it, he knew who it was; and by bringing these away he sufficiently proved Saul's death. He therefore framed his story, and ordered his behavior, in that manner which he supposed would most ingratiate him with David.—It is remarkable, that an Amalekite should boast of having slain Saul, who had been rejected for not punctually executing the command of God, concerning that nation. (1 *Sam.* 15: 18—23. 28: 18.) But this rendered the story the more improbable; for it might well be supposed, that Saul would be as unwilling to be slain by an Amalekite, as by a Philistine.—*Anguish.* (9) The marginal reading seems the true meaning of the original. SCOTT.

(2.) *A man out of the camp of Saul.*] Dr. *A. Clarke* very plausibly suggests, that 'he was one of those wretches who hang on the skirts of camps, and after a battle rob the slain.' ED.

4 And David said unto him, * How went the matter? I pray thee tell me. And he answered, That [k]the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead, and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also.

5 And David said unto the young man that told him [l]How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead?

6 And the young man that told him said, As [m]I happened by chance upon [n]mount Gilboa, behold, [o]Saul leaned upon his spear; and lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him.

7 And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me: and I answered, † Here *am* I.

8 And he said unto me, Who *art* thou! And I answered him, I *am* [p]an Amalekite.

9 He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me; for ‡ anguish is come upon me, because my life *is* yet whole in me.

10 So I stood upon him, and [q]slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took [r]the crown that *was* upon his head, and the bracelet that *was* on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord.

11 Then David took hold on his clothes, and [s]rent them, and [t]likewise all the men that *were* with him.

12 And they [u]mourned and wept, and fasted

* Heb. *What was, &c.* 1 Sam. 4:16. *marg.*
k 1 Sam. 31:1—6. 1 Chr. 10:1—6.
l Prov. 14:15.
m 1 Sam. 6:9. Luke 10:31.
n 21. 1 Sam. 28:4. 31:1.
o 1 Sam. 31:2—7.
† Heb. *Behold me.* 9:6. 1 Sam. 22:12. Is. 6:8. *marg.* 65:1.
p Gen. 14:7. Ex. 17:8—16. Num. 24: 20. Deut. 25:17—19. 1 Sam. 15:3. 27:8. 30:1,13.
‡ Or, *my coat of mail*, or, *my embroidered coat hindereth me, that my*, &c.
q Judg. 9:54. 1 Sam. 31:4,5.
r 12:30. Lam. 5:16.
s 3:31. 13:31. Gen. 37:29,34. Acts 14:14.
t Rom. 12:15.
u Ps. 35:13,14. Prov. 24:17,18. Jer. 9:1. Amos 6:6. Matt. 5:44. 2 Cor. 11:29. 1 Pet. 3:8.

issue of the war was, for multitudes resorted to him, it should seem, in consequence; but he was desirous to know the certainty of it concerning Saul and Jonathan, either because he was not forward to believe it, or because he would not proceed upon it, to make his own claims, till he was fully assured of it. The young man, therefore, puts it past doubt that Saul was dead, for he himself had been an instrument of his death, therefore David might rely on his testimony. He says nothing of Jonathan, knowing how ungrateful his death would be to David, but accounts only for Saul, thinking (as David understood it well enough, *ch.* 4: 10.) that he should be welcome for that, and rewarded, as one that brought good tidings.

I. His account is very particular: that he happened to go to the place where Saul was, (*v.* 6.) as a passenger, not as a soldier, and therefore an indifferent person; that he found Saul endeavoring to run himself through with his own spear. The margin reads the phrase, *Anguish is come upon me*, as a complaint of the inconvenience of his clothes; his coat of mail, or his embroidered coat, hindered him, that he could not get the spear far enough into his body, or so straitened him, now that his body swelled with anguish, that he could not expire. Let no man's clothes be his pride, for they may be his burden and snare. 'Hereupon,' saith our young man, '*I stood upon him, and slew him;*' (*v.* 10.) at which word, perhaps, he observed David look with displeasure, and therefore excuses it, in the next words; '*for I was sure he could not live;* his life was whole in him indeed, but he would certainly have fallen into the hands of the Philistines, or given himself another thrust.'

2. It is doubtful whether this story be true. If it was, the righteousness of God is to be observed, that Saul, who spared the Amalekites, in contempt of the divine command, received his death wound from an Amalekite. But most interpreters think it false, and that he told it to David, in expectation that he would have rewarded him, as having done him a good service. They who rejoice at the fall of an enemy, are apt to measure others by themselves, and to think they will do so too. But a man after God's own heart, is not to be judged of by common men. I am not clear whether this young man's story were true or no; it may consist with the narrative in the ch. before, and be an addition to it, as Peter's account of the death of Judas, Acts 1: 18. is to the narrative, Mat. 27: 5. What is there called *a sword*, may here be called *a spear;* or, when he fell on his sword, he leaned on his spear.

3. However, he produced what was proof sufficient of the death of Saul, his crown and bracelet. These Saul was so foolishly fond of, as to wear in the field of battle, which made him a fair mark for the archers; but as *pride* (we say) *feels no cold*, so it fears no danger from that which gratifies it. Saul spared the best of the Amalekite's spoil, and now the best of his came to one of that devoted nation. He brought them to David, as the rightful owner of them now that Saul was dead, not doubting but, by his officiousness herein, to recommend himself to the best preferments in his court or camp. The tradition of the Jews, that this Amalekite was the son of Doeg, is a groundless conceit; Doeg's son, it is likely, was so well known to Saul, that he needed not ask him as he did, (*v.* 8.) *Who art thou?* David had been long waiting for the crown, and now it is brought him by an Amalekite. See how God can serve his own purpose of kindness to his people, even by designing (ill-designing) men, who aim at nothing but to set up themselves.

V. 11—16. I. So far was David from falling into a transport of joy, as the Amalekite expected, that he falls into a passion of weeping, *rent his clothes*, (*v.* 11.) *mourned and fasted*, (*v.* 12.) not only for his people Israel, and Jonathan his friend, but for Saul his enemy. This he did, not only as a man of honor, in observance of that decorum which forbids us to insult over the fallen, and requires us to attend our relations to the grave with respect, whatever we lost by their life, or got by their death; but as a good man, and a man of conscience, that had forgiven Saul's injuries, and bore him no malice. He knew before his son wrote it, that if we *rejoice when our enemy falls, the Lord sees it, and it displeases Him;* and, that *he who is glad at calamities, shall not go unpunished.* By this it appears, that those passages in David's psalms, which express his desire of, and triumph in, the ruin of his enemies, proceed not from a spirit of revenge, or any irregular passion, but from a holy zeal for the glory of God and the public good; for by what he did here, when he heard of Saul's death, we may perceive his natural temper was very tender, and he kindly affected even to those that hated him. He was very sincere, and his passion so strong, on this occasion, that it moved those about him; probably, it was a religious fast, they humbled themselves under the hand of God, and prayed for the repairing of the breaches made upon Israel by this defeat.

II. The reward he gave to him that brought the tidings; instead of preferring him, he put him to death: judged him, out of his own mouth, as a murderer of his prince, and ordered him forthwith to be executed for the same.

Now, 1. David herein did justly. For, (1.) The man was an Amalekite. This, he made him own a second time, *v.* 13. That nation, and all that belonged to it, were doomed to destruction; so that, in slaying him, David did what his predecessor should have done, and was rejected for not doing. (2.) He did himself confess the crime, so that the evidence was, by the consent of all laws, sufficient to convict him; for every man is presumed to make the best of himself: and by boasting of it to David, he showed what opinion he had of him, that he would rejoice in it, as one altogether like himself, which was an intolerable affront to him, who had once and again refused to *stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed.* And his lying to David, if indeed it were a lie, was highly criminal, and proved, as sooner or later that sin will prove, lying against his own head.

2. He did honorably and well. Hereby he demonstrated the sincerity of his grief; discouraged all others from thinking, by doing the like, to ingratiate themselves with him; and did what might, probably, oblige the house of Saul, win upon them, and recommend him to the people, as one zealous for public justice, without regard to private interest. We may learn from it, that to give assistance to any in murdering themselves, directly or indirectly, if done wittingly, incurs the guilt of blood; and that the lives of princes ought to be, in a special manner, precious to us.

V. 17—27. We have here a poem David wrote on the occasion of Saul's death; by which he designed both to express his own sorrow for this great calamity, and to impress the like on the minds of others, who ought to lay it to heart.

I. The orders David gave with this elegy, *v.* 18. Not but that the children of Judah knew how to use the bow; but, perhaps, they had of late made more use of slings, as David, in killing Goliath, because cheaper; now, 1. David would have them return to the use of the bow, that they might be in a capacity to avenge the death of their prince on the Philistines, and to outdo them at their own weapon, 1 Sam. 31: 3. David hereby showed his authority over, and concern for, the armies of Israel, and set himself to rectify the errors of the former reign. But we find that the companies now come to David to Ziklag, were armed with bows; (1 Chron. 12: 2.) therefore, 2. Some understand it, either of some musical instrument called *a bow*, to which he would have the mournful ditties sung, or, of the elegy itself; *he bade them teach the children of*

Verse 9.

Anguish, &c.] Following the marginal reading, which seems to give the true meaning, the Amalekite describes, with great particularity, (almost as if he had wholly invented a set of plausible circumstances,) how Saul, having wounded himself, complains that the texture of his *coat of mail* (*shebets*) would not permit his blood to flow freely from the wound: i. e. his *life* (for the life was thought to reside in the blood) was yet *whole* in him. The cut of a coat of mail, from

until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel, because they were fallen by the sword.

13 And David said unto the young man that told him, [x] Whence *art* thou? And he answered, I *am* the son of a stranger, an Amalekite.

14 And David said unto him, [y] How, wast thou not afraid [z] to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?

15 And David called one of the young men, and said, [a] Go near, *and* fall upon him. And he smote him that he died.

16 And David said unto him, [b] Thy blood *be* upon thy head: for [c] thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD's anointed.

[*Practical Observations.*]

17 ¶ And David [d] lamented with this lamentation over Saul, and over Jonathan his son:

18 (Also he bade them [e] teach the children of Judah *the use of* the bow; behold, *it is* written in [f] the book of [*] Jasher.)

19 The [g] beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places; [h] how are the mighty fallen!

20 [i] Tell *it* not in Gath, publish *it* not in the streets of Askelon; [k] lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,

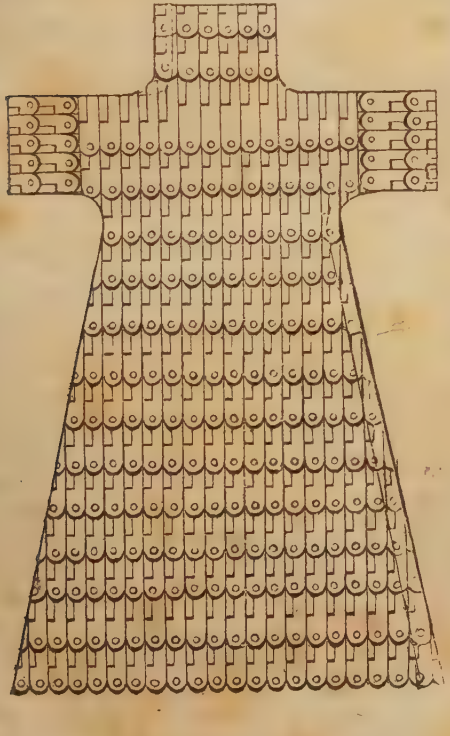
x 8.
y Num. 12:8. 1 Sam. 31:4. 2 Pet. 2:10.
z 1 Sam. 24:6. 26:9. Ps. 105:15.
a 4:10—12. Judg. 8:20. 1 Sam. 22:17, 18. 1 Kings 2:25,34,46.
b Gen. 9:5,6. Lev. 20:9,11—13,16,27. Deut. 19:10. Josh. 2:19. 1 Kings 2:32. Ez. 18:13. 33:5. Matt. 27:25. Acts 20:26.
c Job 15:6. Prov. 6:2. Luke 19:22. Rom. 3:19.
d Gen. 50:11. 2 Chr. 35:25. Jer. 9:17—21.
e 1 Sam. 31:3.
f Josh. 10:13.
* Or, *the upright.*
g 23. Deut. 4:7,8. 1 Sam. 31:8. Is. 4:2. 53:2. Lam. 2:1. Zech. 11:7,10.
h 25,27. Lam. 5:16.
i Deut. 32:26,27. Judg. 16:23,24. Mic. 1:10.
k Ex. 15:20,21. Judg. 11:34. 1 Sam. 18:6. Ez. 16:27,57.

1. He was very generous to Saul, his sworn enemy. (1.) He conceals his faults: Charity teaches us to make the best we can of every body; and those we can say no good of, to say nothing of, especially when they are gone. (2.) He celebrates what was praise-worthy in him. He does not commend him for what he was not; says nothing of his piety, or fidelity; those funeral commendations, which are gathered out of the spoils of truth, are not at all to the praise of those on whom they are bestowed, but very much the dispraise of those who unjustly misplace them. But he has this to say, in honor of him, [1.] He was *anointed with oil*, (v. 21.) therefore he was to be honored, because God, the Fountain of honor, had honored him. [2.] He was a man of war, a *mighty man;* (v. 19—21.) and had often been victorious, (1 Sam. 14: 47.) his *sword returned not empty*, v. 22. [3.] Take him with Jonathan, he was a man of a very agreeable temper, that recommended himself to

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—16. Many secretly wish for the death of those who keep them from honors or estates, without excepting even their nearest relations; but the grace of God subdues this base disposition, and the true believer does not allow himself to desire, or to rejoice in, the calamity or death of a rival or an enemy; (*Note, Prov.* 24: 17, 18.) much less of a kind and superior relation. Nor can he exult in the prospect of worldly advancement; for he considers himself as by it intrusted with more talents, surrounded by greater temptations, and called to increasing cares, duties, and burdens. Those therefore will be deceived, who court his favor, as sycophants, and will meet with a rebuke, and perhaps punishment, where they expected a large reward: and this treatment of such mercenary men promises a useful and honorable possession of worldly pre-eminence. SCOTT.

ancient Egyptian monuments, will show the texture of those used in Egypt; and probably Saul, as king, had his dress of the best manufacture that could be procured, and that was, doubtless, at that time, Egyptian. '*Braunius* transl. *shebets*, tunica scutulata, *Jun.* and *Trem.* ocellata chlamys.' *Gill.* ED.



Verse 10.

Crown.] 'Probably no more than a royal *fillet*. [Cuts, 2 Chron. 12 : 8, &c.] It is sometimes customary in the east for a sovereign to give a *crown* and *bracelets*, when investing others with authority over certain provinces. Did Saul receive them, in token of being God's vicegerent, and that he held the kingdom from Him alone?' Dr. A. CLARKE. 'The bracelets are ornaments fastened above the elbows, [cut, Gen. 41 : 42, 43.] composed of precious stones of great value, and are worn only by the king and his sons.' MORIER.

Verses 19—27.

This elegy contains little directly relating to religion; but it is highly poetical. The wish that neither rain nor dew might fructify the fields, on which the fatal battle was fought; and that no sacrifices might thence be brought to the altar of God, because there the anointed of the LORD had cast away his shield, as a common soldier, is a strong expression of regret. The harmony, which generally subsisted between Saul and Jonathan, in warring against the enemies of Israel; their impetuosity and fury; and their falling in the same battle, are touched in a very poetical manner. Probably Saul had encouraged the manufactures of Israel, and perhaps had increased their wealth: the daughters of Israel therefore, as most delighted with external embellishment, are called upon to lament over their prince. Every thing is mentioned in his commendation, which truth permitted: but Jonathan is named with most passionate affection; as having fallen upon the high places, where he had often successfully displayed his valor; and as having shown a strong and faithful affection, in such trying circumstances, and in so disinterested a manner, as could not be equalled by any instances of conjugal fidelity, or the most constant love which had ever subsisted between the sexes. SCOTT.

(19.) *Beauty.*] *Tsebi*, lit. *antelope*, used metaphorically in the east for beauty. 'O antelope of Israel, pierced on thine own mountains.' GEDDES, and BOOTHR.

(19—27.) 'This inimitable lamentation is justly admired as a picture of distress, the most tender and the most striking; unequally divided by grief into longer and shorter breaks, as nature could pour them forth from a mind interrupted by the alternate recurrences of the most lively images of love and greatness. It is almost impossible to read the noble original without finding every word *swollen* with a *sigh*, or *broken* with a *sob*. A heart eloquent with distress, and striving to utter expressions descriptive of its feelings, (which are repeatedly interrupted by an excess of grief,) is most sensibly painted throughout the whole.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(21.) *Vilely.*] 'It was always reckoned very scandalous, and a great crime, ever punishable with death, to cast away a shield, both with the Greeks, ancient Germans, &c.' GILL. So the Spartan mother told her son, to return from battle '*with* his shield, or *upon* it.' ED. *Not.*] 'Heb. *beli*, I read *keley*, instruments, weapons. So *Soncini* bible, A. D. 1488, and 1 Kennicott ms. of A. D. 1200. Neither the Syr. Arab. nor Chal. acknowledge the negative particle: the Heb. b. closely resembles the k. Thus altered, the verse will read, "The shield of Saul, weapons anointed with oil."' Dr. A. CLARKE. *Gill* supposes shields were anointed, to cause missiles to glance off them, referring to Is. 21:5. *Gerson* refers to the anointing of shields, &c. when *laid aside*, to keep them from rust. ED.

lest the [l] daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

21 Ye [m] mountains of Gilboa, [n] *let there be* no dew, neither *let there be* rain upon you, nor fields [o] of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, *as though he had* not *been* [p] anointed with oil.

22 From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, [q] the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty.

23 Saul and Jonathan *were* lovely and [*] pleasant in their lives, and in their death [r] they were not divided: they were [s] swifter than eagles, they [t] were stronger than lions.

24 Ye [u] daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet with *other* delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

25 [x] How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, [y] *thou wast* slain in thine high places.

26 I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me: [z] thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

27 How are the mighty fallen, and the [a] weapons of war perished!

CHAP. II.

David, by divine direction, goes with his company to Hebron, and is anointed king over Judah, 1—4. He commends the men of Jabesh-gilead for their kindness to Saul, 5—7. Abner sets up Ish-bosheth as king over Israel, 8—11. Twelve of Abner's men, and twelve of Joab's, engage in a fatal contest, which brings on a battle, in which Israel is vanquished, 12—17. Asahel, Joab's brother, is slain by Abner, 18—24. At Abner's desire Joab sounds a retreat, 25—29. The number of the slain, 30, 31. Asahel's burial, 32.

AND it came to pass after this, that David [a] inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto [b] Hebron.

2 So David went up thither, and [c] his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail, Nabal's wife the Carmelite.

l 1 Sam. 17:26,36. 31:4.
m 1 Sam. 31:1. 1 Chr. 10:1,8.
n Judg. 5:23. Job 3:3—8. Is. 5:6. Jer. 20:14.
o Joel 1:9. 2:14.
p 1 Sam. 10:1. Is. 21:5.
q 1 Sam. 14:7—14. 18:4. Is. 34:6,7.
* Or, *sweet.* 1 Sam. 18:1. 20:2.

the affections of his subjects, *v.* 23. Jonathan was always so, and Saul as long as he concurred with him; and in the pursuit of the enemy, never were men more bold, more brave, *swifter than eagles, and stronger than lions:* a rare composition of softness and sharpness they had, which makes many a man's temper very happy. It may be understood of the harmony and affection, that, for the most part, subsisted between Saul and Jonathan; they were lovely and pleasant one to another: Jonathan a dutiful son, Saul an affectionate father, and therefore dear to each other in their lives, and *in their death they were not divided*, but fell together in the same cause. He had enriched his country with the spoils of conquered nations, and introduced a more splendid attire. Herein he was, in a particular manner, obliging to his female subjects, *v.* 24.

2. He was very grateful to Jonathan, his sworn friend, and mentions him with marks of distinction: (*v.* 25.) *O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places!* which, compared with *v.* 19. intimates that he meant him by *the beauty of Israel*, which, he there says, was slain upon the high places. He laments Jonathan as his particular friend; (*v.* 26.) not so much for what he would have been to him if he had lived, but for what he had been. He had reason to say, Jonathan's love to him was *wonderful;* sure never was the like, for a man to love one who he knew was to take the crown over his head; and to be so faithful to his rival: this far surpassed the highest degree of conjugal affection and constancy. Nothing is more delightful in this world than a true friend, that is wise and good, that kindly receives and returns our affection, and is faithful to us in all our true interests. Nothing more distressful than the loss of such a friend. It is the vanity of this world, that what is most pleasant to us, we are most liable to be distressed in.

3. He was deeply concerned for the honor of God; which he has an eye to, when he fears lest *the daughters of the uncircumcised* triumph over Israel, and the God of Israel, *v.* 20. Good men are touched very sensibly by the reproaches of them that reproach God.

4. He was deeply concerned for the public welfare. It was the beauty of Israel that was slain, (*v.* 19.) and the honor of the public that was disgraced; the *mighty are fallen*, that is three times lamented, (*v.* 19, 25, 27.) and so the strength of the people is weakened. Public losses are most laid to heart by men of public spirit.

David here shews himself also to be a man of a fine imagination, as well as wise and holy. The expressions are all excellent, and calculated to work upon the passions. He is truly elegant when he says, (*v.* 20.) *Tell it not in Gath;* and the curse he entails on the mountains of Gilboa, the theatre on which this tragedy was acted, *Let there be no dew upon you, nor fields of offerings, v.* 21. is a poetical strain, like that of Job, *Let the day perish wherein I was born.* Not as if David wished any part of the land of Israel might be barren, but, the mountains of Gilboa having been stained with royal blood, thereby forfeited celestial dews. In this elegy, Saul had a more honorable interment, than that the men of Jabesh-gilead gave him.

CHAP. II. Here we have an account of a civil war in Israel, which, in process of time, ended in the complete settlement of David on the throne.

V. 1—7. When Saul and Jonathan were dead, though David knew himself anointed to be king, and now saw his way very clear, yet he did not immediately send messengers through all the coasts of Israel, to summon all people to come in and swear allegiance to him, on pain of death, but proceeded leisurely; for he that believeth, doth not make haste; and he that will rule with meekness, will not rise with violence. Observe here,

I. He doubted not of success, yet he uses proper means, both divine [*v.* 1.] and human, [*v.* 5—7.] Assurance of hope in God's promise, so far from slackening, will quicken pious endeavors. 1. David, according to the precept, *acknowledged God in his way:* inquired by the breast-plate of judgment, Abiathar brought. We must apply to God, not only when in distress, but even when the world smiles on us, and second causes work in our favor. '*Shall I go up?*' God, according to the promise, directed his path. Hebron, a priest's city, with the sepulchres of the patriarchs adjoining, would remind him of the ancient promise, on which God had caused him to hope. God sent him, not to Beth-lehem his own city, because that was *little among the thousands of Judah;* but to Hebron, a more considerable place, and which, perhaps, was then as the county town of that tribe.

II. His care of his family and friends in his remove, *v.* 2, 3. It does not appear, that as yet he had any children; his first-born was in Hebron, *ch.* 3: 2. His friends and followers had accompanied him in his wanderings, therefore, when he gained a settlement, they settled with him: so to those who *continue with Christ in his temptations, He appoints a kingdom,* and will *feast them at his own table.*

r 1 Sam. 31:2—5.
s 2:18. Deut. 28:49. 1 Chr. 12:8. Job 9:26. Jer. 4:13. Lam. 4:19.
t 23:20. Judg. 14:18. Prov. 30:30.
u Judg. 5:30 Ps. 68:12. Prov. 31:21. Is. 3:16—26. Jer. 2:32. 1 Tim. 2:9, 10. 1 Pet. 3:3—5.
x 19,27. Lam. 5:16.
y Judg. 5:18. 1 Sam. 14:13—15.
z 1 Sam. 18:1—4. 20:17,41. 23:16.
a 2 Kings 2:12. 13:14. Ps. 46:9. 76:6. Ez. 39:9,10.
a 5:19,23. Num. 27:21. Judg. 1:1. 1 Sam. 23:2,4,9—12. 30:7,8. Ps. 25:4, 5. 27:4. 143:8. Prov. 3:5,6. Ez. 36:37.
b 5:1—3. 15:7. Gen. 23:2. Num. 13: 22. Josh. 14:14,15. 1 Kings 2:11. 1 Chr. 29:27.
c 1 Sam. 25:42,43. 30:5. Luke 22:28, 29.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 17—27. The faults even of our enemies should not be needlessly exposed, and the offices and rank of distinguished persons are entitled to respect, though their characters do not deserve our esteem.—Useful endowments are conferred on numbers who are destitute of true piety; and it is in some cases allowable and decent to give them due commendation: yet we must on no account praise them for virtues which they do not possess.—The calamities of the Lord's people, and the triumphs of his enemies, always grieve the hearts of true believers; and it would be well, if many things which continually occur among professed Christians could be concealed from infidels and profligates, who are exceedingly hardened and emboldened by them. But it is not enough to *conceal* offences. Indeed the wish to do it is vain, and the thing itself generally impracticable: nay, the very endeavor often increases the mischief; being considered as an effort to connive at or palliate evil conduct, in those of our own creed or party. And, at the same time, the hope of escaping disgrace decreases resistance in the hour of temptation; and so multiplies the scandals themselves. We must therefore watch and pray against them, and use all our influence to prevent them. Let us then learn to repress ambition, resentment, and self-love; and to exercise patience, meekness, gratitude to our benefactors, love to our country, and good-will to men; with zeal for the glory of God, and the interests of true religion. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. II. V. 1. *Hebron.*] 'One of the richest regions in Judea. The mountains of Hebron were famed for fruits, herbage, and honey; and many parts were well adapted for vines, olives, and different kinds of grain, and abounding in springs of excellent water, as the most accurate travellers assert.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

3 And [d] his men that *were* with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dweit in [e] the cities of Hebron.

4 And [f] the men of Judah came, and there they [g] anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, *That* [h] the men of Jabesh-gilead *were they* that buried Saul.

5 And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, [i] Blessed *be* ye of the LORD, that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, *even* unto Saul, and have buried him.

6 And now [k] the LORD show kindness and truth unto you: and [l] I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.

7 Therefore now [m] let your hands be strengthened, and be ye * valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

8 ¶ But [n] Abner the son of Ner, captain of † Saul's host, took [o] Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to [p] Mahanaim;

9 And made him king over [q] Gilead, and over the [r] Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel.

10 Ish-bosheth Saul's son *was* forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years: but the house of Judah followed David.

11 And [s] the ‡ time that David was king in Hebron over the house

III. The honor done him by the men of Judah, *v.* 4. Judah had often stood by itself, more than any other of the tribes; (1 Sam. 15: 4.) and had been used to act separately; they did so now; they did not pretend to anoint him king *over all Israel*, (as Judg. 9: 22.) but only *over the house of Judah*; the rest of the tribes might do as they pleased, but as for them and their house, they would be ruled by him whom God had chosen. See how David rose gradually; he was first anointed king *in reversion*, then, in *possession*, of one tribe only, and, at last, of all the tribes: thus the kingdom of the Son of David is set up by degrees; He is Lord of all, by divine designation, but *we see not yet all things put under Him.*

IV. His respectful message to the men of Jabesh-gilead, to thank them for their kindness to Saul. Still he studies to honor the memory of his predecessor, and thereby to show, that he was far from aiming at the crown from any principle of ambition, or enmity to Saul, but purely because called of God to it. Perhaps some thought he would have been displeased at them as over-officious. But he commended them for it, *v.* 5. He prays God to bless and recompense them for it. Due respect and affection showed to the bodies, names, and families, of those that are dead, in conscience toward God, is a piece of charity, which shall in nowise lose its reward. He promises to make them amends for it, *I also will requite you.* And finally, he prudently takes this opportunity to gain them to his interest, *v.* 7. *Judah* has *anointed me king*, and it will be your wisdom to concur with them, and in that to be valiant. We must not so dote on the dead, as to neglect or despise the blessings we have in those whom God has raised up to us in their stead.

V. 8—17. Here is, I. A rivalship between two kings; David, whom God made king, and Ish-bosheth, whom Abner made king. Such a spirit of contradiction is there, in the devices of men, to the counsels of God, that such a weak and silly thing as Ish-bosheth, who was not thought fit to go with his father to the battle, shall yet be thought fit to succeed him in the government, rather than David shall come peaceably to it. Herein David's kingdom was typical of the Messiah's, against which *the heathens rage*, and the *rulers take counsel.* 1. Since they must have a king like the nations, the crown must descend as with them from father to son. See how much mischief one man may be the occasion of. Ish-bosheth would never have set up himself, if Abner had not set him up, and made a tool of him to serve his own purposes. 2. Mahanaim was the place where he first made his claim. On the other side Jordan, where it was thought David had the least interest, and being at a distance from his forces, they might have time to strengthen themselves. But, having set up his standard there, the unthinking people of all the tribes of Israel, that is, the generality of them, submitted to him, (*v.* 9.) and Judah only was entire for David. This was a further trial of the faith of David in the promise of God, and of his patience, whether he could wait God's time for the performance of that promise. 3. Some difficulty there is about the time of the continuance of this competition. David reigned over Judah only, about 7 years; (*v.* 11.) and yet (*v.* 10.) Ish-bosheth reigned over Israel but 2 years: either before those 2 years, or after, or both, it was in general for the house of Saul, (*ch.* 3: 6.) and not any particular person of that house, that Abner declared. Or, these two years he reigned, before the war broke out, (*v.* 12.) which continued long, even the remaining 5 years, *ch.* 3: 1.

II. A rencounter between their two armies. It does not appear that either side brought their whole force into the field, for the slaughter was but small, *v.* 30, 31. We may wonder, 1. That the men of Judah did not appear and act more vigorously for David; but, it is likely, David would not suffer them, choosing rather to wait till God should give him the crown, without the effusion of Israelitish blood; for to him, as a type of Christ, that was very precious, Ps. 72. 14. Even those that were his adversaries he looked upon as his subjects, and would treat them accordingly. 2. That the men of Israel could sit down tamely under Ish-bosheth, for so many years, especially considering what characters many of the tribes displayed at this time, as we find, 1 Chron. 12: 23, &c. *Wise men, mighty men, men of valor, expert in war*, and not of double heart. But Divine Providence serves its own purposes, by the stupidity of men at some times, and the activity of the same persons at other times; they are unlike themselves, and yet the motions of Providence uniform.

(1.) Abner was the aggressor; and the seat of the war Gibeon; Abner chose it, because it was in the lot of Benjamin, where Saul had the most friends; yet, since he offered battle, Joab, David's general, would not decline it, but there joined issue with him, and met him *by the pool of Gibeon*, *v.* 13.

(2.) It should seem the trial between 12 and 12 of a side began in sport as a trial of skill, as gladiators: (*v.* 14.) perhaps, Saul had used his men to these barbarous pastimes, like a tyrant indeed, and Abner had learned it of him. He meant, 'Let them *fight* before us,' when he said, 'Let them *play* before us;' *fools* thus *make a mock at sin.* But he is unworthy the name of a man, that can be thus prodigal of human blood. Joab, having been bred up under David, had so much wisdom as not to make such a proposal, yet not resolution enough to refuse a challenge when another made it. Therefore he said, *Let them arise;* not that he was fond of the sport, or expected the duels would be decisive, but would not be hectored by his antagonist. How many precious lives have thus been sacrificed to the caprice of proud men! —But, however this sport began, it ended in blood; (*v.* 16.) they thrust *every man his sword into his fellow's side*, spurred on by honor, not by enmity; so they *fell down together*, that is, all the 24 were slain; such an equal match were they for one another, and so resolute, that neither side would either beg or give quarter; they did, as it were by agreement, (says *Josephus*,) despatch one another with mutual wounds. They that strike at other men's lives, often throw away their own, and death only conquers and rides in triumph. The wonderful obstinacy of both sides was remembered in the name given to the place, *Helkath-hazzurim, the field of rocky men;* men that were not only strong in body, but of firm and unshaken constancy, that stirred not at the sight of death

d 1 Sam. 22:2. 27:2,3. 30:9,10. 1 Chr. 12:1,&c.
e Josh. 21:11,12.
f 19:11,42. Gen. 49:8—10.
g 7. 5:3,17. 1 Sam. 16:13. 1 Chr. 11:3.
h 1 Sam. 31:11—13.
i Ruth 1:8. 2:20. 3:10. 1 Sam. 23:21. 24:19. 25:32,33. Ps. 115:15.
k 15:20. Is. 57:3. Prov. 14:22. Matt. 5:7. 2 Tim. 1:16—18.
l 9: 3,7. 10: 2. Matt. 5:44. 10: 16. Philem. 18,19.
m 10:12. Gen. 15:1. 1 Sam. 4:9. 31: 7,12. 1 Cor. 16:13. Eph. 6:10.
* Heb. *the sons of valor.*
n 1 Sam. 14:50. 17:55. 26:14.
† Heb. *the host which was Saul's.*
o 3:7,8. 4:5,6. 1 Chr. 8:33. 9:39. *Esh-baal.*
p 17:26,27. Gen. 32:2.
q Num. 32:1,&c. Josh. 13:8—11. Ps. 108:8.
r Gen. 30:13. Num. 1:40.
s 5:5. 1 Kings 2:11. 1 Chr. 3:4. 29: 27.
‡ Heb. *number of days.*

Verse 3.

Gittaim.] 'Probably the same as Gath, as Ramah in the same as Rama.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Ish-bosheth.] 'Called Esh-baal, 1 Chr. 8: 33 and 9: 39. Baal is the name of a shameful idol, therefore sometimes called Bosheth, *shame.* See Hos. 9: 10. wherefore such names as had Baal in them were changed for Besheth or Bosheth, as the names of Jerub-baal, and Merib-baal, who were called Jerub-bosheth and Mephi-bosheth. See Judg. 8: 35 comp. with 2 Sam. 11: 21, and 4: 4 with 1 Chr. 8: 34, and 9: 40.' GILL.

Verse 9.

The nation in general had rejected the judges, whom God had raised up for them, and had demanded a king: and, in the same rebellious spirit, they refused the prince whom the Lord had selected for them, who was a man of approved abilities and character; and preferred the surviving son of their rejected king, though in every respect an improper person. In this, David was a type of Christ, whom Israel would not submit to, though anointed by the Father to be their Prince and Savior. SCOTT.

Verses 10, 11.

For 2 years Ish-bosheth reigned in peace, and David made no attempts against him: but for the remainder of the 7 years and 6 months, there was war. Abner possessed the authority, and Ish-bosheth was only a nominal king. *Ish-bosheth* signifies *a man of shame*

of Judah, was seven years and six months.
[*Practical Observations.*]

12 ¶ And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to [t] Gibeon.

13 And [u] Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out, and met * together by the [x] pool of Gibeon: and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool.

14 And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and [y] play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise.

15 Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin, which *pertained* to Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David.

16 And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and *thrust* his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together: wherefore that place was called † Helkath-hazzurim, which *is* in Gibeon.

17 And there was a very sore battle that day: and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David.

18 And there were [z] three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel [a] *was as* light of ‡ foot as a § wild roe.

19 And Asahel pursued after Abner; and in going he [b] turned not to the right hand nor to the left, from ‖ following Abner.

20 Then Abner looked behind him, and said, *Art* thou Asahel? And he answered, I *am*.

21 And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his [¶] armor. But Asahel would not turn aside from following of him.

22 And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: [c] wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? [d] how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?

23 Howbeit, he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner, with the hinder end of the spear smote him under [e] the fifth *rib*, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass, *that* as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died, [f] stood still.

24 Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner: and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that *lieth* before Giah, by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon.

25 And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of an hill.

26 Then Abner called to Joab, and said, [g] Shall the [h] sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? [i] how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?

27 And Joab said, *As* [k] God liveth, [l] unless thou hadst spoken, surely then **in the morning the people had †† gone

t Josh. 9:3. 10:12. 18:25.
u 18. 8:16. 20:23. 1 Kings 1:7. 2:28—35.
* Heb. *them together.*
x Jer. 41:12.
y 28. Prov. 10:23. 17:14. 20:18. 25: 8. 26:18,19.
† That is, *The field of strong men.*
z 1 Chr. 2:15,16.
a 1:23. 1 Chr. 12:8. Ps. 147:10,11. Ec. 9:11.
‡ Heb. *his feet.*
§ Heb. *one of the roes that is in the field.* Ps. 18:33. Cant. 2:17. 8:14. Hab. 3:19.
b 21. Josh. 1:7. 23:6. 2 Kings 22:2. Prov. 4:27.
‖ Heb. *after Abner.*
¶ Or, *spoil.* Judg. 14:19.
c 2 Kings 14:10—12. Prov. 29:1. Ec. 6:10.
d 3:27.
e 4:6. 20:10.
f 20:12,13.
g 14. Acts 7:26.
h 11:25. Is 1:20. Jer. 2:30. 12:12. 46:10,14. Hos. 11:6.
i Job 18:2. 19:2. Ps. 4:2. Jer. 4:21.
k 1 Sam. 25:26. Job 27:2.
l Prov. 15: 1. 17: 14. 20:18. 25: 8. Luke 14:31,32.
** Heb. *from the morning.*
†† Or, *gone away.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—11. If we would possess temporal things with a blessing, we must not eagerly seize upon them, nor be determined by favorable events, or carnal counsellors: but we must observe the rules of God's Word, and pray for his direction; using those means, and those only, which He has appointed or allowed, and avoiding all evil, and 'appearance of evil,' in our pursuit of them: and then, whatever else we fail in, we shall certainly be directed in the way to the kingdom of heaven.—Ambition, jealousy, envy, and other evil passions, cause men to rebel against the word of God: but they generally attempt to conceal their real motives under plausible pretences. The believer's wisdom, however, consists in waiting quietly and silently under injuries, and in leaving God to plead his cause, except it is evidently his duty to be active. But there is a respect due to superior relations, to which equals or inferiors, in similiar circumstances, are not entitled. SCOTT.

He is also called Esh-baal. (1 *Chr.* 8 : 33. *Note, Judg.* 6:31,32.) He was evidently a very inconsiderable and despised person. [Yet Abner (see note, end of 1 Sam.) could employ the political jealousies of the tribes in favor of one even so worthless.] SCOTT.

Verses 12, 13.

The moderation with which Joab conducted the war may be ascribed to the instructions given him by David. 'For he had sworn to Saul, that he would not cut off his seed, and therefore would not willingly engage against Ish-bosheth.' *Patrick.* ID.

Verses 14—16.

It is probable Joab kept on the defensive, and gave Abner no opportunity of attacking him; and that Abner's impatience to engage induced him to give this rash challenge. Some think that only the twelve Benjamites were slain: but the words more obviously mean, that all the company were butchered. SCOTT.

Verses 18—23.

The circumstances, stated in these vs. show, that Abner was not at all to blame in the death of Asahel: for he was constrained to slay him in his own defence. ID.

(18.) *Light of foot.*] 'A great qualification for a warrior; So *Cornelius Nepos.* Achilles, in *Homer*, is often said to be swift of foot, and others of his heroes are commended for their swiftness.' GILL. *Sons of Zeruiah.*] Zeruiah was David's sister, (1 *Chr.* 2 :16.) and Joab, Abishai, and Asahel, his nephews. (23 : 18—24. 1 *Chr.* 11:6.) SCOTT.

up every one from following his brother.

28 So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more.

29 And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain, and passed over Jordan, and went through all [m] Bithron, and they came to Mahanaim.

30 And Joab returned from following Abner: and when he had gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel.

31 But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, *so that* [n] three hundred and threescore men died.

32 And they took up Asahel, and [o] buried him in the sepulchre of his father which *was in* Beth-lehem. And Joab and his men [p] went all night, and they came to Hebron at break of day.

CHAP. III.

David grows stronger, and Ish-bosheth weaker, during the war, 1. Six sons are born to David in Hebron, 2—5. Abner quarrels with Ish-bosheth, and offers his services to David, 6—12. David demands and receives back Michal, 13—16. Abner communes with the Israelites, goes to David, and is feasted by him, and sent away in peace, 17—21. Joab is angry with David, and murders Abner, 22—27. David protests against his wickedness, and denounces a curse upon him, 28—30. David mourns for Abner, 31—39.

NOW there was [a] long war [b] between the house of Saul and the house of David: but [c] David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker.

2 And unto David were [d] sons born in Hebron: and his first born was [e] Amnon, of [f] Ahinoam the Jezreelitess;

3 And his second, [g] Chileab, [h] of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, [i] Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of [j] Talmai king of [k] Geshur;

4 And the fourth [l] Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;

5 And the sixth, Ithream, by Eglah David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron.

6 ¶ And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that [m] Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul.

CHAP. III. The battle between Joab and Abner did not end the controversy between the two houses of Saul, and David, but it is in this ch. working towards a period.

V. 1—6. Here is, 1. David's struggle with the house of Saul, before his settlement in the throne was completed, *v.* 1. It is not strange there was war between them; but one would wonder it should be a long war: however, though truth and equity will triumph at last, God may, for wise and holy ends, prolong the conflict. The length of this war tried the faith and patience of David, and made his establishment at last the more welcome to him. The house of Saul lost places, lost men, sunk in its reputation, grew less considerable, and was foiled in every engagement; but the house of David grew stronger and stronger; many prudently came into his interests, being convinced that he would certainly win the day. So the contest between grace and corruption, in the hearts of believers, is long; but as the work of sanctification is carried on, corruption grows weaker and weaker; while grace grows stronger and stronger, till it comes to a perfect man, and judgment is brought forth unto victory.

2. The increase of his own house, *v.* 2—5. As the death of Saul's sons weakened his interest, so the birth of David's strengthened his. But it was David's fault thus to multiply wives, contrary to the law, (Deut. 17: 17.) and a bad example to his successors. We read not that any of these sons came to be famous; three of them were infamous, Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah; we have therefore reason to rejoice with trembling in the building up of our families. His son by Abigail is called *Chileab*, *v.* 3. but 1 Chron. 3: 1. *Daniel. Chileab*, signifies; *like his father;* or, the father's picture. Absalom's mother is said to be the daughter of a heathen prince: perhaps David thereby hoped to strengthen his interest, but the issue of the marriage was one that proved his grief and shame. The last is called *David's wife*, which, therefore, some think, was Michal, his first and most rightful wife, called here by another name; and though she had no child after she mocked David, she might have had before.

Thus was David's house strengthened; but it was Abner that *made himself strong for the house*

m Cant. 2:17. *Bether.*
n 3:1. 1 Kings 20:11.
o 1 Sam. 17:58. 1 Chr. 2:13—16. 2 Chr. 16:14. 21:1.
p Prov. 22:29.
a 1 Kings 14:3. 15:16,32.
b Gen. 5:15. Ps. 45:5—5. Matt. 10:35, 38. Gal. 5:17. Eph. 6:12.
c Esth. 6:13. Job 8:7. 17:9. Ps. 84:7. Prov. 4:18,19. Dan. 2:34,35,44,45. Rev. 6:2.
d 1 Chr. 3:1—4.
e 13:1—29. Gen. 49:3,4.
f 1 Sam. 25:43.
g 1 Chr. 3:1. *Daniel.*
h 1 Sam. 25:3,42.
i 13:20—28. 14:24—33. 15:1—14. 17: 1—14. 18:9—18,33.
j 13:37,38.
k Deut. 3:14. Josh. 13:13. 1 Sam. 27:8.
l 1 Kings 1:5,&c. 2:13—25.
m 2:8,9. 2 Kings 10:2,3. 2 Chr. 25:8. Prov. 21:30. Is. 8:9,10. Joel 3:9—13. Matt. 12:30.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 12—32. From age to age numbers are ambitious of venturing their lives and souls, for the empty hope of being celebrated as valiant men, after they are dead! and from the same motive they mingle the blood of their brethren with their own; though they bear them no resentment, and have received no provocation from them! But what can be more senseless and infatuated than such a conduct?—The sword of civil war, when once unsheathed, is not easily returned into the scabbard; and those who, in their eagerness to engage, make light of such unnatural contests, will perceive in the event that they are bitterness to all concerned.—It is always right to exercise clemency to the vanquished, and generosity to the wretched; to spare the shedding of human blood; to alleviate, in every way we possibly can, the sum of human misery; and to strive for peace, especially in the intestine contentions of nations or churches, where the common cause must suffer, which party soever may acquire the ascendency. —Different endowments qualify us for varied kinds of service, and should be improved for that purpose. But when talents are over-rated; and when men confide and glory in them, they will go beyond the dictates of prudence, as well as out of the line of duty, in order to distinguish themselves; they will despise warning and counsel, as the effect of envy and cowardice; and they will always be shamed, and frequently ruined, by those qualifications in which they prided themselves. Often do men fancy themselves about to seize upon happiness, when death stops their career, and lays them in the dust: and if they will rush forwards in the road to destruction, though plainly warned of their danger, they can blame none but themselves. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. III. V. 1. The civil war, between David and Ish-bosheth, continued about five years and a half: but it seems to have been conducted with great moderation on the part of David. SCOTT.

Verses 2—5.

(*M. R.*) David's motives for multiplying wives must have been *carnal*, in one way or other; and his conduct in this respect proved the occasion of much sin and trouble, in the subsequent part of his life. He had by all his wives no more than six sons, during the seven years that he reigned at Hebron; though probably he had some daughters, who are not mentioned.—Perhaps Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, had been taken prisoner, and proselyted before David married her: though some think David had contracted affinity with the king of Geshur, to strengthen himself against Ish-bosheth.—It is not known, why Eglah only is called 'David's wife.' SCOTT.

Verses 6—10.

(*M. R.*) No doubt Abner was guilty of the crime charged upon him, which was considered as a claim to the kingdom of a deceased

7 And Saul had a concubine, whose name *was* [n]Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and *Ish-bosheth* said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou [o]gone in unto my father's concubine?

8 Then was Abner [p]very wroth for the words of Ish-bosheth, and said, *Am* [q]I a dog's head, which against Judah [r]do show kindness this day unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me to-day with a fault concerning this woman?

9 [s]So do God to Abner, and more also, except [t]as the LORD hath sworn to David, even so I do to him;

10 To translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel, and over Judah, [u]from Dan even to Beer-sheba.

11 And he could not answer Abner a word again, [x]because he feared him.

12 ¶ And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, saying, [y]Whose *is* the land? saying *also*, [z]Make thy league with me, and behold, [a]my hand *shall be* with thee, to bring about all Israel unto thee.

13 And he said, Well; I will make a league with thee: but one thing I require of thee, * that is, [b]Thou shalt not see my face, except thou first bring [c]Michal Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face.

14 And David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth Saul's son, saying, Deliver *me* my wife Michal, which I espoused to me for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines.

15 And Ish-bosheth sent, and took her from *her* husband, *even* from [d]Phaltiel the son of Laish.

16 And her husband went with her † along weeping behind her to [e]Bahurim. Then said Abner unto him, Go, return. And he returned.

[*Practical Observations.*]

of Saul, which is mentioned, (*v.* 6.) to show that if he failed them, they would fall of course.

V. 7—21. Here, I. Abner breaks with Ish-bosheth, on a little provocation Ish-bosheth unadvisedly gave him. God can serve his own purposes by the sins and follies of men. Note, Proud men will not bear to be reproved, especially by those whom they think they have obliged. With the utmost arrogance and insolence, Abner lets him know, that, as he had raised him up, so he could pull him down again, and would do it. He knew God had sworn to give David the kingdom, and yet he had opposed it with all his might, from a principle of ambition; but now he complies with it from a principle of revenge, under color of some regard to the will of God, which was but a pretence. Slaves to their lusts have many masters, which drive, some one way, and some another.

II. Abner treats with David. We must suppose he began to grow weary of Ish-bosheth's cause, and sought an opportunity to desert it; else, however he might threaten Ish-bosheth with it, to quash the charge against himself, he would not have made good his angry words so soon as he did, *v.* 12. Note, God can find ways to make those serviceable to the kingdom of Christ, who yet have no sincere affection for it, and who have vigorously set themselves against it. Enemies are sometimes made a footstool, not only to be trodden upon, but to ascend by. The earth helped the woman.

III. David enters into a treaty with Abner, on condition he procure him the restitution of Michal his wife, *v.* 13. in which he showed the sincerity of his conjugal affection to his first and most rightful wife, and testified his respect to the house of Saul; he valued himself not a little on his relation to it. He cannot be pleased with the honors of the throne, unless he have Michal, Saul's daughter, to share them with him; so far was he from bearing any malice to the family of his enemy. Her latter husband was loath to part with her, (*v.* 16.) usurpers must expect to resign. Let no man therefore set his heart on what he is not entitled to. If any disagreement has separated husband and wife, as they expect the blessing of God, let them be reconciled, and come together again; let all former quarrels be forgotten, and let them live together in love, according to [their own solemn promise, and] God's holy ordinance.

IV. Abner uses his interest with the elders of Israel, to bring them over to David; knowing, that, which ever way *they* went, the common people would follow of course. Now that it serves his own turn, he can plead in David's behalf, that he was, 1. Israel's choice, (*v.* 17.) and 2. God's choice, *v.* 18. Compare *v.* 9. 'When God appointed Samuel to anoint him, He did, in effect, promise, that by his hand he would save Israel; for, for that end he was made king. Who would have expected such reasonings out of Abner's mouth? But thus God will make the enemies of his people to know, and own, *that He has loved them*, Rev. 3: 9. He particularly applied himself to Benjamin, his own tribe, on whom he had the greatest influence, and whom he had drawn to the house of Saul; he that deceived them, was concerned to undeceive them. Thus the multitude are as they are managed.

V. David concludes the treaty with Abner, who reports the sense of the people, and the success of his communications with them, *v.* 19. He came now, not, as at first, privately, but with a retinue of 20 men, and David entertained them with a *feast*, (*v.* 20.) in token of reconciliation and joy, and as a pledge of the agreement between them: it was a feast upon a covenant, like that, Gen. 26: 30. *If thine enemy hunger, feed him;* but if he submit, feast him. Abner, pleased with his entertainment, with the prevention of his fall with Saul's house, and much more with his prospects

[n] 21:8—10.
[o] 12:8. 16:21,22. 1 Kings 2:17,21,22.
[p] Ps. 76:10. Mark 6:18,19.
[q] 9:8. 16:9. Deut. 23:18. 1 Sam. 24: 14. 2 Kings 8:13.
[r] 9,18. 5:2. 1 Sam. 15:28. Ps. 2:1—4. Is. 37:23. Acts 9:4,5.
[s] 35. 19:13. Ruth 1:17. 1 Sam. 3:17 14:44. 25:22. 1 Kings 19:2.
[t] 1 Sam. 15:28. 16:1,12,13. 28:17. 1 Chr. 12:23. Ps 89:3,4,19,20.
[u] 17:11. 24:2. Judg. 20:1. 1 Kings 4:25.
[x] 39.
[y] 19:6,7. 20:1—13.
[z] Ps. 62:9. Luke 16:5—8.
[a] 21,27. 5:1—3. 19:14,41—43. 20:1, 2. 1 Chr. 11:1—3. 12:38—40. Matt. 21:8—10.
* Heb. *saying*.
[b] Gen. 43:3. 44:23,26.
[c] 20—23. 1 Sam. 18:20—28. 19:11—17. 1 Chr. 15:29.
[d] 1 Sam. 15:44. *Phalti*.
† Heb. *going and weeping*. Prov. 9: 17,18.
[e] 16:5. 17:18. 19:16. 1 Kings 2:8.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—16. The power and policy of Satan, and of wicked men, may struggle against the purposes of God, and the cause of his anointed King, and occasion apparent delays: but his interest is gaining ground, though by unnoticed degrees, and his glory will ere long be displayed throughout the earth.—Inconstancy must be incident to selfish men: and sometimes making pretensions to religion seems the readiest way to the gratification of worldly ambition, rapacity, or revenge.—Many are not *above* committing very base crimes, who are too proud to bear reproof, or even the suspicion of being guilty: and while men go on in their sins *apparently without concern*, they are often conscious that they are fighting against God!—Little confidence can be placed in those who affront their Maker, betray their country, or deceive those who confide in them, under the pretence of serving their friends: most certainly they mean to serve their own purposes; and will betray those also who now trust them, when they can obtain advantageous terms for doing it. Yet even by such as act from revenge, ambition, lust, or avarice, the Lord secretly carries on his own designs: but as they intend not to honor Him, whatever they profess; so when his ends are answered, He will throw them aside with contempt.—Though guilt commonly renders men objects of our deepest compassion; yet no affection can be either truly amiable or allowable, which is not regulated according to the Word of God. SCOTT.

prince. (*Notes*, 1 *Kings* 2:15—25.) Ish-bosheth however was very imprudent to mention it, as he was entirely dependent on Abner. Ambition, and not regard to Ish-bosheth, had hitherto induced him to support his interest: and revenge and policy, not regard to the will of God, at length prevailed with him at this time to join David's party. 'Such is the genius of many great courtiers, who are irritated on slight occasions; and rather rule over kings, than are ruled by them.' *Pellicanus.* SCOTT.

Dog's head. (8) (*M. R.*) A proverbial expression for what was deemed worthless and contemptible.—Some explain it to mean, 'As if I were only fit to be set over a company of dogs.' ID.

Verse 12.

Whose is the land?] Abner by this expression seems to have insinuated, that he, not Ish-bosheth, retained the authority: if therefore David would grant him advantageous terms, he would put him in possession of the whole land.—Some however interpret the words, as an acknowledgment of David's title, by the appointment of God, to the kingdom over all Israel. SCOTT.

Verses 13—16.

David knew the kingdom was his, in the purpose of God; it was desirable to sheath the sword of civil war, and to unite all Israel voluntarily under one king; he was not accountable for Abner's secret motives; and doubtless he meant to grant Ish-bosheth very favorable terms, had not his purposes been prevented.—If David had divorced Michal, and she had in consequence been married to another, he must not have received her again: but the separation was violent on both sides. (M. R.) It is probable her marriage to Phaltiel was a force on her inclinations. and Phaltiel was very criminal in taking another man's wife, whatever affection he had for her.—David required Michal to be restored, perhaps out of affection for her; or to strengthen his interest by asserting his affinity with the house of Saul, or to show his regard for the law of God, and to rebuke a man who openly violat

17 And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David *in times past to be* king over you:

18 Now then do *it:* [f]for the LORD hath spoken of David, saying, [g]By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.

19 And Abner also spake in the ears of [h]Benjamin: and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron, all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin.

20 So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with him. And [i]David made Abner, and the men that *were* with him, a feast.

21 And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and [j]will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest [k]reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.

22 ¶ And, behold, the servants of David and Joab came from *pursuing* a troop, and brought in a great spoil with them: but Abner *was* not with David in Hebron; for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace.

23 When Joab and all the host that *was* with him were come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace.

24 Then Joab came to the king, and said, [l]What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee: why *is* it *that* thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone?

25 Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, [m]that he came to deceive thee, [n]and to know thy going out, and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest.

26 And when Joab was come out from David, [o]he sent messengers after Abner, which brought him again from the well of Sirah: but David knew *it* not.

27 And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab [p]took him aside in the gate to speak with him † quietly, and smote him there [q]under the fifth *rib*, that he died, [r]for the blood of Asahel his brother.

28 ¶ And afterward when David heard *it*, he said, I and my kingdom *are* [s]guiltless before the LORD for ever, from the ‡ blood of Abner the son of Ner.

29 Let it [t]rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house: and

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• Heb. *both yesterday and the third day.*
f 9. 1 Sam. 13:14. 15:28. 16:1,12,13. John 12:42,43.
g Ps. 89:3,4,19—23. 132:17,18.
h 1 Sam. 10:20,21. 1 Chr. 12:29. Ps. 68:27.
i Gen. 26:30. 31:54. Esth. 1:3.
j 10,12. 2:9. Phil. 2:21.
k 1 Kings 11:37. Ps. 20:4.
l 8,39. 19: 5—7. Num. 23:11. John 18:35.
m 27. 2 Kings 18:32. *Marg.* John 7: 12,47. Rom. 2:1.
n 10:3. Gen. 42:9,12,16. Num. 27:17. Deut. 28:6. 1 Sam. 29:4—6. Ps. 121: 8. Is. 37: 28.
o Prov. 26:23—26. 27:4,6.
p 20:9,10. Deut. 27:24. 1 Kings 2:5,32.
† Or, *peaceably.* Jer. 41:2,6, 7.
q 4:6.
r 2:19—23.
s Gen. 9:6. Ex. 21:12. Num. 35:33. Deut. 21:1—9. Matt. 27:24.
‡ Heb. *bloods.* Gen. 4:10. *marg.*
t 1:16. Judg. 9:24,56,57. 1 Kings 2:31 —34. Acts 28:4.

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of preferment under David, undertakes, in a little time, to perfect the revolution, *v.* 21. However, the affair between them was well settled. Thus it behooves all, who fear God and keep his commandments, to avoid strife, even with the wicked; to live at peace with all men, and to show the world that they are children of the light.

V. 22—39. We have here an account of the murder of Abner by Joab, and David's deep resentment of it.

I. Joab very insolently fell foul upon David for treating with Abner, and called him a *fool*, in effect. He had all the reason in the world to be satisfied of David's prudence, and to acquiesce in the measures he took, knowing him to be a wise and good man himself, and under a divine conduct in all his affairs; yet, as if he had the same sway in David's cause that Abner had in Ish-bosheth's, he chides David, and reproaches him to his face, as impolitic, *v.* 24, 25. As if David were accountable to him for what he did. I know not whether to wonder more, that Joab had impudence enough to give such an affront to his prince, or David patience enough to take it. We find no answer that David gave him, not because he feared him, as Ish-bosheth did Abner, (*v.* 11.) but because he despised him, or because Joab had not so much good manners as to stay for an answer.

II. He very treacherously sent for Abner back, and, under color of a private conference with him, barbarously killed him with his own hand. That he made use of David's name, under pretence of giving him some further instructions, is intimated in that, but *David knew it not*, *v.* 26. and it is intimated, (*v.* 30.) that Abishai was privy to the design, aiding and abetting, and would have come in to his brother's assistance, had there been occasion: he is therefore charged as an accessary; *Joab and Abishai slew Abner;* though perhaps He only knew it, who is privy to the thoughts and intents of men's hearts.

Now in this, 1. It is certain the Lord was righteous. Abner had maliciously, and against the convictions of his conscience, opposed David; he had basely deserted Ish-bosheth, and betrayed him, under pretence of regard to God and Israel, but really out of pride and revenge, and impatience of control; God will not therefore use so bad a man, though David might, in so good a work, as the uniting of Israel. But, 2. It is as certain Joab was unrighteous. (1.) Even the pretence for doing it was very unjust. Joab and Abishai pretended to be the avengers of blood; (*v.* 27, 30.) but Abner slew Asahel in an open war, wherein Abner indeed had given the challenge, but Joab himself had accepted it, and had slain many of Abner's friends; he did it likewise in his own defence, and not till he had given him fair warning, and with reluctancy; but Joab here *shed the blood of war in peace*, 1 Kings 2: 6. (2.) What we have reason to think was at the bottom of Joab's enmity to Abner, made it much worse. Joab was now general of David's forces; but if Abner should come into his interest, he would possibly be preferred before him, being a senior officer, and more experienced in the art of war. (3.) He did it treacherously, and under pretence of speaking peaceably to him, Deut. 27: 24. Thus he basely slew Amasa, *ch.* 20: 9, 10. (4.) It was a great affront and injury to David. Abner was now actually in David's service, and Joab knew it, so that, through his side, he struck at David himself. (5.) It was a great aggravation of the murder, that he did it in the gate, openly and avowedly, as one that was not ashamed, nor could blush. The gate was the place of judgment and the place of concourse; so that he did it in defiance of justice, both the just sentence of the magistrates, and the just resentments of the crowd; as one that neither feared God, nor regarded man, but thought himself above all control: and Hebron was a Levites' city, and a city of refuge.

III. David laid it deeply to heart, and many ways expressed his detestation of this execrable villany.

1. Lest any should suspect Joab had some secret intimation from David to do as he did, he here solemnly appeals to God concerning his innocency, *v.* 28. It is a comfort to be able to say, when any bad thing is done, that we had no hand in it.

2. He entailed the curse for it on Joab and his family, *v.* 29. 'Let the iniquity be visited on his children, and children's children, in some hereditary disease or other.' This intimates that the guilt of blood brings a curse on families; if men do not avenge it, God will, and will lay up the iniquity for the children. But, methinks, a resolute punishment of the murderer himself would better have become David, than this passionate imprecation of God's judgments on his posterity

3. He called on all about him, even Joab himself, to lament the death of Abner, *v.* 31. His alliance to Saul, his place as general, his interest, and the great services he had formerly done, were enough to denominate him *a prince and a great man.* When he could not call him a saint and a

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ed it.—As Abner did not deem it politic, at that juncture, directly to take Michal from Phaltiel, David addressed himself to Ish-bosheth, whose sister she was, who complied with his demand; perhaps being willing to be on amicable terms with him, as he could not overcome him by arms. SCOTT.

Verses 17—21.

It seems, that the people in general had desired to receive David as their king, especially when Saul and his sons were slain; but that Abner's great authority had induced them to set up Ish-bosheth: so that now, when Abner entered into the interests of David, he had little difficulty in bringing them over to him. The words which Abner mentions, as spoken by the LORD concerning David, are not found in the preceding history; but the meaning of them is implied in the promises given him. (*M. R.* f, g.) SCOTT.

Verse 22.

A troop.] Probably, this was a troop of Philistines, [Amalekite bedouins,] or other enemies, not of Ish bosheth's forces. ID.

Verses 24, 25.

Joab, and his brother Abishai, David's nephews, had been very faithful and useful to him in his afflictions. It is evident Joab only *pretended* to doubt Abner's sincerity. ID.

Verses 28, 29.

(*M. R.*) David no doubt intended, by these protestations, and imprecations on Joab and his family, to wipe off all suspicion of his own

[a]let there not *fail from the house of Joab one that hath [v]an issue, or that is a [x]leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread.

30 So Joab and Abishai his brother [y]slew Abner, [z]because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

31 And David said to Joab, and to all the people that *were* with him, [a]Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David *himself* followed the † bier.

32 And they buried Abner in Hebron; and the king [b]lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept.

33 And the king lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner [c]as a fool dieth?

34 Thy [d]hands *were* not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before ‡ wicked men, *so* fellest thou. And all the people [e]wept again over him.

35 And when all the people came to [f]cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, [g]So do God to me and more also, if I taste bread, or ought else, [h]till the sun be down.

36 And all the people took notice *of it*, and it § pleased them: [i]as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people.

37 For all the people, and all Israel, understood that day, that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner.

38 And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is [k]a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?

39 And [l]I *am* this day ‖ weak though anointed

4. David himself followed the corpse as chief mourner, and made a funeral oration at the grave; *v.* 31, 32. All former quarrels are forgotten, and David is the true mourner for Abner's fall. What he said over the grave, fetched fresh floods of tears from the eyes of all present, when they thought they had already paid the debt in full, *v.* 33, 34. (1.) He speaks as one vexed that so great a man as Abner, one so famed for conduct and courage, should be imposed upon by a color of friendship, slain by surprise, and so, die as a fool dies. The wisest and stoutest of men have no fence against treachery. See here how much more we are beholden to God's providence, than to our own prudence, for the continuance of our lives and comforts. Were it not for the hold God has of the consciences of bad men, how soon would the weak and innocent become an easy prey to the strong and merciless, and the wisest die as fools! Or, (2.) He speaks as one maintaining that Abner did not fool himself out of his life. '*Died Abner as a fool dies?* No, he did not, not as a criminal, a traitor or felon; Abner falls not before just men, by a judicial sentence, but as *a man, an innocent man, before wicked men*, thieves, and robbers.' *Died Abner as Nabal died?* So the Seventy read it; but Abner's fate was such as might have been the fate of the best man in the world. Abner did not throw away his life as Asahel did. Note, It is a sad thing to die like a fool, as they do, that any way shorten their own days, and much more they that make no provision for another world.

5. He fasted all that day, and would by no means be persuaded to eat any thing till night, *v.* 35. It was then the custom of great mourners to refrain for the time from bodily refreshments, as *ch.* 1: 12. 1 Sam. 31: 13. How incongruous is it then to turn the house of mourning into a house of feasting! David's respect to Abner was very pleasing to the people, and satisfied them he was not, in the least, accessory to the murder; (*v.* 36, 37.) he was solicitous to avoid the suspicion, lest Joab's villany should have made him odious, as that of Simeon and Levi did Jacob. On this occasion it is said, *Whatever the king did, pleased all the people.* Which bespeaks, his good affection to them, and their good opinion of him; such a mutual willingness to please, and easiness to be pleased, will make every relation comfortable.

6. He bewailed it that he could not, with safety, do justice on the murderers, *v.* 39. but these sons of Zeruiah were too hard for him, too big for the law to lay hold of; therefore, though by man, by the magistrate, the blood of a murderer *should be shed*, (Gen. 9: 6.) David bears the sword in vain; he ought to have done his duty, and trusted God with the issue, but he contents himself, as a private person, to leave them to the judgment of God; *The Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.* This was a diminution of his greatness and of his goodness. Who would be fond of power, when a man may have the name of it, and must be accountable for it, and yet be

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u 1 Sam. 2:32—36. 2 Kings 5:27. Ps. 109:8—19.
* Heb. *be cut off.*
v Lev. 15:2.
x Lev. 13:44—46. 2 Kings 5:1.
y Prov. 28:17. Acts 23:4.
z 2:19—23.
a 1:2,11. Gen. 37:29,34. Josh. 7:6. Judg. 11:35. 2 Kings 19:1.
† Heb. *bed.* Luke 7:14.
b 1:12. 13:36. 1 Sam. 30:4. Job 31: 29. Prov. 24:17. Luke 19:41,42.
c 13:28,29. Ec. 2:15,16. Luke 12:19,20.
d Judg. 16:21. Ps. 107:10,11.
‡ Heb. *children of iniquity.* Job 24:14. Hos. 6:9.
e 1:12.
f 12:17. Jer. 16:7. Ez. 24:17,22.
g See on 9.
h Judg. 20:26.
§ Heb. *was good in their eyes.*
i 15:6,13. Ps. 62:9. Mark 7:37. 15: 11—13.
k 12. 2:8. 1 Sam. 14:50,51. Job 32:9.
l Ex. 21:12. 2 Chr. 19:6,7. Ps. 75:10. 101:8. Prov. 20:8. 25:5.
‖ Heb. *tender.* 1 Chr. 22:5. Is. 7:4. *Marg.* Rom. 13:4.

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guilt, and to remove it from the land; being perhaps afraid of a revolt of the soldiers, if he proceeded to execute vengeance on the murderer. But he should have remembered, that He, 'who stilleth the raging of the sea,' is able also 'to still the madness of the people.' In so just a cause, he ought to have risked all consequences. He was anointed king to administer justice without respect of persons; and he might have been assured of the Lord's support in doing so important a duty: the example would have been very salutary; all impartial persons would have applauded his firmness; perhaps Ish-bosheth's murder would have been prevented, as well as many other crimes and calamities, in the latter part of his reign. But his fear of man in this instance overcame his faith in God, and Joab continued and increased in authority, and in crimes, to the end of David's life: he was at length, however, called to account for them all. (38,39. 4: 20: 8—10. *Num.* 35:31—34. 1 *Kings* 2:5,6,28—34. SCOTT.

Verse 30.

BECAUSE *he had slain their brother.*] This law of revenge, in all its blood-thirstiness, still exists among the Arabs, and other half-civilized, as well as most savage nations; nor is it banished from the code of many an unrenewed heart in Christian lands. Few, indeed very few comparatively, acknowledge the principles of Christ herein, in all their length and breadth; or, if the majority of the best communities do acknowledge them for individuals, they yet contend that the law of revenge is proper for nations. 'But,' says the acute Dr. *Wayland*, 'revenge is that disposition which prompts us to inflict pain upon another, for the sake of alleviating the painful feeling of personal degradation, consequent upon an injury. Now suppose a man, inflamed and excited by this feeling of injury, should inflict, upon the other party, pain, until his excited feeling was gratified: the injured party would then manifestly become the injurer, and thus, the original injurer would be, by the same rule, entitled to retaliate. Thus, revenge and retaliation would go on increasing until the death of one of the parties. The duty of vengeance would then devolve upon the surviving friends and relatives of the deceased, and the circle would widen, until it involved whole tribes or nations. Thus, the indulgence of this one evil passion would, in a few generations, render the thronged city an unpeopled solitude: . . . . witness the North American Indians.' *Elements of Moral Science.* ED.

Verse 31.

David no doubt intended to lessen Joab's authority with the people, by requiring his attendance: but his military rank and achievements counteracted and rendered ineffectual this design; as might have been foreseen. SCOTT.

Bier.] *Mittah, bed.* (marg.) A cut is given from *Roberts* of the beds used to carry the dead to burial in India. This he applies to illustrate 2 Kings 9: 28. and 23: 30. but that conveyance was different, as the word there is from *rkb, a chariot, to ride*, &c. ED. 'On these beds the rich and noble among the Greeks and Romans were carried, and the meaner sort on biers; and so with the Jews; (note, Luke 14: 12.) some of which were gilded with gold, and made of ivory, with ivory feet; that of Herod was all of gold, inlaid with precious stones, and the body covered with purple, and followed by his sons and kindred, the soldiers going before armed, and their leaders following; the bier or bed, with the Romans, was sometimes carried by 6, sometimes by 8 or more persons.' GILL

Verses 33, 34.

It must have been very mortifying to Joab, to be thus publicly reproached as an assassin. SCOTT.

Verse 35.

The Israelites had a custom of *inviting*, and *pressing*, the friends of the dead to take food, after the funeral was over; it being supposed that their sorrow would indispose them to it. (*M. R.*) ID.

'The custom was, to bury in the day time, and after the funeral to send in food to comfort those who had buried the dead, and come and eat with them.'— GILL; PATRICK.

Verses 38, 39.

David, in thus addressing his officers, seems first to have given a reason, why he made such lamentation over Abner; and then to have excused himself for not punishing Joab and Abishai. The near relation, in which Joab and Abishai stood to David; (*Note*, 2:18.) their steady adherence to him, during Saul's persecutions; the important services which they had rendered him; and the influence, they had

king, and these men, [m] the sons of Zeruiah, *be* [n] too hard for me: [o] the LORD shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.

CHAP. IV.

Ish-bosheth and Israel are troubled at Abner's death, 1. After Saul's death, changes took place, and Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, was lamed, 2—4. Rechab and Baanah slay Ish-bosheth, and bring his head to David, 5—8. David causes them to be put to death, and Ish-bosheth's head to be buried, 9—12.

AND when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, [a] his hands were feeble, [b] and all the Israelites were troubled.

2 And Saul's son had two men *that were* [c] captains of bands; the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the * other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon a Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin: (for [d] Beeroth also was reckoned to Benjamin:

3 And the Beerothites [e] fled to Gittaim, and were sojourners there until this day.)

4 And [f] Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son *that was* lame of *his* feet. He was five years old when [g] the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name *was* [h] Mephibosheth.

5 And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, [i] went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ish-bosheth, who [j] lay on a bed at noon.

6 And they came thither into the midst of the house, *as though* they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him [k] under the fifth *rib:* and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped.

7 For when they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber, and they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and [l] took his head, and gat them away through the plain all night.

8 And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, thine enemy, which [m] sought thy life; and [n] the LORD hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed.

m 1 Chr. 2:15,16. n 19:7.
o 1 Kings 2:5,6,33,34. Ps. 28:4. 62:12. 2 Tim. 4:14.
a 17:2. Ezra 4:4. Neh. 6:9. Is. 13:7. 35:3. Jer. 6:24. 50:43. Zeph. 3:16.
b Matt. 2:2,3.
c 3:22. 2 Kings 5:2. 6:23.
* Heb. *second.*
d Josh. 9:17. 18:25.
e 1 Sam. 31:7. Neh. 11:33.
f 9:3.
g 1 Sam. 29:1,11. 31:1—10.
h 1 Chr. 8:34. 9:40. *Meribbaal.*
i 2 Chr. 24:25. 25:27. 33:24.
j 11:2. 1 Kings 16:9. Prov. 24:33,34. 1 Thes. 5:3—7.
k 2:23. 3:27. 20:10.
l 1 Sam. 17:54. 31:9. 2 Kings 10:6,7. Matt. 14:11. Mark 6:28,29.
m 1 Sam. 18:11. 19:2—10,15. 20:1. 23:15. 25:29. Matt. 2:20.
n 18:19,31. 22:48. Luke 18:7,8. Rev. 6:10. 18:20.

CHAP. IV. When Abner was slain, David was at a loss for a friend to perfect the reduction of those tribes that were yet in Ish-bosheth's interest; but here Providence brings it about by the removal of Ish-bosheth.

V. 1—8. I. Saul's house still grew weaker and weaker. Ish-bosheth had no spirit left in him; all that adhered to him were troubled, and at a loss what to do, whether to proceed in their treaty with David or no, *v.* 1. As for Mephibosheth, who, in the right of his father Jonathan, had a prior title, he was lame, and unfit for any service, *v.* 4. See what sad accidents children are liable to in their infancy. What reason have we to be thankful to God for the preservation of our limbs and senses to us, through the many perils of the weak and helpless state of infancy, and to own his goodness! Ps. 91: 12.

II. The murder of Saul's son, by *Baanah and Rechab, v.* 2, 3. They were, or had been, Ish-bosheth's own servants; so much the more base and treacherous was it in them to do him a mischief. They were of his own tribe, and of the city of Beeroth; Gittaim lay not far off in the same tribe, but was better fortified by nature, being situate (if we may depend on Fuller's map) between the two rocks, Bozez and Seneh; there the Beerothites probably took root, and never returned to Beeroth again, which made Beeroth, that had been one of the cities of the Gibeonites, (Josh. 9: 17.) to be forgotten, and Gittaim to be famous long after, as we find, Neh. 11: 33.

1. How the murder was committed, *v.* 5—7. It does not appear that the country was at any time of the year so hot, as to oblige the inhabitants to retire at noon, as they do in Spain, and other countries, in the heat of summer; but Ish-bosheth was a sluggish man, loved his ease, and hated business: and when he should have been, at this critical juncture, at the head of his forces in the field, or at the head of his counsels in a treaty with David, he was lying upon his bed, and sleeping, for his hands were feeble, (*v.* 1.) and so were his head and heart. *Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty and ruin.* The idle soul is an easy prey to the destroyer. Baanah and Rechab came into the house, under pretence of fetching wheat to victual their regiments; and such was the plainness of those times, that the king's corn-chamber, and his bed-chamber, lay near together, which gave the traitors an opportunity, when fetching wheat, to murder him as he lay on the bed.

2. The murderers triumphed in what they had done, and make a present of Ish-bosheth's head to David; (*v.* 8.) than which they thought nothing could be more acceptable to him: yea, and they make themselves instruments of God's justice, though they had no commission. Not that they had any regard either to God, or David's honor; they aimed at nothing but to make their own fortunes, (as we say,) and to get preferment in David's court; but, to ingratiate themselves with

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 17—39. The bulk of mankind, in all ages, are guided by those who rule or teach them, and address their passions by eloquence or flattery: but let us seek a sound judgment, a good conscience, and an upright heart; that we may know and adhere to the truth and will of God, amidst all changes.—In cultivating Christian tempers, and performing relative duties, extremes and counterfeits must be guarded against: as, through undue ascendency of those inferiors, who ought 'to be kept in subjection with all gravity,' shameful things will often be done or connived at, to the disgrace of individuals, and the reproach of the common cause. Every one therefore should know his own place and duties, and exercise the Christian temper *in doing them;* and not make the fear of being ruffled or discomposed an excuse for neglecting them.—It is not enough for those, who are invested with authority, to express their abhorrence of crimes and criminals, or their compassion for those who suffer by them: but all partialities, relative affections, and interested considerations should be laid aside, and condign punishment inflicted; that 'others may hear, and fear, and do no more such wickedness:' and in every state, the executive authority should possess power sufficient to punish the proudest subject, lest blood be imputed to the land.—Alas, what are the imagined advantages of royalty? The king 'after God's own heart' finds as much cause for lamentation and complaint, as when a poor fugitive! But He, who now reigns upon the throne of David, has a kingdom of a nobler kind: whatever He does is noticed by and pleases all his willing people: and He will bring them all to share his glory and joy. Many however are outwardly serviceable to his cause, who only seek *themselves* in all they do, and from time to time disgrace it with their crimes: these may escape for a season, but at length they shall be numbered with his enemies, and perish for ever. SCOTT.

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thus acquired among his soldiers and friends, and even with him; combined to render it extremely difficult, and even perilous, to oppose and punish them. But the satisfaction, which the people expressed in the former part of his conduct, showed, that he might, notwithstanding, very safely have proceeded to execute the divine law on the offenders, in its utmost strictness. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV. V. 1. Perhaps Ish-bosheth had not before been certainly informed, of Abner's desertion to David: or, both he and the people hoped by Abner's means to have obtained better terms. But by his death their affairs were left in a most unsettled and dangerous situation; and they had no person in whom they could place confidence, either to lead them to battle, or negotiate a treaty. ID.

Verses 2—4.

When Saul's army was routed, and he and his sons slain, the inhabitants of Beeroth deserted their city, and went to sojourn at Gittaim; where they remained, when this history was written. (*Neh.* 11:33. 1 *Sam.* 31:7.)—These facts seem to have been recorded, to illustrate the consternation which followed the death of Saul and his sons. SCOTT.

Verse 5.

It was, and is still, a custom in the east countries, to retire for sleep about noon; i. e. for such as live in ease and luxury; not for others, except in very sultry regions. The Scripture gives no intimation that this was a common practice in Israel. (*M. R.* j.) ID.

Verses 6, 7.

Fetched wheat.] 'To pay their soldiers with, who in those days were paid in corn, (grain,) as were the Roman soldiers; so *Valtrinus.*' *Took his head:*] 'and perhaps put it in one of the sacks they had for the wheat, and so brought it out undiscovered.' GILL.

9 And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said unto them, *As* the LORD liveth, [o] who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity,

10 When [p] one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, (* thinking to have brought good tidings,) I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, † who *thought* that I would have given him a reward for his tidings:

11 How much more [q] when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed! shall I not therefore now [r] require his blood of your hand, and take you away [s] from the earth?

12 And David commanded his young men, and they [t] slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and [u] hanged *them* up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried *it* [x] in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.

CHAP. V.

The elders of the tribes, at Hebron, anoint David king over all Israel, 1—3. His age at the beginning of his reign, and the length of his reign, 4, 5. He takes Zion from the Jebusites, and calls it the city of David, 6—10. Hiram sends him timber and workmen to build him a house, 11. He prospers, and takes more wives; and eleven sons are born to him, 12—16. By divine direction, he gains two victories over the Philistines, 17—25.

THEN [a] came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, [b] we *are* thy bone and thy flesh.

him, they pretend a concern for his life, a conviction of his title, and a zealous desire to see him in full possession of the throne.

V. 9—12. We have here justice done on the murderers of Ish-bosheth.

I. Sentence passed on them. There needed no evidence; David therefore shows them the heinousness of the crime, and that blood called for blood from his hand, who was now the chief magistrate, and was, by office, the avenger of blood. And, perhaps, he was the more vigorous in the prosecution, because, for reasons of state, he had spared Joab. Observe, 1. How he aggravates the crime, *v.* 11. Ish-bosheth was a righteous person: he had done them no wrong, nor designed them any; and David was satisfied, that his opposition to him was not from malice, but mistake, from an idea he had of his own title to the crown, and the influence of others on him, who urged him to put in for it. Note, Charity teaches us to make the best, not only of our friends, but of our enemies, and to think those may be righteous persons, who yet, in some instances, do us wrong. The manner of it much aggravated the crime. Assassinating is confessedly the most odious and villanous way of murdering. *Cursed is he that smiteth his neighbor secretly.* 2. He quotes a precedent; *v.* 10. Nothing is here said of the Amalekite's helping Saul to kill himself, only of his bringing the tidings of it: by which it should seem the story he told, was, on inquiry, found to be false, and that he lied against his own head. 3. He ratifies the sentence with an oath, *v.* 9. He expresses himself thus resolutely, to prevent the making of any intercession for the criminals by those about him: and thus piously, to intimate that his dependence was upon God for the putting of him in possession of the promised throne, and that he would not be beholden to any man to help him to it, by any indirect or unlawful practices. He speaks of his redemption from all adversity, as a thing done, though he had many a storm yet before him, because he knew that He who had delivered, would deliver. Hereupon, he signs a warrant for the execution of these men, *v.* 12. This may seem severe, when they intended him a kindness in what they did; but he would thus show his detestation of the villany, and his resentment of the great affront they put upon him, in expecting that he should patronise and reward it; they could scarcely have done him a greater injury, than thus to think him altogether such a one as themselves; one that cared not what blood he waded through to the crown.

II. Execution done. The murderers were put to death according to law, and their hands and feet hung up; not their whole bodies, the law forbade that, but only their hands and feet, [in this place of concourse,]—*to frighten others*, to be monuments of David's justice, and recommend him to the esteem of the people, as a man fit to rule, and that aimed not at his own preferment, nor had any enmity to the house of Saul, but only, and sincerely, designed the public welfare. But what a confusion to the two murderers! What a horrid disappointment! And such they will meet with, who think to serve the interests of the Son of David, by any immoral practices, by war and persecution, fraud and rapine; who, under color of religion, murder princes, break solemn contracts, lay countries waste, *hate their brethren, and cast them out, and say, Let the Lord be glorified; kill them, and think they do God good service.* However men may canonize such methods of serving the church and the catholic cause, Christ will let them know, another day, that Christianity was not intended to destroy humanity; and they, who thus think to merit heaven, shall not escape the damnation of hell.

CHAP. V. How far Abner's deserting the house of Saul, his murder, and the murder of Ish-bosheth, might contribute to perfect the revolution, and establish David king over all Israel, does not appear; but, it should seem, that happy change followed presently thereupon, which in this ch. we have an account of.

V. 1—5. Here is, I. The humble address of all the tribes to David, beseeching him to take the government, and owning him for their king.

2 Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that [c] leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD said to thee, [d] Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be [e] a captain over Israel.

3 So [f] all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David [g] made a league with them in Hebron [h] before the LORD: and they [i] anointed David king over Israel.

4 David *was* [k] thirty years old when he began to reign, *and* he reigned [l] forty years.

5 In Hebron he reign-

o Gen. 48:16. 1 Kings 1:29. Ps. 31:5—7. 34:22. 71:23. 103:4. 106:10. 107:2. 2 Tim. 4:17,18.
p 1:2—16.
* Heb. *he was in his own eyes, as a bringer, &c.*
† Or, *which was the reward I gave him for his tidings.*
q 1 Kings 2:32. Prov. 25:26. Heb. 1: 4,12. 1 John 3:12.
r 3:27,39. Gen. 9:5,6. Ex. 21:12. Num. 35:31—34. Ps. 9:12.
s Gen. 4:11. 6:13. 7:23. Ex. 9:15. Ps. 109:15. Prov. 2:22. Jer. 10:11.
t 1:15. Ps. 55:23. Matt. 7:2.
u 21:9. Deut. 21:22,23.
x 3:32.
a 1 Chr. 11:1—3. 12:23—40.
b 19:13. Gen. 29:14. Deut. 17:15. Judg. 9:2. Eph. 5:30. Heb. 2:14.
c Num. 27:17. 1 Sam. 18:13,16. 25:28. Is. 55:4.
d 7:7. 1 Sam. 16:1,13. 25:30. Ps. 78: 71,72. Is. 40:11. Ez. 34:23. 37:24, 25. Mic. 5:4. Matt. 2:6. *marg.* John 10:3,4,11.
e 1 Sam. 9:16. 13:14. 2 Kings 20:5. Heb. 2:10.
f 1 Chr. 11:3.
g 1 Sam. 11:15. 2 Kings 11:17. 2 Chr. 23:16.
h Judg. 11:11. 1 Sam. 23:18.
i 2:4. 1 Sam. 16:13.
k Luke 3:23.
l 1 Chr. 26:31. 29:27.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Every thing will concur in forwarding the accomplishment of God's word, whether of promise or of wrath, when the appointed time approaches: on one hand there can be no *failure;* on the other, no *escape.*—Wretched indeed are they, who are engaged in undertakings, in which none can serve them without opposing the known will of God! The more exalted their station, the greater is their danger: for the very men, in whom they repose their chief confidence, are destitute of principle, serve them only for gain, and will betray or murder them when their mercenary schemes require it.—Alas! what numbers sink, from self-indulgence and carnal security, into unsuspected and inevitable destruction!—Many are conscious, that *they* should be pleased with villany, provided it conduced greatly to their profit: thus they are led confidently to conclude, that others will be so too; and as numbers are rewarded for villanous actions, they expect the same. Persons in authority should therefore decidedly manifest, that they will not be served by such base characters, but will, instead of rewarding, severely punish their crimes.—Finally, the Son of David will requite those, who pretend to serve his cause by frauds, treasons, massacres, and persecutions, with far more dreadful vengeance, than was inflicted by David on Ish-bosheth's murderers.

SCOTT.

Verses 9, 10.

Redeemed, &c. (9) (*M. R.*—*Note, Gen.* 48:16.) By using this language, David reminded all who heard him, that in his most extreme dangers, he had neither used treachery or cruelty himself, nor allowed his men to use them. It must therefore be evident, that, now the Lord had rescued and prospered him, he had no temptation to countenance such traitors as Rechab and Baanah. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. V. V. 1, 2. (*Note*, 1 *Chr.* 12:23—40.) This is the first time good rulers are spoken of, under the emblem of shepherds, which is afterwards very common, and is especially applied to Christ our King. (*M. R.* d.) But wicked rulers are characterized as lions, bears, wolves, and leopards. (*Prov.* 28:15,16. *Ez.* 19:2—9. 22:27,28. *Dan.* 7 2—8.) SCOTT.

Verse 3.

It is probable, David agreed to an act of indemnity for past offences, and engaged to rule over his people according to the law of God; and they submitted to his authority according to the same rule. (*M. R.*) ID.

Verses 4, 5

(*M. R.* m.) If David was 20 years when Samuel anointed him. Saul reigned [illegible] ction, but it is not cer-

ed over Judah [m] seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

6 ¶ And the king and his men [n] went to [o] Jerusalem unto [p] the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, [q] Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: * thinking, David cannot come in hither.

7 Nevertheless David took the strong hold of [r] Zion: [s] the same *is* the city of David.

8 And David said on that day, [t] Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, *that are* hated of David's soul, *he shall be chief and captain.* † Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.

9 So David dwelt in

m 2:11. 1 Kings 2:11. 1 Chr. 3:4.
n 1 Chr. 11:4—9.
o Gen. 14:18. Josh. 10:3. Judg. 1:8.
p Josh. 15:63. 18:28. Judg. 1:21. 19: 10—12. q Jer. 37:10.
* Or, *saying, David shall not.*
r Ps. 2:6. 9:11. 48:12. 51:18. 87:2. 132:13. Is. 12:6. 59:20. Mic. 4:2. Rom. 9:33. Heb. 12:22. Rev. 14:1.
s 6:10. 1 Kings 2:10. 3:1. 8:1. 1 Chr. 11:7. 2 Chr. 5:2. 32:16.
t Josh. 15:16,17. 1 Sam. 17:25.
† Or, *Because they had said, even the lame and the blind, he shall not come into the house.*

What number came from each tribe, with what zeal and sincerity they came, and how they were entertained for three days at Hebron, when they were all of one heart to make David king, we have a full account, 1 Chron. 12: 23—40. Here we have only the heads of their address, containing their grounds for making David king. 1. Their relation to him, *v.* 1. 'We know thou hast a tender concern for us, as a man has for his own body, which Saul and his house had not; therefore thou wilt be as glad as we shall be, to put an end to this long civil war; and thou wilt pity us, protect us, and do thine utmost for our welfare.' 2. His former services to the public were a further inducement; *v.* 2. He that is faithful in a little deserves to be intrusted with more. 3. The divine appointment was the greatest inducement of all. *The Lord said, Thou shalt feed my people Israel;* i. e. thou shalt rule them; for princes are to feed their people as shepherds, in every thing consulting the subjects' benefit; feeding them, and not fleecing them. Since God has said so, now at length, when need drives them to it, they are persuaded to say so too.

II. The public and solemn inauguration of David, *v.* 3. A convention of the states was called, all the elders of Israel came to him; the contract was settled; he obliged himself to protect them as their judge in peace, and captain in war; and they obliged themselves to obey him; God was a Witness. Hereupon he was, the third time, anointed king. His advances were gradual, that his faith might be tried, and that he might gain experience. Thus his kingdom typified that of the Messiah, which was to come to its height by degrees, Heb. 2: 8. 1 Cor. 15: 25.

III. A general account of his reign and age, 30 years. *v.* 4, 5. At that age, the Levites were at first appointed to begin their ministration. Num. 4: 3. About that age, the Son of David entered on his public ministry, Luke 3: 23. Then men come to their full maturity of strength and judgment. Hebron had been famous; (Josh. 14: 15.) but Jerusalem was to be more so, and to be the *holy* city. Great kings affected to raise cities of their own; (Gen. 10: 11.—36: 32—35.) David did so, and Jerusalem was it; *the city of David.* It is a name famous to the end of the Bible, (Rev. 21.) where we read of a new Jerusalem.

V. 6—10. If Salem was Jerusalem, (as seems probable from Ps. 76: 2.) it was famous in Abraham's time; Joshua, in his time, found it the chief city of the south part of Canaan, Josh. 10: 1—3. It fell to Benjamin's lot, (Josh. 18:28.) but joined close to Judah's, Josh. 15: 8. Judah had taken it, (Judg. 1: 8.) but Benjamin suffered the Jebusites to dwell among them. (Judg. 1: 21.) who grew so upon them, that it became a *city of Jebusites,* Judg. 19: 11. Now the very first exploit David did, after he was anointed king over all Israel, was, to recover Jerusalem, which, because it belonged to Benjamin, he could not well attempt, till that tribe, which long adhered to Saul's house, (1 Chron. 12: 29.) submitted to him. Here we have,

I. The Jebusites' defiance of David, and his forces, *v.* 6. They sent David this provoking message, because, as it is said afterward, on another occasion, they could not believe that *ever an enemy should enter into the gates of Jerusalem,* Lam. 4: 12. They confided, either, 1. In the protection of their gods, which David, in contempt, had called *the blind and the lame,* for *they have eyes and see not, feet and walk not.* Some think they were constellated images of brass, set up in the recess of the fort, and intrusted with the custody of the place. Or, 2. In the strength of their fortifications, which [having held good so long] they thought were so impregnable by nature, or art, or both, that the blind and the lame were sufficient to defend them against the most powerful assailant. The strong hold of Zion they especially depended on, as that which could not be forced. Probably, they set invalids or maimed soldiers, to make their appearance on the walls, in scorn of David and his men, judging them an equal match for him. Comp. Jer. 37: 10. Note, the enemies of God's people are often very confident of their own strength, and most secure when their fall draws nigh.

II. David's success. Their insolence, instead of daunting, animated him, and when he made a general assault, he gave this order to his men; 'He that smiteth the Jebusites, let him also throw down in the ditch, or gutter, *the lame and the blind,* which are set upon the wall to affront us and our God.' Probably they had spoken blasphemous things, and were therefore hated of David's soul. Thus *v.* 8. may be read; we fetch our reading of it from 1 Chron. 11: 6. which speaks only of smiting the Jebusites, but nothing of the blind and

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tainly known how long he had reigned before. (*Acts* 13:21.) SCOTT.

Verses 6—8.

The last clause (8) may be translated 'They had said, even the blind and the lame, that he shall not come into the house.' But David commanded his men, 'when they smote the Jebusites, to throw down the blind and the lame into the gutter,' or *ditch,* as it might be rendered; which, under the conduct of Joab, they effected accordingly. These were said to be 'hated of David's soul;' for they were devoted Canaanites and idolaters, if not blasphemers of God.—Near to this mount the ark was placed, the temple built, and the residence of the family of David fixed. (11. 6:1,17. *Ps.* 122: 132:13—18.) SCOTT.

Except, &c.] *Carpenter* transl. 'And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, thou shalt not come hither; for the blind, and the lame,' [which they had picked out of their number, and placed in bravado on their walls, trusting to the strength of the fortress they had kept so many hundred years,] 'shall keep thee off, by saying David shall not come in hither. But David took, &c.' ED. 'There are two common interpretations of this (1.) It was customary in almost every nation, at the foundation of a city, to lay up an image magically consecrated (a talisman) in some retired part of it, on which the security of the place was supposed to depend. To this the allusion is made. *Gregory, Selden.* The Jewish writers say, these were of brass, and had inscriptions on them, and the keeping of the place was confidently intrusted to them. In this sense, the passage means, 'unless you remove these gods, which you scornfully call the blind and lame, you will never be able to take the place.' GILL. (2.) They imagined their fortress to be so impregnable, that they told him in scorn the blind and lame could defend it. *Bochart, Poole, Gill,* Dr. *A. Clarke.* Invalid troopers could defend it. *Wilson.* The objection to this interpretation is, that 'the blind and the lame are said (*v.* 8.) to be 'hated of David's soul.' 'Surely,' says *Hewlett,* 'the distressing circumstances of blindness and lameness, which rendered these men helpless and impotent, would not of themselves have afforded any foundation for such enmity.' *Geddes,* followed by *Boothroyd,* renders the words 'blind and lame,' 'sentinels and patrols,' *haiurym vhfshym;* and as *aier* signifies 'to awake, excite, or arouse,' and *fsh,* 'to pass on,' &c. this interpretation is not unworthy of regard, and the words fully designate the persons here conjectured. ED.

Whosoever getteth up to the gutter.] 'An aqueduct, or subterraneous passage for water.' *S. Burder.* 'The secret passage.' *Boothr.*

Shall be chief, &c.] These words are supplied from 1 Chr. 11:6.

Hated of David's soul.] 'If the idols be meant, the cause is obvious, and if the blind and lame men, David hated them as Canaanites.' *Henry, Gill, Scott, Clarke.* This passage has been variously rendered, 'He that smiteth the Jebusites, let him throw down into the ditch both the blind and the lame, which David doth extremely hate.' *Bochart.* 'Whosoever first smiteth the Jebusites, and, through the subterraneous passage, or gutter, reacheth the blind and the lame, which are hated by David's soul, because the blind and the lame continued to say, he shall not come into this house, shall be head and captain; so Joab, the son of Zeruiah, went up first, and was chief captain.' *Kennicott.* 'Whosoever first smiteth the Jebusites, and through the secret passages reacheth the sentinels and patrols, who detest the person of David (because the sentinels and patrols had said, "into this house he shall not come,") he shall be chief captain.' *Boothr.* COND. COMM.

(8.) *Gutter.*] 'Tzenur, Vulg. *fistulas;* Vatablus, *canales;* Jun. and Trem. *emissarium;* Poole, tubus aquæ; Bochart, *alveus,* &c. Most agree, that it means something hollow, and apply it to water. "Rabatamana," says *Polybius,* "a city of Arabia, could not be taken, till one of the prisoners showed the besiegers a subterraneous passage, through which the besieged came down for water. [A son of the editor observed a covered passage of this sort, through which ran a stream of water, cut for a long distance through the soft rock, a kind of rock too like that on which Jerusalem is situated, and communicating with the interior of fort Labdalon, the citadel of Syracuse. It was large enough for a horseman to ride through.—ED.] David had already taken the lower town, ('the strong hold of Zion,' *v.* 7.) which was spread over the wide hill of Sion, and now, *v.* 8. takes the citadel, as Rabatamana was taken, through *this subterraneous* passage; for Josephus expressly calls them *subterraneous cavities,* thus putting this interpretation on a solid footing.' CARPENTER. Aquila understands *an aqueduct,* and the Jews say there was an underground passage from the king's house in Jerusalem to Jericho. *Dio Cassius* speaks of several through which the Jews escaped in the last siege of Jerusalem.' GILL. Much of the rock formation about the Mediterranean is soft underneath, and hardens when exposed to the air; hence subterraneous passages are easily cut, as the vast catacombs of Malta, Syracuse, Naples, Rome, &c. show, Note, Josh. 12: 8. ED.

Verse 9.

Millo seems to have been a place of public convention, all around which David erected such buildings, as were proper for rendering the city the seat of government. (*Note, Judg.* 9:16—20, *v.* 20. 2 *Kings* 12:20,21.) SCOTT.

Millo.] 'A general name for any strong fort or bulwark.' BOOTHR.

the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about [a] Millo and inward.

10 And David * went on and grew great; and [v] the LORD God of hosts *was* with him.

B. C. 1043. 11 ¶ And [x] Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and † masons: and [y] they built David an house.

12 And [z] David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for [a] his people Israel's sake.

13 And [b] David took *him* more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron: and there were yet sons and daughters born to David.

14 And these *be* [c] the names of those that were born unto him in Jerusalem: ‡ Shammuah, and Shobab, and [d] Nathan, and [e] Solomon,

15 Ibhar also, and [f] Elishua, and Nepheg, and Japhia,

16 And Elishamah, and [g] Eliada, and [h] Eliphalet.

B. C. 1046. 17 ¶ But [i] when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard *of it*, and went down to [k] the hold.

18 The Philistines also came, and spread themselves in [l] the valley of Rephaim.

19 And David [m] inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And [n] the LORD said unto David, Go up; for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

20 And David came to [o] Baal-perazim, and David smote them there, and said, The LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place § Baal-perazim.

21 And there they left their images, and David and his men ‖ burned them.

22 And the Philistines [q] came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.

23 And when David [r] inquired of the LORD, he said, Thou shalt not go up; *but* [s] fetch a com-

the lame. The Jebusites had said, that if their images did not protect them, *the blind and the lame should not come into the house*, i. e. they would never again trust their palladium, (so Gregory,) nor respect, as they had, their images; and David, having gained the fort, said so too, that these images, which could not protect their worshippers, should never have any place there more.

III. His fixing his royal seat in Zion; he himself dwelt in the fort, and he built houses round about for his attendants and guards, (*v.* 9.) from Millo (the town-hall, or state-house) and inward. He proceeded and prospered in all he set his hand to: grew more and more honorable in the eyes of his subjects, and formidable in the eyes of his enemies. God has all creatures at his command, makes what use He pleases of them, and serves his own purposes by them; and He was with him, to direct, preserve, and prosper him. Those who grow great, must ascribe it to the presence of God with them, and give Him the glory of it. The church is called *Zion*, and the *city of the living God;* Christ's enemies must first be conquered and dispossessed, the blind and the lame taken away, and then Christ divides the spoil, sets up his throne there, and makes it his residence by the Spirit.

V. 11—16. Here is, I. David's house built, a royal palace, fit for the reception of his court, and the homage made him, *v.* 11. The Jews were husbandmen and shepherds, and did not much addict themselves either to merchandise or manufactures; therefore Hiram, king of Tyre, a wealthy prince, when he sent to congratulate David on his accession to the throne, offered him workmen to build him a house: David thankfully accepted the offer, and Hiram's workmen built David a house to his mind. It is prophesied of the gospel-church, *The sons of strangers shall build up thy wall, and their kings shall minister unto thee.*

II. David's government rooted and built up, *v.* 12. 1. His kingdom was established. He that made him king, established him, because he was to be a type of Christ, with whom God's hand should be established, and his *covenant stand fast*, Ps. 89: 21—28. 2. It was exalted in the eyes both of its friends and enemies. Thus it is promised of Christ, that He shall be *higher than the kings of the earth.* God has *highly exalted Him.* 3. David perceived it, by the wonderful concurrence of providences to his establishment and advancement; *By this I know that Thou favorest me.* Many have the favor and love of God, and do not perceive it, and so want the comfort of it: but to be exalted to that, and established in it, and to perceive it, is happiness enough. 4. He owned it was *for his people Israel's sake.* God had not made Israel his subjects for *his sake*, that he might be great, and rich, and absolute; but He made him their king for *their* sake, that he might lead, and guide, and protect them. Kings should be *ministers of God to their people for good*, Rom. 13: 4

III. David's family multiplied and increased All the sons born to him after he came to Jerusalem, are here mentioned together; 11 in all; beside the 6 born before in Hebron, *ch.* 3: 2—5. *There* the mothers are mentioned, not *here;* only, in general, that he *took him more concubines and wives, v.* 13. The bad example of the patriarchs might make him think there was no harm in it, and he might hope it would strengthen his interest, by multiplying his alliances, and increasing the royal family. But one vine by the side of the house, with the blessing of God, may send boughs to the sea, branches to the rivers. Adam, by one wife, peopled the world, and Noah repeopled it. David had many wives, yet that did not keep him from coveting his neighbor's wife, and defiling her; men that have once broken the fence, will wander endlessly. Of David's concubines, see *ch.* 15: 16. 16: 22. 19: 3. Of his sons, see 1 Chr. 3: 5.

V. 17—25. The particular service David was raised up for, was, to *save Israel out of the hand of the Philistines*, *ch.* 3: 18. This therefore Divine Providence, in the first place, gives him an opportunity of accomplishing. Two great victories obtained over the Philistines we have here an account of, by which David not only balanced the disgrace, and retrieved the loss, Israel had sustained in the battle wherein Saul was slain, but went far toward the total subduing of those vexatious neighbors, the last remains of the devoted nations.

I. In both these actions, the Philistines were the aggressors. 1. In the former, they *came up to seek David*, (*v.* 17.) because they *heard that he was anointed king over Israel.* He that under Saul had slain his ten thousands, what would he do when he himself came to be king? They therefore thought it time to look about them, and try to crush his government in its infancy. Their success against Saul, some years ago, perhaps, encouraged them; but they considered not that David had that presence of God with him, which Saul had not. The kingdom of the Messiah, as soon as it was set up in the world, was thus vigorously attacked by the powers of darkness, who, with

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u Judg. 9:6,20. 1 Kings 9:15,24. 11: 27. 2 Chr. 32:5.
* Heb. *went going and growing.* 3:1. Job 17:9. Prov. 4:18. Is. 9:7. Dan. 2:44. Luke 2:52.
v Gen. 21:22. Ps. 46:7,11. Is. 8:9,10. Rom. 8:31.
x 1 Kings 5:8,9. 1 Chr. 14:1.
† Heb. *hewers of the stone of the wall.*
y 7:2. 1 Kings 7:1—12. Ec. 2:4—11. Jer. 22:14—16.
z 7:16. 1 Chr. 14:2.
a 1 Kings 10:9. 2 Chr. 2:11. Esth. 4: 14. Is. 1:25—27. Dan. 2:30.
b Gen. 25:5,6. Deut. 17:17. 1 Chr. 14:3—7. 2 Chr. 11:18—21. 13:21.
c 1 Chr. 3:5—9. 14:4.
‡ Or, *Shimea.* 1 Chr. 3:5.
d 12:1—7. Luke 3:31.
e 12:24,25. Matt. 1:6.
f Or, *Elishama.* 1 Chr. 3:8. 14:5.
g Or, *Beeliada.* 1 Chr. 14:7.
h *Eliphelet.* 1 Chr. 3:8.
i 1 Chr. 14:8,9. Ps. 2:1—5. Rev. 11: 15—18.
k 23:14. 1 Chr. 11:16.
l 23:13. Gen. 14:5. 1 Chr. 11:15. Is. 17:5.
m 2:1. 1 Sam. 23:2,4. 30:7,8.
n 23. Judg. 20:28. 1 Sam. 28:6. 30: 8. 1 Kings 22:6,15—23. Prov. 3:6.
o Is. 28:21.
§ That is, *The plain of breaches.*
p Deut. 7:5,25. 1 Sam. 5:2—6. 1 Chr. 14:11,12. Is. 37:19.
‖ Or, *took them away.* Is. 46: 1,2. Jer. 43:12.
q 1 Kings 20:22. 1 Chr. 14:13. r 19.
s Josh. 8:2,7. 1 Chr. 14:14. Matt. 9: 29,30. Mark 8:23—25. John 9:6,7.

Verse 11.

Saul affected the splendor of royalty, yet did not build a royal palace; but David built one, perhaps as a token of his assured belief that the kingdom would be continued in his family. SCOTT.

Hiram.] 'A common name for the kings of Tyre. This was father of that one in Solomon's days.' GILL. 'Lebanon, famous for cedars, was mostly in his dominions. The Tyrians are renowned among ancient writers as skilful workmen.' POOLE.

Verses 13—16.

(*M. R.*) It was customary for kings to multiply wives, and to strengthen their interests by many alliances; and to this David very improperly conformed. (3:2—5. 11:1—5. 15:16. 16:20—23. 1 *Kings* 11:1—8.) Some names are mentioned in Chr. not found here; perhaps the sons there mentioned died in infancy. (1 *Chr.* 3:1—9.) SCOTT.

Verses 17, 18.

The Philistines, satisfied with the advantages they had enjoyed since the death of Saul, had been restrained from molesting the Israelites during their civil dissensions: but they invaded them as soon as they were united again under one king. Thus, by beginning war, they delivered David from any embarrassment, about warring against those who had previously protected him. (1 *Sam.* 27:1—3. 28:1,2.) (*M. R.* l.) SCOTT.

Verse 19.

Notes, 2:1—3. *Ex.* 28:30. *Num.* 27:21. ID.

Verse 20.

Baal-perazim properly signifies the *lord of breaches.* By some evident interposition, the Lord Himself fought against the Philistines, like the breaking forth of impetuous torrents, which bear all down before them. ID.

pass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry-trees.

24 And let it be, when thou hearest [t] the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then [u] thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the LORD go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines.

25 And David did so, as the LORD had commanded him; and smote the Philistines from [x] Geba until thou come to [y] Gazer.

CHAP. VI.

David fetches the ark from Kirjath-jearim on a new cart, 1—5. Uzzah is smitten, David is disconcerted, and the ark is left with Obed-edom, whose house is blessed on account of it, 6—11. David brings the ark to Zion with sacrifice; and dances before it, for which Michal despises him, 12—16. He places it in a tabernacle with joy and feasting, 17—19. Michal, deriding David for his religious joy, continues childless, 20—23.

AGAIN, David [a] gathered together all *the* chosen *men* of Israel, thirty thousand.

2 And David arose, and went with all the people, that *were* with him, from [b] Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, [*] whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts, that [c] dwelleth *between* the cherubims.

t 2 Kings 7:6.
u Judg. 4:14. 7:15. 1 Sam. 14:9—12. 1 Chr. 14:15. Phil. 2:11,12.
x 1 Chr. 14:16. *Gibeon.*
y Josh. 16:10.
a 5:1. 1 Kings 8:1. 1 Chr. 13:1—4. Ps. 132:1—6.
b Josh. 15:9,10,60. *Baalah, Kirjath jearim.* 1 Sam. 7:1. 1 Chr. 13:6.
* Or, *at which the name, even the name of the LORD of hosts was called upon.* Lev. 24:11—16. Is. 47:4. 54:5.
c Ex. 25:18—22. 1 Sam. 4:4. 1 Kings 8:6,7. Ps. 80:1. 1 Pet. 1:12.

the combined force both of Jews and Gentiles, made head against it: the heathen raged, and the kings of the earth set themselves to oppose it; but all in vain, Ps. 2: 1, &c. They took counsel together, but were *broken in pieces.* 2. In the latter, they *came up yet again*, hoping to recover what they had lost in the former, their hearts being hardened to their destruction, *v.* 22. 3. In both, they *spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim*, very near Jerusalem; which they hoped to master, before David had completed his fortifications. Their spreading themselves, intimates they were very numerous, and made a very formidable appearance. We read of the church's enemies *going upon the breadth of the earth;* but the further they spread themselves, the fairer mark they are to God's arrows.

II. In both, David, though forward enough to go against them, (*v.* 17.) yet entered not upon action, till he had *inquired of the Lord* by the breast-plate of judgment, *v.* 19, 23. His inquiry was twofold. 1. Concerning his duty; '*Shall I go up?* Shall I have a commission from Heaven to engage them?' or, 'Shall I go up *now?*' It is to be done, but is it to be done at this time? *In all thy ways acknowledge Him.* And besides, though the Philistines were public enemies, yet some, as Achish, had been his particular friends. 'Now,' says David, 'ought not I rather to make peace with them, than war?' 'No,' says God, 'they are Israel's enemies, and are doomed to destruction, therefore never scruple it, but *go up.*' 2. Concerning his success. His conscience asked the former question, his prudence asked this, *Wilt Thou deliver them into my hand?* Hereby he owns his dependence, and refers himself to the good pleasure of God, *Wilt Thou do it?* Yea, says God, *I will doubtless do it.* The assurance God gives us of victory over our spiritual enemies, should animate us in our spiritual conflicts. We do not fight at uncertainty. David had now a great army at command, and in good heart, yet he relied more on God's promise than his own force.

III. In the former of these engagements, David routed the Philistines by dint of sword, (*v.* 20.) he *smote them;* and when he had done, 1. He gave *his God* the glory; *v.* 20. 'I could not have done it, if He had not done it before me.' Most of the work was God's doing; nay, He did all; therefore, *Not unto us, but unto the Lord, give glory.* He hoped likewise this breach would let in a final desolation upon them: and, to perpetuate the remembrance of it, he called the place *Baal-perazim, the Master of the breaches.* Let posterity notice it to God's honor. 2. He put *their gods* to shame. They brought the images of their gods into the field, as their protectors, in imitation of the Israelites' bringing the ark into their camp: but being put to flight, they could not stay to carry them off; therefore they left them to fall, with the rest of their baggage, into the hands of the conqueror. God can make men weary of those things they have been most fond of, and compel them to desert what they doted on, and cast away even *their idols of silver and of gold*, Isa. 2: 20, 21. David and his men converted to their own use the rest of the plunder, but burnt the images, as God had appointed. (Deut. 7: 5.) Patrick well observes here, that when the ark fell into the Philistines' hands, it consumed them, but when these images fell into the hands of Israel, they could not save themselves from being consumed.

IV. In the latter of these engagements, God gave David some sensible tokens of his presence with him, bade him not fall upon them directly, as he had done before, but *fetch a compass behind them. v.* 23. He promised him to charge the enemy Himself, by an invisible host of angels, *v.* 24. Angels tread light, and He that can walk upon the clouds, can, when He pleases, walk on the tops of trees, or, (as Patrick understands it,) at the head of the mulberry tree; i. e. of the wood, or hedge-row, of those trees. 'And by that sign thou shalt know that *the Lord goes out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines.*' But observe, though God promised to *go before them and smite the Philistines*, yet David, when he heard the sound of the going, must bestir himself, and be ready to pursue the victory. Note, God's grace must quicken our endeavors. If God work in us both to will and to do, it does not follow that we must sit still, as those that have nothing to do, but we must therefore *work out our salvation* with all possible care and diligence. The sound of the going was a signal to David when to move; and perhaps an alarm to the enemy, to put them into confusion. Hearing the march of an army against their front, they retreated with precipitation, and fell into David's army, which lay behind them in their rear. Of those whom God fights against, it is said, *The sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them.*

The success of this is briefly set down, *v.* 25. David observed his orders, and God performed his promise. When the kingdom of the Messiah was to be set up, the apostles must not attempt any thing till they received the promise of the Spirit; who *came with a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind;* and when they heard that, they must bestir themselves, and did so; they went forth conquering and to conquer.

CHAP. VI. The obscurity of the ark, during the reign of Saul, had been as great a grievance to Israel as the insults of the Philistines. David having humbled the Philistines, in gratitude, and

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Mercies, long waited for in faith and patience, will be conferred in the most reputable and comfortable manner: nor shall any go unrewarded, who persist in refusing to employ sinful means for their own deliverance, or advancement.—Civil government is fixed on its firmest basis, and is likely to produce the most permanent blessings, when it is regulated by wholesome laws; marking out duties, prerogatives, and privileges to the prince and people, and reciprocally ratified, as in the presence of the Lord, by the most solemn assurances, with a view to his authority, appointments, and commandments.—Jesus became our Brother, assumed and inhabits our nature, that He might be our Prince and Savior: and thus the humbled sinner takes encouragement from this endearing relation: applies for his salvation, voluntarily submits to his kind authority, and craves his powerful protection.—In the day of his power, Satan's strong-hold, the human heart, is converted into 'an habitation of God through the Spirit;' and into a throne, on which the Son of David rules, and brings every thought into obedience to Himself. May He thus come and claim and cleanse each of our hearts; and, having destroyed every idol, may He dwell and reign there for ever. (*Gal.* 2: 17—21. *Eph.* 2: 19—22. 3: 14—19.)—It is in mercy to a nation, when wise and righteous persons are exalted to authority: and every advancement or endowment which we receive, should remind us, that the Lord alone has conferred the distinction; and that He did it, that we might be useful to his people by the talents intrusted to us.—(1 Kings 3: 5—14. *P. O.* 1—15.) Alas! even good men are apt to grow secure and self-indulgent in prosperity, and to sanction by their example those abuses, which they should oppose or repress: and all our returns for the Lord's mercies are deeply tinged with ingratitude.—In our spiritual warfare, we must decidedly declare for the Lord, though against relatives or benefactors; and if we consult Him, He will teach us to do it without even the appearance of evil.—All those objects which men idolize, will prove a useless encumbrance to them, when 'the Lord shall arise to execute judgment on his enemies.' SCOTT.

Verse 24.

Sometimes the Lord commands and employs man's concurrence, and sometimes he rejects it; that we may neither be self-important nor negligent. SCOTT.

Verse 25.

And David did so.] 'He punctually obeyed the directions of the Lord, and then every thing succeeded to his wish. Why are such directions and assistances not communicated now? Because they are not asked for; and not asked for, because not expected; and they are not expected, because men have not faith: and they have not faith, because they are under a refined spirit of atheism, and have no spiritual intercourse with their Maker. Who believes that God sees all things, and is every where? Who supposes that He concerns Himself with the affairs of his creatures? Who acknowledges Him in all his ways? Who puts not his own wisdom, prudence and strength in the place of God Almighty? Reader, hast *thou* faith in God? Then exercise it, cultivate it, and thou mayest remove mountains.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI. V. 2. 'Baale, or Baalim, or Baalah, (the two former

3 And they * set the ark of God upon [d] a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that *was* in †Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart.

4 And they brought it out of [e] the house of Abinadab, which *was* at Gibeah, ‡ accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark.

5 And [f] David, and all the house of Israel, played before the LORD on all manner of *instruments made of* fir-wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

6 And when they came to [g] Nachon's threshing-floor, Uzzah [h] put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of

* Heb. *made the ark of God to ride.*
d Num. 4:5—12. 7:9. 1 Sam. 6:7.
† Or, *the hill.*
e 1 Sam. 7:1,2. 1 Chr. 13:7.
‡ Heb. *with.*
f 1 Sam. 10:5. 16:16. 2 Kings 3:15. 1 Chr. 13:8. 15:16—24. Ps. 47:5. 68: 25—27. 150:3—5. Dan. 3:5,7,10,15. Am. 5:23. 6:5.
g 1 Chr. 13:9. *Chidon's.*
h Num. 4:15,19,20.

in pursuance of his designs for the public welfare, is here bringing up the ark to his own city, that it might be near him, an ornament and strength to his new foundation.

V. 1—5. We have not heard a word of the ark, since it was lodged in Kirjath-jearim, immediately after its return out of its captivity among the Philistines, (1 Sam. 7: 1, 2.) except that, once, Saul called for it, 1 Sam. 14: 18. Let it not seem strange that we find the church so long in the wilderness, Rev. 12: 14 Perpetual visibility is no mark of the true church. God is graciously present with the souls of his people, when they want the external tokens of his presence. But now that David is settled in the throne, the honor of the ark begins to revive. Here is, I. An honorable mention made of the ark, *v.* 2. Let us learn hence, 1. To think and speak highly of God. His is the name above every name; *the Lord of hosts,* that has all creatures in heaven and earth at his command, and receives homage from them all, yet is pleased to dwell between the cherubim, over the propitiatory, or mercy-seat, graciously manifesting Himself to his people, reconciled in a Mediator, and ready to do them good. 2. To think and speak honorably of holy ordinances, which are to us, as the ark to Israel, the tokens of God's presence, (Mat. 23: 20.) and the means of our communion with Him, Ps. 27: 4. It is the honor of the ark, that it is the ark of God, He is jealous for it, is magnified in it, his name is called upon it. The divine institution puts a beauty and grandeur on holy ordinances, which otherwise have no form nor comeliness. Christ is our Ark, in and by Him God manifests his favor, and communicates his grace to us, and accepts our adorations and addresses.

II. An honorable attendance given to the ark on its removal. David made the motion, (1 Chr. 13: 1—3.) and the heads of the congregation agreed to it, *v.* 4. All the chosen men of Israel, the nobility and gentry, elders and officers, came, to the number of 30,000, (*v.* 1.) and the generality of the common people besides; (1 Chr. 13: 5.) some think, it was done at one of the three great festivals. This would help to inspire the young, who, perhaps, had scarcely heard of the ark, with a great veneration for it.

III. Great expressions of joy, on its removal, *v.* 5. David himself, and all with him that were musically inclined, used such instruments as they had, to excite and express their rejoicing on this occasion. It might well put them into a transport of joy, to see the ark rise out of obscurity, and move towards a public station. As secret worship is better, the more secret it is, so public worship is better, the more public it is: and we have reason to rejoice, when restraints are taken off; for joy of this, they *played before the Lord.* Note, Public joy must always be as *before the Lord,* with an eye to Him, and terminating in Him; and must not degenerate into that which is carnal and sensual. Lightfoot supposes that, on this occasion, David penned Ps. 68. because it begins with that ancient prayer of Moses, at the removing of the ark, *Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered;* and notice is taken there (*v.* 25.) of the *singers and players on instruments* that attended, and (*v.* 27.) of the princes of several of the tribes; and perhaps those words in the last verse, *O God, Thou art terrible out of thy holy places,* were added on occasion of the death of Uzzah.

IV. An error they were guilty of, in carrying the ark in a cart or carriage, whereas the priests should have carried it on their shoulders, *v.* 3. The Kohathites, who had the charge of the ark, had no wagons assigned them, because *their service was to bear it on their shoulders,* Num. 7: 9. The ark was no such heavy burden, but that they might, among them, have carried it as far as Mt. Zion on their shoulders; they needed not put it in a cart, like a common thing. The Philistines *knew* no better. I wonder how so wise and good a man as David, that conversed so much with the

masculine, the latter feminine,) was another name for Kirjath-jearim. (*Josh.* 15:9, 60. 1 *Chr.* 13:6. 1 *Sam.* 7:1,2,17. 1 *Chr.* 13:1—4.)—The terms used in speaking of the ark are very expressive of reverence. The name of JEHOVAH Sabaoth, the LORD of hosts, was, as it were, affixed to the ark, because it was the most honored external representation of his invisible glory: and when the ark was in its proper place, in the holy of holies, the Lord manifested his presence, by the visible glory above it, as the Protector and Glory of Israel. It especially typified Christ, and his merits and mediation, in which the name of JEHOVAH, and all his glorious excellences are harmoniously displayed, while all his hosts of angels, (represented by 'the cherubim,') desire to look down into those mysteries, or to be employed by Him who is the Savior and Glory of his redeemed people, and whom sinners now approach upon a mercy seat. (*Notes, Ex.* 25:10—22. *Ps.* 80:1. 1 *Pet.* 1:10—12.) SCOTT.

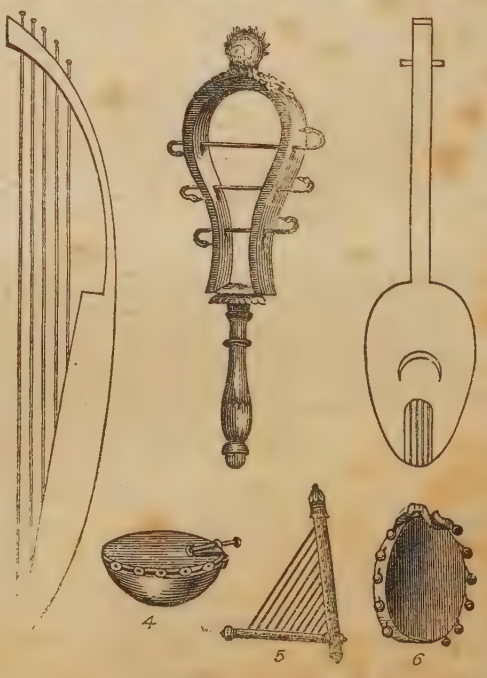
Verse 3.

David and the Israelites seem to have taken the Philistines for their precedent on this occasion, (*Notes,* 1 *Sam.* 6:2—16.) instead of consulting the law of God! (*Note, Num.* 7:4—9.) It is probable, Abinadab and Eleazar his son were dead before this time, as the ark had continued at Kirjath-jearim at least seventy years; (*Note,* 1 *Sam.* 7:1,2.) There is no proof that Uzzah and Ahio were Levites; though some expositors think they were: and if any of the priests attended, they seem not to have taken an active part in the service. *Gibeah* signifies *the hill,* and means that division of the city, in which the house of Abinadab stood. ID.

Verse 5.

(*M. R.*—1 *Chr.* 15:16—24.) ID.

All manner of fir wood.] *Bekol atsey berashim.* Vulg. 'In omnibus lignis fabrefactis.' *Sept.* 'In organis modulatis in fortitudine, et in canticis.' *Chal.* 'In omnibus lignis abietum.' *Syr.* and *Arab.* 'Lignis cedrinis, et abiegnis.' Qu. is this discrepancy owing to the fact, that the names of one or two instruments are given in the Heb. (as *atsey* or *rashim*) which the transl. could not identify? Dr. *A. Clarke* says, 'By omitting the letter yod [*y*, in atsey] it will read, *with all their might,* and so the parallel place, 1 Chr. 13:8. and the Sept. here, which alone makes sense;' and so *Boothr.* But then the word *rashim* remains untranslated. *On harps.*] *Kinnorim.* A portable cythara, lyre or harp, is given from the tombs at Thebes, (comp. note, 1 Sam. 10:5.) one also is seen at v. 14. The Arab. has fidibus, fiddles, see cut, 1 Sam. 18:6. *Psalteries,* (from *psallo* to leap, dance, Heb. *nebelim.*) Note, 1 Sam. 10:5. on the *nablum. Timbrels.*] *Tophim,* a kind of drum, see the cuts here, (4 and 6) and comp. note and cut, Gen. 31: 27. *Cornets.*] 'The treble and tenor cornets were simple curvilineal tubes, about 3 ft. long, gradually increasing in diameter from the mouth-piece. [Cut, 1 Sam. 10: 5.] The bass cornet was similar, but serpentine, and 4 or 5 ft. long. The cornet has now given place to the haut-boy.' *Encyc. Am.* The Heb. is *men'neym,* which the *Vulg.* and *Syr.* transl. *sistrums,* (note, 1 Sam. 18:6.) common on Egyptian monuments, in sacred processions, &c. they were of metal, pear shaped, (cut,) with three rods, or more, which, sliding back and forward as they were *shaken,* made a ringing: so *Montanus* transl. the Heb. word, *commoventibus,* from *nua* to be *shaken, agitated.* The *Sept.* transl. *cymbals.* But the *Arab.* has *quadratis* (tympanis) and the *Chal. quadruplicibus.* Did they understand the ancient Egyptian *portable*



4-stringed instrument in the cut? The *Syr.* too, uses a word referring to the number 4; and *Schindler* transl. the *Chal.* 'tabulæ tenues quatuor chordarum,' thin tablets, or boards, with 4 strings. *Cymbals.*] *Tseltselim.* Note, 1 Sam. 10:5. and cut, 1 Chr. 15:16. ED.

Verses 6, 7.

It may be supposed, that neither Eleazar, nor Uzzah, nor Ahio, had

it; for the oxen *shook it.

7 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah: and [i] God smote him there for *his* †error; and there he died by the ark of God.

8 And David was [k] displeased, because the LORD had ‡ made a breach upon Uzzah; and he called the name of the place § Perez-uzzah to this day.

9 And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, [m] How shall the ark of the LORD come to me?

10 So David would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of David; but David carried it aside into the house of [n] Obed-edom the [o] Gittite.

11 And the ark of the LORD continued in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months: and [p] the LORD blessed Obed-edom, and all his household.

[*Practical Observations.*]

* Or, *stumbled.*
[i] Lev. 10:1—3. 1 Sam. 6:19. 1 Chr. 13:10. 15:2,13. 1 Cor. 11:30—32.
† Or, *rashness.*
[k] 1 Chr. 13:11,12. Jon. 4:1,9.
‡ Heb. *broken.*
§ That is, *The breach of Uzzah.*
[l] Num. 17:12,13. 1 Sam. 5:10,11. 6:20. Ps. 119:120. Is. 6:5. Luke 5:8, 9. 1 Pet. 3:6.
[m] 1 Kings 8:27. 1 Chr. 13:11,12. Job 25:5,6.
[n] 1 Chr. 13:13,14. 15:13. 16:5. 26:4—8.
[o] 4:3. 15:19. 18:2.
[p] Gen. 30:27. 39:5,23. Prov. 3:9,10. Mal. 3:10.

law of God, came to be guilty of such an oversight. We will charitably hope it was because he was so extremely intent on the substance of the service, that he forgot to take care of this circumstance.

V. 6—11. We have here Uzzah struck dead for touching the ark, when on its journey to the city of David; a sad providence, which damped their mirth, stopped the progress of the ark, and, for the present, dispersed this great assembly in a fright.

I. Uzzah's offence seemed very small, *v.* 6. The critics are not agreed about the signification of the original word for *shook: They stumbled;* so our margin: *They kicked;* so some; perhaps, against the goad with which Uzzah drove them. *They stuck in the mire,* so some. By some accident or other, the ark was in danger of being overthrown. Uzzah was a Levite, but priests only might touch the ark. The law was express concerning the Kohathites, that though they were to carry the ark by the staves, yet *they must not touch any holy thing, lest they die,* Num. 4: 15. Uzzah's long familiarity with the ark, and the constant attendance he had given to it, might occasion his presumption, but would not excuse it.

II. His punishment for this offence seems very great, *v.* 7. In sacred things, God is a jealous God. He *smote him there for his rashness,* so the word is, struck him dead on the spot, *by the ark of God;* even the mercy-seat would not save him. 1. God, by this instance of severity, would show how He might justly have dealt with our first parents, when they had eaten that which was forbidden under the same penalty, *lest ye die.* 2. God saw the presumption and irreverence of Uzzah's heart. Perhaps he affected to show, before this great assembly, how bold he could make with the ark, having been so long acquainted with it. 3. David afterward owned, Uzzah died for an error they were all guilty of, 1 Chr. 15: 13. But Uzzah was singled out, perhaps, because most forward in advising that way of conveyance; however, he had fallen into another error, occasioned by that. Perhaps, the ark was not covered, as it should have been, with badgers' skins, (Num. 4: 6.) and that was a further provocation. 4. God would hereby awe the thousands of Israel, convince them the ark was never the less venerable for its having been so long in mean circumstances, and thus teach them to rejoice with trembling, and always to treat holy things with reverence and holy fear. 5. God would hereby teach us that a good intention would not justify a bad action. He can and will secure his ark, and needs not any man's sin to help him to do it. 6. If it were so great a crime for one to lay hold on the ark of the covenant, that had no right to do so, what is it for those to lay claim to the privileges of the covenant, that come not up to the terms of it? Ps. 50: 16. Heb. 10: 29.

III. David's feelings on this infliction, were keen, and perhaps not altogether as they should have been. He should have humbled himself under God's hand, confessed the error, acknowledged God's righteousness, and deprecated the further tokens of his displeasure, and then have gone on with the good work he had in hand. But

1. He was displeased; it is not said because Uzzah had affronted God, but because God had made a breach on Uzzah, *v.* 8. the same word is used for God's displeasure, *v.* 7. David did not now act like himself, like *a man after God's own heart.* It is not for us to be displeased at any thing God does, how unpleasing soever it is to us. When we lie under God's anger, we must keep under our own.

2. He was afraid, *v.* 9. it should seem, with amazement; for he said, *How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?* As if God sought advantages against all that were about Him, and was so extremely tender of his ark, there was no dealing with it; therefore better keep it at a distance. He should rather have said, 'Let the ark come to me, and I will take warning by this to treat it with more reverence.' *Provoke Me not,* (says God, Jer. 25: 6.) *and I will do you no hurt.* Or, this may be looked upon as a good use of this tremendous judgment; he did not say, 'Surely, Uzzah was a sinner above all men,' but is concerned for himself, as one conscious, not only of his own unworthiness of God's favor, but his obnoxiousness to God's displeasure. This God intends in his judgments, that others may hear and fear. David therefore will not bring the ark into his own city, (*v.* 10.) till he is better prepared for its reception.

3. He took care to perpetuate the remembrance of this stroke, by a new name he gave the place, *Perez-uzzah, the breach of Uzzah, v.* 8. The memorial would be a warning to posterity, to take heed of all rashness and irreverence in dealing about holy things; for *God will be sanctified in those that come nigh unto Him.*

4. He lodged the ark in a good house, that of Obed-edom, a Levite, where the disaster happen-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—11. Our judgment in religion must be regulated by the word of God, and not by the customs of the world, or even of the church: for human inventions have often long prevailed, when divine appointments have grown into disuse and contempt. But true believers are accepted, notwithstanding such errors and abuses as they either do not discern, or are unable to rectify: yet those, who have it in their power, should embrace the first opportunity of replacing matters upon the scriptural foundation, and of bringing to light and reputation those parts of true religion, which have been most neglected and obscured. That the LORD dwells upon the mercy-seat, 'between the cherubim,' that the name and perfections of JEHOVAH are in Jesus, the true Ark of the covenant, forms the foundation of every genuine human hope of felicity, and is the source of every believer's privileges and comforts: while, with all his hosts and all his authority, God is his reconciled Friend, Father, and Protector. Whatever else may be overlooked, these essential truths should be always placed in the most convincing and conspicuous light, in every sermon and religious ordinance; that sinners may be called on to believe, and believers to rejoice, and glorify God our Savior.—In the fervency of zeal we are all very prone to forget the *precepts* of God; and are too eager about the substance of our services, to consult the Scriptures concerning the right method of conducting them.—But while one is disheartened from active service through servile fear, others will be animated with humble faith and hope; and not dread the ark, or the ordinance, but only the sin which occasioned the rebuke, or against which the threatening is denounced. And the Lord will abundantly recompense those, who are humbly bold for Him, while others are either presumptuous or desponding. (*P. O.* 1 *Sam.* 6:) SCOTT.

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thus touched the ark during all the years it had remained with them. Uzzah, it is probable, had become too familiar with this sacred symbol of the Lord's especial presence. No doubt the Lord saw, in his conduct, what indicated irreverence and presumption; not wholly unlike the sin of Nadab and Abihu, when they offered strange fire before Him: and therefore He smote him, perhaps in a similar manner, and for the same reasons. (*Notes, Lev.* 10:1—5. 1 *Sam.* 6:19—21.) His death was a pointed rebuke and warning to David, to the priests, and to all Israel. SCOTT.

Verses 8, 9.

David's heart was upright, and his zeal and love very fervent: but there were many things very faulty in his frame of mind, as well as irregular in his proceedings, on this occasion. He seems to have been possessed with some measure of self-complacency, on account of the important service he was performing, in honoring the ark after it had been so long neglected; and to have thought that the goodness of the work would counterbalance a degree of informality in the manner of doing it, and ensure to him comfort and commendation: and he had not taken time to examine the law of God, or to consult the priests how this good work ought to be performed. When therefore the event turned out contrary to his expectations, he was greatly disconcerted, and his lively religious affections were extinguished. He was *angry,* (so the word signifies,) that occasion had been given for this unexpected stroke; though it does not appear with whom he was displeased, and certainly his anger implied a degree of rebellion against the dispensation of God in smiting Uzzah! A measure of servile fear succeeded to zeal, hope, and joy: so that he would not venture to bring the ark any nearer to him, lest he should be destroyed in like manner. (*Num.* 17:12,13. *Josh.* 7:6—9. 1 *Sam.* 6:19—21. 1 *Chr.* 15:12—14. *Ps.* 119:120. *Is.* 6:5.) SCOTT.

Verses 10, 11.

Obed-edom was a Levite; (*M. R.* n;) and he is called a Gittite, perhaps from Gathrimmon, the place of his birth, or of his abode. (*Josh.* 21:24,25.) ID.

Verses 12, 13.

He had now learned his mistake, and the reason of the breach made

12 And it was told king David, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that *pertaineth* unto him, because of the ark of God. [q] So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness.

13 And it was *so*, that [r] when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed [s] oxen and fatlings.

14 And David [t] danced before the LORD [u] with all *his* might; and David *was* [v] girded with a linen ephod.

15 So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD [x] with shouting, and with [y] the sound of the trumpet.

16 And as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, [z] Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she [a] despised him in her heart.

17 And [b] they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had * pitched for it: and David [c] offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the LORD.

q 1 Chr. 15:1—3,25. Ps. 24:7—10. 68: 24—27. 132:6—8.
r Num. 4:15. 7:9. Josh. 3:3. 1 Chr. 15:2,25,26.
s 1 Kings 8:5. 2 Chr. 5:6.
t Ex. 15:20. Judg. 11:34. 21:21. Ps. 30:11. 149:3. 150:4. Luke 15:25.
u Deut. 6:5. Ec. 9:10. Col. 3:23.
v 1 Sam. 2:18. 22:18. 1 Chr. 15:27.
x 1 Chr. 15:15,25,28. Ezra 3:10,11. Ps. 47:1,5,6. 68:24—27.
y Num. 10:1—10. Josh. 6:4,5. Ps. 150:3.
z See on 3:14.
a 1 Chr. 15:29. Ps. 69:7. Is. 53:3. Acts 2:13. 1 Cor. 2:14.
b 1 Chr. 15:1. 16:1. 2 Chr. 1:4. Ps. 132:8.
* Heb. *stretched.*
c 1 Kings 8:5,62—65. 2 Chr. 5:6. 7:5—7. Ezra 6:16,17.

ed, *v.* 10, 11. Obed-edom knew what slaughter the ark had made among the Philistines that imprisoned it, and the Bethshemites that looked into it. He saw Uzzah struck dead for touching it, and perceived David himself afraid of meddling with it; yet he cheerfully invites it to his own house, and opens his doors to it without fear, knowing it was a *savor of death unto death*, to those only that treated it ill. 'Oh the courage,' says Bp. Hall, 'of an honest and faithful heart; nothing can make God otherwise than amiable to his own: even his very justice is lovely.' And now the same hand that punished Uzzah rewarded Obed-edom. Let none think the worse of the Gospel for the judgments inflicted on those that reject it, but set in opposition to them the blessings it brings to those that duly receive it. None ever had, or ever shall have reason to say, that *it is in vain to serve God.* Let masters of families be encouraged to keep up religion in their families, and to serve God and the interests of his kingdom, with their houses and estates, for that is the way to bring a blessing on all they have. The ark is a guest which none shall lose by, that bid it welcome Josephus says, that whereas, before, Obed-edom was poor, on a sudden, in these three months, his estate increased, to the envy of his neighbors. Piety is the best friend to prosperity. In wisdom's left hand are riches and honor. His household shared in the blessing: it is good to live in a family that entertains the ark, for all about it will fare the better for it.

V. 12—19. We have here a second attempt to bring the ark home to the city of David. It should seem, the blessing on Obed-edom for the ark's sake, was a great inducement to David, (*v.* 12.) For, it was an evidence, 1. That God was reconciled to them, and his anger turned away; and if God be at peace with them, they can cheerfully go on with their design. 2. That the ark was not such a burdensome stone, as it was taken to be, but, on the contrary, happy was the man that had it near him. Christ is indeed a *Stone of stumbling, and a Rock of offence*, to them that are disobedient; but to them which believe, a *Corner-stone, elect, precious.* Note, The experience others have had of the gains of godliness, should encourage us to be religious.

1. David now rectified the former error, and ordered those, whose business it was, to carry it on their shoulders. This is implied here, (*v.* 13.) and expressed, 1 Chr. 15: 15. *Then* we make a good use of the judgments of God on ourselves and others, when we are awakened by them to reform and amend whatever has been amiss.

2. At their first setting out, he offered sacrifices to God, (*v.* 13.) by way of atonement for their former errors, and in thankful acknowledgment of the blessings bestowed on the house of Obed-edom. *Then* we are likely to speed in our enterprises, when we begin with God, and give diligence to make our peace with Him. When we attend on God in holy ordinances, our eye must be to the great Sacrifice, to which we owe it that we are taken into covenant and communion, Ps. 50: 5.

3. He himself attended the solemnity with the highest expressions of joy, (*v.* 14.) His dancing, I suppose, was not artificial, by any certain rule or measure, nor do we find that any danced with him; but it was a natural expression of his great joy and exultation of mind. He laid aside his imperial purple, and put on a plain ephod, which was light and convenient for dancing, and was used in religious exercises by those who were no priests, for Samuel wore one, 1 Sam. 2: 18. That great prince thought it no disparagement to appear in the habit of a minister to the ark.

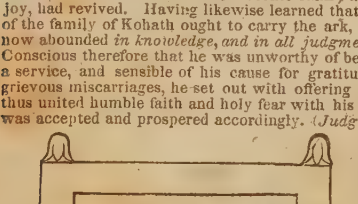
4. All the people triumphed in this advancement of the ark; *v.* 15. expressing their own joy in loud acclamations, and giving notice to all about them to rejoice with them. The public and free administration of ordinances, not only under the protection, but under the smiles, of the civil powers, is just matter of rejoicing to any people.

5. The ark was safely brought to, and honorably deposited in, the place prepared for it, *v.* 17. namely, a *tabernacle*, or tent, *David* had *pitched for it;* not the tabernacle Moses reared, but in imitation of that; that was at Gibeon, (2 Chr. 1: 13.) and, we may suppose, gone to decay, but this was a tent set up on purpose. As soon as it was lodged, he offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, in thankful supplication to God for the continuance of his favor. Note, All our joys must be sanctified both with praises and prayers; *for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* Now, it should seem, he penned Ps. 132.

6. The people were then dismissed with great satisfaction. He prayed God to bless them, and rewarded them for the honor and respect they had now shown, with a generous treat; for so it was, rather than a distribution of alms; the great men, probably, he entertained at his own house, but the *multitude*, at their respective quarters, and this he did; 1. in token of his joy and gratitude to God, and when the heart is enlarged by cheerfulness, that should open the hand in liberality; Esth. 9. 22. to recommend himself to the people, and confirm his interest in them; for *every one is a friend to him that giveth gifts.*

V. 20—23. David, having dismissed the congregation with a blessing, *returned to bless his household;* (*v.* 20.) i. e. to pray with and for them, and to offer family-thanksgiving for this national

on Uzzah. His mind was also become calm; and his zeal, love, and joy, had revived. Having likewise learned that none but the Levites of the family of Kohath ought to carry the ark, (1 *Chr.* 15:) his 'love now abounded *in knowledge, and in all judgment.*' (*Phil.* 1:9—11.) Conscious therefore that he was unworthy of being employed in such a service, and sensible of his cause for gratitude, if preserved from grievous miscarriages, he set out with offering sacrifices: and, as he thus united humble faith and holy fear with his fervent affections, he was accepted and prospered accordingly. (*Judg.* 20:26—28.) SCOTT.



(13.) *Bare the ark.*] Since writing the notes on Ex. 25:10—17. the Ed. finds on one of the most ancient monuments of Egypt, *an ark* in a religious procession, with emblems on its sides, and images on its top. The length is exactly two thirds of the height of the 4 bare-headed, shaven figures, who *bear it by the staves upon their shoulders.* ED.

Verses 14, 15.

(*M. R.* v.) It does not appear that David in the least attempted to encroach on the priestly office.—The methods here adopted by the Israelites in expressing joy and gratitude, were customary among them; and the music, blowing of trumpets, and sacred dances, were accompanied with psalms of praise, sung to the glory of God, by great multitudes in concert. (*Ex.* 15:20,21. 2 *Chr.* 15: 16:) SCOTT.

(14.) *Danced*, comp. with *v.* 5. *David played.*] A cut is given of a *dancing* figure who *plays;* it is from a representation of a religious festival found at Herculaneum, and shows an ancient form of the harp, as well as the method of *playing* while *dancing.* ED.

Verse 16.

Michal seems to have had no deep sense of the importance and excellency of heavenly things: but she was possessed with high thoughts of temporal dignity and royalty. Perhaps, she considered David's zeal as a reproach of her father's negligence. SCOTT.

Verse 17.

The tabernacle, which had been long situated at Shiloh, was thence carried to Nob, and, perhaps, when Samuel died it was placed at Gibeon, with the altar of burnt-offering, and

18 And as soon [d] as David had made an end of offering burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, [e] he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts.

19 And [f] he dealt among all the people, *even* among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece *of flesh*, and a flagon *of wine*. [g] So all the people departed every one to his house.

20 Then David returned to [h] bless his household. And [i] Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How [k] glorious was the king of Israel to-day, who [l] uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the [m] vain fellows [*] shamelessly uncovereth himself!

21 And David said unto Michal, *It was* [n] before the LORD, which [o] chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I [p] play before the LORD.

22 And I will yet be [q] more vile than thus, and will be base [*] in mine own sight: and of the † maid-servants, which thou hast spoken of, of them shall [r] I be had in honor.

23 Therefore [t] Michal the daughter of Saul had no child [u] unto the day of her death.

mercy. Ministers must not think their public performances will excuse from family worship; David, though he had prophets, priests, and Levites, about him, to be his chaplains, yet did not devolve the work on them, but himself *blessed his household:* It is angels' work to worship God, and therefore surely can be no disparagement to the greatest men.

Never did David return to his house with so much pleasure and satisfaction, as now, and yet even this joyful day concluded with some uneasiness, occasioned by the pride and peevishness of his wife. Even the palaces of princes are not exempt from domestic troubles. Michal thought he degraded himself, in dancing before the ark. She thought his mighty zeal for the ark of God, and the transport of joy he was in, on its coming home to him, was but a foolish thing, and unbecoming so great a soldier, statesman, and monarch: it had been enough to encourage the devotion of others, but she looked upon it as a thing below him to appear so very devout himself. Note, The exercises of religion appear very mean to those that have little or no religion themselves. She was so full of disdain and indignation, that she could not hold her peace till she had him in private, but went out to meet him with reproaches.

Observe, 1. How she taunted him, *v.* 20. Her contempt of him and his devotion began in the heart, but out of the abundance of that the mouth spake. What displeased her, was his affection to the ark; but she basely represents his conduct, in dancing before the ark, as lewd and immodest. We have no reason to think this was true in fact: David, no doubt, observed decorum, and governed his zeal with discretion; but it is common for those that reproach religion, thus to put false colors on it, and lay it under the most odious characters. To have abused *any man* thus, for his pious zeal, had been very profane; but to abuse *her own husband* thus, whom she ought to reverence, and one whose prudence and virtue were above the reach of malice itself to disparage, one who had showed such affection for her, that he would not accept a crown, unless he might have her restored to him, (*ch.* 3: 13.) was a most base and wicked thing, and showed her to have more of Saul's daughter in her, than of David's wife, or Jonathan's sister.

2. How he replied to her reproach.

(1.) He designed thereby to honor God, *v.* 21. Notwithstanding her invidious construction, he had the testimony of his conscience, that he sincerely aimed at the glory of God. Here he reminds her indeed of the setting aside of her father's house, to make way for him to the throne, that she might not think herself the most proper judge of propriety. 'If the expressions of a warm devotion to God were looked upon as mean and unfashionable in thy father's court, yet *I will play before the Lord*, and thereby bring them into reputation again.' Note, [1.] We should be afraid of censuring the devotion of others, though it may not agree with our sentiments, because, for aught we know, the heart may be upright in it. [2.] If we can approve ourselves to God in what we do in religion, we need not value the censures and reproaches of men. [3.] The more we are vilified for well doing, the more resolute we should be in it. *I will be yet more vile.*

(2.) He designed thereby to humble himself. In the throne of judgment, and in the field of battle, none shall do more to support the grandeur, honor and authority of a prince, than David; but in acts of devotion he lays aside the thoughts of majesty, humbles himself to the dust before the Lord, joins in with the meanest services done in honor of the ark, and yet thinks it no diminution to him. The greatest of men is less than the least of the ordinances of Jesus Christ.

(3.) He doubted not but even this would turn to his reputation, among those whose reproach she feared. The common people, so far from thinking the worse of him for these pious condescensions, would esteem and honor him the more. The truly pious are sometimes *manifested in the consciences* even of those that speak ill of them. Let us never be driven from our duty by the fear of reproach. Piety will have its praise: let us not then be indifferent in it, nor afraid or ashamed to own it.

God punished Michal's insolence by writing her for ever childless from this time forward, *v.* 23. *They that honor God, He will honor;* but those that despise Him, and his servants and service, *shall be lightly esteemed.*

CHAP. VII.

David purposes to build a temple, and Nathan encourages him, 1—3. God, by Nathan, forbids it, but with promises of special blessings to Israel, to David, and to his seed, 4—17. David's prayer and thanksgiving, 18—29.

AND it came to pass, [a] when the king sat in his house, and [b] the LORD had given him rest

CHAP. VII. V. 1—3. Here is, I. David at rest, *v.* 1. Though a man of war, he was *for peace*, (Ps. 120: 7.) and did not *delight in war.* He had not been long at rest, nor was it long before he was again engaged in war; but, at present, he enjoyed a calm, and he was in his element when sitting in his house, meditating on the law of God.

II. David's thoughts of building a temple for the honor of God. Thus he would make a grateful

d 1 Kings 8:55. 1 Chr. 16:2. 2 Chr. 6:3. 30:18,19,27. Acts 3:26.
e Gen. 14:19. Ex. 39:43. Lev. 9:22, 23. Heb. 7:1—7.
f 1 Chr. 16:3. 2 Chr. 30:24. 35:7,8,12, 13. Neh. 8:10. Ez. 45:17. Acts 20: 35. Eph. 4:3.
g 1 Kings 8:66. 2 Chr. 7:10.
h 18. Gen. 18:19. Josh. 24:15. 1 Chr. 16:43. Ps. 39: *title* 101:2.
i 16. Ps. 69:7—9. Mark 3:21.
k Neh. 4:3,4. Is. 53:2,3. John 12.6. 1 Cor. 4:10—13. Phil. 2:7,8.
l 1 Sam. 19:23,24.
m Judg. 9:4. Job 30:8.
* Or, *openly.*
n 14,16. 1 Cor. 10:31.
o 1 Sam. 13:14. 15:28. 16:1,12. Ps. 78:70—72. 89:19,20. Acts 13:22.
p 5. 1 Chr. 15:29.
q Is. 50:6. 51:7. Matt. 5:11,12. Acts 5:41,42. Heb. 12:2. 1 Pet. 4:14.
r Gen. 32:10. Job 40:4. 42:6. 1 Tim. 1:15. 1 Pet. 5:6.
† Or, *handmaids* of my servants.
s 1 Sam. 2:30.
t 1 Sam. 1:6—8. Is. 4:1. Hos. 9:11. Luke 1:25.
u 1 Sam. 15:35. Is. 22:14.
a 1 Chr. 17:1, &c. Dan. 4:29,30.
b Josh. 21:44. 23:1. 1 Kings 5:4. Chr. 14:6. Prov. 16:7. Luke 1:74,75.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 12—23. When pious men, who have been betrayed into unwarrantable conduct, have had time for self-examination, searching the Scriptures, and prayer, they will discover and confess their mistakes, and be reduced to a better temper; justify God in his corrections; profit by their own errors; stand the stronger for their falls, and not abate in their zeal and affections, but learn to connect them with humility, and to regulate them according to the precepts of the sacred Scripture. Then they may expect to prosper in their attempts to glorify God, and promote the cause of true religion.—We are so unworthy, and our services so defiled, that all our joy in divine ordinances must be connected with the exercise of repentance, and faith in the Redeemer's atoning blood; so that the more we are preserved from sin, and the more we are enabled to do in the work of God, with acceptance and comfort, the greater obligations we are brought under, and the more thankful we ought to be. (1 *Chr.* 29: 10—19.)—Proud and carnal persons have always ridiculed fervent devotion, as folly or enthusiasm. Satan has long deluded men into a persuasion, that such holy earnestness is unbecoming persons of genius, learning, wealth, or influence; and only fit for ignorant, poor people, women, or children. But if the Lord has chosen and accepted us, we should deem such reproaches honorable, and determine to become still more vile in the eyes of ungodly revilers, by abounding in those services which they despise. —Piety should always be attended with liberality.—Finally, in this removal of the ark, let us contemplate the Redeemer's ascension to glory, and seek to participate his precious gifts, and to serve Him with ardent love and joy. SCOTT.

all other things belonging to its sacred services. (1 *Sam.* 7:1,2. 21:1, 2.) David, however, prepared another tent for the reception of the ark, where an altar was erected and sacrifices offered; as also there were on the former altar. (1*Chr.* 16:37—43.) SCOTT.

Verses 18, 19.

David prayed for the people, and, as a prophet, solemnly blessed them in the name of the Lord, not using the ministry of the priests. (*Num.* 6.23—26.) SCOTT.

Verse 20.

Michal spoke the language of passion and contempt. Because David had laid aside his royal robes, she would represent it as if he had improperly stripped himself. (1 *Sam.* 19:23,24.) ID.

round about from all his enemies,

2 That the king said unto [c] Nathan the prophet, See now, [d] I dwell in an house of cedar, but [e] the ark of God dwelleth within [f] curtains.

3 And Nathan said to the king, [g] Go, do [h] all that *is* in thine heart: [i] for the LORD *is* with thee.

4 And it came to pass [j] that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying,

5 Go and tell [*] my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, [k] Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?

6 Whereas [l] I have not dwelt in *any* house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have [m] walked in a [n] tent and in a tabernacle.

7 In all *the places* wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel, spake I a word with any of the [o] tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to [p] feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?

8 Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, [q] I took thee from the sheep-cote, from [†] following the sheep, to be [r] ruler over my people, over Israel.

9 And [s] I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have [t] cut off all thine enemies [‡] out of thy sight, and have made thee [u] a great name, [x] like unto the name of the great *men* that *are* in the earth.

10 Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will [y] plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; [z] neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, [a] as before-time,

11 And as [b] since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over my people Israel, and [c] have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee, that [d] he will make thee an house.

12 And [e] when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt [f] sleep with thy fathers, [g] I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

13 [h] He shall build an house for my name, and [i] I will establish the

return for the honors God had put upon him. Note, When God, in his providence, has remarkably done much for us, it should put us on contriving what we may do for Him and his glory. *What shall I render unto the Lord?* And when He gives us rest, and finds us little to do of worldly business, we must do so much the more for God and our souls. How different David's thoughts, when he sat in his palace, from Nebuchadnezzar's, when he *walked in his!* That proud man thought of nothing but the might of his own power, and the honor of his own majesty; this humble soul is full of contrivance how to glorify God, and honor Him; and how God resisted the proud, and gave grace and glory to the humble, the event showed. David thought of the incongruousness, that he should dwell in a palace, and the ark in a tent. He had been uneasy till he found out *a place for the ark,* (Ps. 132: 4, 5.) and now he is uneasy till he finds out a better place. Gracious, grateful souls never think they can do enough for God, but when they have done much, are still projecting to do more, and devising liberal things. They cannot enjoy their own accommodations, while they see the church of God in distress and under a cloud. Those who *stretched themselves upon beds of ivory,* and were *not grieved for the affliction of Joseph,* though they had David's music, had not David's spirit; (Amos 6: 4—6.) nor they who dwelt in their *ceiled houses,* while God's house *lay waste,* Hag. 1: 4.

III. His communicating his thought to the prophet. David told Nathan, that by him he might know the mind of God. It was certainly a good work; but it was uncertain whether it was the will of God, that David should have the doing of it.

IV. Nathan approves it. *v.* 3. Note, We ought to do all we can, to encourage and promote the good purposes and designs of others. Nathan spoke this, not in God's name, but as from himself; not as a prophet, but as a wise and good man; it was agreeable to the revealed will of God, which requires that all in their places should lay out themselves for the advancement of religion and the service of God, though, it seems, the secret will was otherwise, that David should not do this. It was Christ's prerogative always to speak the mind of God, which He perfectly knew; other prophets spake it only when the spirit of prophecy was upon them; but if in any thing they mistook, (as Samuel, 1 Sam. 16: 6. and Nathan here,) God soon rectified the mistake.

V. 4—17. We have here a full revelation of God's favor to David, by Nathan the prophet. Nathan might not continue long in an error, nor David have his head any further filled with thoughts of that, which he must never bring to pass. God might have said this to David Himself immediately, but He chose to send it by Nathan, to support the honor of his prophets, and to preserve in David a regard to them.

Now, in this message,

I. David's purpose to build God a house is superseded. God noticed that purpose, and was well pleased with it, as appears, 1 K. 8: 18. yet He forbade him to go on with his purpose, (*v.* 5. as explained in the parallel place, 1 Chron. 17: 4.) David is a man of war, and must enlarge the borders of Israel, by carrying on their conquests; he is a sweet psalmist, and must prepare psalms for the use of the temple when it is built, and settle the courses of the Levites; but his son's genius will better suit for building the house, and he will have a better treasure to bear the charge of it, therefore let it be reserved for him. *As every man hath received the gift, so let him minister.*

The building of a temple was to be a work of time, and preparation made for it; but it was a thing that had never been spoken of till now. David, in his Psalms, often calls the tabernacle a temple, (as Ps. 5: 7.—27: 4.—29: 9.—65: 4.—138: 2.) because it answered the intention of a temple, though made but of curtains: wise and good men value not the show, while they have the substance. David perhaps had more true devotion, and sweeter communion with God, in a house of curtains, than any of his successors in the house of cedar. Better a *tent* of God's appointing, than a *temple* of his own inventing.

II. David is reminded of the great things God had done for him, to let him know he was a favorite of Heaven, though he had not the favor to be employed in this service: as also that God

c 12:1. 1 Chr. 29:29.
d 5:11. 1 Chr. 14:1. Jer. 22:13—15. Hag. 1:4.
e Ps. 132:5. John 2:17. Acts 7:36.
f 6:17. Ex. 26:1—14. 40:21. 1 Chr. 16:1. 2 Chr. 1:4.
g 2 Kings 4:27.
h 1 Sam. 16:7. 1 Kings 8:17,18. 1 Chr. 22:7. 28:2. Ps. 20:4. 37:4.
i 1 Sam. 10:7. 1 John 2:27.
j Num. 12:6. 1 Chr. 17:3. Am. 3:7.
* Heb. *to my servant, to David.*
k 1 Kings 5:3. 8:18,19. 1 Chr. 17:4. 22:7,8. 28:3.
l Josh. 18:1. 1 Kings 8:16. 1 Chr. 17:5,6.
m Ex. 33:14,15. 40:35—38. Lev. 26:23,24,27,28. Num. 10:33—36. Deut. 23:14. 2 Cor. 6:16. Rev. 2:1.
n Ex. 40:18,19,34. Acts 7:44.
o 1 Chr. 17:6. *judges.*
p 5:2. Ps. 78:71,72. Is. 40:11. Jer. 23:4. Ez. 34:2,15,23. Mic. 5:4. Matt. 2:6. *marg.* John 21:15—17. Acts 21:28. 1 Pet. 5:2.
q 1 Sam. 16:11,12. 1 Chr. 17:7. Ps. 78:70.
† Heb. *after.*
r 6:21. 12:7. 1 Sam. 9:16. 10:1.
s 5:10. 8:6,14. 22:30,34—38. 1 Chr. 17:8.
t 22:1. 1 Sam. 31:6. Ps. 89:23.
‡ Heb. *from thy face.*
u Gen. 12:2. 1 Sam. 2:8. 1 Chr. 17:8. Ps. 113:7,8. Luke 1:52.
x Ps. 87:3—6.
y 1 Chr. 17:9. Ps. 44:2. 80:8. Jer. 18:9. 24:6. Ez. 37:25—27. Am. 9:15.
z Ps. 89:22,23. Is. 60:18. Hos. 2:18.
a Ex. 1:13,14,22. Judg. 4:3. 6:2—6. 1 Sam. 13:17.
b Judg. 2:14—16. 1 Sam. 12:9—11. Ps. 106:42.
c 1 Job 5:18,19. 34:29. Ps. 46:9.
d 27. Ex. 1:21. 1 Kings 2:24. 1 Chr. 17:10. 22:10. Ps. 89:3,4. 127:1. Prov. 14:1.
e 1 Kings 2:1. 8:20.
f Deut. 31:16. 1 Kings 1:21. Dan. 12:2. Acts 13:36. 1 Cor. 15:51. 1 Thes. 4:14.
g Gen. 15:4. 1 Kings 8:20. 1 Chr. 17:11. Ps. 89:29. 132:11. Is. 9:7. 11:1—3,10. Matt. 22:42—44. Acts 2:30.
h 1 Kings 5:5. 6:12. 8:19. 1 Chr. 17:11,12. 22:9,10. 28:6,10. Zech. 6:13. Matt. 16:18. Luke 1:31—33. Heb. 3:3. 1 Pet. 2:5.
i 16. 1 Chr. 28:7. Ps. 89:4,21,36,37. Is. 9:7. 49:8. Luke 1:32,33.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII. V. 5. *Shalt thou &c.*] It appears that Nathan spoke more to David than is here recorded: for other reasons are afterwards given, why David was not permitted to build the temple. (2 *Chr.* 22:6—10. 28:2—8.) SCOTT.

Eusebius mentions, that a story of David, founded on this, was preserved in the writings of *Eupolemus*, a heathen, who varies the narrative a little: see Gill. ED.

Verses 6, 7.

Though the building of a temple accorded with the spirit of the Mosaic dispensation, it was not commanded by any law; and was not therefore peculiarly any one's duty, without some further intimation from God. Nor was it necessary either to the glory of God, or the good of Israel, to have a temple; and the erecting of one might therefore very well be delayed a little longer. (*Is.* 66:1,2. *Acts* 7:44—50.) SCOTT.

(7.) *Tribes.*] '*Shibtey.* Rather *shophtey, judges,* and so the parallel passage. There is but *one letter* of difference in the words, and it is a letter which might be easily mistaken for another; the apex under the upper stroke of the *pay,* (ph) being the only mark to distinguish it from the *baith,* (b).' So *Houbigant, Waterland,* and Dr. *A. Clarke.* GREENF.

Verse 10.

'*Will appoint . . . . will plant . . . shall . . .* should be transl. *have appointed . . . have planted . . . do:* and v. 11. should be joined thus, "any more; as beforetime, and as since the time that I have commanded judges to be over Israel: and I have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies."' *Kennicott,* and Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 12—16.

The work and honor of building the temple were reserved for David's son, who *was hereafter to be born;* for, by the future tense in this connection, both Absalom and Adonijah, and all the children David

throne of his kingdom for ever.

14 [k] I will be his father, and he shall be my son: [l] if he commit iniquity, [m] I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

15 But [n] my mercy shall not depart away from him, [o] as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

16 And [p] thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

17 [q] According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

[*Practical Observations.*]

18 ¶ Then went king David in, and [r] sat before the LORD, and he said,

k 1 Chr. 17:13. 28:6. Ps. 89:26,27. Matt. 3:17. Heb. 1:5.
l Ps. 89:30—35.
m Deut. 8:5. Job 5:17. Ps. 94:12,13. Prov. 3:11,12. Jer. 30:11. 1 Cor. 11: 32. Heb. 12:5—11. Rev. 3:19.
n Ps. 89:28,34. Is. 55:3. Acts 13:34—37.
o 1 Sam. 15:28. 16:14. 1 Kings 11:13, 34—36. Is. 9:7. 37:35.
p Gen. 49:10. 2 Kin s 19:34. 1 Chr. 17:13,14. Ps. 45:6. 72:5,17—19. 89: 36,37. Is. 9:7. Dan. 2:44. 7:14. Matt. 16:18. Luke 1:32,33. John 12:34. Rev. 11:15.
q 1 Chr. 17:15. Acts 20:20,27. 1 Cor. 15:3.
r 1 Chr. 17:16. Is. 37:14.

1. Some of these promises relate to Solomon, his immediate successor, and to the royal line of Judah. (1.) God would advance him to the throne. David's government was the first that was entailed; for the promise made to Christ, of the kingdom, was to reach to his spiritual seed: *if children, then heirs.* (2.) He would settle him in the throne, *I will establish his kingdom, v.* 12. *The throne of his kingdom, v.* 13. His title shall be clear and uncontested, his interest confirmed, and his administration steady. 3. He would employ him in that good work of building the temple, which David had only the satisfaction of designing. *He shall build a house for my name, v.* 13. The work shall be done, though David do it not. (4.) He would take him into the covenant of adoption, *v.* 14, 15. We need no more to make us and ours happy, than to have God to be a Father to us and them: and if He be a careful, tender, bountiful Father to us, we must be obedient, tractable, dutiful children to Him. The promise here speaks *as unto sons.* [1.] That his Father would correct him, when there was occasion. Afflictions are an article of the covenant, and are not only consistent with, but flow from, God's fatherly love. 'I will consider his frame, and correct him with all possible tenderness and compassion, and no more than there is need of; it shall be with *the stripes*, the *touches*,' (so the word is,) '*of the children of men;* not a stroke, or wound, but a gentle touch.' [2.] That yet He would not disinherit him, *v.* 15. The revolt of the ten tribes from the house of David was their correction for iniquity, but the constant adherence of the other two to that family, which was a competent support of the royal dignity, perpetuated the mercy of God to the seed of David, according to this promise. Never any other family swayed the sceptre of Judah, than that of David. This is that covenant of royalty celebrated, Ps. 89: 3, &c. as typical of the covenant of redemption and grace.

2. Others of them relate to Christ, who is often called *David*, and the *Son of David:* that son of David to whom these promises pointed, and in whom they had their full accomplishment. He was of the *seed of David*, Acts 13: 23. But the establishing of his house, and his throne, and his *kingdom for ever*, (*v.* 13.) and again, and a third time, (*v.* 16.) *for ever*, can be applied to no other than Christ and his kingdom. The supposition of committing iniquity, cannot indeed be applied to the Messiah Himself, but it is applicable (and very comfortably) to his spiritual seed; true believers have their infirmities, for which they may expect to be corrected, but they shall not be cast off. Every transgression in the covenant will not throw us out of covenant.

Now, (1.) This message Nathan faithfully delivered to David, *v.* 17. Though, in forbidding

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—17. The greater leisure and ability any man is favored with, the more should he form, and attempt to execute, plans of important usefulness; and those who are largely supplied with the providential gifts of God, and at the same time richly replenished by his grace, will most comfortably enjoy their possessions, when they can render them subservient to his glory and the salvation of souls. Such zealous and liberal Christians should be encouraged by their brethren, and by ministers, as far as the great designs they conceive agree with the Scripture.—The wisest and best of men, (not excepting prophets and apostles, unless when immediately speaking by divine inspiration,) have been liable to error; hence the claim of infallibility is the very essence of blasphemous arrogance. But God will rectify the prejudicial mistakes of his upright servants, and prevent every bad consequence: and it is their true honour, as well as their duty, to retract what they have unadvisedly advanced, and to acknowledge themselves mistaken; and all wise men will respect them the more for doing so.—Our desires, even of usefulness, must be subjected to God's holy will, and regulated by his precept. He appoints unto every man his work, and endows him with suitable qualifications: and each of us should thankfully and faithfully mind our proper business; and rejoice in the superior talents, and more honorable and important services, of our brethren.—Our own plans, though well intended, are often fit for nothing but to be laid aside, to make way for the Lord's purposes respecting us, of which perhaps we had no conception. But, in one way or other, God will bless, and make useful to his church, those persons, who simply devote themselves and all they have to his glory.—Israel, according to the flesh, forfeited by their sins the rest to which they were brought: and the cause of God has hitherto been greatly opposed and run down. Yet the time is coming when this cause will gain the entire ascendency, and overspread the earth; and when the Israel of God shall 'be planted, and dwell in a place of their own, and move no more, neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more for ever.'—We should indeed earnestly desire the entail of our blessings on our posterity, that they may be children of God; but our chief comfort in life and death must arise from looking unto Jesus, the Son of God, the everlasting King of Israel, and in participating his covenanted mercies. (*Note*, 23: 5.) In his human nature 'all the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily;' and by uniting his people to Himself through his Holy Spirit, He builds the living temple, in which the Lord will dwell for ever. If we belong to Him, He will not finally reject us: but when we offend, He will, by rebukes and chastenings, bring us to repentance, and establish us, as kings and priests before Him, to all eternity. (*Notes, Heb.* 12: 4—8. *Rev.* 3: 18, 19. 5: 8—10.)

SCOTT.

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then had, were excluded from the succession.—The kingdom over Judah remained, unto the Babylonish captivity, in the family of David and Solomon.—These promises were, however, in an especial manner, predictions of Christ, the son of David, the true Solomon, 'the Prince of peace,' who builds the spiritual temple of true believers, to be 'an habitation of God through the Spirit.' (*Notes, Zech.* 6:12,13. *Eph.* 2:19—22.)—The clause concerning the merciful chastisement of David's son if he offended, and the engagement not to reject him for his transgressions, belongs to his people, who are his seed, and one with him. In a parallel passage, it is put in the plural number, 'If his *children* forsake my law, &c.' (*Ps.* 89:30—33.)—The expression, 'before thee,' might perhaps be a gracious intimation, that though these things would take place after David's death, yet he would be acquainted with them, and rejoice in them.

SCOTT.

(14.) Dr. *A. Clarke* transl. . . . 'son: even in his suffering for iniquity, I shall chasten him with the rod of men, (*with the rod* due to men,) and with the stripes (*due to*) the children of Adam;' and refers to Is. 53 4,5. See the Diss. of Kennicott, quoted by him at the end of this ch. in which it is remarked, that 'next to our present very improper translation, the cause of the common confusion here has been—not distinguishing the promise here made, as to *Messiah* alone, from another made as to *Solomon* alone: one by Nathan, near the beginning, the other by Gad, (so the Arab.) near the end of David's reign.'

ED.

Verses 15—25.

'Jesus was the *only heir* to the kingdom of Israel: He did not choose to sit on a secular throne, He ascended the *spiritual* throne . . . . All the promises have failed to David's *natural posterity;* and to

[v] Who *am* I, O LORD God? and what *is* my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?

19 And [w] this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O LORD God; but [u] thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. [x] And *is* this the [*] manner of man, O LORD God?

20 And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, LORD God, [y] knowest thy servant.

21 For [z] thy word's sake, and [a] according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know *them.*

22 Wherefore [b] thou art great, O LORD God: for *there is* [c] none like thee, neither *is there any* God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

23 And [d] what one nation in the earth *is* like thy people, *even*

a Gen. 32:10. Ex. 3:11. Judg. 6:15. 1 Sam. 9:21. 15:17. 18:18. Ps. 8:4.
t 12:8. Num. 16:9,13.
u 11—16. 1 Chr. 17:17.
x Ps. 36:7. Is. 55:8,9. Eph. 2:7. 3: 19,20.
* Heb. *law.*
y 1 Sam. 16:7. Ps. 139:1. John 2:25. 21:17. Heb. 4:13 Rev. 2:23.
z Num. 23 19. Deut. 9:5. 1 Sam. 25:14, 15. Ps. 115:1. 138:2. Matt. 24:35. Luke 1:54, 55,72.
a Matt. 11:26. Luke 10:21. 12:32. 1 Cor. 1:1. Eph. 1:9. 3:11.
b Deut 3:24. 1 Chr. 16:25. 2 Chr. 2: 5. Ps. 48:1. 86:10. 96:4. 135:5.
c Ex. 15:11. Deut. 4:35. 32:39. 1 Sam. 2:2. Ps. 86:8. 89:6,8. Is. 40: 18,25. 45:5,18,22. Jer. 10:6. Mic. 7:18.
d Deut. 4:7,8 32—34. 33:29. Ps. 47:20. Rom. 3:1,2.

him to build the temple, he contradicted his own words, yet he was not backward to do it, when he was better informed concerning the mind of God. (2.) These promises God faithfully performed to David, and his seed, in due time. Though David came short of making good his purpose to build God's house, yet He did not come short of making good his promise to build him a house. Such is the tenor of the covenant we are under; though there are many failures in our performances, there are none in God's.

V. 18—29. We have here David's solemn address to God, in answer to the gracious message God had sent him. David had no sooner received the message, than, while the impressions of it were fresh, he retired to return an answer. Observe,

I. The place he retired to; he *went in before the Lord*, that is, into the tabernacle, where the ark was. God's will now is, that men pray every where; but wherever we pray, we must set ourselves as before the Lord, and set Him before us.

II. The posture he put himself into; he *sat before the Lord.* 1. It denotes the posture of his body. But this will by no means justify the ordinary use of that gesture in prayer, whatever may be allowed in a case of necessity. Kneeling or standing is certainly the most proper. *David went in, and took his place before the Lord*, so it may be read; but when he prayed, he stood up as the manner was. Or, he *went in and continued before the Lord;* staid some time silently meditating, before he began his prayer, and then remained longer than usual in the tabernacle. Or, 2. It may denote the frame of his spirit at this time. He went in, and composed himself before the Lord; thus we should do in all our approaches to God; *O God, my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed.*

III. The prayer itself, which is full of the breathings of pious and devout affection toward God.

1. He speaks very humbly of himself, and his own merits. So he begins as one astonished, *v.* 18. God had reminded him of the meanness of his original, (*v.* 8.) and he subscribed to it. He was, on all accounts, a very considerable and valuable man; yet he says, when he comes to speak of himself before God, '*Who am I?* A man not worth taking notice of.' His house was of the royal tribe, and descended from the prince of that tribe; and allied to the best families of the country, yet, he, like Gideon, thinks his family poor in Judah, and himself *the least in his father's house.* David thus humbled himself, when Saul's daughter was mentioned to him for a wife, (1 Sam. 18: 18.) but now with much more reason. Note, It very well becomes the greatest and best of men, even in the midst of the highest advancements, to have low and mean thoughts of themselves. For the greatest of men are worms, the best are sinners, and those who are highest advanced, have nothing but what they have received. It intimates, that he could not have reached this himself by his own management, if God had not brought him to it. All our attainments must be looked upon as God's vouchsafements.

2. He speaks very highly and honorably of God's favors to him. *Is this the manner of men?* That is, 1st. Can man expect to be so dealt with by his Maker? *Is this the law of Adam?* Note, Considering the character and condition of men, it is very surprising and amazing God should deal with them as He does. Or, 2dly. Do men usually deal thus one with another? No, the way of our God is far above the manner of men. Some give another sense of this, *And this is the law of man, the Lord Jehovah:* i. e. 'This promise of one whose kingdom shall be established for ever, must be understood of one that is a man, and yet the Lord Jehovah, this must be the law of such a one. A Messiah from my loins must be man, but, reigning for ever, must be God.' 'What can I ask, or wish for more? *v.* 20. *Thou, Lord, knowest thy servant*, knowest what will make me happy, and what Thou hast promised is enough to do so.' The promise of Christ includes all; if that Man, the Lord God, be ours, what can we ask, or think of, more? Eph. 3: 20. Then let us be satisfied with the provision He has made for us; what can we say more for ourselves in our prayers, than He has said for us in his promises?

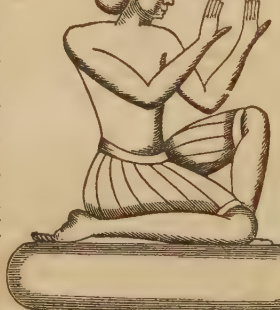
3. He ascribes all to the free grace of God; (*v.* 21.) both the great things He had done for him, and the great things He had made known to him. All that God does for his people in his providences, and secures to them in his promises, is for his pleasure, and for his praise; the pleasure of his will, and the praise of his word.

4. He adores the greatness and glory of God, *v.* 22. God's gracious condescension to him, and the honor He had put on him, did not at all abate his awful veneration for the Divine Majesty; the nearer any are brought to God, the more they see of his glory.

5. He expresses great esteem for the Israel of God, *v.* 23, 24. As there were none among the gods to be compared with Jehovah, so none among the nations to be compared with Israel; considering, (1.) The works He had done for them;

Christ and his spiritual throne alone are they fulfilled. Had David's posterity been faithful, they would, according to these promises of God, have been sitting on the Israelitish throne at the present day.' *Kennicott*, in Dr. A. CLARKE. The subject is exhibited at full, and in an interesting light, by Dr. J. P. SMITH, in his highly valuable work, 'The Scripture Testimony to the Messiah;' vol. I. pp. 263—272. 2d. ed. ED.

(18.) David cordially acquiesced in the will of God; and likewise found his love, gratitude, hope, and joy greatly excited, by these remembrances of past, and promises of future mercies, to himself, his people, and posterity; especially as they all centred in the promised Savior who was to descend from him. This is the only place in Scripture, which mentions *sitting* as the posture of any servant of God in religious worship. SCOTT.



Sat] 'Pococke supposes after the manner, inferior persons sit at this day [in the E.] before great men. [See the cut. Ex. 25: 18, with which compare a praying figure from one of the most ancient Egyptian monuments.] It is considered a very humble posture.' WILLIAMS.

(18, 19.) Dr. *J. P. Smith* reads, 'What am I, O Lord, Jehovah, and what my house, that thou hast brought me to this point [of exaltation]! And little [is] even this in thine eyes, O Lord Jehovah: thou hast even spoken, with respect to the house of thy servant, unto a vast extent! And this [is] the law of the Adam, O Lord Jehovah:' and in the parallel place, 1 Chr. 17:16,17. 'Thou hast regarded me according to the order of the Adam from above, [or, the pre-eminent,] O Jehovah God!' *Carpenter*, in quoting this, agrees with Dr. *A. Clarke*, after *Kennicott*, that this prophecy refers to Christ *only*. 'Christ was to descend from Abraham: of course the promise of Him is recorded in Abraham's life, Gen. 22:18. Christ being also to descend from David, it cannot be supposed, the historian omitted to record this promise, more honorable to him than any other circumstance, especially when his life is given more at large than that of any other person in the O. T. The record of this promise must be in this ch. if written at all. Here I am fully persuaded it is, and the chief reason why our divines have so frequently missed it, or been so much perplexed about it, is owing to the very improper translation of vs. 10 and 14.' [See notes on those vs. and on 1 Chr. 17:16,17.] *Kennicott.* On these words, it is the remark of *Michaelis*, as quoted by Dr. *Smith*: 'All human affairs are subjected to changes: nothing is permanent: at least reigning families are not. Not one of those which now occupy any of the thrones of Europe (which have been generally more regular and stable than any other) is now 1000 yrs. old. It is plainly, therefore, contrary to the course of all human affairs, that to the family of David an everlasting throne should be promised. In fact, it was not to be brought to pass in the ordinary course of things; but was to be accomplished in that Everlasting King, who is celebrated in the 72d. and 110th. Psalms.' ED.

(19.) *Manner of man.*] 'Lit. *law of Adam.* [And so the Sept. Lat. Vulg. and Doway vers.] Does he refer to the promise to Adam "*The seed of the woman*," &c.? "From my line shall the Messiah spring, and be the spiritual and triumphant King for ever and ever?"' [Thus *Luther*, *Osiander*, *Pfeiffer*, and *Gill*, who translates, 'this is the law, or doctrine, of the man *who is* the Lord God.'] Dr. A. CLARKE.

(20, 21.) David could find nothing to ask for himself, or his people, or his posterity, but what had already been covenanted to him: so that his prayer consisted of thankful repetitions of the promises. SCOTT.

(22—25.) (*M. R.—Deut.* 4:20, 32—40. 1 *Sam.* 2:2. 1 *K.* 8:23,24. *Neh.* 9:5—8.) *For you.* (23) These words are not found in the parallel passage, (1 *Chr.* 17:21.) and seem here redundant. ID.

(23.) *For you.*] 'Rather, *them*, so the Vulg. and Arab. The Sept. omits the words. The difference is but in a letter.' BOOTHR. &c.

like Israel, whom God [e]went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you [f]great things and terrible, for thy land, before [g]thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, *from* the nations and [h]their gods?

24 For thou hast [k]confirmed to thyself thy people Israel, *to be* a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God.

25 And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, [m]establish *it* for ever, and do as thou hast said.

26 And [n]let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts *is* the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established [o]before thee.

27 For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast [*]revealed to thy servant, saying, [p]I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant [q]found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.

28 And now, O LORD God, thou *art* that God, and [r]thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant:

29 Therefore now [†]let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O LORD God, hast spoken *it*, and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed [s]for ever.

how He went to redeem them, as if by the same consultation and concurrence of all the persons in the blessed Trinity, that there was when God said, *Let Us make man. Whom they that were sent of God, went to redeem;* so the Chaldee, meaning, I suppose, Moses and Aaron. The redemption of Israel, as described here, was typical of our redemption by Christ; the honor of God, and the eternal happiness of the saints, are the two things aimed at in their redemption. (2.) The covenant He had made with them, *v.* 24. [1.] *Mutual;* 'They to be a people to Thee, and Thou a God to them.' [2.] *Immutable;* 'Thou hast confirmed them.' He that makes the covenant, makes it sure, and will make it good.

6. He concludes with humble petitions. (1.) He grounds his petitions on the message God had sent him; (*v.* 27.) *Thou hast revealed this to thy servant;* i. e. 'Thou hast, of thine own good will, given me the promise, that thou wilt build me a house, else I could never have found in my heart to pray such a prayer as this.' 'Thy servant has found in his heart to pray this prayer;' so it is in the original, and the Sept. That prayer which is found in the tongue only, will not please God; it must be found in the heart; that must be lifted up and poured out before God. *My son, give God thy heart.* (2.) He builds his faith, and hopes to speed, on the fidelity of God's promise, *v.* 28. *Thou art that God;* that *Lord of hosts*, and *God of Israel;* or, *That God whose words are true*, whom one may depend on. (3.) Thence he fetches the matter of his prayer, and refers himself to that, as the guide of his prayers.

[1.] He prays for the performance of his promise, *v.* 25. Thus we must turn God's promises into prayers, and then they shall be turned into performances.

[2.] He prays for the glorifying of God's name; *v.* 26. this ought to be the sum and centre of all our prayers; begin with *Hallowed be thy name*, and end with *Thine is the glory for ever.* And he reckons, nothing magnifies God's name more than this, to say, with suitable affections, *The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel.* David desired the performance of God's promise for the honor, not of his own name but of God's. Thus the Son of David prayed, *Father, glorify thy name;* (John 12: 28.—17: 1.) *Glorify thy Son, that thy Son may also glorify Thee.*

[3.] He prays for his house; for to that the promise has special reference: The care of good men is very much concerning their families; and the best entail on their families is the blessing of God. The repetition of this request is not a vain repetition. He prays, that the entail of the crown might not be cut off, but remain in his family; that none of his ever forfeit it, but walk before God, and have that for their establishment; and that his kingdom might have its perfection and perpetuity in the kingdom of the Messiah. The perpetuity of the Messiah's kingdom is the desire and faith of all good people.

CHAP. VIII.

David subdues the Philistines and Moabites, 1, 2. He smites Hadadezer and the Syrians, 3—8. Toi, king of Hamath, sends his son to David with presents, which he dedicates to God, with the spoils that he had taken, 9—13. He puts garrisons in Edom, 14. He reigns in equity, 15. The names of his chief officers, 16—18.

AND [a] after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them: and David took [‡]Metheg-ammah out of the hand of the Philistines.

2 And [b]he smote Moab, and [c]measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive: [d]and *so* the Moabites became David's servants, *and* [*]brought gifts

3 David smote also [f]Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of [g]Zobah, as he went to recover

CHAP. VIII. V. 1—8. God had given David rest from all his enemies; and he, having made a good use of that rest, is now commissioned to make war on them, avenge Israel, and recover their rights, for as yet they were not in full possession of the land God's promise entitled them to. [So that it seems David had, as *Gill* remarks, other work to do than to build God's house.]

1. He quite subdued the Philistines, *v.* 1. *Metheg-ammah* was *Gath*, (the chief and royal city of the Philistines,) and the towns belonging to it, among which a constant garrison was kept by the

e Ex. 3:7,8. 19:5,6. Num. 14:13.14. Ps. 111:9. Is. 63:7—14. Tit. 2:14. 1 Pet. 2:9. Rev. 5:9.
f Ex. 9:16. Josh. 7:9. 1 Chr. 17:21. Is. 63:12,14. Ez. 20:9. Eph. 1:6.
g Deut. 10:21. Ps. 40:5. 65:5. 66:3. 106:22. 145:6.
h Deut. 9:26. 15:15. Neh. 1:10.
i Ex. 12:12.
k Gen. 17:7. Deut. 26:18.
l 23. Ex. 15:2. Deut. 27:9. 1 Chr. 17: 22. Ps. 48:14. Is. 1:22. Jer. 31:1, 33. 32:38. Hos. 1:10. Zech. 13:9. John 1:12. Rom. 9:25,26. 1 Pet. 2: 10.
m Gen. 32:12. Ps. 119:49. Jer. 11:4,5. Ez. 36:37.
n 1 Chr. 17:23,24. 29:10—13. Ps. 72: 18,19. 115:1. Matt. 6:9. John 12:28.
o Gen. 17:18. 1 Chr. 17:23,24. Ps. 89: 36.
* Heb. *opened the ear.* Ruth 4:4. 1 Sam. 9:15. *marg.*
p 11.
q 1 Chr. 17:25,26. Ps. 10:17.
r Num. 23:19. John 17:17. Tit. 1:2.
† Heb. *be thou pleased and bless.* Num. 6:24—26. 1 Chr. 17:27. Ps. 115:12—15.
s 22:51.
a 7:9. 21:15—22.
‡ Or, *the bridle of Ammah.* 2:24. 1 Chr. 18:1. *Gath.*
b Num. 24:17. Judg. 3:29,30. 1 Sam. 14:47. Is. 60:8. 63:6. 108:9.
c 12:31.
d 6,12—14. 2 Kings 1:1. 3:4—27. 1 Chr. 18:2.
e 1 Sam. 10:27. 2 Chr. 26:8. Ps. 72: 10,11. Is 36:16.
f 1 Chr. 18:3. *Hadarezer.*
g 10:6. 1 Sam. 14:47. 1 Kings 11:23, 24. Ps. 60: *title.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 18—29. When we have duly attended to the word, which the Lord has spoken; and when our affections are excited, or our consciences alarmed; let us without delay retire, to pour out our hearts before Him in fervent prayer, grounded on his gracious promises in Christ Jesus.—Comparing the former displays of the glorious excellences of our God, with those which He has manifested in his dealings with us, we shall at once have our admiring gratitude enlarged, and our expectation of further blessings increased; and shall find in our hearts to plead his precious promises, neither deeming them too large, nor too hard, for Him to perform to us wretched sinners. Though He have not given us 'a great name, like unto the great men that are in the earth;' we shall be contented with 'a name written in the book of life,' and a clear character among our brethren: and we can desire no more for our posterity, than that they may be 'blessed with the blessing of the LORD for ever.' SCOTT.

Verse 26.

The Lord by his promises had connected the glory of his own truth, with the establishment of David's family; and David also expected and desired, that his descendants might be instrumental in maintaining true religion for the glory of God.—In Christ all the perfections of the Godhead are glorified; and by Him the cause of truth and righteousness is, and will be, established on earth. (1 *Chr.* 29:10—19. *Ps.* 21:13. 72.17—19. *Matt.* 6:13.) In all these respects David prayed for the magnifying of God's name, in the establishment of his posterity. (1 *Chr.* 17.17—24. *v.* 24.) SCOTT.

Verses 27—29.

(*M. R.*) The promises of Scripture are not made *personally to us by name*, as these were to David; but they belong to all who believe in Jesus Christ, and plead them in his name. (2 *Pet.* 1:3,4.) ID.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII. V. 1. (*Note*, 1 *Chr.* 18:1.) *Metheg-ammah*, or 'the *bridle of Ammah*,' (*marg.*) was probably an eminence, or natural fortress, on which Gath was built, and gave the inhabitants an opportunity of retaining the neighborhood in subjection. SCOTT.

Took Metheg-ammah.] 'This is variously transl. The Vulg. (probably, nearest the truth) has, *removed the bondage of the tribute* which the Israelites paid to the Philistines. No such place as Metheg-ammah is known. [*Gill* remarks that some make Ammah to be the hill Amgaris of Pliny. ED.] The versions are all different.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 2.

It may be supposed David had just cause for this war, and for the severity with which he treated the vanquished. SCOTT.

'This treatment,' says *Michaelis*, 'was *one third* less severe than the Mosaic law commanded.' See on 12:31. ED.

Verse 3.

Zobah seems to have been a part of Syria, to the N. E. of Canaan, to the S. of Damascus, and reaching to the river Euphrates.—It is probable, that Hadadezer was jealous of David's growing greatness, and came to assist the Moabites, in order to secure his own domin-

his border, [h] at the river Euphrates.

4 And David took * from him a thousand † *chariots*, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: and [i] David houghed all the chariot-*horses*, but [k] reserved of them *for* an hundred chariots.

5 And [l] when the Syrians of Damascus [m] came to succor Hadadezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men.

6 Then David put [n] garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David, *and* brought gifts. And [o] the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

7 And David took the [p] shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem.

8 And from [q] Betah, and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took [r] exceeding much brass.

9 ¶ When [s] Toi king of [t] Hamath heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadadezer,

10 Then Toi sent [u] Joram his son unto king David, to ‡ salute him, and [x] to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him: (for Hadadezer § had wars with Toi:) and *Joram* ‖ brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass;

11 Which [y] also king David did dedicate unto the LORD, with the silver and gold that he had dedicated of all nations which he subdued:

12 Of [z] Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

13 And David [a] got *him* a name when he returned from ¶ smiting of the Syrians in [b] the valley of salt, ** *being* eighteen thousand *men*.

14 And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons: and [c] all they of Edom became David's servants. And [d] the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

h Gen. 15:18. Ex. 23:31. Deut. 11:24. 1 Kings 4:21. Ps. 72:8.
* Or, *of his*.
† As 1 Chr. 18:4.
i Deut. 17:16. Josh. 11:6,9. Ps. 20:7. 33:16,17.
k 1 Kings 10:26.
l 1 Kings 11:23—25. 1 Chr. 18:5,6. Is. 7:8.
m Job 9:13. Ps. 83:4—8. Is. 8:9,10. 31:3.
n 14. 23:14. 1 Sam. 13:3. 14:1,6,15. 2 Chr. 17:2. Ps. 18:34—46.
o 14. 7:9. 1 Chr. 18:13. Ps. 5:11,12. 121:7,8. 140:7. 144:1,2. Prov. 21: 31.
p 1 Kings 10:16,17. 14:26,27. 1 Chr. 18:7. 2 Chr. 9:15,16.
q 1 Chr 18:8. *Tibhath. Chun.*
r 1 Chr. 22:14,16. 29:7. 2 Chr. 4:1—18.
s 1 Chr. 18:9. *Tou.*
t Am. 6:2.
u 1 Chr. 18:10. *Hadoram.*
‡ Heb. *ask him of peace.* Gen. 43:27. Is. 39:1.
x 1 Sam. 13:10. *marg.* 1 Kings 1:47. Ps. 129:8.
§ Heb. *was a man of wars with.*
‖ Heb. *in his hand were.*
y 1 Kings 7:51. 1 Chr. 18:11. 22:14—16. 26:26—28. 29:2. Mic. 4:13.
z 10:11,14. 12:26—31. 1 Chr. 18:11.
a 7:9. 1 Chr. 18:12. Ps. 60: *title.*
¶ Heb. *his smiting.*
b 2 Kings 14:7. 2 Chr. 25:11.
** Or, *slaying.*
c Gen. 25:23. 27:29,37,40. Num. 24: 18. 1 Kings 22:47. 1 Chr. 18:13. Ps. 60:8,9. 108:9,10.
d See on 6.

a vain thing for safety, Ps. 33: 16, 17. 2. The Syrians of Damascus coming to the relief of the king of Zobah, fell with him, *v.* 5. so that it was easy for David to make himself master of the country, and garrison it for himself, *v.* 6. The enemies of God's church will, by their confederacies, ruin each other, Isa. 8: 9.

In all these wars David was protected and enriched, (*v.* 7, 8.) according to the ancient entail of these countries on the seed of Abraham.

V. 9—14. Here is, 1. The court made to David by the king of Hamath, who, it seems, was at this time at war with the king of Zobah. David lost nothing by taking this little prince under his protection; for the wealth he had from the countries he conquered by way of spoil, he had from this by way of present or gratuity: *Vessels of silver and gold.*

2. The offering David made to God of the spoils of the nations, and all the rich things brought him, *v.* 11, 12. All were dedicated, i. e. designed for building the temple; a good omen of kindness to the Gentiles in the fulness of time, that the temple was built of the spoils and presents of Gentile nations. In allusion to which, we find *the kings of the earth* bringing *their glory and honor into the new Jerusalem*, Rev. 21: 24. *Their gods of gold David burnt*, (*ch.* 5: 21.) but their vessels of gold he dedicated; thus, in the conquest of a soul, by the grace of the Son of David, what stands in opposition to God must be destroyed, every lust mortified and crucified, but what may glorify Him must be dedicated, and the property of it altered: even the merchandise and the hire must be *holiness to the Lord*, (Isa. 23: 18.) the gain *consecrated to the Lord of the whole earth*, (Mic. 4: 13.) then it is truly our own, and that most comfortably.

3. The reputation he got, particularly by his victory over the Syrians, and the Edomites their allies, compare the title of Ps. 60. penned on this occasion, with *v.* 13. *he gat him a name.* Something extraordinary, it is likely, there was in that action, which turned very much to his honor, yet he is careful to transfer the honor to God, as appears by the psalm, *v.* 12. It is through God, that we do valiantly.

4. His success against the Edomites, *v.* 14. Now, and not till now, Isaac's blessing was accomplished, (Gen. 27: 37—40.) the Edomites continued long tributaries to the kings of Judah,

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ions: and that this gave David a fair opportunity of extending his conquests to the Euphrates. SCOTT.

Verse 4.

Houghed all the chariot horses.] 'Rather, *disjointed all the chariots*. So the Heb. and the Sept. nearly.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 5—8.

(*M. R.*) The Syrians of Damascus were in alliance with Hadadezer, but not subject to him. SCOTT.

(6.) *Syria of Damascus.*] 'I. e. Cœle-Syria, lying between Libanus and Antilibanus.' GILL.

(7.) *Shields.*] 'Some transl. *arms*, others, *quivers*, others, *bracelets*, others, *collars*.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 9—11.

Hamath lay N. of Canaan, and S. of Damascus. SCOTT.

(9.) *Hamath.*] 'Supposed to be the famous Emessa, on the Orontes.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* See the map. ED.

Verse 12.

Children of Ammon.] Either some of the Ammonites at this time assisted the Moabites; or this is spoken by way of anticipation. (10: 12:26—31.) SCOTT.

'These conquests of David are confirmed by the testimony of *Eupolemus*, (quoted by *Eusebius*) who says, that he overcame the Syrians by Euphrates, and the Assyrians in Galadene, (or Gilead,) and the Phenicians; that he fought against the Idumeans (or Edomites,) the Ammonites, Moabites, Itureans, Nabatheans, and Nabdeans; also against Syron king of Tyre and Phenicia; all of whom he obliged to pay tribute to the Jews.' GILL.

Verses 13, 14.

Syrians.] It is said in Chr. that 'Abishai smote 18,000 *Edomites* in the valley of salt.' (1 *Chr.* 18 12.) Perhaps they were Edomites fighting for the Syrians. It is evident, however, that Edom was subjected in consequence of this victory, by which David acquired great renown.—12,000 of Edom are elsewhere mentioned, as slain by Joab. (*Ps.* 60: *title.*) Perhaps Joab and Abishai commanded distinct bodies of troops, and 18,000 were slain between them, 6,000 by Abishai, and 12,000 by Joab.—Thus the predictions concerning the Edomites began to be fulfilled. (*Gen.* 25:22,23. 27:27—29,39,40. *Num.* 24:18,19. *Ps.* 60: 6—12.) SCOTT

15 ¶ And David reigned [e] over all Israel; and [f] David executed judgment and justice unto all his people.

16 And [g] Joab the son of Zeruiah *was* over the host; and [h] Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* * recorder;

17 And [i] Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, *were* the priests; [k] and Seraiah *was* the † scribe;

18 And [l] Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was over* both [m] the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were ‡ chief rulers.

CHAP. IX.

David inquires after Saul's family, and is informed, by Ziba, of Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, 1—4. He sends for him, and entertains him at his table for Jonathan's sake, 5—8. He restores to him the family-estate, intrusting the management to Ziba, 9—13.

AND David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for [a] Jonathan's sake?

2 And *there was* of the house of Saul [b] a servant, whose name *was* [c] Ziba: and when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, *Art* thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant *is he.*

e 3:12. 5:5.
f 23:3,4. 1 Chr. 18:14. Ps. 45:6,7. 75:2. 78:71,72. 101:1—8. Is. 9:7. Jer. 22:15. 23:5,6.
g 19:13. 20:23. 1 Chr. 11:6. 18:15—17.
h 1 Kings 4:3.
* Or, *remembrancer*, or *writer of chronicles.*
i 1 Chr. 6:8 53. 24:3,4.
k 1 Chr. 18:16. *Shavsha.*
† Or, *secretary.*
l 1 Kings 1:44. 2:34,35. 1 Chr. 18:17.
m 15:18. 20:7,23. 23:20—23. 1 Sam. 30:14. Ez. 25:16. Zeph. 2:5.
‡ Or, *princes.* 20:26.
a 1:26. 1 Sam. 18:1—4. 20:42. 23:16—18. 1 Kings 2:7. Prov. 27:10. Matt. 10:42. 25:40. Mark 9:41. John 19:26,27. Philem. 9—12. 1 Pet. 3:8.
b Gen. 15:2,3. 24:2. 39:6.
c 16:1—4. 19:17,27—29.

CHAP. IX. The only thing recorded in this ch. is, the kindness David showed to Jonathan's seed for his sake.

V. 1—8. Here is, I. David's inquiry after the remains of the ruined house of Saul, *v.* 1. This was a great while after his accession to the throne, as the Moabites to the kings of Israel, till, in Joram's time, they revolted, (2 Chr. 21: 8.) as Isaac had foretold Esau should, in process of time, break the yoke from his neck. Thus David, by his conquests, secured peace to his son, that he might have time, and procured wealth, that he might have wherewith to build the temple. God employs his servants variously; and one prepares work for the other, that God may have the glory of all. All David's victories were typical of the success of the Gospel.

V. 15—18. David was not so engaged in wars abroad, as to neglect the administration at home.

1. His care extended to all parts of his dominion. *All Israel* were safe under his protection, and shared in the fruits of his good government. *v.* 15.

2. He did justice with an unbiassed, unshaken hand; neither did wrong, nor denied or delayed right to any. It bespeaks his industry, and close application to business; also his impartiality and equity; he never perverted justice for favor or affection, nor had respect of persons, in judgment. Herein he was a type of Christ, who was faithful and true, and who doth *in righteousness both judge and make war*, Rev. 19: 11. See Ps. 72: 1, 2.

3. He kept good order, and good officers, in his court. Being the first king that had an established government. (Saul's reign [if not short was] unsettled,) he had the modelling of the administration. He instituted (1.) Two military officers; Joab as general of the forces in the field, and Benaiah over the Cherethites and Pelethites, i. e. the city trainbands, *archers and slingers*, so the Chal. or rather the life-guard, or standing force, that attended the king's person. They were ready to serve at home, to assist in administering justice, and to preserve the public peace: we find them employed in proclaiming Solomon, 1 K. 1: 38. (2.) Two ecclesiastical officers; Zadok and Ahimelech as priests, i. e. to be employed in the priests' work under Abiathar, the high priest. (3.) Two civil officers; one as recorder, or remembrancer, to remind the king of business in its season; he was prime minister of state; another as scribe, or secretary of state, to draw up public orders and despatches, and record judgments given. *Lastly*, David's sons, as they grew up, had places of honor and trust assigned them, either in the household, the camp, or the courts of justice, according to their genius. They were chief about the king; (so it is explained, 1 Chr. 18: 17.) employed near him, that they might be under his eye. Our Lord Jesus has appointed officers in his kingdom, for his honor and the good of the community, (Eph. 4: 8—11. Mark 13: 44.) David made his sons chief rulers; but all believers are better preferred, Rev. 1: 6.

V. 1—8. Here is, I. David's inquiry after the remains of the ruined house of Saul, *v.* 1. This was a great while after his accession to the throne, for Mephibosheth, who was but five years old when Saul died, had now a son born, *v.* 12. It is good sometimes to think, whether there be any promises or engagements that we have neglected to make good; better do it late than never. The compendium Paul gives of the life of David, is, that he *served his generation according to the will of God*, i. e. made it his business to do good; witness this instance, where we may observe,

1. That he *sought* an opportunity to do good, *v.* 1. So good men should. *The liberal deviseth liberal things.* For the most proper objects of our kindness and charity are such, as will not be frequently found without inquiry. The most necessitous are the least clamorous.

2. Saul had a very numerous family, (1 Chr. 8: 33.) enough to replenish a country, and yet so emptied, that none of it appeared; but it was come to this inquiry, *Is there any left?* See how the providence of God can empty full families; see how the sin of man will do it! Saul's was a bloody house, no marvel it was thus reduced, *ch.* 21: 1.

(1.) Saul was David's *sworn enemy*, yet he would show kindness to his house, and was forward to do it. Note, We must evince the sincerity of our forgiving persons any way unjust or injurious to us, by being ready, as we have opportunity, to show kindness both to them and theirs: not only not avenge ourselves on them, but love them, and *do them good*, (Mat. 5: 44.) and not be backward to any office of love and good-will to those that have done us many an injury, *but contrariwise, blessing.* This is the way to overcome evil, and to find mercy for ourselves and ours, when we or they need it.

(2.) Jonathan was David's *sworn friend*, therefore he would show kindness to his house. This teaches us to be mindful of our covenant, and of our friendships. Note, Kindness to our friends, even to them and theirs, is one of the laws of our holy religion. Prov. 18: 24. Though there be not a solemn league, yet there is a sacred law of friendship, no less obliging, that to him that is in misery pity should be showed by his friend; *A brother is born for adversity.*

3. The kindness he promised, he calls the *kindness of God;* not only great kindness, [kindness in the highest degree, as the phrase is often used,] but, kindness, in pursuance of the covenant between him and Jonathan, to which God was a witness: see 1 Sam. 20: 42. kindness, after God's example; for we must be merciful as He is. He spares those whom He has advantage against, and so must we. Jonathan's request was, (1 Sam. 20: 14.) '*Show me the kindness of the Lord, that I die not*, and the same to my seed.' The kindness of God, is some greater instance of kindness than one can ordinarily expect from men. It is kindness done after a godly sort, and with an eye to God, and his honor and favor.

II. Ziba was an old retainer to Saul's family, and knew the state of it; he is sent for and examined, and acquaints the king, that Jonathan's son was living, but *lame*, *v.* 3. How he came to be so, we read before, (*ch.* 4: 4.) and that he lived

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Short is the triumphing and certain the ruin of all God's enemies, however strong and confederated. But those who confide in his protection, and are doing his work, will be preserved and prospered, 'whithersoever they go.' They will not allow themselves to glory in their success, or to establish any other ground of confidence, than the mercy, power, and truth of Him who has hitherto helped them, to whom they will dedicate the fruits of their prosperity; and in this they will be distinguished from all the other mighty ones, who have been renowned on the earth.—A diligent, impartial administration of justice, should be the business of those who are advanced above others; for their authority was given them to do good with.—Thus the Son of David subjects his enemies: his Gospel is a savor of life to some, and of death to others; and He will be glorified *upon* his obstinate opposers, and *by* those who welcome Him as their Lord and Savior. Many assist in building his spiritual temple, who have no place in it: his government is in judgment and in justice, as well as in mercy: and all who adhere to Him faithfully, in a state of humiliation and suffering, shall reign with Him for ever in glory. SCOTT.

Verses 15—18.

Ahimelech and Zadok presided, probably, the one on mt. Zion, the other at Gibeon, where the tabernacle was. (1 *K.* 3:4. 1 *Chr.* 16:37—43.) The Cherethites and Pelethites, probably, consisted chiefly of those, who had accompanied David in his distresses; or of such as had joined him from among the Philistines, who are called Cherethites. (*M. R.* m.) SCOTT.

(16—18.) Note 1 Sam. 10:25. ED.

(18) '*Cherethites* are those who accompanied David when he fled from Saul; *Pelethites* those who came to him at Ziklag: so some—they were rather *archers* and *slingers*. No weapons then known were equally powerful with the bow and sling.' Dr. A. CLARKE. '*Cherethites*, from *kereth*, to cut off, *executioners*, and *Pelethites*, from *peleih*, to run or go swiftly, *royal messengers:* The two appear to have constituted the kings body-guard, and were like the *capigis* of Turkey. Executioners in the E. are an honorable body. Comp. Mark 6:27. The Cherethites, or Cretans, are thought to belong to the same nation of Caphtorim, or Philistines, by Calmet.' ROB. CALM.

3 And the king said, *Is* there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show [d] the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath [e] yet a son, *which is* lame on *his* feet.

4 And the king said unto him, Where *is* he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold he *is* in the house of [f] Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar.

5 Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.

6 Now when [g] Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, [h] he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant.

7 And David said unto him, [i] Fear not: [j] for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt [k] eat bread at my table continually.

8 And he bowed himself, and said, What *is* thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such [l] a dead dog as I *am*?

9 Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, [m] I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul, and to all his house.

10 Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in *the fruits*, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son [n] shall eat bread alway at my table. [o] Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

11 Then said Ziba unto the king, [p] According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, *said the king*, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons.

12 And Mephibosheth had a young [q] son, whose name *was* Micha: and all that dwelt in the house of Ziba *were* [r] servants unto Mephibosheth.

13 So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for [s] he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.

d Deut. 4:37. 10:15. 1 Sam. 20:14—17. Matt. 5:44,45. Luke 6:36. Tit. 3:3,4.
e 4:4. 19:26.
f 17:27—29.
g 1 Chr. 8:34. 9:40. *Meribbaal.*
h Gen. 18:2. 33:3. 1 Sam. 20:41. 25:23.
i Gen. 43:18,23. 50:19—21. 1 Sam. 12:19,20,24. Is. 35:3,4. Mark 5:33, 34. Luke 1:12,13,29,30.
j See on 1,3.—Ruth 2:11,12. 2 Tim. 1: 16—18.
k 11. 19:28,33. 1 Kings 2:7. Jer. 52: 33,34. Luke 22:30. Rev. 3:20.
l 3:8. 16:9. 1 Sam. 24:14. 26:20. Matt. 15:26,27.
m 16:4. 19:29. 1 Sam. 9:1. Is.32:8.
n 11:19,28. 2 Kings 25:29. Luke 14:15.
o 19:17.
p 16:1—4. 19:26,27.
q 1 Chr. 8:34—40. 9:40—44. *Micah.*
r Mic. 7:6.
s 7,10,11.

OBSCURE, probably, among his mother's relations in Lo-debar, in Gilead, on the other side Jordan.

III. The bringing of Mephibosheth to court. The king sent (Ziba, it is likely) to bring him up to Jerusalem with all convenient speed, *v.* 5. Machir appears to have been a very generous, free-hearted man, and to have entertained Mephibosheth, not out of disaffection to David, but in compassion to the reduced son of a prince, for afterward we find him kind to David himself, when he fled from Absalom (*ch.* 17: 27.); though when David sent for Mephibosheth from him, he little thought the time would come, when he himself would gladly be beholden to him: *therefore* we should be forward to give, because we know not but we ourselves may sometime be in want; *he that watereth, shall be watered also himself.*

Now, 1. Mephibosheth presents himself to David with all the respect due to his character, *v.* 6. David had thus made his honors to Mephibosheth's father, Jonathan, when next the throne; (1 Sam. 20: 41.) and now Mephibosheth, in like manner, addresses him, when affairs are so completely reversed. Those who, when in inferior relations, show respect, when they come to be advanced, shall have respect shown them.

2. David received him with all kindness. He remembered his name; probably he was born about the time of the intimacy between him and Jonathan. He bade him not be afraid, *v.* 7. Great men should not take a pleasure in the timorous approaches of their inferiors, but encourage them. He gives him, by grant from the crown, *all the land of Saul his father*, i. e. his paternal estate: forfeited by Ish-bosheth's rebellion, and added to his own revenue. True friendship will be generous. For Jonathan's sake, he will make him a constant guest at his own table: for his good father's sake, will take him to be one of his family.

3. Mephibosheth accepts this kindness with great humility and self-abasement. He was none of those that take every favor as a debt, and think every thing too little that their friends do for them, *v.* 8. How does he vilify himself! Though the son of a prince, and the grandson of a king, yet, his family being under guilt and wrath, and himself poor and lame, he calls himself *a dead dog* before David. Note, It is good to have the heart humble under humbling providences, and those who thus humble themselves, shall be exalted. How does he magnify David's kindness! It had been easy to lessen it, had he been so disposed. Had David restored him his father's estate, it was but giving him his own. Did he take him to his table? That was policy, that he might have an eye on him. But Mephibosheth thinks all kind, that David said and did, and himself less than the least of his favors. See 1 Sam. 18: 18.

V. 9—13. The matter is here settled concerning Mephibosheth.

1. This grant of his father's estate is confirmed to him, and Ziba called as a witness; (*v.* 9.) it should seem, Saul had a very good estate, 1 Sam. 9: 1. 22: 7.

2. The management of the estate is committed to Ziba, who knew what it was, and how to make the most of it, whom, having been his father's servant, he might confide in, and who, having a numerous family of sons and servants, had hands sufficient to be employed about it, *v.* 10. Thus Mephibosheth is made very easy, having a good estate without care, and is in a fair way of being very rich; having much coming in, and little occasion to spend, himself being kept at David's table. Ziba, too, is now pleased, for he loves wealth, and will have abundance: *v.* 11. seems to be Ziba's words. How unfaithful Ziba was, we shall find at *ch.* 16: 3.

David being a type of Christ, his kindness to Mephibosheth may illustrate the kindness and love of God our Savior toward fallen man. Man was convicted of rebellion against God, and, like Saul's house, under sentence of rejection from

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Amidst a multiplicity of affairs, we are prone to forget the gratitude we owe, and the engagements we are under, not only to our friends, but to the Lord Himself: but persons of real and eminent piety, when they recollect their obligations, will have no rest till they have discharged them: they will be burdened with those possessions, which they suppose *in equity* belong to another; and impatient to express their forgiveness of those by whom they have been injured, and their gratitude to the persons or the relations of those who have been kind to them.—Those who have much in their power should sedulously *inquire* after opportunities of doing good; for frequently the most deserving objects of our compassion are concealed by modesty and patient resignation.—Kindness, shown to the most helpless persons, is sometimes recompensed in a very seasonable manner, by those from whom we had no expectation of obtaining or wanting assistance.—To be trained up in privacy, poverty, and hardship, and afterwards more prospered, is far more comfortable, than to be brought up in pride and delicacy, with great expectations, and then to be reduced to poverty and distress. Though the liberality of friends should be thankfully acknowledged, it can contribute little to our real happiness, further than providing us with the necessaries or conveniences of life. But the love of Jesus, who seeks out, provides for, enriches, and entertains us poor, ruined, worthless sinners, confers substantial and enduring felicity. May we humbly acknowledge our unworthiness of his mercies, thankfully accept them, and return Him our cheerful praises and willing services, and show our gratitude to Him, by kindness to those whom He owns, as his 'brethren, sisters, and mother.' SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX. V. 8, *A dead dog.*] (*M. R.* l.) That is, a person who is very mean, and incapable of being any way serviceable. Mephibosheth seems to have been an unambitious, modest, friendly, and pious man. SCOTT.

Verses 9—11.

David appears more generous than prudent in this appointment [of Ziba.] Mephibosheth's family must be provided for out of the estate, though he himself lived at David's table.—Some understand the last clause, as the words of Ziba, proposing in a boasting manner to entertain Mephibosheth royally at his own table: but they seem to be the words of David. SCOTT.

Verse 12.

Micha.] The posterity of Jonathan and Mephibosheth, by Micha, was very numerous. (*M. R.*—1 Chr. 8:29—40. 9:35—44.) ID.

CHAP. X.

David sends ambassadors to comfort Hanun, the king of Ammon, on the death of his father; who grossly insults them, 1—4. David counsels and comforts them, 5. The Ammonites, assisted by the Syrians, are overcome by Joab and Abishai, 6—14. Hadarezer sends another army, which David conquers, slaying Shobach its general, 15—18. The kings of Syria submit to David, 19.

AND it came to pass after this, that the [a] king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead.

2 Then said David, I will [b] show kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, [c] as his father showed kindness unto me. And David sent to comfort him, by the hand of his servants, for his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon.

3 And the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord, [*] Thinkest thou that David doth honor thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? [d] hath not David *rather* sent his servants unto thee, to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it?

4 Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, [e] and shaved off the one half of their beards, and [f] cut off their garments in the middle, *even* to their buttocks, and sent them away.

5 When they told *it* unto David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed: and the king said, Tarry at [g] Jericho until your beards be grown, and *then* return.

6 And when the children of Ammon saw that they [h] stank before David, the children of Ammon sent and hired [i] the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand footmen, and of king [k] Maacah a thousand men, and of [†] Ish-tob twelve thousand men.

7 And when David heard of *it*, he sent Joab, and [l] all the host of the mighty men.

8 And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate: and the Syrians of Zoba, and of [m] Rehob, and Ish-tob, and Maacah, *were* by themselves in the field.

9 When Joab saw that [n] the front of the battle was against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice *men* of Israel, and put *them* in array against the Syrians.

10 And the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai his brother, that he might put *them* in array against the children of Ammon.

11 And he said, [o] If

Chap. X. This ch. tells of a war David had with the Ammonites, and the Syrians their allies, with the occasion and success of it.

V. 1—5. Here is, I. The great respect David paid his neighbor, the king of the Ammonites; *v.* 1, 2. for some kindnesses formerly received from Nahash, the deceased king, *v.* 2. The pleasure of doing one kind and generous action, should excite us to another. Nahash had been a cruel enemy to Israel, (1 Sam. 11: 2.) and had showed kindness to David, perhaps only in contradiction to Saul: however, David is not nice in examining the grounds and principles of it, but resolves gratefully to return it. He sends an embassy to condole with him on his father's death, as is common among princes in alliance. Note, it is a comfort to children, when their parents are dead, to find that their parents' friends are theirs, and intend to keep up their acquaintance. It is a comfort to mourners, to find there are those who mourn with them, are sensible of their loss, and share in it. It is a comfort to those who are honoring the memory of their deceased relations, to find others who likewise honor it, and value those they valued.

II. Hanun hearkened to the spiteful suggestions of his princes, who insinuated that David's ambassadors, under pretence of being comforters, were sent as spies, *v.* 3. False themselves, they imagined David dissembled, to serve a turn. Ill-founded suspicion argues a bad mind. Patrick's note on this, is, that there is nothing so well meant, but it may be ill-interpreted, and is wont to be by men who love nobody but themselves. Men of the greatest honor and virtue must not think it strange, if they be thus misrepresented. *Charity thinketh no evil:* but it is plain, Hanun only sought an occasion to put the utmost disgrace he could on David's ambassadors, (*v.* 4.) out of an antipathy to their king and country.

III. David's tender concern for his servants thus abused. He sent to meet them, and directed them to stay at Jericho, a private place, where they would not have occasion to come into company, till that half of their beards, which was shaved off, was grown to such a length that the other half might be decently cut to it, *v.* 5. The Jews wore their beards long, reckoning it an honor to appear aged and grave; therefore it was not fit persons of their rank and figure should appear at court unlike their neighbors. Let us learn not to lay too much to heart unjust reproaches; after a while, they will wear off of themselves, and turn only to the shame of their authors, while the injured reputation in a little time grows again. God will *bring forth thy righteousness as the light*, therefore *wait patiently for Him*, Ps. 37: 6, 7.

Some have thought David but well enough served for courting and complimenting that pagan prince, whom he knew to be an inveterate enemy to Israel, and might now remember how, when he [or, as some think, his father,] would have put out the right eye of the men of Jabesh-gilead, he designed that, as he did this, for a *reproach on all Israel*, 1 Sam. 11: 2. What better usage could he expect from such a spiteful family and people? Why should he covet the friendship of a people, which Israel must have so little to do with, as that an Ammonite might not *enter into the congregation of the Lord, even to the tenth generation*, Deut. 23: 3.

V. 6—14. Here is, I. The preparation the Ammonites make for war, *v.* 6. They saw they had made themselves very odious to David, and obnoxious to his just displeasure. Yet, it seems, they had not considered how unable they were to meet him; for, now they were forced to hire forces of other nations into their service. Thus sinners daringly provoke God, and expose themselves to his wrath, and never consider that He is *stronger than they*, 1 Cor. 10:22.

II. The speedy descent David's forces made on them, *v.* 7. They that are in war with the Son of David, not only give the provocation, but begin the war; for He *waits to be gracious*, but they *strengthen themselves against Him*, and therefore, *if they turn not, He will whet his sword*, Ps. 7: 12. It was David's prudence to carry the war into their own country, and fight them at the entering in of the gate of their capital city, *Rabbah*, as some think, or *Medeba*, a city in their borders, before which they pitched to guard their coast, 1 Chr. 19: 7. Such are the terrors and desolations of

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a Judg. 10:7—9. 11:12—28. 1 Sam. 11:1—3. 1 Chr. 19:1—3.
b Deut. 23:3—6. Neh. 4:3—7. 13:1—3.
c 1 Sam. 22:3,4.
* Heb. *In thine eyes doth*.
d Gen. 42:9,16. 1 Cor. 13:5.
e Lev. 19:27. 1 Chr. 19:3,4. Ps. 109: 4,5. Is. 15:2.
f Is. 20:4. 47:2,3. Jer. 41:5.
g Josh. 6:24—26. 1 Kings 16:34. 1 Chr. 19:5.
h Gen. 34:30 Ex. 5:21. 1 Sam. 13:4. 27:12. 1 Chr. 19:6,7.
† 8:3 5,12. *Zobah*. Prov. 25:3. Is. 8: 9,10.
k Josh. 13:11—13.
† Or, *the men of Tob*. Judg. 11:3,5.
l 23:8, &c. 1 Chr. 19:8, &c.
m 6. Num. 13:21. Josh. 19:28. Judg 1:31.
n Josh. 8:22. Judg. 20:42,43.
o 1 Chr. 19:9—12. Neh. 4:20. Luke 22:32. Rom. 15:1. Gal. 6:2. Phil. 1:27,28.

NOTES.

Chap. X. V. 2. It may be questioned, whether David ought to have shown respect to the memory of so cruel an enemy to his people; especially as the law forbade Israel to seek the peace and prosperity of the Ammonites. (*Notes, Deut.* 23:3—6. 1 *Sam.* 11:1—3.) They were not, however, of the *devoted* nations; so that, perhaps, it was not wrong for David to express a sense of gratitude to a benefactor, without deciding on the motives of his conduct; and to render the customary civilities to his son, on his decease. Scott.

V. 3, 4. (*M. R.* e, f) Id.

Verse 4.

'Having the garments cut, and standing in them from morning to night, was a punishment of soldiers with the Romans, when they offended.' See *Martial*. Gill.

Verses 4, 5.

'It was one of the most infamous punishments of cowardice in Sparta, that they who turned their backs in the day of battle, were obliged to appear abroad with one *half* of their *beard shaved*, and the other half unshaved.' The beard is held very sacred in the east. See *Burder*. 'It is a mark of authority and liberty in Mahometan countries. Among the Arabians, it is more *infamous* to have the beard cut off, than among us to be publicly whipped.' Niebuhr. Ed.

(5.) *Jericho*.] This was a village near the spot where Jericho had stood: for that city was not yet rebuilt. (*Notes, Josh.* 6.26. 1 *Kings* 16:34.) Scott. Ed.

Jericho.] Note, Josh. 6:26.

Verse 6.

(*Note, Gen.* 34:30.) Little more can be determined with certainty concerning the different tribes of the Syrians, than what may be collected from the texts referred to in the margin. Maacah seems to have been the name of a district, and not of a king: and the clause may be rendered, 'of the king of Maacah.' (*Notes*, 1 *Chr.* 19:6,7.) Scott.

the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee.

12 Be [p] of good courage, and let us [q] play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and [r] the LORD do that which seemeth him good.

13 And Joab drew nigh, and the people that *were* with him, unto the battle against the Syrians: and [s] they fled before him.

14 And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, then fled they also before Abishai, and entered into the city. So Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came to Jerusalem.

15 ¶ And when the Syrians saw that they were smitten before Israel, they [t] gathered themselves together.

16 And [u] Hadarezer sent, and brought out the Syrians that *were* beyond * the river; and they came to Helam: and ‡ Shobach the captain of the host of Hadarezer *went* before them.

17 And when it was told David, [x] he gathered all Israel together, and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam: and the Syrians set themselves in array against David, and fought with him.

18 And the Syrians [y] fled before Israel; and David slew *the men of* seven hundred chariots of the Syrians, and forty thousand [z] horsemen, and smote [a] Shobach the captain of their host, who died there.

19 And when all the kings *that were* [b] servants to Hadarezer saw that they were smitten before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and served them. So the Syrians [c] feared to help the children of Ammon any more.

p Num. 13:20. Deut. 31:6. Josh. 1:6, 7,9,18. 1 Sam. 14:6,12. 17:32. 2 Chr. 32:7. Neh. 4:14. Heb. 13:6.
q 1 Sam. 4:9. 1 Chr. 19:13. 1 Cor. 16: 13.
r 16:10,11. Judg. 10:15. 1 Sam. 3:18. Job 1:21.
s 1 Kings 20:13,14,19—21,28—30. 1 Chr. 19:14,15. 2 Chr. 13:5—16.
t Ps. 2:1. Is. 8:9,10. Mic. 4:11,12. Zech. 14:2,3. Rev. 19:19—21.
u 8:3—8. 1 Chr. 18:3,5.
* That is, *Euphrates.*
† Or, *Shophach.* 1 Chr. 19:16.
x 1 Chr. 19:17.
y 8:4. Ps. 18:38. 46:11.
z 1 Chr. 19:18. *footnote.*
a Judg. 4:2,22. 5:26.
b Gen. 14:1—5. Josh. 11:10. Judg. 3: 7. 1 Kings 20:1. Dan. 2:37.
c 8:6. 1 Chr. 19:19. Ps. 48:4,5. Is. 26:11. Rev. 18:10.

III. Preparations made for an engagement. 1. The enemy disposed themselves in two bodies, one of Ammonites, which, being their own, were posted at the gate of the city; the other of Syrians, whom they had taken into their pay, and who were therefore posted at a distance in the field, to charge the forces of Israel in the flank or rear, while the Ammonites charged them in the front, *v.* 8. 2. Joab accordingly divided his forces: the choicest men he took under his own command, to fight the Syrians, whom, probably, he knew to be the better soldiers, and, being hired, better versed in the art of war, *v.* 9. The rest he put under the command of Abishai, to engage the Ammonites, *v.* 10.

IV. Joab's speech before the battle, *v.* 11, 12. It is not long, but pertinent and brave, [indeed, says Clarke, one of the most admirable of ancient or modern times.] 1. He prudently concerts the matter with Abishai his brother, that the dividing of the forces might not be the weakening of them; but that, which part soever was borne hard upon, the other should come in to its assistance. Note, Mutual helpfulness is brotherly duty. Christ's soldiers should thus strengthen one another's hands in their spiritual warfare. They that through grace are conquerors over temptation, must counsel, and comfort, and pray for, those that are tempted: *When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.* 2. He bravely encourages himself, and his brother, and the rest of the officers and soldiers, to do their utmost. Great dangers put an edge on true courage, and *God and our country*, was the word. The relation which any person or thing stands in to God, should endear it to us, and engage us to do our utmost in its service. 3. He piously leaves the issue with God. When we make conscience of doing our duty, we may, with the greatest satisfaction, leave the event with God; not thinking that our valor bids Him to prosper us, but that still He may do as He pleases, yet hoping for his salvation in his own way and time.

V. The victory, *v.* 13, 14. We do not hinder our success by preparing for disappointment.

V. 15—19. Here is, 1. A new attempt of the Syrians to recover their lost honor, and to check the progress of David's victorious arms. The forces lately dispersed, rallied again, *v.* 15. Even the baffled cause will make head, as long as there is any life in it; the enemies of the Son of David do so, Matt. 23: 34. Rev. 19: 19. These, conscious of insufficiency, called in the aid of their allies and dependences on the other side *the river*, (*v.* 16.) and, thus recruited, hoped to make their part good against Israel; but *they knew not the thoughts of the Lord, for He gathered them as sheaves into the floor;* see Mic. 4: 11—13.

2. The defeat of this attempt by the vigilance and valor of David, who, on notice of their design, resolved not to stay till they attacked him, but went in person at the head of his army over Jordan, (*v.* 17.) and in a pitched battle routed the Syrians; (*v.* 18.) slew 7000 men, who belonged to 700 chariots, and 40,000 other soldiers, horse and foot, as appears from 1 Chr. 19: 18. Their general was killed in the battle, and David came home in triumph, no doubt.

3. The consequence of this victory. (1.) David gained several tributaries, *v.* 19 Thus the promise made to Abraham, (Gen. 15: 18.) and repeated to Joshua, (*ch.* 1: 4.) that the borders of Israel should extend to the Euphrates, was performed at length. (2.) The Ammonites lost their old allies. *The Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon*, not because they had an *unrighteous* cause, (justifying a crime which was a breach of the law of nations,) but because they found it *unsuccessful.* It is dangerous helping those that have God against them; for when they fall, their helpers will fall with them.

Jesus Christ, the Son of David, sent his apostles and ministers, after all his servants the prophets, to the Jewish church and nation: but they treated them shamefully, as Hanun did David's ambassadors; mocked them, abused them, slew them: and this was it that filled the measure of their iniquity, and brought on them ruin without remedy; (Matt. 21: 35, 41.—22: 7. comp. 2 Chr. 36: 16.) for Christ takes the affronts and injuries done to his ministers, as done to Himself, and will avenge them accordingly.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ought to sympathize with the afflicted, and show gratitude to our friends: but nothing, except vexation and disappointment, can be expected by courting the friendship of ungodly men.—It is the height of folly to awaken the resentment of those, by insult and contempt, whose power of taking vengeance cannot be thus diminished: and the fatal effects of rash affronts, though little feared, are often severely felt.—Those, who are the most ready to commit injustice, are commonly the most averse to reconciliation: and confidence in numbers, strength, or valor, frequently buoys up men to their destruction; for 'though hand join in hand the wicked shall not be unpunished.' Yet a good cause, and a single dependence on the Lord, afford the surest indications of success.—But especially let the impenitent, and unbelieving, and disobedient recollect, that the Son of David will assuredly resent their contempt of his ambassadors, whom He sends to them with a message of peace and love; and that He will consider the ill-usage of them as a declaration of war against Himself. All his people should be valiant in his cause, and for his truth and righteousness: and ministers should neither fear, nor be ashamed, to exercise their embassy of reconciliation, however despised, insulted, or persecuted; for He will plead their cause, comfort them under their trials, and reward their faithfulness with 'a crown of glory which fadeth not away.' SCOTT.

Verse 18.

The men of 700, &c.] 7,000, 1 Chr. 19.18; probably 7,000 men belonging to 700 chariots. And 40,000 men, who fought on foot or on horseback, as there was occasion. [Qu. Is this explained by the custom of some tribes of N. American Indians, who go to war with a limited number of horses: each Indian riding in turn; thus hastening the march. Were the horses and chariots of the Syrians thus apportioned, each one to so many men?] Or some were foot-soldiers and some horsemen. SCOTT. The scholiast on Vegetius states that from 6 to 8 persons fought from the square, 4-horse chariots. ED.

700.] 'The Hebrews formerly, probably, (as they do now,) expressed their numbers by letters, and, as many of these closely resemble each other, they might in transcribing be easily mistaken one for the other; and thus the two numbers often, as here, become uncertain. Thus, 1 Chr. 19:18. the number stated as slain is 7000. Now the letter *Zain* with a dot over it (ז) stands for 7000, and the letter *Nun* (נ) for 700.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Made peace.] 'Thus, in the space of 19 or 20 years, David gloriously finished 8 wars; viz. with Ishbosheth; the Jebusites; the Philistines and their allies; the Philistines alone; the Moabites; Hadadezer; the Idumeans; and the Ammonites and Syrians.' ID.

CHAP. XI.

Joab besieges Rabbah, 1. David commits adultery with Bath-sheba, the wife of Uriah, 2—4. She informs David, that she is pregnant, 5; who sends for Uriah, and in vain tries to induce him to visit his wife, 6—13. He sends by Uriah a letter to Joab; according to which Uriah, with others, is slain by the Ammonites, 14—17. Joab sends word to David, and he answers the messengers in very improper language, 18—25. David marries Bath sheba, who bears him a son; but God is displeased, 26, 27.

AND it came to pass, * after the year [a] was expired, at the time when kings go forth *to battle*, that [b] David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged [c] Rabbah: but David tarried still at Jerusalem.

2 And it came to pass in an evening-tide, that David [d] arose from off his bed, and walked upon [e] the roof of the king's house: and from the roof [f] he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman *was* [g] very beautiful to look upon.

3 And David [h] sent and inquired after the woman. And *one* said, *Is* not this †Bath-sheba, the daughter of ‡ Eliam, the wife of [i] Uriah the Hittite?

4 And David [k] sent messengers, and took her: and she came in unto him, and [l] he lay with her, (for § she was [m] purified from her uncleanness,) and she returned unto her house.

5 And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, [n] I *am* with child.

6 And David sent to Joab, *saying*, [o] Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David.

7 And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded *of him* ‖ how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered.

8 And David said to Uriah, [p] Go down to thy house, and [q] wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and [r] there ¶ followed him [s] a mess *of meat* from the king.

CHAP. XI. What David said of the mournful report of Saul's death, may more fitly be applied to the sad story of this ch. the adultery and murder David was guilty of—*Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in Askelon.* We wish we could draw a veil over it, and that it might never be known; but it cannot, must not, be concealed: the Scripture is faithful in relating the faults even of those whom it most applauds, which is an instance of the sincerity of the penmen, and an evidence that it was not written to serve any party; but *for our learning*, that *he that thinks he stands, may take heed lest he fall;* and that others' harms may be our warnings. Many, no doubt, have been imboldened to sin, and hardened in it, by this story, and to them it is a *savor of death unto death;* but many have by it been awakened to a holy jealousy over themselves, and constant watchfulness against sin, and to them it is *a savor of life unto life.* They are very great sins, and greatly aggravated, which here we find David guilty of. Let him that readeth, understand what the best of men are, when God leaves them to themselves.

V. 1—5. Here is, I. David's glory in pursuing the war against the Ammonites, *v.* 1. Having routed their army in the field, as soon as the season permitted, he sent more forces to waste the country, and further to avenge the quarrel of his ambassadors. Rabbah, their metropolis, held out a great while; Joab laid close siege to it, and it was at the time of that siege, that David fell into this sin.

II. David's shame, in being himself conquered, and led captive, by his own lust. The sin he was guilty of, was adultery, *an iniquity to be punished by the judges*, a sin which *takes away the heart*, and *gets a man a wound and dishonor*, more than any other, and the *reproach of it is not wiped away.*

1. Observe the occasions, which led to it. (1.) Neglect of his business. To the Syrian war David went in person, *ch.* 10: 17. Had he been now at his post, at the head of his forces, he had been out of the way of this temptation. When out of the way of duty, we are in temptation. (2.) Love of ease, and indulgence of sloth. *He came off his bed at evening-tide;* (*v.* 2.) there he had dozed away the afternoon in idleness, which he should have spent in some exercise, for his own improvement, or the good of others. He used to pray, morning, evening, and at noon, in the day of his trouble: it is to be feared he had, this noon, omitted it. Idleness gives great advantage to the tempter. Standing waters gather filth. The bed of sloth oft proves the bed of lust. (3.) A wandering eye. *He saw a woman washing herself*, probably from some ceremonial pollution, according to the law. This sin came in at the eye, as Eve's did. Either he had not, like Job, *made a covenant with his eyes*, or, at this time, had forgotten it.

2. The steps of the sin. When he saw her, lust immediately conceived, and, the corrupt desire growing more violent, though he was told she was a wife, and whose wife she was, yet he sent for her, and when she came, *lay with her*, she too easily consenting, because he was a great man, and famed for goodness too. See how the way of sin is down-hill; when men begin to do evil, they cannot soon stop themselves. *The beginning* of lust, as *of strife, is like the letting forth of water;* therefore leave it off before it be meddled with. The foolish fly fires her wings, and fools away her life, at last, by playing about the candle.

3. The aggravations of the sin. He was now in years, 50 at least, some think more, when those lusts, which are more properly youthful, one would think, should not have been violent in him. He had many wives and concubines; this is insisted on, *ch.* 12: 8. Uriah, whom he wronged, was one of his own worthies; a person of honor and virtue, now abroad in his service, jeoparding his life for the honor and safety of him and his kingdom, where he himself should have been. Bath-sheba was a lady of good reputation, and, till drawn by him into this wickedness, no doubt, had preserved her purity. David was a king, whom God had intrusted with the sword of justice, and the execution of the law on other criminals, particularly on adulterers, who were, by the law, to be put to death; for him therefore to be guilty of those crimes himself, was to make himself a pattern, when he should have been a terror, to evil doers. Much more might be said to aggravate the sin; and I can think but of one extenuation, that it was done but once, and by the surprise of a temptation. David was none of those, of whom the prophet complains, Jer. 5: 8. but, this once, God left him to himself, as He did Hezekiah, *that he might know what was in his heart*, 2 Chr. 32: 31. By this instance we are taught, what need we have to pray every day, *Father in heaven, lead us not into temptation;* and to *watch, that we enter not into it.*

V. 6—13. Uriah, we may suppose, had now been absent some weeks, and not intending to return till the end of the campaign: the situation of his wife would *bring to light the hidden works of darkness;* and when, at his return, he should find how he had been abused, and by whom, it might well be expected, he would prosecute his wife, and have her stoned; for *jealousy is the rage of a man*, especially a man of honor; and he that is

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* Heb. *at the return of the year.* 1 Kings 20:22,26.
a 2 Chr. 36:10. Ec. 3:8.
b 1 Chr. 20:1. Zech. 14:3.
c 12:26. Deut. 3:11. 1 Chr. 20:1. Ez. 21:20.
d 4:5,7. Prov. 19:15. 24:33,34. Matt. 26:40,41. 1 Thes. 5:6,7. 1 Pet. 4:7.
e Deut. 22:8. Jer. 19:13. Matt. 10:27. Acts 10:9.
f Gen. 3:6. 6:2. 34:2. Job 31:1. Ps. 119:37. Matt. 5:28. 1 John 2:16.
g Gen. 39:6. Prov. 6:25. 31:30.
h Jer. 5:8. Hos. 7:6,7. Jam. 1:14,15.
† Or, *Bath-shua.*
‡ Or, *Ammiel.* 1 Chr. 3:5.
i 23:39. 1 Chr. 11:41.
k Gen. 39:7. Job 31:9—11. Ps. 50:18.
l Ps. 51: *title.* Jam. 1:14.
§ Or, *and when she had purified herself, &c. she returned.* Prov. 31:30.
m Lev. 12:2—5. 15:19, &c. 18:19.
n Deut. 22:22. Prov. 6.34.
o Gen. 4:7. 38:18—23. 1 Sam. 15:30. Job 20:12—14. Prov. 28:13. Is. 29:15. Matt. 26:71,72,74
‖ Heb. *of the peace of Joab.* Gen. 29:6. 37:14. 1 Sam. 17:22. *marg.*
p Ps. 32:21. Is. 28:15. Luke 12:2. Heb. 4:13.
q Gen. 18:4. 19:2.
r Ps. 12:2. 55:21.
¶ Heb. *went out after him.*
s Gen. 43:34.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI. V. 1—5. Without doubt, David's prosperity had gradually rendered him more negligent than formerly in his devotional exercises, and more self-indulgent; and perhaps had occasioned a measure of self-confidence and carnal security: and, having been accustomed, without censure, to marry any single woman, for whom he conceived an affection, his inclinations had not been habituated to a denial. Perhaps, supposing her not to be a married woman, he sent to inquire after her, in order to add her to the number of his wives. But his sinful passion had acquired such an ascendency, that he was the more inflamed by being informed, that she was the wife of one of his bravest and most faithful officers. Most of the Jewish writers, on the most frivolous pretences, exculpate both David and Bath-sheba, as to the adultery; and only condemn David, as to the murder! This is a specimen of their morality! SCOTT.

(2.) 'The Persian ladies regard the bath as their place of greatest amusement; they make appointments to meet there, and often pass 7 or 8 hours together in the carpeted saloon, relating anecdotes, eating sweetmeats, sharing the kalioun (a kind of pipes) and completing, in their beautiful forms, the fancied perfections of the east. . . . The summer bath seemed to comprise every thing of seclusion, elegance, and that luxurious enjoyment which has too often been the chief occupation of some Asiatic princes. This bath, saloon, or court, is circular, with a vast circular basin in its centre, (of pure white marble, 60 or 70 ft. in diameter,) filled with the clearest water, sparkling in the sun, for its only canopy is the vault of heaven; but rose-trees, with other pendant shrubs, bearing flowers, cluster near it. . . . Round the sides of the court are two ranges, one above another, of little chambers, looking towards the bath, and furnished with every refinement of the harem. . . . In this delightful recess, the waters flow through the basin by a constant spring, thus renewing the vigor of the body by their bracing coolness: and enchantingly refreshing the air. . . . The royal master frequently takes his noon-day repose in one of the upper chambers, which encircle the saloons of the bath, and may overlook the bathers below. In such a bath court, probably, Bath-sheba was seen by David, as he was walking at eventide on the roof of his palace; he might undesignedly have strolled far enough to overlook the *anderoon* of his women, where the beautiful wife of Uriah, visiting the royal wives, might have joined them, as was often the custom of those countries, in the delights of the bath.' PORTER.

9 But [t] Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house.

10 And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest not thou from *thy* journey? why *then* didst thou not go down unto thine house?

11 And Uriah said unto David, [u] The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and [x] my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields: shall I then go into mine house to eat, and to drink, and to lie with my wife? [y] *as* thou livest, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing.

12 And David said to Uriah, [z] Tarry here to-day also, and to-morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day and the morrow.

13 And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he [a] made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house.

[*Practical Observations.*]

14 ¶ And it came to pass in the morning, that

t Job 5:12—14. Prov. 21:30.

thus injured, *will not spare in the day of vengeance.* This Bath-sheba was apprehensive of, when she let David know she was with child, intimating that he was concerned to protect her, which, it is likely, if he had not promised so to do, she would not have consented to him. Hope of impunity is a great encouragement to iniquity. It might also be expected that Uriah, since he could not prosecute David by law for such an offence, would take his revenge another way, and raise a rebellion. There have been instances of kings, who, by such provocations, given to powerful subjects, have lost their crowns.

To prevent this double mischief, David endeavors to father the child which should be born, on Uriah himself, and therefore sends for him home, to stay a night or two in his own house. Uriah must come home, under pretence of bringing David word *how the war prospered*, and how they went on with the siege of Rabbah, *v.* 7. David, having had as much conference with Uriah as he thought requisite to cover the design, sent him to his house, and, that he might be the more pleasant there, sent a dish of meat for himself and wife, *v.* 8. When that project failed the first night, the next night, *he made him drunk*, (*v.* 13.) or merry, that he might forget his vow, (*v.* 11.) and be disposed to go home to his own bed. It is a very wicked thing, on any design whatsoever, to make a person drunk; *Wo to him* that doth so, Hab. 2: 15, 16. God will put into their hands a cup of trembling, who put into the hands of others the cup of drunkenness. Robbing a man of his reason, is worse than robbing him of his money; and drawing him into sin, worse than drawing him into any trouble whatsoever. Every good man, especially every magistrate, should endeavor to prevent this sin, by admonishing, restraining, and denying the glass to those whom they see falling into excess; but to further it, is to do the devil's work, to officiate as factor for him.

This plot was defeated by Uriah's firm resolution not to lie in his own bed: both nights, he slept with the life-guard, and *went not down to his house*, though, probably, his wife pressed him as much as David, *v.* 9, 12. Now, 1. Some think he suspected what was done; but if he had, surely he would have opened the letter David sent by him to Joab. Whether he suspected any thing or no, Providence put this resolution into his heart, and kept him to it, to discover David's sin, baffle his design to conceal it, and awaken David's conscience to confess, and repent. 3. The reason he gave to David of this strange instance of self-denial and mortification, was very brave, *v.* 11. Now, (1.) This was a generous resolution, and shows Uriah to be a man of a public spirit, bold and hardy, and mortified to the delights of sense. In times of public difficulty and danger, it does not become us to repose in security, or roll in pleasure; or, do as the king and Haman, who sat down to drink, when the *city Shushan was perplexed*. We should voluntarily endure hardness, when the church of God is constrained to. (2.) It might have been of use to awaken David's conscience. That he had basely abused so brave a man, a man so heartily concerned for him and his kingdom, and that acted for him and it with so much vigor. That he was himself so unlike him. The consideration of the public hardships and hazards kept Uriah from lawful pleasures, yet could not keep David, though more nearly interested, from unlawful ones. The law was, *When the host goeth forth, then*, in a special manner, *keep thyself from every wicked thing*, Deut. 23: 9. Uriah outdid that law, but David violated it.

V. 14—27. When David's project of fathering

u 7:2,6. 1 Sam. 4:4. 14:18.
x 20:6. Matt. 10:24,25. John 13:14. 1 Cor. 9:25—27. 2 Tim. 2:3,4,12. Heb. 12:1,2.
y 14:19. 1 Sam. 1:26. 17:55. 20:3. 25:26.
z Jer. 2:22,23,37.
a Gen. 19:32—35. Ex. 32:21. Hab. 2:15.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—13. A deep conviction that the human heart, even the heart of every man, is 'deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,' is of the greatest importance to the due exercise of repentance, faith, and every Christian grace: and in order to impress this humiliating conviction on the minds of those who attend to the Word of God, a few of his most eminent servants have been left to fall in such a manner, as fully to prove, that every evil dwells in each of us; and that in circumstances of concurring temptations, we are capable of committing any crime; even that which we at present and habitually most dread and detest! Neither eminent piety, nor a long and close walk with God, habits of obedience, and of the government of the passions, nor the sobriety of advancing age, nor peculiar obligations from God, great reputation and usefulness, nor clear knowledge of the divine law; nor even the Spirit of prophecy, have been found capable of extirpating the most hateful propensities of the human heart: though restrained, dethroned, and crucified, they have still lived, and have revived, obtained advantages, and for a season *seemed to reign* with the most destructive tyranny! Who then are we, that we should deem ourselves secure? We are never in this world out of the reach of temptation; never exempted, in respect of any sin, from the necessity of watchfulness, prayer, and dependence on divine grace. Let us not then be high-minded; but beg of God that He would enable us to pass the time of our sojourning in humble, jealous fear. SCOTT.

Verse 9.

Slept at the door.] 'The general method of building, both in Barbary and the Levant, seems to have continued the same from the earliest ages. Large doors, spacious chambers, marble pavements, cloistered courts, with fountains sometimes playing in the midst, are well adapt-

ed to their hot climate. Their jealousy is pleased to have all the windows open into their respective courts, except a latticed window, or balcony, which sometimes looks into the street. Entering one of the principal houses, we first pass through a porch or gateway, with benches on each side, where the master of the family receives visits, and despatches business; [here Uriah seems to have slept;] few persons, not even the nearest relations, having a further admission, except upon extraordinary occasions. From this we are received into the court or quadrangle, open to the weather, and paved with marble to carry off the water. [See the cut.] This is allotted to the reception of larger companies, Luke 5:19, &c.' SHAW. See *Calm.* by *Roo.* ED.

Verses 10, 11.

The circumstance of the ark being constantly placed in a tabernacle, and not a temple, could be no reason why Uriah should not go home to his house. It is therefore probable, that the ark was on this occasion carried with the army to the war. SCOTT.

Verses 14—17.

Satan, having gradually drawn David on into one sinful attempt after another, had prepared his mind for still more atrocious wickedness. (*Matt.* 26:14—16, 25, 30—35, 40, 41, 69—75. *John* 12:1—8. 13:18—30.) Whatever casuistry David might use with his conscience, this was *deliberate murder of many persons with malice prepense*, aggravated exceedingly by the circumstance, that these men were slain in the very act of fighting for him and his kingdom. ID.

(14.) To show how well, alas! David here acts the oriental despot, comp. the following; 'Nour Jehan, or 'the light of the world,' (also called Nour Mahl, or 'the light of the seraglio,') was wife to one Sher Afkan Khan, of a Turkoman family, who came from Persia to Hindostan in very indifferent circumstances. As she was exquisitely beautiful, of great wit, and an elegant poetess, Jehanguire, the Sultan, resolved to take her to himself. He sent her husband, esteemed the

David [b] wrote a letter to Joab, and sent *it* by the hand of Uriah.

15 And he wrote in the letter, saying, [c] Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the * hottest battle, and retire ye † from him, that he may be smitten, [d] and die.

16 And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that * he assigned Uriah unto a place, where he knew that valiant men *were.*

17 And the men of the city went out and fought with Joab: and [f] there fell *some* of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

18 Then Joab sent, and told David all the things concerning the war;

19 And charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king;

20 And if so be that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight? knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall?

21 Who smote [g] Abimelech the son of [h] Jerubbesheth? did not a woman cast a piece of a mill-stone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? Then say thou, [i] Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

22 So the messenger went, and came and showed David all that Joab had sent him for.

23 And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate.

24 And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants, and *some* of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

25 Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing ‡ displease thee; [k] for the sword devoureth § one as well as another: [l] make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it; and encourage thou him.

26 And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, [m] she mourned for her husband.

27 And when the mourning was past, David sent and [n] fetched

b 1 Kings 21:8—10. Ps. 19:13. 52:2. 62:9. Jer. 9:1—4. 17:9. Mic. 7:3—5.
c 17. 1 Sam. 18:17,21,25. Ps. 51:4,14. Jer. 10:23.
* Heb. *strong.*
† Heb. *from after him.*
d 12:9.
e 21. 3:27. 20:9,10. 1 Sam. 22:17—19. 1 Kings 2:5,31—34. 21:12—14. 2 Kings 10:6,7. Prov. 29:12. Hos. 5:11. Acts 5:29.
f 12:9. Ps. 51:14.
g Judg. 9:53.
h Judg. 6:32. 7:1. *Jerub-baal.*
i 3:27,34. Ps. 39:8. Is. 14:10. Ez. 16: 51,52.
‡ Heb. *be evil in thine eyes.*
k Josh. 7:8,9. 1 Sam. 6:9. Ec. 9:1—3, 11,12.
§ Heb. *so and such.*
l 12:26.
m 3:31. 14:2. Gen. 27:41.
n 3:2—5. 5:13—16. 12:9.

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bravest in his service, with troops, to command in Bengal, and afterwards, sent another with a greater force to cut him off. When he was killed, Nour Jehan was soon prevailed upon to become an empress.' *Frazer*, in *Burder.* ED.

Verse 21.

Then say, &c.] This was a plain intimation to the messenger, that the death of Uriah would be so agreeable to David, as to reconcile him to the loss which had been sustained. Thus he began already to be despised even by his accomplices! SCOTT.

Verse 25.

David spoke on this occasion with an insensibility about the lives of his subjects, which borders on infidelity, and strongly marks the state of his heart. On other occasions, he would have considered such an event as a rebuke, which required humiliation, prayer, and sacrifices, and a more entire dependence on God in future; (*Notes, Josh.* 7: 6—9. 1 *Chr.* 15:12—14.) and he would have censured the imprudence of the commanders, and charged them, on pain of his displeasure, to be more careful of the lives of their brethren. ID.

Verse 27.

Probably, David still attended on the ordinances of religion. By some ingenious self-flattery he endeavored to palliate his conduct to himself; and no one reproved him for it. Perhaps the general practice of other princes induced him to conclude, that persons in his high station were not, in this respect, bound to the same strictness as their subjects. However, though he had no deep remorse of conscience, we may be sure that he lost all spirituality and comfort in religion: for small transgressions, like slight wounds, give much pain to the believer's conscience; but enormous crimes, like a violent blow on the head, leave him for a season in an unaccountable state of insensibility. SCOTT.

But the thing, &c.] Such marriages, as this of David with Bath-sheba, with whom he had previously committed adultery, were not forbidden in the law, as some of the rabbies suppose; for this was needless, as both parties were condemned to die. and David was not afterwards ordered to put her away. Yet as he married her in order to cover his iniquity, and as the desire of possessing her may be supposed an inducement to the murder of Uriah, it formed an aggravation of the crime: and the whole transaction, from first to last, was in all respects displeasing to the Lord.—But why was this permitted? or why was it recorded? It is certain that thousands, through succeeding generations, have, by this fall of 'the man after God's own heart,' been prejudiced against true religion, hardened in infidelity, or emboldened in blasphemy: while others have thence taken occasion to commit *habitual wickedness* under a religious profession, and with presumptuous confidence, to the still greater discredit of the Gospel. It should, however, be considered, that all these have been, previously, either open enemies to true religion, or hypocritical pretenders to it. and it is the righteous purpose of God, that stumbling-blocks should be thrown

her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done * displeased the LORD.

CHAP. XII.

Nathan by a parable causes David to pass sentence on himself, 1—6. David, convicted by Nathan, confesses his guilt; and is pardoned, but told that the child shall die, 7—14. The child is smitten and dies, though David fasted and prayed for him while he lived, 15—18. Finding that the child is dead, David worships God, and takes comfort, 19—23. Solomon is born, and named Jedidiah, 24, 25. David takes Rabbah, and treats the Ammonites with severity, 26—31.

AND [a] the LORD sent Nathan [b] unto David: and [c] he came unto him, and said unto him, [d] There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.

2 The rich *man* had * exceeding many flocks and herds;

3 But the poor *man* had nothing, save [f] one little ewe-lamb, which he had bought, and nourished up; and it grew up together with him, and with his children: it did eat of his own

o Gen. 38:10. 1 Chr. 21:7.
* Heb. *was evil in the eyes of.* Ps. 5:6. 41:4,5. Heb. 13:4.
a 7:1—5. 24:11—13. 1 Kings 13:1. 18:1. 2 Kings 1:3.
b 11:10—17,25. 14:14. Is. 57:17,18.
c Ps. 51: *title.*
d 14:5—11. Judg. 9:7—15. 1 Kings 20:35—41. Is. 5:1—6. Matt. 21:33—45. Luke 15:11, &c. 16:19, &c.
e 8. 3:2—5. 5:13—16. 15:16. Job 1:3.
f 11:3. Prov. 5:18,19.

broad an intimation to the messenger, and by him to others, that David would be secretly pleased to hear that: for murder will out. And when men do such base things, they must expect to be bantered and upbraided with them, even by their inferiors. The messenger delivered his message agreeably to orders, *v.* 22—24.

IV. David receives the account with a secret satisfaction, *v.* 25. All is well, now Uriah is got out of the way. 'It was a chance of war.' He orders Joab to make the battle more strong next time, while he, by his sin, was weakening it, and provoking God to blast the undertaking!

Lastly, He married the widow, in a short time. She submitted to the ceremony of mourning, as little time as custom would admit, (*v.* 26.) then David took her, and she bare him a son. Uriah's revenge was prevented, but the birth of the child, so soon after the marriage, published the crime; sin will have shame; yet that was not the worst, *The thing displeased the Lord;* the whole *matter of Uriah*, (as it is called, 1 K. 15: 5.) the adultery, falsehood, murder, and this marriage, at last. The nearer any are to God in profession, the more displeasing to Him their sins are; for in them there is more ingratitude, treachery, and reproach, than in the sins of others.

CHAP. XII. V. 1—14. It seems to have been a great while after David's guilt with Bath-sheba, before he was brought to repentance. For, when Nathan was sent, the child was born, *v.* 14. What shall we think of David's state all this while? Can we imagine his heart never smote him? Or that he never repented in secret before God? I would willingly hope he did, and that Nathan was sent to him, immediately on the birth of the child, when the thing by that mean came to be publicly known and talked of, to draw from him an open confession of the sin, to the glory of God, the admonition of others, and that he might receive, by Nathan, absolution with certain limitations. But during these nine months, we may well suppose his comforts and exercises of grace suspended, and his communion with God interrupted; certainly, he penned no Psalms, his harp was out of tune, and his soul like a tree in winter, that has life in the root only; therefore, after Nathan had been with him, he prays, *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and open Thou my lips.* Ps. 51: 12, 15. Let us observe,

I. The messenger: a prophet, Nathan, his faithful friend and confidant, to instruct and counsel, *v.* 1. David did not send for Nathan, but God sent Nathan to David. Note, Though God may suffer his people to fall into sin, He will not suffer them to lie still in it. *He went on frowardly in the way of his heart*, and, if left to himself, would have wandered endlessly, but (saith God) *I have seen his ways, and will heal him*, Isa. 57: 17, 18. He sends after us before we seek after Him, else we should certainly be lost. By Nathan God had sent him notice of his kind intentions toward him, (*ch.* 7: 4.) and now, by the same hand, He sends him this message of wrath. God's word in the mouth of his ministers must be received, whether it speak terror or comfort.

II. Nathan's message.

1. A parable, which seemed to David as a complaint against one of his subjects that had wronged his poor neighbor, in order to his righting the injured, and punishing the injurious. Nathan, it is likely, used to come on such errands, which made this the less suspected. It becomes those who have interest in princes, and free access to them, to intercede for the wronged, that they may have right.

(1.) In this [most searching parable], he showed him the evil of the sin he had been guilty of. He had many wives and concubines, whom he kept at a distance, as rich men keep their flocks in their fields; had he had but one, and had she been dear to him, as the ewe-lamb was to its owner, *as the loving hind and the pleasant roe;* he would have looked no further, Prov. 5: 19. Marriage is a remedy against fornication, but marrying many is not; for when once the law of unity is transgressed, the indulged lust will hardly stint itself. Uriah, like the poor man, had only one wife, who was to him as his own soul, and always lay in his own bosom, for he had no other, he desired no other. The traveller, (so Bp. Patrick from the Jewish writers,) was the evil imagination, disposition, or desire, which came into David's heart. It is called a *traveller*, they observe, for at first it is only so, but, in time, it becomes a

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 14—27. When a man has so far given place to the devil, as not only to commit scandalous sins, but to use disingenuous and base means of concealing them, and sees a prospect of having the whole exposed to public view; what shall prevent his being pushed forward, by the same influence and from the same motives, to treachery, malice, and murder, till crimes are multiplied and aggravated, beyond computation, and till every nobler consideration is extinguished? But can a real and eminent believer ever tread this downward path, and, as it were, fall asleep in the arms of Satan? (*Notes*, and *P. O. Judg.* 16:) Can a person, who has committed such atrocious crimes, and so long remains impenitent, be indeed a child of God, a member of Christ, a temple of the Holy Spirit, and an heir of eternal glory? Can one spark of divine life exist unextinguished in such an ocean? It is plain that these things are possible; but no man in such a case can have warranted evidence to conclude that he is a believer: the higher his confidence, who has sunk thus low in wickedness, the greater proof is there of his presumption and hypocrisy. Though grace be not lost in such an awful case, the assurance and consolation of it must be wholly suspended. Let not then any hypocrite, who resembles David in nothing but his transgressions, and who adds the habit of allowed sin to all other aggravations, buoy up his confidence with his example: let him first imitate David's humiliation, repentance, and other eminent graces, before he thinks himself, or requires others to consider him, as merely a backslider. (12: 13—15. 15: 24—29. 1 *Chr.* 29: *Ps.* 51:) Neither let any opposer or despiser of the truth say, Are these the fruits of faith and devotion? We confidently answer, No. They are the effects of a [corrupted] nature, the tendency of which to evil must be inconceivably strong, when it overcomes the contrary tendency of truth and grace in the heart of an eminent servant of God.—And let us all watch against the beginnings of negligence and self-indulgence, and keep at the utmost distance from that precipice, whence David fell, earnestly beseeching God to close our senses, imaginations, and affections to all forbidden objects, thoughts, and desires. But again: Is it possible that such a backslider from God can be recovered, and admitted afterwards to comfortable communion with Him? Doubtless it is; 'for with the LORD there is mercy, and with Him there is plenteous redemption:' and He will neither cast out one humble, penitent believer, whatever his former crimes have been; nor suffer Satan to pluck any of his sheep out of his hand. (*John* 10: 26—31.) Let then those who are fallen, return to the Lord without delay, and seek forgiveness through the Redeemer's atoning blood. SCOTT.

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in the way of such men, that they 'may stumble, and fall, and be snared, and taken, and perish:' it is his holy will thus to detect the secret malignity of their hearts, and to make way for the display of his justice in their condemnation.—On the other hand, thousands, from age to age, have by this awful example been rendered more suspicious of themselves, more watchful, more afraid of temptation, more dependent on the Lord, and more fervent in prayer; and, by means of David's fall, have themselves been preserved from falling. Numbers, who have been overcome by temptation, have thus been preserved from despair. Every upright soul will *eventually* derive benefit from the impartial record of this event; and none will finally be injured by it, except those, who desire an excuse for sin, or an objection to the religion of the Bible. Bees will collect honey, and spiders poison, from the same plants, according to their different natures. No excuse can be made for David; he attempted none for himself: and much self-knowledge is requisite to account for his conduct, or to deem it *possible* that a man, who had so long enjoyed communion with God, in the highest exercises of devotion, could commit such enormous crimes, and continue so long impenitent. But the Lord's design in leaving him to himself was doubtless wise, righteous, and merciful; and He can and will over-rule it for great good to those who fear and love Him. The glory of all the good is his due; the blame of all the evil, *original* or *consequent*, belongs to those who commit it. (*Gen.* 50:20. 2 *Chr.* 32: 30—33, *v.* 31. *Matt.* 26:69—75.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII. V. 1—6. 'There is never more use of wisdom, than in the contrivance of reprehension; especially of princes, and great persons.' *Patrick.* There scarcely ever was any thing more calculated, on the one hand to awaken emotions of sympathy, and on the other, those of indignation, than the case here supposed, and the several circumstances, by which the heart must be interested in the poor man's case, and by which the unfeeling oppression of his rich neigh

*meat, and drank of his own cup, and [s] lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

4 And there came [h] a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but [i] took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

5 And [k] David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, [l] *As* the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this *thing* † shall surely die:

6 And he shall [m] restore the lamb four-fold, because he did this thing, and [n] because he had no pity.

7 And Nathan said to David, [o] Thou *art* the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, [p] I anointed thee king over Israel, and [q] I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul:

8 And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy [r] master's wives into thy bosom, and [s] gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and, if *that had been* too little, [t] I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

9 Wherefore hast thou [u] despised the commandment of the LORD, [x] to do evil in his sight? [y] thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be* thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

10 Now therefore [z] the sword shall never depart from thine house; [a] because thou hast despised me, and [b] hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

guest, and in conclusion, is master of the house. Yet some observe, that, in David's breast, lust was but as a wayfaring man that tarries only for a night, it did not dwell and rule there.

(2.) By this parable, he drew from David a sentence against himself. For David, supposing it to be a case in fact, and not doubting the truth of it, when he had it from Nathan himself, gave judgment immediately against the offender, and confirmed it with an oath, *v.* 5, 6. For his injustice he should restore four-fold. (Ex. 22: 1.) For his tyranny and cruelty, he should be put to death. If a poor man steal from a rich man, even to satisfy his soul when he is hungry, he shall make restitution, though it cost him *all the substance of his house*, Prov. 6: 30, 31, and adultery is alluded to, *v.* 32. But if a rich man steal for stealing sake, not for want but wantonness, merely that he may be imperious and vexatious, he deserves to die for it; for to him restitution is no punishment, or next to none. If the sentence be thought too severe, it must be imputed to the present roughness of David's temper, being under guilt, and not having himself as yet received mercy.

2. He closed in with him, at length, in the application of the parable. In beginning with a parable, he showed his prudence; but here, in his application, he shows his faithfulness, and deals as plainly and roundly with king David himself, as if he had been a common person. In plain terms, '*Thou art the man*, who hast done this wrong, and one incomparably greater, to thy neighbor; and therefore, by thine own sentence, thou deservest to die, and shalt be judged out of thine own mouth. Though he took the lamb, he did not cause the owner thereof to lose his life, as thou, therefore much more art thou worthy to die.'

Nathan now speaks, not as a petitioner for a poor man, but as an ambassador from the great God, with whom is no respect of persons.

(1.) God, by Nathan, reminds David of the great things He had done and designed for him, *v.* 7, 8. See how liberal God is in his gifts; we are not straitened in Him. Where He has given much, He yet gives more. And God's bounty to us is a great aggravation of our discontent, and desire of forbidden fruit. It is ungrateful to covet what God has prohibited, while we have liberty to pray for what God has promised, which is enough.

(2.) He charges him with a high contempt of the divine authority, in these sins, *v.* 9. This is the spring, and malignity of sin, that it is making light of the divine law, and the Law-maker; as if its obligation were weak, its precepts trifling, and the threats not at all formidable. His adultery, which began the mischief, is not mentioned perhaps, because he was already convinced of that, but, the murder of Uriah is twice mentioned, and aggravated. The marrying of Bath-sheba is likewise twice mentioned, because he thought there was no harm in that, *v.* 9, 10. To marry her whom he had before defiled, and whose husband he had slain, was an affront on the ordinance of marriage, making that not only to palliate, but in a manner to consecrate, such villanies. In all this, he *despised the word of the Lord*, (so the Heb.) not only his commandment in general, which forbade such things, but the word of promise, God had sent him by Nathan some time before, that He would build him a house; which sacred promise, if he had had a due value and veneration for, he would not thus have polluted his house with lust and blood.

(3.) He threatens an entail of judgments on his family for this sin, *v.* 10. God had promised, his mercy should not depart from him and his house, (*ch.* 7: 15.) yet here threatens that the sword should not depart. Those may lie under great and long afflictions, who yet shall not be excluded from the grace of the covenant. The reason given is, *Because thou hast despised Me.* Note, Those who despise the word and law of God, despise God Himself.

It is particularly threatened, that his children should be his grief; and his wives should be publicly debauched; it is not said by his own son, lest the accomplishment be hindered by the prediction being too plain; but it was done by Absalom; (*ch.* 16: 21, 22.) *He that defiled his neighbor's wife, should have his own defiled*, for thus that sin used to be punished; Job 31: 10. Hos. 4: 14.

* Heb. *morsel.*
† Or, *is worthy to die.* Heb. *is a son of death.* 1 Sam. 20:31. 26:16. *marg.*
g Deut. 13:6. Mic. 7:5.
h Gen. 18:2—7. Jam. 1:14.
i 11:3,4.
k Gen. 38:24. 1 Sam. 25:21,22. Luke 6:41,42. 9:55. Rom. 2:1.
l 1 Sam. 14:39.
m Ex. 22:1. Prov. 6:31. Luke 19:8.
n Jam. 2:13.
o 1 Sam. 13:13. 1 Kings 18:18. 21:19, 20. Matt. 14:4.
p 7:8. 1 Sam. 15:17. 16:13.
q 22:1,49. 1 Sam. 18:11,21. 19:10—15. 23:7,14,26—28.
r 11. 1 Kings 2:22.
s 2:4. 5:5.
t 7:19. Ps. 84:11. 86:15. Rom. 8:32.
u 10. 11:4,14—17. Gen. 9:5,6. Ex. 20:13,14. Num. 15:30,31. 1 Sam. 15:19,26. Is. 5:24. Am. 2:4. Heb. 10:28,29.
x 2 Chr. 33:6. Ps. 51:4. 90:8. 139:1, 2. Jer. 18:10.
y 11:15—17,27.
z 13:28,29. 18:14,15,33. 1 Kings 2:23 – 25. Am. 7:9. Matt. 26:52.
a Num. 11:20. 1 Sam. 2:30. Mal. 1:6, 7. Matt. 6:24. Rom. 2:4. 1 Thes. 4:8.
b Gen. 20:3. Prov. 6:32,33.

bor was aggravated. Several expressions, however, might have excited a suspicion, that more was intended, than merely to plead the cause of an injured man against his oppressor: yet David evidently supposed it to be matter of fact, till Nathan made the application.—Yet this parable, apposite and beautiful as it was, pointed out only a small part of the enormity of David's conduct. Uriah's loyal and gallant services, and David's ingratitude and treachery, with the murder of him and his fellow soldiers, were not so much as alluded to. His injury to Uriah and Bath-sheba, in the crime of adultery, was alone shadowed forth: for perhaps the prophet meant to bring him by degrees to a view of his exceeding sinfulness; and would not make the case too exact in all particulars, lest he should suspect his intentions, and be kept from giving sentence against himself. SCOTT.

(4.) *Came a traveller.*] So now in the east, at least among the Arabs. 'A foot passenger could make his way at little or no expense, as travellers and wayfarers of every description halt at the sheikh's dwelling, where, whatever may be the rank or condition of the stranger, before any questions are asked him, coffee is served to him from a large pot always on the fire, and a meal of bread, milk, oil, honey, or butter, is set before him, for which no payment is ever demanded or expected by the host, who, in this manner, feeds at least 20 persons on an average every day in the year, from his own purse, at least as far as I could learn.' *Buckingham. Lamb.*] On visiting the country seat of the governor of Rosetta, he placed before the party, of which a son of the editor formed one, a *whole* boiled *lamb*, for the evening's repast, with its accompaniments, the soup, bread, and *pilaf*. ED.

(6.) *Fourfold.*] 'Is it indulging fancy too much to say, David was called, in a just providence, to pay this *fourfold* debt: to lose four sons by untimely deaths, viz. this of Bath-sheba's, on whom David had set his heart, was slain by the Lord: Ammon, [his first born, 'the pride of his excellency, and the beginning of his strength, note 13:21.'] murdered by his brother Absalom; Absalom, [on whom he doted, 13: 39. marg. hung,] slain by Joab; and Adonijah, [the beautiful, whom his father would never bear to displease, 1 K. 1:6.] slain by his brother Solomon, at God's altar? . . . How dreadfully then was David punished! Who would repeat his transgression, to share in its penalty! Behold the goodness and severity of God! Reader, lay all these solemn things to heart, and beware of "the well-circumstanced sin."' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 8.

Wives.] Or, *Women.* We read of no more than one wife of Saul, and Rizpah his concubine; (21:8. 1 *Sam.* 14:50.) and probably he had not any more. The women therefore of his court and family seem to be meant; which, according to the custom of the east, came into David's possession, when he succeeded to the kingdom. But if Saul had more wives or concubines, it is not probable David married any of them, as Saul was his father-in-law. The LORD, by giving David these women in his providence, no more sanctioned his polygamy, than his giving Israel a king proved they did well in desiring and asking one; or than his giving David's concubines to Absalom, sanctioned his detestable incest. (11,12. 16:20—23. 1 *Sam.* 12:11—19.) But the multitude of unmarried women, of whom David had it in his power to make choice, aggravated his guilt in seizing on the wife of another man. Nay, had he thought that any thing conducive to his comfort was yet wanting, he was allowed to ask for it, and the Lord declared that He would not have denied it, if He had seen it good for him. (*Ps.* 84:11,12.) SCOTT.

Verse 9.

Wherefore, &c.] The clause may be rendered, 'Wherefore hast thou despised *the word* of the LORD?' His *promises*, as well as his *precepts*. (*Job* 2:10. *Matt.* 16:21—23.) ID.

Verse 10.

Despised me, &c.] (*Note*, 1 *Sam.* 2:30.) When David despised the word of God, he despised God Himself; even his power and authority,

11 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, [c] I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and [d] I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give *them* unto thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun;

12 For thou didst *it* [e] secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

13 And [f] David said unto Nathan, [g] I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, [h] The LORD also hath put away thy sin; [i] thou shalt not die.

14 Howbeit, because [k] by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, [l] the child also *that is* born unto thee shall surely die.

[*Practical Observations.*]

15 ¶ And Nathan departed unto his house: and the LORD [m] struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

16 David therefore [n] besought God for the child; and David * fasted, and went in, and [o] lay all night upon the earth.

The sin was secret, and industriously concealed, but the punishment should be open, and industriously proclaimed, to his shame, whose sin in the matter of Uriah, though committed many years before, would then be called to mind, and commonly talked of. The punishment often answers to the sin; here is *blood for blood, and uncleanness for uncleanness.*

3. David's penitent confession of his sin, hereupon, *v.* 13. He says not a word to excuse himself, or extenuate it. It is probable he said more, but this is enough to show he was truly humbled, and submitted himself to the conviction. He owns his guilt, *I have sinned;* and he aggravates it; it was *against the Lord:* Ps. 51: 4. *Against Thee, Thee only.*

4. His pardon declared, on this penitent confession, but with a reserve of judgment. (1) '*Thou shalt not die;*' i. e. ' not eternally, nor be for ever put away from God.' The obligation to punishment is hereby cancelled and vacated. *He shall not come into condemnation;* that is the nature of forgiveness. David deserved to die as an adulterer and murderer, but God would not cut him off, as He might justly have done. See how ready God is to forgive sin. To this instance, perhaps, David refers, Ps 32: 5, *I said, I will confess, and thou forgavest.* Let not great sinners despair of finding mercy with God, if they truly repent; for who is a God like unto Him, pardoning iniquity? (2.) Yet he pronounces a sentence of death on the child, *v.* 14. [1.] David had, by his sin, wronged God in his honor. The wicked people of that generation would triumph in David's fall, and speak ill of God and of his law, when they saw one guilty of such foul enormities, that professed such an honor both for Him and it. And, to this day, there are those who reproach God, and are hardened in sin, through the example of David. Note, There is this great evil in the scandalous sins of those that profess religion, that they furnish the enemies of God and religion with matter for reproach and blasphemy. Rom. 2: 24. [2.] God will therefore vindicate his honor, by showing his displeasure against David for this sin, and letting the world see, that, though He loves David, He hates his sin; and He chooses to do it by the *death of the child.* Perhaps, the diseases and deaths of infants were not so common in those days as they are now, which might make this, as an unusual thing, the more evident token of God's displeasure; according to the word He had often said, that He would *visit the sins of the fathers on the children.*

V. 15—25. God, in making use of Nathan as an instrument to bring David to repentance, and as the herald both of mercy and judgment, put an honor on the ministry, *and magnified his Word above all his name.* David named one of his sons by Bath-sheba, *Nathan,* in honor of this prophet, (1 Chr. 3: 5.) and it was that son, of whom Christ, the great Prophet, lineally descended, Luke 3: 31. When Nathan retired, David, probably, retired likewise, and penned Ps. 51. in which (though he had been assured that his sin was pardoned) he prays earnestly for pardon, and greatly laments his sin; for *then* will true penitents be ashamed of what they have done, when God is *pacified toward them,* Ezek. 16: 63.

Here is, I. The child's illness, *v.* 15. The diseases and death of infants, *that have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression,* especially as they are sometimes sadly circumstanced, are sensible proofs of the original sin in which they are conceived.

II. David's humiliation under this token of God's displeasure, and the intercession he made with God for the life of the child, *v.* 16, 17. was as evidence of the truth of his repentance. For, 1. Hereby it appeared he was willing to bear the shame of his sin, in that he was so far from desiring the death of the child, as most, in such circum-

c 13:1—14,28,29. 15:6,10.
d 16:21,22. Deut. 28:30. Ez. 14:9. 20: 25,26. Hos. 4:13,14.
e 11:4,8,13,15. Ec. 12:14. Luke 12:1, 2. 1 Cor. 4:5.
f 1 Sam. 15:20. 1 Kings 13:4. 21:20. 22:8. 2 Kings 1:9. 2 Chr. 16:10. 24: 20—22. 25:16. Matt. 14:3—5,10.
g 24:10. 1 Sam. 15:24,25,30. Job 7:20. 33:27. Ps. 32:3—5. 51:4. Prov. 25: 12. 28:13. Luke 15:21. Acts 2:37. 1 John 1:8—10.
h Job 7:21. Ps. 32:1,2. 130:3,4. Is. 38:17. 43:25. 44:22. Lam. 3:32. Mic. 7:18,19. Zech. 3:4. Heb. 9:26.
i Lev. 20:10. Num. 35:31—33. Ps. 51: 16. Acts 13:38,39. Rom. 8:33,34.
k Neh. 5:9. Ps. 74:10. Is. 52:5. Ez. 36:20—23. Matt. 18:7. Rom. 2:24.
l Ps. 89:31—33. 94:12. Prov. 3:11,12. Am. 3:2. 1 Cor. 11:32. Heb. 12:6. Rev. 3:19.
m Deut. 32:39. 1 Sam. 25:38. 26:10. 2 Kings 15:5. 2 Chr. 13:20. Ps. 104: 29. Acts 12:23.
n 22. Ps. 50:15. Is. 26:16. Joel 2:12 —14. Jon. 3:9.
* Heb. *fasted a fast.* Esth. 4:16. Ps. 69:10. Is. 22:12. Acts 9:9.
o 13:31. Job 20:12—14.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—14. Our falls into sin originate from the evil of our depraved hearts, but our recoveries are from the Lord. He commonly employs the ministry of the Word in bringing sinners to repentance: and the plain, authoritative declaration of the divine law, and of the evil nature and effects of sin, is the appointed method of awakening the careless conscience, and of bringing men to condemn themselves.—Instruction and reproof are not *personal;* provided the general cases of multitudes are described, and the *peculiarities* of an individual's character are not so marked, as to draw the attention of the auditors from themselves to him. But it is often necessary, *in private,* to be still more explicit and particular, with such professed Christians as cannot, or will not, understand the plainest *public* address; and this without reserve, or respect of persons, and with all seriousness, energy, and expostulation. It will never be well with the church of God, till secret lamentations over unreproved scandals and abuses, and private conversations concerning the faults of the absent, be generally changed, by the ministers of Christ especially, for faithful, plain dealing with men *in private:* and those who are of reputation ought to take the lead, and to set the example, in this arduous but salutary business.—But, however iniquity may have prevailed, where true grace exists there is also *sensibility,* and a ground in which the Word of God may take root. (*Matt.* 13: 23.) The humbled sinner will not be offended by his faithful reprover, but rather thank him; and God will never refuse forgiveness to true penitents.—It is, however, grievous to think, what great occasion of blasphemy to the enemies of the Lord the falls of his professing people afford: yet none except his enemies will make this use of them; and the open confessions of the penitent offenders, their future holy conduct, the severe corrections which they experience, and their patience under them, will manifest the equity and purity, as well as the mercy of God, in pardoning their offences; and will mark an essential difference, of *habitual character and disposition,* between them and unhumbled sinners of every description. (*Rom.* 7: 13—17.) SCOTT.

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his justice and purity, his omnipresence and omniscience, his favor and wrath, and all his glorious perfections: else, he would not thus have offended Him, for the base gratification of his lusts. This was an aggravation of his crimes, less obvious to man's natural apprehensions, but full of deeper malignity, than all those enumerated in the former ch. (11:1—17. *Ps.* 51:4. *Rom.* 2:4—6.)—The word rendered *never,* in this connection, only implies *perpetuity.* (*Note, Gen.* 17:7, 8.) So long as David lived, one after another of his family was slain, and Adonijah just after his death. SCOTT.

Verses 11, 12.

David was not at Jerusalem when Absalom perpetrated his abominable crime; but it was committed in so shameless a manner, that it was as notorious as if he had seen it with his own eyes.—The Lord raised up this evil out of his own house: yet He did not put the wickedness into the hearts of his sons; but He left them to their own vile passions, and over-ruled the effects of them for David's chastisement. (*Luke* 22:21—23, *v.* 22. *Acts* 2:22—24. 4:23—28.) ID.

Verse 13.

The dormant spark of divine grace in David's heart now began to rekindle; 'I have sinned against the LORD.' The words are few; but the event proved them to have been the language of genuine repentance, which regards sin as committed against the authority and glory of the Lord, whether or not it have occasioned evil to any fellow creature. (*Note, Ps.* 51:4.) *And Nathan said,* (13) Perhaps not at that time, but when the sincerity of his repentance had been further proved. SCOTT.

Verse 14.

Perhaps the Ammonites, and other idolatrous enemies of God and Israel, had received information of these sins, and blasphemed his name on that account: and the wicked Israelites, especially those of Saul's party, would reflect on the divine justice, in that Saul had been rejected for *apparently* less heinous crimes, and David was spared notwithstanding these enormities. (*Matt.* 18:7—9. 1 *Tim.* 6:1—5. *Tit.* 2:3—6.) But the Lord did not punish Saul above his deservings, and therefore did him no injustice in forgiving David: and He judges not merely by the outward action, but by the inward disposition of the heart; and there He perceived a very important difference, and even contrariety, in the two characters. In the temporal punishment, however, of David in his family, the Lord determined to silence these blasphemies; and began by the death of the child Bath-sheba had born to him. This event, though in fact a mercy to all parties, yet being predicted and publicly declared to be a rebuke for his sin, would be for the time a sharp and painful chastisement. ID.

Verse 16.

(*M. R.*) He considered the infant as an innocent sufferer for *his* crimes; (24:17.) he had doubtless a very great affection for him; his

17 And [p] the elders of his house arose, *and went* to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

18 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then * vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?

19 But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.

20 Then David [q] arose from the earth, and washed, and [r] anointed *himself*, and changed his apparel, and came into [s] the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

21 Then said his servants unto him, [t] What thing *is* this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child *while it was* alive; but when the child was dead thou didst rise and eat bread.

22 And he said, While the child was yet alive, [u] I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell *whether* God will be gracious to me, that the child may live?

23 But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? [x] I shall go to him, but [y] he shall not return to me.

24 And David comforted Bath-sheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and [z] she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon; and the LORD loved him.

25 And he sent by the hand of [a] Nathan the prophet, and he called his name †Jedidiah, because of the LORD.

stances, do, that he prayed earnestly for its life. True penitents patiently *bear the reproach of their youth*, and of their youthful lusts, Jer. 31: 19. 2. A very tender, compassionate spirit appeared in this, and great humanity, above what is commonly found in men, especially men of war, toward little children, even their own; and this was another sign of a broken contrite spirit: they that are penitent, will be pitiful. 3. He discovered, in this, a great concern for another world, which is an evidence of repentance. While the child is in the reach of prayer, he earnestly intercedes with God for it, chiefly (as we may suppose) that its soul might be safe and happy in another world. 4. He discovered, in this, a holy dread of God and of his displeasure. He deprecated the death of the child, chiefly as it was a token of God's anger against him and his house. Ps. 6: 1.

III. The death of the child; (*v.* 18.) when it was seven days old, and therefore not circumcised, which David might, perhaps, interpret as a further token of God's displeasure, that it died before it was brought under the seal of the covenant; yet he does not therefore doubt of its being happy, for the benefits of the covenant do not depend on the seals.

IV. David's wonderful calmness, when he understood the child was dead.

Having prepared himself, he *went up to the tabernacle, and worshipped*, like Job when he heard of the death of his children. He went to acknowledge the hand of God in the affliction, to humble himself under it, and to submit to his holy will in it; to thank God that he himself was spared, and his sin pardoned; and to pray that God would not proceed in his controversy with him, nor stir up all his wrath. *Is any afflicted? Let him pray. Then he went to his own house*, and refreshed himself, as one who found benefit by his religion in the day of his affliction. Observe

The reason he gave for what he did. 1. That while the child was alive, he thought it his duty to importune the divine favor towards it, *v.* 22. Nathan had indeed said the child should die, but, for aught he knew, the threatening might be conditional, as that concerning Hezekiah: on his great humiliation and earnest prayer, He that had so often *heard the voice of his weeping*, might be pleased to reverse the sentence, and spare the child; *Who can tell whether God will yet be gracious to me?* When our relations and friends have fallen sick, the prayer of faith has prevailed much; while there is life, there is hope, and while there is hope, there is room for prayer. 2. That, the child being dead, he thought it as much his duty to be satisfied in the divine disposal concerning it, *v.* 23. Two things checked his grief: (1.) *I cannot bring him back again;* and again, *he shall not return to me.* The dead are out of the reach of prayer; nor can our tears profit them; we can neither weep nor pray them back to this life. Wherefore then should we fast? Yet David fasted and wept for Jonathan when he was dead, in honor to him. (2.) *I shall go to him;* 1st. To him, to the grave. Note, The consideration of our own death should moderate our sorrow at the death of our relations; instead of mourning for their death, we should think of our own: and whatever loss we have of them now, we shall die shortly, and go to them. 2dly. To him, to heaven, to a state of blessedness. Godly parents have great reason to hope concerning their children that die in infancy, that it is well with their souls in the other world; for *the promise is to us and to our seed*, which shall be performed to those that do not put a bar in their own door, as infants do not. This may comfort us when our children are removed from us by death; they are better provided for, than they could be in this world.

V. The birth of Solomon. Though David's marrying Bath-sheba had displeased the Lord, yet he was not therefore commanded to divorce her; so far from this, God gave him that son by her, on whom the covenant of royalty should be entailed. Bath-sheba, no doubt, was greatly afflicted with the sense of her sin, and the tokens of God's displeasure. But God having restored to David the joys of his salvation, he *comforted her* with the same comforts with which he himself was comforted of God, *v.* 24. And both he and she had reason to be comforted in the tokens of God's reconciliation to them.

1. Inasmuch as, by his providence, He gave them a son, not, as the former, in anger, but graciously. They called him *Solomon, peaceful*, in token of God's being at peace with them, of the prosperity entailed on him, and because he was to be a type of Christ, the Prince of Peace. The way to have our creature-comforts either continued or restored, or the loss of them made up some other way, is, cheerfully to resign them to God.

2. Inasmuch as, by his grace, He particularly owned and favored that son; *The Lord loved him*, (*v.* 24.) and (*v.* 25.) ordered him, by the prophet Nathan, to be called *Jedidiah, beloved of the Lord;* so well ordered was the covenant, and the crown entailed by it, that it took away all attainders, and corruption of blood, signifying, that those who were by nature children of wrath and disobedience, should, by the covenant of grace, not only

* Heb. *do hurt to.*
[p] 3:35. 1 Sam. 28:23.
[q] Job 1:20. 2:10. Ps. 39:9. Lam. 3: 39—41.
[r] Ruth 3:3. Ec. 9:8.
[s] 6:17. 7:18.
[t] 1 Cor. 2:15.
[u] Is. 38:1—3. Joel 1:14. Am. 5:15. Jon. 1:6. 3:9,10. Jam. 4:9,10.
[x] Gen. 37:35. Job 30:23. Luke 23:43.
[y] Job 7:8—10.
[z] 7:12. 1 Chr. 3:5. 22:9,10. 28:5,6. 29:1. Matt. 1:6.
[a] 1—14. 7:4. 1 Kings 1:11,23.
† That is, *Beloved of the Lord.* Matt. 3:17. 17:5.

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spirit was at that time peculiarly tender; and perhaps Bath-sheba likewise was overwhelmed with a load of guilt and sorrow. (24)—We may conceive of him, as laying aside his royal robes, and appearing as a penitent, in a mean and mournful garment, fasting, lying on the ground, confessing his guilt, mourning over it, and praying with all fervency, and without intermission, during the whole night. SCOTT.

Verse 17.

Eat bread with them.] 'As he was wont to do at other times, when the principal persons of the court sat at table with him.' *Patrick.* Probably, some days past before the child died; but, whatever sustenance David might take during that time, no doubt it was mean, scanty, and taken privately. (*Dan.* 10:2,3.) ID.

Verse 18.

Some think the child died on the seventh day from his birth; and that this was an additional rebuke, as he died uncircumcised. But others suppose that the continuance of the child's sickness, and of David's sorrow and mortification is meant. ID.

Verse 22.

Who can tell, &c.] 'David, and indeed all others, under the Mosaic dispensation, were so satisfied that all God's *threatenings* and *promises* were conditional, that even in the most positive assertions relative to judgments, &c. they sought for a *change* of purpose. David thought the child's life, notwithstanding Nathan's positive declaration, might perhaps depend on some unexpressed conditions; such as earnest *prayer, fasting, humiliation*, &c. and in these he continued while there was hope. This appears to be the sole reason of his importunity.' DR. A. CLARKE

Verses 24, 25.

David's marriage with Bath-sheba was in many respects very sinful; (11:27.) yet it must not be disannulled. In the mystery of the divine counsels, it made way for the performance of the promises before given: (7:12—16.) and Bath-sheba has her name inserted in the genealogy of the Redeemer!—As a token of the Lord's reconciliation to David and Bath-sheba, this son by her was named Solomon, or the *peaceable;* and Jedidiah, or *Beloved of the LORD*, because of the LORD's peculiar favor to him. (*M.—Notes, Gen.* 49:10. *Matt.* 1:20—23.) In this he especially typified Him of whom the Father hath said, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'—'It is observable, that there is not one word said to Bath-sheba, in all this relation. . . She was punished . . . . in the calamity that befell David; who enticed her, not she him, to commit the foul sin of adultery; and she was innocent in the murder of Uriah.' *Patrick.* It seems, she was released from the *legal* punishment of death, by the same act of grace, which pardoned David: but she was, probably, for some time both in great sorrow and distress, and overwhelmed with fears, remorse, and shame. SCOTT.

26 ¶ And [b]Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city.

27 And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against [c] Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters.

28 Now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it; lest I take the city, and * it be called after my name.

29 And David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it.

30 And he [e]took their king's crown from off his head, (the weight whereof *was* a talent of gold, with the precious stones,) and it was *set* on David's head: and he brought forth the spoil of the city † in great abundance.

31 And he brought forth the people that *were* therein, and [f] put *them* under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. So David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem.

b 11:25. 1 Chr. 20:1.
c 11:1. Deut. 3:11. Ez. 21:20.
* Heb. *my name be called upon it.*
d John 7:18. e 1 Chr. 20:2.
† Heb. *very great.*
f 8:2. Ps. 21:3,9.

be reconciled, but made favorites. And, in this name, he typified Jesus Christ, that blessed Jedidiah, the Son of God's love, concerning whom God declared again and again, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

V. 26—31. We have here an account of the conquest of Rabbah, and other cities of the Ammonites; which comes in here, after the birth of David's child, but most probably was effected a good while before, and soon after the death of Uriah, perhaps during the days of Bath-sheba's mourning for him.

Observe, 1. God was very gracious in giving David this great success against his enemies, notwithstanding the sin he had been guilty of. Justly might He have made the sword of Ammon which murdered Uriah, from thenceforward, a plague to David and his kingdom; yet He breaks it, and makes David's sword victorious, even before he repented; that this *goodness of God might lead him to repentance.* Good reason had David to own, that God *dealt not with him according to his sins*, Ps. 103: 10.

2. Joab acted very honestly and honorably; for when he had taken *the city of waters*, the royal city, where the palace was, and from which the rest of the city was supplied with water, and which, therefore, on the cutting off of that, would be obliged speedily to surrender, he sent to David to come in person to complete this great action, that he might have the praise of it, *v.* 26—28. Herein he showed himself a faithful servant, that sought his master's honor, and his own only in subordination to his; and left an example to the servants of the Lord Jesus, in every thing they do, to consult his honor: *Not unto us, but unto thy name, give glory.*

3. David was both too haughty, and too severe, on this occasion, and neither so humble nor so tender as he should have been. (1.) He seems to have been too fond of the crown of the king of Ammon, *v.* 30. The heart that is truly humbled for sin, is dead to worldly glory, and looks upon it with a holy contempt. (2.) He seems to have been too harsh with his prisoners of war, *v.* 31. Had he made examples of those only, who had abused his ambassadors, advised or assisted in it, that being a violation of the law of nations, it might be looked upon as a piece of necessary justice for terror to other nations; but to be thus severe with all the cities of the children of Ammon, (i. e. the garrisons or soldiers of the cities,) was extremely rigorous, and a sign that David's heart was not yet made soft by repentance, else the bowels of his compassion would not have been thus shut up.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 15—31. The Lord often causes his offending people to read their sins in their punishment; He puts them to *open* shame for their *secret* offences; and, by the sufferings of those whom they most tenderly love, He fills their hearts with the keenest anguish. Under such rebukes they will be led to deeper and deeper humiliation, to chasten themselves with fasting, and to pour out more fervent and incessant prayers; and especially for those who are suffering on their account, and are unable to pray for themselves. After the same manner, as long as life lasts, let the discouraged sinner seek the Lord, humble himself, and pour out his prayers before Him; if only able to say, 'Who knoweth if God will be gracious to me!'—Those, who are ignorant of the divine life, cannot comprehend the reasons of a believer's conduct in his varied experiences: and in a thousand different ways they will show their incapacity to judge of the consistency and reasons of his behavior. (*Acts* 16: 1—5. *P. O.* 1 *Cor.* 2: 10—16.) But God accepts those services which man censures: a humble, submissive spirit prepares the way for divine consolations, notwithstanding former crimes; and we should encourage the desponding hearts of our fellow sinners, with the comforts which the Lord has graciously afforded us.—Our prayers for our children are graciously answered, if some of them die in their tender infancy, (for they are well taken care of,) and the others live 'beloved of the LORD.'—Vengeance will in due season overtake the persecutors and abusers of God's people and ministers; and in their severest sufferings He will be righteous, though the instruments should be unreasonably and iniquitously severe.—In proportion as we lose sight of the honor that cometh from God, we become ambitious and vain of worldly distinctions: (*Note*, 2 *Kings* 20: 12—19.) and we are most compassionate, kind, and forgiving to our fellow-sinners, when we most feel our need of the Lord's forgiving love, and experience the comfort of it.—Finally, in whatever service the Lord may please to employ us, may we, (as Joab with David,) execute his will faithfully, and then give Him the whole glory without reserve. SCOTT.

Verses 26—31.

The sacred historian, having finished the account of David's fall and repentance, resumes the subject of the war with Ammon.—The crown of the king of the Ammonites is said to have *weighed* a talent; but that, being above a hundred weight, seems enormous: probably it means the value of it with the precious stones.—It is not certain what the punishments were, which he inflicted on the prisoners; whether he put them to death, under saws, axes, and harrows; or whether he condemned them to wear out their lives in severe bondage, by various labors, [as was then usual, in conquerors to the conquered; when they did not torture or murder them.] SCOTT.

(27.) *Have taken* &c.] 'Jun. and Trem. render "I have intercepted the water from the city," and so Josephus states. So this place 'called Rabathamana, (Rabbath Ammon,) note, 5:3.] was taken by Antiochus some hundred years after, by stopping up the secret passage through which the besieged got water.' GILL.

(30.) A golden crown, weighing 5 oz. found in Ireland, in 1692, 10 ft. under the ground, is represented in the cut; this 'in its style and workmanship is perfectly eastern, and unlike everything of the kind used in Europe within historic times.' It is given to be compared with the other most ancient crowns, or caps of honor; that on the left representing one seen on the head of one of a conquered nation upon Egyptian monuments; that on the right is the very ancient Abyssinian crown. ED.

King's crown.] *Atrth mlkm.* 'Some understand the crown of Milcom, or Molech, their idol. Athenæus mentions a crown made of 10,000 pieces of gold placed on the throne of King Ptolemy, and some of 2, 6, yea 16 cubits. Some think the Syriac talent is meant, which was but one-fourth of an Hebrew one. After all, the phrase *from off* may be rendered *from above* or *over* his head, and so it was set *above* or *over* the head of David, being supported by some means or other that its weight did not bear thereon.' GILL.

A talent of gold.] '*Carcar zehab*: usually supposed to be 114 lbs. While this weight is so uncertain, no valid objection can be urged against the narrative, on the ground of its supposed incredibility. CARPENTER. We know, that it is not the custom of kings to wear their crowns except on great occasions, and that they have a heavier crown for great, and a lighter, [see the crowns in the cut,] for ordinary occasions. The stately head-dresses on the monuments of Egyp are enormous; and the crown here must have been more for show than use; besides it is said '*it was set* on David's head,' and such form of expression seems to imply something of unusual ceremony, besides the agency of others. ED.

(31.) 'Sawing asunder and hacking human beings, [though, (says *Michaelis*,) the common cruelties to prisoners, especially among the Canaanites, and their descendants the Carthaginians, so that even the cruel Romans complain of them, these] have no place in this text, no more than they had in David's conduct. Though our translation is *by far the best, in any language*, ancient or modern, yet as Biblical criticism, if it existed, was in its infancy when it was made, it stands much in need of revision.' Dr. *A. Clarke*, and *Boothr*. Indeed most of the weapons of infidelity are furnished from this source, viz. misconceptions of translators. ED. 'The whole mistake here seems to have arisen from an error in the Heb. of 1 Chr. 20:3. by the omission of a small part of one letter; for the word, instead of *vyshm*, (*and he put,*) is now *vyshr*, (*and he sawed.*) This corruption was probably very ancient, because it is expressed in the Sept. Five Heb. mss. too read it in Chr. as in Sam. i. e. *he put them to saws.*' BOOTHR.

'The charge of [excessive] cruelty will be removed, by following the translation of *Danzius*, which I think the words will bear, and he obliged the people that were in it to go out, and put them to the saw, *to cut stones*; and to the iron mines *to dig there*; and to the axes of iron, *to cut wood with*; after he had made them to pass with their king *out of the city.*' GILL. So, nearly, Dr. *A. Clarke, Boothroyd, Carpenter*, &c. See on 1 Chr. 20:3. ED.

CHAP. XIII.

Amnon, David's son, loves his sister Tamar, 1, 2: and by Jonadab's advice he feigns sickness, that Tamar might wait on him; and taking that opportunity, he ravishes her, 3—14. He hates her, and drives her away, and she in grief and shame retires to Absalom, 15—20. David is angry; but Absalom conceals his hatred, 21, 22. Absalom invites his brethren to a feast; where Amnon at his command is murdered, 23—29. David grieves vehemently, supposing that all his sons are slain; but is comforted by Jonadab, and learns the truth, 30—36. Absalom flees to Geshur; but David longs after him, 37—39.

AND it came to pass after this, that [a] Absalom, the son of David, had [b] a fair sister, whose name *was* [c] Tamar; and Amnon the son of David [d] loved her.

2 And Amnon was so [e] vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she *was* a virgin: and [*] Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her.

3 But Amnon had [f] a friend, whose name *was* Jonadab, the son of [g] Shimeah, David's brother: and Jonadab *was* a very [h] subtle man.

4 And he said unto him, [i] Why *art* thou, *being* the king's son, † lean ‡ from day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, [k] I love Tamar, [l] my brother Absalom's sister.

5 And Jonadab said unto him, [m] Lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar come, and give me meat, and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see *it*, and eat *it* at her hand.

6 So Amnon lay down, and made himself sick: and when the king was come to see him, Amnon said unto the king, I pray thee, let Tamar my sister come and [n] make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat at her hand.

7 Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, Go now to thy brother Amnon's house, and dress him meat.

8 So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was laid down. And she took § flour, and kneaded *it*, and made cakes in his sight, and did bake the cakes.

9 And she took a pan, and poured *them* out before him; but he refused to eat. [o] And Amnon said, Have out all men from me: and they went out every man from him.

10 And Amnon said unto Tamar, Bring the meat into the chamber, that I may eat of thine hand. And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought *them* into the chamber to Amnon her brother.

CHAP. XIII. V. 1—20. The righteous God had lately told David, by Nathan, that, to chastise him for his sin, he would *raise up evil against him, out of his own house*, ch. 12: 11. And here, in the very next ch. we find the evil beginning to rise; henceforward, he was followed with one trouble after another. Thus God chastened him with the rod of men, yet assured him that his *loving-kindness He would not utterly take away*. Adultery and murder were David's sins, and those sins, among his children, (Amnon defiling his sister Tamar, and Absalom murdering his brother Amnon,) were the beginnings of his punishment, and the more grievous, because he had reason to fear his bad example might help to bring them to these wickednesses: and because he was unwittingly made accessary to both, by sending Tamar to Amnon, and Amnon to Absalom.

We have here a particular account of the abominable wickedness of Amnon; his character, we have reason to think, was bad in other things; if he had not forsaken God, he had never been given up to these vile affections. We do not find David's children imitated him in his devotion; but his false steps they trod in, and repented not. Parents know not how fatal the consequences may be, if, in any instance, they give their children bad examples. Observe the steps of Amnon's sin.

I. The devil, as an unclean spirit, put it into his heart to lust after his sister Tamar, who was fair, *v.* 1. They that are handsome, have no reason, on that account, to be proud, but great reason to stand on their watch. Amnon's lust was, 1. Unnatural in itself; but such a spirit of contradiction there is in man's corrupt nature, that still it desires forbidden fruit, and the more strongly it is forbidden, the more greedily it is desired. [She was doubtless kept secluded, as the eastern women are, especially virgins, which explains *v.* 2.] What wickedness so vile, as not to find admittance into an unsanctified, unguarded heart, left to itself? 2. Very uneasy to him. Fleshly lusts are their own punishment, *v.* 2. See what a hard master sinners serve, and how heavy his yoke is.

II. The devil, as a subtle servant, put it into his head how to compass this wicked design. Amnon had a friend, really an enemy, a kinsman that had in him more of David's blood (he was his nephew) than of David's spirit, a subtle man, cunning to carry on any bad design, especially an intrigue of this nature, *v.* 3.

1. He noticed Amnon looked ill, and concluded he was love-sick, *v.* 4. Content and comfort are not always to be found in royal palaces. He tells him not to pine away for that which, lawful or unlawful, he as the king's son may of course have: '*Your will is law.*' Thus Jezebel to Ahab in a like case, (1 K. 21: 7.) *Dost not thou govern Israel?* The abuse of power is the most dangerous temptation of the great.

2. Amnon having the impudence to own his wicked lust, miscalling it *love*, Jonadab put him in a way to compass his design, *v.* 5. Had he been what he pretended, (Amnon's friend,) he would have startled at the mention of such horrid wickedness, and used his subtilty to divert Amnon from it, by recommending some other to him, whom he might lawfully marry. Note, The case of those is very miserable, whose friends, instead of admonishing and reproving them, flatter and forward them in their sinful ways.

3. Amnon follows these directions, and thus gets Tamar within his reach, *v.* 6. David was always fond of his children, and concerned if any thing ailed them; he no sooner hears Amnon is sick, than he comes himself to visit him. We may suppose, when David came to see his sick son, he gave him good counsel to make a right use of his affliction, and prayed with him, which did not alter his wicked purpose. Tamar innocently goes, not disdaining, in obedience to her father, and love to her brother, (though but her half-brother,) to be his nurse, *v.* 8, 9. Though a king's daughter, a great beauty, (*v.* 1.) and well-dressed, (*v.* 18.) yet she did not think it below her to knead and bake cakes, nor had she done it now, if she had not been used to it. Good housewifery is not a thing below the greatest ladies, nor ought they to think it a disparagement to them. The virtuous woman, whose *husband sits among the elders*, yet *works willingly with her hands*. Modern ages have not been destitute of such instances, nor is it so unfashionable as some would make it. Preparing for the sick should be more the care and delight of ladies, than preparing for the nice; charity more than curiosity.

4. Having got her to him, he contrives to have her alone; (*v.* 9.) The sick must be humored, and think they have a privilege to command, The mask is thrown off, *v.* 11. A base affront to think it possible to persuade Tamar to such wickedness! But it is common for those that live in uncleanness, to think others such as themselves.

III. The devil, as a strong tempter, deafens his ear to all the reasonings with which she resisted his assaults, and would have persuaded him to de-

a 3:2,3. 1 Chr. 3:2.
b 11:2. Gen. 6:2. 39:6,7. Prov. 6:25. 31:30.
c 14:27. 1 Chr. 3:9.
d 15. Gen. 29:18,20. 34:3. 1 Kings 11:1.
e 1 Kings 21:4. Cant. 5:8. 2 Cor. 7:1
* Heb. *it was marvellous*, or *hidden, the eyes of Amnon.*
f Gen. 38:1,20. Judg. 14:20. Esth. 5: 10,14. 6:13. Prov. 19:6.
g 32. 1 Sam. 16:9. *Shammah.*
h 14:2,19,20. Gen. 3:1. Jer. 4:22 1 Cor. 3:19. Jam. 3:15.
i 1 Kings 21:7. Esth. 5:13,14. Luke 12:32.
† Heb. *thin.*
‡ Heb. *morning by morning.*
k Is. 3:9. Jer. 8:12. Mic. 7:3.
l Lev. 18:9. 20:17.
m 16:21—23. 17:1—4. Ps. 50:18,19. Prov. 19:27. Mark 6:24,25. Acts 23: 15.
n Gen. 18:6. Matt. 13:33.
§ Or, *paste.*
o Gen. 45:1. Judg. 3:19. John 3:20.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII. V. 1, 2. David seems to have been far too indulgent of his children: probably, their mothers had a great share in their education, and some of these instilled into them bad principles; indeed these are the natural effects of polygamy. SCOTT.

Verses 3, 4.

Jonadab was 'a very subtle man;' (32, 33. 16:20—23. *Gen.* 3:1.) one very sagacious, as to this present world; or rather, a very crafty courtier, who readily discerned the inclinations of his superiors, and was very ingenious in devising means for the gratification of them. Had he not interposed, probably Amnon's passion might have been suppressed, and at length supplanted by an affection for some other object. (1 *K.* 21:4—7.) Amnon was the heir-apparent of the crown: David was growing old, and probably showed Jonadab but little favor, though he was his nephew; being the son of David's brother Shimeah, called also Shammah, and Shimma. (32. 1 *Sam.* 16:9. 1 *Chr.* 2:13.) He therefore paid court to Amnon; and supposed that his rank and authority would bear him out in any crime he was disposed to commit. SCOTT.

(3.) *Very subtle.*] 'We talk of the simplicity and excellence of primitive times! "Say not then, what is *the cause* that the former days were better than these." Take them altogether, we may thank God that they are past; and pray Him that they may never return.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 5—14.

It is probable, Tamar accompanied her complaints and expostulations with unavailing outcries, which Amnon's domestics doubtless disregarded: for she seems to have been entirely free from blame in the scandalous transaction. SCOTT.

(8.) *Was laid down.*] 'From the cloisters and galleries [of an eastern house, note and cut, 11:9.] we are conducted into spacious chambers, of the same length with the court, but seldom or never

11 And when she had brought *them* unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and said unto her, [p] Come, lie with me, my sister.

12 And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not [*] force me; for [†] no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do not thou this [q] folly.

13 And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go? and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel. [r] Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee.

14 Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice; but, being stronger than she, [s] forced her, and lay with her.

[*Practical Observations.*]

15 Then Amnon [t] hated her [‡] exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her *was* greater than the love wherewith he had loved her: and Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone.

16 And she said unto him, *There* is no cause; this evil in sending me away *is* greater than the other that thou didst unto me: but he would not hearken unto her.

17 Then he called his servant that ministered unto him, and said, Put now this *woman* out from me, and bolt the door after her.

18 And *she had* [u] a garment of divers colors upon her: for with such robes were the king's daughters *that were* virgins apparelled. Then his servant brought her out, and bolted the door after her.

19 And Tamar [x] put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colors that *was* on her, and [y] laid her hand on her head, and went on crying.

20 And Absalom her brother said unto her, Hath [§] Amnon thy brother been with thee? [z] but hold now thy peace, my sister: he *is* thy brother; [‖] regard not this thing. So Tamar remained [¶] desolate in her brother Absalom's house.

21 But when king David heard of all these things, [a] he was very wroth.

p Gen. 39:7,12.
* Heb. *humble.* Gen. 34:2. Deut. 22:29.
† Heb. *it ought not so to be done.* Lev. 18:9. 20:17.
q Gen. 34:7. Judg. 19:23. 20:6. Prov. 7:7.
r Gen. 19:8. Judg. 19:24.
s 12:11. Deut. 22:25—27. Judg. 20:5. Esth. 7:8.
t Ex. 23:17.
‡ Heb. *with great hatred greatly.*
u Gen. 37:3,32. Judg. 5:30. Ps. 45:14.
x 1:2. Josh. 7:6. Job 2:12. 42:6.
y Jer. 2:37.
§ Heb. *Aminon.*
z Prov. 26:24. Rom. 12:10.
‖ Heb. *set not thine heart on.*
¶ Heb. *and desolate.* Gen. 34:2. 46:15.
a 3:28,29. 12:5,10. Gen. 34:7. 1 Sam. 2:22—25,29. Ps. 101:8.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—14. The judgments of God upon those, who are finally saved, may be so terrible, varied, and continued, as effectually to proclaim his abhorrence of their crimes; and no reflecting person, with these records before his eyes, would venture to commit iniquity, even if he could be sure to escape eternal misery; any more than a man would, for a trifling advantage, throw himself from a precipice and break his bones, if he could be assured that his life would be preserved: for he would be sensible that he must suffer immense pain, and probably be a cripple all his days.—The Lord *over-rules* the wickedness of men, (while they are hurried on by their own lusts and Satan's temptations,) to accomplish his holy and righteous purposes.—So depraved is the human heart, that [every] natural affection may degenerate into licentiousness.—What men dignify with the name of *love* is commonly a sensual inclination, entire selfishness, which often triumphs over conscience and the fear of God, and without pity consigns its object to irreparable disgrace and misery, for the sake of a momentary gratification! How different from that *love*, which the law of God commands! yea, how contrary to it!—Men's domineering lusts, when restrained by external hindrances, become their tormentors, drink up their spirits, and disorder their bodies; and probably the fury of sinful passions, without any possibility of gratification, will form one dreadful part of the misery of the damned: let the tremendous thought lead every reader to seek their mortification, that by the grace of God they may [never *rule* in] his heart.—Who can conceive what the state of this world would be, if every sinner's power was equal to his inclination, for the commission of wickedness?—Such plausible villains [as Jonadab] know how to take advantage of the affection, candor, modesty, and unsuspecting confidence of pious persons, for the accomplishment of their own infamous designs: and when iniquity is resolved on, a perfect infatuation takes place, and all probable or certain consequences are forgotten. SCOTT.

He hated her with great hatred, greatly, so the marg. and grew as outrageous in his malice, as he had been in his lust; he basely turned her out of doors by force; nay, as if he now disdained to touch her with his own hands, he ordered his servant to *pull her out,* and *bolt the door after her,* *v.* 17. Now, 1. The innocent, injured lady had reason to resent this as a great affront, and in some respects, (as she says, *v.* 16.) worse than the former, for nothing could have been done more barbarous, or more disgraceful to her. Had he given her time to compose herself, she might have kept her countenance when she went out, and so have kept her counsel. But to dismiss her thus hurried, thus rudely, obliged her, in her own defence, to proclaim her wrong. 2. We may learn from it, both the malignity of unbridled appetites, and the mischievous consequences of sin; at last, it bites like a serpent. Had he hated the sin, and loathed himself for it, we might have hoped he was penitent: *Godly sorrow worketh indignation;* (2 Cor. 7: 11.) but to hate the person he had abused, showed that his conscience was terrified, but his heart not at all humbled. See what deceitful pleasures those of the flesh are, how soon they pass away, and turn into loathing; see Ezek. 23:

communicating with one another. One of them frequently serves a whole family, particularly when a father indulges his married children to live with him, or two or more families hire one house. In houses of better fashion these chambers are hung with velvet or damask, from the middle of the wall downwards, are covered and adorned with velvet or damask hangings of white, blue, red, green or other colors (Esth. 1:6.) suspended on hooks, or taken down at pleasure: But the upper part is adorned with stucco, and fret-work, &c. The ceiling is of wainscot, painted, or else panelled with gilt mouldings, and *scrolls* of the Coran intermixed: (comp. Jer. 22:14.) The floors are of painted tile, or plaster of terrace, and spread with rich carpets, for sitting cross-legged, or lying at length. Along the sides of the wall, a range of narrow beds, or mattrasses, is often placed on these carpets, with damask or velvet bolsters. At *one end* of each chamber, there is a little gallery, raised 3, 4, or 5 ft. above the floor, with a balustrade in front, and a few steps leading up to it. Here they place their beds; a situation frequently alluded to in the Bible.' [And probably in this v.] See *Calm.* by *Rob.* SHAW.

Verse 17.

That ministered.] 'Eastern masters do not keep their servants at the distance usual in England. The affairs of the family, the news of the day, and the little incidents of life, are mutually discussed, as by equals.' ROBERTS. The case seems to have been much the same in the times of the patriarchs, and of Moses. ED.

Verses 19, 20.

Tamar went home in the manner, and with all the gestures of an inconsolable mourner. (*M. R.*) Doubtless her mind was filled with extreme anguish; but perhaps she meant also thus to protest, that though unfortunate she was not criminal.—It seems that Tamar not only shunned society at the time; but also lived all her days a single and retired life. (*Gen.* 34:31.) SCOTT.

Verse 21.

Amnon's *incest* was an express violation of the divine law; and to one prohibition it is added, 'they shall be cut off; . . . he shall bear his iniquity.' (*Lev.* 18:9. 20:17.) Yet the magistrate was not explicitly commanded to put the offender to death. Neither was it enjoined, that he who forced a woman should be put to death, unless she was betrothed; because otherwise he would have been obliged to marry her. (*Ex.* 22:16, 17. *Deut.* 22:22—27.) Perhaps these circumstances united with David's excessive paternal tenderness, especially to his eldest son, and with the consciousness of his own guilt, to satisfy his mind in leaving Amnon to the judgment of God. But certainly he ought to have manifested his displeasure in some very decided manner; and this complication of crimes would have justified the severest punishment: but as he neglected his duty, the Lord afterwards took vengeance on Amnon, in a way which added still more to David's domestic trials. (22—33. 1 *Sam.* 2:29—34.) ID.

22 ¶ And Absalom [b]spake unto his brother Amnon [c]neither good nor bad: for Absalom [d]hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.

23 And it came to pass after two full years, B. C. 1030. that Absalom had [e]sheep-shearers in Baal-hazor, which *is* beside Ephraim: and Absalom [f]invited all the king's sons.

24 And Absalom came to the king, and said, Behold now, thy servant hath sheep-shearers; [g]let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants, go with thy servant.

25 And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all now go, lest we be chargeable unto thee. And he [h]pressed him: howbeit he would not go, but [i]blessed him.

26 Then said Absalom, If not, I pray thee, [k]let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said unto him, Why should he go with thee?

27 But Absalom pressed him, that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.

28 Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's [m]heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, [n]fear not: [*]have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be † valiant.

29 And the [o]servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded: then all the king's sons arose, and every man ‡ gat him upon his [p]mule and fled.

30 And it came to pass, while they were in the way, that tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left.

31 Then the king [q]arose, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth; and [r]all his servants stood by with their clothes rent.

32 And [s]Jonadab the son of [t]Shimeah, David's brother, answered and said, Let not my lord suppose *that* they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the § appointment of Absalom this hath been ‖ determined, from the day that he forced his sister Tamar.

33 Now therefore [u]let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead.

34 But [x]Absalom fled. And the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came much people by the way of the hill-side behind him.

35 And Jonadab said unto the king, Behold, the king's sons come: ¶ as thy servant said, so it is.

36 And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that behold, the king's sons came, and lifted up their voice, and wept; and the king also

17 Sins, secret in the commission, afterward become open and public, and the sinners themselves often make them so. The Jewish doctors say, that, on the occasion of this wickedness, a law was made, that a young man and a young woman should never be alone together; for, said they, if the king's daughter be so used, what will become of the children of private men?

We must now leave the criminal to the terrors of his guilty conscience, and inquire what becomes of the poor victim. She bitterly lamented the injury, as a stain to her honor, though no real blemish to her virtue; loathing her own beauty and ornaments, because they had occasioned Amnon's unlawful love; so she went crying for another's sin, *v.* 19. Retiring to Absalom's house, because he was her *own* brother, she lived there in solitude and sorrow, in token of her modesty, and detestation of uncleanness. Absalom spoke kindly to her, bid her pass by the injury, for the present, designing himself to revenge it, *v.* 20. It should seem, by Absalom's question, (*Has Amnon been with thee?*) that Amnon was notorious for such lewd practices, so that it was dangerous for a modest woman to be with him; this Absalom might know, and yet Tamar be wholly ignorant of it.

V. 21—29. I. David, at the tidings of Amnon's sin, was very wroth, *v.* 21. But was it enough to be angry? He ought to have punished his son, and put him to open shame; both as a father, and as a king, he had power to do it. But the Sept. here adds these words: *But he saddened not the spirit of his son Amnon, because he loved him, because he was his first-born.* He fell into Eli's error, whose sons *made themselves vile, and he frowned not on them.* If Amnon was dear to him, punishing him would have been so much the greater punishment to himself, for his own uncleanness. But he cannot bear the shame those must submit to, who correct that in others, which they are conscious of in themselves, therefore his anger must serve instead of his justice; this hardens sinners, Eccl. 8: 11.

II. How Absalom resented it; and since his father will not punish Amnon, he will; he reckons himself affronted through his sister. Their mother was daughter to a heathen prince, (*ch.* 3: 3.) which perhaps they were upbraided with sometimes, as children of a stranger; as such a one Absalom thought his sister now treated; and if Amnon thought her fit to be made his harlot, he would think him fit to be made his slave; this enraged him, and nothing less than Amnon's blood will quench his rage. Here we have,

1. The design (*v.* 23—28.) conceived. *Absalom hated Amnon,* (*v.* 22.) and *he that hateth his brother, is a murderer* already, and, like *Cain, is of that wicked one,* 1 John 3: 12—15. Absalom's hatred of his brother's crime had been commendable, and he might justly have prosecuted him; but to hate his person, and design his death, was to put a great affront on God, by offering to repair the breach of his seventh commandment by the violation of his sixth, as if they were not all alike sacred. See James 2: 11.

2. The design executed, *v.* 28, 29. Absalom's entertainment was very plentiful; he resolves the king's sons shall all be merry; at least, he concludes Amnon will be so, for he knew he was apt to drink to excess. But, the orders he gave his servants to mingle Amnon's blood with his wine, were very barbarous. Observe the aggravations of this sin: (1.) He would have Amnon slain, *when his heart was merry with wine;* as if to destroy both soul and body. What a dreadful surprise has death been to many, whose hearts have been *overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness!* (2.) His servants must be employed to do it, and so involved in the guilt. What an impious defiance to the divine command, *Thou shalt not kill!* '*Have not I commanded?*' Those servants are ill-taught, (and have wicked masters,) who obey, in contradiction to God: too obsequious, that will damn their souls to please their masters, whose big words cannot secure them from God's wrath. Masters must always command their servants, as those that know they have also a Master in heaven. (3.) He did it in the presence of *all the king's sons,* of whom it is said, (*ch.* 8: 18.) they were *chief rulers;* so it was an affront to public justice, of which they had the administration, and to the king his father whom they represented. 4. There is reason to suspect Absalom did this, not only to revenge his sister's quarrel, but to make way for himself to the throne; which he would stand fair for, if Amnon the eldest son was taken off. Chileab was dead, so Patrick. Now the threatened sword is drawn in David's house, which should not depart from it. (1.) His eldest son falls by it, himself being, by his wickedness, the cause of it, and his father, by his connivance, accessary. (2.) All his sons flee from it in terror, not knowing how far their brother Absalom's bloody design might extend. See what mischief sin makes in families

V. 30—38. Here is, I. David's fright upon a false report brought to Jerusalem, that Absalom had *slain all the king's sons,* *v.* 30. Let us

b Lev. 19:17,18. Prov. 25:9. Matt. 18: 15.
c Gen. 24:50. 31:29.
d Prov. 10:18. 26:24. 27:4—6. Ec. 7: 9. Eph. 4:26,31. 1 John 3:15.
e Gen. 38:12,13. 1 Sam. 25:2,4,36. 2 Kings 3:4. 2 Chr. 26:10.
f 1 Kings 1:9,19,25.
g 11:8—15. Ps. 12:2. 55:21. Jer. 41: 6,7.
h Gen. 19:2,3. Judg. 19:7—10. Luke 14:23. 24:29. Acts 16:15.
i 14:22. *marg.* Ruth 2:4.
k 3:27. 11:13—15. 20:9. Ps. 55:21. Prov. 26:24,25.
l 11:15. Ex. 1:16,17. 1 Sam. 22:17,18. Acts 5:29.
m 11:13. Gen. 9:21. 19:32—35. Judg. 19:6,22. 1 Sam. 25:36—38. 1 Kings 20:16. Esth. 1:10. Dan. 5:2—6,30. Nah. 1:10. Luke 21:34.
n Num. 22:16,17. 1 Sam. 28:10,13.
* Or, *Will you not, since I have commanded you?* Josh. 1:9.
† Heb. *sons of valor.*
o 1 Sam. 22:18,19. 1 Kings 21:11—13. 2 Kings 1:9—12. Prov. 29:12. Mic. 7:3.
‡ Heb. *rode.*
p 18:9. Gen. 36:24. Lev. 19:19. 1 Kings 1:33.
q 12:16. Gen. 37:29,34. Josh. 7:6. Job 1:20.
r 1:11. 3:31.
s 3—5.
t 1 Sam. 16:9. *Shammah.*
§ Heb. *mouth.*
‖ Or, *settled.* Gen. 27:41. Ps. 7:14. Prov. 24:11,12.
u 19:19.
x 38. Gen. 4:8—14. Prov. 28:17. Jer. 48:44. Am. 5:19.
¶ Heb. *according to the word of thy servant.*

Verse 29.

His mule.] Mules seem about this time to have come greatly into use among the superior persons, being substituted in the place of asses: for horses were still little employed in Israel. (*M. R.*) p.) Yet the breeding of mules was a violation of the divine law. (*Lev.* 19 19.) —Probably, they were imported. SCOTT.

Verses 32, 33.

It cannot be supposed, that Absalom would make Jonadab his confidant; but being a sagacious man, he had, from some circumstances, or casual expressions, suspected his malicious intentions. (*M. R.—Note,* 3, 4.) It would, however, have been far more profitable sagacity, to have foreseen these consequences, and to have forwarned

and all his servants wept * very sore.

37 But Absalom fled, and went to [y] Talmai, the son of † Ammihud, king of Geshur. And *David* mourned for his son every day.

38 So Absalom fled, and went to [z] Geshur, and was there three years.

39 And [a] *the soul of* king David ‡ longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was [b] comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.

CHAP. XIV.

Joab instructs a woman of Tekoah, and sends her to David, 1—3. With a feigned tale and artful management she induces him to recall Absalom, 4—20. Joab is sent to bring him to Jerusalem; yet he is not allowed to see the king, 21—24. His beauty, 25, 26. His children, 27. After two years, he prevails with Joab to introduce him to David, 28—33.

NOW [a] Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart *was* [b] toward Absalom.

2 And Joab sent [c] to Tekoah, and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on now [d] mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead:

3 And come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab [e] put the words in her mouth.

4 And when the woman of Tekoah spake to the king, she [f] fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, * Help, O king.

5 And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, [g] I *am* indeed a widow woman, and mine husband is dead.

6 And thy handmaid had two sons, [h] and they two strove together in the field, and *there was* † none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew him.

7 And behold, [i] the whole family is risen against thine handmaid, and they said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew; and we will destroy the heir also: and [k] so they shall [l] quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband *neither* name nor remainder ‡ upon the earth.

* Heb. *with a great weeping greatly.*

not be afraid of evil tidings, while they want confirmation, but when we hear the worst, hope the best, at least, hope better. However, this false news gave David as much present affliction, as if it had been true, *v.* 31. It was well he had grace; he had need enough of it, for he had strong passions.

II. The mistake rectified two ways. 1. By the sly suggestions of Jonadab, David's nephew, *v.* 32, 33. It is well, if Jonadab was not as guilty of Amnon's death, as of his sin; if we do not our utmost to prevent mischief, we make ourselves accessary to it: such friends do *they* prove, who are hearkened to as counsellors to do wickedly: he that would not be so kind as to prevent Amnon's sin, neither would he be so kind as to prevent his ruin, when, it should seem, he might have done both. 2. By the safe return of all the king's sons, except Amnon; *v.* 34, 35. yet, that Amnon was dead, and slain by his own brother, in such a treacherous, malicious, barbarous manner, was enough to put the king, court, and kingdom, into real mourning. Sorrow is never more reasonable, than when there is sin in the case.

III. Absalom's flight from justice, *v.* 34. The cities of refuge gave no protection to a wilful murderer. He therefore made the best of his way to his mother's relations, and was entertained by his grandfather, *Talmai, king of Geshur,* (*v.* 37.) there he was protected *three years;* (*v.* 38.) David not demanding him, and Talmai not thinking himself obliged to send him back, unless demanded.

IV. David's uneasiness for his absence. He mourned for Amnon a good while, (*v.* 37.) but he being past recall, time wore off that grief; he was *comforted concerning Amnon:* it also wore off too much his detestation of Absalom's sin; instead of loathing him, as a murderer, he *longs to go forth to him,* *v.* 39. At first, he could not find in his heart to do justice on him, now he can almost find in his heart to take him into his favor again. This was David's infirmity; something God saw in his heart that made a difference, else we should have thought that he, as much as Eli, *honored his sons more than God.*

CHAP. XIV. How Absalom threw himself out of his royal father's protection and favor, we read in the foregoing ch. which left him an exile, outlawed, and proscribed; in this, we have the arts used to bring him and his father together again, and how, at last, it was done; which is here recorded, to show the folly of David, in sparing him, and indulging him in his wickedness, for which he was, soon after, severely corrected by his unnatural rebellion.

V. 1—20. Here is, I. Joab's design to get Absalom recalled out of banishment, his crime pardoned, and his attainder reversed, *v.* 1. Joab made himself very busy in this affair, 1. As a courtier, studious, by all ways possible, to ingratiate himself with his prince, and improve his interest in his favor; he perceived that, the heat of the king's displeasure being over, he still retained his old affection for Absalom, and only wanted a friend to court him to be reconciled, and to contrive how he might do it, without impeaching the honor of his justice. 2. As a friend to Absalom, whom, perhaps, he had a particular kindness for, at least looked upon as the rising sun, to whom it was his interest to recommend himself. He plainly foresaw his father would, at length, be reconciled; and therefore thought he should make both his friends, if instrumental to bring it about. 3. As a statesman concerned for the public welfare. He knew how much Absalom was the darling of the people, and if David should die while he was in banishment, it might occasion a civil war; for it is probable that, though all Israel loved his person, yet they were much divided upon his case. 4. As one who was himself a

15. *marg.* 12:21. 18:33.
[y] 3:3. 1 Chr. 3:2.
† Or, *Ammihur.*
[z] 14:23,32. 15:8.
[a] Gen. 31:30. Deut. 28:32. Phil. 2:26.
‡ Or, *was consumed.* Ps. 84:2. 119:20.
[b] 12:23. Gen. 24:67. 37:35. 38:12.
[a] 2:18. 1 Chr. 2:16.
[b] 13:39. 18:33. 19:2,4. Prov. 29:26.
[c] 2 Chr. 11:6. 20:20. Neh. 3:5,27. Jer. 6:1. Am. 1:1. *Tekoa.*
[d] 11:26. Ruth 3:3. Ps. 104:15. Ec. 9: 8. Matt. 6:17.
[e] 19. Ex. 4:15. Num. 23:5. Deut. 18: 18. Is. 51:16. 59:21. Jer. 1:9.
[f] 1:2. 1 Sam. 20:41. 25:23.
* Heb. *Save.* 2 Kings 6:26—28. Job 29:12—14. Luke 18:3—5.
[g] 12:1—3. Judg. 9:8—15.
[h] Gen. 4:8. Ex. 2:13. Deut. 22:26,27.
† Heb. *no deliverer between them.*
[i] Gen. 4:14. Num. 35:19. Deut. 19:12.
[k] Gen. 27:45. Deut. 25:6.
[l] 21:17.
‡ Heb. *upon the face of.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 15—39. Sensual love is readily changed into hatred, and concupiscence into loathing: nor can it reasonably be expected, that those, who make no scruple of debauching the persons for whom they *pretend affection,* will feel any remorse at deserting them with cruelty and disdain, at exposing them to shame and contempt, or at leaving them to all the horrors of penury or prostitution; [as is done every day.] Let no one ever expect better treatment from those, who are capable of attempting to seduce them.—But it is better to suffer the *greatest wrong,* than to commit the *least sin,* though apparently with impunity and without rebuke.—It is every one's duty to comfort those who are in distress: and generally it is most advisable for injured persons to be quiet, and leave their cause with God.—Often have festive interviews, and seasons of sensual indulgence, been the chosen scenes for assassinations and massacres; and men have been sent into the eternal world from the midst of riot and excess! Such is human nature, left to itself, armed with power, and emboldened by prosperity: what need then have we to pray for converting grace, and to be satisfied, in our inferior stations!—Children are always uncertain comforts: but *indulged* children will surely prove trials to pious parents, whose foolish fondness induces them to neglect their duty to God: yet parental affection can scarcely be extinguished by any degree of misconduct. But the case of parents is very deplorable, when the children copy their conduct in the crimes which they perpetrate; and when it is nevertheless their duty to punish them with great severity for those very imitations!—Let us not covet that worldly wisdom, which, with all its boasted sagacity, cannot prevent the destruction of those who are counselled by it: but let us seek that heavenly wisdom, which safely leads the possessor, through all the dangerous paths of this life, to the perfect felicity of the eternal world. SCOTT.

Amnon, before he had perpetrated the crime which provoked this fatal revenge. (*Jer.*-4:22. 8:8, 9.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV. V. 1—3. Joab perceived David greatly desired to recall Absalom; but did not know how to do it, without disgracing his character and government. He doubtless intended [by the artifice used] to obtain a concession from David, that in *some possible cases* the punishment of a murderer might be dispensed with; and then to apply it to the case of Absalom. SCOTT.

Verses 6, 7.

Had the case been drawn more similar, it would have betrayed the design, and defeated Joab's purpose: and the state of David's heart rendered it unnecessary to be very exact: for he wanted, not *a good reason,* but *a plausible excuse for following his inclinations,* as Joab well knew. SCOTT.

(7.) *Quench my coal.*] 'The heathens made use of the same similitude. The few persons who survived the deluge of Deucalion are termed *stŏpura, living coals;* because by them the *vital flame* of the

8 And the king said unto the woman, Go to thine house, and [m] I will give charge concerning thee.

9 And the woman of Tekoah said unto the king, My lord, O king, [n] the iniquity *be* on me, and on my father's house: [o] and the king and his throne *be* guiltless.

10 And the king said, Whosoever saith *ought* unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more.

11 Then said she, I pray thee, [p] let the king remember the LORD thy God, that * thou wouldest not suffer [q] the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son. And he said, [r] *As* the LORD liveth, there shall [s] not one hair of thy son fall to the earth.

12 Then the woman said, [t] Let thine handmaid, I pray thee, [u] speak *one* word unto my lord the king. And he said, [x] Say on.

13 And the woman said, [y] Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the [z] people of God? for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, [a] in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished.

14 For [b] we must needs die, and *are* [c] as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again: † neither doth [d] God respect *any* person; yet doth he * devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.

15 Now therefore that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king, *it is* because the people have made me afraid: and thy handmaid said, I will now speak unto the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his handmaid.

16 For the king will hear, to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of the man *that would* destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God.

17 Then thine handmaid said, The word of my lord the king shall now be ‡ comfortable: for [f] as an angel of God, so *is* my lord the king § to [g] discern good and bad: therefore the LORD thy God will be with thee.

delinquent, by the murder of Abner; and who therefore, whatever favor he could procure to be shown to Absalom, would corroborate his [own] reprieve.

II. His contrivance, by laying somewhat of a parallel case before the king, was done so dexterously by the person he employed, that the king took it for a real case, and gave judgment on it, (as on Nathan's parable,) which being in favor of the criminal, the manager might, by that, discover his sentiments so far, as to venture on its application, and show it was the case of his own family. This, probably, she was instructed not to proceed to, if the king's judgment were severe.

The person employed is not named, but is said to be *a woman of Tekoah, a wise woman*, that had a quicker wit, and readier tongue, than most of her neighbors, *v.* 2. and it was requisite the scene should be laid at a distance, that David might not think it strange he had not heard of it before. The truth of the story would be less suspected, when supposed to come from the person's own mouth.

She names not Absalom, nor needed she to name him; David longed so much after him, and had him so much in his thoughts, that he was soon aware whom she meant by *his banished*. It is true, Absalom's case differed very much from that she had put. But David was too well affected to the cause, to be critical in his remarks on the disparity of the cases; and more desirous than she could be, to bring that favorable judgment to his own son, which he had given concerning hers.

However, she reasons upon it with the king, to persuade him to recall Absalom, pardon, and take him into favor again; and concludes her address, with high compliments to the king, and strong expressions of her assurance that he would do what

m 12:5,6. 16:4. Job 29:16. Prov. 18:13. Is. 11:3,4.
n Gen. 27:13. Matt. 27:25.
o 3:28. Num. 35:33. Deut. 21:1—9. 1 Kings 2:33.
p Gen. 14:22. 24:2,3. 31:50. 1 Sam. 20:42.
* Heb. *the revenger of blood do not multiply to destroy.*
q Num. 35:19,27. Deut. 19:4—10. Josh. 20:3—6.
r 1 Sam. 14:45. 28:10.
s 1 Kings 1:52. Matt. 10:30. Acts 27:34.
t 1 Sam. 25:24.
u Gen. 18:27,32. 44:18. Jer. 12:1.
x Acts 26:1.
y 12:7. 1 Kings 20:40—42. Luke 7:42—44.
z 7:8. Judg. 20:2.
a 13:37,38.
b 11:25. Job 30:23. 34:15. Ec. 3:19,20. 9:5. Heb. 9:27.
c Job 14:7—12,14. Ps. 22:14. 79:3.
† Or, *because God hath not taken away his life, He hath also devised means, &c.*
d Deut. 10:17. Job 34:19. Matt. 22:16. Acts 10:34. Rom. 2:11. 1 Pet. 1:17.
e Ex. 21:13. Num. 35:15,25,28.
‡ Heb. *for rest.*
f 20. 19:27. 1 Sam. 29:9. Prov. 27:21. 29:5.
§ Heb. *to hear.*
g 1 Kings 3:9,28. Job 6:30. 1 Cor. 2:14,15. *marg.* Heb. 5:14.

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human race, [fabled to be stolen at first by Prometheus from heaven,] was to be re-kindled on the earth.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 8—11.

It would not have answered the intent of the woman, or of Joab her prompter, had David merely engaged to examine into the case: a present absolute decision in favor of the supposed criminal was the object. The woman therefore, having excited David's compassion, urged her plea with great earnestness; and assured him that she was so satisfied of the goodness of the cause, that she was willing all the guilt, if there were any, should rest on her and her father's house, and not on David or his kingdom. Thus she engaged for what was out of her power; (1 *Sam.* 28:9, 10.) for the neglect of punishing murder would, notwithstanding, bring guilt on both king and people. (*Num.* 35:31—34.) She, however, requested him to 'remember the LORD his God:' i. e. to give her the security of an oath, that he would spare and protect her son; and he was prevailed on to grant her unreasonable demand. In this, David acted more according to his feelings than his judgment, and was very precipitate. If the party concerned in the supposed case did not deserve to die, the city of refuge would have afforded him a safe retreat, and a fair trial: (*note, Josh.* 20:2—6.) and if he merited death, David had no right to dispense with the divine law by protecting him; and moreover he had examined no other witness, *than one interested party!* SCOTT.

I will give charge concerning thee.] 'This would not do; it was too distant: and she could not by it bring her business to a conclusion; so she proceeds—*The iniquity be on me.*] Intimating that, if the king should suppose, that not bringing the offender to the assigned punishment might reflect on the administration of justice in the land, she was willing that all blame should attach to her and her family, and the king and his throne be guiltless. *Whosoever saith* aught *unto thee.*] Neither did this bring the matter to such a bearing that she could come to a conclusion: which was, to get the king pledged by a *solemn promise* that all proceedings in the case should be stopped. *Remember the Lord Thy God.*] Consider, that when God is earnestly requested to show mercy, He does it in the promptest manner; He does not wait till the case is hopeless: The danger to which my son is exposed is imminent; if the king do not decide the business instantly, it may be too late. *And he said, As the Lord liveth.*] Thus he binds himself by a most solemn promise and oath; and this is what the woman wished to extort. . . . It is very possible the principal facts of this woman's story were real, and Joab found out a person whose circumstances bore a near resemblance to that he wished to represent.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 13—17.

The woman, having thus far carried her point, proceeded, gradually and *ambiguously*, to apply David's concession to the case of Absalom; and her speech was most artfully devised, so that she might retract, or be more explicit, according as he took it. She intimated that the king's severity to his son was injurious to the people of God; and that he was wanting in his duty to the kingdom, in delaying to recall him: as if Absalom had been so excellent a young man, that all the hopes of Israel centered in him! She represented his flight to Geshur as a *banishment*, which had already been too severe a punishment of his offence. She pleaded the certainty of death, and the impossibility of recalling the dead to life again; by which she would either insinuate that Amnon would have died in some other way, if Absalom had not slain him; or that the punishment of Absalom would not bring him to life again; or that, as David himself must at length die, it was proper that Absalom should be recalled to succeed him. But whatever she meant, it was nothing to the purpose: for God hath commanded the death of the murderer, which exceedingly tends to the preservation of the life of man, though it cannot raise the dead; and if such an argument were of any force, no malefactor must be put to death! 'When we have a mind to a thing, all reasons seem strong to persuade us to it.' *Patrick.*—She also pleaded the mercy of God, in sparing, and re-admitting sinful men into his presence and favor, though justly banished from it; in which she seems to have referred to the return of the manslayer to his inheritance, at the death of the high priest.—The marginal reading, (14) 'because God hath not taken away his life, He hath also, &c.' appears to be the proper translation; and it is intimated, that as God had spared Absalom, David ought to pardon him.—But God pardons none who are impenitent; nor any, to the dishonor of his law and justice, or to the encouragement of crimes, and the injury of others. Perhaps she meant to hint, that the people expressed their dissatisfaction with Absalom's banishment so openly, that they made her afraid of an insurrection: but she *purposely* so confounded the feigned cause of her son with the real cause of Absalom, that part of her address is obscure. While, however, she ventured to censure David for not *gratifying* himself; she took care repeatedly to give him flattering commendations for his wisdom and goodness, which in such a cause abundantly compensated for the ambiguity of her discourse, and the weakness of her arguments: (*Prov.* 26:28. 29:5.) and to do her justice, her ingenuity in pleading so bad a cause was admirable. SCOTT.

(14.) *Neither doth God respect* any *person.*] 'Heb. *velo yissa Elo him nephesh*, "and God doth not take away the soul." Sept. "God will receive the soul." Thus the opinion of the separate existence of the soul with God [note, h. Introd. vol. 1, p. 10.] was certainly held by these translators, and was the opinion of the ancient Jews, at least 300 yrs. before the incarnation; about which time this translation was made. The Vulg. has, "Nor does God will the destruction of the soul." God is not the author of death; neither hath He pleasure in the destruction of the living; imitate Him; pardon and recall thy son.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(15—17.) *Boothr.* places these vs. after v. 11. ED.

18 Then the king answered and said unto the woman, [h] Hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the king now speak.

19 And the king said, *Is not* the hand [i] of Joab with thee in all this? And the woman answered and said, [k] *As* thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can [l] turn to the right hand or to the left from ought that my lord the king hath spoken: for thy servant Joab, he bade me, and [m] he put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid:

20 To [n] fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and my lord *is* wise, [o] according to the wisdom of an angel of God, [p] to know all *things* that *are* in the earth.

[*Practical Observations.*]

21 ¶ And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, [q] I have done this thing: go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again.

22 And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and [*] thanked the king: and Joab said, To-day thy servant knoweth that [r] I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of was just and kind, both in the one case and the other; for, as if the case had been real, still she pleads for herself and her son, yet meaning Absalom.

Lastly, (1.) David soon suspected the hand of Joab in it. For he could not think such a woman as this would have appealed to him, in a matter of such moment, of her own head. And he knew none so likely to set her on as Joab, a politic man, and a friend of Absalom.

(2.) This the woman very honestly owned; saying 'Thy servant Joab, he bade me. If it be well done, let him have the thanks; if ill, let him bear the blame.' Though she found it very agreeable to the king, yet she would not take the praise to herself, but speaks the truth, and gives us an example never to tell a lie for the concealing of a well-managed scheme; *Dare to be true, nothing can need a lie.*

V. 21—27. I. Orders are here given to bring back Absalom; the errand on which the woman came to David was so agreeable, and her management of it so very ingenious and surprising, that he was brought into a peculiarly kind humor: *Go*, (says he to Joab,) *bring the young man Absalom again*, *v.* 21. Which may illustrate the methods of divine grace. It is true, God has thoughts of compassion toward poor sinners, not willing that any should perish, yet He is reconciled to them through a Mediator, who intercedes, and to whom he has given orders, *Go, bring them again. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself*, and He came to this land of our banishment, to bring us to God.

Joab, having received these orders, 1. Thanks the king for doing him the honor to employ him in an affair so universally grateful, *v.* 22. 2. Defoot even to the crown of his head, there was no blemish in him.

26 And [x] when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled *it:* because *the hair* was heavy on him, therefore he polled it;) he weighed the hair of his head, at [y] two hundred shekels after the king's weight.

27 And unto Absalom there were [z] born three sons, and one daughter, whose name *was* [a] Ta-

† his servant.

23 So Joab arose and went to [s] Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.

24 And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and [t] let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face.

25 ‡ But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: [u] from the sole of his

lays not to execute David's orders, *v.* 23. I see not how David can be justified in suspending the execution of the ancient law, (Gen. 9: 6.) *Whoso sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed*, in which a righteous magistrate ought not to *acknowledge even his brethren, or know his own children.* God justly made Absalom a scourge to him, whom his foolish pity thus spared. But though he allowed him to return to his own house, he forbade him the court, and would not see him himself, *v.* 24. Perhaps he had heard something of his conduct, when Joab went to fetch him, which gave him too much reason to think he was not truly penitent; he therefore put him under this mark of his displeasure, that he might be awakened to a sight of his sin, and to sorrow for it, and might make his peace with God; on the first notice of which, no doubt, David would be forward to receive him again into his favor.

II. Occasion taken hence to give an account of Absalom. Nothing is said of his wisdom and piety, though he was the son of such a devout father; parents cannot give grace to their children, though they give them ever so good an education. All that is here said of him, is, 1. That there was not his equal in all Israel for beauty, *v.* 25. A poor commendation for a man that had nothing else in him valuable. Handsome are they that handsome do. Perhaps his being handsome was one reason why his father was so fond of him, and protected him from justice. Those have reason to fear affliction in their children, who are better pleased with their beauty than with their virtue. 2. That he had a very fine head of hair. Whether it was the length, or color, or extraordinary softness of it, something there was, which made it very valuable, and very much an ornament to him, *v.* 26.

h I Sam. 3:17,18. Jer. 38:14,25.
i 3:27,29,34. 11:14,15. 1 Kings 2:5,6.
k 11:11. 1 Sam. 1:26. 17:55. 20:3. 25:26. 2 Kings 2:2.
l Num. 20:17. Deut. 5:32. 28:14. Josh. 1:7. Prov. 4:27.
m See on 3.—Ex. 4:15. Luke 21:15.
n 5:23.
o 17. Job 32:21,22. Prov. 26:28. 29:5.
p Gen. 3:5. Job 38:16,&c. 1 Cor. 8:1,2.
q 11. 1 Sam. 14:39. Mark 6:26.
* Heb. *blessed*. 19:39. Neh. 11:2. Job 29:11. 31:20. Prov. 31:28.
r Gen. 6:8. Ex. 33:16,17. Ruth 2:2. 1 Sam. 20:3.
† Or, *thy*.
s 3:3. 13:37.
t 28. 3:13. Gen. 43:3. Rev. 22:4.
‡ Heb. *And as Absalom there was not a beautiful man in all Israel to praise greatly.* 1 Sam. 9:2. 16:7. Prov. 31: 30. Matt. 23:27.
u Deut. 28:35. Job 2:7. Is. 1:6. Eph. 5:27.
x 18:9. Is. 3:24. 1 Cor. 11:14.
y Gen. 23:16. Lev. 19:36. Ez. 45:9—14.
z 18:18. Job 18:16—19. Is. 14:22. Jer. 22:30.
a 13:1.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—20. It behooves princes and magistrates to be accessible, and to protect the destitute and oppressed: yet the most amiable dispositions must be regulated by discretion; or they will lead us to improper concessions.—If scruples and fears deter great men from complying with their inclinations; some feigned precedent, some plausible arguments, or some partial illustration, will be devised and speciously suggested, to remove the hindrance. Thus many a one has been led to impose on his own judgment and conscience, and conclude that he could not resist such urgent importunities, and such cogent arguments; that his consent was almost extorted; and that to oblige such kind friends he had passed his word, and could not in honor retract it: while in reality he was overcome by his own inclinations, and only wanted a specious excuse for indulging them.—Let us hence learn, what need we have to adhere closely to our rule of duty; to pray earnestly for the teaching of the Holy Spirit; and to watch against the deceitfulness of our own hearts, the bribery of our passions, and the agreeable poison of adulation.—Sin has so filled the world with misery, that real cases of distress may be found, more pitiable than any which the imagination can feign; and we should readily endeavor to relieve those, who are in trouble: but even compassion, amiable as it is, will not justify our violations of the divine law, or neglect of the important duties of our station. (*Ex.* 23: 1—3.) With this single exception, alleviating misery is the noblest privilege and employment of the great; who should in this especially 'remember the LORD their God:' not only his authority and their accountableness to Him; but his compassion and mercy to others and to themselves; and his justice and holiness, who in his love to sinners manifests most conspicuously his abhorrence of their crimes.—When most commended for our *discernment*, we generally act the *most foolishly;* for those very praises cloud the understanding, and pervert the judgment. We deem it unnecessary for persons, of such acknowledged wisdom as we are, to waste time in nice distinctions; we can scarcely refuse to speak *comfortably* to them, who speak so agreeably to us: and hence extravagant commendations lead to self-deception, and entangle all parties in the net of the great deceiver of our fallen race. SCOTT.

Verses 21, 22.

David was willing to suppose that his oath, to spare the woman's son, obliged him to recall Absalom, who was the person really intended; though he could not but perceive the insufficiency of her arguments, and the disparity of the cases. *As a favor*, therefore, he gave Joab *permission* to fetch home Absalom; and Joab appeared as thankful to the king for allotting him this service, as if the most expensive kindness had been done him. There was much of the courtier in this; but it was far distant from godly sincerity! SCOTT.

Verse 24.

David probably meant to quiet his own conscience, and to silence the censures of others, or to show his abhorrence of murder, by laying Absalom under some tokens of disgrace, and by denying himself the pleasure of seeing him. This might also be intended to humble Absalom: but it entirely failed of producing that effect. SCOTT.

Verses 25—27.

(*M. R.*—15:1—6. 1 *K.* 1:5, 6.) 'It is not certain that he cut his hair ones a year: for the words in the Hebrew are, 'from the end of days

mar; she was a woman of a fair countenance.

B. C. 1025. 28 ¶ So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face.

29 Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king; [b] but he would not come to him: and when he sent again the second time, he would not come.

30 Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near [*] mine, and he hath barley there; [c] go and set it on fire. [d] And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.

31 Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto *his* house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire?

32 And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur? [e] *it had been* good for me *to have been* there still: now therefore let me see the king's face; and if there be *any* iniquity in me, let him kill me.

33 So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king [f] kissed Absalom.

This notice is taken of it, not as the hair of a Nazarite, but as the hair of a beau. He let it grow, till it was a burden to him, nor would he cut it, as long as ever he could bear it. As pride feels no cold, so it feels no heat; and that which feeds and gratifies it, is not complained of, though very uneasy. When he did poll it at certain times, for ostentation he had it weighed, that it might be seen how much it excelled other men's; and it weighed 200 shekels, which some reckon to be 3 lbs. 2 oz. of our weight; and with the oil and powder, especially if it were powdered (as Josephus says the fashion then was) with gold-dust, Patrick thinks it is not at all incredible that it should weigh so much. This fine hair proved his halter, *ch.* 18:9. 3. That his family began to be built up. It was, probably, a good while before he had a child; and then, despairing of having one, he set up that pillar, *ch.* 18:18. to bear up his name; but afterward he had three sons, and one daughter, *v.* 27. [called *Tamar, a date-tree*, note, Ex. 15:27.] Or, perhaps, these sons, while he was hatching his rebellion, were all cut off by the righteous hand of God, and thereupon he set up that monument.

V. 28—33. Three years, Absalom had been an exile with his father-in-law, and now, two years, a prisoner at large in his own house, and, in both, better dealt with than he deserved; yet his spirit was still unhumbled, his pride unmortified, and, instead of being thankful his life is spared, he thinks himself sorely wronged that he is not restored to all his places at court. Had he truly repented, his distance from the gaieties of the court, and his solitude and retirement in his own house, especially being in Jerusalem the holy city, would have been very agreeable. If a murderer must live, yet let him be for ever a recluse. But he longs to see the king's face, pretending it was because he loved him, but really because he wanted an opportunity to supplant him. This snake cannot sting again, till he be warmed in his father's bosom. He gained this point, not by pretended submissions and promises of reformation, but (would you think it?) by insults and injuries.

1. Once and again, he sent to Joab to come and speak with him, for he durst not go to him; but Joab would not come, (*v.* 29.) probably, because Absalom had not owned his kindness in bringing him to Jerusalem, so gratefully as he thought he should have done; proud men take every service done them for a debt. One would have thought a person in Absalom's circumstances would have sent to Joab a kindly message, and offered him a large gratuity; courtiers expect it: instead of this, he insolently and strangely bids his servants set Joab's corn-fields on fire; (*v.* 30.) as spiteful a thing as he could do. Samson could not think of a greater injury to the Philistines. God, by afflictions, brings those to Him, that kept at a distance from Him. Absalom was obliged by the law to make restitution, (Ex. 22:6.) yet we do not find he offered, or Joab demanded it. And now Joab (perhaps frightened at the surprising boldness and fury of Absalom, and apprehensive he had made an interest in the people strong enough to bear him out in the most daring things, else he would never have done this) not only puts up with this injury, but goes on his errand. See what some men can do, by threats, and carrying things with a high hand.

2. By his insolent message (for I can call it no better) to the king, he recovered his place at court, to see the king's face, i. e. to become a privy counsellor, Esth. 1:14. (1.) He undervalued the favor showed him, in recalling him from banishment, and restoring him to his own house and that in Jerusalem; *Wherefore am I come from Geshur?* He will not own there was any iniquity in him, insinuating therefore that he had been wronged in the rebuke he had been under. He defies the king's justice, 'Let him kill me, if he can find in his heart;' knowing he loved him too well to do it. (2.) Yet with this message he carried his point, *v.* 33. David's strong affection for him, construed all this to be the language of a great respect to his father, and an earnest desire of his favor, when, alas, it was any thing but that. See how easily wise and good men may be imposed on by their own children that design ill, especially when blindly fond. Did the bowels of a father prevail to reconcile David to an impenitent son, and shall penitent sinners question the compassion of Him who is the Father of mercy? If Ephraim bemoan himself, God soon bemoans him, with all the kind expressions of a fatherly tenderness; *He is a dear son, and a pleasant child*, Jer. 31:20.

b 30,31. Esth. 1:12. Matt. 22:8.
* Heb. *my place.*
c 13:28,29. Judg. 15:5.
d 1 Kings 21:9—14. 2 Kings 9:33. 10:6,7.
e Ex. 14:12. 15:3. 17:3.
f Gen. 3:12. 1 Sam. 15:13. Ps. 36:2. Prov. 28:13. Jer. 2:22,23. 8:12. Matt. 25:44. Rom. 3:19.
g Gen. 27:26. 33:4. 45:15. Luke 15:20.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 21—33. In our treatment of children or others who have greatly offended, every method should be used, which has a tendency to mortify pride, and to bring them to repentance; and in aiming at this important object, the feelings of our hearts must be repressed. But when high rank, early indulgence, impunity in crimes, flattering commendations, personal accomplishments, and popular favor, concur to increase the natural haughtiness of the human heart; and when the Lord leaves a man to himself, it is inconceivable to what a pitch of arrogance and insolence he will arrive.—But all this is the forerunner of destruction: and when parents or rulers countenance such imperious characters, they will soon experience the most fatal effects.—The Lord grant unto us the inward beauty of holiness, and the adorning of a meek and quiet spirit: for 'favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain:' and those only, who fear the Lord, are truly excellent and happy.

SCOTT.

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to days, . . . at stated times, . . . when it grew too heavy.' *Patrick.* —As 200 shekels, according to the usual meaning of the word, was no less than 3 lbs. 4 oz. Troy weight; it has been thought, that the shekel of half an ounce is not meant, but a much less weight; or that the decorations used about his hair were included. Absalom's atrocious guilt however was forgotten, and his accomplishments universally celebrated; which increased his arrogance, and ended in his ruin.—His sons died before him. (18:18.) SCOTT.

(26.) 200 '*kings' shekels.*] '50 oz. equal to 4 lbs. 2 oz. Troy, or 3 lbs. 2 oz. Avoirdupois. This weight need not appear incredible, as abundance of oil and ointments were used by the ancients in dressing the head. See Greek and Roman writers, and Ps. 23:5. Eccl. 9:8. Matt. 6:17.' *Bochart.* '*Josephus* also informs us that the Jews not only used ointments, but put *gold dust* in their hair, that it might flame in the sun; and this they might do in considerable quantities, as gold was so plentiful among them. I knew of an officer who had upwards of 2 lbs. of powder and ointments put on his head daily, whose hair did not weigh one fourth as much. The vain Absalom might extensively use these things.' Dr. *A. Clarke:* who however ingeniously suggests that '*lamed*, 30, was first written, which being mistaken for *resh*, 400, with a mark over it, was afterwards written out at length, *mathayim*, (400).' ED.

Verses 28, 29.

Perhaps Absalom was not only forbidden to visit his father; but confined to his own house and its environs, and not allowed to go abroad. (1 *K.* 2:36—46.) Thus he would be greatly embarrassed in his ambitious projects: and this might be one reason of his impatient desire of being reconciled to David, and enjoying his full liberty; and also of being freed from the disgrace of his present situation, which would hinder many from attaching themselves to him. He seems, however, to have been secretly active in forming a party, even at this time: and either he had not favored Joab for his former services, according to his expectations; or Absalom's popularity and ambition made that sagacious politician regard him as a dangerous person, with whom he did not wish to form any further connections; so that he declined coming to him. SCOTT.

Verses 30—33.

Absalom's injurious and hectoring treatment of so considerable a person as Joab; and his arrogant message to David, almost vindicating his conduct and demanding justice; plainly showed his character and intentions, his confidence in the favor of the people, and the ill-judged lenity of his father. This aggravated David's sin and folly in receiving him into full favor, in the manner he did; and which would give him access, without restraint, to all those, who before were reserved, or afraid of showing their attachment to him. ID.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV. V. 1—6. The last clause in these verses aptly marks the way, in which Absalom ingratiated himself with the people. He

CHAP. XV.

Absalom, by fair speeches and affected courtesy, steals the hearts of the people, 1—6. Under pretence of a vow, he obtains leave to go to Hebron, where he raises rebellion, 7—12. David hearing it retires from Jerusalem, 13—18. Ittai the Gittite faithfully adheres to him, and the people weep over him, 91—23. Zadok and Abiathar are sent back with the ark, 24—29. David and his company ascend mount Olivet weeping, 30. Hearing that Ahithophel had joined Absalom, he prays that his counsel may be turned into foolishness, 31. Hushai is sent back with instructions, 32—37.

AND it came to pass after this, that [a]Absalom prepared him chariots, and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

2 And Absalom [b]rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was *so*, that when any man that had a controversy *came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city *art* thou? And he said, Thy servant *is* of one of the tribes of Israel.

3 And Absalom said unto him, See, [c]thy matters *are* good and right; but †*there is* no man *deputed* of the king to hear thee.

4 Absalom said moreover, [d]Oh, that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and [d]I would do him justice!

5 And it was *so*, that when any man came nigh *to him* to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and [f]took him, and [g]kissed him.

6 And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom [h]stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

B. C. 1021. 7 ¶ And it came to pass after [i]forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, [k]let me go and [l]pay my vow, which I have

CHAP. XV. Absalom's name signifies *the peace of his father*, yet he proves his greatest trouble; so often are we disappointed in our expectations from the creature. The sword, entailed on David's house, had hitherto been among his children, now it begins to be drawn against himself, with this aggravation, that he may thank himself for it, for had he done justice on the murderer, he had prevented the traitor. The story of Absalom's rebellion begins with this ch. but we must go over three or four more before we see the end of it. Now the word of God was fulfilled, that He would *raise up evil against him out of his own house*, ch. 12: 10.

V. 1—6. Absalom is no sooner restored to his place at court, than he aims [the graceless and ungrateful wretch] to be in the throne. Perhaps, he valued himself on being the son of a king's daughter, and despised his father, who was but the son of Jesse. His mother was the daughter of a heathen king, which made him the less concerned for the peace of Israel. David, in this unhappy issue of that marriage, smarted for being unequally yoked with an unbeliever. Two things recommend a man to popular esteem; greatness, and goodness.

I. Absalom looks great, *v.* 1. He on a horse, his father using a mule. The people desired a king like the nations; and such a one Absalom will be. Samuel had foretold this would be the *manner of the king;* (1 Sam. 8: 11.) and this is Absalom's manner. David connives at it as designed only to grace his court. Those parents know not what they do, who indulge a proud humor in their children; I have seen more young people ruined by pride, than by any one lust whatsoever.

II. Absalom will seem very good too, but with a very bad design. Had he proved himself a good son, and a good subject, and set himself to serve his father's interest, he had *done his present duty*, and showed himself worthy of future honors, after his father's death. Those that know how to obey well, know how to rule. Those are good indeed, that are good in their own place, not that pretend how good they will be in other people's places. But this is all the goodness we find in Absalom.

He had all the pomp and pleasure he could wish; yet this will not content him, unless he have power too. We read not of his wisdom, virtue, or learning in the laws, nor had he given any proofs of his love to justice, but the contrary: yet he wishes he were a judge, *v.* 4. Note, Those are commonly most ambitious of preferment, that are least fit for it; the best qualified are the most modest and self-diffident.

Had he humbly petitioned his father to employ him in the administration of justice, and studied to qualify himself for it, (according to the rule, Ex. 18: 21.) no doubt, he had been sure of the next judge's place that fell; but this is too mean a post for his proud spirit. It is below him to be subordinate, though to the king his father; he must be supreme, or nothing. He wants to be such a judge, that *every* man who has any cause, shall come to him.

To gain the power he aims at, he endeavors to instil into the people's minds,

1. A bad opinion of the present administration. He got round him all he could, that had business at the council-board, inquired what their business was; and, (1.) Upon a slight and general inquiry into their cause, pronounced it good; *Thy matters are right.* A fit man indeed to be a judge, who would give judgment upon hearing one side only! He has a bad cause indeed, that cannot put a good color on it, when he himself has the telling of it. But, (2.) He told them, it was to no purpose to appeal to the throne, *There is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.* The king is himself old, and past business; or so taken up with his devotions, that he never minds business; (his sons were so addicted to their pleasures, that, though they had the name of chief rulers, they took no care of the affairs committed to them;) he further seems to insinuate, what a great loss there was of him, while banished and confined, and how much the public suffered by it. Even David himself, the best of kings, and his administration, could not escape the worst of censures. They that aim to usurp, cry out of grievances, and pretend to design nothing but the redress of them: as Absalom here.

2. A good opinion of his own fitness to rule. He recommends himself, (1.) As very diligent; he rose early, and appeared in public, as one mightily concerned to see justice done, and public business despatched. (2.) As very inquisitive and desirous to be acquainted with every one's case. He would know of what city every one was, that came for judgment, that he might inform himself concerning every part of the kingdom, and the state of it, *v.* 2. (3.) As very familiar and humble. If any Israelite offered to do obeisance to him, he took him, and embraced him as a friend. No man's conduct could be more condescending, while his heart was as proud as Lucifer's. He knew what a grace it puts on greatness, to be affable and courteous, and how much it wins on common people: had he been sincere in it, it had been his praise; but to fawn on the people, that he might betray them, was abominable hypocrisy. Ps. 10: 9, 10.

V. 7—12. We have here the breaking out of Absalom's rebellion, which he had long been contriving; *after* 40 *years*, *v.* 7. not from David's beginning his reign, then it would fall in the last year of his life, which is not probable, but either from his first anointing by Samuel, 7 years before, or rather, (I think,) from the people's desiring a king, and the first change of the government into a monarchy; which might be about 10 years before David began to reign; it is fitly dated thence, to show that the same restless spirit was still working, and they still given to change: as fond now of a new man, as then of a new model. So it fell about the 30th year of David's reign, Absalom's plot being now ripe for execution.

I. The place he chose for the rendezvous of his party, was Hebron; the place where he was born, and where his father began his reign, and contin-

a 13:1. Deut. 17:16. 1 Sam. 8:11. 1 Kings 1:5,33. 10:26—29. Ps. 20:7. Prov. 21:2. 16:18. 17:19. Jer. 22: 14—16.
b Job 24:14. Prov. 4:16. Matt. 27:1.
* Heb. *to come.* Ex. 18:14,16,26. 1 Kings 3:16—28.
c Num. 16:3,13,14. Ps. 12:2. Dan. 11: 21. 2 Pet. 2:10.
† Or, *none will hear thee from the king* downward. 8:15. Ex. 20:12. 21:17. Prov. 30:11,17. Ez. 22:7. Matt. 15: 4. Acts 23:5. 1 Pet. 2:17.
d Judg. 9:1—5,15,28. Prov. 25:6,7. Luke 14:8—11.
e Prov. 27:2. 2 Pet. 2:19.
f Ps. 10:9,10. 55:21. Prov. 26:25.
g 14:33.
h Prov. 11:9. Rom. 16:18. 2 Pet. 2:3.
i 1 Sam. 16:13.
k 13:24—27.
l Prov. 21:27. Is. 58:4. Matt. 2:8. 23:14.

'stole the hearts of the men of Israel.' (*Rom.* 16:17—20.) He did not gain their hearts by eminent services, or by a wise and virtuous conduct. But he affected to look great, as heir to the crown; and yet to be very condescending, and affable to his inferiors: he pretended a great regard to their interests, and threw out artful insinuations against David's administration: Absalom suggested, that if he could be judge, suits should not then be so tedious, expensive, and partially decided as they were. This he confirmed by rising early and by apparent application; though it was to other people's business, and not to his own duty: and by such sinister arts, united with his personal attractions, magnificence, and address, he imposed upon multitudes all over the land, to prefer so worthless a character to the wise, righteous, and pious David!—Others of the king's sons were employed in public business, but Absalom seems not to have had any place. (8:15—18.) This might offend him; and his artifices tended to alienate the people from his brethren, as well as from his father.—The chariots and horsemen of Absalom, being a deviation from the divine law, should not have been allowed by David on any account: (8:4. *Deut.* 17:16. 1 *K.* 1:5, 6.) and indeed he might easily have foreseen the consequences of Absalom's ostentation, and should at once have restrained it. SCOTT.

Verses 7—9.

The era, from which the '40 years' here mentioned should be computed, cannot easily be assigned; nor are any of the conjectures of learned men on the subject fully satisfactory. The most approved seems to be, that they must be reckoned from the time of David's anointing by Samuel to the kingdom: yet that, being a private transaction, would scarcely have been referred to in a public computation; no other events are dated from that era; the subsequent history has no apparent connection with it; and indeed it would fix Absalom's rebellion more early in David's reign, than it seems to have occurred. —It is evident, that Josephus read *four years*, which he dates from Absalom's reconciliation; (a very proper time for his artful schemes to produce their effects:) and this seems to be the true reading, from which a trivial error, easily made, was fallen into by some very ancient transcriber.—Absalom knew his father would be pleased to sup

vowed unto the LORD in Hebron.

8 For [m] thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at [n] Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then [o] I will serve the LORD.

9 And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron.

10 But Absalom sent [p] spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom [q] reigneth in [r] Hebron.

11 And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, *that were* [s] called; and they went in [t] their simplicity, and they knew not any thing.

12 And Absalom sent for [u] Ahithophel the Gilonite, [x] David's counsellor, from his city, *even* from [y] Giloh, [z] while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for [a] the people increased continually with Absalom.

[*Practical Observations.*]

13 ¶ And there came a messenger to David, saying, [b] The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.

14 And David said unto all his servants that *were* with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.

15 And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.

16 And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, which were concubines, to keep the house.

17 And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off.

18 And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.

19 Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou art a stranger, and also an exile.

20 Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee.

21 And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.

22 And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that were with him.

23 And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.

24 And lo Zadok also, and all the Levites were with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city.

25 And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation:

26 But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.

27 The king said also unto Zadok the priest, Art not thou a seer? return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.

28 See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me.

29 Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem: and they tarried there.

30 And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.

31 And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

32 And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head:

33 Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me:

34 But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.

35 And have there not with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, that what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

36 Behold, they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear.

37 So Hushai David's friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

m Gen. 28:20,21. 1 Sam. 1:11. Ps. 56: 12. Ec. 5:4.
n 13:37,38. 14:23,32.
o Josh. 24:15. Is. 28:15. Jer. 9:3—5. 42:20.
p 13:28,29. 14:30.
q 19:10. Job 20:5. Ps. 73:18,19.
r 2:1,11. 3:2,3. 5:5. 1 Chr. 11:3. 12: 23,38.
s 1 Sam. 9:13. 16:3—5.
t Gen. 20:5. 1 Sam. 22:15. Prov. 14: 15. 22:3. Matt. 10:16. Rom. 16:18, 19.
u 31. 16:20—23. 17:14,23.
x Ps. 41:9. 55:12—14. Mic. 7:5,6. John 13:18.
y Josh. 15:51.
z Num. 23:1,14,30. 1 Kings 21:9,12. Ps. 50:16—21 Prov. 21:27. Is. 1:10—16. Tit. 1:16.
a Ps. 3:1. 43:1,2.
b 6. 3:36. Judg. 9:3. Ps. 62:9. Matt. 21:9. 27:22.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12. The ostentation of emulating or exceeding superiors in external pomp, is an evidence of a narrow mind, a weak judgment, and a depraved heart. It is, however, the common folly and ruin of *indulged* children, and frequently prepares the way for the most atrocious crimes. The very first appearance, therefore, of this affectation should be repressed by parents, with decision, and even with severity, if they would prevent the ruin of their families. Such is human nature, that the arts and attainments of the fawning sons of ambition go much further in gaining the favor of the multitude, than wisdom and justice, truth and piety, or the most important and long continued services! This is the old hackneyed way for men, destitute of conscience or honor, to wind themselves into important stations; and yet it is as much practised, and as little suspected, as if it were quite a new discovery!—No wise and good man, therefore, should on any account promise himself the continuance of popular favor, or be cast down if he meet with treachery and ingratitude: yet, in general, we may perceive the righteousness of God, in the basest treatment which we can receive from man; and may thence be reminded to humble ourselves before Him, and to expect all our happiness from Him alone.—No villany can be termed *complete*, which is not disguised under the mask of religion; especially in those times, when the profession of godliness is treated with general respect. Pious persons are glad to see others, and particularly those whom they most love, appear to be religious, and are not apt to suspect them of hypocrisy: and this gives occasion to the most scandalous and pernicious deceptions.—The policy of wicked men and the subtlety of Satan are exerted to the utmost, in drawing in respectable persons to give an unintended and unsuspected countenance to the basest designs; by which, opinions, principles, and practices acquire a degree of regard, to which they are not at all entitled, and which they would not otherwise have obtained: but none so much strengthen the hands of profligates or infidels, as apostates from a religious profession. SCOTT.

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pose he paid any regard to religion; and therefore he cloaked his intended treason and parricide, with hypocrisy. (*Gen.* 27:21—23.) SCOTT.

(7.) *Forty years.*] Dr. *A. Clarke* has suggested, that two mss. collated by Dr. *Kennicott*, have *days* instead of *years*, and that this may be the true reading; but should it be *four* years, as the Syr. and Arab. with *Josephus* and *Theodoret* have it, then they may be dated from the time of his slaying Amnon—after which, see ch. 13:38. he was 3 yrs. at Geshur. The conspiracy would then be a year after his return. ED.

Verse 10

Spies having been previously sent into all parts of the land, to sound the inclinations of the people, and to prepare the way; when the design was ripe for execution, trumpeters were sent after them: that, when the signal was given, the spies might, through all the tribes of Israel, proclaim Absalom king, without expressly avowing the treason, or saying whether David was dead, or had resigned, or had admitted Absalom to share the authority. Thus, while David's loyal subjects would hesitate in uncertainty, Absalom's party became formidable. SCOTT.

Verse 12.

(*M. R.*) Bath-sheba was daughter to Eliam, and Eliam was son to Ahithophel; (11:3. 23:34.) it has therefore been thought that he was her grandfather, and resented the dishonor done to his family. In many things he resembled Judas the traitor, and may even be said to have *typified* him. (*Ps.* 41:9. 55:12—15, 20, 21. 109.2—20. *John* 13: 18—30. *Acts* 1:16—18.)

Verses 13—15.

It is most probable, that some of the 200 men, who 'went in their simplicity,' sent David word concerning the conspiracy; and also

salem, [c] Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not *else* escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and * bring evil upon us, [d] and smite the city with the edge of the sword.

15 And the king's servants said unto the king, [e] Behold, thy servants *are ready to do* whatsoever my lord the king shall † appoint.

16 And the king went forth, and all his household ‡ after him: and the king left [f] ten women, *which were* concubines, to keep the house.

17 And the king [g] went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off.

18 And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the [h] Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the [i] Gittites, six hundred men, which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.

19 Then said the king to [j] Ittai, the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou *art* a stranger, and also an exile.

20 Whereas thou camest *but* yesterday, should I this day make thee § go up and down with us? [k] seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: [l] mercy and truth *be* with thee.

21 And Ittai answered the king, and said, [m] *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* my lord the king liveth, [n] surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.

22 And David said to Ittai, Go, and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that *were* with him.

23 And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook [o] Kidron, and all the people passed over toward the way of the [p] wilderness.

call to mind the arts Absalom had used to inveigle them, and perhaps reflected on it with regret, that he had not done more to counterwork him, and secure his own interest, which he had been too confident of. Note, It is the wisdom of princes, to make sure of the hearts of their subjects; for if they have them, they have their purses, arms, all, at their service.

II. The alarm this gave David, and the resolutions he came to, thereupon. We may well imagine him in a manner thunder-struck. Well might he say with Cæsar, *What, thou, my son?* Let not parents raise their hopes too high from their children, lest they be disappointed. David, consulting only with God and his own heart, determined immediately to quit Jerusalem, *v.* 14. 1. As a penitent, submitting to the rod. Conscience now reminded him of his sin in the matter of Uriah, and this sentence for it, that *evil should rise against him out of his own house.* Thus he *accepts the punishment of his iniquity.* Or, 2. As a politician. Jerusalem was a great city, but not tenable; it should seem, by David's prayer, (Ps. 51: 18.) its walls were not built, much less was it regularly fortified; it was too large to be garrisoned by so small a force as he had now with him; he had reason to fear the generality of the inhabitants were too well-affected to Absalom; should he fortify himself there, he might lose the country, in which, especially among those that lay farthest from Absalom's tampering, he hoped to have the most friends. And he was loth to make Jerusalem the seat of war, and expose it to the calamities of a siege; he will rather quit it tamely to the rebels. Note, Good men, when they suffer themselves, care not how few are involved with them in suffering.

III. His hasty flight from Jerusalem. His servants agreed to the measures he took, faithfully adhered to him, (*v.* 15.) and assured him of their inviolable allegiance. Whereupon, 1. He went out of Jerusalem himself on foot, while his son Absalom had chariots and horses. It is not always the best man, nor the best cause, that makes the best figure. Thus he chose to do, to abase himself so much the more under God's hand, and in condescension to his friends and followers, with whom he would walk, in token that he would live and die with them. 2. He took his household with him, that he might protect them in this day of danger, and they be a comfort to him in this day of grief. Masters of families, in their greatest frights, must not neglect their households. *Ten women*, that *were concubines*, he *left* behind, *to keep the house*, thinking the weakness of their sex, their age and relation to him, would protect them; but God overruled this for the fulfilling of his word. 3. He took his life-guard with him, or band of pensioners; the Cherethites and Pelethites, under the command of Benaiah; and the Gittites, under the command of Ittai, *v.* 18. These Gittites seem to have been, by birth, Philistines of Gath, who came, a regiment of them, 600 in all, to enter themselves in David's service, having known him in Gath, and being greatly in love with him for his virtue and piety, and having embraced the Jews' religion. David made them of his *body-guard*, and they adhered to him in his distress. The Son of David *found not so great faith in Israel* as in a Roman centurion, and a woman of Canaan. 4. As many as would, of the people of Jerusalem, he took with him, and made a halt at some distance from the city, to draw them up, *v.* 17. He compelled none; they whose hearts were with Absalom, to Absalom let them go, and so shall their doom be, they will soon have enough of him. Christ enlists none but volunteers.

IV. His discourse with Ittai the Gittite. 1. David dissuaded him from going with him, *v.* 19, 20. willing to try whether he were hearty for him, and not inclined to Absalom. If he were no more than a soldier of fortune, (as we say,) he would be for that side which would pay and prefer him best; and to that side let him go. If faithful, yet David would not have him exposed to the fatigues and perils he now counted upon. Generous souls are more concerned at the share others have in their troubles, than at their own. Ittai shall therefore be dismissed with a blessing; a very proper, pious farewell, when we part with a friend, '*Mercy and truth be with thee*, and then thou art safe, and mayest be easy, wherever thou art.' David's dependence was on the mercy and truth of God, for comfort and happiness, both for himself and his friends. See Ps. 61: 7. 2. Ittai bravely resolves not to leave him, *v.* 21. and he confirms his resolution with an oath, that he might not be tempted to break it: such an esteem has he for his wisdom and goodness, which were still the same, that, whatever comes of it, he will never leave him. Note, That is a friend indeed, who loves at all times, and will adhere to us in adversity. Thus should we cleave to the Son of David, with full purpose of heart, that *neither life nor death shall separate us from his love.*

V. The common people's sympathy with David in his affliction. When he and his attendants *passed over the brook Kidron*, (the very same brook

c 19:9. Ps. 3: *title.*
* Heb. *thrust.* Ex. 46:18. Matt. 11:12. *marg.* Luke 10:15.
d 23:16,17. Is. 51:18. 55:3—11. 137: 5,6.
e Prov. 18:24. Luke 22:28,29. John 6: 66—69. 15:14.
† Heb. *choose.*
‡ Heb. *at his feet.* Judg. 4:10. 1 Sam. 25:7,42. *marg.*
f 12:11. 16:21,22. 20:3. Rom. 12:2.
g Ps. 3: *title.* 2. 66:12. Ec. 10:7.
h 8:18. 20:7,23. 1 Sam. 30:14. 1 Kings 1:38. 1 Chr. 18:17.
i 19—22. 6:10. 18:2. 1 Sam. 27:3.
j 18:2. Ruth 1:11—13. †
§ Heb. *wander in going.* Ps. 56:8. 59: 15. Am. 8:12. Heb. 11:37,38.
k 1 Sam. 23:13.
l 2:6. Ps. 25:10. 57:3. 61:7. 85:10. 89:14. Prov. 14:22. John 1:17. 2 Tim. 1:16—18.
m 1 Sam. 20:3. 25:26. 2 Kings 2:2,4, 6. 4:30.
n Ruth 1:16,17. Prov. 17:17. 18:24. Matt. 8:19,20. John 6:66—69. Acts 11:23. 21:13. 2 Cor. 7:3.
o 1 Kings 2:37. John 18:1. *Cedron.*
p 16:2. Matt. 3:1,3. Luke 1:80.

represented it as extremely formidable. It must indeed have been expected, that the conspirators would act in the most decided manner: and though Jerusalem was a well fortified city, yet it might not be stored with a garrison or provisions for a siege. It does not appear that David's measures were impolitic, or that his friends thought them so. SCOTT.

(13.) *The hearts of Israel are after Absalom.*] 'Several reasons are given, in trying to account for this general defection. 1. David was old and afflicted, and could not well attend to the administration of justice. 2. It does appear that the king did not attend to the affairs of state; and that there were no properly appointed judges in the land, (see v. 3.) 3. Joab's power was overgrown; he was wicked and insolent, oppressive to the people, and David was afraid to execute the laws against him. 4. There were still some partisans of Saul, who thought the crown not fairly obtained by David. 5. David was under God's displeasure (for adultery and murder), who let his enemies loose against him. 6. There are always troublesome and disaffected men under every government, who can never rest [who, from conceit, a spirit of contradiction, or party spirit, that poison of free states, oppose every thing,] or are ever hoping [some selfish advantage] from a change. 7. Absalom appeared to be the *real*, and was the *undisputed heir* to the throne: David could not live long, and most people are more disposed [from the love of novelty] to hail the beams of the *rising*, than exult in those of the *setting* sun. No doubt some of these causes operated; and perhaps most of them exerted less or more influence in this most scandalous business.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 17.

It is highly probable, from the original, that both David and all his company went *on foot.* SCOTT.

Verses 18—22.

The 600 Gittites seem to have been a distinct body from the Cherethites and Pelethites. ID.

Verse 23.

Though the multitude favored Absalom, yet many sympathized with David.—Thus while the general cry against Jesus was, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him;' there were those who wept, and bewailed Him. (*Luke* 23:26—31.)

All the country wept, &c.] All the *land* wept; i. e. the weeping was general among the inhabitants; the adherents to Absalom being at a distance. ID.

Verses 24—29.

Abiathar was the high priest: yet Zadok, of the family of Eleazar,

24 ¶ And lo, [q] Zadok also, and all the Levites *were* with him, [r] bearing the ark of the covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up until all the people had done passing out of the city.

25 And the king said unto Zadok, [s] Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favor in the eyes of the LORD, [t] he will bring me again, and show me *both* it and his [u] habitation.

26 But if he thus say, I [v] have no delight in thee; behold *here am* I, [x] let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.

27 The king said also unto Zadok the priest, *Art not* thou [y] a seer? [z] return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.

28 See, [a] I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me.

29 Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem: and they tarried there.

30 And David went up by [b] the ascent of *mount* Olivet, *and wept as he went up, and had [c] his head covered; and he went [d] barefoot: and all the people that *was* with him covered every man his head, and they went up, [e] weeping as they went up.

31 ¶ And *one* told David, saying, [f] Ahithophel *is* among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, [g] O LORD, I pray thee, [h] turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

32 And it came to pass, that *when* David was come to [i] the top *of the mount*, where [j] he worshipped God, behold, [k] Hushai the [l] Archite came to meet him with his [m] coat rent, and earth upon his head:

33 Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, [n] then thou shalt be a burden unto me:

Christ passed over, when He entered on his sufferings, John 18: 1.) *toward the way of the wilderness*, which lay between Jerusalem and Jericho, *all the country wept with a loud voice*, *v.* 23. Cause enough there was for weeping. Parents that are abused and ruined by their own children, merit the tender sympathy of their friends, as much as any of the sons or daughters of affliction. To see their own prince, too, thus wronged, who had been so great a blessing to their land, and had done nothing to forfeit the affections of his people; to see him in this distress, and themselves unable to help him, might well draw floods of tears.

V. 24—30. Here is, I. The fidelity of the priests and Levites. They knew David's great affection to them and their office, notwithstanding his failings; the method Absalom took to gain people's affections, made no impression on them; he had little religion in him, therefore they steadily adhered to David; Zadok, Abiathar, and all the Levites, if he go, will accompany him, and take the ark, that, by it, they might ask counsel of God for him, *v.* 24. Note, They that are friends to the ark in their prosperity, shall find it a friend to them in their adversity. Formerly, David would not rest, till he had found a resting place for the ark; and now, if the priests may have their mind, the ark shall not rest, till David returns to his rest.

II. David's dismission of them back into the city, *v.* 25, 26. Abiathar was high priest, (1 K. 2: 35.) but Zadok his assistant; he attended the ark most closely, while Abiathar was active in public business, *v.* 24. Therefore David directs his speech to Zadok, and an excellent speech it is, and shows him to be in a very good frame under his affliction, and that still he holds fast his integrity.

1. He is very solicitous for the safety of the ark; Note, It argues a good principle, to be more concerned for the church's prosperity, than for our own; to *prefer Jerusalem* before our *chief joy;* (Ps. 137: 6.) the success of the Gospel, and the flourishing of the church, above our own wealth, credit, ease, and safety, even when they are most in hazard.

2. He is very desirous to return to the enjoyment of the privileges of God's house. Note, Gracious persons measure their comforts and conveniences in this world, by the opportunity they give them of communion with God. Hezekiah wishes for the recovery of his health, that he might *go up to the house of the Lord*, Isa. 38: 22.

3. He is very submissive to the holy will of God, concerning the issue of his present dark dispensation. He hopes the best, (*v.* 25.) and hopes for it from the favor of God, which he looks upon to be the fountain of all good. Observe with what satisfaction and holy complacency he speaks of the divine disposal. Note, It is our interest, as well as duty, cheerfully to acquiesce in the will of God, whatever befalls us. That we may not complain of what is, let us see God's hand in all events; and that we may not be afraid of what shall be, let us see all events in God's hand.

III. The confidence David put in the priests, to serve his interest to the utmost of their power, in his absence. He calls Zadok *a seer*, (*v.* 27.) that is, a wise man, a man that can see into business, and discern time and judgment. One friend that is a seer, in such an exigence as this, was worth twenty that were not so quick-sighted. For the settling of a private correspondence with the priests in his absence, he appoints Ahimaaz and Jonathan, whose coat, it might be hoped, would be their protection, and of whose prudence and faithfulness, probably, he had had experience. He would encamp *in the plain of the wilderness*, till he heard from them, (*v.* 28.) and then move according to the information and advice they should send him. Hereupon, they returned to the city, to wait the event; it was pity any disturbance should be given to a state so happy as this was, when the prince and the priests had such an entire affection for, and confidence in each other.

IV. The melancholy posture David and his men put themselves into, when, at the beginning of their march, they went up the *mount of Olives*, *v.* 30. David himself, as a deep mourner, covered his head and face for shame and blushing, went barefoot, as a prisoner or a slave, and for mortification, and went weeping. (1.) He could not but weep, to think that his son would thus lift up the heel against him. (2.) There was much of the displeasure of his God in it; this infused the wormwood and gall, Lam. 3: 19. His sin was *ever before him*, (Ps. 51: 3.) but never so plain, nor ever appearing so black, as now. He never wept thus when Saul hunted him, but a wounded conscience makes troubles lie heavy, Ps. 38: 4. 2. When David wept, all his company wept likewise. It is our duty to *weep with those that weep*, especially our superiors, and betters; for, *if this be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* To prevent suffering with sinners, let us sorrow with them.

V. 31—37. Nothing, it seems, appeared to David more threatening in Absalom's plot, than that Ahithophel was in it. Absalom was himself no politician, but Ahithophel would be the more dangerous, because he had been, all along, acquainted with David's counsels and affairs: if therefore he can be baffled, Absalom is as good as routed, and the head of the conspiracy cut off. This David endeavors to do,

1. By prayer. When he heard Ahithophel was in the plot, he lifted up his heart in prayer, *Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness*, *v.* 31. He prays not against Ahithophel's person, but against his counsel, that, though a wise man, he might, at this time, give foolish counsel; or, if he gave wise counsel, that it might be rejected as

q 27,35. 8:17. 20:25. 1 Kings 1:8. 2: 35. 4:2—4. 1 Chr. 6:8—12. Ez. 43: 11.
r 6:13. Num. 4:15. 7:9. Josh. 3:3,6, 15—17. 4:16—18. 6:4,6. 1 Sam. 4: 3—5,11. 1 Chr. 15:2.
s 12:10,11. 1 Sam. 4:3—11. Jer. 7:4.
t Ps. 26:8. 27:4,5. 42:1,2. 43:3,4. 63: 1,2. 84:1—3,10. 122:1,2,9. Is. 38:22.
u 6:17. 7:2.
v 22:20. Num. 14:8. 1 Kings 10:9. 2 Chr. 9:8. Is. 42:1. 62:4. Jer. 22:28. 32:41. Mal. 1:10.
x Judg. 10:15. 1 Sam. 3:18. Job 1:20, 21. Ps. 39:9.
y 24:11. 1 Sam. 9:9. 1 Chr. 25:5.
z 34,36. 17:17.
a 23. 16:2. 17:1,16.
b Zech. 14:4. Luke 19:29,37. 21:37. 22:39. Acts 1:12.
* Heb. *going up and weeping.* Ps. 42: 3—11. 43:1,2,5. Luke 19:41.
c 19:4. Esth. 6:12. Jer. 14:3,4.
d Is. 20:2,4. Ez. 24:17,23.
e Ps. 126:5,6. Matt. 5:4. Rom. 12:15. 1 Cor. 12:26.
f 12. Ps. 3:1,2. 41:9. 55:12—14. Matt. 26:14,15. John 13:18.
g Ps. 55:15—17. 109:3,4.
h 16:23. 17:14,23. Job 5:12,13. 12:16 —20. Is. 19:3,11—14. Jer. 8:8,9. 1 Cor. 1:20. 3:18—20. Jam. 3:15.
i 30. 1 Kings 11:7. Luke 19:29.
j 1 Kings 8:44,45. Job 1:20,21. Ps. 3: 3—5, 7. 4:1—3. 50:15. 91:15.
k 16:16—19. 1 Josh. 16:2
m 1:2. 13:19. n 19:35.

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was more noticed than he, as more favored by David; for Eli's family was gradually declining. David's frame of spirit was excellent on this trying occasion: and his language beautifully humble, resigned, and pious.—It is not certain whether Zadok was endued with the Spirit of prophecy, or whether he sometimes inquired of the Lord in the place of the high priest; or whether David only meant to say, that he was a person of remarkable discernment and penetration.
SCOTT.

Verse 30.

These were expressions of David's self-abasement, and sorrow for his sins, and for the miseries which he had brought on himself, on his family, and people. He thus 'humbled himself under the mighty hand of God,' which he saw lifted up against him: and the people joined him with the same tokens of godly sorrow and repentance.
SCOTT.
(*M. R.*)

Covered.] 'Not only as a *mourner*, but even as a *culprit*; they usually had their heads covered when condemned; Esth. 7: 8. See also *Quintus Curtius*. "Go, executioner, cover his head."'
Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 31.

All, who heard this petition, could not but be much impressed with the answer which it shortly received. (17:1—14, 23.)—David afterwards worshipped God, in a more solemn manner, with his whole company. (32)
SCOTT.

Verses 32—37.

Stratagems of war are lawful [if war itself be so]; for an enemy

34 But if thou [o]return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; [p]*as* I *have been* thy father's servant hitherto, so *will* I now also *be* thy servant; [q]then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.

35 And *hast thou* not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, *that* what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, [r]thou shalt tell *it* to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

36 Behold *they have* there with them [s]their two sons, Ahimaaz, Zadok's *son*, and Jonathan, Abiathar's *son;* and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear.

37 So Hushai David's [t]friend came into the city, and [u]Absalom came into Jerusalem.

CHAP. XVI.

Ziba imposes on David, and obtains a grant of Mephibosheth's estate, 1—4. Shimei a Benjamite curses and slanders David, who bears it humbly and meekly, 5—14. Hushai insinuates himself into Absalom's counsels, 15—19. By Ahithophel's advice, Absalom openly goes in to his father's concubines, 20—23.

AND when David was a [a]little past the top *of the hill*, behold, [b]Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him [c]with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred *loaves* of bread, and an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred of [d]summer fruits, and [e]a bottle of wine.

2 And the king said unto Ziba, [f]What mean'est thou by these? And Ziba said, [g]The asses *be* for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer-fruit [h]for the young men to eat; and the wine, [i]that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink.

3 And the king said, And [j]where *is* thy master's son? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, [k]To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.

4 Then said the king to Ziba, [l]Behold, thine *are* all that *pertained* unto Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, I humble myself; let me find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king.

foolish: or, if it were followed, that some providence might defeat it. David prayed this, in a firm belief that God has all hearts and tongues in his hand; Job 12: 17. Isa. 8: 2, 3. and in hope that God would own and plead his just and injured cause. Note, We may pray in faith, and should pray with fervency, that God will turn that counsel into foolishness, which is taken against his people.

2. By policy. We must second our prayer with our endeavors, else we tempt God. It is good service to countermine the policy of the church's enemies. When David came to the top of the mount, he *worshipped God*, *v.* 32. Note, Weeping must not hinder worshipping, but quicken it rather. Now he penned the third Psalm, as appears by the title; and some think, his singing it was this worship. Just now Providence brought Hushai to him; while he was yet speaking, God heard, and sent him the person that should be instrumental to befool Ahithophel. He came to condole with David on his present trouble; but David, having great confidence in his conduct and faithfulness, resolved to employ him in the nature of a spy on Absalom: so he sent him back to Jerusalem, to wait for Absalom's arrival, as a deserter from David, and to offer him his service, *v.* 34. Thus he might insinuate himself into his counsels, and defeat Ahithophel, either by dissuading Absalom from following his advice, or by discovering it to David, that he might know where to stand on his guard. How this gross dissimulation, which David put Hushai upon, can be justified as a stratagem in war, I do not see. The best that can be made of it, is, that Absalom, if he rebel against his father, must stand on his guard against all mankind; and if he will be deceived, let him be deceived. David recommends him to Zadok and Abiathar, as persons proper to be consulted with, (*v.* 35.) and to their two sons, as trusty men to be sent on errands to David, *v.* 36. Hushai, thus instructed, came to Jerusalem, (*v.* 37.) whither also Absalom soon after came with his forces. How soon do royal palaces and royal cities change their masters! But we look for a kingdom which cannot be thus shaken, and in the possession of which we cannot be disturbed.

CHAP. XVI. V. 1—4. We read before how kind David was to Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan. This matter was well settled; *ch.* 9: 10. but, it seems, Ziba is not content to be manager, he longs to be master, of Mephibosheth's estate. Now he thinks is his time; if he can procure a grant of it from the crown, he hopes, whether David or Absalom get the better, it is all one to him, he shall succeed. In order hereunto,

1. He makes David a handsome present of provisions, the more welcome, because seasonable; *v.* 1. David thought Ziba very discreet, generous, and well affected to him, when, in all, he designed only his own market. Shall the prospect of advantage in this world, make men generous to the rich; and shall not the belief of an abundant recompense in the resurrection of the just, make us charitable *to the poor?* Luke 14: 14. Ziba was very considerate in his present to David; it was what would do him good in his present distress, *v.* 2. The wine was not for the king's own drinking, or the courtiers; they did not commonly use it, but it

p 16:16—19.
q 17:5—14.
r 17:15,16.
s 27. 17:17. 18:19, &c.
t 16:16. 1 Chr. 27:33.
u 16:15.
a 15:30,32.
b 9:2,9—12.
c 17:27—29. 19:32. 1 Sam. 25:18. 1 Chr. 12:40. Prov. 18:16. 29:4,5.
d Jer. 40:10,12. Am. 8:1. Mic. 7:1.
e 1 Sam. 10:3. 16:20.
f Gen. 21:29. 33:8. Ex. 37:18.
g 15:1. 19:26. Judg. 5:10. 10:4.
h 1 Sam. 25:27.
i 15:23. 17:29. Judg. 8:4,5. 1 Sam. 14:28. Prov. 31:6,7.
j 9:9,10. Ps. 88:18. Mic. 7:5.
k 19:24—30. Ex. 20:16. Deut. 9:18, 19. Ps. 15:3. 101:5. Prov. 1:19. 21: 28. 1 Tim. 6:9,10. Jude 11.
l 14:10,11. Ex. 23:3. Deut. 19:15. Prov. 18:13,17. 19:2.
o 20. Josh. 8:2. Matt. 10:16.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 13—37. Our severest trials often come from those, in whom we most confided; and our firmest friends are sometimes raised up among persons, from whom we had the least expectations. But a truly pious man will never be entirely excluded from usefulness; some individuals, wherever he abides, will have to bless God for his example, converse, and prayers.—We often in despondency think our enemies to be more numerous, and our friends fewer, than they are found upon trial: for our severest crosses are mingled with comforts, which afford us causes for thankfulness.—The ministers of God should always set an example of submission to 'the powers that be,' in all things lawful; and of cordial attachment and faithful adherence to those rulers, who protect and countenance them in their pious labors; and especially in those seasons, when others oppose and revile them.—It behooves us to humble ourselves before God under the tokens of his displeasure; and godly sorrow, confession of sin, repentance, self-denial, and self-abasement are the proper methods of seeking deliverance out of those troubles, which are evidently chastisements for sins. (*Is.* 22: 8—14.) Vain is all worldly wisdom and power against 'the effectual, or [in-wrought,] fervent prayer of a righteous man;' as, in answer to a single emphatical ejaculation, 'the counsel of the prudent is carried headlong,' and the force of the potent is turned into perfect weakness.—Some are useful in one way, and some in another, to one common cause, when they are cordially united: yet alas! where shall we find wisdom and simplicity so united in any mere man, that we can perceive nothing which merits censure, and needs forgiveness? But when the Son of David was treated with all possible treachery, indignity, cruelty, and ingratitude; his wisdom, meekness, candor, and patience were unalloyed perfection. His inexpressible sufferings are now over: his humiliation is exchanged for the throne of glory, where unseen, except by realizing faith, He serves our cause in the world above. Let us follow, serve, and cleave to Him, in tribulation, life, and death. And let us not forget, that we are left behind among his enemies, to promote his cause; and his instruction is, that we be 'wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.' (*Matt.* 10: 16—18.) SCOTT.

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may as well be out-witted as over-powered: but the instructions given to Hushai imply a falsehood, which cannot be wholly vindicated. (*Josh.* 8:1, 2.)—The conduct of Ahithophel, in joining Absalom, would render Hushai's less suspected by the conspirators.—*Ahimaaz* &c. (36) *Notes*, 17:15—21. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI. V. 1—4. (*Notes*, 9:) It was indeed improbable, Mephibosheth should prove so ungrateful, or form expectations of obtaining the kingdom: but what villany could excite wonder, when Absalom was in arms against his own too indulgent father? ID.

(1.) *Asses saddled.*] See one manner of carrying such things as are here mentioned in panniers on the backs of *saddled* (note Gen. 22:3.) asses, represented in the cut, Gen. 41:57. *Summer fruits.*] 'Probably *pompions*, *cucumbers*, or *watermelons*. The two latter are extensively used in those countries, to refresh travellers in the burning heat of the summer.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* ED.

(2.) *For the king's household.*] 'The eastern method of presents to a great man. "This and this to the slaves of the servants of your majesty," when at the same time the presents are intended for the sovereign himself, and are so understood. It is a high eastern compliment. These presents are not worthy of your acceptance; they are only fit for the slaves of your slaves.' [See the first interview of Abigail and David, with her subsequent reply to his messengers.] Dr. A. CLARKE.

(4.) 'He who is in the habit of obeying the first impulse of his passions, or feelings, will seldom do a right action; and never keep a

to Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, * I humbly beseech thee *that* I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king.

5 ¶ And when king David came to [m] Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, [n] whose name *was* Shimei, the son of Gera: † he came forth, and [o] cursed still as he came.

6 And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people, and all the mighty men, *were* on his right hand and on his left.

7 And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou ‡ bloody man, and thou [p] man of Belial:

8 The LORD hath [q] returned upon thee all [r] the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, § behold, thou *art taken* in thy mischief, because thou *art* a bloody man.

9 Then said [s] Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this [t] dead dog [u] curse my lord the king? [x] let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head.

10 And the king said, [y] What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because [z] the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. [a] Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?

11 And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, [b] Behold, my son, which [c] came forth of my bowels, [d] seeketh my life: how much more now *may this* Benjamite *do it*? Let him alone, and let him curse; [e] for the LORD hath bidden him.

12 It may be that [f] the LORD will look on mine ‖ affliction, and that the LORD will [g] requite me good for his cursing this day.

13 And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and [h] cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and ¶ cast dust.

14 And the king, and all the people that *were* with him, came weary, and refreshed themselves [i] there.

[*Practical Observations.*]

was for cordials for them *that were ready to perish*, Prov. 31: 6. Blessed art thou, O land, when thy princes use wine for strength, as David did, and not for drunkenness, as Absalom did, *ch.* 13: 28. See Eccl. 10: 17. Whatever Ziba intended, God's providence sent David this present for his support very graciously. God makes use of bad men for good purposes to his people, and sends them meat by ravens.

2. Having thus insinuated himself into David's affection, and gained credit with him, the next thing he does to compass his end, is, to incense him against Mephibosheth, by a false accusation, *v.* 3. David inquires for him as one of his family, which gives Ziba occasion. What immense damages do masters often sustain by lying servants! David knew Mephibosheth to be unambitious, easy in his place, and well affected to him and his government; yet he credits the calumny, and, without further inquiry or consideration, convicts Mephibosheth of treason, seizes his lands as forfeited, and grants them to Ziba; (*v.* 4.) a rash judgment, which afterward he was ashamed of, when the truth came to light, *ch.* 19: 29. Princes and great men ought to use all means possible to discover the truth, to guard against malicious, designing men, to be jealous of flatterers, and to remember that nature has given them two ears, that they may hear both sides.

V. 5—14. David bore Shimei's curses much better than Ziba's flatteries; by those he was brought to pass a wrong judgment on another, by these to pass a right judgment on himself; the world's smiles are more dangerous than its frowns Observe here,

I. How insolent and furious Shimei was. He took this opportunity to vent his malice, Because now he thought he might do it safely; now it would be most grievous to David, and pour vinegar into his wounds, (Ps. 69: 26.)—Because now he thought Providence justified his reproaches, and present afflictions proved David to be as bad as he was willing to represent him Job's friends condemned him on this false principle. If once it be said, *God hath forsaken him*, presently it follows *Persecute and take him*, Ps. 71: 11. But it is the character of a base spirit thus to trample on those that are down. No man could be more innocent of the blood of the house of Saul than David was. Once and again he spared Saul's life, while Saul sought his. When Saul and his sons were slain, David and his men were many miles off; and, when they heard it, lamented it. From the murder of Abner and Ish-bosheth he had sufficiently cleared himself; and yet all *the blood of the house of Saul* must be laid at his door; *v.* 7, 8. See how apt we are to judge of men and their character, by what they are to us; and to conclude those certainly evil, that have ever so justly been, or that we ever so unjustly think have been, instruments

* Heb. *I do obeisance.* 14:4,22.
m 14. 3:16. 17:18. 19:16. 1 Kings 2:8,9,36—44.
† Or, *he still came forth and cursed.*
o Ex. 22:28. 1 Sam. 17:43. Ps. 59:26. 109:16—19,28. Prov. 26:2. Ec. 10: 20. Is. 8:21. Matt. 5:11,12.
‡ Heb. *man of blood.* 3:37. 11:15—17. 12:9. Ps. 5:6. 51:14.
p Deut. 13:13. 1 Sam. 2:12. 25:17. 1 Kings 21:10,13.
q Judg. 9:24,56,57. 1 Kings 2:32,33. Acts 28:4,5. Rev. 16:6.
r 1:16. 3:28,29. 4:11,12. Ps. 3:2. 4:2.
§ Or, *behold thee in thy evil.*
s 3:30. 1 Sam. 26:6—8.
t 3:8. 9:8. 1 Sam. 24:14.
u See on Ex. 22:28. Acts 23:5. 1 Pet. 2:17.
x 1 Sam. 26:6—11. Job 31:30,31. Jer. 40:13—16.
y 3:39. 19:22. 1 Kings 2:5. Matt. 16: 23. Luke 9:54—56. 1 Pet. 2:23.
z Gen. 20:20. 1 Kings 22:21—23. 2 Kings 18:25. Lam. 3:38,39. John 18: 11.
a Job 9:12. Ec. 8:4. Dan. 4:35. Rom. 9:20.
b 12:11,12.
c 7:12. Gen. 15:4.
d 17:1—4. 2 Kings 19:37. 2 Chr. 32:21. Matt. 10:21.
e Is. 10:5—7. Ez. 14:9. 20:25.
f Gen. 29:32,33. Ex. 2:24,25. 3:7,8. 1 Sam. 1:11. Ps. 25:18.
‖ Or, *tears.* Heb. *eye.*
g Deut. 23:5. Is. 27:7. Matt. 5:11,12. Rom. 8:28. 2 Cor. 4:17. 2 Thes. 1:7. Heb. 12:10,11. 1 Pet. 4:12—19.
h 5,6.
¶ Heb. *dusted him with dust.* Acts 22: 23. 1 S.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—14. Selfish men often affect to appear generous, in giving away the property of others for their own advantage, and are great adepts in address and insinuation. Flatterers are generally backbiters; for it is as easy to them to forge slanders of the absent, as to pretend affection and respect for the present: and those servants, who purloin their master's substance, commonly likewise asperse their reputations.—When much treachery and ingratitude have been experienced, men are apt to become too suspicious; but while the dissimulation of false friends occasions sin, the rage, malice, and contumely of cruel enemies call forth the exercises of the believer's graces, and often prove advantageous to him.—It is good to see the hand of God *directing*, though not *dictating*, the injuries of men. Their calumnies may recall to memory some evil, or appearance of evil, which requires humiliation, watchfulness, and prayer: we deserve worse from the Lord than their most cruel and contemptuous treatment, and should consider it as his correction: and if we bear it humbly, patiently, and meekly, for his sake, He will graciously give us inward peace and consolation.—Seasons of peculiar humiliation before God, require peculiar long-suffering towards men: private revenge must never be indulged.—A deep sense of personal guilt will soften the spirit towards others, and dispose a man to be indignant and severe against himself: and the most zealous friends must be disregarded, and even reproved, when they counsel what is evidently wrong. SCOTT.

clear conscience.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* 'It is a good rule, never to decide on an important step the first day it is presented to the mind. Those who are most careful in promising, are, generally, the most conscientious in performing.' WAYLAND.

Verses 5—14.

Bahurim was a city of Benjamin; and Shimei was a relation of Saul: so that the translation of the kingdom to David marred all his prospects of preferment. He disregarded the express appointment of God, and his heart was full of implacable enmity to David, as a usurper of the throne. The sin both of Shimei and of Absalom was from themselves and Satan: but David's affliction was from the Lord; and they were merely instruments, which He employed, without their intention, of correcting David for good. (*Gen.* 50:20. *Is.* 10:7, 15. *Ez.* 14:9—11. *Acts* 2:22—24.) The curse causeless could only injure him who used it: and David hoped that his humble submission to such base usage from man, would prepare the way for the return of peace and comfort from a merciful God; and therefore he would not permit Shimei to be molested. (*M. R.*—19:19—23. 1 *K.* 2:8, 9, 36—46.)

Come out, &c. (7) Or rather, 'Go out, go out.' 'Get thee out o the kingdom, whence thou deservest to be expelled.' *Patrick.*— SCOTT.

(5.) *Bahurim.*] 'Lit. *Youths*, Called *Almon*, Josh. 21:18; and in 1 Chr. 6:60. *Alenuth* which also signifies youth.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* This may serve as an example of the cause of the same place or person being mentioned under different names, of which there are many examples in Scripture. ED.

(10, 11.) *Because.*] '*Veki.* Rather, *for if the Lord hath bidden.* No soul of man can suppose that ever God bade one man to curse another; much less a Shimei to curse a David. It is a peculiarity of the Heb. which does not always distinguish between *permission* and *commandment.*' [Yet see Judg. 5: 23.] Dr. A. CLARKE.

(13.) *Cursed . . . cast dust.*] 'Who in the E. has not often witnessed a similar scene? Listen to the maledictions: they are of such a nature, that evil spirits only could have suggested them. Look at the enraged miscreant: he dares not come near for fear of punishment, but he stands at a distance, vociferates his imprecations, violently throws about his hands; then stoops to the ground, and takes

15 ¶ And [j] Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him.

16 And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, [*] God save the king, God save the king.

17 And Absalom said to Hushai, [k] *Is* this thy kindness to thy friend? [l] why wentest thou not with thy friend?

18 And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay, but [m] whom the LORD, and this people, and all the men of Israel choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide.

19 And again, Whom should I serve? [n] *Should* I not *serve* in the presence of his son? As I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.

20 ¶ Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, [o] Give counsel among you what we shall do.

21 And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, [p] Go in [q] unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art [r] abhorred of [s] thy father: [t] then shall [u] the hands of all that *are* with thee be strong.

of evil to us. So partial are we to ourselves, that no rule can be more fallacious than this. Innocency is no fence against malice and falsehood; nor are we to think it strange, if we be charged with that which we have been most careful to keep ourselves from. It is well for us, that men are not to be our judges, but He, whose judgment is according to truth.

II. See how patient and submissive David was, under this abuse, *v.* 9. If David will but give them leave, his friends will put these lying, cursing lips to silence, and take off Shimei's head; for his throwing stones at the king was an overt act, which abundantly proved that he designed his death. But the king would by no means suffer it. Thus Christ rebuked the disciples, who, in zeal for his honor, would have fire from heaven on the town that affronted Him, Luke 9: 55. Let us see with what considerations David quieted himself.

1. The chief thing that silenced him, was, that he had deserved it: this is not mentioned indeed; for a man may truly repent, and yet needs not, on all occasions, proclaim his penitent reflections. Shimei unjustly upbraided him with the blood of Saul; from *that* his conscience acquitted him, but, at the same time, charged him with the blood of Uriah: 'The reproach is too true,' (thinks David,) 'though false as he means it.' Note, An humble, tender spirit will turn reproaches into reproofs, and so get good by them, instead of being provoked.

2. He observes *the hand of God in it*, *v.* 10, 11. As it was Shimei's sin, it was not from God, but from the devil, and his own wicked heart, nor did God's hand in it excuse or extenuate it, much less justify it, any more than it did their sin, who put Christ to death, Acts 2: 24. 4: 28. But, as it was David's affliction, it was from the Lord, one of the evils He raised up against him. David looked above the instrument to the Supreme Director, as Job, when the plunderers had stripped him, acknowledges, *The Lord hath taken away.* Nothing more proper to quiet a gracious soul under affliction, than an eye to the hand of God in it: *I opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it.* The scourge of the tongue is God's rod.

3. He quiets himself under the less affliction, with the consideration of the greater, *v.* 11. Tribulation works patience in those that are sanctified.

4. He comforts himself with hopes that God would, some way or other, bring good to him out of his affliction, would balance the trouble itself, and recompense his patience under it: '*The Lord will requite me good for his cursing.* If God bid Shimei grieve me, it is that He Himself may the more sensibly comfort me; surely He has mercy in store for me, which He is preparing me for by this trial.'

V. 15—23. Absalom had speedy notice by some of his friends at Jerusalem, that David was withdrawn, and with what a small retinue; so that the coasts were clear. Accordingly, he came without delay, (*v.* 15.) extremely elevated, no doubt; and now that he is master of Jerusalem, he concludes all his own, the country will follow of course. God suffers wicked men to prosper awhile in their wicked plots, even beyond their expectation, that their disappointment may be the more grievous and disgraceful.

The most celebrated politicians of that age, were, Ahithophel and Hushai; the former Absalom brings with him to Jerusalem, (*v.* 15.) the other meets him there; (*v.* 16.) so that he cannot but think himself sure of success; on them he relies, and consults not the ark, though he had that with them. But miserable counsellors were they both; for,

I. Hushai designed to betray him, yet still makes him believe he is hearty for him. He is for the king in *possession*, *v.* 18. Whom the people choose, and Providence smiles upon, he will

22 So they spread Absalom a tent upon [x] the top of the house: and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines [y] in the sight of all Israel.

23 And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, *was* [z] as if a man had inquired at the † oracle of God: so *was* [a] all the counsel of Ahithophel [b] both with David and with Absalom.

j 15:37.
k Heb. *Let the king live.* 1 Sam. 10:24. 1 Kings 1:25,34. 2 Kings 11:12. Dan. 2:4. 5:10. 6:6,21. Matt. 21:9.
l Deut. 32:6.
m 15:32—37. 19:25. Prov. 17:17. 18:24.
n 5:1—3. 1 Sam. 16:13.
o 15:34. 1 Sam. 28:2. 29:8. Ps. 55:21. Gal. 2:13.
p Ex. 1:10. Ps. 2:2. 37:12,13. Prov. 21:30. Is. 8:10. 29:15. Matt. 27:1. Acts 4:23—28.
p Gen. 6:4. 38:16.
q 12:11. 15:16. 20:3. Gen. 35:22. Lev. 18:8. 20:11. 1 Kings 2:17,22. 1 Cor. 5:1.
r Gen. 34:30. 1 Sam. 13:4.
s Gen. 49:3,4.
t 1 Sam. 27:12.
u 2:7. Zech. 8:13.
x 11:2.
y 12:11,12. Num. 25:6. Is. 3:9. Jer. 3:3. 8:12. Ez. 24:7. Phil. 3:19.
z Num. 27:21. 1 Sam. 30:8. Ps. 28:2. 1 Pet. 4:11.
† Heb. *word.* Ps. 19:7.
a 17:14,23. Job 5:12. 28:28. Jer. 4:22. 8:9. Matt. 11:25. Luke 16:8. Rom. 1:22. 1 Cor. 3:19,20. Jam. 3:13—18.
b 15:12. Ec. 10:1.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 15—23. Men, who admire themselves, will be easily deceived by those who profess an attachment to them: yet they readily discern those faults in others, of which themselves are far more notoriously guilty; and are apt to express astonishment at them.—If a zealous disciple of Christ be betrayed into evident wickedness, even profligates will exclaim, 'Is this thy kindness to thy Friend!' But alas, how often might the Savior Himself address each of us in these words, to our shame and confusion! And how often should we thus check ourselves, and remember our ingratitude, to our deeper humiliation!—Destruction is before those, who hearken to deceitful and wicked counsellors: yet young people in general, especially in high life, will not regard any other.—How desperately wicked is the human heart, that can conceive, execute, and glory in those deeds of darkness, which it is shocking to think of, and shameful to mention! (*Eph.* 5: 8—14.) Yet all this might be drawn forth out of *our hearts* by successive temptations, if Satan and his agents were permitted to practise upon us!—When eminent abilities and daring wickedness unite in one character, they form the express image of the devil: and, like that arch-apostate and rebel, men of this description will spare no pains to push others forward into those kinds and degrees of guilt, which may drive them desperate, and extinguish all thoughts of reconciliation unto God! SCOTT.

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up handfuls of dust, throws it in the air, and exclaims, "Soon shalt thou be as that—thy mouth shall soon be full of it—look, look, thou cursed one, as this dust, so shalt thou be." ROBERTS. 'In almost all the E. those who accuse a criminal, or demand justice against him, throw dust upon him; as much as to say he deserves to be put under ground. "Be covered with earth," is a common Turkish and Persian imprecation.' CHARDIN.

Verses 15—19.

Though Absalom interpreted Hushai's words as implying an express promise of fidelity, and an unreserved tender of his services, they did not necessarily imply these things. He said, 'Let the king live,' not *Let king Absalom live.* And when Absalom expressed his surprise, that he thus forsook his friend; he declared his resolution to accompany, and devote himself to *him*, whom the LORD and whom all Israel chose, but the event soon proved that this was not Absalom, however it appeared for a time. 'He would also serve in the presence of the son, as in the presence of the father.' But whom would he serve? He would serve David in Absalom's presence, as faithfully as he had hitherto done. (*Gen.* 3: 4, 5.)—If Absalom had not been blinded with pride and popularity, he would have suspected such ambiguous words, when used by the known and hitherto zealous friend of his father; and not have admitted him at once among his confidential counsellors.—It is indeed very difficult to conduct stratagems without such equivocations, if not direct falsehoods: and therefore it is best to keep at a distance from them if possible. SCOTT. [In answer to all which, it is sufficient to say, that Hushai received no direct command from God to *lie*, therefore he did wrong in disobeying the express command, 'lie not one to another;' comp. Ex. 20:16. 'God governs the universe on the principles of veracity. Now lying consists in "making a false impression with intention to deceive," and a promise is binding in the sense in which the promiser supposed the promisee to receive it.' See *Wayland.* Elts. Mor. Sci. 'A lie is never justifiable.' *Dwight.* ED.] When Absalom said, 'Is this thy kindness to thy friend?' Hushai might have answered, 'Is this thy duty to thy father and king?' SCOTT.

(15.) 'The words "*the men of Israel*," are not in the Chal. Sept. Syr. Vulg. or Arab. nor in 2 mss.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 22.

On the top of the house.] Many observe, that this might have been the *very same spot*, whence David's eye took the adulterous view of Bath-sheba, 11:2. ED.

CHAP. XVII.

Hushai's counsel is preferred to the politic, but desperately wicked counsel of Ahithophel, by the secret appointment of God, 1—14. Hushai sends intelligence to David, who hastily passes over Jordan, 15—22. Ahithophel returns home and hangs himself, 23. David comes to Mahanaim, 24. Amasa is made captain of Absalom's army, which is encamped at Gilead, 25, 26. David's friends bring him provisions, 27—29.

MOREOVER, Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and [a] I will arise and pursue after David [b] this night:

2 And I will come upon him while he *is* [c] weary and weak-handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that *are* with him shall flee, and [d] I will smite the king only.

3 And [e] I will bring back all the people unto thee; the man whom thou seekest *is* as if all returned: *so* all the people [f] shall be in peace.

4 And [g] the saying [*] pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel.

5 Then said Absalom, Call now [h] Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what [†] he saith.

6 And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner: shall we do *after* his [‡] saying? if not, speak thou.

7 And Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath [§] given *is* [i] not good at this time.

8 For, said Hushai, thou knowest thy father and his men, that they *be* [j] mighty men, and they *be* [‖] chafed in their minds, [k] as a bear rob-

a Prov. 1:16. 4:16. Is. 59:7,8.
b Ps. 3:3—5. 4:8. 109:2—4.
c 16:14. Deut. 25:18.
d 1 Kings 22:31. Zech. 13:7. Matt. 21: 38. 26:31. John 11:50. 18:4—8.
e 3:21.
f Is. 48:22. 57:21. 1 Thes. 5:3.
g 1 Sam. 18:20,21. 23:21. Esth. 5:14. Rom. 1:32.
* Heb. *was right in the eyes of.* 2 Chr. 30:4. Esth. 1:21. *marg.*
h 15:32—37. 16:16—19.
† Heb. is *in his mouth.*
‡ Heb. *word.*
§ Heb. *counselled.*
i Prov. 31:8.
j 15:18. 21:18—22. 23:8,9,16,18,20—22. 1 Sam. 16:18. 17:34—36,50,51. 1 Chr. 11:25—47. Heb. 11:32—34.
‖ Heb. *bitter of soul.* Judg. 18:25. *marg.*
k 2 Kings 2:24. Prov. 17:12. 28:15. Dan. 7:5. Hos. 13:8.

be faithful to; and he is for the king in *succession*, (*v.* 19.) the rising sun. True, he loved his father; but he had had his day, and it was over; and why should he not love his successor as well?

II. Ahithophel counselled him to do wickedly, and so as effectually betrayed him. It seems, Ahithophel was noted as a deep politician, *v.* 23. Such reputation was he in for subtilty and sagacity in public affairs, that all people, good and bad, both David and Absalom, had a profound regard to his sentiments. Let us observe, from this account of Ahithophel's fame for policy, 1. Many excel in worldly wisdom, who are utterly destitute of heavenly grace, because those who set up oracles for themselves, are apt to despise the oracles of God. *God has chosen the foolish things of the world*, and the greatest statesmen are seldom the greatest saints. 2. Great politicians frequently act most foolishly for themselves. Ahithophel is cried up for an oracle, and yet very unwisely takes part with Absalom, who was not only a usurper, but a rash youth, never likely to come to good; whose fall, and the fall of all that adhered to him, any one, with the tenth part of the policy Ahithophel pretended to, might foresee. Well, after all, honesty is the best policy, and will be found so in the long run.

Observe, (1.) The wicked counsel Ahithophel gave, *v.* 21. The divine law had made what he advises a capital crime, Lev. 20: 11. And the apostle speaks of it as a piece of villany, *not so much as named among the Gentiles*, 1 Cor. 5: 1. Reuben lost his birth-right for it. But Ahithophel advised to it as a political thing, because it would give assurance to all Israel, that he was in good earnest in his pretensions; and resolved never to make peace with his father on any terms, of which, perhaps, the people were jealous, and that they must be sacrificed to the reconciliation. Having drawn the sword, he thus threw away the scabbard, which would strengthen the hands of his party, and keep them tight to him. This cursed policy bespoke him rather *an oracle of the devil, than of God.*

(2.) Absalom's compliance, *v.* 22. When an unnatural rebellion was the opera, what fitter prologue than such unnatural lust? Thus was his wickedness all of a piece, and such as a conscience, not quite seared, could not entertain the thoughts of without the utmost horror. Nay, the client outdoes what his counsel advises: Ahithophel bid him do it, that all Israel might *hear* of it; but so perfectly lost is he to all honor and virtue, he will do it, and all Israel shall *see* it. Yet, in this, the word of God was fulfilled in the letter of it; (*ch.* 12: 11, 12.) and some think Ahithophel, in advising it, designed to be revenged on David for the injury to Bath-sheba, who was his grand-daughter: for she was the daughter of Eliam, (*ch.* 11: 3.) who was the son of Ahithophel, *ch.* 23: 34. Job speaks of a circumstance like this, as the just punishment of adultery, (*ch.* 31: 9, 10.) and the prophet, Hos. 4: 13, 14. What to think of these concubines, who submitted to this wickedness, it were easy to say; but how unrighteous soever Absalom and they are, we must say, *The Lord is righteous:* nor shall any word of his fall to the ground.

CHAP. XVII. The contest between David and Absalom is now drawing to a crisis. It must be determined by the sword, and preparation is made, accordingly in this ch. Hitherto, every thing has looked black upon poor David, but now the day of his deliverance begins to dawn.

V. 1—14. David reigned in Hebron, over the tribe of Judah only, above seven years, and was not hasty to destroy his rival: but the young man, Absalom, not only hastens from Hebron to Jerusalem, but is impatient there, till he has destroyed his father. That so profligate a wretch should aim at the throne of so good a father, is not so strange; but that the body of the people of Israel, to whom David had been so great a blessing in all respects, should join with him in it, is very amazing. But their fathers often mutinied against Moses. The best of parents, and the best of princes, will not think it strange, if they be made uneasy by those who should be their support and joy, when they consider what sons and what subjects David himself had.

David, and all that adhered to him, must be cut off. That is resolved, for aught that appears, *unanimously*. It was not long since Absalom himself fled for a crime, and David contented himself with his being an exile, though he deserved death, nay, David mourned and longed for him; but so perfectly void of all natural affection is this ungrateful Absalom, that he absolutely thirsts for his own father's blood.

I. Ahithophel's advice, *v.* 1—3. By this, it appears Absalom had declared his design to be on David's life, and Ahithophel concurs with him in it; *Smite the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered*, an easy prey to the wolf. Nothing could have been more fatal to David, than the taking of these measures. See how usurpers call a general ruin, *a general peace* (*v.* 3.); but thus the devil's palace is in peace, while he, as a strong man armed, keeps it. Compare here the plot of Caiaphas (that second Ahithophel) against Christ; Let that *one man die for the people*, John 11: 50. This saying, *I will smite the king only*, pleased Absalom well! (*v.* 4.) nor had he so much sense of honor and virtue left him, as to pretend to startle at it, or even to be reluctant in this barbarous and monstrous resolution. What good can stand before the heat of a furious ambition?

II. Hushai's advice, *v.* 8—13. in giving which, he really intended to serve David and his interest; that *he* might have time to send him notice of his proceedings, and David gain time to gather an army, and remove into those countries beyond Jordan, which, lying more remote, Absalom, probably, had got least interest in. Nothing would be of greater advantage to David in this juncture, than time to turn himself in; that he may have that, Hushai counsels Absalom to do nothing rashly, but to proceed with caution, and secure his success by securing his strength. All the elders of Israel approved of Ahithophel's counsel, yet God overruled the heart of Absalom not to proceed upon it, till he had advised with Hushai, *v.* 5. Herein he thought he did wisely, but God taketh the wise in their own craftiness. Hushai argued against Ahithophel's counsel, and undertook to show the danger of following his advice. With modesty, and all possible deference, he begs leave to differ from him, *v.* 7. The counsel of Ahithophel is usually the best, but not at this time; it was not safe to venture so great a cause on so small a number, and such a hasty sally; it has often proved of bad consequence to despise an enemy. See how plausibly Hushai reasons: David was a man of great conduct, courage, and experience; (*v.* 8, 10.) and not so weary and weak-handed as Ahithophel imagines. His retiring from Jerusalem must be imputed, not to his cowardice, but to his prudence. His attendants, though few, were mighty men, (*v.* 8, 10.) of celebrated bravery, versed in all the arts of war. They were all exasperated against Absalom, the author of all this mischief, and would fight with the utmost fury; so that there would be no standing before them, especially for such raw soldiers as Absalom's generally were. Thus does he represent them as formidable as Ahithophel had made them despicable. He suggests that, probably, David and some of his men would lie in ambush, and fall on Absalom's soldiers before they were aware, the terror of which would put them to flight, *v.* 9. 'It will soon be given out, that there is a slaughter among Absalom's men, and then they will all make the best of their way, and the heart of Ahithophel himself, though now it seems like the heart of a lion, will

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII. V. 7—14. Ahithophel's *former* counsel was followed, for God intended to correct David: (16:20—23.) but his *latter* was not, for he did not mean to destroy *him*, but Absalom. Thus God answered David's prayer, and turned the *good*, i. e. the *politic* counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. (15:31. 16:15—19.)—*A bear*, &c. (8) *Hos.* 13:5—8. SCOTT.

Appointed. (14) *Commanded.* (*M.*) It was God's determined purpose thus to defeat Ahithophel's counsel, and to preserve David; and the whole transaction was so conducted, by his secret influence on

bed of her whelps in the field: and [l] thy father *is* a man of war, and will not lodge with the people.

9 Behold, [m] he is hid now in some pit, or in some *other* place: and it will come to pass, when [n] some of them be [*] overthrown at the first, that whosoever heareth it, will say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom.

10 And he also *that is* valiant, whose [o] heart *is* as the heart of a lion, shall [p] utterly melt: for all Israel knoweth that thy father *is* a mighty man, and *they* which *be* with him *are* valiant men.

11 Therefore I counsel, that [q] all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, [r] as the sand that *is* by the sea for multitude, and that [†] thou go to battle [s] in thine own person.

12 So shall we come upon him [t] in some place where he shall be found, and [u] we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground: and of him, and of all the men that *are* with him, there shall not be left so much as one.

13 Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not [x] one small stone found there.

14 And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite *is* better than the counsel of Ahithophel: for [y] the LORD had [‡] appointed [z] to defeat the [a] good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.

15 ¶ Then said Hushai unto [b] Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and thus have I counselled.

16 Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, [c] Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, [d] but speedily pass over; lest the king [e] be swallowed up, and all the people that *are* with him.

17 Now [f] Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by [g] En-rogel, (for they might not be seen to come into the city,) and a wench went and told them: and they went and told king David.

18 Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom: but they went both of them away quickly, and came to a man's house in [h] Bahurim, which had a well in his court, whither they went down.

19 And the woman took and [i] spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn thereon; and the thing was not known.

20 And when Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house, they said, Where *is* Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman said unto them, [j] They be gone over the brook of water. And [k] when they had sought, and could not find *them*, they returned to Jerusalem.

21 And it came to pass after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David, and said unto David, [l] Arise, and pass quickly over the water; for [m] thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you.

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l 1 Sam. 23:23.
m Judg. 20:33. 1 Sam. 22:1. 24:3.
n Josh. 7:5. 8:6. Judg. 20:32. 1 Sam. 14:14,15.
* Heb. *fallen.*
o 1:23. 23:20. Gen. 49:9. Num. 24:8, 9. Prov. 28:1.
p Ex. 15:15. Deut. 1:28. Josh. 2:9—11. Is. 13:7. 19:1.
q 24:2. Judg. 20:1.
r Gen. 13:16. 22:17. Josh. 11:4. 1 Kings 4:20.
† Heb. *thy face*, or *presence*, *go*, *&c.*
s 12:28. Ps. 7:15,16. 9:16.
t 1 Sam. 23:23.
u 1 Kings 20:10. 2 Kings 18:23. 19:24. Is. 10:13,14. Ob. 3.
x Matt. 24:2.
y 15:31. Gen. 32:28. Ex. 9:16. Deut 2:30. 2 Chr. 25:16,20.
‡ Heb. *commanded.* Ps. 33:9,10. Lam. 3:37. Am. 3:3.
z 15:34. 16:23. Job 5:12—14. Prov. 19:21. 21:30. Is. 8:10. 1 Cor. 1:19, 20. 3:19.
a Luke 16:8.
b 15:35.
c 16:28.
d 21,22. 15:14. 1 Sam. 20:38. Ps. 55: 8. Prov. 6:4,5. Matt. 24:16—18.
e 20:19,20. Ps. 35:25. 56:2. 57:3. 1 Cor. 15:54. 2 Cor. 5:4.
f 15:27,36.
g Josh. 15:7. 18:16. 1 Kings 1:9.
h 3:16. 16:5. 19:16.
i Josh. 2:4—6.
j 15:34. Ex. 1:19. Josh. 2:4,5. 1 Sam. 19:14—17. 21:2. 27:11,12.
k Josh. 2:22,23.
l See on 15,16.
m 1—3.

And what tricks are often in courts, and councils, which they are happiest that are least conversant with. See how much more the providence of God can do: Hushai managed the plot with dexterity, yet the success is ascribed to God, and his agency on the minds of those concerned; *The Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel.* Be it observed, to the comfort of all that fear God, He turns all men's hearts as the rivers of waters, though *they know not the thoughts of the Lord. He stands in the congregation of the mighty*, has an overruling hand in all counsels, and a negative voice in all resolves, and laughs at men's projects against his anointed.

V. 15—21. We must now leave David's enemies pleasing themselves with thoughts of a sure victory, by following Hushai's counsel, and we next find David's friends consulting how to get him notice of all this, that he might steer his course accordingly. Hushai tells the priests what had passed in council, *v.* 15. But, it should seem, he was not sure Ahithophel's counsel might not be followed, and was therefore jealous, lest, if he made not the best of his way, the king would be *swallowed up, and all the people that were with him*, *v.* 16. Perhaps, as he was called in to give his advice, (*v.* 5.) so he was dismissed before they came to that resolve, (*v.* 14.) in favor of his advice. Or he feared they might afterward change their mind. However, it was good to provide against the worst, and therefore to hasten those valuable lives out of the reach of these destroyers.

Such strict guards did Absalom set upon all the avenues to Jerusalem, that they had much ado to get this necessary intelligence to David, *v.* 17. but Providence can serve its wise counsels by the foolish things of the world. The woman, *v.* 19. thus far, did well; but we know not how to justify her concealing the messengers with a lie, *v.* 20. We must not do evil that good may come of it. However, hereby they were protected, and the pursuers defeated, and returned to Absalom without their prey. It was well Absalom did not, hereupon, fall upon their two fathers, Zadok and Abiathar, as Saul on Ahimelech for his kindness to David; but God restrained him. Being thus preserved, they brought their intelligence very

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the minds of all concerned, that the event was as certainly secured, as if He had given an express *command* to that purpose. This accorded to the language of David concerning Shimei. (16:5—14. *Ps.* 76:10. *Acts* 4:23—28.) SCOTT.

Verse 17.

En-rogel.] 'The *fuller's well*; [near Jerusalem. See map, end of Mark.] The place where they were accustomed to *tread* the clothes with their *feet*; hence the name *ein*, a *well*, and *regel*, the *foot*. [Washing in the open air at public wells, is still a common sight on the shores of the Mediterranean.] *Wench.*] *Shipchah*: rather, *girl*, maid, maid-servant. Our translators elsewhere render it handmaid, boudmaid, maiden, woman-servant, maid-servant.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 19.

'Wells in the E. have their mouths level with the ground, [note Ex. 21:33.] hence, nothing is more easy than to put a mat or covering over the opening to conceal them from sight . . . Who [in the E.] has not seen corn or flour spread on mats in the sun to dry? Such methods of concealment are still practised.' ROBERTS.

22 Then David arose, and all the people that *were* with him, [n] and they passed over Jordan: by the morning-light [o] there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan.

23 ¶ And when Ahithophel [p] saw that his counsel was not [*] followed, he saddled *his* ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to [q] his city, and †put his household in order, [r] and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.

24 Then David came to [s] Mahanaim: and Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.

25 And Absalom made [t] Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa *was* a man's son whose name *was* [u] Ithra, an Israelite, that went in to ‡Abigail, the daughter of § Nahash, sister to Zeruiah, Joab's mother.

26 So Israel and Absalom pitched in the [v] land of Gilead.

27 And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi [x] the son of Nahash, of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and [y] Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar, and [z] Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim,

28 Brought [a] beds, and ‖ basins, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched *corn*, and beans, and lentiles, and parched *pulse*,

29 And honey, and butter, and sheep, and [b] cheese of kine, [c] for David, and for the people that *were* with him, [d] to eat: for they said, [e] The people *is* hungry, and weary, and thirsty, [f] in the wilderness.

n 24. Prov. 27:12. Matt. 10:16.
o Num. 31:49. John 18:9.
p Prov. 16:18. 19:3.
* Heb. *done.*
q 15:12.
† Heb. *gave charge concerning his house.* 2 Kings 20:1.
r 15:31. 1 Sam. 31:4,5. 1 Kings 16:18. Job 31:3. Ps. 5:10. 55:23. Matt. 27:5.
s 2:8. Gen. 32:2. Josh. 13:26.
t 19:13. 20:4,9—12.
u 1 Chr. 2:16,17. *Jethur the Ishmaelite.*
‡ Heb. *Abigal.*
§ Or, *Jesse.* 1 Chr. 2:13,16.
v Num. 32:1,&c. Deut. 3:15. Josh. 17:1.
x 10:1,2. 12:30. 1 Sam. 11:1.
y 9:4.
z 19:31,32. 1 Kings 2:7. Ezra 2:61.
a 16:1,2. 1 Sam. 25:18. Is. 22:8.
‖ Or, *cups.*
b 1 Sam. 17:18.
c Luke 8:3. Phil. 4:15—19.
d Ps. 34:8—10. 84:11.
e Judg. 8:4—6. Ec. 11:1,2. Is. 21:14. 58:7. f 16:2.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When Satan has seduced men into a wicked course of life, every crime makes more and greater enormities almost necessary; and they must go forward, or lose the fruit, and suffer the punishment, of their former villanies.—His decided servants are more sagacious and vigorous in their mischievous devices, than the Lord's servants are in doing good: and they have a very great *apparent* advantage; being freed from the restraints of conscience, gratitude, natural affection, and the fear of God; [while, on the other hand, good men are apt to trust too much to 'a good cause,' and neglect active duty.]—That some few individuals should be monsters of iniquity would not excite much surprise: but from age to age immense multitudes are found, who with one consent break through every tie of duty; especially when engaged in opposing the cause of religion and its cordial friends: and this demonstrates, that man by [his present degenerated] nature is an enemy to the service and holiness of God.—The Lord can perform the greatest deliverances by the feeblest instruments: and whatever wisdom, address, despatch, or assistance, any man employs or affords; the success is from God alone, who will not suffer one of his people to perish.—When Satan has tempted men to successive crimes, till they are ripe for destruction; and when Providence has disappointed their ambitious and vain-glorious projects, and their lives are rendered miserable; the last device of that subtle enemy is to urge them to murder themselves: and in this way he sometimes deludes those, who have been most renowned for wisdom, but who are at length so foolish as to plunge themselves into everlasting misery, for fear of temporal disgrace and suffering!—Our King indeed needs not our help: but He has assured us, that what we do for the least of his brethren, who are sick, poor, or destitute, shall be accepted and recompensed, as if it were done to Himself in person. (*Matt.* 25: 34—40.) SCOTT.

Verse 22.

About this time David wrote Ps. 3. SCOTT.

Verse 23.

It is observable that three at least of those, who are recorded in Scripture as suicides, were apostate professors of godliness, viz. Saul, Ahithophel, and Judas. (1 *Sam.* 31:3—6.) It is also remarkable that he should have *hanged himself*, rather than kill himself in any other way. (*Deut.* 21:22, 23. *Matt.* 27:3—5.) David's prayer was answered more terribly than he expected or desired. (*M. R.*)

Hanged himself.] *Matt.* 27:5. Gr. The whole narrative confutes the absurd gloss of those Jews, who would represent him as *choked with grief*, and not as having strangled himself. SCOTT.

Verse 24.

(*M. R.*) While Absalom was collecting his army, David had time for taking effectual measures to resist him. ID.

Verse 25.

Nahash was evidently another name of Jesse. [Tremellius, however, supposes it the name of the wife of Jesse.] Ithra is supposed to have been an Ishmaelite by birth, but proselyted to the religion of Israel.—Amasa was nephew to David, by Abigail his sister, as were also Joab and Abishai, by Zeruiah. (1 *Chr.* 2:13—17.—*Note*, 17.) ID.

Verses 27—29.

Perhaps Shobi, the son of Nahash, had been advanced to reign over Ammon by David, instead of Hanun his brother; and thus expressed his gratitude: (*Notes*, 10:) or perhaps he was proselyted, and lived among the Israelites. SCOTT.

(28.) '"The Moors of W. Barbary use the flour of parched barley as provision for their journeys, and often at home; they carry it in a leathern satchel." *Jones.* This is ordinarily of goat-skin; one now lies before me, drawn off the animal before it was cut up; the places where the forelegs, tail, &c. were, are elegantly closed, and have leathern thongs, by which it can be slung over the back of man, ass, or camel. The skin is tanned; and the upper side curiously embroidered, with red, black, blue, yellow, and flesh-colored leather, in very curious and elegant forms and devices. Bags of this kind [comp. an Egyptian leathern bag, cut, Lev. 11:32, 35.] are used for carrying wine, water, milk, butter, grain, flour, clothes, and merchandise. This is the scripture *bottle*. Jones further says, "Travellers use *zumeet*, flour mixed with honey, butter, and spice; *tumeet*, flour done up with organ oil; and *limereece*, flour mixed with water for drink. This quenches thirst much better than water alone; satisfies hunger; cools and refreshes weary spirits; overcoming the ill effects of a hot sun and fatiguing journey." This flour might be made of grain or pulse of any kind: and probably may be what we here term *parched corn* and *parched pulse*; and, in the forms above, was a well-timed supply for David's *people, hungry, weary*, and *thirsty in the wilderness.*' Dr. A. CLARKE.

CHAP. XVIII.

David musters his troops under three commanders, and charges them to spare Absalom, 1—5. Absalom's army is routed; he flees, and, his head being entangled in an oak, he is slain by Joab, and cast into a pit, 6—17. Absalom's place, 18. Ahimaaz and Cushi carry tidings to David, 19—32. He laments most bitterly, 33.

AND David [a] numbered the people that *were* with him, and set [b] captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them.

2 And David sent forth [c] a third part of the people under [d] the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of [e] Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people, [f] I will surely go forth with you myself also.

3 But the people answered, [g] Thou shalt not go forth: for, [h] if we flee away they will not *care for us; neither if half of us die will they care for us: but now *thou art* † worth ten thousand of us; therefore now *it is* better that thou ‡succor us out of the city.

4 And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood [i] by the gate-side, and all the people came out [j] by hundreds and by thousands.

5 And the king commanded Joab, and Abishai, and Ittai, saying, [k] *Deal* gently for my sake with the young man, *even* with Absalom. And [l] all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.

6 So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the [m] wood of Ephraim;

7 Where [n] the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David; and there was there [o] a great slaughter that day of [p] twenty thousand *men.*

8 For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and [q] the wood §devoured more people that day, than the sword devoured.

a Ex. 17:9. Josh. 8:10.
b 1 Sam. 8:12.
c Judg. 7:16,19,20. 9:43.
d 10:7—10.
e 15:19—22.
f 17:11. Ps. 3:6. 27:1—3. 118:6—8.
g 21:17.
h 17:2. 1 Kings 22:31. Zech. 13:7.
* Heb. *set* their *heart on us.*
† Heb. *as ten thousand of us.* Lam. 4: 20.
‡ Heb. *be to succor.* 10:11. Ex. 17:10 —12.
i 24. Is. 28:6.
j 1. 1 Sam. 29:2.
k 16:11. 17:1—4,14. Deut. 21:18—21. Ps. 103:13. Luke 23:34.
l 12.
m Judg. 12:4—6.
n 2:17. 15:6. 19:41—43.
o Prov. 11:21. 24:21,22.
p 2:26,31. 2 Chr. 13:16,17. 28:6.
q Ex. 15:10. Josh. 10:11. Judg. 5:20, 21. 1 Kings 20:30. Ps. 3:7. 43:1.
§ Heb. *multiplied to devour.*

Selah; it is a thing to be marked and meditated upon, Ps. 7: 15, 16. (3.) Prayer answered, and an honest cause served even by its enemies. Now, as David had prayed, Ahithophel's counsel was *turned into foolishness to himself.* Lightfoot supposes David penned the 55th Psalm, on occasion of Ahithophel's being in the plot against him, and that he is the man complained of, (*v.* 13.) that had been *his equal, his guide, and his acquaintance;* and if so, this was an immediate answer to his prayer there, (*v.* 15.) *Let death seize on them, let them go down quick into hell.* Ahithophel's death was an advantage to David's interest; for had he digested that affront, and continued his post at Absalom's elbow, he might have given him counsel afterward, that might have been of pernicious consequence to David. It seems, it was not then usual to disgrace the dead bodies of self-murderers, for Ahithophel was *buried,* we may suppose, honorably buried, *in the sepulchre of his father,* though he deserved no better than the *burial of an ass:* see Eccl. 8: 10.

III. Absalom's pursuit of his father; he had now got all the men of Israel with him, as Hushai advised, and he himself, at the head of them, *passed over Jordan, v.* 24. He *pitched in the land of Gilead* with all his forces, ready to give David battle, *v.* 26. Amasa's father (*v.* 25.) was, by *birth,* Jether, an Ishmaelite, (1 Chron. 2: 17.) but, by *religion,* Ithra, (as here,) an Israelite; probably, he was not only proselyted, but, having married a near relation of David's, was, by some act of the state, naturalized, and is therefore called an *Israelite.* His wife, Amasa's mother, was Abigail, David's sister, whose other sister, Zeruiah, was Joab's mother, 1 Chr. 2: 16. So that Amasa was the same relation to David that Joab was. Jesse is here called *Nahash,* for many had two names; or perhaps it was his wife's name.

IV. The friends David met with in this distant country. Even Shobi, a younger brother of the royal family of the Ammonites, was kind to him, *v.* 27. Probably he had detested the indignity his brother Hanun did David's ambassadors, and, for that, had received favors from David, which he now returns. Machir was he that maintained Mephibosheth, (*ch.* 9: 4.) till David eased him of that charge; and is now repaid for it by that generous man, who, it seems, was the common patron of distressed princes. Barzillai we shall hear of again. These, compassionating David and his men, brought in plenty of all he had occasion for. Let us learn hence to be generous and open-handed, according as our ability is, to all in distress, especially [to] great men, to whom it is most grievous, and good men, who deserve better treatment. Observe here, how God sometimes makes up to his people that comfort from strangers, which they are disappointed of in their own families.

CHAP. XVIII. This ch. puts a period to Absalom's rebellion and life, and so makes way for David to his throne, whither the next ch. brings him back in peace and triumph.

V. 1—8. Now here we have,

I. David's army numbered and marshalled, *v.* 1, 2. He had, no doubt, committed his cause to God by prayer, for that was his relief in all his afflictions; and then he took an account of his forces; Josephus says, in all, but about 4000: these he divided into regiments, and companies, with proper officers, and then disposed them, as is usual, into the right wing, left wing, and centre, two of which he committed to his two old, experienced generals, Joab and Abishai, and the third to his new friend Ittai. Good order and good conduct may sometimes be as serviceable in an army, as great numbers. Wisdom teaches us to make the best of the strength we have.

II. David's true friends would not let him go to battle, remembering Ahithophel's design to *smite the king only.* David showed his affection to them by being willing to venture with them; (*v.* 2.) and they theirs to him by opposing it. We must never reckon it an affront to be gainsayed for our good, and by those that therein consult our interest. 1. Good princes ought to be valued by their subjects, who, for their safety, must be willing to expose themselves. 2. They would not so far gratify the enemy, who would rejoice more in his fall, than in the defeat of the whole army. 3. He might be more serviceable to them by tarrying in the city, with a reserve of his forces there, whence he might send them recruits. So he acquiesced, (*v.* 4.) It is no part of wisdom to be stiff in our resolutions, but to be willing to hear reason, even from inferiors, and to be overruled by their advice, when it appears to be for our own good. Whether the people's prudence had an eye to it or no, God's providence wisely ordered it, that David should not be in the field of battle: for then his tenderness had certainly interposed to save Absalom's life, whom God had determined to destroy.

III. The charge he gave concerning Absalom, *v.* 5. How does he render good for evil! Absalom would have David only smitten, David would have Absalom only spared. What foils are these to each other! Never was unnatural hatred to a father more strong than in Absalom; never natural affection to a child more strong than in David; as if designed to be a resemblance of man's wickedness toward God, and God's mercy toward man. This charge supposes David's strong expectation of success; he doubts not but Absalom would lie at their mercy, and therefore bids them deal gently with him, spare his life, and reserve him for his judgment. 'Was it not in type of that unmeasurable mercy of the true King and Redeemer of Israel, who prayed for his persecutors, for his murderers; *Father, forgive them. Deal gently with them for my sake.*' So Bp. Hall. When God sends an affliction to correct his children, it is with this charge, 'Deal gently with them for my sake;' for He knows our frame.

IV. A complete victory gained over Absalom's forces. *The wood of Ephraim,* (*v.* 6.) was so called from some memorable action of the Ephraimites there, though it lay in the tribe of Gad. David thought fit to meet the enemy there, before they came up to Mahanaim, lest he should bring that city into trouble, which had so kindly sheltered him. Josephus represents the fight as very obstinate, but the rebels were at length totally routed, *v.* 7. Now they see what it is to take counsel *against the Lord, and his anointed,* and to think of *breaking his bands asunder.* And that they might see that God fought against them, they are conquered by a few, an army probably much inferior to theirs in number. By that flight with which they hoped to save themselves, they destroy themselves also; *the wood,* which they sought to for shelter, *devoured more than the*

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII. V. 1—3. It is probable, David's army was greatly inferior in numbers to Absalom's, but far superior in discipline; and consisted chiefly of old and approved friends, and such as acted from principle and conscience in adhering to their prince. This appears in the answer they returned to his proposal of leading them to battle in his own person. SCOTT.

Verse 6.

The wood of Ephraim here mentioned was beyond Jordan; and is supposed to be the place where the Ephraimites had been slain in the days of Jephthah. (*Judg.* 12:4—6.) IB.

V. 8. (*M R.* o, p.) IB.

9 And Absalom met the servants of David: and Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and [r] his head caught hold of the oak, and he was [s] taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that *was* under him went away.

10 And a certain man saw *it*, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak.

11 And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest *him;* and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground, and I would have given thee ten *shekels* of silver, and a girdle?

12 And the man said unto Joab, Though I should * receive a thousand *shekels* of silver in mine hand, *yet* would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for [t] in our hearing the king charged thee, and Abishai, and Ittai, saying, † Beware that none *touch* the young man Absalom.

13 Otherwise I should have [u] wrought falsehood against mine own life: [v] for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against *me*.

14 Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus ‡ with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and [w] thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he *was* yet alive in the § midst of the oak.

15 And ten young men that bare Joab's armor compassed about, and smote Absalom, and slew him.

16 And Joab [x] blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel: for Joab held back the people.

17 And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and [y] laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every one to his tent.

18 Now Absalom in his life-time had taken and [z] reared up for himself a pillar, which *is* in [a] the king's dale: for he said, [b] I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and [c] he

r 14:26. 17:23. Matt. 27:5.
s Deut. 21:23. 27:16,20. Job 18:9,10. 31:3. Prov. 20:20. 30:17. Jer. 48: 44. Mark 7:10. Gal. 3:13.
* Heb. *weigh upon my hand.* t 5.
† Heb. *Beware, whosoever ye be, of the, &c.*
u 1:15,16. 4:10—12.
v 14:19,20. Heb. 4:13.
‡ Heb. *before thee.*
w 5. Judg. 4:21. 5:26,31. Ps. 45:5. 1 Thes. 5:3.
§ Heb. *heart.* Matt. 12:40.
x 2:28. 20:22. Num. 10:2—10. 1 Cor. 14:8.
y Josh. 7:26. 8:29. 10:27. Prov. 10: 7. Jer. 22:18,19.
z 1 Sam. 15:12.
a Gen. 14:17.
b 14:27. Job 18:16,17. Ps. 109:13. Jer. 22:30.
c Gen. 11:4. 1 Sam. 15:12. Ps. 49:11. Dan. 4:30.

Verse 9.

'Probably Absalom's neck was caught in the fork of a strong bough, and he was nearly dead, (*v.* 14 *yet alive,*) when Joab found him.' Dr. A. Clarke.

Verse 11.

Girdle.] 'The military belt was the chief ornament of a soldier; and was highly prized in all ancient nations. Jonathan gave his to David in pledge of perpetual friendship. Ajax gave his to Hector as a token of the highest respect. See *Homer.*' Dr. *A. Clarke.* One who asks protection of a Bedouin Arab, seizes his belt: and in the Highlands of Scotland, a man who had authority to command the service in war of a number of men, was said to have them 'under his belt;' which countenances *Henry's* idea above. Ed.

Verse 13.

Wrought falsehood, &c.] This man meant to say, that he should have cheated himself; and by seeking a reward have forfeited his life. Scott.

Verse 14.

Joab cannot be excused in acting against the express command of his sovereign. He had no warrant from God or man to execute vengeance on Absalom. Id.

Darts.] Heb. *Shebatim; armed staves (?).* Probably such as are represented (*held* in the *hollow of the hand*, so the *Heb.* here) in the cut, from ancient Egyptian monuments. These seem used to *thrust*, not to be thrown like the javelin, Heb. *chanith* and *romah.* Ed.

Verse 18.

Pillar.] 'There was a marble pillar in the time of Josephus, called *Absalom's pillar:* and there is one shown to the present day under this name [maps, end of Mark]; but it is comparatively a modern structure.' Dr. *A. Clarke. Place.*] Lit. *hand.* 1 Sam. 15:12. The *hand* was an emblem of power, &c. comp. cut, 1 Chr. 29:24. and Num. 31:49. marg. and was used on the Egyptian hieroglyphics, which spelled names by letters, indicated by pictures, having reference to attributes of the person whose name was written: cut, 2 Chr. 12:8. where a hand is chosen, because it was the most appropriate word (to apply to a king) in Egyptian, whose initial letter would express one of the letters wanted to make out the sound of the word Judah. The ancient Irish kings of Ulster (the O'Niels) carried a hand on their signet ring and arms: hence the bloody hand is the badge of baronets in England; and Louis IX of France is represented with a hand surmounting his sceptre. *Niebuhr* says, the mosque of Ali has his hand on the dome, and *Mortier* gives the cut of the hand of Mohammed, which formed part of the pageantry of a religious procession in Persia. If such a standard were very ancient, (cuts, Ps. 20: 5.) it would suggest to Saul or Absalom at once a durable and beautiful model of an obelisk, cut, Judg. 9:6. Did Absalom erect such an obelisk on a base hewn on the rock, and now concealed by the modern casing? A cut of 'Absalom's pillar,' as it is now, is given. 'The lower portion is quadrangular, standing entirely detached from the living rock, from which it was hewn. Upon the four façades are cut Ionic pilasters, above which is a frieze with Doric metopes and triglyphs. Over this basis rises a square piece of masonry, smaller, and the whole is crowned by a tall conical dome, finishing in a point . . . The bases hewn from the rock, possessing the character of that

called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day, [d] Absalom's place.

[*Practical Observations.*]

19 ¶ Then said [e] Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now run and bear the king tidings, how that the LORD hath * avenged him of his enemies.

20 And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not † bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day; but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, [f] because the king's son is dead.

21 Then said Joab to Cushi, Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cushi bowed himself unto Joab, and ran.

22 Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, But ‡ howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cushi. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings § ready?

23 But howsoever, *said he*, let me run. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and over-ran Cushi.

24 And David sat [g] between the two gates: and [h] the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running alone.

25 And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he *be* alone, *there is* tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near.

26 And the watchman saw another man running, and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold, *another* man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.

27 And the watchman said, ‖ Methinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, [i] He *is* a good man, and cometh with good tidings.

28 And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, ¶ All is well. And [k] he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, [l] Blessed *be* the LORD thy God, which hath ** delivered up the men, that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.

29 And the king said, †† Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and *me* thy servant, [m] I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what *it was*.

so proud of, and for which he had been so much admired? Where his aspiring projects, and castles in the air? His thoughts perish, and he with them. And, to signify how heavy *his iniquity lay upon his bones*, as the prophet speaks, (Ezek. 32: 27.) they raised a *great heap of stones upon him*, to be a monument of his villany, and to signify that he ought to have been stoned as a rebellious son, Deut. 21: 21. Travellers say, the place is noticed to this day, and that passengers throw a stone to this heap, with a *Curse to the memory of rebellious Absalom, and to all wicked children that rise up in rebellion against their parents.* To aggravate the ignominy of his burial, the historian notices a pillar he had erected in the valley of Kidron, near Jerusalem, to be a monument for himself, and keep his name in remembrance, (*v.* 18.) at the foot of which, probably, he designed to be buried. What foolish, insignificant projects do proud men fill their heads with! And what care do many people take about the disposal of their bodies, when dead, that have no care at all what shall become of their precious souls! Absalom had had three sons, (*ch.* 14: 27.) but had none now, it seems, and justly is a rebellious son written childless; to make up the want, he erects this pillar for a memorial; yet, in this also, Providence crosses him, and a rude heap of stones shall be his monument instead of this marble pillar. His care was, to have his name kept in remembrance, and it is so, to his everlasting dishonor.

V. 19—33. Absalom's business is done; we are now told, I. How David was informed of it.

1. Joab ordered Cushi to carry the tidings, (*v.* 21.) an *Ethiopian*, so his name signifies, and some think he was so by birth; a black, probably one of the ten that had helped despatch Absalom, (*v.* 15.) as some think, though it was dangerous for one of those to bring the news to David, lest his fate should be the same with theirs that reported to him Saul's death, and Ishbosheth's.

2. Ahimaaz, the young priest, *ch.* 17: 17. was very forward to bear the tidings, so transported was he with joy that this cloud was blown over, *v.* 19. This he desired, not so much in hope of a reward, (he was above that,) as to have the pleasure and satisfaction of bringing the king, whom he loved, this good news. Joab knew David better than Ahimaaz did, and that the tidings of Absalom's death, which must conclude the story, would spoil the acceptableness of all the rest; and he loves Ahimaaz too well to let him bear those tidings, (*v.* 20.) they are fitter to be brought by a footman than a priest. However, when Cushi was gone, Ahimaaz begged hard for leave to run after him, and with great importunity obtained it, *v.* 22, 23. One would wonder why he should be so very fond of this office, when another was employed in it. Perhaps to show his swiftness; observing how heavily Cushi ran, and that he took the worst way, though the nearest. No great praise for a priest to be swift of foot, yet perhaps Ahimaaz was proud of it. Perhaps he desired it in prudence and tenderness to the king. If bad news must come, let it come gradually, and it will be the better borne.

3. They are both discovered by the watchman on the gate of Mahanaim; Ahimaaz first, (*v.* 24.) but, presently, Cushi, *v.* 26. Ahimaaz, it seems, was so famous for running, that he was known by it at a distance; and so eminently good, it was taken for granted, if he be the messenger, the news must needs be good: *he* would not bring bad news. It is pity but the good tidings of the Gospel should

[d] Gen. 11:9. Acts 1:18,19.
[e] 23:27—29. 15:36. 17:17.
[f] Heb. *judged him from the hand, &c.* Ps. 7:8,8,9. 9:4,16. 10:14,18. Rom. 12:19.
† Heb. *be a man of.* 17:16—21.
‡ 5,27,29,33. Heb. *be what may.*
§ Or, *convenient.* Rom. 1:28. Eph.5:4.
[g] 4. 1 Sam. 4:13.
[h] 2 Kings 9:17—20. Is. 21:6—9,11,12. Ez. 33:2—6.
‖ Heb. *I see the running.* 2 Kings 9:20.
[i] 1 Kings 1:42. Prov. 25:13,25. Is. 52: 7. Rom. 10:15.
¶ Or, *Peace* be to thee. Heb. *Peace.*
[k] 1:2. 14:4.
[l] 22:47. Gen. 14:20. 24:27. 2 Chr. 20: 26. Ps. 115:1. 144:1,2. Rev. 19:1 —3.
** Heb. *shut up.* 1 Sam. 24:18. 26:8. Ps. 31:8.
†† Heb. Is there *peace to, &c.?*
[m] 19,20,22.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—18. The peculiar exercises of religion ought to *precede*, but not to *exclude*, the use of every prudent mean of securing success in lawful undertakings: and those who would engage others in arduous and perilous attempts, must be willing to take a full share of the hardship and danger. Thus Jesus loved his people, and laid down his life for them: and thus they consider his cause as dearer to them than every personal interest, and are prepared to lay down their lives for his sake.—True courage and firmness of mind are very different from rashness and obstinacy; and wise men are always most ready to listen to prudent counsel, even from their inferiors.—The extremes of our most amiable propensities are often of fatal consequence: and it is merciful for God to deny us those things which we greatly desire, when He sees they would prove our temptation or affliction.—Multitudes suffer *through* the wickedness of one, but *for* their own crimes: and rebellion against good and lawful governors is generally and justly punished with the ruin of those concerned in it.—At all times 'evil pursueth sinners:' and when in the appointed hour it overtakes them, they cannot possibly escape; but those things on which they have most depended, and of which they have been most proud, often prove the occasion or instruments of their destruction.—Let young people look on Absalom, suspended on the tree, accursed and forsaken of Heaven and earth; and there read the Lord's abhorrence of rebellion against parents: let them consider the agony of his death, and the ignominy of his burial, and learn how empty are all external embellishments; and how vain the flattery of man, (14: 25—27.) and all that care, which is employed in rendering themselves [simply] admired and renowned. After all, 'the memory of the wicked shall rot:' and nothing can preserve us from misery and contempt, but heavenly grace and wisdom. SCOTT.

massive sepulchral architecture the Israelites derived from Egypt, might very well have been the tombs of those to whom they are assigned [Absalom, Jehoshaphat, and Zacharias, &c.] while the Ionic pilasters and other ornaments of a subsequent period might not improbably have been the very *garnishing of the sepulchres* alluded to by our Savior, (Luke 23:29.) added either in his days or a short time before, when the reduction of Judea into a Roman province, and the example of Herod, had introduced a different style.' *Three weeks in Palestine and Lebanon*, 1835. Comp. note, Gen. 35:19. ED.

Verses 19—22.

Ahimaaz had continued with David, after he had brought tidings from Hushai; (17:17—21.) and was present in the battle, probably sounding the sacred trumpet. (*Num.* 10:1—10. 2 *Chr.* 13:4—12.) SCOTT.

Verse 24.

The gate seems to have opened into a square building, or square enclosed with porticoes, with accommodations for sitting, where justice was administered: an opposite gate opening into the city: and the building having a second story for the guards stationed on its roof. ED.

Verses 28—32.

The piety of the language both of Ahimaaz and Cushi, on this occasion, are worthy of notice and imitation. SCOTT.

30 And the king said *unto him*, Turn aside, *and* stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still.

31 And, behold, Cushi came: and Cushi said, * Tidings, my lord the king: for [n] the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

32 And the king said unto Cushi, Is the young man Absalom safe? and Cushi answered, [o] The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do *thee* hurt, be as *that* young man *is*.

33 And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, [p] O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! [q] Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

CHAP. XIX.

The people being greatly disappointed and discouraged by David's conduct, Joab, by rude expostulations, induces him to restrain his grief and come forth to them, 1—8. The men of Israel dispute about bringing back David; who sends to the priests to incite the men of Judah to take the lead in this; and they readily comply, 9—15. Shimei submitting is not punished, 16—23. Mephibosheth meets David; complains that Ziba had deceived and slandered him; and has half his land restored, 24—30. Barzillai attends David over Jordan, and his son is taken into the king's family, 31—40. The Israelites expostulate with the men of Judah, for bringing back the king without them, 41—43.

AND [a] it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom.

2 And the † victory that day was [b] *turned* into mourning unto all

* Heb. *Tidings is brought.*
n 19.28. 22:48,49. Deut. 32:35,36. Ps. 58:10. 94:1—4.
o Judg. 5:31. Ps. 68:1,2. Dan. 4:19.
p 19:4.
q 12:10—23. Ps. 103:13. Prov. 10:1. 17:25. Jam. 5:17.
a 18:5,12,14,20,33.
† Heb. *salvation*, or, *deliverance.*
b Prov. 16:15. 19:12.

always be brought by good men; and how welcome should they be to us for their message-sake!

4. Ahimaaz is very forward to proclaim the victory; (*v.* 28.) cries at a distance, and when he comes near, tells the news more particularly. *He fell on his face*, not only in reverence to the king, but in humble adoration of God, whose name he praises for this success. By directing David thus to give God thanks for his victory, he prepares him for the approaching news of its allay. The more our hearts are fixed, and enlarged, in thanksgiving to God for our mercies, the better disposed we shall be to bear with patience the afflictions mixed with them. Poor David is so much a father, that he forgets he is a king, and therefore cannot rejoice in the news of a victory, till he know whether *Absalom be safe;* for whom his heart seems to tremble, almost as Eli's, in a like case, for the ark of God. Ahimaaz soon discerns what Joab intimated, that the death of the king's son would make the tidings of the day very unwelcome, therefore in his report leaves that matter doubtful; though he gives occasion to suspect how it was, yet, that the thunder-clap might not come too suddenly, he refers the king to the next messenger, whom they saw coming, for a more particular account. He is therefore bid to stand by till Cushi came; (*v.* 30.) and now, we may suppose, he gives the king a more particular account of the victory, which was the thing he came to bring the news of.

5. Cushi, besides confirming the news of the victory, *v.* 31. satisfies the king's inquiry concerning Absalom, *v.* 32. but he tells the news so properly, that, how unwelcome soever the message, the messenger could have no blame. He does not say plainly Absalom was hanged, run through, and buried under a heap of stones; but only that his fate was what he desired might be the fate of all traitors against the king.

II. We are told how David received the intelligence, *v.* 33. As soon as he perceived by Cushi's expression that Absalom was dead, he asked no more questions, but fell into a passion of weeping, retired from company, and abandoned himself to sorrow; as he was going up to his chamber, he was overheard to say, '*O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom;* alas, for thee! I lament thee: how art thou fallen! *Would God I had died for thee*, and that thou hadst remained alive this day,' so the Chaldee adds, '*O Absalom, my son, my son.*' I wish I could see reason to think, that this arose from a concern about Absalom's everlasting state, and that he wished to have *died for him*, because he had good hopes of his own salvation, and of Absalom's repentance, if he had lived: it seems rather to have been spoken inconsiderately, and in a passion, and it was his infirmity. He is to be blamed, 1. For showing so great a fondness for a graceless, however handsome and witty, son, that was justly abandoned both of God and man. 2. For quarrelling, not only with divine providence, the disposals of which he ought silently to acquiesce in, but divine justice, the judgments of which he ought to adore and subscribe to: see how Bildad argues, Job 8: 3, 4. See also Lev. 10: 3. 3. For opposing the justice of the nation, which, as king, he, with other public interests, ought to prefer before any natural affection. 4 For despising the mercy of his deliverance, and the deliverance of his family and kingdom, from Absalom's wicked designs, as if this were no mercy, nor worth giving thanks for, because it cost the life of Absalom. 5. For indulging a strong passion, and speaking unadvisedly with his lips. He now forgot his own reasonings on the death of another child, *Can I bring him back again?* and his own resolution to *keep his mouth as with a bridle*, when *his heart was hot within him;* as well as his own practice at other times, when he *quieted himself, as a child that was weaned from his mother.* The best men are not always in a good frame; what we over-loved, we are apt to over-grieve for: in each affection, therefore, it is wisdom to have rule over our own spirits; and to keep a strict guard on ourselves, when that is removed from us, which was very dear to us. The penitent, patient sufferer *sitteth alone, and keepeth silence;* (Lam. 3: 28.) or rather, with Job, says, *Blessed be the name of the Lord.*

CHAP. XIX. V. 1—8. Soon after the messengers had brought the news of the defeat and death of Absalom to the court at Mahanaim, Joab and his victorious army followed, to grace the king's triumphs, and receive his further orders. But,

I. What a damp was it to find the king in tears for Absalom's death, which they construed as a token of his displeasure against them for what they had done, whereas they had expected him to meet them with joy and thanks for their good services. It was told Joab, *v.* 1. The report of it ran through the army, *v.* 2. The people will notice particularly what their princes say and do: the more eyes we have upon us, and the greater our influence, the more need we have to speak and act wisely, and govern our passions strictly.

When they came to the city, they found the king in close mourning, *v.* 4. He covered his face, and would not so much as look up, nor take any notice of the generals, when they attended him. It could not but surprise them; yet see how he avows his grief, *He cries with a loud voice, O my son Absalom.* 'My servants are all come home safe, but my son, alas! is dead; and, dying in sin, I fear, he is lost for ever: I cannot now say, *I shall go to him;* my soul shall not be gathered with such sinners; what shall be done for thee, *O Absalom, my son, my son!*' Had he contented himself with giving vent to his passion for an hour or two, when he first heard the news, it had been excusable; but to continue it thus for so bad a son, like Jacob for good Joseph, with a resolution to go to the grave mourning, and to stain his triumphs with his tears, was very unwise and very unworthy.

Now, see how ill this was taken by the people. They were loath to blame the king, for *whatever he did used to please them*, (*ch.* 3: 36.) but they took it as a great mortification. *Their victory was turned into mourning*, *v.* 2. *They stole into the city as men ashamed*, *v.* 3. In compliment to their sov-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 19—33. Every deliverance should be received with praise and thanksgiving: and *good men* delight in bearing glad tidings to those whom they love. May all, who proclaim the glad tidings, be men of holy lives, and unblemished reputation; and may numbers more be sent forth with this joyful message!—All other good tidings but those of salvation to sinners, have so much alloy, that our joy on account of them must be mingled with weeping, or with trembling: and alas! we are more disposed to complain of the trouble which alloys our mercies, than to be thankful for the mercies themselves. But while we learn from the example before us, to watch and pray against partial and inordinate attachments, the indulgence or neglect of our children, and the unadvised language and passionate wishes of excessive grief; while we learn to bow down to the righteous appointments of God in our sharpest trials, to adore his unmerited mercy in our comforts and deliverances, and to prefer the public welfare to any personal or private affections; we may in David perceive a shadow of the Savior's love, who wept, prayed, and suffered death in all its bitterness, for us rebels and enemies, without even excepting those, who persecuted and crucified Him; and hence learn 'not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good.'

SCOTT.

Verse 33.

David's grief was doubtless excessive, and very imprudent and criminal. But he was a man of warm passions: he had inordinately loved a very unworthy object, who was cut off in the midst of his crimes: he could not but think of the state of his immortal soul; and vainly hoped, that if he had been preserved, he might have repented: he was conscious that, when his own forfeited life was spared, after his adultery and murder, this burden had been laid on his family. he considered himself, by his transgression, example, and the chastisement of God, as accessory to the dire catastrophe; and in the vehemency of his grief he wished, that he had died himself rather than his son, probably, as being better prepared for the eternal world; while the agitation of his mind prevented him from adverting to the fatal effects of such an event to his kingdom, and to that cause which in his calmer hours was nearest to his heart. SCOTT.

the people: for the people heard say that day, how the king was grieved for his son.

3 And the people gat them by stealth that day [e] into the city, as people being ashamed [d] steal away when they flee in battle.

4 But the king [e] covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, [f] O my son, Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!

5 And Joab came into the house to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have [g] saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons, and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines;

6 * In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends: for thou hast declared this day, that † thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, [h] then it had pleased thee well.

7 Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak ‡ comfortably unto thy servants: for I swear by the LORD, if thou go not forth, [i] there will not tarry one with thee this night; and that will be worse unto thee, than [j] all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now.

8 Then the king arose, and [k] sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king: [l] for Israel had fled every man to his tent.

9 ¶ And all the people were at [m] strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, [n] The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines, and now [o] he is fled out of the land for Absalom.

10 And Absalom, [p] whom we anointed over us, [q] is dead in battle: now therefore why §speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?

11 And king David [r] sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, [s] Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, [t] Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, *even* to his house.

12 Ye *are* my brethren, ye *are* [u] my bones and my flesh; wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king?

13 And say ye to [x] Amasa, *Art* thou not of my bone, and of my flesh? [y] God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the [z] room of Joab.

14 And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, [a] even as *the heart of* one man; so that they sent *this word* unto the king, Return thou, and all thy servants.

c 32. 17:24.
d Gen. 31:27.
e See on 15:30.
f 18:33.
g Neh. 9:27. Ps. 3:8. 18:47,48.
* Heb. *By loving, &c.*
† Heb. *princes or servants* are *not to thee.*
h 3:24,25. Job 34:18. Prov. 19:9,10. Acts 23:5.
‡ Heb. *to the heart of.* Gen. 34:3. Is. 40:1. Hos. 2:14. *marg.*
i Prov. 14:28.
j Ps. 71:4—6,9—11,18—20. 129:1,2.
k 18:4,24.
l 3. 18:7. 1 Kings 22:36. 2 Kings 14: 12.
m Gen. 3:12,13. Ex. 32:24. Jam. 3: 14—16.
n 8:10. 1 Sam. 17:50. 18:5—7,25. 19:5.
o 15:14.
p 15:12,13. Hos. 8:4.
q 18:14.
§ Heb. are *ye silent?* Judg. 18:9.
r 15:29,35,36. 1 Kings 2:25,26,35.
s 2 Cor. 5:20.
t Matt. 5:16. 2 Thes. 3:9.
u 5:1. Gen. 2:23. Judg. 9:2. Eph. 5: 30.
x 17:25. 1 Chr. 2:16,17. 12:18.
y Ruth 1:17. 1 Kings 19:2.
z 5—7. 3:29,30. 8:16. 18:11.
a Judg. 20:1. Ps. 110:2,3. Acts 4:32.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX. V. 9—15. David would not appear to reign by force of arms: and therefore waited till publicly invited to the government. From the time he began to reign in Hebron over the tribe of Judah only, the distinction between Judah and Israel began to be observed. (2:4. 5:1—3.)—Amasa, having headed so daring a rebellion, was not a proper person to supplant Joab, whose influence with the army and with David's best friends, was too firmly established to be thus shaken; and he was sure not to submit quietly to such a disgrace. David therefore does not seem to have acted with prudence on this emergency. SCOTT.

(14.) 'Appear to distrust those you have some reason to suspect, and you increase their caution and distrust. Put as much confidence in them as you safely can; and this will not fail to excite their confidence toward you.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

V. 9—15. It is strange David did not immediately march back to Jerusalem, to regain possession of his capital city, while the rebels were all in confusion, and before they could rally again: but, 1. He would come back, with the consent and approbation of the people, and not forcing his way: he would restore their liberties, and not take occasion to seize them, or encroach on them. 2. He would come back in peace and safety, and be sure he should meet with no difficulty or opposition in his return; therefore he would first be satisfied the people were well affected to him. 3. He would come back in honor, and like himself; therefore not at the head of his forces, but in the arms of his subjects; the prince that has wisdom and goodness enough to make himself his people's darling, without doubt, looks greater, and makes a much better figure, than the prince that has strength enough to make himself his people's terror.

It is resolved, therefore, David must be brought back with some ceremony.

I. The men of Israel (i. e. the ten tribes) first talked of it, *v.* 9, 10. The people were at strife about it; it was the great subject of discourse and dispute throughout all the country. Some perhaps opposed it; others appeared zealous for it. Perhaps this was all the strife among them, not a dispute whether the king should be brought back or no, but whose fault it was, that it was not done; as is usual in such cases, every one justified himself, and blamed his neighbor. The people laid the fault on the elders, and the elders on the people, and one tribe on another. Mutual excitements to do a good work are laudable, but not mutual accusations for not doing it; usually when public services are neglected, all sides must share in the blame; each might do more than he does, in reformation of manners, healing of divisions, and the like.

II. The men of Judah, by David's contrivance, were the first that did it. Strange, that they, being David's own tribe, were not so forward as the rest. David had intelligence of the good disposition of all the rest, but nothing from Judah, though he had always been particularly careful of them. We do not always find the most kindness from those we have most reason to expect it from. Yet David would not return till he knew the sense of his own tribe.

1. He employs Zadok and Abiathar, the two chief priests, to treat with the elders of Judah, and to excite them to give the king an invitation back, even to his house, which was the glory of their tribe, *v.* 11, 12. No men more proper to

15 So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to [b] Gilgal to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.

[*Practical Observations.*]

16 ¶ And [c] Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, which *was* of Bahurim, [d] hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David.

17 And *there were* a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and [e] Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over Jordan before the king.

18 And there went over a ferry-boat to carry over the king's household, and to do [*] what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera [f] fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan;

19 And [g] said unto the king, [h] Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou [i] remember that which thy servant [k] did perversely, the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should [l] take it to his heart.

20 For thy servant doth know that I have sinned; therefore, behold, [m] I am come the first this day of all the house of [n] Joseph, to go

negotiate this affair—firm to David's interest, prudent men, and of great influence with the people. Perhaps the men of Judah were thus remiss, because nobody put them on to it, and then it was proper to stir them up. Many will follow, who, in a good work, will not lead: Or, perhaps, they were so sensible of the greatness of their provocation to David, by joining with Absalom, that they were afraid to bring him back, despairing of his favor; he therefore warrants his agents to assure them of it, with this reason, '*Ye are my brethren, my bone and my flesh*, therefore I cannot be severe with you.' The Son of David has been pleased to call us *brethren*, which encourages us to hope we shall find favor with Him. Or, perhaps, they were willing to see what the rest of the tribes would do, before they stirred, with which they are here upbraided. Note, We should be stirred up to what is great and good, by the examples both of our ancestors and of our neighbors, and by the consideration of our rank. Let not the first in dignity be last in duty.

2. He particularly courts into his interest Amasa, who had been Absalom's general, but was his own nephew as well as Joab, *v.* 13. Sometimes there is nothing lost in purchasing the friendship of one that has been an enemy. Amasa's interest might do David good service at this juncture. But if David did wisely for himself in designating Amasa for this post, (Joab being now grown intolerably haughty,) he did not do kindly by Amasa in letting his design be known, for it occasioned his death by Joab's hand, *ch.* 20: 10.

3. The point was hereby gained. He bowed the heart of the men of Judah to vote, *unanimously*, for the recall of the king, *v.* 14. David stirred not till he received this invitation, then he came as far back as Jordan, at which river they were to meet him, *v.* 15. Our Lord Jesus will rule in those that invite Him to the throne in their hearts, and not till He is invited. He first bows the heart, and makes it willing in the day of his power, then *rules in the midst of his enemies*, Ps. 110: 2, 3.

V. 16—23. Perhaps Jordan was never passed with so much solemnity, nor with so many remarkable occurrences, as now, since Israel passed it under Joshua. David, in his afflictive flight, remembered God particularly *from the land of Jordan*, (Ps. 42: 6.) and now that land, more than any other, was graced with the glories of his return. David's soldiers furnished themselves with accommodations for their passage over this river, but, for his own family, *a ferry-boat* was sent on purpose, *v.* 18. *A fleet of boats*, say some; *a bridge of boats was made*, say others; the best convenience they had to serve him with.

Two remarkable persons met him on the banks of Jordan, who had abused him wretchedly when he was in his flight.

I. Ziba, *ch.* 16: 4. A greater abuse he could not have done him, than, by imposing on his credulity, to draw him in to do a thing so unkind to the son of his friend Jonathan. He comes now, with a retinue of sons and servants, to meet the king, (*v.* 17.) that he might obtain the king's favor, and so come off the better, when Mephibosheth would shortly undeceive him, and clear himself, *v.* 26.

II. Shimei, *ch.* 16: 5. If David had been defeated, no doubt, he would have continued to trample on him, and have gloried in what he had done; but now he sees him in triumph, he thinks it his interest to make his peace with him. Those who now slight and abuse the Son of David, would be glad to make their peace too, when He shall come in his glory; but it will be too late. Shimei, to recommend himself, 1. Came with good company, the men of Judah. 2. He brought a regiment of the men of Benjamin with him, offer-

b Josh. 5:9. 1 Sam. 11:14,15.
c 16:5—13. 1 Kings 2:8,36—46.
d Job 2:4. Prov. 6:4,5. Matt. 5:25.
e 26,27. 9:2,10. 16:1—4.
* Heb. *the good in his eyes.*
f Ps. 66:3. 81:15. Rev. 3:9.
g Ec. 10:4.
h 1 Sam. 22:15. Ps. 32:2. Rom. 4:6,8. 2 Cor. 5:19.
i Ps. 79:8. Is. 43:25. Jer. 31:34.
k 16:5—9,13. Ex. 10:16,17. 1 Sam. 26: 21. Matt. 27:4.
l 13:20,33. 1 Sam. 25:25.
m Ps. 78:34—37. Jer. 22:23. Hos. 5:15.
n 9. 16:5. Gen. 48:14,20. 1 Kings 12: 20,25. Hos. 4:15—17. 5:3.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—15. The excessive indulgence of any passion, (grief by no means excepted,) not only offends God, but betrays men into great imprudence even in their temporal concerns.—Many allow that such and such things should be done, and wonder that others do not set about them; and yet they themselves are equally dilatory, through indolence, pride, covetousness, &c.—Ministers should at all times be examples of fidelity to magistrates and rulers; and may very properly exhort others to do their *plain and evident duty*, in that as well as in other respects: but, this case excepted, it is generally best for them not to intermeddle in public affairs.—Convincing arguments, urged in mildness and love, are very forcible, and produce great effects on the minds of men in all temporal concerns: but the grace of God alone can bow our hearts into submission to his humbling truth and holy will.—In acts of clemency to those who have been open offenders, care should be taken not to disgust such as have deserved better of us, though in some respects they have failed of their duty: and that which exposes a man to envy or rivalship, however splendid and valuable, will probably be injurious to him. (1 *Sam.* 18:6—11. *Prov.* 27:4.)—Self-preference and contempt of others should always be guarded against; and every thing avoided which may be thought to spring from these evils: while equity, mutual respect, and harmony should be studied, and many interests and supposed points of honor receded from, that strife and contention may be excluded. SCOTT.

Verse 18.

Ferry-boat.] This is the only place, in which a *boat* for passing over a river is mentioned. Bridges are not once mentioned in scripture. Rivers were generally *forded* at this time. SCOTT.

Ferry-boat.] Heb. *haabarah, something affording passage.* A cut is given of an ancient Egyptian boat, delineated upon the monuments of El Kab, or Elythia. 'The Egyptian boats were of various kinds. The larger ones [such as this, perhaps, for David and his family] were built of acacia planks, fastened by *bolts* and *nails* upon strong ribs; with a large, square sail. Their long rudder was suspended on a sort of mast or wooden pillar; and according to the direction of a type, held by the steersman, it slided to the right and left, along the edge of a broad squared recess at the stern, the pillar being the centre on which it turned. They frequently had chains, or rudder bands fastened to the blade. They were also furnished with large oars, supported and moving on thowl-pins; and, except in galleys of war, the men generally pulled standing, or rose to the stroke. Smaller boats had a rudder on each side, which like the former consisted of a long, broad blade, and still longer handle, the rope serving for a tiller.' WILKINSON. ED.

Verses 19—23.

Next to the tribe of Judah, the descendants of Joseph had the pre-eminence; and Israel, as distinguished from Judah, was named from them. Shimei, therefore, though a Benjamite, ranked himself among the sons of Joseph, or the Israelites; and intimated, that none except the men of Judah had come to David so soon as he had. Perhaps he meant, that he had come before any of the house of Joseph.—Shimei confessed his crime, and seemed penitent: and David granted him a pardon, and swore to him that he should not die, *at that time*, or *for that offence.* (16:5—14. 1 *K.* 2:8, 9, 36—46.) SCOTT.

down to meet my lord the king.

21 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, [o] Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he [p] cursed the LORD's anointed?

22 And David said, [q] What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? [r] shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I *am* this day king over Israel?

23 Therefore the king said unto Shimei, [s] Thou shalt not die: and the king [t] sware unto him.

24 ¶ And [u] Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king; and had neither [x] dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came *again* in peace.

25 And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, [y] Wherefore wentest thou not with me, Mephibosheth?

26 And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, [z] I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because [a] thy servant *is* lame.

27 And he hath [b] slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king *is* [c] as an angel of God: do therefore *what is* good in thine eyes.

28 For all *of* my father's house [d] were but [*] dead men before my lord the king; yet [e] didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table: what right therefore have I yet [f] to cry any more unto the king?

29 And the king said unto him; [g] Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, [h] Thou and Ziba divide the land.

30 And Mephibosheth said unto the king, [i] Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.

ing his own and their service; or, perhaps, they were volunteers, whom by his interest he had got togetl er to meet the king, which was the more obliging, because of all the tribes of Israel, there were none, except these and Judah, that appeared to pay him this respect. 3. What he did, he hastened to do; he lost no time; *Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way.*

He submits, *v.* 18—20. The offence was public, therefore so is his submission. He owns his crime, aggravates it, begs the king's pardon, and intimates, it was below the king's great and generous mind to deal with him as he deserved; he pleads his early return to his allegiance, and that he came first, that by his example of duty, the rest might be disposed, and by his experience of the king's clemency, the rest might be *encouraged*, to follow.

A motion is made for judgment against him; *v.* 21. by Abishai, who would have ventured his life to have been his death, when he was cursing, *ch.* 16: 9. David did not think fit to have it done then, because his judicial power was cut short; but now that it was restored, why should not the law have its course? Abishai herein consulted what he supposed to be David's feelings more than his true interest. Princes have need to arm themselves against temptations to severity.

But David rejected Abishai's motion with displeasure; *v.* 22, 23. The less we have to do with those who are of an angry, revengeful spirit, and who put us on doing what is harsh and rigorous, the better. Those who advise us to what is wrong, are really *Satans, adversaries*, to us. 1. They were adversaries to his inclination, which was now to clemency. It is the glory of kings to forgive those that humble and surrender themselves. His joy inclined him to forgive: joyful days should be forgiving days. Yet this was not all; his experience of God's mercy, in restoring him to his kingdom, his exclusion from which, he attributed to his sin, inclined him to show mercy to Shimei. They that are forgiven, must forgive. David had severely revenged the abuses done his ambassadors by the Ammonites, (*ch.* 12: 31.) but easily passes by the abuse done himself by an Israelite. That was an affront to Israel in general, and touched the honor of his crown and kingdom; this was purely personal, and therefore he could the more easily forgive it. 2. They were adversaries to his interest: if he should put Shimei to death, who cursed him, they would expect the same fate, who had taken up arms, and actually levied war against him, which would drive them from him, while he was endeavoring to draw them to him. Acts of severity are seldom acts of policy: *The throne is established by mercy.*

V. 24—30. Mephibosheth's case is next to be inquired into, and he himself brings it on.

1. He went down in the crowd *to meet the king*, (*v.* 24.) and, as a proof of the sincerity of his joy in the king's return, we are here told what a true mourner he was for the king's banishment. During that melancholy time, Mephibosheth continued in a very melancholy state. In times of public calamity, we ought to abridge ourselves of the delights of sense, in conformity to the season. There are times when God calls to weeping and mourning, and we must comply with the call.

2. When the king came to Jerusalem, (since he could not sooner have an opportunity,) he made his appearance before him, *v.* 25. The king asked him, why he, being one of his family, had stayed behind, and he opened his case fully. (1.) He complains of Ziba, his servant, who should have been his friend, but had been, two ways, his enemy: first, he hindered him from going with the king, by taking the ass himself, which he was ordered to make ready for his master, (*v.* 26.) and, secondly, he had accused him to David of a design to usurp the government, *v.* 27. How much mischief is it in the power of a wicked servant to do to the best master! (2.) He gratefully acknowledges the king's great kindness to himself, when he and all his father's house lay at the king's mercy, *v.* 28. This shows Ziba's suggestion was improbable: for could Mephibosheth be so foolish as to aim higher, when he lived so easily, so happily? And could he be so very disingenuous, as to design any harm to David, of whose great kindness he was thus sensible? (3.) He refers himself to the king's pleasure, depending on the king's wisdom, and his ability to discern between truth and falsehood, and disclaiming all pretensions of his own merit.—We were all *as dead men before God;* yet He has not only spared us, *but taken us to sit at his table.* How little reason then have we to complain of any trouble we are in: and how much reason to take all well that God does.

3. David hereupon recalls the sequestration of Mephibosheth's estate; being deceived in his grant, he revokes it, and confirms his former settlement of it; *I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land;* (*v.* 29.) i. e. 'Let it be as I first ordered it.' *ch.* 9: 10. Thus Mephibosheth is where he was, no harm is done, only Ziba goes away unpunished for his false and malicious information against his master; David either feared him too much, or loved him too well, to do justice on him according to that law, Deut. 19: 18, 19. and he was now in the humor of forgiving, and resolved to make every body easy.

4. Mephibosheth drowns all his cares about his estate, in his joy for the king's return, *v.* 30. A good man can contentedly bear his own private losses and disappointments, while he sees Israel in peace, and the throne of the Son of David exalted and established.

[*Practical Observations.*]

o Ex. 22:28. 1 Kings 21:10,11.
p 16:5,7,13. 1 Sam. 24:8. 26:9.
q 3:39. 16:10. 1 Sam. 26:8. Matt. 8: 29.
r 1 Sam. 11:13. Is. 16:5. Luke 9:54—56.
s 1 Kings 2:8,9,37,46.
t 1 Sam. 20:10. 30:15. Heb. 6:16.
u 9:6. 16:3.
x 15:30. Is. 15:2. Jer. 41:5. Matt. 6: 16. Rom. 12:15. Heb. 13:3.
y 16:17.
z 16:2,3.
a 4:4.
b 16:3. Ex. 20:16. Ps. 15:3. 101:5. Jer. 9:4.
c 14:17,20. 1 Sam. 29:9.
d Gen. 32:10.
* Heb. *men of death.* 1 Sam. 26:16.
e 9:7,8,10,13.
f 2 Kings 8:3.
g Job 19:16,17 Prov. 18:13. Acts 18:15.
h Deut. 19:17—19. Ps. 82:2. 101:5.
i 1:26. Acts 20:24. Phil. 1:20.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 16—30. Many seem to be sorry for those crimes, which expose them to present punishment; and the language and semblance of repentance are easily imitated: but it is safest for us to judge favorably of others; if we do err, to err on the side of candor and clemency; and to leave it to the heart-searching God, to determine between the upright and the hypocritical.—Peculiar mercies from God should dispose us to be the more merciful to others: and our best friends must be considered as adversaries, when they would persuade us to act contrary to conscience and duty. (*Matt.* 16:21—23.)—Perseverance in well doing will at length refute slanderous accusations;—credulity in believing slanders often leads pious persons into difficulties, and covers them with shame: no offenders are so seldom treated with proper severity as backbiters. SCOTT.

Verses 24—30.

Mephibosheth did not come to David till his return to Jerusalem, probably, because he could not procure an ass prepared for him to ride on; having been deserted by Ziba, and all his attendants. Whether David did not fully credit Mephibosheth; or whether he was ashamed of his credulity, and wished not to have it further noticed; he suffered Ziba to escape merited punishment, and to enjoy part of the fruits of his slander: or at least he contented himself with restoring matters to their former settlement, as some understand it. (*Note*, 9 9—11.) SCOTT.

31 ¶ And [j] Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan.

32 Now Barzillai was a very aged man, *even* [k] fourscore years old: and he had [l] provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; [m] for he *was* a very great man.

33 And the king said unto Barzillai, [n] Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem.

34 And Barzillai said unto the king, [*] How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem?

35 I *am* this day fourscore years old: *and* [o] can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant [p] taste what I eat or what I drink? [q] can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a [r] burden unto my lord the king?

36 Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward?

37 Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that [s] I may die in mine own city, *and be buried* [t] by the grave of my father and of my mother. But, behold thy servant [u] Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee.

38 And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee: and whatsoever thou shalt [†] require of me, *that* will I do for thee.

39 And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over, the king [v] kissed Barzillai, and [x] blessed him; and [y] he returned unto his own place.

40 Then the king went on to Gilgal, and [‡] Chimham went on with him: and all [z] the people of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel.

41 And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king, [a] Why have our brethren the men of Judah [b] stolen thee away, and have brought the king, and his household, and all David's men with him, over Jordan?

42 And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, [c] Because the king *is* near of kin to us: wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? have we eaten at all of the king's *cost*? or hath he given us any gift?

43 And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, [d] We have [e] ten parts in

[j] 1 Kings 2:7. Ezra 2:61. Neh. 7:63.
[k] Gen. 5:27. 9:29. 25:7. 47:28. 50:26. Deut. 34:7. Ps. 90:3—10
[l] 17:27.
[m] 1 Sam. 25:2. Job 1:3.
[n] 9:11. Matt. 25:34—40. Luke 22:28—30. 2 Thes. 1:7.
[*] Heb. *How many days* are *the years of my life?* Gen. 47:9. Job 14:14. Ps. 39:5,6. 1 Cor. 7:29. Jam. 4:14.
[o] Job 6:30. 12:11. Heb. 5:14. 1 Kin. 3:9.
[p] Ec. 12:1—5.
[q] Ezra 2:65. Neh. 7:67. &c. 2:8. 12:4. [r] 13:25. 15:33.
[s] Gen. 48:21. Josh. 23:14. Luke 2:29 30. 2 Tim. 4:6. 2 Pet. 1.14.
[t] Gen. 47:30. 49:29—31. 50:13. 1 Kings 13:22.
[u] 40. 1 Kings 2:7. Jer. 41:17.
[†] Heb. *choose.*
[v] Gen. 31:55. 45:15. Ruth 1:14. 1 Kings 19:20. Acts 20:37.
[x] 6:18,20. 13:25. Gen. 14:19. 28:3. 47:7,10. Luke 2:34.
[y] Gen. 31:55. Num. 24:25. 1 Sam. 24:22.
[‡] Heb. *Chimhan.*
[z] 11—15. Gen. 49:10. Matt. 21:9.
[a] Judg. 8:1. 12:1. John 7:5,..
[b] 3. Gen. 31:26,27.
[c] 12. 5:1. 1 Chr. 5:2—7.
[d] 20:1,6. 1 Kings 12:16.
[e] 5:1. Prov. 13:10.

V. 31—39. David had already graced the triumphs of his restoration with the generous remission of injuries; we have him here gracing them with the no less generous reward of kindnesses. Barzillai, the Gileadite, who had a noble seat at Rogelim, not far from Mahanaim, was the man who, of all the nobility and gentry of that country, had been most kind to David in his distress.

Here is, I. His great respect to David, not only as a good man, but as his rightful sovereign, *v.* 32. God had given him a large estate, and, it seems, he had a large heart to do good with it: what else but that, is a large estate good for? To reduced greatness, generosity obliges us, and to oppressed goodness, piety obliges us, to be in a particular manner kind, to the utmost of our power. Barzillai, to show he was not weary of David, though so great a charge to him, attended him to Jordan, and went over with him, *v.* 31. Let subjects learn hence, to render *tribute to whom tribute is due*, and *honor to whom honor*, Rom. 13: 7.

II. The kind invitation David gave him to court, *v.* 33. 1. That he might have the pleasure of his company, and the benefit of his counsel; for we may suppose he was very wise and good, as well as very rich, else he had not been called here *a very great man;* for it is what a man is, more than what he has, that bespeaks him truly great. 2. That he might have an opportunity of returning his kindness. David did not take Barzillai's kindness to him as a debt, (he was none of those arbitrary princes, who think that whatever their subjects have, is theirs when they please,) but accepted it and rewarded it as a favor.

III. Barzillai's reply, wherein, 1. He admires the king's generosity, lessening his service, and magnifying the king's return for it, *v.* 36. He thought he had done himself honor enough, in doing the king any service. Thus, when the saints shall be called to inherit the kingdom, in consideration of what they have done for Christ in this world, they will be amazed at the disproportion between the service and the recompense; (Mat. 25: 37.) *Lord, when saw we Thee hungry, and fed Thee?*

2. He declines the invitation, begs his majesty's pardon for refusing so generous an offer: he should think himself very happy in being near the king, but, (1.) He is old, and unfit to remove at all, especially to court: old, and unfit for the *business* of the court; old, and unfit for the *diversions* of the court, *v.* 35. As in Moses' time, so in Barzillai's, and now, *if men be so strong that they come to fourscore years, their strength then is labor and sorrow.* Let those that are old, learn of Barzillai to be dead to the delights of sense; let grace second nature, and make a virtue of the necessity. Nay, Barzillai, being old, thinks he shall *burden the king*, rather than honor him; and a good man would not be burdensome, or, if he must be so, will rather be so to his own house than to another's. (2.) He is dying, and must begin to think of his long journey, his removal out of the world, *v.* 37. It is good for us all, but it especially becomes old people, to think and speak much of dying. 'Talk of going to court!' says Barzillai; 'let me go home and *die in my own city;* the grave is ready for me, let me go and get ready for that.'

3. He desires the king to be kind to his son Chimham; what favor is done to him, Barzilla will take as done to himself. They that are old must not grudge young people those delights which they themselves are past the enjoyment of, nor oblige them to retire as *they* do.

IV. David's farewell to Barzillai, (*v.* 39.) signifying that, in gratitude for his kindnesses, he would love him and pray for him; and with a promise, that, whatever request he should at any time make to him, he would be ready to oblige him, *v.* 48. What is the chief excellency of power, but this, that it gives men a capacity of doing the more good? He takes Chimham forward with him, and leaves it to Barzillai to choose him his preferment, *v.* 38. And, it should seem, Barzillai, who had experienced the innocency and safety of retirement, begged a country-seat for him near Jerusalem, but not in it; for, long after, we read of a place near Beth-lehem, David's city, which is called, *The habitation of Chimham*, allotted him, probably, not out of the crown-lands, or the forfeited estates, but David's paternal estate.

V. 40—43. David came over Jordan, attended and assisted by the men of Judah; when advanced as far as Gilgal, the first stage on this side Jordan, *half the people of Israel*, i. e. of their elders and great men, were come to wait on him, to kiss his hand, and congratulate him on his return, but found they came too late to witness the solemnity of his first entrance. This put them out of humor, and occasioned a quarrel between them and the men of Judah, which was a damp to the joy of the day, and the beginning of further mischief.

Here is, 1. The complaint the men of Israel brought against the men of Judah, *v.* 41. This reflected on them, as if they were not so well affected to the king and his restoration as the men of Judah were, whereas the king himself knew

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V. 31—39. The narrative of the conversation between David and Barzillai, and their affectionate parting, is exceedingly pleasing and instructive; but requiring little comment. Scott. *Singing men and singing women.*] (35.) 'Besides delicate meats and drinks, we here find that vocal music constituted a principal part of court entertainments: male and female singers made a necessary appendage to these banquets, as they do in most eastern courts [and wealthy houses] to the present day. [*Wilkinson* remarks, 'at all entertainments the ancient Egyptians had *music* and *dancing*, and sometimes buffoons to divert the guests.' Ed.] David *the sweet singer*, and sublime poet, had doubtless musicians, poets and poetesses at his court: for it is not likely he was the only poet of his time.' Dr. A. Clarke.

Verses 40—43.

The *fiercer* words, here returned, produced very bad effects. (*Judg.* 8:1—3. 12:1—7. *Prov.* 13:10. 17:14. 18:19. 1 *Cor.* 13:4—7. *Gal.* 5:13—15. *Phil.* 2:1—4. *Jam.* 3:13—18.) Scott.

the king, and we have also more *right* in David than ye: why then did ye * despise us, that [f]our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And [g] the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

CHAP. XX.

Sheba draws the men of Israel into a revolt, 1,2. David shuts up his ten concubines, 3. Amasa, being sent to call together the men of Judah, is murdered by Joab, who resumes the command and pursues Sheba, 4—13. He besieges Abel, whither Sheba had fled, 14, 15. Through the interposition of a wise woman, Sheba's head is thrown over the wall, and the revolt is terminated, 16—22. David's officers, 23—26.

AND [a]there happened to be there [b]a man of Belial, whose name *was* Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and [c]he blew a trumpet, and said, [d]We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel.

2 So [e]every man of Israel went up from after David, *and* followed Sheba the son of Bichri: but [f]the men of Judah clave unto their king, [g]from Jordan even to Jerusalem.

3 And David came to his house at Jerusalem: and the king took the [h]ten women *his* concubines, that he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood.

4 Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present.

5 So Amasa went to assemble the men of Judah: but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him.

6 And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than *did* Absalom: take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape us.

7 And there went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men: and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

8 When they were at the great stone which *is* in Gibeon, Amasa went before them. And Joab's garment that he had put on was girded unto him, and upon it a girdle with a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and as he went forth it fell out.

9 And Joab said to Amasa, Art thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him.

10 But Amasa took no heed to the sword that *was* in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again; and he died. So Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri.

11 And one of Joab's men stood by him, and said, He that favoureth Joab, and he that *is* for David, *let him go* after Joab.

12 And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a cloth upon him, when he saw that every one that came by him stood still.

13 When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

14 And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel, and to Bethmaacah, and all the Berites: and they were gathered together, and went also after him.

15 And they came and besieged him in Abel of Bethmaacah, and they cast up a bank against the city, and it stood in the trench: and all the people that *were* with Joab battered the wall, to throw it down.

16 Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee.

17 And when he was come near unto her, the woman said, Art thou Joab? And he answered, I am he. Then she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear.

18 Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask *counsel* at Abel: and so they ended *the matter*.

19 I *am one* of them that are peaceable *and* faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the LORD?

20 And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy.

21 The matter *is* not so: but a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, *even* against David: deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall.

22 Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast *it* out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.

23 Now Joab was over all the host of Israel: and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and over the Pelethites:

24 And Adoram was over the tribute: and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder:

25 And Sheva was scribe: and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests:

26 And Ira also the Jairite was a chief ruler about David.

* Heb. *set us at light.*

a 19:41—43. Ps. 34:19.
b 23:6. Deut. 13:13. Judg. 19:22. 1 Sam. 2:12. 30:22. Ps. 17:13. Prov. 26:21. Hab. 1:12,13.
c 15:10. Judg. 3:27. Prov. 24:21,22. 25:8.
d 19:43. 1 Kings 12:16. 2 Chr. 10:16.
e 15:10. Judg. 3:27. Prov. 24:21,22. Luke 19:14,27.
f 9,14. Gal. 5:20,26. Phil. 2:3.
g Judg. 9:23. 12:1—6. Prov. 15:1. 17:14. 18:19. Rom. 12:21. Gal. 5:15, 20. Jam. 1:20. 3:14—16. 4:1—5.
h 15:16. 16:21,22.

CHAP. XX. V. 1—3. How do the clouds return after the rain! No sooner is one of David's troubles over, than another arises, as it were, out of the ashes of the former, wherein the threatening is fulfilled, that the sword should never depart from his house. David, in the midst of his triumphs, has here the affliction to see his kingdom disturbed, and his family disgraced.

I. His subjects revolt at the instigation of *a man of Belial*, whom they followed when they forsook the *man after God's own heart*. We must not think it strange, while in this world, if the end of one trouble be the beginning of another: deep sometimes calls unto deep. When a reconciliation is newly made, it ought to be handled with great tenderness and caution, lest the peace break again before it be settled. A broken bone, when it is set, must have time to knit. The ring-leader of this rebellion was Sheba, a Benjamite by birth, (*v.* 1.) who had his habitation in mount Ephraim, *v.* 21. Shimei and he were both of Saul's tribe, and both retained the ancient grudge of that house. Against the kingdom of the Messiah there is an hereditary enmity in the serpent's seed, and a succession of attempts to overthrow it; but He that sits in Heaven laughs at them all. The occasion of it was that foolish quarrel, in the close of the foregoing ch. Israel complained to David of the slight Judah put on them; if he had now countenanced their complaint, commended their zeal, and returned them thanks for it, he might have confirmed them in his interest; but he seemed partial to his own tribe: *their words prevailed above the words of the men of Israel;* as some read the last words of the foregoing ch David inclined to justify them; which when the men of Israel perceived, they flew off with indignation. This Sheba proclaimed, (*v.* 1.) who, probably, was a man of note, and had been active in Absalom's rebellion; the disgusted Israelites took the hint, and *went up from after David to follow Sheba*, (*v.* 2.) i. e. the generality of them did so, only the men of Judah adhered to him.

Learn hence, (1.) Princes and parents should carry it with an even hand. (2.) Those know not what they do, that make light of the affections of their inferiors, by not countenancing and accepting them. Their hatred may be feared, whose love is despised. (3.) *The beginning of strife is as the letting forth of water;* it is *therefore* wisdom to *leave it off before it be meddled with.* How great a matter doth a little of this fire kindle! (4.) To pervert words is to subvert peace: much mischief is made by forcing invidious constructions on what is said and written, and drawing consequences that were never intended. The men of Judah said, *The king is near of kin to us*, by which, say the men of Israel, you mean, *We have no part in him;* whereas they meant no such thing. (5.) People are very apt to run into extremes, *We have ten parts in David*, said they; and almost in the next breath, *We have no part in him.* To-day, *Hosanna*, to-morrow, *Crucify.*

II. His concubines shut up for life, and he himself under the necessity of doing it, because they had been defiled by Absalom, *v.* 3. David had multiplied wives, contrary to the law, and they proved a grief and shame to him. That Absalom's villany might be buried in oblivion, they must be buried in obscurity. Nay, justice obliged him to shut them up in prison, to punish them for their easy submission to Absalom's lust, despairing, perhaps, of David's return, and giving him up for gone. Let none expect to do ill, and fare well.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 31—43. It becomes us, as we advance in life, to relinquish worldly pursuits before we be torn from them; and, leaving to our juniors those scenes of business, or of pleasure, where reflection is too often dissipated, and the voice of conscience stunned, to prefer retirement and privacy, where we may best prepare for the closing hour. And, though allowances should be made to youth, in matters *inexpedient* to old age; yet the sooner and the more entirely young people devote themselves to God, the safer and happier they will be.—It is our duty to recompense to the children, the kindness shown us by their parents, and to pray for them that they may have grace properly to use their temporal good things.—Envy and anger often interrupt the most promising appearances, and in quarrels generally both parties are culpable. [For both, by showing anger, &c. excite the same propensities in those they dispute with, till reason, and love are drowned. Yet 'a soft answer turns away wrath;' the mildness shown exciting the corresponding and better feelings of the opposite party.]—But here again, some glimpses may be discerned of the glorious character and kingdom of David's Son and David's Lord. Being anointed by the Father to be his King on his holy hill of Zion, He reigns over a willing people, who deem it their privilege to be his subjects. Once indeed they were rebels, and numbers of their associates perished in rebellion: but when they became sensible of their danger, they were fearful or reluctant to submit unto Him; till his ministers, by representing his tender love, and his promises of pardon and preferment, through the concurring influences of his Spirit, bowed their hearts to a humble willingness that He should reign over them: then He readily pardoned and accepted them, and on no accusation will He cast out, or cut off, the greatest offender who cries for his mercy. His friends sincerely mourn when his cause is run down, and rejoice when it prospers, whether they prosper in the world or not. He will recompense those, who from love to Him feed his servants; He will assign them a place in his holy city, the new Jerusalem; He will feast them on the provisions of his house, and will bless their children after them. Alas! that it must be added, that while the King Himself is so plenteous in mercy; many of his professed subjects are envious, and contentious with each other, and quarrel about the most trivial concerns; which prevents much good, does immense mischief, and occasions lamentable scandals. May He at length teach all who are called by his name, to follow the example of his humility and meekness; and to rejoice in seeing the common cause promoted, let who will have the credit of being the instrument: and may all 'endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace!' (*Note, Eph.* 4:1—6.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX. V. 1, 2. Sheba, it is probable, had been a commander under Amasa in Absalom's revolt, and possessed great influence among the men of Israel. SCOTT.

bines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in * ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So they were † shut up unto the day of their death, ‡ living in widowhood.

4 Then said the king to [i] Amasa, § Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present.

5 So Amasa went to assemble *the men of* Judah: but he [k] tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him.

6 And David said to [l] Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri [m] do us more harm than *did* Absalom: take thou [n] thy lord's servants and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities and ‖ escape us.

7 And there went out after him [o] Joab's men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men: and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

8 When they *were* at the great stone which *is* [p] in Gibeon, [q] Amasa went before them. And Joab's garment that he had put on was girded [r] unto him, and upon it a girdle *with* a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and as he went forth it fell out.

9 And Joab said to Amasa, [s] *Art* thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand [t] to kiss him.

10 But Amasa took no heed to the sword that *was* [u] in Joab's hand: so [v] he smote him therewith in the fifth *rib*, [x] and shed out his bowels to the ground, and ¶ struck him not again; and he died. So Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri.

11 And one of Joab's men stood by him, and said, [y] He that favoreth Joab, and he that *is* [z] for David, *let him go* after Joab.

12 And [a] Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a cloth upon him, when he saw that every one that came by him stood still.

13 When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

[*Practical Observations.*]

V. 4—13. We have here Amasa's fall, just as he began to rise. I. He has a commission to raise forces to suppress Sheba's rebellion, and is ordered to do it with all possible expedition, *v.* 4. It seems, the men of Judah, though forward to attend the king's triumphs, were backward enough to fight his battles; most love a loyalty, as well as a religion, that is cheap and easy. Many boast of being akin to Christ, that yet are very loath to venture for Him. Amasa finds Judah so backward and unready, that he cannot do it within the time appointed, (*v.* 5.) though his promotion, who had been their general under Absalom, was very agreeable, and a proof of the clemency of David's government.

II. Upon Amasa's delay, Abishai, the brother of Joab, is ordered to take the guards and standing forces, and with them to pursue Sheba, (*v.* 6, 7.) for nothing could be of more dangerous consequence than to give him time. David gives these orders to Abishai, because he resolves to mortify Joab, and degrade him, not so much, I doubt, for the blood of Abner, which he shed basely, as for the blood of Absalom. Joab, without orders, though in disgrace, goes with his brother, knowing he might be serviceable to the public, or perhaps now meditating the removal of his rival.

III. Joab, near Gibeon, meets Amasa, and barbarously murders him, *v.* 8—10. It should seem, the great stone in Gibeon was the place appointed for the general rendezvous: there the rivals met; and Amasa, relying on his commission, went before, as general both of the new-raised forces which he had got together, and of the veteran troops Abishai had brought in; but Joab girds his coat about him, that that might not hang in his way, and girds his belt on his coat, that his sword might be the readier; he puts his sword in a sheath too big for it, that, whenever he pleased, it might, on a little shake, fall out, as if by accident, and so he take it into his hand, unsuspected, as if to return it into the scabbard, when he designed to sheath it in the bowels of Amasa. The more there is of plot in a sin, the worse it is. He did it treacherously, and under pretence of friendship, that Amasa might not be on his guard. He called him *brother*, (they were own cousins,) inquired of his welfare, and *took him by the beard*, as one he was free with, to kiss him, while with

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—13. We must expect one trial after another, for our salutary chastisement, till we reach the place where sin and sorrow are for ever excluded.—Angry disputants commonly misunderstand, or misinterpret, one another's words: proud men will either manage every thing their own way, or entirely refuse their concurrence; and when greatly enraged, they are apt to avenge themselves on the innocent, and on persons whom they profess to love, instead of those who have affronted them.—Many a vehement quarrel would spend its fury in angry words, and then die away, if some 'man of Belial' were not present, to sound the trumpet of public contention. Satan, if permitted,—will be sure to excite such ringleaders of dissension: and God, in wise and holy sovereignty, is pleased often to permit it, that He may execute vengeance, or inflict correction, according to his righteous purposes. Hence nations are visited with war and bloodshed, especially the dire scourge of civil wars; and the church with pestilent divisions, and virulent controversies.—When immoderate and inexpedient provision is made for sensual gratification, it will surely terminate in grief and shame: and obscure retirement best suits those who are become infamous by sin.—The most powerful cannot effect all that they wish, or all that they see to be right; nay, they cannot attempt it without danger: for at last they can only do, what *the many* can be prevailed with to concur in.—By degrees men grow more and more bold and unfeeling in the commission of crimes of every kind; until they vindicate and glory in their villanies: and when such daring offenders are actuated by ambition or revenge, they will not be restrained by the ties of relationship, or friendship; nay, they will employ the guise and language of love, to obtain the opportunity of perpetrating the most atrocious murders.—The murderer may conceal his crimes, or prosper in his ways for a season, and elude or outbrave the justice of man: but let him not expect to escape the vengeance of God.—Vain are earthly distinctions and preferments, which excite so much envy and enmity, without affording any additional security to man's uncertain life: may we then be ambitious 'of that honor which cometh from God only!'—Great abilities, strong attachment to the interests of the public, and eminent services, performed with firmness, prudence, and clemency, constitute a *great*, but not always a *good* man: and a person thus peculiarly distinguished, being the slave of one imperious lust, may violate every moral obligation in order to its indulgence; though such treachery, cruelty, and injustice seem to 'be far from him,' in other parts of his conduct. SCOTT.

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* Heb. *a house of ward.* Gen. 40:3.
† Heb. *bound.*
‡ Heb. *in widowhood of life.*
i 17:25. 19:13. 1 Chr. 2:17.
§ Heb. *Call.*
k 1 Sam. 13:8.
l 2:18. 3:30,39. 10:9,10,14. 18:2,12. 21:17. 23:18. 1 Sam. 26:6. 1 Chr. 11:20. 18:12.
m 19:7.
n 11:11. 1 Kings 1:33.
‖ Heb. *deliver himself from our eyes.*
o 23. 8:16,18. 15:18. 23:22,23. 1 Kings 1:38,44.
p 2:13. 3:30.
q 4,5.
r Ps. 55:21. Prov. 26:24—26. Mic. 7:2.
s Matt. 26:48,49. Luke 22:47,48.
t 9. Judg. 3:21. 1 Chr. 12:2.
u 2:23. 3:27. Gen. 4:8. 1 Kings 2:5,6, 31—34.
x Acts 1:18,19.
¶ Heb. *doubled not his* stroke. 1 Sam. 26:8.
y 6,7,13,21.
z 4. 2 Kings 9:32.
a 17:25. Ps. 9:16. 55:23. Prov. 24:21,22.

Verses 4, 5.

Amasa's appointment to be commander of the army, in the place of Joab, must have been unpopular with all who had fought and conquered under that commander: and as Amasa had not been successful for Absalom, perhaps his own party did not entirely confide in him. This might occasion unexpected delay in raising an army. SCOTT.

Verses 8—10.

It was the Lord's righteous will, that Amasa should thus suffer the punishment due to his former treason. (3:26, 27. 18:14. *Judg.* 9:50—57.) ID.

(9.) *By the beard, to kiss him.*] 'The [east-] Indians take one another by the chin, i. e. the beard, when they would give a hearty salute.' *Della Valle.* 'It was an ancient custom among the Greeks, to take the person, to whom they had an address to make, by the chin or beard.' *Pliny. Thevenot.* 'The Arabians have a great regard for the beard; the wives kiss the husband's, and the children the father's beards, when they salute them. And when two friends meet they thus salute each other.' *D'Arvieux.* See *Burder.* 'It is a great affront to touch it, unless for this purpose.' *Harris.* ED.

(10.) *Fifth rib.*] '*Chomesh:* so rendered here and elsewhere: it means, I believe, any part of the abdominal region.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 11—13.

By the artifice of representing the cause of Joab as united with that of David, the people in general were left in suspense, whether Joab acted by the king's orders, or against them: but when the body of Amasa was removed and covered, they followed their old commander without further hesitation. SCOTT.

14 ¶ And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto [b] Abel, and to Beth-maachah, and all the [c] Berites: and they were gathered together, and went also after him.

15 And they came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maachah, and they [d] cast up a bank against the city, and * it stood in the trench: and all the people that *were* with Joab † battered the wall to throw it down.

16 Then cried [e] a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee.

17 And when he was come near unto her, the woman said, *Art* thou Joab? and he answered, I *am he.* Then she said unto him, [f] Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear.

18 Then she spake, saying, ‡ They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask *counsel* at Abel: and so they ended *the matter.*

19 I *am one of them that are* [g] peaceable *and* faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and [h] a mother in Israel: why wilt thou [i] swallow up [k] the inheritance of the LORD?

20 And Joab answered and said, [l] Far be it, far be it from me, [m] that I should swallow up or destroy.

21 The matter *is* not so: but [n] a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri § by name, hath [o] lifted up his hand against the king, *even* against David: deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, [p] his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall.

22 Then the woman went unto all the people [q] in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast *it* out to Joab: and [r] he blew a trumpet, and they ‖ retired from the city, every man to his tent. [s] And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.

23 ¶ Now [t] Joab *was* over all the host of Israel: [u] and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites, and over the Pelethites:

the drawn sword in his other hand he was aiming at his heart. Was this done like a gentleman, a soldier, a general? No, but like a villain, a base coward. Just thus he slew Abner, and went unpunished for it, which encouraged him to do the like again. He did it impudently, not in a corner, but at the head of his troops, in their sight, as one so hardened in blood and murders, that he could neither blush nor tremble. He did it in contempt and defiance of David, and the commission given Amasa: that commission was the only ground of his quarrel with him; so David was struck at through Amasa, and, in effect, told to his face, that Joab would be general, in spite of him. This ill-timed quarrel might have scattered their forces, or engaged them one against another, and so have made them all an easy prey to Sheba. So contentedly could Joab sacrifice the interest both of king and kingdom to his personal revenge.

IV. Joab immediately resumes his general's place, and leads on the army in pursuit of Sheba, that, if possible, he might prevent any prejudice to the common cause by what he had done. 1. He leaves one of his men to proclaim to the forces coming up, that they were still engaged in David's cause, but under Joab's command, *v.* 11. He knew his interest in the soldiery, and how many favored him, rather than Amasa, that had been a traitor, was now a turn-coat, and had never been successful; on this he boldly relied, and called them all to follow him. But one would wonder with what face a murderer could pursue a traitor; and how, under such heavy guilt, he had courage to enter on danger; his conscience was seared with a hot iron. 2. Care is taken to remove the dead body out of the way, because at that they made a stand, (as *ch.* 2: 23.) and to cover it with a cloth, *v.* 12, 13. Wicked men think themselves safe in their wickedness, if they can but conceal it from the eye of the world: if it be hidden, it is with them as if it were never done. But the covering of blood with a cloth cannot stop its cry in God's ear for vengeance, or make it the less loud. However, since this was no time to arraign Joab for what he had done, and the common safety called for expedition, it was prudent to remove what retarded the march of the army.

V. 14—22. We have here the conclusion of Sheba's attempt.

I. The rebel, when he had rambled over all the tribes of Israel, and found them not so willing, on second thoughts, to follow him, as they had been, on a sudden provocation, to desert David, (having only picked up a few like himself,) entered Abel Beth-maachah, a strong city in the N. in the lot of Naphtali, 2 K. 15: 29. Here he took shelter, whether by force, or with consent, does not appear, but his adherents were mostly Berites of Beeroth in Benjamin, *v.* 14. One bad man will find and make more.

II. Joab drew up all his force against the city, besieged it, battered the wall, and made ready for a general storm, *v.* 15. Justly is that place attacked with all this fury, which dares harbor a traitor; nor will that heart fare better, which indulges those rebellious lusts that will not have Christ to reign over them.

III. A discreet good woman of the city of Abel brings this matter, by her prudent management, to a good issue, so as to satisfy Joab, and yet save the city. Souls know no difference of sexes; though the man be the head, it does not therefore follow that he has the monopoly of the brains, therefore he ought not to have the monopoly of the crown; many a masculine heart, and more than masculine, has been found in a female breast; nor is the treasure of wisdom the less valuable for being lodged in the weaker vessel.

In the treaty between this nameless heroine and Joab, 1. She gains his audience and attention, *v.* 16, 17. 2. She reasons with him on behalf of her city, and very ingeniously. It was a city famous for wisdom, (*v.* 18.) as we translate it; she pleads, the city had been long in such reputation for prudent, knowing men, that it was the common referee of the country, and all agreed to abide by the award of its elders. Now, shall such a city be laid in ashes, and never treated with? The inhabitants were generally peaceable and faithful in Israel, *v.* 19. She could speak, not for herself only, but for all whose cause she pleaded, that they were not turbulent, seditious spirits, but of known fidelity, and peaceableness; neither seditious, nor litigious. It was a mother in Israel, a guide and nurse to the towns and country about; a part of *the inheritance of the Lord,* a city of *Israelites;* not of *heathens;* the destruction of which would lessen and weaken the nation God had chosen for his heritage. They expected him to offer them peace, before he made an attack on them, according to that known law of war, Deut. 20: 10. So the margin reads, *v.* 18. *They plainly spake in the beginning,* (of the siege,) *saying, Surely they will ask of Abel;* i. e. 'The besiegers will demand the traitor, and ask us to surrender him; and if so, we will soon come to an agreement, and so end the matter.'

3. Joab and Abel's advocate soon agree, that Sheba's head shall be the ransom of the city. Joab, though, in a personal quarrel, he had lately swallowed up and destroyed Amasa, yet, when he acts as a general, will by no means bear the imputation, *v.* 20. A great deal of mischief would be prevented, if contending parties would but understand one another. The single condition of peace, is, the surrender of the traitor; it is so in God's dealing with the soul, when it is besieged by conviction and distress; sin is the traitor; the beloved lust is the rebel: part with that, cast away the transgressions, and all shall be well. No peace on any other terms. Our wise woman immediately agrees to the proposal.

She went to the citizens in her wisdom, (and perhaps had as much need of it in dealing with them, as with Joab,) and persuaded them to cut off Sheba's head, probably, by some public order of their government, and it was thrown over the wall to Joab who knew the traitor's face.

V. 23—26. Here is an account of the state of David's court, after his restoration. Joab was continued general, being too great to be displaced,

b 1 Kings 15:20. 2 Kings 15:29. 2 Chr. 16:4.
c Josh. 18:25. *Beeroth.*
d 2 Kings 19:32. Jer. 32:24. 33:4. Luke 19:43.
* Or, *it stood against the outmost wall.*
† Heb. *marred to throw down.*
e 14: 2. 1 Sam. 25:3,32,33. Ec. 9:14—18.
f 14:12. 1 Sam. 25:24.
‡ Or, *They plainly spake in the beginning, saying, Surely they will ask of Abel, and so make an end.* Deut. 20: 10,11.
g Gen. 18:23. Rom. 13:3,4. 1 Tim. 2:2.
h Judg. 5:7. Ez. 16:45—49.
i 17:16. Num. 16:32. 26:10. Ps. 124: 3. Jer. 51:34,44. Lam. 2:2,5,16. 1 Cor. 15:54. 2 Cor. 5:4.
k 21:3. Ex. 19:5,6. Deut. 32:9. 1 Sam. 26:19.
l 23:17. Job 21:16. 22:18.
m 10. Prov. 28:13. Jer. 17:9. Luke 10:29.
n 1. Judg. 2:9. 7:24. 2 Kings 5:22. Jer. 4:15. 50:19.
§ Heb. *by his name.*
o 23:18. 1 Sam. 24:6. 26:9.
p 17:2,3. 2 Kings 10:7. John 18:4—8.
q Ec. 7:19. 9:14—18.
r 1. 2:28. 18:16.
‖ Heb. *were scattered.*
s 3:28—39. 11:6—21. Ec. 8:11.
t 8:16—18. 1 Chr. 18:15—17.
u See on 7.

Verse 15.

Bank.] 'Soliah. Probably a *battering engine,* or a tower overlooking the walls; whence archers and slingers could annoy the inhabitants, while others sapped the walls.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 18.

They shall surely ask counsel *at Abel: and so they ended* the matter.] 'Rather, "make indeed sure inquiry and then act accordingly."

I read *be-abel* (at Abel) as one word, *beabel,* a participle. The versions are various. She blames Joab's precipitation. *A city, a mother.*] A mother-city.' [Small towns dependent on a large one are elsewhere called daughters.] BOOTHR.

Verses 23—26.

Abiathar was the high priest: Ahimelech his son is not mentioned. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

24 And [v]Adoram *was* over the tribute: and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud [x]*was* *recorder:*

25 And [y]Sheva *was* scribe: and Zadok and Abiathar *were* the priests:

26 And [z]Ira also the [a]Jairite was †a chief ruler about David.

CHAP. XXI.

A famine prevails for three years, as a judgment on the land, for Saul's cruelty to the Gibeonites; who, being asked, require seven of his descendants, and hang them up before the Lord, 1—9. Rizpah watches their bodies: David buries their bones, with those of Saul and Jonathan, in the sepulchre of Kish; and the famine ceases, 10—14. In several battles with the Philistines, four of David's mighty men slay four giants, 15—22.

THEN there was [a]a famine in the days of David, three years, year after year: and David ‡inquired [b]of the LORD. And the LORD answered, [c]*It is* for [d]Saul, and for *his* bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.

2 And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them: (now [e]the Gibeonites *were* not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them, [f]in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah:)

3 Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for

v 1 Kings 4:6. 12:18.
x 1 Kings 4:3.
* Or, *remembrancer.*
y 8:17. 1 Kings 4:4. 1 Chr. 18:16. *Shavsha.*
z 23:38. 1 Chr. 11:40. *Ithrite.*
a Judg. 10:4,5.
† Or, *a prince.* 8:18. Gen.41,43. Ex. 2:14.
a Gen. 12:10. 26:1. 41:57. 42:1. 43:1. Lev. 26:19,20,26. 1 Kings 17:1. 18:2. 2 Kings 6:25. 8:1. Jer. 14:1,&c.
‡ Heb. *sought the face.*
b 5:19,23. Num. 27:21. 1 Sam. 23:2,4, 11. Job 5:8—10. 10:2. Ps. 50:15. 91:15.
c Josh. 7:1,11,12.
d 1 Sam. 22:17—19.
e Josh. 9:3,15—21.
f Deut. 7:16. 1 Sam. 14:44. 15:3,9. 2 Kings 10:16,31. Luke 9:54,55. John 16:2. Rom. 10:2. Gal. 4:17.

Benaiah, as before, captain of the guards. One new office is erected, which we had not, *ch.* 8: 16. that of *treasurer*, or one *over the tribute*, for it was not till toward the latter end of his time, that he began to raise taxes. Adoram was long in this office, but it cost him his life at last, 1 K. 12: 18.

CHAP. XXI. V. 1—9. The date of the events of this ch. is uncertain. I incline to think they happened as here placed, after Absalom's and Sheba's rebellion, and toward the latter end of David's reign. That the battles with the Philistines, mentioned here, were long after the Philistines were subdued, appears by comp. 1 Chr. 18: 1. with ch. 20: 4. The numbering of the people was just before the fixing of the place of the temple, (as appears, 1 Chr. 22: 1.) which was toward the close of David's life; and, it should seem, the people were numbered just before the three years' famine for the Gibeonites, for what is threatened as *three* years' famine, 1 Chr. 21: 12. is called *seven* years, 2 Sam. 24: 12, 13. Three more, with the year current, added to those three.

Here is, I. The injury Saul, long before this, did to the Gibeonites, which we had no account of in the history of his reign, nor should have heard of here, but that it came now to be reckoned for. The Gibeonites were of the remnant of the Amorites, (*v.* 2.) who by a wile had made peace with Israel, and had the public faith pledged to them by Joshua for their safety. See Josh. 9: 23. It does not appear they had broken their part of the covenant, nor was it pretended; but Saul, under color of zeal for the honor of Israel, that it might not be said they had any of the natives among them, aimed to root them out, and so slew many. What made this an exceeding sinful sin, was, that he not only shed innocent blood, but therein violated the solemn oath which bound the nation to protect them. See what brought ruin on Saul's house; it was a bloody house.

II. Israel chastised with a sore famine, long after, for this sin of Saul. 1. Even in the land of Israel, that fruitful land, and in the reign of David, that glorious reign, there was a famine, great drought, and scarcity of provisions, for three years together. If corn miss one year, commonly the next makes up the deficiency; but if three successively, it will be a sore judgment; and the man of wisdom will by it hear God's voice crying to the country, to repent of the abuse of plenty. 2. David inquired of God concerning it. Though himself a prophet, he must consult the oracle, and know God's mind in his own appointed way. Note, When under God's judgments, we ought to inquire into the grounds of the controversy. *Lord, show me wherefore Thou contendest with me.* It is strange David did not sooner consult the oracle; but, perhaps, till now, he apprehended it not to be an extraordinary judgment for some particular sin. Even good men are often remiss in duty. We continue in ignorance, and mistake, because we delay to inquire. 3. God was ready to answer, though David was slow to inquire. *It is for Saul.* Note, God's judgments often look a great way back, which obliges us to do so, when under his rebukes. It is not for us to object against the people's smarting for the sin of their king, perhaps they were aiding and abetting; nor against this generation's suffering for the sin of the last; God often *visiteth the sins of the fathers upon the children, and his judgments are a great deep;* He gives not account of any of his matters. Time does not wear out the guilt of sin; nor can we build hopes of impunity on the delay of judgments. There is no statute of limitation to be pleaded against God's demands. *God may punish when He pleases.*

III. Vengeance taken on the house of Saul, to turn away God's wrath.

1. David, probably by divine direction, referred it to the Gibeonites themselves, to prescribe what satisfaction should be given them, *v.* 3. They had many years remained silent, but now, at length, God speaks for them; *I heard not, for Thou wilt hear;* (Ps. 38: 14, 15.) and they are recompensed for their patience with this honor, that they are made judges in their own cause, *v.* 3, 4. It is sad for any family or nation to have the prayers of oppressed innocency against them; therefore the expense of a just restitution is well bestowed, to retrieve *the blessing of those that were ready to perish.* Those understand not themselves, that value not the prayers of the poor and despised.

2. They desire that seven of Saul's posterity be put to death, and David grants it.

(1.) They required no *silver, nor gold, v.* 4. Money is no satisfaction for blood; see Num. 35: 31—33. It is the ancient law, Blood calls for blood, Gen. 9: 6. The Gibeonites had now a fair opportunity to get a discharge from their servitude, according to the equity of that law, *If a man strike out his servant's eye, he shall let him go free for his eye's sake.* But they did not insist on this; they were *Nethinim*, given to God and his people Israel, and they would not seem weary of the service.

(2.) They required no lives but of Saul's family. We sue the heirs for the parent's debts; men may not extend that so far as life, Deut. 24: 16. *The children*, in an ordinary course of law, *shall never be put to death for the parents*, but this case was extraordinary. God had made Himself an immediate party to the cause, and, no doubt, put it into the heart of the Gibeonites to make this demand, for He owned what was done, (*v.* 14.) and his judgments are not subject to the rules which men's judgments must be subject to. Let parents take heed of sin, especially the sin of cruelty and oppression, for their poor children's sake, who may be smarting for it by the just hand of God, when they are in their graves. It should seem, Saul's posterity trod in his steps, for it is called *a bloody house:* it was the spirit of the family, therefore they are justly reckoned with for his sin, as well as for their own.

(3.) They would not impose it on David to do this execution, (*v.* 4, 6.) that if there were any hardship in it, they might bear the blame, and not David or his house. By our old law, if a murderer had judgment given against him on an appeal, the relations that appealed, had the executing of him [so among the Arabs, &c. now].

(4.) They did not require this, out of malice against Saul or his family, then they would have moved it themselves long before, but out of love

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 14—26. Wisdom is not restricted to rank or sex: and it does not consist in extensive knowledge, or ingenious speculations; but in understanding how to act as circumstances arise, in order that calamities may be averted, and benefits secured, personal, relative, and public.—Contending parties would often be reconciled, if they properly understood each other; hence the benefit of a prudent and impartial mediation: and the just punishment of one atrocious criminal is frequently mercy to great numbers.—Thus the sinner persists in his rebellion, till, through the Savior's mediation, he perceives that his offended Lord does not seek *his* destruction, but that of his sins: then he becomes willing that they should be crucified, especially the strongest and most domineering of them; and, receiving pardon and grace from God, he becomes peaceable, faithful, and useful in Israel. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI. V. 1—3. The history of Saul gives no account of the transaction, which was declared to be the cause of this calamity: but it seems Saul did not attempt to extirpate the Amalekites, Philistines, and other hostile nations, whom God commanded him to destroy! These were able and determined to resist, and could not be subdued without *apparent* danger and difficulty; while the inoffensive Gibeonites might be oppressed with ease, and *apparent* safety.—It does not appear, that many of them dwelt at Nob; and neither they, nor the Levites are mentioned in the transaction recorded 1 Sam. 22:9—19. Nor could it have been said, had the slaughter been made by Doeg on that occasion, that 'Saul sought to slay them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah.' It seems that Saul's relations also were disposed to cruelty, and concurred in this bloodshed; and that many Israelites had willingly assisted in the persecution. SCOTT.

(2.) *Amorites.*] 'The Gibeonites were Hivites, not Amorites, see Josh. 6:19. But Amorites is a name often given to the Canaanites in general, Gen. 15:16. Amos 11:9, &c.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

you? and [e] wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may [f]bless the inheritance of the LORD?

4 And the Gibeonites said unto him, * We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, *that* will I do for you.

5 And they answered the king, [k] The man that consumed us, and that † devised against us, *that* we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel,

6 Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will [l]hang them up unto the LORD [m] in Gibeah of Saul, ‡*whom* the LORD did choose. And the king said, I will give *them.*

7 But the king spared [n] Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, [o] because of the LORD'S oath that *was* between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul.

8 But the king took the two sons of [p] Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth: and the five sons of § Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she ‖ brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite:

9 And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill [q] before the LORD: and they fell *all* seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first *days*, [r] in the beginning of barley-harvest.

10 And [s] Rizpah the daughter of Aiah [t] took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, [u] from the beginning of harvest [x] until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither [y] the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night.

11 And it was [z] told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done.

12 And David went and took [a] the bones of Saul, and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabesh-gilead, which had stolen them from the street of [b] Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hanged them, when the Philistines had slain Saul [c] in Gilboa.

13 And he brought up from thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son; and they gathered the bones of them that were hanged.

14 And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son [d] buried they in the country of Benjamin in [e] Zelah, in the sepulchre of Kish his father: and they performed all that the king commanded. And after that [f] God was entreated for the land.

g Ex. 32:30. Lev. 1:4. 1 Sam. 2:25. Mic. 6:6,7. Heb. 9:22. 10:4-12.
h 20:19.
* Or, *it is not silver nor gold that we have to do with Saul, or his house; neither* pertains it *to us to kill, &c.*

to Israel, whom they saw plagued for the injury done to them. '*We will hang them up unto the Lord*, (*v.* 6.) to satisfy his justice, not to gratify any revenge of our own; for the good of the public, not for our own reputation.'

(5.) The nomination of the persons they left to David; who secures Mephibosheth for Jonathan's sake; avenging the breach of one oath, he would not himself break another; (*v.* 7.) but he delivered up two of Saul's sons by a concubine, and five of his grandsons, whom Merab bore to Adriel, (1 Sam. 18: 19.) but brought up by his daughter Michal, *v.* 8. Now Saul's treachery was punished, in giving Merab to Adriel, when he had promised her to David, with a design to provoke him. 'It is dangerous,' says Bp. Hall, on this, 'to offer injury to any of God's faithful ones; if their meekness have easily remitted it, their God will not pass it over without a severe retribution, though it may be long first.'

(6.) The place, time, and manner, of their execution, all added to the solemnity of their being sacrificed to divine justice. [1.] They were hung up as anathemas, under a peculiar mark of God's displeasure, Deut. 21: 23. Gal. 3: 13. [2.] They were hung up in Gibeah of Saul, (*v.* 6.) to show that it was for his sin they died. The blood of the priests, and their families, doubtless, now came in remembrance before God, and inquisition was made for it, Ps. 9: 12. Yet the blood of the *Gibeonites* only is mentioned; because that was shed, in violation of a sacred oath. The despising of the oath, and breaking of the covenant, will be recompensed on the head of those who thus profane God's sacred name, Ezek. 17: 18, 19. And thus God would show, that with Him rich and poor meet together. [3.] They were put to death *in the days of harvest*, (*v.* 9, 10.) to show they were thus sacrificed to turn away that wrath of God, which had withheld from them their harvest mercies for some years past, and to obtain his favor in the present harvest. There is no way of appeasing God's anger, but by mortifying and crucifying our lusts and corruptions. In vain do we expect mercy from God, unless we do justice on our sins. Those executions must not be complained of as cruel, which are become necessary to the public welfare. Better seven of Saul's bloody house be hanged, than all Israel famished.

V. 10—14. Here we have, I. Saul's sons not only hanged, but hanged till the judgment ceased, by the sending of rain on the land. They died as sacrifices, not consumed all at once by fire, but gradually by the air. They died as anathemas, as execrable, because iniquity was laid upon them But how shall we reconcile this with the law which expressly obliged to *bury those that were hanged, the same day?* Deut. 21: 23. It was an extraordinary case, which did not fall within that law: nay, the very reason for that law is a reason for this exception. He that is thus left hanged, is accursed, therefore ordinary malefactors must not be so abused; but therefore these must; because they were sacrificed, not to the justice of the nation, but for the crime of the nation, no less a crime than the violating of the public faith, and for the deliverance of the nation from no less a judgment than a general famine.

II. Their dead bodies watched by [the broken-hearted] Rizpah, the mother of two of them, *v.* 10. It was a great affliction to her, now in her old age, to see her two sons, who, we may suppose, had been a comfort to her, and were likely to be the support of her declining years, cut off in this dreadful manner. [It was a sight to move the deepest pity.] None know what sorrow they are reserved for. But she indulges her grief, as mourners are too apt to, to no good purpose. When sorrow, in such cases, is in danger of growing excessive, we should rather study how to divert and pacify it, than how to humor and gratify it. Thus she let the world know her sons died, not as stubborn and rebellious sons, whose eye had despised to obey their mother, Prov. 30: 17; but for their father's sin, therefore maternal love could not be alienated from them by their hard fate.

III. The solemn interment of their dead bodies, with the bones of Saul and Jonathan, in the burying-place of their family. 1. David was not displeased at Rizpah, but stirred up rather to honor the house of Saul, and these branches of it among the rest; thus it appeared it was not out of any personal disgust to the family that he delivered

i Ps. 49:7,8. 1 Pet. 1:18,19.
k 1. Esth. 9:24,25. Matt. 7:2.
† Or, *cut us off.* Dan. 9:26.
l 17:23. 18:10. Gen. 40:19,22. Num. 25:4,5. Deut. 21:22. Josh. 8:29. 10:26. Ezra 6:11. Esth. 9:10,13,14. Matt. 27:5.
m 1 Sam. 10:26. 11:4.
‡ Or, *the chosen of the LORD.* 1 Sam. 9:16,17. 10:1,24. Acts 13:21.
n 4:4. 9:10. 16:4. 19:25.
o 1 Sam. 18:3. 20:8,15,17,42. 23:18.
p 3:7.
§ Or, *Michal's sister.* 1 Sam. 18:19.
‖ Heb. *bare to.*
q See on 6.—6:21. Ex. 20:5. Num. 25: 31—34. Deut. 21:1—9. 2 Kings 24: 3,4.
r Ruth 1:22.
s 3:7.
t 1 Kings 21:27. Joel 1:13.
u See on 9.
x Deut. 11:14. 1 Kings 18:41—45. Jer. 5:24,25. 14:22. Hos. 6:3. Joel 2:23. Zech. 10:1.
y Gen. 40:19. Ez. 39:4.
z 2:4. Ruth 2:11,12.
a 2:5—7. 1 Sam. 31:11—13.
b Josh. 17:11. *Bethshean.* 1 Sam. 31: 10.
c 1:6,21. 1 Sam. 28:4. 31:1. 1 Chr. 10:1,8.
d 3:32. 4:12.
e Josh. 18:28. 1 Sam. 10:2. *Zelzah.*
f 24:25. Ex. 32:27—29. Num. 25:13. Josh. 7:26. 1 Kings 18:40,41. Jer. 14: 1—7. Joel 2:18,19. Am. 7:1—6. Jon. 1:15. Zech. 6:8.

Verses 4—7.

As God accepted the expiation here demanded, we must suppose, that both the inquiry of David, and the answer of the Gibeonites, were directed by some open or secret intimation from Him. They did what they did in the character of avengers of blood. SCOTT.

Verse 8.

This Barzillai is called 'the Meholathite;' to distinguish him from Barzillai the Gileadite before spoken of. (19:31. *Judg.* 7:22. 1 *K.* 4:12. 19:16.) ID.

Verses 9—14.

The execution of these persons was not considered to be within the meaning of the law, against the bodies of malefactors being left on a tree all night: for that statute meant, that those, who were put to death for *breaking human laws*, should not be treated as 'accursed of God.' Indeed He may *command* that, in a particular case, which He *prohibits* in general: provided it be not intrinsically unjust. He ordered the children to be put to death for the parents' crimes, though magistrates in general were forbidden to do it: and in like manner He might require this treatment of these dead bodies, though, *in some respects*, contrary to the general rule.—The first rain was a token of reconciliation: but after the expiation was finished, the scarcity was removed in answer to prayer; and doubtless the Gibeonites joined, in seeking 'this blessing for the inheritance of the LORD.' (3) SCOTT.

(9.) *Beginning of barley harvest.*] 'About the 21st. March.' DR. A. CLARKE.

(10.) '*Harmer* has shown that, *sometimes*, in dry seasons rain fell abundantly in Palestine in June or July.' BOOTHR

15 ¶ Moreover [g] the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: [h] and David waxed faint.

16 And Ishbi-benob, which *was* [i] of the sons of * the giant, (the weight of † whose spear *weighed* three hundred *shekels* of brass in weight,) he, being girded with a new *sword*, [k] thought to have slain David.

17 But [l] Abishai the son of Zeruiah [m] succored him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, [n] Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou [o] quench not the ‡ light of Israel.

18 And it came to pass after this, that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob: then [p] Sibbechai the Hushathite slew § Saph, which *was* of the sons of ‖ the giant.

19 And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where [q] Elhanan the son of ¶ Jaare-oregim, a Bethlehemite, slew *the brother of* [r] Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear *was* like a weaver's beam.

20 And there was [s] yet a battle in Gath, where was a man of *great* stature, that had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four and twenty in number; and he also was born to ** the giant.

21 And when he †† defied Israel, [t] Jonathan the son of [u] Shimeah the brother of David slew him.

22 These [x] four were born to the giant in Gath, and [y] fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

I. David himself was engaged with one of the giants: the Philistines began the war yet again, *v.* 15. The enemies of God's Israel are restless in their attempts. David fought not for his own glory, (at this age he was loaded with that, and needed no more,) but for the good of his kingdom. But now he *waxed faint*. His body could not keep pace with his mind. Their champion was soon aware of his advantage, and, being himself strong and well armed, *thought to have slain David;* but God was not in his thoughts, and therefore in that very day they all perished. The enemies of God's people are often very strong, very subtle, and very sure of success, but there is no strength, nor counsel, nor confidence, against the Lord. We must own Abishai's courage and fidelity to his prince, but, much more, the good providence of God, which brought him to David's succor, *v.* 17. in the minute of his extremity. When Abishai gave him a cordial, it may be, to relieve his fainting spirits, or appeared as his second, he (namely, David, so I understand it) *smote the Philistine, and killed him:* for it is said, (*v.* 22.) David had himself a hand in slaying the giants. David's servants, hereupon, resolved he should never expose himself thus any more. They had easily persuaded him not to fight against Absalom, (*ch.* 18: 3.) but against the Philistines he would go, till, on this

[g] 5:17,22. 1 Chr. 20:4.
[h] Josh. 14:10,11. Ps. 71:9,18. 73:26. Ec. 12:3. Is. 40:28—30. Jer. 9:23,24. 1 Pet. 1:24,25.
[i] Gen. 6:4. Num. 13:32,33. Deut. 1: 28. 2:10,21. 3:11. 9:2. 1 Sam. 17: 4,5.
* Or, *Rapha.* 18,20. *marg.* 5:18. Gen. 14:5.
† Heb. *the staff*, or *the head.*
[k] 1 Sam. 17:45—51.
[l] See on 20:6—10.
[m] 22:19. Ps. 46:1. 144:10.
[n] 18:3.
[o] 14:7. 1 Kings 11:36. 15:4. Ps. 132: 17. John 1:8,9. 5:35.
† Heb. *candle*, or *lamp.*
[p] 1 Chr. 11:29. 20:4.
§ Or, *Sippai.* 1 Chr. 20:5.
‖ Or, *Rapha.* 16,20. *marg.*
[q] 1 Chr. 11:26.
¶ Or, *Jair.* 1 Chr. 20:5.
[r] 1 Sam. 17:4,&c.
[s] 1 Chr. 20:6.
** Or, *Rapha.* 16,18. *marg.*
†† Or, *reproached.* 1 Sam. 17:10,26,2[illegible] 2 Kings 19:23.
[t] 1 Chr. 27:32.
[u] 1 Sam. 16:9. 17:13. *Shammah.* 1 Chr. 2:13. *Shimma.*
[x] 1 Chr. 20:8.
[y] Josh. 14:12. Ps. 60:12. 108:13. 118: 15. Ec. 9:11. Jer. 9:23. Rom. 8:31, 37.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Every affliction arises from sin, and should excite us to repentance: but some troubles loudly proclaim that they were especially sent to 'bring sin to remembrance.' (1 *K.* 17: 18.) In this case, we prolong our sufferings by neglecting self-examination, and prayer to the Lord to show us in what we have offended, if the cause be not already plain to our consciences: and, however reluctant, we must submit to this, before we can expect relief from his mercy.—While the grand outlines of the Lord's government are evidently righteous, some of his judgments are far too deep for us: but faith believes those appointments to be just, which assume a different appearance, and waits for the more complete display of the glory of God in them.—By the punishment of children for the sins of their parents, and of subjects for those of their princes, even after their death, He marks his abhorrence of destructive crimes, gives a check to enormous wickedness, and teaches us to pray for our rulers, and to deny our passions, out of love to our offspring: and He will so arrange the whole, that no individual shall in the event have cause to complain of injustice.—That our guilty land should experience successive years of plenty, calls for admiring gratitude; and we need not wonder, if our misused abundance should be punished with as great a scarcity. Yet when a scarce season occurs, how few are disposed to inquire of the Lord, concerning the *sinful cause;* while the ingenuity of numbers is employed in discovering the *second causes*, by which He is pleased to work; and the impatience and malignity of multitudes are expressed by outrages against those who are, generally without cause, charged with being the authors of the calamity!—The Lord will plead for those who cannot or will not avenge themselves; and the blood of nobles is not an adequate, though the only required and accepted atonement, to expiate the guilt of the murder of the meanest person, that the wrath of God may be averted from the land. Violated oaths and covenants will be severely punished, either in this world or the next, let the criminal be ever so highly exalted among his fellow creatures.—Our zeal, either for the public good or the supposed cause of religion, is *naturally* exercised in a perverse manner, and as if in contempt of God's commandments: but an apparently easy and safe exertion, which consists with our self-indulgence, and flatters our pride and lusts, is the temptation which prevails against us, unless the grace of God teach us a better way.—Little do we know what may befall our children, or what anguish they may occasion us: but if we educate them in the fear of God, and commit them to his keeping, He will either exempt us from heavy trials about them, or else support us under them. In every case, resignation to the will of God is our duty and interest; and whatever cherishes inordinate grief, is sinful, rebellious, and tormenting, however specious its appearance.—The valor and affection of friends should be acknowledged; and the strongest need the assistance of the more feeble: but the glory of every thing belongs to God. SCOTT.

Verses 15—22.

(*M. R.*) Ishbi-benob seems to have been Goliath's son, (as indeed do the others here mentioned,) and probably aimed to revenge his father's death. *Six fingers*, &c. (20) Other instances of this peculiarity are recorded by historians; and the author has been informed, by most indisputable testimony, of one such now living. [Three instances have fallen under the notice of the editor, two of which were of a father and son, and several are mentioned by Dr. A. Clarke.] SCOTT.

(18, 19.) *Gob.*] 'Several editions, about 40 of Kennicott's and De Rossi's mss. read *Nob;* but Gezer is the name, 1 Chr. 20:4. *Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim—slew—Goliath the Gittite.*] Here is a most manifest corruption of the text, or gross mistake of the transcriber; David slew Goliath. In 1 Chr. 20:5. it is thus—"Elhanan, the son of Jair, slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, whose spear's staff was like a weaver's beam." This is plain, and our translators have *borrowed* some words from Chr. to make both texts agree. The corruption may be easily accounted for by considering, that *oregim* (*weavers*), has slipped out of one line into the other; and that *Beth ha lechmi*, (*the Bethlehemite*) is corrupted from *eth lachmi;* then the reading will be the same as in Chron. *Kennicott.*' Dr. A. CLARKE;—who, at the close of this ch. gives several reasons for suspecting, that the text of it has unusually suffered, so that the facts have been distorted: accounting for it from the distinction made by the Jewish rabbis between the *different degrees of inspiration*, and their less careful preservation of the historical records. But he concludes with saying, —'still the great foundation of God standeth sure, and is sufficiently attested by his own broad seal of consistency, truth, and holiness.' ED.

CHAP. XXII.

The introduction to David's psalm of thanksgiving, 1. He professes his confidence and joy in God, 2, 3. He states his trials and dangers, and celebrates the praises of God for surprising deliverances, 4—20. He avows his integrity, and shows the method of the Lord's dealings with men, 21—28. He ascribes to God all the glory of his victories, 29—36. He exults, with grateful praises, in the destruction or subjection of all his enemies, 37—44. He anticipates the submission of the nations, and glories in the salvation of God, and his mercies to him and to his Seed for ever, 45—51.

AND [a] David spake unto the LORD [b] the words of this song, [c] in the day *that* the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and [d] out of the hand of Saul:

2 And he said, [e] The LORD *is* my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer;

3 The God of my rock, [f] in him will I trust; *he is* my [g] Shield, and [h] the Horn of my salvation, [i] my high Tower, and [k] my Refuge, [l] my Savior; [m] thou savest me from violence.

4 I [n] will call on the LORD, *who is* [o] worthy to be praised: [p] so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

5 When the * waves of death compassed me, [q] the floods of † ungodly men made me afraid;

6 [r] The ‡ sorrows of hell compassed me

a Ps. 50:14. 103:1—6. 116:1,&c.
b Ex. 15:1. Judg. 5:1.
c 49. Ps. 18: *title.* 34:19. Is. 12:1, &c. 2 Cor. 1:10. 2 Tim. 4:18. Rev. 7:9—17.
d 1 Sam. 23:14. 24:15. 25:29. 26:24. 27:1.
e Deut. 32:4. 1 Sam. 2:2. Ps. 18:2. 31:3. 42:9. 71:3. Matt. 16:18.
f Heb. 2:13.
g Gen. 15:1. Deut. 33:29. Ps. 3:3. 5: 12. 28:7. 84:9,11. 115:9—11. Prov. 30:5.
h 1 Sam. 2:1. Luke 1:69.
i 51. Ps. 61:3. 144:2. Prov. 18:10.
k Ps. 9:9. 18:2. 27:5. 32:7. 46:1,7, 11. 71:7. 142:4. Is. 32:2. Jer. 16:19.
l Is. 12:2. 45:21. Luke 1:47,71. Tit. 3:4,6.
m 49. Ps. 55:9. 72:14. 86:14. 140:1, 4,11.
n Ps. 116:2,4,13,17.
o Neh. 9:5. Ps. 18:3. 66:2. 106:2. 148: 1—4. Rev. 4:11. 5:12.
p Ps. 34:6. 50:15. 55:16. 56:9. 57:1 —3. Rom. 10:13.
* Or, *pangs.* 1 Thes. 5:3.
q Ps. 18:4. 69:14,15. 93:3,4. Is. 59:19. Jer. 46:7,8. Rev. 12:15,16. 17:1,15.
† Heb. *Belial.*
r Ps. 18:5. 116:3. John 2:2. Acts 2: 24.
‡ Or, *cords.* Job 36:8. Ps. 140:5. Prov. 5:22.

narrow escape, it was resolved in council, and confirmed with an oath, that *the light of Israel* (its guide and glory, so David was) should never be put again into such hazard of being blown out.

II. The rest of the giants fell by the hand of David's servants, *v.* 18—20. Shimea (*v.* 21.) had one son named *Jonadab*, 2 Sam. 13: 3. I should have taken it for the same with this Jonathan; but that was noted for subtilty, this for bravery. These giants, probably, were the remains of the sons of Anak, who, though long feared, fell at last. The most powerful enemies are often reserved for the last conflict. David began his glory with the conquest of one giant, and here concludes it with the conquest of four. Death is a Christian's last enemy, and a son of Anak; but through Him that triumphed for us, we hope, even over that enemy, to be more than conquerors at last.

CHAP. XXII. This ch. is a psalm of praise; we find it afterward inserted among David's psalms, (Ps. 18.) with some little variation. We have it *here*, as it was at first composed for his own closet, and his own harp, but *there* as afterward delivered to the chief musician for the service of the church; though calculated primarily for David's case, yet it adapts itself to, [or] might aptly serve the devotion of others, in giving thanks for their deliverances: or, it was intended his people should thus join with him in his thanksgivings, because, being a public person, his deliverances were to be accounted public blessings, and called for public acknowledgments. The inspired historian, having largely related David's deliverances, in this and the foregoing ch. thought fit to record this sacred poem, as a memorial of all that had been before related. *In the day that God delivered him, he sang this song.* While the mercy is fresh and we are most affected with it, let the thank-offering be brought, to be kindled with the fire of that affection. Some think David penned this psalm when he was old, on a general review of the mercies of his life, and the many wonderful preservations God had blessed him with, from first to last. We should, in our praises, look as far back as we can, and not suffer time to wear out the sense of God's favors. Others think he penned it when young, on occasion of some of his first deliverances, and kept it by him for his use afterward, and that, on every new deliverance, his practice was to sing it. But the book of Psalms shows that he varied, as there was occasion, and confined not himself to one form.

V. 1—51. Let us observe, in this song of praise,

I. How David adores God, and gives Him the glory of his infinite perfections. There is none like Him, nor any to be compared with Him, *v.* 32. All others that are adored as deities, are counterfeits and pretenders. None are to be relied on besides. They are dead, but *the Lord liveth, v.* 47. They disappoint their worshippers, when they most need them. But *as for God, his way is perfect, v.* 31. Men begin in kindness, but end not; promise, but perform not; but God will finish his work, and his word is tried, and what we may trust.

II. How he triumphs in the interest he had in this God, and his relation to Him, which He lays down as the foundation of all the benefits he had received from Him. *He is my God;* as such he cries to Him, (*v.* 7.) and cleaves to Him; (*v.* 22.) and if *my God*, then, *my Rock;* (*v.* 2.) i. e. my Strength, and my Power, (*v.* 33.) the Rock under which I take shelter, and who is to me as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land; the Rock on which I build my hope, *v.* 3. Whatever is my strength and support, it is *the God of my rock that makes it so;* nay, He is *the God of the rock of my salvation*, (*v.* 47.) my saving strength is in Him and from Him. David often hides himself in a rock, (1 Sam. 24: 2.) but God was his chief Hiding-place. He is *my High-tower*, or Stronghold, in which I am out of the reach of evil; the *Tower of salvation*, (*v.* 51.) which can neither be scaled, nor battered, nor undermined; salvation itself saves me. Am I in distress? He is my Deliverer. Struck at? Shot at? He is my Shield. Pursued? He is my Refuge. Oppressed? He is my Savior, that rescues me out of the hand of those that seek my ruin. Nay, He is the *Horn of my salvation*, by which I am strongly protected, and my enemies strongly pushed. Christ is spoken of as the *Horn of salvation* in the house of David, Luke 1: 69. Am I burdened, and ready to sink? *The Lord is my Stay*, (*v.* 19.) by whom I am supported. Am I in the dark, benighted, at a loss? *Thou art my Lamp, O Lord*, to show me my way, and wilt *lighten my darkness, v.* 29. If we sincerely take the Lord for our God, all this, and much more, He will be to us, all we need and can desire.

III. What improvement he makes of his interest in God. If He be mine, 1. *In Him will I trust;* (*v.* 3.) i. e. I will resign myself to Him, and then depend on his power, and wisdom, and goodness, to conduct me well. 2. *On Him will I call*, (*v.* 4.) for *He is worthy to be praised.* What we have found in God, that is worthy to be praised, should engage us to pray to Him, and thereby we do, in effect, praise Him, and give glory to Him. 3. *To Him will I give thanks*, (*v.* 50.) and that publicly; when among the heathen, he would neither be afraid nor ashamed to own his obligations to the God of Israel.

IV. The full and large account he keeps for himself, and gives to others, of the great and kind things God had done for Him. This takes up most of the song.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII. V. 1. It is probable, this song of praise was composed early in the reign of David, and soon after he was finally delivered from the persecuting rage of Saul. The variations [between this and the 18th Ps.] are immaterial; though the Jewish writers enumerate no less than 74. Few of them need be here particularly noted. (*Ps.* 18:1.)—The first v. of this ch. forms the title of Ps. 18. with some alterations; the most remarkable of which is, the insertion of the words, 'The servant of the LORD,' in which it seems, the Psalmist deemed himself more honored, than in being a renowned conqueror, and a very prosperous king. [Nay, one of the greatest of kings.]—In the whole of this sacred hymn, David seems immediately to celebrate providential deliverances: yet he uses language, which may fairly be accommodated to spiritual blessings. He appears also primarily to speak of the Lord's dealings with himself: yet he was led by the prophetic Spirit to utter many things, which may with great propriety be applied to the Redeemer's sufferings and victories, of whom David was an evident and remarkable type. (*Ps.* 2: 22:1. 40:1—5. 69:1—3. 88:1, 2.) SCOTT.

'The title may only denote the time when David composed this prophetic hymn; that, *when delivered from all his other enemies, as well as from the hand of Saul*, he *then* consecrated his leisure, by writing the sublime prophecy concerning MESSIAH, his Son; *whom* he represents here as speaking, just as in Ps. 22:40. and other places,) and as describing, 1. His triumph over death and hell. 2. The manifestation of Omnipotence in his favor; earth and heaven trembling at God's awful presence. 3. The speaker's innocence, thus divinely attested. 4. The vengeance He was to take on his own people, the Jews, in the destruction of Jerusalem; and, 5. The adoption of the *heathen*, over whom He was to be Head and Ruler.' KENNICOTT.

Verses 2, 3.

The eighteenth psalm abruptly begins, 'I will love Thee, O LORD, my Strength;' words added, perhaps, when it was made public, as an expression of David's exulting gratitude, in order to kindle the devotions of the people. (*Ps.* 18:1.)—The accumulation of metaphors here used, as descriptive of David's expectations from God, which had been fully answered, denotes, that those energetic figures of speech, which commonly exceed the bounds of exact truth, are too feeble to express what God is to his believing people, and what He does for them. (2 *Cor.* 4:13—18.) Several expressions, as 'The God of my rock,' and 'the Horn of my salvation,' seem to refer to the person of the Redeemer, 'God manifested in the flesh,' become the Salvation of his people, and in human nature displaying divine power and authority in the redemption of believers, and the destruction of their enemies. (*Ps.* 27:1—3. *Is.* 12:2. 45:15—17. *Matt.* 1:20, 21. *Luke* 2:25—32. *Tit.* 2:13. 3:4—7.) SCOTT.

Verses 5, 6.

These verses contain a figurative and poetical description of the violence of David's enemies, and the imminent danger to which he was exposed. In this he was a type of Christ our King, when agonizing in the garden; when He endured the severest tortures, the pangs of death, the temptations of Satan, yea, the wrath of God against our sins; and was at the same time surrounded by the insulting scribes, priests, and people. (*Ps.* 18:4, 5. 40:1—5.) IN.

about; the [p]snares of death prevented me;

7 In [t]my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God: and he [u]did hear my voice [v]out of his temple, and [x]my cry *did enter* into his ears.

8 Then [y] the earth shook and trembled; [z]the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because he was wroth.

9 There [a]went up a smoke * out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: [b]coals were kindled by it.

10 He [c]bowed the heavens also, and came down; and [d] darkness *was* under his feet.

11 And he rode upon [e]a cherub, and did fly: and he was seen [f]upon the wings of the wind.

12 And he made darkness [g] pavilions round about him, † dark waters, *and* thick clouds of the skies.

13 Through the brightness before him were [h]coals of fire kindled.

14 The LORD [i]thundered from heaven, and the Most High uttered his voice.

15 And he sent out [j] arrows, and scattered them; lightning, and discomfited them.

16 And [k]the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were discovered, at the [l]rebuking of the LORD, at the blast of the breath of his ‡ nostrils.

17 He [m] sent from above; he took me; [n]he drew me out of § many waters;

18 He [o]delivered me from my strong enemy, *and* from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me.

19 They [p]prevented me in the day of my calamity; but [q]the LORD was my stay.

20 He [r]brought me forth into a large place: he delivered me, because he [s]delighted in me.

[*Practical Observations.*]

21 The LORD [t]rewarded me according to my righteousness: according to the [u]cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.

22 For [x]I have kept [y]

1. He magnifies the great salvations God had wrought for him, *v.* 3, 4, 18, 36. God sometimes brings his people into very great difficulties and dangers, that He may have the honor of saving them, and they the comfort of being saved by Him. To magnify the salvation, he observes, (1.) That the danger was very great and threatening, out of which he was delivered, *v.* 40, 49. This is expressed figuratively, *v.* 5, 6. (2.) That his deliverance was in answer to prayer, *v.* 7. He has here left us a good example, when in distress, to cry unto God with importunity, as children, in a fright, cry to their parents; and great encouragement to do so, in that he found God ready to answer. (3.) That God appeared in a singular and extraordinary manner for him, and against his enemies: the expressions are borrowed from the descent of the Divine Majesty on Sinai, *v.* 8, 9, &c. We do not find that in any of David's battles, God fought for him, either with thunder, as in Samuel's time, or with hail, as in Joshua's, or with the stars in their courses, as in Deborah's: but those lofty metaphors are used, 1. To set forth the glory of God, which was manifested in his deliverance. His wisdom and power, his goodness and faithfulness, his justice and holiness, and his sovereign dominion over all the creatures and all the counsels of men, which appeared in favor of David, were as clear and bright a discovery of God's glory to an eye of faith, as those would have been to an eye of sense. 2. To set forth God's displeasure against his enemies, *v.* 9, 13, 15. Who knows the power and terror of his wrath? 3. To set forth the vast confusion his enemies were put into, and their consternation, *v.* 8, 16. as if the earth had trembled, and the *foundations of the world* had been discovered. 4. To show how ready God was to help him, *v.* 11. Yet, as *a God hiding*

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* Prov. 19:14. 14:27.
[t] Ps. 116:4. 120:1. Matt. 26:38,39. Luke 22:44. Heb. 5:7.
[u] Ex. 3:7. Ps. 34:6,15—17.
[v] 1 Kings 8:28—30. Ps. 18:6. 27:4. Jon. 2:4,7. Hab. 2:20.
[x] Jam. 5:4.
[y] Judg. 5:4. Ps. 18:7. 77:18. 97:4. Hab. 3:6—11. Matt. 27:51. 28:2. Acts 4:31.
[z] Job 26:11. Nah. 1:5,6.
[a] 16. Ex. 15:7,8. 19:18. 24:17. Deut. 32:22. Job 4:9. 41:20,21. Ps. 18:8, 15. 97:3—5. Is. 30:27,33. Jer. 5:14. 15:14. Heb. 12:29.
* Heb. *by his, &c.*
[b] Hab. 3:5.
[c] Ps. 144:5. Is. 64:1—3.
[d] Ex. 20:21. Deut. 4:11. 1 Kings 8:12. Ps. 97:2. 104:3. Matt. 27:45. Luke 23:44,45.
[e] Gen. 3:24. Ex. 25:19. 1 Sam. 4:4. Ps. 18:10. 68:17. 80:1. 99:1. Ez. 9: 3. 10:2—14. Heb. 1:14.
[f] Ps. 104:3. 139:9,10.
[g] Ps. 18:11,12. 27:5.
† Heb. *binding of waters.*
[h] 9.
[i] Ex. 19:16. Judg. 5:20. 1 Sam. 2:10. 7:10. 12:17,18. Job 37:2—5. 40:9. Ps. 29:3—9. 77:16—19. Is. 30:30. Ez. 10:5. Rev. 11:19.
[j] Deut. 32:23. Josh. 10:10. Ps. 7:12, 13. 18:14. 45:5. 144:6,7. Hab. 3:11.
[k] Ex. 14:21—27. 15:8—10. Ps. 18:15 —17. 114:3—7.
[l] Ex. 15:8. Job 38:11. Ps. 106:9. Nah. 1:4. Hab. 3:8—10. Matt. 8:26,27.
‡ Or, *anger.* 9. Ps. 74:1.
[m] Ps. 18:16,17. 144:7.
[n] Ps. 32:6. 59:1,2. 93:3,4. 124:4,5. 130:1. Is. 43:2. Lam. 3:54. Rev. 17:16.
§ Or, *great.*
[o] 1. Ps. 3:7. 56:9. 2 Cor. 1:10. 2 Tim. 4:17.
[p] 15:10—13. 1 Sam. 19:11—17. 23:26, 27. Ps. 18:18,19. 118:10—13. Matt. 27:39—44.
[q] Ps. 71:20,21. Is. 26:3,4. 50:10.
[r] Gen. 26:22. 1 Chr. 4:10. Ps. 31:8. 118:5. Hos. 4:16.
[s] 15:26. Ps. 22:8. 147:11. 149:4. Is. 42:1. Matt. 3:17. 17:5. 27:43. Acts 2:32—36.
[t] 25. 1 Sam. 26:23. 1 Kings 8:32. Ps. 7:3,4,8. 18:20—25. 19:11. 1 Cor. 15:58.
[u] Job 17:9. Ps. 24:4. Jam. 4:8.
[x] Num. 16:15. 1 Sam. 12:3. Job 23:10 —12. 2 Cor. 1:12.
[y] Gen. 18:19. Ps. 119:1—3. 128:1. Prov. 8:32.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—20. When we have received mercies from God, we ought, without delay, to render him our tribute of praise and gratitude.—They who know the Lord in his glorious perfections, and the various relations in which He stands to his rational creatures, and especially as 'a God of salvation;' and who thus learn to fear, trust, love and serve Him, choosing Him as their Portion, and waiting for his mercy unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ, and according to the covenant which He mediated, may expect from Him every conceivable blessing. They are assailed by powerful enemies, and exposed to manifold troubles and dangers, from without; they are often disquieted by distressing fears and terrors of conscience, from within; while Satan pours in his horrible suggestions to aggravate their distress, and to urge them to despair. But in their extreme distress they cry unto the Lord with the greatest earnestness, and He supports them, and appears for their relief: so that all their sorrows and fears shall terminate in the more conspicuous display of the glory of God's perfections, and in the evidence of his special love to them: and however painful their feelings are at present, the retrospect shall hereafter be delightful.—The judgments of God are no less terrible now on the enemies of his people, than they were, when the earth swallowed them up, the depths of the sea overwhelmed them, or the fire of the Lord consumed them: though they are less noticed, because more spiritual, and chiefly executed in the eternal world. For still the whole creation fights against his enemies, yea, his own almighty arm is lifted up to destroy *them*, as well as to deliver those who trust in Him. SCOTT.

Verses 7—16.

When every other hope failed, the Psalmist simply and earnestly sought help from God; whose manifested presence, in the sanctuary above the mercy-seat, represented his tabernacling in human nature, as 'God our Savior;' and our access to Him on a throne of grace; (*Ex.* 25:10—21.) as well as his exalted display of his glorious presence in his holy temple in heaven.—His 'riding upon a cherub,' and 'his flying on the wings of the wind,' denote the ministration of angels, and the speed with which He effected the deliverance of his servant. (*Gen.* 3:22—24. *Ps.* 104:4. *Ez.* 1:4—25. 10:1—22. 11:22—25.) 'The coals of fire kindled' at his presence, may indicate, that the wrath of God arms all creatures against his enemies, or that it will consume them as fuel is consumed by the fire.—Here David was eminently the type of Christ; and the figurative language, used by him, was in many respects exactly accomplished in the preternatural convulsions attending our Lord's death and resurrection. (*Ps.* 18:6—15. *Matt.* 27:51—53. 28:1—8.) SCOTT.

(11.) 'In the original of this sublime passage, *sense* and *sound* are astonishingly well connected. "Nayirkav al keruv vaiyaoph; vaiyera al canphey ruach." The *clap* of the *wing*, the *agitation* and *rush* through the air, are expressed here in a very extraordinary manner.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 17, 18

Goliath and Saul, and other enemies were perhaps intended by the Psalmist: but the victory of Christ over 'death and him that has the power of death,' was prefigured. SCOTT.

Verse 19.

When David had framed a plan for secreting or securing himself, 'in the day of his calamity,' his enemies employed treachery and malice to prevent his success. Thus the men of Keilah were ready to deliver him to Saul, and the Ziphites repeatedly informed of him: (1 *Sam.* 23:9—13, 19—28. 26:1, 2.) therefore, notwithstanding his own prudence and activity, he must have been cut off, if the Lord Himself had not protected him, by his own immediate and extraordinary interposition. SCOTT.

Verse 20.

David had been straitened in dens and caves, as in a prison, and was afraid to go abroad in the open air: but now, through the divine goodness, he might walk at liberty, according to his own inclination. The words may also refer to the extent of his dominions, and the greatness of his prosperity, compared with his former difficulties. (*Ps.* 31:7, 8. 118:5. 142: *title.* 6, 7.) All this the Lord had done for him, 'because He delighted in him,' as the object of his special love, and a partaker of his sanctifying grace; and as, in the general tenor of his conduct, 'a man after his own heart.' (*Note*, *Ps.* 22:7, 8.) ID.

Verses 21—28.

This profession did not relate to David's 'justification in the sight of God;' nor was it intended as a vindication of every part of his conduct, as not needing forgiveness. (*Ps.* 130:3, 4. 143:2.) But it was the same consciousness of general integrity, which every true believer possesses, and may on some occasions avow, as an answer to un-

the ways of the LORD, and [z] have not wickedly departed from my God.

23 For [a] all his [b] judgments *were* before me: and *as for* his statutes, [c] I did not depart from them.

24 I was also [d] upright * before him, and have [e] kept myself from mine iniquity.

25 Therefore the LORD hath [f] recompensed me according to my righteousness; according to my cleanness † in his eye-sight.

26 With [g] the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful, *and* with the upright man thou wilt show thyself upright.

27 With [h] the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with [i] the froward thou wilt ‡ show thyself unsavory.

28 And [k] the afflicted people thou wilt save: [l] but thine eyes *are* upon the haughty, *that* thou mayest bring *them* down.

29 For thou *art* my § Lamp, O LORD: and the LORD will [m] lighten my darkness.

30 For by thee I have ‖ run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall.

31 *As for* God, [n] his way *is* perfect; [o] the word of the LORD *is* ¶ tried: he *is* [p] a Buckler to all them that trust in him.

32 For [q] who *is* God, save the LORD? and who *is* [r] a rock, save our God?

33 God *is* my [s] Strength *and* Power: and he ** maketh [t] my way [u] perfect.

34 He †† maketh my feet [v] like hinds' *feet;* and [x] setteth me upon my high places.

35 He [y] teacheth my hands ‡‡ to war; so that [z] a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.

36 Thou hast also given me [a] the shield of thy salvation: and thy [b] gentleness hath §§ made me great.

37 Thou hast [c] enlarged my steps under me; so that [d] my ‖‖ feet did not slip.

38 I have [e] pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them; and turned not again until I had consumed them.

39 And I have [f] consumed them, and wounded them, that they could not arise: yea, they are fallen under my feet.

40 For thou hast [g] girded me with strength to battle: [h] them that rose up against me hast thou ¶¶ subdued under me.

41 Thou hast also given me the [i] necks of mine enemies, that [k] I might destroy them that hate me.

42 They looked, but *there was* none to save; *even* [l] unto the LORD, but he answered them not.

z Ps. 36:3. 125:5. Zeph. 1:6. John 15: 10. Heb. 10:38,39.
a Ps. 119:6,95,128. Luke 1:6. John 15: 14.
b Deut. 6:1,2. 7:12. Ps. 19:8,9. 119: 13,30,102.
c Deut. 8:11.
d Gen. 6:9. 17:1. Job 1:1. Ps. 51:6. 84:11. John 1:47. 2 Cor. 5:11.
* Heb. *to him.*
e Prov. 4:23. Heb. 12:1.
f 21. Is. 3:10. Rom. 2:7,8. 2 Cor. 5: 10.
† Heb. *before his eyes.* Prov. 5:21.
g Matt. 5:7. Jam. 2:13.
h Matt. 5:8.
i Lev. 26:23—28. Deut. 28:58—61. Ps. 125:5.
‡ Or, *wrestle.* Ex. 18:11. Ps. 18:26. Is. 45:9.
k Ex. 3:7,8. Ps. 12:5. 72:12,13. 140: 12. Is. 61:1—3. 63:9. Matt. 5:3.
l Ex. 9:14—17. 10:3. 18:11. Job 40: 11,12. Ps. 138:6. Prov. 21:4. Is. 2: 11. 37:23,28,29. Dan. 4:37. Jam. 4: 6,7. 1 Pet. 5:5,6.
§ Or, *Candle.* Job 29:3. Ps. 27:1. 84: 11. John 8:12. Rev. 21:23.
m Ps. 4:6. 18:28. 97:11. 112:4. Is. 50:10. 60:19,20. Mic. 7:9. Mal. 4: 2. John 12:46.
‖ Or, *broken a troop.* Ps. 18:29. 118: 10—12. Rom. 8:37. Phil. 4:13.
n Deut. 32:4. Dan. 4:37. Matt. 5:48. Rev. 15:3.
o Ps. 12:6. 18:30. 119:140. Prov. 30:5.
¶ Or, *refined.*
p 3. Ps. 35:2. 91:4. Prov. 2:7.
q Deut. 32:31,39. 1 Sam. 2:2. Is. 42:8. 44:6,8. 45:5,6,21. Jer. 10:6,7,16.
r 2,3.
s Ex. 15:2. Ps. 18:32. 27:1. 28:7,8. 31:4. 46:1. Is. 41:10. Zech. 10:12. 2 Cor. 12:9. Eph. 6:10. Phil. 4:13
** Heb. *rideth* or *looseth.*
t Heb. 13:21.
u Deut. 18:13. Job 22:3. Ps. 101:2,6. 119:1.
†† Heb. *equalleth to.*
v 2:18. Deut. 33:25. Hab. 3:19.
x Deut. 32:13. Is. 33:16. 58:14.
y Ps. 18:33,34. 144:1.
‡‡ Heb. *for the war.*
z Ps. 46:9. Ez. 39:3,9,10.
a Gen. 15:1. Ps. 84:11. Eph. 6:16.
b Ps. 18:35.
§§ Heb. *multiplied me.* Gen. 12:2. 22: 17. Ps. 115:14.
c Ps. 4:1. 18:36. Prov. 4:12.
d 1 Sam. 2:9. Ps. 17:5. 94:18. 119: 117. 121:3.
‖‖ Heb. *ankles.*
e 5:18—25. 8:1,2,13,14. 10:14. Ps. 21: 8,9. Rom. 8:37.
f Is. 18:37,38. 110:1,5,6. 118:10—12. Mal. 4:1,3.
g 1 Sam. 17:48—51. 23:5. Ps. 18:32,39. Is. 45:5. Col. 1:11.
h Ps. 44:5. 144:2.
¶¶ Heb. *caused to bow.* Is. 60:14. Rev. 3:9.
i Gen. 49:8. Ex. 23:27. Josh. 10:24. Ps. 18:40,41.
k Ps. 21:8,8. Luke 19:14,27. 2 Thes. 1:8,9.
l 1 Sam. 28:6. Job 27:9. Prov. 1:28. Is. 1:15. Ez. 20:3. Mic. 3:4. Matt. 7:22,23. Luke 13:25,26.

Himself, (Isa. 45: 15.) He *made darkness his pavilion,* (*v.* 12.) for the amazement of his enemies, and the protection of his own people. (4.) That God manifested his particular favor and kindness to him in these deliverances, *v.* 20. The deliverance came not from common providence, but covenant-love; he was treated as a favorite; so he perceived by the communications of divine grace and comfort to his soul, with these deliverances, and the communion he had with God in them. Herein he was a type of Christ, whom God upheld, because He *delighted in Him,* Isa. 42: 1, 2.

2. He magnifies the great successes God had crowned him with; He had not only preserved, but prospered him. He was blest, (1.) With liberty and enlargement, *v.* 20. he had room to thrive; his *steps were enlarged under him,* (*v.* 37.) and no longer straitened and confined. [No longer tottering, but established on a broad base.] (2.) With military skill, strength, and swiftness. God, having called him to fight his battles, qualified him for the service, made him very ingenious, *v.* 35. vigorous and valiant, *v.* 40. He gives God the glory of all his courage and ability for service. He was very expeditious too, *v.* 34. which is of great advantage, both in charging and retreating. (3.) With victory over his enemies, not only Saul and Absalom, but the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Syrians, and other neighboring nations. His wonderful victories are here described, *v.* 38—43. as *speedy* and *complete:* (4.) With advancement to honor and power. To this he was anointed before his troubles began, and at length gained his point. God *made his way perfect,* (*v.* 33.) gave him success in all his undertakings *set him on his high places,* (*v.* 34.) denoting both safety and dignity, and

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merited reproach, consistently with the deepest humility, and the most entire dependence on the mercy and grace of God through Jesus Christ. (2 *Cor.* 1:12—14. 1 *Thes.* 2:9—12. 1 *John* 3:18—24.) And the gracious recompense, of which David spoke, may be generally expected by those, who act conscientiously in the sight of God, from right motives. This accords to his method of dealing with mankind, and especially with his professed worshippers. If He sees them humble, sincere, teachable, watchful, loving, pure, and obedient in their general conduct; He will be merciful and kind to them, and will fulfil his promises, and communicate his holy consolations, to them: but if He sees them dissembling or perverse, 'He will wrestle with them.' He will likewise save those who are poor in spirit, and suffer persecution for his sake; but with his wrath He will frown upon proud oppressors to bring them down. (*M. R.* k, l.)—It should be remembered, that David, in these things, was a type of Christ, to whom many of the expressions here used are applicable in the fullest sense, and to Him alone. SCOTT.

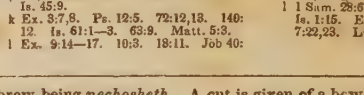
Verses 29, 30.

Many of the verbs, in different parts of the Psalm, are future in the original: probably, as expressing David's previous believing expectations, to which the subsequent events corresponded; and thus turned the language of hope into that of thanksgiving. ID.

Verses 34, 35.

As hinds [or other animals of the goat kind] climb the craggy rocks, and stand firm on the slippery summit of the precipice [in consequence of that peculiar structure of their hoofs, concave on the bottom with a hard, horny rim]; so David had been upheld in the most dangerous and slippery paths, and advanced to his present exalted station, by the providence and grace of God: (*Deut.* 33:24, 25. *Hab.* 3:17—19.) and his extraordinary skill and strength in war must be ascribed to the same cause.—The word rendered *steel,* generally signifies *copper,* or *brass,* of which the ancients frequently made arms: though bows, requiring elasticity, could not well be made of it. ID.

(35.) *Bow of steel.*] Rather of *copper, brass,* or *bronze,* the Hebrew being *nechosheth.* A cut is given of a bow of bronze, [so *Champollion,*] from the monuments of Egypt. It was used also as a kind of noose to entangle the bow or arms of an antagonist,



and draw him within reach of a spear or sword. ED.

Verse 36.

Gentleness, &c] The rebukes, corrections, and instructions, which the Lord intermixed with his merciful forgiveness, encouragements, and deliverances, like the gentle tuition of a kind parent, tended to prepare David for prosperity and authority, and to advance him to them. SCOTT.

Verses 37—42.

The meaning of these vs. as applied to David, wants no other explanation than the preceding history, implying his believing anticipations, fully verified by the event. But they are peculiarly descriptive of the Redeemer's conflicts and victories, and especially of the inevitable destruction which came upon the Jews, and the disgraceful dispersion of the degraded remnant of that nation, for crucifying the Lord of glory, and rejecting the Gospel. They cried and still cry to the Lord to save them; but refusing to obey his beloved Son, He vouchsafes them no answer.—Thus David's enemies, in their extreme distress, are represented as crying to the Lord for deliverance from impending ruin; but, as they did it not in repentance, faith, and integrity, it was in vain. Thus Saul inquired of the Lord, and He answered him not. (1 *Sam.* 28:6. 1 *Chr.* 10:13, 14.) ID.

(41.) *The necks.*] Egyptian monuments represent conquered nations with halters round their necks. Such appear carved on the lower part of the throne, cut 2 K. 10:19. 'A proprietor of slaves is said [in India] to have their *necks.* To a person going amongst wicked or cruel people it is said, "Go not there, your neck, (or nape,) will be given to

43 Then did I beat them [m] as small as the dust of the earth: I did stamp them [n] as the mire of the street, *and* [o] did spread them abroad.

44 Thou also hast [p] delivered me from the strivings of my people, thou hast kept me *to be* [q] Head of the heathen: [r] a people *which* I knew not shall serve me.

45 [*] Strangers shall [†] submit themselves unto me: as soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto me.

46 Strangers shall [s] fade away, and they shall be afraid [t] out of their close places.

47 The [u] LORD liveth; and blessed *be* my Rock; and exalted be the God of [x] the rock of my salvation.

48 It *is* God that [‡] avengeth me, and [y] that bringeth down the people under me,

49 And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies: [z] thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me: thou hast delivered me from [a] the violent man.

50 Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, [b] among the heathen, and [c] I will sing praises unto thy name.

51 *He is* [d] the Tower of salvation for his king; and showeth mercy to [e] his anointed, unto David, and to his [f] Seed for evermore.

[m] 2 Kings 13:7. Ps. 18:42. 35:5. Dan. 2:35. Mal. 4:1.

nity. God's gentleness, his grace, and tender mercy, *made him great*, *v.* 36. gave him great wealth, and great authority; many remote nations should serve him, *v.* 44.

V. The comfortable reflections he makes on his own integrity, which God, by those wonderful deliverances, had graciously owned, and witnessed to, *v.* 21—25. He means especially with reference to Saul and Ish-bosheth, Absalom and Sheba, and those who either opposed his coming to the crown, or endeavored to dethrone him; he had the testimony of his conscience, that he was not ambitious, aspiring, false and bloody, as they called him; that he had never taken any indirect, unlawful courses to secure or raise himself, but in his whole conduct had kept in the way of his duty: and that in the whole course of his conversation he had, for the main, made religion his business, so that he could take God's favors to him, as the rewards of his righteousness, not of debt, but of grace; God had recompensed him, though not *for* his righteousness, as if that had merited any thing at the hand of God, yet *according* to his righteousness, which He was well-pleased with, and had an eye to.

His conscience witnessed for him, that he had made the Word of God his rule, and had kept to it, *v.* 23. 1. Wherever he was, God's judgments were before him as his guide; whithersoever he went, he took his religion with him; and though forced to fly his country, and sent, as it were, to serve other gods, yet, as for God's statutes, he did not depart from them, but kept the way of the Lord, and walked in it. 2. He could not but say he had not deserted God, or forsaken his way. Sins of infirmity he could not acquit himself from, but the grace of God had kept him from presumptuous sins. By *this* it appeared he was *upright before God*, or *to* God, in his sight, and with an eye to Him—that he *kept himself from his own iniquity:* not only from that particular sin of killing Saul, when it was in the power of his hand to do it, but, in general, he was afraid of sin, and watchful against it, and made conscience of what he said and did. The matter of Uriah is an exception, (1. K. 15: 5.) like that in Hezekiah's character, 2 Chr. 32: 31. David reflected with more comfort on his victories over his own iniquity, than on his conquest of Goliath, and all the hosts of uncircumcised Philistines; and the witness of his own heart to his uprightness was sweeter, though more silent music, than theirs that sang, *David has slain his ten thousands.* If a great man be a good man, his goodness will be much more his satisfaction than his greatness. Let favor be shown to the upright, and his uprightness will sweeten, and double it.

VI. His comfortable prospects of God's further favor; as he looks back, so he looks forward, with pleasure, and assures himself of the kindness God had in store for all the saints, for himself and his Seed.

1. For all good people, *v.* 26—28. As God had dealt with him according to his uprightness, so He will with all others. He takes occasion here to lay down the established rules of God's proceedings with men: (1.) That He will do good to the upright in heart. As we are found toward God, He will be found toward us. God's mercy and grace will be the joy of those that are merciful and gracious: even the merciful need mercy, and they shall obtain it. God's uprightness, justice and faithfulness, will be the joy of those that are upright, just, and faithful toward God and man. God's purity and holiness will be the joy of the pure and holy, who therefore give thanks at the remembrance of it. And if any of these good people be *afflicted people, He will save* them, either out of their afflictions, or by and after them. On the other hand, (2.) That those who turn aside to crooked ways, He will *lead forth with the workers of iniquity*, as he says in another psalm, *With the froward He will wrestle;* and *Wo unto him that strives with his Maker!* He will walk contrary to those that walk contrary to Him, and be displeased with those that are displeased with Him. As for the haughty, his eyes are upon them, marking them out, as it were, to be brought down: *He resists the proud.*

2. For himself. He foresees his conquests and kingdom should be yet further enlarged, *v.* 45, 46. Thus the Son of David goes on, *conquering and to conquer*, Rev. 6: 2. His Gospel, which has been victorious, shall be so more and more.

3. For his seed. He *showeth mercy to his Messiah*, (*v.* 51.) not only to David himself, but to that Seed of his for evermore. David was himself anointed of God, not an usurper, but duly called to the government, and qualified for it, therefore he doubted not but God would show mercy to him: that mercy he had promised not to take from him, nor from his posterity; (*ch.* 7: 15, 16.) on that

[n] Ps. 18:42. Is. 10:6. Mic. 7:10. Zech. 10:5.
[o] Deut. 33:26. Is. 26:15. Zech. 2:6. Luke 21:24.
[p] 3:1. 5:1. 18:6—8. 19:9,14. 20:1,2, 22. Ps. 2:1—6. 18:43. Acts 4:25—28. 5:30,31.
[q] 8:1—14. Deut. 28:13. Ps. 2:8. 60: 8,9. 72:8,9. 110:6. Is. 60:12. Dan. 7:14. Rom. 15:12. Rev. 11:15.
[r] Is. 55:5. 65:1. Hos. 2:23. Rom. 9: 25,26.
[*] Heb. *Sons of the stranger.* Is. 56:3, 6.
[†] Or, *yield feigned obedience.* Heb. *lie.* Deut. 33:29. Ps. 18:44,45. 66:3. 81:15. Acts 8:13,21—23.
[s] Ps. 1:3. Is. 64:6. Jam. 1:11.
[t] Is. 2:19,21. Am. 9:3. Mic. 7:17.
[u] Deut. 32:39,40. Job 19:25.
[x] Ps. 18:46. 89:26. 95:1. Luke 1:47.
[‡] Heb. *giveth avengement for me.* 18: 19,31. 1 Sam. 25:39. Ps. 18:47. 35: 1. 94:1.
[y] Ps. 110:1. 144:2. 1 Cor. 15:25.
[z] 5:12. 7:8,9. Num. 24:7,17—19. 1 Sam. 2:8. Ps. 18:48.
[a] Ps. 140:1.
[b] Rom. 15:9.
[c] Ps. 18:49. 103:1. 138:1. 145:1,2. 146:1,2. Is. 12:1—6.
[d] 2. Ps. 3:3. 21:1. 48:3. 89:26. 91: 2. 144:10.
[e] Ps. 18:50. 89:20. Acts 4:27.
[f] 7:12,13. Ps. 18:50. 89:29. Jer. 30: 9. Luke 1:31—33. Rev. 11:15.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 21—51. Under reproaches and persecutions, the testimony of conscience, to our integrity and sincerity in our religious profession, 'not of fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God,' will prove a singular support: and it perfectly consists with the deepest humility, and the most simple dependence on the Savior. Nor can we without it expect the witness of the comforting Spirit of God. We should therefore 'exercise ourselves to have a conscience void of offence towards God and man:' and, earnestly seeking supporting and sanctifying grace, we should steadily persevere in the path of duty, rejecting every temptation to seek relief by forsaking it.—In the darkest seasons the Lord will guide and comfort those who trust in and follow Him: and of the very many millions, who have tried his word, none ever complained that He was unfaithful; but all have been so assisted, that they have at length wondered at what the Lord had enabled them to do, as well as what He had done for them. Without Him all other helpers are vain; and with Him they are needless, except as He pleases to work by them, as his instruments of good to us. All our talents and abilities are from God, and all our improvement of them: whatever services we have performed, or however consistent our walk has been, the will and the power have been from Him: 'He is our Strength, who maketh our way perfect.' Ability and success in our spiritual warfare, liberty from sin and Satan, enlargement of heart in the service of our God, and preservation in the slippery paths of this ensnaring world, are causes for thankfulness, and not for glorying in ourselves.—But we may here likewise meditate on the Redeemer's sufferings, and the glory which was to follow, and which has followed, and shall still far more be displayed. SCOTT.

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them." When two men have been fighting, the conqueror may be seen to seize the vanquished by the neck, and thrust him to the ground.' ROBERTS. ED.

Verses 43—51.

Here [besides alluding to his own victories] the Spirit of inspiration seems especially to have carried his mind forward to the glorious kingdom of the Redeemer, the destruction of all his enemies, and the prevalency of his cause on earth. SCOTT.

Submit themselves. (45) Or, *yield feigned obedience.* Heb. *lie* (*M*) May not this expression, which occurs in many Psalms prophetical of the Messiah's kingdom, be considered as a prediction of that influx of hypocrites into the church, especially in and after the days of Constantine, in consequence of the astonishing external displays of the Redeemer's power, in the first ages? From this time formal Christians, who *lie* in their profession, have been exceedingly multiplied. (*Note*, *Ps.* 66:1—3.)—*The God of the Rock of my salvation.* (47) This remarkable expression may well call to mind, what may be considered as 'the style of the New Testament,' 'The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' (*Note*, 2 *Cor.* 1:1—7. *v.* 3.) SCOTT.

CHAP. XXIII.

David's last words, 1—7. The names and exploits of his chief warriors, 8—39.

NOW these *be* [a] the last words of David: David the son of Jesse said, and the man *who was* [b] raised up on high, [c] the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the [d] sweet Psalmist of Israel, said,

2 The [e] Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue.

3 The [f] God of Israel said, [g] the Rock of Israel spake to me, * He that ruleth over men [h] *must be* just, [i] ruling in the fear of God.

4 And *he shall be* [k] as the light of [l] the morning, *when* the sun riseth, *even* a morning without clouds; *as* [m] the tender grass *springing* out of the earth by clear shining after rain.

5 Although [n] my house *be* not so with God; yet

a Gen. 49:1,2. Deut. 33:1,&c. Josh. 23:24. Ps. 72:20. 2 Pet. 1:13—15.
b 5:1—3. 7:8,9. Ps. 78:70,71. 89:27.
c 1 Sam. 2:10. 16:12,13. Ps. 2:6. 89:20.
d 1 Chr. 16:4,5,7,9. Am. 6:5. Luke 20:42. Eph. 5:19,20. Col. 3:16. Jam. 5:13.
e Matt. 22:43. Mark 12:36. Acts 2:25—31. Heb. 3:7,8. 2 Pet. 1:21.
f Gen. 33:20. Ex. 3:15. 19:5,6. 20:2.
g See on 22:2,32. Deut. 32:4,30,31. Ps. 42:9.
* Or, *Be thou ruler over men, &c.* Ps. 110:2.
h Ex. 23:6—8. Deut. 16:18—20. Ps. 82:3,4. Is. 11:4,5. 32:1. Jer. 23:5. Zech. 9:9. Heb. 1:8.
i Ex. 18:21. 2 Chr. 19:7—9. Neh. 5:15.
k Judg. 5:31. Ps. 89:36. 110:3. Prov. 4:18. Is. 60:1,3,18—20. Hos. 6:5. Mal. 4:2. Luke 1:78,79. John 1:7.
l Hos. 6:3.
m Deut. 32:2. Ps. 72:6. Is. 4:2. Mic. 5:7.
n 7:18,19. 12:10. 13:14,15,28. 18:14, 15. 1 Kings 1:5,6. 2:24,25. 11:6—8. 12:14,15.

promise he depends, with an eye to Christ, who alone is his *Seed for evermore*, whose throne and kingdom still continue, and will, to the end, whereas the seed and lineage of David are long since extinct. See Ps. 89: 28, 29. Thus all his joys and all his hopes terminate, as ours should, in the great Redeemer.

CHAP. XXIII. The historian is now drawing toward a conclusion of David's reign, and therefore gives us an account here of some of his last words, which he spake by inspiration, and which seem to have reference to *his Seed that was to be for evermore*, spoken of in the close of the foregoing ch.

V. 1—7. We have here the last will and testament of king David, or a codicil annexed to it, after he had settled the crown upon Solomon, and his treasures. The last words of great and good men are thought worthy to be, in a special manner, remarked and remembered; David would have [his own] noticed and added, either to his Psalms, (as they are here to that in the foregoing chapter,) or to the chronicles of his reign. These words, especially, *v.* 5. though recorded before, we may suppose he often repeated for his own consolation, even to his last breath, and therefore they are called his *last words*. When we find death approaching, we should endeavor both to honor God, and to edify those about us, with our last words. Let those that have had long experience of God's goodness, and the pleasantness of wisdom, when they come to finish their course, leave a record of that experience, and bear their testimony to the truth of the promise. We have on record the last words of Jacob and Moses, and here of David, designed, as those, for a legacy to them that were left behind. We are here told,

I. Whose last will and testament this is; related, either, as is usual, by the testator himself, or, rather, by the historian, *v.* 1. He is described, 1. By the meanness of his original: *the son of Jesse.* It is good for those who are advanced to be corner-stones, and top-stones, to be reminded, and often to remind themselves, of *the rock out of which they were hewn.* 2. By the height of his elevation: he *was raised up on high*, as a prince, to sit higher than his neighbors, and as a prophet, to see further; to be serviceable to the people of God in their civil interests, and in their religious exercises. Observe, Was David a prince *anointed?* He was so for Jacob. Was he *the sweet psalmist?* He was so for Israel. Note, The dispensation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal, therefore, *as every man has received the gift, so let him minister the same.*

II. What the purport of it is. It is an account of his communion with God.

Pious persons take a pleasure in calling to mind what they have heard from God, in recollecting his word, and revolving it in their minds. Thus what God spake once, David heard twice, yea often. Observe, David here avows his divine inspiration, that in his Psalms, and in this composition here, *the Spirit of God spake by him.* He, and other holy men, spake and wrote *as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* This puts an honor on the book of Psalms, and recommends them to our use in our devotions, that they are words which the Holy Ghost teaches.

A distinction seems to be made between what the Spirit of God spake *by* David, which includes all his Psalms, and what the Rock of Israel spake *to* David, which concerned himself and his family. Let ministers observe, that those by whom God speaks to others, are concerned to hear and heed what He speaks to themselves. They whose office it is to teach others their duty, must be sure to learn and do their own.

Now what is here said, (*v.* 3, 4.) may be considered,

1. With application to David and his royal family. And so here is, (1.) The duty of magistrates. Let rulers remember they *rule over men;* not beasts whom they may enslave and abuse at pleasure, but reasonable creatures of the same rank with themselves; *men* that have their follies and infirmities, and therefore must be borne with: *over men*, but *under* God, and for Him. They *must be just*, both *to* those over whom they rule, and *between* them; see Deut. 1: 16, 17. It is not enough that they do no wrong, they must not suffer wrong to be done. They must *rule in the fear of God;* that is, be possessed themselves with a fear of God, which will restrain from all acts of injustice and oppression; so Nehemiah, *ch.* 5: 15. so Josepn, Gen. 42: 18. and also endeavor to promote the fear of God, i. e. the practice of religion, among those over whom they rule. The magistrate is to be the keeper of both tables, and to protect botn godliness and honesty. (2.) Prosperity promised them, if they do this duty, *v.* 4. Light is sweet and pleasant, and a great blessing; such are good princes that *rule in the fear of God. The light of the morning* is most welcome after the darkness of the night; such is the growing lustre of a good government; as David's after Saul's; (Ps. 75: 3.) It is likewise compared to the tender grass, which the earth produces for the service of man; it brings with it a harvest of blessings. See Ps. 72: 6, 16. which were also some of the last words of David, and seem to refer to these here.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII. V. 1, 2. Many things, after this, are recorded concerning the words and actions of David; so that it is not agreed in what sense these were his 'last words.' Some suppose them to have been the *last words* he spoke by inspiration, and, as it were, an appendix to the Psalms he composed: but perhaps he repeated them in his dying moments, as the expression of his faith and hope, and the source of his consolation. (*Ps.* 72:17—20.) SCOTT.

(1.) *Last words.*] 'Last poetical composition.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 3, 4.

These vs. explained of David, taught the duties incumbent on him, as king of Israel; how he ought to instruct his son and successor Solomon; and the general character of good and pious magistrates, who are blessings to the people. (*M. R.*)—Many expositors, however, interpret the words almost exclusively of Christ; the anointed King of Israel, and the Ruler over the sons of Adam in general. He is indeed just and righteous: He is the *Righteousness* and *Sanctification* of his subjects; and both requires and teaches, inclines and enables, them to fear God, and work righteousness. His light, and grace, and consolations, render them fruitful and happy; and the blessings of his kingdom are inexpressible, and shall be eternal. (*Ps.* 45:6, 7. 72:1—14. *Is.* 11:1—9. 32:1—8. *Jer.* 23:5, 6. *Zech.* 9:9, 10. *Tit.* 2:11, 12. *Heb.* 7:1—3. *Rev.* 19:11—16.) SCOTT.

(3.) *He that ruleth*, &c.] 'Rather, "The just One is the Ruler among men."' Dr. *A. Clarke.* 'To me the Rock of Israel hath promised a ust Ruler over mankind.' BOOTHR.

Verses 4, 5.

'As lovely as the morning when the sun ariseth; a morning not gloomy, threatening tempests and hurricanes, but cloudless and bright; as *flourishing* as grass from the earth after rain [note, 1 K. 18:4.]; So shall my house or family abide, splendid in rank and in honors; flourishing until He come, who is to be the just Ruler over mankind; and when every other branch is cut off, flourishing in Him for ever. Such I take to be the import of this passage.' ID.

(5.) This verse is supposed to be peculiarly difficult, and is variously interpreted, generally as relating to the covenant made with David concerning the kingdom.—But, he seems here to have turned his reflections from the kingdom of his posterity, and especially that of the Messiah, to his own personal concerns, and those of his family and immediate descendants.—By 'the everlasting covenant' David no doubt principally intended the covenant of mercy and peace, which the Lord had made with him, as one who believed in the promised Savior, and had yielded up himself to be his redeemed servant, and had been made partaker of his sanctifying grace, as the seal and pledge of it. (*Is.* 55:1—3. *Jer.* 32:39—41. *Ez.* 37:25, 26. *Heb.* 13:20, 21.) This covenant was 'from everlasting' in the purposes of God, and shall be 'to everlasting' in the blessed effects of it. From age to age sinners, when they accede to it by true faith, are admitted to share its benefits, which believers shall for ever enjoy; and God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, for ever be glorified through it, in their salvation. It is made with the Surety, in behalf of those for whom He engaged; all the blessings of it were obtained and secured by his atoning blood, and are freely bestowed on all who believe in his name; and it secures to them pardon, righteousness, grace, and 'eternal life, as the gift of God through Jesus Christ.' It is 'ordered in all things:' for in the Person, undertaking, and mediation of the Savior, effectual provision is made for the manifestation of the holiness, the satisfaction of the justice, and the honor of the law of God, and the discovery of the evil and desert of sin. While his mercy abounds in the forgiveness and salvation of the chief of sinners; there is an infinite fulness of grace, and of all blessings, treasured up in Christ, for the supply of those who seek for this salvation; a way opened to the mercy-seat of God, in which they may come in humble confidence; ordinances appointed, through which these blessings are communicated; invitations to draw near, and 'exceedingly great and precious promises' to plead with God. All those things, which in one respect are commanded, in another are promised; and while we pray for the performance of the promise, we are enabled to obey the command, to repent, to forsake sin, to turn unto God, and to walk in newness of life. This covenant is also 'sure,' or preserved. It is preserved by the continual intercession of Christ, and the promises, and securities grounded on it. (*Luke* 22:31—34. *Rom.* 5:7—10. 8:32—34. *Col.* 3:1—4. 1 *Pet.* 1. 3—5. 2 *Pet.* 1:10, 11. *Jude* 1, 2.)—Provision is made for the recovery of those, who have walked inconsistently with it in the most disgrace-

[o] he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all *things*, [p] and sure: for *this is* [q] all my salvation, and all *my* [r] desire, although he make *it* not to [s] grow.

6 But [t] *the sons* of Belial *shall be* all of them as [u] thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands:

7 But the man *that* shall touch them must be * fenced with iron and the staff of a spear; and [x] they shall be utterly burned with fire in the *same* place.

[*Practical Observations.*]

o 7:15,16. 1 Chr. 17:11—14. Ps. 89:3, 4.28,29. Is. 9:6,7. 55:3. 61:8. Jer. 32:40. 33:25,26. Ez. 37:26. Heb. 13: 20.
p 1 Sam. 2:35. 25:28. 1 Kings 11:38. Acts 13:34. Heb. 6:19.
q Ps. 62:2. 119:81.
r [1]s. 27:4. 63:1—3. 73:25,26.
s Is. 4:2. 7:14. 9:6,7. 11:1. 27:6. Am. 9:11. 1 Cor. 3:6,7.
t 20:1. Deut. 13:13. 1 Sam. 2:12.
u Gen. 3:18. Cant. 2:2. Is. 33:12. Ez. 2:6.
* Heb. *filled*.
x 22:8—10. Is. 27:4. Matt. 3:10—12. 13:42. Luke 19:14,27. John 15:6. 2 Thes. 1:8. 2:8. Heb. 6:8.

2. With application to Christ, and then it must all be taken as a prophecy, and the original will bearit. He is *a Ruler among men*, or over men, *just*, and *ruling in the fear of God*. He orders the affairs of religion, and divine worship, according to his Father's will; and He shall be as *the light of the morning*, &c. for He is the Light of the world, and *as the tender grass*, for He is the *Branch of the Lord*, and the *Fruit of the earth*, Isa. 4: 2. Compare this with those promises of Christ, which speak of his *reigning in righteousness*, and being *of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord*, Isa. 11: 1—5.—32: 1, 2. Ps. 72: 2. God, by the Spirit, gave David the foresight of this, to comfort him under the many calamities of his family, and the melancholy prospects he had of the degeneracy of his seed. Observe,

III. The comfortable use he made of what God spake to him, and his devout meditations on it, by way of reply, *v.* 5. It is not unlike his meditation, on occasion of such a message, 2 Sam. 7: 18, &c.

Here is,

1. Trouble supposed. David's family was not as described, (*v.* 3, 4.) and as he could wish; not so good, not so happy; he foresaw it would not be so when he was gone; neither so pious nor so prosperous as one might have expected the offspring of such a father to be. *Not so with God.* Note, We and ours are that really, which we are with God. This David's heart was upon concerning his children, that they might be right with God; the children of godly parents are often neither so holy nor so happy as might be expected: corruption, not grace, runs in the blood; the race is not to the swift, but God gives the Spirit as a free Agent. *Not made to grow* in number, in power; God makes families to grow, or not to grow, Ps. 107: 41. Good men have often the melancholy prospect of a declining family. David's house was typical of the church of Christ, Heb. 3: 3. Suppose this be not so with God as we could wish, but diminished, distressed, disgraced, and weakened by errors and corruptions, yea, almost extinct, yet God has made a covenant with the church's Head, the Son of David, that He will preserve to Him a seed, that the gates of hell shall never prevail against his house. This our Savior comforted Himself with, in his sufferings, that the covenant with Him stood firm, Isa. 53: 10—12.

2. Comfort insured. Whatever trouble a child of God may have in prospect, still he has one comfort or other to balance it with, (2 Cor. 4: 8, 9.) and none like this here. It may be understood of the covenant of royalty, (in the type,) which God made with David and his seed, touching the kingdom, Ps. 132: 11, 12. But, it must look further, to the covenant of grace, made with all believers, that God will be, in Christ, to them a God, which was signified by the covenant of royalty, and therefore the promises of the covenant are called, *the sure mercies of David*, Isa. 55: 3. God has made a covenant of grace with us in Jesus Christ, and we are here told, it is an *everlasting* covenant; from everlasting in contrivance and counsel, to everlasting in continuance and consequences. It is *ordered*, well-ordered in all things, admirably well, to advance the glory of God, and the honor of the Mediator, with the holiness and comfort of believers. Whatever is required in it,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—7. It has been observed by those who intimately converse with persons of genuine piety, that they are uniformly most sensible of the reality and importance of heavenly things, when they consider themselves as very nearly approaching to the eternal world. If discouraged respecting their own interest in the invisible blessings, their assured belief excites the most earnest and distressing anxiety, lest they should come short of them: but when their hope abounds, they exult and triumph, though parting with all below, though oppressed with pain and sickness, and in the very agonies of death! So that many have gone from their dying beds more convinced of the truth and excellency of the Gospel by their 'last words' and behavior, than by all the arguments which have conclusively been adduced in proof of it.—When we approach this closing scene, it will be useful and pleasant to consider what we originally were, and to inquire what the Lord has done for us, in his providence, and by his grace. The more we have been conformed to the Savior, as bearing his image, and copying his example; and the more we have been treated by the world as He was; the more clearly it will appear that we belong to Him.—They who stir up and assist their brethren in the exercises of devotion, are peculiarly useful: and the sweet work of praise and thanksgiving, when conducted with solemnity, as springing from lively affections, is an anticipation of heavenly joy, a solace of earthly sorrows, a preparation for every service, most honorable to God, and calculated to give religion an attractive aspect.—The best of men, reviewing their past conduct, and comparing it impartially with the rule of duty, will see great cause to be humbled, and to mourn over their sins. Neither their hearts nor their houses will be found what they ought to be: but it will be their earnest desire, aim, and prayer, that their families may be the accepted servants of God, without which no outward prosperity will satisfy their minds: and if, through their own negligence, or occasional misconduct, they are otherwise; they will be the more earnest in supplication for them, that they may not perish with the sons of Belial.—Yet in all their troubles, true believers, being conscious that they 'have fled for refuge to the hope set before them' in the Gospel, and having experienced the power of renewing grace, may rejoice that the Lord 'hath made with them an everlasting covenant;' and may meditate with comfort on the rich provisions and firm security of it.—Such, as are in reality partakers of divine grace, will long for more holiness: and those who, in this imperfect state, are satisfied with their present attainments, have no good ground to consider themselves as true Christians. SCOTT.

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ful manner: and yet not the least encouragement is given to commit sin, but the most effectual methods are used to deter men from it, and constrain them to all holy obedience. (1 *John* 2:1—3.) So that it is 'ordered in all things,' in such a manner, that no believer can want wisdom, grace, or strength sufficient for him, whatever his conflicts, temptations, or difficulties may be: and he shall either persevere in a uniform course of holy obedience, or be brought to deep and evident repentance of his misconduct, and shall infallibly at length inherit eternal life.—This covenant was 'all David's salvation;' for he was so well acquainted with the holy character and law of God, the evil of sin, and his own sinfulness in every thing, that he knew he could not escape condemnation, according to the covenant of works: and he perceived that all things suited to his case, and sufficient for his salvation, were engaged for by it to every believer; and that it was framed in perfect wisdom, so as to honor God, to humble and encourage the sinner, to inspire love and gratitude, to bring him to a holy and happy disposition of mind, and to prepare him for that state of complete felicity, in which all the powers of the human soul shall be eternally satisfied. It was also 'all his desire,' or *delight*, as the word is generally rendered: in comparison with it, all earthly objects lost their attractions; he was willing to renounce them, as far as required, for the sake of the blessings of the covenant; his comfort, while he possessed them, was derived from it, not from them; and he was willing to die and leave all else, that he might enjoy its full felicity. This he was conscious of: and yet he complained, that matters were not with his soul, any more than with his house, as he could wish; for this seems the meaning of the words, 'although He make it not to grow.' The grace of the covenant he had received, but it had not been made to increase and flourish, in that measure which he desired. Still the prevalence of sinful propensities, and the weakness of his faith, hope, and love, were his grief and burden. The Lord had not 'made them to grow.' David did not mean to impeach the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, who had good reasons for what He withheld, as well as for what He gave; and doubtless David would have allowed that his own inattention and negligence were the criminal cause, why his grace had not more been made to grow. But the hope, that it would ere long be perfected in glory, animated and encouraged him in his dying moments.—Referring this also to the Redeemer, it may be observed, that the kingdom of David's family was not so with God in any other period, as under Him: and foreseen by faith, He, as the Surety of the everlasting covenant, was all David's Salvation and Desire; though his coming was distant, and though his cause of truth and righteousness did not prosper in Israel, nor even in the prophet's own heart, as he most earnestly desired that it might. (*Deut.* 29:4. 1 *Cor.* 3:4—9.) SCOTT.

Although my house be not so.] 'Rather, "For is not my house established with God; because He hath, &c. For this, (He,) is all my salvation and all my desire, although He made it, (or Him) not to spring up." i. e. though my spiritual successor do not yet appear. See *Kennicott.*' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 6, 7.

As a man fenced, *or completely armed*, (*marg.*) 'with iron and the staff of a spear,' can thrust the thorns into the fire: and so Christ is able to destroy out of his kingdom all his enemies, and will 'make them as a fiery oven in the day of his wrath.' (*Ps.* 21:8—12. *Nah.* 1:9, 10.) As the willing subjects of David prospered, but his opposers were crushed; so shall it be with those who submit to the authority of the Redeemer, and those who reject Him. (*Matt.* 3: 11, 12. 13:36—43. 2 *Thes.* 1:5—10.) SCOTT.

(6.) *As thorns thrust away.*] 'An [agricultural] metaphor, from *hedging*; the workman thrusts the thorns aside, either with his *bill* or hand, protected by his impenetrable *mitten*, or glove, till, getting a fair blow at the roots, he cuts them all down. The man is *fenced with iron*, and the handle of his bill is *like the staff of a spear*—a perfectly natural and intelligible image.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

8 ¶ These *be* the names of the mighty men whom David had: * The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same *was* Adino the Eznite; *he lift up his spear* against eight hundred, † whom he slew at one time.

9 And after him *was* [y] Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, *one* of the three mighty men with David, when they [z] defied the Philistines *that* were there gathered together to battle, and [a] the men of Israel were gone away.

10 He arose and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and [b] the LORD wrought a great victory that day; and [c] the people returned after him only to spoil.

11 And after him *was* [d] Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And [e] the Philistines were gathered together ‡ into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles; and the people fled from the Philistines.

12 But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and [f] the LORD wrought a great victory.

13 And § three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest-time, unto [g] the cave of Adullam: and the troop of the Philistines pitched in [h] the valley of Rephaim.

14 And David *was* then in [i] an hold, and the [k] garrison of the Philistines *was* then in Bethlehem.

15 And David [l] longed, and said, Oh, that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem, which *is* by the gate!

16 And [m] the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that *was* by the gate, and took *it*, and brought *it* to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but [n] poured it out unto the LORD.

17 And he said, [o] Be it far from me, O LORD, that I should do this: *is not this* [p] the blood of the men that went in [q] jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men.

is promised; every transgression does not throw us out of it, and it puts our salvation, not in our own keeping, but in the keeping of a Mediator. It is *sure;* sure, because well-ordered; the general offer, the promised mercies, the particular application of it to true believers, are sure to all the seed. It is *all our salvation:* nothing but this will save us, and this is sufficient: on this only our salvation depends. Therefore it must be *all our desire.* Let me have an interest in this covenant, and the promises of it, and I have enough, I desire no more.

3. Here is the doom of the sons of Belial, *v.* 6, 7. thrust away as thorns, rejected, abandoned; like thorns, not to be touched with hands; therefore, like thorns, to be *utterly burnt with fire,* Heb. 6: 8. This is intended, either, As a direction to magistrates, to use their power to punish and suppress wickedness. Let them *thrust away the sons of Belial;* see Ps. 101: 8. Or, As a caution to magistrates, particularly David's sons and successors, to see that they be not themselves sons of Belial, for then, though men could not deal with them, God would. Or, As a prediction of the ruin of all the implacable enemies of Christ's kingdom: enemies without, that openly oppose it, and fight against it; enemies within, that secretly betray it; both sons of Belial, the children of the wicked one, of the serpent's seed: both as thorns, grievous and vexatious: but both to be so thrust away, as that Christ will set up his kingdom, in despite of their enmity, will go *through them,* (Isa. 27: 4.) and, in due time, bless his church with such peace, that there shall be *no pricking brier, nor grieving thorn.* And those that will not repent, to give glory to God, shall, in the judgment-day, (to which the Chaldee paraphrast refers this,) be burnt with unquenchable fire. See Luke 19: 27.

V. 8—39. The catalogue here left on record of the greatest soldiers in David's time, is intended, 1. For the honor of David, who trained them up in the arts and exercises of war, and set them an example of conduct and courage. 2. For the honor of those worthies themselves, who were instrumental to bring David to the crown, settle and protect him in the throne, and enlarge his conquests. Note, Those that in public stations venture themselves, and lay out themselves, to serve the interests of their country, are worthy of double honor, both to be respected by those of their own age, and to be remembered by posterity. 3. To excite those that come after, to a generous emulation. 4. To show how much religion contributes to inspire men with true courage. David, both by his Psalms, and by his offerings for the service of the temple, greatly promoted piety among the grandees of the kingdom; (1 Chr. 29: 6.) and when they became famous for piety, they became famous for bravery.

Now these mighty men are here divided into three ranks.

I. The first three, who had done the greatest exploits, and thereby gained the greatest reputation. Adino, (*v.* 8.) Eleazar, (*v.* 9, 10.) and Shammah, *v.* 11, 12. I do not remember that we read of any of these, or of their actions, any where in all the story of David, but here, and in the parallel place, 1 Chr. 11. Many great and remarkable events are passed by in the annals, which relate rather the blemishes, than the glories, of David's reign, especially after his sin in the matter of Uriah; so that we may conclude it to have been more illustrious than it has appeared to us while reading the records of it.

The exploits of this brave triumvirate are here recorded. They signalized themselves in the wars of Israel against their enemies, especially the Philistines. Note, How great soever the bravery of the instruments is, the praise of the achievement must be given to God. These fought the battles, but God wrought the victory. *Let him that glories, glory in the Lord.*

II. The next three were distinguished from, and dignified above, the thirty, but attained not to the first three, *v.* 23. All great men are not of the same size. Many a bright and benign star there is, which is not of the first magnitude. Of this second triumvirate, two only are named, Abishai and Benaiah, whom we have often met with in the story of David; and who seem to have been not inferior in serviceableness, though they were in dignity, to the first three. 1. They attended David in his troubles, when he absconded in the

* Or, *Josheb-bassebet, the Tachmonite, head of the three.* 1 Chr. 11:11,12. 27:32.
† Heb. *slain.*
‡ Or, *for foraging.*
§ Or, *the three captains over the thirty.* 1 Chr. 11:15—19.

y 1 Chr. 11:12—14. 27:4. *Dodai.*
z Num. 23:7,8. 1 Sam. 17:10,26,36,45, 46.
a Is. 63:3,5. Mark 14:50.
b Josh. 10:10,42. 11:8. Judg. 15:14,18. 1 Sam. 11:13. 14:6,23. 19:5. 2 Kings 5:1. Ps. 108:13. 144:10. Rom. 15:18. 2 Cor. 4:6. Eph. 6:10—18.
c Ps. 68:12. Is. 53:12.
d 1 Chr. 11:27. *Shammoth the Harorite.*
e 1 Chr. 11:13,14.
f See on b. 10.—Ps. 3:8. 44:2. Prov. 21:31.
g Josh. 12:15. 15:35. 1 Sam. 22:1. Mic. 1:15.
h 5:18,22. 1 Chr. 11:15. 14:9. Is. 17:5.
i 1 Sam. 22:4,5. 24:22. 1 Chr. 12:16.
k 1 Sam. 10:5. 13:4,23. 14:1,6.
l Num. 11:4,5. Ps. 42:1,2. 63:1. 119: 81. Is. 41:17,18. 44:3. John 4:10,14. 7:37,38.
m 9. 1 Sam. 19:5. Acts 20:24. Rom. 5:7. 2 Cor. 5:14.
n Num. 23:7. 1 Sam. 7:6. Lam. 2:19. Phil. 2:17. *marg.*
o 20:20. Gen. 44:17. 1 Sam. 2:30. 26: 11. 1 Kings 21:3. 1 Chr. 11:19.
p Gen. 9:4. Ps. 72:14. Matt. 26:28. Mark 14:24. John 6:52—54.
q Judg. 5:18. 1 Cor. 15:30.

Verse 8.

Under Joab, the chief captain, the persons mentioned in this chapter, were the principal officers in David's army: and as only 36 are named, Joab must be added to complete the number 37. (39) There were two triumvirates; and under them thirty officers, who commanded subdivisions of the troops. Of several of them, and of their exploits, we read nothing elsewhere: so that David's reign and actions were far more splendid, than they appear in the history.—Adino the *Tachmonite*, is called Jashobeam the *Hachmonite.* (1 *Chr.* 11:11.) It is supposed that he had his title from his *wisdom*, and that he ordinarily presided in councils of war.—It is here said he slew 800 men, in Chronicles only 300: perhaps 300 were left dead on the spot, and the rest died afterwards; or two different actions are meant, or some trivial mistake has been made. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

'This v. contains *three* great corruptions. (1.) The proper name of *Jashobeam* is turned into two common words, rendered, *sat in his seat.* (2.) The words, *he lifted up his spear*, are turned into two proper names, wholly inadmissible here:—*hu Adino Haetsni*, he was Adino the Eznite: it being nearly as absurd to say, that Jashobeam the Hachmonite was the same with Adino the Eznite, as that David the Bethlehemite was the same as Elijah the Tishbite. (3.) 800 should be 300; as 1 Chr. 11:11.' KENNICOTT, in CLARKE.

Verses 9, 10.

(*M. R.*) The divine interposition seems to have been miraculous, in answer to the expectation of faith; as in the case of Jonathan and his armor-bearer. (*Josh.* 10:9, 10. 1 *Sam.* 14:6—10, 45, 46.) SCOTT.

Verses 11, 12.

In Chronicles this victory seems ascribed to Eleazar, who perhaps was the chief commander, though Shammah most distinguished himself.—The field also is said to have been 'full of barley:' perhaps part of it was sown with lentiles, and part with barley. (1 *Chr.* 11:12—14.)—The annexed titles seem to have been generally derived from the place of the birth, or abode, of the persons spoken of. (*M. R.*) ID.

Verses 13—17.

It is probable, that, during the harvest, the Philistines invaded the land of Israel, in order to carry off or destroy the crop; and that David and his men opposed them: and the three captains, of the thirty afterwards mentioned, having come to him in the cave of Adullam, (probably when persecuted by Saul,) assisted him. (1 *Sam.* 22:1, 2. *Ps.* 142: *title.*) A garrison also of Philistines, at the same time, occupied the outer gate of Bethlehem, the city of David.—Some expositors think that David, by wishing for the water of the well of Bethlehem, meant to stir up his whole band to attempt dispossessing the

18 And [r] Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief among three And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, * *and* slew *them*, and had the name among three.

19 Was he not most honorable of three? therefore he was their captain: howbeit [s] he attained not unto the *first* three.

20 And [t] Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of [u] Kabzeel, † who had done many acts, he slew two ‡ lion-like men of Moab: he went down also and [x] slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow:

21 And he slew an Egyptian, § a goodly man: and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and [y] slew him with his own spear.

22 These *things* did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among three mighty men.

23 He was ‖ more honorable than the thirty, but he attained not to the *first* three. And David set him ¶ over his guard.

24 [z] Asahel the brother of Joab *was* one of the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Beth-lehem,

cave of Adullam, (*v.* 13.) suffered with him, and therefore were afterward preferred by him. Let us be willing to venture in the cause of Christ, even when it is a suffering cause, as those who are assured that it will prevail, and that we shall not lose by it at last. Were they so forward to expose themselves, on the least hint of their prince's mind, and so ambitious to please him? And shall not we covet to approve ourselves to our Lord Jesus, by a ready compliance with every intimation of his will, given us by his word, Spirit, and providence? Some make it a public-spirited wish that David expressed, about the water of the well of Bethlehem, the well being put for the city, as the river often signifies the country it passes through. But if he meant so, those about him did not understand him; therefore it seems rather to be an instance of his weakness. Patrick speaks of some who think it was not material water David longed for, but the Messiah, who had the water of life; who, he knew, should be born at Beth-lehem, which the Philistines therefore should not be able to destroy. Did David look upon that water as very precious, which was got at the hazard of these men's blood, and shall not we much more value those benefits, for the purchasing of which our blessed Savior shed his blood? Let us not undervalue the *blood* of the covenant, as they do, that undervalue the *blessings* of the covenant.—In a time of snow, [20] he was more stiff, and the lion more fierce and ravenous, and yet he mastered him.

III. Inferior to the second three, but of great note, were the 31 here mentioned by name, *v.* 24, &c. The surnames here given them, are taken, as it should seem, from the places of their birth or habitation, as many surnames with us originally were. From all parts of the nation, the most wise and valiant were picked up to serve the king. Several of these here named, we find captains of the twelve courses which David appointed, one for each month in the year, 1 Chr. 27. They that did worthily, were preferred according to their merits. Joab is not mentioned, 1. Because he was so *great*, he did not need to be mentioned; the first of the first three sat chief among the captains, but Joab was over them as general. Or, 2. Because he was so *bad*, he did not deserve to be mentioned; for though he was confessedly a great soldier, and one that had so much religion in him as to dedicate of his spoils to the house of God, (1 Chr. 26: 28.) yet he lost as much honor

25 [a] Shammah the Harodite, Elika the Harodite,

26 Helez the [b] Paltite, [c] Ira the son of Ikkesh the [d] Tekoite,

27 [e] Abiezer the Anethothite, [f] Mebunnai the Hushathite,

28 Zalmon the Ahohite, [g] Maharai the Netophathite,

29 [h] Heleb the son of Baanah, a Netophathite, [i] Ittai the son of Ribai out of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin,

30 [k] Benaiah the [l] Pirathonite, [m] Hiddai of the ** brooks of Gaash,

31 [n] Abi-albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the [o] Barhumite,

32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite; of the sons of [r] Jashen, Jonathan,

33 [q] Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of [r] Sharar the Hararite,

34 Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, [s] Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite,

35 [t] Hezrai the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite,

36 [u] Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite,

37 [x] Zelek the Ammonite, [y] Naharai the Beerothite, armor-bearer to Joab the son of Zeruiah,

38 [z] Ira an Ithrite, Gareb an Ithrite,

39 [a] Uriah the Hittite: thirty and seven in all.

r 2:18. 3:30. 10:10,14. 18:2. 20:10. 1 Sam. 26:6—8. 1 Chr. 2:16. 11:20, 21.

* Heb. *slain.*

s 9.13,16. 1 Chr. 11:25. Matt. 13:8, 23. 1 Cor. 15:41.

t 8:18. 20:23. 1 Kings 1:8,26,38. 2: 29—35,46. 1 Chr. 18:17. 27:5,6.

u Josh. 15:21.

† Heb. *great of acts.*

‡ Heb. *lions of God.* 1:23. 1 Chr. 11: 22—24. 12:8.

x Judg. 14:5,6. 1 Sam. 17:34—37.

§ Heb. *a man of countenance*, or *sight*, called, 1 Chr. 11:23, *a man of* great *stature.*

y 1 Sam. 17:51. Col. 2:15.

‖ Or, *honorable among the thirty.* 1 Chr. 27:6.

¶ Or, *over his council.* Heb. *at his command.* 20:23. 1 Sam. 22:14.

z 2:18. 1 Chr. 11:26. 27:7.

a 1 Chr. 11:27,28. *Shammoth. Harorite.*

b 1 Chr. 11:27. 27:10. *Pelonite.*

c 1 Chr. 11:28. 27:9.

d See on 14:2.

e 1 Chr. 11:28. *Antothite.* 27:12. *Anetothite.*

f 1 Chr. 11:29. *Sibbecai.*

g 1 Chr. 11:30. 27:13.

h 1 Chr. 11:30. *Heled.* 27:15. *Heldai.*

i 1 Chr. 11:31. *Ithai.*

k 1 Chr. 11:31. 27:14.

l Judg. 12:15.

m 1 Chr. 11:32. *Hurai.*

** Or, *valleys.* Deut. 1:24. Judg. 2:9.

n 1 Chr. 11:32. *Abiel.*

o 1 Chr. 11:33. *Baharumite.*

p 1 Chr. 11:34. *Hashem, the Gizonite.*

q 1 Chr. 11:37.

r 1 Chr. 11:35. *Sacar.*

s 11:3. 15:31. 17:23. 1 Chr. 27:33,34.

t 1 Chr. 11:37. *Hezro.*

u 1 Chr. 11:38. *Joel.*

x 1 Chr. 11:39.

y 1 Chr. 11:37.

z 20:26. 1 Chr. 2:53. 11:40.

a 11:3,6. 12:9. 1 Kings 15:5. 1 Chr. 11:41. Matt. 1:6.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 8—39. The habit of *wishing* and hankering after those things which Providence withholds, though natural to us, and often given way to by godly men in an unguarded hour, is indeed a degree of rebellion against the Lord; and it shows the remaining sensuality and selfishness of the heart, and leads to many snares and evils. Under Christ's command, as 'the Captain of our salvation,' and refreshed by the waters of life which He bestows, we may venture to engage, yea defy, all our adversaries at the greatest disadvantage, and shall be able to turn their own arms upon them. Though not numbered with apostles and prophets, our names and services will be recorded in the book of life; and not a cup of cold water, given for his sake, shall be unrewarded: yea, the willing mind to suffer for Him, shall be accepted, as if we had actually laid down our lives in his cause. But, as He has shed his blood for sinners, let all beware of neglecting so great salvation: for the sons of Belial, especially those who reject or pervert his truth, and persecute his people, will be thrust away, as thorns, into the everlasting fire of hell. SCOTT.

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garrison, and not that his officers alone should attack them. It is more probable, however, that being very thirsty in hot weather, he eagerly desired, and inconsiderately wished, to quench his thirst at that well, the water being remarkably good: and that these brave men, to express their peculiar attachment to him, broke, sword in hand, through the Philistines, and returned to him with some of the water. David however was, on recollection, ashamed of his inordinate desire and rash wish; and being unwilling to encourage such desperate attempts, he refused to drink of it, but poured it out as a drink-offering unto the Lord. For, as it had been procured at the hazard of the lives of these brave officers, he would no more drink of it, than he would drink their blood: 'Far be it from me,' said he, or 'My God forbid it me.' (*Ps.* 72:14. 116:15.)—'Beth-lehem' signifies *the house of bread*; and the place was likewise noted for excellent water. There Christ was born, who is the Bread of Life, and who also gives us the Water of Life. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

(13.) *Thirty.*] *Shalashim.* It probably signifies an office or particular description of men. 37 of these are here mentioned, and it cannot be said that we have 37 out of 30. Besides in 1 Chr. 11 ch. 16 are added! The *captains* over Pharaoh's chariots are termed shalashim, Ex. 14:7. So *Clarke.* See note and cut there, for the origin of the name of this office, which would seem nearly equivalent to "*file-leaders.*" ED. *In the valley.*] The same war spoken of v. 17.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 18—24.

(*M. R.*) We are not told on what occasions these exploits were performed: but they were done in faith, by the Lord's extraordinary assistance, and for the public good. Asahel seems to have been the third captain in the second triumvirate, though mentioned as one of the thirty, over whom perhaps he presided as captain: for there are thirty names besides his; and only two of the three are named, if he was not the third. (*M. R.*—*Note*, 2:18—23.) SCOTT.

(21.) *With a staff.*] Similar feats are recorded by heathen writers; and are performed to this day with the *quarter-staff.* The ancient Egyptian villages sometimes rivalled each other in the game, and left many dead on both sides. Comp. 2 Sam. 2. 14—16. ED.

Verses 25—39.

The names of the captains here enumerated are not exactly the same in Chronicles, but the same persons must be meant. In some instances a trivial variation is made in the spelling; in others, they might be known by more names than one.—Others also are added in Chronicles; but they were not so renowned as these. (*M. R.*—1 *Chr.* 11:10—47.) SCOTT.

CHAP XXIV.

David requires Joab to number the people, who very reluctantly complies, 1—8. Joab delivers in the number to the king, 9. He repents; and being warned by Gad the prophet, and obliged to choose one plague; out of three proposed to him, he fixes on three days' pestilence, 10—14. After seventy thousand had died in Israel, the angel is stayed from destroying Jerusalem, in answer to David's prayer, 15—17. David, directed by God, purchases Araunah's threshing-floor, builds an altar, and sacrifices; and the plague is stayed, 18—25.

AND [a] again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and *[b] he [b] moved David against them to say, [c] Go, number Israel and Judah.

2 For the king said to [d] Joab the captain of the host, which *was* with him, † Go now through all the tribes of Israel, [e] from Dan even to Beer-sheba, and number ye the people, [f] that I may know the number of the people.

3 And Joab said unto the king, [g] Now the LORD thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundred fold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see *it:* but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?

4 Notwithstanding, [h] the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host [i] went out from the presence of the king to number the people of Israel.

5 And they passed over Jordan, and pitched in [j] Aroer, on the right side of the city that *lieth* in the midst of the ‡ river of Gad, and toward [c] Jazer:

6 Then they came to [l] Gilead, and to the § land of Tahtim-hodshi; and they came to [m] Dan-jaan, and about to [n] Zidon,

7 And came to the strong hold of [o] Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites: and they went out to the south of Judah, *even* [p] to Beer-sheba.

8 So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

a 21:1,&c.
* *Satan.* 1 Chr. 21:1. Jam. 1:13,14.
b 12:11. 16:10. Gen. 45:5. 50:20. Ex. 7:3. 1 Sam. 26:19. 1 Kings 22:20—23. Ex. 14:9. 20:25. Acts 4:28. 2 Thes. 2:11.
c 1 Chr. 27:23,24.
d 2:13. 8:16. 20:23. 23:37.

† Or, *Compass now all.* 1 Chr. 21:2.
e 3:10. 17:11. Judg. 20:1.
f Deut. 8:13,14. 2 Chr. 32:25,26,31. Prov. 29:23. Jer. 17:5. 2 Cor. 12:7.
g 16:12. ‖ Chr. 21:3,4. Ps. 115:14. Prov. 14:28. Is. 60:5.
h 1 Chr. 21:4. Ec. 8:4.
i Ex. 1:17. Acts 5:29.
j Deut. 2:36. Josh. 13:9,16. 1 Sam. 30:28. Is. 17:2.
‡ Or, *valley.*
k Num. 32:1,3,35. Is. 16:8,9.
l Gen. 31:21,47,48. Num. 32:1,39.
§ Or, *nether land newly inhabited.*
m Josh. 19:47. Judg. 18:29.
n Gen. 10:15. Josh. 11:8. 19:28. Judg. 18:28.
o Josh. 19:29.
p Gen. 21:31—33.

CHAP. XXIV. V. 1—9. Here we have, I. David's orders to Joab to number the people of Israel and Judah, *v.* 1, 2. Two things here seem strange.

1. The sinfulness of this. What harm was there in it? Did not Moses twice number the people, without any crime? Should not the shepherd know the number of his sheep? Does not the Son of David know all his own by name? Might not he make good use of this calculation? What evil has he done, if he do this? *Answer.* It is certain it was a sin, and a great sin; but where the evil of it lay is not so certain. Some think the fault was, he numbered those under 20 years, if they were but of stature and strength able to bear arms; and that was the reason why this account was not enrolled, because it was illegal, 1 Chr. 27: 23, 24. Others, that he did not require the half-shekel, Ex. 30: 12. Others think that he did it with a design to impose a tribute on them for himself, by way of poll; but nothing of this appears, nor was David ever a raiser of taxes. [Others think he designed ambitious and unbidden conquests, *the great sin* of powerful princes and nations; and his people, proud of prosperity, wished also thus to acquire 'glory', at the expense of every blessing to themselves and others; the usual price of wars, then as now. Strange, that in the villanies among those of the last hundred years, even the Israelites could not have seen the demoralizing effect of the bad passions engendered and inflamed by war.] This was the fault, that he had no orders from God to do it, nor was there any occasion for it. It was a needless trouble, both to himself and to his people. Some think it was an affront to the ancient promise God made to Abraham, that his seed should be innumerable as the dust of the earth. it savored of distrust, or a design to show that the promise was not fulfilled. He would number those of whom God had said that they could not be numbered. Those know not what they do, that go about to disprove the word of God. The worst thing in it was, David did it in the pride of his heart, as Hezekiah showed his treasures. (1.) It was a proud conceit of his own greatness, in having the command of so numerous a people, as if their increase had been owing to any conduct of his, which was to be ascribed purely to the blessing of God. (2.) It was a proud confidence in his own strength. By publishing among the nations the number of his people, he thought to appear the more formidable; and doubted not, if he should have any war, he should overpower his enemies with the multitude of his forces; trusting in an arm of flesh, more than *he* should have done, who had written so much of trusting in God only. God judges not of sin as we do. What appears to us harmless, or, at least, but a small offence, may be a great sin in the eye of God, who sees men's principles, and is a Discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. [Besides, if a sin be indeed '*little*,' what a bad state must that heart be in which will displease God for such a trifle! How can any sin be little, or how can we judge of the *degrees* of sin, when the nature of our obligations to God is so incomprehensible, so infinite!] His judgment, we are sure, is according to truth.

2. The spring from which it is here said to arise, is yet more strange, *v.* 1. It is not strange *the anger of the Lord should be kindled against Israel;* there was cause enough for it, they were unthankful for the blessings of David's government, and strangely drawn in to take part with Absalom first, and afterward with Sheba: we have reason to think their peace and plenty made them secure and sensual, and for this God was displeased with them: but that, in this displeasure, He should move David to number the people, is very strange. We are sure God is not the author of sin: He tempts no man: we are told (1 Chr. 21: 1.) *Satan provoked David to number Israel;* Satan, as an enemy, suggested it for a sin, as he put it into the heart of Judas to betray Christ. God, as a righteous Judge, permitted it, with a design, from this sin of David, to take an occasion to punish other sins of Israel, which He might justly have punished them for, without this. But,

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV. V. 1, 2. The Israelites had offended God, by their ungrateful and repeated rebellions against David; by not duly profiting under the means employed for the revival of religion; and probably by that pride, luxury, and ungodliness, which generally spring from great prosperity; and it is likely they had not been amended by correction; (21:1—14.) but some think, the sin immediately intended was, their setting up Absalom for king, and rebelling against David. (1 *Sam.* 8:6—9. *Hos.* 8:2—4.) This David had cordially forgiven: but it was a national defection from God, which He did not judge it proper to leave unpunished. So that he permitted Satan to tempt and prevail against David, that in *chastising* him, he might *punish* them. David's thought and purpose of numbering the people, sprang from his remaining depravity, excited by Satan's suggestions: and as this 'was of the LORD,' (in the same manner, that it was of Him that the Canaanites should be hardened, and that Ahab should be deceived,) He withdrew every internal or external restraint, and left him to follow his own counsels. (*M. R.* b.) Thus, by a manner of expression common in Scripture, the Lord is said to have 'moved David against Israel;' for certainly this is the most natural construction of the words. (*M.—Note,* 1 *Chr.* 21:1.) But other passages prove, that the sinful disposition and resolution could not be from God, though He both *permitted* them, and over-ruled them to accomplish his own wise and righteous purposes: and this example throws light on the doctrine of God's providential government of the world, and suggests many practical instructions. (12:11, 12. *Gen.* 50:20. 1 *K.* 22:19—23.)

SCOTT.

Verses 3, 4.

Joab readily perceived, David's purpose arose from ambition, and was inconsistent with his character and interest; and that if he persevered to 'delight in,' or require, 'such a thing, it would be a cause of trespass,' *i. e.* of guilt and punishment, 'to Israel.' (1 *Chr.* 21:3.) On this occasion he spoke with great reason and temper; expressed much affection both for his prince and country; and even assumed an appearance of piety: and David would have shown his wisdom, had he yielded to his remonstrances. Yet the king's word prevailed, but 'it was abominable to Joab:' (1 *Chr.* 21:6.) and as he and the captains set about it reluctantly, we may suppose that they did not perform it very exactly. 'It is something strange, that Joab should see the danger of this, and David not think of it; no, not when it was so plainly represented to him. But the best of men are sometimes very drowsy, and apprehend not those things, which plainly appear to those who are not so good.' *Patrick.* A considerable degree of self-will and precipitation was manifested in David's conduct, respecting this measure.

ID.

Verses 5—8.

Land of Tahtim-hodshi. (6) 'Nether land newly inhabited.' (*M.*)—It is not known what region is meant; as the name occurs only in

9 And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king: and there were in Israel [q] eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah *were* five hundred thousand men.

[*Practical Observations.*]

10 ¶ And [r] David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, [s] I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now I beseech thee, O LORD, [t] take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very [u] foolishly.

11 For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet [x] Gad, David's [y] seer, saying,

12 Go, and say unto David, Thus saith the

q 1 Chr. 21:5,6. 27:23,24.
r 1 Sam. 24:5. John 8:9. 1 John 3:20, 21.
s 12:13. 1 Chr. 21:8. 2 Chr. 32:26. Job 33:27,28. Ps. 32:5. Prov. 28:13. Mic. 7:8,9. 1 John 1:9.
t Job 7:21. Hos. 14:2. John 1:29.
u 13:13. Deut. 32:6. 1 Sam. 13:13. 26:21. 2 Chr. 16:9. Mark 7:22. Tit. 3:3.
x 1 Sam. 22:5. 1 Chr. 21:9. 29:29.
y 1 Sam. 9:9.

as before, He brought a famine on them for the sin of Saul, so now, a pestilence for the sin of David; that princes may, from these instances, learn, when the judgments of God are abroad, to suspect that their sins are the ground of the controversy, and may therefore repent and reform themselves, which should have a great influence on national repentance and reformation; and that people may learn to pray for those in authority, that God would keep them from sin; because if they sin, the kingdom smarts.

II. Joab's opposition to these orders. Even *he* was aware of David's folly and vain-glory in this design. He observed David gave no reason for it, only, *Number the people, that I may know the number of the people;* he therefore endeavors to divert his pride, and in a much more decent manner than he had before used to divert his passion on the death of Absalom; then he spake rudely and insolently, (*ch.* 19: 5—7.) but now, as became him, *v.* 3. It is his wish, both that their number might increase, and that the king, though old, might live to see it, and have the satisfaction of it. *But why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?* What need is there of doing it? *Leave it to the poor to count their flocks.* Especially, why should David, who speaks so much of delighting in God, and the exercises of devotion, and who, being old, one would think, should have put away childish things, take a pleasure (so he calls it modestly, but means taking a pride) in a thing of this nature? Note, Many things, not in themselves sinful, turn into sin to us by our inordinate delighting in them. Joab was aware of David's vanity herein, but he himself was not. It would be good for us to have a friend that would faithfully admonish us, when we say or do any thing proud or vain glorious, for we often do so, and are not ourselves aware of it.

III. The orders executed notwithstanding, *v.* 4. Joab must not gainsay it, lest he be thought to grudge his time and pains in the king's service. It is an unhappiness to great men, to have those about them, that will aid them and serve them in what is evil; Joab, according to order, applied himself with some reluctancy to this unpleasing task, and took the captains of the host to help him.

V. 10—17. We have here David repenting of the sin, and yet punished for it; God repenting of the judgment, and David thereby made more penitent.

I. Here is David's penitent reflection, and confession of his sin in numbering the people. While the thing was in doing, all those nine months, we do not find that he was sensible of his sin, (for then he would have countermanded the orders he had given;) but when the account was finished, and laid before him, that very night, his conscience was awakened, and he felt the pain of it, just then when he promised himself the pleasure of it, *v.* 10. 1. He was convinced of his sin; *his heart smote him*, before the prophet came to him; *v.* 11. I think it should be read, *and when David was up*, (so it is in the original,) his conscience showed him the evil of what he had done; now that appeared sin, and exceeding sinful, in which, before, he saw no harm. 2. He confessed it to God, and begged earnestly for forgiveness. True penitents, whose consciences are tender and well informed, see that evil in sin, which others do not see. He owns he had *done foolishly, very foolishly;* he cries to God for pardon: *I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant. If we confess our sins*, we may pray in faith that God *will forgive them*, and take away, by pardoning mercy, that iniquity which we cast away by sincere repentance.

II. The just and necessary correction he suffered for this sin. David, under the sense of his sin, *arose in the morning*, expecting to hear of God's displeasure against him for what he had done, or designing to speak with Gad his seer about it. Gad is called his *seer*, because always at hand to advise with him; but God prevented him, and directed the prophet what to say to him, *v.* 11. David must be corrected; it is too great a crime, and reflects too much dishonor on God, to go un-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—9. In the righteous government of God, rulers and their subjects have a reciprocal influence on one another, and cannot sin or suffer without being mutually affected. Instead therefore of mutual recriminations under public calamities, however occasioned, all parties should be reminded to repent of their own sins, and to practise their own duties.—The remains of sin live, and will often revive, in the best of men, as long as they continue in this world: and the wisest are soon induced to do very foolishly, when God leaves them to themselves, and permits Satan to tempt them: and against this there is no security, except humble watchfulness and unceasing prayer.—Pride mixes with and defiles the best of our services. Even the believer often sacrilegiously assumes to himself the glory which belongs to God; and becomes vain of those endowments or possessions, which he had no share in procuring, and cannot secure for one hour! Through this hateful principle it comes to pass, that we so readily can spy a mote in our brother's eye, and yet remain unconscious of a beam in our own: so that even ungodly men can discern those evil tempers and that unbecoming conduct in eminent believers, to which themselves are insensible! (*Matt.* 7: 3—5.) This should warn Christians to walk circumspectly, lest their mistakes should encourage others in unbelief and ungodliness: and it is sometimes a part of our chastisement, to be shamed and rebuked by men of very bad characters. Yet those who have no real piety may, on personal and relative accounts, be sincerely attached to the interests of true Christians; and *in a certain way* have the cause of religion much at heart, as it happens to be connected with that of their party or their friends: but they cannot love the disciple simply because he loves and bears the image of his Master. They sometimes however give good advice, supported by solid arguments: they can foresee consequences which the believer does not suspect, and sincerely endeavor to prevent them; and they can mingle their expostulations with affectionate good wishes, and a kind of prayers for their welfare and success. These things do not prove a man to be a partaker of the grace of God, but they entitle him *so far* to the attention of godly persons. When authority prevails against reason and truth, pernicious effects must follow: yet this is so common, that those who possess much power and influence, rarely acquit themselves honorably as professors of godliness.—Men seldom accomplish to good purpose those services, in which they engage reluctantly: and God does not generally allow those whom He loves, the satisfactions which they sinfully covet. SCOTT.

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this place: probably, it was a tract of low land, [newly conquered,] which had lately been taken possession of by the Gileadites, in the N. part of the country. SCOTT.

Verse 9.

The numbers, as stated in Chronicles, are very different from those here given: and in order to reconcile them, it is thought that the regular troops, serving in rotation every month, and amounting to 288,000, (besides their officers, as it is supposed,) are included in the one account, but not in the other. (*Note*, 1 *Chr.* 27:1—15.) If these are added to the men of Israel as here numbered, and a due proportion taken from the men of Judah for their part of this militia, the round numbers will amount to nearly the same in both places.—This is, however, uncertain: and as Levi and Benjamin were not numbered, we may suppose that in other respects the accounts were inaccurate: and it might please God thus to order it, that David at last 'might not know the number of the people.' (1 *Chr.* 21:2—6. 27:23, 24.)—It is remarkable that the Israelites had not multiplied when possessed of Canaan, in proportion to what they had done during their bondage in Egypt. (*Ex.* 1:7.) ID.

[a] In 1 Chr. 21:5. 1,100,000 are assigned to Israel, 470,000 to Judah. Neither of the sums is too great; but they cannot both be right. More corruptions are found, in fact, in the *numbers* of the historical books of the O. T. than in any other part of the Sacred Records. Let us acknowledge, what cannot be successfully denied, that, although the original writers were under the influence of the Divine Spirit, yet we are not told that the same influence descended on all *copiers* of their words, so as absolutely to preclude mistakes.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 11.

Literally: 'And David arose in the morning, and the word of the LORD was unto the prophet Gad.' Gad compiled, in part at least, the annals of David's last years. (1 *Chr.* 29:29, 30.)—Had David's history been written, in the manner of modern *memoirs*, by friends of the deceased, how many things would have been concealed, or thrown into the back-ground! how much palliated! and what eulogiums would have been paid to his excellent and honorable actions. Thus David's character would have appeared more faultless: but his history would have been, in exact proportion, so much the less instructive. SCOTT.

Verses 12—14.

Though the Lord intended to forgive the sin of his repenting servant, as to his personal concern; yet as it was a *public offence*, He would *correct* it in a public manner, by destroying his subjects before his eyes. (*Notes*, 1, 2. 2 *Kings* 23:26, 27. 24:3, 4. 2 *Chr.* 33:12—17.)—

LORD, [z] I offer thee three *things*; choose thee one of them, [a] that I may do *it* unto thee.

13 So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall [b] seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou [c] flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be [d] three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me.

14 And David said unto Gad, [e] I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; [f] for his mercies *are* * great: and [g] let me not fall into the hand of man.

15 So [h] the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people [i] from Dan even to Beer-sheba [d] seventy thousand men.

16 And when [l] the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD [m] repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, [n] It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing-place of [o] Araunah [p] the Jebusite.

17 And David [q] spake unto the LORD, when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, [r] Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but [s] these sheep, what have they done? [t] let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.

punished, even in David himself: of the seven things God hates, pride is the first, Prov. 6: 17. Note, Those who truly repent of their sins, and have them pardoned, yet are often made to smart for them in this world. He was proud of the numbers of his people; therefore the judgment he must be chastised with for this sin, must be such as will make them fewer. Note, What we make the matter of our pride, it is just with God to take from us, or imbitter to us; and, some way or other, to make the matter of our punishment. It must be such a punishment as the people must have a large share in, *for God's anger was kindled against Israel*, v. 1. Though David's sin immediately opened the sluice, the sins of the people all contributed to the deluge.

Now as to the punishment to be inflicted,

(1.) David is bid to choose what rod he will be beaten with, v. 12, 13. God, by putting him thus to his choice, designed to humble him the more for his sin, which he would see to be exceeding sinful, when he came to consider each of these judgments as exceeding dreadful; to upbraid him with the proud conceit he had of his own sovereignty over Israel: or, to give him some encouragement under the correction, letting him know God did not cast him out of communion with Himself, but that still his secret was with Him, and in afflicting him, He considered his frame, and what he could best bear: or, that he might the more patiently bear the rod, when it was a rod of his own choosing. The prophet bids him advise with himself, and then tell him what answer he should *return to Him that sent him*. Note, Ministers are sent of God to us, and they must give an account of the success of their embassy; it concerns us therefore to consider, what answer they shall return from us.

(2.) He excepts only against the judgment of the sword, and, for the other two, refers himself to God, but intimates his choice of the pestilence rather, v. 14. Note, Sin brings men into straits; wise and good men often distress themselves by their own folly. To *fall into the hand of man*, that would sully all the glory of his triumphs, and occasion the enemies of God and Israel to *behave themselves proudly*. See Deut. 32: 26, 27. Their tender mercies also are cruel; and in three months they will do more damage than many years will repair. Therefore He casts himself on God. Men are *God's hand*, Ps. 17: 14. some judgments are more immediately from his hand than others, as famine and pestilence; and which of these shall be the scourge, he refers it to God, who chooses the shortest, that he might the sooner testify his being reconciled. But some think David, by these words, intimates his choice of the pestilence. The land had not yet recovered [from] the famine under which it smarted 3 years on the Gibeonites' account, therefore let us not be corrected with that rod, for that also will be the triumph of our neighbors; hence we read of *the reproach of famine*; (Ezek. 36: 30.) but, if Israel must be diminished, let it be by the pestilence, for that is *falling into the hands of the Lord*, who usually inflicted that judgment by the hand of his own immediate servants, the angels, as in the death of the first-born of Egypt. That is a judgment to which David himself, and his own family, lie as open as the meanest subject, but not so, either to famine or sword, therefore David, tenderly conscious of his guilt, chooses that. *It is a dreadful thing*, the apostle says, *to fall into the hands of the living God*; but David, a penitent, dares cast himself into God's hand, knowing he shall find that *his mercies are great*. Good men, even when under God's frowns, yet entertain no other than good thoughts of Him *Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him*.

(3.) A pestilence is, accordingly, sent, (v. 15.) from Dan to Beer-sheba, from one end of the kingdom to the other, which shows it to come immediately from God's hand, and not from any natural causes: David has his choice, he suffers by miracle, and not by ordinary means. For continuance, it lasted from morning (this very morning on which it was put to David's choice) to the third day, so Mr. Poole: or only to the evening of the first day, the time appointed for the evening sacrifice, so Patrick and others, who reckon it lasted but nine hours, and that, in compassion to David, God shortened the time first mentioned. The execution the pestilence did, was very severe, 70,000 that were all well, sickened and died, in a few hours. See the power of the angels, when God gives them commission, either to save or to destroy: Joab is nine months in passing with his pen, the angel but nine hours in passing with his sword, through all the coasts and corners of the land of Israel. How easily God can bring down the proudest sinners, and how much we owe daily to the divine patience. David's adultery is punished, for the present, only with the death of one infant; his pride, with the death of all those thousands, so much does God hate pride. The number slain amounts almost to a half decimation; 70,000 was about one in twenty: now we may suppose, David's flesh *trembled for fear of God, and he was afraid of his judgments*, Ps. 119: 120.

III. God's gracious relaxation of the judgment, when it began to be inflicted on Jerusalem, v. 16. The country had drunk of the bitter cup, but Jerusalem must drink the dregs: perhaps there was more wickedness, especially more pride, (and that was the sin now chastised,) in Jerusalem than elsewhere, therefore the hand of the destroyer is stretched out upon that: but then *the Lord repented Him of the evil*, changed not his mind, but his way, and said to the destroying angel, *It is enough; stay now thine hand*, and *let mercy rejoice against judgment*. See here how ready God is to forgive, and how little pleasure He takes in punishing; and let it encourage us to meet Him by repentance in the

z 1 Chr. 21:10,11.
a 12:9,10,14. Lev. 26:41. Job 5:17,18. Prov. 3:12. Heb. 12:6—10. Rev. 3:19.
b 21:1. Lev. 26:20,26. 1 Kings 17:1, &c. 1 Chr. 21:12. Ez. 14:13,21. Luke 4:25.
c Lev. 26:17,36,37. Deut. 28:25,52.
d Lev. 26:16,25. Deut. 28:22,27,35. Ps. 91:6. Ez. 14:19—21.
e 1 Sam. 13:6. 2 Kings 6:15. John 12:27. Phil. 1:23.
f Ex. 34:6,7. 1 Chr. 21:13. Ps. 51:1. 86:5,15. 103:8,13,14. 119:156. 145:9. Is. 55:7. Jon. 4:2. Mic. 7:18.
* Or, *many*.
g 2 Kings 13:3—7. 2 Chr. 28:5—9. Prov. 12:10. Is. 47:6. Zech. 1:15.
h Num. 16:46—49. 25:9. 1 Sam. 6:19. 1 Chr. 21:14. 27:24. Matt. 24:7. Rev. 6:8.
i See on 2.
k Is. 37:36.
l Ex. 12:23. 2 Kings 19:35. 1 Chr. 21:15,16. 2 Chr. 32:21. Ps. 35:6. Acts 12:23.
m Gen. 6:6. 1 Sam. 15:11. Ps. 78:38. Jer. 18:7—10. Joel 2:13,14. Am. 7:3,6. Hab. 3:2.
n Ex. 9:28. 1 Kings 19:4. Is. 40:1,2. Mark 14:41. 2 Cor. 2:6.
o 1 Chr. 21:15. 2 Chr. 3:1. *Ornan*.
p 5:8. Gen. 10:16. Josh. 15:63. Judg. 1:21. 19:11. Zech. 9:7.
q 1 Chr. 21:16,17.
r 10. Job 7:20. 42:6. Ps. 51:2—5. Is. 6:5.
s 1 Kings 22:17. Ps. 44:11. Ez. 34:2-6,23,24. Zech. 13:7.
t Gen. 44:33. John 10:11,12. 1 Pet. 2:24,25.

Only *three years* of famine are proposed in Chronicles: (1 *Chr.* 21:12.) but such variations frequently occur, and are probably owing to some trivial errors of transcribers in so long a course of years; especially as *the numbers* were often distinguished by *marks* [or letters] which might the more easily be mistaken.—'They that fear the Lord will prepare their hearts, and humble their souls in his sight, saying, We will fall into the hands of the LORD, and not into the hands of men: for as his majesty is, so is his mercy.' *Ecclesiasticus* 2:17, 18. (*Heb.* 10:31.) SCOTT.

(14.) 'David acted nobly: had he chosen *war*, his own *personal safety* was not risked; because an ordinance prevented his going to battle. Had he chosen *famine*, his own *wealth* would have secured his and his family's support: but he showed the greatness of his mind in choosing the *pestilence*, to which himself and household were exposed equally with the meanest of his subjects.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(15, 16.) 'The time appointed' may mean either, the close of the third day: or, more probably, the appointed hour of evening sacrifice on the first day. For 'the LORD repented Him of the evil,' implying that He did not proceed to the extent of the judgment denounced. SCOTT.

Verse 17.

Probably, the angel [note, John 5:4.] had before been invisible: but at length 'David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the LORD stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand, stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon *their faces*.' 1 *Chr.* 21:16, 17. The 'drawn sword' was an emblem of the divine justice about to be executed on the city. David had before humbled himself in the sight of God, and, no doubt, had earnestly interceded for the people; but this sight affected him more than ever: and, while he and the elders prostrated themselves on the ground, he poured out his soul before God in fervent prayer for his subjects, and especially for Jerusalem. His guilt indeed *occasioned* the judgment: but the people were far from that innocency which David supposed; for their wickedness was in reality the *cause* of the calamity. (*Note*, 1, 2.) His intercession however prevailed: and it was doubtless in answer to his prayer, that the LORD said to the destroying angel, 'It is enough: stay now thine hand.' SCOTT.

18 ¶ And [u] Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD, in the threshing-floor of * Araunah the Jebusite.

19 And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up [x] as the LORD commanded.

20 And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and [y] bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground.

21 And Araunah said, [z] Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? and David said, [a] To buy the threshing-floor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that [b] the plague may be stayed from the people.

22 And Araunah said unto David, [c] Let my lord the king take and offer up what *seemeth* good unto him: behold *here be* [d] oxen for burnt-sacrifice, and threshing-instruments, and *other* instruments of the oxen for wood.

23 All these *things* did Araunah, [e] *as* a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, [f] The LORD thy God accept thee.

24 And the king said unto Araunah, [g] Nay; but I will surely buy *it* of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto the LORD my God, of that which doth cost me nothing. [h] So David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

25 And David [i] built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. [k] So the LORD was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

u 11. 1 Chr. 21:18.

way of his judgments. This was on mt. Moriah. [The Jews say, this was the place of Cain's and Abel's offerings.] Lightfoot observes, that in the very place where Abraham, by a countermand from heaven, was stayed from slaying his son, this angel, by a like countermand, was stayed from destroying Jerusalem. It is for the sake of the great Sacrifice, that our forfeited lives are preserved from the destroying angel.

IV. David's renewed repentance for his sin on this occasion, *v.* 17. Note, True penitents, the more they receive of God's sparing, pardoning mercy, the more humbled they are for sin, and the more resolved against it. *They shall be ashamed, when I am pacified toward them*, Ezek. 16: 63. Observe, 1. How he criminates himself, as if he could never speak ill enough of his own fault; so willing was he to accept the punishment of his iniquity. 2. How he intercedes for the people, whose bitter lamentations made his heart ache, and his ears tingle; *These sheep, what have they done?* Done! Why they had done much amiss; it was their sin that provoked God to leave David himself to do as he did; yet, as became a penitent, he is severe on his own faults, while he extenuates theirs. Most people, when God's judgments are abroad, charge others with being the cause of them, and care not who falls by them, so they can escape; but David's penitent and public spirit was otherwise affected. Let this remind us of the grace of our Lord Jesus, who gave Himself for our sins, and was willing God's hand should be against Him, that we might escape.

V. 18—25. Here is, I. A command sent to David, to erect an altar in the place where he saw the angel, *v.* 18. God's encouraging us to offer to Him spiritual sacrifices, is a comfortable evidence of his reconciling us to Himself. Peace is made between God and sinners by sacrifice, not otherwise, even by Christ, the great Propitiation, of whom all the legal sacrifices were types. It is for his sake, the destroying angel is bid to stay his hand. When God's judgments are graciously stayed, we ought to acknowledge it with thankfulness, to his praise. This altar was to be for thank-offerings. See Isa. 12: 1.

II. David's purchase hereunto. It seems, the owner was a Jebusite: proselyted, no doubt, to the Jewish religion, though by birth a Gentile, and therefore allowed, not only to dwell among the Israelites, but to have a possession of his own in a city, Lev. 25: 29, 30. Now,

1. David went in person to the owner, to treat with him. See his justice; he would not so much as use it in the present exigence, though the proprietor was an alien, though himself a king, and though he had express orders from God to rear an altar there, till he had bought it, and paid for it. God *hates robbery for burnt-offering*. See his humility, how far he was from taking state; though a king, he was now a penitent, therefore, in token of his self-abasement, he neither sent for Araunah to come to him, nor sent another to deal with him, but went himself; (*v.* 19.) and, though it looked like a diminution of himself, he lost no honor by it; Araunah, when he saw him, went and *bowed himself to the ground before him*, *v.* 20. Great men will be never the less respected for their humility, but the more.

2. Araunah generously offered him, not only the ground to build his altar on, but *oxen for sacrifices*, and other things that might be of use to him in the service, (*v.* 22.) all, *gratis*, and a prayer besides: *The Lord thy God accept thee! He gave as a king*, (*v.* 23.) though an ordinary subject, he had the spirit of a prince. In the Hebrew it is, *He gave, even the king to the king*, whence it is supposed Araunah had been king of the Jebusites in that place; or was descended from their royal family, though now tributary to David. [*Hamelec, the king*, is not in the Sept. Syr. Arab. 3 of Ken. and De Rossi's mss. nor in the paral. pass. in Chr. Perhaps it should be, "Araunah gave unto the king." *Clarke.*] He greatly honored David, though his conqueror, on the score of his personal merits. He had also an affection for Israel, and earnestly desired *the plague might be stayed;* and the honor of its being stayed at *his threshing-floor* he would account a valuable consideration for all he now tendered to David.

3. David resolves to pay the full value of it, and does so, *v.* 24. [Otherwise it would have been, says *Clarke*, Araunah's not David's offering.] He would not take advantage of the pious Jebusite's generosity; he thanks him, no doubt, for his kind offer, but pays him now for the floor and the oxen, for the present service, and afterward for the ground adjoining, to build the temple on. Note, Those know not what religion is, all whose care it is, to make it cheap and easy to themselves, and who are best pleased with that which costs them least pains or money. What have we our substance for, but to honor God with it; and how can it be better bestowed?

III. The building of the altar, and the offering of the proper sacrifices on it; (*v.* 25.) burnt-offerings, to the glory of God's justice in the execution that had been done; and peace-offerings, to the glory of his mercy in the seasonable staying of the process. Hereupon, God showed (it is supposed by fire from heaven consuming the sacrifices) that *He was entreated for the land*, and that it was in mercy the plague was removed, and in token of God's being reconciled both to prince and people. Christ is our Altar, our Sacrifice; in Him alone we may expect to find favor with God, to escape his wrath, and the flaming sword of the cherubim, which *keeps the way of the tree of life.*

* Heb. *Araniah.* See on c, p. 16.
x Gen. 6:22. 1 Chr. 21:19. 2 Chr. 20: 20. 36:16. Neh. 9:26. Heb. 11:3.
y 9:8. Gen. 18:2. Ruth 2:10. 1 Chr. 21:20,21.
z 3 18.
a Gen. 23:8—16. 1 Chr. 21:22. Jer. 32: 6—14.
b 21:3—14. Num. 16:47—50. 25:8. Ps. 106:30.
c Gen. 23:11. 1 Chr. 21:22.
d 1 Sam. 6:14. 1 Kings 19:21.
e Is. 32:8.
f Job 42:8. Ps. 20:3,4. Is. 60:7. Ez. 20:40,41. Hos. 8:13. Rom. 15:30,31. 1 Tim. 2:1,2. 1 Pet. 2:5.
g Gen. 23:13. 1 Chr. 21:24. Ma. . . 12 —14. Rom. 12:17.
h 1 Chr. 21:25. 22:1.
i Gen. 8:20. 22:9. 1 Sam. 7:9,17.
k 14. 21:14. 1 Chr. 21:26,27. Lam. 3:32,33.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 10—25. When God corrects the transgressions of his people, He makes them, by the anguish of their souls, in the great straits to which He reduces them, taste the bitterness of their sins, and perceive his abhorrence of them.—Whatever we idolize, or grow proud of, will generally be taken from us, or converted into a source of distress; and no aggravation or affliction is more painful to generous minds, than the reflection, that others, whom they love, are suffering on their account.—While ministers mourn over the state of their congregations; they may sometimes profitably inquire, whether their own supineness, pride, and desire of applause or popularity; their want of zeal and simplicity; their self-indulgence, or conformity to the world, do not blight their labors, although more open evils do not blot their profession? and whether the people's souls are not suffering for *their* correction; and to bring them to deeper humiliation, greater fervency in prayer, and a more simple, spiritual frame of mind, and devotedness to God? And surely we should choose to be chastened in our own persons, rather than that the blessing should be withheld from our congregations: for, though the Lord is righteous in these dispensations; yet the people have not deserved *at our hands*, that we should occasion this evil to them.—Grace teaches men to condemn themselves rather than others, and to seek the interests of their fellow creatures in many respects before their own: and earnest prayers offered in this temper of mind, by those who unreservedly cast themselves on the mercies of the Lord, are very prevalent. For 'He is slow to anger, and ready to forgive:' and He never fails of his promises, though He readily recedes from his threatenings in behalf of the humbled sinner.—If the power of angels, as it appears in this chapter, is so terrible, what is that of the Almighty Creator! and as *they* are so obedient to their Maker's word, and so prompt in executing his will; we ought carefully to imitate them, especially in the delightful service of 'ministering to the heirs of salvation.' SCOTT.

AN EXPOSITION,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, AND NOTES,

UPON THE FIRST BOOK OF

KINGS.

THE holy Scripture is the history of the kingdom of God among men, under the several administrations of it. The particular history now before us, is that of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel; yet with special regard to the kingdom of God among them; for still it is a sacred history, much more instructive, nor less entertaining, than any of the histories of the kings of the earth, to which (those of them that are of any certainty) it is prior in time.

The Bible began with the story of Patriarchs, Prophets, and Judges, men whose converse with heaven was more immediate, (the record of which strengthens our faith,) but is not so easily accommodated to our case, (now that we expect not visions,) as the subsequent history of affairs like ours, under the direction of common providence; and here also we find, though not many, types and figures of the Messiah, yet great expectations of Him: for not only prophets, but kings, desired to see the great mysteries of the Gospel, Luke 10: 24.

The two books of Samuel are introductions to the books of the Kings, as they relate the origin of the royal government in Saul, and of the royal family in David. These two books give us an account of David's successor, Solomon, the division of his kingdom, and the succession of the several kings both of Judah and Israel, with an abstract of their history down to the captivity. And as from the book of Genesis we may collect excellent rules of economics, for the good governing of families; so, from these books, of politics, for the directing of public affairs. There is in them special regard had to the house and lineage of David, from which Christ came. Some of his sons trod in his steps, others did not. The characters of the kings of Judah may be thus briefly given:—David the devout, Solomon the wise, Rehoboam the simple, Abijah the valiant, Asa the upright, Jehoshaphat the religious, Jehoram the wicked, Ahaziah the profane, Joash the backslider, Amaziah the rash, Uzziah the mighty, Jotham the peaceable, Ahaz the idolater, Hezekiah the reformer, Manasseh the penitent, Amon the obscure, Josiah the tender-hearted, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah, all wicked, and such as brought ruin quickly on themselves and their kingdom. The number of the good and bad is nearly equal, but the reigns of the good were generally long, and those of the bad, short. This consideration will make the state of Israel not altogether so bad in this period as, at first, it seems. In this first book, we have, I. The death of David, *ch.* 1. and 2. II. The glorious reign of Solomon, and his building of the temple; (*ch.* 3—10.) but the cloud his sun set under, *ch.* 11. III. The division of the kingdoms in the reign of Rehoboam, and his reign and Jeroboam's, *ch.* 12—14. IV. The reigns of Abijah and Asa over Judah, Baasha and Omri over Israel, *ch.* 15. and 16. V. Elijah's miracles, *ch.* 17—19. VI. Ahab's success against Ben-hadad, his wickedness and fall, *ch.* 20—22. And, in all this history, it appears that kings, though gods to us, are men to God, mortal and accountable. HENRY.

The history contained in the two books of the Kings, extends through a period of about 427 years. The two seem originally to have formed but one book; but they were afterwards divided into two, and called 'The first and second books of the Kings;' and in some versions, 'The third and fourth books of the Kings;' as the two books of Samuel are, in the Sept and Vulg. called 'The first and the second books of the Kings.'—It is evident, they contain an abstract from more copious records, which seem to have been collected and preserved by contemporary prophets. (11:41. 14:29. 15:31. 22:39, 45 2 *Chr.* 9:29. 12:15. 13:22. 20:34. 26:22.) Indeed, a considerable part of the transactions of their own times is recorded, in connection with the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. It is, however, uncertain by whom this compilation was made: but if Ezra, as is generally and probably supposed, compiled the books of Chronicles; it is not likely, that, (according to some learned men,) he compiled these also: as they form a distinct history of the same times. If, therefore, they were arranged in the present manner, principally by one sacred writer, those, who ascribe them to Jeremiah, seem to have adopted the more probable opinion. Indeed, the second book of the Kings and his prophecy end with the narrative of the same events; though, perhaps, both were added after his death by another hand: and it is not unlikely, that some other trivial alterations were made in the days of Ezra, [Bp. GRAY remarks, that the Chaldaic names, by which the months are denominated in these books, were not used by the Jews, till in or after the captivity.] to render the narrative more perspicuous to the Jews after [their return from Babylon].—They have, however, been constantly received, both by Jews and Christians, as a part of the sacred canon, the holy Scriptures: and the events recorded are frequently referred to in the N. T. (*Matt.* 1:7—12. 6:29. 12:42. *Luke* 4:25—27. *Acts* 2:29. 7:47—50. *Jam.* 5:17, 18.) It is observable also, that our Lord and his apostle James not only speak of them as authentic records, and a part of the sacred oracles received by the Jews; but especially attest some of the most wonderful miracles recorded in them; and thus affix a direct sanction to them, as given by inspiration of God.—They also contain many prophecies; especially that of Josiah, who was foretold by name 300 years before his birth: (1 *K.* 13:2.) but none of these predictions, in their most evident literal meaning, refer to events later than the Babylonish captivity.—After the death of David, the sacred historian records the principal transactions of Solomon's long and peaceable reign; [recounts his great wisdom, his magnificence, and his fall; Dr. A. CLARKE.] and under his successor, the nation was divided into the two distinct kingdoms of Judah and Israel.—The descendants of Solomon reigned over that of Judah till the captivity, for about 387 years. So that, from the accession of David, during a course of 467 years, the throne was filled by his descendants, in lineal descent, except as the sons of Josiah succeeded one another. During this long term of years, there was not a single revolution, or civil war; and but one short interruption, by Athaliah's usurpation. Perhaps it would be difficult to find, in universal history, any thing equal to this permanent internal order and tranquillity. Let the reader recollect how many revolutions, civil wars, murders of reigning kings by rivals and successors, and changes in the succession, are found in the English history, during the same number of years.—Above half the kings of Judah supported true religion, and several of them were eminently pious men: and it is remarkable that their reigns were much longer, than those of the wicked princes; (11:42. 15:10. 22:42. 2 *K.* 15:2,33. 18:2. 22:1.) so that they comprise much above 300 years of this period; and the greatest part of this time was evidently passed, either in profound peace, or in remarkable prosperity. Let this state of things be compared with the history of Greece or Rome; and the situation of Judah must be allowed to have been exceedingly more desirable, than that of these celebrated heathen nations.—The kingdom of Israel continued about 254 years, till the Assyrian captivity. The nineteen kings, of several families, who, during this period, reigned in succession, were all idolaters, and most of them monsters of iniquity: yet the Lord by his prophets, especially by Elijah and Elisha, preserved a considerable degree of true religion in the land, till the measure of their national wickedness was full; and then they were finally dispersed among the Gentiles: except as a remnant of them was, in various ways, and at different times, incorporated among the Jews.—In these books the history of the two kingdoms is carried on together: and the whole forms an admirable comment on the prophecies delivered to the nation by Moses and Joshua; (*Lev.* 26: *Deut.* 4: 28: 29: 30: 31: 32: *Josh.* 23:15, 16.) and a striking illustration of the proverb, 'Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is the reproach of any people.'—This first book contains the history of about 120 years. Connected with the

peace and prosperity of Solomon's reign, and the fame of his wisdom, a full account is given of the temple having been built by him. God had commanded Israel to offer all their sacrifices at one place; Shiloh had for some time been that place; and the ark had been removed to Zion, by David, in order that a temple might there be built, which Solomon his son accomplished. (*Deut.* 12:5—7.) A large proportion of the subsequent parts of the O. T. relates to this temple; to the sins of the people in sacrificing elsewhere; to their profanation of the temple; to the judgments of God upon them for these crimes; especially to the destruction of the temple by the Chaldeans; and to the rebuilding of it by Zerubbabel: and these things so run through all the subsequent history and prophecies, that, if Solomon did not build the temple by the express command of God, it must follow, that God punished the nation with tremendous judgments for violating merely human appointments.—When the Samaritans preferred mount Gerizim, our Lord told the woman of Samaria, they 'knew not what they worshipped, for salvation was of the Jews:' and this declaration, with his own constant attendance at the ordinances administered at the temple in Jerusalem, sufficiently attests the divine inspiration of those records, in which alone it is expressly declared, that Solomon built the temple by the direction and appointment of God Himself.—Solomon's fall into idolatry seems evidently implied in the book of Ecclesiastes: and the history of Rehoboam's imprudence, the division of his kingdom, Jeroboam's idolatry, and the subsequent events to the end of the book, are assumed as undoubted facts in the writings of all the prophets. So entirely does the whole canon of Scripture coincide; while each part confirms, and receives confirmation from, all the rest. SCOTT.

CHAP. I.

Abishag is procured to cherish David, in his old age and sickness, 1—4. Adonijah gains over Joab and Abiathar, and aspires to the throne, 5—10. Nathan counsels Bathsheba, who speaks to David, and is seconded by Nathan, 11—27. David assures Bathsheba, by an oath, that Solomon shall succeed him; and gives orders that he should, that day, be anointed and proclaimed king, 28—37. Zadok, Benaiah, and Nathan, zealously execute these orders, and the people rejoice, 38—40. Jonathan informs Adonijah and his company; and they hastily disperse, 41—49. Adonijah flees to the horns of the altar, and obtains from Solomon a conditional pardon, 50—53.

NOW king David was [a] old [b] *and* [*] stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat.

2 Wherefore his servants said unto him, [†] Let there be sought for my lord the king [‡] a young virgin: and let her [d] stand before the king, and let her [§] cherish him, and let her [e] lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may [f] get heat.

3 So [g] they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found [h] Abishag a [i] Shunammite, and brought her to the king.

4 And the damsel *was* very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him: but the king [k] knew her not.

5 ¶ Then [l] Adonijah the son of Haggith [m] exalted himself, saying, [n] I will [‖] be king: and [o] he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him.

6 And his father [p] had not displeased him [¶] at any time in saying, Why

CHAP. 1. V. 1—4. We have David here sinking under the infirmities of old age, and brought by them to the gates of the grave. He that *cometh up out of the pit, shall fall into the snare;* and, one way or other, *we must needs die.*

I. It would have troubled one to see David so infirm, *v.* 1. He was now 70 years old. Many, at that age, are as lively and fit for business as ever: but David was now chastised for his former sins, especially that in the matter of Uriah, and felt from his former toils, and the hardships he had gone through in his youth, which then he made nothing of, but was now the worse for. Let young people *remember their Creator in the days of their youth,* before these evil days come. When our strength is gone, it will be a comfort to remember that we used it well.

II. It would have troubled one to see his physicians so weak and unskilful, that they knew no other way of relieving him, than by outward applications. *Clothes,* where there is any inward heat, will keep it in, and so increase it; but, where it is not, they have none to communicate, no, not royal clothing. Elihu understood not *how our garments are warm upon us;* (Job 37: 17.) but if God deny his blessing, men *clothe them, and there is none warm;* (Hag. 1: 6.) David here was not. They foolishly prescribed nuptials to one that should rather have been preparing for his funeral; (*v.* 2—4.) but his prophets should have been consulted as well as his physicians, in an affair of this nature. However, this might be excused then, when even good men ignorantly allowed themselves to have many wives. We now have not so learned Christ, but are taught, that one man must have but one wife; (Matt. 19: 5.) and further, *that it is good for a man not to touch a woman,* 1 Cor. 7: 1. That Abishag was married to David before she lay with him, and was his secondary wife, appears from its being imputed as a great crime to Adonijah, that he desired to marry her, (*ch.* 2: 22.) after his father's death.

V. 5—10. David had much affliction in his children; Amnon and Absalom had both been his grief; the one his first-born, the other his third. (2 Sam. 3: 2, 3.) his second, whom he had by Abigail, we will suppose he had comfort in; his fourth, Adonijah, (2 Sam. 3: 4.) one of those born in Hebron, we heard nothing of till now; and here we are told he was a comely person, and next in age, and (as it proved) next in temper, to Absalom, *v.* 6. And further, that in his father's eyes he had been a jewel, but was now a thorn.

I. His father had made a fondling of him, *v.* 6 It is not said, He never displeased his father; probably he had frequently, and his father was secretly troubled at his misconduct, and lamented it before God: but his father had not displeased him, either by crossing, or denying him, or by calling him to an account, as to what he had done, and where he had been, or by keeping him to his book or his business, or reproving him; he never said to him, *Why hast thou done so?* Because he saw it was uneasy to him, and he could not bear it without fretting. It was the son's fault that he was displeased at reproof, and took it for an affront, whereby he lost the benefit of it; and the father's, that, because he saw it displeased him, he did not reprove him; and now he justly smarted for indulging him. They who honor their sons more than God, as those do, who keep them not under good discipline, thereby forfeit the honor they might expect from their sons.

II. He, in return, made a fool of his father: because he was old, and confined to his bed, he thought no notice was to be taken of him; therefore he *exalted himself,* and said, *I will be king,* *v.* 5. Children that are indulged, learn to be proud and ambitious, and that is the ruin of a great many young people. The way to keep them humble, is, to keep them under. Observe Adonijah's insolence. 1. He looks upon the days of mourning for his father to be at hand, therefore prepares to succeed him, though he knew that by the designation both of God and David, Solomon was to be the man; (Chr. 22: 9. 23: 1.) which entail Adonijah attempted by force to cut off, in contempt both of God and his father. It argues a very base and wicked mind, for children to insult over their parents, because of the infirmities of their age.

In pursuance of this ambitious prospect, (1.) He got a great retinue, (*v.* 5.) *chariots and horsemen,* both for state and strength; to wait on him, and to fight for him. (2.) He made great interest with no less than Joab, the general of the army, and Abiathar the High Priest, *v.* 7. old men, who had been faithful to David, in the most difficult and troublesome of his times; men of sense and experience, who, one would think, would not easily be wheedled. But God, in this matter, left them to themselves, perhaps, to correct them for some former misconduct, with a scourge of their own making. We are told (*v.* 8.) who they were, of such approved fidelity to David, that Adonijah had not confidence to propose it to them; Zadok,

a 2 Sam. 5:4. 1 Chr. 23:1. 29:27,28. Ps. 90:10.
b Gen. 18:11. 24:1. Luke 1:7.
* Heb: *entered into days.* Josh. 23:1,2, *marg.*
† Heb. *Let them seek.*
‡ Heb. *a damsel, a virgin.*
d Deut. 10:8. 1 Sam. 16:21,22. 2 Chr. 29:11.
§ Heb. *be a cherisher unto him.*
e Gen. 16:5. Deut. 13:6. 2 Sam. 12:3. Mic. 7:5.
f Ec. 4:11.
g Esth. 2:2—4.
h 2:17—25.
i Josh. 19:18. 1 Sam. 28:4. 2 Kings 4: 8,25.
k Matt. 1:25.
l 2 Sam. 3:4. 1 Chr. 3:2.
m 11. 2:24. Ex. 9:17. Prov. 16:18. 18:12. Luke 14:11. 18:14.
n Deut. 17:15. Judg. 9:2. 1 Chr. 22:5 —11. 28:5. 29:1.
‖ Heb. *reign.*
o Deut. 17:16. 2 Sam. 15:1. Is. 2:7.
p 1 Sam. 3:13. Prov. 22:15. 23:13,14. 29:15. Heb. 12:5,6.
¶ Heb. *from his days.*

NOTES.

CHAP. I. V. 1—4. The counsel of his courtiers, or physicians, deserves much censure: though similar advice has been given in other ages and countries. [*Roberts* says, the custom is still common in the E. The parties generally are not married.] We may suppose, David acceded to it merely in compliance with their wishes, and in deference to their judgment; but the appearance was not at all becoming his character, and circumstances. (*M. R.*—2:15—18.) SCOTT.

(4.) See the note from Dr. *A. Clarke* on Ruth, ch. 4:16. illustrating the principle of this advice, for which *Poole* quotes the authority of Galen. ED.

Verses 5, 6.

After the death of Absalom, Adonijah was David's eldest son: and no doubt he considered the kingdom as his birth-right, and confided in the support of the people to seize upon it; without any regard to his father, or to the revealed will of God.—It is remarkable how frequent-

hast thou done so? and he also *was a* [q] very goodly *man;* and *his mother* [r] bare him after Absalom.

7 And [*] he [s] conferred with [t] Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with [u] Abiathar the priest: and they † following Adonijah helped *him.*

8 But [v] Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and [x] Nathan the prophet, and [y] Shemei, and Rei, and [z] the mighty men which *belonged* to David, were not with Adonijah.

9 And Adonijah [a] slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zoheleth, which *is* by ‡ En-rogel, and [b] called all his brethren the king's sons, and all the men of Judah the king's servants.

10 But [c] Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not.

[*Practical Observations.*]

11 ¶ Wherefore [d] Nathan spake unto Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that [e] Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign, and David our lord knoweth *it* not?

12 Now therefore come, [f] let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest [g] save thine own life, and [h] the life of thy son Solomon.

13 Go, and get thee in unto king David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, [i] Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall [j] sit upon my throne? why then doth Adonijah reign?

14 Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, [k] I also will

[q] 1 Sam. 9:2. 10:23. 2 Sam. 14:25.
[r] 2 Sam. 3:3,4. 1 Chr. 3:2.
[*] Heb. *his words were with.*
[s] 2 Sam. 15:12. Ps. 2:2.
[t] 2:28. 2 Sam. 8:16. 20:23.
[u] 1 Sam. 22:20—23. 2 Sam. 15:24—29, 35. 20:25.
† Heb. *helped after Adonijah.* 2:22,26—35.
[v] 2:35. 2 Sam. 8:17,18. 20:25. 1 Chr. 27:5,6. Ez. 44:15.
[x] 2 Sam. 7:2—4. 12:1—15.
[y] 4:18. Zech. 12:13.
[z] 2 Sam. 23:8—39. 1 Chr. 11:10—47.
[a] 2 Sam. 15:12. Prov. 15:8.
‡ Or, *the well Rogel.* 2 Sam. 17:17.
[b] 2 Sam. 13:23—27. 15:11.
[c] 8,19.
[d] 2 Sam. 7:12—17. 12:24,25. 1 Chr. 22:9,10. 28:4,5. 29:1.
[e] See on 5.
[f] Prov. 11:14. 20:18. 27:9. Jer. 38:15.
[g] 21. Gen. 19:17. Acts 27:31.
[h] Judg. 9:5. 2 Kings 11:1. 2 Chr. 21:4. 22:10. Matt. 21:38.
[i] See on 11,17,30.
[j] 17,24,30,35,48. 2:12. Deut. 17:18. 1 Chr. 29:23. Ps. 132:11,12. Is. 9:7. Jer. 33:21. Luke 1:32,33.
[k] 17—27. 2 Cor. 13:1.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—10. The most vigorous constitutions must soon wear out, and our lives hasten to a close: and, though proper means of restoring health and prolonging our days should be used; yet a pious and wise man ought not to yield to such expedients as have the appearance of evil, or may become temptations to him. —*Indulgent* parents are commonly chastised with *disobedient* children.—Every propensity gathers strength by being gratified.—So long as carnal self-love reigns in the heart, no worldly wisdom and experience, no maturity of age, no rank or station in the community or in the church, no previous fidelity or attachment to princes or patrons, can secure men's continuance in their former course or connections: for innumerable circumstances may occur, which may prompt them to some new method of attempting to gratify their reigning inclinations. So that disgust, fear, conscious guilt, or the hope of greater authority, influence, or wealth, may speedily induce them to measures, which stand in opposition to all their former lives! We ought therefore to depend on the Lord to preserve us from the deceitfulness of our own hearts, and from the fickleness and treachery of men.—Political wisdom frequently contradicts the Word of God, and proves in the event the greatest folly: and crafty seducers can discern who are, and who are not, fit for their purpose; and will shun determined, honest characters as their enemies and rivals.

SCOTT.

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ly the first-born were set aside by his express appointment. In the ordinary course of things, it is expedient that the primogeniture should have the precedency; and the *judicial* law of Moses, (as well as the civil laws of most nations,) was formed accordingly. But the examples of Jacob, Judah, the sons of Joseph, David, Solomon, and others, prove that this is not grounded on moral obligation: that it is not divine, or unalterable, or to be put in competition with the welfare of whole nations, and the liberty and rights of all the rest of mankind; according to the sentiments of some authors, who most absurdly ground their doctrine on the Word of God, though it is evidently contradictory to it!—It is probable, Adonijah was of an imperious disposition. He seems to have greatly resembled his elder brother Absalom. SCOTT.

(6.) *Nor had his father grieved him.*] David's *faults* seem to have been occasioned by *two causes;* too great indulgence of the sexual propensity, and of the paternal feeling.—These propensities, like the others, gather strength by indulgence; and their undue indulgence is a sin punishable both here and hereafter. Had David always restrained these within proper bounds, what 'assurance of *a man*' would the history of his life furnish to us! What a model of well endowed humanity! Neither less nor more than man! Great was he in intellect and imagination—great in his moral nature, great in social feelings—greatest, in that he aimed to live, 'a man after God's own heart'—and to feel the spirit of the prayer, 'Father, *thy will* be done!' ED.

Verse 7.

Perhaps Joab, though attached to David, was not favorable to Solomon, and preferred Adonijah, as more congenial with his own disposition. Being destitute of piety, he disregarded the divine appointment, and deemed it more politic to place the eldest son on the throne; and no wrong to David, who, he might think, injured Adonijah in preferring his younger brother. Perhaps he was still afraid of being called to account for his murders; and hoped to secure himself, to continue his preferment, and to increase his influence, by helping Adonijah to the kingdom: and it may be supposed, that he secretly resented David's conduct in attempting to lay him aside, and to put Amasa in his place. (2 *Sam.* 19:9—15. 20:6—10.)—Abiathar, though high priest, seems to have been less regarded by David than Zadok was: (2 *Sam.* 15:24—29.) and perhaps he suspected Solomon would set his family aside, in favor of the line of Eleazar to which Zadok belonged. But by attaching himself to Adonijah, he hastened that event, and showed, that David had good reasons for preferring Zadok, who probably was a man of much deeper and more serious religion. (2:26, 27, 35. 1 *Sam.* 2:31—36. *Ez.* 44:15, 16.) SCOTT.

Verses 8—10.

It is highly improbable, that Shimei would be much regarded by either party [though he seems to have been able to command the wills of at least a thousand of his tribe. ED.]. (2:8, 9, 36—46.2 *Sam.* 16:5—14. 19:19—23.) Solomon afterwards preferred a person of this name: (4:18.) and probably he was a man of considerable consequence. (*Zech.* 12:9—14.)—We know nothing further of Rei, but no doubt he also was a person of rank and great influence.—The mighty men were the chieftains before enumerated. (2 *Sam.* 23:8—39.)—It is most likely that Adonijah made a solemn sacrifice, as well as a magnificent feast, on the occasion; and thus he concealed his designs, till ripe for execution. (2 *Sam.* 15:7—9.) ID.

Verses 11—14.

Had Adonijah succeeded, he would, no doubt, have put Solomon and Bath-sheba to death: for the history of the world demonstrates, that when men are aspiring after dominion, they are easily tempted to the most enormous crimes, which seem necessary for their purpose, even when most contrary to their apparent natural disposition. (*Judg.* 9:4—6. 2 *K.* 11:1, 2. *Matt.* 2:3—6, 16—18.) ID.

come in after thee, and * confirm thy words.

15 ¶ And Bath-sheba went in unto the king into the chamber: and the king was [l] very old; and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king.

16 And Bath-sheba [m] bowed and did obeisance unto the king. [n] And the king said, † What wouldest thou?

17 And she said unto him, [o] My lord, [p] thou swarest by the LORD thy God unto thine handmaid, *saying*, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne.

18 And now behold, [q] Adonijah reigneth; and now, my lord the king, [r] thou knowest *it* not.

19 And [s] he hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host: but Solomon thy servant hath he not called.

20 And thou, my lord, O king, [t] the eyes of all Israel *are* upon thee, that [u] thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him.

21 Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall [v] sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted ‡ offenders.

22 ¶ And lo, [x] while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in.

23 And they told the king, saying, Behold, Nathan the prophet. And when he was come in before the king, [y] he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground.

24 And Nathan said, My lord, O king, [z] hast thou said, Adonijah shall [a] reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne?

25 For he is gone down this day, and hath [b] slain oxen, and fat cattle, and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and behold they eat and drink before him, and say, § God save king Adonijah.

26 But me, *even* [c] me thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called.

27 Is this thing done by my lord the king, [d] and thou hast not showed *it* unto thy servant, who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?

[*Practical Observations.*]

28 ¶ Then king David answered and said, Call me Bath-sheba. And she came ‖ into the king's presence, and stood before the king.

29 And the king sware and said, [e] *As* the LORD liveth that [f] hath redeemed my soul out of all distress,

30 Even [g] as I sware unto thee by the LORD God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day.

31 Then Bath-sheba bowed with *her* face to the earth, and [h] did reverence to the king, and said, [i] Let my lord king David live for ever.

* Heb. *fill up.*
l 2—4.
m 23. 1 Sam. 20:41. 24:8. 25:23.
n 2:20. Esth. 7:2. Matt. 20:21,32.
† Heb. *What to thee?*
o Gen. 18:12. 1 Pet. 3:6.
p 13,30.
q 5,24. 2 Sam. 15:10.
r 11,24,27. Acts 3:17.
s See on 7—10.—25.
t 2 Chr. 20:12. Ps. 25:15. 123:2. Zech. 3:9.
u 2 Sam. 23:2. 1 Chr. 22:8—10. 27:5, 6,10. 29:1.
v See on 2:10.—Gen. 15:15. Deut. 31: 16.
‡ Heb. *sinners.* 2:15,22—24.
x Gen. 24:15. Job 1:16—18. Dan. 9:20.
y See on 16.—Rom. 13:7. 1 Pet. 2:17.
z 14,16.
a 5,13,17.
b See on 9.—1 Sam. 11:14,15. 1 Chr. 29:21—23.
§ Heb. *Let king Adonijah live.* 34. 1 Sam. 10:24. 2 Sam. 16:16. 2 Kings 11:12. 2 Chr. 23:11. *margins.* Matt. 21:9. Mark 11:9,10. Luke 19:38.
c 8,19. 2 Sam. 7:2,12—17. 12:25.
d 24. 2 Kings 4:27. John 15:15.
‖ Heb. *before the king.*
e 2:24. 17:1. 18:10. Judg. 8:19. 1 Sam. 14:39,45. 19:6. 20:21. 2 Sam. 12:5. 2 Kings 4:30. 5:16,20.
f Gen. 48:16. 2 Sam. 4:9. Ps. 34:19—22. 72:14. 136:24. 138:7.
g See on 13,17.
h 2 Sam. 9:6. Esth. 3:2. Matt. 21:37. Eph. 5:33. Heb. 12:9.
i See on 25.—Neh. 2:3. Dan. 2:4. 3: 9. 5:10. 6:6,21.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 11—27. In every age men form designs, which their own consciences condemn as contrary to the will of God: and yet hope success from the favor and assistance of man! But those, who are vain of their own accomplishments, often flatter themselves with the imagined attachment of numbers, that have no real esteem or affection for them.—A feast, and a sacrifice, are proper baits to draw in the sensual or the unsuspecting: and aspiring men, according to the taste of the times, have always employed one or both of these expedients, to subserve their own ambitious purposes; by which numbers have been inadvertently betrayed to concur in criminal measures, contrary to their judgments, consciences, characters, and interests.—If a neighbor is in danger of being injured or murdered, without knowing it, or being able to avoid the snare; it must be the duty of every man, in all cases, or at any hazard, to give him warning or counsel, and to interpose for his preservation.—When others are neglecting their duty, through inattention or multiplied infirmities or engagements, they should be put in remembrance of it: when they are slack to do it, prudent contrivances, and quickening expostulations may be successfully employed to incite them; and every mean should be used to prevent manifest injustice, to exclude occasions of future discord, and to promote decisive measures for the glory of God, and the good of his people: for if the enemies of religion be combined, active, and daring; its friends should not be timid, supine, and disunited.—The most respectful behavior to our superiors is very consistent with plainness of speech in the great concerns of God: and such language and behavior, combined in persons of known and approved character, will be very forcible with men of piety and intregrity. SCOTT.

Verses 15—18.

It is not recorded, on what occasion David sware to Bath-sheba, that Solomon should succeed him: but it is supposed with probability, that it took place after Absalom's rebellion; and as God Himself had settled the succession, he might very properly give her this assurance. SCOTT.

Verse 20.

David, though anointed to the kingdom, did not assume regal authority at first, without the concurrence of the elders of Judah and Israel: (2 *Sam.* 2:4. 5:1—5.) and after Absalom's rebellion, he did not return to the exercise of it without their approbation. (2 *Sam.* 19:9—15.) He could not therefore claim a right to dispose of the kingdom *by will*, as if it had been his own private property, according to the statement of some writers: but he might very properly inform the people of the Lord's appointment in that behalf: (1 *Sam.* 8:19—22.) and so far were they from eagerly joining Adonijah, as they had done Absalom; that they remained in suspense, till his determination was notified. SCOTT.

Verse 23.

He bowed, &c.] The exterior indications of civil honor, to persons in authority, were generally rendered by the most eminent servants and prophets of God. The refusal of them *may* arise from an erroneous conscience, but it has the appearance of pride and affected moroseness. (*Acts* 26:25.) ID.

Verse 29. *Gen.* 48:16. 2 *Sam.* 4:9. ID.

32 And king David said, Call me [k]Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king.

33 The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son [l] to ride upon * mine own [m] mule, and bring him down to [n] Gihon.

34 And let [o] Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and [p] blow ye with the trumpet, and say, [q] God save king Solomon.

35 Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and [r] sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and [s] I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.

36 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, [t] Amen: [u] the LORD God of my lord the king say so *too*.

37 As [x] the LORD hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, [y] and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David.

38 So [z] Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and [a] the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon [b] king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon.

39 And Zadok the priest took [c] an horn of oil [d] out of the tabernacle, and [e] anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and [f] all the people said, God save king Solomon.

40 And all the people came up after him; and the people piped with † pipes, and [g] rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

adding, that his party were already got to that height of assurance, as to shout *God save king Adonijah*, as if king David were already dead, taking notice also, that they had not invited him to their feast; thereby intimating, that they resolved not to consult either God or David. He makes David sensible how much he was concerned to clear himself from having a hand in it, *v.* 24, 27. '*Is this thing done by my lord the king?* If it be, he is not so faithful either to God's word or to his own, as we all took him to be; if it be not, it is high time we witness against the usurpation, and declare Solomon his successor. But if my lord the king know nothing of the matter, (as certainly he does not,) what daring insolence are Adonijah and his party guilty of!' Thus he endeavors to incense David against them, that he might act the more vigorously for the support of Solomon's interest. Note, Good men would do their duty, if they were reminded of it, and put upon it, and told what occasion there is for them to appear: and those who thus are their remembrances, do them a real kindness, as Nathan here did to David.

IV. David, hereupon, made a solemn declaration of his firm adherence to his former resolution, that Solomon should be his successor; Bath-sheba is called in, (*v.* 28.) and to her, as acting for and on behalf of her son, the king gives these fresh assurances. 1. He repeats his former promise and oath, *v.* 30. Though old, he remembers this. Note, An oath is too sacred a thing, one would think, to be forgotten. 2. He ratifies it with another, because the occasion called for it. His form of swearing seems to be what he commonly used on solemn occasions, 2 Sam. 4: 9. carrying in it a grateful acknowledgment of the goodness of God to him, which he now mentions to the glory of God, as Jacob, when he lay a dying; (Gen. 48: 16.) thus setting to his seal, from his own experience, that that was true, which the Lord spake by him; (Ps. 34: 22.) *The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants.* Dying saints ought to be witnesses for God, and speak of Him as they have found. Perhaps he speaks thus, on this occasion, to encourage his son and successor, to trust in God in the distresses he also might meet with.

Bath-sheba receives these assurances, (*v.* 31.) with great complaisance to the king's person; and hearty good wishes for the king's health. We should earnestly desire to prolong useful lives, however it may postpone any advantages of our own.

V. 32—40. We have here the [prompt and] effectual care David took, both to secure Solomon's right, and to preserve the public peace, by crushing Adonijah's project in the bud. Observe,

1. The express orders he gave, forthwith, with all possible solemnity, to proclaim Solomon. 1. Zadok and Nathan, the two ecclesiastical persons, must, in God's name, anoint him king: for though not the first of his family, as Saul and David were, yet he was made king by divine appointment, and his title was contested, which made it necessary that hereby it should be settled. This unction was typical of the designation and qualification of the Messiah, or Christ, the anointed One, on whom the Spirit, that oil of gladness, was poured without measure, Heb. 1: 9. Ps. 89: 20. And all real Christians, being *heirs of the kingdom*, (Jam. 2: 5.) do from Him *receive the anointing*, 1 John 2: 27. 2. The great officers, civil and military, are ordered to give public notice of this, and to express the public joy on this occasion, by sound of trumpet, by which the law of Moses directed the gracing of great solemnities; to this must be added the acclamations of the people, '*Let king Solomon live*, let him prosper, let his kingdom be established and perpetuated, and let him long continue in the enjoyment of it;' so it had been promised concerning him, (Ps. 72: 15.) *He shall live.* 3. They must then bring him in state to the city of David, and he must sit on the throne of his father, as his substitute now, or viceroy, to despatch public business during his weakness, and be his successor after his death; *He shall be king in my stead.* It would be a great satisfaction to David, and to all concerned, to have this done immediately, that, on the demise of the king, there might be no dispute, or agitation, in the public affairs.

II. The great satisfaction Benaiah, in the name of the rest, professed in these orders, *v.* 36. This is the language of his faith in that promise of God, on which Solomon's government was founded. If we say as God says in his Word, we may hope that He will say as we say by his providence. To this he adds a prayer for Solomon, (*v.* 37.) that God would be with him as he had been with David, and make his throne greater. The wisest and best man in the world desires his children may be wiser and better than he, for he himself desires to be wiser and better than he is; and wisdom and goodness are true greatness.

III. The immediate execution of these orders, *v.* 38—40. No time was lost, but Solomon was brought in state to the place appointed, and there Zadok (not yet High Priest, but, we may suppose, the Suffragan, the Jews called him the *Sagan*, or second priest) anointed him by direction of Nathan, and David, *v.* 39. In the tabernacle, where the ark was now lodged, was kept, among other sacred things, the holy oil, for many religious services; thence Zadok took a *horn of oil*, which denotes both power and plenty, and therewith anointed Solomon: whom God calls He will qualify, which was signified by the anointing; usurpers, as Adonijah, had it not. *Christ* signifies *anointed*, and He is the King whom God hath *set upon his holy hill of Zion*, according to the decree, Ps. 2: 6, 7. Christians also are *made to our God* (and *by* Him) *kings*, and they have an *unction from the Holy One*, 1 John 2: 20.

The people, hereupon, express their great joy,

k See on 8,26,38.
l 5,33,44. Gen. 41:43. Esth. 6:6—11.
* Heb. *the mule which* belongeth *to me.*
m Lev. 19:19.
n 38,45. 2 Chr. 32:30.
o 19:16. 1 Sam. 10:1. 16:3,12,13. 2 Sam. 2:4. 5:3. 2 Kings 9:3,6. 11:12. 2 Chr. 23:11. Ps. 45:7. Acts 10:38.
p 2 Sam. 15:10. 2 Kings 9:13. 11:14. Ps. 98:5—7.
q See on 25.—2 Kings 11:12.
r See on 13,17. 2:12.
s 2:15. 1 Chr. 23:1. 28:4,5. Ps. 2:6. 72: *title*, 1,2.
t Deut. 27:15—26. Ps. 72:19. Jer. 11: 5. 28:6. Matt. 6:13. 28:20. 1 Cor. 14:16.
u 1 Sam. 25:29. Ps. 18:2. 63:1. 89: 20,26.
x 3:7—9. Ex. 3:12. Josh. 1:5,17. 1 Sam. 20:13. 1 Chr. 28:20. 2 Chr. 1: 1. Ps. 46:7,11. Is. 8:10. Matt. 1: 23. Rom. 8:31.
y 47. 2 Sam. 24:3. 2 Kings 2:9. Ps. 72:8,17—19. Dan. 7:14.
z See on 8,26.
a 1 Sam. 30:14. 2 Sam. 8:18. 15:18. 20:23. 1 Chr. 18:17. Zeph. 2:5.
b See on 33.
c See on 1 Sam. 16:3.
d Ex. 30:23—33. Ps. 89:20.
e 1 Chr. 29:22.
f See on 25.—1 Sam. 10:24. 2 Kings 11:12. 2 Chr. 23:11,13.
† Or, *flutes*. Dan. 3:5.
g 1 Sam. 11:15. 2 Kings 11:14,20. Chr. 12:38—40. Ps. 97:1. Zech. 9:9 Luke 19:37. Rev. 11:15—18.

Verse 35.

The manner of [inauguration] seems thus:—1. The king elect was *placed on the mule of his predecessor*, and caused to *ride abroad* to one of the public wells, or to a river, where was the concourse of people, that they might see who he was that was appointed. Here, Solomon is taken to the river *Gihon*, to be anointed: the continual stream, or constantly running fountain, denoting the perpetuity of the kingdom. 2. The *priest* and *prophet anointed* him in the name of the Lord; and thereby signified that he should be endued with all kingly virtues; and should reign *by*, *for*, and *under* the Lord. 3. The *trumpet* was then to be *blown*, and solemn proclamation made, that he was anointed king. 4. He was then brought and solemnly *placed on the throne*, to signify that he had now assumed the reins of government, and was about to administer justice and judgment to the people.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 36.

This instance serves to explain the original use and emphasis of the word Amen. (*Deut.* 27:15—26. *Ps.* 72:17—19. *Matt.* 6:13.) SCOTT.

Verse 38.

1 *Chr.* 23:1. 29:21—25.—*Gihon.*] A fountain near Jerusalem. (33. 2 *Chr.* 32:30.) It does not appear, that there was any special reason, why this spot was selected; but, probably, it was a place so much frequented, that it was peculiarly suited to make the transaction speedily known throughout the whole city. ID.

Verse 39.

An horn, &c.] Neither Absalom, nor Adonijah, regarded this expressive ceremony: perhaps presuming on the right of primogeniture; for we do not find that kings, who succeeded as the first-born of their predecessors, without any interruption, were anointed. (*Notes*, 19: 15—17. 1 *Sam.* 10:1. 16:13. 2 *K.* 9:5—10. 11:12.) ID.

41 And Adonijah and all the guests that *were* with him heard *it*, [h] as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, [i] Wherefore *is* this noise of [k] the city being in an uproar?

42 And while he yet spake, behold, [l] Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came: and Adonijah said unto him, Come in; for thou *art* [m] a valiant man, and bringest good tidings.

43 And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, [n] Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king.

44 And the king hath sent with him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule.

45 And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon: and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that [o] the city rang again. [p] This *is* the noise that ye have heard.

46 And also Solomon [q] sitteth on the throne of the kingdom.

47 And moreover, the king's servants came to [r] bless our lord king David, saying, [s] God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne: and the king [t] bowed himself upon the bed.

48 And also thus said the king, [u] Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, [x] which hath given *one* to sit on my throne this day, [y] mine eyes even seeing *it*.

49 And [z] all the guests that *were* with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way.

50 And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and [a] caught hold on the horns of the altar.

51 And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me today, that he will not slay his servant with the sword.

52 And Solomon said, If he will show himself a worthy man, [b] there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth; but if [c] wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die.

53 So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and [d] bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, [e] Go to thine house.

v. 40. Hereby they declared their concurrence in the choice, and that he was not forced upon them, but cheerfully accepted by them. The power of a [good] prince can be little satisfaction to himself, unless he knows it to be a satisfaction to his people. Every Israelite indeed rejoices in the exaltation of the Son of David.

V. 41—53. We have here, I. The tidings of Solomon's inauguration brought to Adonijah and his party, in the midst of their jollity. It should seem, it was a great while before they made an end *of eating*, for all the affair of Solomon's anointing was ordered, done, and finished, while they were at dinner, glutting themselves. They who oppose Christ, are commonly such as *serve their own belly*, and make *a god of it*. Their long feast intimates likewise that they were very secure, and confident, else they would not have lost so much time. So the old world and Sodom were secure and sensual, when their destruction came, Luke 17: 26, &c. Adonijah is very confident, *v.* 42. Usurpers flatter themselves with the hopes of success, and those are commonly least timorous, whose condition is most dangerous. But those who do evil deeds, may expect evil tidings; the worthiest man will bring them the worst news, as the priest's son did here to Adonijah, *v.* 43.

He relates to them very particularly, with what great solemnity and general satisfaction *Solomon* was *made king*, *v.* 44, 45. The *people* were pleased, witness their joyful acclamations, *v.* 45. The *courtiers* were pleased; *the king's servants* attended him with an address of congratulation on the occasion, *v.* 47. they *blessed king David*, applauded his prudent care, acknowledged their happiness under his government, and prayed for his recovery. They also prayed for Solomon, that God would make his name better than his father's, which it might well be, when he had his father's foundation to build on; a child, on a giant's shoulders, is taller than the giant himself. The *king* himself is pleased; he *bowed himself upon the bed*, not only to signify his acceptance of his servants' address, but to offer up his own address to God, *v.* 48. Note, It is a great satisfaction to good men, at death, to see the affairs of their families in a good state, and religion prosperous.

II. The effectual crush this gave to Adonijah's attempt, *v.* 49. *The triumphing of the wicked is short.*

III. The terror Adonijah himself was in, and the course he took to secure himself; they who oppose Christ and his kingdom, will shortly be made to tremble before Him, and call, in vain, to rocks and mountains to shelter them from his wrath. He threw himself upon the mercy of his prince. Perhaps he had formerly slighted the service of the altar, yet now he courts the protection of it. Many who, in the day of their security, neglect the great salvation, under the arrest of the terrors of the Lord, would gladly be beholden to Christ and his merit, and, when it is too late, will *catch hold of the horns of that altar*.

IV. His humble address to Solomon for mercy By those who brought Solomon tidings where he was, he sent a request for his life, *v.* 51. He owns Solomon for his prince, and himself his servant; dares not justify himself, but *makes supplication to his judge*. It was a great change with him; he that, in the morning, was grasping at a crown, is, before night, begging for his life.

V. Solomon's orders concerning him. He discharged him, on his good behavior, *v.* 52, 53. He considers him his brother; it was the first offence, perhaps: and then being so soon made sensible of his error, and not persisting in his rebellion, he might prove, not only a peaceable, but a serviceable subject; therefore, if he will conduct himself well for the future, what is past shall be pardoned: but, if otherwise, execution shall be awarded against him. Thus the Son of David receives those to mercy, that have been rebellious: if they will return to their allegiance, and be faithful to their Sovereign, their former crimes shall not be mentioned against them; but if still they continue in the interests of the world and the flesh, that will be their ruin. Solomon not only gave Adonijah his life, but his estate, thus *establishing his throne by mercy*.

h Job 20:5. Prov. 14:13. Matt. 24:38, 39. Luke 17:26—29.
i Ex. 32:17,18. Job 15:21,22. Ps. 73: 18—20.
k Matt. 21:9—11,15. Acts 21:31.
l 2 Sam. 15:36. 17:17.
m 22:18. 2 Sam. 18:27. 2 Kings 9:22. Is. 57:21. 1 Thes. 5:2,3.
n See on 32—40.
o 40. 1 Sam. 4:5. Ezra 3:13.
p 14:6. 1 Sam. 28:29. Dan. 5:26 28.
q 13. 1 Chr. 29:23. Ps. 132:11. Hag. 2:22.
r Ex. 12:32. 2 Sam. 8:10. 21:3. Ezra 6:10. Ps. 20:1—4.
s See on 37.—Luke 19:38.
t Gen. 47:31. Heb. 11:21.
u Gen. 14:20. 1 Chr. 29:10,20. Neh. 9:5. Ps. 34:1. 41:13. 72:17—19. 103: 1,2. 145:2. Dan. 4:34. Luke 1:46, 47,68,69. Eph. 1:3. 1 Pet. 1:3.
x 3:6. 1 Chr. 17:11—14,17. Ps. 132:11 12. Prov. 17:6.
y 2 Sam. 24:3.
z Prov. 28:1. Is. 21:4,5. Dan. 5:4—6
a 2:28. Ex. 21:14.—38:7. Ps. 118:27.
b 1 Sam. 14:45. 2 Sam. 14:11. Matt. 10:30. Luke 21:18. Acts 27:34.
c 2:21—23.
d See on 16,31.—2 Sam. 1:2.
e 2:36. 2 Sam. 14:24,28. Prov. 24:21.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 28—53. The true believer loves to review his past experience: even the frequent recollection of his distresses, from all which 'the LORD hath redeemed him,' increases his comfort as well as his gratitude; and inspires him with hope, and animates him to duty, though under the decays of nature, and at the approach of death. In preparation for that event, we should so arrange all our domestic or more public concerns, as may best secure peace and good to the survivors: and we should lose no time before we do so useful a work, even though it somewhat interrupt our religious exercises.—Those enterprises must end well, which are conducted with piety and integrity, in simple dependence on God, and cordial acquiescence in his will.—They who are engaged in a bad cause, are exposed to continual terrors and no *good man* can bring other than *evil tidings* to those who are rebelling against God and the king.—Clemency becomes those in power, especially towards such as have rather injured them than the public: yet, no government can pardon or tolerate a traitor, who perseveres in his treasonable machinations. SCOTT.

Verse 42.

(2 *Sam.* 17:17—21.) It is probable, that Jonathan was not invited to the feast, nor concerned in the conspiracy; but he went to warn his father of the danger: though some think he was left in the city to learn what should occur, and bring an account to Adonijah. SCOTT.

Verses 49—53.

The murderer was to be taken from the altar and slain: (*Ex.* 21: 12—14.) but in other crimes it was a customary refuge, at least till a pardon could be supplicated; as representing the method of obtaining forgiveness from God, through the great sacrifice for sin. SCOTT.

CHAP. II.

David charges Solomon to serve God; and directs him how to act towards Joab, the sons of Barzillai, and Shimei, 1—9. His death, and the years of his reign, 10,11. Solomon succeeds him, 12. Adonijah persuades Bathsheba to ask Solomon to give him Abishag to wife; and is put to death, 13—25. Abiathar's life is spared, but he is deprived of the high priesthood, 26, 27. Joab, having fled to the altar, is there put to death, 28—34. Benaiah succeeds Joab, and Zadok, Abiathar, 35. Shimei is, by Solomon, required to reside in Jerusalem, and engages by oath to do so: but breaking his engagement, he is put to death, 36—46.

NOW [a] the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he [b] charged Solomon his son, saying,

2 [c] I go the way of all the earth: [d] be thou strong therefore, and [e] show thyself a man;

3 And [f] keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his [g] statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his [h] testimonies, [i] as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest * prosper in all that thou doest, and [k] whithersoever thou turnest thyself:

4 [l] That the LORD may continue [m] his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way to [n] walk before me in truth, [o] with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not † fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel.

5 Moreover, thou knowest also what [p] Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, *and* what he did to the two captains of the host of Israel, unto [q] Abner the son of Ner, and unto [r] Amasa the son of [s] Jether, whom he slew, and ‡ shed the blood of war in peace, and [t] put the blood of war upon his girdle that *was* about his loins, and in his shoes that *were* on his feet.

6 Do therefore [u] according to thy wisdom, and [x] let not his hoar head go down to the grave [y] in peace.

7 But show kindness unto the sons of [z] Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that [a] eat at thy table: for so they came to me [b] when I fled because of Absalom thy brother.

8 And, behold, *thou hast* with thee [c] Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a § grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but [d] he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I sware to him by the LORD, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword.

9 Now therefore [e] hold him not guiltless: for thou *art* [f] a wise man,

CHAP. II. V. 1—11. I. The charge and instructions David, when dying, gave to Solomon, his son, and declared successor. He is not afraid to hear or speak of dying: *I go the way of all the earth*, v. 2. Heb. *I am walking in it.*

1. He charges him, in general, to keep God's commandments, and to make conscience of his duty, v. 2—4. He prescribes to him, (1.) A good rule to act by, the divine will. The authority of a dying father is much, but nothing to *the charge of* a living *God*. The written Word is our rule; Solomon must himself do *as was written in the law of Moses*. (2.) A good spirit to act with; *Be strong, and show thyself a man*, though, in years, but a child. Those that would keep the charge of the Lord their God, must put on resolution. (3.) Good reasons for all this; 'it is the way to prosper, and secure prosperity in thy kingdom.' Let each, in his own age, successively, keep God's charge, then God will be sure to continue his word. We never let fall the promise, till we let fall the precept. God had promised David, the Messiah should come from his loins; and that promise was absolute: but the promise, that there should not fail him *a man on the throne of Israel*, was conditional; if his seed behave themselves as they should. If Solomon, in his day, fulfil the condition, he does his part toward perpetuating it. The condition is, that he walk before God; in order whereunto, he must *take heed to his way*. In order to our constancy in religion, nothing is more necessary than caution and circumspection.

2. He gives him directions concerning some particular persons, what to do with them, that he might make up his deficiencies, in justice to some and kindness to others.

(1.) Joab, v. 5. David was now conscious he had not done well to spare him, when he had made himself once and again obnoxious to the law, by murder. The murder of a subject is a wrong to the prince, a loss to him, and against the peace of his sovereignty. These murders were particularly against David, reflecting on his reputation. Magistrates are the avengers of the blood of those they have the charge of. It aggravated Joab's crime, that he was neither ashamed of the sin, nor afraid of the punishment, but daringly wore the girdle and shoes that were stained with innocent blood, in defiance of the justice both of God and the king. David refers him to Solomon's wisdom, (v. 6.) with an intimation that he left him to his justice. Though he has been long reprieved, he shall be reckoned with at last; time does not wear out the guilt of any sin, particularly not of murder.

(2.) Barzillai's family; whom he orders him to be kind to for Barzillai's sake, who, we may suppose, by this time, was dead, v. 7. When David, on his death-bed, was remembering the injuries that had been done, he could not forget the kindnesses that had been shown, but leaves it as a charge on his son to return them. Note, The kindnesses we have received from our friends, must not be buried, either in their graves or ours, but our children must return them to theirs. Hence, perhaps, Solomon fetched that rule, (Prov.

a Gen. 47:29. Deut. 31:14. 33:1. 2 Tim. 4:6. 2 Pet. 1:13—15.
b Num. 27:19. Deut. 3:28. 31:23. Acts 20:28—31. 1 Tim. 1:18. 6:13. 2 Tim. 4:1.
c Josh. 23:14. Job 16:22. 30:23. Heb. 9:27.
d Deut. 31:6. Josh. 1:6,7. 1 Chr. 28:20. Eph. 6:10. 2 Tim. 2:1.
e 3:7. 2 Sam. 10:12. 1 Cor. 16:13. 1 Tim. 4:12.
f Deut. 29:9. Josh. 1:7. 22:5. 1 Chr. 22:12,13. 28:8,9. 29:19.
g See on Deut. 4:1,5,8. 5:1. 6:1,2.
h Deut. 4:45. Ps. 19:7. 119:2,111,138.
i Deut. 17:18—20. Mal. 4:4.
* Or, *do wisely*. Josh. 1:7,8. *marg.*—1 Sam. 18:5,14,30. 2 Chr. 31:20,21. Ps. 1:2,3. 119:98—100. Prov. 3:1—4.
k 2 Sam. 8:6,14. 2 Kings 18:7.
l Gen. 18:19. Deut. 7:12. 1 Chr. 28:9. John 15:9,10. Jude 20,21,24.
m 2 Sam. 7:11—16,25. 1 Chr. 17:11—15. 22:9—11. 28:5—7. Ps. 89:29—37. 132:11,12.
n 3:3,14. 8:23. Gen. 17:1. Lev. 26:3. 2 Kings 20:3. 23:3,25. 2 Chr. 17:3. Luke 1:6.
o Deut. 6:5. 10:12. 11:18. Matt. 22:37.
† Heb. *be cut off from thee from the throne*. 8:25. Ps. 37:9,22. Zech. 14:2.
p 1:7,18,19. 2 Sam. 3:39. 18:5,14. 19:5—7.
q 2 Sam. 3:27.
r 2 Sam. 20:10.
s 2 Sam. 17:25. *Ithra.*
‡ Heb. *put*.
t Jer. 2:34. 6:15. Ez. 24:7,8.
u 9. Prov. 20:26.
x 28—34. Gen. 9:6. Num. 35:33. Prov. 28:17. Ec. 8:11. Is. 65:20.
y 2 Kings 22:20. Ps. 37:37. Is. 48:22. 57:2,21.
z 2 Sam. 17:27—29. 19:31—38. Prov. 27:10.
a 2 Sam. 9:10. 19:28. Luke 12:37. 22:28—30. Rev. 3:20,21.
b 2 Sam. 15:13—15.
c 36—46. 2 Sam. 16:5—8.
§ Heb. *strong*.
d 2 Sam. 19:16—23. Jer. 4:2.
e Ex. 20:7. 22:28. Job 9:28.
f 3:12,28.

NOTES.

CHAP. II. V. 1, 2. Solomon cou'd not at this time be more than 20 years of age; and, probably, he was not so much: an early period for him to enter on so weighty a charge, as the government of God's people! (3:5—14.) But he was endowed with extraordinary wisdom [as his first manly act, 1:52, 53. shows'; and David charged and exhorted him to show all Israel, that though he was but a child in years, he was a man in capacity and attention to business. (*Num.* 27:19. 1 *Tim.* 4:11—16. 2 *Tim.* 2:1, 2.) SCOTT.

Verse 3.

(*Josh.* 1:7, 8. 1 *Chr.* 22:11—13. 28:9.) *Testimonies*, in this connection, may signify those laws, which preserved the remembrance of great events; as the sabbaths, the passover, and others. (*Deut.* 6:1. *Ps.* 19:7—11. *Is.* 8:16, 20.)—Nothing can be more manifest, than that the law of Moses, as *written* in the Pentateuch, was known at this time. (*Deut.* 17:16—18.) ID.

Verse 4.

(*Gen.* 18:18, 19. 2 *Sam.* 7:12—16.) The continuance of the kingdom to David's posterity was sure, as it respected the Messiah and his spiritual reign: nor would every transgression forfeit the temporal kingdom entailed on his descendants; for chastisements would be used to bring them to repentance: yet obstinate and aggravated disobedience would cut off the entail. Thus the Lord punished Solomon's idolatry by the defection of the ten tribes from his son: (11:9—13. 12:8—15.) and, at length, the family of David was deprived of all authority, till Christ came and set up his spiritual kingdom. ID.

Verses 5, 6.

These dying counsels of David ought by no means to be imputed to personal resentment; but to a regard to justice, and a wise and pious concern for the security of Solomon's throne, which was the cause of God and of Israel. Joab's murders were crimes *against David*, as committed on two men who were connected with David: and yet they were so conducted, as to bring him into suspicion as if privy to them.—It is observable, that David did not blame Joab for killing Absalom: being doubtless conscious that he deserved to die; and that his own desire to spare him was a weakness and a sin. SCOTT.

Verse 7. 2 *Sam.* 17:27—29. 19:31—39. ID.

Verses 8, 9.

(2 *Sam.* 16:5—14. 19:19—23.) Shimei, had he been suitably affected with David's lenity, and acted properly afterwards, would have been fully and finally pardoned. ID.

(9.) *Bring thou.*] 'Rather, *bring thou not*. The negative particle (*lo, not,*) in this former clause, "hold him *not* guiltless," should be repeated in this latter clause, though not expressed; instances of which occur frequently in the Heb. Bible.' Dr. *A. Clarke*. So *Kennicott*, who says, 'It is not uncommon in the Heb. to omit the negative in the second part of the sentence, and to consider it as repeated, when it has been once expressed, and is followed by the connecting particle. Thus at Is. 13:22. the late learned annotator says, "The *negative* is repeated or referred to, by the conjunction *vau*, (*and,*) as in many other places." Dr. K. also quotes Is. 23:4. Ps. 1:5. 9:18. &c. &c. and adds, Did Solomon understand he was to kill Shimei in consequence of this v.? Certainly he did not; for, after he had *immediately* commanded Joab to be slain, in obedience to his father, he sends for Shimei, and knowing [he was so violent and ill-affected a character] that he must be watched, he confines him to the city, &c.' See Dr. *A. Clarke*. So that David's charge only meant to say 'kill him not now, as you ought to kill Joab, *at once*: but have an eye on him.' ED.

and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him: but [g] his hoar head bring thou down to the grave [h] with blood.

[*Practical Observations.*]

10 ¶ So [i] David slept with his fathers, and was buried in [j] the city of David.

11 And the days that David [k] reigned over Israel *were* forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.

12 ¶ Then [l] sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and [m] his kingdom was established greatly.

13 And [n] Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, [o] Comest thou peaceably? and he said, Peaceably.

14 He said moreover, [p] I have somewhat to say unto thee. And she said, Say on.

15 And he said, [q] Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and *that* all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's; for [r] it was his from the LORD.

16 And now I ask one petition of thee, [*] deny me not. And she said unto him, Say on.

17 And he said, Speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king, (for he will not say thee nay,) that he give me [s] Abishag the Shunammite to wife.

18 And Bath-sheba said, [t] Well; I will speak for thee unto the king.

19 Bath-sheba therefore went unto king Solomon to speak unto him for Adonijah. And the king [u] rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and [x] she sat on his right hand.

20 Then she said, [y] I desire one small petition of thee; *I pray thee*, say me not nay. And the king said unto her, [z] Ask on, my mother, for I will not say thee nay.

21 And she said, [a] Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife.

22 And king Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And [b] why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him [c] the kingdom also; for he *is* mine elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah.

g 6. Gen. 42:38. 44:31.
h Num. 32:22.
i See on 1:21.—1 Chr. 29:28. Acts 2:29. 13:36.
j 3:1. 11:43. 2 Sam. 5:7. 1 Chr. 11:7.
k 2 Sam. 5:4. 1 Chr. 29:26,27.
l 1:46. 1 Chr. 29:23—25. 2 Chr. 1:1. Ps. 132:12.
m 2 Sam. 7:12,13,29. Ps. 89:36,37.
n See on 1:5—10,50—53.
o 1 Sam. 16:4,5. 2 Kings 9:18—22. 1 Chr. 12:17,18 Luke 1:43.
p 2 Sam. 14:12. Luke 7:40.
q 1:5,25. 2 Sam. 3:17—19.
r 2 Sam. 7:12. 1 Chr. 22:9,10. 28:5—7. Prov. 21:30. Jer. 27:5—7. Dan. 2:21.
* Heb. *turn not away my face* Ps. 132:10. Prov. 30:7. *marg.*
s 1:2—4. 2 Sam. 3:7. 12:8.
t Prov. 14:15.
u Ex. 20:12. Lev. 19:3.
x Ps. 45:9. 110:1. Matt. 25:33.
y Matt. 20:21. John 2:3,4.
z Matt. 7:7—11. 18:19. Mark 10:36, 36. 11:24. Luke 11:9,10. John 14 13,14. 15:16.
a 2 Sam. 16:21,22.
b Matt. 20:22. Mark 10:38. Jam. 4:3
c 1:5—7,11,24,25.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—9. It is desirable to be habitually and calmly expecting the approach of death; a dark and gloomy road indeed it is for the workers of iniquity, to a still more dark and dreadful place; but rendered cheerful to the righteous, by the presence of the Lord, and by the hopes of complete felicity. Whilst they are supported by these lively hopes and strong consolations, how becoming is it for them to animate their survivors and successors, to fill up their stations in the church of God, and in society, after a proper manner!—Young men, who are called to important services, should be cautioned by their seniors to act with gravity and prudence, that they may prevent others 'from despising their youth.'—We can neither act with true wisdom, nor prosper in our undertakings further, than we make the whole Word of God our rule and our hope; nor can we finally come short of all desirable success, if we do this, however appearances may for a while be against us.—In human governments undue lenity is an evidence of imbecility, want of wisdom, and disregard to justice. Can it then be supposed, that the King of heaven will so indiscriminately exercise mercy, as not to magnify his law, and show decidedly his abhorrence of iniquity?—No human authority has a right to pardon *wilful murder:* and the magistrate, who presumes to do so, is unfaithful to Him, who has commissioned him to execute vengeance on evil doers; and not only exposes the peaceable subject, but brings guilt on his own soul, on his family, and on the land.—They, therefore, who act 'according to wisdom,' will not let the murderer, though advanced in years, or exalted in rank, go down to the grave in peace: and in our proper stations we may promote the execution of the law upon them. Nay, in doing this, we may 'serve our generation according to the will of God,' and prepare for death; no less than when we are recompensing our benefactors, and doing acts of kindness to the distressed. SCOTT.

Verse 20.

For I, &c.] All such general promises imply the supposition, that the request is lawful and proper to be granted: for even the assurances of God's Word, that whatever we ask of Him shall be given, admit of a similar limitation: *i. e.* if consistent with his glory, and for our real good. (*Rom.* 8:24—27. *Jam.* 4:1—3. 1 *John* 5:14, 15.) SCOTT.

23 Then king Solomon sware by the LORD, saying, [d] God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not [e] spoken this word against his own life.

24 Now therefore, [f] as the LORD liveth, which hath established me, and [g] set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath [h] made me an house, [i] as he promised, Adonijah shall be [k] put to death this day.

25 And king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada: and [l] he fell upon him, that he died.

[*Practical Observations.*]

26 ¶ And unto [m] Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to [n] Anathoth, unto thine own fields; for thou *art* [*] worthy of death: but I will not at this time put thee to death, [o] because thou barest the ark of the Lord GOD before David my father, and [p] because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted.

27 So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the LORD; [q] that he might fulfil the the word of the LORD,

d 20:10. Ruth 1:17. 1 Sam. 14:44. 2 Sam. 3:9,35. 19:13. 2 Kings 6:31.
e Ps. 64:8. 140:9. Prov. 18:6,7. Ec. 10:12. Luke 19:22.
f See on 1:29.
g 3:6,7. 10:9. 1 Chr. 29:23. 2 Chr. 1: 8,9.
h Ex. 1:21. 1 Sam. 25:28. 2 Sam. 7: 12,13,27. 1 Chr. 17:10,17,23. Ps. 127:1.
i 1 Chr. 22:10.
k Ec. 8:11—13.
l 31,34,46. Judg. 8:20,21. 1 Sam. 15: 33. 2 Sam. 1:15. 4:12.
m 35. 1:7,25.
n Josh. 21:18. Is. 10:30. Jer. 1:1.
* Heb. *a man of death.* 2 Sam. 12:5. *marg.*
o 1 Sam. 22:20—23. 23:6—9. 1 Chr. 15:11,12.
p 2 Sam. 15:24—29. Matt. 10:42. Luke 22:28. Gal. 3:4.
q 1 Sam. 2:31—36. 3:12—14. Matt. 26:56. John 12:38. 19:24,28,36,37.

durst not make suit to Abishag immediately, (he knew she was at Solomon's disposal, and he would justly resent it, if his consent were not first obtained, as even Ish-bosheth did, in a like case, 2 Sam. 3: 7.) nor durst he apply himself immediately to Solomon, knowing he lay under his displeasure; but he engaged Bath-sheba to befriend him, who would be forward to believe it a matter of love, and not apt to suspect it a matter of policy. She was surprised to see him in her apartment, but he came, he said, only to ask a favor, *v.* 13—17. which, if he may but obtain, he will thankfully accept, (1.) As a compensation for his loss of the kingdom. So he insinuates, (*v.* 15.) '*Thou knowest the kingdom was mine*, as my father's eldest son living at the time of his death, *and all Israel set their faces on me.*' But it was false, there were but a few on his side; yet thus he would represent himself as an object of compassion. (2.) As his reward for his acquiescence in that loss. He owns Solomon's right to the kingdom. '*It was his from the Lord*, I was foolish in offering to contest it; and now that it is turned about to him, I am satisfied.' Thus he pretends to be well pleased with Solomon's accession to the throne, when he is doing all he can to give him disturbance. *His words were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart.*

3. Bath-sheba's address to Solomon on his behalf, *v.* 18, 19. Solomon received her with all the respect owing to a mother, though himself a king, according to the law of the fifth commandment. Children, not only when grown *up*, but when grown *great*, must honor their parents, and behave dutifully and respectfully toward them. *Despise not thy mother, when she is old.* As a further instance of his deference, when his mother presented a petition to him, he promised not to say her nay. A promise which both he and she understood with this necessary limitation, provided it be just and reasonable, and fit to be granted; but if it were otherwise, he was sure he should convince her it was so, and then she would withdraw it. She tells him her errand, at last, *v.* 21. It was strange she did not suspect the treason, but more strange she did not abhor the incest: but either she did not take Abishag to be David's wife, because the marriage was not consummated, or she thought it might be dispensed with, to gratify Adonijah, in consideration of his tame submission. This was her weakness and folly; it was well she was not regent. Note, They that have the ear of princes and great men, as it is their wisdom not to be too prodigal of their interest, so it is their duty never to use it for the assistance of sin, or furtherance of any wicked design. Let not princes be asked that which they ought not to grant. It ill becomes a good man to prefer a bad request, or appear in a bad cause.

4. Solomon's just and judicious rejection of the request, without violation of his general promise, *v.* 20. If Herod had not had a mind to cut off John Baptist's head, he would not have thought himself obliged to do it by a general promise, like this, made to Herodias. The best friend we have in the world must not have such an interest in us as to bring us to do a wrong thing, either unjust or unwise. (1.) Solomon convinces his mother of the unreasonableness of the request, and shows her the tendency of it, which before she was not aware of. His reply is somewhat sharp, *v.* 22. Probably, he had information, or strong cause to suspect Adonijah was plotting with Joab and Abiathar to give him disturbance, which warranted him to put this construction on Adonijah's request. (2.) He convicts and condemns Adonijah for his pretensions, and both with an oath, *v.* 24. God had interposed Himself with an oath, that He would establish David's throne, (Ps. 89: 35.) therefore Solomon pledges the same assurance to secure that establishment, by cutting off the enemies of it. Thus the ruin of the enemies of Christ's kingdom is as sure as the stability of his kingdom, and both as sure as the being and life of God, the Founder of it. It is strange Adonijah may not be heard to speak for himself: but Solomon's wisdom did not see it needful to examine the matter any further; it was plain enough Adonijah aimed at the crown, and Solomon cannot be safe while he lives. Ambitious, turbulent spirits commonly prepare for themselves the instruments of death. Many a head has been lost by catching at a crown.

V. 26—34. Abiathar and Joab were both aiding and abetting in Adonijah's rebellious attempt, and, probably, at the bottom of the motion for Abishag, and, it should seem, Solomon knew it, *v.* 22. This was, in both, an intolerable affront, both to God and to the government; and the worse, because of their high station, and the great influence of their example. They therefore come next to be reckoned with: both equally guilty of the treason, but, in the judgment passed on them, differently treated, and with good reason.

I. Abiathar, in consideration of his old services, is only degraded, *v.* 26, 27. Solomon convicts him; but calls to mind the respect he had formerly showed his father, and that he had both ministered to him in holy things, and also tenderly sympathized with him in his afflictions, particularly when in exile and distress, both by Saul's persecution, and Absalom's rebellion. Note, Those that show kindness to God's people, shall have it remembered to their advantage, one time or other. For this reason, he spares his life, but deposes him, and confines him to his country-seat at Anathoth, forbids him the court, the city, the tabernacle, the altar, and all intermeddling in public business, with an intimation likewise, that he was on his good behavior, and that though not put to death, at this time, he might be, another time, if he did not conduct himself well. Saul, for a supposed crime, had barbarously destroyed Abiathar's father, and 85 priests, their families, and city; Solomon spares Abiathar, though guilty of a real crime: thus was Saul's government ruined, and Solomon's established. As men are to God's ministers, so they will find Him to them. The depriving of Abiathar was the fulfilling of the threatening against the house of Eli, (1 Sam. 2: 30.) for he was the last high priest of that family. It was now above 80 years, since the ruin was

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 10—25. It is very happy for a nation, when the death of one good king is followed by the peaceable succession of another, equally wise and righteous. But men are not duly thankful for these blessings: and therefore the Lord permits their course to be interrupted; that public calamities, experienced or dreaded, may promote humiliation for sin, fervency in prayer, and general reformation; and make way for more lively gratitude, when they are removed or prevented. On such great emergencies, wisdom is needful to direct Christians, that they may neither neglect their present duty, nor intermeddle out of their proper sphere.—Ambitious men can never rest; they must continually be aiming to disturb the settled order and public peace, that they may mount to superior authority; and when baffled with one weapon, they make trial of another.—The duty of honoring parents is obligatory upon us in every station in life; and too much respect and gratitude cannot be shown them, provided they be not gratified by unlawful and improper compliances: but no relative affection, no engagement whatever, can bind us to do a thing that is evil, or of bad tendency to the public.—The machinations of crafty men generally entangle themselves, and involve them in mischiefs which simple, upright men escape. (*Ps.* 125: 4, 5.) No government can be secure, whilst they, who aim to subvert it, remain unpunished: and such as have been convicted, and still persist in treasonable designs, are proper persons to be sacrificed for the public good, and for an example to others; for apparent severity to them may eventually be mercy to thousands. SCOTT

Verses 23—25.

Solomon has been censured, as too severe and precipitate in this execution; but there is no intimation of this in the Scripture. Nor would sound policy admit of any delay. SCOTT.

Verses 26, 27.

Solomon's language to Abiathar, and his silence, clearly prove, that some recent conspiracies had been formed. In deposing Abiathar, Solomon purposely intended to fulfil the word of God to Eli. (36—46. 2 *Sam.* 14:28, 29.) The entire subjection of the priests, and even of the high priest, to the kings of Israel, in all civil and political concerns, is clearly shown in this instance: nor is any exemption from capital punishment, in the case of treason, or other crimes deserving

which he spake concerning the house of Eli in [r] Shiloh.

28 ¶ Then tidings came to Joab; for [s] Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD, and [t] caught hold on the horns of the altar.

29 And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD; and behold, *he is* by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, [u] Go, fall upon him.

30 And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me.

31 And the king said unto him, [x] Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou [y] mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and [z] from the house of my father.

32 And the LORD shall [a] return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon [b] two men [c] more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, [d] my father David not knowing *thereof, to wit,* Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of [e] Jether, captain of the host of Judah.

33 Their blood shall therefore return [f] upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever: but [g] upon David, and upon his seed, and [h] upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the LORD.

threatened; God's judgments, though not executed speedily, will be executed surely.

II. Joab, in consideration of his old sins, is put to death.

1. His guilty conscience sent him to the horns of the altar. He heard Adonijah was executed, and Abiathar deposed; therefore, fearing his turn would be next, he flies for refuge to the altar. Some think he designed thereby to devote himself for the future to a constant attendance on the altar, hoping by this to obtain his pardon: as some that have lived a dissolute life, all their days, have thought to atone for it, by retiring into a monastery when old, leaving the world when it has left them.

2. Solomon orders him to be put to death there for the murder of Abner and Amasa; for these are the crimes on which he thought fit to ground the sentence, rather than on his treasonable adherence to Adonijah. Solomon would have pardoned his offence against himself, (for clemency gives great reputation and establishment to an infant government,) and would have only displaced him, as he did Abiathar; but he must die for the murders he had formerly been guilty of, for which his father had charged him to call him to an account. On this he grounds the sentence, aggravating the crime, *v.* 32. Wo to the head that lies under the guilt of blood! The seed of such evil doers shall never be renowned. Joab resolved not to stir from the altar, (*v.* 30.) hoping thereby either to secure himself, or else to render Solomon odious to the people, if he should put him to death there. Benaiah made a scruple of either killing him there, or dragging him thence; but Solomon knew the law, that the altar of God should give no protection to wilful murderers; (Ex. 21: 14.) *Thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die,* may die a sacrifice. In case of such sins, as the blood of beasts would atone for, the altar was a refuge, but not in Joab's case; he therefore orders him to be executed there, if he would not be got thence, to show that he feared not the censure of the people in doing his duty, but would rectify their mistake, and let them know that the administration of justice is better than sacrifice, and that the holiness of any place should never countenance the wickedness of any person. Benaiah slew him, (*v.* 34.) with the solemnity, no doubt, of a public execution. The law being thus satisfied, he was *buried in his own house in the wilderness,* privately, like a criminal, not pompously, like a soldier; yet no indignity is done to his dead body; it is not for man to lay iniquity on the bones, whatever God does.

Lastly, Solomon pleases himself with this act of justice, not as it gratified any personal revenge, but as it fulfilled his father's orders, and was a real kindness to himself and his own government.

V. 35—46. Here is,

I. The preferment of Benaiah and Zadok, two faithful friends to Solomon and his government *v.* 35. Benaiah to be general of the forces, and Zadok high priest; and therein was fulfilled that word of God, when He threatened to cut off the house of Eli, 1 Sam. 2: 35. No wonder a king,[4] so immediately of God's making, was empowered to make whom he thought fit, high priest; and he did it in equity, for the ancient right was in Zadok, he being of the family of Eleazar, whereas Eli and his house were of Ithamar.

II. The course taken with Shimei. He is sent for, by a messenger, from his house at Bahurim, expecting, perhaps, no better than Adonijah's doom, being conscious of his enmity to the house of David; but Solomon knows how to make a difference of crimes and criminals. David had promised Shimei his life for his time, Solomon is not bound by that promise, and yet will not go directly contrary to it.

1. He confined him to Jerusalem, and forbade him, on any pretence whatsoever, to go out of the city, any further than the brook Kidron, *v.* 36, 37. Of this, Shimei had no reason to complain; it would also make it the more safe for Solomon, for there he would have him under his eye, and be able to watch his motions; and he plainly tells him that if he ever go out of the rules, he shall certainly die for it; this was a fair trial of his obedience.

2. Shimei submits to the confinement, and thankfully takes his life on those terms; he enters into

34 So [i] Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, and slew him: [j] and he was buried in his own house [k] in the wilderness.

35 And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host: and [l] Zadok the priest did the king put in the room of Abiathar.

36 ¶ And the king sent and called for [m] Shimei, and said unto him, [n] Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither.

37 For it shall be, *that* on the day thou goest out, and passest [o] over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: [p] thy blood shall be upon thine own head.

38 And Shimei said unto the king, [q] The saying *is* good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days.

B. C. 1011. 39 And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto [r] Achish son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants *be* in Gath.

40 And Shimei [s] arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants; and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath.

41 And it was told

r Josh. 13:1. Ps. 78:60. Jer. 7:12—14.
s 1:7. 2 Sam. 18:2,14,15.
t See on 1:50.—Ex. 27:2.
u 25,31,46.
x Ex. 21:14.
y Gen. 9:5,6. Num. 35:33. Deut. 19: 12,13. 21:8,9. 2 Kings 9:26. Prov. 28:17. Acts 28:4.
z 2 Sam. 3:28.
a 44. Gen. 4:11. Judg. 9:24,57. Ps. 7:16.
b 2 Sam. 3:27. 20:10.
c 1 Sam. 15:28. 2 Sam. 4:11. 2 Chr. 21:13. Esth. 1:19.
d 2 Sam. 3:26,37.
e 5. 2 Sam. 17:25. *Ithra.*
f See on 32.—2 Sam. 3:29. 2 Kings 5: 27. Ps. 101:8. 109:6—15. Matt. 27: 25.
g 2 Sam. 3:28. Prov. 25:5.
h Ps. 89:29,36,37. 132:12. Is. 9:6,7. 11:1—9. Luke 1:31—33. 2:14.
i 25,31,46.
j 2 Kings 21:18. 2 Chr. 33:20.
k Josh. 15:61. Matt. 3:1.
l See on 27.—Num. 25:11—13. 1 Sam. 2:35. 1 Chr. 6:4—15,50—53. 24:3. Ps. 109:8. Acts 1:20.
m 8,9. 2 Sam. 16:5—9. Prov. 20:8,26.
n 1:53. 2 Sam. 14:24,28.
o 15:13. 2 Sam. 15:23. 2 Kings 23:6. 2 Chr. 29:16. Jer. 31:40. John 18:1. *Cedron.*
p See on 31,33.—Lev. 20:9. Josh. 2:19. 2 Sam. 1:16. Ez. 18:13.
q 20:4. 2 Kings 20:19.
r 1 Sam. 21:10. 27:2,3.
s Prov. 15:27. Luke 12:15. 1 Tim. 6: 10.

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death, even in favor of the high priesthood itself, in the least intimated.—How different from the claims of the Roman hierarchy in these respects! SCOTT.

Verse 34.

House in the wilderness.] *Roberts* thinks, this could not have been a dwelling house, as it was *in the wilderness,* and understands it of such a house as 'children or parents [in the E.] often build in a retired place, over, or for the remains of their dead; and the rest of the family, when they die, are buried there. Some of these are most splendid. In some, too, the funeral car or palanquin [cut, 2 *Sam.* 3: 31.] in which the corpse was brought, is suspended from the roof. At the anniversary of the death of a father, mother, or any other near relation, the friends go thither to perform the annual rites for the benefit of their *manes.* Such a house, so long as the descendants of the dead interred there have the power to prevent it, will never be allowed to go to decay.' ROBERTS.

Verse 35.

Zadok.] The high priesthood seems to have continued, from this time, in the line of Eleazar and Phinehas, at least till long after the Babylonish captivity. (*M. R.*—1 *Chr.* 6:4—15.)—Nothing further is said of Jonathan the son of Abiathar. (1:42.) SCOTT.

Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again.

42 And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, 'Did I not make thee to swear by the LORD, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for a certain, on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely die? and thou saidst unto me, The word *that* I have heard *is* good.

43 Why [u] then hast thou not kept the oath of the LORD, and [x] the commandment that I have charged thee with?

44 The king said moreover to Shimei, [y] Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father: therefore the LORD shall [z] return thy wickedness upon thine own head;

45 And king Solomon *shall be* [a] blessed, [b] and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for ever.

46 So the king com[n]anded Benaiah the son o[c] Jehoiada; which went [d] ut and fell upon him, [e] hat he died. And [f] the [g] ingdomwas established [h] the hand of Solomon.

CHAP. III.

Solomon marries Pharaoh's daughter, 1. The people sacrifice in high places, 2,3. Solomon offers a thousand burnt-offerings at Gibeon, 4. God appears to him in a dream; and he asks and obtains from Him wisdom, together with riches and honor, 5—15. His sagacious decision of a perplexing cause between two harlots renders him celebrated for wisdom, 16—28.

AND Solomon [a] made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, [b] and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into [c] the city of David, until he had made an end of building [d] his own house, and [e] the house of the LORD, and [f] the wall of Jerusalem round about.

2 Only [g] the people sacrificed in high places, because there [h] was no house built unto the name of the LORD until those days.

3 And Solomon [i] loved the LORD, [j] walking in the statutes of David his father: [k] only he sacrificed and burned incense in high places.

4 And the king went to [l] Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place. [m] A thousand burnt-offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar.

5 In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon [n] in a dream by night:

t 36—38. Ps. 15:4. Luke 19:22.
u 2 Sam. 21:2. Ez. 17:18,19.
x 2 Chr. 30:12. Ec. 8:2. Rom. 13:5.
y 2 Sam. 16:5—13. John 8:9. Rom. 2:15. 1 John 3:20.
z See on 32,33.—Ps. 7:16. Prov. 5:22. Hos. 4:9. *marg.*
a Ps. 21:6. 72:17.
b See on 24.—Prov. 25:5. Is. 9:6,7.
c 12,45. 2 Chr. 1:1. Prov. 29:4.
a 2 Chr. 18:1. Ezra 9:14.
b 7:8. 9:24. 11:1.
c 2 Sam. 5:7. 1 Chr. 11:7.
d 7:1—12.
e 6: 7:13—51. 2 Chr. 2:—4. Ezra 5:11.
f 9:15—19.
g 22:43. Lev. 17:3—6. 28:30. Deut. 12:2—5. 2 Chr. 33:17.
h 5:3. 1 Chr. 17:4—6. 28:3—6. Acts 7:47—49.
i Deut. 6:5. 10:12. 30:6,16,20. 2 Sam. 12:24,25. Ps. 31:23. Mark 12:29,30. Rom. 8:28. 1 Cor. 8:3. Jam. 1:12. 2:5. 1 John 4:19,20. 5:2,3.
j See on 14.—2:3,4. 11:34. 15:3. 1 Chr. 28:8,9. 2 Chr. 17:3—5.
k 15:14. 22:43. 2 Kings 12:3. 14:4. 15:4,35. 18.4,22.
l 9:2. Josh. 9:3. 10:2. 1 Chr. 16:39. 21:29. 2 Chr. 1:3.
m 8:63. 2 Chr. 1:6. 7:5. 29:32—35. 30:24. Is. 40:16. Mic. 6:6,7.
n Gen. 28:12,13. Num. 12:6. Job 33:14,15. Matt. 1:20. 2:13,19.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 26—46. Those, who have disgraced the sacred ministry by their crimes, are unworthy to officiate in holy things, and should be excluded from them; and wicked priests, though often spared here, will hereafter receive the deepest condemnation. Yet distinctions should be made in the punishment of the guilty; former services and sufferings in a good cause may plead for an alleviation of the sentence, where the law of God will admit of it: and in every event his word will one way or other be accomplished.—Even murder admits of degrees of criminality. The character of the persons murdered, their rank, and usefulness to society; and the malice, treachery, and boldness, with which the crime was perpetrated; enhance proportionably its malignity.—Different offenders ought to be treated in diverse ways, and punishments so inflicted, as may appear most equitable.—The kingdom of Christ is established by the ruin of its obstinate opposers, and the advancement of its cordial friends. Those who injure his people will be called to account perhaps long after; and all, who are kind to them, shall be surely recompensed. May we be his faithful subjects! May the Lord more and more establish and extend his kingdom, by making his foes his footstool; and may the whole earth be filled with his glory, and with the acclamations of his willing people! SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. III. V. 1. As Rehoboam was born before the death of David, (comp. 11:42. with 14:21.) it is plain Solomon had before this married Naamah an Ammonitess; (14:21.) and at this time he married the daughter of the Egyptian king. It is supposed that both of them had embraced the religion of Israel: and, as Solomon is not censured on this account, there might be special reasons inducing him to this conduct, of which we are not informed. SCOTT.

Verses 5—14.

(*Gen* 20:1—6. 31:23,24 *Job* 4:12—16. 33:14—18.) In Solomon's

and God said, [o] Ask what I shall give thee.

6 And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto [p] thy servant David my father [q] great * mercy, [r] according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that [s] thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day.

7 And now, O LORD my God, [t] thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father; and I *am but* [u] a little child: I know not *how* [v] to go out or come in.

8 And thy servant *is* in the midst of [x] thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that [y] cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

9 [z] Give therefore thy servant an † understanding heart [a] to judge thy people, that I may [b] discern between good and bad; for [c] who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

10 And the speech [d] pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing.

11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and * hast not asked for thyself ‡ long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding, to § discern judgment;

12 Behold, [e] I have done according to thy words: lo, [f] I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither [g] after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

13 And [h] I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both [k] riches and honor; so that there ‖ shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

14 And [i] if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, [m] as thy father David did walk, then [n] I will lengthen thy days.

15 And Solomon [o] awoke; and behold, *it was* a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood [p] before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt-offerings, and

thereby tempting the people to do so too, *v.* 2, 3. Abraham built his altars on mountains, (Gen. 12: 8.—22: 2.) and worshipped in a grove; (Gen. 21: 33.) thence the custom was derived, and was proper, till the divine law confined them to one place, Deut. 12: 5, 6.

V. 5—15. We have here a gracious visit God made Solomon, and his communion with God in it, which puts a greater honor on him than all the wealth and power of his kingdom.

I. Gibeon, the great high place, should have been the only one, because there the tabernacle and brazen altar were, 2 Chr. 1: 3. Here Solomon offered his great sacrifices, and here God owned him more than in any other of the high places; the nearer we come to the rule in worship, the more reason we have to expect tokens of God's presence; where God records his name, there He will meet and bless us. The time was the night after that generous sacrifice, *v.* 4. The more we abound in God's work, the more comfort we may expect in Him; if the day has been busy for Him, the night will be easy in Him. Silence and retirement befriend our communion with God: his kindest visits are often in the night, Ps. 17: 3. The manner of it was, in a dream, when his senses were locked up, that God's access to his mind might be the more free and immediate; in this way, God used to speak to the prophets, (Num. 12: 6.) and to private persons, for their own benefit, Job 33: 15, 16. These divine dreams, no doubt, distinguished themselves from those in which are divers vanities, Eccl. 5: 7.

II. The gracious offer God made him, *v.* 5. He saw the glory of God shine about him, and heard a voice, saying, *Ask what I shall give thee.* Thus God would testify his acceptance of his sacrifices, and signify what great mercy He had in store for him, if he were not wanting to himself. Thus He would try his inclinations, and honor the prayer of faith. God, in like manner, condescends to us, and puts us in the ready way to be happy, by assuring us we shall have what we will, for the asking, John 16: 23. 1 John 5: 15. What would we more? *Ask, and it shall be given you.*

III. Solomon readily laid hold on this offer; why do we neglect the like offered to us, like Ahaz, who said, *I will not ask?* Isa. 7: 12. Solomon prayed in his sleep, God's grace assisting him; yet it was a lively prayer. What we are most in care about, and which makes the greatest impression on us when awake, commonly affects us when asleep; and by our dreams, sometimes, we may know what our hearts are upon. Plutarch makes virtuous dreams one evidence of increase in virtue. Yet this must be attributed to a higher source. Solomon's making such an intelligent choice as this, when asleep, showed it came purely from the grace of God, which wrought in him these gracious desires. If his *reins* thus *instruct him in the night season*, he must *bless the Lord* who *gave him counsel*, Ps. 16: 7. His prayer,

1. Acknowledges God's great goodness to David, *v.* 6. He speaks honorably of his father's piety, drawing a veil over his faults. It is to be hoped those who praise their godly parents, will imitate them. But he speaks more honorably of God's goodness to his father, in giving him to be sincerely religious, and then recompensing his sincerity; and the great kindness He had kept for him, to be bestowed on his family when he was gone, in *giving him a son to sit on his throne.* Children should thank God for his mercies to their parents; for the sure mercies of David. The way to get the entail perpetuated, is, to bless God that it has hitherto been preserved.

2. He owns his own insufficiency for the discharge of that great trust to which he was called, *v.* 7, 8. And here is a double plea to enforce his petition for wisdom, namely, that his place required it, and he wanted it, as one that had an humble sense of his own deficiency; he calls himself a child in understanding, though his father called him *a wise man, ch.* 2: 9. Note, Those who are employed in public stations, ought to be very sensible of the weight and importance of their work, and their own insufficiency for it; then they are qualified to receive divine instruction. Paul's question (*Who is sufficient for these things?*) is much like Solomon's here, *v.* 9. Absalom, who was a fool, wished himself a judge; Solomon, who was a wise man, trembles at the undertaking, and suspects his own fitness for it. The more knowing and considerate men are, the better acquainted they are with their own weakness, and the more jealous of themselves.

3. He begs of God to give him wisdom; (*v.* 9.) and pleads his relation to God, as his servant, 1 s.

o 2 Chr. 1:7—12. Matt. 7:7,8. Mark 10:36—38,51. 11:24. John 14:13,14. 15:16. 16:23,24. Jam. 1:5,6. 1 John 5:14,15.
p Num. 12:7. 2 Sam. 7:5.
q 2 Sam. 7:8—12. 12:7,8. 22:47—51. 1 Chr. 29:12—14. Ps. 78:70—72.
* Heb. *bounty.* Ps. 13:6. 118:7. 119: 17. 2 Cor. 9:5,11.
r 2:4. 9:4. 2 Kings 20:3. Ps. 15:2. 18: 20—24.
s See on 1:48.
t Dan. 2:21. 4:25,32. 5:18,21.
u 1 Chr. 29:1. Job 32:6—8. Ec. 10:16. Jer. 1:6. Matt. 18:3,4.
v Num. 27:17. Deut. 31:2. 1 Sam. 18: 13. 2 Sam. 5:2. John 10:3,4,9.
x Ex. 19:5,6. Deut. 7:6—8. 1 Sam. 12:22. Ps. 78:71.
y Gen. 13:16. 15:5. 22:17. 1 Chr. 21: 2,5,6. 27:23,24.
z 1 Chr. 22:12. 29:19. 2 Chr. 1:10. Ps. 119:34,73,144. Prov. 2:6. 3:13—18. 16:16. Jam. 1:5. 3:17.
† Heb. *hearing.* Prov. 20:12.
a 28. Ps. 72:1,2. Prov. 14:8. Ec. 7: 11,19. 9:15—18.
b 2 Sam. 14:17. Is. 11:2—4. 1 Cor. 2: 14,15. Eph. 5:17. Phil. 1:10. *Gr.* Heb. 5:14.
c Ex. 3:11,12. 4:10—13. Jer. 1:6. Matt. 3:11,14. 2 Cor. 2:16. 3:5.
d Prov. 15:8.
e Ps. 4:6. Prov. 16:31. Matt. 20:21,22. Jam. 4:3.
‡ Heb. *many days.*
§ Heb. *hear.* 9. *marg.*
f Ps. 10:17. Is. 65:24. Rom. 8:26,27. 1 John 5:14,15.
g 28. 2:6,9. 4:29—34. 5:12. 10:3—8. 2 Chr. 1:11,12. 2:12. 9:5—8. Ec. 1: 16. Luke 21:15.
h Matt. 12:42. Col. 2:3.
i Ps. 84:11,12. Matt. 6:33. Rom. 8:32. 1 Cor. 3:22,23. Eph. 3:20.
k 4:21—24. 10:23,27. Prov. 3:16.
‖ Or, *hath not been.*
l 2:3,4. 1 Chr. 22:12,13. 28:9. 2 Chr. 7:17—19. Ps. 132:12. Zech. 3:7
m See on 3.—9:4,5. 15:5. 2 Chr. 17:3 4. 29:2. 34:2. Acts 13:22.
n Deut. 5:16. Ps. 91:16. Prov. 3:2,16. 1 Tim. 4:8.
o Gen. 41:7. Jer. 31:26.
p 2 Sam. 6:17. 1 Chr. 16:1,2.

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dream, the powers of his soul were supernaturally invigorated; and he was enabled to receive the divine vision, and to make a suitable choice in the case referred to him. His single petition therefore was, that the Lord would give his servant an understanding heart: i. e. that He would enlarge and strengthen his intellectual powers, give him a ready discernment in spiritual things, and a correspondent disposition; and furnish him with the peculiar talents and capacities for government; that he might administer justice and judgment, with impartial rectitude and deep penetration, for the benefit of the people and the honor of God. Doubtless these sentiments were habitually in Solomon's mind, previously to this dream: and his consciousness of his own insufficiency had led him to depend on the Lord to qualify him for the discharge of the duties of his important station: and his request accorded to the exhortations David had given him, and the prayers he had offered for him. (1 *Chr.* 22:11, 12. 28:9. 29.10—19. *Ps.* 72: *title.* 1, 2. *Prov.* 2:1—6. 14:8. *Jam.* 1:5—8.)—Absalom and Adonijah do not seem to have been troubled with anxiety on this account, though far inferior to Solomon in capacity for ruling: but *they* sought the *honor and power* of the kingdom, *he* desired *to discharge the duty* of a king.—The disposition and judgment which dictated this petition, in preference to all those alluring distinctions which carnal minds pursue, and which especially attract young persons in superior stations, was well pleasing to the Lord. SCOTT.

(7.) *I am but a little child.*] *Boothr.* thinks this a strange rendering, and has *very young man*; but, says *Roberts*, 'So say men here [in the E.] though they be advanced in years, when they wish to speak of their incapacity for any performance.' "What can I do in it, I am but a boy of yesterday's birth." So in pleading for forgiveness, "I am but *a little child*, it was my ignorance," &c. This is one of the innumerable cases where a knowledge of the manners, customs, habits of thought and expression of the modern orientals, is obviously necessary to a full understanding of the Bible. ED.

offered [q] peace-offerings, and made [r] a feast to all his servants.

[*Practical Observations.*]

16 ¶ Then came there [s] two women, *that were* harlots, unto the king, and [t] stood before him.

17 And the one woman said, [u] O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house, and I was delivered of a child with her in the house.

18 And it came to pass, the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we *were* together; *there was* no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house.

19 And this woman's child died in the night, because she overlaid it.

20 And she arose, at [x] midnight, and [y] took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom.

21 And when I arose in the morning to [z] give my child suck, behold it was dead; but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son which I did bear.

22 And the other woman said, [a] Nay; but the living *is* my son, and the dead *is* thy son. And this said, No; but the dead *is* thy son, and the living *is* my son. Thus they spake before the king.

23 Then said the king, The one saith, This *is* my son that liveth, and thy son *is* the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son *is* the dead, and my son *is* the living.

24 And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king.

25 And the king said, [b] Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.

116: 16. Thus his good father prayed, Ps. 119: 125. An understanding heart is God's gift, Prov. 2: 6. We must pray for it, (James 1: 5.) and pray for it with application to our particular calling, and various occasions, as Solomon's, *v.* 9. That is the best knowledge, which will be serviceable in doing our duty; and such that knowledge is, which enables us to *discern between good and bad*, right and wrong, sin and duty, truth and falsehood, so as not to be imposed upon by false colors, in judging either of others' actions, or our own.

4. The favorable answer God gave, *v.* 10. God is well pleased with his own work in his people, the desires of his own kindling, the prayers of his Spirit's inditing. Those are accepted of God, who prefer spiritual blessings to temporal, and are more solicitous to be found in the way of duty, than preferment. But that was not all; it was a *prevailing* prayer. God gave him wisdom, *v.* 12. Such an insight, and such a foresight, never was prince so blessed with. He gave him riches and honor into the bargain, (*v.* 13.) and it was promised he should as much exceed his predecessors, successors, and neighbors, in these, as in wisdom. These also are God's gift, and are promised to all that *seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof*, as far as is good for them, Matt. 6: 33. Let young people learn to prefer grace to gold, because *godliness has the promise of the life that now is*, but *the life that now is*, has not *the promise of godliness*. Wisdom is good, is so much the better with an inheritance, Eccl. 7: 11. But if we make sure of wisdom and grace, those will either bring outward prosperity with them, or sweeten the want of it. God promised Solomon riches and honor, absolutely, but long life, on condition; (*v.* 14.) he failed in the condition, and therefore, though he had riches and honor, did not live so long to enjoy them, as, in the course of nature, he might. Length of days is Wisdom's right-hand blessing, typical of eternal life; but it is in her left hand that riches and honor are. See here, the way to obtain spiritual blessings, is, to be importunate for them; to wrestle with God in prayer for them, as Solomon did for wisdom, asking that only, as the *one thing needful;* and the way to obtain temporal blessings, is, to be indifferent to them, and to refer ourselves to God concerning them. Solomon has wisdom given him, because he *did* ask it, and wealth, because he did *not*.

5. Solomon's gratitude for the visit, *v.* 15. He awoke, we may suppose, in a transport of joy; awoke, and *his sleep was sweet to him*, as the prophet speaks. He had made his prayer at Gibeon, and there God had graciously met him; but he comes to Jerusalem, to give thanks *before the ark of the covenant*, blaming himself, as it were, that he had not prayed there, the ark being the token of God's presence, and wondering that God had met him any where else. God's passing by our mistakes, should persuade us to amend them.

V. 16—28. An instance is here given of Solomon's wisdom, to show that the grant lately made him, had a real effect upon him. It is probable, the cause had been heard in the inferior courts, before it was brought before Solomon, and had been found special, the judges being unable to determine it, that Solomon's wisdom in deciding it, at last, might be the more noted. We see in it, 1. What anxiety is caused by little children, how uncertain their lives are, and to how many dangers they are continually exposed. The age of infancy is the valley of the shadow of death; and the lamp of life, when first lighted, is easily blown out. It is a wonder of mercy, that so few perish in the perils of nursing. 2. How much better it was, in those times, with children born in fornication, than, commonly, it is now. Then they were nursed; whereas now, they are often abandoned, or killed. Thus it is foretold, that *in the last days perilous times should come*, when people should be without natural affection, 2 Tim. 3: 3.

The question was, Who was the mother of the living child. Both mothers were vehement in their claims, and showed deep concern about it. Neither will own the dead child. The living child is the parents' joy, because their hope; and may not the dead children be so? See Jer. 31: 17. The difficulty of the case was, there was no evidence on either side. To put the parties to the rack, would have been barbarous; not she who had justice on her side, but she who was most hardy, would have had the judgment in her favor. Little stress is to be laid on extorted evidence.

Solomon, having patiently heard both sides, sums up the evidence, *v.* 23. And now the who.e

q 8:63. Lev. 3: 7:11—19. 2 Sam. 6:18, 19. 2 Chr. 7:5,7—10. 30:22—26.
r Gen. 31:54. 40:20. Esth. 1:3. Dan. 5:1. Mark 6:21.
s Lev. 19:29. Deut. 23:17. Josh. 2:1.
t Ex. 18:13,16. Num. 27:2.
u Gen. 43:20. Rom. 13:7.
x Job 34:13—17. Matt. 13:25. John 3:20.
y 21.
z Gen. 21:7. 1 Sam. 1:23. Lam. 4:3,4.
a 23,24.
b Prov. 25:3.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—15. Such as love the Lord ought to copy the examples, and follow the instructions, of those who have gone before them in the same path; especially of pious parents: but they should be careful to avoid their errors and transgressions; for even good men find it difficult to act themselves *at all times* as they would counsel others: so that defects will be found in the best characters, and the best state of the church on earth. We should indeed watch and pray against all evil in ourselves, and use our influence to prevent it in others: yet we should expect to see many things that we disapprove, and learn to make allowances for them.—The Lord by his Gospel, in effect, makes this proposal to all who hear it, 'Ask what I shall give thee.' (*Matt.* 7: 7—11.) He does not indeed engage to gratify the desires of the ambitious, the covetous, the sensual, the envious, or the revengeful: but He is ever ready to answer the petitions of those, who ask of Him heavenly wisdom and spiritual blessings, however guilty, depraved, and foolish they have hitherto been; and we should honor the riches of his all-sufficiency and liberality, by multiplying and enlarging our requests, and grasping at more and more from Him; for He will take it graciously, and deal with us accordingly.—Distinguishing favors require peculiar returns of gratitude: and a man's being evidently called to very important and arduous services, may dictate his prayers, and encourage his expectations of proportionable assistance.—Such as succeed eminently wise and good men, should ask a double portion of wisdom and grace, to answer the expectations of others from them: and they who, in deviation from ordinary rules, are employed in any public service, will be more narrowly watched, and more severely censured, if they act inconsistently. Let not this hint be overlooked, or taken amiss, by those who preach the Gospel without an express regular appointment from man, in any of those ways by which ministers are ordinarily sent forth.—The continued blessing of God can be expected only in the way of persevering obedience: and negligence or wickedness will always ensure loss in our temporal or spiritual comforts. SCOTT.

Verses 23—28.

In many countries such cases have been decided by *lot*, and, which is much worse, by *duels;* or the parties have been tortured, that they might be compelled to declare the truth. But Solomon adopted the only rational method, by making use of his acquaintance with the human heart, to discover which of them had the *feelings* of a mother for the living child.—The murder of illegitimate infants by their mothers, to conceal their own sin and shame, which so frequently occurs in this land, is not so much as intimated in any way in the Scriptures, nor, as far as my reading and recollection extend, in any ancient history. The state of morals among the heathen accounts for this, among them, in two ways: 1st. It was not considered as peculiarly disgraceful to either parent to have spurious children: and 2dly. The common practice of exposing infants, whether spurious or not, excluded all temptation to the secret murder of any. But the case must have been very different in Israel: yet this crime seems never to have

26 Then spake the woman, whose the living child *was*, unto the king, (for [c]her bowels [*]yearned upon her son,) and she said, O my lord, [d]give her the living child, and in nowise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine or thine, *but* divide *it*.

27 Then the king answered, and said, Give her the living child, and in nowise slay it: she *is* the mother thereof.

28 And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they [e]feared the king: for they saw that [f]the wisdom of God *was* † in him to do judgment.

CHAP. IV.

Solomon's princes, 1—6. Twelve officers who provided for his household, each in his month, 7—19. The prosperity and grandeur of his kingdom, 20—25. His horses and chariots, 26—28. His wisdom and reputation, 29—34.

SO king Solomon was king [a]over all Israel.

2 And these *were* [b]the princes which he had; [c]Azariah the son of Zadok the ‡ priest;

3 Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of [d]Shisha, § scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the ‖ recorder.

4 And [e]Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the host: and [f]Zadok and Abiathar *were* the priests;

5 And Azariah the [g]son of Nathan *was* over the officers; and Zabud the son of Nathan *was* principal officer, *and* [h]the king's friend;

6 And Ahishar *was* over the household: and [i]Adoniram the son of Abda *was* over the ¶ tribute.

7 ¶ And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household: [j]each man his month in a year made provision.

8 And these *are* their names: ** The son of Hur, in [k]mount Ephraim.

9 †† The son of Dekar, in Makaz, and in [l]Shaalbim, and [m]Beth-shemesh, and Elon-bethhanan.

10 ‡‡ The son of Hesed in Aruboth; to him *pertained* [n]Sochoh, and all the land of [o]Hepher.

11 §§ The son of Abinadab, in all the region of [p]Dor; which had Taphath the daughter of Solomon to wife.

12 Baanah the son of Ahilud; *to him pertained* [q]Taanach and [r]Megiddo, and all [s]Bethshean, which *is* by [t]Zartanah beneath [u]Jezreel, from Beth-shean to [x]Abel-meholah, *even* unto *the place that is* beyond Jokneam.

13 ‖‖ The son of Ge-

CHAP. IV. V. 1—19. Here is,

I. Solomon on his throne: (*v.* 1.) that is, confirmed and established king *over all Israel*, and not, as his successors, only over two tribes. Those preserve the name and honor of their place, that mind the business of it, and make conscience of it.

II. The great officers of his court; 1. Several of them are the same that were in his father's time, (2 Sam. 20: 25.) only then, Abiathar had the precedency among the priests, now, Zadok. Shisha was his father's scribe, and his sons were his, *v.* 3. Solomon, though wise, would not affect to seem wiser than his father in this matter. When sons come to inherit their father's wealth, honor, and power, it is a respect due to their memory, *where it can properly be done*, to employ those whom they employed, and trust those whom they trusted. Many pride themselves in being the reverse of their good parents. 2. The rest were priests' sons. His prime minister of state, *Azariah the son of Zadok the priest;* two others of the first rank, sons of Nathan the prophet, *v.* 5. In preferring them, he testified his grateful respect for their good father, whom he loved *in the name of a prophet*.

III. The purveyors for his household, whose business it was to send in provisions from several parts of the country, for the king's tables and cellars, (*v.* 7.) and for his stables, *v.* 27, 28. That thus, 1. His house might always be well furnished, at the best hand. 2. That thus he himself, and those who immediately attended him, might be eased of care, and the more closely apply themselves to the business of the state. 3. That thus all parts of the kingdom might be equally benefited, by the sale and purchase of commodities for the crown, and the circulating of coin. The dividing

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c Gen. 43:30. Is. 49:15. Jer. 31:20. Hos. 11:8. Phil. 1:8. 2:1. 1 John 3:17.
* Heb. *were hot.* Ps. 39:3.
d Rom. 1:31. 2 Tim. 3:3.
e Ex. 14:31. Josh. 4:14. 1 Sam. 12:18. 1 Chr. 29:24. Prov. 24:21.
f 9—12. Ezra 7:25. Ec. 7:19. Dan. 2:21,47. 5:11. 1 Cor. 1:24,30. Col. 2:3.
† Heb. *in the midst of h.*
a 11:13,35,36. 12:19:20. 2 Sam. 5:5. 1 Chr. 12:38. 2 Chr. 9:30. Ec. 1:12
b Ex. 18:21. 2 Sam. 8:15—18. 20:23—26. 1 Cor. 12:28.
c 1 Chr. 6:8—10. 27:17.
‡ Or, *chief officer.*
d 2 Sam. 20:25. *Sheva.* 1 Chr. 18:16 *Shavsha.*
§ Or, *secretaries.*
‖ Or, *remembrancer.* 2 Sam. 8:16. 1 Chr. 18:15. Is. 62:6. *margine.*
e See on 2:35.
f See on 2:26,27,35.
g 1:10, &c. 2 Sam. 7:2. 12:1—15,25.
h 2 Sam. 15:37. 16:16. 19:37,38. Prov 22:11. John 13:23. 15:14,15. Jam 2:23.
i 12:18. 2 Sam. 20:24. *Adoram.*
¶ Or, *levy.* 5:13,14. 9:15.
j 1 Chr. 27:1—15.
** Or, *Ben-hur.*
k Judg. 17:1. 19:1.
†† Or, *Ben-dekar.*
l Josh. 19:42. *Shaalabbin.*
m See on 1 Sam. 6:12,20.
‡‡ Or, *Ben-hesed.*
n See on Josh. 15:35.
o Josh. 12:17. 17:2.
§§ Or, *Ben-abinadab.*
p Josh. 12:23. 17:11. Judg. 1:27.
q See on Josh. 17:11. Judg. 5:19.
r 2 Kings 23:29,30.
s 1 Sam. 31:10,12.
t 7:46. *Zarthan.* Josh. 3:16. *Zaretan*
u 18:46.
x 19:16.
‖‖ Or, *Ben-geber.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 16—28. Judges, magistrates, and all concerned in trying causes, need great discernment, as well as integrity, in order to search out the truth, when all possible pains and fallacy are employed to conceal it: they ought therefore, in all their studies and in all their decisions, to ask wisdom of God; and we should earnestly remember them in our prayers, that He would confer it upon them.—Where the Lord has given abilities, and a heart disposed to improve them, He will open a way for the profitable exercise of them in his due time: and an accurate acquaintance with the human heart will be found a more profitable kind of knowledge for all, but especially for magistrates and ministers.—God has made natural affection very strong, especially in mothers, as the great means of preserving their infants, in the midst of their dangers and infirmities, and notwithstanding all the trouble and fatigue which they occasion. Yet human depravity, habitual wickedness, or fear and shame, can extinguish it, and even mothers are capable of becoming the murderers of their own infants! Surely these harlots will rise up in judgment against such unnatural criminals, and condemn them; and still more their brutal seducers, who have deserted them when exposed to these awful temptations. SCOTT.

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occurred; nor was any law enacted concerning it. It is not, however, difficult to discover the cause of its frequent and horrid occurrence in our enlightened land, in the stern rejection of the offending female, if detected, from the society of all who are not thus disgraced, without discrimination, or hope of recovery from this infamous *loss of caste*, so to speak; and in the entire impunity of her male paramour, though perhaps far more deeply criminal. [The hopeless, pitiless lot of these most forlorn, offending females, is one of the blackest stains on the female character, taken in connection with the treatment licentious young men receive in society.] And it is a question of no small importance, in every view, whether some measures might not be taken, to counteract this dire evil, without lowering the standard of morality, or giving encouragement to vice. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV. V. 2. *Princes.*] 'His *great, chief*, or *principal* men. None of them were princes in the ordinary acceptation of the word.' [Yet it is observable, even of the Norman nobility of England, and of the German princes, that many of them have their denomination from household employments, and civil offices.] Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 7—19.

(*M. R.*) It was not *Solomon's policy*, to prevent his children from intermarrying with his subjects. These marriages must have taken

ber, in [v] Ramoth-gilead; to him *pertained* [z] the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, which *are* in Gilead: to him *also pertained* the region of [a] Argob, which *is* in Bashan, three-score great cities with walls and brazen bars.

14 Ahinadab the son of Iddo *had* * Mahanaim.

15 Ahimaaz *was* in [b] Naphtali; he also took Basmath [c] the daughter of Solomon to wife.

16 Baanah the son of Hushai *was* in [d] Asher and in Aloth:

17 Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in [e] Issachar:

18 [f] Shimei the son of Elah, in [g] Benjamin.

19 Geber the son of Uri *was* in the country of Gilead, *in* [h] the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan; and *he was* the only officer which *was* in the land.

20 Judah and Israel *were* many, [i] as the sand which *is* by the sea in multitude, [k] eating and drinking and making merry.

21 And [l] Solomon reigned over all kingdoms, from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they [m] brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.

22 ¶ And Solomon's † provision for one day was thirty ‡ measures of fine flour, and three-score measures of meal,

23 [n] Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roe-bucks, and fallow-deer, and fatted fowl.

24 For he had dominion over all *the region* on this side the river, from Tiphsah even to [o] Azzah, over [p] all the kings on this side the river: and he [q] had peace on all sides round about him.

25 And Judah and Israel dwelt § safely, [r] every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, [s] from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon.

of this trust into so many hands was prudent, that no one might be continually burdened with the care of it, nor grow exorbitantly rich with the profit of it; but that Solomon might have those, in every district, who, having a dependence on the court, would be serviceable to him and his interest, as there was occasion.

These commissioners of the victualling-office are here named; several only by their surnames, as great men commonly call their servants; though several also by their proper names. Two of them married Solomon's daughters, *v.* 11, 15. and no disparagement to them, to marry men of business. Better match with the officers of their father's court, that were Israelites, than with the sons of princes, that were *strangers to the covenant of promise*. The son of Geber was in Ramoth-gilead, (*v.* 13.) and Geber himself was in the country of Sihon and Og, which included that and Mahanaim, *v.* 19. He is therefore said to be *the only officer in that land*, because the other two, mentioned *v.* 13, 14. depended on him, and were subordinate to him.

V. 20—28. Such a kingdom, and such a court, sure never prince had, as Solomon's here.

I. Such a kingdom. Never did the crown of Israel shine so bright, as when Solomon wore it; never in his father's days, never in the days of any of his successors; nor was that kingdom ever so glorious a type of the Messiah's, as then. The account here fully answers the prophecies concerning it, Ps. 72. a psalm for Solomon, but with reference to Christ.

1. The territories were large, and tributaries many: so it was foretold, he should *have dominion from sea to sea*, Ps. 72: 8—11. Solomon reigned not only over all Israel, who were his subjects by choice, but over all the neighboring kingdoms, who were his subjects by constraint. All the princes from the river Euphrates N. E. to the border of Egypt S. W. not only added to his honor, by doing him homage, and holding their crowns from him, but added to his wealth, by serving him, and bringing him presents, *v.* 21. David, by his successful wars, compelled them to this subjection, and Solomon, by his admirable wisdom, made it easy and reasonable; for it is fit the fool should be *servant to the wise in heart*. If they gave him presents, he gave them instructions, and still *taught the people knowledge;* not only his own people, but those of other nations; and *wisdom is better than gold*. He had *peace on all sides*, *v.* 24. None, of all the nations subject to him, offered to shake off his yoke, or give him any disturbance; but, rather, thought themselves happy in their dependence on him. Herein, his kingdom typified the Messiah's; for to Him it is promised, that He shall have the *heathen for his inheritance*, and that *princes shall worship Him*, Isa. 49: 6, 7. 53: 12.

2. The subjects of this kingdom, and its inhabitants, were many and cheerful, *v.* 20. Now was fulfilled the promise made to Abraham, concerning the increase of his seed; (Gen. 22: 17.) as well as that concerning the extent of their dominion, Gen. 15: 18. God's spiritual Israel are many, at least they will be so, when they all come together, Rev. 7: 9. All were also easy; they dwelt safely, or, with confidence and assurance; (*v.* 25.) not jealous of their king, or of his officers; not disaffected, either to him, or to one another, nor under any apprehension of danger from enemies foreign or domestic. Solomon invaded no man's property, as sometimes was the manner of the king, (1 Sam. 8: 19.) but protected every man in the possession and enjoyment of it. They dwelt every man under *his vine and fig-tree*. So great was the peace, that they might dwell as safely under their shadow, as within the walls of a city. Or, because it was usual to have *vines by the sides of their houses*, (Ps. 128: 3.) they are said to *dwell under their vines*. They were cheerful in the use of their plenty, *eating and drinking, and making merry*, *v.* 20. Solomon taught them that God gave them their abundance, that they might use it soberly and pleasantly, not that they might hoard it up. *There is nothing better* than for a man to eat *the labor of his hands*, and that, *with a merry heart*. His father, in the Psalms, had led his people into the comforts of communion with God, and now he led them into the comfortable use of the good things of this life. This pleasant posture of Israel's affairs extended, in place, from Dan to Beer-sheba; and continued a long time, *all the days of Solomon*, without any material interruption. The spiritual peace, and joy, and holy security, of all the faithful subjects of the Lord Jesus, were typified by this. *The kingdom of God is not*, as Solomon's was, *meat and drink*, but, what is infinitely better, *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*.

II. Such a court Solomon kept, as can scarcely be paralleled. We may guess at the vast number of his attendants, and the great resort to him, by the daily provision for his table; bread enough, as is computed, to serve 3000 men; Carellus says above 48000 men; and the provision of flesh (*v.* 23.) rather more, in proportion; vast quantities of beef, mutton, and venison, and the choicest of all *fatted things*, as some, *fatted fowl*. Ahasuerus once made a *great feast*, to *show the riches of his kingdom*, Esth. 1: 3, 4. But it was much more

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y 22:3. Deut. 4:43. Josh. 20:8. 21:38. 2 Kings 9:1,14.
z Num. 32:41. Deut. 3:14.
a Deut. 3:4,13,14. 1 Sa. 22:12. 68:15.
* Or, *to Mahanaim*. Gen. 32:2. 2 Sam. 2:8. 17:24,27.
b Josh. 19:32—39.
c 11. 1 Sam. 18:18.
d Josh. 19:24—31.
e Josh. 19:17—23.
f 1:3. Zech. 12:13.
g Josh. 18:20—28.
h Num. 21:21—35. Deut. 2:26—37. 3: 1—17. Josh. 13:9—12.
i 3:8. Gen. 13:16. 15:5. 22:17. Prov. 14:28.
k 1 Sam. 30:16. 1 Chr. 12:39. Job 1: 13. Ps. 72:3—7. Ec. 2:24. Is. 22: 13. Mic. 4:4. Zech. 3:10. 9:15. Acts 2:46.
l 24. Gen. 15:18. Ex. 23:31. Deut. 11:24. Josh. 1:4. 2 Chr. 9:26. Ezra 4:20. Ps. 72:8,9.
m 1 Sam. 10:27. 2 Kings 17:3. 2 Chr. 17:5. 32:23. Ps. 68:29. 72:10,11. 76:11.
† Heb. *bread*.
‡ Heb. *core*.
n Neh. 5:17,18.
o Gen. 10:19. Judg. 16:1. *Gaza*.
p See on 21.—Ps. 72:8,11.
q 5:4. 1 Chr. 22:9. Ps. 72:3,7. Is. 9: 7. Luke 2:14. Heb. 7:1,2.
§ Heb. *confidently*. Is. 60:18. Jer. 23: 5,6. 33:15,16. Ez. 38:11. *more*.
r 2 Kings 18:31. Mic. 4:4. Zech. 3:10
s Judg. 20:1. 2 Sam. 17:11. 24:15.

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place many years after his accession, and this ch. should be considered as a general account of the state of the land in his reign. SCOTT.

Verse 20.

The people were not diminished in Solomon's reign, by wars, invasions, or intestine contests; and therefore they grew exceedingly numerous and prosperous, and lived in great peace and plenty. (*M. R.*—*Ec.* 2:24—26.) But they seem to have been too much pleased and elated with their external blessings, and to have indulged themselves too freely in the use of them. ID.

Verses 22, 23.

Measures. (22) *Cors.* (*m.*) A cor is generally computed at 10 ephahs, or rather above 72 gallons. ID.

Sheep.] 'The original word comprehends both sheep and goats.' *Harts.*] 'Or, deer.' *Roe-buck.*] 'The gazel, antelope, or wild goat.' *Fallow-deer.*' 'The buffalo.' *Fatted fowl.*] 'The original means, I suppose, all the *wild fowls* in *season* during each month. Michaelis derives the word *barburim* from *bara*, which in Chald. Syriac and Arabic signifies a *field*, or *desert*. It may signify creatures taken by *hunting*, as opposed to the *domesticated*, and consequently may include *beasts* as well as *fowls*. Solomon's table therefore was supplied with all the *necessaries* and *delicacies* which the *house* or *field* could afford.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 24.

Tiphsah is supposed to have been a city, near which there was a passage over the Euphrates, either by a ford, a ferry, or a bridge; the name being derived from a word which signifies *to pass over*. (*Note*, 2 *Sam.* 19:18.) *Azzah* is *Gaza* of the Philistines, the original word being the same. SCOTT.

Verse 25.

(*M. R.*) The land was in such profound peace, that the people disregarded the protection of walled cities. (*Ez.* 38:11. *Mic.* 4:4. *Zech.* 3:9, 10.) ID. *Under his vine.*] Note 2 K. 18: 31. ED.

26 And Solomon had [t] forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

27 And [u] those officers provided victual for king Solomon, and for all that came unto king Solomon's table, every man in his month: they lacked nothing.

28 Barley also and straw for the horses and [*] dromedaries brought they unto the place, where *the officers* were, every man according to his charge.

[*Practical Observations.*]

29 ¶ And [x] God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and [y] largeness of heart, even [z] as the sand that *is* on the sea-shore.

30 And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all [a] the children of the east country, and all [b] the wisdom of Egypt.

31 For he was [c] wiser than all men; than [d] Ethan the Ezrahite, and [e] Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and [f] his fame was in all nations round about.

32 And [g] he spake three thousand proverbs: and his [h] songs were a thousand and five.

33 And he spake of trees, from [i] the cedar-tree that *is* in Lebanon, even unto [k] the hyssop

t 10:25,26. *Deut.* 17:16. 2 Sam. 8:4. 2 Chr. 1:14. 9:25. Ps. 20:7.

u 7—19.

* Or, *mules, or swift beasts.* Esth. 8: 10,14. Mic. 1:13.

x See on 3:12,28.—10:23,24. 2 Chr. 1: 10—12. Ps. 119:34. Prov. 2:6. &c. 1:16. 2:26. Jam. 1:5,17. 3:17.

y Is. 60:5

z See on 20.—Gen. 41:49. Judg. 7:12. Jer. 33:22. Hab. 1:9.

a Gen. 25:6. Job 1:3. Dan. 1:20. 4: 7. 5:11,12. Matt. 2:1.

b Is. 19:11,12. Acts 7:22.

c See on 3:12.—Matt. 12:42. Luke 11: 31. Col. 2:3.

d 1 Chr. 15:19. Ps. 89: *title.*

e 1 Chr. 2:6. 6:33. 15:17,19. Ps. 88: *title.*

f 5:7. 10:1,6. 2 Chr. 9:23. Matt. 4:24.

g Prov. 1:1. Ec. 12:9. Matt. 13:35.

h Cant. 1:1.

i Num. 24:6. 2 Kings 19:23. Ps. 92:12.

k Ex. 12:22. Num. 19:18. Ps. 51:7. Heb. 9:19.

the honor of Solomon, that he kept a constant table, and a noble one, not of dainties, or deceitful meats, (he himself witnessed against them, Prov. 23: 3.) but substantial food, to the entertainment of those who came to hear his wisdom. Thus Christ fed those whom He taught, 5000 at a time, more than ever Solomon's table would entertain at once: all believers have in Him a continual feast. Herein He far outdoes Solomon, that He feeds all his subjects, not with the bread that perishes, but *with that which endures to eternal life.*

It added much, both to the strength and glory of Solomon's kingdom, that he had such abundance of horses, perhaps 1000 in every tribe, for preserving the public peace, *v.* 26. God had commanded their king not to multiply horses, (Deut. 17: 16.) nor, considering the extent and wealth of Solomon's kingdom, did he multiply horses in proportion to his neighbors; even the Philistines brought into the field 30,000 chariots, (1 Sam. 13: 6.) and the Syrians, at least, 40,000 horse, 2 Sam. 10: 18. The same officers provided alike for his house, and for his table, *v.* 27, 28. Every one knew his place, work, and time; and so this great court was kept without confusion. Solomon, that had vast incomes, lived at a vast expense; and perhaps wrote that, with application to himself, *When goods increase, they are increased that eat them; and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes,* unless withal they have the satisfaction of doing good with them?

V. 29—34. Solomon's wisdom here described was more his glory than his wealth.

I. Its fountain. *God gave it him, v.* 29. He owns it himself, (Prov. 2: 6.) *The Lord giveth wisdom:* He gives the powers of reason, (Job 38: 36.) preserves and improves them. The ordinary advances of them are owing to his providence, the sanctification of them, to his grace; and this extraordinary pitch at which they arrived in Solomon, to a special grant, in answer to his prayer.

II. Its fulness. *He had wisdom and understanding, exceeding much;* great knowledge of distant countries, and the histories of former times; a quickness of thought, strength of memory, and clearness of judgment, such as never any man had. It is called *largeness of heart,* for the heart is often put for the intellectual powers. He had a vast compass of knowledge, could take things entire, and had an admirable faculty of laying things together. Some, by his *largeness of heart,* understand his courage and boldness, and that great assurance with which he delivered his dictates and determinations. Or, it may be meant of his disposition to do good with it. He was very free and communicative of his knowledge; had the gift of utterance, as well as wisdom. Note, It is very desirable that those who have large gifts of any kind, should have large hearts to use them for the good of others; and this is *from the hand of God.* Eccl. 3: 24. He shall *enlarge the heart.* Ps. 119:32.

The greatness of Solomon's wisdom is illustrated by comparison. Chaldea and Egypt were nations famous for learning; thence the Greeks borrowed theirs; but the greatest scholars of these nations came short of Solomon, *v.* 30. If nature excels art, much more does grace. The knowledge God gives by special favor, goes beyond what man gets by his own labor. Some wise men there were in Solomon's time, particularly Heman, and other Levites, employed by David in the temple music, 1 Chr. 15: 19. Heman, *his seer in the word of God,* 1 Chr. 25: 5, Chalcol and Darda, but *Solomon excelled them all, v.* 30.

III. The fame and fruits of it. It was talked of *in all nations round about.* His great wealth and glory made his wisdom much more illustrious. The jewel of wisdom may receive great advantage by the setting of it. He did not bury his talent, but showed his wisdom.

1. In his compositions. Those in divinity, written by divine inspiration, are not mentioned here; they are extant, and will remain to the world's end, monuments of his wisdom; and are, as other parts of Scripture, of use to make us *wise unto salvation.* But beside those, it appears he was, (1.) A moralist; he spake 3000 *proverbs,* wise sayings, apophthegms, of admirable use for the conduct of human life. Whether those proverbs of Solomon we have, were any part of the 3000, is uncertain. (2.) A poet, and a man of great wit. *His songs were a thousand and five,* of which only one is extant, as divinely inspired, which is therefore called his *Song of songs.* His wise instructions were communicated, by *proverbs,* that they might be familiar to them he designed to teach, and ready on all occasions; by *songs,* that they might be pleasant, and move the affections. (3.) A natural philosopher, and a man of great learning, and insight into the mysteries of nature: from his own and others' observations and experience, he wrote both of plants and animals, (*v.* 33.) descriptions of their natures and qualities, and (some think) of their medicinal uses.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—28. True wisdom generally directs those, who succeed prudent and prosperous men in kingdoms or estates, to tread in their steps, to employ their servants, and to avail themselves of the good advice of their friends and counsellors: but folly and self-conceit delight in making many and great changes, though they commonly prove disadvantageous. (12: 6—15. 2 K. 21: 1—3. *Ec.* 2: 18—23.)—Those who faithfully seek the good of our souls, though sometimes with sharp reproofs, are our best friends: and their memories are always entitled to grateful respect, and their children to kind regard; yet these are worthy of a wise man's confidence and friendship, only when they tread in the steps of their pious parents.—It is extremely difficult to possess abundance, without covetousness, luxury, or ostentation; without abusing, wasting, or burying, the goods of our common Lord, to whom every one must give an account of his stewardship: yet, prudent management and frugality are excellent appendages to liberality, and serve to support the expenses of it.—Wise and righteous princes are most valuable blessings to whole kingdoms, and should be sought in prayer from that God, who has all hearts in his hands.—Wealth without wisdom, and knowledge without humility and grace, are generally destructive to the possessor, and to those with whom he is connected; yet both are the gifts of God, good in themselves, and only evil as perverted by man's depravity. And heavenly wisdom teaches men to give God the glory in the use of these inferior blessings, and so renders them ornamental to the Christian profession, and conducive to promote designs of extensive usefulness. SCOTT.

Verse 26.

'1400 chariots, &c.' 10:26. 2 *Chr.* 1:14. '4000 stalls for horses and chariots, &c.' 2 *Chr.* 9:25. Different ways have been taken of reconciling these texts; none of which are satisfactory. 4000 *stalls* (not *stables* would be a proper number, for 1000 chariots to have change of horses. The 400 might be added afterwards. As numbers were generally expressed in the manuscripts by numeral letters, over which, in many cases, a small mark distinguished one number from another much smaller; it seems most obvious to suppose, that a trivial mistake has here occurred. 40,000 stalls for chariot horses, (unless all sorts of carriages be included,) seems out of all proportion to 12,000 horsemen: and in no other place are more than 1400 chariots mentioned. (10:24—27. *Deut.* 17:16.) SCOTT.

Verse 29.

Largeness of heart, &c.] This expression and comparison denote the unparalleled greatness of Solomon's intellectual powers, his most extensive knowledge, and his enlargement of heart in communicating instruction to all around him. 'A mind very comprehensive of all sorts of knowledge; and a heart to do a vast deal of good. . . . As the sand . . . encloses a vast body of waters; so his mind contained an ocean of knowledge, as Lord Bacon . . . speaks.' *Bp. Patrick.* (*Ps.* 119: 32. 2 *Cor.* 5:13—15.) SCOTT.

Verses 30—34.

Ethan and Heman seem to have been men renowned for extraordinary piety and wisdom.—(*M. R.* d—f. 1 *Chr.* 2:5, 6.) Perhaps he [Solomon] possessed more accurate and extensive knowledge, on an

that springeth out of the wall: he spake also [l] of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.

34 And [m] there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

CHAP. V.

Hiram, king of Tyre, sends to congratulate Solomon: who informs him that he intends to build a temple, and desires him to furnish the timber, 1—6. Hiram blesses God for Solomon's wisdom, and engages for the timber; requiring in return food for his household, 7—9. The mutual good offices between Hiram and Solomon, 10—12. The number of Solomon's workmen and laborers, 13—18.

AND [a] Hiram king of Tyre [b] sent his servants unto Solomon: for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father; [c] for Hiram was ever a lover of David.

2 And [d] Solomon sent to Hiram, saying,

3 Thou knowest how that David my father [e] could not build an house unto the name of the LORD his God, [f] for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD [g] put them under the soles of his feet.

4 But now the LORD my God [h] hath given me rest on every side, *so that there is* neither adversary, nor evil occurrent.

5 And, [i] behold, I

l See on Gen. 1:20—25.
m 10:1. 2 Chr. 9:1,23. Is. 2:2. Zech. 8:23.
a 10.18. 9:11—14. 2 Chr. 2:3. *Haram.*
b 2 Sam. 5:10. 10:1,2. Ps. 45:12.
c 2 Sam. 5:11. 1 Chr. 14:1. Am. 1:9.
d 2 Chr. 2:3.
e 2 Sam. 7:5—11. 1 Chr. 22:4—6. 2 Chr. 6:6—8.
f 1 Chr. 22:8. 28:3.
g Josh. 10:24. Ps. 8:6. 110:1. Mal. 4:3. 1 Cor. 15:25. Eph. 1:22.
h See on 4:24.—1 Chr. 22:9. Ps. 72:7. Is. 9:7. Acts 9:31.
i 2 Chr. 2:1,4.

2. In his conversation. There came persons from all parts, who were more inquisitive after knowledge than their neighbors, to *hear the wisdom of Solomon*, *v.* 34. Kings sent their ambassadors to hear it, and to bring them instructions from it. Solomon's court was the staple of learning, and the rendezvous of philosophers, i. e. the lovers of wisdom, who all came to light their candle at his lamp. Let those who magnify modern learning above that of the ancients, produce such a treasure of knowledge, any where in these latter ages, as that was, which Solomon was master of; yet this puts an honor on human learning, that Solomon was praised for it, and recommends it to the great men of the earth, as well worthy their diligent search. But, *lastly*, Solomon was, herein, a type of Christ, in *whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;* and hid for use, for He is *made of God to us, wisdom.*

CHAP. V. The great work Solomon was raised up to do, was, the building of the temple; his wealth and wisdom were given him for that. In this, especially, he was to be a type of Christ, for *He shall build the temple of the Lord*, Zech. 6: 12. In this ch. we have an account of his preparations for that and other buildings. Gold and silver his good father had prepared in abundance, but timber and stone he must get ready; and about these we have him treating with Hiram.

V. 1—9. We have here an account of the amicable correspondence between Solomon and Hiram. Tyre was a famous trading city, close on the sea, in the border of Israel; its inhabitants, (as should seem,) none of the devoted nations, nor ever at enmity with Israel; therefore David never offered to destroy them, but lived in friendship with them. It is said here of Hiram their king, that he was *ever a lover of David;* and we have reason to think he was a worshipper of the true God, and had himself renounced, though he could not reform, the idolatry of his city. David's character will win the affections of those that are without. Here is,

I. Hiram's embassy of compliment, *v.* 1. He sent, as is usual among princes, to condole with Solomon on the death of David, and to renew alliances on his succession to the government. It is good keeping up friendship and communion with families in which religion is uppermost.

II. Solomon's embassy of business to Hiram; his letter acquaints him,

1. With his design to build a temple to the honor of God. Solomon tells Hiram, (1.) David's wars obstructed him, that he could not build this temple, though he designed it, *v.* 3. See what need we have to pray, that God will *give peace in our time*, because, in time of war, the building of the gospel-temple commonly goes slowly on. (2.) That peace gave him an opportunity to build it, and therefore he resolved to set about it immediately, *There is no adversary;* (*v.* 4.) no *Satan*, so the word is, no instrument of Satan to oppose it, or to divert us from it. Satan does all he can, to hinder temple-work, (1 Thess. 2: 18. Zech. 3: 1.) but when he is bound, (Rev. 20: 2.) we should be busy. When there is *no evil occurrent*, then let us be vigorous and zealous in that which is good. When the churches have rest, let them be edified, Acts 9: 31. As God's providence excited Solomon to think of building the temple, by giving him wealth and leisure, so his promise encouraged him. God had told David his *son should build him a house; v.* 5. Let God's promise quicken our endeavors.

2. With his desire that Hiram would assist in it. Lebanon was the place whence timber must be had, a noble forest in the N. of Canaan, particularly expressed in the grant of that land to Israel, *all Lebanon*, Josh. 13: 5. So that Solomon was proprietor of all its productions; the *cedars of Lebanon* are spoken of as, in a special manner, the *planting of the Lord*, (Ps. 104: 16.) being designed for Israel's use, and particularly for temple-service. Canaan was *a land of wheat and barley*, (Deut. 8: 8.) which employed Israel in the affairs of husbandry, so that they were not at all versed in manufactures: in them, the Sidonians excelled. Israel, in the things of God, are a *wise and understanding people;* yet, in curious arts, inferior to their neighbors: true piety is a much more valuable gift of heaven than the highest degree of ingenuity. Better be an Israelite skilful in the law, than a Sidonian skilful to hew timber. But, the case being thus, Solomon courts Hiram to send him workmen, and promises, (*v.* 6.) both to *assist* them, and to *pay* them; for the laborer, even in church-work, though it be indeed its own wages, *is worthy of his hire.* The evangelical prophet, foretelling the glory of the church in the days of the Messiah, seems to allude to this story, Isa. 60. where he prophecies, (1.) That the *sons of strangers* (such were the Tyrians and Sidonians) should *build up the wall* of the gospel-temple, *v.* 10. Ministers were raised up among the Gentiles, for the edifying of the body of Christ. (2.) That *the glory of Lebanon* should be brought to it to *beautify it*, *v.* 13. All external endowments and advantages should be made serviceable to the interests of Christ's kingdom.

3. Hiram's reception of, and return to, this message. (1.) He received it with great satisfaction to himself, *v.* 7. His generous spirit rejoiced, not only in the prospect of advantage by Solomon's employing him, but in the prospect of Solomon's proving so great a blessing to his kingdom; and he gave God the praise of that, of which he had the pleasure. Let us learn not to envy others wherein they excel us. What a great comfort is it to those who wish well to the Israel of God, to see religion and wisdom kept up in families from one generation to another, especially in great families, and those that have great influence on others: where it is so, God must have the glory of it.

(2.) He returned it with great satisfaction to Solomon, granting him what he desired, and showing himself very forward to assist him in this great and good work, to which he was laying his hand. We have here his articles of agreement with Solomon concerning this affair, in which we may ob-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 29—34. A reputation for wisdom and piety is no further desirable, than as it consists with humility, and affords a man an opportunity of communicating more extensively that useful knowledge, which the Lord has imparted. (*Ec.* 10: 1.)—Every information, which is needful in order to our glorifying God and obtaining his 'salvation with eternal glory,' is preserved to us in the sacred Scriptures: and the light of Heaven will more certainly and speedily instruct us in all useful knowledge, than all the regretted records of antiquity could do if we had them. Let us then rejoice that the Lord reigns on a mercy-seat, and that his name is Emmanuel. His kingdom was faintly shadowed forth in that of Solomon, but is of a nobler and more heavenly nature. In his days the righteous flourish; their numbers have already been exceedingly multiplied, and future ages shall witness a more rapid and immense increase, 'when all kings shall bow down before Him, and all nations shall serve Him.' (*Ps.* 72: 8—11.)—But, whilst we look with joyful, longing desires and fervent prayers for these glorious days, let us now sit at his feet, hear his word, ask of Him wisdom, submit to his will, and seek his glory.

SCOTT.

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immense variety of subjects, than any mere man besides, in any age or nation of the world, ever did. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. V. V. 2—9. (*M. R.*)—1 *Chr.* 22:6—10. 2 *Chr.* 2:3—12.) The Tyrians possessed only a small tract of land, and were employed and enriched by commerce and manufactures; and they had their provisions chiefly from the fruitful land of Canaan. (*Acts* 12:20—23.) ID.

(6.) *Can skill to hew timber.*] Dr. *A. Clarke* gives here the rules of *Vitruvius* respecting the season and method of cutting timber, condemning the haste with which the frame-work of houses is prepared, and suggesting that a conformity to the rules might possibly prevent 'the dry rot.' Timber-trees should be felled 3 yrs. before being used, so he. The rapidity of our building will hardly allow this. ED.

(9.) *Floats.*] "They conveyed the timber from the high parts of the mountains to the river Adonis, or the plain of Biblos, the pieces being bound together in floats, [or rafts.]' PATRICK. In exactly the same way, timber is now conveyed in all parts of the E. The trees are cut down before the rainy season, all the branches are lopped off, and the trunks are squared on the spot. Notches are then made in the logs, and they are tied together by ropes, made of green withes gathered in the forests. If, however, the waters of the rainy season

SIDON.

1 Kings 5:6. Page 217.

* purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God, [k] as the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name.

6 Now therefore command thou, that they hew me [l] cedar-trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants: and unto thee [m] will I give hire for thy servants, according to all that thou shalt † appoint: for thou knowest [n] that *there is* not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the [o] Zidonians.

7 And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, [p] Blessed *be* the LORD this day, [q] which hath given unto David [r] a wise son over this great people.

8 And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have ‡ considered the things which thou sentest to me for: *and* I will do all thy desire, concerning timber of cedar, and concerning [s] timber of fir.

9 My servants shall bring *them* down from [t] Lebanon unto the sea; and [u] I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt § appoint me, and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive *them;* and thou shalt accomplish my desire in [x] giving food for my household.

10 So Hiram gave Solomon cedar-trees and fir-trees, *according to* all his desire. B. C. 1012.

11 And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand ‖ measures of wheat *for* food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year.

12 And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, [y] as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and [z] they two made a league together.

13 ¶ And king Solomon raised a ¶ levy out of all Israel; and [a] the levy was thirty thousand men.

14 And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand [b] a month by courses; a month they were in Lebanon, *and* two months at home: and [c] Adoniram *was* over the levy.

15 And Solomon had [d] threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains;

16 Beside the chief of Solomon's officers, which *were* over the work, [e] three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work.

17 And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, [f] costly stones, *and* hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house.

18 And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew *them*, and ** the stone-squarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.

* Heb. *say.*
k 2 Sam. 7:12,13. 1 Chr. 17:12. 22:10. 28:6,10. Zech. 6:12,13.
l 6:9,10,16,20. 2 Chr. 2:8,10. Ps. 29:5.
m Rom. 12:17. Phil. 4:8.
† Heb. *say.*
n 1 Cor. 12:24—21. Eph. 4:7.
o Gen. 10:15. Ezra 3:7.
p 10:9. 2 Chr. 2:11,12. 9:7,8. Ps. 122: 6,7. 137:6.
q 1:48. Gen. 33:5. Is. 8:18. 9:6.
r See on 3:9.—2 Chr. 2:12. Prov. 10:1. 15:20. 23:24.
‡ Heb. *heard.*
s 6:15,34. 2 Sam. 6:5. 2 Chr. 3:5.
t Deut. 3:25.
u 2 Chr. 2:16.
§ Heb. *send.*
x 2 Chr. 2:15. Ezra 3:7. Ez. 27:17. Acts 12:20.
‖ Heb. *cors.* 4:22. *marg.* 2 Chr. 2:10.
y 3:12. 4:29. 2 Chr. 1:12. Jam. 1:5.
z 15:19. Gen. 21:32. Am. 1:9.
¶ Heb. *tribute* of men. See on 4:6.
a 9:15.
b 4:7—19. 1 Chr. 27:1—15.
c See on 4:6.
d 9:20—22. 2 Chr. 2:17,18. 8:7—9. Ezra 2:58. Neh. 7:57,60.
e 9:23. 2 Chr. 2:2.
f 6:7. 7:9. 1 Chr. 22:2. Is. 28:16. 1 Cor. 3:11,12. 1 Pet. 2:6,7. Rev. 21: 14—21.
** Or, *Giblites.* Josh. 13:5. Ps. 83:7. Ez. 27:9.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Those who love God are influenced to love one another, and rendered superior to selfish jealousies and envyings: and this divine energy teaches them to rejoice in each other's prosperity, and to be glad to receive or afford mutual assistance in every good undertaking.—The most necessary and successful wars, not only produce very much temporal evil, but obstruct or retard the execution of many useful designs for promoting godliness.—Different persons are qualified for diverse services; and while all harmoniously concur, in their proper places, and by improving their several talents, the common cause will prosper.—God has so constituted the earth, that every nation has its peculiar productions, and its inhabitants their distinguished endowments: thus their mutual intercourse is forwarded; and, by an interchange of benefits, they are instructed to love one another as children of the same family. Happy would it be, if commerce were generally conducted on such principles, and rendered subservient to the promulgation of true religion: but alas! through man's depravity, it has often tended to diffuse wickedness and misery rapidly through the nations of the earth!—All agreements should be made with consideration, that equity may be established, and contests precluded: and great punctuality should be observed in paying laborers their wages.—Frequently, they are most ingenious in the liberal arts, who are strangers to true godliness; and many are employed *about* the church of God, who have no interest in its blessings. (*Ps.* 87: 4—7. *P. O.*) The meanest office in his service is honorable and profitable, if cordially performed: and millions of us poor Gentiles, who in ourselves were devoted to destruction, have been employed by Him. SCOTT.

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should not reach the spot where they are felled, they are dragged singly ['snaked'] to the place where it is known that in the wet monsoon they will float. Then, in the harbor may be seen immense collections of the finest timber, towed down to the stream, and thence to the ocean, and thus brought "by sea, in floats."' ROBERTS.

Verse 11.

'20,000 *baths* of oil' are mentioned in Chronicles, which amounted at least to 2,000 *cors*. (*Marg. Note*, 4:22.) But as barley and wine are *there* spoken of; some think that the *wheat, here* mentioned, was intended for the use of Hiram's family, and the small quantity of very fine oil for his own use; whereas in Chr. the provisions made for the workmen are intended. (2 *Chr.* 2:3—10.) SCOTT.

Verses 13—18.

(*M. R.*—9:20—22.) 3,600 are mentioned in Chronicles: (2 *Chr.* 2: 17, 18.) perhaps 300 were officers over the rest; or they were supernumeraries, to supply for such as were sick and disabled from attendance.—*Stone-squarers.* (18) *Giblites.* (*M.*—*Josh.* 13:5.) 'The Giblites, . . . being Phenicians, inhabitants of Gabala, a promontory mentioned by Pliny, . . . were the most excellent artists in those parts.' *Patrick.* ID.

CHAP. VI.

The building of the temple is begun, 1. The dimensions of the house, and its porch, 2, 3. The windows, 4. The chambers, 5—10. The promise of God concerning the temple, 11—13. Its walls, ceiling, floor, and ornaments, 14—18. The Oracle and Cherubim, 19—30. The doors of the Oracle, and of the house, 31—35. The inner-court, 36. The time in which the whole was completed, 37, 38.

AND [a] it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, [b] in the month Zif, which *is* the second month, that he * began to [c] build the house of the LORD.

2 And the house which king Solomon built for the LORD, the length thereof *was* [d] threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits.

3 And the [e] porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits *was* the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house, *and* ten cubits *was* the breadth thereof before the house.

4 And for the house he made † windows of narrow lights.

5 And ‡ against the wall of the house he [f] built § chambers round about, *against* the walls of the house round about, *both* of the temple and of the [g] oracle: and he made ‖ chambers round about.

6 The nethermost chamber *was* five cubits broad, and the middle *was* six cubits broad, and the third *was* seven cubits broad: for without *in the wall* of the house he made ¶ narrowed rests round about, that *the beams* should not be fastened in the walls of the house.

7 And the house, when it was in building, was [h] built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, *nor* any tool of iron, heard in the house while it was in building.

8 The door for the middle chamber *was* in the right ** side of the

a Judg. 11:26. 2 Chr. 3:1,2.
b 37. Num. 1:1.
* Heb. *built.* Acts 7:47.
c 1 Chr. 29:19. Zech. 6:12,13,15. John 2:19—21. 1 Cor. 6:19. 2 Cor. 6:16. Eph. 2:20—22. Col 2:7. Heb. 9:11. 11:10. 1 Pet. 2:5
d Ezra 6:3,4. Ez. 41:1,&c. Rev. 21: 16,17.
e 1 Chr. 28:11. 2 Chr. 3:3,4. Ez. 41: 15. Matt. 4:5. John 10:23. Acts 3: 10,11.

II. The time when it began to be built, is exactly set down. It was just 480 years after the exodus; allowing 40 years to Moses, 17 to Joshua, 299 to the Judges, 40 to Eli, 40 to Samuel and Saul, 40 to David, and 4 to Solomon, before he began the work. So long it was, after that holy state was founded, before that holy house was built, which, in less than 430 years, was burnt by Nebuchadnezzar; it was thus deferred, because Israel had, by their sins, rendered themselves unworthy of this honor, and because God would show how little He values external pomp and splendor in his service; He was in no haste for a temple. It was in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, the first three years being taken up in settling the affairs of his kingdom, that he might not find any embarrassment from them in this work: and also in preparing the materials. It is not time lost, which is spent in composing ourselves for the work of God, and disentangling ourselves from every thing which might distract or divert us; we are truly serving God, when we are preparing for his service, and furnishing ourselves for it.

III. The materials are brought in, ready for their place, *v.* 7. It seems, the preparation was, more than common, full and exact; so that, when the several parts came to be put together, there was nothing defective to be added, nothing amiss to be amended; it was to be the temple of the God of peace, therefore no iron tool must be heard in it. Quietness and silence both become and befriend religious exercises. God's work should be done with *as much care*, and *as little noise* as may be. The temple was thrown down with *axes and hammers;* and they that did it, roared *in the midst of the congregation;* (Ps. 74: 4, 6.) but it was built up in silence. Clamor and violence often hinder, but never further, the work of God.

IV. The dimensions are laid down, (*v.* 2, 3.) according to the rules of proportion. Some observe the length and breadth were just double that of the tabernacle. Now Israel was more numerous, their place of meeting needed to be enlarged; (Isa. 54: 1, 2.) and now they were richer, they were the better able to enlarge it. Where God sows plentifully, He expects to reap so.

V. An account of the windows, (*v.* 4.) they were *broad within, and narrow without*, margin. Such should the eyes of our mind be, reflecting nearer on ourselves than on other people, looking much within, to judge ourselves, but little without, to censure our brethren. The narrowness of the lights intimated the darkness of that dispensation, in comparison with the gospel-day.

The chambers are described, (*v.* 5, 6.) in which

† Or, *windows broad* within, and *narrow* without; or, *skewed* and *closed*. See on 6:4.—Cant. 2:9. Ez. 40:16. 41:26.
‡ Or, *upon*, or, *joining to*.
f 1 Chr. 9:26. 23:28. 28:11. 2 Chr. 31:11. Neh. 10:37. 12:44. 13:5—9. Cant. 1:4. Jer. 35:4. Ez. 40:44. 41: 5—11. 42:3—12.
§ Heb. *floors*.
g 16,19—21,31. Ex. 25:22. Lev. 16:2. Num. 7:89. 2 Chr. 4:20. 5:7,9. Ps. 28:2.
‖ Heb. *ribs*.
¶ Or. *narrowings*, or, *rebatements*.
h 5:18. Prov. 24:27. Rom. 9:23. 2 Cor. 5:5. Col. 1:12. 1 Pet. 2:5.
i Is. 42:2. Acts 9:31. Jam. 1:20. 3:17, 18.
** Heb. *shoulder*.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI. V. 1. The use and typical meaning of the temple, and those of the tabernacle, were the same: but the movable tabernacle suited the state of Israel when wandering in the wilderness, and a magnificent temple was more proper when they were settled in Canaan. (*Ex.* 25:8, 9.)—A temple was not indeed essential to the religion of Israel: therefore the building of it was deferred till 440 years after they entered Canaan: (*Note, Judg.* 11:26.) and this temple was destroyed, in less than 420 after it was finished.—The month *Zif* was the second of the *ecclesiastical* year. Some think the names of the months, here given, were not in use before the captivity. SCOTT. Note, *Ex.* 12:2. ED.

Verses 2, 3.

The temple was a very magnificent building, and immense quantities of gold and silver were used about it: yet, apart from its courts, it was but a small structure, compared with many buildings in ancient and modern times.—It was about 100 feet long, 33 wide, and 50 high: and it had a porch, on the east end at the entrance, which formed in some respects an ornamental steeple, of about 200 feet high. (2 *Chr.* 3:3, 4.) The tabernacle erected in the wilderness is computed to have been 50 feet long, 12 or 13 wide, and nearly 17 high. SCOTT.

Verse 4.

These windows, which are supposed to have been wider on the inside than without, were situated in the spaces between the chambers afterwards mentioned; or, as some think, above them. (*M.*) SCOTT.

Verses 5, 6.

For the purpose of fixing these chambers, the wall of the temple was made two cubits thicker at the bottom than at the top: and where it was made a cubit less in thickness, a rest was formed on the outside, for the beams of the second story of chambers to lodge upon, and so for the third. By this contrivance the upper stories were larger than the lower; and the wall of the temple was not weakened, either by building, or by repairing the chambers. It is supposed that there was also a gallery round about, by which the priests entered the chambers; and that there were no chambers over the entrance of the temple. (*Ez.* 41:5—12.) ID.

Verse 7.

Several of these circumstances may shadow forth spiritual things. (*P. O.*) ID.

Verse 8.

There seems to have been a door, in each of the two upper stories, into a gallery, which communicated with all the chambers; and wind-

house: and they [j] went up with winding stairs into the middle *chamber*, and out of the middle into the third.

9 So [k] he built the house, and finished it; and covered the house [*] with beams and boards of cedar.

10 And *then* he built chambers against all the house, five cubits high: and they rested on the house with timber of cedar.

11 ¶ And the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying,

12 *Concerning* this house which thou art in building, [l] if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; [m] then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father:

13 And [n] I will dwell among the children of Israel, and [o] will not forsake my people Israel.

[*Practical Observations.*]

14 ¶ So [p] Solomon built the house, and finished it.

15 And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, [†] both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling: *and* he covered *them* on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir.

16 And he built twenty cubits on the sides of the house, both the floor and the walls, with boards of cedar: he even [q] built *them* for it within, *even* for the oracle, *even* for the most holy *place*.

17 And the house, that *is*, the temple before it, was forty cubits *long*.

18 And the cedar of the house within *was* carved with [‡] knops and [§] open flowers: all *was* cedar; there was no stone seen.

19 And [r] the oracle he prepared in the house within, [s] to set there the ark of the covenant of the LORD.

20 And the oracle in the forepart *was* twenty cubits in length, and [t] twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof; and he overlaid it with [‖] pure gold; and *so* covered [u] the altar *which was of* cedar.

21 So Solomon [x] overlaid the house within with pure gold; and he

2. The work Solomon did for God. *So he built the house;* (*v.* 14.) *so* animated by the message God had sent him, *so* admonished not to expect God should own his building, unless he were obedient to his laws; thus he built it. The strictness of God's government will never drive a good man from his service, but quicken him in it. Solomon built and finished; he grew not weary of the work, met not with any obstructions, (as Ezra 4: 24.) did not outbuild his property, nor do it by halves; but, having begun to build, was both able and willing to finish, for he was a wise builder.

V. 15—38. Here is,

I. The wainscot of the temple described; it was of cedar, (*v.* 16.) strong, and durable, of a very sweet smell, and curiously carved with knops (like eggs or apples) and flowers; no doubt, as the fashion then was, *v.* 18.

II. The gilding; not like ours, washed over, but *the whole house*, all the inside of the temple, (*v.* 22.) even the floor, (*v.* 30,) he *overlaid with gold*, and the most holy place with *pure gold*, *v.* 21. Solomon would refuse no expense necessary to make it every way sumptuous; gold was under foot there, as it should be in all the living temples, the abundance of it lessened its worth.

III. The oracle, or *speaking place*, (for so the word signifies,) *the holy of holies*, so called, because that thence God spake to Moses, and perhaps to the high priest, when he consulted with the breast-plate of judgment; in this place, *the ark of the covenant was to be set*, *v.* 19. Solomon made every thing new, and more magnificent than it had been, except the ark, which was still the same Moses made, with its mercy-seat and cherubim; that was the token of God's presence, which is always the same with his people, whether

j Ez. 41:6,7.
k 14,38.
* Or, *the vault beams and the ceilings with cedar.*
l 2:3,4. 3:14. 8:25. 9:3—8. 1 Sam. 12: 14,15. 1 Chr. 28:9. 2 Chr. 7:17,18. Ps. 132:12. Zech. 3:7. Col. 1:23.
m 2 Sam. 7:13. 1 Chr. 22:10.
n 8:27. Ex. 25:8. Lev. 26:11. Ps. 68: 18. 132:12,13. Is. 57:15. Ez. 37:26 —28. 2 Cor. 6:16. Rev. 21:3.
o See on Deut. 31:6,8. 1 Sam. 12:22. 1 Chr. 28:9,20.
p 9,38. Acts 7:47,48.
† Or, *from the floor of the house, unto the walls, &c.* 16.
q 5,19,20. 8:6. Ex. 25:21,22. 26:33. Lev. 16:2. 2 Chr. 3:8. Heb. 9:3.
‡ Or, *gourds.*
§ Or, *openings of flowers.*
r See on 5.—2 Chr. 4:20.
s 8:6—10. Ex. 40:20,21. 2 Chr. 5:7. Heb. 9:3,4.
t See on 2,3.
‖ Heb. *shut up.*
u 22. 7:48. Ex. 30:1—3.
x Ex. 26:29,32. 36:34. 2 Chr. 3:7—9.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—13. Though God does not delight in outward magnificence, but is present with his poor people who assemble in the meanest place, and accepts their worship: yet He expects the wealthy to devote their riches to his service. And whatever is liberally expended, out of zeal for his glory, and according to the rule of his Word, shall be graciously accepted; though perhaps some censure the expense, as needless or useless. (*Matt.* 26: 6—13. *John* 12: 1—8.)—Every good work should be done heartily and without procrastination: but it is not needless delay to consult prudent measures, to make requisite preparations, and to remove such obstructions, as might afterwards impede our progress, or divert our attention. Thus, young men, animated with a laudable design to seek the salvation of souls, and impatient to be employed in the work of the ministry, would do well to restrain their ardor, to wait for a proper opening in Providence, and to spend some time in previous study, meditation, and prayer; that they may acquire the wisdom, experience, humility, and steadiness, requisite for so important a work; and afterwards proceed in it without interruption, and to better effect: and a few years spent in this manner will no more be *lost time*, than those which were employed in preparations for the building of Solomon's temple.—The true church of God is most glorious within; and the true believer is chiefly employed in attending to the state of his heart.—In all religious matters conveniency must be preferred to splendor; but stability must not be sacrificed even to *apparent* conveniency.—No pompous services will purchase a dispensation from obeying the least of God's commandments; for nothing but unreserved obedience to the precepts and statutes of God's Word, can prove the sincerity of our faith, and our love to the Savior. But, though numbers of professors apostatise, and whole nations forfeit their peculiar privileges; yet the Lord will dwell in the midst of his true people, and never forsake them: and they will delight in his ordinances and commandments; and be encouraged by being told their duty, as it is a token of the Lord's favor to them.

SCOTT.

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ing stairs from one story to another. SCOTT.

Verse 10.

The chambers were five cubits high in each story; and thus they did not go up to the top of the temple, which was thirty cubits high. (3) The windows are supposed to have been placed above the top of the chambers. (*Note*, 4.)—The beams of cedar lay on the rests in the wall. (*Note*, 5, 6.) ID.

Verses 15—22.

'The oracle,' or 'the most holy place,' was either *built* or *ceiled* lower than the other part of the temple. The veil, which separated the holy of holies, was hung by golden chains on pillars erected for that purpose. (2 *Chr.* 3:15, 16.)—'The altar, by the oracle,' was the altar of incense without the veil, in the *holy place*, which was twice as long as the *most holy place*. SCOTT.

(18.) *Carved.*] 'An eastern temple is almost, from its foundation to its summit, a complete mass of sculpture and carved work.' ROBERTS.

made a partition [y] by the chains of gold before the oracle, and he overlaid it with gold.

22 And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house: [z] also the whole altar that *was* by the oracle he overlaid with gold.

23 And within the oracle he made [a] two cherubims *of* *olive-tree, *each* ten cubits high.

24 And five cubits *was* the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub; from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other *were* ten cubits.

25 And the other cherub *was* ten cubits: both the cherubims *were* of one measure, and one size.

26 The height of the one cherub *was* ten cubits, and so *was it* of the other cherub.

27 And he set the cherubims within the inner house: [b] and †they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims, so that the wing of the one touched the *one* wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house.

28 And he overlaid the cherubims with gold.

29 And he carved all the walls of the house round about with [c] carved figures of cherubims, and [d] palm-trees, and ‡open flowers, within and without.

30 And [e] the floor of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without.

31 And for the entering of the oracle he made [f] doors *of* olive-tree: the lintel *and* side-posts *were* § a fifth part *of the wall.*

32 The ‖ two doors also *were of* olive-tree; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims, and palm-trees, and ¶open ** flowers, and overlaid *them* with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm-trees.

33 So also made he for the door of the temple, posts of olive-tree, ** a fourth part *of the wall.*

34 And the two doors *were of* [g] fir-tree: the [h] two leaves of the one door *were* folding, and the two leaves of the other door *were* folding.

35 And he carved *thereon* cherubims, and palm-trees, and open flowers; and covered *them* with gold fitted upon the carved work.

36 And he built [i] the inner court with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams.

37 ¶ In [k] the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the LORD laid, in the month Zif:

38 And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which *is* the eighth month, was the house

they meet in tent or temple, it changes not with their condition.

IV. The cherubim. Besides those at the ends of the mercy-seat, which covered the ark, 1. Solomon set up two more, very large ones, images of young men, (as some think,) with wings made of olive-wood, and all overlaid with gold, *v.* 23, &c. This most holy place was much larger than that in the tabernacle, the ark would seem lost in it, and the dead wall would have been unsightly, had it not been thus adorned. 2. He carved cherubim on all the walls of the house, *v.* 29. The heathen set up images of their gods, and worshipped them; these were designed to represent the servants and attendants of the God of Israel, the holy angels, not to be themselves worshipped, (*See thou do it not,*) but to show how great He is, whom we are to worship.

V. The doors. The folding doors that led into the oracle, were but a fifth part of the wall; (*v.* 31.) those into the temple a fourth part; (*v.* 33.) both beautified with cherubim engraven on them, *v.* 32, 35.

VI. The inner court, in which the brazen altar was, and at which the priests ministered; separated from the court, where the people were, by a low wall, three rows of hewn stone topped with a cornice of cedar, (*v.* 36.) that over it the people might see what was done, and hear what the priests said to them, for, when under that dispensation, they were not kept wholly either in the dark, or at a distance.

Lastly, The time spent in this building; seven years and a half, *v.* 38. Considering the vastness and elegance of the building, and the many appurtenances to it, which were necessary to fit it for use, it was soon done.

Let us now see what was typified by this temple.

1. Christ is the *true* Temple; He Himself spake of the temple of his body, John 2: 21. God Himself prepared Him his body, Heb. 10: 5. *In Him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead*, as the *Shechinah* in the temple; in Him meet all God's spiritual Israel; through Him we have access with confidence to God; all the angels of God, those blessed cherubim, have a charge to worship Him.

2. Every believer is a *living* temple, in whom the Spirit of God dwells, 1 Cor. 3: 16. Even the body is such by virtue of its union with the soul, 1 Cor. 6: 19. We are not only wonderfully made, by Divine Providence, but more wonderfully made anew, by the divine graces; this living temple is built upon Christ as its Foundation, and will be perfect in due time.

3. The gospel-church is the *mystical* temple; it grows to a *holy temple in the Lord*, (Eph. 2: 21.) enriched and beautified with the gifts and graces of the Spirit, as Solomon's temple with gold and precious stones; only Jews built the tabernacle, but Gentiles join them in building the

y 5. Ex. 26:32,33. 2 Chr. 3:14—16.
z See on 20.
a Gen. 3:24. Ex. 25:18—22. 37.7—9. 2 Chr. 3:10—13. Ps. 18:10. 80:1. Is. 37:16. Ez. 10:2,&c. Heb. 1:14. 1 Pet. 1:12.
* Or, *oily*. Heb. *trees of oil.*
b Ex. 25:20. 37:9. 2 Chr. 5:8.
† Or, *the cherubims stretched forth their wings.* 2 Chr. 3:11.
c Ex. 36:8. 2 Chr. 3:14. 4:2—5. Ps. 103:20. 148:2. Luke 2:13,14. Eph. 3:10. Rev. 5:11—14.
d Ps. 92:12—15. Rev. 7:9.
‡ Heb. *openings of flowers.* 18,32.
e Is. 54:11,12. 60:17. Rev. 21:18—21.
f John 10:9. 14:6. Eph. 2:18. Heb. 10:19,20.
§ Or, *five square.*
‖ Or, *leaves of the doors.*
¶ Heb. *openings of flowers.*
** Or, *four square.*
g 5:8.
h Ez. 41:23—25.
i Ex. 27:9—19. 38:9—20. 2 Chr. 4:9. 7:7. Rev. 11:2.
k 1. 2 Chr. 3:2.

Verse 23. *Cherubims.*] Note and cut, Ex. 25: 18. A cut is given from the tombs of 'Biban el Molook,' at Thebes. Other Egyptian monuments have likewise such, with the wings stretched on each side of the figure. ED. *Olive wood.*] [t]Lit. "*of oily wood.*" The oleaster, or wild olive tree, (so *Michaelis*,) which abounds in Judea, and is very durable.' BOOTHR.

Verses 31—35.

It is probable, that, besides the veil, there was another partition between the holy of holies and the sanctuary. The veil covered the whole of this: but when that was drawn aside, folding doors, of olive-tree plated with gold, and curiously engraved with cherubim and palm-trees, took up a fifth of the partition, or about four cubits.—The doors at the entrance of the sanctuary were rather larger. SCOTT.

Verse 38.

HISTORY OF THE TEMPLE. 'The temple [see the engraving] was dedicated, (8:1.) says *Usher*, in the *9th jubilee year*, opening the 4th *millenary* of the world, or 3001; since which it has suffered many revolutions.

'In A. M. 3033, B. C. 967 (before the Vulg. Era 971.) Shishach carried away its treasures; 1 K. 14. 2 Chr. 12.—In 3146, Joash (K. of Judah) got silver together to go upon the repairs of the temple. They began in earnest in 3148. (B. C. 852.) 1 K. 12:4, 5. 2 Chr. 24:7, 8, 9, &c.—In 3264 (B. C. 736) Ahaz gave its riches to Tilgath-pilneser; profaned the holy place, by setting up there an altar like one he had seen in Damascus; took away Solomon's brazen altar, sea, basins, and the king's throne or oratory. He sacrificed to strange gods, and erected profane altars in all the corners of the streets of Jerusalem. He pillaged the temple, broke the sacred vessels, and lastly shut up the house of God, till his death in 3278. Hezekiah (his son) reopened and repaired the gates of the temple in 3278; restored the worship, and sacrifices, and made new sacred vessels in place of those destroyed by his father; but,—in 3291 (the 14th of Hezekiah's reign, B. C. 709) Sennacherib coming with an army into Judah, Hezekiah was forced to give him all the temple-riches, and even the plates of gold he himself had put on the gates. But when the king of Assyria was gone, Hezekiah, doubtless, restored all these things to their first condition,—In 3306 and seq. Manasseh (son of Hezekiah) profaned the temple, by setting up altars to all the host of heaven, even in its courts. He set up idols there and worshipped them. So the king of Babylon carried him in chains beyond the Euphrates in 3328. (B. C. 672 Bef. Vulg. Era 676.) There he repented, and being sent back, redressed his profanations by taking away the idols, destroying the profane altars, and restoring the burnt-offerings' altar, and sacrificing upon it.—In 3380, Josiah king of Judah) labored with all his might in repairing its edifices, either neglected or demolished by his predecessors; commanded the Levites to

[l] finished * throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he [m] seven years in building it.

CHAP. VII.

Solomon builds himself an house, 1: and the house of the forest of Lebanon, 2—5: the porch of pillars, 6: the porch of judgment, 7: the house of Pharaoh's daughter, 8. The costly materials of these structures, and of the great court, 9—12. Hiram, a skilful artificer, is fetched from Tyre, 13, 14. He casts two pillars of brass, 15—22: and the brazen sea; with ten bases, and ten lavers, and other vessels for the temple, 23—47. The furniture and sacred vessels of gold are made for the temple, 48—50. The dedicated treasures are brought into it, 51.

BUT Solomon was building his own house [a] thirteen years, and he finished all his house.

2 He built also [b] the house of the forest of Lebanon; the length thereof *was* an hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits, upon four rows of cedar-pillars, with

[l] Ezra 6:14,15. Zech. 4:9. 6:13—15.
* Or, *with all the appurtenances thereof, and with all the ordinances thereof.*
[m] 7:1. Ezra 3:8—13. 6:15. John 2:20.
[a] 9:10. 2 Chr. 8:1. Ec. 2:4,5. Matt. 6:33.
[b] 9:19. 10:17. 2 Chr. 9:16. Cant. 7:4.

temple; even strangers and foreigners are built up, a *habitation of God*, Eph. 2: 19, 22. This temple is built firm, upon a Rock, not to be taken down, as the tabernacle of the O. T. was. The temple was long in preparing, but was built at last; the top-stone of the gospel-church will, at length, be brought forth with shoutings; pity there should be the clashing of axes and hammers in building it. Angels are ministering spirits, attending the church on all sides, and all the members of it.

4. Heaven is the *everlasting* temple; there the church will be fixed, and no longer movable; the streets of the new Jerusalem, in allusion to the flooring of the temple, are said to be *of pure gold*, Rev. 21: 21. The cherubim, there, always attend the throne of glory. The temple was uniform, and in heaven there is the perfection of beauty and harmony. In Solomon's temple, there was no noise of axes and hammers; every thing is quiet and serene in heaven: all that shall be stones in that building, must, in the present state of probation and preparation, be fitted and made ready for it, must be hewn and squared by divine grace, and so made meet for a place there.

CHAP. VII. V. 1—12. Never had any man so much of the spirit of building as Solomon, and never man built to better purpose; he began with the temple, built for God first, and then all his other buildings were comfortable. The surest foundations of a lasting prosperity are laid in early piety. Matt. 6: 33. He built,

1. A house for himself, (*v.* 1.) *where he dwelt*, *v.* 8. much of the comfort of this life is connected with an agreeable house. He was less eager and intent, in building his own house, (*v.* 1.) than in building God's; he was in no haste for his own palace, but impatient till the temple was finished, and fit for use; thus we ought to prefer God's honor before our own ease and satisfaction.

2. *The house of the forest at Lebanon*, (*v.* 2.) supposed to be a country-seat near Jerusalem, so called from the pleasantness of its situation, and the trees that encompassed it; but I rather think a house built in the forest of Lebanon itself, whither Solomon might frequently retire with ease; his throne, mentioned *v.* 7. was not at the house of the forest of Lebanon, and it was not at all improper to put his shields there as in a magazine. Express notice is taken of his buildings, not only in Jerusalem, but in Lebanon; (*ch.* 9: 19.) and we read of the tower of Lebanon, which looks toward Damascus, (Cant. 7: 4.) which, probably, was part of this house. Being designed for pleasant prospects, there were three tier of windows on each side, *light against light*, (*v.* 4, 5.) or, as it may be read, *prospect against prospect*. Those whose lot is cast in the country, may be well reconciled to a country-life by this, that some of the greatest princes have thought those their most pleasant days, which they have spent in their country retirements.

3. Piazzas before one of his houses, either that at Jerusalem, or that in Lebanon, which were very famous, a porch of pillars, (*v.* 6.) either for an exchange, or a guard-house, or for those to walk in, that attended him about business, till they could have audience, or for state and magnificence. He himself speaks of Wisdom's building her house, and *hewing out her seven pillars*, for the shelter of those that, three verses before, (*ch.* 8: 34.) are said to *watch daily at her gates, and to wait at the posts of her door*.

4. At his house, where he dwelt in Jerusalem, he built a great hall, or porch of judgment, where was set the throne, or king's bench, for the trial of causes, in which he himself was appealed to, and this was richly wainscoted with cedar, from the floor to the roof, *v.* 7. He had there also *another court within the porch*, nearer his house, of smaller work, for his attendants to walk in, *v.* 8.

5. A house for his wife, where she kept her court, *v.* 8. said to be *like the porch*, because built of ce-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 14—38. What is begun in the fear and love of God, in dependence on Him, and obedience to Him, will in due time be accomplished to his glory.—God must be honored with the best we have: but gold is only meet to be trodden under foot, in comparison with the beauty of holiness, which is the glory and ornament of his spiritual temple.—The human nature of the Redeemer, that true Temple in which God dwells with man, is immaculately holy: the Christian, as united unto Jesus, and 'an habitation of God through the Spirit,' is sanctified in his measure: and the church above, where innumerable angels unite with redeemed sinners, in ceaseless worship of God our Savior, is perfect in this beauty. Let not then the hypocrite, or formal professor of Christianity, who is a stranger to the sanctifying influences of God's Spirit, and who lives in secret or open sin, suppose himself a part of this living Temple.—Yet let sinners come to Jesus, as the living Foundation, that they may be built on Him, a part of this spiritual house, consecrated in body and soul to the glory of God. (*Eph.* 2: 19—22. 1 *Pet.* 2: 4—6.)—If we have good ground to conclude, that we are a part of this living Temple; let us look to it, that our inward part, which is seen by God alone, may be preserved most pure: let us be careful also of our outward conduct, that our blameless conversation may be ornamental to our profession in the sight of man: let us look to Jesus for encouragement and assistance in every service, and as the great Exemplar to which we are to be conformed: and let us by faith behold that glorious company whom we hope soon to join; that we may now emulate their praises, imitate their obedience, and thus anticipate their comforts, even in this world of sin and sorrow.

SCOTT.

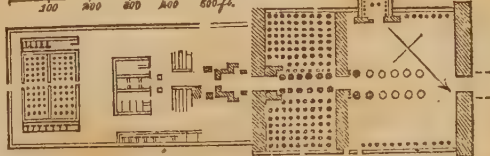
NOTES.

CHAP. VII. V. 1. As he employed twenty years in these buildings, (9:10.) it seems he finished the temple before he began his own house; though his numerous workmen might have carried on both together. SCOTT.

Verse 2.

Some have thought that this palace was built, for retirement, in a beautiful situation near mount Lebanon: but it seems rather to have been erected not far from Jerusalem; and to have been thus called, either from its airy and lofty situation, or from the cedars of Lebanon of which it was built. For Solomon put the shields of gold 'in the house of the forest of Lebanon:' yet when Shishak came to Jerusalem he seized on them; and when Rehoboam made brazen ones in their stead, they were carried before him when he went to the house of the Lord, and brought back with him to the great chamber. (10:17. 2 *Chr.* 9:16. 12:9—11.) ID.

V. 2—12. To illustrate Solomon's structures, a cut is given, from *Capt.*



C. F. Head, of the ground plan of a contemporary temple-palace of the kings of Egypt; that of Karnac, at Thebes. It was built by successive

replace the ark in the sanctuary; and ordered that it should no more be removed from place to place, as it had been during the reign of the wicked kings.—In 3398, under Jehoiakim, (k. of Judah,) Nebuchadnezzar took away part of the sacred vessels, and placed them in the temple of his god at Babylon; he also carried away others under Jechoniah, in 3405. Lastly, in 3416 (B. C. 584) he took Jerusalem, and entirely destroyed the temple, in the 11th year of Zedekiah.

'It continued buried in its ruins, 52 yrs. till the 1st yr. of Cyrus, at Babylon, in 3468 (B. C. 532. bef. Vulg. E. 536.) Then Cyrus permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem, and rebuild the temple. Ezra 1: 1, 2, 3. In 3469 they laid its foundation, but had hardly been at work one year, when Cyrus, or his officers, gained over by the enemies of the Jews, forbade them, A. M. 3470. After the death of Cyrus and Cambyses, they were again, in 3483, forbid by the Magian (called in SS. Artaxerxes) who succeeded Cambyses. Lastly, these prohibitions being superseded under Darius, son of Hystaspes, in 3485, the temple was finished, and dedicated 4 yrs. after in 3489, (B. C. 511) 20 yrs. after the return from captivity.—It was profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes in 3837; the ordinary sacrifices discontinued, and the idol of Jupiter Olympus set up on the altar. So it continued 3 years, when Judas Maccabeus purified it, and restored the sacrifice and worship of the Lord, in 3840 (B. C. 160.) 1 Mac. 4:36.

'Herod the Great undertook to rebuild the whole anew. In 3987 he began to lay its foundation, 46 yrs. before the first passover of Christ, as the Jews observe to Him, "46 yrs. was this temple in building," John 2:20. This is not saying that Herod employed 46 yrs. in building it; for Josephus says he built it in 9 yrs. and a half. But after Herod's time they all continued to make additions, and Josephus tells us they went on working upon it till the Jewish war.—Herod's temple, which was very different from Solomon's (see Josephus), subsisted but 77 yrs. when it was destroyed by the Romans in 4073. (A. D. 73, of the vulg. era 70.)' *Calmet, and Jos.* in CLARKE.

cedar-beams upon the pillars.

3 And *it was* covered with cedar above upon the * beams, that *lay* on forty-five pillars, fifteen *in* a row.

4 And *there were* [e] windows *in* three rows, and † light *was* against light *in* three ranks.

5 And all the ‡ doors and posts *were* square with the windows: and light *was* against light *in* three ranks.

6 And he made a porch of pillars; the length thereof *was* fifty cubits, and the breadth thereof thirty cubits: and the porch *was* § before them; and the *other* pillars and the thick beam *were* ‖ before them.

7 Then he made [d] a porch [e] for the throne, where he might judge, *even* the porch [f] of judgment: and *it was* covered with cedar [¶] from one side of the floor to the other.

8 And his house where he dwelt *had* [g] another court within the porch, *which* was of the like work. Solomon made also [h] an house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken *to wife*, like unto this porch.

9 All these *were of* [i] costly stones, according to the measures of hewed stones, sawed with saws, within and without, even from the foundation unto the coping, and *so* on the outside toward the great court.

10 And [k] the foundation *was of* costly stones, *even* great stones; stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits.

11 And [l] above *were* costly stones, after the measures of hewed stones, and cedars.

12 And the great court round about *was* with [m] three rows of hewed stones, and a row of cedar-beams, both for the inner court of the house of the LORD, and for [n] the porch of the house.

[*Practical Observations.*]

13 ¶ And king Solomon sent, and fetched [o] Hiram out of Tyre.

14 He *was* ** a widow's son of the tribe of [p] Naphtali, and his father *was* a man of Tyre, a worker in brass; and [q] he was filled with wisdom and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass. And he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work.

15 For he †† cast [r] two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about.

16 And he made [s] two chapiters *of* molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars: the height of the one chapiter *was* five cubits, and the height of the other chapiter *was* five cubits:

17 *And* nets of checker-work, and [t] wreaths of chain-work, for the chapiters which *were* upon the top of the pillars: seven for the one chapiter, and seven for the other chapiter.

18 And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one net-work, to cover the chapiters that *were* upon the top, with pomegranates: and so did he for the other chapiter.

19 And the chapiters that *were* upon the top of the pillars, *were* of [u] lily-work in the porch, four cubits.

20 And the chapiters

* Heb. *ribs.* 6:5. *marg.*
c 5. 6:4. Is. 54:12. Ez. 40:16,22,25, 29,33,36. 41:26.
† Heb. *sight against sight.*
‡ Or, *spaces and pillars were square in prospect.*
§ Or, *according to them.*
‖ Or, *according to them.*
d 6:3.
e 10:18—20. Ps. 122:5. Is. 9:7.
f 3:9,28. Prov. 20:8.
¶ Heb *from floor to floor.*
g 2 Kings 20:4.
h See on 3:1.—9:24. 2 Chr. 8:11.
i 10,11. 5:17.
k Is. 28:16. 54:11. 1 Cor. 3:10,11. Rev. 21:19,20.
l Eph. 2:20—22. 1 Pet. 2:5.
m See on 6:36.
n John 10:23. Acts 3:11. 5:12.
o 40. 2 Chr. 2:13. 4:11. *Huram.*
** Heb. *the son of a widow woman.*
p 2 Chr. 2:14.
q Ex. 31:2—6. 35:30—35. 36:1,2,8. Is. 28:26. Dan. 1:17.
†† Heb. *fashioned.*
r 2 Kings 25:16,17. 2 Chr. 3:15—17. 4: 12. Jer. 52:21—23.
s Ex. 36:38. 38:17,19,28. 2 Chr. 4:12, 13.
t Ex. 28:14,22,24,25. 39:15—18. 2 Kings 25:17.
u 22. 6:18,32,35.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12. Princes and nobles should not expend too much in houses, &c. lest they be straitened in their ability of doing good to others, and glorifying God: (*Notes* and *P. O. Luke* 16: 1—12.) nor suffer such cares and contrivances to take up their time, or to draw their affections from communion with God, and the care of their souls: for peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, and the lively hope of a heavenly inheritance, are the choicest comforts; the beauties of holiness are the most valuable ornaments; and distinguished usefulness is the most honorable and durable testimony to a man's character. SCOTT

kings, who vied with their predecessors in decorating and adding to this magnificent ancestral palace, whose remains attest to that 'pomp' of Egyptian power, of which Isaiah and Ezekiel speak. *Wilkinson* says, the most ancient name upon it is of *Osirtesen* I. whom he considers to have been contemporary with Joseph: thus proving it to be 100 yrs. more ancient than any other building in Thebes. It was surrounded by a wall several thousand feet square; and the elevation on which it stands had numerous monuments connected with this.' The captive towns and districts taken by Shishak [14:25, &c.] in his expedition against Jerusalem, appear on the S. W. wall of the grand hall. Notes, 14:25. and 2 Chr. 12:3, &c. The columns of this hall are of granite, 66 ft. high (without the pedestal and abacus) and 12 in diameter. The temple has the usual accompaniments, avenues of sphinxes, obelisks, propylæa, porticoes, &c. One stone is over 40 ft. ED.

(6—12.) It is not certain, whether 'the porch of pillars,' belonged to 'the house of the forest of Lebanon,' or to the palace in Jerusalem: but it is most probable, that 'the porch for the throne' was at Jerusalem.—The palace seems to have stood within two courts; one nearer to it than 'the porch for the throne,' and the other farther off.—The palace for Pharaoh's daughter was placed at some distance, 'out of the city of David:' (*Note*, 2 *Chr.* 8:11.) but it was built with the same magnificence as the other palaces. The *costly stones* seem to have been large valuable blocks of marble, beautifully squared and polished on every side: and the outer court was surrounded with a wall like that which separated the court of the temple; so that the people might look through the rows of the cedar-beams, which were placed at proper distances. These buildings, though magnificent, were intended for use, and not merely for ostentation: and no doubt were finished in the best style of those days. The court round Solomon's own house was built in the same manner, as the inner court of the house of the Lord. SCOTT A recent traveller thinks the remains of the 'house of Lebanon' are possibly seen in the astonishing ruins at Baalbec, where are stones, 3 of which extend 68 yds. but most are of the size mentioned in v. 10. ED.

Verses 13, 14.

Hiram's mother is in Chronicles said to have been 'of the daughters of Dan;' (2 *Chr.* 2:14.) and some think, Dan was the name of her father: but, probably, she was originally of the tribe of Dan, and had first been married to a man of Naphtali; and, being by him left a widow, had married a Tyrian to whom she bare Hiram, or Huram, who was called by the name of the king of Tyre. This man, uniting, as it were, the Israelite and the Gentile, and being the chief workman in the furniture of the temple, aptly represented the union of Jews and Gentiles in the Christian church. (*Eph.* 2: 19—22.) SCOTT.

Verses 15—22.

(*M. R.*) Each of these pillars being 18 cubits in height, the two together would measure 36 cubits in length; but one cubit is supposed to be allowed for the bases. (2 *Chr.* 3:15.)—The chapiters are, in one place, said to have been *three* cubits in height: but the upper part, covered with decorations, is thought to be there mentioned separate-

upon the two pillars *had pomegranates* also above, over against the belly which *was* by the net-work: and the [z] pomegranates *were* two hundred in rows round about upon the other chapiter.

21 And [y] he set up the pillars in [z] the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof [*] Jachin; and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof † Boaz.

22 And upon the top of the pillars *was* lily-work: so was the work of the pillars finished.

23 ¶ And [a] he made [b] a molten sea, ten cubits from ‡ the one brim to the other: *it was* round all about, and his height *was* five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about.

24 And under the brim of it round about *there were* [c] knops compassing it, ten in a cubit, [d] compassing the sea round about: the knops *were* cast in two rows when it was cast.

25 It stood upon [e] twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea *was set* above upon them, and all their hinder parts *were* inward.

26 And it *was* [f] an hand-breadth thick, and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, [g] with flowers of lilies: it contained [h] two thousand baths.

27 And he made ten [i] bases of brass: four cubits *was* the length of one base, and four cubits the breadth thereof, and three cubits the height of it.

28 And the work of the bases *was* on this *manner:* they had borders, and the borders *were* between the ledges:

29 And on the borders that *were* between the ledges *were* [j] lions, oxen, and cherubims: and upon the ledges *there was* a base above; and beneath the lions and oxen *were* certain additions made of thin work.

30 And every base had four brazen [k] wheels, and plates of brass; and the four corners thereof had undersetters: under the laver *were* undersetters molten, at the side of every addition.

31 And the mouth of it, within the chapiter and above, *was* a cubit: but the mouth thereof *was* round, *after* the work of the base, a cubit and a half; and also upon the mouth of it *were* gravings with their borders, four-square, not round.

32 And under the borders *were* four wheels: and the axle-trees of the wheels *were* § *joined* to the base, and the height of a wheel *was* a cubit and half a cubit.

33 And [l] the work of the wheels *was* like the work of a chariot-wheel; their axle-trees, and their naves, and their felloes, and their spokes, *were* all molten.

34 And *there were* four undersetters to the four corners of one base. *and* the undersetters *were* of the very base itself.

35 And in the top of the base *was there* a round compass of half a cubit high: and on the top of the base, the ledges thereof, and the borders thereof, *were* of the same.

36 For on the plates of the ledges thereof, and on the borders thereof, he [m] graved cherubims, lions, and palm-trees, according to the ‖ proportion of every one, and additions round about.

37 After this *manner* he made the ten bases: all of them had one casting, one measure, *and* one size.

38 Then made he [n] ten lavers of brass one laver contained forty baths; *and* every laver was four cubits: *and* upon every one of the ten bases one laver.

39 And he put five bases on the right ¶ side of the house, and five on the left side of the house; and [o] he set the sea on the right side of

x 2 Kings 25:17. 2 Chr. 3:16. 4:13. Jer. 52:22,23.
y 2 Chr. 3:17. Gal. 2:9. Rev. 3:12.
z 6:3. Ez. 40:48,49.
* That is, *He shall establish.* 2 Sam. 7:12. Is. 9:7.
† That is, *In it is strength.* Ruth 4:21. Is. 45:24. Matt. 16:18.
a Ex. 30:13—21. 38:8.
b 2 Kings 25:13. 2 Chr. 4:2. Jer. 52: 17,20.
‡ Heb. *his brim to his brim.*
c 6:18. Ex. 25:31—36. 37:17—22.
d 2 Chr. 4:3.
e 2 Chr. 4:4. Jer. 52:20. Ez. 1:10. Matt. 28:19. Mark 16:15,16. Luke 24:47. 1 Cor. 9:9. Rev. 4:6,7.
f Jer. 52:21.
g 19. 6:18,32,35.
h 38. 2 Chr. 4:5. Ez. 45:14.
i 2 Kings 25:13,16. 2 Chr. 4:14. Jer. 52:17,20.
j See on 25.—6:27. Ez. 1:10. 10:14. 41:18,19. Rev. 4:6,7.
k Ez 1:16—21. 3:13. 10:10—13.
§ Heb. *in the base.*
l Ez. 1:16,18.
m 29. 6:29,32,35. Ez. 40:31,37. 41:18—20,25,26.
‖ Heb. *nakedness.*
n Ex. 30:17—21,28. 38:8. 40:11,12. 2 Chr. 4:6. Zech. 13:1. Heb. 9:10. 10: 22. 1 John 1:7. Rev. 7:14.
¶ Heb. *shoulder.*
o 2 Chr. 4:6,10.

(2.) Their significancy is intimated in the names given them; (*v.* 21.) *Jachin—He will establish;* and *Boaz—In Him is strength.* Some think they were intended for memorials of the pillar and cloud of fire, which led Israel through the wilderness: I rather think them designed for memorandums to the priests, and others that came to worship at God's door, [1.] To depend on God only, and not on any sufficiency of their own. When we come to wait on God, and find our hearts wandering and unfixed, then, by faith, let us fetch in help from heaven. Spiritual strength and stability are to be had at the door of God's temple, where we must wait for the gifts of grace, in the use of the means of grace. [2.] It was a memorandum to them, of the strength and establishment of the temple of God among them. Let them keep close to God and duty, and they should never lose their dignities and privileges, but the grant should be confirmed and perpetuated. The gospel-church is what God will establish, and what He will strengthen, and what the gates of hell can never prevail against. But when this temple was

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ly, and to be here included. (16. 2 *Kings* 25:17.)—There were 400 pomegranates in all; 200 on each chapiter, in two rows of 100 each. Perhaps 96 of these might be counted on every side; being nearly one half of the whole number on each chapiter: but, as some think, there were 96 smaller pomegranates in each row, in four divisions, towards the four quarters of the sky; and four larger pomegranates were placed between these four divisions. (*Jer.* 52:23.)—A writer, who completely understood such subjects, would scarcely be able, *by words without plates,* to convey any adequate ideas of the ornamental workmanship described in this chapter. SCOTT.

(15.) 'We should find it difficult, even now, to procure a founder who could cast such massive pillars (about 30 ft. high and 20 round,) whether solid or hollow.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* Perhaps the greatest triumph of modern art, in this respect, is the column of the Place Vendome, Paris, cast in 1810 at Napoleon's order (by Delaunoy, Lepere, Gendouin, &c.) of brass artillery taken from the Austrians. It is about 141 ft. high, and 12 ft. 9 in. in diameter. The column is of stone, covered with a shell of bronze, (most ingeniously detached from the stones,) in 276 plates, about 3 ft. wide and 4 high, joined irregularly according to the disposition of the bas-relief figures upon them, which ascend in a spiral line. A spiral staircase, of 176 steps, in the centre of the column, ascends to a gallery at the summit. It cost 1,000,000 francs. The bas-reliefs contain a history of the events of the campaign of 1805, in chronological order, commencing at the bottom. The column is surmounted by a bronze statue of Napoleon. ED.

Verses 23—39.

The brazen sea was a very large reservoir, capable of holding 3000 baths, or about 450 hogsheads; though no more than 2000 were generally put into it.—The *knops* are supposed to have been in the form of an ox's head, (2 *Chr.* 4:3.) and some think the water flowed out at the mouths of them, or of some of them.—The description given of these bases (33) is very difficult: many of the original words are but seldom used, if at all, elsewhere: and it would be impossible to give a satisfactory explanation of each particular, without labor and prolixity, disproportioned to its importance to us.—The likeness of lions, oxen, &c. we shall hereafter find to be undeniably emblematic of the boldness, patience, diligence, and heavenly-mindedness of the ministers of Christ. (*Ez.* 1:5—14. *Rev.* 4:6—8.) *Oxen* and *cherubim* are both mentioned, (29) which shows they were not the same figures. (*Note, Ex.* 10:44.) SCOTT.

the house eastward, over against the south.

40 ¶ And * Hiram made [p] the lavers, and [q] the shovels, and [r] the basins: [s] so Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he made king Solomon for the house of the LORD:

41 The [t] two pillars, and the *two* bowls of the chapiters that *were* on the top of the two pillars; and the [u] two net-works, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters which *were* upon the top of the pillars;

42 And four hundred pomegranates for the two net-works, *even* two rows of pomegranates for one net-work, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters that *were* upon † the pillars;

43 And the [x] ten bases, and ten lavers on the bases;

44 And [y] one sea, and twelve oxen under the sea;

45 And [z] the pots, and the shovels, and the basins: and all these vessels, which Hiram made to king Solomon for the house of the LORD, *were of* ‡ bright brass.

46 In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in § the clay-ground between [a] Succoth and [b] Zarthan.

47 And Solomon left all the vessels *unweighed*, ‖ because they were exceeding many: neither was the weight of the brass ¶ found out.

destroyed, particular notice is taken of the destroying of these pillars, (2 K. 25: 13, 17.) which had been the tokens of its establishment, and would have been so, had they not forsaken God.

2. A brazen sea; a very large vessel, above five yards diameter, and which contained above 500 barrels of water for the priests' use, in washing themselves, conducting the sacrifices, and keeping the courts of the temple clean, *v.* 23, &c. It stood raised on the figures of twelve oxen in brass, so high, that either they must have stairs to climb up to it, or cocks at the bottom to draw water from it. The Gibeonites, or Nethinim, who were to draw water for the house of God, had the care of filling it. Some think Solomon made the images of oxen to support this great cistern, in contempt of the golden calf, that (so Patrick) the people might see there was nothing worthy of adoration in those figures: they were fitter to make posts, than gods. Yet this did not prevent Jeroboam's setting up the calves for deities. In the court of the tabernacle, there was only a *laver* of brass, but in the court of the temple, a *sea;* intimating, that, by the gospel of Christ, much fuller preparation is made for our cleansing, than by the law of Moses. Zech. 13: 1.

3. Ten bases, stands, or settles, of brass, on which were put ten lavers, to be filled with water for the service of the temple, because there would not be room at the molten sea for all that had occasion to wash there. The bases on which the lavers were fixed, are very largely described here, *v.* 27, &c. They were curiously adorned, and set upon wheels, that the lavers might be removed as there was occasion; but, ordinarily, they stood in two rows, five on one side of the court, and five on the other, *v.* 39. Each laver contained forty baths, that is, about ten barrels, *v.* 38. They must be very *clean that bear the vessels of the Lord* Spiritual priests and spiritual sacrifices must be washed in the laver of Christ's blood, and of regeneration. We must wash often, for we daily contract pollution; cleanse our hands, and purify our hearts. Plentiful provision is made for our cleansing; so that if we have our lot for ever among the unclean, it will be our own fault.

4. Beside these, there was a vast number of brass pots to boil the flesh of the peace-offerings in, for the priests and officers to feast upon before the Lord; (see 1 Sam. 2: 14.) also shovels, wherewith they took out the ashes of the altar. Some think the word signifies *flesh-hooks*, with which they took meat out of the pot. The basins also were made of brass, to receive the blood of the sacrifices. These are put for all the utensils of the brazen altar, Ex. 38: 3. While about it, they made abundance of them, that they might have a good stock by them, when those that were first in use, wore out, and went to decay. Thus Solomon, having wherewithal, provided for posterity.

V. 48—51. Here is, 1. The making of the gold-work of the temple, which, it seems, was done last, for with it the work of the house of God ended. All within doors was gold, and all made new, except the ark, with its mercy-seat and cherubim, the old ones being either melted down, or laid by—the golden altar, table, and candlestick, with all their appurtenances. The altar of incense was still *one*, for Christ and his intercession are so: but he made ten golden tables, 2 Chr. 4: 8. (though here mention is made of that

48 ¶ And Solomon made all the vessels that *pertained* unto the house of the LORD: [c] the altar of gold, and [d] the table of gold, whereupon the shew-bread *was;*

49 And [e] the candlesticks of pure gold, five on the right *side*, and five on the left, [f] before the oracle, with the flowers, and the lamps, and [g] the tongs *of* gold;

50 And the bowls, and the snuffers, and the basins, and the [h] spoons, and the ** censers, *of* pure gold; and the hinges *of* gold, *both* for the doors of the inner house, the most holy *place*, *and* for the doors of the house, *to wit*, of the temple.

51 So [i] was ended all the work that king Solomon made for the house of the LORD. And Solomon brought in the †† things [k] which David his father had dedicated; *even* the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among the treasures of the house of the LORD.

* Heb. *Hirom.* See on 13.
p See on 28.—2 Kings 25:14,15. 2 Chr. 4:8,11—16. Jer. 52:18,19.
q 45.
r Ex. 24:6.
s Ex. 39:32—43.
t See on 15—22. 2 Chr. 4:12.
u 17,18.
† Heb. *the face of the pillars.*
x 27—39.
y See on 23—26.
z Ex. 27:3. 38:3. Lev. 8:31. 1 Sam. 2:13,14. 2 Chr. 4:16. Ez. 46:20—24. Zech. 14:21.
‡ Heb. *brass made bright*, or, *scoured.*
§ Heb. *the thickness of the ground.*
a Gen. 33:17.
b 4:12. *Zaʹtanah.* Josh. 3:16. *Zuretan.* 2 Chr. 4:17. *Zeredaʹthah.*
‖ Heb. *for the exceeding multitude.* 2 Chr. 4:18.
¶ Heb. *searched.* 1 Chr. 22:14,16.
c Ex. 30:1—5. 37:25—28. 39:38. 40:26. 2 Chr. 4:19.
d Ex. 25:23—30. 37:10—16. 39:36. 40:22,23. Lev. 24:5—9. 2 Chr. 4:8. Ez. 40:39,42. 41:22. 44:16. Mal. 1:12. 1 Cor. 10:21.
e Ex. 25:31,&c. 37:17,&c. 39:37. 40:24,25. 2 Chr. 4:7. Zech. 4:1—3,11—14. Matt. 5:14—16. Rev. 1:20. 2:1.
f See on 2 Chr. 4:20.
g Ex. 25:38. Num. 4:9.
h Ex. 25:29. Num. 7:86.
** Heb. *ash-pans.* Lev. 16:12. 2 Chr. 4:21,22.
i Ex. 40:33. Ezra 6:15. Zech. 4:9.
†† Heb. *holy things of David.*
k 2 Sam. 8:7—11. 1 Chr. 18:7,8,10,11. 26:26—28. 28:11—13. 29:2—8. 2 Chr. 5:1.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 13—51. It is well when great ingenuity unites with equal integrity; when entire confidence is proved to have been well placed; and when every one abounds in the work of the Lord, in proportion as his abilities are enlarged. Yet, in all our services, and after them, we need washing from the guilt and pollution of sin, which defiles us and all we do. Let us therefore bless God for 'the Fountain' which He has 'opened for sin and for uncleanness;' and which by the preaching of the Gospel and the written Word, may be conveyed to every part of the earth. —Those who depend on their own resolutions, wisdom, or works; who trust in riches, honor, prosperity, or powerful friends; who worship other gods, or depend on other intercessors; and who presume on their notions, creeds, or external forms; can never be established, but will at length sink and perish. But the power of Christ rests on the humble believer; his arms uphold him; his grace establishes his heart in hope and love; He is his Stability in every trial, and his Sufficiency for every service: and is both able, and willing 'to keep him from falling, and to present him faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy.' External images cannot describe, words cannot express, the heart cannot conceive, his preciousness or his love. Let us come to Him, and wash away our sins in his blood; let us seek for the purifying grace of his Spirit; let us walk in the light of his instructive Word, and observe his kind directions; let us feed upon Him daily 'in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving,' maintain communion with God the Father, through his intercession, and yield up ourselves and all we have to his service. SCOTT.

Verses 48—51.

Under the gospel-dispensation, externals of worship are altogether changed, but the way of access and acceptance with God is the same. —Most things were multiplied, or enlarged above what they had been in the tabernacle; but there was but one altar of burnt-offering, and one altar of incense as before. Thus the N. T. dispensation is suited to the promulgation of the Gospel through all nations; but the multiplication of atonements and intercessors is antichristian. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

(50.) *Hinges.*] *Wilkinson*, and others, describe doors 'of two folds turning on *bronze pins*, which moved in *circular grooves*,' as common in the tombs of Egypt, of this and former ages. A traveller in 1834 gives the cut of one from the 'tombs of the kings,' at Jerusalem, 'still perfect, hewn out of the same compact limestone that forms the rock, half a foot in thickness: the pannels as nicely cut as in our finest mahogany doors, and the whole highly polished. It turned on tenons of one piece with itself, resting on sockets in the solid rock, fitting most exactly in the door frame, shutting, with its own weight.' 'This kind of pivot hinges,' says Shaw, 'is still very common in the E.' The cut, without doubt, represents the 'hinges' of the text ED.

CHAP. VIII.

Solomon assembles the elders and princes; and the priests carry the ark into the most holy place, 1—9. The glory of the Lord fills the house, 10, 11. Solomon blesses Israel; and praises God for performing his word to David, 12—21. He prays, that God would answer the supplications of Israel, and of strangers, in all ages, and in all cases, in which they should call upon Him, towards this his holy temple, 22—53. He again praises God, and blesses the people, 54—61. He offers very numerous sacrifices, keeps the feast fourteen days; and dismisses the people, who return home joyful and thankful, 62—66.

THEN [a] Solomon [b] assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the [*] chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, [c] that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD, [d] out of the city of David, which *is* Zion.

2 And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon [e] at the feast, in the month Ethanim, which *is* the seventh month.

3 And all the elders of Israel came, and [f] the priests took up the ark.

4 And they brought up the ark of the LORD, [g] and the [h] tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that *were* in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up.

5 And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled unto him, *were* with him before the ark, [i] sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude.

6 And [k] the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto [l] his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy *place, even* [m] under the wings of the cherubims.

7 For the cherubims spread forth *their* two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above.

8 And they [n] drew out the staves, that the [†] ends of the staves were seen out in the [‡] holy *place* before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are [o] unto this day.

9 [p] *There was* nothing [q] in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses [r] put there at Horeb, [§] when the LORD made *a covenant* with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

[*Practical Observations.*]

CHAP. VIII. The building and furniture of the temple were very glorious, but the dedication of it exceeds in glory, as much as prayer and praise exceed the casting of metal, and the graving of stones. The temple was designed to keep up the correspondence between God and his people; and here we have an account of the solemnity of their first meeting there. These were Israel's golden days; days of the Son of man in type.

V. 1—11. The temple, though richly beautified, while without the ark, was like a body without a soul, or a house without an inhabitant. The bringing in the ark therefore is the end which must crown the work, and here we have its doing with great solemnity.

I. Solomon presides in this service, as David did in the bringing up of the ark to Jerusalem; neither thought it below him to follow the ark, or to lead the people in their attendance on it. Solomon glories in the title of the *preacher*, (Eccl. 1: 1.) and the *master of assemblies*, Eccl. 12: 11.

II. All Israel attend the service; their judges, the chief of their tribes and families; all their officers, civil and military; and (as may be said) the heads of their clans. A convention of these might well be called *an assembly of all Israel;* these came together, on this occasion, 1. To honor Solomon, and to return him the thanks of the nation for all the good offices he had done, in kindness to them. 2. To honor the ark, and testify their universal joy and satisfaction in its settlement. Public mercies call for public acknowledgments. They that appeared before the Lord, did not appear empty, they all sacrificed sheep and oxen innumerable, v. 5. The people, in Solo-

a 2 Chr. 5:2.
b Josh. 23:2. 24:1. 1 Chr. 28:1. 2 Chr. 30:1. Ezra 3:1.
* Heb. *princes*. Num. 7:3.
c 2 Sam. 6:1,2,12. 1 Chr. 13:1—5. 15: 3,25.
d 3:15. 2 Sam. 5:7—9. 6:12—17. 1 Chr. 11:7. 15:29. 16:1. Ps. 9:11. 102:21. Is. 28:16. 46:13. 1 Pet. 2:6.
e Lev. 23:34. Num. 29:12,&c. Deut. 16:13. 2 Chr. 5:3. 7:8—10. Ezra 3: 4. Neh. 8:14—18. Zech. 14:16—19. John 7:2,37,38.
f Num. 4:15. Deut. 31:9. Josh. 3:3,6, 14,15. 4:9. 6:6. 1 Chr. 15:2,11—15. 2 Chr. 5:5—8.
g 3:4. 2 Chr. 1:3.
h See on Ex. 40:2—33.
i 62,63. 2 Sam. 6:13. 1 Chr. 16:1.
k 4. 2 Chr. 5:7.
l 6:19. Ex. 26:33,34. 40:20,21.
m 6:27. Ex. 25:20—22. 37:9. 1 Sam. 4:4. 2 Sam. 6:2. Ps. 80:1. 99:1. Is. 37:16. Ez. 10:5.
n Ex. 25:14,15. 37:4,5. 40:20.
† Heb. *heads*.
‡ Or, *ark*. 2 Chr. 5:9.
o Josh. 4:9. Matt. 28:15.
p Ex. 25:21. Deut. 10:2. 2 Chr. 5:10.
q Ex. 16:33. Num. 17:10. Heb. 9:4.
r Ex. 40:20. Deut. 10:5. 31:26.
§ Or, *where*. 21. Ex. 24:8. 34:27,28. Deut. 4:13.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—9. When those in authority heartily and scripturally promote the cause of true religion, increasing numbers will soon be engaged in the cause: and what a blessed improvement is this of authority, influence, affluence, and wisdom!—But every religious observance is an empty form, unless we hold communion with a reconciled God on a mercy-seat, through the person and work of the Redeemer, and by the influences of his sanctifying Spirit. This is the life and soul of true godliness, which infuses efficacy into every truth, ordinance, or duty; and in all things it should be chiefly attended to. (2 *Cor.* 3: 17, 18.) For, as far as this is attained, we, the believing servants of God on earth, hold fellowship with the church above; and, with all the company of angels and archangels, we worship the name of God our Savior, with acceptance, and to his glory. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII. V. 1. (*Notes*, 2 *Sam.* 6:1, 2. 1 *Chr.* 13:1—4.) The want of the ark, after the Babylonish captivity, in the temple then built, intimated that that dispensation was ready to vanish away.—Mt. Moriah, on which the temple was built, was near the city of David, on mt. Zion, where the ark was before placed; but was distinct from it. (1 *Chr.* 21:18—30. 22:1. 2 *Chr.* 3:1, 2.) SCOTT.

Verse 2.

This was about 11 months after the temple was completed. The intervening time was doubtless employed in getting every thing ready for the solemnity; and the time which was chosen coincided with the feast of tabernacles, which ensured the presence of multitudes of the most zealous and pious Israelites, along with the elders and chief persons. (2 *Chr.* 7:8, 9. 63—65.) ID.

'Solomon deferred the dedication to the following year after it was finished, because that year, according to Usher, was a *jubilee*.' Dr. *A. Clarke* 'This was the 9th jubilee, opening the 4th *millenary* of the world, or, A. M. 3001; wherein Solomon with great magnificence, celebrated the dedication of the temple 7 days, and the feast of the tabernacle, other 7 days; and the celebrity of the 8th day of tabernacles being finished, upon the 23d day of the 7th month, the people were dismissed, every man to his home. The 8th day of the 7th month, viz. the 30th of our October, being *Friday*; was the 1st of the 7 days of dedication; the 10th day, Sunday, Nov. 1. was the fast of expiation, or atonement, held; whereon, according to the Levitical law, the jubilee was proclaimed by sound of trumpet. The 15th day, Friday, Nov. 6. was the 1st. of the feast of tabernacles; the 22d (18 of our Nov.) being also *Friday*, was the feast of tabernacles, which was always very solemnly kept, 2 Chr. 7:9. Lev. 23:36. John 7:37. and the day following, Nov. 14. being our Saturday, when the [Jews] Sabbath was ended, the people returned home.' USHER.

Verse 3.

The Levites of Kohath's family were appointed to carry the ark; and the priests were of that family: on the most solemn occasions, therefore, the priests performed this service. (*Num.* 7:4—9. *Josh.* 3: 3, 4. 2 *Sam.* 6:12, 13. 1 *Chr.* 15:15. 2 *Chr.* 5:2—5.) SCOTT.

Verse 5.

The altar of burnt-offering, which Solomon had prepared, seems to have been covered with sacrifices, without any fire under them: and when Solomon had ended his prayer, the fire came down from heaven and consumed them. (*Lev.* 9:24. 2 *Chr.* 7:1—3.) But there might also be other sacrifices on the former altar, and likewise temporary altars erected, with all suitable preparations for so extraordinary an occasion. (63—65.) ID.

Verse 6.

(*M. R.*)—*Oracle.*] From the Heb. *to speak*; because from above the mercy-seat the Lord *spake*, when the rulers inquired of Him by the high priest. ID.

Verses 7—9.

The ends of the staves might be seen in the holy of holies, but not in the outer sanctuary. ID.

(8.) *There they are*, &c.] 'This proves that the book was written before the destruction of the first temple; but how long before we cannot tell.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

10 ¶ And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy *place*, that [a]the cloud filled the house of the LORD,

11 So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: [t]for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.

12 Then spake Solomon, [u]The LORD said that he would dwell in [v]the thick darkness.

13 I have [x]surely built thee an house to dwell in, [y]a settled place for thee to abide in for ever.

14 And the king turned his face about, and [z]blessed all the congregation of Israel, and [a]all the congregation of Israel stood;

15 And he said, [b]Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, [c]which spake with his mouth unto David my father, and [d]hath with his hand fulfilled *it*, saying,

16 Since [e]the day that I brought forth my people Israel out of Egypt, [f]I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build an house, that [g]my name might be therein; but [h]I chose David to be over my people Israel.

17 And [i]it was in the

a Ex. 13:21. 14:24. 16:10. 24:16—18. 40:34,35. Lev. 16:2. Num. 9:15. 2 Chr. 5:13,14. 7:1—3. Ez. 10:4. Rev. 15:8.
t Lev. 9:6,23. Ez. 43:2,4,5. 44:4. John 1:14. Acts 7:55. 2 Cor. 3:18. 4:6. Rev. 21:11,23.
u Deut. 4:11. 2 Chr. 6:1,2. Ps. 18:8—11. 97:2.
v Ex. 20:21. Deut. 5:22. Heb. 12:18.
x 2 Sam. 7:13. 1 Chr. 17:12. 22:10,11. 28:6,10,20. 2 Chr. 6:2.
y Ps. 78:68,69. 132:13,14. John 4:21—23. Acts 6:14. Heb. 8:5—13. 9:11, 12,24.
z 55:56. Josh. 22:6. 2 Sam. 6:18. 1 Chr. 16:2. 2 Chr. 6:3. 30:18—20. Ps. 118:26. Luke 24:50,51.
a 2 Chr. 7:6. Neh. 8:7,9:2. Matt. 13:2.
b 1 Chr. 29:10,20. 2 Chr. 6:4. 20:26. Neh. 9:5. Ps. 41:13. 72:18,19. 115: 18. 117:1,2. Luke 1:68. Eph. 1:3. 1 Pet. 1:3.
c 2 Sam. 7:25,28,29. 1 Chr. 17:12. Is. 1:20. Luke 1:70.
d Josh. 21:45. 23:15,16. Ps. 138:2. Matt. 24:35. Luke 1:54,55,72.
e See on 2 Sam. 7:6,7.—2 Chr. 6:5.
f 1 Chr. 17:5,6. Ps. 132:13.
g See on 2 Sam.—11:36. 2 Kings 23:27. Neh. 1:9. Jer. 7:12. Dan. 9:19.
h 1 Sam. 16:1. 2 Sam. 7:8. 1 Chr. 28: 4. Ps. 78:70. 89:19,20.
i 2 Sam. 7:2,3. 1 Chr. 17:1,2. 22:7. 28:2.

mon's time, were very rich, very easy, very cheerful; therefore it was fit, on this occasion, they should consecrate not only their cheerfulness, but a part of their wealth, to God and his honor.

III. The priests do their part of the service. In the wilderness, the Levites were to carry the ark, because then there were not priests enough to do it; but here, the priests themselves did it, as they were ordered to do, when it surrounded Jericho. In the ark were the two tables of stone, (*v.* 9.) a treasure far exceeding all the dedicated things both of David and Solomon. The pot of manna, and Aaron's rod, were *by* it, but not *in* it. Brought up with it, (*v.* 4.) was *the tabernacle of the congregation*. Probably the one Moses set up in the wilderness, which was in Gibeon, and that David pitched in Zion, were both brought to the temple; for to this they did, as it were, surrender all their holiness, merging it in that of the temple, as henceforward to be the place where God must be sought unto. Thus will all the church's holy things on earth, that are so much its joy and glory, be swallowed up in the perfection of holiness above. The ark was fixed in the place appointed for its rest after all its wanderings, (*v.* 6) *in the oracle of the house*, whence they expected God to speak to them, even in the most holy place, which was made so by the presence of the ark, *under the wings of the* great *cherubim*, (set up, *ch.* 6: 27.) signifying the special protection of angels, which God's ordinances and the assemblies of his people are taken under. The staves were drawn out, so as to be seen from under the wings of the cherubim, to direct the high priest to the mercy-seat, over the ark, when he went in, once a year, to sprinkle the blood there; so they still continued of some use, though there was no longer occasion for them to carry it by.

IV. God graciously owns what is done, and testifies his acceptance, *v.* 10, 11. The priests might come into the most holy place, till God manifested his glory there; but, thenceforward, none might, but at their peril, approach the ark, except the high priest, on the day of atonement. After the priests were come out, the *Shechinah* cloud appeared, which filled not only the most holy place, but the temple, so that the priests who burnt incense at the golden altar, could not bear it. By this visible emanation of the Divine Glory, 1. God put an honor on the ark, and owned it as a token of his presence. God will now show that it is as dear to Him as ever, and will have it looked on with as much veneration, as when Moses first brought it into his tabernacle. 2. He testifies his acceptance of the building and furnishing of the temple, as good service done to his name and kingdom among men. 3. He struck an awe on this great assembly; and, by what they saw, confirmed their belief of what they read in the books of Moses, concerning the glory of God's appearances to their fathers, that hereby they might be kept close to the service of the God of Israel, and fortified against temptations to idolatry. 4. He showed Himself ready to hear the prayer Solomon was now about to make; and not only so, but took up his residence in this house, that all his praying people might be encouraged to apply to Him there. But the glory of God appeared in a cloud, a dark cloud, to signify, (1.) The darkness of that dispensation, compared with the Gospel, by which, *with open face, we behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord.* (2.) The darkness of our present state, compared with the vision of God, which will be the happiness of heaven, where the Divine Glory is unveiled. Now we can only say what He is not, but then we shall see Him as He is.

V. 12—21. Here, I. Solomon encourages the priests, who came out of the temple from their ministration, much astonished at the dark cloud that overshadowed them. He reminds them that this was a token of God's presence and favor; for He had said, *I will appear in a cloud*, Lev. 16: 2. Note, Nothing is more effectual to reconcile us to dark dispensations, than to consider what *God hath said*, and to compare his word and works together, as Lev. 10: 3. God is light, and He dwells in light; but He dwells with men *in the thick darkness*, makes that his pavilion, because they could not bear the dazzling brightness of his glory. And since God, by this cloud, came down to take possession, Solomon here, in a few words, solemnly gives Him possession, *v.* 13. It is his joy, that God has taken possession, and his desire, that He would keep it. Let not the priests therefore dread that in which Solomon so much triumphs.

II. He instructs the people, and gives them a plain account concerning this house, which they now saw God take possession of. He spoke briefly to the priests, to satisfy them; but *turned his face about*, (*v.* 14.) and addressed himself largely *to the congregation* that stood in the outer court.

1. He blessed them. When they saw the dark cloud enter the temple, they were astonished, and afraid; the amazing sight, such as they had never seen in their days, we may suppose, drove every man to his prayers, and the vainest minds were made serious by it. Solomon therefore set in with their prayers, and blessed them all; as one having authority, in God's name, he spake peace to them, and a blessing; like that with which the angel blessed Gideon, when in a fright, on a like occasion; (Judg. 6: 22, 23.) *Peace be unto thee; fear not, thou shalt not die.* Solomon *blessed them*, i. e. pacified them, and freed them from the consternation they were in. To receive this blessing, they all stood up, in token of reverence, and readiness to hear and accept it. It is a proper posture to be in, when the blessing is pronounced.

2. He informed them concerning this house which he had built, and was now dedicating. He begins his account with a thankful acknowledgment of the good hand of his God upon him hitherto; *v.* 15. Where we are allowed to have pleasure, God must have praise. Solomon here blessed God, (1.) For his promise *to David*. (2.) For the performance; that He had now *fulfilled it with his hand*. We have then the best sense of God's mercies, and most grateful both to ourselves and to our God, when we run up those streams to the fountain of the covenant, and compare what God does with what He has said.

Solomon is now making a solemn surrender or dedication of this house unto God, delivering it to God by his own act and deed. Grants and conveyances commonly begin with recitals of what has been before done, leading to what is now done: accordingly, here is a recital of the special causes and considerations moving Solomon to build this house.

[1.] The want of such a place. It was necessary this should be premised; for, according to the dispensation they were under, there must be one place, in which they must expect God to record his name. If, therefore, there were any other chosen, this would be usurpation. But he shows, from what God Himself had said, that there was no other, (*v* 16.) *I chose no city to build a house in for my name;* therefore there is occasion for building this.

Verses 10—14.

All the priests and Levites attended the removal of the ark, and sang solemn praises on the occasion, with the sound of trumpets and instruments of music. (*Notes*, 2 *Chr.* 5:11—13.) But when the ark, as the symbol of JEHOVAH's presence, had taken possession of the temple, the cloud filled the whole of it, so that the priests could no longer continue in it. The 'thick darkness' represented the comparative obscurity and terror of that dispensation; and the darkness, which in this world rests on all our inquiries into the things of God and of eternity. 'God' indeed 'is LIGHT, and with Him is no darkness at all:' but we sinners cannot approach or endure that light, except as seen in the person of Jesus Christ. (*M. R.* v. 2 *Cor.* 4:5, 6. 1 *Tim.* 6:13—16. 1 *John* 1:5—7.) It is not easy to distinguish with accuracy between the cloud, and the glory of God which filled the house. It may, however, be observed, that at the close of Solomon's prayer, the fire burst forth from the cloud and consumed the sacrifices on the altar. (2 *Chr.* 7:1—3.) SCOTT.

Verses 15—21.

In this introductory address, while Solomon adored and blessed God, with lively gratitude, for performing his promises; he also reminded the people of several particulars, which were well suited to affect their hearts, and prepare them to unite with understanding in

heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

18 And the LORD said unto David my father, [k] Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart.

19 Nevertheless [l] thou shalt not build the house; but thy son, that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name.

20 And the LORD [m] hath performed his word that he spake; and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

21 And [n] I have set there a place for the ark, wherein *is* [o] the covenant of the LORD, which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.

[*Practical Observations.*]

22 ¶ And Solomon [p] stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and [q] spread forth his hands toward heaven;

23 And he said, [r] LORD God of Israel, *there is* [s] no god like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, [t] who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that [u] walk before thee with all their heart;

24 Who hast kept with thy servant David my father, that thou promisedst him: [x] thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled *it* with thine hand, as *it is* this day.

25 Therefore now, LORD God of Israel, [y] keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, saying, [*] There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel: [†] so that [z] thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me.

26 And now, [a] O God of Israel, [b] let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father.

27 But [c] will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold [d] the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded.

[2.] David's purpose to build such a place. God chose the person first that should rule his people, *v.* 16. then He put it into *his heart to build a house* for God's name, *v.* 17. It was not a project of his own, to magnify himself; but of his good father.

[3.] God's promise concerning himself: God approved his father's purpose, *v.* 18. Note, Sincere intentions to do good shall be graciously approved and accepted of God, though Providence prevent our putting them in execution. *The desire of a man is his kindness.* See 2 Cor. 8: 12. God accepted David's good will, yet would not permit him to do the good work, but reserved that honor for his son, *v.* 19. The work itself therefore, and his doing of it, was according to God's designation.

[4.] What he himself had done, and with what intention, *v.* 20, 21. Thus all the right, title, interest, claim, and demand, whatsoever, which he or his had, or might have, in or to this house, or any part of its appurtenances, he resigns, surrenders, and gives up, to God for ever. It is for his name, and his ark. In this, says he, *the Lord hath performed his word that He spake.* Note, Whatever good we do, we must look upon it as the performance of God's promise to us, rather than the performance of our promises to Him. The more we do for God, the more we are indebted to Him; for our sufficiency is of Him, and not of ourselves.

V. 22—53. Solomon having surrendered this house to God, and God signified his acceptance of it by taking possession, here follows Solomon's prayer; in which he more particularly declares the uses of that surrender, with all humility and reverence, desiring God would agree thereto. In short, his request is that this temple may be deemed and taken, not only for a house of sacrifice, (no mention is made of that, it was taken for granted,) but a *house of prayer for all people:* and herein it was a type of the gospel-church: see Isa. 56: 7. comp. Matt. 21: 13.

I. Solomon made a good improvement of the pious education his parents gave him. With all his learning, it seems, he learned to pray well, and knew how to express himself to God in a suitable manner, without a prescribed form. In the crowd of his philosophical transactions, proverbs, and songs, he did not forget his devotions. Shall any think themselves too great to do this office for their own families! Solomon, in all his other

k 2 Chr. 6:7,8. 2 Cor. 8:12.

l 5:3—5. 2 Sam. 7:5,12,13. 1 Chr. 17: 4,11,12. 22:8—10. 28:6.
m See on 15.—Neh. 9:8. Is. 9:7. Jer. 29:10,11,39. Ex. 12:25. 37:14. Mic. 7:20. Rom. 4:21. Phil. 1:6.
n See on 5,6.
o 9. Ex. 34:28. Deut. 9:9,11.
p 2 Kings 11:14. 23:3. 2 Chr. 6:12,13.
q Ex. 9:29,33.—See on 2 Chr. 6:12.—Ezra 9:5. Job 11:13. Ps. 28:2. 63:4. Is. 1:15. 1 Tim. 2:8.
r Gen. 33:20. Ex. 3:15.
s Ex. 15:11. 1 Sam. 2:2. 2 Sam. 7:22. Ps. 35:10. 86:8. 89:6—8. 113:5. Is. 40:18,25. Jer. 10:6,16. Mic. 7:18.
t Deut. 7:9. Neh. 1:5. 9:32. Ps. 89:3—5. Dan. 9:4. Mic. 7:19,20. Luke 1:72.
u 2:4. 3:6. 6:12. Gen. 17:1. 2 Kings 20:3.
x See on 15.—2 Sam. 7:12. 2 Chr. 6:14, 15.
y 2:4. 2 Sam. 7:27—29. 1 Chr. 17:23—27. Luke 1:68—72.
* Heb. *There shall not be cut off unto thee a man from my sight.* Jer. 33: 17—26.
† Heb. *only if.*
z 2:4. 9:4—6. 1 Chr. 28:9. 2 Chr. 6: 16,17.
a 23. Ex. 24:10. 1 Sam. 1:17. Ps. 41: 13. Is. 41:17. 45:3.
b 2 Sam. 7:25—29. 2 Chr. 1:9. Jer. 11:5. Ez. 36:36,37.
c 2 Chr. 6:18. Is. 66:1. John 1:14. Acts 7:48,49. 17:24. 2 Cor. 6:16. 1 John 3:1.
d Deut. 10:14. 2 Chr. 2:6. Ps. 113:4. 139:7—16. Jer. 23:24. 2 Cor. 12:2.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 10—21. When we wait on the Lord in the ways of his appointment, we shall surely receive tokens of his special favor: yet his light is inaccessible to us; and the cloud, with which He veils his insufferable brightness, in his discoveries of Himself to us, sometimes obstructs our view of his love, and causes us to tremble for fear of his judgments. However, blessed be God, in the person of our Emmanuel, and in his complete redemption, 'the thick darkness,' in which JEHOVAH dwells, is greatly dispelled; the *dark cloud is become bright to us;* (*Matt.* 17: 5—8.) and though, compared with the beatific vision, we 'see through a glass darkly;' yet, following Him who 'is the Light of the world,' 'we shall not abide in darkness, but shall have the light of life.' Yet sacred joy, gratitude, and love, will ever be mixed with deep humility and reverential fear; and conscious guilt and pollution will connect self-abhorrence, and godly sorrow, with our most fervent praises and adorations.—We all are bound by the strongest obligations to use our utmost exertions for the honor of God. Let us therefore persevere in devising, and endeavoring to execute, plans of usefulness, though we be often baffled and unsuccessful; for it shall at last be declared, that we 'did well that it was in our heart:' and let sinners remember, that they also are accountable to God, and will be punished, for all the wickedness which was conceived in their hearts, though they were restrained in Providence, left destitute of the power, or deterred by the fear of man; and therefore did not actually commit it.

SCOTT.

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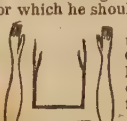
the solemn services of that interesting occasion.—The tables of the law are called the *covenant*, because the covenant with Israel at Sinai was grounded on them. (*Ex.* 25:10—22.) SCOTT.

(21.) *The covenant.*] 'As it is said, *v.* 9. there was *nothing* in the ark *but the tables:* these must be called, *the covenant*, i. e. the *sign* of the covenant, as our Lord calls the *cup*, the *New Covenant in his blood;* i. e. the *sign* of the New Covenant: as *This is my body*, implies, this is the *sign*, or *emblem* of my body.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 22.

A scaffold had been prepared in the court of the temple: and on this Solomon *stood up* to bless and instruct the people, and then kneeled down upon it, to offer the following most copious and comprehensive prayer (2 *Chr.* 6:13.) To this reverential posture he also added the spreading forth of his hands towards heaven, as expressive of the fervor of his heart, and the largeness of his expectations, in this act of worship. (*M. R.* q.)—The king of Israel never looked more glorious than on this occasion. Doubtless his personal performance of this service gave it a peculiar solemnity, and greatly affected the people: (2 *K.* 23:2.) but he was also a type of Christ, who is at once our King and our Intercessor.—It is most probable, that he prayed from a full heart, without any precomposed form of words; but not without having seriously and fully considered the various blessings for which he should pray. SCOTT.



Spread forth his hands towards heaven.] 'An usual custom in all nations. See several Psalms. One of the heathens has said, "all men, in praying, lift up their hands to heaven."' Dr. *A. Clarke.* A cut is given of the *ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic* for prayer, ED.

Verse 27.

The heaven of heavens cannot contain thee.] Lit. *The heavens*, and *the heavens of heavens.* What inconceivable sublimity of thought is here! The systems upon systems, equal in extent to our solar system, stretching throughout the infinity of space, with their millions upon millions of suns, whose light, travelling these 6000 years, at the rate of 190,000 miles a second, may not yet have reached us, these systems are represented not only as pervaded throughout their endless infinitude by the omnipresent Deity, but as inadequate to contain God! What unparalleled magnificence of thought! How do the conceptions of the heathen of their gods dwindle into nothingness before this Hebrew expression. ED.

28 Yet [c] have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to [d] hearken unto the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee to-day;

29 That [e] thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, *even* toward the place of which thou hast said, [h] My name shall be there; that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make * toward this place.

30 And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, [i] when they shall pray † toward this place: [k] and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place; and when thou hearest, [l] forgive.

[*Practical Observations.*]

31 ¶ If any man [m] trespass against his neighbor, and ‡ an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and [n] the oath come before thine altar in this house:

32 Then [o] hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, [p] condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and [q] justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.

33 ¶ When thy people Israel be [r] smitten down before the enemy, [s] because they have sinned against thee, and shall [t] turn again to thee, and confess thy name, glory, even on his ivory throne, looked not so great as now. Great men should thus support the reputation of religious exercises, and so honor God with their greatness. Solomon was herein a type of Christ, the great Intercessor for all over whom He rules.

II. His posture was very reverent, expressive of humility, seriousness, and fervency. He *stood before the altar;* intimating that he expected the success of his prayer in virtue of that sacrifice to be offered up in the fulness of time, typified by the altar sacrifices. But when he addressed himself to prayer, 1. He *kneeled down*, as appears, *v.* 54. where he is said to *rise from his knees;* comp. 2 Chr. 6:13. Kneeling is the most proper posture for prayer, Eph. 3:14. 2. *He spread forth his hands toward heaven;* and, as it should seem by *v.* 54. continued so, to the end of the prayer, hereby expressing his desire toward, and expectations from, God, as a *Father in heaven.* He spread forth his hands, as it were to offer up the prayer from an open, enlarged heart, and to urge it into heaven; and also to receive the mercy thence, with both arms, which he prayed for. Such outward expressions of the fixedness and fervor of devotion, ought not to be despised or ridiculed.

III. The prayer was very long, yet perhaps longer than is here recorded. At the throne of grace, we have liberty of speech, and should use our liberty. It is not *making long prayers*, but making them *for a pretence*, that Christ condemns.

In this excellent prayer, Solomon, (as we should in every prayer,)

1. *Gives glory to God.* This he begins with, as the most proper act of adoration, *v.* 23, 24.

2. Sues for grace and favor.

(1.) That God would perform to him and his the mercy promised, *v.* 25, 26. David had prayed, (2 Sam. 7:25.) *Lord, do as Thou hast said.* Note, Children should learn of their godly parents how to pray, and plead, in prayer.

(2.) That God would have respect to this temple, and that his eyes might be *continually open towards it, v.* 29. To this purpose, he premises, [1.] An humble admiration of God's gracious condescension, *v.* 27. Can we imagine that a Being, infinitely high, and holy, and happy, should stoop so low, as to let it be said of Him, that He *dwells upon the earth*, and blesses the worms of the earth with his presence? The earth, that is corrupt, and over-spread with sin! Cursed, and reserved to fire! [2.] An humble acknowledgment of the incapacity of the capacious house he had built, to contain God. Note, When we have done the most we can for God, we must acknowledge the infinite distance and disproportion between us and Him, between our services and his perfections. He supposes God's people would ever be a praying people; he resolves to adhere to that duty himself. He directs them to have an eye, in their prayers, to that place where God was pleased to manifest his glory, so as He did not any where else on earth, as an instituted medium of their worship, helping the weakness of their faith, and typifying the mediation of Jesus Christ, the true Temple, whom we must eye in every thing we have to do with God. They that were at a distance, looked toward Jerusalem, for the sake of the temple, even when it was in ruins, Dan. 6:10. He begs that God would *hear the prayers*, and *forgive the sins*, of all that look this way in their prayers: not as if he thought all devout prayers by those who had no knowledge of this house, or regard to it, were therefore rejected; but he desired that the sensible tokens of the divine presence with which this house was blessed, might always sensibly encourage and comfort believing petitioners.

More particularly, he here puts divers cases in which he supposed application would be made to God by prayer, in or toward this house of prayer.

(1.) He prays that, in difficult civil or criminal matters, this throne of grace might be a throne of judgment, from which God would right the injured that believingly appealed to it, and punish the injurious that presumptuously appealed to it. *v.* 31, 32. It was usual to swear by the temple and altar, Matt. 23:16, 18. a corruption which perhaps took its rise from this supposition of an oath taken, not *by* the temple or altar, but *at* or *near* them, for the greater solemnity.

(2.) If the people of Israel were groaning under any *national calamity*, (*v.* 33, 35, 37.) or any particular Israelite under any *personal calamity*, (*v.* 38—40.) he desires the prayers they should make in or toward this house, might be heard and answered. He supposes the cause of the judgment would be sin, and nothing else. And the consequence of the judgment would be, they would cry to God, and make supplication to Him, in or toward that house. Those that slighted Him before,

and [u] pray, and make supplication unto thee § in this house:

34 Then hear thou in heaven, and [x] forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land, [y] which thou gavest unto their fathers.

[c] 2 Cor. 6:19. Ps. 141:2. Dan. 9:17—19. Luke 18:1,7.
[d] Ps. 4:1. 5:1. 86:3,6,7. 88:1,2.
[e] 52. 2 Kings 19:16. 2 Chr. 6:20,40. 7:15. 16:9. Neh. 1:6. Ps. 34:15. Dan. 9:18.
[h] 16,43. *marg.* 11:36. Ex. 20:24. Deut. 12:11. 16:2,6. 26:2. 2 Kings 21:4,7. 23:27. 2 Chr. 6:5,6,20. 7:16. 20:8. 33:4,7. Neh. 1:9. John 14:13, 14.
* Or, *in this place.* Dan. 6:10.
† 2 Chr. 20:8,9. Neh. 1:5,6.
‡ Or, *in this place.*
[k] 34,38,39,43,49. 2 Chr. 6:21. Ps. 33: 13,14. 113:5,6. 123:1. Ec. 5:2. Is. 57:15. Matt. 6:9.
[l] 34,38,39. 2 Chr. 7:14. Ps. 130:3,4. Dan. 9:19. Matt. 6:12.
[m] 2 Chr. 6:22,23.
‡ Heb. *he require an oath of him.* Ex. 22:8—11. Lev. 5:1. Prov. 30:9.
[n] Num. 5:16—22.
[o] See on k. 30.
[p] Num. 5:27. Deut. 25:1. Prov. 1:31. Is. 3:10,11. Ez. 18:13,30. Rom. 2:6—10.
[q] Ex. 23:7. Prov. 17:15. Ez. 18:20.
[r] Lev. 26:17,25. Deut. 28:25,48. Josh. 7:8. 2 Chr. 6:24,25. Ps. 44:10.
[s] Josh. 7:11,12. Judg. 6:1,2. 2 Kings 17:7—18. 18:11,12. 2 Chr. 36:14—17.
[t] Lev. 26:40,41. Neh. 1:9. Jon. 3:10.
[u] Ezra 9:5,&c. Neh. 9:1—3,&c. Is. 63: 15—19. 64:8,&c. Dan. 9:3,&c.
§ Or, *toward.* 30.
[x] See on 30.—Ezra 1:1—6. Ps. 106:47. Jer. 31:4—9,27. 32:37. 33:10—13. Dan. 9:2,19,25. Am. 7:2.
[y] Gen. 13:15. Ex. 6:8. Josh. 21:43.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 22—30. The service of God is the highest honor of the greatest of men; and to lead others in prayer and praise, to animate and assist them in worshipping the Lord, forms the noblest employment on earth, and most resembles that of the angels in heaven. But indeed, the most exalted adorations of the noblest creatures are beneath the notice of his Infinite Majesty, and only accepted through his unspeakable condescension. With what internal awe, and external indications of reverence, should we, worthless sinners, prostrate ourselves before his glorious and holy Majesty! How should we approach his mercy-seat with admiring, adoring gratitude, and humble expectation of his invaluable and much needed benefits! and how should faith and love exalt our souls above all external objects, and raise them to heaven, his dwelling place, where He displays his glory, who fills immensity, and 'inhabiteth eternity!'—But behold, He dwells in human nature, as in his temple! there sinners may see his glory and live: and when we pray in his name, directing our faith towards that sacred residence of the Deity, He will assuredly hear, and forgive our sins, and save our souls. His 'name is Emmanuel:' 'God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.' SCOTT.

Verses 28—30.

The Lord was not *essentially* more present in the temple than elsewhere; and the full displays of his glory were made in heaven, his throne and his dwelling-place: yet He had 'recorded his name' in the temple; and it was a peculiar type of the human nature of Christ, in whom the divine perfections are revealed, as harmonizing in the salvation of believers; and in whom 'God is reconciling the world to Himself,' dwelling among men, and accepting the services and answering the prayers of all true believers.—The sacrifices continually offered, the incense burnt, and the whole service performed at the temple, were typical of the Redeemer's offices, oblation, and intercession. The temple, therefore, must be continually adverted to in all their prayers.—Accordingly, the Israelites, when distant from Jerusalem, were accustomed to turn their faces toward it, as expressive of dependence on the services there performed by the priests, and of their communion with the worshippers of JEHOVAH: and when they were near it, they resorted thither to present their supplications. [Mohammedans have also their *keblah*, the temple of Mecca, toward which they pray. See *Sale.*] (*M. R.* g, h.—*Dan.* 6:10, 11. *Jon.* 2:3, 4.)—Under one word, 'forgive,' he comprised all he could ask in behalf of his people: for, as all misery springs from sin; forgiveness of sin must prepare the way for the removal of every evil, and the communication of every good; and without it, no deliverance can prove a blessing. (*Ps.* 32:1, 2. *Rom.* 4:6—8.) SCOTT.

35 ¶ When [z] heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; [a] if they pray toward this place, and [b] confess thy name, and [c] turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them:

36 Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that [d] thou teach them [e] the good way wherein they should walk, and [f] give rain upon thy land which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.

37 ¶ If there be [g] in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, *or* if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their * cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness *there be;*

38 What [h] prayer and supplication soever be *made* by any man, *or* by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man [i] the plague of his own heart, and [j] spread forth his hands toward this house:

39 Then [k] hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and [l] give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for [m] thou, *even* thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;)

40 That they may [n] fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers.

41 ¶ Moreover, concerning [o] a stranger that *is* not of thy people Israel, but [p] cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake;

42 (For [q] they shall hear of thy [r] great name, and of [s] thy strong hand, and of thy stretched-out arm;) [t] when he shall come and pray towards this house:

43 Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for; [u] that all people of the earth may know thy name, to [x] fear thee, as *do* thy people Israel; and that they may know that † this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name.

44 ¶ If thy people [y] go out to battle against their enemy, [z] whithersoever thou shalt send them, and [a] shall pray unto the LORD ‡ toward [b] the city which thou hast chosen, and *toward* the house that I have built for thy name:

45 Then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their § cause.

[*Practical Observations.*]

z 17:1. Lev. 26:19. Deut. 11:17. 28: 12,23,24. 2 Sam. 24:13. Jer. 14:1—7. Ez. 14:13. Mal. 3:10. Luke 4:25. Rev. 11:6.
a 33. 2 Chr. 6:24,26. Rom. 10:9. 15:9.
b 29,30. Joel 1:13—20. 2:15—17.
c 33. Is. 1:15,16. 9:13. Ez. 18:30—32. Hos. 14:1.
d Ps. 25:4,5,12. 27:11. 32:8. 94:12. 119:33. 143:8. Is. 35:8. Mic. 4:2.
e 1 Sam. 12:23. 2 Chr. 6:26,27. Is. 30: 21. Jer. 6:16. 42:3. Matt. 22:16.
f 18:1,27—40,45. Ps. 68:9. Jer. 14:22. Jam. 5:17,18.
g Lev. 26:16,25,26. Deut. 28:21,22,25, 38—42,52—61. 2 Kings 6:25—29. 1 Chr. 21:12. 2 Chr. 6:28—31. 20:9. Ps. 105:34,35. Jer. 32:2. 39:1—3. Ez. 14:21. Joel 1:4—7. 2:25,26.
* Or, *jurisdiction.*
h 2 Chr. 20:5—13. Ps. 50:15. 91:15. Is. 37:4,15—21. Joel 2:17. Am. 7:1—6.
i 2 Chr. 6:29. Job 7:11. Ps. 2:3,4. 42:5,9,11. 73:21,22. 142:3—5. Prov. 14:10. Rom. 7:24. Phil. 4:6.
j See on 22.—Is. 1:15.
k See on 32,36.
l Ps. 18:20—26. 28:4. Jer. 17:10. 32: 19. Ez. 18:30. Rev. 22:12.
m 1 Sam. 16:7. 1 Chr. 28:9. 2 Chr. 6: 30. Ps. 11:4,5. John 2:25. 21:17. Acts 1:24. Heb. 4:13. Rev. 2:23.
n Gen. 22:12. Ex. 20:20. Deut. 6:2,13. 1 Sam. 12:24. Ps. 115:13. 130:4. Jer. 32:39,40. Hos. 3:5. Acts 9:31. 10:2. Heb. 12:28,29. Rev. 15:4. 19: 5.
o 10:1,2. Ruth 1:16. 2:11. 2 Chr. 6: 32. Is. 56:3—7. Matt. 8:5,10,11. 15: 22—28. Luke 17:18. John 12:20. Acts 10:1—4.
p 10:1,2. Ex. 18:8—12. 2 Kings 5:1—7,16,17. Is. 60:1—10. Matt. 2:1. 12: 42. Acts 8:27, &c.
q Ex. 15:14,15. Deut. 4:6. Josh. 2:10, 11. 9:9,10. 2 Chr. 32:31. Dan. 2:47. 3:28. 4:37.
r Ex. 3:13—16. 34:5—7. Josh. 7:9. Ps. 86:8,9. Ez. 20:9.
s Ex. 3:19,20. 9:15,16. 13:14. Deut. 3:24. 11:2,3. 2 Kings 17:36. Ps. 89: 13. 136:12. Is. 51:9. 63:12. Jer 31:11. 32:17.
t Is. 66:19,20. Jer. 3:19. Zech. 14:16
u 1 Sam. 17:46. 2 Kings 19:19. 2 Chr 6:33. Ps. 22:27. 67:2. 72:10,11. 86 9. Is. 11:9. Rev. 11:15.
x Ps. 102:15. 117:
† Heb. *thy name is called upon this house.* 29.
y Deut. 20:1—4. 31:3—6. Josh. 1:2—5. 2 Chr. 6:34.
z Num. 31:1, &c. Josh. 6:2—5. 8:1,2. Judg. 1:1,2. 4:6. 6:14. 1 Sam. 15: 3,18. 30:8. 2 Sam. 5:19,23.
a 2 Chr. 14:9—12. 18:31. 20:6—13. 32:20.
‡ Heb. *the way of the city.*
b See on 16.—Ps. 78:67—69. 132:13,14. Dan. 9:17—19.
§ Or, *right,* Gen. 18:25. Ps. 9:4. Jer. 5:28.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 31—45. It is a debt we owe to our brethren, neighbors, friends, and strangers, yea, to our enemies, to intercede for them as their cases may require; and we shall not be condemned for long prayers, if they be not *formal*, and rendered tedious by vain, unmeaning repetitions.—It is a comfort to the believer to reflect, how many prayers of parents, ministers, and pious friends, are laid up before God on his behalf; and how many are now praying for him in one place or other. All these shall, in due time, be answered in blessings unnumbered: nay, even whole nations, through successive generations, have reaped the benefits of the fervent supplications of a single true believer. Such intercessors form the unseen strength and bulwark of kingdoms: may the Lord increase their numbers, and may we be found among them!—Yet neither the prayers of godly friends, nor even the Savior's intercession, will benefit those who are never brought to pray earnestly for themselves. For He intercedes for those alone, who eventually are led to 'believe in his name,' and 'who come to God by Him:' and the prayers of his people, for such as continue impenitent and unbelieving, return into their own bosom. (*John* 17: 6—10, 20, 21.)

SCOTT.

Verses 35, 36.

M. R.—17:1. 18:36—40. *Jer.* 14:1—6.—The *same words* are rendered in Chr. 'When Thou hast taught them the good way in which they should walk.' (2 *Chr.* 6:26, 27.)—The divine teaching particularly respects this 'good way in which we ought to walk,' and not merely notions and speculations. SCOTT.

Verse 38.

The plague, &c.] That is, 'His own sore, and his own grief.' 2 *Chr.* 6:29.—This interpretation doubtless includes, though it is not confined to, that meaning which is very frequently given to the expression, 'the plague of his own heart;' namely, the prevalence of indwelling sin, which as a *plague*, or pestilential disease, is the grief and sore of every true believer; and, in connection with the guilt which in consequence accumulates upon his conscience, brings him, day by day, to offer his fervent prayers and supplications before the mercy-seat of a forgiving God. ID.

Verse 40.

As 'there is no man that sinneth not,' (46) so no man could worship a holy God, 'if there were not forgiveness with Him.' (*Gen.* 22: 11, 12. *Ps.* 130:3, 4.) Unless this was clearly revealed, that reverential fear, which unites with hope, and leads men to repent and seek the Lord, would be extinguished, when sinners became acquainted with their own character and state, and with the perfections and holy laws of God; and that slavish fear alone would remain, which unites with enmity and despair, and drives men further and further from God and his worship. (*Jam.* 2:19, 20.)—It is very instructive to compare the several parts of this prayer, with the preceding prophecies, and the subsequent history; which may in good measure be done by consulting the M. R. SCOT.

Verses 41—43.

There was a court built, called 'the court of the Gentiles,' which was appropriated to the use of those, who came from other nations to worship the God of Israel, but were not circumcised, and did not observe the ceremonial law.—The prejudices of the Jews, in the days of Christ, against the admission of Gentiles into the church, arose from ignorance of the Scriptures, connected with national prejudices, pharisaical pride, and bigotry; which being early imbibed, were not easily removed even from true believers. ID.

Verses 44, 45.

(*M. R.*) *Thou shalt send*, &c. (44) That is, in *any just and necessary war*; for God did not *send* the Israelites, when they were actuated by selfishness to engage in oppressive and unrighteous wars: nei

46 ¶ If they sin against thee, (for [c] *there is* no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives [d] unto the land of the enemy, far or near:

47 *Yet* [e] if they shall [*] bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, [f] saying, We have sinned, and have [g] done perversely, we have committed wickedness;

48 And *so* [h] return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies which led them away captive, and [i] pray unto thee toward their land which thou gavest unto their fathers, [k] the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name:

49 Then [l] hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their [†] cause;

50 And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, [m] and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them:

51 For they *be* [n] thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of [o] the furnace of iron:

52 That [p] thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them [q] in all that they call for unto thee.

53 For thou didst [r] separate them from among all the people of the earth, *to be* [s] thine inheritance, [t] as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O LORD God.

54 ¶ And it was *so*, that, [u] when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from [v] kneeling on his knees [w] with his hands spread up to heaven.

55 And he stood, and [x] blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying,

56 [y] Blessed *be* the LORD, that [z] hath given rest unto his people Is-

in the severest rebukes of his providence; no man but what is in danger of falling into gross sin, and will, if God leave him to himself. 2. He supposes what may well be expected, if Israel revolt from God, that God will be *angry with them*, and *deliver them into the hand of their enemies*, to be carried captive into a strange country, *v.* 46. 3. He then supposes they bethink themselves, consider their ways; for afflictions put men upon consideration; and when once they are brought to consider, they repent and pray, confess their sins, and humble themselves, (*v.* 47.) and *return to God in the land of their enemies*, whom they had forsaken in their own. 4. He supposes, that in their prayers they will look toward their own holy land, city, and house, and directs them so to do, (*v.* 48) for his sake, who gave them that land, chose that city, and to whose honor that house was built. 5. He prays, that then God would *hear their prayers, forgive their sins, plead their cause*, and incline their enemies to *have compassion on them*, *v.* 49, 50. God has all hearts in his hand, and can make their most cruel persecutors to pity his people. See this prayer answered, Ps. 106: 46. 6. He pleads their relation to God, and his interest in them, *v.* 51, 53.

Lastly, After all these particulars, he concludes with this general request, that God would hearken to all his praying people *in all that they call unto Him for*, *v.* 52. No place, now under the Gospel, can be imagined to add any acceptableness to the prayers made in or toward it, as the temple then did; that was a shadow, the substance is Christ; whatever we ask in his name, it shall be given us.

V. 54—61. We have here Solomon's *blessing of the people*, *v.* 55. He pronounced it standing, that he might be the better heard, and because he blessed as one having authority. Never were words

[*] Heb. *bring back to their heart.*
[f] Ezra 9:6,7. Neh. 1:6. 9:26—30. Ps. 106:6. Is. 64:6—12. Dan. 9:5—11. Zech. 12:10.
[g] Job 33:27,28. Jer. 31.18—20. Luke 15:18.
[h] Deut. 4:29. 6:5,6. Judg. 10:15,16. 1 Sam. 7:3,4. Neh. 1:9. Ps. 119:2, 10,145. Prov. 28:26. Is. 55:6,7. Jer. 3:10. 24:7. 29:12—14. Dan. 9:13. Acts 8:37. Rom. 10:10.
[i] See on 30.—Dan. 6:10.
[k] See on 44. 1 See on 30.
[†] Or, *right.* 45. 2 Kings 19:19. Zech. 1:15,16.
[m] 2 Chr. 30:9. Ezra 7:8,27,28. Neh. 1:11. 2:4—8. Ps. 106:46. Prov. 16: 7. Dan. 1:9,10. Acts 7:10.
[n] 53. Ex. 32:11,12. Num. 14:13—19. Deut. 9:26—29. 2 Chr. 6:39. Neh. 1:10. Is. 63:16—18. 64:9. Jer. 51:19.
[o] Deut. 4:20. Jer. 11:4.
[p] See on 29.—2 Chr. 6:40.
[q] Ps. 86:5. 145:18.
[r] Ex. 19:5,6. 33:16. Num. 23:9. Deut. 4:34. 7:6—8. 14:2. 32:9. 2 Cor. 6: 14—18. Tit. 2:14. 1 Pet. 2:9.
[s] Deut. 32:9. Jer. 10:16. Eph. 1:18.
[t] Deut. 33:1—3,26—29.
[u] Luke 11:1. 22:45.
[v] See on 2 Chr. 6:13.—Ps. 95:6. Luke 22:41,45. Acts 20:36. 21:5.
[w] See on 22.—2 Chr. 6:12.
[x] See on 14.—Num. 6:23—26. 2 Sam. 6:18. 1 Chr. 16:2.
[y] See on 15.
[z] Deut. 3:20. 12:10—12. Josh. 21:44. 2 Chr. 14:6. Heb. 4:3—9.

[c] 2 Chr. 6:36. Job 14:4. 15:14—16. Ps. 19:12. 130:3. 143:2. Prov. 20:9. Ec. 7:20. Is. 53:6. 64:6. Rom. 3: 19. Gal. 3:22. Jam. 3:2. 1 John 1: 8—10.
[d] Lev. 26:34—39. Deut. 4:26,27. 28: 36,64—68. 28:38. 2 Kings 17:6,18, 23. 25:21. Dan. 9:7—14. Luke 21:24.
[e] Lev. 26:40—45. Deut. 4:29—31. 30: 1,2. 2 Chr. 6:37. 33:12,13. Ez. 16: 61,63. 18:28. Heg. 1:7. Luke 15:17.

ther could they reasonably expect his assistance in them. It does not indeed appear from their history, that they were much engaged in such wars: and many circumstances, arising from the tenure of their lands, and other judicial regulations, as well as their religious ordinances, tending to constitute Israel a nation of agriculturists, powerfully counteracted the pernicious natural propensity of fallen man, both rulers and people, to make war their favorite and most honorable employment. SCOTT.

(44.) *To battle.*] 'This 6th case refers to wars undertaken by divine appointment: *whithersoever Thou shalt send them*; for in no other wars could they expect the blessing and concurrence of the Lord; in none other could the God of truth and justice *maintain their cause*. There were such wars under the Mosaic dispensation, there are none such under the Christian dispensation: [Notes, Josh. 23:3—10, &c.] nor can there be any; for the Son of man is come not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Except mere *defensive* war, all others are diabolic; and, *query*, were there no *provocations*, would there be any *attacks*, and consequently any need of *defensive* wars?' Dr. *A. Clarke*. But see Dr. *Wayland's* arguments against *all wars* (Elts. Mor. Science.) as *wicked, impolitic*, and *absurd*. ED.

Verses 46—53.

This concluding part of Solomon's intercession was evidently answered, in the restoration of the Jews after the Babylonish captivity. (*Lev.* 26:38—45. *Deut.* 4:29—31. *Neh.* 1:5—11. *Jer.* 29:11—14. *Ez.* 36:25—32.) Though the temple and city lay in ruins; yet when they bethought themselves, and repented, and prayed in the land of Chaldea, towards the land of Israel; the Lord heard, forgave, and restored them to their own land. (*Dan.* 9:1—19.) But it will hereafter receive another more remarkable answer, when the Jews shall be gathered from their present dispersion, become a part of the Christian church, and probably be reinstated in their own country.—All Solomon's arguments, in this plea for his people, were deduced from the Lord's choice of them, his separation of them from other nations to be his inheritance, and the favors which He had already conferred on them: and all inseparably connecting their returning peace and prosperity, with their deep humiliation, true repentance, conversion, and fervent prayer. (*Zech.* 12:9—14.)—It appears from Chr. that Solomon concluded with a passage taken from one of the Psalms. (2 *Chr.* 6:41, 42.)—*There is no man that sinneth not.* (46) *Ec.* 7:19, 20. *Rom.* 3:21—26. *Jam.* 3:1, 2. 1 *John* 1:8—10. 3:4—6. SCOTT.

Verses 55—61.

(*Josh.* 21:43—45. 23:14—16.) *Incline*, &c. (58) No blessing can be expected, whilst men continue wilfully disobedient. No human heart is of itself inclined to obey the call to repentance, faith, and newness of life, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. The first benefit communicated to sinners, through the intercession of Him whom Solomon typified, is 'the inclining of the heart to this obedience.' 'Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.' *Communion service.*—'As by thy special grace preventing us, Thou dost put into our hearts good desires.' *Col.*

rael, according to all that he promised: [a] there hath not [*] failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.

57 The [b] LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us:

58 That he may [c] incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep [d] his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers.

59 And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the LORD, be [e] nigh unto the LORD our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel [†] at all times, [f] as the matter shall require;

60 That [g] all the people of the earth may know that [h] the LORD *is* God, *and that there is* none else.

61 Let your heart therefore be [i] perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.

62 ¶ And [j] the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the LORD.

63 And Solomon offered [k] a sacrifice of peace-offerings, which he offered unto the LORD, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel [l] dedicated the house of the LORD.

64 The same day did the king [m] hallow the middle of the court that *was* before the house of the LORD: for there he offered burnt-offerings, and meat-offerings, and the fat of the peace-offerings: because [n] the brazen altar that *was* before the LORD *was* too little to receive the burnt-offerings, and meat-offerings, and the fat of the peace-offerings.

65 And at that time Solomon [o] held a feast, and all Israel with him, [p] a great congregation, [q] from the entering in of Hamath unto [r] the river of Egypt, before the LORD our God, [s] seven days and seven days, *even* fourteen days.

66 On [t] the eighth day he sent the people away: and they [‡] blessed the king, and went unto their tents, [u] joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people.

more fully spoken, or more pertinently; never was congregation dismissed with that which was more likely to affect them and abide with them.

I. He gives God the glory of the great and kind things He had done for Israel, *v.* 56. He blesses God who has given, he does not say wealth, honor, power, victory, to Israel; but *rest*, as if that were a blessing more valuable: let not those who have rest, undervalue that blessing, then, though they want some other. He compares their blessings with the promises; does, as it were, write a receipt in full on the back of these bonds, to the everlasting honor of the divine faithfulness, and the everlasting encouragement of all those that build on the divine promises.

II. He blesses himself and the congregation, expressing his earnest desire and hope of these four things. 1. The presence of God with them, (*v.* 57.) that is all in all to the happiness of a church and nation, and of every particular person. 2. The power of his grace on them; '*Let Him be with us*, not to enlarge our coasts, and increase our wealth, but to *incline our hearts to Himself*,' *v.* 58. Spiritual blessings are the best, which we should covet earnestly: our hearts are naturally averse to our duty, and apt to decline from God; it is his grace that inclines them, grace that must be obtained by prayer. 3. An answer to this his prayer, *v.* 59. Let a gracious return be made to every prayer that shall be made here, and that will be a continual answer to this prayer. What Solomon here asks for his prayer, is still granted in the intercession of Christ, which his supplication typified; that powerful, prevailing intercession *is before the Lord our God day and night;* for our great Advocate attends continually to this very thing, and we may depend on Him to maintain our cause, on all occasions, as the matter shall require, so as to speak for us *the word of the day in its day*, (as the original is here,) from which we shall receive grace sufficient, suitable, and seasonable, *in every time of need.* 4. The glorifying of God in the enlargement of his kingdom among men. Let Israel be thus blessed, thus favored; not that all people may become tributaries to us, but *that all people may know that the Lord is God*, and He only, and may come and worship Him, *v.* 60. With this, Solomon's prayers, like *the prayers of his father, are ended;* (Ps. 72: 19, 20.) *Let the whole earth be filled with his glory:* we cannot close our prayers with a better summary than this, *Father, glorify thy name.*

[a] Josh. 21:45. 23:14,15. Luke 1:54,55, 72,73. 21:33.
[*] Heb. *fallen.* 1 Sam. 3:19. 2 Kings 10:10.
[b] Deut. 31:6,8. Josh. 1:5,9. 1 Chr. 28: 9. 2 Chr. 32:7,8. Ps. 46:7,11. Is. 8: 10. 41:10. Matt. 1:23. 28:20. Rom. 8:31. Heb. 13:5.
[c] Ps. 119:36. Cant 1:4. Jer. 31:33. Ez. 36:26,27. Phil. 2:13. Heb. 13:21.
[d] See on Deut. 4:1,45. 6:1.
[e] Ps. 102:1,2. 112:2. John 17:9,20—24. 1 John 2:1.
[†] Heb. *the thing of a day in his day.* Luke 11:3.
[f] Deut. 33:25.
[g] See on 43.—Josh. 4:24. 1 Sam. 17:46. 2 Kings 19:19.
[h] 18:39. Deut. 4:35,39. Is. 44:6,8,24. 45:5,6,22. Jer. 10:10—12. Joel 2:27.
[i] 11:4. 15:3,14. Gen. 17:1. 2 Kings 20:3. 1 Chr. 28:9. Job 1:1,8. Ps. 37: 37. 2 Cor. 7:1. Phil. 3:12—16.
[j] 2 Sam. 6:17—19. 2 Chr 7:4—7.
[k] Lev. 3: 1 Chr. 29:21. 2 Chr. 15:11. 29:32—35. 30:24. 35:7—9. Ezra 6: 16,17. Ez. 45:17. Mic. 6:7.
[l] Num. 7:10,11,84—88. 2 Chr. 2:4. 7: 5. Ezra 6:16,17. Neh. 12:27. John 10:22.
[m] 2 Chr. 7:7.
[n] 2 Chr. 4:1.
[o] 2. Lev. 23:34—43. 2 Chr. 7:8,9.
[p] 2 Chr. 30:13. Ps. 40:9,10.
[q] 4:21,24. Num. 34:8. Josh. 13:5. Judg. 3:3. 2 Kings 14:25. Am. 6:14.
[r] Gen. 15:18. Ex. 23:31. Num. 34:5. Josh. 13:3.
[s] 2 Chr. 7:8,9. 30:23.
[t] 2 Chr. 7:10. 31:1.
[‡] Or, *thanked.* 1,47.
[u] Deut. 12:7,12,18. 16:11. 2 Chr. 29: 36. 30:26,27. Neh. 8:10. Ps. 95:1, 2. 100:1,2. Is. 61:3,10. 66:13,14. Jer. 31:12—14. Zeph. 3:14. Zech. 9:9,17. Acts 2:46. Gal. 5:22. Phil. 4:4.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 46—66. We are, alas! all sinners, and sin is the cause of all calamities public and personal; and unless forsaken and forgiven, it must terminate in final misery. But when the vilest transgressor bethinks himself, and examines his heart and life; when he is humbled before God, and penitently confesses that he has sinned, has done perversely, and committed wickedness; when he returns to the Lord with his whole heart, and prays unto Him, in the Savior's name: then he has begun to receive the benefit of his intercession, and the Father will hear in heaven his supplication, and maintain his cause. Then, whatever be his grief, his burden and terror, and 'the plague of his own heart,' the guilt of his conscience, the depravity of his nature, his evil habits, the force of temptation, or the pressure of affliction, he will bring it, and spread it in secret before a heart-searching and merciful God: thus he will obtain pardon and peace, and learn to love and fear the Lord all his days. In this manner the Israel of God is established and sanctified, and the backslider is recovered and healed; the stranger is brought nigh, and the mourner comforted; the name of God is glorified, and numbers are added to the church of such as shall be saved.—By the example of Israel, other nations should be warned and instructed: public affairs should be managed in the spirit of faith and devotion: public calamities should excite to national repentance, reformation, and prayer: and these things would best secure public peace and prosperity. The same should be the conduct of churches, families, and individuals.—May 'the Lord then incline our hearts unto Him, that we may walk in all his ways, and keep his commandments and statutes;' may we abound in his work, and stir up others to do the same: may we love the Lord, and do good to and pray for one another, and rejoice together for all the goodness, that the Lord has done for us and for his people! Then shall we enjoy some of the days of heaven on earth, and be continually preparing for that world, where the feast of holy love and joy will be unalloyed and eternal.

SCOTT.

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for Easter Sunday.—'We have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will.' *Art.* x. This, therefore, we should beg of God for others, and for ourselves, when we perceive our need of it: for when this is granted all else will follow. Yet Solomon afterwards *exhorted* the people to be 'perfect with the LORD, &c.' (61): and this is the Scriptural method, though to many it appears inconsistent: but the exhortation reminds men of their duty; and the prayer or promise shows how they may do it. (*Ps.* 51:10. 110 3. *Ez.* 11:17—20. 18:30—32. 36:25—27. *Phil.* 2:12, 13.) SCOTT.

Verses 63—65.

(*Num.* 7:) (*M. R.* 1.)—The people separated on the 23d day of the 7th month, the day after the close of the feast of tabernacles; (2 *Chr.* 7:9, 10.) so that the dedication of the temple must have preceded. And, as the great day of atonement was observed on the 10th of the 7th month, it is not improbably conjectured, that the seven days of the feast of dedication preceded that solemnity; and that the people waited after it, to keep the feast of tabernacles also, before they returned home. (*Lev.* 16:29—31. 23:26—32, 34—36.)—*The brazen altar*, &c. (64) 2 *Chr.* 4:1.—*From the entering in of Hamath*, &c. (65) *M. R.* q, r. SCOTT.

CHAP. IX.

God appears again to Solomon, and makes a covenant with him, 1—9. Transactions between Solomon and Hiram, 10—14. Solomon builds or rebuilds several cities, 15—19. He subjects the remnant of the Canaanites to bond-service, and employs the Israelites in more honorable offices, 20—23. Pharaoh's daughter removes to her house, 24. Solomon sacrifices thrice every year, 25. His navy fetches gold from Ophir, 26—28.

AND [a] it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and [c] all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do;

2 That the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, [d] as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon.

3 And the LORD said unto him, [e] I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: [f] I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, [g] to put my name there for ever: and [h] mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

4 And [i] if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, *and* wilt keep my statutes and my judgments:

5 Then [k] I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel.

6 *But* [l] if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments *and* my statutes which I have set before you, but [m] go and serve other gods, and worship them:

7 Then [n] will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and [o] this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and [p] Israel shall be a proverb and a by-word among all people:

8 And at [q] this house, *which* is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, [r] Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house?

9 And they shall answer, [s] Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought

III. He solemnly charges his people to continue and persevere in duty to God, (*v.* 61.) 'Let your obedience be universal without dividing, upright without dissembling, and constant without declining;' this is evangelical perfection.

V. 62—66. We read before, that Judah and Israel were eating and drinking, and very cheerful, under their own vines and fig-trees; here we have them so in God's courts; now they found Solomon's words true concerning wisdom's ways, that they are ways of pleasantness.

1. They had abundant joy and satisfaction, while they attended at God's house, for there, (1.) Solomon offered a great sacrifice, *v.* 63. enough to have drained the country of cattle, if it had not been a very fruitful land. When Moses dedicated his altar, the peace-offerings were 24 *bullocks; rams, goats, and lambs*, 180; (Num. 7: 88.) then the people were poor, but now they were increased in wealth, more was expected; where God sows plentifully, He must reap accordingly. All these sacrifices could not be offered in one day, but in the several days of the feast; thirty oxen a day served Solomon's table, but thousands shall go to God's altar; few are thus minded, to spend more on their souls than on their bodies. The brazen altar was not large enough to receive all these sacrifices, so that, to serve the present occasion, they were forced to offer many of them *in the middle of the court*, *v.* 64. Some think, on altars of earth or stone, erected for the purpose, and taken down when the solemnity was over; others think, on the bare ground: they that will be generous in serving God, need not stint themselves for want of room and occasion. (2.) He kept a feast, the feast of tabernacles, as it should seem, after the feast of dedication, and both together lasted 14 days; (*v.* 65.) yet they said not, *Behold, what a weariness is it!*

2. They carried this joy and satisfaction with them to their own houses. They rejoiced in God's blessing, both on the royal family and on the kingdom; thus should we go home, rejoicing, from holy ordinances, and go on our way, rejoicing for God's goodness to our Lord Jesus, (of whom *David his servant* was a type,) in the advancement and establishment of his throne, pursuant to the covenant of redemption, and to all believers, his spiritual Israel, in their sanctification and consolation, pursuant to the covenant of grace; if we rejoice not herein always, it is our own fault.

CHAP. IX. V. 1—9. God had given a real answer to Solomon's prayer, and tokens of his acceptance of it immediately, by the *fire from heaven* which consumed the sacrifices; (as we find, 2 Chr. 7: 1.) but here we have a more express and distinct answer to it. Observe,

I. How God appeared to him, as at Gibeon, in a dream or vision, *v.* 2. The comparing of it with that, intimates it was the very night after he had finished the solemnities of his festival, for so that was, 2 Chr. 1: 6, 7. And then *v.* 1. speaking of Solomon's finishing all his buildings, which was not till many years after the dedication of the temple, must be read thus, *Solomon finished;* (as it is 2 Chr. 7: 11.) and *v.* 2. must be read, *and the Lord had appeared.*

II. Its purport. 1. He assures him of his special presence in the temple, in answer to his prayer, *v* 3. Men cannot make a place holy, yet what we, in sincerity, devote to God, we may hope He will graciously accept, as his. Apply it to persons, the living temples; those whom God hallows or sanctifies, whom He sets apart for Himself, have his eye, his heart, his love and care, and this, perpetually.

2. He shows him that he and his people were, for the future, *on their good behavior;* let them not be secure now, as if they might live as they please, now they have the *temple of the Lord* among them, Jer. 7: 4. God deals plainly with us, sets before us good and evil. God here tells Solomon,

(1.) The establishment of his kingdom depended on the constancy of his obedience, *v.* 4, 5. for on that condition the promise was made, Ps. 132: 12. If we perform our part of the covenant, God will not fail to perform his; if we improve the grace God has given us, He will confirm us to the end.

(2.) The ruin of his kingdom would be the certain consequence of his or his children's apostasy from God; *v.* 6. *At all*, &c. *v.* 6. it is thought should be read, *altogether;* '*if you shall altogether turn from following Me.*' Forsaking God's service, deserting his altar, and going to serve other gods, was the covenant-breaking sin. They prided themselves in the stateliness and magnificence of the temple, but let them know it is not so high as to be out of the reach of God's judgments, if they vilify it so as to exchange it for groves and idol-temples, and yet, at the same time, magnify it so as to think it secures the favor of God to them, though they ever so much corrupt themselves; and the guilty, self-convicted, self-condemned, Israelites, will be forced to acknowledge, with shame, that they themselves were its ruin; for when it shall be asked, *Why hath the Lord done thus to this house?* they cannot but answer, It was *because they forsook the Lord their God.* See Deut. 29: 24, 25. Their sin will be read in their punishment.

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a 6:37,38. 7:1,51. 2 Chr. 7:11.
b 2 Chr. 8:1—6. Ec. 2:4.
c 11,19. Ec. 2:10. 6:9.
d 3:5. 11:9. 2 Chr. 1:7—12. 7:12.
e 2 Kings 20:5. Ps. 10:17. 66:19. 116: 1. Dan. 9:23. John 11:42. Acts 10: 31.
f 8:10,11. Ex. 20:11. Num. 16:38. Matt. 6:9.
g See on 8:29.—Deut. 12:5,11,21. 16:11.
h Deut. 11:12. 2 Chr. 6:40. 7:15,16. Ps. 132:13,14. Cant. 4:9,10. Jer. 15:1.
i 3:14. 8:25. 11:4,6,38. 14:8. 15:5. Deut. 28:1.—2 Chr. 7:17,18. Job 23: 11,12. Ps. 15:2. 26:1,11. Prov. 20: 7. Zech. 3:7. Luke 1:6. 1 Thes. 4: 1,2.
k 2:4. 6:12. 8:15,20. 2 Sam. 7:12,16. 1 Chr. 22:10. Ps. 89:28—39. 132:11, 12.
l 1 Sam. 2:30. 2 Sam. 7:14—16. 1 Chr. 28:9. 2 Chr. 7:19—22. 15:2.
m 11:4—10. Josh. 23:15,16.
n Lev. 18:24—28. Deut. 4:26. 29:26—28. 2 Kings 17:20—23. 25:9. Jer. 7: 15. 24:9. Ez. 33:27—29. Luke 21:24.
o See on 3.—2 Kings 25:9. 2 Chr. 7:20. 36:19. Jer. 7:4—14. 26:6,18. 52:13. Lam. 2:6,7. Ez. 24:21. Mic. 3:12. Matt. 24:2. Luke 21:24.
p Deut. 28:37. Neh. 4:1—4. Ps. 44: 14. Is. 65:15. Jer. 24:9. Lam. 2: 15,16. Joel 2:17.
q 2 Chr. 7:21. Is. 64:11. Jer. 19:8. 49:17. 50:13. Dan. 9:12.
r Deut. 29:24. Jer. 22:8,9,28.
s Deut. 29:25—28. 2 Chr. 7:22. Jer. 2:10—13,19. 5:19. 16:10—13. 50:7. Lam. 2:16,17. 4:13—15. Ez. 36:17—20.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX. V. 1, 2. Solomon did not finish his other buildings, till above 12 years after the dedication of the temple; (10. *Note*, 7:1.) and it is exceedingly improbable, that this gracious appearance of God to him was delayed so long. Some expositors therefore render these verses, 'And it was, that thus Solomon finished,' &c.—'And the LORD appeared,' &c.—The two subjects are kept entirely distinct in Chr. (2 *Chr.* 7:11, 12.)—The encouragement given Solomon, while building the temple, (6:11—13.) was either sent by a prophet, or given in an answer by the high-priest: for this was only the *second* appearance of God to him. (3:5—14.) SCOTT.

Verses 4—6.

Solomon and his posterity, and Israel in that and future ages, were alike concerned in these promises and warnings. The obedience intended in all such declarations, is the *unreserved*, though *imperfect*, obedience of a penitent believer; by which he evidences his cordial acceptance of unmerited mercies, and aims to glorify the God of his salvation. SCOTT.

Verses 7—9.

These denunciations were remarkably fulfilled during the Babylonish captivity; but the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and the state of the Jews to this very day, are the most extraordinary

upon them all this evil.

[*Practical Observations.*]

10 ¶ And it came to pass [t] at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD, and the king's house,

11 (*Now* [u] Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar-trees and fir-trees, and with gold, according to all his desire,) that then [v] king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land [x] of Galilee.

12 And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and * they pleased him not.

13 And he said, What cities *are* these which thou hast given me, [y] my brother? And he called them the land of * Cabul unto this day.

14 And Hiram [z] sent to the king six-score talents of gold.

15 ¶ And this *is* [a] the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised; for [b] to build the house of the LORD, and his own house, and [c] Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and [d] Hazor, and * Megiddo, and [f] Gezer.

16 *For* Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and given it *for* a present unto his [g] daughter, Solomon's wife.

17 And Solomon built Gezer, and [h] Beth-horon the nether,

V. 10—14. Solomon's agreement with Hiram, when the building-work was to be begun, we read before, *ch.* 5. Here we have an account of their fair and friendly parting, when the work was done.

1. Hiram made good his bargain, *v.* 11, 14. So far from envying Solomon's growing greatness and reputation, and being jealous of him, he helped to magnify him; Solomon's power, with Solomon's wisdom, needs not to be dreaded by any of his neighbors; God honors him, therefore Hiram will.

2. Solomon, no doubt, made good his bargain, and gave Hiram *food for his household*, as was agreed, *ch.* 5: 9. But here we are told that, over and above that, he gave him 20 cities, (small ones we may suppose, like those mentioned here, *v.* 19.) *in the land of Galilee*, *v.* 11. It should seem, they were not allotted to any of the tribes of Israel, (for the border of Asher came up to them, Josh. 19: 27. which intimates that it did not include them,) but continued in the hands of the natives, till Solomon mastered them, and made a present of them to Hiram; it becomes those that are great and good, to be generous. Hiram came to see these cities, and did not like them, *v.* 12. Solomon afterward repaired them, and then *caused the children of Israel to inhabit them;* 2 Chr. 8: 2. which intimates that, before, they did not; Solomon, no doubt, honorably gave Hiram an equivalent in something else. But the cities were not agreeable to Hiram's genius; the Tyrians were merchants, trading men, that lived in fine houses, and became rich by navigation, but knew not how to value a country that was fit for corn and pasture, that was business out of their way; therefore Hiram desired Solomon to take them again; he called the country the land of *Cabul*, a Phenician word (so Josephus) signifying *displeasing*, *v.* 3. he knew not what to do with them, and if he would please to gratify him, let it be in his own element, by becoming his partner in trade, as we find he did, *v.* 27. See how the providence of God suits both the accommodation of this earth to the various dispositions of men, and the dispositions of men to the various accommodations of the earth, and all for the good of mankind in general; in which observe the wisdom of Him whose all souls are, and all lands.

V. 15—28. We have here a further account of Solomon's greatness:

I. His buildings. Perhaps there was some complaint of the heaviness of the taxes, (*v.* 15.) which the historian excuses from the greatness of his undertakings; he raised it not for war, as other princes, but for building. Solomon verily began his work at the right end, he built God's house first; if we begin with God, He will go on with us; let the first-fruits be his, and the after-fruits will the more comfortably be ours, Matt 6: 33. Those consult not their own interest, that defer to the last what they design for pious uses.

The further order in Solomon's buildings is observable: God's house first, for religion; then his own, for his own convenience; then a house for his wife, to which she removed, as soon as it was ready for her; (*v.* 24.) then Millo, the Town-house, or Guild-hall; then the wall of Jerusalem, the royal city; then some cities of note and strength in the country, which were decayed and unfortified, Hazor, Megiddo, &c. These he rebuilt at his own charge. Among the rest, he built Gezer, which Pharaoh took out of the hands of the Canaanites, and made a present of to his daughter, Solomon's wife, *v.* 16. Then he built cities for convenience, for store, for his chariots, and for his horsemen, *v.* 19. And lastly, he built for pleasure in Lebanon, for his hunting perhaps, or other diversions there.

t 1. 6:37,38. 7:1. 2 Chr. 8:1.
u See on 5:8—10. 2 Chr. 2:8—10,16.
v 2 Chr. 8:2.
x See on Josh. 20:7.
* Heb. *were not right in his eyes.* Num. 22:34. Judg. 14:3. *margins.*
y 5:1,2. Am. 1:9.
† That is, *Displeasing*, or, *dirty.* Josh. 19:27.
z 11,28. 10:10,14,21.
a 21.—See on 5:13.
b 10. 6:38. 7:1. 2 Chr. 8:1.
c 24. 11:27. Judg. 9:6,20. 2 Sam. 5: 9. 2 Kings 12:20.
d Josh. 11:1. 19:36. Judg. 4:2. 2 Kings 15:29.
e 4:12. Josh. 17:11. Judg. 5:19. 2 Kings 9:27. 23:29,30. 2 Chr. 35:22. Zech. 12:11.
f 16,17. Josh. 10:33. 16:10. 21:21. Judg. 1:29. 1 Chr. 6:67. 20:4.
g See on 24. 3:1.
h Josh. 16:3. 21:22. 2 Chr. 8:5,6.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—9. The Lord is ever ready to hear the prayers which we make before Him, and to manifest his acceptance of our upright services: and when we present ourselves, in body and soul, to be consecrated as the temples of the Holy Spirit, to his glory, He will hallow and sanctify us by his grace, and render us meet to be a holy habitation for Himself; though before we were altogether polluted. (*Eph.* 2: 19—22.) In and through Jesus Christ, his eyes and his heart are always on every true believer, to watch over him, and to rejoice in doing him good; yet it is only at intervals, that He manifests his presence, and lifts up the light of his countenance upon him: but in heaven we shall always behold his face, and be filled with unalloyed, uninterrupted felicity.—After all the services which we can perform, we stand on the same terms with the Lord as before: nothing can purchase for us an exemption from obedience, or a dispensation to sin, in any case whatever: nor would the true believer desire such a license. As for those, who merely call themselves Christians, of every sect and creed, who make their forms and notions an excuse for breaking God's commandments, they will ere long be exposed to universal and everlasting contempt.—The conduct of individuals, of churches, and nations, who are exposed to great calamities, when carefully considered, will always sufficiently answer the inquiry, 'Why hath the LORD done this unto them?' Nay, even infidels and profligates frequently justify God in the punishment of unrighteous professors of religion, though not without casting unwarrantable scoffs and insults upon them.—Parents, who set their children good examples and give them good instructions, are warranted to hope, that their prayers for them will be answered, and the blessings of the covenant entailed upon them. (*Gen.* 18: 18, 19.) But the examples of those, whose sins are recorded in their punishment, may be equally instructive.—The present dispersed and despised state of the Jews is both a demonstration of the truth of the Scriptures, and a daily instruction and warning to us, not to trust in outward privileges, not to trifle with the commandments of God, and not to neglect the salvation of the Gospel. We have indeed a better covenant, founded on better promises, than that made with the nation of Israel: but let us see to it, that it is really made *with us;* and that the law of God is written in our hearts, as the proof that our iniquities are forgiven. If this be the case, our persevering obedience, as well as faith in the Savior, is provided for; and the Lord 'will put his fear into our hearts, that we may never depart from Him.' (*Jer.* 32: 38—41.)

SCOTT.

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accomplishment of them. (*Deut.* 29:21—25. 2 *K.* 25:8—10. *Jer.* 40: 2, 3. *Lam.* 1:3—11. 2:15, 16. 4:13—16.) SCOTT.

Verse 11—14.

Hiram had furnished Solomon with timber, not only for building the temple, but also for his own house, and his many other magnificent works: and he likewise 'had sent him 120 talents of gold;' for that seems to be the proper construction of v. 14. Solomon therefore was indebted to Hiram, beyond the corn and wine and oil agreed upon: (5:11.) and he gave him twenty cities in Galilee as a compensation. They seem to have been small towns in the vicinity of Tyre, beyond the boundaries of the land, as divided by Joshua, and lately taken from the ancient inhabitants. Probably they lay in ruins. ED.

(13.) *Cabul,*] 'Sandy.' *Talmud.* In the Phenician, 'not pleasing,' *Jos.* 'As nothing.' *Hiller. Gill.* 'Border,' *Sept.* 'Clay,' R. *Solomon.* 'Given for a debt,' *Arab. Mich.* So also Houb. and Boothr. as Hiram had advanced 120 talents to Solomon. ED.

Verse 15.

The reason, &c.] That is, the *occasion* which there was for the levy, in order to accomplish so many great and magnificent works. or, the *method* in which it was raised. (5:13—18.) SCOTT.

Millo.] 'Mt. Moriah was divided from Sion by a valley, which was guarded on both sides by banks and buttresses, works of immense labor and vast expense; and these works it is probable were called "Millo." The Heb. signifies *fulness*, and the Chal. paraphrase interprets it a *bank, wall*, or *buttress*.' *Lamy* in HEWLETT. Dr. *A. Clarke*, and others, consider it to be this valley filled up, and the town-house built upon it. ED.

18 And [i] Baalath, and [k] Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land,

19 And all [l] the cities of store that Solomon had, and cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen, and * that which Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.

20 *And* all the people, *that were* [m] left of the [n] Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which *were* not of the children of Israel;

21 Their children [o] that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were [p] not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon [q] levy a tribute [r] of bond-service unto this day.

22 But [s] of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen: [t] but they *were* men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his captains, and rulers of his chariots, and his horsemen.

23 These *were* the [u] chief of the officers that *were* over Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty, which bare rule over the people that wrought in the work.

24 But [x] Pharaoh's daughter came up out of [y] the city of David unto her house which *Solomon* had built for her: then did he build [z] Millo.

25 And [a] three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt-offerings and peace-offerings upon the altar which he built unto the LORD, and [b] he burnt incense † upon the altar that *was* before the LORD. [c] So he finished the house.

26 ¶ And king Solomon [d] made a navy of ships in [e] Ezion-geber, which *is* beside [f] Eloth, on the ‡ shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom.

27 And Hiram sent in the navy [g] his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon.

28 And they came to [h] Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, [i] four hundred and twenty talents, and brought *it* to king Solomon.

I. His workmen and servants. In doing such great works, he must needs employ abundance of workmen. The honor of great men is borrowed from their inferiors, who do that which they have the credit of.

1. Solomon [as was often done of old] employed those which remained of the conquered and devoted nations, in all the slavish work, *v.* 20, 21. We may suppose they renounced their idolatry, and submitted to Solomon's government, so that he could not, in honor, destroy them, and were so poor, that he could not levy money on them, therefore he served himself of their labor. Herein he observed God's law, (Lev. 25: 44.) *Thy bondmen shall be of the heathen;* and fulfilled Noah's curse on Canaan, *A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren*, Gen. 9: 25.

2. He employed Israelites in the more creditable services, *v.* 22, 23. they were God's freemen; but he made them soldiers and courtiers, and gave them offices, as he saw them qualified, among his chariots and horsemen, appointing some to support the service of the inferior laborers. Thus he preserved the dignity and liberty of Israel, and honored their relation to God as a kingdom of priests.

III. His piety and devotion, *v.* 25. he offered burnt-offerings extraordinary: namely, at the three yearly feasts, the passover, pentecost, and feast of tabernacles, in honor of the divine institution; beside what he offered at other times, both statedly, and on special occasions. With his sacrifices he burnt incense, not himself, (that was king Uzziah's crime,) but the priest for him, at his charge, and for his particular use. It is said, He offered *on the altar which he* himself *built*. He did not think his building an altar would excuse him from sacrificing, but rather engage him the more to it. Whatever pains we take, for the support of religion, to the glory of God, and the edification of others, we ourselves are likely to have the advantage of it.

IV. His merchandise. He built a fleet of trading ships, at Ezion-geber, (*v.* 26.) a port on the coast of the Red Sea, the furthest stage of the Israelites, when they wandered in the wilderness, Num. 33: 35. That wilderness, probably, now began to be peopled by the Edomites, which it was not then. To them this port had belonged, but David having subdued the Edomites, it now pertained to the crown of Judah. The fleet traded to Ophir in the East Indies; supposed to be what is now called *Ceylon:* [others suppose it to be the E. coast of Africa:] gold was the com-

* Heb. *the desire of Solomon which he desired.* See on 1. Ec. 2:10. 6:9.
m 2 Chr. 8:7,8.
n Gen. 15:19—21. Ex. 23:23,28—33. 34:11,12. Deut. 7:1—3.
o Judg. 1:21,27—35. 2:20—23. 3:1—4. Ps. 106:34—36.
p Josh. 15:63. 17:12,16—18.
q 15. 5:13. Judg. 1:28,35.
r Gen. 9:25,26. Ezra 2:55—58. Neh. 7:57. 11:3.
s Lev. 25:39.
t 4:1—27. 1 Sam. 8:11,12. 2 Chr. 8:9, 10.
u 5:16. 2 Chr. 2:18. 8:10.
x 16. 3:1. 7:8. 2 Chr. 8:11.
y 2 Sam. 5:9.
z 15. 11:27. 2 Chr. 32:5.
a Ex. 23:14—17. 34:23. Deut. 16:16. 2 Chr. 8:12,13.
b Ex. 30:7. 1 Chr. 23:13. 2 Chr. 26:16—21. 29:11. 34:25.
† Heb. *upon it which* was *before.*
c 6:38. 2 Chr. 8:16.
d 2 Chr. 8:17,18.
e 22:48. Num. 33:35. Deut. 2:8.
f 2 Kings 14:22.
‡ Heb. *lip.*
g 5:6,9. 22:49. 2 Chr. 20:36,37.
h 10:11. Gen. 10:29. 1 Chr. 29:4. 2 Chr. 3:18. 9:10. Job 22:24. 28:16. Ps. 45:9. Is. 13:12.
i 2 Chr. 8:18.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 10—28. Men are, and will be, of different judgments and dispositions; and they may be allowed to differ in all temporal matters, and in some things which pertain to the worship of God: but as all believers come to the mercy-seat of their reconciled Father, by Christ the living Way, and through his propitiation, and intercession; and as they all choose and delight in the same spiritual excellency of heavenly things; in these respects, they must and will be of one mind and of one judgment.—Nothing is truly valuable, but in proportion as it is useful: and that is most valuable which promotes the salvation of souls.—Few can resist the fascinating temptations of great prosperity; it gradually fosters pride and sensual indulgence, and eats out the life and power of godliness: and most of those, who have risen to great honor and affluence, after having given satisfactory evidence of real godliness, have evidently shown that their souls were losers in proportion. Let the rich and prosperous, then, 'rejoice with trembling,' and take heed lest they forget the Lord; and let the poor and obscure be thankful for their safer condition! (*P. O. Deut.* 8: *latter part. Notes,* 1 *Tim.* 6: 6—10, 17—19. *Jam.* 1: 9—11.) SCOTT.

Verse 18.

Tadmor in the wilderness.] This is supposed to have been the same with the city Palmyra, the magnificent ruins of which, in the midst of widely extended plains of barren sands, attract the attention, and excite the admiration, of modern travellers and antiquarians. But the architecture of these ruins, being evidently *Grecian*, does not allow us to suppose that they are the remains of buildings erected by Solomon; for they must be of much later date. SCOTT.

Tadmor.] 'City of Palms,' in Latin, 'Palmyra.' 'Situated in a valley with a S. exposure, in the midst of a beautiful palm grove in the desert. It was important as the bulwark of Judea against the wandering tribes from the Euphrates; and as the emporium of the commerce of E. and W. Asia, it was a large and opulent city in Trajan's time, who subjected the whole province (Palmyrene) to the Roman power. It was adorned with magnificent palaces, whose ruins still excite admiration, though it has been twice destroyed; under Zenobia, by Aurelian, in 275, and by the Saracens, in 744. These are described in the magnificent work of *Wood*, the Ruins of Palmyra. Among them are many beautiful columns, and remains of temples and towers, all admirably wrought of marble. The Temple of the Sun is the most beautiful. Palmyra, under its old name Tadmor, is now a village, and some poor families have built their huts amidst its magnificent ruins. See St. Martin's Hist. of Palm.' ENC. AM.

Verse 19.

(*M. R.—Note*, 4:26.) Perhaps the levy of service, raised for the building of these cities, gave occasion to the complaint of the people after his death. (12:4.) Note, 2 K. 20: 13. SCOTT.

Verse 21.

Bond-service.] 'When Sesostris (king of Egypt) returned from his wars, he caused temples to be built in all the cities of Egypt: but did not employ one *Egyptian* in the work; having builded the whole by the hands of the *captives* which he had taken in his wars; and caused this inscription to be placed on each temple:—"No native has labored in these." *Diod. Sic.*' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 26—28.

Ezion-geber, (*M. R.* e.)—This is perhaps as ancient and authentic an account of the East India trade, as any extant. (10:22.) SCOTT.

(28.) *Ophir.*] '*Calmet* places it at the sources of the Euphrates and Tigris. One place of this name was in India beyond the Ganges, another in Arabia, Job 22:24. But *Bruce* would prove—that Ezion-geber is on the Elanitic branch of the Red Sea: that *Tharshish* is Moka, near Melinda, in the Indian Ocean, in 3° S. Lat.: that *Ophir* is somewhere in Sofala, or the vicinity of Zamboze River, opposite Madagascar, where are gold and silver mines in abundance, from the remotest antiquity. And he proves: that no vessel could perform this voyage in less than 3 yrs. because of the monsoons—that more time need not be employed; and that this is the precise time, 1 K. 10:22. that this is "Sheba," (10:1.) or Sabia, or Azeba; and that gold, ivory and silver, &c. are the natural productions of this country. See his map and long dissertation.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

420 *talents.*] '450, says 2 Chr. 8:18. the 30 talents of difference being perhaps expended in the voyage.' GILL.

CHAP. X.

The queen of Sheba comes to visit Solomon, and to propose hard questions to him, 1, 2. He answers her questions: and she greatly admires his piety, wisdom, and magnificence, 3—9. Their presents to each other, 10—13. Solomon's yearly revenue, 14,15. His golden targets and shields, 16,17. His throne of ivory, 18—20. His rich vessels, and lucrative commerce; and the presents brought him, by such as came to hear his wisdom, 21—25. His chariots and horsemen, 26. The plenty of silver and cedar in his time, 27. Horses, chariots, and linen-yarn, brought out of Egypt, 28, 29.

AND [a] when the queen of [b] Sheba [c] heard of the fame of Solomon [d] concerning the name of the LORD, she came [e] to prove him with hard questions.

2 And she came to Jerusalem with [f] a very great train, with camels that bare [g] spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she [h] communed with him of all that was in her heart.

3 And Solomon [i] told her all her [*] questions: there was not *any* thing [j] hid from the king, which he told her not.

4 And when the queen of Sheba had seen all [k] Solomon's wisdom, and [l] the house that he had built,

5 And [m] the meat of

a 2 Chr. 9:1. Matt. 12:42. Luke 11:31.
b Gen. 10:7,28. 25:3. Job 6:19. Ps. 72:10,15. Is. 60:6. Jer. 6:20. Ez. 27:22,23. 38:13.
c 4:31,34.
d Job 28:23. Prov. 2:3—6. John 17:3. 1 Cor. 1:20,21.
e Judg. 14:12—14. Ps. 49:4. Prov. 1:6. Matt. 13:11,35. Mark 4:34.
f 2 Kings 5:5,9. Is. 60:6—9. Acts 25:23.
g Ex. 25:6. 2 Kings 20:13.
h Gen. 18:33. Job 4:2. Ps. 4:4. Luke 24:15.
i 2 Chr. 9:2. Prov. 1:5,6. 13:20. Is. 42:16. Matt. 13:11. John 7:17. 1 Cor. 1:30. Col. 2:3.
* Heb. *words*.
j See on 1.—3:12. 2 Sam. 14:17,20. Dan. 2:20—23. Heb. 4:12,13.
k 3:28. 4:29—31. 2 Chr. 9:3,4. Ez. 12:9. Matt. 12:42.
l 6: 7: m 4:22,23.

modity traded for, substantial wealth. It should seem, Solomon had, before, been Hiram's partner, or put a venture into his ships, (*v.* 14.) that encouraged him to build a fleet of his own. The success of others, in any employment, should quicken our industry; for *in all labor there is profit*. Solomon sent his own servants for factors, and merchants, and super-cargoes, but hired Tyrians for sailors, for they had *knowledge of the sea*, *v.* 27. Thus one nation needs another; not only as Christians, but as men, we are members one of another. Canaan, the holy land, the glory of all lands, had no gold in it: which teaches us that that part of the wealth of this world, which is for hoarding and trading, is not the best part of it, but that which is more immediately for the present support and comfort of life, our own and others; such were the productions of Canaan. Solomon got much by his merchandise, and yet has directed us to a better trade, within reach of the poorest, having assured us, from his own experience of both, that the *merchandise of Wisdom is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold*.

CHAP. X. Still Solomon looks great, and every thing in this ch. adds to his magnificence. We read nothing indeed of his charity, of no hospitals he built, or alms-houses; he made his kingdom so rich, that it did not need them; yet, no question, many poor were relieved from the abundance of his table. A church he had built, never to be equalled; schools or colleges he need not build any, his own palace is an academy, and his court a rendezvous of wise and learned men, as well as the centre of all the circulating riches of that part of the world. So that, putting all together, it must be owned, as it is here said, (*v.* 23.) that *king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches, and for wisdom*. Yet where Christ is, by his Word and Spirit, *behold, a greater than Solomon is there*.

V. 1—13. We have here an account of the queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon, no doubt, when in the height of his piety and prosperity. Our Savior calls her *the queen of the South*, for Sheba lay S. from Canaan. The common opinion is, it was in Africa; and the Christians in Ethiopia, to this day, are confident she came from their country, and that Candace, mentioned, Acts 8: 27. was her successor. But it is more probable she came from the S. part of Arabia the Happy. It should seem, she was a queen-regent, sovereign of her country. Observe,

I. Her errand; not to treat of trade or commerce, to adjust the limits of their dominions, to court his alliance for their mutual strength, or his assistance against some common enemy, the common occasions of the congress of crowned heads, and their interviews: but to satisfy her curiosity; and to prove him, whether he was so great a man as he was reported to be, *v.* 1. His fleet sailed near the coast of her country, and, probably, might put in there for fresh water: perhaps it was thus *she heard of the fame of Solomon*. She came to receive instruction; also, to *hear his wisdom*, and thereby to improve her own, (Matt. 12: 42.) that she might the better govern her kingdom. Those whom God has called to any public employment, particularly in the magistracy and ministry, should, by all means possible, improve themselves in that knowledge which will more and more qualify them for it, and enable them to discharge their trust well. But, it should seem, what she chiefly aimed at was, to be instructed in the things of God; she was religiously inclined, and had heard not only of the fame of Solomon, but *concerning the name of the Lord*, (*v.* 1.) the great name of that God whom Solomon worshipped, and from whom he received his wisdom, and with this God she desired to be better acquainted. Therefore does our Savior mention her inquiries after God, by Solomon, as aggravating the stupidity of those who inquire not after God, by our Lord Jesus Christ, though He, having lain in his bosom, was much better able to instruct them.

II. Her equipage; a very great retinue, agreeable to her rank, intending to try Solomon's wealth and generosity, as well as his wisdom, what entertainment he could, and would, give to a royal visitant, *v.* 2. Yet she came not as one begging, but brought enough to bear her charges; nothing mean or common, but gold, and precious stones, and spices, because she came to trade for wisdom, which she would purchase at any rate.

III. What entertainment Solomon gave her; he despised her not, nor blamed her; but bid her welcome, and all her train; allowed her to *commune with him of all that was in her heart*, (*v.* 2.) and gave her a satisfactory answer to *all her questions*, (*v.* 3.) whether natural, moral, political, or divine. He informed her, no doubt, with particular care, concerning God, and his law and instituted worship, that she might be persuaded to serve the Lord whom now she sought.

IV. How she was affected with what she saw and heard in Solomon's court. Divers things are here mentioned which she admired; the buildings and furniture of his palace; the provision made every day for his table; the orderly sitting of his servants, and the ready attendance of his ministers, without confusion, their rich liveries, and the propriety with which his cup-bearers waited at table; these things she admired, as adding much to his magnificence. But above all these, his wisdom, (*v.* 4.) and the last, which crowned all, his piety, the *ascent by which he went up to the house of the Lord*, with what gravity and seriousness, and an air of devotion in his countenance, he appeared, when he went to the temple, to wor-

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NOTES.

CHAP. X. V. 1, 2. Cush, the son of Ham, had a descendant called Seba, and, probably, he settled in Africa, to the S. of Egypt. (*Gen.* 10: 6, 7.) Eber also had a descendant called Sheba; and Abraham, a grandson by Keturah, called by the same name. (*Gen.* 10:28. 25:1—3.) On these and other accounts, it has been controverted, whether the queen of Sheba came from some part of Ethiopia in Africa, or from the most remote region of Arabia, near the Indian ocean, in Asia.—Tradition favors the former opinion, but then it is blended with manifest falsehoods. [See Dr. A. Clarke.] Our Lord says, 'The queen of the south came from the uttermost part of the earth, to hear the wisdom of Solomon:' and Ethiopia is more distant from Jerusalem than any part of Arabia; but at the same time it does not so well answer the description, 'the uttermost part of the earth.' (*Matt.* 12:42. Note, Deut. 30 13.) Learned men are therefore now generally of opinion, that Sheba lay in the most southern part of Arabia Felix, between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean; that the queen of Sheba was descended from Abraham by Keturah, and retained some traditional fragments of true religion; and that she had heard the fame of Solomon from the mariners of the fleet to Ophir, which had put into some of her ports: and indeed the more general connection, in which the name Sheba is used, in the subsequent part of Scripture, powerfully confirms this conclusion. (*M. R.* b.)—Our Lord's testimony, to the motives which influenced the queen of Sheba, sufficiently refutes the disadvantageous surmises which have often been entertained and advanced. She 'had heard of the fame of Solomon, concerning the name of the LORD,' and she came 'to hear his wisdom.' The report of his knowledge in the truth and precepts of religion, of his piety and zeal in the worship of JEHOVAH, and of the wisdom given him, peculiarly attracted her attention: and she came to propose many questions to him, which perplexed her mind, upon those important subjects; she could meet with no one, who could clear them up to her; and she desired 'to prove him,' whether he could or not. This shows that she was used to reflect seriously on religion; but for want of proper instruction, was not able to obtain satisfactory solutions of her difficulties: and considering her sex and rank, and the magnificence and indulgence in which she might have lived at home; her long journey, undertaken for these purposes, formed a strong proof of a pious and ingenuous mind, which knew the value of true wisdom, and was willing 'to buy the truth' at any price. (*Prov.* 23:23. *Acts* 8:26—31.)

Hard questions. (1) translated *a riddle*; *Judg.* 14:12—18. *dark saying*, *Ps.* 49:4—The plural, *dark sayings*, *Ps.* 78:2. *Prov.* 1:6—*Ps.* 78:2. *Prov.* 1:6. SCOTT. 'Riddles, problems, fables, apologues, &c. formed the principal part of the wisdom of the E.; indeed they use and delight in them to the present day.' Dr. *A. Clarke*. Note, Judg. 14: 12. 'The Hindoos, especially their females, take great delight in riddles, apologues and fables. By this method they convey pleasure, instruction, or reproof.' ROBERTS.

Verses 4, 5.

M. R.—This event probably took place about the middle of Solomon's reign, at least before he began to turn aside to idolatry. SCOTT.

(5.) *No more spirit* (breath?) *in her*.] 'She fainted. I have seen precisely the same effect produced: a lady, who was herself an artist, viewing some exquisitely finished oriental paintings, was so struck with astonishment, that she twice nearly fainted; and was obliged to leave the room. What happened to the queen of Sheba is a natural and not uncommon effect, which will be produced in a delicate, sensible [sensitive] mind, at the sight of rare and extraordinary productions of art.' Dr. A. CLARKE. Fainting is often produced by over excitement of *wonder*, and its kindred sentiments, in camp-meetings, &c. ED.

his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the * attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his † cup-bearers, and his [n] ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD, [o] there was no more spirit in her.

[*Practical Observations.*]

6 And she said to the king, It was a true ‡ report that I heard in mine own land of thy § acts and of thy wisdom.

7 Howbeit [p] I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen *it*: and behold, the half was not told me: ‖ thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.

8 Happy *are* thy men, [q] happy *are* these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, *and* that hear thy wisdom.

9 [r] Blessed be the LORD thy God, which [s] delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: [t] because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, [u] to do judgment and justice.

10 And [v] she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of [x] spices very great store, [y] and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.

11 And the navy also of Hiram that brought gold from [z] Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of [a] almug-trees, and precious stones.

12 And the king made of the almug-trees ¶ pillars for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, [b] harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug-trees, nor were seen unto this day.

13 And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba [c] all her desire whatsoever she asked, beside *that* ** which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her

ship God; with as much humility then, as majesty at other times. Many of the ancient versions [as the Vulg. Sept. Chal. Syr. and Arab.] read it, The *burnt-offerings which he offered in the house of the Lord:* [and so Luther] she observed with what a generous bounty he brought his sacrifices, and with what a pious fervor he attended the offering of them; never did she see so much goodness with so much greatness. Every thing was so surprising, that there was no more spirit in her, but she stood amazed; she had never seen the like.

V. How she expressed herself on this occasion.

1. She owned her expectation far outdone, though highly raised by report, *v.* 6, 7. Usually, things are represented, both by common fame and our own imagination much greater than we find them when examined; but here the truth exceeded both fame and fancy. Those who, through grace, are brought to experience the delights of communion with God, will say the one half was not told them of the pleasures of Wisdom's ways, and the advantages of her gates. Glorified saints, much more, will say it was a true report they heard of the happiness of heaven, but that the thousandth part was not told them, 1 Cor. 2: 9.

2. She pronounced them happy, that constantly attended him, and waited on him, *v.* 8. She was tempted to envy them, and wish herself one of them. Note, It is a great advantage to be in good families, and to have opportunity of frequent converse with those that are wise, good, and communicative. Many have this happiness, who know not how to value it. With much more reason may we say this of Christ's servants, *Blessed are they that dwell in his house, they will be still praising Him.*

3. She blessed God, the Giver of Solomon's wisdom, wealth, and advancement. Solomon's preferment began in the prophet's calling him *Jedidiah, because the Lord loved him*, 2 Sam. 12: 25. It more than doubles our comforts, if we have reason to hope they come from God's delight in us. *It was his pleasure concerning thee*, (so it may be read,) *to set thee on the throne;* not for thy merit's sake, but because so it seemed good unto Him. 'He has made thee king, not that thou mayest live in pomp and pleasure, and do what thou wilt, but *to do judgment and justice.*' This she kindly reminded Solomon of, and, no doubt, he took it kindly. Both magistrates and ministers must be more solicitous to do the duty, than to secure the honors and profits of their places. To this she attributes his prosperity, not to his wisdom, for bread is not always *to the wise*, but whoso *doeth judgment and justice*, it shall be *well with him*, Jer. 22: 15.

VI. How they parted. 1. She made a noble present to Solomon, *v.* 10. David had foretold concerning Solomon, that *to him should be given of the gold of Sheba*, Ps. 72: 15. The present of gold and spices the wise men of the east brought to Christ, was signified by this, Matt. 2: 11. Let those that are taught of God, give Him their hearts, and the present will be more acceptable than this of gold and spices. Mention is made of the great abundance Solomon had of his own, notwithstanding she presented, and he accepted, this gold. What we present to Christ, He needs not, but will have us so to express our gratitude. The almug-trees are here spoken of, (*v.* 11, 12.) as extraordinary, because, perhaps, much admired by the queen of Sheba. 2. Solomon was not behindhand with her. *He gave her whatsoever she asked*, patterns, we may suppose, of curious things, by which she might make the like; or, perhaps, he gave her his precepts of wisdom and piety in writing, *beside that which he gave her of his royal bounty*, *v.* 13. Thus they who apply themselves

* Heb. *standing.*
† Or, *butlers.*
n 2 Kings 16:18. 1 Chr. 9:18. 2 Chr. 23:13. Ez. 44:3. 46:2.
o Josh. 5:1. 2 Chr. 9:4.
‡ Heb. *word.* 2 Chr. 9:5,6. *marg.*
§ Or, *sayings.*
p Is. 64:4. Zech. 9:17. Mark 16:11. John 20:25—29. 1 Cor. 2:9. 1 John 3:2.
‖ Heb. *thou hast added wisdom and goodness to the fame.*
q 2 Chr. 9:7,8. Prov. 3:13,14. 8:34. 10:21. 13:20. Luke 10:39—42. 11: 28,31.
r See on 5:7.—Ps. 72:17—19.
s Ps. 18:19. 22:8. Is. 42:1. 62:4.
t Deut. 7:8. 1 Chr. 17:22. 2 Chr. 2:11.
u 2 Sam. 8:15. 23:3. Ps. 72:2. Prov. 8:15,16. Is. 9:7. 11:4,5. 32:1,2. Jer. 23:5,6. Rom. 13:3,4.
v See on 2. 9:14.—Matt. 2:11.
x Gen. 43:11. Ex. 30:34.
y Prov. 3:13—15. 20:15. Rev. 21:11.
z See on 9:27,28.—2 Chr. 8:18. Ps. 45:9.
a 2 Chr. 2:8. 9:10,11. *algum.*
¶ Or, *rails.* Heb. *a prop.*
b 1 Chr. 23:5. 25:1,&c. Ps. 92:1—3. 150:3—5. Rev. 14:2,3.
c 2. 9:1. Ps. 20:4. 37:4. Matt. 15: 28. John 14:13,14. Eph. 3:20.
** Heb. *which he gave her, according to the hand of king Solomon.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—5. Wisdom and piety are exceedingly valuable, and those, who form a due estimate of their worth, will think no expense or labor too great to obtain them.—When we first attend seriously to religion, we meet with many 'hard questions,' which we cannot resolve, and which often perplex and distress our minds, especially if at a distance from proper instructions. But 'then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD;' and by consulting wise and experienced Christians, we shall be delivered from our difficulties, and a clearer light will shine on our path. (*Prov.* 4: 18, 19. *Is.* 42: 13—17. *Hos.* 6: 1—3. *John* 7: 14—17.)—Those who possess wisdom and knowledge, ought to be courteous and accessible, and glad to communicate them for the good of others; even as the rich should be to impart their wealth.—Our greatest diligence, constancy, seriousness, and cheerfulness, should be manifested, in attending on the ordinances of God; that our example may influence others to 'serve Him in reverence and godly fear.' This gives a lustre to wisdom, learning, wealth, or greatness: but alas! how few are ambitious of this honor that cometh from God! how little of this is seen in our princes, and nobles, and great men! SCOTT.

Verses 6—9.

These sentiments concerning the sovereignty and providence of God, the Giver of all wisdom and prosperity; his free and unfailing love to his people; the duty of kings; and the happiness of those nations who are favored with those that do their duty; together with her praising God for his love to his people, in which she cordially rejoiced, prove an understanding and pious mind. SCOTT.

Verses 11, 12.

It is not known what kind of wood is intended by the words *almug-trees*, or *algum-trees:* but the specimen brought from Sheba would remain to posterity in the pillars, or rails, and the musical instruments, made of it. (2 *Chr.* 2:8. 9:10, 11.) SCOTT. 'The Vulg. has *thyina*, [the '*lignum vitæ*.' Dr. A. C.] Sept. *wrought: Celsius* queries if it be not *sandal:* but *Michaelis* considers the wood as entirely unknown to us. *Shaw* supposes it the *cypress* (and so the Syr.), still used in Italy &c. for stringed instruments. Josephus says it was like the wood of the fig tree, but whiter and more shining, *a pine*, but different from that usually so called.' HARRIS. The Arab. has *colored* wood, and adds, for that wood was by nature painted with various colors: which Dr. *A. Clarke* thinks 'nearest the truth, 'adding,' wood shaded, as *rose-wood* and the like, now brought from the E. Indies, and the Arab. says they brought it from *Hind* (India). And for inlaying and veneering nothing can be finer than this wood.' The 5 and 4 stringed ancient Egyptian musical instruments in the cut, 2 Sam. 6:5. are represented of a *light chestnut color.* ED.

Verse 13.

'Pagan, Arab, Moor, and all the countries round, vouch for this expedition of this queen, nearly in the terms of Scripture. Her name, the Arabs say, was Belkis, the Abyssinians, Maquida, and all the traditions concerning her, state that she had a son, *Menilek*, by Solomon, who was brought up at the Israelitish court, succeeded his mother in the kingdom of Saba, or Azab, and introduced among his subjects the Jewish religion.' See *Bruce.* Dr. A. CLARKE.

own country, she and her servants.

[*Practical Observations.*]

14 ¶ Now the weight of gold, that came to Solomon in one year, [d] was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold;

15 Besides *that he had* of the merchant-men, and of the traffic of the spice-merchants, and of [e] all the kings of Arabia, and of the * governors of the country.

16 And king Solomon made [f] two hundred targets *of* beaten gold: six hundred *shekels* of gold went to one target.

17 And *he made* three hundred shields *of* beaten gold: three pound of gold went to one shield: and the king put them [g] in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

18 ¶ Moreover the king made [h] a great throne of [i] ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold.

19 The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne *was* round † behind: and *there were* ‡ stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays.

to our Lord Jesus, will find Him not only greater than Solomon, and wiser, but more kind; whatsoever we ask, it shall be done for us; nay, He will, out of his divine bounty, which infinitely exceeds royal bounty, even Solomon's, do for us *more than we ask or think*.

V. 14—29. We have here a further account of Solomon's prosperity:

I. How he increased his wealth. Though he had much, he still coveted to have more, being willing to try the utmost the things of this world could do, to make men happy. He received a great deal, in customs, from the merchants, and in land-taxes, from the countries his father had made tributaries to Israel, *v.* 15. He imported, once in three years, not only gold, silver, ivory, substantial goods, and serviceable, but apes to play with, and peacocks to please the eye with their feathers, *v.* 22. He had presents made him every year, from the neighboring princes and great men, not so much because they feared him, or were jealous of him, as because they loved him, and admired his wisdom, had often occasion to consult him, and sent him these presents by way of recompense for his advice in politics; and he took all that came, even garments and spices, horses and mules, *v.* 24, 25. He traded to Egypt for horses, and linen-yarn, (or, as some read it, *linen-cloth*,) the staple commodities of that country, and had his own merchants or factors in this traffic, who were accountable to him, *v.* 28, 29. The custom to be paid to the king of Egypt, for exported chariots and horses out of Egypt, was very high, but (so Patrick) Solomon, having married his daughter, got him to compound for the customs, so that he could bring them up cheaper than his neighbors, which obliged them to buy of him, which he was wise enough, no doubt, to make his advantage of. This puts an honor on trading, that Solomon, one of the greatest men that ever was, thought it no disparagement to him to trade. In all labor there is profit.

II. What use he made of his wealth. He did not hoard it up to look upon, and leave behind him. Of this he has, in his Ecclesiastes, so much exposed the folly, that we cannot suppose he should himself be guilty of it. No; God that had given him riches, and wealth, and honor, gave him also power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, Eccl. 5: 19.

1. He laid out his gold in fine things for himself, which he might the better be allowed to do, when he had, before, laid out so much in fine things for the house of God, (*v.* 16, 17.) not for service, but for state; he had *shields* and *targets* carried before him, to signify that he took pleasure in using his power for the defence and protection of the good, to whom he would be a praise. Magistrates are *shields of the earth*. He made a stately throne, on which he sat, to give laws to his subjects, audience to ambassadors, and judgment on appeals, *v.* 18—20. It was of ivory, or elephants' teeth, very rich; yet, as if he had so much gold he knew not what to do with it, he *overlaid that with gold*, the best. Yet, some think, he did not cover the ivory all over, but here and there. He rolled it, flowered it, or inlaid it, with gold. The stays, or arms, were supported by the images of lions in gold; so the steps by which he went up to it, to be a memorandum to him of that courage and resolution wherewith he ought to execute judgment, not fearing the face of man. *The righteous*, in that post, *is bold as a lion*. He made all his drinking-vessels, and all the furniture of his table, even at his country-seat, of pure gold, *v.* 21. He did not grudge himself what he had, but took the credit and comfort of it, such as it was. That is good, that does us good.

2. He made it circulate among his subjects, so that the kingdom was as rich as the king; he had no separate interests of his own to consult, but sought the welfare of his people. Those princes are not governed by Solomon's maxims, who think it policy to keep their subjects poor. Solomon was, herein, a type of Christ, who is not only rich Himself, but enriches all that are his Solomon was instrumental to bring so much gold into the country, and disperse it, that *silver was nothing accounted of*, *v.* 21. There was such plenty of it in Jerusalem, it was as the stones;

d See on 9:28.
e 2 Chr. 9:13,14. Ps. 72:10. Is. 21:13. Gal. 4:25.
* Or, *captains*.
f 14:26—28. 2 Chr. 9:15,16. 12:9,10.
g See on 7:2.
h 2 Chr. 9:17—19. Ps. 45:6. 110:1. 122:5. Heb. 1:3,8. Rev. 20:11.
i 22. 22:39. Ps. 45:8. Ez. 27:6. Am. 6:4. Rev. 18:12.
† Heb. *on the hinder part thereof*.
‡ Heb. *hands*.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 6—13. There is a spiritual excellency in heavenly things, and in consistent Christians, to which no reports can do justice: and the better they are known, the more they will be esteemed and relished.—All our comforts and prospects spring from the Lord's love to us: He delights in the fruits of his own Spirit; and He communicates many good gifts to magistrates, ministers, and private Christians, out of love to his people, that they may be serviceable to them; and happy are they, who are governed and instructed by those, 'in whom the Lord delighteth.' This indeed has hitherto been a very uncommon case; and many are ready to conclude that it never can become general: but the Scriptures assure us, that at length it shall be the privilege and felicity of every nation under heaven.—The awakened sinner, oppressed with difficulties, objections, and fears, hears the report of the Savior's acts and wisdom, and riches and love; but can scarcely believe the report. With trouble, self-denial, and the forsaking of many earthly things, he resorts by faith and prayer to Him, and is graciously encouraged, and entertained: the Lord's effectual teaching dispels his darkness and distress; He shows him his glory and grace, satisfies him with the provisions of his house, and enriches him from his treasures of 'wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.' The rejoicing believer no longer glories in himself, and his own attainments: nor is he terrified, though humbled with the consciousness of his own guilt and pollution. The person, the character, the love, of Jesus attract and engross his admiring attention, while they confirm his lively hopes of salvation: and he finds, by experience, the half was not told him of his excellency and preciousness. He now congratulates the felicity of the meanest servant of the Redeemer, but especially that of those above, who always behold his face and do his will.—He blesses the Lord for his love to Israel, in giving them such a Prince and Savior, and yields up himself both to be ruled and saved by Him: and though Jesus needs not, and is not enriched by, all that he can render to Him; yet he devotes his riches and talents to his service, and they are graciously accepted, and recompensed with all that he can desire: yea, of his royal bounty, our Prince of Peace gives more than any petitioner 'asks or thinks.' The believer, who has thus been with Jesus, will return to his station in society, to discharge his duty, with new alacrity, from purer motives, and to nobler purposes Yet, he will still look forward to the day, when, being 'absent from the body, he shall be present with the Lord;' and when his transient glimpses of the Savior's glory, which overpower him with admiration, shall be exchanged for uninterrupted vision, with faculties enlarged, and strengthened to endure and delight in that ineffable refulgency. But who can express or conceive aright of that state of happiness? Oh, may the writer, and every reader of these observations, aspire after that unutterable felicity, and at length rejoice in it together! SCOTT.

Verses 14, 15.

Perhaps the kings of Arabia were induced, by the queen of Sheba's report and example, to pay court to Solomon and send him presents. SCOTT.

(15.) *Merchantmen.*] 'Port-collectors, lit. *searchers*; Geddes, with less probability, renders *miners*.' BOOTHROYD.

Verses 16, 17.

Targets.] '*Tsinnah*. It might resemble the Highland target, with a dagger projecting from the *umbo*, or centre. *Shields.*] *Magen*. A large shield to protect the whole body: [cut, Ps. 18:2.] Mr. *Reynolds* computes the *targets* as worth 28,131*l.* 16*s.* 19½*d.* and the *shields*, (with 3 lbs. of gold each,) 210,976*l.* 7*s.* 7*d.*' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 18—20.

Judah was compared by Jacob to a young lion; and our Lord is called 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah.' (*Gen.* 49:8, 9. *Rev.* 5:5—7.) SCOTT.

(18, 19.) *Overlaid.*] 'Rather, inlaid.' *Taylor. Round behind.*] Heb. *rosh ágol lakkissèh meacharayu*. Lit. *caput rotundum solio a post ipsum*. A round head (top) to the back (part) of the throne. Vulg. summitas throni rotunda erat in parte posteriori. The top of the throne was round, at the back. So the *Syr.* and *Arab.* The *Chal.* also has, there was a round head to the throne on its back part. (The *Sept.* has, and the fore parts of a heifer on it behind.) Dr. *A. Clarke* considers it to have been 'like one of our ancient *round topped, two-arm-*

20 And twelve [k] lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not * the like made in any kingdom.

21 And all king Solomon's [l] drinking vessels *were of* gold, and all the vessels of [m] the house of the forest of Lebanon *were of* pure gold; [†] none *were of* silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon.

22 For the king had at sea a navy of [n] Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, [‡] ivory, and apes, and [o] peacocks.

23 So king Solomon [l] exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.

k Gen. 49:9. Num. 23:24. 24:9. Rev. 5:5.
* Heb. *so made.*
l 2 Chr. 9:20—22. m 17. 7:2.
† Or, there was *no silver* in them.
n 22:48. Gen. 10:4. 2 Chr. 9:21. 20: 36,37. Ps. 48:7. 72:10. Is. 2:16. 23: 1,6,10. 60:9. 66:19. Ez. 27:12. Jon. 1:3. *Tarshish.*
‡ Or, *elephant's teeth.* 18. Am. 3:15.
o Job 39:13.

and cedars, that used to be great rarities, were as common as *sycamore trees*, *v.* 27. Such is the nature of worldly wealth, plenty of it makes it the less valuable; much more should the enjoyment of spiritual riches lessen our esteem of all earthly possessions. If *gold in abundance* would make silver to seem so despicable, shall not wisdom, and grace, and the foretastes of heaven, which are far better than gold, make it seem much more so?

Well, thus rich, thus great, was Solomon, and thus did he *exceed all the kings of the earth*, *v.* 23. Now let us remember, (1.) That this was he, who, when *setting out in the world*, did not ask for the wealth and honor of it, but for *a wise and understanding heart*. The more moderate our desires are toward earthly things, the better qualified we are for the enjoyment of them, and the more likely to have them. See, in Solomon's greatness, the performance of God's promise, (*ch.* 3: 13.) and let it encourage us to *seek first the righteousness of God's kingdom*. (2.) That this was he, who, having tasted all these enjoyments, wrote a whole book, to show the vanity of all worldly things, and the vexation of spirit that attends them, their insufficiency to make us happy, and the folly of setting our hearts on them; and to recommend to us the practice of serious godli-

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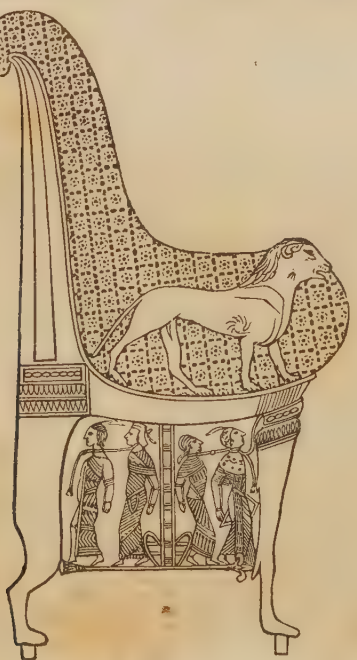
el chairs. *Stays*, &c.] *Yâdoth*, hands, vulg. arms. *Vulg.* duæ manus tenentes sedile. *Chal.* sustentacula hinc et inde super locum sessionis, et duo leones stabant in latere sustentaculæ, [super locum sessionis?] *Arab.* 'On each *side* of the seat respectively, he made a supporter (fulcrum), and upon *its two sides* [i. e. of the seat] he placed two golden lions, one on the right and one on the left.' 'The version of *Pagnini*' says M. *Costaz*, 'is the most literal and clearest, summitas rotunda erat solio a parte posteriori, et manus hinc et inde ad locum sessionis, et duo leones stabant apud manus.' A throne is given below, taken from the tombs of the kings at Thebes, which exactly answers this description. There is a tradition (says Dr. *A. Clarke*, in another place) of the rabbins, particularly *Jarchi*, that 'Shishak invaded Israel in order to get the ivory throne of his son-in-law, Solomon, which he had always coveted, and *this throne he carried away*' into Egypt, when he plundered Jerusalem, and took away '*all* the treasures of the king's house.' (1 K. 14:26.) Was this throne depicted in these tombs, (where appear several other thrones,) with the other trophies of victory, and who are the captives represented beneath the seat, and by whom added to the throne? A knowledge of the era of the builder of this tomb would settle the curious question, whether this is a painting of the throne of Solomon described in vs. 18, 19. The cushion is of a dark purple (leather of a Tyrian dye?) with very dark or black spots, the frame of the chair is pale blue, (of stained ivory?) inlaid with white (ivory?). The lions are yellow, (gold?) as are the supports of the feet, and the fancy-work on the legs. But it is probably only a picture of its model, and its existence possibly occasioned the Jewish tradition. It appears in the 'Harpers tomb,' of Bruce, &c. ('No 11' of *Wilkinson*. '5, to the E.' of *Champ.*) the 'catacomb of the harps' of the French commissioners. 'The monarch whose name here occurs, is Remeses III, (1285 B. C. [1561 *Champ.*]) but that of his father and predecessor is traced beneath the ovals of Remeses, who appropriated and completed the subjects on its walls. This catacomb is 405 ft. long, and has many chambers. Its descent is 31 ft.' See the description of its magnificence, in *Wilkinson*, and the great French work. Ed.



Verse 22.

Many learned men have endeavored to show that Tharshish was a city in Spain, called Tartessus; and some think that this navy, which Solomon had with the navy of Hiram, was distinct from that which traded to Ophir, and was fitted out from some port on the Mediterranean: and they account for the length of time taken up in each voyage, by supposing that a great part of it was employed in selling and buying, or bartering, the several articles of commerce.—But, whatever gold might be, ivory, apes, and peacocks, (or *parrots*, as some render the word,) do not seem to have been articles of trade in any of the countries bordering on the Mediterranean.—'Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken at Ezion-gaber.'—'He joined himself with Ahaziah to make ships to go to Tharshish, and they made the ships in Ezion-gaber. . . . And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tharshish.' (22:48, 49. 2 *Chr.* 20: 35—37.) These passages being decisive proofs that the ships of Tharshish, ships to go to Tharshish, were built at Ezion-gaber on the Red Sea, the learned Bp. Lowth, (having adopted the opinion, that Tharshish was Tartessus in Spain,) says, 'Tharshish is celebrated in Scripture for the trade, which Solomon carried on thither in conjunction with the Tyrians. Jehoshaphat attempted afterward to renew that trade; and from the account given of that attempt, it appears, that this fleet was to sail from Ezion-gaber on the Red Sea, and must therefore have designed to sail round Africa, as Solomon's fleet probably had done before: for it was a three years' voyage; and they brought gold from Ophir, probably from the coast of Arabia, silver from Tartessus, and ivory, apes, and peacocks, from Africa.—It is certain, that under Pharaoh-necho, about 200 years after, this voyage was made by the Egyptians,' &c. *Bp. Lowth* on *Is.* 2:13—16.—But, with all deference to so eminent a writer, it must be allowed extremely improbable, that in regular voyages, for *commerce*, (not *discovery*, for which Pharaoh-necho's extraordinary expedition doubtless was undertaken,) such a circuitous course should be chosen; when, as far as we can learn, it was not then known that Africa was a peninsula! To fit out one navy at Ezion-gaber, for Ophir, whether in Arabia, or the East Indies, which might coast some parts of Africa; and to fit out another navy to Spain from some Mediterranean port, would be an obvious and compendious measure: but that the same ships should attempt the whole, and after taking in the far richest part of their freight, comparatively near home; should with it attempt to sail round Africa, in order to add silver, and some other articles of inferior value, at Tartessus, must strike every reflecting person as a most unparalleled proceeding.—To sail round Africa at that time, would be immensely more formidable, than a voyage round the world at present: and a single glance at a map must convince any person, acquainted with commerce, that no man of common prudence would ever think of such a voyage for lucrative purposes.—Tharshish seems indeed, in some places, to mean Tartessus, or Tarsus, or some place connected with the Mediterranean: for Jonah embarked for Tharshish at Joppa; and Joppa is situated on the Mediterranean. Ships of Tharshish seem also sometimes to mean any large ships fitted out for long voyages. But in this place, and some others referred to, if the text be not corrupted, (which there is not the least reason to suppose,) Tharshish must mean some place in the East Indies, or bordering on the Indian Ocean. (2 Chr. 9:13—21, *v.* 21.) Scott.

Verses 22, 23.

In a tomb at Thebes, blacks and people of a red color bring to the king of Egypt from the country of 'Pount,' *ivory*, *apes*, leopards, skins and dried fruits. Apes were used as buffoons in Egypt, as is evident from other drawings on their monuments. 'Gentiles of the south,' (so called in the hieroglyphics) Ethiopians bring gold rings (the ancient money of Egypt was gold and silver rings) and bags of precious stones (?) hides, apes, leopards, ebony, ivory, ostrich eggs and plumes, a camelopard, hounds with handsome collars, and a drove of long-horned oxen. Another group of light red race, the 'Gentiles,('Shemmo') of 'Kufa,' bring vases of elegant forms ornamented with flowers, necklaces and other costly gifts. Still another group of *white* men wearing close sleeves (from the N.?) bring long gloves, vases, a chariot and horses, a bear, elephant, and ivory. Their name is Rot-n-no. The Ethiopians are generally styled Cush in the hieroglyphics. Ebony, silver cups, and vases of silver and of porcelain, with rare woods, &c. are among the articles offered the king. See *Wilkinson*. Ed.

(23.) 'Mr. *Reynolds* makes Solomon's income to be, each *year* 142,242,034*l.* 9*s.* 7*d.* each *day*, 390,770*l.* 16*s.* 4½*d.*' Dr. A. Clarke.

24 ¶ And all the earth sought * to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, [m] which God had put in his heart.

25 And they brought [n] every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armor, and spices, horses, [o] and mules, [p] a rate year by year.

26 And [q] Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed [r] in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem.

27 And † the king made silver *to be* in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he *to be* as the sycamore-trees that *are* in the vale, for abundance.

28 And ‡ Solomon had [t] horses brought out of Egypt, [u] and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price.

29 And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred *shekels* of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty; and so for all [x] the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring *them* out by § their means.

ness, as that which is the whole of man, and will do infinitely more toward the making of us easy and happy, than all the wealth and power he was master of; and which, through the grace of God, is within our reach, when the thousandth part of Solomon's greatness is a thousand times more than we can ever be so vain as to promise ourselves in this world.

CHAP. XI. This ch. begins with as melancholy a *but* as almost any in all the Bible. Hitherto, we have read nothing of Solomon, but what was great and good; but the lustre both of his goodness, and of his greatness, is here sullied and eclipsed, and his sun sets under a cloud.

V. 1—8. We have here a sad story, and very surprising, of Solomon's defection and degeneracy.

I. Let us inquire into the occasions and particulars of it.

1. He doted on strange women, *many strange women*. This his mother had particularly cautioned him against; (Prov. 31: 3.) *Give not thy strength unto women;* for it is that which, as much as any thing, destroys kings. His father David's fall began with the lusts of the flesh, which he should have taken warning by. The love of women has *cast down many wounded*, Prov. 7: 26. He took many women, 1000 in all, and not one good one among them, as he himself owns in his penitential sermon, (Eccl. 7: 28.) for no woman of established virtue would be one of such a set. God had, by his law, particularly forbidden the kings to multiply either horses or wives, Deut. 17: 16, 17. He broke the former law, in multiplying horses, and having them *out of Egypt* too, *ch.* 10: 29. here, he broke the latter. Note, Less sins, made bold with, open the door to greater. Perhaps he presumed it lawful, because David had multiplied his wives. Note, If those in reputation for religion, in any thing, set a bad example, they know not what mischief it may do, particularly to their own children. One bad act of a good man may be of more pernicious consequence to others, than twenty of a wicked man. Probably Solomon, at first, intended not to exceed his father's number. Divine wisdom has appointed one woman for one man: they who do not think one enough, will not think two or three enough; unbridled lust will be unbounded; the loosened hind will wander endlessly. But this was not all: They were strange women, *v.* 2. Some think he married them in policy, by them to get intelligence of the state of those countries. I rather fear it was because the daughters of Israel were too grave and modest for him, and these pleased him with their wantonness. Or, perhaps, it was for state, to have his seraglio, as his other treasures, replenished with what was far-fetched. To complete the mischief, *Solomon clave unto these in love, v.* 2. Solomon was master of a great deal of knowledge, but to what purpose, when he had no better government of his appetites?

2. He was drawn by them to the worship of strange gods. We have reason to think it impaired his health, and hastened on him the decays of age; his treasure, too, though vast, would be little enough to maintain the pride and vanity of all these women; perhaps it occasioned him, in his latter end, to neglect his business, by which he lost his supplies from abroad, and was forced to burden his subjects, to keep up his grandeur; *ch.* 12: 4. But none of these consequences were so bad as this, *His wives turned away his heart after other gods, v.* 3, 4. [Few things more unfit the mind for communion with God, than excess in such indulgence.] We cannot suppose he quite cast off the worship of God, much less that he restrained or hindered it; the temple-service went on as usual; but he grew less frequent and less

CHAP. XI.

Solomon, having taken very many wives and concubines, even strange women, is in his old age seduced by them into idolatry, 1—3. The Lord threatens to rend the greater part of the kingdom from his family, 9—13. Solomon finds an adversary in Hadad the Edomite, who had been entertained in Egypt, 14—22: and in Rezon, who reigned in Damascus, 23—25: and in Jeroboam, to whom Ahijah foretold that he should reign over ten tribes, and whom Solomon in vain attempts to kill, 26—40. Solomon dies and is buried, and Rehoboam succeeds him, 41—43.

BUT king Solomon [a] loved many strange women, ‖ together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites,

* Heb. *the face of.*
m See on 3:9,12,28.—Prov. 2:6. Dan. 1:17. 2:21,23. 5:11.
n 10. Judg. 3:15. 1 Sam. 10:27. 2 Sam. 8:2,10. 2 Chr. 26:8. Job 42:11. Ps. 72:10,15. Is. 36:16. Matt. 2:11.
o 1:33. 18:5. Gen. 36:24. Ezra 2:66. Esth. 8:10,14. Is. 66:20. Ez. 27:14.
p 2 Kings 17:4. 2 Chr. 9:24.
q See on 4:26.—2 Chr. 1:14. 9:25. Is. 2:7.
r 2 Chr. 9:25.
s 2 Chr. 1:15—17. 9:27. Job 28:24,25.
† Heb. *gave.*
‡ Heb. *the going forth of the horses which* was *Solomon's.*
t Deut. 17:16. 2 Chr. 1:16,17. 9:28. Is. 31:1—3. 36:9.
u Gen. 41:42. Prov. 7:16. Is. 19:9. Ez. 27:7.
x Josh. 1:4. 2 Kings 7:6.
§ Heb. *their hand.* Hos. 12:10. Mal. 1:1. *margins.*
a 8. Gen. 6:2—5. Deut. 17:17. Neh. 13:23—27. Prov. 2:16. 5:3—20. 6: 24. 7:5. 22:24. 23:33.
‖ Or, *besides.* 3:1. Lev. 18:18.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 14—29. They have the most comfort in worldly things, (though seldom the largest share of them,) who expect least from them, and decidedly prefer wisdom and grace, and who devote the best of all which they have to the Lord: for his largest promises, general and particular, shall surely be performed to those who trust and serve Him. But alas! what are worldly wealth and prosperity? They can only procure luxuries, embellishments, and curiosities, which add nothing to the real enjoyment of life: abundance creates satiety, and what is had in plenty is *nothing accounted of.* Such possessions always multiply cares and temptations: and they generally undermine humility and heavenly-mindedness, and eat out the life of religion, by leading to sensual indulgence, avarice, ostentation, or the pride of life. But the spiritual peace, riches, and abundance of the Redeemer's kingdom, are of another nature: they satisfy, but never satiate; while they sanctify the soul, and strengthen it to resist temptation, and to mortify every fleshly lust. SCOTT.

Verses 24—27.

(3-5—14 4:26—34.) These particulars were recorded, to show the faithfulness of God, to the promises made to David and to Solomon, whose reign typified the kingdom of the Messiah, in its peace and prosperity, and in the submission and willing services of princes and nations.—But Solomon was doubtless culpable in several respects, and his mind was gradually corrupted from its simplicity to excessive luxury and ostentation, which prepared the way for the awful departure from God recorded in the ensuing ch. (2 *Sam.* 11:1—5.) SCOTT.

(27.) *Sycamore.*] 'A large evergreen tree, very common in Arabia, Palestine, and Egypt, especially in the low lands. Its wood is very durable, as the mummy chests of it, 3000 yrs. old, prove. Its fruit is like a fig, and eaten by the poor, and its leaves like the *mulberry.* Hence its name, *syke*, a fig, in Greek, and *morea*, a *mulberry tree*, called Sycamore in the SS.' See *Harris.* 'Its fruit springs from the trunk and not the branches, is destitute of seeds, very luscious, and is produced abundantly 7 times a year.' ED.

Verses 28, 29.

Solomon and Pharaoh seem to have traded together, by their merchants, to the exclusion of other persons. The price of the linen yarn, according to its quality, was fixed by contract. The price of a good chariot-horse also was fixed at about 19 pounds sterling, and that of a chariot at 75: and, in a contract, there is no absurdity in supposing that, the quality being described, a certain sum should be given for each, one with another. Besides those, which were brought for the king's use, numbers were sold again, at a great profit, doubtless, to the neighboring princes: for Pharaoh reserved to his son-in-law the exclusive advantage of this lucrative trade. Some indeed suppose the stipulated sums to have been an exorbitant tax, laid by Pharaoh on all chariots, or horses, which were exported: but the other seems the more probable way of explaining the passage. (*M. R.* t, u. *Deut.* 17: 16. *Is.* 31:1—3.) SCOTT.

(28.) *Linen yarn.*] '*Miqveh*: a word hard to be understood, if it be not a corruption. Vulg. and Sept. "from *Coa* or *Tekoa*." Some, as Bochart, (and most probably,) understand tribute: others the string by which the head of one horse was tied to the tail of the other, and so transl. *droves.* Jarchi makes it a collection of horses, or a "*stud.*" Houbigant would read *merchubah*, chariots, but no versions nor mss. acknowledge this reading.' Dr. A. CLARKE. Many commentators make it the name of a place. The Heb. reminds us of the 'Kufa;' note, v. 22, 25. ED.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI. V. 1—8. Probably, Solomon's declension was gradual; he was perhaps elated with spiritual pride, as well as induced by his prosperity to indulge in luxury and ostentation: or, perhaps, he deemed it unnecessary for one of his wisdom and ability, and of his rank and authority, to restrict himself by those rules, which were needful or salutary to inferior persons, as if he were secure from those evils which they were intended to prevent!—Thus he proceeded, till perhaps persons were employed to collect from every part of his king-

Edomites, Zidonians, *and* Hittites:

2 Of the nations *concerning* which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, [b] Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: *for* [c] surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: [d] Solomon clave unto these in love.

3 And he had [e] seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.

4 For it came to pass, [f] when Solomon was old, *that* [g] his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and [h] his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as *was* the heart of David his father.

5 For Solomon went after [i] Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after [k] Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and [*] went not fully after the LORD, as *did* David his father.

7 Then did Solomon build an high place for [m] Chemosh, the [n] abomination of Moab, in [o] the hill that *is* before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.

8 And likewise did he for [p] all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

[*Practical Observations.*]

9 ¶ And the LORD was [q] angry with Solomon, because [r] his heart

serious, in *his ascent to the house of the Lord*, and his attendance on his altar; he left his first love, lost his zeal for God, and did not persevere as he had begun; therefore it is said, *he was not perfect*, because he was not *constant;* and he followed not God fully, because he turned from following Him, and did not continue to the end.

He tolerated and maintained his wives in their idolatry, and made no scruple of joining them in it. Pharaoh's daughter was proselyted (as is supposed), but he used no means to convert his other wives; in complaisance to them, he built chapels for their gods, (*v.* 7, 8.) maintained their priests, and occasionally attended their altars; making a jest of it, as if it were no harm, but all religions were alike; which (says Patrick) has been the *disease of some great wits;* when he humored one thus, the rest would take it ill, if he did not, in like manner, gratify them, so he did it for all his wives, (*v.* 8.) and, at last, set up a high place for *Chemosh in the hill before Jerusalem*, the *mount of Olives*, as if to confront the temple he himself had built; these high places continued here, not utterly demolished, till Josiah did it, 2 K. 23: 13.

II. Let us now pause a while, and lament Solomon's fall; and we may justly stand and wonder at it. *Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid*, as the prophet exclaims in a like case, Jer. 2: 12. Solomon, in his old age, insnared with fleshly lusts, youthful lusts; let us never presume on the strength of our resolutions, or the weakness of our corruptions, so as to be off our guard. So wise a man as Solomon was, so famed for a quick understanding and sound judgment, made such a fool of by these foolish women: one who had so often and so plainly warned others of the danger of the love of women, himself so wretchedly bewitched with it; it is easier to see a mischief, and to show it others, than to shun it ourselves. So good a man, so zealous for the worship of God, who had been conversant with divine things, and who prayed that excellent prayer at the dedication of the temple, doing these sinful things—is this Solomon? Are all his wisdom and devotion come to this, at last?

What shall we say to this? Why God permitted it, it is not for us to inquire; He knew how to bring glory to Himself out of it. God foresaw it, when He said of him that should build the temple, *If he commit iniquity, &c.* 2 Sam. 7: 14. But it concerns us to inquire what good use we may make of it. Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall; we see how weak we are of ourselves, without the grace of God; let us therefore live in a constant dependence on that grace. See the danger of a prosperous condition, and how hard it is to overcome the temptations of it; the *food convenient* Agur prayed for, is safer and better than the food abundant, Solomon was even surfeited with. See what need those have to stand on their guard, who have made a great profession of religion, and showed themselves forward and zealous in devotion, because the devil will set on them most violently, and if they misbehave, the reproach is the greater: it is the evening that commends the day; let us therefore fear, lest, having run well, we seem to come short.

V. 9—13. Here is, I. God's anger against Solomon for his sin; time was, when the Lord

b Ex. 23:32,33. 34:16. Deut. 7:3,4. Josh. 23:12,13. Ezra 9:12. 10:2,&c. Mal. 2:11.
c 16:31—33. Num. 25:1—3. Judg. 3:6, 7. 2 Chr. 21:6. 2 Cor. 6:14—16.
d Gen. 2:24. 34:3. Judg. 16:4—21. 2 Chr. 19:2. Ps. 139:21. Rom. 1:32, 12:9. 1 Cor. 15:33. Rev. 2:4.
e Judg. 8:30,31. 9:5. 2 Sam. 3:2—5. 5: 13—16. 2 Chr. 11:21. Ec. 7:28.
f 12. 6:1. 9:10. 14:21.
g See on c. 2.—Deut. 7:4. 17:17. Neh. 13:26,27.
h 6,38. 6:12,13. 8:61. 9:4. 15:3,14. 2 K. 20:3. 1 Chr. 28:9. 29:19. 2 Chr. 17:3. 25:2. 31:20,21. 34:2.
i 33. Judg. 2:13. 10:6. 1 Sam. 7:3,4. 12:10. 2 K. 23:13. Jer. 2:10—13.
k 7. Lev. 18:21. 20:2—5. *Molech.* Zeph. 1:5. *Malcham.*
* Heb. *fulfilled not after.* Num. 14:24. Josh. 14:8,14. *Heb.*
l Lev. 26:30. Num. 33:52. 2 K. 21:2,3. 23:13,14. Ps. 78:58. Ez. 20:28,29.
m Num. 21:29. Judg. 11:24. Jer. 48:13.
n Deut. 13:14. 17:3,4. 27:15. Is. 44: 19. Ez. 18:12. Dan. 11:31. 12:11. Rev. 17:4,5.
o 2 Sam. 15:30. Zech. 14:4. Matt. 26: 30. Acts 1:9,12.
p See on 1.—Ez. 16:22—29. Hos. 4:11, 12. 1 Cor. 10:11,12,20—22.
q Ex. 4:14. Num. 12:9. Deut. 3:26. 9:8,20. 2 Sam. 6:7. 11:27. 1 Chr. 21:7. Ps. 78:58—60. 90:7,8.
r See on 2,3.—Deut. 7:4. Prov. 4:23. Is. 29:13,14. Hos. 4:11. 2 Tim. 4:10.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—8. Men of superior understanding find it far easier to lay down excellent rules for the conduct of others, than to reduce them to practice in the constant tenor of their own lives. (*Prov.* 1:—9:) For alas! they often fall into the same pit, and are caught in the same snare, against which they have repeatedly warned others; and sometimes are guilty of things as absurd and foolish as they are wicked. Nay, old age itself will not eradicate from the heart any evil propensity. The habit of indulgence in fleshly lusts will more than counterbalance the effect of nature's decay: and if our sinful passions be not crucified and mortified by the grace of God, they will subsist and rage when every opportunity of gratification shall be taken away.—Thus we are taught to 'cease from man,' and to watch and be sober: for ours is a dangerous warfare in an enemy's country, while the worst of our foes are the traitors which occupy our own hearts.—We all *naturally* desire prosperity and pre-eminence; yet in general these operate as fatal poisons to the soul. And when we allow of one inordinate or inexpedient indulgence, we give energy to all our passions, and to every temptation of Satan. Our safety and comfort therefore consist in resolutely requiring them all to obey, and, though we cannot extinguish our passions, in rigorously confining them within the bounds of what is lawful and expedient.—The love of women is one of the most dangerous passions of the human heart. When once the divine, original appointment concerning marriage is violated, the unbridled propensity will know no bounds: nor can the wisest or the most determined say to it, 'Thus far shalt thou go, and no further:' but, like a descending weight, the progress is from bad to worse with accelerated rapidity; till shame and conscience are surmounted, reputation and interest sacrificed, every barrier is broken down, and a perfect infatuation takes place. (*P. O. Judg.* 16:)—Those who have made the boldest profession of godliness, and have been most serviceable to its interests, should be peculiarly watchful against the incursions of spiritual pride; or the fatal persuasion, that *they* are superior to those rules and cautions, which are needful for weaker persons. They should always meditate with seriousness on their danger of falling, and the wide-spreading, fatal effects of their misconduct; and prefer any affliction, or even death, to thus dishonoring God and his truth.—The fond hope, which numbers indulge, who marry with ungodly persons, of being instrumental to their salvation, stands exposed throughout the Scripture, but especially in this chapter. Considering the state of human nature, the case is as desperate, as that of a healthy person associating with those that have got the plague, who is far more likely to be infected himself, than to recover them: and the Lord's prohibition of such marriages declares them to be means, which He does not allow.

SCOTT

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dom, but especially from the subjected nations, every beautiful woman whom they found, without regard to her religion. Those of superior rank seem to have been numbered among his wives, and styled princesses; while the inferiors were his concubines, with inferior privileges. (*Note, Gen.* 25:5, 6.)—Those who have noted in history, or in society, the effects of the influence of inveigling women over the greatest and wisest of men, will readily perceive that matters were speedily in a train; and that it was almost impossible, without an immediate divine interposition, that Solomon should stop short of this extreme folly and wickedness, when he had once suffered himself to be entangled in the fatal net. (*Judg.* 16:4—21.) The inspired historian, therefore, quotes the prohibition of marrying strange women, with the annexed consequence, 'Surely they will turn away your heart after their gods:' to show that no eminency of wisdom, or firmness of resolution, will secure any man, when, in a careless or self-confident spirit, he presumes to violate God's commandments, and thus to run into temptation. Of this, Solomon formed a most striking proof. (*M. R.* b. c.—*Ex.* 34:11—17. *Josh.* 23:11—13. *Neh.* 13:23—30.) (*M. R.* h.) SCOTT.

(3.) 'Darius Codomanus was accustomed to take, in his camp, no fewer than 300 wives, and *Le Compte* tells us, that the emperor of China had a vast number, chosen for their beauty, many of whom the emperor never so much as saw.' BOOTHROYD

was turned from the LORD God of Israel, [a] which had appeared unto him twice,

10 And had [b] commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded.

11 Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this [*] is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, [c] I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.

12 Notwithstanding [v] in thy days I will not do it [x] for David thy father's sake: *but* [y] I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.

13 Howbeit [z] I will not rend away all the kingdom; *but* will give [a] one tribe to thy son [b] for David my servant's sake, and [c] for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.

14 ¶ And [d] the LORD stirred up [e] an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he *was* of the king's seed in Edom.

B. C. 1040. 15 For it came to pass, [f] when David was in Edom, and Joab the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain, [g] after he had smitten [h] every male in Edom;

16 (For six months did Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom;)

17 That Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt; [i] Hadad *being* yet a little child.

18 And they arose out of [k] Midian, and came to [l] Paran; and they took men with them out of Paran, and they came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh king of Egypt; which gave him an house, and appointed him victuals, and gave him land.

19 And Hadad [m] found great favor in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him to wife the

loved Solomon, (2 Sam. 12: 24.) and delighted in him; (*ch.* 10: 9.) but now *the Lord was angry with him*, (*v.* 9.) for there was in his sin, 1. The most base ingratitude; the Lord *had appeared unto him twice*, once, before he began to build the temple, (*ch.* 3. 5.) and once, after he had dedicated it, *ch.* 9: 2. God keeps account of his gracious visits, whether we do or no; and will remember it against us, if we *turn from Him*. 2. The most wilful disobedience: this very thing *God had commanded him—not to go after other gods*, yet he was not kept right by such an express admonition, *v.* 10. Those who have dominion over men, are apt to forget God's dominion over them; and, while they demand obedience from their inferiors, to deny it to the Supreme.

II. The message He sent him hereupon, *v.* 11. it is likely, by a prophet. The sentence is just, that since he had revolted from God, part of his kingdom should revolt from his family. This was a great mortification to Solomon; but sin ruins families, cuts off entails, alienates estates, and lays men's honor in the dust. Yet the mitigations are very kind, for David's sake; (*v.* 12, 13.) i. e. for the sake of the promise to David; thus, all the favor God shows to man, is for *Christ's sake*, and for the sake of the covenant with Him. The kingdom shall be rent from Solomon's house, but, 1. Not *immediately;* Solomon shall not live to see it done; but what comfort can a man take in leaving children and an estate, if he do not leave a blessing, behind him? Yet if judgments be coming, it is a favor to us, if they come not in our days, as 2 K. 20: 19. 2. Not *wholly;* one tribe, Judah, the strongest and most numerous, shall remain, (*v.* 13.) for Jerusalem's sake, which David built, and for the sake of the temple there, which Solomon built, these shall not go into other hands.

Upon this message, we have reason to hope he repented, and as the fruit of it, published the book of Ecclesiastes, where he bitterly laments his own folly and madness; (*ch.* 7: 25, 26.) and warns others to take heed of the like evil courses, 12: 13, 14. That penitential sermon was as true an indication of a heart broken for sin; and turned from it, as David's penitential psalms, though of another nature. God's grace in his people works variously. God may suffer those whom He loves to fall into sin, yet He will not suffer them to lie still in it. Solomon's defection, though much his reproach, and a great blemish to his character, yet did not so far break in on the character of his reign, but that it was afterward made the pattern of a good reign, 2 Chr. 11: 17.

V. 14—25. Here we have an account of two adversaries, inconsiderable, and that could not have done any thing worth noticing, had not Solomon first made God his Enemy. If God be on our side, we need not fear the greatest adversary; but if He be against us, He can make us fear the least, and the very grasshopper shall be a burden.

They themselves were moved by principles of ambition or revenge, but God made use of them, *v.* 14, 23. to serve his design of correcting Solomon; he himself was made to feel the smart of the rod, for his greater humiliation. Note, Whoever are, any way, adversaries to us, we must notice the hand of God in it; look through the instruments to the Author, and hear the Lord's controversy in it.

1. Hadad, an Edomite; we are not told what he did, only, in general, that he was an adversary: but we are told, that what induced him to bear Solomon a grudge was, David had conquered Edom, *v.* 15, 16. 2 Sam. 8: 14. And, what enabled him to do Solomon a mischief, was, his return to his own country again, on the death of David and Joab. It should seem, he remained quiet, while Solomon continued wise and watchful, but when Solomon, having sinned away his wisdom, as Samson his strength, grew careless of public affairs, was off his guard himself, and had forfeited the divine protection, then he troubled him. We are here told only how loath Pharaoh

[a] 3:5. 9:2.
[b] 6:12,13. 9:4—7. 2 Chr. 7:17—22.
[*] Heb. *is with thee.*
[c] 31. 12:15,16. Num. 14:23,35. 1 Sam. 2:36—32. 13:13,14. 15:26—28. 2 Sam. 12:9—12.
[v] 21:29. 2 K. 20:19.
[x] 9:4,5.—Gen. 12:2. 19:29.
[y] See on Ex. 20:5.
[z] 2 Sam. 7:15,16. 1 Chr. 17:13,14. Ps. 89:33—37.
[a] 35,36. 12:20.
[b] See on 11:12,32. Deut. 9:5. 2 K. 13: 23. 19:34. Ps. 39:49. 132:1,17. Is. 9:7. Jer. 33:17—26. Luke 1:32,33.
[c] Deut. 12:5,11. 2 K. 21:4. 23:27. Ps. 132:13,14. Is. 14:32. 62:1,7. Jer. 33:15,16.
[d] 12:15. 1 Sam. 26:19. 2 Sam. 24:1. 1 Chr. 5:26. Is. 10:5,26. 13:17.
[e] 2 Sam. 7:14. Ps. 89:30—34.
[f] 2 Sam. 8:14. 1 Chr. 18:12,13. Ps. 60: *title.* 108:10.
[g] Gen. 25:23. 27:40. Num. 24:18,19. Mal. 1:2,3.
[h] Num. 31:17.
[i] Ex. 2:1—10. 2 Sam. 4:4. 2 K. 11:2. Matt. 2:13,14.
[k] Gen. 25:2,4. Num. 22:4. 25:6,14,18.
[l] Gen. 14:6. 21:21. Num. 10:12. Deut. 1:1. 33:2. Hab. 3:3.
[m] Gen. 39:4,21. Acts 7:10,21.

Verses 12, 13.

Benjamin was so connected with Judah, that together they were but as one tribe, therefore it is not here particularly mentioned.—Even the mitigations of the sentence were suited to *humble* and afflict Solomon. Nothing was done for his sake, but all for his father's. (*Gen.* 19:27—29. 1 *Sam.* 2:30.) It is very probable, that this message brought him to himself, and led him to repentance. SCOTT.

Verse 14.

As the opposition which Hadad made to Solomon accorded to the Lord's secret design of punishing him, and was over-ruled for that purpose, He is said to have 'stirred him up;' though it is evident Hadad was instigated by his own ambition and resentment. (1 *Sam.* 26:17—19. 2 *Sam.* 24:1, 2. *Jam.* 1:13—15.) ID.

Verses 15, 16.

These particulars are not recorded in the preceding history. (*M. R. f.*)—As the Edomites afterwards continued a people, either some particular district only was treated with this severity, or numbers escaped from Joab and his men.—Unless some very peculiar cause required it, this military execution cannot be justified.—*To bury the slain.* (15) The Israelites, who had been slain in the contest, as many think. ID.

Verse 18.

Pharaoh.] 'The Heb. *Phrâh*, (Pi, resh, ayin, he,) is merely the Coptic pire, in the Memphitic dialect phre, pronounced *phra*. I have frequently noticed the meaning and orthography of this word *Phrah*, or Piré, "the Sun," a title given to the Egyptian monarchs, from the pretended analogy of the king, as chief of earthly beings, with the sun, as chief of heavenly bodies.' *Thebes* and *Egypt*, by J. G. WILKINSON. If this opinion be correct, we have the *very name* of Scripture written again and again upon the monuments of Egypt, 'prefixed to the names of all the kings.' See cuts, 14:25, Ex. 1:8, &c. &c. ED.

Verse 19.

Tahpenes.] Heb. Ta C H Pe Ne Y S. Vulg. Taphnes. Sept. Thekemina. Syr. and Arab. Tahhfys. Jablonsky transl. the name of the city Tahaphnehes, Taphe-eneh, caput seculi, seu terræ. Tapé, is the Coptic for Thebes, and means head. Champ. gives an Egyptian god dess Tpe, in the Theban dialect, and Tphe or Tiphe in the Memphi tic, *Urania*, or the goddess *Heaven*, (which, as giving birth to and con taining the sun, moon, &c. was regarded as feminine. As a *mother* prin ciple, the vulture, a symbol of maternity, was consecrated to her. He also says *Neith* (easily sliding into Neys) was the great *female* principle of all nature, (strictly united to Amon-ra, Amon, Amon-re Cneph, or Cnouphis,) the *male* principle, and hence called *arsenothelys* (male-female). This duad in unity organized the world, and her proper name expressed, 'I am from myself.' Her worship was universal throughout Egypt, especially at Sais, where was a college of priests, and where her temple had the famous inscription, 'I am all which was, and is, and is to come; no one has raised my veil; the fruit of my womb is the sun.' She was the type of moral and physical force, presided over wisdom, philosophy, and war. The vulture was consecrated to her, as the mother goddess. Her hieroglyphical title is, *tmoe nib mptpe* (mother, lady, of the upper region.) The monuments represent conquering kings offering their captives to her, as *goddess of war*. *Cruden* gives the meaning of the word Tahpenes, a 'standard, flight, temptation, secret;' The *head* of a goddess, who bears a vulture's beak, cow's horns, and a moon, is given as a '*standard*' in the cut, Ps. 20: 5; The flight of the vulture is remarkable; 'temptation' and woman have much in com mon; the 'moon' presides over the 'secrets' of darkness, and the vul ture's eye searches hidden things afar off. From all which we may conjecture, that this queen of Egypt bore the names of two goddesses, as head and mother of Egypt, or of Neith the mother; while her husband bore the name of Amon-re, the sun, ruler, head and father of

sister of his own wife, the sister of [n] Tahpenes the queen.

20 And the sister of Tahpenes bare him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes [o] weaned in Pharaoh's house: and Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh.

B. C. 1015.] 21 And when Hadad [p] heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the captain of the host was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, * Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country.

22 Then Pharaoh said unto him, [q] But what hast thou lacked with me, that, behold thou seekest to go to thine own country? And he answered, † Nothing: howbeit [r] let me go in any wise.

23 ¶ And [s] God stirred him up *another* adversary, Rezon the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord [t] Hadadezer king of Zobah:

24 And he gathered men unto him, and became captain over a band, when David slew them *of Zobah;* and they went to [u] Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus.

25 And he was an adversary to Israel [x] all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad *did*: and he [y] abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.

26 ¶ And [z] Jeroboam the son of Nebat, [a] an Ephrathite of Zereda, [b] Solomon's servant, whose mother's name *was* Zeruah, a widow-woman, even he lifted up *his* hand against the king.

27 And this *was* the cause that he [c] lifted up *his* hand against the king: [d] Solomon built Millo, *and* ‡ repaired [e] the breaches of [f] the city of David his father.

28 And the man Jeroboam *was* a mighty man of valor: and Solomon seeing the young man that he § was industrious, [g] he made him ruler over all the ‖ charge of [h] the house of Joseph.

29 And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet [i] Ahijah the [k] Shilonite found him in the way: and he had clad himself with a new garment; [l] and they two *were* alone in the field:

was to part with him, and how earnestly he solicited his stay, *v.* 22. Peter Martyr has a pious reflection on Hadad's answer; 'That heaven is our home, to which we ought to keep up a holy affection and desire, even then when the world, the place of our banishment, smiles most upon us.' Does it ask, What have you lacked, that you are so willing to be gone? We may answer, 'Nothing that the world can do for us; but however, let us go thither, where our hope, and honor, and treasure, are.'

2. Rezon, a Syrian, was another adversary; he, when David conquered the Syrians, headed the remains, lived at large by spoil and rapine, till Solomon grew careless, and then he got possession of Damascus, reigned there, (*v.* 24.) and over the country about; (*v.* 25.) and he created troubles to Israel, probably in conjunction with Hadad, all the days of Solomon, namely, after his apostasy; or he was an enemy to Israel, during all Solomon's reign, and on all occasions vented his then impotent malice against them; but till Solomon's revolt, when his defence was departed from him, he could not do them any mischief.

V. 26—40. We have, here, the first mention made of that infamous name, *Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, that made Israel to sin;* he is here brought on the stage as an adversary to Solomon, and the man to whom God had expressly told him (*v.* 11.) He would give the greatest part of his kingdom. We have here an account,

I. Of his extraction; (*v.* 26.) he was of Ephraim, next in honor to Judah; his mother a widow, to whom Providence had made up the loss of a husband in a son active and ingenious, and (we may suppose) a great support and comfort to her.

II. Of his elevation. It was Solomon's wisdom to employ proper persons to do his business; he observed Jeroboam to be industrious, therefore he gradually advanced him, till, at length, he made him receiver-general for Ephraim and Manasseh, or ruler of the burden, or tribute, i. e. either of the taxes, or of the militia, of the house of Joseph. Industry is the way to preferment.

III. Of his designation to the government of the ten tribes, after the death of Solomon. Some think he was himself plotting against Solomon, and contriving to rise to the throne; indeed, it is plainly intimated he had it in his thoughts, for the prophet tells him, as he was going to take possession of his government, (*v.* 37.) *Thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth;* which imboldened him to aim high, and, in some instances, to oppose the king, and give him vexation.

The prophet was *Ahijah of Shiloh;* we shall read of him again, *ch.* 14: 2. The sign, by which it was represented to him, was, the rending of a garment, Ahijah's probably, into twelve pieces, and giving him ten, *v.* 30; *he* (i. e. the prophet) *clad himself with a new garment*, on purpose. The rending the kingdom from Saul was signified by rending Samuel's mantle, not Saul's, 1 Sam. 15: 27, 28. It was more significant, to give Jeroboam ten pieces of what was not his own before, than of what was; the prophets, both true and false, used such signs, even in the N. T. as Agabus, Acts 21: 11.

The message is very particular.

1. He assures him he should be king over ten of the twelve tribes, *v.* 31. not for his good character or deserts, but to chastise Solomon's apostasy, *v.* 33. not because he was likely to do much better; thus Israel must know, that it is not *for their righteousness* they are made masters of Canaan, but for the wickedness of the Canaanites, Deut. 9: 4. Jeroboam did not deserve so good a post, but Israel deserved so bad a prince. He thus warns him to take heed of sinning away his preferment, in like manner.

2. He limits his expectations to the ten tribes only, and to them, in reversion, after the death of Solomon. He must not think David was rejected, as Saul was; no, God would not take his loving-kindness from him, as from Saul. The house of

n Jer. 43:7–9.
o Gen. 21:7,8. 1 Sam. 1:24.
p 2:10. Ex. 4:19. Matt. 2:20.
* Heb. *Send me away.* Gen. 45:24. Josh. 2:21. 1 Sam. 9:26. 2 Sam. 3:21.
q Jer. 2:31. Luke 22:35.
r 2 Sam. 18:22,23. Ps. 37:2. Mark 14: 31.
s See on 14.—2 Sam. 16:11. Ezra 1:1,5. Is. 13:17. 37:26. 45:5. Ex. 38:16.
t 2 Sam. 8:3. 10:15—18. 1 Chr. 18:3—9. 19:6,16—19. *Hadarezer.* Ps. 60: *title.*
u 19:15. 20:34. Gen. 14:15. Acts 9:2.
x 5:4. 2 Chr. 15:2.
y Gen. 34:30. Deut. 23:7. 2 Sam. 16: 21. Ps. 106:40. Zech. 11:8.
z 11:28. 12:2,20,&c. 13:1,&c. 14:16. 15:30. 16:3. 21:22.
a Gen. 35:16. Ruth 1:2. 1 Sam. 1:1. 17:12. 1 Chr. 2:19.
b 9:22. 2 Chr. 13:6.
c 2 Sam. 20:21. Prov. 30:32. Is. 26:11.
d See on 9:15,24.
‡ Heb. *closed.* Am. 9:11.
e Neh. 4:7. Ps. 60:2. Is. 22:9. Ez. 13:5. f See on 2 Sam. 5:7.
§ Heb: *did work.* Prov. 22:29.
g 5:16.
‖ Heb. *burden.* Deut. 1:12. Is. 14:25. Matt. 11:30.
h Josh. 18:5. Judg. 1:22,23. 2 Sam. 19:20. Am. 5:6. Zech. 10:6.
i 12:15. 14:2. 2 Chr. 9:29.
k Josh. 18:1.
l Gen. 4:8. 2 Sam. 14:6.

Egypt: cuts, 14:25. 2 K. 17:4, &c. So that the wife of this Pharaoh appears to have been an idolatress, whether the daughter of Pharaoh whom Solomon married, (a much debated question,) was so or not. These remarks are indulged, in the hope of exciting greater interest in Egyptian literature, from which so much to corroborate the Scriptures, it is to be hoped, will be drawn. Comp. note 12:26—29. 'The kings of Egypt followed the rules of the priests, who restricted their monarch and themselves to *one wife*, but the kings indemnified themselves by the numbers in their *harem*. Herod. and Diod. do not agree on this subject. Polygamy was permitted to the people.' *Wilkinson.* 'Tahpenes' husband seems to have been 'of the 21st Egyptian dynasty. Hadad seems to have remained 24 yrs. in Egypt, under several kings. *Psousenes* (1st.) gave him an asylum. He reigned from 1075 to 1029 B. C. (following the chronology of Usher, and guided by the fixed date of the reign of *Menephres*, i. e. 1322.) Nephelcheres (his successor) gave to Hadad his sister-in-law. In 1025 Amenophis succeeded; and, finally, Hadad's return would date from the reign of the 5th monarch of that family, *Osochor*, who reigned from 1016 to 1010, B. C. So GREPPO, who supposes that Solomon married Osochor's daughter. ED.

Verse 24.

Damascus.] 'Called also Damesk, but generally El Sham, (the sun,) by the Arabs, is in a delightful plain [amid extensive gardens, forming a circuit of 25 or 30 miles], well watered by the Barrada, at the E. foot of Anti-Libanus, being surrounded by hills in the form of a triumphal arch, 136 miles N. of Jerusalem, 195 S. of Antioch, and 276 S. S. W. of Diarbekir. It is a city of the highest antiquity, being at least as old as Abraham's time; it has often been captured, and several times demolished, but has always risen to splendor and dignity. [It has well paved streets, with side-walks, and above 500 large and magnificent houses entitled to the name of palaces: each house has a canal or fountain. Mosques and chapels are numerous, and the grand mosque is of great extent and magnificence. There is a Greek, Syrian, Maronite, and Armenian church, and 8 synagogues of Jews. *Maundrell* describes the modern town as long, straight, from N. E. to S. W. slender in the middle, but bigger at each end, especially the N. E. *Niebuhr* makes the walls something less than a league and a half in circumference; and the pop. is estimated at from 100,000 to 150,000.' [*Burkhardt* says 250,000; *Lamartine*, 400,000.] GREENF. and ENC. AM. A late traveller, *Lamartine*, says of it in 1833, 'in coming towards the city we ascended a few hundred paces to a deep defile, our Arabs suddenly stopped short, and uttering exclamations of joy, pointed to an opening in the rock on our right; I approached, and looking through the cleft I beheld the grandest and most singular prospect that ever presented itself to the eye of man. It was Damascus and its boundless desert, lying at the depth of a few hundred feet below us. The city, surrounded by its ramparts of black and yellow marble, flanked by its innumerable square towers, crowned by sculptured cranies, commanded by its forests of minarets of every form, and intersected by the seven branches of its river and its numberless streams, extended as far as the eye could reach. It was a labyrinth of gardens and flowers, thrusting its suburbs here and there in the vast plain, encircled by its forest of ten leagues in circumference, and every where shaded by groves of sycamores, and trees of every form and hue.' *Pilgrimage to the Holy Land in* 1832—3. ED.

30 And Ahijah caught the new garment that *was* on him, and [m] rent it *in* twelve pieces:

31 And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces; for [n] thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee:

32 (But [o] he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and [p] for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:)

33 Because that [q] they have forsaken me, and have worshipped [r] Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do *that which is* right in mine eyes, and *to keep* my statutes and my judgments, as *did* David his father.

34 Howbeit [s] I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand; but I will make him prince all the days of his life, for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes:

35 But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and [t] will give it unto thee, *even* ten tribes.

36 And unto his son will I give one tribe, that [u] David my servant may have a * light always before me in Jerusalem, [x] the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.

37 And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign, [y] according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel.

38 And it shall be, [z] if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do *that is* right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; [a] that I will be with thee, and [b] build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee.

39 And I will for this [c] afflict the seed of David, but [d] not for ever.

40 Solomon [e] sought therefore to kill Jeroboam; and Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto [f] Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.

41 And [g] the rest of the † acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, *are* they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon?

42 And the ‡ time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel *was* [h] forty years.

43 And Solomon [i] slept with his fathers, and was [k] buried in the city of David his father: and [l] Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

m 1 Sam. 15:27,28. 24:4,5.
n See on 11,12.
o See on 12:20.
p See on 13.
q 9. 8:14. 6:12,13. 9:5—7. 1 Chr. 28:9. 2 Chr. 15:2. Jer. 2:13.
r See on 5—9.
s See on 12,13,31. Job 11:6. Ps. 109: 10. Hab. 3:2.
t 12:15—17,20. 2 Chr. 10:15—17.
u 15:4. 2 Sam. 7:16,29. 21:17. 2 K. 8:19. 2 Chr. 21:7. Ps. 132:17. Jer. 33:17—21. Am. 9:11,12. Luke 1:69, 70,78,79. Acts 15:16,17.
* Heb. *lamp*, or, *candle*.
x See on 13. 9:3.—Gal. 4:25,26. Heb. 12:22. Rev. 21:10.
y 26. Deut. 14:26. 2 Sam. 3:21.
z 3:14. 6:12. 9:4,5. Ex. 19:5. Deut. 15:5. Zech. 3:7.
a See on Deut. 31:8. Josh. 1:5.
b 14:7—14. 2 Sam. 7:11,16,26—29. 1 Chr. 17:10,24—27.
c 12:16. 14:8,25,26. Ps. 89:38—45,49 —51.
d See on 36.—Is. 7:14. 9:7. 11:1—10. Jer. 23:5,6. Luke 1:32,33. 2:4,11.
e 2 Chr. 16:10. Prov. 21:30. Is. 14:24 —27. 46:10. Lam. 3:37.
f 14:25,26. 2 Chr. 12:2—9.
g 2 Chr. 9:29,30.
† Or, *words*, or, *things*.
‡ Heb. *days*.
h 2:11.
i 1:21. 14:20. 15:8,24. 16:8. Deut. 31:16. 2 K. 16:20. 20:21. 21:18.
k 2:10. 14:31. 2 K. 21:18,26. 2 Chr. 21:20. 26:23. 28:27. Jer. 22:19.
l 1 Chr. 3:10. 2 Chr. 9:31. 13:7. Matt. 1:7. *Roboam.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 9—43. The Lord is angry even with the objects of his special love, when their hearts are for a season, or in a measure, turned from Him; and the tokens of his favor, his answers to their prayers, and their comfortable communion with Him in times past, aggravate their guilt and increase his displeasure: nor can there be any peace, or assurance of acceptance, without unreserved, persevering obedience to his commandments. Yet, in punishing transgressors, He will not dishonor his own promises, desert the cause of true religion, or fail to honor the memories of those who have uprightly walked in his ways: and for the sake of Jesus, and his people, whom He hath chosen, He will not suffer his whole displeasure to arise. But when the Lord is become an Adversary, He will give power, courage, and capacity to other adversaries, and thus render those formidable, who before appeared contemptible. Unnecessary severity excites resentments, which may long after create us or ours disturbance and grief.—Many abhor the Israel of God, who are not permitted to hurt them: nay, when they seem to succeed in their malice, they are only the instruments of salutary chastisement to them. We often find our worst enemies among those, whom we have most befriended; especially when ingenuity, industry, and resolution, rather than piety, have recommended them to our notice.—Providential dispensations to this day, as well as prophetic declarations of old, try men's spirits, whether they will grasp at advantages at all events; or wait patiently, and use only lawful means of obtaining them, according to the will of God.—Many so believe some parts of God's Word, as perversely to take encouragement from them to commit iniquity; instead of so believing the whole, as to expect the blessings proposed in the way of conscientious obedience there prescribed. They are shown, and seem to understand, that others have forfeited their most valuable interests by sin; and yet they will seek to seize or to secure their own by similar transgressions! so inconsistent is human nature!—The Lord will not afflict for ever the people of his covenant: but when they grievously offend, He will eclipse their honor; will leave obscurity and reproach on their characters; and perhaps bring them down to the grave in disgrace, discomfort, and uncertainty; distressed concerning the state of their own souls, and about the consequences of their conduct, to their families, to the church, and to the world. May God help us to walk circumspectly; to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear; and to stand with our loins girded, and our lamps burning, prepared for and expecting the coming of our Lord! SCOTT.

Verses 29—32.

(*M. R.—Note, Acts* 21:7—14.) The meaning of the emblematical action, here recorded, seems to imply, that 'the new garment' belonged to the prophet, not to Jeroboam; though many expositors suppose the contrary.—Some think, that the rending of the garment into twelve pieces, represented also the subsequent divisions and distractions which prevailed in Israel. SCOTT.

Verse 33.

Induced by Solomon's example, and to obtain his favor, it seems that the people had generally joined in his idolatry; and the punishment inflicted on him and his posterity involved them in manifold and heavy calamities. ID.

Verse 38.

And build thee, &c.] 2 *Sam.* 7:8—16. Distrusting this express conditional promise, Jeroboam endeavored to establish his authority by disobedience; and thus he forfeited the kingdom as to his posterity, and brought ruin on them, and incalculable mischiefs on Israel. (12:26 —31. 14:5—16. 2 *Chr.* 13:4—12.) ID.

Verse 40.

There is nothing in the original for *therefore*; it is simply 'And Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam.' It does not appear that he did this because of *Ahijah's prophecy*, which would have been an instance of most infatuated rebellion against God, and utterly inconsistent with repentance; but because of *Jeroboam's subsequent misconduct*, who perhaps divulged and boasted of the promise, and 'lifted up his hand against Solomon;' which implies an attempt to raise rebellion in his life-time. (26)—It is probable Shishak was the successor of Pharaoh, whose daughter Solomon had married: but perhaps of another family and interest. He is the only king of Egypt hitherto called by his proper name; all before him being known by the general title of Pharaoh. He is also thought to have been the Sesostris of pagan history: ['but,' says Dr. *A. Clarke*, 'it is likely *he* lived long before Solomon:'] and see *Notes*, 14:25—28. 2 *Chr.* 12:2—11.) SCOTT.

Verse 41.

In the book, &c.] (*Preface to* 1 *K. Notes*, 14:19. 1 *Chr.* 29:29, 30.) ID.

Verses 42, 43.

Solomon was the only king, who reigned so long as 40 years over all Israel: yet he was not above 60 years of age when he died.—This silence in the book of Kings as to his repentance, no more *proves*

CHAP. XII.

The Israelites, assembled at Shechem to make Rehoboam king, with Jeroboam now returned from Egypt, demand redress of their grievances, 1—5. Rehoboam, rejecting the counsel of the old men, and following that of the young, answers them roughly, 6—15. Ten tribes revolt, stone Adoram, and make Jeroboam king, 16—20. Rehoboam raises an army to subdue them; but is forbidden by the prophet Shemaiah, 21—24. Jeroboam builds Shechem and Penuel, 25: and to establish his kingdom, he sets up the worship of the golden calves in Bethel and Dan, 26—33.

AND [a] Rehoboam went to [b] Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king.

2 And it came to pass, when [c] Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard *of it*, (for he was fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;)

3 That they sent and called him: and Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying,

4 Thy father made [d] our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.

5 And he said unto them, Depart yet *for* three days: then come again to me. And the people departed.

6 And king Rehoboam [e] consulted with the old men that stood before Solomon his father, while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people?

7 And they spake ishly seeks to kill his successor. Had not he taught others, that whatever devices are in men's hearts, *the counsel of the Lord that shall stand?* And yet does he himself think to defeat that counsel? God's promise would have secured Jeroboam any where, yet he would use means, and was content to live in exile and obscurity for a while, being sure of a kingdom at last. And shall not *we* be so, who have a better kingdom in reserve?

V. 41—43. We have here the conclusion of Solomon's story, and in it, 1. Reference is had to another history then extant, but (not being divinely inspired) since lost, *the book of the Acts of Solomon*, *v.* 41. written, probably, by a chronologer or historiographer, whom he employed to write his annals, out of which the sacred writer extracted what God saw fit to transmit to the church. 2. His reign was as long as his father's, but not his life. Sin shortened his days. 3. His death, burial, and successor, *v.* 43. Thus the graves are filling with the generations that go off, and houses are filling with those that are growing up. As the grave cries, 'Give, give,' so land is never lost for want of an heir.

CHAP. XII. The glory of the kingdom of Israel was in its height and perfection, in Solomon; it was long in coming to it, but it soon declined, and began to sink and wither in the very next reign, as we find in this ch. where we have the kingdom divided, and thereby weakened, and made little, in comparison with what it had been. Thus did Judah become weak, being deserted by their brethren; and Israel, by deserting the house of the Lord.

V. 1—15. Solomon had 1000 wives and concubines, yet but one son to bear up his name, and he a fool. It is said, (Hos. 4: 10.) *They shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase.* Sin is a bad way of building up a family. Neither wisdom nor grace runs in the blood. Solomon came to the crown very young, yet he was then a wise man: Rehoboam at forty, when men will be wise, if ever, yet he was then foolish. Wisdom does not go by age, nor is it the multitude of years, or the advantage of education, even at Solomon's court, that teaches it. No dispute is made of Rehoboam's succession; on the death of his father, he was immediately proclaimed. But,

I. The people desire a treaty with him at Shechem, and he condescends to meet them there. 1. Their pretence was, to make him king, but their design, to unmake him. 2. The place was ominous; Abimelech set up at *Shechem*, Judg. 9. Yet it had been famous for the convention of the states there, Josh. 24: 1.

II. The representatives of the tribes address him, praying to be eased of the taxes they were burdened with. 1. They complain, (*v.* 4.) not of his father's idolatry, and revolt from God; the greatest grievance of all, was none to them; so careless and indifferent were they in matters of religion, as if God or Moloch were all one, so they might but live at ease, and pay no taxes. Yet their complaint was groundless and unjust. Never did people live more at ease than they, or in greater plenty. Were the taxes a burden? How could that be, when Solomon imported bullion in such plenty, that silver was, in a manner, as common as the stones? So that they did but render to Solomon the things that were Solomon's. Nay, suppose there was some hardship put upon them, were they not told before that this would be the manner of the king, and yet they would have one. The best government cannot secure itself from reproach and censure, no not Solomon's. Factious spirits will never want something to complain of I know nothing in Solomon's administration, that could make the people's yoke grievous, unless, perhaps, the women, whom in his latter days he doted on, where connived at in oppressing them. 2. They demand relief, and, on that condition, will continue in their allegiance. All their care was, to save their money, whether their religion was supported, and the government protected, or no. All seek their own.

III. Rehoboam consulted with those about him, concerning the answer he should give to this address, as was prudent, especially he having so weak a head of his own; yet, on this occasion, it was impolitic to take time himself to consider, for thereby he gave time to the disaffected to ripen things for a revolt; and his deliberating in so plain a case would be improved as an indication of the little concern he had for the people's ease. They saw what they must expect, and prepared accordingly. The way to rule, is to serve; to do good, and to stoop to do it; to become all things to all men, and so win their hearts. Those in power, really sit highest, and easiest, and safest, that do so.

It was an instance of Rehoboam's weakness, that he did not prefer aged counsellors, but the young men that had grown up with him, and with whom he was familiar, *v.* 8. Days should speak. Great wits have not always the most wisdom; nor are those to be relied on as our best friends, that know how to make us merry, for that will not make us happy. It is of great consequence to young people setting out in the world, to have suitable associates. If they reckon those that feed their pride, gratify their vanity, and further them in their pleasures, their best friends, they are already marked for ruin. They thought the old men expressed themselves but dully, *v.* 7. They affect to be witty in their advice. The old men did not undertake to put words into Rehoboam's mouth, only counselled him to speak good words: but the young men will furnish him with very pointed and pert similitudes; *My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins*, &c. That is not always the best sense that is best worded.

IV. He answered the people, according to the counsel of the young men, *v.* 14, 15. He affected to be haughty and imperious, and fancied he could carry all before him with a high hand, therefore would rather run the risk of losing them, than deny himself so far as to give them good words. Note, Many ruin themselves by consulting their humor more than their interest.

1. Rehoboam could not have acted more foolishly and impolitely. (1.) He owned their reflections on his father's government to be true, *v.* 14. and therein was unjust to his father's memory which he might easily have vindicated from the imputation. (2.) He fancied himself better able

a See on 11:43. 2 Chr. 10:1.
b Gen. 12:6. *Shechem.* 33:18,19. Josh. 20:7. 24:1,32. Judg. 9:1. Ps. 60:6. Acts 7:16. *Sychem.*
c See on 11:26—31,40.—2 Chr. 10:2,3.
d 4:7,20,22,23,25. 9:22,23. 1 Sam. 8:11—18. 2 Chr. 10:4,5. Matt. 11:29,30. 23:4. 1 John 5:3.
2 Sam. 16:20. 17:5. Job 12:12. 32:7. Prov. 27:10. Jer. 42:2—5. 43:2.

Solomon did not repent, than the silence of the book of Chronicles *proves* that he did not commit idolatry. I would not indeed decide on so controverted a point with unhesitating confidence: yet the book of Ecclesiastes seems fully to show, that he repented, and publicly declared that repentance before his death. (*Ec.* 7:23—28.) We are not however [so] much interested in the solution, as some suppose: for the doctrines of Christianity must be proved by 'the sure testimony of God,' and not by particular examples: for we are not sufficiently acquainted, either with the real character of men, or with their final doom, to decide on this ground. If Solomon did not repent, he doubtless perished, notwithstanding all his previous zeal, important services, and eminent endowments: for no part of Scripture gives reason to suppose, that any who die in unrepented wickedness are saved. Many indeed think that this supposition would prove all his profession of religion to have been hypocritical; and this conclusion does not well accord to his name *Jedidiah*, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit, that he 'loved the LORD.' (*Ez.* 3:20, 21. *Heb.* 10.35—39. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII. V. 1. That Solomon should have no more children, may be considered as a providential rebuke, for his multiplying wives in so unprecedented a manner.—Solomon seems to have been sensible, that his son was not likely to prove a wise man, or to carry on his designs for the good of Israel, and the establishment of his family; and he appears to have greatly regretted it. (*Ec.* 2:18—23.) *Shechem.* (*M. R.* b.) It is probable this city, which belonged to Ephraim, was chosen, rather than Jerusalem or Hebron, that the tribe of Judah might not have too great influence in the transaction; and Rehoboam was impolitic in consenting to that appointment, if he could have prevented it. SCOTT.

Verse 4.

When the scriptural account of Solomon's reign, and the peace, affluence, and prosperity which Israel then enjoyed, are considered, we cannot doubt, but that this charge was either false or greatly exaggerated. (9.19. 11:1—8.) ID.

Grievous service.] 'We are told in a previous ch. (9:19—22.) that Solomon's immense buildings were reared by his Canaanites and other bond slaves: it should seem, however, as his works increased, that he did not entirely confine himself to them: but the "grievous yoke" may refer chiefly to the heavy taxes imposed to defray the expense of building his own palaces, [&c.] as well as the temple, and to repay king Hiram for the timber and gold he had sent; which last he seems to have lavished with great profusion. What is gained without labor is often expended without care.' WILLIAMS.

unto him, saying, [f]If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and [g]speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.

8 But [h]he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, *and* which stood before him:

9 And he said unto them, [i]What counsel give ye, that we may answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?

10 And the young men that were grown up with him, spake unto him, saying, [k]Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou *it* lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, [l]My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father's loins.

11 And now, whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, [m]I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with [n]scorpions.

12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying [o]Come to me again the third day.

13 And the king [p]answered the people [*]roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him;

14 And spake to them after [q]the counsel of the young men, saying, [r]My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father *also* chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

15 Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for [s]the cause was from the LORD, [t]that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16 So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, [u]What portion have we in David? neither *have we* inheritance in the son of Jesse: [v]to your tents, O Israel: [x]now see to thine own house, David. [y]So Israel departed unto their tents.

17 But *as for* [z]the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

18 Then king Rehoboam sent [a]Adoram, who *was* over the tribute; and [b]all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam [†]made speed to get him up to his chariot, to [c]flee to Jerusalem.

19 So [d]Israel [‡]rebelled against the house of David [e]unto this day.

They speak here very unbecomingly of David, calling him *the son of Jesse*, no greater than his neighbors, [a phraseology of contempt still common in the east.] How soon are good men, and their good services to the public, forgotten! The rashness of their resolution was also much to be blamed; in time, and with prudent management, they might have settled the original contract with Rehoboam, to mutual satisfaction: otherwise, it is true, their jealousy for their liberty and property well became that free people. *Israel is not a servant, is not a home-born slave; why should he be spoiled?* Jer. 2: 14. They are willing to be ruled, but not to be ridden; protection draws allegiance, but destruction cannot. No marvel *Israel falls away from the house of David*, (*v.* 19.) if the house of David fall away from the great end of their advancement, which was, to be *ministers of God to them for good*. But thus to rebel against the seed of David, whom God had advanced to the kingdom, (entailing it on his seed,) and to set up another king in opposition to that family, was a great sin; see 2 Chr. 13: 5—8. To this God refers, Hos. 8: 4. *They have set up kings, but not by Me.* And it is here mentioned, to the praise of the tribe of Judah, that they *followed the house of David*, (*v.* 17, 20.) and, for aught that appears, they found Rehoboam better than his word, nor did he rule with the rigor which, at first, he threatened.

II. Rehoboam was imprudent in the further management of this affair, and more and more infatuated. 1. He was very unadvised, in sending Adoram, who was *over the tribute*, to treat with

f 2 Chr. 10:6,7. Prov. 15:1. Phil. 2:7—11.
g 13. 2 Sam. 15:3—6. Ec. 10:4. Zech. 1:13.
h 2 Chr. 10:8. 25:15,16. Prov. 1:2—5, 25,30. 19:20. 25:12. Ec. 10:2,3.
i 22:6—8. 2 Sam. 17:5,6. 2 Chr. 10:9 18:5—7.
k 2 Sam. 17:7—13.
l 2 Chr. 10:10,11. Prov 10:14. 18:6,7 28:25. 29:23. Is. 47:6.
m Ex. 1:13,14. 5:5—9,18. 1 Sam. 8:18 2 Chr. 16:10. Is. 58:6. Jer. 27:11. 28:13,14.
n 14. Ez. 2:6. Rev. 9:3—10.
o 5. 2 Chr. 10:12—14.
p 20:6—11. Gen. 42:7,30. Ex. 5:2. 10: 28. Judg. 12:1—6. 1 Sam. 20:10,30. 31. 25:10,11. 2 Sam. 19:43. Prov. 15:1. 18:23.
* Heb. *hardly*. Gen. 16:6.
q 2 Chr. 22:4. Esth. 1:16—21. 2:2—4. Prov. 12:5. Is. 19:11—13. Dan. 6:7. r 10,11. Prov. 13:10. 16:18. 17:14. Ec. 7:8. Jam. 3:14—18. 4:1,2.
s 24. 22:23. Deut. 2:30. Judg. 14:4. 2 Chr. 10:15. 22:7. 25:16,20. Ps. 5: 10. Am. 3:6. Acts 2:23. 4:28.
t See on 11:11,29—38. 1 Sam. 15:29. 2 Sam. 17:14. 2 K. 9:36. 10:10. Is. 14:13—17. 46:10,11. Dan. 4:35. John 19:23,24,28,29,32—37. Acts 3:17. 13: 27—29.
u See on 2 Sam. 20:1. 2 Chr. 10:16.
v 22:17,36.
x 11:13,34,36,39. 2 Sam. 7:15,16. Ps. 2:1—6. 76:10. 89:29—37. 132:17. Is. 7:2,6,7. 9:6,7. Jer. 23:5,6. 33:15, 16,21. Luke 19:14,27.
y Judg. 8:35. 2 Sam. 15:13. 16:11. Acts 5:26. 7:57,58.
† Heb. *strengthened himself*.
z 11:13,36. 2 Chr. 10:17. 11:13—17.
a 4:6. 5:14. *Adoniram*. 2 Sam. 20: 24. 2 Chr. 10:18. *Hadoram*.
b Ex. 17:4. Num. 14:10. 2 Chr. 24:21. Acts 5:26. 7:57,58.
† Heb. *strengthened himself*.
c 20:18—20. Prov. 28:1,2. Am. 2:16.
d 1 Sam. 10:19. 2 K. 17:21. 2 Chr. 10: 19. 13:5—7,17. Is. 7:17.
‡ Or, *fell away*. Heb. 6:6.
e See on Josh. 4:9.

Verses 8—15.

It 'is a frequent fault of new kings, [and even of elective rulers,] who, to show their power, presently change their counsellors, and put in new officers, to gratify all their dependents; not considering who are wisest, but who have been their companions.' *Patrick*. SCOTT.

(8.) *The young men that were grown up with him.*] Many think this alludes to an oriental custom, of taking all those sons of the nobles of the realm, born at about the same time as the young prince, to be educated together with him, to live in the same place and way, and to be his constant companions, in physical exercises and sports, as in intellectual. Thus *Xenophon* describes the education of Cyrus. ED.

(15.) *Cause was from the Lord.*] 'Rather, "Jehovah so over-ruled the affair:" I give the sense, in preference to the idiom.' BOOTHR. 'The *cause* of all this confusion and anarchy, was Rehoboam's *folly, cruelty*, and *despotic tyranny*, and this was certainly *not* "from the Lord," nor does the original text speak this doctrine. It says, *sibbah* (from *savav*, to *turn, change*,) "the *change* or *revolution* was from the Lord;" which is consistent with all the preceding declarations. God stirred up the people to revolt from a man who had neither skill nor humanity to govern them.' GREENFIELD, after Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 16.

The Lord had indeed promised ten tribes to Jeroboam: but He had not commanded the people to revolt from the family of David; nor had He commissioned Jeroboam to wrench these tribes from Rehoboam. His purposes and declarations were not the motive of their conduct, and therefore formed no excuse for it. SCOTT.

Verse 17.

A considerable part of the priests and Levites, together with the tribe of Benjamin, and many of the Simeonites, dwelt in Judah; (*Josh.* 19:1—9.) and many others soon after joined them. (2 *Chr.* 11:13—17.) ID.

Verse 18.

It is not certain, whether Rehoboam sent Adoram to demand the taxes of the people, after their dispersion, as a feeble attempt to enforce his imprudent threats; or whether, previously to their departure from Shechem, he sent him to pacify them, with proposals for an accommodation.—This is the first time that we read of a king of Israel riding in a chariot; though no doubt Solomon had generally done so. (*Cant.* 3:9, 10.) ID.

Verses 19, 20.

The defection of Israel from Rehoboam is called *rebellion* against the house of David; as no misconduct of either Solomon or Rehoboam was sufficient to justify or even excuse it; and neither the people nor Jeroboam intended to obey God, though they accomplished his pur

20 And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, [f] and made him king over all Israel: there was [g] none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

[*Practical Observations.*]

21 ¶ And [h] when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, [i] an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon.

22 But the word of God came unto [j] Shemaiah, [k] the man of God, saying,

23 Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, saying,

24 Thus saith the LORD, [l] Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; [m] for this thing is from me. [n] They hearkened therefore to the word of the LORD, and returned to depart, according to the word of the LORD.

25 Then Jero[o]boam [o] built [p] Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built [q] Penuel.

26 And Jeroboam [r] said in his heart, [s] Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David:

27 If this people [t] go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at

them, *v.* 18. The tribute was the thing, and, therefore, Adoram the person, they most complained of; the very sight of him made them outrageous. He was one to whom they could not so much as give a patient hearing, but *stoned him to death* in a popular tumult. 2. Some think he was also unadvised, in making so much haste to Jerusalem, for thereby he deserted his friends, and gave advantage to his enemies, who had gone to their tents indeed, (*v.* 16.) in disgust, but did not offer to make Jeroboam king, till Rehoboam was gone, *v.* 20. See how soon this foolish prince went from one extreme to the other. He hectored and talked big, when he thought all was his own, but sunk, and looked very mean, when he saw himself in danger. It is common for those that are most haughty in their prosperity, to be most abject in adversity.

III. God forbade his attempt to recover by the sword what he had lost. What was done, was of God, who would not suffer, 1. That it should be undone again, as it would be, if Rehoboam got the better, and reduced the ten tribes. Nor, 2. That more should be done to the prejudice of the house of David, as would be, if Jeroboam should get the better, and conquer the two tribes.

(1.) It was brave in Rehoboam, to design to reduce the revolters by force. His courage came to him, when he was come to Jerusalem, *v.* 21. There he thought himself among his fast friends, who generously adhered to him, and appeared for him. Judah and Benjamin presently raised an army of 180,000 men, for the recovery of their king's right to the ten tribes, and were resolved to stand by him (as we say) with their lives and fortunes; having either not such cause, or rather not such a disposition, to complain as the rest.

(2.) It was more brave in Rehoboam, to desist, when God, by a prophet, ordered him to lay down his arms. He would not lose a kingdom tamely, for then he had been unworthy the title of a prince; yet he would not contend for it, in opposition to God, for then he had been unworthy the title of an Israelite. These two considerations should reconcile us to our losses and troubles, that God is the Author of them; and our brethren are the instruments of them, let us not therefore meditate revenge. When we know God's mind, we must submit to it, how much soever it crosses our own mind. In the next reign, God allowed them to fight, and gave them victory, 2 Chr. 13.

V. 24—33. We have here the beginning of the reign of Jeroboam. He built Shechem first, then Penuel, and probably, had a palace in each of them for himself; (*v.* 25.) the former in Ephraim, the latter in Gad, on the other side Jordan. This might be proper; but he formed another project to establish his kingdom, which was fatal to the interests of religion in it.

I. What he designed, was, 1. By some effectual means to secure those to himself, who had now chosen him their king, and to prevent their return to the house of David, *v.* 26, 27. Many that have been advanced in one tumult, have been hurled down in another: what is got by wrong and usurpation, cannot be enjoyed or kept with any security or satisfaction. 2. He was distrustful of God's promise, (*ch.* 11: 38.) and would contrive ways and means, and sinful ones too, for his own safety. A practical disbelief of God's all-sufficiency, is at the bottom of all our treacherous departures from Him.

II. The way he took to do this, *v.* 27. Jerusalem was the place God had chosen to put his name there; Solomon's temple was there, which God had, in the sight of all Israel, and in the memory of many now living, taken solemn possession of, in a cloud of glory. At the altar there, the priests of the Lord attended, there all Israel were to keep the feasts, and thither they were to bring their sacrifices.

Now, 1. Jeroboam apprehended that if the people continued to do this, they would, in time, return to the house of David. If they cleave to their old religion, they will go back to their old king.

2. He therefore dissuaded them from going up to Jerusalem, pretending to consult their ease; (*v.* 28.) '*you have gone long enough to Jerusalem.*' So some read it.

3. He provided for the assistance of their devotion at home: set up two golden calves, as tokens or signs of the divine presence. Some charitably think his calves were made to represent the mercy-seat, and the cherubims over the ark; but, more probably, as he had lived among the Egyptians, for some time, they were in the form of their god Apis, in the similitude of a bull or calf. By these he intended, no doubt, to represent, or rather make present, not any false god, as Moloch or

f 1 Sam. 10:24. Hos. 8:4.
g See on 17. 11:13,32.
h 2 Chr. 11:1—3.
i 1 Chr. 21:5. 2 Chr. 14:8,11. 17:14—19. Prov. 21:30,31.
j 2 Chr. 12:5,7.
k 13:1,4,5,11. 17:18,24.—See on Deut. 33:1.—2 K. 4:16,22,25,27. 1 Tim. 6:11.
l Num. 14:42. 2 Chr. 11:4. 25:7,8. 28:9—13.
m See on 15. 11:29—38.—Hos. 8:4.
n 2 Chr. 25:10. 28:13—15.
o 9:15,17,18. 15:17. 16:24. 2 Chr. 11:5—12.
p See on 1.—Judg. 9:1,45—49.
q Gen. 32:30,31. Judg. 8:8,17.
r Ps. 14:1. Mark 2:6—8. Luke 7:39.
s 11:38. 1 Sam. 27:1. 2 Chr. 20:20. Is. 7:9. Jer. 38:18—21. John 11:47—50. 12:10,11,19. Acts 4:16,17.
t 8:29,30,44. 11:32. Deut. 12:5—7. 16:2,6.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—20. Many wise and pious men have had the severe affliction of foolish and wicked children: and as the 'Lord alone giveth wisdom,' even good instructions will not ensure their prudent and proper conduct. But bad examples generally defeat the effect of wise counsels: and those who are likely to inherit great dignity are commonly so flattered and indulged, that it is almost a miracle, if they are not intoxicated with pride and sensual lusts. —Man is a discontented being; and while one desire remains ungratified, and one inconvenience unremoved, he is *naturally* more disposed to murmur, than to be thankful either to God or man, for the multiplied unmerited blessings with which he is surrounded.—Of these unreasonable dissatisfactions, ambitious men are ready to take the advantage, and put themselves in the way to head any formidable opposition to 'the powers that be,' when it can subserve their own purposes. (1 *Sam.* 8:6—9. 2 *Sam.* 15: 1—6. 20:1,2. *P. O.* 2 *Sam.* 15:1—12.) It requires great wisdom to prevent or defeat these pernicious machinations: but weak men are commonly the most obstinate, and relish no counsel but what flatters their silly pride, and humors their unreasonable prejudices: and when the companions of a prince's pleasures are his select counsellors; his inclinations, however mischievous, will be preferred to the important interests of the whole kingdom. (2 *Chr.* 24:17,18. *Esth.* 2:1—4. *Dan.* 6:12—17.) Yet experience decides that, in general, men best mount by first stooping, prevail by yielding, and rule by becoming serviceable, and giving good words: and when this consists with duty, it is in most cases our wisdom and interest.—We need not wonder that those persons who forget the mercies of God, and oppose his appointments with ingratitude and contempt, should recompense their earthly benefactors with reproaches, insults, or injuries: but the Lord will take care of the characters, families, and interests of his faithful servants; and they may safely leave their cause in his hand, though they cannot see to it themselves. SCOTT.

poses, by pursuing their own schemes. They made Jeroboam king, without any condition, that we can find: though it is likely, he promised to ease them of all their burden.' *Bp. Patrick.*—No whole tribe, except Judah, and little Benjamin as united to it, adhered to Rehoboam. (11:12, 13.) SCOTT.

Verses 21—24.

Shemaiah, the man of God. (22) One who had been before known and approved as a prophet of the Lord; and not one newly raised up, whom Rehoboam and the people would have been less disposed to regard. SCOTT.

Verses 26—29.

The worship of the golden calves was continued uninterruptedly in the kingdom of Israel, till the Assyrian captivity: and the bulk of the people readily concurred in Jeroboam's measures, as suited to their

Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, *even* unto Rehoboam king of Judah, [u] and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah,

28 Whereupon the king [x] took counsel, and made [y] two calves *of* gold, and said unto them, [z] It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: [a] behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

29 And he set the one in [b] Beth-el, and the other put he in [c] Dan.

30 And this thing [d] became a sin: for the people went *to worship* before the one, *even* unto Dan.

31 And he made [e] an

u Gen. 12:12,13. 26:7. Prov. 29:25. 1 Cor. 1:19,20.
x See on 8,9.—Ex. 1:10. Is. 30:1.
y Ex. 20:4. Deut. 4:14—18. 2 K. 10: 29. 17:16. 2 Chr. 11:15. Hos. 8:4—7. 10:5,6.
z Is. 30:10. 2 Pet. 2:19.
a See on Ex. 32:4,8.
b Gen. 12:8. 28:19. 35:1. Hos. 4:15.
c Gen. 14:14. Deut. 34:1. Judg. 18:29—31. 20:1. 2 K. 10:29. Jer. 8:16. Am. 8:14.
d 13:34. 2 K. 10:31. 17:21.
e 13:32. Ez. 16:25. Hos. 12:11.

Chemosh, but the true God only, as he declares, *v.* 28. So it was no violation of the first commandment, but the second. And he chose thus to engage the people's devotion, because he knew there were many among them, so in love with images, that, for the sake of the calves, they would willingly quit God's temple, where all images were forbidden. He set up two, by degrees to break people off from the belief of the unity of the godhead, which would pave the way to the polytheism of the Pagans. He set them up, one in the utmost border of his country northward, the other southward, as if to be the guardians and protectors of the kingdom. Beth-el lay close to Judah: he set up one there, to tempt those of Rehoboam's subjects over to him, who were inclined to image-worship. The other at Dan, was for the convenience of those that lay most remote that way. Micah's images had been set up there, and great veneration paid to them for many ages, Judg. 18: 30. *Beth-el* signifies *the house of God*, which gave some color to the superstition; but the prophet called it *Beth-aven, the house of vanity*, or iniquity.

4. The people complied, fond enough of the novelty, *v.* 30. They that thought it much to go to Jerusalem, to worship God according to his institution, made no difficulty of going twice as far, to Dan, to worship Him according to their own inventions. Or, they are said to go to one of the calves at Dan, because Abijah, king of Judah, within 20 years, recovered Beth-el, (2 Chr. 13: 19.) and, it is likely, removed the golden calf, or forbade the use of it. *This became a sin;* and a great sin it was, against the express letter of the second commandment. God had never allowed the worship of Him by images. Hereby they justified their fathers in making the calf at Horeb, though God had so fully shown his displeasure against them for it, and threatened to visit for it in the day of visitation, Ex. 32: 34. So it was as great a contempt of God's wrath as of his law; and thus they added sin to sin.

5. Having set up the gods, he fitted up accommodations for them: wherein he varied from the divine appointment, we are here told; which intimates that, in other things, he imitated what was done in Judah, (*v.* 32.) as well as he could. See how one error multiplied into many.

(1.) He made a house of high places, or of altars; one temple at Dan, we may suppose, and another at Beth-el, (*v.* 31.) and in each many altars, probably, complaining of it as an inconvenience, that in the temple of Jerusalem there was but one. The multiplying of altars passed with some for devotion, but God, by the prophet, puts another construction on it; (Hos. 8: 11.) *Ephraim has made many altars to sin.*

(2.) He made priests of the lowest of the people; and good enough they were to be priests to his calves, and too good. He made priests *from the extremest parts of the people*, i. e. some out of every corner of the country, whom he ordered to reside among their neighbors to instruct them in his appointments, and reconcile them to them. Thus were they dispersed as the Levites, but *were not of the sons of Levi.* But the priests of the high places, or altars, he ordered to reside in Beth-el, as the priests at Jerusalem, (*v.* 32.) to attend the public service.

(3.) The feast of tabernacles, on the 15th day of the 7th month, he adjourned to the 15th of the 8th month, (*v.* 32.) *the month which he devised of his own heart*, to show his power in ecclesiastical matters, *v.* 33. The passover and pentecost he observed in their proper season, or not at all, or with little solemnity in comparison with this.

(4.) He himself assuming a power to make priests, no marvel if he undertook to do the priests' work with his own hands: *He offered on the altar twice*, *v.* 32, 33. also he burnt incense. This was connived at in him, because of a piece with the rest of his irregularities; but in king Uzziah it was immediately punished with the plague of leprosy. He did it himself, to make him look great

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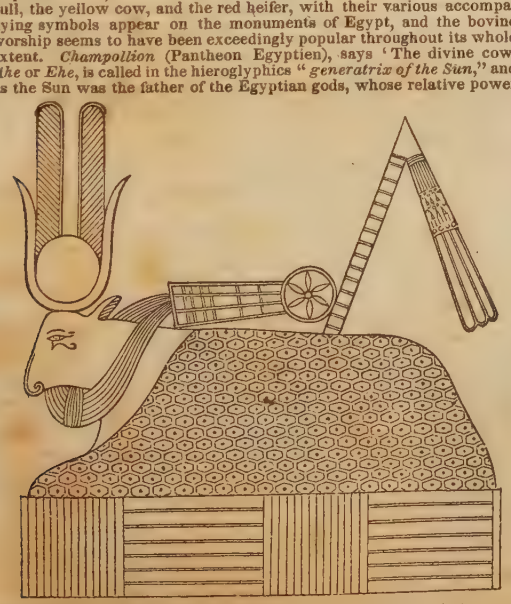
conveniency and inclinations: though the priests, Levites, and many Israelites were honorable exceptions. (*Note*, 2 *Chr.* 11:13—17.)—Perhaps the people would be less shocked at worshipping the God of Israel, under the similitude of the golden calf, than if they had been at once invited to worship Baal: but it made way for that species of idolatry also. Thus the worship of images of Christ, and similar superstitions, in the ancient Romish church, soon introduced the worship of saints and angels. (*Notes*, *Ex.* 20:4—6.) Scott. Most commentators suppose, with *Henry*, that Jeroboam made these images in imitation of the Apis and Mnevis, &c. of Egypt. The symbolical worship of the bull, cow and ox in the E. is an endless subject. The black bull, the yellow cow, and the red heifer, with their various accompanying symbols appear on the monuments of Egypt, and the bovine worship seems to have been exceedingly popular throughout its whole extent. *Champollion* (Pantheon Egyptien), says 'The divine cow, *Ahe* or *Ehe*, is called in the hieroglyphics "*generatrix of the Sun*," and as the Sun was the father of the Egyptian gods, whose relative power



is expressed in the reputed antecedence of their birth, this divine cow claims a high place and antiquity.' We can easily perceive how inveterate this worship must become with those who were taught, as the Egyptians were, the dogma of a male and female principle (Amonra and Neith) of the universe, who formed one god, and conjointly were the activators and producers of all things; a faith still extant in China. A cut is given from the 'Harper's tomb,' (note, 10:18:19. latter part,) of a red cow, covered with a blue covering, reticulated with white, and spotted with deep blue. The moon appears between her horns (indicating the female principle of the universe?); and ostrich feathers (emblems of truth and justice?); a bauble or bulla, hangs about her neck signifying, say some, the generative power, and a flabellum, fly-flap or scourge, signifying severity, (sometimes combined with a crook, as in the extremely ancient figures of Osiris, signifying moderation,) still carried before the pope of Rome, it is said. Perhaps we may hence gather, why Moses connected the 'red heifer' with the abhorrence due to crime, and sin. Ed.

(27.) *And they shall kill me.*] Says Dr. *A. Clarke*, 'He found he had little cause to trust this fickle people; though they had declared for him, it was more from *caprice*, *desire of change*, and *novelty*, than from any regular and praise-worthy principle.' If this was the natural effect of *national prosperity* (4:20:25.) on imperfect human nature, what reason have *we*, a nation blest with *such unequalled prosperity*, to seek, in this our day, the things which belong to our peace! What reason have we to strain every nerve for the education of all, both young and old, in the fear of God—lest He, the Author of our so peculiar blessings, find in us ingratitude which must be punished, or lawlessness which brings swift destruction, pride which goes before a fall, vain-glory which lulls to a blind security, unfounded in virtue, false as fatal; and *lastly*, lest, instead of wise dependence on his love, and obedience to his will, He, finding in our land jealousy, party-rage, self-seeking ambition, fanatic shortsightedness, to foment discord and disunion, correct us in anger with scourges, we have prepared for ourselves, by indulgence in evil passions, reckless of God, his religion, his worship and his fear! Leave us not, God of our mercies, leave us not to ourselves! God of our fathers, be thou our God, and teach us, what alone is the security of a nation, teach us to be thy people! Save us from political divisions, from fanaticism of all kinds, from demagogues like Jeroboam, who make a country to sin; the worship of golden calves, or counterfeit patriots, set up on high by the people, or by partisans for the people's idolatry! Ed.

Verse 30.

(*M. R.* d. *Notes*, 14:9—16.)—*Even unto Dan.*] Perhaps they often went from the southern part of the land, even to Dan, to maintain communion with those who worshipped there, who probably would not be backward in repaying their civility. Scott.

Verse 31.

Thus he exempted the people from paying tithes to the Levites, whom he drove out of his kingdom, because they would not concur in his idolatry: (2 *Chr.* 11:13—17.) and he paid court to the other tribes, by admitting them to the priesthood, of which many were ambitious: (*Num.* 16:1—4, 8—11.) and in both respects he, no doubt, thought himself, and was considered by others, a consummate politician. (2 *Sam.* 15 31. 2 *Chr.* 13:4—22. *Job* 12:13—25. *Prov.* 21:30. 1 *Cor.* 1:20—25.) Id.

house of high places, and made [f] priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.

32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, [g] like unto the feast that *is* in Judah, and he * offered upon the altar. So did he in Beth-el, † sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and [h] he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places which he had made.

33 So he ‡ offered upon the altar, which he had made in Beth-el, the fifteenth day of the eighth month, *even* [i] in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and [k] he offered upon the altar, § and burnt incense.

CHAP. XIII.

A man of God sent from Judah prophesies to Jeroboam, while burning incense, that Josiah of David's race should defile the altar at Beth-el; and he gives him a sign, 1—3. Jeroboam's hand, stretched forth against him, withers; and the altar is rent, 4, 5. Jeroboam's hand is restored at the prophet's prayer, 6. He refuses entertainment and a reward, and leaves Beth-el, 7—10. He is seduced, and brought back, by the lie of an old prophet, who afterwards denounces the judgment of God against him for his disobedience, 11—22. A lion kills him on his way home, 23—25. The old prophet fetches his body, buries it with lamentations, and confirms his prophecy, 26—32. Jeroboam persists in his evil ways, 33, 34.

AND, behold, there came [a] a man of God out of Judah, [b] by the word of the LORD, unto Beth-el: and [c] Jeroboam stood by the altar to ‖ burn incense.

among the people, and to get the reputation of a devout man; also to grace the solemnity of his new festival, with which it is likely, at this time, he joined the feast of the dedication of his altar.

Thus, Jeroboam sinned himself; yet perhaps excused himself to the world and his own conscience, with this, that he did not do so ill as Solomon did, who worshipped other gods. He *made Israel to sin*, drew them off from the worship of God, and entailed idolatry on their seed. And hereby they were punished for deserting the thrones *of the house of David*.

The learned Mr. Whiston, in his chronology for the adjusting of the annals of the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, supposes Jeroboam changed the calculation of the year, and made it of but 11 months, and that by those years the reigns of the kings of Israel are measured, till Jehu's revolution, and no longer; in which interval, 11 years of the annals of Judah answer to 12 in those of Israel.

CHAP. XIII. In the close of the foregoing ch. we left Jeroboam attending his altar at Beth-el, and there we find him, the beginning of this, when he received a testimony from God against his idolatry and apostasy. This was sent him by a prophet, a man of God that lived in Judah, who is the principal subject of the story of this ch.

V. 1—10. Here is, I. A messenger sent to Jeroboam, to signify to him God's displeasure against his idolatry, *v.* 1. This was instead of the army, which was countermanded, *ch.* 12: 24. How bold the messenger, that durst attack the king in his pride, and interrupt the solemnity he was proud of! They that go on God's errand, must not fear the face of man; they know who will bear them out. How kind was He that sent him to warn Jeroboam, (now he is but dedicating his altar, before the deceitfulness of his sin hardened his heart,) of the wrath of God *revealed from heaven* against his *ungodliness* and *unrighteousness!*

II. The message; directed, not to Jeroboam, or to the people, but to the altar, the stones of which will sooner hear and yield, than they who were mad on their idols, and deaf to divine calls. Yet, in threatening the altar, he threatens the founder and worshippers. What is foretold of the altar, (*v.* 2.) is, that, in process of time, a prince of the house of David, Josiah by name, should pollute it by sacrificing the idolatrous priests themselves upon it, and burning the bones of dead men. It was about 356 years, ere this prediction was fulfilled, yet it was spoken of as sure and nigh at hand, for a thousand years with God are but as one day. Nothing more contingent and arbitrary than the giving of names to persons, yet Josiah is here named above 300 years before he was born. Nothing future is hidden from God. There are *names in the book* of the divine prescience, (Philip. 4: 3.) names *written in heaven*.

III. A sign is given to confirm the truth of this prediction, that the altar should be shaken to pieces by an invisible power, and the ashes of the sacrifice scattered, (*v.* 3.) which came to pass immediately, *v.* 5. as, 1. A proof the prophet was sent of God; Mark 16: 20. 2. A present indication of God's displeasure against these idolatrous sacrifices. 3. As a reproach to the people, whose hearts were harder than these stones. 4. As a specimen of what should be done in the accomplishment of this prophecy by Joshua; the altar was now rent, in token of its being then ruined.

IV. Jeroboam's hand withered, *v.* 4. Instead of trembling at the message, as he might well have done, he assaulted him that brought it, in defiance of the wrath of which he was warned, and contempt of that grace which sent him the warning. *Rebuke a sinner* and *he will hate thee*, and do thee a mischief if he can. Yet God's prophets must rather expose themselves than betray their trust: He that employs them, will protect them. When Jeroboam's hand was stretched out to burn incense to his calves, it was not withered; but when against a prophet, he shall have no use of it, till he humble himself. Of all the wickedness of the wicked, there is none more provoking to God, than their malicious attempts against his prophets, of whom He has said, *Touch them not, do them no harm.* God has many ways of disabling the enemies of his church to execute their mischievous purposes. If God, in justice, harden the hearts of sinners, so that the hand they have stretched out in sin, they cannot pull in again by repentance, that is a spiritual judgment, represented by this, and much more dreadful.

V. The sudden healing of the hand, upon his submission, *v.* 6. That word of God which should have touched his conscience, humbled him not; but this which *touched his bone and his flesh*, brings down his proud spirit. The time may come, when those that hate the preaching, would be glad of the prayers, of faithful ministers. But observe,

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f 13:33. Num. 3:10. 2 K. 17:32. 2 Chr. 11:14,15. 13:9. Ez. 44:7,8.
g 8:2. Lev. 23:34,&c. Num. 29:12,&c. Ez. 43:8. Matt. 15:8,9.
* Or, *went up to the altar.*
† Or, *to sacrifice.*
h Am. 7:10—13.
‡ Or, *went up to, &c.* 32.
i Num. 15:39. Ps. 106:39. Is. 29:13. Matt. 15:6. Mark 7:13.
k 13:1. 1 Sam. 13:12. 2 Chr. 26:16.
§ Heb. *to burn incense.* 13:1.
a See on 12:22.—2 Chr. 9:29.
b 5,9,26,32. 20:35. Jer. 25:3. 1 Thes. 4:15.
c See on 12:33.—2 Chr. 26:18.
‖ Or, *offer.* Num. 16:40. Jer. 11:12. 32:29. Mal. 1:11. Rev. 8:3.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 21—33. It is in vain to attempt to disannul the Lord's counsel: when his revealed will is contrary to our pursuits, they should be relinquished, however great our apparent loss may be; and it is his will, and should be the desire of all in authority, as much as possible to prevent the effusion of human blood.—Unbelieving men judge by appearances, and often conclude, that safety and prosperity can be obtained by those measures alone, which the Word of God condemns. But faith waits upon God in the path of duty, for the performance of his own promises, whatever difficulties may seem to impede it: and it perceives and aims at nobler objects, than the success of any temporal project, or even the preservation of life itself.—The duplicity of politicians often consists, in concealing their selfish purposes under plausible, ostensible pretences: but men frequently conjecture aright in such matters; and God sees and will expose the thought of their hearts, notwithstanding all their disguises.—The benefit of the public is often the plea; personal impunity for their crimes, the retaining of their dignity, or the increase of their own authority, are the real motives of their conduct. The people, however, are generally willing to gratify their rulers in matters of religion, provided it be easy, cheap, pompous, or sensual: and if a few scruples intervene, the revival of some old superstition, some plea of antiquity, or of liberality of sentiment, or of agreement in the main with more scrupulous persons, though expedient alterations are adopted, will generally conciliate the minds of the majority to any religion, which suits their conveniency, agrees with their interests, and does not disquiet their consciences, or disturb them in gratifying their inclinations.—When persons in authority aim to render religion conducive to their secular purposes, they generally love to bring every thing under their own management. But the pride, arrogance, and enmity of the human heart, never appears more atrocious and odious, than when it presumptuously dares to change the divine appointments, for those 'which a man hath devised of his own heart,' and to mould the worship of God into *contrariety to his will;* when ministers, so called, can be found shameless enough to countenance this arrogance; and when whole nations of professing worshippers quietly submit to it. Indeed nothing in such a case, but a torrent of ungodliness, and most awful judgments, can be expected. SCOTT.

Verses 32, 33.

Jeroboam affected the credit of devising an entirely new system; and perhaps he hoped to draw in those who still went up to Jerusalem, by having his feast at a different time. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII. V. 1. *To incense.*] (3·2, 3. 12:32, 33. 2 *Chr.* 26:16—23.) Jeroboam seems on this occasion to have officiated himself; and to have burned incense at the same altar, on which the sacrifices had been offered. As the typical meaning of these institutions was not at all understood, and as the divine appointment was entirely disregarded, every kind of innovation was made without scruple [Note, Lev. 10: (1.)] SCOTT.

2 And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, [d] O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD: Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, [*] Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee.

3 And [f] he gave a sign the same day, saying, This *is* the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that *are* upon it shall be poured out.

4 And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Beth-el, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, [g] Lay hold on him. And [h] his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him.

5 The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, [i] according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.

6 And the king answered and said unto the man of God, [k] Entreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. [l] And the man of God besought the [*] LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as *it was* before.

7 And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and [m] refresh thyself, [n] and I will give thee a reward.

8 And the man of God said unto the king, [o] If thou wilt give me half thine house, [p] I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place:

9 For [q] so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, [r] Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest.

10 So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Beth-el.

[*Practical Observations.*]

11 ¶ Now there dwelt [s] an old prophet in Beth-el; and his † sons [t] came and told him all the works, that the man

He does not desire his sin might be pardoned, and his heart changed, only that *his hand might be restored;* thus Pharaoh would have Moses pray God to *take away this death* only, (Ex. 10: 17.) not this *sin.* The prophet, as became a man of God, renders good for evil, and immediately addresses himself to God for him. Those only are entitled to the blessing Christ pronounced on the persecuted, that learn of Him to pray for their persecutors, Matt. 5: 10, 44. When the prophet thus honored God, by showing himself of a forgiving spirit, God put this further honor on him, that, at his word, He recalled the judgment, and by another miracle healed the withered hand; that by the goodness of God Jeroboam might be led to repentance, and if he were not broken by the judgment, yet might be melted by the mercy. With both he seemed affected for the present, but the impressions wore off.

VI. The prophet's refusal of Jeroboam's kind invitation: in which observe, 1. God forbade his messenger to eat or drink in Beth-el, (v. 9.) to show his detestation of their execrable idolatry, and apostasy, and to teach us not to have fellowship with the works of darkness, lest we have infection from them, or encourage them. He must not *turn back the same way*, but deliver his message, as it were, *as he passes along.* He shall not seem to be sent on purpose, (they were unworthy such a favor,) but as if he only called by the way, his spirit being stirred, like Paul's at Athens, as he *passed, and saw their devotions.* God would, by this command, try his prophet, as he did Ezekiel, whether he would not be *rebellious, like that rebellious house*, Ezek. 2: 8. 2. Jeroboam was so affected with the cure of his hand, that he was willing to express his gratitude to the prophet, and pay him for his prayers, *v.* 7. Favors to the body will make even graceless men seem grateful to good ministers. 3. The prophet, though hungry, weary, and, perhaps, poor, in obedience to the divine command, refused both the entertainment, and the reward. He might have supposed his acceptance would give an opportunity of discoursing further with the king, in order to his effectual reformation, now he was convinced; yet he will not think himself wiser than God, but, like a faithful, careful messenger, hastens home when he has done his errand. They have little learned the lesson of self-denial, that cannot forbear one forbidden meal.

V. 11—22. The man of God, over-persuaded by an old prophet, comes back with him, and dines in Beth-el, contrary to the command. Here we find how dear his dinner cost him. Observe with wonder,

I. The old prophet's wickedness. I cannot but call him a false prophet, and a bad man; it being much easier to believe, that, from such a character should be extorted a confirmation of what the man of God said, (as we find, *v.* 32.) than that a true prophet, and a good man, should tell such a deliberate lie, and father it on God. Perhaps, he was trained up among the sons of the

d Deut. 32:1. Is. 1:2. 58:1. Jer. 22: 29. Ez. 36:1,4. 38:4. Luke 19:40.
e 2 K. 22:1,2. 23:15—18. 2 Chr. 34:1, 4—7. Is. 42:9. 44:26—28. 46:10. 48:5—7.
f Ex. 4:3—5,8,9. 7:10. Deut. 13:1—3. 1 Sam. 2:34. 2 K. 20:8. Is. 7:11—14. 38:6—8. Jer. 44:29. Matt. 12:38—40. 1 Cor. 1:22.
g 2 Chr. 16:10. 18:25. 25:15,16. Jer. 20:2. 26:8—11,20—23. 38:4—6. Am. 7:10—13. Matt. 26:57. Mark 14:44—46. Acts 6:12—14.
h Gen. 19:11. 2 K. 6:18—20. Jer. 20: 4—6. Luke 3:19,20. 6:10. John 18: 6. Acts 9:4,5. 13:8—11. Rev. 11:5.
i 22:23,35. Ex. 9:18—25. Num. 16:23—35. Deut. 18:22. Jer. 28:16,17. Mark 16:20. Acts 5:1—10.
k Ex. 8:8,28. 9:28. 10:17. 12:32. Num. 21:7. 1 Sam. 12:19. Jer. 37:3. 42:2—4. Acts 8:24. Rev. 3:9.
l Ex. 3:12,13. Num. 12:13. 1 Sam. 12: 23. Matt. 5:44. Luke 6:27,28. 23: 34. Acts 7:60. Rom. 12:14,21. Jam. 5:16—18.
* Heb. *face of the LORD.*
m Gen. 18:5. Judg. 13:15. 19:21.
n 1 Sam. 9:7,8. 2 K. 5:15. Jer. 40:5. Mal. 1:10. Acts 8:18—20. 1 Pet. 5:2.
o Num. 22:18. 24:13. Esth. 5:3,6. 7: 2. Mark 6:23.
p 2 K. 5:16,26,27. Mark 6:11. 2 Cor. 11:9,10.
q See on 1,21,22.—1 Sam. 15:22. Job 23:12. John 13:17. 15:9,10,14.
r Num. 16:26. Deut. 13:1—18. P 141:4. Rom. 16:17. 1 Cor. 5:11. Eph 5:11. 2 John 10,11. Rev. 18:4.
s 20,21. Num. 23:4,5. 24:2. 1 Sam. 10:11. 2 K. 23:18. Ez. 13:2,16. Mat 7:22. 2 Pet. 2:16.
† Heb. *sons.*
t 1 Tim. 3:5.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—10. The Lord often meets sinners in the midst of their crimes, with alarming indications of his displeasure, to show that 'their way is perverse before Him.'—it requires great fortitude to deliver faithfully the messages of God, especially to those in authority. But the Lord will bear those out whom He sends, and who simply trust and obey Him.—The Lord is peculiarly offended with those, who attempt any thing against such intrepid reprovers of sin; and they, who have most insulted his servants, are often brought by affliction to pay court to them, and to desire their prayers.—When persons are living in open sins, and causing others to sin by their influence and authority, the 'men of God' should manifest their abhorrence of their crimes, by refusing to accept of any favors from them, and by separating from all intercourse with them. And when those who are in low circumstances act in this manner, with firmness and meekness, and plainly assign the reasons of their conduct; it will be one of the most alarming and convincing warnings, which can possibly be given. Ministers and Christians must often go among ungodly people, but they ought never to make themselves familiar with them; and should show that they are so uneasy in their company, that none of their temporal good things can bribe them, needlessly to prolong, or repeat their visits. In order to this, they must be superior to the love of worldly pleasure and interest, inured to hardship and self-denial, and well acquainted with the commandments of God —In the mystery of Providence, false religion is permitted to be planted, and to prevail to the deceiving of great multitudes: but the Lord keeps the times and seasons in his own power; He foresees and determines those events, which are most distant, and appear most contingent; and He will in his appointed time destroy every species of irreligion or superstition, by one of the house of David, of far nobler name and greater excellency than Josiah.—But the tokens of his displeasure, on the instruments of iniquity, proclaim his awful vengeance on the sinners themselves: and none will become sacrifices to his justice with deeper detestation and contempt, than *hireling* ministers, who for filthy lucre have countenanced false religion, to the destruction of the souls of those who blindly followed such blind guides. SCOTT.

Verse 2.

As the destruction of this newly instituted worship was to be expressly foretold, and the stupidity of the idolaters themselves to be severely reproved, this prophet addressed himself to the altar, and not to the worshippers. (*M. R.* d.)—The burning of men's bones upon the altar was the greatest contempt of it imaginable: and the offering of the priests themselves upon it, the greatest mark of God's abhorrence of their crimes. (*M. R.* c.) SCOTT.

Verse 7.

'Come and be one of my priests, and I will give thee a salary.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 9.

Nor turn, &c.] 'Perhaps, lest he should suffer persecution, or be delayed by questions of what took place at Bethel.' ID.

Verses 11—19.

One old prophet: (Heb.) if any others had lived there, they had cre

of God had done that day in Beth-el: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father.

12 And their father said unto them, What way went he? for his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah.

13 And he said unto his sons, [u] Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass, and he rode thereon,

14 And went after the man of God, and found him [x] sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, [y] *Art* thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I *am*.

15 Then he said unto him, Come home with me and eat bread.

16 And he said, [z] I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee; neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place:

17 For * it was said to me [a] by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest.

18 He said unto him, I *am* a prophet also as thou *art*; and [b] an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread, and drink water. [c] *But* he lied unto him.

19 So [d] he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water.

[*Practical Observations.*]

20 And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that [e] the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back:

21 And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, [f] Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as [g] thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee,

22 But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which *the LORD* did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; [h] thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.

23 ¶ And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had

u 27. Num. 22:21. Judg. 5:10. 10:4. 2 Sam. 19:26.
x 19:4. John 4:6 34. 1 Cor. 4:11,12. 2 Cor. 11:27. Phil. 4:12,13.
y See on 1.
z 8,9. Gen. 3:1—3. Num. 22:13,19. Matt. 4:10. 16:23.
* Heb. *a word* was.
a See on b. 1—20:35.
b Num. 22:35. Judg. 6:11,12. 13:3.
c Gen. 3:4,5. Is. 9:15. Jer. 5:12,31. 23:14,17,32. 28:15,16. Ez. 13:9,10,22. Matt. 7:15. 24:24. Rom. 16:18. 2 Cor. 11:3,13—15. 2 Pet. 2:1. 1 John 4:1. Rev. 19:20.
d 9. Gen. 3:6. 2 Pet. 2:18,19.
e Num. 23:5,16. 24:4,16 24. Matt. 7:22. John 11:51. 1 Cor. 13:2.
f 17. Gen. 3:7. Esth. 6:13. Jer. 2:19. Gal. 1:8,9.
g Lev. 10:3. Num. 20:12,24. 1 Sam. 4:18. 13:13. 15:19,22—24. 2 Sam. 6:7. 12:9—11. 24:13. Rev. 3:19.
h 14:13. 2 Chr. 21:19,20. Is. 14:19,20. Jer. 22:19.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 11—19. The cause of God admits of no neutrality. (*Matt.* 12:29,30.) In times of general apostasy, or increasing infidelity and ungodliness, we are especially called to bear our testimony, without yielding to fear or shame: and if any professed Christian will not confess Christ in this world, Christ will not own him in the day of judgment.—They are the most dangerous, because the most plausible and unsuspected, of all tempters to real Christians, whose candor makes them willing to hope the best of them, to credit their professions, and to return their civilities. Having learned to be silent, when called to defend the truth, they soon learn to forge lies in the name of God, when it can answer their purpose; and, by various specious pretences, they obtain the esteem of the unwary, and abuse their confidence by inveigling them into disobedience: so that tempters of this description often prevail, when the terrors of persecution, and the allurements of preferment, have been resolutely withstood. But for our own sakes, and for the credit of the Gospel, let us all with one consent withdraw from *worldly* professors of religion, and be on our guard against them: let them decidedly serve God, or Baal, that we may know what they are; or let us refuse to have any acquaintance with them.

SCOTT.

prophets, in one of Samuel's colleges not far off, whence he retained the name of a prophet, but, growing worldly and profane, the spirit of prophecy was departed from him. If he had been a good prophet, he would have reproved Jeroboam's idolatry, and not have suffered his sons to attend his altars, as, it should seem, they did.

Whether he had any good design in fetching back the man of God, is not certain. But, it is certain he took a very bad method; he imposed on him his former character as a prophet, and pretended he had a vision of an angel that sent him on this errand; but it was all a lie, a banter on prophecy, and profane in the highest degree. When this old prophet is spoken of, (2 K. 23: 18.) he is called *the prophet that came out of Samaria*, whereas there was no such place as Samaria, till long after; (*ch.* 16: 24.) therefore I take it he is so called there, though he was at Beth-el, because he was like those *prophets of Samaria*, who *caused God's people Israel to err*, Jer. 23: 13.

II. The good prophet's weakness, in suffering himself to be thus imposed on, *v.* 19. Good people are more in danger of being drawn from their duty by plausible pretences of divinity and sanctity, than by external inducements; we have therefore need to *beware of false prophets*, and not *believe every spirit*. [For God has given us the faculties necessary to *try the spirits*.]

III. The proceedings of divine justice, hereupon; and we may well wonder that the wicked prophet, who told the lie, and did the mischief, went unpunished, while the holy man of God, who was drawn by him into sin, was suddenly and severely punished for it. Certainly there must be a judgment to come, when these things will be called over again, and when those that sinned most, and suffered least, in this world, will receive according to their works. The message delivered to the man of God was strange; yet it was more strange, the old prophet himself should be the messenger: of this we can give no account, but that God would have it so, as He spake to Balaam by his ass, and read Saul his doom by the devil in Samuel's likeness; we may think God designed hereby, 1. To startle the lying prophet, and make him sensible of his sin; the message could not but affect him the more, when he himself had the delivering of it, and had so strong an impression made on his spirit by it, that he cried out, as one in an agony, *v.* 21. He had reason to think, if he must die for his disobedience in a small matter, who sinned by surprise, of how much sorer punishment he should be thought worthy, who had belied an angel of God, and cheated a man of God, by a deliberate forgery. Perhaps, it had a good effect on him; those who preach God's wrath to others, have hard hearts indeed, if they fear it not themselves. 2. To put the greater mortification on the prophet that was deceived, and to show what they must expect, who hearken to the great deceiver; they that yield to him as a tempter, will be terrified by him as a tormentor; whom he now fawns upon, he will afterward fly upon, and whom he draws into sin, he will do what he can to drive to despair.

V. 23—34. Here is, I. The death of the deceived, disobedient prophet. The old prophet that

(18.) It is difficult to perceive the old prophet's motive for all this base pains, except he wished to destroy the 'man of God,' thus confirming Jeroboam in his wicked way, and thus ingratiating himself with the king for the sake of his sons. But this supposes him to be so depraved, as to continue in his purpose while he believed both that this 'man of God' was sent by God, and that his disobedience would be his death! Jealousy of a prophet more honored of God than himself, or mere gossiping curiosity might possibly have influenced him, as well as pure malice or ambition. ED.

Verses 20—22.

As the Lord inspired Balaam, contrary to his intentions, to pronounce blessings, and to utter, though doubtless with the greatest reluctance, prophecies concerning Israel: (*Num.* 23:7, 8. 24:1—13.) so was this prophet constrained to pronounce sentence against the man of God, whom he had seduced into disobedience; and thus to publish the shame of his own most impious imposture, which also implied against himself a far more dreadful doom, except he repented. SCOTT.

(20.) *That brought him back.*] '*Asher heshibo.* Rather, *whom he had brought back*, and thus these same words are translated in v. 23. where they cannot be translated otherwise. So we may consider the word of the Lord as delivered to the *true* prophet; and then the sentence (*v.* 21.) is pronounced by *God Himself*, calling to him out of heaven, (as in Gen. 22:11.) and of this, v. 26 assures us, where it has "which HE spake." *Josephus* expressly asserts, that the sentence was declared by God to the *true* prophet, and so does the *Arabic*.

KENNICOTT, and CLARKE.

Verses 23—32.

'Here is a cluster of miracles; that the lion, contrary to his nature, did not eat the carcass, nor kill the ass, nor meddle with the travellers that passed by, nor with the old prophet and his ass: and that the ass stood so quietly, and was not frighted at the sight of the lion, nor

drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, *to wit*, for the prophet whom he had brought back.

24 And when he was gone, [i] a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcass was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it; the lion also stood by the carcass.

25 And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcass cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcass: and they came and told *it* in the city where the old prophet dwelt.

26 And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard *thereof*, he said, *It is* [k] the man of God who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD: therefore the LORD hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath * torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the LORD which he spake unto him.

27 And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled *him*.

28 And he went, and found his carcass cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcass: [l] the lion had not eaten the carcass, nor † torn the ass.

29 And the prophet took up the carcass of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city to mourn, and to bury him.

30 And he laid his carcass in his own grave; and they [m] mourned over him, *saying*, Alas, my brother!

31 And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God *is* buried; [n] lay my bones beside his bones:

32 For [o] the saying which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Beth-el and against all [p] the houses of the high places which *are* [q] in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass.

33 ¶ After this thing [r] Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but ‡ made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: [s] whosoever would, he § consecrated him, and he became *one* of the priests of the high places.

34 And this thing [t] became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even [u] to cut *it* off, and to destroy *it* from off the face of the earth.

had deluded him, as if to make some amends for his wrong, or help prevent the mischief threatened him, furnished him with an ass to ride home on, *v.* 23, 24. See 1 Sam. 14: 43. But we must consider, 1. His offence was great; he could not be so certain of the countermand sent by another, as he was of the command given to himself; nor had he any ground to think the command would be recalled, when the reason of it remained in force. He had great reason to suspect the honesty of this old prophet; he should too have taken time to beg direction from God, and not have complied so soon. Was he hungry? Yet had he never read, that *man lives not by bread alone?* 2. His death was for the glory of God; thus it appeared, (1.) That nothing is more provoking to Him than disobedience to an express command, though in a small matter. (2.) That God is displeased at the sins of his own people, and no man shall be protected in disobedience by the sanctity of his profession, the dignity of his office, his nearness to God, or any good services he has done for Him. Perhaps, God, by this, intended, in a way of righteous judgment, to harden Jeroboam's heart, since he was not reformed by the withering of his hand: he would be apt to make a bad use of it, to say the prophet was well enough served for meddling with his altar; nay, that Providence had punished him for his insolence; however, by this He intended to warn all those whom He employs, strictly to observe their orders, at their peril.

II. The wonderful preservation of his dead body, a token of God's mercy remembered in the midst of wrath; the lion did not devour it, nor so much as tear the ass, *v.* 24, 25, 28. nay, did not set on the travellers that passed by, nor on the old prophet; his commission was, to kill the prophet; hitherto he should go, but no further: thus God showed that though angry with him, his anger was turned away, and the punishment went *no further than death.*

III. The care the old prophet took of his burial; when he heard of the unusual accident, it had well become him to ask why the lion was not sent against him and his house, rather than against the good man he had cheated: he was, in effect, the murderer, and now his conscience so far relents, that he weeps over him, and, like Joab at Abner's funeral, is compelled to be a mourner for him whom he had been the death of; they said, *Alas, my brother! v.* 30. The case was indeed very lamentable, that so good a man, a prophet so faithful, and so bold in God's cause, should, for one offence, die as a criminal, while an old, lying prophet lives at ease, and an idolatrous prince in pomp and power. *Thy way, O God, is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters.* We cannot [always] judge of men by their sufferings, nor of sins by their present punishments; with some, the flesh is destroyed, that the spirit may be saved, while with others, the flesh is pampered, that the soul may ripen for hell.

IV. The charge the old prophet gave his sons concerning his own burial, *v.* 31. though a lying prophet, yet he desired to *die the death of a* true prophet. The reason he gives, is, because *what he cried against the altar of Beth-el*, that men's bones should be burnt on it, *shall surely come to pass, v.* 32. Thus, 1. He ratifies the prediction, that the *word might be established*, if possible, to convince and reclaim Jeroboam. 2. He honors the deceased prophet, as one whose *word* would not fall to the ground, though *he* did; ministers die, die prematurely, it may be; but the Word of the Lord endures for ever, and does not die with them. 3. He consults his own interest; it was

[i] 20:36. 2 K. 2:24. Am. 5:19. 1 Cor. 11:31,32. 1 Pet. 4:17,18.
[k] Lev. 10:3. 2 Sam. 12:10,14. Ps. 119 120. Prov. 11:31. Ez. 9:6. 1 Cor 11:30. Heb. 12:28,29. 1 Pet. 4:17.
* Heb. *broken.*
[l] 17:4,6. Lev. 10:2,5. Job 38:11. Ps 148:7,8. Jer. 5:22,23. Dan. 3:22,27 28. 6:22—24. Acts 16:26. Heb. 11: 33,34.
† Heb *broken.*
[m] 14:13. Jer. 22:18. Acts 8:2.
[n] Num. 23:10. Ps. 26:9. Ec. 8:10 Luke 16:22,23.
[o] 2. 2 K. 23:16—19.
[p] 12:29,31. Lev. 26:30.
[q] 16:24. 2 Chr. 25:13. Ezra 4:10. John 4:4,5.
[r] 12:31—33. 2 Chr. 11:15. 13:9. Am 4:6—11.
‡ Heb. *returned and made.* Ps. 78:34. Jer. 18:4. *marg.*
[s] Num. 1:51. 3:10. 17:5,12,13.
§ Heb. *filled his hand.* Ex. 28:41. *marg.* Judg. 17:12.
[t] 12:30. 2 K. 10:31. 17:21.
[u] 12:26. 14:10. 15:29,30.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 20—34. Nothing can excuse any act of wilful disobedience: the tempter 'hath the greater sin,' but the tempted is deeply criminal; and the offences of those who are much honored and employed of God, are of all the most dishonorable to Him, as they rivet the prejudices and embolden the blasphemies of his enemies. Such offenders therefore shall by no means escape correction in this world: and perhaps their very tempters shall be employed to denounce, or inflict, the chastisements of the Lord upon them; or in other respects they shall be made very severe and alarming: while the wicked frequently escape, in this life, being 'reserved unto the day of judgment to be punished.'—The exact obedience of the irrational creatures to their Maker, forms a reproach of man's rebellion: for He can restrain or change the very nature of every creature, to render it subservient to his wise and righteous purposes.—Happy are they, who are habitually ready for death: even if the Lord shall call them hence, by some awful rebuke for an incidental transgression, while they are made useful warnings to others, they will be found safe and happy themselves. (2 *K.* 22:15—20. 1 *Cor.* 11:29—34.)—But many will show respect to the servants of the Lord, assent to the truth of their words, appear to lament their death, and wish to have their lot with them in another world; who yet live and die impenitent: (*Num.* 23:10.) Let all then fear provoking God to leave them to final hardness of heart. SCOTT.

betook itself to flight. And more than this, the lion stood by the carcass a long time, till this strange news was carried into the city; . . . which made the miracle the more illustrious, and plainly showed that this did not happen by chance.' *Bp. Patrick.* All these miraculous circumstances marked the death of the man of God as a divine rebuke for his disobedience, in eating bread at idolatrous Beth-el; and both counteracted the conclusion, which Jeroboam might have been tempted to draw from his death, against the truth of his message, and formed a solemn proof, how God abhorred, and would have all his people abhor, this newly instituted worship.—The man of God from Judah appears to have spoken more prophecies, than are mentioned in the beginning of the chapter. SCOTT.

(24.) As sin lies in the intention of an act, when this poor prophet thought he was *obeying God's command* (by the lying prophet, *v.* 18.) in going back to eat, as well as in delivering his message to Jeroboam, why is he destroyed? Perhaps he was not careful to inquire into the previous character of this lying prophet; perhaps faith in the truth of his own mission (see Deut. 13:1, 2, 3.) yielded now too easily and agreeably to the monitions of appetite, and suffering himself to be influenced by this motive, rather than a higher, he sinned. We may well suppose that if he *had not the means of knowing* when God spake to him, and when He did not, a just God would not have *punished* him. Perhaps God saw something too which we cannot see. Charity leads us to suppose, that the circumstances of his death (which God chooses for all) were ordered as an example to others, while mercy was extended to his soul by a merciful God. ED.

CHAP. XIV.

Jeroboam sends his wife, disguised, to Ahijah the prophet, to inquire concerning his son Abijah, who was sick, 1—4. Ahijah, forewarned by God, denounces to her the destruction of Jeroboam's family, the death of her son, and the rejection of Israel, 5—16. Abijah dies, and is buried, 17, 18. Jeroboam dies, and is succeeded by Nadab, 19, 20. Rehoboam reigns over Judah; and they provoke the Lord by their wickedness, 21—24. Shishak carries away much treasure, and the golden shields, from Jerusalem, 25, 26. Rehoboam makes brazen shields in their stead, 27, 28. His acts, and wars with Jeroboam, 29, 30. He dies, and is succeeded by Abijam, 31.

AT [a] that time Abijah [b] the son of Jeroboam fell sick.

2 And Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray thee, and [c] disguise thyself, that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam; and get thee to Shiloh: behold, there *is* [d] Ahijah the prophet, which told me that *I should be* king over this people.

3 And [e] take * with thee ten loaves, and † cracknels, and a ‡ cruse of honey, and go to him: [f] he shall tell thee what shall become of the child.

4 And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose, and went to [g] Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see; [h] for his eyes § were set by reason of his age.

5 And [i] the LORD said unto Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son; for he *is* sick: thus and thus shalt thou say unto her: for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself *to be* another *woman*.

6 And it was *so*, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, [k] thou wife of Jeroboam; [l] why feignest thou thyself *to be* another? [m] for I *am* sent to thee *with* ‖ heavy *tidings*.

7 Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, [n] Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel,

8 And [o] rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and

[a] 13:33,34.

foretold men's bones should be burnt on Jeroboam's altar; 'Lay mine' (says he) 'close to his, and then they will not be disturbed;' and it was, accordingly, their security, as we find, 2 K. 23: 18. Sleeping and waking, living and dying, it is safe being in good company. No mention is made here of the inscription on the prophet's tomb; but it is spoken of 2 K. 23: 17. the epitaph on the prophet's grave preserved the remembrance of his prophecy, and was a standing testimony against the idolatries of Beth-el, which it would not have been, so remarkably, had he died and been buried elsewhere. The cities of Israel are here called *cities of Samaria*, though that name was not yet known; however the old prophet spake, the inspired historian wrote in the language of his own time.

V. The obstinacy of Jeroboam in his idolatry, *v.* 33. Various methods had been used to reclaim him, but neither threats nor signs, judgments nor mercies, wrought on him, so strangely was he wedded to his calves; he did not reform, no not his priesthood, but whoever would, he made priest, though ever so illiterate or immoral, and of what tribe soever; *and this became sin*, i. e. a snare first, and then a ruin, to Jeroboam's house, to *cut it off*, *v.* 34. Note, The diminution, disquiet, and desolation, of families, are the fruit of sin; he promised himself the calves would secure the crown to his family, but it proved they lost it. Those betray themselves, that think by any sin to support themselves.

CHAP. XIV. The kingdom being divided into that of Judah and that of Israel, we must, henceforward, in these books of Kings, expect and attend their separate history.

V. 1—6. Here we are told how God proceeded in his controversy with Jeroboam; when God judges, He will overcome; sinners shall either bend, or break, before Him.

I. His child fell sick, *v.* 1. probably his eldest son, heir-apparent to the crown; for at his death, all the kingdom mourned, *v.* 13. When sickness comes into our families, we should inquire whether there be not some particular sin, which the affliction is sent to convince us of, and reclaim us from.

II. He sent to inquire of Ahijah, *what should become of the child*, *v.* 2, 3. This sickness touched him in a tender part; such is the force of natural affection; our children are ourselves but once removed. By this instance, and that of Ahaziah, 2 K. 1: 2. and Ben-hadad, 2 K. 8: 8. it should seem, they had then such a foolish notion of fatality, as took them off from all use of means. It had been more pious, had he desired to know wherefore God contended with him, begged the prophet's prayers, and cast away his idols; then the child might have been restored; but most people would rather be told their fortune, than their faults or their duty.

Ahijah lived obscure and neglected in Shiloh, blind through age, yet still blessed with the visions of the Almighty, which need not bodily eyes, but

[b] 12,13. Ex. 20:5. 1 Sam. 4:19,20. 31:2. 2 Sam. 12:15.
[c] 5,6. 22:30. 1 Sam. 28:8. 2 Sam. 14: 2. 2 Chr. 18:29. Luke 12:2.
[d] See on 11:29—38.
[e] 13:7. 1 Sam. 9:7,8. 2 K. 4:42. 5:5, 15. 8:7—9.
* Heb. *in thine hand.*
† Or, *cakes.* 2 Sam. 13:6.
‡ Or, *bottle.*
[f] 2 K. 1:2. 8:8. Luke 7:2,3. John 4: 47,48. 11:3.
[g] 11:29. Josh. 18:1. 1 Sam. 4:3,4. Jer. 7:12—14.
[h] Gen. 27:1. 48:10. Deut. 34:7. 1 Sam. 3:2. 4:15. Ps. 90:10. Ec. 12:3.
§ Heb. *stood for his hoariness.*
[i] 2 K. 4:27. 6:8—12. Prov. 21:30. Am. 3:7. Acts 10:19,20.
[k] Job 5:13. Ps. 33:10.
[l] 2,5. Ex. 14:3—5,7,8. Luke 20:20—23. Acts 5:3—5,9,10. Heb. 4:13.
[m] 10,11. 13:20—22. 20:42. 21:18—24. 22:8. 1 Sam. 15:16,26. 28:18. Jer. 21:2—7. Ez. 2:4,5. Dan. 4:19—25. 5:17—23. Mark 14:21.
‖ Heb. *hard.*
[n] 12:24. 16:2. 1 Sam. 2:27—30. 15: 16. 2 Sam. 12:7,8.
[o] See on 11:30,31.

are rather favored by the want of them, the eyes of the mind being then most intent, and least diverted: Jeroboam has recourse to him, now the gods he served could give him no relief; some have by sickness been reminded of their forgotten ministers, and praying friends: he sends to Ahijah, because he had *told him he should be king*, *v.* 2. Once the messenger of good tidings, surely he will be so again; those that by sin disqualify themselves for comfort, and yet expect their ministers, because good men, should speak peace and comfort to them, greatly wrong both themselves and their ministers.

He sent his wife, because she could best put the question without names, or any other description than, 'Sir, I have a son ill; will he recover, or not?' It seems there were none of all his counsellors, whom he could trust; otherwise, it had been much fitter for her to stay at home, to take care of the child. She must disguise herself from the prophet, that he might only answer her question concerning her son, and not enter on the unpleasing subject of her husband's defection; some people love to prescribe to their ministers, and care not to have the *whole counsel of God declared* to them, lest it prophesy *no good concerning them, but evil*. But what a strange notion of God's prophet, as though he could and would certainly tell what *would become of the child*, and yet either could not, or would not, discover the mother. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked.*

III. God gave Ahijah notice of her approach and disguise, and full instructions what to say, (*v.* 5.) which enabled him, as she came in, to call her by name, to her great surprise, and so discover her to all about him, *v.* 6. He had no regard to her rank, as queen, nor to her present; (*v.* 3.) he did not think himself obliged to give her any finer language than the nature of her message required. Nor did he regard her industrious concealment; it is a civility not to notice those who desire not to be noticed; but the prophet was no courtier; plain dealing is best, and she shall know, at the first word, what she has to trust to; *I am sent to thee with heavy tidings.*

V. 7—20. The prophet here prevents inquiry concerning the child, and foretells the ruin of Jeroboam's house for its wickedness; no one else durst have carried such a message, but his own wife cannot be suspected of ill-will to him.

I. God calls Himself *the Lord God of Israel;* He is Israel's God, therefore will take vengeance on him who did them the greatest mischief possible, drawing them away from Him.

II. He upbraids Jeroboam with his great favor, in taking the kingdom *from the house of David*, to bestow it on him. Whether we keep account of God's mercies or no, He does, and will set even them in order before us, if we be ungrateful, to our greater confusion; otherwise, He gives, and upbraids not.

III. He charges him with his impiety and apostasy, and his idolatry particularly, *v.* 9. Saul never worshipped idols; Solomon but occasionally, in his dotage, and he never made Israel to sin; but

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV. V. 1—4. In the remainder of the books of the Kings, we have the history of Judah and Israel carried on together, or with continual transitions from one to the other. But the latter part of 2 Chr. more fully relates the history of the kings of Judah, and drops that of the kings of Israel, except as connected with the other.—Jeroboam had not noticed Ahijah, either while taking possession of the kingdom, or when establishing his idolatrous worship at Dan and Beth-el; being conscious that the prophet would have opposed and condemned his whole conduct. But when his son was dangerously ill, he was convinced, that more dependence might be placed on his word, than on that of all his priests. SCOTT.

(3.) *Cracknels.*] From the Fr. *craquelin*, vulg. *crackers*. Heb. *nakudim*, from *nakud*, *punctatus*, a kind of cake marked with spots, probably reckoned a delicacy. SCOTT. 'Spotted or perforated bread' [comp. note, Lev. 2:4—8.] thin cakes, pierced through with many holes, the same as is called *Jew's bread* to the present day, and used by them at the passover.' [A specimen is in possession of the Ed.] Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 7—11.

(*Notes*, 11:29—38.)—Jeroboam *intended* his calves, at Dan and Beth-el, should represent the God of Israel, and would have his subjects think, they were worshipping the God of their fathers. (12:26—29.) But the Lord called them, 'other gods, and molten images;' for as He cannot be represented by any similitude, so He abhors all image-wor-

gave it thee: and *yet* thou hast not been as [p] my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do *that* only *which was* right in mine eyes;

9 But [q] hast done evil above all that were before thee: for [r] thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, [s] to provoke me to anger, and hast [t] cast me behind thy back:

10 Therefore, behold, [u] I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam [x] him that pisseth against the wall, *and* [y] him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, [z] as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone.

11 Him [a] that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the LORD hath spoken *it*.

12 Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house: *and* [b] when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die.

13 And all Israel [c] shall mourn for him, and bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him [d] there *is* found *some* good thing toward the LORD God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam.

14 Moreover [e] the LORD shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day: [f] but what? even now.

15 For [g] the LORD shall smite Israel, [h] as a reed is shaken in the water; and he shall [i] root up Israel out of [k] this good land which he gave to their fathers, and [l] shall scatter them beyond the river; [m] because they have made their groves, [n] provoking the LORD to anger.

16 And [o] he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, [p] who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.

17 ¶ And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came to [q] Tirzah: *and* [r] when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died;

18 And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet.

Jeroboam's calves, though pretended to be set up in honor of the God of Israel, yet are here called *other gods*, or *strange gods*, because in them he worshipped God, as the heathen their strange gods; *changed the truth of God into a lie*, and represented Him as altogether different from what He is; and because many of the ignorant worshippers terminated their devotion in the image, and did not at all regard the God of Israel. David though he had his faults, and some bad ones, yet never forsook the worship of God, nor grew loose or cold to that.

IV. He foretells the utter ruin of Jeroboam's house, *v.* 10, 11. God removed his family as a great dunghill. Noble, royal families, if wicked, are no better, in God's account. Their destruction was *unusual* and *shameful:* their very dead bodies should be meat for the dogs in the street, or the birds of prey in the field. Thus evil pursues sinners. See this fulfilled, *ch.* 15: 29.

V. He foretells the immediate death of the child now sick, *v.* 12, 13. 1. In mercy to him; lest, if he live, he be infected with the sin, and so involved in the ruin, of his father's house. Observe the character given of him, *v.* 13. He only had an affection for the true worship of God, and disliked the worship of the calves. Note, (1.) Those are good, *in whom are good things toward the Lord God of Israel;* good inclinations, intentions, desires. Where there is but *some* good thing of that kind, it will be found: God sees it, and is pleased with it. A little grace goes a great way with great people. It is so rare to find princes well affected to religion, that, when they are so, they are worthy of double honor. Pious dispositions are, in a peculiar manner, amiable and acceptable, when found in the young. The divine image, in miniature, has a peculiar beauty and lustre. Those that are good in bad times and places, shine very bright in the eyes of God. A good child *in the house of Jeroboam*, is a miracle of divine grace. Observe the care taken of him: he only, of all Jeroboam's family, shall die in honor; be buried, and lamented, as one that lived desired. Note, Persons distinguished by divine grace, shall be distinguished by divine providence. This hopeful child dies first of all the family; God often *takes them soonest, whom He loves best.* 2. In wrath to the family; it was a sign the family would be ruined, when *he* was taken, by whom it might have been reformed. The righteous are removed from the evil to come in this world, to the good to come in a better. It is a bad omen to a family, when the best in it are buried out of it. It is likewise a present affliction to the family and kingdom, by which both ought to have been bettered.

VI. He foretells the setting up of another family over Israel, *v.* 14. fulfilled in Baasha of Issachar, who, conspiring against Nadab the son of Jeroboam, in the second year of his reign, murdered him, and all his family. '*But what? Even now.*' Sometimes God makes quick work with sinners He did so with the house of Jeroboam. It was not 24 years from his first elevation, to the final extirpation of his family.

VII. He foretells the judgments which should come on the people of Israel, for conforming to the worship Jeroboam had established. It is here foretold, (*v.* 15.) 1. That they should never be easy, nor rightly settled in their land, but continually *shaken like a reed* growing in running *water*. After they left the house of David, the government never continued long in one family, one undermined and destroyed another, and all was disturbance. 2. That they should, ere long, be totally expelled out of their good land, and ruined, *v.* 16. This was fulfilled, in the captivity of the ten tribes, by the king of Assyria. Families and kingdoms are ruined by the sin of the heads of them. *Jeroboam did sin, and made Israel to sin.* If great men do wickedly, they go to hell with a long train, and their condemnation will be more intolerable, who must answer not only for their own sins, but for the sins others have been drawn into, and kept in, by their influence.

The child died; (*v.* 17.) and Jeroboam himself soon after, *v.* 20. It is said, (2 Chr. 13: 20.) *The Lord struck him* with some sore disease, so that he died miserably, when he had reigned 22 years; and left his crown to a son, who lost it, and his life too, and all the lives of his family, within two years after. For a further account of him, the reader is referred to the annals of his reign, drawn up by his own secretaries or the public records, called here, *The book*, or register,

p 3:14. 11:33,38. 15:5. 2 Chr. 17:3. 28:1. Acts 13:22,36.
q 16. 12:28. 13:33,34. 15:34. 16:31.
r Deut. 32:16,17,21. Judg. 5:8. 2 Chr. 11:15. Ps. 106:19,20. 115:4—8. Is. 44:9—20. Jer. 10:14—16.
s 22. Deut. 9:8—16,24. 2 K. 21:3. 23: 26. 2 Chr. 33:6. Ps. 78:40,56. Jer. 7:9,10. Ez. 8:3,17. 1 Cor. 10:22.
t Neh. 9:26. Ps. 50:17. Ez. 23:35.
u 15:25—30. Am. 3:6.
x 16:11. 21:21. 1 Sam. 25:22,34. 2 K. 9:8,9.
y Deut. 32:36. 2 K. 14:26.
z 1 Sam. 2:30. 2 K. 9:37. 21:13. Job 20:7. Ps. 83:10. Is. 5:25. 14:19,23. Jer. 8:2. Ez. 26:4. Zeph. 1:17. Mal 2:3. Luke 14:34,35.
a 16:4. 21:19,23,24. Is. 66:24. Jer 15:3. Ez. 39:17—19. Rev. 19:17,18.
b 3,6,17. 2 K. 1:6,16. John 4:50—52.
c Num. 20:29. Jer. 22:10,18.
d 2 Chr. 12:12. 19:3. Job 19:28. Philem 6. 2 Pet. 2:3,9.
e 15:27—29.
f Ec. 8:11. Ez. 7:2—7. 12:22—28. Jam 5:9. 2 Pet. 2:3.
g 1 Sam. 12:25. 2 K. 17:6,7.
h Matt. 11:7. Luke 7:24.
i Deut. 29:28. Ps. 52:5. Prov. 2:22 Am. 2:9. Zeph. 2:4. Matt. 15:13.
k Lev. 26:32—34,43. Deut. 4:26,27 28:36,64—68. 29:24—28. Josh. 23 15,16.
l 2 K. 15:29. 17:23. 18:11,12. Am. 5 27. Acts 7:43.
m Ex. 34:13,14. Deut. 12:3,4.
n See on 9,23,24.
o Is. 40:24. Hos. 9:11,12,16,17.
p 12:30. 13:34. 15:30,34. 16:2. Ex. 32:21,35. Jer. 5:31. Hos. 5:11,12. Mic. 6:16. Matt. 18:7. Rom. 14:13.
q 15:21,33. 16:6,8,9,15,23. Josh. 12:24. Cant. 6:4.
r See on 12,13.—1 Sam. 2:30—34. 1:18 —20.

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ship as gross idolatry. The case is precisely the same, as to the worship of images in the church of Rome. (2 *Chr.* 11:13—17.) Some of the terms used here occur for the first time. (*M. R.* x, y.—1 *Sam.* 25: 21, 22, *v.* 22.)—By 'him that is shut up and left in Israel,' may be meant, 'every one who has taken refuge in the most fortified cities, and every one that has escaped from the more general devastations:' or, in general, all without exception, however secure they might suppose themselves to be; even these would be pursued and cut off. Or, an allusion may be made to those peculiar treasures, which are shut up for security in the safest repositories, and are reserved to the last when all else is spent; and yet they must be parted with, or will be searched out and seized upon. Indeed the house of Jeroboam was become as offensive to the Lord, as dung would be in a man's habitation; and should therefore be taken away till there was none left. (21:21—26. 2 *K.* 9:30—37. *Jer.* 8:1—3.) SCOTT.

Hast cast me, &c. (9) 'Neglecting me and my service. For those things we cast behind our backs, which are nothing worth; and for which we have no regard, or concern what becomes of them.' *Bp. Patrick.* ID.

Verse 14.

(*Ex.* 9:13—16.)—*But what? even now.*] That is, 'Do not think these judgments distant events; but prepare for them, and consider what will be the consequence if they should come immediately; for they are even now at hand.' [And so Henry.]—Some, however, interpret the clause to mean, that the desolation of Jeroboam's house should merely be an introduction to still greater calamities on Israel SCOTT.

Verses 15, 16.

These vs. emphatically predict the enfeebled, distracted state of Israel, by continual usurpations, massacres, and civil wars, and the further idolatries into which they were led by their wicked princes, until they were given up finally at the Assyrian captivity.—They were punished for 'willingly walking after the commandment' of Jeroboam, to worship the golden calves; and for concurring in his revolt from the house of David, and from the worship of God. (*M. R.* p. *Hos.* 5:11, 12. 8:2—6. 13:10, 11. *Mic.* 6:16.) ID.

Verses 17—18.

Note, 12, 13.—*Tirzah.* (17) *Marg. Ref.* q. ID.

19 And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, [a] how he warred, and how he reigned, behold, they *are* written [t] in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

B. C. 954. 20 And the days which Jeroboam reigned *were* two and twenty years: [u] and he * slept with his fathers, and [x] Nadab his son reigned in his stead.

[*Practical Observations.*]

B. C. 975. ¶ 21 And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. [y] Rehoboam *was* forty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, [z] the city which the LORD did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, [a] to put his name there. And his mother's name *was* [b] Naamah an Ammonitess.

22 And [c] Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and [d] they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, [e] above all that their fathers had done.

23 For they also [f] built them high places, and † images, and [g] groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree.

24 And [h] there were also Sodomites in the land: *and* they did according to all the abominations of the nations, which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

25 And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, *that* [i] Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem:

of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel, which not being divinely inspired, are long since lost.

V. 21—31. Judah's story and Israel's are intermixed in this book. Jeroboam outlived Rehoboam four or five years, yet his history is despatched first, that the account of Rehoboam's reign may be laid together; and a sad account it is. He was born in the last year of David, and had his education, and the forming of his mind, in the best days of Solomon; yet Solomon's defection, at last, did more to corrupt him, than his wisdom and devotion had done to give him good principles. He reigned 17 years in Jerusalem, *the city where God put his name*, where he had opportunity enough to know his duty, if he had had but a heart to do it. His mother was an Ammonitess, twice mentioned, *v.* 21, 31. Strange, David would marry Solomon to an Ammonitess, (for it was done while he lived,) but, probably, Solomon loved her, because she was *Naamah, a beauty*, so it signifies, and his father was loath to cross him, but it proved to have a very bad influence upon posterity. None can imagine how lasting and how fatal the consequences may be, of being unequally yoked with unbelievers, [or with those whose propensities overbalance their moral sentiments.] He had continual war with Jeroboam, (*v.* 30.) which could not but be a perpetual uneasiness. When he had reigned but 17 years, he died, and left his throne to his son.

Here is much said to the disadvantage of the subjects, both as to their character and their condition.

I. How wicked and profane they were: a most sad account is here given of their apostasy, *v.* 22—24. Judah, the only professing people God had in the world, *did evil in his sight*, in contempt and defiance of Him, and the tokens of his special presence with them. The magnificence of their temple, the pomp of their priesthood, and all the secular advantages which attended their religion, could not keep them to it; nothing less than the *pouring out of the Spirit from on high*, will keep God's Israel in their allegiance to Him. The account here given of the wickedness of the Jews, agrees with that which the apostle gives of the wickedness of the Gentile world; (Rom. 1: 21, 24.) so both *Jew and Gentile are all* alike *under*

[a] 30. 2 Chr. 13:2—20.
[t] 29. 15:31. 16:5,14,20,27. 22:39. 1 Chr. 27:24. Esth. 6:1.
[u] See on 2:10. 11:43.
* Heb. *lay down.* Job 14:12. Ps. 3:5. 4:8.
[x] 15:25—31.
[y] 11:43. 2 Chr. 12:13. 13:7.
[z] See on 8:16,44. 11:36.—Ps. 78:68,69. 87:1,2. 132:13,14. Is. 12:6.
[a] See on Ex. 20:24. Deut. 12:5,21.
[b] 21. Deut. 23:3 2 Chr. 12:13.
[c] Judg. 3:7,12. 4:1. 2 K. 17:19. 2 Chr. 12:1. Jer. 3:7—11.
[d] See on 9.—Deut. 4:24. 29:28. 32:16—21. Ps. 78:58. Is. 65:3,4. 1 Cor. 10:22.
[e] 16:30. 2 K. 21:11. Ez. 16:47,48.
[f] 3:2. Deut. 12:2. Is. 57:5. Ez. 16:24,25. 20:28,29.
† Or, *standing images*, or, *statues*. Lev. 26:1.
[g] Mic. 5:14. Deut. 12:2. 2 K. 17:9,10. 21:3—7. 2 Chr. 28:4. Jer. 17:2.
[h] 15:12. 22:46. Gen. 19:5. Deut. 23:17. Judg. 19:22. 2 K. 23:7. Rom. 1:24—27. 1 Cor. 6:9.
[i] 11:40. 2 Chr. 12:2—4.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—20. Parents often suffer and are corrected in the affliction of their children: but sinners are more anxious to know the *secret* purposes of God, than to understand his *revealed* will and their own duty: and they are often conscious, that their *forms* are not to be depended on; but are afraid that others should perceive their convictions, and despise them. They secretly reverence the faithful servants of God: and, having found the truth of some of their words, they have an inward persuasion, that the rest also will be verified; except as they flatter themselves with hopes of escaping the miseries denounced against them. They form, indeed, very erroneous judgments both of God and of his servants; yet they would be glad of help or information in times of trouble, did they not fear rebukes and warnings. They, therefore, either keep at a distance, or attempt to impose on faithful ministers, by disguising their real characters, and pretending kindness to them. Indeed the wisest of men may thus be deceived; but God searches every heart, and often unmasks the hypocrite before the world: He more frequently enables *his servants* to see through their disguises, and to address them in their *real*, not their *assumed* characters; and at last He will expose them to universal shame and contempt before the assembled world.—Every providential favor demands a return of grateful obedience, and aggravates future transgression; and thus prosperous sinners accumulate guilt and wrath, with a rapidity proportioned to their abused mercies. (*Rom.* 2:4—6.)—When men have witnessed, and have even gained by, the wrath of God against the sins of other men, and yet imitate and exceed them in iniquity; they may expect to be visited with more tremendous vengeance: and as they dishonor Him by their crimes, He will disgrace them in their punishment.—A man is not indeed affected by the indignity shown to his dead body, or even by the miseries of his posterity; yet the prospect may torment his mind while he lives: such judgments form a proper emblem of the punishment of the wicked after death; and they strongly express the abhorrence and indignation of God for a warning to others.—The Lord deals with men according to their *habitual character:* and He will not mention against the upright believer, who has cordially followed Him, those incidental sins of which he has repented, and for which he has patiently borne correction.—To show the power and sovereignty of his grace, He frequently reserves an individual or two out of the worst of families, in whom there is 'some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel.' The fruits of his grace He peculiarly delights in, when they flourish from the hearts of the young and the affluent, and of those who are surrounded with contagious examples and instruction. SCOTT.

Verses 19, 20.

(*M. R.*) *The book*, &c. (19) These chronicles, or *words of days*, or *journals*, were the public records of the kingdom, from which extracts seem to have been made by the inspired writers, with such additions as were suited for instruction. 'The book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah,' (29) were the records of that kingdom, and not that part of holy writ, which we call the Books of Chronicles. (*M. R.*—11:41. 1 *Chr.* 29:29, 30.) SCOTT.

Verse 21.

David had himself married the daughter of Talmai, the king of Geshur; but the character of Absalom, his son by her, should have cautioned him against such marriages. (2 *Sam.* 3 2—5. 13:37—39. 15:—17:) It is very doubtful whether Naamah ever cordially embraced true religion: and as Solomon worshipped the gods of Ammon among the rest, it has been thought, she at last became one of his seducers. (3:1. 11:1—8.) ID.

Verses 22—24.

It was a most extraordinary circumstance, that, after the priests and Levites, and pious persons from Israel, had settled in Judah, (2 *Chr.* 11:13—17. 12:1.) Rehoboam and his subjects in general should become more gross idolaters, than the Israelites were. Yet this was actually the case: for they worshipped false gods even more directly than the Israelites; and the *groves* seem to have been temples erected in shady places, where the most abominable lewdness was practised in honor of their filthy idols. (*M. R.*—9—11. 12.26—29. *Lev.* 18:21—30.) SCOTT.

Verse 25.

Shishak.] 'On one of the colonnades which adorn the first court of the palace of Karnac, (cut, 7:2—12.) two royal legends (cut) are inscribed in cartouches; the first expresses the surname, ["The Sun," ("Pharaoh," says *Wilkinson*,) "ruler of the world,"] "*approved by the sun;*" the second, entirely phonetic, reads thus, AMNMAI SHSHNK, "dear to *Ammon*, Sheshonk." We see that this name, also found on many other monuments, is strictly the same with that of *Sesogchis* (pronounced Sesonchis) preserved by Manetho, and differs from it only by the addition of a Greek termination. But if one has the slightest notion of the particular genius of the Shemitish languages, which, adhering only to the skeletons of words, i. e. the consonants, neglect the vowels, as least important, he will then be struck with the analogy of the Egyptian name, *Shshnk*, to that of the Heb. written *Shyshy* (Shishak or Sheshok). Indeed one cannot but perceive their identity: [and so Usher, who] puts this invasion in 971

26 And [k] he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all; and he took away all [l] the shields of gold which Solomon had made.

27 And king Rehoboam [m] made in their stead brazen shields, and committed *them* unto the hands of the chief of the * guard, which kept the door of the king's house.

28 And it was *so*, when the king went into the house of the LORD, that the guard bare them, and brought them back into [n] the guard-chamber.

29 Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, [o] *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

B. C. 958. 30 And [p] there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all *their* days.

31 And [q] Rehoboam slept with his fathers; and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And [r] his mother's name *was* Naamah, an Ammonitess. And [s] Abijam his son reigned in his stead.

CHAP. XV.

Abijam's wicked reign, 1—7. He dies, and is succeeded by Asa, 8. Asa's good reign, 9—15. In his war with Baasha, he makes a league with Ben-hadad, king of Syria; compels Baasha to desist from building Ramah; and with the materials builds Geba and Mizpah, 16—22. He dies, and is succeeded by Jehoshaphat, 23, 24. Nadab's wicked reign over Israel, 25, 26. Baasha slays him, seizes the kingdom, and executes Ahijah's prophecy against Jeroboam's family, 27—32. Baasha's wicked reign, 33, 34.

NOW [a] in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, reigned Abijam over Judah.

2 Three years reigned he in Jerusalem. And [b] his mother's name *was* [c] Maachah, the daughter of [d] Abishalom.

3 And he walked in [e] all the sins of his father, which he had done before him: [f] and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father.

4 Nevertheless [g] for David's sake did the LORD his God [h] give him a † lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, [i] and to establish Jerusalem:

5 Because [j] David did *that which was* right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any *thing* that he commanded him all the days of his life, [k] save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

6 And [l] there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life.

k See on 7:51.—15:18. 2 K. 24:13. 2 Chr. 12:9—11. Ps. 39:6. 89:35—45.

l 10:16,17. 2 Chr. 9:15,16. Prov. 23:5. Ec. 2:18,19.

m Lam. 4:1,2.

* Heb. *runners.* 1.5. 18:46. 1 Sam. 8:11. 22:17. 2 Sam. 15:1.

n 2 Chr. 12:11.

o See on 19. 11:41.—15:23. 22:45. 2 Chr. 12:15.

p 12:24. 15:6,7.

q See on 20. 11:43. 15:3,24. 22:50. 2 Chr. 12:16.

r See on 21.

s 1 Chr. 3:10. *Abia.* 2 Chr. 12:16. *Abijah.* Matt. 1:7. *Alia.*

a See on 14:31.—2 Chr. 13:1,2.

b 13. 2 Chr. 11:20—22.

c 2 Chr. 13:2. *Michaiah the daughter of Uriel.*

d 2 Chr. 11:21. *Absalom.*

e 14:21, 22.

f See on 3:14. 11:4,33.—2 K. 20:3. 2 Chr. 25:2. 31:20, 21. Ps. 119:80.

g 11:12,32. Gen. 12:2. 19:29. 26:5. Deut. 4:37. 2 Sam. 7:12—16. Is. 37: 35. Jer. 33:20—26. Rom. 11:28.

h 11:36. 2 Chr. 21:7. Ps. 132.17. Luke 1:69—79. 2:32. John 8:12. Rev. 22: 16.

† Or, *candle.* Ps. 18:28.

i Ps. 87:5. Is. 9:7. 14:32. 62:7. Jer. 33:2. Mic. 4:1,2. Matt. 16:18

j See on 3. 11:8.—2 K. 22:2. 2 Chr. 34: 2. Ps. 119.6. Luke 1:6. Acts 13:22, 36.

k 2 Sam. 11:4,15—17. 12:9,10. Ps. 51: *title.*

l See on 14:30.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 21—31. No wonder they, who live at a distance from the ordinances of God, are hardened in iniquity; when such as are most favored provoke Him to jealousy by their crimes, and are uninfluenced by his judgments, mercies, warnings, and promises. —The perpetration of the worst crimes, of the worst of the heathen, in Jerusalem, the city that the Lord had chosen for his temple and worship; and at present in this favored land; demonstrates, that nothing can render the heart of fallen man holy, but the special, sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit: on this alone may we depend; for this may we daily pray, in behalf of ourselves and of all around us!—But sin quickly enfeebles, impoverishes, and disgraces the most prosperous nations: and when holiness, the real glory of a religious profession, is gone, all external splendor will follow it, or become worthless. Yet many, who live in gross wickedness, keep up a formal attendance on divine ordinances, and are pleased with an ostentatious imitation of the usages of better times; which have lost all their intrinsic value, and retain nothing, except the external glitter that amuses weak and carnal minds. SCOTT.

B. C. According to *Champollion Figeac*, it was in this same year that *Sesonchis* mounted the throne. So the commencement of his reign was thus signalized.' [See note, 2 Chr. 12.8.] GREPPO. *Wilkinson* makes it to be Sesonchis, of Manetho, &c. and Sheshonk I. 'who ascended the throne B. C. 978.' ED.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV. 1—3. (*M. R.* a, b. *Note*, 9.) There is no sufficient ground for the opinion, that Maachah was the daughter of Absalom the son of David. (*M. R.* c, d.) She is called 'Michaiah the daughter of Uriel,' in Chr.—*His heart was not perfect*, &c. (3) *M. R.* f. *Note*, 14. —As Abijam, though a wicked man, was a professed worshipper of JEHOVAH, he is called 'the LORD his God.' (2 *Chr.* 28:5.) SCOTT.

Verse 4.

Notwithstanding the wickedness of Abijam, and others of David's race; they were for his sake continued as 'a lamp in Jerusalem:' (11: 12, 13, 34—36, *v.* 36.) and they were made highly useful, both to establish the civil state of that city, and to maintain the true worship of God in it: when the light of divine truth was extinguished in almost all other places of the earth. ID.

Verse 5.

Save only, &c.] Those who know the human heart, and the state of a believer in this world of conflict and temptation, will never expect to see in mere man a character and conduct free from blemish and criminality; though they observe many preserved from falling, or from continuing long under the power of notorious evils. David deeply repented, and to the close of his life showed himself to be the upright and devoted servant and worshipper of the Lord, and in no instance turned aside to idolatry, or countenanced it in his subjects. (11: 1—8, *conclusion.* 1 *Chr.* 28: 29: *Ps.* 51:) SCOTT.

Verse 9.

Abijam began to reign during the 18th year of Jeroboam; reigned through his 19th year, and died before the close of his 20. Thus, Abijam is said, according to the Hebrew idiom, to have reigned '*three* years,' in the same manner as Christ is said to have risen after '*three* days.' Thus also Nadab began to reign in the second year of Asa, and reigned two years: yet Baasha succeeded him in the third year of Asa. (28) This is the way, in which the computation of the years between the two kingdoms may be made to coincide: for, in the numerous successions in the kingdom of Israel, the same year is frequently twice reckoned; both to him who reigned in its commencement, and to him who succeeded before the close of it. ID.

An idol. (13) 'Which imports something of terror and horror, either because it was of a frighful aspect, or brought dreadful judgments on its worshippers. *Bp. Patrick.* ID.

B. C. 953. 7 Now [m] the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And [n] there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam.

8 And [o] Abijam slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David: and [p] Asa his son reigned in his stead.

9 ¶ And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah.

10 And forty and one years reigned he in Jerusalem: and his* mother's name *was* Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.

11 And [q] Asa did *that which was* right in the eyes of the LORD, as *did* David his father.

12 And he took away [r] the Sodomites out of the land, and removed [s] all the idols that his fathers had made.

13 And also [t] Maachah [u] his mother, even her he removed from *being* queen, because she had made an idol in a grove: and Asa † destroyed her idol [v] and burnt *it* by [x] the brook Kidron.

14 But [y] the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa's heart [z] was perfect with the LORD all his days.

15 And [a] he brought in the ‡ things which his father had dedicated, and the things which himself had dedicated, into the house of the LORD, silver, and gold, and vessels.

[*Practical Observations.*]

16 ¶ And [b] there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

17 And [c] Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah, and built [d] Ramah, that [e] he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.

18 Then [f] Asa took all the silver and the gold *that were* left in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants; and king Asa sent them to [g] Ben-hadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, that dwelt at [h] Damascus, saying,

m See on 14:29.—2 Chr. 13:2, 21,22.
n 2 Chr. 13:3—20.
o See on 14:31.—2 Chr. 14:1.
p 1 Chr. 3:10. Matt. 1:7,8.

him, weakened him, and compelled him to be quiet the rest of his reign, 2 Chr. 13: 20.

But, in general, we are told, (1.) He was not like David, had no hearty affection for God's ordinances; though, to serve his purpose against Jeroboam, he pleaded possession of the temple and priesthood, as what he valued himself upon, 2 Chr. 13: 10—12. Many boast of their profession of godliness, who are strangers to its power; and plead the truth of their religion, who yet are not true to it. *His heart was not perfect with the Lord his God;* he seemed to have zeal, but wanted sincerity; he began well, but fell off, and *walked in all the sins of his father*, though he had seen the bad consequences. He that was all his days in war, ought to have been so wise as to make and keep peace with God, especially having found Him so good a Friend in his war with Jeroboam, 2 Chr. 13: 18. *Let favor be showed the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness*, Isa. 26: 10. (2.) Yet it was for David's sake he was advanced to, and continued on, the throne, (*v.* 4, 5.) not for his own sake, or for the sake of his father, whose steps he trod in. Note, It aggravates the sin of a degenerate seed, that they fare the better for their ancestor's piety, owe their blessings to it, yet will not imitate it: but unreasonably ridicule and oppose that of which they enjoy the benefit. The character here given of David, is very great, *that he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord;* but the exception very remarkable, *save only in the matter of Uriah*, including both his murder, and the debauching of his wife. That was a bad matter; it was a remaining blot on his name, a bar in his escutcheon, and its reproach not wiped away, though its guilt was. David was guilty of other faults, but they were nothing in comparison of that: yet that, repented of, though mentioned for warning to others, did not prevail to throw him out of the covenant, nor to cut off the entail of the promise upon his seed.

V. 9—24. We have here a short account of the reign of Asa; we shall find a more copious one, 2 Chr. 14, 15, and 16.

Here is, I. The length of it, 41 years, *v.* 10. In the account we have of the kings of Judah, we find the number of the good and bad kings nearly equal; but the reign of the good kings was generally long, that of the bad, short; the consideration of which will make the state of God's church not altogether so bad, within that period, as it appears, at first sight. Length of days is in Wisdom's right hand. *Honor thy father*, much more thy heavenly Father, *that thy days may be long.*

II. The general good character of it, *v.* 11. That is right indeed, which is so in God's eyes. Those are approved, whom He commends. He did *as did David his father*, kept close to God, and to his instituted worship, though he was not a prophet, or psalmist. If we come up to the *graces* of those that are gone before us, it will be our praise with God, though we come short of their *gifts*. Asa was like David, though neither such a conqueror, nor such an author; *his heart was perfect with the Lord all his days*, (*v.* 14.) i. e. he was both cordial and constant in his religion.

* That is, *grandmother's*: 2:13. 2 Chr. 11:20,21. 13:2.
q 3. 2 Chr. 14:2,11. 15:17. 16:7—10.
r See on 14:24.—22:46. Rom. 1:26,27. Jude 7.
s 3. 11:7,8. 14:23. 2 Chr. 14:2—5. Ez. 20:18,19. Zech. 1:2—6. 1 Pet. 1: 18.
t 2,10. 2 Chr. 15:13.
u Deut. 13:6—11. 33:9. Zech. 13:3. Matt. 10:37. 12:46—50. 2 Cor. 5:16. Gal. 2:5,6,14.
† Heb. *cut off*. Lev. 26:30. Deut. 7:5. 2 K. 18:4. 23:12—15. 2 Chr. 34:4.
v Ex. 32:20. Deut. 9:21. Josh. 6:24.
x 2 Sam. 15:23. 2 K. 23:6. John 18:1. *Cedron.*
y 22:43. 2 K. 12:3. 14:4. 15:4. 2 Chr. 14:3,5.
z 8:61. 11:4. 2 Chr. 15:17. 16:9. 25:2.
a See on 7:51.—1 Chr. 26:26—28. 2 Chr. 14:13. 15:18.
‡ Heb. *holy things.*
b 6,7,32. 14:30. 2 Chr. 16:1, &c.
c 27. 2 Chr. 16:1.
d 21. Josh. 18:25. 1 Sam. 15:34. Jer. 31:15.
e 12:27. 2 Chr. 11:13—17.
f 15. 14:26. 2 K. 12:18. 18:15,16. 2 Chr. 15:18. 16:2—6.
g 20:1—5,33,34. 2 K. 8:7—15.
h 11:23,24. Gen. 14:15. 15:2. Jer. 49: 27. Am. 1:4.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—15. Even a superficial acquaintance with the divine law may enable us to perceive evident defects in the conduct of eminent believers; yet if the habitual conduct of the righteous be impartially contrasted with that of unbelievers, the difference is very visible, and they appear to be of another spirit, and far more excellent than their neighbors. The general conduct of the Lord's servants may therefore be held forth as an example for imitation: and numbers are blessed on their account, both while they live, and after they are gone to their rest. But alas! even children, who have been favored and spared for their parents' sake, often forsake their righteous ways; and but few, especially in superior stations, or among kings and rulers, have hitherto served God in uprightness of heart.—It is happy for nations, when wicked rulers are speedily removed; and when the righteous come in their stead, and are long preserved, 'to do that which is right in the eyes of the LORD.'—Those who would please Him, and promote reformation, must prefer his glory to the reputation of every friend or relative: nay, they must oppose the crimes even of their own parents, though this may seem a reflection on the memory of the deceased, or a slight put on the characters of the living. Nor may any age, sex, or relative tie, induce such as are intrusted with authority, to allow those to possess power or influence, who abuse it to the dishonor of God, and to promote idolatry, superstition, or ungodliness; and in every situation our duty to Him must have the precedency over all other duties. (*Matt.* 10: 37—39. *Luke* 14: 25—27.) How absurd then is it, to be satisfied with a religion, merely because our fathers professed it! for, indeed, that reason, if allowed to be valid, would generally prove that men ought to continue in idolatry, superstition, and immorality. (*P. O.* 1 *Pet.* 1: 17—21.)—Every reformation on earth has hitherto been defective: the utmost attainment of fallen man has been an upright and persevering endeavor to glorify God; and this meets with his *merciful* acceptance, by faith in Jesus Christ.

SCOTT.

Verse 13.

In a grove.] Note, Judg. 3:7. 'The temples of the Hindoos are nearly always connected with a grove, or sacred tree, and some of them are built under the branches of a *single tree*. Thus may be seen the noble *banyan*, (*Ficus Indica*,) with his giant arms and *self-planted* supporters, overshadowing the temple of superstition. The Vulg. makes this grove sacred to Priapus. The courtesans of the Hindoo temples are called "parrots of the groves."' ROBERTS.

Verse 14.

Was perfect, &c.] This may be opposed to the external good behavior, and the insincere and divided heart, of hypocrites; and may signify, that Asa was cordially devoted to the service and worship of God all his days; and that his sins arose from infirmity, not from presumptuous, deliberate wickedness. (5, 17—24. 2 *Chr.* 16: *Ps.* 19:12—14.) But some explain it to mean no more, than that he never turned aside from the worship of God to idolatry, as Solomon had done.

SCOTT.

Verse 15.

It seems that Abijam, in his war with Jeroboam, had made some vow of dedicating the spoil to God, which he did not live to perform. But Asa fulfilled it, as well as a similar vow of his own. (*M. R.*—*Lev.* 27:28, 29. 2 *Chr.* 14:9—15.) ID.

Verses 16—22.

(25—31.) The conduct of Asa evidently arose from unbelief, and was very criminal in itself.—Baasha's policy was not unlike the impious devices of Jeroboam: (12:26—29.) but God could have turned it

19 *There is* a [i] league between me and thee, *and* between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and [k] break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may * depart from me.

20 So Ben-hadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel, and smote [l] Ijon, and [m] Dan, and [n] Abel-beth-maachah, and all [o] Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali.

21 And it came to pass, [p] when Baasha heard *thereof*, that he left off building of Ramah, and dwelt in [q] Tirzah.

22 Then king Asa [r] made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none *was* †exempted: and they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded: and king Asa built with them [s] Geba of Benjamin, and [t] Mizpah.

23 The [u] rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? Nevertheless [x] in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet.

B. C. 914. 24 And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and [y] Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead.

25 ¶ And [z] Nadab the son of Jeroboam ‡ began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa, king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years.

26 And [a] he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and [b] walked in the way of his father, and [c] in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

27 And [d] Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, [e] conspired against him: and Baasha smote him at [f] Gibbethon, which *belongeth* to the Philistines; (for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon;)

28 Even [g] in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead.

29 And it came to pass, when he reigned, *that* he smote all the house of Jeroboam; [h] he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according unto the saying of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite:

30 Because of [i] the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger.

31 Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, *are* [j] they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

32 And [k] there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

33 In the third year

III. The particular instances of Asa's piety. His times were times of reformation. 1. He removed that which was evil. Though he began to reign but 20 years after the death of Solomon, yet very gross corruption had spread far, and taken deep root. Immorality he first struck at; *he took away the Sodomites out of the land*, suppressed the brothels; for how can either prince or people prosper, while those cages of unclean and filthy birds, more dangerous than pest-houses, are suffered to remain. Then he proceeded against idolatry, *v.* 12. His father having made idols, he was the more concerned to remove them, that he might cut off the entail of the curse, and prevent the visiting of that iniquity on him and his. Nay, when he found idolatry in the court, he rooted it out thence, *v.* 13. Maachah his grandmother, but called his *mother*, because she had the education of him in his childhood, had yet an idol in a grove, though she was his mother. Reformation must begin at home. Bad practices will never be suppressed in the country, while they are supported in the court. Asa, in every thing else, will honor and respect his mother; he loves her well, but he loves God better, and, like the Levite, (Deut. 33: 9.) bravely forgets the relation, when it comes in competition with his duty. If she be an idolater, her idol shall be burnt; and, probably, he strewed the ashes, in imitation of Moses, (Ex. 32: 20.) and in token of his detestation of idolatry, and his indignation at it, wherever he found it. She also shall be deposed from being queen, or from the queen: i. e. from conversing with his wife; he banished her the court, and confined her to an obscure and private life. They that have power, are happy, when thus they have hearts to use it well. 2. He re-established that which was good, *v.* 15. We must not only cease to do evil, but learn to do well; not only cast away the idols of our iniquity, but dedicate ourselves and our all to God's honor and glory. When those who, in their infancy, were, by baptism, devoted to God, make it their own act to join themselves to Him, and vigorously employ themselves in his service, that is bringing in the dedicated things they and their fathers have dedicated: it is necessary justice, rendering to God the things that are his.

IV. His political conduct. He built cities to encourage the increase of his people, (*v.* 23.) and to invite others to him by conveniences of habitation. And he was zealous to hinder Baasha from building [i. e. fortifying] Ramah, because he designed it to cut off communication between his people and Jerusalem, and to hinder those who, in obedience to God, would come to worship there. An enemy must by no means be suffered to fortify a frontier town.

V. The faults of his reign. In both the things for which he was praised, he was found defective; the fairest characters are not without some *but* or other in them. 1. Did he take away the idols? That was well: *but the high places were not removed;* (*v.* 14.) therein his reformation fell short. They were against the law, which obliged them to worship *at one place*, Deut. 12: 11. They lessened men's esteem of the temple and its altars, and were an open gap for idolatry to enter at, while the people were so much addicted to it. It was not well that Asa, when his hand was in, did not remove these; *nevertheless his heart was perfect with the Lord.* This affords us a comfortable note, that those may be found honest and upright with God, and be accepted of Him, who yet, in some instances, come short of doing the good they might and should. The perfection which is made the indispensable condition of the new covenant, is not to be understood of sinlessness, (then we were all undone,) but sincerity. 2. Did he bring in the dedicated things? That was well: *but* he afterward alienated them, when he took them to bribe Ben-hadad, to break his league with Baasha, and, by making an inroad on his country, to divert him from building Ramah, *v.* 18, 19. Here he sinned. If *Ben-hadad* did wrong *to break his league*, as certainly he did, Asa did wrong in persuading him to do it. He did wrong that he could not trust God, who had done so much for him, to free him out of this strait, without his using such indirect means to help himself: so in taking the gold out of the treasury of the temple, which was not to be used, but on extraordinary occasions. The project succeeded, *v.* 20—22. but we find it was displeasing to God; and though Asa valued himself on the policy of it, and promised himself it would effectually secure his peace, he is told by a prophet, that he had done foolishly, and that *from thenceforth he should have wars;* see 2 Chr. 16: 7—9. [and we find it began that *foreign interference*, ever after so disastrous to the state.]

VI. The troubles of his reign. For the most part, he prospered: but, 1. Baasha king of Israel was a very troublesome neighbor. He reigned 24 years, and, all his days, had war, more or less, with Asa, *v.* 16. This was the effect of the division of the kingdoms; they were continually vexing one another, which made them both an easier prey to the common enemy. 2. In his old age, too, he was himself afflicted with the gout.

VII. The conclusion of his reign. The acts of it were more largely recorded in the common history (to which reference is here had, *v.* 23.) than in this sacred one. He reigned long, but finished,

i 2 Chr. 19:2. Is. 31:1.
k 2 Sam. 21:2. 2 Chr. 16:3. Ez. 17:13—16. Rom. 1:31. 3:8.
* Heb. *go up.*
l 2 K. 15:29.
m 12:29. Gen. 14:14. Judg. 18:29.
n 2 Sam. 20:14,15.
o Josh. 11:2. 12:3.
p 2 Chr. 16:5.
q 14:17. 16:15—18. Cant. 6:4.
r 2 Chr. 16:6.
† Heb. *free.*
s Josh. 18:24. *Gaba.* 21:17.
t Josh. 18:26. 1 Sam. 7:5. *Mizpeh.* Jer. 40:6,10.
u 7:5. 14:29—31.
x 2 Chr. 16:12—14. Ps. 90:10.
y 22:41—43. 2 Chr. 17:1. Matt. 1:8. *Josaphat.*
z 14:12,20.
‡ Heb. *reigned.*
a 16:7,25,30.
b 12:28—33. 13:33,34.
c 30,34. 14:16. 16:19,26. 21:22. 22:52. Gen. 20:9. Ex. 32:21. 1 Sam. 2:24. 2 K. 3:3. 21:11. 23:15. Jer. 32:35. Rom. 14:15. 1 Cor. 8:10—13.
d See on 16,17.
e 16:9. 2 K. 12:20.
f 16:15,17. Josh. 19:44. 21:23.
g Deut. 32:35.
h 14:10—14. 2 K. 9:7—10,36,37. 10:10, 11,31. 19:25.
i See on 26.—14:9—15.
j 14:19. 16:5,14,20,27.
k See on 16.

into foolishness, without Asa's opposing it by a policy not more justifiable. (2 *Chr.* 16:1—10.) SCOTT.

Verses 29, 30.

No doubt Baasha left the dead bodies of Jeroboam's family unburied, as it had been predicted. (14:9—14.) It is also referred to as a well-known fact in subsequent passages. (16:3, 4. 21:22—24.) Baasha, however, only sought to secure himself in the kingdom by this cruelty, and therefore imitated Jeroboam in his idolatry, and other impieties. (34. 16:2—7.) SCOTT.

of Asa king of Judah began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in Tirzah, [l] twenty and four years.

34 And [m] he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and [n] walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

CHAP. XVI.

Jehu the prophet predicts the ruin of Baasha's family, 1—4. Baasha dies, and is succeeded by his son Elah, 5—7. Zimri slays Elah, succeeds him, and fulfils Jehu's prophecy, 8—14. Omri usurps the kingdom, and besieges Zimri in Tirzah, who burns himself in the palace, 15—20. Tibni opposes Omri, who prevails against him, 21, 22. Omri builds Samaria, reigns very wickedly, dies, and is succeeded by Ahab, 23—28. Ahab's excessive wickedness and idolatry, as instigated by his wife Jezebel, 29—33. Joshua's curse on him that should rebuild Jericho, is fulfilled on Hiel, 34.

THEN the word of the LORD came to [a] Jehu the son of [b] Hanani against Baasha, saying,

2 Forasmuch as [c] I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel, and [d] thou hast walked [e] in the way of Jeroboam, and [f] hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins;

3 Behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and [g] will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

4 Him that dieth of Baasha in the city [h] shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth of his in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.

5 Now [i] the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

6 So [j] Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and [k] Elah his son reigned in his stead.

7 And also by [l] the hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the LORD against Baasha, and against his house, even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD, in provoking him to anger [1] with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam; and [m] because he killed him.

8 ¶ In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah, began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years.

9 And his servant

1 16:8.
m 26.
n See on 26.—12:28,29. 13:33. 14:16.
a 7. 2 Chr. 19:2. 20:34.
b 2 Chr. 16:7—10.
c 14:7. 1 Sam. 2:8,27,28. 15:17—19. 2 Sam. 12:7—11. Ps. 113:7,8. Luke 1:52.
d See on 13:33,34. 15:34.
e See on 14:16. 15:26.—Ex. 32:21. 1 Sam. 2:24. 26:19.
f 11,12. 14:10. 15:29,30. 21:21—24. Is. 66:24. Jer. 22:19.
g See on 14:11.
h See on 14:19. 15:31.
i 14:20. 15:24.
j 8,13,14.
k See on 1,2.
l Ps. 115:4. Is. 2:8. 44:9—20.
m 14:14. 15:27—29. 2 K. 10:30,31. Is. 10:6,7. Hos. 1:4. Acts 2:23. 4:27, 28.

awhile, as Jeroboam was; 24 years he reigned, (*v.* 33.) but showed it was not from any dislike to Jeroboam's sins, that he destroyed his family, but from malice and ambition; for, when he had rooted out the sinner, he himself clave to the sin, and *walked in the way of Jeroboam*, (*v.* 34.) though he had seen the end of that way; so strangely was his heart hardened with sin's deceitfulness.

CHAP. XVI. This ch. relates wholly to the kingdom of Israel, and the revolutions of that kingdom—many in a little time.

V. 1—14. Here is, I. The ruin of the family of Baasha foretold: he was a man likely enough to raise and establish his family, active, politic, and daring; but his idolatry brought destruction on it. God sent him warning, 1. That if he were thereby wrought upon to repent and reform, the ruin might be prevented. 2. That, if not, it might appear that the destruction, when it did come, whoever might be instruments of it, was the act of God's justice, and the punishment of sin. *Hanani*, the father, was a seer, or prophet, at the same time with *Jehu*, 2 Chr. 16: 7. He was sent to Asa king of Judah; but the son, on this longer and more dangerous expedition to Baasha king of Israel. Prophecy, thus happily entailed, was worthy of so much the more honor. This Jehu continued long in his usefulness; we find him reproving Jehoshaphat (2 Chr. 19: 2.) above 40 years after, and writing the annals of that prince, 2 Chr. 20: 34. The message he brought to Baasha, is much the same with that which Ahijah sent to Jeroboam by his wife. (1.) He reminds him of the great things God had done for him, *v.* 2. Baasha seemed to have raised himself by his own treachery and cruelty, yet there was the hand of Providence in it, to bring about God's counsel, concerning Jeroboam's house; God's owning his advancement as his act and deed, by no means amounts to the patronising of his ambition and treachery. God puts power into bad men's hands, but makes it serve his good purposes, notwithstanding their bad use of it. God calls Israel his people still, though wretchedly corrupted, because they retained the covenant of circumcision, and there were many good people among them. (2.) He charges him with high crimes and misdemeanors. [1.] That he had *made Israel to sin*, seduced God's subjects from their allegiance, and brought them to pay the homage, due to Him only, at last, with honor, and left his throne to a successor no way inferior to himself.

V. 25—34. We are now to view the miserable condition of Israel, while the kingdom of Judah was happy under Asa's good government. It was threatened, they should be as *a reed shaken in the water;* (*ch.* 14: 15.) and so they were, when, during the single reign of Asa, the government of the kingdom was in six or seven different hands, in Jeroboam's in the beginning of his reign, and Ahab's at the end of it; between whom were Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Tibni, and Omri, undermining and destroying one another. This they got by deserting the house both of God and of David.

Here is, 1. The ruin and extirpation of the family of Jeroboam, according to the word of the Lord by Ahijah. His son Nadab succeeded him. If the death of his brother Abijah had had a due influence on him, to make him religious, and the honor done him at his death had engaged him to follow his good example, his reign might have been long and glorious; but he *walked in the way of his father*, (*v.* 26.) kept up the worship of his calves, and forbade his subjects to go up to Jerusalem to worship; *sinned, and made Israel to sin;* therefore God brought ruin on him quickly, in the second year of his reign. He was besieging Gibbethon, a city which the Philistines had taken from the Danites, and was endeavoring to retake it; and there, in the midst of his army, did Baasha, with others, conspire against him, and kill him; (*v.* 27.) and so little interest had he in the affections of his people, that his army did not only not avenge his death, but chose his murderer for his successor. From what motive, does not appear; but Baasha *slew him*, and *reigned in his stead*, *v.* 28. And the first thing he did, when he came to the crown, was, to *cut off all the house of Jeroboam*, that he might the better secure himself, and his own usurped government. He thought it not enough to imprison or banish them, but he destroyed them; left not only no males, (as was foretold, *ch.* 14: 10.) but none that breathed. Herein, he was barbarous, but God was righteous. Jeroboam's sin was punished, (*v.* 30.) for they that provoke God, do it *to their own confusion;* see Jer. 7: 19. Ahijah's prophecy was accomplished, *v.* 29. Divine threatenings are not designed merely to terrify.

2. The elevation of Baasha. He shall be tried awhile, as Jeroboam was; 24 years he reigned, (*v.* 33.) but showed it was not from any dislike to Jeroboam's sins, that he destroyed his family, but from malice and ambition; for, when he had rooted out the sinner, he himself clave to the sin, and *walked in the way of Jeroboam*, (*v.* 34.) though he had seen the end of that way; so strangely was his heart hardened with sin's deceitfulness.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 16—34. Even true believers find it very difficult, in times of urgent danger, 'to trust in the LORD with all their heart, and not to lean to their own understanding:' and unbelief proportionably makes way for carnal policy.—How much happier are those who are connected with godly people, than such as have their lot cast among the profane and wicked! (16: 21, 22.)—Wretched is it for others, but most so for themselves, when children inherit the vices, with the estates, of their wicked parents: their temporal calamities may arise from the sins of their fathers; but 'the wrath to come' will be the recompense of their own crimes.—Ungodly men execute the just judgment of God on each other, whilst gratifying their own ambition, avarice, or revenge; and at the same time they ripen for severer vengeance, by imitating the sins of those whom they have supplanted.—Many suffer, and many are induced to commit iniquity, by such rulers and usurpers. But in the midst of all these enormities, and this apparent confusion, the Lord is carrying on his universal plan: and when it shall be fully completed, all rational and holy creatures, and all the company of redeemed sinners, will perceive, admire, and adore the glorious justice, wisdom, truth, and mercy, displayed in every part of it, through all the ages of eternity! SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI. V. 1. A succession of prophets was raised up in the nation of Israel, through every generation, till the advent of Christ approached. (*Pref. to Malachi.*) SCOTT.

Verse 7.

It is likely, Jehu was sent from Judah, of which kingdom he seems to have been, and delivered his message to Baasha, as the man of God did to Jeroboam. (*Notes*, 13:1—6. 2 *Chr.* 16:7—10. 19:2.)—*Killed him.*] God had not *commanded* him to do this, though he had *predicted* that it should be done. (2 *K.* 10:29—31. *Is.* 10:5—15. *Hos.* 1:4, 5. *Acts* 2:22—24.) SCOTT.

Verses 8—14.

It is evident, that a part of the third year of Asa, after Baasha came to the throne, is calculated as a whole year. (*Note*, 15:9.) In like

Zimri, captain of half *his* chariots, [n] conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah, [o] drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza,* steward of *his* house in Tirzah.

10 And [p] Zimri went in, and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and [q] reigned in his stead.

B. C. 929. 11 And it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, *that* [r] he slew all the house of Baasha: [s] he left him not one that pisseth against a wall, † neither of his kinsfolks nor of his friends.

12 Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, [t] according to the word of the LORD, which he spake against Baasha ‡ by Jehu the prophet;

13 For all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son, by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their [u] vanities.

14 Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, *are* [v] they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

[*Practical Observations.*]

15 ¶ In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign [x] seven days in Tirzah; and the people *were* [y] encamped against Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the Philistines.

16 And the people *that were* encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: wherefore all Israel made [z] Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp.

17 And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they [a] besieged Tirzah.

18 And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, [b] and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died,

19 For his sins which he sinned [c] in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and [d] in his sin which he did, to make Israel sin.

20 Now [e] the rest of the acts of Zimri, and

n 15:27. 2 K. 9:14. 12:20. 15:10,25, 30.
o 20:16. 1 Sam. 25:36—38. 2 Sam. 13: 28,29. Prov. 23:29—35. Jer. 51:57. Dan. 5:1—4,30. Nah. 1:10. Hab. 2: 15,16. Matt. 24:49—51. Luke 21:34.

* Heb. *which was over.* Gen. 15:2. 24: 2,10. 39:4,9.
p 2 K. 9:31.
q 15.
r 15:29. Judg. 1:7.
s See on 14:10.—1 Sam. 25:22, 34.
† Or, *both his kinsmen and his friends.*
t See on 1—4.
‡ Heb. *by the hand of.* 7. 14:18. 2 K. 14:25. 2 Chr. 10:15. Prov. 26:6.
u Deut. 32:21. 1 Sam. 12:21. 2 K. 17: 15. Is. 41:29. Jer. 10:3—5,8,15. Jon. 2:8. 1 Cor. 8:4. 10:19,20.
v See on 5.
x 2 K. 9:31. Job. 20:5. Ps. 37:35,36.
y 15:27. Josh. 19:44. 21:23.
z 30. 2 K. 8:26. 2 Chr. 22:2. Mic. 6: 16.
a Judg. 9:45,50,56,57. 2 K. 6:24 25. 18: 9—12. 25:1—4. Luke 19:43 44.
b Judg. 9:54. 1 Sam. 31:4,5. 2 Sam. 17:23. Job 2:9,10. Matt. 27:5.
c 7,13. 15:30. Ps. 9:16. 58:9—11.
d See on 12:28. 14:16. 15:26.
e 5,14,27. 14:19. 15:31. 22:39.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—14. We do not well understand the rules, and plans of wisdom, justice, truth, and mercy, by which God governs nations and individuals; (*Note*, *Ps.* 97: 2.) yet we may draw general instructive conclusions from this history. Frequently the Lord warns before He punishes: and they, who are not induced to repentance, are rendered more inexcusable in their wickedness.—God is greatly displeased with those who in any way tempt others to commit iniquity: but He is especially provoked by those, who seduce his professing people to apostasy, or true believers to conceal or disgrace their profession: persecutors, therefore, will be answerable for all the sins, to which they tempt men by the dread of punishment, as well as for all the injustice which they commit, and the blood which they shed.—Those who follow the examples of such as have been awfully punished for their sins, may expect to be overtaken with similar vengeance.—The impunity of the principal culprits, while their children, relatives, or helpers suffer for their crimes, loudly declares the approaching day of judgment, and the more exact discrimination of characters, and distribution of rewards and punishments, which shall then take place.

SCOTT.

manner Elah, who began to reign in the 26th year of Asa, and was killed in the 27th, is said to have reigned two years, that is, a part of two years. SCOTT.

Verse 15.

Gibbethon lay in the lot of Dan, but it was given to the Levites. (*Josh.* 19:44. 21:23.) The Philistines, however, had got possession of it, during the distractions which prevailed in Israel. SCOTT.

Verses 17—19.

Zimri was driven to this extremity, and left to this desperation, by the righteous judgment of God, for his sins: as in the space of seven

his treason that he wrought, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

21 Then were the people of Israel [f] divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half followed Omri.

22 But the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned.

B. C. 925. 23 ¶ In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah, began Omri to reign over Israel, [g] twelve years: six years reigned he in Tirzah.

24 And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called [h] the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, * Samaria.

25 But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and [i] did worse than all that *were* before him.

26 For [j] he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with [k] their vanities.

27 Now [l] the rest of the acts of Omri, which he did, and his might that he showed, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

B. C. 914. 28 So Omri [m] slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead.

29 ¶ And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah, began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel [n] in Samaria twenty and two years.

f 8,29. 15:25,28. Prov. 28:2. Is. 9:18—21. 19:2. Matt. 12:25. 1 Cor. 1: 12,13. Eph. 4:3—5.
g 8,29.
h 13:32. 18:2. 20:1. 22:37. 2 K. 17: 1,6,24. John 4:4,5. Acts 8:5—8.
* Heb. *Shomeron*.
i 30,31,33. 14:9. Mic. 6:16.
j 2,7,19. 12:26—33. 13:33,34.
k See on 13.—Ps. 31:6. Jer. 8:19. 10: 3,8. 14:22. 16:19. 18:15. Acts 14: 15. Rom. 1:21—23.
l 5,14,20. 15:31.
m See on 6.
n See on 24.

I. How he reigned, when, at length, settled on the throne. 1. He made himself famous by building Samaria, (ever after, the royal city of the kings of Israel, the palace at Tirzah being burnt,) which, in process of time, grew so considerable, that it gave name to the middle part of Canaan, between Galilee on the N. and Judea on the S. and to the inhabitants of that country, who were called *Samaritans*. He bought the ground for somewhat more than 700 pounds, sterling money, a *talent* was 353*l.* 11*s.* 10½*d.* Perhaps, Shemer sold it cheaper, on condition the city should be called after his name, which, otherwise, would have borne the name of the purchaser; *Samaria* is *Shemeren*, in the Hebrew. The kings of Israel changed their royal seats; Shechem first, then Tirzah, now Samaria; but the kings of Judah were constant to Jerusalem, the city of God: they that cleave to the Lord, fix; they that leave Him, ever wander. 2. He made himself infamous, v. 25. Though brought to the throne with much difficulty, and remarkably favored in his advancement by Providence, yet he was more profane, or more superstitious, and a greater persecutor, than either of the houses of Jeroboam or Baasha; he went further in *establishing iniquity by a law*, and forcing his subjects to comply; for we read of the statutes of Omri, the keeping of which made *Israel a desolation*, Mic. 6: 16. Jeroboam made Israel to sin, by temptation, example, and allurement; but Omri, by compulsion.

V. 29—34. We have the beginning of the reign of Ahab, of whom more is recorded, than of any of the kings of Israel; we have here only a general idea of him, that we may expect what the particulars will be; he reigned 22 years, long enough to do a deal of mischief.

I. He exceeded all his predecessors in wickedness, v. 30. and, as if it were done with a particular enmity both to God and Israel, it is said, *He did more*, purposely *to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger*, and, consequently, to send judgments on his land, *than all the kings of Israel before him*, v. 33. He thought it *a light thing to walk in the sins of Jeroboam*, v. 31. It was nothing to break the second commandment by image-worship, he would set aside the first also by introducing other gods. Making light of lesser sins makes way for greater; and they that endeavor to extenuate other people's sins will but aggravate their own.

II. He married a wicked woman, who, he knew, would bring in the worship of Baal, and seemed to marry her with that design, v. 31. She was a zealous idolater, extremely imperious and malicious in her natural temper, addicted to witch-

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days he had murdered all the posterity and relations of Baasha; and had manifested his determination to support the worship of the golden calves. (2 *K.* 9:30—37.) SCOTT.

Verses 21, 22.

The war lasted six years, (*Note*, 23.) before the contest ended with he death of Tibni. ID.

So Tibni, &c. (22) How much is contained in this concise sentence! and similar contests continually terminate in the same manner. It is an epitome especially of the history of civil wars. SCOTT. Alas, the insignificance of party politics! How briefly is this revolution, which sundered a whole people into hostile parties, recorded, while on many scenes of domestic life the Scriptures are so copious. The engrossing nature, however, of such ephemeral revolutions, so little conducive to the great end of existence, is well exhibited in the Reflections of the justly eminent ld. chief justice HALE, on the restoration of Ch. II. of Engl. 'When we should be praying,' says he, 'or reading, or observing the duty of the day, or thinking on our everlasting concernments, the thoughts of occurrences past, or what will be next, or what is fit to be said or done, in order to present transactions, interpose, and steal away our hearts, . . . leaving little for God but a bare shell or carcass of devotion, without a life or soul—stifling, starving and diverting those considerations which are of most absolute necessity for our Christian walk.'—See his Life, by Dr. WILLIAMS, of *Shrewsbury*; p. 53, &c. ED.

Verse 23.

Twelve, &c.] Twelve years elapsed from the death of Zimri to tha of Omri; namely, from the beginning of the 27th, to the end of the 38th year of Asa's reign. But, probably, half that time had been spent in civil wars, between Omri and Tibni; and the 31st year of Asa was nearly concluded, when Omri obtained the undisputed possession of the throne; from which time he reigned six complete years.—Thus, whilst Israel was torn to pieces by intestine commotions, conspiracies, massacres, and the succession of one usurper to another, who were all monsters of iniquity, and each destroyed the families, friends, and adherents of the murdered king; Judah was quietly governed by one pious prince, who began to reign in the days of Jeroboam, survived Nadab Baasha, Elah, Zimri, and Omri, and lived till the 4th year of Ahab The revolt of Israel therefore proved to be mainly their own loss (12:16.) SCOTT.

Verse 24.

It is probable, the burning of the palace at Tirzah, by Zimri, induced Omri to this measure.—From this city the whole surrounding country was called Samaria, or *Shomeron*: and sometimes the whole kingdom of the ten tribes is thus called, after Samaria became the capital city. (*M. R.*) ID.

30 And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD [o] above all that *were* before him.

31 And it came to pass, [*] as if it had been [p] a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he [q] took to wife [r] Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of [s] the Zidonians, [t] and went and [u] served Baal, and worshipped him.

32 And he reared up an altar for Baal in [x] the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

33 And Ahab [y] made a grove; and Ahab [z] did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger, than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

34 In his days did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest *son* Segub, [a] according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.

crafts and whoredoms, (2 K. 9: 22.) and every way vicious. The false prophetess spoken of, Rev. 2: 20. is called *Jezebel;* a wicked woman could not be called by a worse name: what mischiefs she did, and what mischief, at last, befell her, (2 K. 9: 33.) we shall find in the following story; this one strange wife debauched Israel more than all Solomon's.

III. He set up the worship of Baal, the god of the Zidonians, Jupiter instead of Jehovah; the sun, so some think; a deified hero of the Phenicians, so others: he was weary of the golden calves, and, like adulterers, must have variety. In honor of this mock deity, he built a temple in Samaria, the royal city, because the temple of God was in Jerusalem, the royal city of the other kingdom; he would have Baal's temple near him, that he might the better frequent, protect, and honor it. He reared an altar in that temple, on which to offer sacrifice to Baal, by which they acknowledged their dependence on him, and sought his favor. O the stupidity of idolaters! He made a grove about his temple, [note, 15:13.] either a natural one, or, (as it is not said, He *planted*, but, He *made* a grove,) something that answered the intention, which was to conceal, and so, countenance, the abominable impurities committed in the filthy worship of Baal. He that doeth evil, hateth the light.

IV. One of his subjects, in imitation of his presumption, ventured to build Jericho, in defiance of the curse Joshua long since pronounced on him that should attempt it, *v.* 34. It comes in as an instance of the height of impiety men were then arrived at, especially at Beth-el, where was one of the calves, for of that city this daring sinner was. He began to build, in defiance of the curse well known in Israel, jesting with it, perhaps, as a bugbear, or fancying it was worn out by length of time, now above 500 years, Josh. 6: 26. He built for his children, but God wrote him childless; his eldest son died, when he began, the youngest, when he finished, and all the rest, (it is supposed,) between. Note, Those whom God curses, are cursed indeed; none ever hardened his heart against God, and prospered. God keep us back from presumptuous sins, those great transgressions!

CHAP. XVII.

Elijah foretells to Ahab a long and excessive drought; and is sent by God to the brook Cherith, and fed by ravens, 1—7. He is afterwards sent to Zarephath, and sustained by a widow woman, whose barrel of meal and cruse of oil do not fail, 8—16. Her son dies, but is restored to life in answer to Elijah's prayer, whom she fully believes to be sent by God, 17—24.

AND † Elijah the Tishbite *who was* of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, [a] *As* the LORD God of Israel liveth, [b] before whom I stand, there shall not be [c] dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

2 And [d] the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

CHAP. XVII. So sad was the character of both princes and people in the foregoing ch. that one would expect God should cast off those who had so cast Him off; but as an evidence to the contrary, never was Israel so blessed with a good prophet, as when so plagued with a bad king; never was king so bold to sin as Ahab, never prophet so bold to reprove and threaten as Elijah, whose story begins in this ch. and is full of wonders.

V. 1—7. Elijah's history begins somewhat abruptly: usually, when a prophet enters, we have some account of his parentage; but Elijah drops

o 25,31,33. 14:9. 21:25. 2 K. 3:2.
* Heb. *was it a light thing, &c.*
p Gen. 30:15. Num. 16:9. Is. 7:13. Ez. 8:17. 16:20,47. 34:18.
q Gen. 6:2. Deut. 7:3,4. Josh. 23:12, 13. Neh. 13:23—29.
r 18:4,19. 19:1,2. 21:5—14,25. 2 K. 9:30—37. Rev. 2:20.
s 11:1. Judg. 10:12. 18:7.
t See on 11:4—8.
u 21:26. Judg. 2:11. 3:7. 10:6. 2 K. 10:18. 17:16.
x 2 K. 10:21,26,27.
y Ex. 34:13. 2 K. 13:6. 17:16. 21:3. Jer. 17:2.
z 21:19,25. 22:6,8.
a Josh. 6:26. 23:14,15. Zech. 1:5,6. Matt. 24:35.
† Heb. *Eliyahu.* Matt. 11:14. 16:14. 27:47,49. Luke 1:17. 4:25,26. 9:30, 33,54. John 1:21. 25. Rom. 11:2. *Elias.*
a 22:14. 2 K. 3:14. 5:16. Is. 49:18. Matt. 7:29. Luke 1:17.
b Deut. 10:8. Jer. 15:19. Luke 1:19. 21:36. Acts 27:23.
c Luke 4:25. Jam. 5:17. Rev. 11:6.
d 12:22. 1 Chr. 17:3. Jer. 7:1. 11:1. 18:1. Hos. 1:1,2.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 15—24. Wicked men accomplish the purposes of God without intending it; and their injustice and cruelty towards each other display his righteousness, while they illustrate the desperate wickedness of the heart of man.—When they are hurried on by their vile passions, and have got the power into their hands, they often perpetrate much wickedness in a little time: and thus they speedily fill up their measure, and hasten the vengeance of God upon themselves. Whether they destroy themselves, or are murdered by others, the ruin is brought upon them by sinning against the Lord: even in death they frequently show the predominancy of their pride, envy, and malice; and thus are driven away into the eternal world, not only under condemnation as sinners, but under the domineering power of most diabolical dispositions, being 'vessels of wrath fitted for destruction.' From such a death, good Lord, deliver us!—The progress of iniquity must be from bad to worse; it seems a light thing to notorious sinners to walk in the steps of their predecessors; and they are often ambitious of distinguishing themselves, and of expressing their enmity and contempt of God, in ways before unheard of. Hence so many newly invented oaths, blasphemies, superstitions, and species of false religion; as well as new refinements in licentiousness and immorality.—When princes set the example of rebellion against God, their subjects will often ambitiously emulate them, and thus ungodliness becomes a test of loyalty, and a kind of fashionable accomplishment: nor will any warnings daunt the stout spirits of presumptuous sinners, till wrath come upon them to the uttermost. But they, who despise the denunciations of God's word, will certainly know his truth in them by their own dreadful experience. SCOTT.

Verses 30—33.

Omri had done worse than all that had been before him, and probably had enforced the worship of the golden calves with greater strictness and severity: (25, 26.) but Ahab, without any *political* inducement, proceeded to still grosser idolatries, than those of Jeroboam; SCOTT. (*Ez.* 16:44—47.)

Ethbaal, &c. (31) 'Called in profane writers Ithobalus.' *Bp. Patrick.* His name was taken from the idol, which he worshipped. ID.

An altar for Baal, &c. (32) Jeroboam and his successors professed to consider the golden calves, as representatives of the God of Israel. (*Note*, 12:26—29.) But Ahab more directly and expressly worshipped other gods. (2 *K.* 10:18—28.) ID.

Verse 34.

(*Note, Josh.* 6:26.) There had passed 440 years, since this word was spoken; and the exact accomplishment of it, after so long a period, was a solemn warning to the people, to expect the fulfilment of all the curses denounced against them, in case of their idolatry, by Moses and Joshua. (*Deut.* 4:25—28. *Josh.* 23:13—16.) ID.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII. V. 1. The most illustrious prophet Elijah was raised up, in the reign of the most wicked among the kings of Israel. '*Tishbite.*' It is not agreed, whether this title was taken from the place where he lived; or given him because he was *the reformer* of Israel: for the word may signify *a converter.* It may be supposed, Elijah had previously warned Ahab to forsake his idolatry, and that he had treated his message with contempt.—The duration of this drought was three years and a half; and the effects must have been inexpressibly calamitous. (*M. R.* c.) One whole year, without rain or dew, would afflict this land, more terribly than it can be conceived: but in much less than three years and a half nearly all the cattle must be destroyed, and most of the inhabitants would be either dead or migrated into other countries. Yet the bulk of Israel continued mad upon their idols, throughout this most tremendous calamity! It was sent in answer to the prophet's prayer, which probably he offered in Ahab's hearing: and the judgment was intended to be a demonstration, that Baal could not defend his worshippers against the indignation of JEHOVAH. The glory of God and the interests of true religion were therefore so greatly concerned in this decision, which was needful in order to prevent the utter apostasy and rejection of Israel, that the prophet might present this petition in wise zeal, and true benevolence; and doubtless he was immediately instructed by the Lord to do so. The benefit of the calamity would abundantly outweigh the miseries: for though many were hardened, yet doubtless numbers were eventually brought to repentance, and made to embrace and continue steadfast in the service of the true God. (*Jam.* 5:16—18.) SCOTT.

Verses 2, 3.

The brook Cherith ran into the Jordan; (5) but it seems the place was so retired, and the prophet kept so close, tha neither friends nor foes knew where he was. (18:10.) ID.

(2.) This *brook* seems to have been a rapid torrent, 'running from the mountains, and forming a deep ravine, of which there are many so steep, that birds of prey build their nests in them.' BOOTHR.

3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and [e] hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that *is* before Jordan.

4 And it shall be, *that* thou shalt drink of the brook; and [f] I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

5 So he went and [g] did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that *is* before Jordan.

6 And [h] the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

7 And it came to pass, [*] after a while, that [i] the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

[*Practical Observations.*]

8 ¶ And [k] the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

9 Arise, get thee to [l] Zarephath, [m] which

e 22:25. Ps. 31:20. 83:3. Jer. 36:19, 26. John 8:59. Acts 17:14. Heb. 11: 38. Rev. 12:6,14.
f 9. 19:5—8. Num. 20:8. Job 34:29. 38:8—13,41. Ps. 33:8,9. 147:9. Am. 9:3,4. Matt. 4:4,11.
g 19:9. Prov. 3:5,6. Matt. 16:24. John 15:14.
h Ex. 16:35. Num. 11:23. Judg. 14:14. 15:18,19. Ps. 34:9,10. 37:3,19. 78:15, 16,23,24. Jer. 37:21. 40:4. Hab. 3: 17,18. Matt. 6:31,32. 14:19—21. 19: 26. Luke 22:35. Heb. 6:18.
* Heb. *at the end of days.*
i Is. 40:30,31. 54:10.
k See on 2.—Gen. 22:14. Is. 41:17. Heb. 13:6.
l Ob. 20. Luke 4:26. *Sarepta.*
m Matt. 15:21,22.

(so to speak) out of the clouds, as if, like Melchisedek, he were without father, mother, and descent, which made some of the Jews fancy he was an angel from heaven; but the apostle has assured us *he was a man subject to like passions as we are*, which perhaps intimates, not only that he was liable to the common infirmities of human nature, but, by natural temper, a man of strong passions, more hot and eager than most other men, and therefore the more fit to deal with the daring sinners of the age he lived in.

Observe, 1. His name; *Elijahu*, '*My God Jehovah is He*,' (so it signifies,) 'is He who sends me, will own me, and bear me out, is He to whom I would bring Israel back, and who alone can effect that great work.' 2. His country; *Gilead*, on the other side Jordan; either Gad, or Manasseh: but whether a native of either tribe, is uncertain; the obscurity of his parentage was no prejudice to his eminency afterward; we need not inquire *whence*, but *what* men are; if it be a good thing, no matter though it come out of Nazareth. Israel was sore wounded, when God sent them this balm from Gilead, this physician thence. He is called a *Tishbite*, from Tishbe, a town there.

I. He foretold a famine; he went, and told it to Ahab; not to the people, to make them disaffected to the government, but to the king, in whose power it was to reform the land, and so, prevent the judgment. Probably, here proved Ahab for his idolatry and other wickedness, and told him that, unless he repented and reformed, this judgment would be brought on his land. *Neither dew nor rain* but *according to my word*; i. e. 'Expect none, till you hear from me again.' The apostle teaches us to understand this, not only of the word of prophecy, but the word of prayer, which turned the key of the clouds, James 5: 17, 18. In allusion to this story, it is said of God's witnesses, (Rev. 11: 6.) *These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy.*

Elijah lets Ahab know, that *the Lord Jehovah* whom he had forsaken, is the *God of Israel*, a *living God*, not like the gods he worshipped, dead, dumb idols; that *he* was his servant in office, and messenger; that notwithstanding their present peace and prosperity, God was displeased with them for their idolatry, and would chastise them for it by the want of rain, which, when He withheld it, the power of their gods could not bestow; Jer. 14: 22. and this he confirms with a solemn oath, that Ahab might stand the more in awe of the threatening, the divine life being engaged for its accomplishment. He lets him know what interest he had in heaven; It shall be *according to my word.*

II. He was himself taken care of in that famine. 1. How he was hidden, *v.* 3. not so much for his preservation, for it does not appear Ahab immediately sought his life, but that he might not be solicited to revoke the sentence, the execution whereof he had said should be *according to his word:* it bodes ill to a people, when good men and good ministers are ordered to hide themselves; when God intended to *send rain on the earth*, then He bade Elijah go *show himself to Ahab*, *ch.* 18: 1. If Providence calls us to solitude and retirement, it becomes us to acquiesce; when we cannot be useful, we must be patient, and when we cannot work for God, we must sit still quietly for Him.

2. How he was fed. When the woman, the church, is *driven into the wilderness*, care is taken that she be fed and nourished there, time, times, and half a time, that is, three years and a half, which was just the time of Elijah's concealment. See Rev. 12: 6, 14. Elijah must drink of the brook, and the ravens were appointed to *bring him meat*, (*v.* 4.) and did so, *v.* 6. Here,

(1.) The provision was plentiful, good, and constant. We may suppose he fared not so sumptuously as the prophets of the groves, (*ch.* 18: 19.) yet better than the rest of the Lord's prophets, whom Obadiah fed *with bread and water*, *ch.* 18: 4. It ill becomes God's servants, especially the prophets, to be nice and curious about their food; if nature be sustained, no matter though the palate be not pleased; instead of envying those who have daintier fare, we should think how many there are, better than we, who live comfortably on coarser fare, and would be glad of our leavings. Elijah had but one meal brought him at a time, every morning and every evening, to teach him not to take thought for the morrow; let those who have but from hand to mouth, learn to live on Providence, and trust it for *the bread of the day in the day;* thank God for bread this day, and let tomorrow bring bread with it.

(2.) The caterers were very unlikely; *ravens* brought it him. Obadiah and others in Israel that had not bowed to Baal, would gladly have entertained him; but he was a man by himself, to be fed in an extraordinary way, a figure of John the Baptist, whose meat was locusts and wild honey. God could have sent angels to minister to

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—7. The Lord will have witnesses to his truth in the worst of times: and as He does not immediately cast off his professing people, when they renounce his service; He employs various methods to convince them of their sin, and bring them to repentance.—If the severest temporal judgments be made effectual to bring men to serve God, they will have great cause to bless Him for sending them.—Fruitful seasons, and abundance of provisions for the body, are valuable mercies, and famine a tremendous evil: yet the liberty and opportunity of attending on divine ordinances are more valuable advantages; and a famine of the Word of God is above all to be dreaded and deprecated. (*Am.* 8: 11—14.)—The Lord will provide for those who serve Him faithfully: and He will teach them to be satisfied with their provisions though mean, and their situation though outwardly uncomfortable. Indeed, if we consider how much better we are dealt with than we deserve, and how many are destitute of the necessaries of life; we shall see abundant reason to be contented with food and raiment, of the meanest and coarsest kind: nor ought we ever to desire luxuries or superfluities.—All nature shall sooner change its course, than one of God's promises fail. We do not indeed now expect *literally* to be fed by ravens: but the Lord often employs selfish men, contrary to their nature and general character, to support his indigent people, or to maintain his cause by their property. The thanks, in this case, are due to the Lord, who sends provision by such instruments: but we should pray, that, as He has counteracted their natural disposition in this instance, He would be pleased also to change them by his renewing grace. SCOTT.

Verses 4—6.

Elijah was a very extraordinary person, and every circumstance relating to him was rendered equally extraordinary, in order to excite the attention of a thoughtless and hardened generation.—*Ravens.* (4) The *command*, or miraculous power of God, suspended their natural instinct, and made them act directly contrary to it. (1 *Sam.* 6:10—16.) It is useless and presumptuous to inquire whence they procured the bread and flesh, or how the food was prepared? He, who commanded them to feed his servant, had ten thousand ways of enabling them to fulfil his word.—Some have objected that *ravens*, being unclean birds, would pollute the food which they brought: but this arises from a mistake. The flesh of unclean animals might not be eaten; but the touch of them when living, communicated no ceremonial uncleanness, either to food, or any other thing: for asses and camels were also unclean; yet in constant use, for carrying provisions, as well as for other purposes. (*Lev.* 11:31.) SCOTT.

(4.) *Ravens.*] '*Orbym*, transl. "merchants," Ezek. 27:27. See also 2 Chr. 21:16. and Neh. 4:7. "The Orbim, inhabitants of a town in the confines of the Arabs." *Jerome.* The birds of that name. *Bochart, Gill. Buothr.* The Heb. word includes every species of raven, and here perhaps means the rook, which lives on corn and insects. *Enc. Brit.* A number of voracious birds, having their nests near, probably brought food for their young [and in hot climates birds seek their prey in the *morning* and in the *evening*.], much of this they dropped, as providence ordered it, for the prophet. *C. Taylor. Wil.* [And modern instances are known of persons being supported several days in this way.] The voracious raven gluts itself when opportunity offers, and then hides the remainder of its food. Hence it is not difficult to conceive how ravens might be Elijah's purveyors, bringing flesh of lambs and poultry, their favorite food, and other portions, of bread, and morsels, the remnants of some table [better supplied than the rest]. *Elijah.* These birds, following their natural habits, might have collected the food, and, by the control of God, have simply deposited it at once on the spot convenient for the prophet's use.' *Cond. Comm.* But see SCOTT above. ED.

Verse 7.

Elijah seems to have continued in this situation about a year: the natural supply of water which came by common providence failed because of the dry weather; but the miraculous supply of food, which was ensured to him by promise, failed not. (10—16.) SCOTT.

Verse 9.

(*M. R.* l.) As the Lord *commands* his creatures, according to their

belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a [n] widow-woman there to sustain thee.

10 So he arose, and went to Zarephath: and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow-woman *was* there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, [o] Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

11 And [p] as she was going to fetch *it*, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, [q] a morsel of bread in thine hand.

12 And she said, [r] *As* the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, [s] but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I *am* gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, [t] that we may eat it and die.

13 And Elijah said unto her, [u] Fear not; go *and* do as thou hast said: but [v] make me thereof a little cake [x] first, and bring *it* unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

14 For [y] thus saith the LORD God of Israel, [z] The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither

n 4. Judg. 7:2,4. Rom. 4:17—21. 2 Cor. 4:7.
o Gen. 24:15. 24:17. John 4:7. 2 Cor. 11:27. Heb. 11:37.
p Gen. 24:18,19. Matt. 10:42. 25:35—40. Heb. 13:2.
q 9. 18:4. Gen. 18:5.
r See on 1. 1 Sam. 14:39,45. 20:3,21. 25:26. 26:10. 2 Sam. 15:21. Jer. 4:2. 5:2.
s 2 K. 4:2—7. Matt. 15:33,34.
t Gen. 21:16. Jer. 14:18. Lam. 4:9. Ez. 12:18,19. Joel 1:15,16.
u Ex. 14:13. 2 K. 6:16. 2 Chr. 20:17. Is. 41:10,13. Matt. 28:5. Acts 27:24.
v Gen. 22:1,2. Judg. 7:5—7. Matt. 13:21,22. Heb. 11:17. 1 Pet. 1:7.
x Prov. 3:9,10. Mal. 3:10. Matt. 6:33. 10:37.
y 2 K. 3:16,17. 7:1,2. 9:6.
z 4. 2 K. 4:2—7,42—44. Matt. 14:17—20. 15:36—38.

him, as He did afterward, (*ch.* 19: 5.) and as He did to our Savior; (Matt. 4: 11.) but He chose to send by winged messengers of another nature, to show that He serves his own purposes, by the meanest creatures, as effectually as by the mightiest. If it be asked, whence the ravens had this provision, how and where it was cooked, and whether they came honestly by it, we must answer as Jacob did, (Gen. 27: 20.) *The Lord our God brought it to them*, whose the earth is, and the fulness thereof, the world, and they that dwell therein. Ravens feed on insects and carrion themselves, yet they brought the prophet man's meat, and wholesome food; it is a pity those who bring the bread of life to others, should themselves take up with *that which is not bread*. Ravens neglect their own young; yet, when God pleases, they shall feed his prophet; young lions and young ravens may lack, and suffer hunger, but not they that fear the Lord, Ps. 34: 10. Ravens are themselves fed by special providence, (Job 38: 41. Ps. 147: 9.) and now they feed the prophet. Have we experienced God's special goodness to us and ours? Let us reckon ourselves obliged, thereby, to be kind to those that are his, for his sake. Let us learn hence, [1.] To acknowledge the sovereignty and power of God over all the creatures; He can make what use He pleases of them, either for judgment or mercy. [2.] To encourage ourselves in God in the greatest straits, and never to distrust Him.

V. 8—16. We have here an account of Elijah's further protection, and further provision, in his retirement. Observe,

I. The place he is sent to; *Zarephath*, or *Sarepta*, a city of Sidon, out of the borders of the land of Israel, *v.* 9. Our Savior notices this as an early and ancient indication of the favor of God designed for the poor Gentiles, in the fulness of time, Luke 4: 25, 26. Elijah was hated and driven out by his countrymen, therefore, *Lo, he turns to the Gentiles*, as the apostles were afterward ordered to do, Acts 18: 6. But why to a city of Sidon? Perhaps, because the worship of Baal, now the crying sin of Israel, came lately thence with Jezebel; (*ch.* 16: 31.) therefore thither he shall go, that thence may be fetched the destroyer of that idolatry. Jezebel was Elijah's greatest enemy; yet to show her the impotency of her malice, God will find a hiding-place for him even in her country; Christ never went among the Gentiles, except once *into the coast of Sidon*, Matt. 15: 21.

II. The person appointed to entertain him; not one of the rich merchants, or great men, of Sidon, not such a one as Obadiah, governor of Ahab's house, that fed the prophets, but a poor widow woman, destitute and desolate. It is God's way, and glory, to use and honor the *weak and foolish things of the world*. He is, in a special manner, the widows' God, and feeds them, therefore they must study what they shall render to Him.

III. The provision made him there; Providence brought the widow woman to meet him very opportunely at the gate of the city, *v.* 10. Observe, 1. Her case and character; She was, (1.) Very poor and necessitous; needy at the best, and now, by the general scarcity, reduced to the last extremity, *v.* 12. She had no fuel but the sticks she gathered in the streets, and no servant, to gather them; (*v.* 10.) more likely to receive alms than give entertainment; to her Elijah is sent, that he might still live on Providence, as much as when the ravens fed him; and it was in compassion to the low estate of his handmaiden.

(2.) Very humble and industrious, *v.* 10, 12. Her mind was brought to her condition, she complains not of her hardships, nor quarrels with the Divine Providence for withholding rain, but accommodates herself to it as well as she can; such as are of this temper, in a day of trouble, are best prepared for honor and relief from God.

(3.) Very charitable and generous; when this stranger desired her to fetch him water, she readily went, at the first word, *v.* 10, 11. She objected not the present scarcity, nor asked what he would give for a draught, nor hinted he was a stranger, an Israelite, with whom, perhaps, the Sidonians cared not to have dealings. She did not excuse herself on account of weakness through famine, or the urgency of her own affairs; did not tell him she had something else to do than to go on his errands; but left gathering sticks for herself, to fetch water for him, which perhaps she did the more willingly, being moved with the gravity of his aspect. We should be ready to do any kind office, even to strangers; if we have not wherewith to give to the distressed, we must be the more ready to work for them; a cup of cold water, though it cost us no more than the labor of fetching, shall, in nowise, lose its reward.

(4.) She had great confidence in the word of God; it was a great trial of her faith and obedience, when, having told the prophet she had but just enough for herself and son, he bade her *make a cake for him*, and make *his* first; if we consider, it will appear as great a trial as could be, in [her circumstances.] Elijah, it is true, made mention of *the God of Israel*, (*v.* 14.) but what was that to a Sidonian? Or, if she had a veneration for the name *Jehovah*, and valued the God of Israel as the true God, yet what assurance had she this stranger was his prophet, or had any warrant to speak in his name? It was easy for a hungry vagrant to impose on her; but she gets over all these objections, and obeys the precept, in dependence on the promise, *v.* 15. *O woman, great was thy faith;* all things considered, it exceeded that of the widow, who, when she had but two mites, cast them into the treasury. Those that can venture on the promise of God, will make no difficulty of exposing and emptying themselves in his service, by giving Him his dues out of a little, and giving Him his part first. They that deal with God, must deal on trust; seek first his kingdom, and then other things shall be added: by the law, the first-fruits were God's, Num. 15: 20, 21. But surely the increase of this widow's faith, to such a degree as to enable her thus to deny herself, and to depend on the divine promise, was as great a miracle in the kingdom of grace, as the increase of her oil, in the kingdom of providence. Happy are they, who can thus, against hope, believe, and obey in hope.

2. The care God took of her and her guest, *v.* 16. Never did corn or olive so increase in the grow-

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natures, and capacities; perhaps this poor widow had received some pre-intimation of Elijah's coming, and a command to entertain him, nothing doubting. SCOTT.

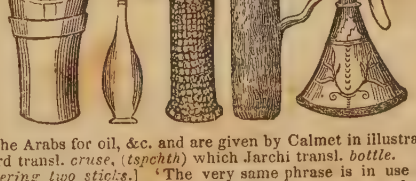
Verse 10.

Now, when nothing but waste and wantonness, wrath and ruin, battles and blood, is in the palace of kings, the sacred history turns our eyes to the economy, magnanimity, self-denial, boundless generosity, humility, and piety of a virtuous and obscure individual; like so many millions whose names are recorded in heaven, though the world never hears of them, nor inscribes them on the blazoned roll of glory! And who, alas! *have* filled that roll? How many, whose spirit God loves; God, in whom alone is true glory—who alone can confer it? Let us receive the startling lesson! The virtues of this widow commend the truth of Elijah's story to every heart, from the eternal principles here illustrated. It is an *internal evidence*, which cold-hearted, self-conceited, and penny-wise infidelity cannot impugn. ED.

Verse 12.

Barrel.] *Kd.* 'It is rather "an earthen jar;" they keep their corn in the E. in long clay vessels, or great jars, to preserve it from being eaten by worms. The word is the same that is used for the vessels which contained Gideon's lamps.' Dr. A. CLARKE. A cut (V) is given of what appears to be the jar described by *Clarke*, from the monuments of Egypt. It is on a smaller scale than the rest, which represent utensils of the Arabs for oil, &c. and are given by Calmet in illustration of the word transl. *cruse*, (*tspchth*) which Jarchi transl. *bottle*. ED.

V



Gathering two sticks.] 'The very same phrase is in use among the Hindoos, two being put for many; and the women are often seen seeking a few sticks to boil their rice.' ROBERTS.

shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day *that* the LORD * sendeth rain upon the earth.

15 And she went and [a] did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat † many days.

16 *And* [b] the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, [c] according to the word of the LORD, which he spake ‡ by Elijah.

[*Practical Observations.*]

17 ¶ And it came to pass, after these things, *that* [d] the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick: and his sickness was so sore, [e] that there was no breath left in him.

18 And she said unto Elijah, [f] What have I to do with thee, [g] O thou man of God? [h] art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?

19 And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up [i] into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed.

20 And [j] he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, [k] hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?

ing (says Bp. Hall) as these in the using; but the *multiplying of the seed sown*, (2 Cor. 9: 10.) in the common course of providence, is an instance of the power and goodness of God, not to be overlooked because common. The meal and the oil multiplied, not in the hoarding but in the spending; *there is that scattereth, yet increaseth;* when God blesses a little, it will go a great way, even beyond expectation; as, on the contrary, though there be abundance, if He blow upon it, it comes to little, Hag. 1: 9. 2: 16. Still, miracles shall be the prophet's daily bread. Above two years, this *poor widow* and *her son* were supplied, *v.* 15: there is nothing lost by being kind to God's people and ministers; she that received a prophet, had a prophet's reward. Christ has promised those who open their doors to Him, that He will come in to them, and *sup with them*, and *they with Him*, Rev. 3: 20. The reward answered the service; she generously made one cake for the prophet, and was repaid with many for herself and son. When Abraham offers his only son to God, he is told he shall be the father of multitudes; what is laid out in piety, or charity, is let out to the best interest, on the best securities. They that trust in God, *shall not be ashamed in the evil time, but in days of famine shall be satisfied*, Ps. 37: 19.

V. 17—24. Here is a further recompense to the widow for her kindness: as if it were a small thing to be kept alive, I. Her son, when dead, is restored to life, and so to her. Being fed miraculously, did not secure him from sickness and death. Comp. John 6: 49, 50. This affliction was to this widow as a thorn in the flesh, lest she should be lifted up above measure with the favors done her, and the honors put upon her. Note, We must not think it strange, if we meet with very sharp afflictions, even then when in the way of duty, and eminent service of God; and when we have the clearest manifestations of God's favor and good will toward us, even then we must prepare for the rebukes of Providence; our mountain never stands so strong, but it may be moved, therefore, in this world, we must rejoice with trembling. Her pathetic complaint to the prophet, of this affliction, it should seem was rather to give vent to her sorrow, than in any hope of relief, *v.* 18.

1. She had spoken calmly of her own, and her child's death, when she expected to die for want, *v.* 12. Yet now that her child dies, and not so miserably as by famine, she is extremely disturbed: we may speak lightly of an affliction at a distance, but when it *toucheth us, we are troubled*, Job 4: 5. Then she spake deliberately, now in haste; it is hard to keep our spirits composed, when troubles come on us suddenly and unexpectedly, and in our peace and prosperity. She calls him *a man of God*, yet quarrels with him, as if he had occasioned the death of her child, and is ready to wish she had never seen him, forgetting past mercies and miracles; 'What have I done against thee?' So some understand it; 'Wherein have I offended thee, or been wanting in my duty?'

2. Yet she expresses herself *penitently*; '*Art thou come to call my sin to* thy *remembrance*, as the cause of the affliction, and so to call it to *my* remembrance, as the effect of the affliction?' Note, When God removes our comforts, He remembers our sins against us, perhaps the iniquities of our youth, though long since past, Job 13: 26. Our sins are the death of our children. When God thus remembers our sins against us, He designs, thereby, to make us remember them against ourselves, and repent of them.

II. The prophet's address to God, on this occasion; he gave no answer to her expostulation, but brought it to God, and laid the case before Him; he took the dead child to his own bed, *v.* 19. Probably, he had a particular kindness to the child, and found the affliction his own, more than by sympathy; he retired to his chamber, and humbly reasoned with God concerning the death of the child, *v.* 20. He pleads the greatness of the affliction to the poor mother. He pleads his own concern. 'I shall be reflected upon, others will be afraid of entertaining me.' He earnestly begs of God to restore the child to life again, *v.* 21. We do not read, before this, of any raised to life; yet Elijah, by a divine impulse, prays for the resurrection of this child, which yet will not warrant us to do the like: David expected not, by fasting and prayer, to bring his child back to life; but Elijah had a power to work miracles, David not; he *stretched himself on the child*, to affect himself, and to show how much he was affected with the case, how desirous he was of the restoration of the child; he would, if he could, put life into him by his own breath and warmth; also to give a sign of what God would do by his power, and what He does by his grace, in raising dead souls to a spiritual life; the Holy Ghost comes upon them, overshadows them, and puts life into them, he is very particular in his prayer, *I pray Thee let this child's soul come into him again;* which plainly supposes the existence of the soul in a state of separation from the body, and, consequently, its immortality; which, Grotius thinks, God designed by this miracle to give intimation and evidence

* Heb. *giveth.*
a Gen. 6:22. 12:4. 22:3. 2 Chr. 20:20. Matt. 15:28. Mark 12:43. John 11: 40. Rom. 4:19,20. Heb. 11:7,8,17.
† Or, *a full year.*
b Matt. 9:28—30. 19:26. Luke 1:37, 45. John 4:50,51.
c See on 13:5.
‡ Heb. *by the hand of.* See on 16:12.
d Gen. 22:1,2. 2 K. 4:18—20. Zech. 12:10. John 11:3,4,14. Jam. 1:2—4, 12. 1 Pet. 1:7. 4:12.
e Job 12:10. 34:14. Ps. 104:29. Dan. 5:23. Jam. 2:26. *Marg.*
f 2 Sam. 16:10. 19:22. 2 K. 3:13. 2 Chr. 35:21. Luke 4:34. 8:28. John 2:4.
g See on 13:1.
h 18:9. Gen. 42:21,22. 50:15—17. 1 Sam. 16:4. Job 13:26. Ez. 21:23,24. Mark 5:7,15—17. 6:16.
i 2 K. 4:10,21,32. Acts 9:37.
j 18:36,37. Ex. 17:4. 1 Sam. 7:8,9. 2 K. 19:4,15. Ps. 99:6. Matt. 21:22. Jam. 5:13—18.
k Gen. 18:23—25. Josh. 7:8,9. Ps. 73: 13,14. Jer. 12:1.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 8—16. The Lord does not generally provide long together for his people in the same way, or by the same means; lest they should rest in them, and expect help from them. Frequently He raises supplies from those, who themselves need relief: 'the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abound unto the riches of their liberality.' (2 *Cor.* 8: 1—5. 9: 8—11.) and He supplies their wants, whilst they are encouraged to communicate of their pittance to others still more destitute.—They, who come unto God and walk with Him, must simply trust in Him, nay, venture their lives and souls on his word, and at his command renounce every present interest, in expectation of future and more enduring advantages. Genuine faith encourages men to do this; while unbelief dislikes the security, holds fast things present, and, for the perishing pleasures and interests of this world, foregoes the blessings of eternal salvation. But none can be losers in the event by giving up secular advantages, at the Lord's command; and what is expended on his people, for his sake, shall be recompensed as if given to Himself: so that the self-denial and liberality of faith, are the best means of excluding the fear of future want, of providing for our families, and of placing out our substance at the highest interest, and on the most unexceptionable security. In these funds the poor may obtain property, as well as the rich; for a morsel of bread, or a cup of water, will go as far, when it is all that we can give, as thousands of gold and silver when they can be spared. (*Prov.* 19: 17. *Mark* 12: 41—44. *Luke* 6: 27—36. 2 *Cor* 8: 10—15.) SCOTT.

Verse 17.

Perhaps the woman's son died suddenly, before the prophet had opportunity to pray for his recovery; because the Lord intended a greater display of his own glory, [a testimony of a final resurrection to that besotted age,] and a more distinguishing favor to the woman, than the sparing of his life: or, he was left to die without any miraculous interposition, to try her faith. (*Mark* 5:35—43. *John* 11:1—10.) SCOTT.

Verse 18.

This woman had doubtless heard, that the drought had come on Israel in answer to Elijah's prayer; and perhaps she supposed her affliction had come on her in the same way. 'Their sins are said to be "called to remembrance" by God, when He punishes them.' *Bp. Patrick.* (*Note, Ez.* 21:23.) SCOTT.

Verse 19.

Loft.] 'The LXX translate it, an upper room; which he had to himself for his study, meditation, and prayer; as Elisha afterwards had in another place: 2 *K.* 4:10.' *Bp. Patrick.* ID.

Verse 20.

Elijah himself could not understand the mystery of this dispensation; but greatly wondered that the Lord should bring evil on the woman, who entertained him, for his sake, as well as on those who rejected both God and his prophet; and he expostulated with God on the occasion. ID.

21 And [l] he * stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, [m] O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come † into him again.

22 And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, [n] and he revived.

23 And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, [o] See, thy son liveth.

24 And the woman said to Elijah, [p] Now by this I know that thou *art* a man of God, and *that* [q] the word of the LORD in thy mouth *is* truth.

CHAP. XVIII.

Elijah is sent to meet Ahab, 1, 2. Ahab and pious Obadiah go different ways, to search the land for pasture, 3—6. Elijah meets Obadiah and sends him to call Ahab, 7—16. Ahab, at Elijah's word, convenes Israel, with the prophets of Baal, at Carmel, 17—20. Elijah proposes to decide, whether JEHOVAH or Baal be God, by proving which would answer by fire, 21—24. Baal's prophets invoke him in vain, 25—29. Elijah prepares a sacrifice, causes much water to be poured upon it, and calls on JEHOVAH, who answers by fire consuming the altar with the sacrifice; the people are convinced that JEHOVAH is God; and at Elijah's word they slay Baal's prophets, 30—40. Elijah gives Ahab notice of abundant rain, which he obtains by prayer; and then he runs before Ahab's chariot to Jezreel, 41—46.

AND it came to pass [a] *after* many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in [b] the third year, saying, [c] Go, show thyself unto Ahab; and [d] I will send rain upon the earth.

2 And Elijah [e] went to show himself unto Ahab: and *there was* [f] a sore famine in Samaria.

3 And Ahab called ‡ Obadiah, which *was* § the governor of *his* house. (Now Obadiah [g] feared the LORD greatly:

4 For it was *so*, when ‖ Jezebel [h] cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)

5 And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts.

6 So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went [i] by himself one way, and Obadiah went [k] by himself another way.

7 And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art not thou that my lord Elijah?

8 And he answered him, I *am*: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is here*.

9 And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me?

10 As the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not *there*; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not.

11 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is here*.

12 And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth.

13 Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD's prophets by fifties in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?

14 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is here*: and he shall slay me.

15 And Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him to-day.

16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

17 And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, *Art* thou he that troubleth Israel?

18 And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.

19 Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the grove four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.

20 So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

21 And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD *be* God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

22 Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets *are* four hundred and fifty men.

23 Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under*: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under*:

24 And call ye on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

25 And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress *it* first; for ye *are* many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire *under*.

26 And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed *it*, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made.

27 And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he *is* a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.

28 And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.

29 And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

30 And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.

31 And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name:

32 And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.

33 And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid *him* on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.

34 And he said, Do *it* the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do *it* the third time. And they did it the third time.

35 And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou *art* God in Israel, and *that* I *am* thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou *art* the LORD God, and *that* thou hast turned their heart back again.

38 Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that *was* in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he *is* the God; the LORD, he *is* the God.

40 And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

41 And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.

42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees,

43 And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times.

44 And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get down, that the rain stop thee not.

45 And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.

46 And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

CHAP. XVIII. In this ch. Elijah's appearance is as public, as, before, his retirement was close; the days appointed for his concealment being finished, he is now commanded to show himself to Ahab, and expect rain. It is a ch. in which are many things very observable.

V. 1—16. I. Israel's sad state on two accounts: 1. *Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord*, (*v.* 4.) *slew them*, *v.* 13. Being an idolater, she was a persecutor, and made Ahab one. Even in those bad times, there were some good people, and some good prophets that instructed them. The priests and Levites were all gone to Judah and Jerusalem; (2 Chr. 11: 13, 14.) but God raised up these prophets to read and expound the law in private meetings, or in families that retained their integrity, for we read not of any synagogues at this time; they had not the spirit of prophecy, nor did they offer sacrifice, or burn incense, but taught people to live well, and keep close to the God of Israel. These Jezebel aimed to extirpate, which was as much a public calamity as a public iniquity, and threatened the utter ruin of religion's poor remains in Israel. Those few that escaped the sword, were forced to abscond, and hide themselves in caves, where they were cut off, though not from life, yet from usefulness, the end and comfort of life; and when the prophets were persecuted, no doubt, their friends, the few good people in the land, were treated in like manner.

Yet, bad as things were, there was one very good man, who was great at court, *Obadiah*, who answers his name, *a servant of the Lord*, one who feared God, and was faithful to Him, yet steward of the household to Ahab. Observe his character; he *feared the Lord greatly*; (*v.* 3.) was not only good, but zealously and eminently good; and he *feared the Lord from his youth*, *v.* 12. Early piety, it is to be hoped, will be eminent piety. It was strange so wicked a man as Ahab, would prefer him, and continue him his steward; certainly it was because he was a man of celebrated honesty, industry, and ingenuousness, one in whom he could confide, *v.* 5. Joseph and Daniel were preferred, because none were so fit as they, for the places they were preferred to. Note, Those who profess religion, should study to recommend themselves to the esteem even of those that are without, by their integrity, fidelity, and application to business. It was strange so good a man as Obadiah, would accept of preferment in a court so addicted to idolatry, and all manner of wickedness. We may be sure, it was not necessary he should be of the king's religion, and conform to the *statutes of Omri, or the law of the house of Ahab*. Obadiah would not have accepted the place, on such conditions, nor was Ahab so impolitic as to exclude those from offices, that were fit to serve him, merely because they would not join him in his devotions; the man that is true to God, will be faithful to his prince. Obadiah therefore could, with a good conscience, enjoy the place, and therefore would not decline, or give it up, though he foresaw he could not do in it the good he desired; they that fear God, need not go out of the world, bad as it is. God has his remnant among all sorts, high and low; there were saints in Nero's household, and in Ahab's. This great good man used his power to protect God's prophets, *v.* 4. See how wonderfully God raises up friends for his ministers and people, for their shelter in difficult times, there where one should least expect them; bread and water were now scarce commodities, yet Obadiah will find a competency of both for God's prophets, to keep them alive for service hereafter, though now they were laid aside.

[a] Luke 4:25. Jam. 5:17. Rev. 11:2,6.
[b] 17:1,7,15.
[c] 2,15, &c.
[d] Lev. 26:4. Deut. 28:12. Ps. 65:9—13. Is. 5:6. Jer. 10:13. 14:22. Joel 2:23. Am. 4:7.
[e] Ps. 27:1. 56:4. Prov. 28:1. Is. 51:12. Heb. 13:5,6.
[f] Lev. 26:26. Deut. 28:23,24. 2 K. 6:25. Jer. 14:2—6, 18. Joel 1:15—20.
‡ Heb. *Obadiahu.*
§ Heb. *over his house.* Gen. 24:2,10. 39:4,5,9. 41:40.
[g] 12. Gen. 22:12. 42:18. 2 K. 4:1. Neh. 5:15. 7:2. Prov. 14:26,27. Mal. 3:16. Matt. 10:28. Acts 10:2,35.
‖ Heb: *Izebel.*
[h] Neh. 9:26. Matt. 21:35. Rev. 17:4—6.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 17—24. Neither faith nor obedience, however exemplary, can exclude afflictions and death. But the Lord bears with our infirmities, and compassionates our sorrows: and we should pity and readily help each other, according to the example and command of Christ. (*Gal.* 6: 1—5.)—The Lord by afflictions 'calls our sins to remembrance;' and this should quiet our spirits, and lead us to self-examination and repentance, that we may obtain forgiveness from Him: and thus all shall issue in our increase of faith, assurance of hope, and joyful expectation of every promised good.—Thus when Jesus comes to communicate his blessings, the convinced, trembling sinner often mistakes the meaning of those humbling instructions He imparts, and those trials He employs; but the loving Savior pities and bears with such trembling souls: and when He has turned their mourning into joy, by reviving their hopes and forgiving their sins, they admire his love and power, and know assuredly that his word is truth; and expect every future good in reliance on his promise, and obedience to his holy will. SCOTT.

Verses 21, 22.

The expression, 'Let this child's soul come into him again,' not only intimates the prophet's certainty that he was really dead; but it marks the distinction between the rational soul and the earthly body to be as real, as that between the house and its inhabitant: for both the prophet and the historian, 'speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,' used proper language. (*Gen.* 22:5, 6. *John* 9:27—34. *Rom.* 4:18—22. *Heb.* 11:17—19.)—Elijah's petition was no doubt directed by immediate inspiration. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII. V. 1, 2. Some think Elijah remained just two years at Zarephath; and that the six months preceded his retiring to the brook Cherith. (*Luke* 4:25.)—The extremity of the famine rendered it the more dangerous for him to show himself to the enraged tyrant: but at this time he was raised above all fear of what flesh could do unto him. (19:2.) ID.

Verse 3.

Obadiah signifies *The servant of the LORD.* Obadiah was so faithful and useful a servant to Ahab, that even Jezebel's instigation did not induce him to dismiss or injure him: and he was, it seems, willing to retain his place, though perilous and difficult, while he could with a safe conscience; as he might do some good, and prevent some evil, by continuing in it: and, though he witnessed abominable idolatries and iniquities, we may be sure, that he was not required to bow his knee unto Baal. (*Dan.* 2:46—49. 3:1—7.) 'He feared the LORD greatly.' Obadiah, at a distance from religious ordinances, and surrounded by the worst of examples and by strong temptations, was eminently pious and devoted to God! (*Gen.* 22:11, 12. *Ec.* 12:11—14.) SCOTT.

Verse 4.

Wicked as Ahab was, he does not seem to have directly persecuted, except as instigated by Jezebel, until she had long trained him up to

LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty [i] in a cave, and [k] fed them with [l] bread and water.)

5 And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find [m] grass to save the horses and mules alive, that * we lose not all the beasts.

6 So they divided the land between them, to pass throughout it: [n] Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

7 And as Obadiah [o] was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and [p] he knew him, and [q] fell on his face, and said, *Art* thou that [r] my lord Elijah?

8 And he answered him, I *am:* go, tell [s] thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is here.*

9 And he said, [t] What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me?

10 *As* [u] the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, [x] whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, *He is* not *there;* he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that [y] they found thee not.

11 And now thou sayest, [z] Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is here.*

12 And it shall come to pass, *as soon as* I am gone from thee, that [a] the spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and *so* when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, [b] he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD [c] from my youth.

13 Was it not told my lord [d] what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD'S prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?

14 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is here:* and he shall slay me.

15 And Elijah said, [e] *As* the LORD [f] of hosts liveth, [g] before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to-day.

16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

[*Practical Observations.*]

i Heb. 11:38.
k 13. 2 K. 6:22,23. Matt. 10:40—42. 25:35,40.
l 13:8,9,16.
m Ps. 104:14. Jer. 14:5,6. Joel 1:18. 2:22. Hab. 3:17. Rom. 8:20—22.
* Heb. *we cut not off* ourselves *from the beasts.*
n Jer. 14:3.
o 11:29.
p 2 K. 1:6—8. Matt. 3:4. 11:8.
q Gen. 18:2. 50:18. 1 Sam. 20:41. 2 Sam. 19:18. Is. 60:14.
r Gen. 18:12. 44:16,20,33. Num. 12:11.
s 3. Rom. 13:7. 1 Pet. 2:17,18.
t 12.—See on 17:18.—Ex. 5:21.
u 15. 1:29. 2:24. 17:1,12. 1 Sam. 29:6.
x Ps. 10:2. Jer. 26:20—23.
y 17:5,9. Ps. 12:7,8. 31:20. 91:1. Jer. 36:26. John 8:59.
z 8,14.
a 2 K. 2:11,16. Ez. 3:12—14. 8:3. 11:24. 37:1. 40:1,2. Matt. 4:1. Acts 8:39. 2 Cor. 12:2,3.
b 1 Sam. 22:11—19. Dan. 2:5—13. Matt. 2:16. Acts 12:19.
c 1 Sam. 2:18,26. 3:19,20. 2 Chr. 34:3. Ps. 71:17,18. Luke 1:15. 2 Tim. 3:15.
d 4. Gen. 20:4,5. Ps. 18:21—24. Acts 20:34. 1 Thess. 2:9,10.
e See on 10.—Heb. 6:16,17.
f Gen. 2:1. Deut. 4:19. Job 25:3. Ps. 24:8—10. 103:21. 148:2,3. Is. 6:3. Jer. 8:2. Luke 2:13,14.
g See on 17:1.—Deut. 1:38. Luke 1:19.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—16. The severest judgments will not of themselves humble or change the hearts of sinners; who often grow more hardened under them, even to desperation. The *imagined* fire of purgatory, therefore, or the *real* torments of hell, possess no purifying efficacy; and the wicked under the anguish of their sufferings will continually increase in wickedness, and accumulate wrath to all eternity. For nothing, except the atoning blood of Christ, can expiate the guilt of sin; nothing, except the sanctifying Spirit of God, can purge away its pollution: and all other expedients are satanical delusions, to keep men from this one [x] fountain, which God hath opened for sin and for uncleanness.'—The enmity of man's heart against God, expresses itself by persecuting those who bear his image and seek his glory: yet He protects them, until their testimony be finished.—It has been the common lot of his prophets and faithful servants, to be lodged in caves or dens of the earth, and fed with bread and water, (if that could be procured,) while the ministers of Satan have rioted in luxury. (*Heb.* 11: 35—38.) Yet the Lord has had a remnant in all places, where any part of his Word has been known, in every age of the world: and notwithstanding errors and irregularities, that spiritual worship, and that repentance, fear, and love of his name, which are the fruits of his Holy Spirit, are accepted through the Redeemer, and by faith in Him.—We should be very cautious about leaving, or persuading others to leave, the posts assigned in providence, however perilous or ensnaring; while they can be maintained without sinful compliances, and while they afford opportunities of doing good.—God indeed has often remarkably preserved those, who have ventured their lives freely in his service, in times of triumphant wickedness; yet, singular activity, prudence, and fidelity in secular concerns, frequently prove the means of their security. (*Dan.* 6: 3—5.)—The servants of God may, in his cause, boldly face their most powerful, enraged enemies; for they *dare not* touch them when He intimidates their hearts, and *cannot* when He restrains their hands: (*Matt.* 14: 3—5. *Acts* 4: 13—22. 5: 26—39.) and such as fear the Lord, however exalted in life, will greatly respect his faithful servants, though poor and hated by all around them. SCOTT.

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it.—These prophets were, probably, brought up in the schools of the prophets, first instituted by Samuel, which still remained, and it made very serviceable by the blessing of God on them. (1 *Sam.* 10:5, 6. 2 *Kings* 2:3. 4:1.)—They worshipped the God of Israel *towards,* though not *at,* the temple and Jerusalem: (*Note,* 8:28—30.) and it seems there were considerable numbers of believers dispersed through the tribes. Though Obadiah's conduct was no secret, he was still protected and employed by Ahab!—*Bread and water.*] That is, the necessaries of life; 'food convenient for them.' (13:8, 9, 16, 22.) SCOTT.

Verses 5, 6.

Horses, &c. (5) Ahab seems to have been more anxious about the animals, which ministered to his luxury, than about those, which were more immediately necessary to his poor subjects, as sheep, goats, and oxen. That the king in person should go on such a business, could only be the effect of the extremity of the famine. Probably most of the cattle, and many of the people, had perished: yet no mention was made of returning to the Lord with repentance, fasting, and prayer! (*Joel* 1:13—15. 2:15—17.) Had God never sent to them, it seems they would never have applied to Him to terminate the calamity, whatever extremities they had endured: but He had a remnant, for whose sake He was pleased to return to them in mercy; and the glory of his name required, that He should not yet give up Israel to utter destruction. (19:18. *Judg.* 3:9, 10, 14. *Rom.* 11:1—6.) SCOTT.

(5.) *Peradventure we may find grass.*] 'In droughts of 6 to 10 months in the E. how often have we seen men, like Obadiah, going along in marshy places, or by the sides of tanks, in search of grass for their cattle. A poor fellow, with a basket of palmirah leaves on his back, and a kind of hoe in his hand, strolls from fountain to brook, and no sooner does he see a green patch of verdure, than he runs eagerly to the spot. Perhaps he meets another in search of the same thing, when each declares he had the first view. They set to work, snarling at each other, and dealing out all kinds of abuse, till they have cleared the place of every green blade. Although the herbage seems withered past all recovery, the effect of rain is like enchantment on the scene.' [Comp. 2 Sam. 23:4.] ROBERTS.

Verse 10.

No nation, &c.] That is, in the neighborhood, among Ahab's dependents and allies.—It is probable, that resentment and enmity greatly influenced Ahab; and that Jezebel intended to cut off Elijah also, if he could have been found, at least, unless he consented to remove the famine. But Ahab was overawed by his unexpected appearance and intrepidity, and did not dare to proceed against him. 2 *K.* 1:15, 16.) SCOTT.

17 ¶ And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, *Art* thou [h] he that troubleth Israel?

18 And he answered, [i] I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, [k] in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.

19 Now therefore send, *and* gather to me all Israel unto [l] mount Carmel, and [m] the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the [n] prophets of the groves four hundred, which [o] eat at Jezebel's table.

20 So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

21 And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, [p] How long halt ye between two *opinions? [q] if the LORD *be* God, follow him: but if Baal, *then* follow him. And the people [r] answered him not a word.

22 Then said Elijah unto the people, I, *even* [s] I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but [t] Baal's prophets *are* four hundred and fifty men.

23 Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves,

h 21:20. Josh. 7:25. Jer. 26:8,9. 38:4. Am. 7:10. Acts 16:20. 17:6. 24:5.
i Ez. 3:8. Matt. 14:4. Acts 24:13,20.
k 9:9. 2 Chr. 15:2. Prov. 11:19. 13:21. Is. 3:11. Jer. 2:13,19. Rom. 2:8,9.
l 42,43. Josh. 19:26. 2 K. 2:25. Jer. 46:18. Am. 1:2. 9:3.
m 22:6. 2 Pet. 2:1. Rev. 19:20.
n 15:13. 16:33. 2 K. 13:6.
o 19:1,2. 2 K. 9:22. Rev. 2:20.
p Deut. 4:35. 2 K. 17:41. Zeph. 1:5. Matt. 6:24. Luke 16:13. Rom. 6:16—22. 1 Cor. 10:21,22. 2 Cor. 6:14—16. Rev. 3:15,16.
* Or *thoughts*.
q 39. Ex. 5:1,2. Josh. 24:15,23,24. 1 Sam. 7:3. 1 Chr. 17:26. 2 Chr. 33:13. Ps. 100:3.
r Gen. 24:50. 44:16. Job 40:4,5. Matt. 22:12,34,46. Rom. 3:19. 6:21.
s 19:10,14. 20:13,22,35,38. 22:6—8. Rom. 11:3.
t 19,20. Matt. 7:13—15. 2 Tim. 4:3,4. 2 Pet. 2:1—3.

less they swore it, and promised likewise, on oath, that if ever they found him among them, they would deliver him up. This, it should seem, was not so much that he might punish him for denouncing the judgment, as that he might oblige him to recall it, because he had said it should be *according to his word;* conceiving of him, as men foolishly conceive of witches, that if they can but compel them to bless what they have bewitched, it will be well again, or as the king of Moab did of Balaam. I incline to this, because we find, when they came together, Elijah, knowing what Ahab wanted, appointed him to meet him on mt. Carmel, and Ahab complied with the appointment, though Elijah took such a way to revoke the sentence, and bless the land, as perhaps he little thought of.

2. God, at length, ordered Elijah to present himself to Ahab, for the time was now come, when He would *send rain on the earth*, (*v.* 1.) or, rather, *on the land:* above two years, he had lain hid at Zarephath, and one year by the brook Cherith; so the third year, here spoken of, (*v.* 1.) was the fourth of the famine, which lasted, in all, three years and six months, Luke 4: 25. James 5: 17.

3. Obadiah saluted Elijah with great respect, *v.* 7. By this it appeared he did indeed *fear God greatly*, that he did honor to one that was God's ambassador extraordinary, and had a great interest in heaven.

Elijah, in answer, transfers the title of honor to Ahab; 'Call him thy lord, not me;' that is a fitter title for a prince than a prophet, *who seeks not honor from men.* Prophets should be called *seers*, and *shepherds*, and *watchmen*, and *ministers*, rather than *lords;* as those that mind duty more than dominion. He bids Obadiah go tell the king he was there to speak with him, *v.* 8. He would have the king know before, that it might not surprise him, and that he might be sure it was the prophet's own act, to present himself.

Obadiah begs to be excused, it might prove as much as his life was worth. He tells Elijah what great search Ahab had made for him, and how much his heart was on finding him, *v.* 10. taking it for granted, Elijah would again withdraw, *v.* 12. He thought he was not in earnest, but intended only to expose the impotency of Ahab's malice; and he is sure Ahab would be so enraged at the disappointment, that he would put him to death for making a fool of him, or for not laying hands on Elijah himself, when he had him in his reach, *v.* 12. Tyrants and persecutors, in their passion, are often unreasonably outrageous, even toward their friends and confidants. Finally, he pleads that he did not deserve to be thus exposed, and put in peril of his life, *v.* 9. He mentions what he had done, *v.* 13. not in pride or ostentation, but to convince Elijah that he deserved not to be bantered as one of the tools of Ahab's persecution.

Elijah satisfies him; *v.* 15. and let Obadiah but know he spake seriously, and really intended it, and he will not scruple to carry the message. Elijah swears, by *the Lord of hosts*, who has all power in his hands, and was therefore able to protect his servant against all the powers of hell and earth.

Notice is hereby soon brought to Ahab, that Elijah had sent him a challenge to meet him immediately at such a place, and Ahab accepts the challenge, *v.* 16. Had he, by his spies, surprised Elijah, he would have triumphed over him; thus surprised by him, we may suppose he even trembled to look him in the face; he hated, yet feared him, as Herod John.

V. 17—20. We have here the meeting between as bad a king as ever the world was plagued with, and as good a prophet as ever blessed the church.

1. Ahab, like himself, basely accuses Elijah. *Art thou he that troubleth Israel*, *v.* 17. How unlike this to that of Obadiah, *v.* 7. Obadiah feared God greatly, Ahab had sold himself to work wickedness; both discovered their character by the manner of their address. One may guess how people stand affected to God, by observing how they stand affected to his people and ministers. Note, It has been the lot of the best and most useful men, to be called and counted *the troublers of the land*, and to be run down as public grievances. Even Christ and his apostles were thus misrepresented, Acts 17: 6.

2. Elijah, like himself, boldly returned the charge on the king, and proved it on him, that he was *the troubler of Israel*, *v.* 17. They that procure God's judgments, do the mischief, not he tha foretells them, and gives warning of them, that the nation may repent, and prevent them. *I would have healed Israel, but they would not be healed.* Ahab is the Achan, the troubler, who follows Balaam, those accursed things. Nothing creates more trouble to a land than the impiety and profaneness of princes and their families.

3. As one having authority immediately from the King of kings, he orders a convention of the states to be forthwith summoned to meet at mt. Carmel, where there had been an altar built to God, *v.* 30. Probably, on that mountain they had had an eminent high place, where, formerly, the pure worship of God had been kept up, as well as it could be any where but at Jerusalem. Thither all Israel must come, to give Elijah the meeting, and the prophets of Baal who were dispersed all the country over, with those of the groves who were Jezebel's domestic chaplains.

4. Ahab issues writs accordingly, to convene this great assembly, (*v.* 20.) either because he feared Elijah, and durst not oppose him; (Saul stood in awe of Samuel more than of God;) or because he hoped Elijah would bless the land, and speak the word that they might have rain, and, on those terms, they would be all at his beck.

V. 21—40. Ahab and the people expected Elijah should now *bless the land*, and pray for rain; but he has other work to do first. The people must be brought to repent and reform, and then they may look for the removal of the judgment, but not till then. This is the right method; God will first *prepare our heart*, and then *cause his ear to hear;* will first *turn us to Him*, and then *turn to us*, Ps. 10: 17.—70: 3. Deserters must not look for God's favor, till they return to their allegiance.

Three years and a half's famine would not bring them back to God; but now Elijah will endeavor to convince their judgments. It was great condescension in God, that He would suffer so plain a case to be disputed, and would permit Baal to be a competitor with Him; but thus God would have every mouth to be stopped, and all flesh to become silent before Him.

1. Elijah reproves the people for mixing the worship of God, and the worship of Baal, together. Not only some Israelites worshipped God, and others Baal, but the same Israelites sometimes worshipped one, and sometimes the other. This he calls, (*v.* 21.) *Halting between two opinions* or *thoughts*. They worshipped God, to please the prophets, but worshipped Baal, to please Jezebe,

Verse 17.

Elijah was the grand opposer of Ahab's plan, for bringing Israel to unite in the worship of Baal, and so making, according to his views, a quiet settlement of the religion of the nation: and in this sense he perhaps deemed him 'a troubler of Israel.' (*Acts* 16:19—24. 17:5—9.) —But it is not easy to determine what his precise sentiments were concerning the drought, which came at Elijah's word. If he thought, it was caused and continued by the prophet's *power*, and could be removed at his *will;* and that he *troubled* Israel in not removing it; he must have been disposed to credit any absurdity, rather than believe that JEHOVAH was the Author of it, and that it could be removed only by his power; or allow that it was his interest and duty to return to the worship of God which he had forsaken. (*Ex.* 7:22, 23. 1 *Sam.* 6: 2—9.) SCOTT.

Verses 18—20.

Troubled, &c. (18) 'They trouble a nation, who break the laws of God, not they that defend them.' *Bp. Patrick.* (*Josh.* 7:25, 26.) ED.

Mount Carmel. (19) In the lot of Asher, towards the N. of the land. (*Josh.* 19:26.) Not Carmel, in the lot of Judah. (1 *Sam.* 25:2.) SCOTT.

(19.) *Groves.*] '*Ashrh.* Probably Ashtoreth, Ashtaroth, Astarte, or Venus, the goddess of the Sidonians,' &c. *Selden.* The 'female principle' of the universe, notes, 12:28. Lev. 26:1. &c. ED.

Verse 21.

Halt ye, &c.] The metaphor is taken from the unequal walk of a lame person. SCOTT.

Halt, &c.] 'Lit. "leap ye upon two branches," like a bird that leaps or hops from one branch to another, and never settles long.' GILL, and GESENIUS.

Verse 22.

Elijah was the only prophet of JEHOVAH, who stood forth at this time; the prophets whom Obadiah preserved, and the prophets of whom we afterwards read, being driven into concealment. (*M. R.*—4. 19:10.) SCOTT.

and cut it in pieces, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under:* and I will dress the other bullock, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under:*

24 And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that [u] answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered [v] and said, * It is well spoken.

25 And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress *it* first; for ye *are* many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire *under.*

26 And they took the bullock, which was given them, and they dressed *it,* and called on the name of Baal [x] from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, † hear us. But *there was* [y] no voice, nor any that ‡ answered. And they § leaped upon the altar which was made.

27 And it came to pass at noon, that [z] Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry ‖ aloud; for he *is* a god; either ¶ he is talking, or he ** is pursuing, or he is in a journey, *or* peradventure he sleepeth, and [a] must be awaked.

28 And they cried aloud, and [b] cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till †† the blood gushed out upon them.

u 38. Lev. 9:24. Judg. 6:21. 1 Chr. 21:26. 2 Chr. 7:1.
v 2 Sam. 14:19.
* Heb. *The word is good.* Is. 39:8.
x Matt. 6:7.
† Or, *answer.*
y 24. Ps. 115:4—7. 135:15—20. Is. 37: 38. 44:17. 45:20. Jer. 10:5. Dan. 5:23. Hab. 2:18. 1 Cor. 8:4. 10:19, 20. 12:2.
‡ Or, *heard.*
§ Or, *leaped up and down at the altar.* Zeph. 1:9.
z 22:15. 2 Chr. 25:8. Ez. 11:9. Is. 8: 9,10. 44:15—17. Ez. 20:39. Am. 4: 4,5. Matt. 26:45. Mark 7:9. 14:41.
‖ Heb. *with a great voice.*
¶ Or, *he meditateth.*
** Heb. *hath a pursuit.*
a Ps. 44:23. 78:65,66. 121:4. Is. 51:9. Mark 4:38,39.
b Lev. 19:28. Deut. 14:1. Mic. 6:7. Mark 5:5. 9:22.
†† Heb. *they poured out blood upon them.*

and curry favor at court. Now Elijah shows them the absurdity of this; he does not insist on their relation to Jehovah; but enters on the merits of the cause. There can be but one God, but one infinite, and but one supreme; there needs but one God, one omnipotent, one all-sufficient: what occasion for addition to that which is perfect? Now, if, on trial, it appears that Baal is that one infinite, omnipotent Being, that one supreme Lord and all-sufficient Benefactor, you ought to renounce Jehovah, and cleave to Baal only: but if Jehovah be that one God, Baal is a cheat, and you must have no more to do with him. Note, 1. It is very wrong to *halt between God and Baal.* Comp. Mark 9: 38, 39. with Matt. 12: 30. The service of God, and the service of sin, the dominion of Christ, and the dominion of our lusts, these are the two thoughts which it is dangerous halting between. Those do so, that are unresolved under their convictions; unstable and unsteady in their purposes; promise fair, but do not perform; begin well, but do not hold on; are inconsistent with themselves, indifferent, lukewarm in that which is good. *Their heart is divided,* (Hos. 10: 2.) whereas God will have all or none. 2. We are fairly put to our choice, *whom we will serve,* Josh. 24: 15. If we can find one that has more right to us, or will be a better master to us, than God, we may take him at our peril. God demands no more from us than He can make out a title to. [Who can fathom the infinitude of our obligations to Him! Our relations to Him cause this to transcend other duties, as much as these relations transcend our thought or conception!]

This fair proposal of the case which Elijah here makes, the people knew not what to say to; they could say nothing to justify themselves, and would say nothing to condemn themselves, but, as people confounded, let him say what he would.

II. He proposes to bring the matter to a fair trial; and it was so much the fairer, because Baal had all the external advantages on his side. However, it is put to this experiment, *v.* 23. Elijah, doubtless, had a special commission from God to put it to this test, else he had tempted God and affronted religion; but the case was extraordinary, and the judgment on it would be of use, not only then, but in all ages. It is an instance of the courage of Elijah, that he durst stand alone in the cause of God against such powers and numbers; and the issue encourages all God's witnesses and advocates never to fear the face of man.

III. The people join issue with him, *v.* 24. They allow the proposal to be fair and unexceptionable; were very desirous to see the experiment tried, and seemed resolved to abide by the issue. They that were firm for God, doubted not but it would end to his honor: the indifferent, were willing to be determined. Ahab and the prophets of Baal durst not oppose, for fear of the people, and hoped that either *they* could obtain fire from heaven, (though they never had yet,) and the rather, because, as some think, they worshipped the sun in Baal; or, that *Elijah* could not, because not at the temple, where God was wont thus to manifest his glory.

IV. The prophets of Baal try first, but in vain, with their God. They covet the precedency, not only for honor, but that if they could in the least seem to gain their point, Elijah might not be admitted to make the trial. Elijah allows it them; (*v.* 25.) gives them the leading for their greater confusion; only, knowing that the working of Satan is with lying wonders, he takes care to prevent a fraud, Be sure to *put no fire under.*

1. We may well imagine what a noise 450 men made, when they cried as one man, and with all their might, and this, for hours, longer than Diana's worshippers, Acts 19: 34. How senseless, how brutish! Like fools, *they leaped upon the altar,* as if themselves to become sacrifices: or, thus to express their great earnestness. *They leaped up and down,* or danced about the altar: they hoped, by their dancing, to please their deity. Like madmen, they *cut themselves with knives and lancets,* (*v.* 28.) for vexation that they were not answered, or in a sort of prophetic fury, hoping to obtain the favor of their god, by offering their own blood, when they could not with the blood of their bullock. God never required his worshippers thus to honor Him; but the service of the devil, though, in some instances, it pleases and pampers the body, yet, in other things, is really cruel to it, as in envy and drunkenness. It seems, this was the manner of the worshippers of Baal: God expressly forbade his worshippers to cut themselves, Deut. 14: 1. He insists on it, that we mortify our lusts and corruptions; [so as to keep the 'lower propensities' in *subjection,* not *destroy* them; for then death ensues; as they are part of our constitution as human beings;] but corporal penances and severities, such as the Papists use, which have no tendency to that, are no pleasure to Him: *Who has required these things at your hands?*

2. How sharp Elijah was on them, *v.* 27. He stood by them, and patiently heard them for many hours, praying to an idol, yet with secret indignation and disdain; and, at noon, when the sun was at the hottest, and they too expecting fire, then, if ever, he upbraided them with their folly; and notwithstanding the gravity of his office, and the seriousness of the work he had before him, banters them, *v.* 27. Note, The worship of idols is a most ridiculous thing, and it is but justice to represent it so, and expose it to scorn. This will, by no means, justify those who ridicule the worshippers of God in Christ, because the worship is not performed just in their way. Baal's prophets were so far from being convinced and put to shame by the just reproach Elijah cast on them, that it made them the more violent, and act more ridiculously. *A deceived heart having turned them aside,* they *could not deliver their souls* by saying, *Is there not a lie in our right hand?*

3. How deaf Baal was to them. Elijah let them go on, till they were tired, and quite despaired of success, which was not *till the time of the evening sacrifice, v.* 29. During all that time, some prayed, while others prophesied, sang hymns, perhaps, to the praise of Baal, or, rather, encouraged those that were praying to proceed, telling them, Baal would answer at last; but there was *no answer, nor any that regarded.* Idols could do neither good nor evil; and God would not suffer the devil to work now, because the trial of his title was put on that issue by consent of parties.

V. The Baalites are forced to give up their cause; and now Elijah,

1. Fitted up an altar. He would not use theirs, that had been polluted, but, finding the ruins of an altar there, which had formerly been used in the service of the Lord, he chose to repair that, (*v.* 30.) to intimate that he was not about to introduce any new religion, but to revive the faith and worship of their fathers' God, and reduce them to their first love, their first works. He could not bring them to the altar at Jerusalem, unless he could have united the two kingdoms again, (which, for correction to both, God designed should not now be done,) therefore by his prophetical authority, he builds an altar on mt. Carmel, and so owns that which had formerly been built there. He repaired this altar with 12 *stones, according to the number of the* 12 *tribes, v.* 31. Though ten of the tribes were revolted to Baal, he will look on them as belonging to God still, by virtue of the ancient covenant with their fathers; and though those ten were unhappily divided from

Verse 24.

M. R. u. *Notes, Gen.* 4:3—5. *Lev.* 9:24. SCOTT.

Verses 27—29.

It seems they thought Elijah in earnest in his counsel, and determined to follow it.—No doubt Satan could have sent fire, and would, if he might, have done it; but he can do nothing except what is *permitted* to him. (*Job* 1:9—12, 16. *Matt.* 8:30—32. [Rev. 13:13, 14.])—*The evening sacrifice.* (29) About three hours before sun-set. (36, 37.) ID.

(27, 28.) 'Baal-peor seems the same as the Siva-lingam of the E. Indians. It is curious, that the prophet's irony is grounded on habits now ascribed to the Lingam of India.—The world was once about to expire from Siva being in a reverie; he is fond of hunting, takes journeys, and sleeps. *Cut.*] Here also [in India] the devotees may be seen cutting themselves with knives, till the blood streams from their bodies, or suspeaded with hooks in their flesh from a pole, or with their tongue cut out, or practising other cruelties upon themselves, for the expiation of their sins, or the glory of their gods.' *Roberts.*

29 And it came to pass, when mid-day was past, and they [c] prophesied until the *time* of the [*] offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that *there was* [d] neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any [†] that regarded.

[*Practical Observations.*]

30 And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And [e] he repaired the altar of the LORD *that was* broken down.

31 And Elijah took [f] twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, [g] saying, Israel shall be thy name:

32 And [h] with the stones he built an altar [i] in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.

33 And [j] he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid *him* on the wood, and said, [k] Fill four barrels with water, and pour *it* on the burnt-sacrifice, and on the wood.

34 And he said, [l] Do *it* the second time. And they did *it* the second time. And he said, Do *it* the third time. And they did *it* the third time.

35 And the water [‡] ran round about the altar, and he filled [m] the trench also with water.

36 And it came to pass, [n] at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, [o] LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, [p] let it be known this day that thou *art* God in Israel, and *that* I *am* thy servant, [q] and *that* I have done all these things at thy word.

37 [r] Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou *art* the LORD God, and *that* [s] thou hast turned their heart back again.

38 [t] Then the [u] fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt-sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that *was* in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw *it*, [v] they fell on their faces: and they said, [x] The LORD, he *is* the God: the LORD, he *is* the God.

40 And Elijah said

c 22:10,12. 1 Sam. 18:10. Jer. 28:6—9. Acts 16:16,17. 1 Cor. 11:4,5.
* Heb. *ascending*. See on 36.
d See on 26.—Gal. 4:8. 2 Tim. 3:8,9.
† Heb. *attention*.
e 19:10,14. 2 Chr. 33:16. Rom. 11:3.
f Ex. 24:4. Josh. 4:3,4,20. Ezra 6:17. Jer. 31:1. Ez. 37:16—22. 47:13. Eph. 2:20. 4:4—6. Rev. 7:4—8. 21:12.
g Gen. 32:28. 33:20. 35:10. 2 K. 17: 34. Is. 48:1.
h Ex. 20:24,25. Judg. 6:26. 21:4. 1 Sam. 7:9,17.
i 1 Cor. 10:31. Col. 3:17.
j Gen. 22:9. Lev. 1:6—8.
k Dan. 3:19—25. John 11:39,40. 19: 33,34.
l 2 Cor. 4:2. 8:21.
‡ Heb. *went*.
m 32,38.
n 29. Ex. 29:39—41. Ez. 9:4,5. Ps. 141:2. Dan. 3:13. 9:21. 12:11. Acts 3:1. 10:30.
o 21. Gen. 26:24. 31:53. 32:9. 46:3. Ex. 3:6,15,16. 1 Chr. 29:18. 2 Chr. 20:6,7. Eph. 1:17. 3:14.
p 8:43. 1 Sam. 17:46,47. 2 K. 1.3,6. 5:15. 19:19. Ps. 67:1,2. 83:18.
q 22:28. Num. 16:28—30. John 11:42.
r 24,29,36. Gen. 32:24,26,28. 2 Chr. 14:11. 32:19,20. Is. 37:17—20. Dan. 9:17—19. Luke 11:3. Jam. 5:16,17.
s Jer. 31:18,19. Ez. 36:25—27. Mal. 4: 5,6. Luke 1:16,17.
t Gen. 15:17. Lev. 9:24. 1 Chr. 21:26. 2 Chr. 7:1.
u 24. Lev. 10:2. 2 K. 1:12. Job 1:16. Is. 31:9.
v Judg. 13:20. 1 Chr. 21:16. 2 Chr. 7:3.
x See on 21. John 5:35. Acts 2:37. 4: 16.

thereby to testify his communion with the altar at Jerusalem. He expected an answer by fire, yet came near to the altar with boldness, and feared not that fire. He addressed himself to God, as *the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel*, acting faith on God's ancient covenant, and reminding the people too of their relation both to God and to the patriarchs. He pleads the glory of God,—not sought his own, but in subserviency to God's, and for his own necessary vindication. He desired also the edification of the people.

5. God immediately answered by fire, *v.* 38. while he was yet speaking, *the fire of the Lord fell*, and not only, as at other times, (Lev. 9: 24. 1 Chr. 21: 26. 2 Chr. 7: 1.) *consumed the sacrifice and the wood*, in token of God's acceptance of the offering, but *licked up all the water in the trench*, exhaling that, and drawing it up as a vapor But this was not all; to complete the miracle, the fire consumed the *stones of the altar, and* the very *dust*, to show that it was no ordinary fire, and perhaps to intimate, that, though God accepted this occasional sacrifice from this altar, yet, for the future, they ought to demolish all the altars on their high places, and, for their constant sacrifices, make use of that at Jerusalem only. Moses' altar and Solomon's were consecrated by the fire from heaven; but this was destroyed, because no more to be used. We may well imagine the terror of guilty Ahab, and all the worshippers of Baal.

Lastly, The people, as the jury, give in their verdict at once; *they fell on their faces*, and all, as one man, said, 'JEHOVAH, *He is the God*, and not Baal; we are convinced and satisfied of it, *Jehovah, He is the God*,' *v.* 39. Whence, one would think, they should have inferred, 'If He be the God, He shall be our God, and we will serve Him only,' as Josh. 24: 24. Some, we hope, had their

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 17—29. The ministers of the Lord have generally been accounted the *troublers* of nations, nay, even of the church, by ungodly rulers: because they oppose prevailing abuses, though sanctioned by authority, and denounce the wrath of God against impenitent sinners. Nay, they have frequently been treated as the authors of those calamities, which have come on men for persecuting them, and neglecting their warnings! But they are able to refute, and even to retort, such charges, when urged to their faces; and to show that those who forsake the commandments of the Lord, and teach others to do so, are the real troublers of the world, of the church, and of themselves and their own families: and when this is done with firmness and solemnity, as by the authority of God, it will often cause the proudest sinner to tremble; to desist from present purposes of violence, and to comply with reasonable requirements.—The cause of truth is not to be determined by vote, authority, or wealth; but God will plead his own cause, and that of his witnesses, which will countervail all disadvantages. It is right, however, to state every thing in so equitable, plain, and convincing a manner, that all may be constrained to say, 'It is well spoken,' and that the mouths of gainsayers may be stopped.—The absurdities of superstition and false religion might excite our ridicule or mockery, did not their awful effects demand our tears. The example of Elijah, in this instance, must be imitated with great caution, and only on very peculiar and evident occasions. SCOTT.

The same practice was usual among other idolaters, the priests of Bellona, the worshippers of the Syrian goddess, and of the Egyptian Isis. *Tertullian, Apul. Herod.* The *dancing* too in circles, supposed by *Patr.* and *Gill*, to be alluded to in v. 26. was a custom of the priests of Mars, (Salii,) and is still kept up by some idolaters. ED.

Verses 36, 37.

Holy zeal and intelligent good-will to Israel suggested every word, and rendered the prayer peculiarly emphatical; especially when contrasted with the unmeaning and long-continued vociferations of Baal's prophets. (26.) SCOTT.

Verses 38, 39.

Probably this fire appeared as lightning, though no cloud was seen: or it was called 'the fire of God,' from its extraordinary force, and its unparalleled effects; and especially as sent to plead the cause of God, and to expose his worthless rival to contempt. (*M. R.* t, u.)—It would be more perspicuous and emphatical to retain the original word, JEHOVAH, in the translation of this chapter. ID.

unto them, * Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook [y] Kishon, and [z] slew them there.

41 ¶ And Elijah said unto Ahab, [a] Get thee up, eat and drink; for *there is* † a sound of [b] abundance of rain.

42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And [c] Elijah went up to the top of Carmel: and [d] he cast himself down upon the earth, and [e] put his face between his knees,

43 And said to his servant, [f] Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, *There is* nothing. And he said, [g] Go again seven times.

44 And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth [h] a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, ‡ Prepare *thy chariot*, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.

45 And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and [i] there was a great rain. [j] And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.

46 And [k] the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and [l] he girded up his loins, and [m] ran before Ahab § to the entrance of Jezreel.

hearts thus turned back, but the generality of them were *convinced* only, not *converted*. Blessed are they that have not seen what *they* saw, yet have believed, and been wrought upon by it, more than they that saw it. Let it for ever be looked upon as a point adjudged against all pretenders, (for it was carried, upon a full hearing, against one of the most daring and threatening competitors that ever the God of Israel was affronted by,) that *Jehovah He is God*, God alone.

Now the prophets of Baal, as criminals and traitors, are seized, condemned, and executed, according to law, *v.* 40. If Jehovah be the true God, Baal is a false god, to whom these Israelites had revolted, and seduced others to the worship of him; therefore, by the express law of God, they were to be put to death, Deut. 13: 1—11. and Elijah (acting still by an extraordinary commission, which is not to be drawn into a precedent) orders them all to be slain immediately, as the troublers of the land; and Ahab himself is so terrified, for the present, with the fire from heaven, that he dares not oppose it. These were the 450 prophets of Baal; the 400 prophets of the groves, (Sidonians, so some,) though summoned, (*v.* 19.) yet, as it should seem, did not attend, and so escaped, which perhaps Ahab and Jezebel thought themselves happy in; but it proved they were reserved to be the instruments of Ahab's destruction, some time after, by encouraging him to go up to Ramoth-Gilead, *ch.* 22: 6.

V. 41—46. The reformation, though far short of being thorough, yet was so far accepted, that God, thereupon, sent rain on his land, that very evening (as it should seem) on which they did this good work, which should have confirmed them in their reformation; see Hag. 2: 18, 19.

1. Elijah sends Ahab to *eat and drink*, for joy that God *had now accepted his works*, and that rain was coming; see Eccl. 9: 7. Ahab had continued fasting all day, either religiously, it being a day of prayer, or for want of leisure, it being a day of great expectation; but now let him *eat and drink*, for, though others perceive no sign of it, Elijah, by faith, hears *the sound of abundance of rain*, *v.* 41. God reveals his secrets to his ser-

* Or, *Apprehend.* 2 K. 10:25.
y See on Judg. 5:21.
z Deut. 13:5. 18:20. Jer. 48:10. Zech. 13:2,3. Rev. 19:20. 20:10.
a Ec. 9:7. Acts 27:34.
† Or, *a sound of a noise of rain*, 17:1.
b See on 1.
c 19. Matt. 14:23. Luke 6:12. Acts 10:9.
d Gen. 24:52. Josh. 7:6. 2 Sam. 12:16. Dan. 9:3. Mark 14:35. Jam. 5:16, 17.
e 19:13. Ezra 9:6. Ps. 89:7. Is. 6:2. 38:2. Dan. 9:7.
f Ps. 5:3. Luke 18:1.
g Gen. 32:26. Hab. 2:3. Luke 18:7. Eph. 6:18. Heb. 10:36,37.
h Job 8:7. Zech. 4:10.
‡ Heb. *Tie*, or, *Bind.* 1 Sam. 6:7,10. Mic. 1:13.
i 39,40. Num. 25:8. 2 Sam. 21:14.
j 21:1,23. Josh. 19:18. 2 Sam. 2:9. 2 K. 9:16.
k 2 K. 3:15. Is. 8:11. Ez. 1:3. 3:14.
l 2 K. 4:29. 9:1. Job 38:3. Jer. 1:17. 1 Pet. 1:13.
m Matt. 22:21. 1 Pet. 2:17.
§ Heb. *till thou come to Jezreel.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 30—46. All religious diligence, which is not regulated according to the Word of God, as to its grand outlines, however self-denying or plausible, is unavailing: 'for he, who gathereth not with' the Savior, 'scattereth.' (*Matt.* 12: 29, 30.) Yet, when it is *impracticable* for us *exactly* to come up to the scriptural standard; or when we cannot have personal communion with God's people, in his more solemn ordinances: we must come as near as we can to the one, and show our fellowship with the other by such expressions as we are capable of: and the Lord will graciously accept our upright intentions, and dispense with the *unavoidable* irregularity.—Hypocrites expect to be heard for their much or their loud speaking; but a few words uttered in assured faith, and with fervent affections of zeal for the glory of God, and love to the souls of men, often form 'the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man, which availeth much.'—The awful displays of the divine justice and holiness may terrify and convince the sinner; extort many confessions, and dispose him to external acts of obedience, while the impression lasts: but the view of these attributes, harmonizing with mercy, love, and truth, in Christ Jesus, is needful to draw the soul into self-abasement, affiance, and love. Yet the Spirit of God employs both methods, in effecting the conversion of sinners, in order and measure, as He pleases: and in our endeavors for that same blessed purpose, it is generally advisable to inform the understanding and convince the judgment first, and then to address the heart and conscience.—When sinners are deeply impressed with divine truth, they should be earnestly exhorted, without delay, to set about those self-denying duties, to which the Savior calls his disciples.—Under the Christian dispensation, indeed, we must not destroy the lives of men, even though they have deceived others to idolatrous worship. When, however, false teachers are removed, silenced, or put to shame, it exceedingly promotes the revival of true religion: and after effectual measures for public reformation have been used, we may hope for the merciful removal of public calamities.—Faith perceives things imperceptible to sense, and anticipates future and distant blessings: it therefore excites fervent prayers, in which reverence, humility, importunity, and perseverance are requisite in order to success.—The love of faithful ministers to the persons of sinners should not only be manifest to that God, who in secret hears their affectionate prayers for those, whom they most severely reprove: but they should show it by every external expression; and be ready to give honor to whom honor on any account is due; and in their private conduct to become the meanest servants to those, whom, speaking in God's name, they 'rebuke with all authority.' And He will strengthen his people for every exertion and self-denial, to which his commandments and providence call them. SCOTT.

Verse 41.

(17:1.) The idolatry of Israel having received a powerful check, and its chief abettors, the prophets of Baal, having suffered condign punishment; the prophet declared to Ahab the approach of deliverance from that awful calamity, under which the land had so long groaned; and encouraged him to go and cheerfully refresh himself. (2 *Sam.* 21:9—14.) It is probable, the prophet, who throughout this chapter spake and acted with heroical intrepidity, 'being strong in faith, giving glory to God,' was too sanguine in his expectations of subsequent success. Ahab's concurrence in all that he had done, or connivance at it, and the people's decided language and conduct, led him to conclude, he should, as it were, carry all before him, till the worship of Baal was wholly extirpated. This unwarranted expectation made way for the timid conduct and depressed state of mind, which is recorded in the next chapter. (19:1—14.) In this chapter he shows what man may be and do, when God upholds and strengthens him; in the next what the same man is, when left to himself. This appears, in the case of Elijah, as clearly, though in a far different way, as in the case of Samson; (*Judg.* 16:) and in many things it resembles what Paul records of himself. 2 *Cor.* 12:1—10.) SCOTT.

A sound . . . of rain.] 'It is as common in the E. to say there is the *sound* of rain, as in England to say there is an appearance of rain. Sometimes this refers to the thunder, as the precursor; and at other times to a blowing noise in the clouds, which indicates rain is at hand. In the vicinity of a hill or tall trees, the sound is the loudest; and Elijah was near mt. Carmel.' ROBERTS.

Verse 42.

'Who in the E. has not seen the natives thus *sitting on the earth*, with their *faces between their knees?* Persons engaged in *deep meditation*, in a *long train* of *reasonings*, *revolving* the *past* or *anticipating* the *future*, when in great sorrow, or fatigue, (as coolies, after a journey,) may be seen thus.' ROBERTS.

Verses 43—45.

As Elijah had no servant before he went to Zarephath; some have thought, that the widow's son, whom he had raised to life, had accompanied him. But it appears from the narrative, that he was not old enough; and it is more likely, that a young person from the schools of the prophets attended Elijah on this occasion.—The rain was no doubt equal to the necessities of the land; and formed another demonstration that JEHOVAH was the only true God. (18—20.) SCOTT.

Went up, &c. (43) The transactions of the day are supposed to have taken place at the foot of the mount, near some rivulet, whence water could still be procured. From this place, Ahab went up to some tent or residence, to take refreshment; but Elijah went up towards the summit of the mount, where the Mediterranean Sea might be clearly seen: yet he sent his servant to some higher crag or eminence to make his observations. ID.

Verse 46.

The Lord directed and strengthened Elijah, though weak with fasting and fatigue, to show this respect to Ahab; and to run as a footman before his chariot; in order to convince him, that his severe reproofs were consistent with affection and loyalty in secular matters: not

CHAP. XIX.

Ahab shows Jezebel, that Elijah had slain Baal's prophets, and she sends to Elijah, threatening to take away his life, 1, 2. He flees into the wilderness; is weary of living; but being twice strengthened with food brought by an angel, he fasts forty days, and arrives at Horeb, 3—8. There God meets him, preceded by a strong wind, an earthquake, and fire; and, speaking to him in a still small voice, commissions him to anoint Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha, 9—17. Elijah is informed that seven thousand worshippers of JEHOVAH still remain in Israel, 18. Elijah casts his mantle on Elisha, who takes leave of his friends, and follows him, 19—21.

AND [a] Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal [b] how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, [c] So let the gods do *to me*, and more also, [d] if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by [e] to-morrow about this time.

3 And when he saw *that*, [f] he arose, and went for his life, and came to [g] Beer-sheba, which *belongeth* to Judah, and left his servant there.

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and [h] sat down under a juniper-tree: and [i] he requested [*] for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I *am* not [k] better than my fathers.

5 And [l] as he lay and slept under a juniper-tree, behold, then [m] an angel touched him, and

a 16:31. 21:5—7,25.
b See on 18.40.
c 2:23. 20:10,11. Ruth 1:17. 2 K. 6:31.
d Ex. 10:28. 15:9. 2 K. 19:10—12,22, 27,28. Dan. 3:15.
e Prov. 27:1. Acts 12:4—6. Jam. 4:13, 14.
f Gen. 12:12,13. Ex. 2:15. 1 Sam. 27:1. Is. 51:12,13. Matt. 26:56,70—74. 2 Cor. 12:7.
g 4:25. Gen. 21:31. Am. 7:12,13.
h 13:14. Gen. 21:15,16. John 4:6.
i 3. Num. 11:15. 2 K. 2:11. Job 3:20—22. Jer. 20:14—18. Jon. 4:3,8. Phil. 1:21—24.
* Heb. *for his life.*
k Am. 6:2. Nah. 3:8. Matt. 6:26. Rom. 3:9.
l Gen. 28:11—15.
m Ps. 34:7,10. Dan. 8:19. 9:21. 10:9, 10. Acts 12:7. Heb. 1:14. 13:5.

vants the prophets; and yet, without a revelation, we may foresee, that when man's judgments run down like a river, God's mercy will. Rain is *the river of God*, Ps. 65: 9.

2. He himself retires to pray, (for though God has promised rain, he must ask it, Zech. 10: 1.) and to give thanks for God's answer by fire, now hoping for an answer by water. What he said, we are not told: but, (1.) He withdrew to the *top of Carmel*, which was very high and very private. Hence we read of those that *hide themselves in the top of Carmel*, Am. 9: 3. There he would be alone. Those who are called to appear, and act in public, for God, must yet find time to be private with Him, and keep up their converse with Him in solitude. (2.) He cast himself down, in token of humility, reverence, and importunity, i. e. abasing himself in the sense of his own meanness, now that God had thus honored him.

3. He orders his servant to bring him notice, as soon as he discerned a cloud arising out of the Mediterranean Sea, which he had a great prospect of from the top of Carmel. The sailors at this day call it *Cape Carmel*. Six times his servant goes to the point of the hill, and sees nothing, yet Elijah continues praying. Note, Though the answer of fervent and believing supplications does not come quickly, yet we must continue instant in prayer, and not faint or give over; for, *at the end, it shall speak, and not lie.*

4. A little cloud, at length, appears, no bigger than a man's hand, which presently overspreads the heavens, and waters the earth, *v.* 44, 45. Great blessings often arise from small beginnings, and showers of plenty from a cloud a span long. Let us therefore never *despise the day of small things.*

5. Elijah, hereupon, hastens Ahab home, and attends him himself. Ahab rode in his chariot, at ease and in state, *v.* 45. Elijah ran on foot before him. If Ahab had respected Elijah as he ought, he would have taken him into his chariot, as the eunuch did Philip, that he might honor him before the elders of Israel, and confer with him further about the reformation of the kingdom: but his corruptions got the better of his convictions, and he was glad to get clear of him, as Felix of Paul. But since Ahab invites him not to ride with him, he will *run before him*, (*v.* 46.) as one of his footmen, that he might not seem to be lifted up with the great honor God had put on him, or to abate in his civil respect to this prince, though he reproved him faithfully. God's ministers should make it appear, that how great soever they look when they deliver God's messages, yet they are far from affecting worldly grandeur: let them leave that to the kings of the earth.

CHAP. XIX. We left Elijah at the entrance of Jezreel, still appearing publicly, and all the people's eyes upon him. In this ch. we have him again absconding, and driven into obscurity, at a time when he could ill have been spared; but we are to look upon it as a punishment to Israel for the insincerity and inconstancy of their reformation. When people will not learn, it is just with God to remove their teachers into corners.

V. 1—8. I. Ahab incenses Jezebel against Elijah. That imperious woman managed king and kingdom, and did what she would. Ahab's conscience would not let him persecute Elijah, but he told Jezebel all Elijah had done, (*v.* 1.) not to convince, but to exasperate her. It is not said, he told her what *God* had done, but what *Elijah* had done; as if he, by some spell or charm, had brought fire from heaven, and the hand of the Lord had not been in it. Especially, he represented to her, as what would make her outrageous against him, that he had slain the prophets; the prophets of Baal he calls *the prophets*, as if none but they were worthy of the name. They were the gods his heart was upon, and he aggravates the slaying of them as Elijah's crime, without noticing it as a just reprisal on her for killing God's prophets, *ch.* 18: 4. Those who, when they cannot, for shame or fear, do mischief themselves, yet stir up others to do it, will have it laid to their charge, as if they had themselves done it.

II. Jezebel sent him a threatening message, *v.* 2. Note, Carnal hearts are hardened and enraged against God, by that which should convince, conquer, and bring them into subjection to Him. She swears by her gods, and raging, like one distracted, curses herself if she slay not him, without any proviso of a divine permission. Cruelty and confidence often meet in persecutors: *I will pursue, I will overtake*, Ex. 15: 9. But how came she to send him word of her design, and so, give him an opportunity to escape? Did she think him so daring, he would not flee; or herself able to prevent it? Or was there a special providence in it? I think, though she desired nothing more than his blood, yet, at this time, she durst not meddle with him, *for fear of the people*, therefore sent this message, merely to frighten him, and get him out of the way, for the present, that he might not carry on what he had begun. Her oath and imprecation, prove not at all that she really intended it, but only intended to make him believe it. The gods she sware by, could do her no harm.

III. Elijah, hereupon, in a great fright, fled for his life, it is likely by night, and came to Beer-sheba, *v.* 3. Shall we praise him for this? We praise him not. Where was the courage with which he had lately confronted Ahab, and all the prophets of Baal? Nay, which kept him by his sacrifice, when the fire of God fell upon it? *Lord, what is man!* Great faith is not always alike strong. He could not but know he might be very serviceable to Israel at this juncture, and had all the reason in the world to depend on God's protection, while he was doing God's work; yet he flies. In his former danger, God had bidden him hide himself, (*ch.* 17: 3.) therefore he supposed he might do it now.

IV. From Beer-sheba he went forward into the wilderness, that vast howling wilderness in which the Israelites wandered. Beer-sheba was so far from Jezreel, and within the dominion of so good a king as Jehoshaphat, that he could not but be safe there; yet, as if his fears haunted him, even there, out of the reach of danger, he cannot rest, but goes a day's journey into the desert. Yet perhaps he proceeded thither, not so much for his safety, as to be wholly retired from the world in order to a more free and intimate communion with God.

V. Being wearied with his journey, he grew cross, (like children when sleepy,) and *wished he might die*, *v.* 4. He *requested for his life*, (so it is in the margin,) *that he might die*; death is life to a good man; the death of the body, the life of the soul. Yet that was not the reason; it was not the deliberate desire of grace, as Paul's, to *depart and be with Christ*, but the passionate wish of his corruption, as Job's. Those that are thus

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was the prophet afraid of going to Jezreel, where Jezebel was; though he did not come into her presence. It does not appear, that either Ahab, or his attendants, or the inhabitants of Jezreel, offered him any refreshment, or hospitably entertained him. His reception at least was discouraging. SCOTT.

Run before.] 'The Egyptian monuments show this custom, and their nobles even had sometimes 6 or 7 servants to run before them, and when going to an entertainment these carried the stool to assist them in alighting from their chariot, an inkstand, or whatever they might want on the road or at their friend's house.' See *Wilkinson*, and 2 Sam. 15: 1. ED.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX. V. 1, 2. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verses 3, 4.

It seems, Elijah fled from Jezreel the very night after the sacrifice, and the fire from heaven, and the abundant rain given in answer to his prayers; and before he had time suitably to refresh himself after the fatigues of the preceding day. Beer-sheba, in the south of Judah, was at a considerable distance from Jezreel, in the lot of Issachar: (*Josh.* 19:18.) yet he travelled with all speed till he came thither.—He had passed through the whole kingdom of Judah, where doubtless pious Jehoshaphat would have welcomed and protected him.—When Elijah said, 'I am no better than my fathers,' he seems to have referred to some pre-intimations given him of his translation. SCOTT.

(4.) *Juniper tree.*] 'Perhaps, rather, the *broom*, which grows commonly in those wildernesses.' *Harris, Gesenius, Le Clerc, Geddes.* BOOTHR.

Verses 5—8.

As mount Horeb was but a few days' journey from Beer-sheba; the forty days here mentioned seem to include the whole of the time, which passed till his return out of the wilderness. SCOTT.

said unto him, Arise *and* eat.

6 And he looked, and, behold, *there* [n] *was* a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his [*] head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

7 And the [o] angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise *and* eat: [p] because the journey *is* too great for thee.

8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went [q] in the strength of that meat, [r] forty days and forty nights, unto [s] Horeb the mount of God.

9 And he came thither [t] unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, and he said unto him, [u] What doest thou here, Elijah?

[*Practical Observations.*]

10 And he said, I have been [x] very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, [y] thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* [z] I only, am left; and [a] they seek my life, to take it away.

11 And he said, Go forth, and [b] stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold,

n 17:6,9—15. Ps. 37:3. Is. 33:16. Matt. 4:11. 6:32. Mark 8:2,3. John 21:5, 9.
* Heb. *bolster.*
o See on 5.
p Deut. 33:25. Ps. 103:13,14.
q Dan. 1:15. 2 Cor. 12:9.
r Ex. 24:18. 34:28. Deut. 9:9,18. Matt. 4:2. Mark 1:13. Luke 4:2.
s See on Ex. 3:1. 19:18.—Mal. 4:4,5.
t Ex. 33:21,22. Jer. 9:2. Heb. 11:38.
u 13. Gen. 3:9. 16:8. Jer. 2:18. John 1:3,4.
x Ex. 20:5. 34:14. Num. 25:11. Ps. 69:9. 119:139. John 2:17.
y 14. 18:4,30. Jer. 2:30. Hos. 5:11. Mic. 6:16.
z 18:4,22. 20:13,22,35,41,42. 22:8. Rom. 11:2,3.
a 2. 18:10,17.
b Ex. 19:20. 24:12,18. 34:2. Matt. 17:1—3. 2 Pet. 1:17,18.

forward to die, are not in the fittest frame for it. Jezebel has sworn his death, therefore he, in a fret, prays for it, yet with this difference, he wishes to die by the hand of the Lord. He would rather die in the wilderness, than as Baal's prophets died, according to Jezebel's threatening, (*v.* 2.) lest the worshippers of Baal triumph, and blaspheme the God of Israel, whom they will think themselves too hard for, if they can run down his advocate. Can that great and gallant spirit shrink thus? God thus left him to himself, to show, that when he was bold and strong, it was *in the Lord*, and *the power of his might*, but of himself he was *no better than his fathers*, or brethren.

VI. God, by an angel, fed him. How much better God deals with his froward children than they deserve! Elijah, in a fit of despondency, wished to die; God needed him not, yet designed further to honor him, therefore sent an angel to *keep him alive*. Our case would be bad sometimes, if God should take us at our word, and grant our foolish, passionate requests. Having prayed he might die, he *laid down and slept*, (*v.* 5.) wishing to die in his sleep; but he is awakened, and finds himself not only well provided with bread and water, (*v.* 6.) but, which was more, attended by an angel, who guarded him when he slept, and twice called him to his food when it was ready, *v.* 5, 7. He needed not complain of the unkindnesses of men, when it was thus made up by the ministration of angels. Wherever God's children are, as they are still on their Father's ground, so they are still under their Father's eye and care. They may lose themselves in a wilderness, but God has not left them; there they may *look at Him that lives, and sees them, as Hagar*, Gen. 16: 13.

Lastly, He is carried, in the strength of this meat, to Horeb, *the mount of God*, *v.* 8. Thither the Spirit of the Lord led him, probably, beyond his own intention. The angel bade him eat the second time, because of the greatness *of the journey before him*, *v.* 7. Note, God knows what He designs us for, though we do not, what services, what trials; and will take care for us, when we, for want of foresight, cannot for ourselves, that we be furnished for them with *grace sufficient*. See how many different ways God took to keep Elijah alive; fed him by ravens, with multiplied meals—then by an angel—and now, to show that *man lives not by bread alone*, he kept him alive 40 days without meat, not resting and sleeping, which might make him the less to crave sustenance, but continually traversing the mazes of the desert, a day for a year of Israel's wanderings; yet he neither needs food, nor desires it. The place, no doubt, reminds him of the manna, and encourages him to hope that God would sustain him here, and, in due time, bring him hence, as he did Israel, though, like him, fretful and distrustful.

V. 9—18. Here is,

I. Elijah housed in a cave at mount Horeb, called *the mount of God*, because on it God formerly manifested his glory; perhaps, the same cave, or cleft of a rock, Moses was hidden in, when the Lord *passed by before him, and proclaimed his name*, Ex. 34: 6. What Elijah proposed to himself, in coming to lodge here, I cannot conceive, unless either to indulge his melancholy, or satisfy his curiosity, and assist his faith and devotion, with the sight of that famous place where the law was given, and so many great things were done, and hoping to meet God Himself, there where Moses met Him; or, in token of his abandoning his people Israel, who hated to be reformed; and so it agrees with Jeremiah's wish, (Jer. 9: 2.) and was a bad omen of God's forsaking them: or, it was because he thought he could not be safe elsewhere; and to this instance of the hardships this good man was reduced to, the apostle refers, Heb. 11: 38. *They wandered in deserts and in mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.*

II. God's visit to him there, and inquiry: *The word of the Lord came to him.* We cannot go any whither, to be out of the reach of God's eye, his arm, and his word. Ps. 139: 7, &c. God will take care of his out-casts; He will find, own, and gather them with everlasting loving-kindnesses John saw the visions of the Almighty, when in banishment in Patmos, Rev. 1: 9.

The question God puts to him, is, *What doest thou here, Elijah? v.* 9. and again, *v.* 13. This is a reproof. Such cowardice had been more excusable in another, and not so bad an example Besides, in the retirement to which God sent him, *ch.* 17. he was a blessing to a poor widow at Sarepta, but here he had no opportunity of doing good. Note, It concerns us often to inquire, whether we be in our place, and in the way of usefulness, and of duty.

III. The account he gives of himself *v.* 10, 14. 1. He excuses his retreat, and desires it may not be imputed to his want of zeal for reformation, but to his despair of success. God knew, and his own conscience witnessed for him, that as long as there was any hope of doing good, he had been *very jealous for the Lord God of hosts;* but now that he had *labored in vain*, and all his endeavors were to no purpose, he thought it time to give up the cause, and mourn for what he could not mend. 2. He complains of the people, their obstinacy in sin, and the height of impiety they were got to. This the apostle calls his *making intercession against Israel*, Rom. 11: 2, 3. He had often been, of choice, their advocate, but now is necessitated to be their accuser, before God. Thus, (John 5: 45.) *There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.* Those are truly miserable, that have the testimony and prayers of God's prophets against them. 3. He charges them with having forsaken God's covenant; they retained circumcision, the sign and seal of it, yet had quitted his worship and service, which was the intention of it. Those who neglect God's ordinances, do really forsake his covenant. He charges them with having *thrown down his altars*; meaning private altars, which, though separate, being erected and attended by those that sincerely aimed at the glory of God, and served Him faithfully, were excused from the charge of schism. But this was not all; *They have slain thy prophets with the sword*, who, it is probable, ministered at those altars. Jezebel, a foreigner, did it, (*ch.* 18: 4.) but it is charged on the body of the people, because the generality of them were *consenting to their death*, and pleased with it. 4. He gives the reason why he retired. (1.) He could not appear to any purpose. 'They all said, *The Lord He is God*, but none of them would stand by me, or offer to shelter me.' Despair of success hinders many a good enterprise. None are willing to venture alone; forgetting that those are not alone, who have God with them. (2.) He could not appear with safety; 'I had better spend life in useless solitude,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—9. No miracles or judgments can finally stop the fury of persecutors: though intimidated for a season, when they have respite, and leisure to confer with one another, they grow desperate in proportion as they have been baffled and mortified. (*Ex.* 8: 15. 14: 5—9. *Acts* 4: 13—22. 5: 17—28.) Nay, such diabolic enmity can inhabit the breasts of females, and has sometimes raged in them with peculiar vehemence! (*Notes, Matt.* 14: 3—11.)—Mad passions often defeat their own end, and furious threats prevent the execution of determined malice.—The most eminent believers cannot exercise even those graces, which most distinguish their characters, without the immediate assistance of God. The Lord, however, bears with his faithful servants, notwithstanding their infirmities; and preserves them for every service which He has allotted them, whatever they wish or fear. Indeed, when they flee from the path of duty, He will meet and rebuke them, but He will not forsake them. SCOTT.

Verse 10.
M. R.—Notes, 11—17. *Rom.* 11:1—6. SCOTT.
Verses 11—14.
All these effects were no doubt produced by the ministration of angels.—Miracles in the first ages of Christianity called men's attention to the preaching of the Gospel, which, as a still, small voice, was the power of God to salvation to thousands and millions.—The Lord's renewed inquiry, 'What doest thou here?' shows, that Elijah did not

[c] the LORD passed by, [d] and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind: and after the wind [e] an earthquake; *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake:

12 And after the earthquake [f] a fire; *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire: and after the fire [g] a still small voice.

13 And it was *so*, when Elijah heard *it*, that [h] he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, *there came* a voice unto him, and said, [i] What doest thou here, Elijah?

14 And he said, [k] I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have [l] forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away.

[*Practical Observations.*]

15 And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to [m] the wilderness of Damascus; and when thou comest, [n] anoint [o] Hazael *to be* king over Syria:

16 And [p] Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint *to be* king over Israel: and [q] Elisha the son of Shaphat, of [r] Abel-meholah, shalt thou anoint *to be* prophet in thy room.

17 And it shall come to pass, *that* [s] him that escapeth [t] the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from [u] the sword of Jehu shall [x] Elisha slay.

18 [y] Yet * I have left

than lose it in a fruitless endeavor to reform those that hate reform.'

IV. God's manifestation of Himself to him. Did he come hither to meet God? He shall find God will not fail to meet him. Moses was put into the cave, when God's glory passed before him; but Elijah was called out of it, to *stand on the mount before the Lord*, *v.* 11. He *saw no manner of similitude*, any more than Israel did, when God *talked to them in Horeb:* but he heard a strong wind, and saw the terrible effects of it; he felt the shock of an earthquake; saw an eruption of fire, *v.* 12. and, at last, he perceived a *still small voice*, in which *the Lord was*, i. e. by which He spake to him, and not out of the wind, or the earthquake, or the fire. Those struck an awe on him, awakened his attention, and inspired humility and reverence; but God chose to make known his mind to him in soft whispers, not in those dreadful sounds. Elijah hid his face, ashamed that he should have been such a coward as to shrink from his duty, when he had such a God of power to stand by him in it. The wind, and earthquake, and fire, did not make him cover his face, but the still voice did. Gracious souls are more affected by the tender mercies of the Lord, than by his terrors. The whole here seems to refer to the discoveries God formerly made of Himself at this place to Moses. Then there was a tempest, earthquake, and fire; (Heb. 12: 18.) but when God would show Moses his glory, He *proclaimed his goodness;* and so here, *He was the Word*, was in the *still small voice.* Then the law was thus given to Israel, with the appearances of terror first, and then with a voice of words; and Elijah, being now called to revive that law, especially the first two commandments of it, is here taught how to manage; he must not only awaken and terrify the people with amazing signs, like the earthquake and fire, but must endeavor, with a still, small voice, to convince and persuade them, and not forsake them, when he should do that. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God: miracles but make way for it. Now God speaks with a still, small voice, the dread of which should not make us afraid; see Heb. 12: 18, &c.

V. The orders God gives him to execute. He repeated the question put before, '*What doest thou here?* This is not a place for thee now.' Elijah answers, (*v.* 14.) in complaint of Israel's apostasy, and the ruin of religion among them. To this God replies, and sends him back with directions to appoint Hazael king of Syria, (*v.* 15.) Jehu king of Israel, and Elisha his successor in the eminency of the prophetical office; (*v.* 16.) which is intended as a prediction, that by these God would chastise the degenerate Israelites, plead his own cause among them, and *avenge the quarrel of his covenant*, *v.* 17. Elijah complained that the wickedness of Israel was unpunished. 'Well,' saith God, 'be content, it is all in good time, the persons are pitched on, and shall

[c] Ex. 33:21—23. 34:6. Hab. 3:3—5.
[d] Ex. 19:16. 20:18. Job 38:1. Ps. 50: 3. Is. 30:30. Ez. 1:4. Nah. 1:3,6. Heb. 12:18—21. Rev. 20:11.
[e] 1 Sam. 14:15. Ps. 68:8. Nah. 1:5. Zech. 14:5. Matt. 24:7. 27:51—54. 28:2. Heb. 12:26. Rev. 11:19. 16:18.
[f] 18:38. Gen. 15:17. Ex. 3:2. Deut. 4:11,12,33. 2 K. 1:10. 2:11. Heb. 12: 29.
[g] Ex. 34:6. Job 4:16. 33:7. Zech. 4:6. Acts 2:2,36,37.
[h] See on 18:42.—Ex. 3:5. 33:23. Is. 6:2,5.
[i] 9. Gen. 16:8. John 21:15—17.
[k] See on 10.—Is. 62:1,6,7.
[l] Deut. 29:25. 31:20. Ps. 78:37. Is. 1:4. Jer. 22:9. Dan. 11:30. Hos. 6:7. Heb. 8:9.
[m] Gen. 14:15. 2 K. 8:7. Acts 9:2,3.
[n] Is. 45:1. Jer. 1:10. 27:2,&c.
[o] 2 K. 8:8—15,28. 9:14. Am. 1:4.
[p] See on 2 K. 9:1—3,6—14.
[q] See on 19—21.—Luke 4:27. *Eliseus.*
[r] 4:12. Judg. 7:22.
[s] Is. 24:17,18. Am. 2:14. 5:19.
[t] 2 K. 8:12. 10:32. 13:3,22.
[u] 2 K. 9:14,&c. 10:6,&c.
[x] 2 K. 2:23,24. Is. 11:4. Jer. 1:10. Hos. 6:5. Rev. 19:21.
[y] Is. 1:9. 10:20—22. Rom. 11:4,5.
* Or, *I will leave.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 10—14. No former zeal, boldness, or usefulness, will excuse present neglects: yet we are most apt to boast of what we have been and done, when most remiss in present duty! The zealous minister often concludes he can do no good, because he cannot do all he hoped for: and when he witnesses much evil in the church, or in that part in which he labors, he often imagines matters to be much worse than they really are. But on reflection, this very experience may explain to us that rebellion of others, which so disconcerts us; and teach us gentleness and long-suffering, without disdaining or despairing of the worst of sinners.—The blessing is from the Lord; and He often works most effectually when proper means are used, with quiet assiduity and perseverance, without any of that bustle and vehemence which excite the public attention.—The Word of God also is indeed 'like a fire, and a hammer, that breaketh the rocks in pieces;' and the whole of it should be preached with zealous plainness and faithfulness: but 'the ministration of condemnation,' and the awful terrors of eternal vengeance, only precede and make way for 'the ministration of righteousness,' and the sweet Gospel of Christ, attended by urgent persuasions, melting expostulations, and tender invitations, in which the Lord chiefly comes to seal our hearts for Himself; and without this little will be done.—We shall do well often to imagine, that we hear the Lord inquire, 'What doest thou here?' In scenes of worldly dissipation, in trifling company, in riotous feastings, or where unlawful traffic is carrying on, the Christian can have no good answer ready: nor can the minister, if engrossed by needless, worldly business, by trifling studies, or by the pursuits of ambition, preferment, pleasure, or reputation, to the neglect of the important duties of his calling. Nay, if we are at home, when we should be in the pulpit; asleep, when we should be at work; or in company, when we should be engaged in prayer and meditation, or reading the Scriptures; such a question must confound us. In short, every station has its proper duties, and every portion of time its proper work, and we should frequently call ourselves to account, whether we be in our place and proper employment, as the duty of the season requires.

SCOTT.

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as yet fully understand the emblematic display: and that he was not properly convinced of his unbelief and sin in fleeing out of the land; or reconciled to going back to his station and employment. He afterwards better understood the Lord's meaning, as it appears from his subsequent conduct. SCOTT.

(13.) *Wrapped his face.*] 'A token of respect among the Asiatics.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 15—17.

As the prophet was ordered to go on the way to the wilderness of Damascus, it seems probable he went directly towards Syria, and meeting with Hazael, anointed him; though this is not recorded. Jehu was afterwards anointed by a prophet sent by Elisha; (2 *K.* 9:1—10.) and perhaps Elisha was anointed by Elijah, when called to be his successor. Some, however, think the expression is not always to be taken literally; but merely as an intimation, that God would advance the persons spoken of, to the stations assigned, and qualify them for the work to be performed by them. (*Ps.* 105:15. *Is.* 45.1.)—Jehu executed vengeance on Jezebel and Ahab's posterity, and the priests and worshippers of Baal: Hazael through his whole reign wasted and destroyed the people of Israel: and, at Elisha's word, the Lord took vengeance on those, who would not attend to the instructions of his prophets. The order of time, in these judgments, seem not to be exactly marked, but the certainty of the events. (*M. R.* s—x.)—God was infinitely more jealous for his own glory, than Elijah could be for it; and He would by no means desert his cause, or suffer his enemies to triumph, as the prophet feared: but, before He proceeded to vengeance, He would gather in his chosen people, and separate a remnant from among the idolaters. SCOTT.

Verse 18.

The Lord 'had reserved for Himself' 7000 Israelites, who had neither bowed their knees to Baal, nor kissed his image, nor in any way been induced to worship him. (*M. R.* y—a. *Hos.* 13:2.) These, though few in comparison, were a considerable number in themselves, and far more than Elijah supposed.—As Ahab and Jezebel aimed to establish the worship of Baal, we may suppose the golden calves were neglected; and that these persons as conscientiously adhered to the worship of JEHOVAH, as the times would admit: they would, however, greatly need further instruction and encouragement. Others might be recovered from idolatry; and the rising generation might be rescued from its contagion. So that there was a great deal of useful employment

me seven thousand in Israel, all [z] the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and [a] every mouth which hath not kissed him.

19 ¶ So he departed thence, and found [b] Elisha the son of Shaphat, who *was* ploughing *with* twelve yoke *of oxen* before him, and [c] he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast [d] his mantle upon him.

20 And [e] he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, [f] Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and *then* I will follow thee. And he said unto him, * Go back again; for what have I done to thee?

21 And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and [g] boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and [h] gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and [i] ministered unto him.

z Ex. 20:5. Is. 49:23. Rom. 14:10—12. Phil. 2:10.
a Job 31:27. Ps. 2:12. Hos. 13:2.
b See on 16.
c Ex. 3:1. Judg. 6:11. Ps. 78:70—72. Am. 7:14. Zech. 13:5. Matt. 4:18, 19.
d 13. 1 Sam. 28:14. 2 K. 2:8,13,14.
e Matt. 4:20,22. 9:9. 19:27.
f Matt. 8:21,22. Luke 9:61,62. Acts 20:37.
* Heb. *Go, return.*
g 2 Sam. 24:22.
h Luke 5:23,29.
i 18:43. Ex. 24:13. Num. 27:18—20. 2 K. 2:3. 3:11. Acts 13:5. 2 Tim. 4:11. Philem. 13.

now be nominated. When Hazael comes to be king of Syria, he shall make bloody work among the people, (2 K. 8: 12.) and so correct them for their idolatry.' 'When Jehu comes to be king of Israel, he shall make bloody work with the royal family, and shall utterly destroy the house of Ahab, that set up and maintained idolatry.' 'Elisha, while thou art on earth, shall strengthen thy hands; and when thou art gone, shall carry on thy work, and be a remaining witness against the apostasy of Israel, and even he shall slay the children of Beth-el, that idolatrous city.' Note, The wicked are reserved to judgment. *Evil pursues sinners*, and there is no escaping it; to attempt an escape, is but to run from one sword's point on another. It is a great comfort to good men, and good ministers, to think that God will never want instruments to do his work, in his time, but when *they* are gone, others shall be raised up to carry it on.

VI. The comfortable information God gives him of the number of Israelites who retained their integrity, though he thought he was left alone, *v.* 18. Note, 1. In times of the greatest degeneracy and apostasy, God has always had, and will have, a remnant faithful to Him. The apostle mentions this answer of God to Elijah, (Rom. 11: 4.) and applies it to his own day, when the Jews generally rejected the Gospel, *v.* 5. 2. It is God's work to preserve that remnant, and distinguish them from the rest; it is therefore said to be a remnant, *according to the election of grace.* 3. It is but a little remnant, in comparison with the degenerate race; what are 7,000 to the thousands of Israel? Yet when those of every age come together, they will be found many more, 12,000 *sealed out of each tribe*, Rev. 7: 4. 4. God's faithful ones are often his hidden ones, (Ps. 83: 3.) and the visible church scarcely visible; the wheat lost in the chaff, and the gold in the dross, till the sifting, refining, separating, day comes. 5. *The Lord knows them that are his*, though we do not; He sees them in secret. 6. There are more good people in the world, than some wise and holy men think.

V. 19—21. Elisha was named last in the orders God gave Elijah; but is first called, for by him the other two were to be called. Elijah is far from being jealous of his successor, and rejoices to think he shall leave the work of God in such good hands. Concerning the call of Elisha, observe,

1. It was a surprising call: Elijah found him by divine direction, or, perhaps, he was before acquainted with him, and knew where to find him, *v.* 19. Though a great man, (as appears by his feast, *v.* 21.) master of the ground, oxen, and servants, yet he did not think it any disparagement to him, to follow his business himself, and not only to inspect his servants, but himself to lay his hand to the plough. Idleness is no man's honor, nor husbandry any man's disgrace. An honest calling in the world, does not at all put us out of the way of our heavenly calling. Elisha inquired not after Elijah, but was anticipated with this call. We love God, and choose Him, because He chose us, and loved us, first.

2. It was a powerful call: Elijah did but *cast his mantle on him*, (*v.* 19.) in token of friendship, that he would take him under his care and tuition, or, in token of his being clothed with the spirit of Elijah; now he put some of his honor on him, as Moses on Joshua; (Num. 27: 20.) but when Elijah went to heaven, he had the mantle entire, 2 K. 2: 13. And immediately he *left the oxen* to go as they would, and *ran after Elijah*, assuring him that he would follow him presently, *v.* 20. An invisible hand touched his heart, and unaccountably inclined him, by a secret power, without any external persuasions, to quit his husbandry, and give himself to the ministry. It is in a day of power, that Christ's subjects are willing; nor would any come to Christ, unless they were thus drawn. Elisha came to a resolution presently, but begged a little time, not to *ask* leave, but only to *take* leave, of his parents. This was not an excuse for delay, like his that desired he might *bid them farewell that were at home;* but only a reservation of the respect and duty he owed his father and mother. Elijah bade him go back, and do it, he would not hinder him: nay, if he would, he might go back, and not return, for any thing he had done to him.

3. It was a pleasant and acceptable call, as appears by the farewell feast he made, *v.* 21. Yet he not only quitted all the comforts of his father's house, but exposed himself to the malignity of Jezebel, and her party; it was a discouraging time for prophets to set out in. A man that had consulted with flesh and blood, would not be fond of Elijah's mantle, nor willing to wear his coat; yet Elisha, cheerfully, and with great satisfaction, leaves all, to accompany him. Thus Matthew made a great feast, when he left the receipt of custom to follow Christ.

4. It was an effectual call: Elijah did not stay for him, but left him to his own choice, and he soon arose, went after him, and not only associated with him, but *ministered to him*, as his servitor, *poured water on his hands*, 2 K. 3: 11.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 15—21. It is not easy to convince men of their faults, and silence their excuses or boastings: and, whilst the Lord encourages his servants under their difficulties, He sends them back to their proper work, ashamed of their timidity and neglect; and then He gives them both helpers and success.—Those who duly understand the importance of the sacred ministry, will renounce every other honor, pleasure, and interest for the sake of it, though called to labor in the midst of hardships, poverty, and persecution.—Zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls will subordinate, though it will not extinguish, natural affections. (*Matt.* 10: 37—39.) The work of the ministry requires the whole man: and when such persons are employed, as have not been regularly educated for it, they are especially concerned to attend the instructions, frequent the company, and copy the examples, of aged and approved ministers: and 'no man having set his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.' (*P. O. Matt.* 4: 12—25.—*Matt.* 8: 21, 22.) In difficult times, helpers of inferior abilities may be a great comfort to the discouraged servants of God: and this service is carried on to advantage, when different ministers concur, from the same principles, to seek the same great end of his glory in the salvation of souls. May 'the Lord of the harvest send forth many such laborers into his harvest!' Amen. (*Note, Matt.* 9: 36—38.)

SCOTT.

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for Elijah, which it was well worth while to accomplish, even by living amidst persecutions, perils, and conflicts. (*Phil.* 1:21—26.) There was also a sufficient reason why the Lord should defer his anger, though provoked to jealousy every day. (*Rom.* 11:1—6.) SCOTT.

Kissed.] 'The mouth was often applied to the images of Hercules, in worship.' *Cicero.* In India, 'things sent to the temples, to be presented to idols, are, when returned, *kissed* by the people.' *Roberts.* But the text probably alludes to the little images of Baal handed round at their religious assemblies to be kissed, or to the ancient superstition of kissing the sometimes obscene image of this god, afterwards practised in heathen Italy, and handed down to us in the venerable custom of kissing the pope's toe. ED.

Verse 19.

This might occur after Elijah's return from the wilderness of Damascus, or in his journey thither.—Elisha was employed in husbandry, and his father seems to have been a man of wealth. Whilst he was employed in his labor, Elijah cast his mantle on him, which was intended, and understood, as a call to him to follow and attend upon him. (2 *K.* 2:13, 14.) SCOTT.

'It is no disgrace now in the E. for a great man to begin the work of the season by ploughing himself.' *Roberts. Twelve.*] 'This vale of Jordan was a clayey, stiff ground, and required such a number at first tilling.' *Fuller.* 'At Damasgraed, in upper Egypt, six oxen yoked to the plough turned up the ground with much difficulty.' *Norden.* Their oxen were probably smaller than ours, by one half; see the Egyptian monuments: and the oxen at present used in Crete, are so. Six oxen are sometimes used in the Western United States. See *Shirreff's* Tour. ED.

Verses 20, 21.

It is probable Elijah intended to discover, whether Elisha was fully determined to renounce his temporal interests, and to venture persecution as a prophet of the Lord.—The prophet could now no longer complain, that he was left alone, for the Lord had provided him a companion. (*Ex.* 4:14. *Matt.* 10.1—4.) SCOTT.

(21.) *Done to thee.*] 'Done to hinder thee.' BOOTHR

CHAP. XX.

Ben-hadad king of Syria, not satisfied with Ahab's submission, leads a powerful army against Samaria, and wars against it, 1—12. Ahab, directed by a prophet, gains a complete victory over him, 13—21. A prophet warns Ahab to prepare for another assault, 22. The Syrians come again, the next year, with very great preparations; and are opposed by a very small company, 23, 27. A prophet assures Ahab of victory, because the Syrians thought JEHOVAH the God of the hills, but not of the valleys, 28. The Syrians are smitten with immense slaughter, and Ben-hadad flees and hides himself, 29, 30. He submissively sues to Ahab, who makes a league with him, 31—34. A prophet, by a parable, leads Ahab to condemn himself, and then denounces the judgment of God against him for his unseasonable lenity, 35—43.

AND [a] Ben-hadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together; and *there were* [b] thirty and two kings with him, [c] and horses and chariots: and he went up and [d] besieged Samaria, and warred against it.

2 And [e] he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Ben-hadad,

3 Thy [f] silver and thy gold *is* mine; thy wives also and thy children, *even* the goodliest, *are* mine.

4 And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, [g] I *am* thine, and all that I have.

5 And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Ben-hadad, saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children;

6 Yet I will send my servants unto thee to-morrow, about this time, [h] and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants: and it shall be, *that* whatsoever is [*] pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put *it* in their hand, and take *it* away.

7 Then the king of Israel called [i] all the elders of the land, and said, [j] Mark, I pray you, and see how this *man* [k] seeketh mischief: for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold, and I † denied him not.

8 And all the elders and all the people said unto him, Hearken not *unto him*, nor consent.

9 Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Ben-hadad, Tell my lord the king, All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I will do; but this thing I may not do. And the messengers departed, and brought him word again.

10 And Ben-hadad sent unto him, and said, [l] The gods do so unto me, and more also, [m] if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that ‡ follow me.

a 15:18,20. 2 K. 8:7—15. 2 Chr. 16:2—4. Jer. 49:27. Am. 1:4.
b 16,24. Gen. 14:1—5. Judg. 1:7. Ezra 7:12. Is. 10:8. Ez. 26:7. Dan. 2:37.

Chap. XX. This ch. is the history of a war between Ben-hadad king of Syria, and Ahab king of Israel, in which Ahab was once, and again, victorious. We read nothing of Elijah or Elisha in all this story; Jezebel's rage, it is probable, was abated, and the persecution of the prophets began to cool; which gleam of peace Elijah improves; he appears not at court, but, being told how many thousand good people there were in Israel, more than he thought of, employs himself, as we may suppose, in founding religious schools, or colleges, of prophets, in several parts of the country, to be nurseries of religion, that they may help to reform the nation, when the throne and court would not be reformed: while they were thus busied, God favored the nation with the successes we here read of, which were the more remarkable, because obtained against Ben-hadad king of Syria, whose successor, Hazael, was ordained to be a scourge to Israel; they must shortly suffer by the Syrians, and yet now triumph over them, that, if possible, they might be led to repentance by the goodness of God.

V. 1—11. Here is, I. Ben-hadad's threat, *v.* 1. What the ground of the quarrel was, we are not told; covetousness and ambition were the principle, which would never want some pretence or other. David, in his time, had quite subdued the Syrians, and made them tributaries, but Israel's apostasy makes them formidable again Asa had tempted the Syrians to invade Israel once, (*ch.* 15: 18—20.) and now they did it of their own accord: it is dangerous bringing a foreign force into a country, posterity may pay dear for it. Ben-hadad had with him 32 kings, who were either tributaries, or confederates; how little did the title of king look, when all these poor, petty governors pretended to it!

II. The treaty between these two kings; surely Israel's Defence was departed, else the Syrians could not have marched so readily, and with so little opposition, to Samaria, the head and heart of the country, a city lately built, and therefore, we may suppose, not well fortified, but like to fall quickly into the hands of the invaders; both sides are aware of this, therefore,

1. Ben-hadad's proud spirit sends Ahab a very insolent demand, *v.* 2, 3. that Ahab become his vassal, nay, not only pay tribute out of what he has, but make over his title to Ben-hadad, and hold all at his will, even his wives and children, the goodliest of them: the manner of expression is designed to gall.

2. Ahab's poor spirit sends Ben-hadad a very disgraceful submission; general indeed, he cannot mention particulars in his surrender, with so much pleasure as Ben-hadad in his demand, but effectual, *I am thine, all that I have*, *v.* 4. See the effect of sin: it provokes God to depart, brings men into straits, and puts them out of divine protection; if God do not rule us, our enemies shall; a rebel to God, is a slave to all besides. Ahab had prepared his silver and gold for Baal, (Hos. 2: 8.) justly therefore is it taken from him; such an alienation amounts to a forfeiture. If he had not, by sin, wronged his own conscience, and set that against him, he could not have made such a mean surrender; guilt dispirits men, and makes them cowards; he knew Baal could not help, and had no reason to think God would, therefore is content to buy his life on any terms; he will rather live a beggar, than not die a prince.

3. Ben-hadad's proud spirit rises, on his submission, and becomes yet more insolent and imperious, *v.* 5, 6. Ahab had laid his all at his feet, expecting one king would use another generously, that his acknowledgment of Ben-hadad's sovereignty would have contented him; the honor was sufficient for the present, and he might, hereafter, make use of it if he saw cause; but this will not serve: He is as covetous as he is proud, he will not so much as lend Ahab the use of his own goods above a day longer. He is as spiteful as he is haughty; he will not come himself, but send his servants to insult the prince, and rifle the palace; nay, to vex Ahab the more, they shall be ordered not only to take what they please, but especially whatever Ahab is in a particular manner fond of. We are often crossed in that which we most doat on; and that proves least safe, which is most dear He is as unreasonable as he is unjust, he will construe the surrender Ahab made for himself, as made for all his subjects too, and plunder them at discretion. Blessed be God for peace and prosperity, and that what we have, we can call our own.

4. Ahab's poor spirit begins to rise, too, on his growing insolence; and if not bold, yet becomes desperate, he will rather hazard his life than give up all thus. Now he takes advice of his privy-council, though he speaks but poorly, (*v.* 7.) owns he had truckled before, and would have them advise what he should do in this strait; they speak bravely, *v.* 8. promising, no doubt, to stand by him in the refusal. Yet he expresses himself very modestly in his denial, *v.* 9. It was a mortification to Ben-hadad, that even such an abject spirit as Ahab's, dares deny him; yet it should seem by his manner of expressing himself, that he durst not have done it, if his people had not animated him.

5. Ben-hadad proudly swears the ruin of Samaria: the threatening waves of his wrath, meeting with this check, rage and foam, and make a noise; in his fury, he imprecates the impotent revenge of his gods: and so confident is he of success, that the taking of Samaria will be as easy as the taking up of a handful of dust; all shall be carried away, even the ground on which the city stands. Thus confident is his pride, thus cruel his malice; this pre-

c Ex. 14:7. Deut. 20:1. Judg. 4:3. 1 Sam. 13:5. Is. 37:24.
d Lev. 26:25. Deut. 28:52. 2 K. 6:24—29. 17:5,6.
e 2 K. 19:9. Is. 36:2, &c. 37:9,10.
f Ex. 15:9. Is. 10:13,14.
g Lev. 26:36. Deut. 28:48. Judg. 15:11—13. 1 Sam. 13,6,7. 2 K. 18:14—16.
h 1 Sam. 13:19—21. 2 Sam. 24:14. 2 K. 18:31,32.
* Heb. *desirable*. Gen. 27:15. Ezra 8. 27. Is. 44:9. Jer. 25:34. Lam. 1:7, 10. Hos. 13:15. Joel 3:5. *Marginal.*
i 8:1. 1 Chr. 13:1. 28:1. Prov. 11:14.
j 2 K. 5:7.
k Job 15:35. Ps. 7:14. 36:4. 62:3. 140: 2 Prov. 6:14. 11:27. 24:2. Dan. 11:27. Rom. 3:13—18.
† Heb. *kept not back from him.* See on 4.
l See on 19:2.—Acts 23:12.
m 2 Sam. 17:12,13. 2 K. 19:23,24. Is. 10:13,14. 37:24,25.
‡ Heb. *are at my feet.* Ex. 11:8. *Marg.* Judg. 4:10.

NOTES.

Chap. XX. V. 1. Ben-hadad signifies *The son of Hadad*; (11:14—22.) yet he is said to have been 'the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion.' (15:18.)—Perhaps Hadad was his father, and Tabrimon and Hezion his more remote ancestors.—The 32 kings were petty princes of the adjacent countries, who were either vassals or allies to the king of Syria.—Ben-hadad had probably wasted the country before he besieged Samaria.—The late terrible famine must have diminished the number of the Israelites, by death and emigration, almost beyond calculation: and, by the righteous judgment of God, the remainder were so disaffected to Ahab, or so dismayed by Ben-hadad, that they had retired or fled; thus they left the capital city in a very defenceless condition. Scott.

Verse 3.

Similar messages are still sent by the African princes to each other. See *Park*. Comp. also the inscriptions of the Egyptian monuments. Ed.

Verse 10.

Dust ... suffice for handfuls.] A figure, says *Roberts*, 'still in common use in the east.' In.

11 And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell *him*, [n] Let not him that girdeth on *his harness* boast himself as he that putteth it off.

12 And it came to pass, when *Ben-hadad* heard this [*] message, as he *was* [o] drinking, he and the kings in the [†] pavilions, that he said unto his servants, [‡] Set *yourselves in array.* And they set *themselves in array* against the city.

13 And, behold, there [§] came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the LORD, [p] Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day; [q] and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD.

14 And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the LORD, *Even* by the [‖] young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall [¶] order the battle? And he answered, Thou.

15 Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were [r] two hundred and thirty-two: and after them he numbered all the people, *even* all the children of Israel, *being* [s] seven thousand.

16 And they went out at noon. But [t] Ben-hadad *was* drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him.

17 And [u] the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; and Ben-hadad sent out, and they told him, saying, There are men come out of Samaria.

18 And he said, [v] Whether they be come out for peace, take them alive; or whether the be come out for war, take them alive.

19 So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army which followed them.

20 And [x] they slew every one his man: and [y] the Syrians fled; and Israel pursued them: and Ben-hadad the king of Syria [z] escaped on an horse, with the horsemen.

21 And the king of Israel [a] went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter.

[*Practical Observations.*]

pares him to be ruined, though such a prince and such a people are unworthy to see him ruined.

6. Ahab sends him a decent rebuke to his assurance; dares not defy his menaces, only reminds him of the uncertain turns of war, *v.* 11. This was one of the wisest words Ahab ever spake, and is a good item or memento to us all: it is folly to boast before, of any day, since we know not what it may bring forth; (Prov. 27: 1.) but especially of a day of battle. It is impolitic to despise an enemy; and to be too sure of victory is the way to be beaten. Apply it to our spiritual conflicts; Peter fell by his confidence: while we are here, we are but girding on the harness, therefore must never boast as though we had put it off. *Happy is the man that feareth always*, and is never off his watch.

V. 12—21. The treaty between the besiegers and the besieged being broken off abruptly, we have here an account of the battle that ensued immediately.

I. The Syrians, the besiegers, had their directions from a drunken king, who gave orders over his cups, as he was *drinking*, (*v.* 12.) and this, at noon. Drunkenness is a sin, which armies and their officers have, of old, been addicted to: security and sensuality went together in the old world, and in Sodom; Luke 17: 26, &c. and so here, Ben-hadad's drunkenness was the forerunner of his fall, as Belshazzar's was, Dan. 5. He orders the town to be invested, the engines fixed, and every thing got ready for a general attack, (*v.* 12.) but stirs not from his drunken club to see it done; *Wo unto thee, O land, when thy king is* such *a child.* When the besieged made a sally, he gave orders (*v.* 18.) not to kill them, which might have been done more easily and safely, but to seize them, which gave them an opportunity of killing the aggressors; so imprudent was he, as well as unjust, in ordering them to be taken prisoners, even if they came for peace, and to renew the treaty.

II. The Israelites, the besieged, had their directions from an inspired prophet, one of the prophets of the Lord, whom Ahab had hated and persecuted: *And behold, a prophet, even one, drew near to the king of Israel;* so it may be read, *v.* 13. Behold, and wonder, that God should send a prophet with a kind and gracious message to so wicked a prince; but He did it, 1. For his people Israel's sake, who, though wickedly degenerated, were the seed of Abraham his friend, and Jacob his chosen, the children of the covenant, not yet cast off. 2. That He might magnify his mercy, in doing good to one so evil and unthankful; might either bring him to repentance, or leave him the more inexcusable. 3. That He might mortify the pride of Ben-hadad, and check his insolence: Ahab's idolatry shall be punished hereafter, but Ben-hadad's haughtiness now; God resists the proud.

This prophet is not named, for he *spake in God's name;* but when he said, *Thus saith the Lord*, we may suppose Ahab began to tremble, expecting a message of wrath; yet he is revived, when it proves a gracious one. He is reminded of the use he must make of this blessed turn of affairs. God's foretelling a thing so very unlikely, proved it was his own doing. The prophet instructs him what to do to gain the victory. 1. He must sally out, and surprise the enemy in their trenches. 2. The persons employed must be the *young men of the princes of the provinces*, the pages, the footmen, few in number, unacquainted with war, and the unlikeliest men that could be thought of, for such a bold attempt; these must do it, that while Ben-hadad's boasting is punished, Ahab's might be prevented and precluded, and the *excellency of the power* be *of God.* 3. Ahab must himself so far testify his confidence in the word of God, as to command in person, though, in the eye of reason, he exposed himself to the utmost danger by it; it is fit that those who have the benefit of God's promises, should venture on them. Yet, 4. He is allowed to use what forces he had at hand, to follow the blow. All he had in Samaria, or within call, were but 7000 men; *v.* 15. the same number, observe, with theirs that had not *bowed the knee to Baal*, (*ch.* 19: 18.) though, it is likely, not the same men.

III. The issue was accordingly; the proud Syrians were beaten, the poor, despised Israelites more than conquerors; the young men alarmed the Syrians, just at noon, at high dinner time [at least this was the hour of dinner among the ancient Egyptians], supported by what little force they had, *v.* 16. Ben-hadad despised them, at first, (*v.* 18.) but at length, affrighted, he mounted

[n] 1 Sam. 14:6,12,13. 17:44—47. Prov. 27:1. Ec. 9:11. Is. 10:15,16. Matt. 26:33—35,75.
[*] Heb. *word.*
[o] 16. 16:9. 1 Sam. 25:36. 2 Sam. 13: 28. Prov. 31:4,5. Dan. 5:2,30. Luke 21:34. Eph. 5:18.
[†] Or, *tents.* Jer. 43:10.
[‡] Or, *Place* the engines. *And they placed* engines.
[§] Heb. *approached.*
[p] 2 K. 6:8—12. 7:1. 13:23. Is. 7:1—9. Ez. 20:14,22.
[q] 28. 18:37. Ex. 14:18. 16:12. Ps. 83:18. Is. 37:20. Ez. 6:7. Joel 3:17.
[‖] Or, *servants.* Gen. 14:14—16. Judg. 7:16—20. 1 Sam. 17:50. 1 Cor. 1:27—29.
[¶] Heb. *bind*, or, *tie.* See on 18:44.
[r] Judg. 7:7,16. 1 Sam. 14:6. 2 Chr. 14:11.
[s] 19:18. 1 Sam. 14:2. 2 K. 13:7. Ps. 106:40—43.
[t] See on 12.—16:9. Prov. 23:29—32. Ec. 10:16,17.
[u] 14,15,19.
[v] 1 Sam. 2:3,4. 14:11,12. 17:44. 2 K. 14:8—12. Prov. 18:12.
[x] 2 Sam. 2:16.
[y] Lev. 26:8. Judg. 7:20—22. 1 Sam 14:13—15. 2 K. 7:6,7. Ps. 33:16. 46: 6.
[z] 1 Sam. 30:16,17. 2 K. 19:36.
[a] Judg. 3:28. 7:23—25. 1 Sam. 14:20—22. 17:52. 2 K. 3: 18,24.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—21. The indignation of the Lord will surely weaken and dispirit sinners: and those nations especially, which have been favored with the light of revelation, will be brought low for their iniquity, when they forsake the service of God.—Ungodly men delight to insult over the fallen; success increases their pride and insolence; and thus they too are prepared for vengeance.—Those, who most daringly rebel against God, are often mere cowards when assaulted by their fellow creatures.—Men will part with their most pleasant things, to save their temporal lives: yet they lose their souls, and incur everlasting misery, rather than bestow any labor, or give up any pleasure or interest, to prevent it! (*Matt.* 16: 24—28. *P. O.* 21—28.)—Boasting and menacing language generally betrays a weak and foolish mind, exposes men to cutting rebukes, and terminates in abject meanness and disgrace.—The Lord will secure his own glory, and take care of his own people, notwithstanding the wickedness of the great, or the many: He will leave every impenitent sinner without excuse; and He delights to save by unlikely instruments, that his own power may be the more conspicuous.—The Lord inspires counsel and courage, or sends infatuation and dismay, as He pleases: so that the battle is not to the strong; but all calculations are strangely proved erroneous, when this secret influence is not taken into the account. (*Ec.* 9: 11, 12.) SCOTT.

Verse 11.

Harness.] 'An obsolete word for "armor," from the French, "*harnois.*"' HEWLETT.

Verse 13.

Elijah had complained that he was left alone; yet the Lord had other prophets, whom he could send to speak before Ahab. (19:10.) Probably, Elijah and Elisha were at this time well employed in some distant part of the land. SCOTT.

Verses 19—21.

This unexpected resistance, by the secret operation of God on the

22 ¶ And [b] the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go, [c] strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest: for [d] at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee.

23 And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, [e] Their gods *are* gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we: but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.

24 And do this thing; [f] Take the kings away, every man out of his place, and put captains in their rooms:

25 And number thee an army, like the army that [*] thou hast lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot: and we will fight against them in the plain, *and* surely we shall be stronger than they. And he hearkened unto their voice, and did so.

26 And it came to pass at the return of the year, that Ben-hadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to [g] Aphek [†] to fight against Israel.

27 And the children of Israel were numbered, and [‡] were all present, and went against them: and the children of Israel pitched before them [h] like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country.

28 ¶ And [i] there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, [k] Because the Syrians have said, The LORD *is* God of the hills, but he *is* not God of the valleys, [l] therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and [m] ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

29 And they pitched one over against the other [n] seven days. And *so* it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined: and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians [o] an hundred thousand footmen in one day.

30 But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and *there* [p] a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men *that were* left. And Ben-hadad [q] fled and came into the city [§] into an inner chamber.

31 And [r] his servants said unto him, Behold now, we have heard

b 13,38. 19:10. 22:8.
c 2 Chr. 25:8,11. Ps. 27:14. Prov. 18:10. 20:18. Is. 8:9. Joel 3:9,10. Eph. 6:10.
d 26. 2 Sam. 11:1. 1 Chr. 20:1. Is. 26:11.
e 23. 14:23. 1 Sam. 4:8. 2 K. 19:12. 2 Chr. 32:13—19. Ps. 50:21,22. 121:1, 2. Is. 42:8.
f 1,16. 22:31. Prov. 21:30.
* Heb. *was fallen.*
g 30. Josh. 13:4. 19:30. Judg. 1:31. *Aphik.* 1 Sam. 4:1. 29:1. 2 K. 13:17.
† Heb. *to the war with Israel.*
‡ Or, *were victualled.* Josh. 1:11. Judg. 7:8.
h Deut. 32:30. Judg. 6:5. 1 Sam. 13:5—8. 14:2. 2 Chr. 32:7,8. Ec. 9:11.
i 13,22. 13:1. 17:13. 2 Chr. 20:14—20.
k See on 23.
l Deut. 32:27. Josh. 7:8,9. Ps. 59:10, 11. 79:10. Is. 37:29,35. Jer. 14:7. Ez. 20:9,14. 36:21—23,32.
m See on 13.—Ex. 6:7. 7:5. 8:22. Deut. 29:6. Ez. 6:14. 11:1,. 12:16. 36:22. 39:7.
n Josh. 6:15. 1 Sam. 17:16.
o 2 Sam. 10:18. 2 Chr. 13:17. 20:22—25. 28:6. Is. 37:36.
p Is. 24:18. Jer. 48:44. Am. 2:1,,15. 5:19. 9:3. Luke 13:4.
q 10,20. Dan. 4:37.
§ Or, *from chamber to chamber.* Heb. *into a chamber within a chamber.* 22: 25. 2 Chr. 18:24.
r 23. 2 K. 5:13.

I. Ahab is admonished by a prophet to prepare for another war, *v.* 22. It should seem, he was now secure; those that are careless of their souls, are often as careless of their outward affairs; but the prophet (to whom God made known the counsels of the Syrians) told him, they would renew their attempt, at the return of the year, hoping to retrieve their honor, and be avenged. He therefore bade him strengthen himself, and be ready. God had decreed the end, but Ahab must use the means, else he tempts God. The enemies of God's Israel, though they may take time to breathe, yet are restless in their malice. It concerns us always to expect assaults from our spiritual enemies, and therefore to mark and see what we do.

II. Ben-hadad is advised by those about him concerning the next campaign.

1. To *change his ground*, *v.* 23. They take it for granted it was not Israel, but Israel's gods, that beat them; (so great a regard was then universally had to invisible powers;) but they speak very ignorantly of Jehovah—that He was *many*, whereas he is One,—that He was *their* God only, a local deity, peculiar to that nation, whereas He is the Creator and Ruler of all the world—and that He was a God *of the hills* only, because David, had said, *I will lift up mine eyes to the hills from whence cometh my help*, and that *his foundation was in the holy mountain*; and much was said of his *holy hill*, supposing Him altogether such a one as their imaginary deities: thus vain were they *in their imaginations* concerning God.

2. They advise him to change his officers; (*v.* 24, 25.) not to employ the kings, who were commanders by birth, but captains rather, who were commanders by merit; let every man be employed in that which he is brought up to, and used to, and preferred to that which he is fit for. Syria, it seems, was rich and populous, when it could furnish recruits sufficient, after so great a defeat, *horse for horse, chariot for chariot.*

III. Both armies take the field: Ben-hadad, with his Syrians, near Aphek, in the tribe of Asher, a city, it is likely, in his own possession, one of those his father had won, (*v.* 34.) and the country about, flat and level, fit for his purpose, *v.* 26. Ahab, with his forces, at some distance over against them, *v.* 27. The disproportion of numbers was very remarkable, *v.* 27.

IV. Ahab is encouraged to fight. A man of God is sent to tell him, that this numerous army should *all be delivered into his hand*, (*v.* 28.) but not for his sake; he was utterly unworthy: God would not do it, because Ahab had praised God, or prayed to Him, (we do not read that he did either,) but because the Syrians had blasphemed God, who is Lord of all hosts, not only in hills and valleys, but in heaven and earth, which they are willingly ignorant of; and shall be undeceived, at the expense of that vast army which is so much their pride and confidence.

V. After the armies had faced one another seven days, (the Syrians, it is likely, boasting, and the Israelites trembling,) they engaged, and the Syrians were totally routed; 100,000 slain in the field of battle, (*v.* 29.) and 27,000, *under the walls of Aphek*, probably, overthrown by an earthquake, and, the cities of Canaan being walled up to heaven, it reached a great way, and they were all either killed, hurt, or overwhelmed with dismay. Ben-hadad, who thought his city Aphek should have held out against the conquerors, finding it thus unwalled, and the remnant of his forces dispirited and dispersed, had nothing but secrecy to rely on for safety, therefore hid himself in *a chamber within a chamber.*

V. 31—43. Here is what followed the victory.

I. Ben-hadad's tame and mean submission; even in his inner chamber he fears, and would, if he could, flee further, though none pursues; his servants, seeing him and themselves reduced to the last extremity, advise a surrender at discretion, and make themselves prisoners and petitioners to Ahab for their lives, *v.* 31. Their inducements of the Syrians, so dismayed them, that they yielded the army an easy and decisive victory. (1 *Sam.* 14:11—15.) SCOTT.

Verses 23—25.

They had probably heard, that JEHOVAH had displayed his glory from mt. Sinai: the temple was built on mt. Zion; Samaria was situated on a hill; and the people loved to sacrifice on high places: therefore the Syrians concluded that the God of Israel was powerful on the mountains, but not in the plains; and they foolishly expected to prevail against Israel and JEHOVAH, by changing their ground. (*Num.* 23:13.) No doubt, however, they likewise considered the plain country as better suited to their army, which was furnished with cavalry and chariots of war, than to the foot soldiers of Israel. (*M. R.* e, f) ID.

(23.) *Gods of the hills.*] 'This notion very much obtained in all ages, among the heathen, see *Ovid*, *Livy*, *Lactantius*, &c.' GILL. 'So the Hindoos have their gods of the hills, and also those of the lower places. Thus Siva, Vishnoo, and Murraga-Murte are those of the high places; but Vyravar, Urruttera, and many demons, are the deities of the lower regions.' [See also the *Pantheon Egyptien*, of CHAMPOLLION.] ROBERTS.

Verse 26.

Aphek (*M. R* g. *Josh.* 19:24—31.) seems to have been selected as the seat of the war, because the adjacent region had plains and valleys suited to Ben-hadad's cavalry. SCOTT.

Verse 27.

All.] 'I. e. all that were in the battle of the former year.' REF BIB.

Verse 28.

Another prophet seems to have been sent with this message; and not he who delivered the former one. SCOTT.

Verse 30.

Wall.] '*Chumh.* KENNICOTT would read *Chmh* "*heat*" and render, "and the burning wind fell," &c. as on the army of Sennacherib.' COND. COMM.

Verses 31—34.

This must have been a very great mortification to Ben-hadad: and

that the kings of the house of Israel *are* [t] merciful kings: let us, I pray thee, [u] put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel; [u] peradventure he will save thy life.

32 So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and *put* ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, [v] Thy servant Ben-hadad saith, I pray thee, let me live. And he said, *Is* he yet alive? [x] he *is* my brother.

33 Now [y] the men did diligently observe whether *any thing would come* from him, and did hastily catch *it:* and they said, Thy brother Ben-hadad. Then he said, Go ye, bring him. Then Ben-hadad came forth to him; [z] and he caused him to come up into the chariot.

34 And *Ben-hadad* said unto him, [a] The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then, *said Ahab,* I will send thee away with this covenant. [b] So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.

35 ¶ And a certain man [c] of the sons of the prophets said unto his neighbor, [d] in the word of the LORD, [e] Smite me, I pray thee. And the man refused to smite him.

36 Then said he unto him, [f] Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the LORD, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee. And as soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him, and slew him.

37 Then he found another man, and said, [g] Smite me, I pray thee. And the man smote him, [*] so that in smiting he wounded *him.*

38 So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, and [h] disguised himself with ashes upon his face.

39 And as the king passed by, he cried unto the king: and he said, [i] Thy servant went out

[*] The Canaanites were notorious for cruelty to prisoners of war, (note 2 Sam. 12:31.) and the monuments of Egypt prove even the Egyptians to have been cruel to such. *Wilkinson* remarks on the pictures of the great conqueror, Ramses II. (Sesostris of some.) 'Cruelty has ever been throughout the E. the criterion of courage; and the power of a monarch or the valor of a nation has always been estimated by the inexorability of their character. Thus too Achilles is called "impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer."' *Ed.*

the conqueror?' This word *brother* they catch at, (*v.* 33.) and were encouraged by that to go and fetch their king; he that calls him *brother*, will *let him live.* Let poor penitents hear God, in his Word, calling them *children*, (Jer. 31: 20.) and call him *Father.* Ben-hadad, on his submission, shall not only be honorably conveyed, (he *took him up into the chariot,*) but treated with as an ally; (*v.* 34.) he *made a covenant with him,* not consulting either God's prophets, or the elders of the land, or himself, concerning what was fit to be insisted on, but, as if Ben-hadad had been conqueror, he shall make his own terms: he is content with a poor liberty, at his own expense, to build streets in Damascus, a point of honor, and no advantage. With this covenant he sent him away, without so much as reproving him for his blasphemous reflections on the God of Israel, whose honor Ahab had no concern for. Note, There are those on whom success is ill bestowed; they know not how to serve either God or their generation, or even their own true interests, with their prosperity: *Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness.*

III. The reproof to Ahab for his clemency, and covenant; given by a prophet, in the name of the Lord; the Jews say by Micaiah, and not unlikely, for Ahab complains of him, (*ch.* 22: 8.) that he used to *prophesy evil concerning him:* this prophet designed to reprove Ahab by a parable, (to oblige him to condemn himself, as Nathan and the woman of Tekoa did David;) to make it the more plausible, he feigns to be a wounded soldier.

1. With some difficulty, he gets himself wounded, for he would not do it with his own hands; one of his brother prophets, his *neighbor* or *companion,* (for so the word signifies,) *v.* 35. declined it, we cannot but think from a good principle. Good men can much more easily receive a wrongful blow than give one; yet because he disobeyed an express command of God, (which was so much the worse if he were himself a prophet,) like that other disobedient prophet, *ch.* 13: 24. he was presently *slain by a lion, v.* 36. This was intended, not only to show, in general, how provoking disobedience is, (Col. 3: 6.) but to intimate to Ahab, who, no doubt, was told the story, that if a good prophet were thus punished for sparing his friend and God's, when God said, *Smite,* of much sorer punishment should a wicked king be thought worthy, who spared his enemy and God's, when God said, *Smite. Shall mortal man* pretend to *be more just than God, more pure* or more compassionate *than his Maker?* We must be merciful *as* He is merciful, not otherwise. The next he met, made no difficulty of smiting him, *v.* 37.

2. He charged himself with such a crime, as

s Prov. 20:28. Is. 16:5. Eph. 1:7,8.
t 21:27—29. 2 Sam. 3:31. 14:2. 2 K. 19:1,2. Esth. 4:1—3. Is. 22:12. 37: 1. Jon. 3:5,6. Rev. 11:3.
u 2 K. 7:4. Esth. 4:16. Job 2:4. Matt. 10:28.
v 3—6. Job 12:17,18. 40:11,12. Is. 2: 11,12. 10:12. Dan. 5:20—23. Ob. 3,4.
x 42. 1 Sam. 15:8,20.
y Prov. 25:13. Luke 16:8.
z 2 K. 10:15. Acts 3:31.
a 15:20. 2 Chr. 16:4.
b 42. 22:31. 2 Chr. 18:30. Is. 28:10.
c 38. 1 Sam. 10:12. 2 K. 2:3,5,7,15. 4:1,38. Am. 7:14. d 13:1,2,17,18.
e 37. Is. 8:18. 20:2,3. Jer. 27:2,3. Ez. 4:3. Matt. 16:24.
f 13:21—24,26. 1 Sam. 15:22,23.
g 35. Ex. 21:12.
* Heb. *smiting and wounding.*
h 14:2. 22:30 2 Sam. 14:2. Matt. 6: 16.
i Judg. 9:7—20. 2 Sam. 12:1—7. 14:5—7. Mark 12:1—12.

it was equally flattering to Ahab's vanity; who, seduced by it, forgot both the interests of Israel, and his own real honor and security.—These streets of Damascus were probably allotted the Israelites for the purposes of trade, that in them they might live unmolested according to their own laws. It is probable, that the same liberty had been allowed the Syrians in Samaria; where the idolaters were at ease, when the prophets of JEHOVAH were cut off. SCOTT.

Diligently observe, &c. (33) The Heb. is from *Nachash,* note, Gen. 44:2—5. These men acted with the subtlety and sagacity of the serpent, in their conduct before Ahab. ID.

(31, 32.) *Ropes on their heads.*] Or about their necks. So *Boothr.* Comp. the figures of captives in the cut, 1 K. 10:18. and 2 K. 17:6. Such are common on Egyptian monuments. They are sometimes seen thus tied together in rows, and 'led captive' by one who holds the end of the string in his hand. In some instances they appear thus tied together on their knees, while the executioner cuts off their heads: Comp. 9:16. *Thevenot* states, that at the taking of Bagdad by the Turks, in 1638, when the besieged entreated quarter, the principal officer went to the Grand Vizier with a scarf about his neck, and his sword wreathed in it, and begged mercy. ED.

(34.) *Ben-hadad.*] Rather, Ahab, says *Gill,* who supposes that *Omri,* the warlike father of Ahab, rather took cities than lost them, and that the words 'make streets in Damascus,' confirm the idea: 'for Ben-hadad's father never had any power in Samaria, but Ahab's built it.' ID.

Verses 38—40.

The prophet appeared, either as one wounded in the face, and so covered with a bandage like a veil to disguise himself, as many understand it; or he assumed the character of a mourner, being under condemnation to die, seeing he could not pay the talent of silver required of him; or he united both. [The ancient Egyptians in mourning daubed their faces with mud.] His account implied, that the prisoner

into the midst of the battle; and, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then shall [k] thy life be for his life, [l] or else thou shalt [*] pay a talent of silver.

40 And as thy servant was busy here and there, [†] he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, [m] So *shall* thy judgment *be;* thyself hast decided *it.*

41 And he hasted, and took [n] the ashes away from his face; and the king of Israel discerned him, that he *was* of the prophets.

42 And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, [o] Because thou hast let go out of *thy* hand a man, whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore [p] thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.

43 And the king of Israel [q] went to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria.

CHAP. XXI.

Ahab covets Naboth's vineyard, and is greatly displeased, because Naboth refuses to part with it, 1—4. Jezebel discovering this, by letters, in Ahab's name, to the elders of Jezreel, causes Naboth to be stoned, as a blasphemer, 5—14. She excites Ahab to take possession of his vineyard, 15,16. Elijah is sent to meet Ahab, and to denounce the judgment of God against him, and his family, and Jezebel, 17—24. Ahab's enormous wickedness, 25, 26. He externally humbles himself before God, and the judgments on his family are deferred to his son's days, 27—29.

AND it came to pass [a] after these things, *that* Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which *was* in [b] Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.

2 And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, [c] Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for [d] a garden of herbs, because it *is* near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; *or,* if it [‡] seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.

3 And Naboth said to Ahab, [e] The LORD forbid it me, that [f] I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.

k 42. 2 K. 10:24.
l Ex. 21:30. Job 36:18. Ps. 49:7,8. Prov. 6:35. 13:8. 1 Pet. 1:18,19.
* Heb. *weigh.*
† Heb. *he was not.*
m 2 Sam. 12:5,6. Job 15:6. Matt. 21: 41. 25:24—27. Luke 19:22.

n 38. 2 Sam. 13:19. Job 2:8. Jer. 6: 26.
o 34. 1 Sam. 15:9—11.
p 22:31—37. 2 K. 6.24. 8:12. 2 Chr. 18:33,34.
q 21:4. 22:8. Esth. 5:13. 6:12,13. Job 5:2. Prov. 19:3.
a 20:35—43. 2 Chr. 28:22. Ezra 9:13, 14. Is. 9:13. Jer. 5:3.
b 18:45. Josh. 19:18. Judg. 6:33. 1 Sam. 29:1. Hos. 1:4,5.
c Gen. 3:6. Ex. 20:17. Deut. 5:21. 1 Sam. 8:14. Jer. 22:17. Hab. 2:9—11. Luke 12:15. 1 Tim. 6:9,10. Jam. 1: 14,15.
d 2 K. 9:27. Deut. 11:10. Ec. 2:5. Cant. 4:15.
‡ Heb. *be good in thine eyes.* Gen. 16: 6. 1 Sam. 8:6. 29:6. *Margins.*
e Gen. 44:7,17. Josh. 22:29. 24:16. 1 Sam. 12:23. 24:6. 26:9—11. 1 Chr. 11:19. Job 27:5. Rom. 3:4,6,31. 6: 2,15. 7:7,13. 1 Cor. 6:15. Gal. 6:14.
f Lev. 25:23. Num. 36:7. Ez. 46:18.

CHAP. XXI. Ahab is still the unhappy subject of the sacred history; from the great affairs of his camp and kingdom this ch. leads us into his garden, and gives us an account of some ill things, (ill indeed they proved to him,) relating to his domestic affairs.

V. 1—4. Here is, I. Ahab's coveting his neighbor's vineyard; perhaps, Naboth had been pleased his vineyard lay so advantageously for a prospect of the royal gardens, or the vending of its productions to the royal family, but it proved fatal to him; many a man's possessions have been his snare, and his neighborhood to greatness, of pernicious consequence. Ahab sets his eye on this vineyard, *v.* 2. and nothing will serve but it must be his; yet he is not such a tyrant as to take it by force, but fairly proposes, either to give him the full value of it in money, or a better vineyard in exchange; and to desire a convenience to his estate, was not evil; there would be no buying, if there was no desire of what is bought; the virtuous woman *considers a field and buys it;* but to desire any thing inordinately, though we would compass it by lawful means, is a fruit of selfishness, contrary to the law of contentment, and the letter of the tenth commandment.

II. The repulse he met with in this desire, *v.* 3. Canaan was, in a peculiar manner, God's land; the Israelites his tenants; and one of the conditions of their leases was, they should not alienate any part of what fell to their lot, unless in case of extreme necessity, and then only till the year of jubilee, Lev. 25: 28. Naboth foresaw, if his vineyard were sold to the crown, it would never return to his heirs, no not in the jubilee; he would gladly oblige the king, but he must obey God rather than men, therefore desires to be excused. Ahab knew the law, or should

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 22—43. Fallen man has very confused, absurd, and dishonorable apprehensions of the divine attributes; and is thus emboldened to persist in his rebellion: and the most consummate wisdom, in worldly concerns, often unites with the most contemptible ignorance on religious subjects.—To silence the blasphemies, or to expose the mistakes of his enemies, the Lord sometimes gives temporary success to those, who, *in another way,* despise his warnings and disobey his precepts: but He will not countenance them in their crimes, nor let them finally escape condign punishment.—The whole creation is at war with those who fight against God; and He will surely render contemptible, as well as miserable, the haughtiest of them.—It indeed becomes all to be *merciful;* and clemency is the ornament of royalty, especially of the kings of Israel, the rulers of God's people: yet clemency to notorious criminals, whilst those who love and serve God are treated with cruelty, is strangely inconsistent.—In every thing the Lord demands *implicit* obedience; even the plea of compassion will not excuse rebellion against his will: and, by severe temporal judgments on such as have committed lighter offences, He loudly speaks terror to more atrocious criminals; whom He will at length constrain to decide against themselves. And whatever prosperity they may in the meantime obtain, it will be imbittered to them by what they feel, and what they fear; for 'there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.'—Alas! how many that hear these glad tidings, are busy here and there, till the day of salvation is gone; and, not having wherewithal to ransom their souls, they must spend eternity in unavailing lamentations and despair. Even true believers are often so taken up with trifles, as to let seasons of important usefulness glide away unimproved, to the loss both of themselves and of others. SCOTT.

trusted to his keeping was one of superior rank; and that his officer, or captain, committed him to his care, with this injunction, or warning. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI. V. 2, 3. 'Our first parents had for their residence a beautiful garden, which may have had some influence on their immediate descendants, in giving them a predilection for such situations. People in England will scarcely be able to appreciate the value the orientals place on a garden. The food of many of them consists of vegetables, roots, and fruits; their medicines, also, being indigenous, are mostly produced in their gardens. Here they have their fine fruit trees, and the constant shade; and here they have their wells and places for bathing. See the proprietor, in his undress, walking around his little domain; his fence or wall is so high, no one can overlook him: he strolls about to smoke his *shroot,* pick up the fruit, and cull the flowers; he cares not for the world; his soul is satisfied with the scenes around him. Ahab wished to have Naboth's garden; but how could he part with "the inheritance of his fathers?" There was scarcely a tree which had not some pleasing associations connected with it: one was planted by the hand of a beloved ancestor, another in memory of some great event; (on the day a child is born, parents often plant a number of fruit trees;) the water he drank, and the fruit he ate, were from the same sources as those which refreshed his fathers. How then could he, in disobedience to God's command, and in violation of all these tender feelings, give up his garden to Ahab? To part with such a place is, to the people of the east, like parting with life itself.' ROBERTS.

(3.) *The Lord forbid it me.*] *Gen.* 18:25. *Josh.* 22: 29. 24:16. 1

4 And Ahab came into his house [g] heavy and displeased, because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, [h] I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. [i] And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.

5 But [k] Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, [l] Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?

6 And he said unto her, [m] Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee *another* vineyard for it: and he answered, [n] I will not give thee my vineyard.

7 And Jezebel his wife said unto him, [o] Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? Arise *and* eat bread, and let thine heart be merry; [p] I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

[*Practical Observations.*]

8 So [q] she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed *them* with his seal, and sent the letters unto [r] the elders, and to [s] the nobles that

g See on 20:43.—Is. 57:20,21. Jon. 4:1, 9.
h See on 3.—Num. 22:13,14.
i Gen. 4:5—8. 2 Sam. 13:2,4. Ec. 6:9. 7:8,9. Eph. 4:27. Jam. 1:14,15.
k 25. 16:31. 18:4. 19:2. Gen. 3:6.
l 2 Sam. 13:4. Neh. 2:2. Esth. 4:5.
m See on 2.—Esth. 5:9—14. 6:12,13. Prov. 14:30. 1 Tim. 6:9,10. Jam. 4:2—7. n See on 3,4.
o 1 Sam. 8:14. 2 Sam. 13:4. Prov. 30:31. Ec. 4:1. 8:4. Dan. 5:19—21.
p 15,16. Mic. 2:1,2. 7:3.
q 2 Sam. 11:14,15. 2 Chr. 32:17. Ezra 4:7,8,11. Neh. 6:5. Esth. 3:12—15. 8:8—13.
r Num. 11:16. Deut. 16:18,19. 21:1—9.
s 1. 2 K. 10:1—7,11.

have known it, therefore did ill to ask what his subject could not grant without sin. Some think Naboth took his earthly inheritance as an earnest of his lot in the heavenly, and therefore would not part with the former, lest he should forfeit the latter: he seems to have been a conscientious man, who would rather hazard the king's displeasure than offend God; probably, he was one of the 7000 that had not bowed the knee to Baal, for which, it may be, Ahab owed him a grudge.

III. Ahab's great discontent and uneasiness, hereupon, *v.* 4. He could by no means digest the affront; it was a thing not to be suffered; he cursed the squeamishness of Naboth's conscience, nor could he bear the disappointment, it cut him to the heart, he was perfectly sick for vexation. Note, 1. Discontent is a sin that is its own punishment, and makes men torment themselves; it makes the spirit sad, the body sick, and all the enjoyments sour; it is the heaviness of the heart, and the rottenness of the bones. 2. It is a sin that is its own parent; it arises not from the condition, but from the mind; Paul was contented in a prison, Ahab is discontented in a palace; he had all the delights of Canaan, that pleasant land, the wealth of a kingdom, the pleasures of a court, the honors and powers of a throne; yet *all this avails him nothing* without Naboth's vineyard. Inordinate desires expose men to continual vexations, and they that are disposed to fret, be they ever so happy, will always find something or other to fret at.

V. 5—16. Nothing but mischief is to be expected when Jezebel enters into the story—*that cursed woman*, 2 K. 9: 34.

I. Under pretence of comforting her afflicted husband, she feeds his pride and passion, and blows the coals of his corruptions. It became her to notice his grief, and inquire its cause, *v.* 5. Those have forgotten both the duty and affection of the conjugal relation, that interest not themselves in each other's troubles. He tells her what troubled him, (*v.* 6.) yet invidiously conceals Naboth's reason for his refusal, representing it as peevish, when it was conscientious; *I* will *not give it thee*, whereas he said, *I* may *not*. What! (says Jezebel, *v.* 7.) *Dost thou govern Israel? Arise, and eat bread.* She does well to persuade him to shake off his melancholy; grieving would not redress it, but pleasantness would alleviate it; her plea is capable of a good sense; 'Does it become so great a prince, to cast himself down for so small a matter? Art thou fit to govern Israel, who hast no better a government of thine own passions? Or hast thou so rich a kingdom at command, and canst not thou be without this one vineyard?' We should learn to quiet ourselves, under our crosses, with the thoughts of the mercies we enjoy, especially our hopes of the kingdom. But she meant it in a bad sense; 'Art thou a king? It is below thee to buy and pay, much more to beg and pray; stretch thy prerogative, and take the vineyard by force; instead of resenting the affront, revenge it: give me leave to use thy name, and I will soon *give thee the vineyard*, and it shall cost thee nothing.' Unhappy princes those are, and hurried apace toward their ruin, who have those about them, that stir them up to acts of tyranny, and teach them how to abuse their power.

II. To gratify him, she projects and compasses Naboth's death; no less than his blood will atone for the affront he had given Ahab, which she thirsts after the more greedily, because of his adherence to the law of the God of Israel. Had she aimed only at his land, her false witnesses might have sworn him out of that by a forged deed; but *the adulteress will hunt for the precious life.* Revenge is sweet.

1. Never were more wicked orders given by any prince, *v.* 8—10. She borrows the privy-seal, but the king shall not know what she will do with it: probably this was not the first time he had lent it her, but that with it she had signed warrants to slay the prophets. She uses the king's name, knowing the thing would please him when done, yet fearing he might scruple the manner of doing it; in short, she commands them, on their allegiance, to put Naboth to death, without giving them any reason. To oblige them to find the witnesses, to suborn them themselves, and then to give judgment on a testimony they knew to be false, was such an impudent defiance to every thing just and sacred, as we hope cannot be paralleled in any story; she must look upon the elders of Jezreel as men perfectly lost to every thing honest and honorable, when she expected these orders to be obeyed; but she will put them in a way how to do it, having as much of the serpent's subtilty as of his poison.

(1.) It must be done *under color of religion.*—'*Proclaim a fast*, as if apprehensive of some dreadful judgment, which you would avert, not only by prayer, but by finding out and putting away the accursed thing; charge the people, if they know of any great offender, to inform against him, and at last let Naboth be fastened on as the suspected person, that may serve for a pretence to *set him on high*, i. e. to call him to the bar. Note, No wickedness is so vile, so horrid, but religion has sometimes been made a cloak for it. We must not at all think the worse of fasting and praying for their having been sometimes thus abused, but much the worse of those wicked designs that have at any time been carried on under color of them.

(2.) It must be done *under color of justice* too, and with the formalities of a legal process. Had she sent to them to hire some desperate ruffians to assassinate him, it had been bad enough; but to do it by a course of law, to use that power to murder the innocent, which ought to be their protection, was such a *violent perverting of justice and judgment* as yet we are bid *not to marvel at*, Eccl. 5: 8. The crime they must lay to his charge, was a complicated blasphemy. His *blaspheming God* would be the forfeiture of his life, but not of his estate, therefore he is also charged with treason, in *blaspheming the king*, for which his estate was to be confiscated, that so Ahab might have his vineyard.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—7. It is natural to us, as fallen creatures, to hanker after those things which are withheld from us; and every accession of wealth or prosperity, increases the violence of this propensity. The commandment indeed, which forbids us to covet, 'is holy, just, and good,' the fence of our neighbor's property, and of our own peace and integrity. (*Ex.* 20: 17.) But alas! 'it is weak through the flesh;' and the impetuous torrent of our lusts easily bursts the salutary barrier, and rages the more for having been opposed. (*Rom.* 8: 3, 4.)—Pride cannot brook opposition: every plea of conscience is treated as mere pretence; and the best intended actions, of the most blameless and excellent persons, are ascribed to the worst of motives. But such passions are serpents cherished in a man's bosom, the bite of which inflicts exquisite torture and death.—Providential blessings well answer the end for which they were intended, but cannot form a rational creature's felicity. Our more intimate connections are of the highest importance; when, instead of a prudent and pious counsellor, a man has a factor for Satan in the form of an artful, unprincipled, and beloved woman, what fatal effects may not be expected! 'Be ye not therefore unequally yoked with unbelievers.'—It is hard to relate facts, respecting ourselves, with simplicity and impartiality; but much more difficult to restrain those within the strict limits of equity, who are able to seize on the objects of their desires, without fear of being called to account before any human tribunal.—A little acquaintance with history, and with human nature, will terminate our *astonishment* at such transactions; for 'nothing is new under the sun:' but they must ever excite our regret, our compassion, and our indignation. SCOTT.

Sam. 24:7. 2 *Sam.* 23:17. Heb. The word implies the idea of *impiety*; and Naboth seems to have started back from the proposal, with aversion and alarm, as from a temptation to a heinous sin. SCOTT.

Verse 4.

Would eat no bread.] 'This childishness is still common in the east.' See *Roberts*, who remarks, that the 'weak relations and friends take great pains to soothe, persuade and humor the one who from anger, pettishness, &c. indulges this folly.' ED.

Verse 7.

Ahab made no objection or opposition. SCOTT.

were in his city, dwelling with Naboth.

9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, [t] Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth * on high among the people;

10 And set [u] two men, [x] sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, [y] Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And *then* carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.

11 And the men of his city, *even* the elders and the nobles, who were the inhabitants in his city, [z] did as Jezebel had sent unto them, *and* as it *was* written in the letters which she had sent unto them.

12 They [a] proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people.

13 And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and [b] the men of Belial witnessed against him, *even* against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did [c] blaspheme God and [d] the king. Then [e] they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.

14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, [f] Naboth is stoned, and is dead.

15 And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, [g] Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead.

16 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that [h] Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

[*Practical Observations.*]

17 ¶ And [i] the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

18 Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, [k] which *is* in Samaria: behold, *he is* in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it.

19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, [l] Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, [m] In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.

20 And Ahab said to Elijah, [n] Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found *thee:* because [o] thou hast sold thyself [p] to work evil in the sight of the LORD,

2. Never were wicked orders more wickedly obeyed. They do not so much as dispute the command, or make any objections against it, though so palpably unjust; but punctually observe all the particulars of it, either because they fear Jezebel's cruelty, or hate Naboth's piety, or both, *v.* 11, 12. They stoned Naboth, (*v.* 13.) and, as it should seem, his sons with him, or after him: for when God made inquisition for blood, we find that article in the account, 2 K. 9: 26. Perhaps they were secretly murdered, that they might not claim their father's estate, or complain of the wrong done him. Here we may well stand amazed at the wickedness of the wicked, and the power of Satan in them; lament the hard case of oppressed innocency; commit the keeping of our lives and comforts to God; and rejoice in the belief of a judgment to come, in which such wrong judgments as these will be called over. We see *there be just men to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked*, but all will be set right in the great day.

III. Naboth being taken off, Ahab takes possession of his vineyard. 1. The elders sent notice to Jezebel very unconcernedly, as a piece of agreeable news, *Naboth is stoned, and is dead*, *v.* 14. Observe their obsequiousness, as that of the elders of Samaria afterwards to Jehu's orders, which he sent from Jezreel for the murder of Ahab's 70 sons; only that was not done by course of law, 2 K. 10: 6, 7. Tyrants, that debauch the consciences of inferior magistrates, may, perhaps, find at last the wheel return on them; and that those who will not stick to do one cruel thing for them, will be as ready to do another cruel thing against them. 2. Jezebel, jocund enough that her plot succeeded so well, notifies Ahab, that *Naboth is dead*, therefore, *Arise, take possession of his vineyard*, *v.* 15. And so pleased is he that he will make a journey to Jezreel himself to enter on it; it should seem in state, too, as if he had got some mighty victory, for Jehu remembers long after, that he and Bidkar attended him at this time, 2 K. 9: 25. Might often prevails against right, and wonderful is the divine patience that suffers it. God is certainly *of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*, yet for a *time keeps silence, when the wicked devours one more righteous than he*, Hab. 1: 13.

V. 17—29. In these vs. observe,

I. The very bad character given of Ahab, (*v.* 25, 26.) which comes in here, to justify God in the heavy sentence passed on him, and to show that though passed on occasion of his sin, in the matter of Naboth, yet God would not have punished him so severely, had he not been guilty of many other sins, especially idolatry. Blessed Paul complains that he was *sold under sin*, as a poor captive against his will; but Ahab was voluntary, he *sold himself to sin*. Yet this did not excuse him. Jezebel his wife made him, in many respects, worse than otherwise he would have been.

II. Elijah's message to him, *v.* 17—19. Hitherto God kept silence, but now Ahab is reproved, and his *sin set in order before his eyes*. 1. A prophet of lower rank was sent with messages of kindness to him, *ch.* 20: 13. But the father of

t Gen. 34:13—17. Is. 58:4. Matt. 2:8. 23:14. Luke 20:47. John 18:28.
* Heb. *in the top of the people.*
u See on Deut. 19:15.—Matt. 26:59,60. Acts 6:11.
x See on Deut. 13:13. Judg. 19:22.
y Ex. 22:28. Lev. 24:15,16. Matt. 26: 65,66. John 10:33. Acts 6:13.
z Ex. 1:17,21. 23:1,2. Lev. 19:15. 1 Sam. 22:17,18. 23:20. 2 K. 10:6,7. 2 Chr. 24:24. Prov. 29:12,26. Dan. 3:18—25. Hos. 5:11. Mic. 6:16. Matt. 2:12,16. Acts 4:19. 5:29.
a See on 8—10.
b Deut. 5:20. 19:16—21. Ps. 27:12. 35: 11. Prov. 6:19. 19:5,9. 25:18. Mark 14:56—59.
c Job 1:5,11. 2:9. Matt. 9:3. Acts 6: 11,13.
d Ec. 10:20. Is. 8:21. Am. 7:10. Luke 23:2. John 19:12. Acts 24:5.
e Lev. 24:11—16. Num. 15:35,36. Deut. 13:10. 21:21. 22:21,24. Josh. 7:24, 25. 2 K. 9:26. Acts 7:58,59.
f 2 Sam. 11:14—24. Ec. 5:8. 8:14.
g See on 7.
h 2 Sam. 1:13—16. 4:9—12. 11:25—27. 23:15—17. Ps. 50:18. Is. 33:15. Obad. 12—14. Rom. 1:32. 2 Pet. 2:15.
i 2 K. 1:15,16. 5:26. Ps. 9:12. Is. 26: 21.
k 13:32. 2 Chr. 22:9.
l Gen. 3:11. 4:9,10. 2 Sam. 12:9. Mic. 3:1—4. Hab. 2:9,12.
m 22:38. Judg. 1:7. 2 Sam. 12:11. 2 K. 9:25,26. Esth. 7:10. Ps. 7:15,16. 9:16. 58:10,11.
n 18:17. 22:8. 2 Chr. 18:7,17. Am. 5: 10. Mark 12:12. Gal. 4:16. Rev. 11: 10.
o 25. 2 K. 17:17. Is. 50:1. 52:3. Rom. 7:14.
p 16:30. 2 K. 21:2. 2 Chr. 33:6. Eph. 4:19.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 8—16. There will always be found those in every rank, who will prostitute their talents, influence, and conscience, to the tyrant who rewards iniquity. (*Ps.* 58: 1, 2. 82: 2—4. *Ez.* 22: 27, 28. *Mic.* 2: 1—3. 7: 1—4. *Matt.* 26: 57—62.) Let us then bless God for a *limited* government, and for security from such outrages of oppression.—And let judges, juries, and witnesses beware of being warped, in their decisions, verdicts, or testimony, by fear, affection, or interest: for those, who now are placed on the tribunal, must shortly stand at the bar, to answer before a heart-searching, impartial Judge, for their conduct in their important stations. SCOTT.

Verse 8.

Seal.] Cut, Gen. 38:18. *Letters.*] Calmet gives a drawing of the form of oriental letters. See the note and cut, Ezra 4: 7. ED.

Verse 10.

To bear witness.] 'Ask any judge, any gentleman in the civil service of India, whether men may not be had, in any village, to swear any thing for the fraction of a shilling? Jezebel would not find it difficult to procure agents to swear away Naboth's life.' ROBERTS.

Verses 17—19.

Some learned men think that the word rendered 'the place where,' may mean, *in like manner as:* but this signification of the original word is unprecedented. Others suppose, that the word *place* is taken in a large sense, for all the adjacent region; and so includes Samaria, where Ahab dwelt, and where he was buried; as well as the city of Jezreel. (22:37, 38.) But may we not say, that, as dogs licked the blood of Ahab, *literally*, when his chariot was washed in the pool of Samaria; so they licked *his* blood, as flowing through and from the veins of his son Joram, when Joram was slain by Jehu, and his body thrown into this very spot? (2 *K.* 9:25, 26.) SCOTT.

Verse 20.

After the slaughter of Baal's prophets, and Elijah's flight from Jezebel, Ahab had returned to his wicked course of life, and shunned the prophet as his worst enemy: and it does not appear, that Elijah had seen him since those events. (22:8, 9.)—Elijah did not deny that he was an enemy to his wickedness: he neither paid respect to him, nor was intimidated by his anger or power. He had found him, as a thief caught in the fact; and, in the name of God, he denounced the most tremendous sentence of condemnation on him and on his posterity. (*Jer.* 2:26—30.) For Ahab had 'sold himself,' *as a willing slave to his lusts.* This is very different from 'being sold under sin;' so that, through the remaining power of corrupt nature, a man who 'delights in the law of God,' and hates all sin, yet 'cannot do the things that he would.' In the former case, the slavery is *voluntary*, the will itself is enslaved: in the latter, it is *involuntary*, and is a man's grief and distress. 'To will is present with me: but how to perform that which is good, I find not.'—'Oh wretched man that I am!' (*Rom.* 7:13—25.) ID.

21 Behold, [z] I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab [a] him that pisseth against the wall, and [b] him that is shut up and left in Israel,

22 And will [c] make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked *me* to anger, and [d] made Israel to sin.

23 And of [e] Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the * wall of Jezreel.

24 Him [f] that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.

25 But [g] there was none like unto Ahab, which did [h] sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, [i] whom Jezebel his wife † stirred up.

26 And he did [k] very abominably in following idols, [l] according to all *things* as did the Amorites, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

27 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that [m] he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and [n] lay in sackcloth, and [o] went softly.

28 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

29 [p] Seest thou how [q] Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, [r] I will not bring [s] the evil in his days: *but* [t] in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.

CHAP. XXII.

Ahab persuades Jehoshaphat to go with him against Ramoth-gilead, 1—4. Jehoshaphat proposes to inquire of the LORD; and the false prophets assure Ahab of success, 5—7. At Jehoshaphat's request, Micaiah, whom Ahab hates, is sent for, 8—12. The messenger's advice to Micaiah, and his answer, 13, 14. Micaiah, adjured by Ahab to declare the truth, predicts his death, and shows that his prophets are deceived by a lying spirit, 15—23. He is reviled, smitten, and sent to prison, 24—28. Jehoshaphat goes to battle in his robes, but Ahab in disguise, 29, 30. Jehoshaphat, mistaken for Ahab, narrowly escapes; Ahab is mortally wounded; and the people are dispersed by proclamation, 31—36. Ahab dies; and dogs lick his blood, 37, 38. The acts of Ahab, who is succeeded by Ahaziah, 39, 40. Jehoshaphat's good reign, and acts, 41—49. He dies and is succeeded by Jehoram, 50. Ahaziah's wicked reign, 51—53.

AND [a] they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel.

z See on 14:10.—Ex. 20:5. 2 K. 9:7—9. 10:1—7,11—14,17,30.
a See on 1 Sam. 25:22,34.
b Deut. 32:36. 2 K. 9:8,9. 14:26.
c 15:29. 16:3,4,11.
d See on 14:16. 15:30,34. 16:26.
e See on 25.—2 K. 9:10,30—37.
* Or, *ditch*.
f 14:11. 16:4. Is. 14:19. Jer. 15:3. Ez. 32:4,5. 39:18—20. Rev. 19:18.
g 16:30—33. 2 K. 23:25.
h See on 20.—2 K. 17:17. Is. 50:1. 52:3. Rom. 6:19. 7:14.
i 7. 11:1—4. 16:31. 18:4. 19:2. Prov. 22:14. Ec. 7:26. Mark 6:17—27. Acts 6:12. 14:2.
† Or, *incited*.
k 2 Chr. 15:8. Is. 65:4. Jer. 16:18. 44:4. Ez. 18:12. 1 Pet. 4:3. Rev. 21:8.
l Gen. 15:16. Lev. 18:25—30. 20:22,23. Deut. 12:31. 2 K. 16:3. 21:2,11. 2 Chr. 33:2,9. 36:14. Ezra 9:11—14. Ps. 106:35—39. Ez. 16:47.
m Gen. 37:34. 2 K. 6:30,31. 18:37. Jon. 3:6.
n 2 Sam. 12:17. Job 16:15. Is. 22:12. 58:5—8. Joel 1:13.
o Is. 38:15.
p Jer. 7:17. Luke 7:44.
q Ex. 10:3. Ps. 18:44. 66:3. *margins*. 78:34—37.
r Ps. 36:15. Ez. 33:10,11. Mic. 7:18. Rom. 2:4. 2 Pet. 3:9.
s See on 21—23.
t 2 K. 9:25,26,33—37. 10:1—7,11.
a See on 20:34.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 17—29. Such ministers of God, as are most decidedly faithful, must expect to be deemed morose, and even malevolent, by sinners, whose consciences have been galled with their plain warnings and rebukes, but whose hearts are wedded to their lusts. On the other hand, impenitent sinners often account those to be their friends, who speak smooth things, and help them to deceive themselves: and are very lavish in their commendation, by way of contrasting them with those whom they deem their enemies; that it may be thought they love religion, while they hate its firmest friends.—But 'the man of God' will neither desire the applause, nor fear the reproach, of those who have 'sold themselves to work wickedness,' and evince that they are the enemies of God and holiness. At the tribunal of God, the difference will be manifest to all men, between the most lamentable falls of true believers, and the habitual wickedness of ungodly men; and between true repentance, and all external, partial, and temporary appearances of it.—Before the searching Word of God, the most hardened conscience (with very few exceptions) will sometimes be disquieted, and the stoutest hearts tremble; and for a season sinners will speak and act as if truly penitent.—Whilst we are warned to beware of counterfeits, we are encouraged by the abounding grace of God, which He will never withhold from the upright, humble soul; seeing He so delights in mercy, that He extends it even to wicked men, as far as consists with his justice, holiness, truth, and wisdom. We may also be animated to abound in the work of the Lord, assured that our labor will not be in vain; since He even recompenses *in kind* the formal services of his enemies. SCOTT.

Verse 23.

This circumstance not only predicted the dreadful manner in which Jezebel should be slain, but denoted the worst punishment of sin to be after death. (2 *K.* 9:30—37.)—*Jezreel.*] If Jezebel attended Ahab on this occasion, it was, as far as is recorded, the only time, in which Elijah spake in her presence. SCOTT.

The dogs shall eat.] The dogs of eastern cities wander about half-starved, without an owner, feeding on garbage, and at night are sometimes dangerous. *Bruce* saw, at Gondar, dogs eating the bodies of some persons killed with the sword. ED.

Verses 25, 26.

Ahab's crime, in respect of Naboth, was not a detached part of his conduct, contrary to the general course of his life, as David's sin in the matter of Uriah had been; but a specimen of his continued rebellion against God. (*Rom.* 7:15—17.) (*M. R.* k, l.) SCOTT.

Verses 27—29.

He did not, that we find, so much as restore Naboth's vineyard to his heirs; much less did he put away Jezebel, or renounce idolatry, and establish the worship of God. However, he would have acted still worse, if he had vindicated and gloried in his crimes, or attempted to put the prophet to death: therefore the Lord recompensed his outward temporary repentance with a similar reward. 'Accordingly it was his son's blood, not his, which was licked up by the dogs, in the portion of Jezreel.' *Patrick.* (17—19.)—Jezebel was too hardened to show any symptoms of remorse on this, or any other occasion. (*Acts* 24:24—27.) SCOTT.

(27.) *Went softly.*] [Heb. *at*; Vulg. *with his head hung down*; Sept. *confused* and *sad*; Chal. Syr. and Arab. *with naked feet*. So *Targ.* and *Cranmer*.] 'See the man who goes into the presence of a superior [in the E.]: he takes off his sandals, and walks *softly*—he has a timid air, and you cannot hear his foot tread on the ground. When a dutiful son goes to his father, or a devotee into the presence of a sacred personage, he walks in the same way. Has a proud, boasting man been humbled, the people say, "Aha! aha! he can now walk *Mitha-vāka*, i. e. softly." "What, the proud Muttoo walk softly; who ever expected that?"' [Comp. 1 Sam. 15:32. though the Heb. word there for *delicately* is different.] ROBERTS.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII. V. 1. *Three years.*] During this time Ben-hadad was, no doubt, recruiting his forces, and preparing for war; having by no means adhered to the treaty, which Ahab had made with him. SCOTT.

2 And it came to pass [b] in the third year, that [c] Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel.

3 And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye, that [d] Ramoth in Gilead *is* ours, and we *be* * still, *and* take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?

4 And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-gilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, [e] I *am* as thou *art*, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses.

5 And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, [f] Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to-day.

6 Then the king of Israel gathered [h] the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, [i] Go up; for the LORD shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king.

7 And Jehoshaphat said, [j] *Is there* not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might inquire of him?

b 1. Matt. 12:40. 16:21.
c 41,44.—See on 15:24. 2 K. 8:18. 2 Chr. 18:1,2.
d 4:13. Deut. 4:43. Josh. 20:8.
* Heb. *silent from taking it.* Judg. 16: 2. 2 Sam. 19:10. *margine.*
e 2 K. 3:7. 2 Chr. 18:3.
f 2 Chr. 18:2. Ps. 139:21,22. Prov. 13: 20. 1 Cor. 15:33. 2 Cor. 6:16,17. Eph. 5:11. 2 John 11. Rev. 2:2,6.
g Num. 27:21. Josh. 9:14. Judg. 1:1. 20:18,23,28. 1 Sam. 14:18,19. 23:2, 4,9—12. 30:8. 2 K. 1:3. 3:11. 1 Chr. 10:13,14. 2 Chr. 18:4,5. Prov. 3:5,6. Jer. 21:2. 42:2—6. Ez. 14:3. 20:1 —3.
h 18:19. 2 Tim. 4:3.
i 15,22,23. 2 Chr. 18:14. Jer. 8:10,11. 14:13,14. 23:14—17. 28:1—3. Ez. 13: 7—16,22. Matt. 7:15. 2 Pet. 2:1—3. Rev. 19:20.
j 2 K. 3:11—13. 2 Chr. 18:6,7.

of pardon; and because he did hereby give some glory to God, God took notice of it, and bade Elijah take notice of it, *v.* 29. In consideration of this, though the sentence should not be revoked, the execution should be suspended. Now, (1.) This discovers the great goodness of God, and his readiness to show mercy. Favor is showed to this wicked man, that God might magnify his goodness, (says Bp. Sanderson,) even to the hazard of his other divine perfections; as if, (says he,) God would be thought unholy, or untrue, or unjust, (though He be none of these,) or any thing, rather than unmerciful. (2.) This teaches us to notice that which is good, even in those who are not so good as they should be: let it be commended as far as it goes. (3.) This gives a reason why wicked people sometimes prosper long: God is rewarding their external services with external mercies. (4.) This encourages all those that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe the holy Gospel. If a pretending, partial penitent shall go to his house, reprieved, doubtless, a sincere penitent shall *go to his house, justified.*

CHAP. XXII. V. 1—14. This ch. finishes the history of Ahab's reign, in that of his war with the Syrians at Ramoth-gilead. Though Ahab continued under guilt and wrath, and the dominion of the lusts to which he had sold himself, yet, as a reward for his professions of repentance and humiliation, though the time drew near when he should descend into battle and perish, we still have him blessed with a three years' peace, (*v.* 1.) and an honorable visit from Jehoshaphat king of Judah, *v.* 2. It is strange, so great a man as Jehoshaphat would pay so much respect to a kingdom revolted from the house of David; and so good a man show so much kindness to a king revolted from the worship of God. But, though a godly man, his temper was too easy, which betrayed him into snares and inconveniences.

The Syrians durst not give Ahab any disturbance. But, I. Ahab here meditates a war against the Syrians, and advises concerning it with those about him, *v.* 3. Now, he knows by experience, what he ought to have considered, that as *the kisses, so* the promises, *of an enemy are deceitful;* and no confidence is to be put in leagues extorted by distress. Ben-hadad is one of those princes that think themselves bound by their word no further, and no longer, than it is for their interest. Whether any other cities were restored, according to promise, *ch.* 20, 34. we do not find, but Ramoth-gilead was not: a considerable city in Gad, on the other side Jordan, a Levites' city, and one of the cities of refuge. Ahab blames himself, and people, that they did not bestir themselves to recover it, and to chastise Ben-hadad's violation of his league; and resolves to do it now. Ahab has a good cause, yet succeeds not. Equity is not to be judged of by prosperity.

II. He draws in Jehoshaphat, to join him in this expedition, *v.* 4. I do not wonder he should desire the assistance of one so pious and prosperous; even bad men often covet the friendship of the good. But it is strange Jehoshaphat will go so entirely into Ahab's interests, *v.* 4. Too great complaisance to evil-doers, has brought many good people, through unwariness, into dangerous fellowship with *the unfruitful works of darkness.* Yet some observe, that, in joining Israel against Syria, he atoned for his father's fault, in joining Syria against Israel, *ch.* 15: 19, 20.

III. Ahab thought it enough to consult with his statesmen, but Jehoshaphat moves they should *inquire of the word of the Lord, v.* 5. Note, 1. Whithersoever a good man goes, he desires to take God along with him, will acknowledge Him and look up to Him for counsel and success. He ought not to be ashamed to own his religion, no not when with those who have no kindness for it. 2. If Ahab drew him into his wars, he will draw Ahab into his devotions.

IV. Ahab's 400 prophets, (a standing regiment *prophets of the groves* they called them,) agreed to encourage this expedition, and assure him of success, *v.* 6. He put the question with seeming fairness. But they knew his inclination, and designed only to humor the two kings. To please Jehoshaphat, they made use of the name *Jehovah;* stealing the word from the two prophets, (Jer. 23: 30.) and using their language. To please Ahab, they said, *Go up.* They had, indeed, probabilities on their side; Ahab had, not long since, beaten the Syrians twice; he had now a good cause, and was much strengthened by his alliance with Jehoshaphat; but they pretended to speak by prophecy, not by rational conjecture; 'Thou shalt certainly recover Ramoth-gilead.' Zedekiah, a leading man among them, in imitation of the true prophets, illustrated his false prophecy with a sign, *v.* 11. He made a pair of iron horns, representing the two kings, and their honor and power, both which were signified by horns, exaltation and force. All agreed, as one man, that Ahab should return a conqueror, *v.* 12. Unity is not always the mark of a true church, and true ministry.

V. Jehoshaphat cannot relish this sort of preaching; he was not used to it; the false prophets cannot so mimic the true, but that he who had spiritual senses exercised, could discern the fallacy, therefore he inquires for a *prophet of the Lord besides, v.* 7. He is too much a courtier to reflect on the king's chaplains, but he waits to see a *prophet of the Lord;* intimating that he could not look upon these to be so.

VI. Ahab has another, one he hates, but, to please Jehoshaphat, he will have him sent for, *v.* 8—10. Ahab owned he was a true prophet, one that knew God's mind. Yet, 1. He hated him, and was not ashamed to own it, and to give his reason for it. Note, Those are wretchedly hardened in sin, and ripening apace for ruin, who hate God's ministers, because they deal plainly with them, and faithfully warn them of their misery and danger by reason of sin. 2. He had (it should seem) imprisoned him; for when he committed him, (*v.* 26.) he bade the officer carry him *back;* namely, to the place whence he came. We may suppose this was he that reproved him, (*ch.* 20: 38, &c.) and for that was cast into prison,

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Verse 2.

We shall have a better opportunity hereafter, of fully considering Jehoshaphat's character. (2 *Chr.* 17:—20.)—He was very criminal in marrying his son to one of the family of idolatrous Ahab, which probably occasioned his visit at Samaria, with all its consequences. (2 *K.* 8: 18. 2 *Chr.* 18: 1.)

SCOTT.

Verse 4.

Jehoshaphat meant nothing more, than to express his readiness to afford Ahab every assistance in his power; as both he and his forces were at his command: but the language seemed to countenance all Ahab's undertakings; or at least to treat all the differences in opinion and conduct between him and Ahab as unimportant! Yet surely there was an essential difference between the reformer of Judah, and the corrupter of Israel! But excessive pliability of temper was the grand defect in Jehoshaphat's character. (2 *K.* 8: 18. 9: 27, 28. 10: 13, 14. 11: 1, 2. 2 *Chr.* 18: 1. 19: 2.)

ID.

Verse 6.

It is most probable, these were the prophets of the groves, who escaped, when the prophets of Baal were slain at the command of Elijah; for certainly they were false prophets. (18:18—20, 40.) No doubt, they commonly prophesied in the name of Baal, or of some idol: but it seems that occasionally they could speak in the name of the LORD. In this verse indeed the word is not JEHOVAH, but *Adonai*, which is used with greater latitude: but afterwards both Zedekiah, and the rest of them, used the word JEHOVAH. (11, 12.) Like some modern philosophers and poets, they perhaps would argue, that it was all one, whether the Supreme Being were called Baal, or JEHOVAH, or Jupiter. They perhaps allowed Jehoshaphat to be a good sort of man: but he had some narrow prejudices, and would not be satisfied, if they said, 'Go up, for Baal shall deliver it into the hand of the King;' and they would scorn to disagree with him about a trifling variation, which they could make with little trouble, and without expense.

SCOTT

Verse 7.

Jehoshaphat must have regarded these prophets as deceivers and sycophants, whose interest it was to counsel Ahab to please himself. He knew Israel was favored with Elijah, Elisha, and other eminent prophets, though none of them appeared at court: he felt dissatisfied; but being too afraid of giving offence, he seemed to allow that these were prophets of God, yet he wished to consult some other, if there were any to be found. Perhaps he took occasion, from their using the word *Adonai*, (which might mean either the God of Israel, or a false god,) to inquire after some other prophet of JEHOVAH: and this might induce them afterwards to change their language in this respect. His subsequent conduct, however, shows that he paid far more regard to them, than he ought to have done, or than they deserved. Indeed,

8 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, *There is* [k] yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the LORD; [l] but I hate him, for he doth not prophesy [m] good [n] concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, [o] Let not the king say so.

9 Then the king of Israel called an * officer, and said, [p] Hasten *hither* Micaiah the son of Imlah.

[*Practical Observations.*]

10 And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, [q] having put on their robes, in a † void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and [r] all the prophets prophesied before them.

11 And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him [s] horns of iron: and he said, [t] Thus saith the LORD, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them.

12 And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, [u] Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper; for the LORD shall deliver *it* into the king's hand.

13 And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah, spake unto him, saying, [x] Behold now, the words of the prophets *declare* good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak *that which is* good.

14 And Micaiah said, *As* the LORD liveth, [y] what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak.

15 ¶ So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah,

where he had lain these three years. Hence Ahab knew where to find him so readily, *v.* 9. But his imprisonment had not excluded divine visits; nor did it in the least abate his courage, or make him less confident or faithful. Jehoshaphat gave Ahab too gentle a reproof, for expressing his indignation against a faithful prophet, *Let not the king say so*, *v.* 8. Such sinners as Ahab, must be rebuked sharply. However, he so far yielded to the reproof, that, for fear of provoking Jehoshaphat to break off his alliance, he sends for Micaiah with all speed, *v.* 9. to hear what he had to say; many will give God's Word the hearing, that will not obey it.

Lastly, Micaiah is pressed by the officer that fetched him, to follow the cry, *v.* 13. He thought him altogether such a one as the rest, who studied to please men, and not God. They that dote on worldly things themselves, think every body else should do so too, and, true or false, right or wrong, speak and act for their secular interest only. He intimates likewise, that it would be to no purpose to contradict such a numerous and unanimous vote. But Micaiah knows better things, protests it, and backs his protestation with an oath, that he will deliver his message from God with all faithfulness, whether it be pleasing or displeasing to his prince, *v.* 14. Bravely resolved!—and as became one who had his eye to the greater King.

V. 15—28. Micaiah, as is common, suffers ill for doing well.

I. Three ways he delivers the message, and all displeasing to Ahab.

1. He speaks as the rest of the prophets, but ironically, *Go, and prosper*, *v.* 15. as if he had said, 'I know you are determined to go, and I hear your own prophets are unanimous in assuring you of success; go then, and take what follows.' Note, Those deserve to be bantered, that love to be flattered; and it is just with God to give up those to their own counsels, that give up themselves to their own lusts, Eccl. 11: 9. In answer to this, Ahab adjures him to tell him the truth, (*v.* 16.) as if he sincerely desired to know both what God would have him do, and what He would do with him; yet intending to represent the prophet as a perverse, ill-humored man, that would not tell him the truth, till adjured to do it.

2. Thus pressed, he plainly foretold that the king would be cut off, and his army scattered, *v.* 17. He saw them in a dream, dispersed on the mountains, as sheep that have no one to guide them: i. e. Israel should be deprived of their king, who was their shepherd; God took notice of it, *These have no master.* He does not foresee any great slaughter, but they should make a dishonorable retreat; their king shall fall, but they shall go home in peace. Now Ahab finds himself aggrieved, turns to Jehoshaphat, and appeals to him, whether Mi-

k 18:4. 19:10,14. 20:4),42.
l 27. 20:43. 21:20. Gen. 37:3. 2 Chr. 36:16. Prov. 9:8. 15:12. Is. 49:7. Jer. 18:18. 20:10. 43:3,4. Am. 5:10. Zech. 11:8. Matt. 10:22. John 3:19—21. 7:7. 15:18,19. 17:14. Gal. 4: 16. Rev. 11:7—10.
m 13. Is. 30:10. Jer. 38:4. Mic. 2:11.
n 20:25—42. 2 K. 9:22. Is. 3:11. 57: 19—21.
o 21:27—29. Prov. 5:12—14. Mic. 2:7.
* Or, *eunuch*. 2 K. 9:32. 2 Chr. 18:8. Is. 39:7. Dan. 1:18.
p 26,27.
q 30. Esth. 5:1. 6:8,9. Matt. 6:26. 11:8. Acts 12:21. 25:23.
† Heb. *floor*.
r 18:29. 2 Chr. 18:9—11. Jer. 27:14—16. Ez. 13:1—9.
s Jer. 27:2. 28:10—14. Zech. 1:18—21. Acts 19:13—16. 2 Cor. 11:13—15. 2 Tim. 3:8.
t Jer. 23:17,25,31. 28:2,3. 29:21. Ez. 13:6. 22:27,28. Mic. 3:11.
u See on 6—15,22—36.
x Ps. 10:11. 11:1. 14:1. 50:21. Is. 30: 10,11. Hos. 7:3. Am. 7:13—17. Mic. 2:6,7,11. 1 Cor. 2:14—16.
y Num. 22:38. 2 Chr. 18:12,13. Jer. 23:28. 26:2,3. 42:4. Ez. 2:4—8. 3: 17—19. Acts 20:20,26,27. 2 Cor. 2: 17. 4:2.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—9. They, who neglect the word of God to rely on the promises of ungodly men, generally meet with merited disappointment: but this does not excuse the treachery and ingratitude of those, who deceive and injure the very persons, that have been criminally kind to them.—That same compliant spirit, which betrays some pious persons into amity with the declared enemies of religion, renders the connection peculiarly dangerous to them: they are perpetually persuaded to improper concessions of every kind; and induced to connive at, and even sanction, such converse and conduct, as they ought decidedly to protest against: and the fear of being deemed uncourteous, and the desire of escaping censure, ridicule, or insult, for their religious peculiarities, stop their mouths, and cause them to deviate from *sincerity* in their expressions of *civility* or courteousness. Yet these alone are the godly persons whose acquaintance the men of the world will much desire. If, however, we are necessarily placed among profane or infidel characters, we must not yield either to fear or shame, so as to conceal our dependence on God and devotedness to Him; for these mark the difference 'between those who serve Him, and those who serve Him not.'—If it were to be decided by vote, what is the true religion, we see plainly, that those abominations which God abhors would gain the election, against that worship which He has instituted.—Those, who from ambition, avarice, or sensuality, 'turn away their ears from the truth,' and 'cannot endure sound doctrine,' will 'heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts: (2 *Tim.* 4: 1—5, *vv.* 3, 4.) that the agreement of so many ministers may embolden them to disregard those *singular* and uncourteous persons, who are always robbing them of their comfort, and putting them on an unnecessary strictness. A few individuals indeed hint, that something is wanting in their favorite instructers; nay, prefer such as they dislike. But then, are not these too scrupulous? Do they not carry matters too far? Do they make proper allowances for human frailty, and peculiar situations? Thus eventually smooth doctrine, united with confidence, ingenuity, and courtly manners, obtains the preference, and opens the way to the favor of the great and of the many. The faithful servants of God must therefore lay their account with hatred, contempt, and insult. They know not to give flattering words, or to call base crimes by soft names, or to buoy up the hopes of hypocrites with insinuating falsehoods: they cannot be silent, when called to speak; but must declare the counsel of God, and not keep back any thing profitable, however displeasing. Their conscientiousness will often be ascribed to pride and obstinacy; the language of their tender compassion for souls will be called severity or malevolence; and their plain-dealing will be branded as insolence and ill-manners. But they must commit their cause to God: and wicked men, who hate them for the truth's sake, will at length find, that they were their own enemies in so doing, and that in opposing them they strove against the Almighty.

SCOTT.

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he ought to have decidedly entered his protest against them, and warned Ahab of his danger, if he hearkened to them; as Micaiah did. At least he should have done this, after he had heard Micaiah's message. (17—28.) SCOTT.

Verse 8.

Micaiah is never mentioned in the history, except in this ch. and the history in 2 *Chr.* 18: yet he doubtless had several times been sent with messages of rebuke and warning to this haughty idolater: (9.) Ahab, therefore, while he allowed, that they might inquire of the LORD by him, acknowledged that he hated him! (*Is.* 30:8—11. *John* 7:3—10. 15:17—21.) But Jehoshaphat ventured gently to intimate that he ought not to speak thus: he ought neither to hate him, nor be displeased with his word, nor seek agreeable, but useful things; and he hoped on this occasion he would bring an encouraging message. In.

Verses 13, 14.

Perhaps this man intended to be friendly to Micaiah: and thought it a pity, that he should hinder his preferment, and expose himself to Ahab's resentment, by a needless or useless scrupulousness. Perhaps he concluded, that the unanimity and confidence, with which so great a number of prophets assured Ahab of success in the name of the LORD, proved them to be in the right; and that it would be foolish in Micaiah to oppose his single voice to such a multitude. And indeed, not only Ahab, but Jehoshaphat himself, seems to have been imposed on by the same delusive argument; which, in one form or other, has been urged as cogent, if not unanswerable, by very able and sensible men, in every age of the church. 'Thus it is in the church at this day.' *Patrick.* —Micaiah affords a most noble example in his reply. SCOTT.

[z] shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, [a] Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king.

16 And the king said unto him, How many times [b] shall I adjure thee, [c] that thou tell me nothing but *that which is* true in the name of the LORD?

17 And he said, [d] I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, [e] as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace.

18 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, [f] Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?

19 And he said, [g] Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: [h] I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and [i] all the host of heaven standing by him, on his right hand and on his left:

20 And the LORD said, Who shall * persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner.

21 And [k] there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him.

22 And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be [l] a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, [m] Thou shalt persuade *him*, and prevail also: go forth, and do so.

23 Now therefore, behold, [n] the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and [o] the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee.

24 But [p] Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and [q] smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, [r] Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee?

25 And Micaiah said, [s] Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go † into an inner chamber to hide thyself.

26 And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and [t] carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son;

27 And say, Thus saith the king, [u] Put this *fellow* in the prison, and feed him with [x] bread of affliction and with water of affliction, [y] until I come in peace.

z See on 6.
a 18:27. Judg. 19:14. 2 K. 3:13. 2 Chr. 18:14. Ec. 11:9. Matt. 26:45.
b Josh. 6:26. 1 Sam. 14:24. 2 Chr. 18:15. Matt. 26:63. Mark 5:7. Acts 19:13.
c Jer. 42:3—6. Matt. 22:16,17.
d 1 Sam. 9:9. Jer. 1:11—16. Ez. 1:4. Acts 10:11—17.
e 34—36. Num. 27:17. 2 Chr. 18:16, 17. Jer. 23:1,2. 50:6,17. Ez. 34:4—6. Zech. 10:2. 13:7. Matt. 9:36.
f See on 8.—Prov. 10:24. 27:22. 29:1. Luke 11:45.
g Is. 1:10. 28:14. Jer. 2:4. 29:20. 42:15. Ez. 13:2. Am. 7:16.
h 2 Chr. 18:18—22. Is. 6:1. Ez. 1:26—28. Dan. 7:9,10. Acts 7:55,56. Rev. 4:2,3.
i Ps. 103:20,21. Is. 6:2,3. Zech. 1:10. Matt. 18:10. Heb. 1:7,14. 12:22. Rev. 5:11.
* Or, *deceive*. Job 12:16. Jer. 4:10. Ez. 14:9.
k 23. Job 1:6,7. 2:1.
l Job 1:8—11. 2:4—6. John 8:44. Acts 5:3,4. 2 Thes. 2:9,10. 1 Tim. 4:1,2. 1 John 4:6. Rev. 12:9,10. 13:14. 16:13,14. 20:3,7,8,10.
m See on 20.—Judg. 9:23. Ps. 109:17. 2 Thes. 2:11,12. Rev. 17:17.
n Ex. 4:21. 10:20. Deut. 2:30. 2 Chr. 25:16. Is. 6:9,10. 44:20. Ez. 14:3—5,9. Matt. 13:13—15. 24:24,25.
o See on 8—11. 20:42. 21:19. Num. 23:19,20. 24:13. Is. 3:11.
p 11.
q 2 Chr. 18:23,24. Is. 50:5,6. Lam. 3:30. Mic. 5:1. Mark 14:65. 15:19,20. John 15:18,20. Acts 23:2.
r Jer. 28:10,11. 29:26,27. Matt. 26:68. 27:42,43.
s Num. 31:3. Is. 9:14—16. Jer. 23:15. 28:16,17. 29:21,22,32. Am. 7:17. 2 Pet. 2:1. Rev. 19:20.
† Or, *from chamber to chamber*. Heb. *a chamber in a chamber*. 20:30. *marg.*
t 9.
u 2 Chr. 16:10. 18:25—27. Jer. 20:2. 29:26. 37:15. 38:6. Lam. 3:53—55. Mark 6:17—28. Luke 3:20. Acts 5:18. 16:23,24. 24:25—27. 26:10. Eph. 3:1. Rev. 2:10.
x Deut. 16:3. Ps. 80:5. 102:9. 127:2. Is. 30:20.
y Luke 12:45,46. 1 Thes. 5:2,3. Jam. 4:13,14.

Verse 16.

Ahab spake as if he had, on former occasions, thus adjured Micaiah to speak nothing to him, but 'that which was true in the name of the Lord;' and with some intimation, that the prophet needed such adjurations. He evidently aimed to be thought, especially by Jehoshaphat, exceedingly solicitous about discovering the will of God. Perhaps Micaiah hesitated, till repeatedly urged to speak: and some think, he did not receive his message, till the very moment before he delivered it.—The adjuring a person to speak, was equivalent to putting him on his oath; and calling on him, as in the presence and by the authority of God, to speak all he knew. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verses 19—23.

In order to leave this hardened criminal without excuse, and to give a salutary instruction and warning to others in future ages, Micaiah received and related this vision.—It is not requisite to inquire particularly, concerning what passes in that world, where the Lord unveils his glory; for *truths*, rather than *facts*, are revealed in such representations. (*Job* 1:6.)—God had doomed Ahab to fall at Ramoth-gilead, by the army of Ben-hadad, whom he had sinfully spared. (20:31—34, 41, 42.) To bring him thither, He was pleased to give an evil spirit leave to impose on him, with the hopes of success. 'The devil and his angels' are always ready for such attempts, and generally use false prophets and teachers as their ministers. (2 *Cor.* 11:13—15.) This method the lying spirit proposed on the present occasion, and prevailed against Ahab, by inducing all his prophets to assure him of victory. And by *permitting* him to do this, 'the LORD put a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' (22) He neither commanded nor inclined the lying spirit to tempt Ahab's prophets; nor did He put the wickedness into their hearts, or the lies into their mouths. He likewise gave Ahab fair warning; and had he not hated the truth, and loved a lie, he would not have gone to Ramoth-gilead: but God foresaw he would go, and would perish there.—The prophet 'saw the LORD sitting on his throne,' and that made him disregard Ahab on his throne, and not fear his frown and vengeance; nor the resentment of the 400 prophets, who must have been enraged, even to madness, at being thus publicly declared to be the ministers of the devil, to deceive and persuade their king to his destruction. (*M. R.*—*Ez.* 14:1—11. 2 *Thes.* 2:8—12.) SCOTT.

Verses 26, 27.

'*Joash, the king's son*:' Nothing is elsewhere said of a son of Ahab, of that name. IB.

sion, that the devil deceives men. Thereby God serves his own purposes. *The deceived and the deceiver are his*, Job 12: 16. When He pleases, for the punishment of those who receive not the truth in the love of it, He not only *lets Satan loose to deceive them*, (Rev. 20: 7, 8.) but *gives up men to strong delusions to believe* him, 2 Thess. 2: 11, 12. (7.) Those are manifestly marked for ruin, that are thus given up; God has certainly *spoken evil concerning those* whom He has given up to be imposed on by lying prophets; thus Micaiah gave Ahab fair warning, not only of the danger of proceeding in this war, but of the danger of believing those that encouraged him to proceed; thus we are warned to *beware of false prophets*, and to try the spirits; the lying spirit never deceives so fatally, as *in the mouth of prophets*.

II. We are here told, how he was abused for delivering his message thus faithfully, thus plainly, in a way so very proper both to convince and to affect.

1. Zedekiah, a wicked prophet, impudently insulted him in the face of the court; as if he not only had the Spirit of the Lord, but the monopoly of this Spirit, that he might not go without his leave, he asks, *Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak to thee?* v. 24. The false prophets were always the worst enemies the true prophets had, and not only stirred up the government against them, but were themselves abusive to them. Ahab was pleased, and Jehoshaphat had not courage to appear for the injured prophet; but Micaiah, though he returns not his blow, (God's prophets dare not avenge themselves, or be, any way, accessary to the breach of the peace,) yet, since he boasted so much of the Spirit, as those commonly do, that know least of his operations; he leaves him to be convinced of his error by the event; v. 25. It is likely, Zedekiah went with Ahab to the battle, to return in triumph with the

28 And Micaiah said, [z] If thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me. And he said, [a] Hearken, O people, every one of you.

[*Practical Observations.*]

29 ¶ So [b] the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, went up to Ramoth-gilead.

30 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat,* I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but [c] put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel [d] disguised himself, and went into the battle.

31 But the king of Syria commanded his [e] thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, [f] Fight neither with [g] small nor great, save only with the king of Israel.

32 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it *is* the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and [h] Jehoshaphat cried out.

33 And it came to

z Num. 16:29. Deut. 18:20—22. 2 K. 1:10,12. Is. 44:26. Jer. 28:8,9. Acts 13:10,11.

a 18:21—24,36,37. 2 Chr. 18:27. Am. 3:1. Mic. 1:2. Mark 7:14—16. 12: 37.

b See on 2—6.—2 Chr. 18: 3.

* Or, *when he was to disguise himself, and enter into the battle.*

c 10. Ps. 12:2.

d 14:2. 20:38. 1 Sam. 28:8. 2 Sam. 14:2. 2 Chr. 18:29. 35:22. Prov. 21: 30. Jer. 23:24.

e 20:24. 2 Chr. 18:30.

f See on 20:33—42.

g See on Gen. 19:11. 1 Sam. 30:2. Jer. 16:6.

h Ex. 14:10. 2 Chr. 13:31. Ps. 50:15. 91:15. 116:1,2. 130:1—4. John 2:1, 2.

king; but the army being routed, he fled among the rest and sheltered himself as Ben-hadad had done, in *a chamber within a chamber*, (*ch.* 20: 30.) lest he should perish. Note, Those that will not have their mistakes rectified in time by the Word of God, will be undeceived, when it is too late, by the judgments of God.

2. Ahab, that wicked king, committed him to prison; (*v.* 27.) to be fed with bread and water, coarse bread and puddle-water, till he should return; not doubting he should return a conqueror, and then he would put him to death for a false prophet, *v.* 27. Hard usage for one that would have prevented his ruin! But by this it appeared God had *determined to destroy him*, as 2 Chr. 25: 16. How confident is Ahab of success! He doubts not but he shall return in peace, forgetting what he himself had reminded Ben-hadad of, *Let not him that girdeth on the harness, boast.* Micaiah puts it on the issue, and calls all the people to be witnesses that he did so, *v.* 28. 'Let me incur the reproach and punishment of a false prophet, if the king come home alive.' He knew whom he had believed; He that is terrible to the kings of the earth, and treads on princes as mortar, will rather let thousands of them fall to the ground, than one jot or tittle of his own word; He will not fail to *confirm the word of his servants.*

V. 29—40. The matter in contest between God's prophet and Ahab's prophet, is here soon determined.

I. The two kings march to Ramoth-gilead, *v.* 29. That Ahab should persist is not strange; but that Jehoshaphat, that pious prince, who had desired to inquire by a *prophet of the Lord*, as disrelishing and discrediting Ahab's prophets, should yet proceed, after so fair a warning, is matter of astonishment; but by the easiness of his temper he was carried away with the delusion; Micaiah had not forbidden them to go; nay, at first, he said, *Go, and prosper;* if it came to the worst, it was only Ahab's fall that was foretold, and therefore he hoped he might venture.

II. Ahab contrives to secure himself, and expose his friend, *v.* 30. He pretended hereby to honor Jehoshaphat, and compliment him with the sole command of the army. Ahab will serve as a soldier under him; but he intended, 1. To make a liar of a good prophet; thus he hoped to elude the danger, and so to defeat the threatening, as if, by disguising himself, he could escape the divine cognizance, and the judgments that pursued him. 2. To make a fool of a good king, whom he did not cordially love, because he was one that adhered to God, and so condemned his apostasy. Ahab was marked for ruin: one would not have been in his attire for a great sum; yet he will over-persuade this godly king to muster for him. See what they get, that join affinity with vicious men, whose consciences are debauched, and who are lost to every thing honorable. How can it be expected *he* should be true to his friend, that has been false to his God?

III. Jehoshaphat, having more piety than policy, put himself into the post of honor, though the post of danger, but was thereby brought into peril of his life; the king of Syria charged his captains to level their force, not against the king of Judah, for with him he had no quarrel, but with the king of Israel only, *v.* 31. Now Ahab was justly repaid for sparing Ben-hadad, who, as the seed of the serpent commonly do, stung the bosom in which he was fostered, and saved from perishing; though some think he designed only to have him taken prisoner, that he might now give him as honorable a treatment as he had formerly received from him. Now, God let Jehoshaphat know He was displeased with him for joining in confederacy with Ahab; they that associate with evil doers, are in danger of sharing in their plagues. By his deliverance, God let him know that though displeased with him, yet He had not deserted him; some of the captains knew him, it is said, (2 Chr. 18: 31.) *God moved them* (for He has all hearts in his hand) *to depart from him;* to Him he cried out, not in cowardice, but devotion, and from Him his relief came; Ahab was in no care to succor him; God is a Friend that will not fail us, when other friends do.

IV. Ahab received his mortal wound, notwithstanding his endeavors to secure himself. Let no man think to hide himself from God's judgments, no, not in masquerade; *Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies, v.* 34. The Syrian, that shot him, little thought of doing such a service, not aiming particularly at any man; yet God so directed the arrow, that he hit the right person, and hit him in the right place. No armor is proof against the darts of divine vengeance: case the criminal in steel, and it is all one; *He that made him, can make his sword to approach to him.* That which to us seems altogether casual, is done by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God.

V. The army was dispersed by the enemy, and sent home by the king. Either Jehoshaphat or Ahab ordered the retreat, *v.* 36. We may well imagine with what horror Ahab now reflected on the wickedness he had committed, the warnings he had slighted, Baal's altars, Naboth's vineyard, Micaiah's imprisonment; now he sees himself flattered into his own ruin, and Zedekiah's horns of iron pushing, not the Syrians, but himself, into destruction. Thus is he *brought to the king of terrors*, without *hope in his death.*

VI. The royal corpse was brought to Samaria, and buried there, (*v.* 37.) and thither were brought the bloody chariot and bloody armor in which he

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 10—28. Unprincipled teachers are sufficiently pliable in matters of religion: they carefully avoid the imputation of bigotry; they make great pretensions to candor, and even treat the most fundamental truths of Revelation, as matters of indifference or uncertainty: but the same men are exceedingly tenacious of their own interests, and stubborn in their own concerns. Whereas we ought to be as pliant as the willow, where our own ease, credit, advantage, or indulgence are at stake; and as firm as the sturdy oak, in standing up for the great things, which relate to the glory of God, and the salvation of souls.—We must not expect exemption from hardship and ill usage; and need not wonder, if we eat the bread of affliction, and are even rewarded with blows, imprisonment, and cruel mockings: and when princes, false teachers and apostates unite against the servants of God, even the remnant of his people will often be afraid to interfere in their behalf.—Alas! how should we be ashamed to complain of what we in this day call *trials*, when we consider what the servants of God formerly endured!—Nothing can by any means harm us, if we continue faithful, and meekly valiant for the truth: the Lord will remove every aspersion from our characters, and bear testimony to his truth, in his due time: and some will profit by our warnings, though others rush headlong on ruin.—Little do unbelievers suspect how many legions of crafty, malicious, and powerful enemies are unwearied in plotting their destruction; restrained by no hand, but that of Him whom they despise and disobey. (*P. O. Job* 1: 6—12.)—The whole multitude of those, 'who privily bring in damnable heresies,' or propagate infidelity with vast industry and ingenuity, speak and write no other things, than are suggested to them by the prompter behind the curtain! Let us then fear suppressing our convictions, and returning back to sin after professions of repentance, lest Satan should thus prevail against us. For if he obtain leave to deceive, the disposition of our hearts, to prefer a flattering lie to a humbling truth that opposes our inclinations, will give him such an advantage, that every attempt of others to prevent his success, will only exasperate the mind to persecution or blasphemy. SCOTT.

Verse 28.

(*Notes*, 18:36, 37. *Num.* 16:28—34.)—*People.*] Heb. *Peoples*, meaning both the men of Judah who attended Jehoshaphat, and those of Israel. SCOTT.

Verse 30.

Perhaps Ahab was secretly alarmed by the solemnity of Micaiah's address, though he scorned to desist from his enterprise; or he was aware, he should be peculiarly aimed at by the Syrian forces. But Jehoshaphat meant no harm, and suspected none: yet in such a case, the wisdom of the serpent was as needful, as the harmlessness of the dove. (*Matt.* 10:16—18. 1 *Cor.* 14:20—25, *v.* 20.) SCOTT.

Verses 32—35.

Ahab, notwithstanding all his precaution, could not escape the destined blow.—Perhaps Ahab did not think the wound would prove

pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it *was* not the king of Israel, [i] that they turned back from pursuing him.

34 And a *certain* man drew a bow * at a venture, [k] and smote the king of Israel between the † joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am ‡ wounded.

35 And the battle § increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and [l] died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the ‖ midst of the chariot.

36 And [m] there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, [n] Every man to his city; and every man to his own country.

37 So the king died, and [¶] was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria.

38 And *one* washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria, [o] and the dogs licked up his blood, and they washed his armor, according unto the word of the LORD which he spake.

39 Now [p] the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and [q] the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

40 So Ahab [r] slept with his fathers; and [s] Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

B. C. 914. 41 ¶ And [t] Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel.

42 Jehoshaphat *was* [u] thirty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem: [x] and his mother's name *was* Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi.

43 And [y] he walked in all the ways of Asa his father, [z] he turned not aside from it, [a] doing *that which was* right in the eyes of the LORD: nevertheless [b] the high places were not taken away; *for* the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places.

44 And Jehoshaphat [c] made peace with the king of Israel.

45 Now [d] the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might that he showed, and how he warred, [e] *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

46 And [f] the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land.

47 *There was* then [g] no king in Edom: a deputy *was* king.

48 [h] Jehoshaphat ** made [i] ships of Tharshish to go [k] to Ophir for gold: but [l] they went not; for the ships were broken at [m] Ezion-geber.

49 Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships: might but send his servants with some effects on board Jehoshaphat's ships, he refused. Better buy wisdom dear, than be without it; but experience is therefore said to be the mistress of fools, because they are fools that will not learn till they are taught by experience, and particularly, the danger of associating with wicked people.

Now Jehoshaphat's reign appears here to have been none of the longest, but one of the best. 1. It was none of the longest, (*v.* 42.) but then 25 years added to his father's happy 41, give us a grateful idea of the flourishing condition of the kingdom of Judah, and of religion in it, for a great while, even when things were very bad, on all accounts, in the kingdom of Israel. If Jehoshaphat reigned not so long as his father, to balance that, he had not those blemishes on the latter end of his reign, that his father had; (2 Chr. 16: 9, 10, 12.) and it is better for a man that has been in reputation for wisdom and honor, to die in the midst of it, than to outlive it. 2. Yet it was one of the best, both in respect of piety and prosperity. (1.) He did well, *v.* 43. yet every man's character has some *but* or other, so had his; the *high places were not taken away*, no, not out of Judah and Benja-

died, *v.* 38. Now Naboth's blood was avenged, (*ch.* 21: 19.) and that word of David, as well as Elijah's word, was fulfilled, (Ps. 68: 23.) *That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same.* The dogs licking the guilty blood, was not only in fulfilment of the prophecy, but perhaps designed to represent the terrors that prey on the guilty soul after death.

Lastly. The story of Ahab is here concluded in the usual form, *v.* 39, 40.

V. 41—53. Here is, I. A short account of the reign of Jehoshaphat, of which we shall have a much fuller narrative. His confederacy with Ahab in war, we have already found dangerous to him, and his confederacy with Ahaziah his son in trade, sped no better, *v.* 48. See 2 Chr. 20: 35, 36. While they were preparing to sail, they were exceedingly damaged and disabled by a storm, *broken at Ezion-geber*, which a prophet gave Jehoshaphat to understand was a rebuke to him for his league with wicked Ahaziah, 2 Chr. 20: 37. Therefore, as we are told here, (*v.* 49.) when Ahaziah desired a second time to be a partner with him, or, *if* that could not be obtained, that he

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t 31. Ps. 76:10.
* Heb. *in his simplicity.* 2 Sam. 15:11.
k 1 Sam. 17:49. 2 K. 9:24.
† Heb. *joints and the breastplate.* Rev. 9:9.
‡ Heb. *made sick.* 2 Chr. 18:30. 35:23. *Margins.* Mic. 6:13.
§ Heb. *ascended.*
l 28. 20:42.
‖ Heb. *bosom.*
m 17,31. 12:16. 2 K. 14:12.
n 12:24. Judg. 7:7,8. 21:24. 1 Sam. 4:10. 2 Sam. 19:8. 2 K. 14:12.
¶ Heb. *came.*
o See on 21:19.—Josh. 23:14,15. Is. 44: 25,26. 48:3—5. Jer. 44:21—23. Zech. 1:4—6. Matt. 24:35.
p 14:19. 15:23,31. 16:5,20,27.
q 10:18,22. Ps. 45:8. Ez. 27:6,15. Am. 3:15. 6:4.
r See on 2:10. 11:21. 14:31. Deut. 31: 16. 2 Sam. 7:12.
s 51. 2 K. 1:2,17. 2 Chr. 20:35.
t See on 2. 1 Chr. 3:10. 2 Chr. 17:1.
u 2 K. 1:17. 8:16.
x 14:21. 15:2,10.
y 15:11,14. 2 Chr. 14:2—5,11. 15:8,17.
z 15:5. Ex. 32:8. 1 Sam. 12:20,21. 2 Chr. 16:7—12. Ps. 40:4. 101:3. 125: 5. Prov. 4:27.
a 2 Chr. 17:3—6. 19:3,4. 20:3,&c.
b 14:23. 15:14. 2 K. 12:3. 14:3,4. 15: 3,4. 18:22.
c 2. 2 K. 3:18. 2 Chr. 19:2. 21:6. 2 Cor. 6:14.
d 39.
e See on 11:41. 14:29.
f 14:24. 15:12. Gen. 19:5. Deut. 23: 17. Judg. 19:22. Rom. 1:26,27. 1 Cor. 6:9. 1 Tim. 1:10. Jude 7.
g Gen. 25:23. 27:40. 36,31,&c. 2 Sam. 8:14. 2 K. 3:9. 8:20. Ps. 108:9,10.
h 2 Chr. 20:35,36.
** Or, had *ten ships.*
i 10:22. 2 Chr. 9:21. Ps. 48:7. Is. 2: 16. 60:9. Jon. 1:3.
k See on 9:28. Ps. 45:9.
l 2 Chr. 20:37. 25:7.
m See on 9:26.—Num. 33:35,36.

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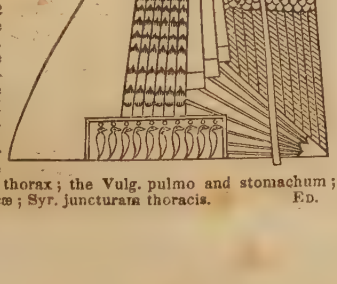
fatal, and was unwilling to intimidate his forces by wholly leaving the field of battle; therefore, probably, having retired that his wound might be dressed, he returned, and remained in his chariot till he died. SCOTT.

(34.) *Between the joints and the harness.*] *Scott* prefers the marg. reading. "'Between the cuirass and the lower part of the helmet,' or 'between the cuirass, and cuissarts' [thigh pieces?].' *Joints.*] *Debaqim. Conjuncturas. Targ.* Juncturas; does this allude to a *jointed thigh-piece* like that (evidently royal) given in the cut, from the tombs of Thebes? Over this was the coat of mail, seen in the cut, 2 Sam. 1:9. (Comp. the note there, and on 1 Sam. 17:5—7.) Perhaps these are the two pieces of armor referred to in the text. *Harness.*] An old word for '*armor.*' Heb. *Shirion.* Lorica, coat of mail. Chal. *lorica.* For these two words the Sept. has, pneumon and thorax; the Vulg. pulmo and stomachum; Arab. commissuram loricæ; Syr. junctura thoracis. ED.



Verse 39.

Ivory house.] It cannot be supposed, that this house was built of ivory: but it was so inlaid and ornamented with ivory, that it thence derived its principal elegance, or magnificence. (*M. R.* q.) SCOTT.

Verses 41—45.

Perhaps this general account is here given, of Jehoshaphat's reign over Judah, in order to contrast it with Ahab's wicked reign over Israel. (*M. R.*—2 5. 2 *Chr.* 17:—20:) ID

High places. (43) 'This error was so deeply rooted, that the best of the kings, till Hezekiah's time, . . . connived at it.' *Patrick.* (2 *K* 18:4, 22. 2 *Chr.* 31:1.) ID.

Verse 47.

David had conquered Edom; and it is probable, that till this time the nominal king of Edom had been merely a viceroy of the kings of Judah. (*M. R.*—2 *Sam.* 8 13, 14.) ID.

Verses 48, 49.

Jehoshaphat at first joined with Ahaziah, and lost his fleet: but, being reproved by a prophet, he would not consent to Ahaziah's proposals the second time. (2 *Chr.* 20:35—37.) These ships of Tharshish were made to go to Ophir: yet it is said in Chronicles, they were 'made to go to Tarshish.' Was there not therefore a Tarshish near Ophir, as well as a place of that name in Spain? (*Note*, 10:22.) ID.

(48.) *Ships of Tharshish.*] 'Ships of burden.' *Houbigant*; so called from being formed like those that traded to Tharshish. 'All such ships, wherever they were built, were called ships of Tharshish.' *Abarbinel.* Perhaps Tharshish is a word equivalent to our word 'over-sea,' 'abroad,' or 'foreign parts,' and this name is given to the ships like our term 'merchantman,' in opposition to 'a coaster.' For Tharshish

but Jehoshaphat would not.

B. C. 889. 50 And Jehoshaphat [n] slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers [o] in the city of David his father: and [p] Jehoram his son reigned in his stead.

B. C. 897. 51 ¶ Ahaziah the son of Ahab [q] began to reign over Israel in Samaria, the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned [r] two years over Israel.

52 And [s] he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and [t] in the way of his mother, [u] and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

53 For [x] he served Baal, and worshipped him, and [y] provoked to anger the LORD God of Israel, [z] according to all that his father had done.

n See on 40. 2:10.—2 Chr. 21:1.

min, though those tribes lay so near Jerusalem; old corruptions are with difficulty rooted out, especially when they have formerly had the patronage of those that were good, as the high places had of Samuel, Solomon, and some others. (2.) His affairs did well; he prevented the mischiefs which had attended their wars with Israel, and established a lasting peace, (*v.* 44.) which had been a greater blessing, had he not joined affinity with Israel: he put a deputy, or viceroy, in Edom, so that that kingdom was tributary to him; (*v.* 47.) and therein the prophecy concerning Esau and Jacob was fulfilled, that *the elder should serve the younger;* and, in general, mention is made of his might and his wars, *v.* 45. He pleased God, and God blessed him with strength and success; his death is spoken of, (*v.* 50.) to shut up his story; yet, in the history of the kings of Israel, we find mention of him afterward, 2 K. 3: 7

II. The beginning of the story of Ahaziah the son of Ahab, (*v.* 51—53.) his reign was very short, not two years. Some sinners God makes quick work with. A very bad character is here given him; he not only kept up Jeroboam's idolatry, but the worship of Baal likewise: though he had heard of the ruin of Jeroboam's family, and had seen his own father drawn into destruction by the prophets of Baal, who had often been proved false prophets, yet he received no instruction, took no warning, but followed the example of his wicked father, and the counsel of his more wicked mother Jezebel, still living. Miserable are the children that not only derive a stock of corruption from their parents, but are thus taught by them to trade with it; and most unhappy parents, they that help to damn their children's souls.

o See on 11:43. 14:31. 15:24.
p 2 K. 8:16—18. 2 Chr. 21:5—7.
q 40. r 15:25. 2 K. 1:17.
s See on 15:26. 16:30—33. 2 K. 1:2—7.
t 21:25. 2 K. 8:27. 9:22. 2 Chr. 22:3. Mark 6:24. Rev. 3:20.
u See on 14:9—16. 15:34. 2 K. 3:3.
x Judg. 2:1—11. 2 K. 1:2. 3:2.
y 16:7. Ps. 106:29. Is. 65:3. Ez. 8:3.
z 21:29. Ez. 18:14—18.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 29—53. Those, who are rebellious against God, and injurious to his people, will not often be very faithful or grateful to their friends. Self-love is their supreme principle, to which all other considerations must be sacrificed; and the children of God are seldom so politic as the children of the wicked one. When, however, the Lord has rebuked his offending people, He will mark that difference between them and his enemies, which they did not sufficiently observe. Yet sincere endeavors to do good are the proper evidences and effects of saving faith: and the concurring reproofs of God's word and rod will lead the upright believer to repent of every transgression, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance: whilst hardened sinners rush forward, unawed and unmoved, in the ways which have led others before them into everlasting misery. SCOTT.

is mentioned as their place of destination, in 2 Chr. 20:36, 37. and here they are said to 'go to Ophir:' but see note there. *Bochart* thinks there was a place called Tharshish in the Indian Ocean, near to Ophir. Sir *W. Betham* regards it as a general term, like the phrase East or West Indies. See his '*Gael and Cymbri.*' *Ezion-geber.*] Said to have its name from a line of rocks near the harbor, standing up like a *man's back-bone.* On these *Gill* supposes the vessels to have been wrecked. ED.

V. 51. Jehoshaphat began to reign in the *4th* yr. of Ahab, who reigned 22 yrs. (41) yet Ahaziah succeeded Ahab, in the *17th* yr. of Jehoshaphat. This occasions some difficulty: but learned men suppose, that the chronology of the kings of Israel was adjusted to that of the kings of Judah. Now Ahab began to reign, after Asa had entered on his 38th year, and Asa died before the end of his 41st year. (16:29. 2 *Chr.* 16: 13.) And Jehoshaphat began to reign in the same year, which thus was reckoned both to Asa and Jehoshaphat. Ahab therefore is computed to have reigned 4 years in Asa's time, and 18 in Jehoshaphat's, including a part of the year in which Asa died, and in which Jehoshaphat succeeded him: though Ahab did not live till Jehoshaphat had fully completed his 17th year; having died nearer the beginning of the year, than Asa had done.—It is difficult to make this intelligible to persons not acquainted with the Jewish method of computing time; who, (whether in days or years,) take in both the first and last of the account, as if entire, even though only a small part of each had actually passed. Thus Ahaziah, having reigned part of the 17th year of Jehoshaphat, and part of the 18th, (for he died in the 18th,) is said to have reigned *two* years. (*Note*, 16:8—14.) SCOTT.

On the character of David.] *Dr. Chandler* considers that the expression 1 Sam. 13:14. is used in opposition to the character and conduct of Saul. It means one who should act prudently, and obey the commandments of God delivered him by his prophets, and whom, therefore, God would thus far approve and continue to favor. [One whose *ruling motive* of action is obedience to God's will: whose constant prayer is, 'thy will be done.'] Thus it is interpreted by Paul, (Acts 13:22,) 'I have found David, a man after my own heart, *who shall execute my will.*' Dr. C. cites many places of Scripture to confirm this, and adds, 'David certainly was a wise, just, munificent, and prosperous prince; but he had private faults, and those great ones. These, however, were not inconsistent with this character of "a man according to God's heart." For, if he was such a prince as God intended him to be, by faithfully executing his orders, and bringing to pass those great events, he was raised up by God to accomplish, he thus far acted "according to the heart," i. e. *the purpose and will* "of God," and thereby, in this respect, rendered himself well pleasing and acceptable to Him. The particular purposes for which God advanced David were, 1. That by his steady adherence to the one true God, and the religion He established by Moses, David might be an illustrious example to all that should reign after him. 2. To save his people from the Philistines, and all enemies, accomplishing the promise, Gen. 15: 18. 3. To exalt the glory of his people Israel, and render them a flourishing and happy people by the wisdom and justice of his government.—In these, he faithfully performed all the pleasure of God. He was therefore "a man after God's own heart," in the proper, original sense of the expression.'

Poole's view of 1 Sam. 13:14. is, 'Such a man as I desire, one who will fulfil all the desires of my heart, and not oppose them as thou (i. e. Saul) dost.'

Vain cavils appear to have arisen from not considering that the phrase may be interpreted, with equal propriety, as referring to the divine purpose, as to designate peculiar favor and affection. The latter undoubtedly was true, yet the former is most clearly the meaning here. Surely we may learn hence how God overrules all things to his own praise.

Robinson says, We admire the exceeding grace of God in David's spiritual attainments; and when we consider the depth of his contrition, the strength of his faith, the fervor of his love, the activity of his obedience, we do not fear to assert, that, in this sense, 'he found favor before God, and was a man after his own heart.'

Yonge observes, Too true and sad it is that David fell, with all the aggravations of accumulated guilt. He stands an alarming memento of the frailty of man in his best estate. Excuse there can be none. However strong temptations are, we have, or may have power to resist them. But what was his anguish! how deep his sorrow! how sincere his repentance Sincere we may be sure it was, for God forgave him. True sorrow consists in a deep grief that we have erred, with continual recollection of our fault, with a future fear of ourselves, and a return to every duty with double assiduity. Such was the repentance of David. He returned from his fall to the most diligent performance of his duties; and though he felt he was forgiven by God, he could scarcely forgive himself. He occasionally bursts out into condemnation of himself, and grief at times overpowers him. He continues to the end of his days serving God and man. Never was repentance more severe, or sorrow more keen; so that he may justly be said, (his repentance included, though not his fall,) to be a man after God's own heart.

Delany says, David, in his personal character, is vastly superior to any one hero of all antiquity. It is indeed a mixed character, and where is the character that is not so? Is it fair to consider David only in the light of guilt? or should he, in common justice, be estimated as all men are, by the main of his life? Millions have fallen, have sinned, as David did; but who ever repented and recovered like him? Revolve his whole life before the matter of Uriah; it is almost one train of wise, generous, pious, and valiant conduct. Revolve his whole life from the hour of this guilt, and it is little else than one train of humiliation and repentance before God, and this, too, after assurance of pardon from God Himself, by his prophet. Or, if he varied his conduct, it was only from penance to praise; to turn all his thoughts and attention, to employ his whole heart and soul, to the glory and in the service of God—of that God who pardoned all his sins, and crowned him with mercy and loving-kindness. And if, after all this, the Scriptures are to be reviled, for styling this man, in this character, 'a man after God's own heart,' what is to be reverenced?—Again, I challenge al mankind to produce any instance, from the foundation of the world, wherein virtue was so signally rewarded, and guilt so signally chastised as in that of David, consequently, to those who look most to rewards and punishments, from a solicitude for the interests of virtue there is no case in which true religion and true virtue are so nearly and intimately interested, as in the history of David's rise, fall, and recovery. HENRY abr.

If we except the abuse of the paternal and amatory feelings, for which 'no man suffered more in his body, soul and domestic affairs, we have a just view of David's well endowed, well balanced, well harmonized, and almost perfect character, in these few but glowing words of Dr. *Delany*, 'To sum up all: David was a true believer, a zealous adorer of God, teacher of his law and worship, and inspirer of his praise! A glorious example, a perpetual and inexhaustible fountain of true piety. A consummate and unequalled hero; a skilful and fortunate captain; a steady patriot; a wise ruler; a faithful, generous and magnanimous friend; and, what is yet rarer, a no less generous and magnanimous enemy. A true penitent, a divine musician, a sublime poet, and an inspired prophet. By birth a *peasant*; by merit a *prince!* In youth a *hero*, in manhood a *monarch*, and in age a *saint!*' ED.

AN EXPOSITION,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS AND NOTES,

UPON THE SECOND BOOK OF

KINGS.

THIS second book of the Kings, the Septuagint, numbering from Samuel, calls the *fourth:* some think it might better have been made to begin with the 51st v. of the foregoing ch. where the reign of Ahaziah begins. The prophets outshone their princes; therefore, as far as they go, the history shall be accounted for in them. Here is, I. Elijah fetching fire from heaven, and ascending in fire to heaven, *ch.* 1, 2. II. Elisha working many miracles, both for prince and people, Israelites and foreigners, *ch.* 3—7. III. Hazael and Jehu anointed, the former for the correction of Israel, the latter for the destruction of the house of Ahab, and of the worship of Baal, *ch.* 8—10. IV. The reigns of several of the kings, both of Judah and Israel, *ch.* 11—16. V. The captivity of the ten tribes, *ch.* 17. VI. The good and glorious reign of Hezekiah, *ch.* 18—20. VII. Manasseh's wicked reign, and Josiah's good one, *ch.* 21—23. VIII. The destruction of Jerusalem by the king of Babylon, *ch.* 24, 25. This history, in the several passages of it, confirms that observation of Solomon, *That righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is the reproach of any people.* HENRY.

This book is merely a continuation of the preceding, to which it is joined in the Hebrew Canon: the remarks therefore already made on *that*, in a great measure apply to *this*.—It contains the history of above 300 years.—In Israel the kings were uniformly idolatrous and wicked: and, though the labors of Elijah, Elisha, and other prophets, were prospered to preserve a considerable number of the people from the general contagion; yet the measure of their national iniquity was soon filled up: so that they were conquered and carried captive by the kings of the Assyrians, and dispersed among the Gentiles, no more, as a collected body, to be restored to their own land. Their country was, after this, planted by the conquerors with a mingled people, who established a corrupt and partial worship of JEHOVAH, from whom originated the nation and religion of the Samaritans. These events began to take place considerably above 100 years before the Babylonish captivity.—In Judah indeed some remarkable revivals of religion took place under the pious princes of David's family, and by means of the faithful labors of the prophets: but after the death of pious Josiah, the nation became almost universally corrupt; and the melancholy account closes with the destruction of the city and temple, the desolation of the country, and the enslaving and carrying away of the inhabitants, by the Chaldeans.—As all the prophets, (commonly so called,) whose writings have been preserved, lived in the latter part of this period; (those excepted who lived during or after the captivity;) and as they continually refer to the facts recorded in this history; we may consider all their predictions as sanctioning, by their accomplishment, the divine authority of the narrative; though it does not contain any express prophecy, the completion of which extended much beyond the term of the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity. SCOTT.

B. C. 896.

CHAP. I.

Moab rebels against Israel, 1. Ahaziah, being sick, sends to inquire of Baal-zebub; and Elijah is sent by an angel to order the messengers to inform him, in the name of JEHOVAH, that he should surely die, 2—4. Ahaziah sends to apprehend Elijah, who twice calls down fire to consume those who came against him, 5—12. The captain of the third company sues for mercy; and Elijah, encouraged by an angel, goes to Ahaziah, and assures him that he would die at that time, 13—16. Ahaziah dies, and is succeeded by Jehoram, 17, 18.

THEN [a] Moab rebelled against Israel [b] after the death of Ahab.

2 ¶ And Ahaziah fell down through [c] a lattice

a Num. 24:17. 2 Sam. 8:2. 1 Chr. 18: 2. Ps. 60:8.
b 3:4,5. 8:20,22.
c Judg. 5:28. Cant. 2:9. Acts 20:9.

CHAP. I. V. 1—8. We have here, Ahaziah, the wicked king of Israel, under God's rebukes, both by his providence and his prophet; his rod and his word.

I. He is crossed in his affairs. How can those expect to prosper, that *do evil in the sight of the Lord*, and *provoke Him to anger?* When he rebelled against God, Moab rebelled against him, and revolted from their long subjection to the kings of Israel, *v.* 1. If men break their covenants with us, and withdraw their duty, we must reflect on our breach of covenant with God, and the neglect of our duty to Him. Sin weakens and impoverishes us. Comp. on ch. 8: 22.

II. He is seized with sickness from a severe accident; perhaps it threw him into a fever, *v.* 2. Wherever we go, there is but a step between us and death. The cracked lattice is as fatal to the son, when God pleases, as the bow drawn at a venture, to the father. Job 18: 9, 10. He is never safe, that has God for his Enemy.

III. In his distress, he sends messengers to inquire of the god of Ekron (a despicable town of the Philistines, Zech. 9: 7.) whether he should recover or no, *v.* 2. And here, 1. His inquiry was very foolish. We should be more thoughtful of our duty than our fortune; what will become of us after death, than how, or when, or where, we shall die; and more desirous to be told how to conduct ourselves well in sickness, and get good to our souls by it, than whether we shall recover. 2. His sending to Baal-zebub was very wicked; no less a reproach to his reason than to his religion. Baal-zebub signifies *the lord of a fly;* one of their Baals, that, perhaps, gave his answers either by the power of the demons, or the craft of the priests, with a humming noise, like that of a great fly; or that had (as they fancied) rid their country of the swarms of flies wherewith it was infested, or of some pestilential disease brought among them by flies. Perhaps this dunghill-deity was as famous then, as the oracle of Delphos was, long after, in Greece. In the N. T. *the prince of the devils* is called *Beel-zebub;* (Matt. 12: 24. [where see note:]) for the gods of the Gentiles were devils, and

NOTES.

CHAP. I. V. 1. After David had subjugated the Moabites, they continued in subjection till the division of the kingdom; when their vassalage and tribute were transferred to the kings of Israel, as those of Edom remained to the kings of Judah. (1 *K.* 22: 47.) But after Ahab's death the Moabites revolted. (*M. R.*—3: 4—27. 2 *Sam.* 8: 1, 2.) SCOTT.

Verse 2.

The lattice, through which Ahaziah fell, is supposed to have had some curious ornamental net-work, which being decayed, gave way when he leaned on it. The Baal generally worshipped in Israel at that time, was the god of the Zidonians; but Baal-zebub was the god of Ekron in Philistia: for they 'had lords many, and gods many.' Perhaps Ahaziah had been making preparations for reducing the Moabites, and, impatient to march against them, desired, on that account, to know whether he should recover or not. ID.

Through the lattice in his upper chamber.] Though it is not *necessary* to understand exactly every word of Scripture, yet it is certainly *worth while*, if possible. The Heb. here is *bead sebakah badlyyato*, per cancellum in cœnaculum suum, Through the lattice into his supper-room. *Mont.* Per cancellos cœnaculi sui, *Vulg.* i. e. through the lattices, or bars of his supper room. *Wilkinson* says, that the ancient Egyptians gave entertainments in the ground floor, or in the *second story* of their houses, all which agrees with our transl. 'upper chamber': and *Shaw* says, 'all the windows of [modern] eastern houses open into the court, except a *latticed window, or balcony*, which sometimes looks into the streets.' (Comp. cut, 2 K. 9: 30.) *Wilkinson* also describes the ancient Egyptian houses as 'of crude brick plastered, and having frequently a ground floor, and an upper story with a terrace cooled by the air, which a wooden mulquf conducted down the slope.' This is still used in the E. and is of planks, nailed side by side on transverse beams, forming a shelving roof, facing and open to the wind, with one or both sides closed, and of similar materials. Sometimes the interior was laid out in a series of chambers, encompassing a square court.' *Jahn* says, the Jews had a 'kind of ventilator which rose from the centre of the flat roof, 10 cubits broad, and looked like a turret. It was hollow, open to the N. and conveyed cool air into the rooms below. [Perhaps, 'through a lattice.'] The *alyyah*, Gr. *hyperoon*, is more appropriately the chamber over the porch; it extends from the interior of the front side into the court, its roof is supported by two columns only, and the front of it has no wall. In it princes receive ambassadors, transact business, and dispense justice. Here Christ seems to have been tried, Luke 22: 61, 62, &c. and comp. 1 K. 7: 7. and Esth. 5: 1. It opens directly upon

in his upper chamber that *was* in Samaria, and [d] was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of [e] Baal-zebub the [f] god of Ekron, [g] whether I shall recover of this disease.

3 But [h] the angel of the LORD said to [i] Elijah the Tishbite, [k] Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, [l] *Is it* not because *there is* not a God in Israel, *that* [m] ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron?

4 Now therefore thus saith the LORD, * Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, [n] but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed.

5 And when the messengers turned back unto him, he said unto them, Why are ye now turned back?

6 And they said unto him, There came a man up to meet us, and said unto us, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, *Is it* not because *there is* not a God in Israel, *that* thou sendest to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron? [o] therefore thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.

7 And he said unto them, † What manner of man *was he* which came up to meet you, and told you these words?

8 And they answered him, *He was* [p] an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It *is* Elijah the Tishbite.

[*Practical Observations.*]

9 ¶ Then the king [q] sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty: and he went up to him; and, behold, [r] he sat on

d 1 Kings 22:34. *Marg.* 2 Chr. 21:14, 15. Job 31:3.
e 3,6,16. Matt. 10:25. 12:24—27. Mark 3:22. Luke 11:15. *Beelzebub.*
f Judg. 11:24. 1 Sam. 5:10. 1 Kings 11:33. Is. 37:12,19.
g 8:7—9. 1 Kings 14:3.
h 15. 1 Kings 19:5,7. Acts 8:26. 12:7—11.
i 8. See on 1 Kings 17:1.
k 1 Kings 18:1.
l 6,16. 5:3,15. 1 Sam. 17:46. 1 Kings 18:36. Ps. 76:1.
m Jer. 2:11—13. Jon. 2:8.
* Heb. *The bed whither thou art gone up, thou shalt not come down from it.*
n Gen. 2:17. 3:4. Num. 26:65. 1 Sam. 28:19. 1 Kings 14:12. Prov. 11:19. 14:32. Ez. 18:4.
o See on 3,4.—1 Chr. 10:13,14.
† Heb. *What* was *the manner of the man?* Judg. 8:18. 1 Sam. 28:14.
p Is. 20:2. Zech. 13:4. Matt. 3:4. 11:8. Luke 1:17. Rev. 11:3.
q 6:13,14. 1 Kings 18:4,10. 19:2. 22:8,26,27. Matt. 14:3.
r 1 Kings 18:42. Luke 6:11,12.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—8. Death meets men in the most unexpected places and forms, but always under the direction of the all-wise and righteous God. If reconciled to Him by faith in the Savior, and walking in his ways, 'death is ours,' and can never come in a wrong time or manner: but to the impenitent and unbelieving he is and must be 'the king of terrors.'—False religion amuses men's minds, and gratifies a vain curiosity: but the Bible declares the way of acceptance, and the path of duty; and, without informing us of the events of our future lives, or the time and manner of our death, it teaches us to be always ready; and instructs us how to behave under every dispensation of Providence, and thus to find comfort under them all, and derive benefit from them.—Men are prone to act, as if there were no God; and as if they were left to take care of themselves, as well as to spend their lives in following their own inclinations: hence they are so readily induced to yield to every temptation, and to make rapid progress in wickedness, when in pursuit of the objects which they idolize, or when afraid of losing them.—Those who would be valiant for the truth, and in the cause of God, before the great ones of this world, must learn temperance, and frugality; and evince that they neither envy nor covet their luxuries and embellishments, but are indifferent about all other things, compared with the glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls. SCOTT.

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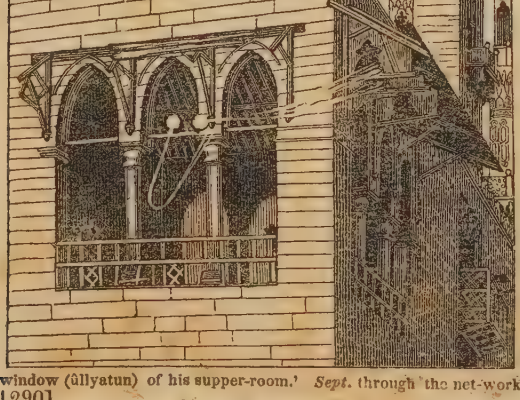
the roof, and is a place for retirement, devotion, &c. Strangers are frequently lodged in it. 1 K. 17: 19. 2 K. 4: 10, &c.' The Chal. has, e cancellis (*serigta*) in cœnaculum suum; the *Syr.* has, 'from the shaded walk, gallery, (*zystum*) of his supper room.' *Arab.* 'from the



window (ûllyatun) of his supper-room.' *Sept.* through the net-work (diktyotos) in his supper room, (hyperoon.) 'The diktyotos means not merely the windows, or reticulated [lattice] work, but also the supper-room itself, which had such windows.' *Hesych.* and *Phav.* in *Schleusner.* *Hewlett* understands, 'the rail work of the flat roof;' and *Poole* thinks the words may be rendered, 'through the lattice in the battlements of the roof of the house:' *Shaw* also remarks, 'over the cloister, when the house is of more than one story, in eastern houses, there is a gallery erected of the same dimensions with the cloister, having a balustrade, or else a piece of carved or latticed work, going round about it, to prevent people from falling from it into the court.' After all, our common version really seems as good as any. A cut, showing several lattices, is given of an outside corner of the 'tombs of the Memlook kings' in Cairo, Egypt. The apartment is 15 to 20 ft. from the ground, and the building has two steeples, the base of one of which is given. ED.

Verses 3, 4.

When a king of Israel sent to inquire of a heathen oracle, he proclaimed to the Gentiles his want of confidence in JEHOVAH: as if the only nation favored with revelation, and the knowledge of the true God, had been the only nation in which no God was known! Elijah departed, yet did not conceal himself; but continued so near to the same place, that the captains and their soldiers readily found him. (9, 10.) SCOTT.

Verse 8.

Elijah thus showed his mortifiedness to the world, and expressed his concern and grief for the idolatry and iniquity of his people. ID.

Verse 9.

This officer called Elijah a 'man of God' by way of derision, not out of respect as others did.—Jezebel's name is not mentioned in this transaction; but probably she stirred up her son, as she formerly had done her husband, against the prophets of the Lord. ID.

the top of an hill: and he spake unto him, [s] Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.

10 And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, [t] If I *be* a man of God, then [u] let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, [x] and consumed him and his fifty.

11 [y] Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty, with his fifty: and he answered and said unto him, [z] O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly.

12 And Elijah answered, and said unto them, [a] If I *be* a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

13 And [b] he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty: and the third captain of fifty went up, and came and * fell on his knees before Elijah, and [c] besought him, and said unto him, [d] O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight.

14 Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties, with their fifties: therefore let my * life now be precious in thy sight.

15 And the angel of the LORD said unto Elijah, Go down with him; [f] be not afraid of him. And he arose, and went down with him unto the king.

16 And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, [g] Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, *is it* not because *there is* no God in Israel to inquire of his word? therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed, on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.

17 So he died, according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken: and Jehoram reigned in his stead, [h] in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; because he had no son.

18 Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah

making any good improvement of the warning given him: no external alarms will startle and soften secure sinners, but rather exasperate them.

II. The captain sent with his fifty soldiers, *v.* 9. Elijah was now so far from absconding, as formerly, that he makes a bold appearance on the top of a hill, some think Carmel; experience of God's protection makes him more bold. The captain calls him *a man of God*, not that he believed him to be so,* or reverenced him as such a one, but because he was commonly called so; had he really looked upon him as a prophet, he would not have attempted to make him his prisoner; and command him to surrender at the word of a king.

III. Elijah calls for fire from heaven, to consume this haughty, daring sinner; not to secure himself, he could have done that some other way; nor to avenge himself, it was not his own cause he appeared and acted in; but to prove his mission, and to *reveal the wrath of God* from *heaven, against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.* It was not long since Elijah had fetched fire from heaven, to consume the sacrifice, (1 K. 18: 38.) in token of God's acceptance of it as an atonement for the people; but they having slighted that, now the fire falls on the sinners themselves, *v.* 10. See here, 1. What an interest the prophets had in heaven; Elijah did but speak, and it was done; he that formerly had fetched water from heaven, now fetches fire. O the power of prayer! Isa. 45: 11. 2. What an interest heaven had in the prophets! God was always ready to plead their cause. Doubtless Elijah did this by a divine impulse, and yet our Savior would not allow the disciples to draw it into a precedent, Luke 9: 54.

IV. This is repeated a second time; would one think it? obstinate sinners must be convinced and conquered, at last, by the fire of hell, for fire from heaven, it seems, will not do it. Another captain is ready with his fifty, who, in his blind rage against the prophet, and his blind obedience to the king, dares engage in that service which had been fatal to the last undertakers; this is as impudent and imperious as the last, and more in haste; [e] *Come down quickly*, the king's business requires haste; come down, or I will fetch thee down.' Elijah relents not, but calls for another flash of lightning, which instantly lays this captain and his fifty dead on the spot; they that will sin like others, must expect to suffer like them; God is inflexibly just.

V. The third captain humbled himself, and cast himself on the mercy of God and Elijah. It does not appear that Ahaziah ordered him to do so, but he took warning by the fate of his predecessors, and begged for his life and the lives of his soldiers, acknowledging their own evil deserts, and the prophet's power, *v.* 13, 14. Note, There is nothing to be got by contending with God: if we would prevail with Him, it must be by supplication; if we would not fall before Him, we must bow before Him; and those are wise, who learn submission from the fatal consequences others entail by their obstinacy.

VI. Elijah more than grants the request of this third captain; never any found it in vain to cast themselves on the mercy of God. This captain not only has his life spared, but is permitted to carry his point; Elijah, being so commanded by the angel, *goes down with him to the king*, *v.* 15. Thus he shows that he, before, refused to come, not because he feared the king or court, but because he would not be imperiously summoned, and would not lessen the honor of his Master; he *magnifies his office.* He comes boldly to the king, and tells him, to his face, what he had before sent to him, (*v.* 16.) that he should surely and shortly die; he mitigates not the sentence, either for fear of the king's displeasure, or in pity to his misery. So thunder-struck is Ahaziah with this message, when it comes from the prophet's own mouth, that neither he, nor any about him, durst offer him any violence, nor so much as give him an affront; but out of that den of lions he comes unhurt, like Daniel. Who can harm those whom God will shelter?

Lastly, The prediction is accomplished in a few days; Ahaziah died, (*v.* 17.) and, dying childless, left his kingdom to his brother Jehoram; his father reigned wickedly 22 years, he not 2; sometimes the *wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power;* but they who therefore promise themselves prosperity in impiety, may, perhaps,

* On the contrary, *this belief* seems to have been the very *aggravation* of his sin, which called for punishment: otherwise his duty was obedience. *Ed.*

On the top of a hill.] Carmel was far N. or N. W. of Samaria, where Ahaziah lay, (*Josh.* 19: 26.) and the road to Ekron lay to the S. W. Had the prophet retired to mt. Carmel, the captain could not so readily have found him. SCOTT.

Verse 10.

No doubt Elijah was moved, to call for fire from heaven on these men, by immediate revelation. He was influenced by a holy zeal for the honor of the Lord, which was attacked in his person, as a man of God, by the worshippers of Baalim; for if he had been actuated by resentment or selfish passions, the fire from heaven would not have come at his word.—The officers and soldiers, who were slain, not only deserved death as idolaters, but doubtless they had been the instruments of Ahab and Jezebel in persecution: and the example would have salutary effects on many in Israel. (*Dan.* 3: 19—23. *Luke* 9: 51—56. *Acts* 12: 18, 19.) ID.

Let fire, &c.] 'Elijah was constrained to a painful duty, for the truth's sake.' *Cond.Com.* 'Rather, *Fire will come*, &c. I consider the prophet as predicting what would now happen, to show the king the truth of the message sent.' BOOTHR. 'The words were declarative and not implicatory.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 11, 12.

It is hard to say, which was on this occasion the more wonderful, the madness of the wounded and enfeebled Ahaziah, when the report of the awful event reached him, or the presumption of this officer and his soldiers: for the second attempt was made in a more peremptory and haughty manner, than the foregoing. But perhaps the former calamity was ascribed to chance. None of the persons concerned appear to have been convinced, that JEHOVAH had sent the fire from heaven, for this express purpose, in answer to the words of Elijah. (1 *Sam.* 6: 2—9.) SCOTT.

Verses 15, 16.

Elijah had so exasperated Jezebel and her party, by putting the prophets of Baal to death; and by the awful sentence on Ahab and Jezebel, and the whole family, denounced in the vineyard of Naboth; that he had no further prospect of doing them good. In general he lived in a retired manner; and labored among the inferior inhabitants, without exposing himself to the rage of the king: but on this occasion, he was especially commissioned to go to him, along with the captain and his fifty. And his presence and authoritative boldness, in delivering in person the solemn message before sent by the messengers, so dismayed Ahaziah, that he did not attempt any thing against him. ID.

Verse 17.

Jehoshaphat lived some time after this: it is therefore supposed that he admitted his son Jehoram to reign with him, 8 or 9 years before his death: and Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over

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s Am. 7:12. Matt. 26:68. 27:29,41—43. Mark 15:29,32. Heb. 11:36.
t 2:23,24. Num. 16:28—30. 1 Kings 18:36—38. 22:28. 2 Chr. 36:16. Ps. 105:15. Matt. 21:31. 23:34—37. Acts 5:3—10.
u Num. 11:1. 16:35. Job 1:16. Ps. 106:18. Luke 9:54. Rev. 11:5.
x Dan. 3:22. 6:24. Acts 12:19.
y Num. 16:41. 1 Sam. 6:9. Is. 26:11. Jer. 5:3. John 18:5—12. Acts 4:16,17.
z See on 1 Sam. 22:17—19.—Prov. 29:12. Is. 32:7. Matt. 2:16. Luke 22:63,64.
a See on 9,10.
b Job 15:25,26. Prov. 27:22. Ec. 9:3. Is. 1:5.
* Heb. *bowed*.
c Ex. 11:8. Num. 12:11—13. 1 Kings 13:6. Is. 60:14. Rev. 3:9.
d Ps. 102:17. Jam. 4:7.
e 1 Sam. 26:21,24. Ps. 49:8. 116:15. Prov. 6:26. Matt. 16:25,26. Acts 20:24.
f Gen. 15:1. 1 Kings 18:15. Ps. 27:1. Is. 51:12,13. Jer. 1:17. 15:20. Ez. 2:6. Matt. 10:28. Heb. 11:27.
g See on 3,4.—Ex. 4:22,23. 1 Kings 14:6—13. 21:18—24. 22:8.
h 3:1. 8:16,17. 1 Kings 22:51.

which he did, *are* they not written [i] in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

CHAP. II.

Elijah, when about to be translated, cannot induce Elisha not to attend him in his progress, 1—7. With his mantle he divides Jordan, and they pass over, 8. Elijah allows conditionally of Elisha's request of a double measure of the Spirit, and is taken to heaven in a fiery chariot, 9—11. Elisha takes up Elijah's mantle; smites and divides Jordan with it, and passes over; and is received as Elijah's successor, 12—15. The sons of the prophets in vain seek for Elijah, 16—18. Elisha heals with salt the bad waters of Jericho, 19—22. Bears destroy the children that mock him, 23—25.

AND it came to pass, when the LORD would [a] take up Elijah into heaven, [b] by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with [c] Elisha from [d] Gilgal.

2 And Elijah said unto Elisha, [e] Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Beth-el. And Elisha said *unto him*, [f] *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, [g] I will not leave thee. So they went down to [h] Beth-el.

3 And [i] the sons of the prophets that *were* at Beth-el came forth

i See on 1 Kings 14:19. 22:39.
a Gen. 5:24. 1 Kings 19:4. Luke 9:51. Acts 1:9. Heb. 11:5. Rev. 11:12.
b 1 Kings 18:12. 19:11. Job 38:
c See on 1 Kings 19:16—21.
d Josh. 4:19. 5:9.
e Ruth 1:16. 2 Sam. 15:19,20. John 6: 67,68.
f 4,6. 4:30. 1 Sam. 1:26. 17:55. 25:26.
g Ruth 1:16—18. 2 Sam. 15:21. 1 John 2:19.
h Gen. 28:19. 1 Kings 12:29,33. 13:1,2.
i 5,7,15. 4:1,38. 9:1. 1 Sam. 10:16—12. 19:20. 1 K. 18:4. 20:35. Is. 8: 18.

find themselves deceived; for, (as Bp. Hall observes here,) 'Some sinners live long, to aggravate their judgment, others die soon, to hasten it;' but it is certain that *evil pursues sinners*, and, sooner or later, will overtake them; nor will any thing fill the measure sooner than that complicated iniquity of Ahaziah; honoring the devil's oracles, and hating God's.

CHAP. II. In the close of the foregoing ch. we had a wicked king leaving the world in disgrace, here we have a holy prophet leaving it in honor; the departure of the former was his greatest misery, of the latter, his greatest bliss: men are as their end is.

V. 1—8. Elijah's times, and the events concerning him, are as little dated as those of any great man in scripture; we are not told of his age, nor in what year of Ahab's reign he first appeared, nor in what year of Joram's he disappeared; we therefore cannot conjecture how long he flourished; it is supposed about 20 years in all.

Here we are told,

I. God had determined to take him up into heaven by a whirlwind, *v.* 1. He probably let him know of his purpose, some time before, how that He would shortly take him from the world, not by death, but as Enoch, only causing him to undergo such a change as would be necessary to qualify him to be an inhabitant in that world of spirits; such as they shall undergo, who will be found alive at Christ's coming. It is not for us to say, why God would so honor Elijah above any other of the prophets; he was a man *subject to like passions as we are*, knew sin, yet never tasted death. Wherefore then is he thus dignified? We may suppose,—to recompense him for his past eminent and extraordinary services, and to encourage the sons of the prophets to tread in the steps of his zeal and faithfulness, and, whatever it cost them, to witness against the corruptions of the age they lived in; also that in the present dark and degenerate state of the church, God would thus give a very sensible proof of another life after this, and draw the hearts of the faithful few upward toward Himself, and that other life: he likewise looked forward to the evangelical dispensation, and, in the translation of Elijah, gave a type and figure of the ascension of Christ, and the *opening of the kingdom of heaven to all believers*. We are assured that if we have our conversation in heaven, while here on earth, we shall be there shortly, and happy there for ever.

II. Elisha had determined, as long as he continued on earth, to cleave to him, and not to leave him: Elijah seemed desirous to shake him off, *v.* 2, 4, 6. out of humility, so some; (God's favorites covet not to have it proclaimed before them, that they are favorites;) or rather, it was to try him, and make his constant adherence to him the more commendable, like Naomi's persuading Ruth to go back: in vain does Elijah entreat him; he resolves, whatever comes, *I will not leave thee;* and because he loved him, and desired to be edified by his holy, heavenly converse as long as he staid on earth; it had always been profitable, but, we may suppose, now, more so than ever. We should *therefore* do all the spiritual good we can, one to another, and get all we can, one by another, while we are together, because we are to be *together but a while*. He desired also to be satisfied concerning his departure, and to see him when he was taken up, that his faith might be confirmed, and his acquaintance with the invisible world increased. Let not those that follow Christ, come short by tiring at last.

III. Elijah, before his departure, visited the schools of the prophets, and took leave of them; it seems there were such schools in many of the cities of Israel, probably, even in Samaria itself; here we find *sons of the prophets*, considerable numbers, even at Beth-el, where one of the calves was, and at Jericho, which was lately built in defiance of a divine curse: thus, by these schools, God graciously made up in Israel for the want of the priests, and Levites, and the temple-service which were had in Judah. Much of God was among these prophets, and *more were the children of the desolate* than the *children of the married wife;* none of all the high priests were comparable to those two great men, Elijah and Elisha, who, for aught we know, never attended in the temple at Jerusalem. These seminaries which Elijah, probably, had been instrumental to found, he now visits, before his departure, to instruct, encourage, and bless them. Note, Those that are going to heaven themselves, ought to be concerned for those they leave behind, to leave with them their experiences, testimonies, counsels, and prayers, 2 Pet. 1: 15. When Christ said, with triumph, *Now I am no more in the world*, He added, with tenderness, *But these are; Father, keep them.*

IV. The sons of the prophets had intelligence, or suspected, by the solemnity of Elijah's farewell, that he was now shortly to be removed, and told Elisha, both at Bethel, (*v.* 3.) and at Jericho, *v.* 5. This they did to show how full they were of the thoughts of this matter, and big with ex-

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PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 9—18. The conduct of some persons, as impartially recorded in the Word of God, appears so infatuated, that we should scarcely be able to credit the account, did we not sometimes witness actions equally unaccountable. Often has it been observed, that men upon a death-bed, and aware that they could not recover, have appeared more trifling, profane, avaricious, morose, fierce, or cruel, than at any former period: so that those around them have been tempted, by their intolerable conduct, to wish them dead before the hour arrived! Some have even seemed to regret, with their dying lips, that they could do no more mischief in the world before they left it! And in many other ways men are continually acting in a manner inexplicable, except on the principles of the wise man; 'The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart whilst they live, and after that they go to the dead.' (*Ec.* 9: 1—3. *Matt.* 2: 16—18.) —If the wicked face death in its most tremendous forms, to obtain or preserve the favor of an earthly prince, whose 'breath goeth forth, and he returneth to his dust, and all his thoughts perish;' what danger and hardship ought we not to welcome in the service of the everlasting God, who can give us the gracious recompense of eternal life. (*Ps.* 146: 3—6.)—There are proper seasons for different methods of behaving towards sinners, and we must ask wisdom of God to direct us: and, as the same action may be either right or wrong, according to the principle from which it springs, we should look well to our own spirits, and be candid in judging our brethren. It is, however, our general rule, 'not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good.' —The judgments of God under the Christian dispensation are commonly *spiritual:* and the more mildly we behave to those, wh insult and injure us for the Lord's sake, the more terrible punishment will He at length inflict on them. But our God is ever ready to forgive the humble supplicant, however rebellious he has been; and the way to prevail with Him is to bow before Him. We therefore should be followers of Him, and be ready to pray for and favor our bitterest enemies, especially when, under any alarm of conscience they entreat us so to do. SCOTT.

Israel, in the 2d year of that term, or in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat. (8· 16, 17. 1 *K.* 22: 51.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. II. V. 2. Elijah might intend by this proposal to make trial of the strength of Elisha's attachment; or perhaps he longed for retirement, and shunned ostentation. But Elisha expressed his determination to enjoy the pleasure and reap the benefit of his company to the last; and, if it might be, to witness his translation: and this he confirmed with a most solemn asseveration. As the life and soul of man entirely depend on God, to mention them in a solemn oath, either alone, or along with Him, was deemed equivalent to swearing by the name of the LORD. (*Matt.* 5:33—37. 23:16—22.) SCOTT.

Verse 3.

Beth-el.] (*M. R.*—1 *K.* 12.26—33. 13:1,2.) 'By "the sons of the prophets" are meant the scholars of the prophets, whom they educated and trained up in religion and piety. It seems to me very probable, they were such ministers to the prophets, as the evangelists were to the apostles; whom the prophets sent to publish their prophecies and instructions to the people, where they could not go themselves.' *Patrick.*—Elisha, however, would not allow them to interrupt the composure of Elijah's mind, at this solemn season, by any lamentations: it is probable, that he forbade them publicly to speak of it, lest multitudes should be collected to witness the event; or he counselled them to be calm, and not to disquiet themselves, for the Lord would make up the loss. SCOTT.

From thy head. 'In allusion to disciples sitting at the feet of their masters, and so they at the head of them.' GILL.

to Elisha, and said unto him, knowest thou that the LORD will take away [k] thy master from thy head to-day? And he said, Yea, I know *it;* hold ye your peace.

4 And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to [l] Jericho. And he said, [m] *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.

5 And the sons of the prophets that *were* at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away [n] thy master from thy head to-day? And he answered, [o] Yea, I know *it;* hold ye your peace.

6 And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here: for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

7 And [p] fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood * to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.

8 And Elijah took [q] his mantle and wrapped *it* together, and smote the waters, and they [r] were divided hither and thither; so that they two went over on dry ground.

9 And it came to pass when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, [s] Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And [t] Elisha said, I pray thee, let [u] a double portion of thy Spirit be upon me.

10 And he said, [v] Thou hast † asked a hard thing: *nevertheless,* [x] if thou see me *when I am* taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be *so.*

[*Practical Observations.*]

pectation of the event, and to admonish Elisha to prepare for the loss: know we not that our nearest relations, and dearest friends, must shortly be taken from us? let us then carefully do the duty of every relation, that we may reflect on it with comfort, when it comes to be dissolved. Elisha knew it too well, therefore did not care to hear it, or to be interrupted in his contemplations, or, in the least, diverted from attendance on his master; he speaks not peevishly, or in contempt, but as one that was himself, and would have them, composed and sedate, and with an awful silence expecting the event; *I know it, be silent,* Zech. 2: 13. They went themselves to witness it at a distance, though they might not closely attend, *v.* 7. intending to satisfy their curiosity, but God so ordered it, that they might be eye-witnesses of the honor Heaven did that prophet, who was *despised and rejected of men.* God's works are well worthy our notice; when a *door is opened in heaven,* the call is, *Come up hither, come and see.*

V. The miraculous dividing of the Jordan was the preface to Elijah's translation into the heavenly Canaan, as it had been to the entrance of Israel into the earthly Canaan, *v.* 8. The other side Jordan, was his native country; there he might be near the place where Moses died; thus also honor might be put on that part of the country, which was most despised. He and Elisha might have gone over Jordan by a ferry, as other passengers did, but God would magnify Elijah's exit, as He did Joshua's entrance, by dividing the river, Josh. 3: 7. Moses with his *rod* divided the sea, so Elijah with his *mantle* divided Jordan, both *the badges* of their office; these waters, of old, yielded to the ark, now, to the prophet's mantle, which, to those that wanted the ark, was an equivalent token of God's presence: death is the Jordan which the faithful must all pass, and they find a way through it, safe and comfortable; the death of Christ has divided those waters, that the ransomed of the Lord may pass over; *O death, where is thy sting?* thy hurt, thy terror?

V. 9—12. I. Elijah here makes his will, and leaves Elisha his heir, now anointing him to be a prophet in his room, more than when he *cast his mantle on him,* 1 K. 19: 19.

1. Elijah, being greatly pleased with the constancy of Elisha's affection and attendance, bade him ask what blessing he should leave him at parting; he does not say, (as Bp. Hall well observes, '*Ask of me when I am gone,* in heaven I shall be better able to befriend thee,' but, 'Ask before I go.' Our friends on earth may be spoken to, and can give us an answer, but we know not that we can have access to any friend in heaven but Christ, and God in Him; *Abraham is ignorant of us.*

2. Elisha asks not for wealth, or honor, or exemption from trouble, but to be qualified for the service of God and his generation; he asks, (1.) For the Spirit; not that the gifts and graces of the Spirit were in Elijah's power to give, therefore he says not, 'Give me the Spirit,' (he knew very well it was God's gift,) but, '*Let it be upon me,* intercede with God for this, for me.' Christ bade his disciples ask what they would, not one, but all, and promised to send the Spirit, with much more authority and assurance than Elijah could. (2.) For *his* spirit; because he was to be a prophet in his room, to carry on his work, to father the sons of the prophets, and face their enemies; having the same perverse generation to deal with, if he have not Elijah's spirit, he has not *strength according to the day.* (3.) For a *double portion of his spirit;* he does not mean double to what Elijah had, but double to what the rest of the prophets had, from whom so much would not be expected as from Elisha, who had been brought up under Elijah. It is a holy ambition to *covet earnestly the best gifts,* and those which will render us most serviceable to God and our brethren. Note, We all ought, both ministers and people, to set before us the examples of our predecessors, to labor after their spirit, and to be earnest with God for that grace which carried them through their work, and enabled them to finish well.

3. Elijah promises him what he asked, but under two provisos, *v.* 10. (1.) That he duly value it; this he teaches him to do, by calling it *a hard thing;* not too hard for God to do, but too great for him to expect. Those are best prepared for spiritual blessings, that are most sensible of their worth, and their own unworthiness to receive them. (2.) That he kept close to his master, even to the last, and was observant of him: *If thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be* so, otherwise not. Or, perhaps, this was intended only as a sign; 'If God favor thee so far as to give thee a sight of me when I ascend, take that for a token that He will do this for thee, and depend on it.' Christ's disciples saw Him as-

k Deut. 33:3. Acts 22:3.
l Josh. 6:26. 1 K. 16:34. Luke 19:1.
m See on 2.—4:30. Acts 2:42. 11:23.
n See on 3.—Josh. 1:1,2. Luke 24:51. John 17:5—7. Acts 1:2,11. 20:25.
o Gen. 43:19. Ec. 3:7. Is. 41:1. Hab. 2:20.
p 17. 1 K. 18:4,13.
* Heb. *in sight,* or, *over against.*
q 1 K. 19:13,19.
r 14. Ex. 14:21,22. Josh. 3:16,17. Ps. 114:5—7. Is. 11:15. Heb. 11:29. Rev. 16:12.
s 13:14—19. Num. 27:16—23. Deut. 34:9. 1 Chr. 29:18,19. Ps. 72:1,20. Luke 24:45—51. John 17:9—12. Acts 1:8. 8:17. 20:25,36.
t Num. 11:17,25. 1 K. 3:9. 2 Chr. 1:9, 10. John 14:12—14. 16:7. 1 Cor. 12:31.
u Deut. 21:17. Zech. 9:12. 12:8. 1 Tim. 5:17.
v Mark 11:22—24. John 16:24.
† Heb. *done hard in asking.*
x 12. Acts 1:9,10.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—10. The Lord always acts with perfect wisdom, justice, goodness, and truth; but He does not always deign to explain to us the reasons of his conduct. In exempting sinners from *merited* condemnation, and in conferring *unmerited* blessings, He 'divideth to every man severally as He will.' (*Acts* 10: 34, 35.) As we know not the time of our departure, we should give diligence to be habitually ready: and we ought to mind our proper work with greater assiduity, if able, when we perceive that the time approaches. Whether ministers or private Christians, we are called to 'serve our generation;' and should aim to leave all around us deeply convinced of the nearness and reality of eternal things, and animated with the desire of glorifying God and doing good: and our example, exhortations, and prayers should especially be directed to these important objects, when we approach the solemn closing scene. (*Note,* 2 *Pet.* 1: 12—15.) Those who are called to succeed eminent men in arduous and important stations, and are conscious of their own insufficiency, are peculiarly encouraged to expect a double portion of the Spirit of God, that they may not disgrace their situations, or remain useless in them. SCOTT.

Verses 7, 8.

Mantle.] In all the places, where this word is used, the LXX translate it *a sheepskin. Heb.* 11:37. Gr. (1:8.) SCOTT.

Verses 9, 10.

Elijah did not give the least intimation of being prayed to as an intercessor, after he was gone to heaven; nay, his words imply the contrary, in a very decisive manner. If the request were not made before he was taken away, it would afterwards be too late.—Elisha seems only to have meant a double portion of the Spirit of prophecy, and of wisdom, courage, faith, and grace, to what was ordinarily bestowed on the prophets; but in the enlargedness of his desires he was led to use words, which may signify even double the portion which Elijah had possessed: and Elijah's answer seems to imply, that this was the import of them.—It appears from the history, that Elisha wrought twice as many miracles as Elijah had done: and being more constantly among the people as their example and instructer, for above 60 years, from his first calling by Elijah, he seems to have been favored with more extensive usefulness than he; though in other respects he may be considered as his inferior. (13 14.) Thus our Lord said to his apostles, (referring to the extensive usefulness of their labors, compared with that of his personal ministry, and to the number, variety, and long continuance of the miracles wrought by them,) 'Greater works than these shall ye do:' yet was He infinitely greater than they. (*Matt.* 11:7—11. *John* 14:7—14. SCOTT.

(9.) *A double portion.*] 'A repetition.' *Geddes.* This view is supported by v. 15. *Boothr.* He alludes to the double portion of the

11 ¶ And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* [y] a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up [z] by a whirlwind [a] into heaven.

12 And Elisha [b] saw *it*, and he cried, [c] My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And [d] he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and [e] rent them in two pieces.

13 He took up also [f] the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the * bank of Jordan;

14 And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and [g] smote the waters, and said, [h] Where *is* the LORD God of Elijah? And when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither; and Elisha went over.

15 And when the sons of the prophets, which *were* [i] to view at Jericho, saw him, they said, [j] The Spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and [k] bowed themselves to the ground before him:

16 And they said unto him, Behold now, there

y 6:17. Ps. 68:17. 104:3,4. Ez. 1:4, &c. 10:9,&c. Hab. 3:8. Zech. 6:1—8. Heb. 1:14. z See on 1.
a Mark 16:19. b 10.
c 13:14. Job 22:30. Prov. 11:11. Ec. 7:19. 9:16—18. Is. 37:4,15,21. Acts 27:24.
d Prov. 30:4. Mark 16:19. Luke 2:15. 24:51. John 3:13. Acts 1:9. 2 Cor. 5:2,4. Eph. 4:8. Rev. 11:12.
e Job 1:20,21. Is. 57:1,2. Acts 8:2.
f 8. 1 K. 19:19.
* Heb. *lip.* 1 K. 9:26. *marg.*
g See on 3—10.—Josh. 1:1—9. Mark 16:20. John 14:12. Acts 2:33. 3:12, 13.
h Judg. 6:13. 1 K. 18:36—39. Ps. 42: 2,10. 115:2. Joel 2:17. i See on 7.
j Num. 11:25—29. 27:20. Josh. 3:7. Is. 11:2. 59:21. John 15:26,27. Acts 1:8. 2 Cor. 12:9. 1 Pet. 4:14.
k 19. 4:1—4,37. 6:1—7. Josh. 4:14.

cend, and were, thereupon, assured they should, in a little time, be filled with his Spirit, Acts 1: 8. Elisha, we may suppose, hereupon, prayed earnestly, *Lord, show me this token for good.*

II. Elijah is carried to heaven in a fiery chariot, *v.* 11. Like Enoch, he was translated, *that he should not see death.* Many curious questions might here be asked, which could not be answered. Let it suffice that we are told,

1. His Lord, when He came, found him talking with, instructing and encouraging Elisha, directing him in his work, and quickening him to it, for the good of those he left behind: Thinking of divine things is good, but talking of them (if it come from the heart) is better, because for edification, 1 Cor. 14: 4. Christ ascended as He was blessing his disciples.

2. His Lord sent for him *a chariot of fire, and horses of fire*, for brightness, not burning, (to render his ascension conspicuous, and illustrious,) either descending from the clouds, or (as Bp. Patrick thinks) running toward them on the ground. The souls of all the faithful are carried by an invisible guard of angels into Abraham's bosom; but Elijah being to carry his body with him, this heavenly guard was visible, not in a human shape, as usual, but in the form of a chariot and horses, that he may ride in state, in triumph, like a prince, like a conqueror, yea, *more than a conqueror;* the angels are called, in scripture, *Cherubim* and *Seraphim*, and their appearance here, though it may seem below their dignity, answers to both those names; *Seraphim* signifies *fiery*, and God is said to make them *a flame of fire*, Ps. 104: 4. *Cherubim* (as many think) signifies *chariots*, and they are called *the chariots of God*, Ps. 68: 17. And He is said to *ride upon a cherub*, (Ps. 18: 10.) to which perhaps there is an allusion in Ezekiel's vision of four living creatures, and wheels, like horses and chariots; in Zechariah's vision they are so represented, Zech. 1: 8.—6: 1. Comp. Rev. 6: 2, &c. See the readiness of the angels to do the will of God, even in the meanest services, for the good of them that shall be heirs of salvation.

3. The dearest friends must part; Elisha protested he would not leave him, yet is left behind, while Elijah *went up by a whirlwind into heaven;* the fire tends upward, the whirlwind helped to carry him through the atmosphere, and how swiftly he ascended to the world of holy and blessed spirits, we cannot conceive. Elijah had once, in a passion, wished he might die; yet God was so gracious to him, as not only not to take him at his word then, but to honor him with this singular privilege, that he should never see death; and by this instance, and that of Enoch, God showed how men should have left the world, if they had not sinned, not by death, but by a translation. He gave a glimpse of that life and immortality brought to light by the Gospel, of the glory reserved for the bodies of the saints, and the *opening of the kingdom of heaven to all believers;* it was also a figure of Christ's ascension.

III. Elisha pathetically laments his loss, but attends him with an encomium, *v.* 12. He saw it; thus he received the sign by which he was assured of the grant of the double portion of Elijah's spirit; he rent his own clothes, in token of his sense of his own and the public loss; though Elijah was gone triumphantly to heaven, this world could ill spare him, therefore his removal ought to be much regretted by the survivors. Surely their hearts are hard, whose eyes are dry, when God, by taking away faithful, useful men, calls for weeping and mourning. *My father, my father!* he saw his own condition like that of a fatherless child thrown on the world, and laments it accordingly. Christ, when he left his disciples, did not leave them orphans, (John 14: 15.) but Elijah must. The public had lost its best guard; *the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.* He would have brought them all to heaven, as in this chariot, if it had not been their own fault; they used not chariots and horses in their wars, but Elijah was to them, by his counsels, reproofs, and prayers, better than the strongest force of chariot and horse, and kept off the judgments of God; his departure was like the routing of an army, an irreparable loss. Better have lost all our men of war than this man of God.

V. 13—18. We have here, I. The tokens of God's presence with Elisha, and the marks of his elevation into Elijah's room, to be, as he had been, a father to the sons of the prophets, and the chariot and horsemen of Israel. He was possessed,

1. Of Elijah's mantle, the badge of his office, which, we may suppose, he put on, and wore, for his master's sake, *v.* 13. though in itself of small value, yet as a token of the descent of the Spirit on him, it was more than thousands of gold and silver. Elisha took it up, not as a sacred relic to be worshipped, but as a significant garment to be worn, a recompense for his own garments rent; he loved this cloak ever since it was first cast over him, 1 K. 19: 19. There are remains of great and good men, which ought to be gathered up and preserved by the survivors, their sayings, writings, examples, that as their works follow them in reward, they may stay behind in benefit.

2. Of Elijah's power to divide Jordan, *v.* 14. He returns to the prophets; Jordan was between him and them, he will try whether it will divide to make way for him, and by that he will know that God is with him, and that he has the double portion of Elijah's spirit. He made use of the mantle, as Elijah had done, (*v.* 8.) to signify that he designed to keep to his master's methods, and would not introduce any thing new, as those affect to do, that think themselves wiser than their predecessors. He applied to Elijah's God; does not ask, 'Where is Elijah?' either as poring on his loss, (as if he could not be easy now he was gone,) or as doubting of his happy state, (as if, like the sons of the prophets here, he knew not what was become of him,) or as curiously inquiring concerning the particulars of that state he was removed to; nor as expecting help from him; no, Elijah is happy, but is neither omniscient, nor omnipotent: but he asks, *Where is the Lord God of Elijah?* Now that Elijah was taken to heaven, God had abundantly proved Himself the God of Elijah; and when our creature-comforts are removed, we have a God to go to, that lives for ever; the God that Elijah served, and honored, and pleaded for, and adhered to, when all Israel had deserted Him. This honor is done to those who cleave to God in times of general apostasy, that God will be, in a peculiar manner, their God. It is the duty and interest of the saints on earth to inquire after God, and apply themselves to Him, as the Lord God of the saints gone before to heaven, *the God of our fathers.* It is very com-

first-born, Gen. 21:17. *Poole.* He used words which may mean even a double portion of the spirit and graces of Elijah. *Gill. Scott.* He does not mean a double portion with respect to Elijah, but with respect to the junior prophets. *Gill.*' COND. COMM.

Verse 11.

(*M. R.*—1.) Elijah's translation was doubtless performed by the ministration of angels, who caused the appearances and effects here described. The event was a distinguished honor put upon one, who had been peculiarly zealous for the honor of God, and had ventured all consequences in his cause, by opposing the idolatry of an apostate and persecuting age and nation. It was a public attestation of the doctrine of a future state of retributions, for the encouragement of God's suffering people; and it was also a prefiguration of the Redeemer's ascension. (*Luke* 24:50—53. *Acts* 1:9—12. SCOTT.

Verses 11, 12.

'In reading these passages, it is well to observe a due medium between superstition and skepticism. We cannot comprehend the various operations of Infinite Power.' HEWLETT. *Dathe*, (in *Cont. Comm.*) considers that the words, 'The chariot of Israel, &c.' are proverbial of one regarded as the defence of his country. ED.

Verse 13.

The prophet went to heaven in the body; yet, as a token of the different state into which he was entered, and the change which had taken place, he dropped his mantle, or upper garment. (1 *Cor.* 15: 50—54. 2 *Cor.* 5: 1—4.) SCOTT.

Verse 14.

The original is more expressive than the translation, and may be rendered, 'Where is JEHOVAH, the God of Elijah, even He?' He is still with me: though Elijah be not here, the God of Elijah is. (*Josh.* 3: 7. *Matt.* 28: 19, 20.) ID.

Verses 16—18.

These sons of the prophets might think, that even in case Elijah was finally taken from them, his soul alone was gone to heaven; and that his body might be found, and buried with due honor: but perhaps they also doubted, whether he was really removed; or had only been carried to some other place in a supernatural manner, as he seems to

be with thy servants fifty * strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master; lest peradventure [l] the Spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon † some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send.

17 And when [m] they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but [n] found him not.

18 And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

[*Practical Observations.*]

19 ¶ And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of the city *is* pleasant, as [o] my lord seeth: but [p] the water *is* naught, and the ground ‡ barren.

20 And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put [q] salt therein: and they brought *it* to him.

21 And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and [r] cast the

* Heb. *sons of strength.*
l 1 K. 18:12. Ex. 3:14. 8:3. 11:24. 40:2. Acts 8:39. 2 Cor. 12:2,3.
† Heb. *one of the mountains.*
m 2 Sam. 18:22,23. Luke 11:8. Rom. 10:2.
n Heb. 11:5.
o Num. 12:11. 1 K. 18:7,13. 1 Tim. 5:17.
p Ex. 7:19. 15:23. Josh. 6:17,26. 1 K. 16:34.
‡ Heb. *causing to miscarry.* Ex. 23: 26. Deut. 28:2—4,11,15—18. Hos. 9:14.
q Judg. 9:45. Ez. 47:11. Zeph. 2:9.
r 4:41. 6:6. Ex. 15:25,26. John 9:6.

fortable to those who inquire after God, that they know where to find Him; it is *even He* that *is in his holy temple*, (Ps. 11: 4.) and *nigh to all who call upon Him*, Ps. 145: 18. Those that walk in the spirit and steps of their godly, faithful predecessors, shall certainly experience the same grace that they experienced; Elijah's God will be Elisha's too; the Lord God of the holy prophets is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

3. Of Elijah's interest in the sons of the prophets, *v.* 15. Some of the college at Jericho, who had placed themselves conveniently near Jordan, to see what passed, were surprised to see Jordan divided before Elisha, and took that as a convincing evidence, that *the spirit of Elijah did rest on him*, and that therefore they ought to pay him the same respect and deference, as they had Elijah. Accordingly, they went to meet and congratulate him; they were trained up in the schools, Elisha was taken from the plough, yet, when they perceive that God is with him, and that this is *the man whom He delights to honor*, they readily submit to him, as their head and father; as the people to Joshua, when Moses was dead, Josh. 1: 17. Those that appear to have God's Spirit and presence with them, ought to have our esteem and best affections, notwithstanding the meanness of their extraction and education. Whomsoever God honors, we must. This ready submission, no doubt, was a great encouragement to Elisha, and helped to clear his call.

II. The needless search of the sons of the prophets for Elijah. Elisha consented not to their motion, till they overcame him with importunity, *v.* 17. Wise men may yield to that, for the sake of peace, and the good opinions of others, which yet their judgment is against, as needless and fruitless. The issue made them as much ashamed of their proposal, as they, by their importunity, had made Elisha ashamed of opposing it. This would make them the more willing to acquiesce in his judgment another time.

V. 19—25. Elisha had a double portion of Elijah's spirit, in that he wrought more miracles than he. Some reckon them in number just double. Two are recorded in these vs.—a miracle of mercy to Jericho, and of judgment to Beth-el, Ps. 101: 1.

I. Jericho was built in disobedience to a command, in defiance to a threatening; and at the expense of the lives of all the builder's children; yet, when built, it was not ordered to be demolished again, nor were God's prophets or people forbidden to dwell in it, but even within those walls, we find a nursery of piety. Hither Elisha came, to confirm the disciples with a more particular account of Elijah's translation, and here he staid while the fifty men were searching for him.

And, 1. The men of Jericho represented to him their grievance, *v.* 19. Some think it was not all the ground about Jericho, that was barren, and had bad water, but that part only where the sons of the prophets, here called *the men of the city*, had their lodgings. 2. He soon redressed their grievance. If salt had been proper to season the water, yet what could so small a quantity do towards it, and what the better for being in a new cruse? But thus they that would be helped, must be employed, and their faith and obedience tried. God's works of grace are wrought, not by any operations of ours, but in our observance of his institutions. He cast the salt *into the spring of the waters*, and so healed the streams, and the ground they watered. The way to reform men's lives, is, to renew their hearts. *Make the tree good, and the fruit will be good.* Purify the heart, and that will cleanse the hands. He did not pretend to do this by his own power, but in God's name. He is but the instrument, the channel through which God is pleased to convey this healing virtue. By doing them this kindness, with a *Thus saith the Lord*, they would be made the more willing, hereafter, to receive from him a reproof, admonition, or command, with the same preface. *Thus saith the Lord*, out of Elisha's mouth, must, ever after, be of mighty force with them. The cure was lasting, and not for the present only, *v.* 22. What God doeth, *it shall be for ever.* When He, by his Spirit, *heals a soul*, there shall be *no more death nor barrenness;* the property is altered; what was useless and offensive, becomes grateful and serviceable.

II. Here is a curse on the *children of Beth-el.* At Beth-el was another school of prophets, thither Elisha goes next; the scholars, no doubt, welcomed him with all possible respect, but the townsmen abused him. One of Jeroboam's calves was at Beth-el; this they were proud and fond of, and hated them that reproved them. The law did not empower them to suppress this pious academy, but we may suppose it was their usual practice to jeer the prophets as they went along the streets, to call them by some nickname or other, to expose them to contempt, prejudice their youth against them, and, if possible, drive them out of their town. Had this abuse to Elisha been the first offence of that kind, probably it would not have been so severely punished. But *mocking the messengers of the Lord*, and *misusing the prophets*, was one of the *crying sins of Israel*, 2 Chr. 36: 16.

1. The little *children of Beth-el* (the boys and girls playing in the streets; notice, it is likely, being come to the town of his approach) went out to meet him, not with hosannas, as they ought, but with scoffs; gathered about him, and mocked

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 11—18. Angels delight to be employed in removing the saints to their glorious rest, in any way that the Lord pleases. (*Notes, Gen.* 24: 2—9. *Luke* 16: 22, 23. *Heb.* 1: 13, 14.) Yet the event, which is so joyful to them, often causes painful separations to those who are left behind: many, on these occasions, are bereft of such as have been more dear and useful to them, than the tenderest parent: yea, even the public has been deprived of some of its strongest bulwarks, though most men are insensible to the loss. (*Note, Is.* 57: 1, 2.) On these accounts it is allowable to grieve: but believers should be warned 'not to sorrow, as men without hope;' the separation will at length issue in a more joyful meeting, and the loss shall be made up to them. Though Elijah be removed, 'the LORD God of Elijah' lives; and, though the miraculous powers are withdrawn, the Gospel still is attended with a divine energy for the conversion and salvation of sinners. Oh, may that power be more abundantly experienced, wherever the Word of God is truly preached! And may we all seriously inquire, whether it be not suspended, retarded, or removed, through some criminal cause in us!—Having, however, the same exceeding great and precious promises, the same throne of grace, the same Mediator, the same powerful God and Father, as the primitive Christians had; if we have also the same 'precious faith,' we need not fear breaking through all difficulties, opposing enemies, and at last passing comfortably through the Jordan of death, as on dry ground. SCOTT.

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have been on former occasions. (*M. R.*—1 *K.* 18: 12—16.) Elisha, however, might fear lest they should suspect, if he persisted in refusing their request, that he was influenced by an undue desire of filling Elijah's honorable place; and the event tended to establish his authority. SCOTT.

Verses 19, 22.

Barren.] '*Causing* animals *to miscarry*,' (marg.) and operating in vegetable bodies to make them cast their immature fruit. *Scott. Gill.* So also *Josephus.* 'The Rabbins mention another place similar, in the mountains of Judah. The word tr. "*barren* land," *v.* 21, means *abortion.* It cannot well refer to vegetable products, as Jericho was celebrated for fertility, was *pleasant*, and called the 'city of palms,' 2 Chr. 28: 15. The climate of Porto Bello was thought to produce analogous effects. *Bruce* says, "no beast of burden, &c. will breed at or near Sennaar. . . . My two grey-hounds and mule lived but a few weeks after I arrived. They seemed to have some inward complaint, for nothing appeared outwardly. Several kings have tried to keep lions, but no care could preserve them beyond the first rains. Two lived with a shekh's horses, kept 3 miles from Sennaar. Neither rose nor any species of jessamine grows here; no tree but the lemon flowers near the city, that I ever saw; the rose has been often tried, but in vain. This unfavorableness to propagation, seems owing to some noxious quality of the fat earth all around it, and ceases on removing from the fertile country to the sands. The soil of Sennaar is strongly impregnated with salt." This instance seems a parallel to Jericho.' ROB. CALM. which see. ED.

The new cruse, and the salt, were merely signs of Jehovah's powerful operation. *M. R.* SCOTT.

salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, [s]I have healed these waters: [t]there shall not be from thence any more death or barren *land*.

22 So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.

23 ¶ And he went up from thence unto [u]Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth [x]little children out of the city, and [y]mocked him, and said unto him, [z]Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.

24 And he turned back, and looked on them, and [a]cursed them in the name of the LORD: and there came forth two [b]she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two [c]children of them.

25 And he went from thence to [d]mount Carmel; and from thence he returned to Samaria.

CHAP. III.

Jehoram reigns wickedly, 1—3. Mesha king of Moab revolts, 4, 5. Jehoram, Jehoshaphat, and the king of Edom, march against him; and being greatly distressed for want of water, they apply to Elisha, who sharply reproves Jehoram, but shows respect to Jehoshaphat, 6—14. He promises them water, and victory, 15—19. Plenty of water is sent; the Moabites are deceived by the appearance, and are entirely defeated, 20—24. The allied kings destroy the cities, spoil the country, and besiege Kir-haraseth, 25. The king of Moab, sacrificing his eldest son, causes them to raise the siege, 26, 27.

NOW [a]Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria, the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and

him, as if a fool, or one fit to make sport with: among other things that they used to jeer the prophets with, they had this particular taunt for him, *Go up, thou bald-head; Go up, thou bald-head.* It is wicked to reproach any for natural infirmities or deformities; it is adding affliction to the afflicted; and if they are as God made them, the reproach reflects on Him. But this was such a thing as scarcely deserved to be called a blemish, and would never have been turned to his reproach, if they had had any thing else to reproach him with. It was his character, as a prophet, that they designed to abuse. They bade him *go up*, perhaps reflecting on the assumption of Elijah: 'Thy master,' they say, 'is gone up; why dost not thou go up after him? Where is the fiery chariot? When shall we be rid of thee too?' These children said as they were taught; they had learned of their idolatrous parents to call foul names, and give bad language, especially to prophets. Perhaps their parents sent them out, and set them on, that, if possible, they might keep the prophet out of their town.

2. Here is a specimen of that ruin which came on Israel, at last, for misusing God's prophets, and of which this was intended to give them fair warning. Elisha heard their taunts, a good while, with patience; but, at length, the fire of holy zeal for God was kindled in his breast, and he *turned and looked upon them*, to try if a grave and severe look would shame or awe them; or to see if he could discern in their faces any marks of ingenuousness: but they *were not ashamed, neither could they blush;* therefore he *cursed them in the name of the Lord*, both imprecated and denounced the following judgment, not in personal revenge for the indignity to himself, but, as the mouth of divine justice, to punish the dishonor to God. His summons was immediately obeyed; two she-bears (bears perhaps robbed of their whelps) came out of an adjacent wood, and presently killed 42 children, *v.* 24. Now in this, (1.) The prophet must be justified, for he did it by divine impulse. Had the curse come from any bad principle, God would not have said, *Amen*, to it. Elisha knew, by the Spirit, the bad character of these children, what a generation of vipers they were; and what mischievous enemies they would be to God's prophets, if they should live to be men, who began so early to abuse them. He intended hereby to punish the parents, and to make them afraid of God's judgments. (2.) God must be glorified, as a righteous God that hates sin, and will reckon for it, even in little children. Let little children be afraid of speaking wicked words, for God notices what they say. Let them not mock at any for their defects in mind or body, but pity them rather; especially let them know it is at their peril, if they jeer God's people or ministers, and scoff at any for well-doing. Let parents that would have comfort in their children, train them up well, and do their utmost betimes to drive out the foolishness that is bound up in their hearts; for, (as Bp. Hall says,) 'In vain do we look for good of those children whose education we have neglected; and in vain do we grieve for those miscarriages which our care might have prevented.'

Elisha comes to Beth-el, and fears not the revenges of the bereaved parents; God, who bade him do what he did, he knew would bear him out. Thence he goes to Carmel, (*v.* 25.) where, it is probable, there was a religious house fit for retirement and contemplation. Thence he returned to Samaria, where, being a public place, this father of the prophets might be most serviceable. Bp. Hall observes here, 'That he can never be a profitable seer, who is either always or never alone.'

CHAP. III. We are now called to attend the public affairs of Israel, in which we shall find Elisha concerned. The house of Ahab is doomed to destruction; and though in this ch. we have both its character and its condition better than before, yet the threatened ruin is not far off.

V. 1—5. Jehoram, the son of Ahab, and brother of Ahaziah, is here on the throne of Israel; and though but a bad man, yet,

1. He removed his father's idols. He did evil in many things, but not like his father Ahab, or his mother Jezebel, *v.* 2. he was not so bad, so *overmuch wicked*, as Solomon speaks. Perhaps Jehoshaphat, though by his alliance with Ahab he made his own family worse, did something toward

s Ez. 47:8—11. 1 Cor. 1:18—28. Rev. 22:2,3.
t Ps. 107:34—38. Rev. 21:4.
u 1 K. 12:28—32. Hos. 4:15. 10:5,15. Am. 3:14. 4:4. 5:5. 7:13.
x Job 19:18. Prov. 20:11. 22:6,15. Ec. 11:10. Is. 1:4. 3:5. Jer. 7:18.
y Gen. 21:9. 2 Chr. 36:16. Job 30:1,8, 9. Ps. 35:15. Is. 57:3,4. Gal. 4:29. Heb. 11:36.
z 11. Matt. 27:28—31,40—43.
a 1:10—12. Gen. 9:25. Deut. 28:15—26. Jer. 23:16. 29:21—23. Am. 7: 17. Mark 11:14,21. Acts 5:5,9. 8: 20. 13:9—11. 2 Cor. 10:6.
b 2 Sam. 17:8. Prov. 17:12. 28:15. Hos. 13:8.
c Ex. 20:5. 1 K. 13:24. 19:17. 20:36.
d 4:25. 1 K. 18:19,42.
a 1:17. 8:16, *Joram.* 1 K. 22:51.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 19—25. The nature of man, in its best estate, and adorned with all the embellishments of which it is capable, resembles the unwholesome water and soil of Jericho. It is throughout infected with sin, and barren of real good; and man's best actions, *till renewed by grace*, proceed from selfish and carnal motives, are directed to unworthy purposes, and measured by a false rule. But when that remedy is applied, a blessed change takes place through all the powers of the soul: and repentance, faith, and love of God and man, produce good works, performed from the purest principles, and for the most important ends; and regulated according to the holy law of God, and the example of the Redeemer. In this way sometimes whole towns and cities have assumed a new appearance, through the preaching of the Gospel, and by the pouring out of the Holy Spirit; so that the curse of sin and ungodliness has been converted into the blessing of fruitfulness 'in the works of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God:' and when this blessing is vouchsafed to seminaries of learning, and places of public education; the fertilizing streams may flow through whole countries, nay into the most distant lands, and produce the most happy change. (*Notes, Ez.* 47: 1—11.)—While the special favor of God evidently rests on those places where his Gospel is welcomed; his heaviest wrath will light on those who reject the gracious message, and insult and abuse his ministers.—The words and actions even of children, yea, of 'little children,' are noticed by Him. Let then the youngest who read or hear these observations, 'stand in awe, and sin not.' And if any have the misfortune to have parents or teachers so wicked, as to set them an example of such profaneness, or to instruct or encourage them to behave in such a manner; let them remember that they should 'obey God rather than man,' and that they must answer to Him for their offence, whoever commands them to commit it.—Indeed the ministers of Christ must and will, in all ordinary circumstances, continue to bless, and not curse: but the Lord is still glorious in holiness, and all creatures serve Him; and while He protects his people, even among their enraged foes, He can soon call for instruments of his vengeance on those, whom He sees to be ripe for destruction. SCOTT.

Verses 23, 24.

Several learned men have endeavored to prove, that these offenders were not children, but grown up persons: and, no doubt, the first word (*neärim*) rendered *children*, is often used in that sense. The addition, however, of the word rendered *little*, seems clearly to evince, that they were not men, but young boys, who had been trained up in idolatry, and taught to despise the prophets of the Lord. The children of the city in general seem to have been present; and the insult was perhaps the effect of a pre-concerted plan, to drive the sons of the prophets from Beth-el by ill treatment. The 42 children, which were devoured, seem to have been only a part of the whole company, and perhaps they were the most guilty. However, the Judge of all the earth surely did right. Had he cut them off by a fever, no one would have objected to it: but, while the dispensation would have been as severe towards them, it would not have been suited, in any adequate measure, to make the same useful impression on the minds of the survivors, or to inculcate the same important instructions to other ages and nations, as this solemn sentence and immediate execution were. (*Num.* 31:2. *Josh.* 6:21. *Acts* 5:1—11.) SCOTT.

(23.) *Bald head.*] 'This is still a term of reproach and contempt among the Hindoos, even when they revile a person with plenty of hair.' ROBERTS.

NOTES.

CHAP. III. V. 1. *Note*, 1: 17. SCOTT.

reigned twelve years.

2 And he [b] wrought evil in the sight of the LORD, [c] but not like his father, and [d] like his mother; for he put away the [*] image of [e] Baal that his father had made.

3 Nevertheless [f] he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, [g] which made Israel to sin; [h] he departed not therefrom.

4 ¶ And Mesha king of Moab was [i] a sheepmaster, and [k] rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool.

5 But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, [l] that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.

6 And king Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time, and [m] numbered all Israel.

7 And he went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me: [n] wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I will go up; I *am* as thou *art*, my people as thy people, *and* my horses as thy horses.

8 And he said, Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through [o] the wilderness of Edom.

9 So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and [p] the king of Edom; and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey: and there was [q] no water for the host, and for the cattle [†] that followed them.

10 And the king of Israel said, Alas! that [r] the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab!

11 But Jehoshaphat said, [s] *Is there* not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may inquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel 's servants answered and said, Here *is* Elisha the son of Shaphat, [u] which poured water on the hands of Elijah.

making Ahab's better. Jehoram saw his father and brother cut off for worshipping Baal, and thence wisely took warning, and *put away the image of Baal*, resolving to worship the God of Israel only, and consult none but his prophets. So far was well, yet it did not prevent the destruction of Ahab's family, nay, that destruction came *in his days*, and fell immediately *on him*; (*ch.* 9: 24.) though he was one of the best of the family, for then the measure of its iniquity was full. Jehoram's reformation was next to none: (1.) He only put away the image of Baal *which his father had made*, and this, probably, in compliment to Jehoshaphat; he did not destroy the worship of Baal among the people, *ch.* 10: 19. It was well to reform his family, but he ought to have used his power to reform his kingdom. (2.) When he put away the image of Baal, he maintained the worship of the calves, that politic sin of Jeroboam, *v.* 3. *He departed not therefrom*, because that was the state engine by which the division between the two tribes was supported. Those do not truly nor acceptably repent or reform, who only part with the sins they lose by, but continue their affection to the sins they get by.

2. He did what he could, to recover his brother's losses. As he had something more of the religion of an Israelite than his father, so he had something more of the spirit of a king than his brother. Moab rebelled against Israel immediately on the death of his father, *ch.* 1: 1. And we do not find that Ahaziah made any attempt to chastise or reduce them, but tamely let go his interest in them rather than entertain the cares, undergo the fatigues, and run the hazards, of a war with them. His folly and pusillanimity, herein, and his indifference to the public good, were the more aggravated, because the tribute which the king of Moab paid was a very considerable branch of the revenue of the crown of Israel, *v* 4. The riches of kings then lay more in cattle than coin, and they thought it not below them to *know the state of their flocks and herds* themselves, because, as Solomon observes, *the crown doth not endure to every generation*. Taxes were then paid, [as in ancient Egypt,] not so much in money, as in the commodities of the country, an ease to the subject, whether an advantage to the prince or no.

V. 6—19. Jehoram has no sooner got the sceptre, than he takes the sword, to reduce Moab. Crowns bring such cares and perils. Here we have,

I. The concerting of this expedition between the king of Israel and the king of Judah, *v.* 6—9. 1. Jehoram courts Jehoshaphat to be his confederate, gains him, *v.* 7. Judah and Israel, though unhappily divided, yet can unite against Moab, a common enemy. Those are no friends to their own peace and strength, who can never find in their hearts to forgive and forget an old injury, and unite with those that have formerly broken in on their rights.—2. Jehoshaphat advised, that they should not march against Moab the nearest way, over Jordan, but round *through the wilderness of Edom*, that they might take the king of Edom, a tributary, and his forces, along with them.

II. The great straits the confederate army was reduced to. Before they saw the face of an enemy, they were all in danger of perishing for want of water, *v.* 9. God suffers his people, by their own improvidence, to bring themselves into distress, that the wisdom, power, and goodness, of his providence may be glorified in their relief. The king of Israel sadly laments the distress, *v.* 10. It was he that had *called these kings together*, yet he charges it on Providence, and reflects on that as unkind. Thus *the foolishness of man perverteth his way*, and then *his heart fretteth against the Lord*.

III. Jehoshaphat's good motion to ask counsel of God in this exigence, *v.* 11. They could not but be reminded of the *wonders their fathers told them of*, the waters fetched out of the rock. This thought, we may suppose, encouraged Jehoshaphat's motion. He was the more concerned, because it was by his advice they fetched this compass through the wilderness, *v.* 8. It had been much better, had he inquired of the Lord before he engaged in this war, or steered this course; so the distress might have been prevented. Good men are sometimes remiss and forgetful, and neglect their duty, till necessity and affliction drive them to it.

IV. Elisha recommended as a proper person to consult, *v.* 11. It is strange, 1. That Elisha should follow the camp, unasked, unobserved, and in no post of honor at all. We may suppose it was by special direction from heaven. It would often be bad with us, if God did not take more care of us, both for soul and body, than we for ourselves. 2. That a servant of the king of Israel knew of his being there, when the king himself did not. Probably, it was such a servant as Obadiah was to his father Ahab, one that *feared the Lord*; to such a one Elisha made himself known, not to the kings.

V. The application the kings made to Elisha, *v.* 12. Jehoshaphat had such esteem for a prophet with whom the word of the Lord was, that he would condescend to visit him in his own person, and not send. The other two were moved by the straits they were in, to make their court to the prophet. He that humbled himself, was thus exalted, when three kings came to beg his assistance; see Rev. 3: 9.

VI. The entertainment Elisha gave them. 1. He was very plain with the wicked king of Israel, *v.* 13. 'How canst thou expect an answer of peace from me?' Elisha was not imposed on, as Jehoshaphat was, by his partial and hypocritical reformation; he knew, that, though he had put away the image of Baal, Baal's prophets were still dear to him, and some of them perhaps now in his camp. *Go*, said he, *Get you to the gods ye have served*. Elisha tells him to his face, in a holy indignation at his wickedness, that he could scarcely find in his heart to *look toward him*, or to *see him*, *v.* 14. Jehoram is to be respected as a prince, but as a wicked man, he is vile, and to be contemned, Ps. 15: 4. Elisha, as a subject, will honor him, but, as a prophet, will make him know his iniquity. For them that had such an extraordinary commission, it was fit (though not for a common person) to say to a king, *Thou art wicked*, Job 34: 18. Jehoram has so much self-command as to take it patiently; he cares not now for hearing of the prophets of Baal, but is a humble suitor to the God of Israel and his prophet, representing

[b] 8:31,32. 21:6,20.—See on 1 Sam. 15: 19. 1 K. 16:19.
[c] 1 K. 16:33. 21:20,25.
[d] 9:22,34. 1 K. 21:5—15,25.
[*] Heb. *statue*.
[e] 10:18,26—28. 1 K. 16:31,32.
[f] 10:20—31.—See on 1 K. 12:28—33.
[g] See on 1 K. 14:16.—15:26,34. 16:31.
[h] 13:2,6,11. 14:24. 15:9,18. 17:22. 1 K. 12:26—28. 13:33. 1 Cor. 1:19,20.
[i] Gen. 13:2. 26:13,14. 2 Chr. 26:10. Job 1:3. 42:12.
[k] 2 Sam. 8:2. 1 Chr. 18:2. Ps 60:8. Is. 16:1.
[l] See on 1:1.—2 Chr. 21:8—10.
[m] 1 Sam. 11:8. 15:4. 2 Sam. 24:1. 1 K. 20:27.
[n] See on 1 K. 22:4,32,33.—2 Chr. 18:3, 26—32. 19:2. 21:4—7. 22:3,4,10—12.
[o] Num. 21:4. Mal. 1:2,3.
[p] See on 1 K. 22:47.
[q] Ex. 15:22. 17:1. Num. 20:2,4. 21: 5. 33:14.
[†] Heb. *at their feet*. Ex. 11:8. *marg.* Judg. 4:10.
[r] 6:33. Gen. 4:13. Ps. 78:34—36. Prov 19:3. Is. 8:21. 51:20.
[s] See on 1 K. 22:7. Ps. 74:9.—Am. 3:7.
[t] 1,8. Josh. 9:14. Judg. 20:8—11,18. 23,26—28. 1 Chr. 10:13. 14:10,14. 15:13.
[u] Gen. 18:4. Josh. 1:1. 1 K. 19:21. Luke 22:26,27. John 13:4,5,13,14. Phil. 2:22.

Verses 4—6. *E. R.*—*Note*, 1:1.—*Rams*. (4) Or *wethers*, as some understand it. SCOTT.

Verses 8, 9.

It is probable, the army either missed the direct road, or was hindered in its march, and turned out of the way which the kings had intended to take, by some unforeseen impediments: or a great drought prevailed in that region, of which they had not been aware. SCOTT.

Verse 11.

Poured, &c.] As 'the eastern custom of eating with the fingers, renders this practice necessary, and usual after every meal,' (*Roberts*, &c.) the phrase came to signify an attendant. ED.

12 And Jehoshaphat said, [x] The word of the LORD is with him. So [y] the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to meet him.

[*Practical Observations.*]

13 And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, [z] What have I to do with thee? [a] get thee to [b] the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, [c] Nay; for the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab.

14 And Elisha said, [d] *As* the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that [e] I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, [f] I would not look toward thee, nor see thee.

15 But now [g] bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that [h] the hand of the LORD came upon him.

16 And he said, Thus saith the LORD, [i] Make this valley full of ditches:

17 For thus saith the LORD, [k] Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, [l] that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts.

18 And [m] this is *but* a light thing in the sight of the LORD: [n] he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand.

19 And [p] ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall [q] fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and * mar every good piece of land with stones.

20 And it came to pass in the morning, [r] when the meat-offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.

21 And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they gathered all that were able to put on armor, and upward, and stood in the border.

22 And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood:

23 And they said, This is blood: the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil.

24 And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them: but they went forward smiting them, even in their country.

25 And they beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees: only in Kirharaseth left they the stones thereof; however the slingers went about it, and smote it.

26 And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through even unto the king of Edom: but they could not.

27 Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt-offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to their own land.

V. 20—27. We have here the divine gift of both the things God had promised by Elisha; water and victory; and the former not only a pledge of the latter, but a mean of it.

I. It relieved their armies, which were ready to perish, *v.* 20. and, which was very observable, just at the time of the *offering of the morning sacrifice* on the altar at Jerusalem, a certain time, and universally known; that time Elisha chose for his *hour of prayer*, in token of his communion with the temple-service, and his expectation of success, by virtue of the great Sacrifice. That time God chose for the *hour of mercy*, to put an honor on the daily sacrifice which had been despised. God answered Daniel's prayer just at the *time of the evening-sacrifice*, (Dan. 9: 21.) for He will glorify his own institutions.

II. It deceived their enemies, who were ready to triumph, into their destruction. Notice is brought the Moabites of the advances of the confederate army; to oppose which, *all that were able to put on armor* were raised, and posted on the frontiers, where they are ready to give them a warm reception, (*v.* 21.) promising themselves, it would be easy dealing with an army fatigued by so long a march through the wilderness of Edom. But see here,

1. How easily they were drawn into their own delusions; observe the steps of their self-deceit. They saw the water in the valley where Israel encamped, and conceited it was blood, *v.* 22. They knew it was a dry valley, and (there having been no rain) could not imagine it should be water. The sun shone on it, and, probably, *the sky was red and lowering*, a presage of *foul weather that day*, (Matt. 16: 3.) and so it proved to them. But this making the water look red,* their own fancies, which made them willing to believe what made for them, suggested, *This is blood;* God permitting them thus to impose on themselves. If their camp was thus full of blood, they conclude, 'Certainly the kings have fallen out, and they have *slain one another*, *v.* 23. what else should slay them?' And, 'If so, we have nothing to do but to divide the prey. Now therefore, *Moab, to the*

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* A sort of the Ed. observed a similar appearance on the Nile. Note, Ex. 7: 20.

x 2:14,15,21,24. 1 Sam. 3:19—21.
y 5:8,9,15. Is. 49:23. 60:14. Rev. 3:9.
z Ez. 14:3—5. Matt. 8:29. John 2:4. 2 Cor. 5:16. 6:15.
a Judg. 10:14. Jer. 2:27,28.
b 1 K. 18:19. 22:6,10,11,22—25.
c See on 10. Deut. 32:37—39. Hos. 6:1.
d 5:16. 1 K. 17:1. 18:15.
e 2 Chr. 17:3—9. 19:3,4. Ps. 15:4.
f 1 Sam. 15:26—31. 1 K. 14:5,&c. 21: 20. Jer. 1:18. Dan. 5:17—23. Matt. 22:16.
g 1 Sam. 10:5. 16:23. 18:10. 1 Chr. 25:2,3. Eph. 5:18,19.
h 1 K. 18:46. Ez. 1:3. 3:14,22. 8.1. Acts 11:21.
i 4:3. Num. 21:8,16—18.
k 1 K. 18:36—39. Ps. 84:6. 107:35. Is. 41:17,18. 43:19,20. 48:21.
l Ex. 17:6. Num. 20:8—11.
m 1 K. 3:13. Jer. 32:17,27. Luke 1:37. Eph. 3:20.
n 20,10. 1 K. 16:31. Is. 7:13. 49:6. Ez. 8:17.
o 1 K. 20:13,28. Is. 7:1—9.
p 13:17. Num. 24:17. Judg. 6:16. 1 Sam. 15:3. 23:2.
q Deut. 20:19,20.
* Heb. grieve. 25.
r Ex. 29:39,40. 1 K. 18:36. Dan. 9:21.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12. Partial reformations often originate from the hope of advantage in *temporal* things, by the favor of godly men: and even the selfish will sometimes renounce those sins, which occasion them loss and trouble; and then detect their own hypocrisy by adhering to those which promise present advantage.—Worldly men are quick-sighted to their temporal interests, but they seek nothing further; and often seduce pious persons to forget their own principles, and to 'lean to their own understandings,' instead of 'acknowledging the LORD in all their ways.' But whilst the wicked in their difficulties are ready to 'fret against the Lord,' as the author of those calamities, which their own sin and folly have brought upon them; the believer will be humbled before Him for neglect of duties, and disposed to inquire his will and seek his help. And when corrections have brought men to this temper, relief will be afforded them; and their ungodly connections will often succeed the better on their account.—Those, who would be eminent in the church of the living God, must readily stoop to the meanest service and the hardest labor: for such as have thus distinguished themselves, have generally attained to singular honor and usefulness. (*Matt.* 20: 24—28.) SCOTT.

Verses 13, 14.

It is probable, Elisha meant to show Jehoshaphat the deficiency and hypocrisy of Jehoram's reformation; as his heart still went after the prophets and worship of Baal: and he had no real regard for the prophets of God, [nor would have given Him the glory of success,] though in his distress he consults Elisha.—Doubtless the prophet was directed to act in his *public character*, differently from what he would have done as *a private subject* of Jehoram's kingdom. This indeed is implied in the words of the oath, by which he confirmed what he spake. 'As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand.' (*M. R.* d.) SCOTT.

Verse 15.

This music was intended to calm the prophet's mind, and so prepare him for illapses of the Holy Spirit. ID.

'To be able to discern the voice of God, and the operations of his hand, it is necessary that the mind be calm, and the *passions* [affective faculties] *all in harmony*, under the direction of *reason*; that reason may be under the influence of the divine Spirit.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 16, 17.

It is useless to inquire whence this water came [note, 2:11, 12.]: He, that caused the rock to pour forth rivers, could never want resources. (*Ex.* 17:5, 6.) The supply, however, was evidently miraculous: and those who have insinuated the contrary, as if Elisha had merely known that there was water in the place, if they would only dig for it; must suppose that the prophet, whom they attempt to disparage, had more sagacity in matters of this kind, than these three kings, with all their officers, and counsellors, and soldiers. SCOTT.

Verses 18, 19.

(*M. R.*) Providence put it in Jehoram's power to execute that severe vengeance on the revolted Moabites, which he meditated. But it is not certain, whether the words of Elisha implied a *permission* to do so, or were merely *prophetical* of the event. (*Deut.* 20:19, 20.) ID.

Verse 20.

(*M. R.* r.)—The peculiar circumstances of Israel were such, that without uninterrupted miracles, or subverting the foundation of the

hold, there came water by the way of Edom; and the country was *filled with water.

21 And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they *gathered all that were able to †put on armor and upward, and stood in the border.

22 And they arose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side, *as* red as blood:

23 And they said, [t]This *is* blood: the kings are surely ‡slain, and they have smitten one another: [u]now therefore Moab to the spoil.

24 And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and [x]smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them: but they §went forward smiting the Moabites, even in *their* country.

25 And they [y]beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it, and they [z]stopped all the wells of water, [a]and felled all the good trees: ‖only in [b]Kir-haraseth left they the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about *it*, and smote it.

26 And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through *even* [c]unto the king of Edom: but they could not.

27 Then he took his eldest son, that should have reigned in his stead, and [d]offered him *for* a burnt-offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and [e]they departed from him, and returned to *their own* land.

spoil!' What we wish, we readily believe. Thus they that are to be destroyed, are first deceived, (Rev. 20: 8.) and none are so effectually deceived as those that deceive themselves.

2. How fatally they thereby ran on *their own destruction*, *v.* 24, 25. The Israelites left only the royal city standing; in the walls of which they made great breaches with their battering engines. Who ever *hardened his heart against God, and prospered?*

In the close of the ch. we are told what the king of Moab did, when he found himself reduced to the last extremity by the besiegers, and that his capital city was likely to fall into their hands. He got together 700 choice men, and sallied out on the intrenchments of the king of Edom, who, being but a mercenary in this expedition, would not, he hoped, make any great resistance if vigorously attacked. But he was obliged to retire, *v.* 26. This failing, he, brutishly, and barbarously, took his own son, his eldest son, that was to succeed him, than whom nothing could be more dear to himself, and his people, and *offered him for a burnt-offering on the wall*, *v.* 27. He designed

a See on Ps. 78:15,16,20. Is. 35:6,7.
* Heb. *were cried together.*
† Heb. *gird himself with a girdle.* 1 K. 20:11. Eph. 6:14.
t 6:18—20. 7:6.
‡ Heb. *destroyed.*
u Ex. 15:9. Judg. 5:30. 2 Chr. 20:25. Is. 10:14.
x Josh. 8:20—22. Judg. 20:40—46. 1 Thes. 5:3,4.
§ Or, *smote in it even smiting.*
y 19. Judg. 9:45. 2 Sam. 8:2. Is. 37: 26,27.
z Gen. 26:15,18. 2 Chr. 32:4.
a Deut. 20:19,20.
‖ Heb. *until he left the stones thereof in Kir-haraseth.*
b Is. 16:7,11. Jer. 48:31,36. *Kir-heres.*
c 9. Am. 2:1.
d Gen. 22:2,13. Deut. 12:31. Judg. 11: 31,39. Ps. 106:37,38. Ez. 16:20. Mic. 6:7.
e 1 Sam. 14:36—46. 1 K. 20:13,28,43.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 13—27. Many show respect to the ministers of God under heavy trials, who despise them at other times. In that case, they might be justly left to seek help from the worldly idols, the vicious companions, the worthless forms, or infidel principles, which they have preferred to the favor and truth of God: and they should be shown, that with Him 'there is no respect of persons.' The minister may also properly let them know, that he is no stranger to their character, and will pay no court to them, whatever he would do or suffer for their good: and he, who in private life is the allowed inferior, and willing to be the servant of all, when speaking in the name of the Lord, is commissioned to 'rebuke with all authority.' In *all ordinary cases*, however, it should be with evident affection and respect; and it is proper so to change the voice, and regulate the conduct, as decisively to mark the difference between the offending believer and the mere hypocrite.—The Lord will take occasion, from the distresses of his offending servants, to manifest the glory of his power, truth, and love: and, whilst all good gifts are from Him alone, we must show our believing expectation, and prepare for their reception, by observing the directions of his Word.—Our rule is, to do good and not evil to *our* adversaries: but we shall hereafter behold and rejoice in the destruction of all the enemies of God. And they who are expressly commissioned by Him, (as the Israelites of old, and magistrates at present,) to execute his vengeance on the wicked, are authorized in those severities, which in others would be extremely criminal.—The Lord will put honor on his own institutions: and sinners left to themselves are speedily infatuated; for if men could not believe what they wish to be true, *without proof, and in defiance of demonstration*, 'the fool' would not 'say in his heart, there is no God.'—We should be careful not to urge the worst of men to extremities, lest we should occasion blasphemies, murder, or suicide: we ought rather to recede from our right, and leave them to the judgment of God. SCOTT.

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civil establishment, the people could not exactly observe the ritual law. The prophets were therefore directed, by God Himself, to accommodate their conduct to these circumstances, and to spend their lives in recovering or preserving the people from idolatry, and in teaching them the grand essentials of acceptable religion.—In every age hitherto, considerate and faithful ministers have found it impracticable for them, to rectify every external deviation from what to them appeared most scriptural: but, having adverted to the distinction between what is *desirable*, and what is *attainable*; and between the essentials of true religion in every age, and matters more circumstantial; they have accommodated themselves to that state of things which they could not alter; and endeavored to bring men to repentance, faith in Christ, and holiness of life, and to as scriptural an external worship as they could. And, though some of their brethren have censured them, the Lord God of Elijah and Elisha has evidently pleaded their cause, by making them the instruments of numerous conversions, and great revivals of religion: whilst others, scrupulously exact in external forms, and earnest to magnify them, have worn out their lives in vainly attempting to new model the church and the world, and have missed their opportunity of more essential usefulness. (4:23. 1 *Sam.* 7:9, 17. 1 *K.* 18:4, 36, 37.) In due time the Lord will regulate every thing externally, as well as internally, in the best manner: in the meanwhile we must make the best of things: we must aim to be satisfied respecting our own conduct as in the sight of God; to be moderate and candid in our own judgment concerning those who differ from us, and patient under their censures of us; and, learning what that means, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice,' to be careful not to lose sight of the great end of all religion, for the sake of some of the *disputable* means of attaining it. For at last, nothing 'availeth in Christ Jesus, but faith which worketh by love,' and 'a new creature' manifested in 'newness of life.' (*Gal.* 5:1—6. 6:11—16.)

The way of Edom.] Mt. Seir was inhabited by Edom: and some think, that plentiful rains on the mountains of Edom supplied the water. But this is uncertain; and Mt. Seir was not so distant, but that tokens of wind or rain would have been perceived by the army. SCOTT.

(17)

Verse 25.

The slingers.] A cut is given from *Vegetius* of a Balearian slinger. *Diod. Sic.* says, they carried 3 slings, one round the head, another round the waist, and the third in their hand. These were of different lengths, according to the distance of their object, &c. ED.

Verse 27.

It has been supposed, that the king of Moab offered in sacrifice the eldest son of the king of Edom, whom he had taken prisoner: but the narrative does not admit of this interpretation. It has been thought, that a tradition of Abraham's offering Isaac, nay, that even a distorted tradition concerning the sacrifice of the Redeemer, gave occasion to those horrid human sacrifices, which have been, and still are, very common in the Gentile world. But this at most could only be the *occasion*: the *cause* was two-fold; the depravity and blindness of the human heart, and the subtlety and malignity of Satan; in whose worship, as directed by him, it must be a first principle, that the more costly, painful, unnatural, and cruel the oblation is, the more acceptable the sacrifice; because it best gratifies his pride, envy, and malice. (*Lev.* 20:2—5. *Mic.* 6:6—8.) SCOTT. To this it may be added, that a religion of *fear*, merely, will but excite its neighbor propensities to cruelty, and murder, as is often seen in the persecuting bigot, whose conscience is uneducated, while his zeal and devotion fire a bad heart with exterminating rage, whose effects he will think an acceptable offering to the God he has set up. Such ever has been and such still is the religion of the lower propensities. ED.

Offered him.] 'This barbarous [method to avert national calamities] existed among the Ethiopians, Phœnicians, Scythians, Egyptians, Chinese, Persians, ancient Indians, Gauls, Greeks, Romans, Goths, Britons, [Arabs,] &c.' BURDER.

CHAP. IV.

A Elisha's word the oil of a poor prophet's widow is increased, to enable her to pay her debt, 1—7. He is hospitably entertained by a woman of Shunem, who is rewarded by having a son in her old age, 8—17. The child dies, but is restored to life in answer to Elisha's prayer, 18—37. Elisha heals the pottage made with poisonous herbs, 38—41; and feeds a hundred men with twenty small barley loaves, 42—44.

NOW there cried a certain woman of the wives of the [a] sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that [b] thy servant did fear the LORD: and [c] the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.

2 And Elisha said unto her, [d] What shall I do for thee? tell me: what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house [e] save a pot of oil.

3 Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbors, *even* [f] empty vessels; [*] borrow not a few.

4 And when thou art come in, [g] thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, [h] and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.

5 So [i] she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought *the vessels* to her, and she poured out.

a 38. See on 2:3,5. 1 K. 20:35.
b Gen. 22:12. 1 K. 18:3. Neh. 7:2. Ps. 103:11,17. 112:1,2. 115:13. 147:11. Ec. 8:12. 12:13. Mal. 3:16. 4:2. Acts 13:26. Rev. 15:4. 19:5.
c Lev. 25:39,40,43. Neh. 5:2—5. 10:31. Jer. 34:14. Matt. 18:25,30,35. Jam. 2:13.
d 2:9. 6:26,27. Matt. 15:34. John 6:5—7. Acts 3:6. 2 Cor. 6:10.
e 1 K. 17:12. Jam. 2:5. f 3:16. John 2:7.
* Heb. *scant not.* 13:18,19. Is. 31:10. John 16:24.
g 32,33. 1 K. 17:19,20. Is. 26:20. Matt. 6:6. Mark 5:40. Acts 9:40.
h John 2:7—9. 6:11.
i 5:11. 1 K. 17:15,16. Luke 1:45. Heb. 11:7,8.

CHAP. IV. Great service Elisha had done, in the foregoing ch. for the three kings; to his prayers and prophecies they owed their lives and triumphs. One would have expected the next ch. should have told us what honors and what dignities were conferred on Elisha for this: that he should immediately have been preferred at court, and made prime-minister of state; that Jehoshaphat should have taken him home with him, and advanced him in his kingdom. No, the wise man delivered the army, but no man remembered the wise man, Eccl. 9: 15. Or, if he had preferment offered him, he declined it; he preferred the honor of doing good in the schools of the prophets before that of being great in the courts of princes. God magnified him, and that sufficed him; magnified him indeed, for we have him here employed in no less than five miracles.

V. 1—7. Elisha's miracles were for use, not show: Christ's were so; not only great wonders, but great favors. God magnifies his goodness with his power. So here,

I. Elisha readily receives a poor widow's complaint: to whom should a prophet's widow apply herself, but to a father to the sons of the prophets, who concerned himself in the welfare of their families? Marriage is honorable in all, and not inconsistent with the most sacred professions. It seems her husband was well known to Elisha. Ministers of eminent gifts and stations should make themselves familiar with their inferiors, and know their character and state. He had also the reputation of a godly man. Elisha knew him to be such, one that had kept his integrity in a time of general apostasy; one of the 7000 that had not bowed the knee to Baal. He died poor, and in debt more than he was worth; not from prodigality, luxury, and riotous living; religion obliges men not to live above what they have, nor spend more than God gives them, no not in expenses otherwise lawful; for thereby, of necessity, they must disable themselves, at last, to give every one his own, and so prove guilty of a continued act of injustice: yet it may be the lot of those that fear God, to be in debt, and insolvent, through afflictive providences, bad debts, or their own imprudence; the *children of light* are not always *wise for this world*. Perhaps this prophet was impoverished by persecution: when Jezebel ruled, prophets had much ado to live, especially if they had families. The creditors were very severe to her. Two sons she had, and their labor is reckoned *assets* in her hand; that must go therefore, and they be bondmen seven years, (Ex. 21: 2.) to work out this debt. Those that leave their families under a load of debt disproportionable to their estates, know not what trouble they entail; but the generation of the upright may expect help from God's providence, and countenance from his prophets.

II. He effectually relieves her, and puts her in a way both to pay her debt, and to maintain herself and her family. This was done by miracle, but indicates the best method of charity, and the greatest kindness one can do to poor people, which is, if possible, to help them into a way of improving what little they have, by their own industry and ingenuity.

1. He directed her what to do. The sons of the prophets were poor, and it would signify little to make a collection for her among them. He therefore inquires what she had to make money of, *v.* 2. had she had any plate or furniture, he would have bidden her part with it. We cannot reckon that really, nor comfortably, our own, which is not so when all our debts are paid. If she had not had this pot of oil, the divine power could have supplied her; but having this, it will work on this, and so teach us to make the best of what we have. Her borrowing *empty vessels*, (*v.* 3.) may indicate her poverty and her credit; and she must shut the door, to prevent interruptions from the creditors and others, that she might not seem proudly to boast of this miraculous supply, and might have opportunity for prayer and praise to God. [Note, Matt. 6:6.] Observe, The oil was to be multiplied in the pouring, as the other widow's meal in the spending. The way to increase what we have, is, to use it; to him that so hath, shall be given. It is not hoarding the talents, but trading with them, that doubles them. It must be poured out by herself, not by Elisha, or some of the sons of the prophets, to intimate that it is after our careful and diligent endeavors, that we may expect the blessing of God to enrich us, both for this world and the other. What we have, will increase best in our own hand.

2. She did it accordingly, and had the result, *v.* 6. She sees not the spring that supplies it, but believes it to be in Him *in whom all our springs are.*

3. The oil continued flowing as long as she had any empty vessels to receive it; and then stayed, *v.* 6. Note, We are never straitened in God, in his power and bounty, and the riches of his grace; all our straitness is in ourselves. It is our faith that fails, not his promise. He gives above what we ask: were there more vessels, there is enough in God to fill them; enough for all, enough for each. Was this pot of oil exhausted, as long as there were any vessels to be filled from it? And shall we fear lest the golden oil, which flows from the very root and fatness of the good olive, should fail, as long as there are any lamps to be supplied from it? Zech. 4: 12.

4. She must not keep the oil for her own use, *v.* 7. Those whom Providence has made poor, must be content with poor accommodations for themselves—that is *knowing how to want;* and must not think, when they get a little of that which is better than ordinary, to feed their own luxury

NOTES.

CHAP. IV. V. 1. The prophets seem in general to have married and brought up families; though Elijah and Elisha are supposed to have continued in a single state.—Except the prophets had private fortunes, which probably was not often the case, their incomes must have been very precarious; and would arise either from the donations of pious persons, or from their own manual labor. The people perhaps sometimes gave them the first fruits, and some other of the oblations, which would have belonged to the priests and Levites, if they had not departed from among them. (2 *Chr.* 11:13—17.) Many of them, however, seem to have been very scantily provided for.

SCOTT.

To be bondmen.] Those who defend slavery from the Mosaic law, and from its universality, must also defend this. ED. 'The Romans, Athenians, and Asiatics in general had the same authority over their children as the Hebrews had. Romulus gave the Romans power to cast them into prison, beat, employ them as slaves in agriculture, sell them for slaves, or even take away their lives! *Dion. Halicarnas.* Numa Pompilius enacted, that if a son married with his father's consent, his father could not sell him for debt. Diocletian and Maximian forbade *freemen* to be sold for debt. The ancient Athenians had the same right over their children as the Romans; but Solon reformed this barbarous custom. So the people of Asia, and Lucullus tried to check it by moderating the laws respecting usury. The Georgians may alienate their children, and creditors may sell their debtors' wives and children. And we have reason to believe that this custom long prevailed in the British isles. In short, this custom appears to have been the custom of all the earth. We have some remains of it yet in the senseless and pernicious custom of throwing a man into prison for debt, though his own industry and labor be absolutely necessary to discharge it; and these cannot be exercised within the loathsome and contagious walls of a prison.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 2, 3.

A pot of oil . . . vessels.] See the cut, 1 K. 17:12. ED.

Verse 4.

Shut, &c.] (*Note, Matt.* 6:6.) SCOTT.

6 And it came to pass when [j] the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, *There is* not a vessel more. [k] And the oil stayed.

7 Then she came, and told the man of God: and he said, Go, sell the oil, and [l] pay thy * debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

[*Practical Observations.*]

8 ¶ And † it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to [m] Shunem, where *was* [n] a great woman: and [o] she ‡ constrained him to eat bread. And *so* it was, *that* as oft as he passed by he turned in thither to eat bread.

9 And [p] she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that [q] this *is* a holy [r] man of God, which passeth by us continually.

10 [s] Let us make [t] a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.

11 And it fell on a day that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there.

12 And he said to [u] Gehazi his [v] servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him.

She must sell it. We may suppose, being produced by miracle, it was the best of its kind; (like the wine, John 2: 10.) so she might have both a good price, and a quick market. Probably, the merchants bought it to export; oil was a commodity Israel traded in, Ezek. 27: 17. She must pay her debt with the money she received. Her creditors were too rigorous, yet they must not therefore lose their debt. Her first care must be to discharge that, even before she makes any provision for her children. It is a fundamental law of our religion, that we pay every just debt, though we leave ever so little for ourselves; and this, not of constraint, but willingly and without grudging; not only for wrath, to avoid being sued, but also for conscience-sake. They that are honest, cannot eat their daily bread with pleasure, unless it be their own. The rest must not be laid up, but she and her children must live on it, and with it put themselves into a capacity of getting an honest livelihood. Hence, [1.] Let those that are poor and in distress, be encouraged to trust God for supply, in the way of duty. It is true, we cannot now expect miracles, yet we may expect mercies, if we wait on God, and seek to Him. Let widows particularly, and prophets' widows in a special manner, depend on Him to preserve them and their fatherless children alive, for to them He will be a Husband, a Father. Let those whom God has blessed with plenty, use it for the glory of God, and under the direction of his Word: let them do justly with it, as the widow did, and serve God cheerfully in the use of it; and, as Elisha, be ready to do good to those that need them, be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame.

V. 8—17. Observe here,

I. The kindness of the Shunammite woman to Elisha. Shunem was a city in the tribe of Issachar, on the road between Samaria and Carmel, a road Elisha often travelled, as we find *ch.* 2: 25. and being so famous, he could not pass or repass unobserved. This pious matron, having notice of his being there, constrained him to dine with her, *v.* 8. He was modest, loath to be troublesome, and affected not to associate with those of the first rank; so it was not without some difficulty, he was first drawn into an acquaintance there: but afterward, whenever he came that way in his circuit, he constantly called. So well pleased was she with her guest, and so desirous of his company, that she will not only welcome him to her table, but provide a lodging room for him, that he may make the longer stay, not doubting but her house would be blessed for his sake, and all under her roof edified by his pious instructions and example; a good design, yet she will neither lay out her husband's money, nor invite strangers to his house, without his consent asked and obtained, *v.* 9, 10. She suggests, the stranger was *a holy man of God*, who therefore would do good to their family, and God would recompense the kindness done him. The kindness she intended, would also be no great charge; she would build him only a little chamber; the furniture should be very plain, a bed, table, stool, and candlestick; all that was needful only for his convenience, his repose, study, reading and writing. Elisha seems highly pleased with these accommodations; he turned in and lay there, (*v.* 11.) and, as it should seem, his man in the same chamber, for he was far from taking state.

II. Elisha's gratitude for this kindness; they that receive courtesies, should study to return them; it ill becomes men of God to be ungrateful, or to sponge on those that are generous.

1. He offers to use his interest for her in the king's court, *v.* 13. thus he magnifies the kindness he received, as the humble are accustomed to do. As the liberal devises liberal things, so the grateful devises grateful things. '*Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or the captain of the host*, for an office for thine husband, civil or military? Hast thou any complaint, petition, suit, any thing that needs the countenance of the higher powers? Wherein can I serve thee?' It seems, Elisha had got such an interest by his late services, that though he chose not to prefer himself, he could prefer his friends; a good man can take as much pleasure in serving others, as in raising himself. But she needs not any good offices of this kind, *I dwell* (says she) *among mine own people*, that is, 'We are well off as we are, and do not aim at preferment.' Some years after this, we find this Shunammite had occasion to be spoken for to the king, though now she needed it not, *ch.* 8: 3, 4. Those that dwell among their own people, must not think their mountain stands so strong as that it cannot be moved; our continuing city is above.

2. He used his interest for her in the court of heaven, which was far better. Elisha consulted with his servant what kindness he should do for her, such a freedom did this great prophet admit

* Or, *creditor.*
† Heb. *there was a day.* 11,18.
‡ Heb. *laid hold on him.*

j 43,44. Matt. 9:29. 13:58. 14:20. 15:37. Luke 6:19. 2 Cor. 6:12,13.
k 13:19. Josh. 6:12. 1 K. 17:14. John 6:12.
l Ps. 37:21. Rom. 12:17. Phil. 4:8. 1 Thes. 2:9,10. 4:12. 2 Thes. 3:7—12.
m 12. Josh. 19:18. 1 Sam. 28:4. 1 K. 1:3.
n 2 Sam. 19:32. Job 1:3. 32:9. Luke 1:15.
o Gen. 19:3. Judg. 19:20. Prov. 7:21. Luke 14:23. 24:29. Acts 16:15.
p Prov. 31:10,11. 1 Pet. 3:1.
q 1 Thes. 2:10. Tit. 1:8. 2 Pet. 1:21. 3:2.
r See on Deut. 33:1.—1 K. 13:1. 17:18, 24. 1 Tim. 6:11.
s Is. 32:8. Matt. 23:40. Luke 8:8. Rom. 12:13. Heb. 10:24. 13:2. 1 Pet. 4:9,10.
t 1 K. 17:19.
u 29—31. 5:20—27. 8:4,5.
v 3:11. 1 K. 18:43. 19:3. Acts 13:5.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—7. It is incumbent on all Christians, and especially on ministers, to submit to Providence in respect of their temporal provision; and, while they trust in God for their daily bread, not to tempt Him by negligence or extravagance. We should be careful to perform our present duty, and to commit all our concerns to the Lord: we should study to adorn the Gospel in our life and conversation, and He will take care of us and ours: and if He bring us into distress, He will manifest his power and truth in our deliverance. He generally supplies what is requisite for honesty and charity to his people, by blessing them while they are occupying with a little.—In every way we should show a readiness to relieve those in distress; and to give them our counsel and prayers, when we have nothing else.—At length all the vessels of mercy shall be filled with the Lord's goodness: and the Redeemer's all-sufficiency will only be stayed from supplying the wants and saving the souls of sinners, when there are no more inclined to come to Him for salvation. SCOTT

Verse 6.

We may conclude, she borrowed as many as she thought could be wanted. Had her expectations been larger, the supply would have been still more abundant. (13:15—19.) SCOTT.

Verses 8—10.

Elisha seems to have generally resided at or near mt. Carmel: but he went his circuits through the land, to visit the seminaries of the prophets, and to instruct the people, which probably was his stated employment, when not sent on some special service. (2:1. 1 *K.* 19: 20, 21.)—The husband of this woman seems to have been a pious person, but not so zealous and active as she: and, as he confided his domestic affairs to her care, she is chiefly noticed. By his approbation she prepared for the prophet a retired lodging; perhaps perceiving that the hurry of a large family did not suit his contemplative mind.—The plain, simple manner in which the prophet's chamber was furnished, (though he was the patriarch, if I may so speak, of the whole church of Israel,) is worthy of our notice. ID.

(10.) *A chamber on the wall.*] *Alyyath-kir.* A wall-chamber. Sept. *hyperoon.* 'A back building, called in the east "'alleah," in which strangers are entertained.' *Shaw*, in Cond. Comm. It seems rather to have been a little apartment, built expressly for the prophet, on the roof of the house, by carrying up the wall. So the Vulg. &c. transl. *cœnaculum;* or perhaps the most natural impression from the v. is, that it was a chamber built *against* the wall, in a part of the court, retired, but convenient to the entrance. But comp. note, 1:2. ED.

'To most of the (modern) eastern houses there is a smaller one annexed, which sometimes rises one story higher than the house; at other times it consists of one or two rooms only, and a terrace; whilst others that are built (as they frequently are) over the porch or gateway, have, if we except the ground floor, (which they have not) all the conveniences that belong to the house, properly so called. There is a door of communication from them into the gallery of the house, kept open or shut at the discretion of the master of the family; besides another door, which opens immediately from a privy-stairs (Luke 24:17.) down into the porch or street, without giving the least disturbance to the house. These rear-houses are called Alee, or Oleah, (the house proper is called Dar, or Beet,) and in them strangers are entertained, &c. and men retire for meditation or diversions. The Oleah of Scripture [the Heb. *here* is *alyyath-kir*, a wall-Oleah,] being the same, is rendered by the same word in the Arab version.' SHAW.

13 And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, [x] thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what *is* to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for [y] to the king, or [z] to the captain of the host? And she answered, [a] I dwell [b] among mine own people.

14 And he said, What then *is* to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily [c] she hath no child, and her husband is old.

15 And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door.

16 And he said, [d] About this * season, according to the time of life, [e] thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, [f] my lord, *thou* man of God, [g] do not lie unto thine handmaid.

B. C. 893. 17 And [h] the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.

B. C. 889. 18 And when the child was grown, it fell on a day that he went out to his father [i] to the reapers.

19 And he said unto his father, [j] My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother.

20 And when he had taken him, and brought him to [k] his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, [l] and *then* died.

21 And she went up, and laid him on [m] the bed of the man of God, and shut *the door* upon him, and went out.

22 And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that [n] I may run to the man of God, and come again.

23 And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? *it is* neither [o] new moon nor sabbath. And she said, *It shall be* † well.

even his servant to; and Gehazi tells him of her only grievance. Those are the most welcome kindnesses, which are most suited to our necessities. He sent for her immediately; she very humbly and respectfully *stood in the door*, (*v.* 15.) according to her accustomed modesty, and then he assured her that within a year she should bring forth a son, *v.* 16. The promise was a surprise, and she begs she may not be flattered by it; '*Nay, my lord, thou* art a *man of God*, and therefore, I hope, speakest seriously, and dost not jest with me, nor lie.' The event, within the time limited, confirmed the truth of the promise, *v.* 17. We may well imagine what joy this brought to the family; *Sing, O barren.*

V. 18—37. I. The sudden death of the child, though so much a darling; he is so far past the perils of infancy, that he is able to go to the field to his father, who, no doubt, is pleased with his engaging talk, and his joy of his son is greater than the joy of his harvest; but either the cold or the heat of the open field overcame the child, that was bred tenderly, and he complains to his father that his head aches, *v.* 19. Whither should we go with our complaints, but to our Heavenly Father? Thither the Spirit of adoption brings believers with all their grievances, all their desires. The father sends him to his mother's arms, little suspecting any danger in his indisposition, but hoping he will drop asleep and awake well; but it proves fatal, he sleeps the sleep of death; (*v.* 20.) well in the morning, and dead by noon; all the mother's care and tenderness cannot keep him alive: a child of promise, a child of prayer, and given in love, yet taken away. But how admirably does the prudent, pious mother guard her lips, under this surprising affliction! Not one peevish, unbecoming word escapes her; like a genuine daughter of Abraham's faith, as well as Ioins, she accounts that God is able to raise him from the dead, for thence she *received him in a figure*, Heb. 11: 19. She had heard of the raising of the widow's son of Sarepta, and that the spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha; and confided in God's goodness; by this faith, *women received their dead raised to life*, Heb. 11: 35. In this faith, she makes no preparation for the burial of her dead child, but for its resurrection; for she *lays him on the prophet's bed*, (*v.* 21.) expecting he would stand her friend; *O woman, great is thy faith!* He that wrought it, would not frustrate it.

II. Her application to the prophet, who, as it happened very opportunely, was now at the college on mt. Carmel, not far off.

1. She begged leave of her husband to go to the prophet, yet not acquainting him with her errand, lest he should not have faith enough to let her go, *v.* 22. He objected, (*v.* 23.) but in a manner which intimated her usual attendance on public worship at the times appointed; 'Why wilt thou go to-day? What is the matter?' 'No harm,' said she; '*it shall be well*, so you will say yourself, hereafter.' See how this husband and wife vied with each other, in showing mutual regard; she was so dutiful to him, that she would not go till she had acquainted him with her journey, and he so kind to her, [and confident of her good sense,] that he would not oppose it, though she did not think fit to acquaint him with her business.

2. Gehazi was not the man she came to complain to, therefore she puts him off with, '*It is well*': she said little, but what she did say, was very patient; 'It is well with me, with my husband, with the child'—all well, and yet the child dead in the house. Note, When God calls away our dearest relations by death, it becomes us quietly to say, 'It is well both with us and them;' it is well, for all is well that God does; all is well with them, if gone to heaven; all well with us, if by the affliction we are furthered in our way thither.

3. When her passion would do her service, she knew how to discover it, (*v.* 27.) as well as how to conceal it, when it would do her disservice. Gehazi knew his master would not be pleased to see her lie at his feet, and therefore would have raised her up; but Elisha waited to hear from her, since he might not know immediately from God, the cause of her trouble. God discovered things to his prophets, as He saw fit, not always as they desired; God did not show this to the prophet, because he might know it from the woman. What she said, was very pathetic; she appeals to the prophet, (1.) On her indifference to this mercy; '*Did I desire a son of my lord?* No, thou knowest I did not; it was thine own proposal, not mine; I did not fret for the want of a son, as Hannah, nor beg, as Rachel, *Give me children, or else I die.*' Note, When any creature-comfort is taken from us, it is well, if we can say, through grace, that we did not set our hearts inordinately upon it; for if we did, we have reason to fear it was given in anger, and taken away in wrath. (2.) On her entire dependence on the prophet's word; *Did I not say, Do not deceive me?* This reflection on it may be considered either, [1.] As quarrelling with the prophet for deceiving her; she was ready to think herself mocked the mercy, was so soon removed: better never have had the child, than be deprived of him, just as he begins to be a comfort. Note, The loss of a mercy should not make us undervalue the gift of it; or, [2.] As pleading with the prophet to raise the child to life again; *I said, Do not deceive me*, and I know thou wilt not. Note, However the providence of God may disappoint us, we may be sure his promise never did, nor ever will, deceive us: hope in that will not make us ashamed.

III. The raising of the child to life again; we

x Matt. 10:40—42. Luke 9:3—5. Rom. 16:2,6. Phil. 4:18,19. 1 Thes. 5:12, 13. 2 Tim. 1:16—18.
y 3:15—18. 8:3—6. Gen. 14:24. 2 Sam. 19:32—38.
z 9:5. 2 Sam. 19:13. 1 K. 2:32.
a 1 Tim. 6:6—8. Heb. 13:5.
b 8:1. Ruth 1:1—4. Ps. 37:3.
c Gen. 15:2,3. 17:17. 18:10—14. 25: 21. 30:1. Judg. 13:2. 1 Sam. 1:2,8. Luke 1:7.
d Gen. 17:21. 18:10,14.
* Heb. *set time.*
e Gen. 17:16,17. Luke 1:13,30,31.
f See on a. 2:19.
g 23. 5:19,11. Gen. 18:12—15. 1 K. 17:18. 18:9. Ps. 116:11. Luke 1:18—20.
h Gen. 21:1. 1 Sam. 1:19,20. Ps. 113: 9. Luke 1:24,25. Heb. 11:11.
i Ruth 2:4.
j Job 14:1,2. Jer. 4:19.
k Is. 49:15. 66:13. Luke 7:12.
l Gen. 22:2. 37:3,35. 1 K. 17:17. Ez. 24:16—18. Luke 2:36. John 11:5,5,14.
m 10. 1 K. 17:19.
n 24,26. John 11:3. Acts 9:38.
o Num. 10:10. 28:11. 1 Chr. 23:31. Is. 1:13—15.
† Heb. *peace.* 26.

Verse 13.

Thou hast been careful.] Probably, the same word was used by our Lord to Martha, rendered, *art troubled*, *Luke* 10:41. SCOTT.

Verses 14—17.

Gehazi, as having more leisure and opportunity to observe the affairs of the family than Elisha had, discovered what favor would be most acceptable; and he seems not to have doubted the prevalence of his master's prayers in this respect. In addressing his benefactress, Elisha used words, which some think implied, not only the time, but the very day, on which she should embrace *a son*. (*M. R.—Gen.* 17: 21. 18:14.)—Her answer intimated that she could not suppose he would mock her with delusive expectations. ID.

Verses 19—24.

My head.] 'Probably the child had a *coup-de-soleil*, [was sunstruck,] common in hot countries. *Drive.*] 'Servants, in the E. drive the animal of the female rider, following on foot.' HARRIS. It is common in those countries, where time and labor are not so much valued as with us, for the owner of a hired ass or mule, or one employed by the owner, to follow the jaded animal and his rider, with a club, on foot: sometimes running behind for 25 miles per day. So on the monuments of Egypt, as well as along the shores of the Mediterranean, laden asses, without bridles, are driven with a stick before their master. ED.

(23.) It appears, that on the sabbaths, new moons, and other solemnities, the people were accustomed to assemble in appointed places, to worship God, and to receive instruction from the prophets; and it was thought allowable to use the cattle on the sabbath-day, to go to the prophet, or to these places, if at a distance. (*Ex.* 20:8—11.)—It is not certain whether they assembled in synagogues, or private houses; but probably it was done in most parts of the land of Israel.—In Judah, pious people had the advantage of the temple-worship, and the instructions of the priests and Levites; they were generally countenanced and protected by their kings; and they thankfully availed themselves of these advantages. But in Israel, the ruling powers were against them: yet they served God according to their consciences, as their circumstances would admit. (3:20.) SCOTT.

24 Then [p] she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, [q] Drive, and go forward; [*] slack not *thy* riding for me, except I bid thee.

25 So she went and came unto the man of God [r] to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, *yonder is* that Shunammite:

26 [s] Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, [t] *Is it* well with thee? *is it* well with thy husband? *is it* well with the child? And she answered, [u] *It is* well.

27 And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught † him [v] by the feet: but Gehazi came near to [x] thrust her away. And the man of God said, [y] Let her alone; for her soul *is* ‡ vexed within her: and the LORD hath [z] hid *it* from me, and hath not told me.

28 Then she said, [a] Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, [b] Do not deceive me?

29 Then he said to Gehazi, [c] Gird up thy loins, and [d] take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, [e] salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and [f] lay my staff upon the face of the child.

30 And the mother of the child said, [g] *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, [h] I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her.

31 And Gehazi passed on before them and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but *there was* [i] neither voice nor § hearing: wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child *is* [k] not awaked.

32 And when Elisha was come into the house, behold [l] the child was dead, *and* laid upon his bed.

33 He went in therefore, and [m] shut the door upon them twain, and [n] prayed unto the LORD.

34 And he went up, and [o] lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands, and he stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm.

35 Then he returned, and walked in the house ‖ to and fro, and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, [p] and the child opened his eyes.

36 And he called Gehazi, and said, [q] Call this Shunammite. So he called her: and when she was come in unto him, he said, [r] Take up thy son.

37 Then she went in, and [s] fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.

[*Practical Observations.*]

p Ex. 4:20. 1 Sam. 25:20. 1 K. 13:13, 23.
q 1 Sam. 25:19.
* Heb. *restrain not for me to ride.*
r 2:25. 1 K. 18:19,42.
s Zech. 2:4.
t Gen. 29:6. 37:14. 1 Sam. 17:18. Matt. 10:12,13. Acts 15:36.
u 23. 1 Sam. 3:18. Job 1:21.
† Heb. *by his feet.*
v Matt. 28:9. Luke 7:38.
x Matt. 15:23. Mark 10:13. John 4:27. 12:4—6.
y Mark 14:6. John 12:7.
‡ Heb. *bitter.* 1 Sam. 1:10. Job 10:1. Prov. 14:10. 18:14.
z 6:12. Gen. 18:17. 2 Sam. 7:3. Am. 3:7. John 15:15.
a Gen. 30:1.
b See on 16.
c 9:1, 1 K. 18:46. Eph. 6:14. 1 Pet. 1:13.
d 2:14. Ex. 4:17.
e Luke 10:4.
f Ex. 7:19,20. 14:16. Josh. 6:4,5. Acts 3:16. 19:12.
g See on 2:2,4.
h Ex. 33:12—16. Ruth 1:16—18.
i 1 Sam. 14:37. 28:6. Ez. 14:3. Matt. 17:16—21. Mark 9:19—29. Acts 19:13—17.
§ Heb. *attention.* 1 K. 18:26,29.
k Job 14:12. Dan. 12:2. John 11:11, 43,44. Eph. 5:14.
l 1 K. 17:17. Luke 8:52,53. John 11:17.
m See on 4.—Matt. 6:6.
n 5:11. 6:17,18,20. 1 K. 17:20. 18:26, 27. John 11:41,42. Acts 9:40. Jam. 5:13—18.
o 1 K. 17:21. Acts 20:10.
‖ Heb. *once hither and once thither.*
p 8:1,5. 13:21. 1 K. 17:22. Luke 7:14,15. 8:55. John 11:43,44. Acts 9:40.
q 12.
r 1 K. 17:23. Luke 7:15. Heb. 11:35.
s 27. 2:15. 1 K. 17:24.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 8—37. The ministers of religion should not seek great things for themselves, or court the intimacy of the great, except to do good *to them*, or *by them*.—Alas! all earthly comforts are sources of trouble and sorrow: anxious fears counterbalance our pleasure from our beloved children, when most hopeful: and their sudden sickness and death may turn all our joy into poignant anguish. On such occasions it is right to keep silence, or to say that 'all is well:' nor must we think it hard to bring up children for the grave, or for the kingdom of heaven.—In all our troubles we may find peace and comfort, from the counsel and prayers of the Lord's faithful servants, who can teach us how to turn all our losses into the richest gain. Their company therefore, with the ordinances of God, and the throne of grace, should be doubly welcome to the afflicted and bereaved.—The gospel of salvation will no more effect the sinner's conversion, without the presence and blessing of God, than the condemning law will: and if the minister be a hypocrite, and destitute of faith, little good can be expected from the most exact external observances; 'the sinners are "*not awaked*"' will generally be the doleful report. Not so, when the use of appointed means is accompanied by the spirit of fervent, believing prayer, and persevering expectation from the Lord.—As the choicest comforts occasion the severest trials, so our heaviest afflictions make way for the sweetest consolations.—It is happy and comely when harmony prevails in domestic life; when the husband's authority is tempered with affection and unsuspecting confidence; when the wife answers that confidence with deference and submission, as well as fidelity; and when each party consults the other's inclinations, and both unite in attendance on the ordinances of God, and supporting his cause.

SCOTT.

Verses 24—26.

Mt. Carmel was at some distance from Shunem; and the words, 'Slack not thy riding,' imply, that the servant also rode on an ass. The word, rendered *Drive*, properly means, *Lead* the way, or, *Go before*.—Elisha did not expect to see her at this time; and, being afraid that some calamity had befallen her, sent Gehazi to make very particular inquiries; to which she answered, '*It is well*,' or *peace*. (*Shalom.*) Some suppose she only meant to put off Gehazi with this answer, as in part true, in respect of herself and her husband, though not the whole of the case: but it is probable it was also the language of her faith and submission; as she was persuaded, the affliction was in mercy, and would terminate well, though her passions conflicted against her better judgment. (*M. R.—Note, Lev.* 10:3.) SCOTT. Or, it was but a common answer of compliment merely, to a common question, and meant no more than the modern, 'I thank you,' of equivocal meaning. The more bigoted Turks, on meeting a Christian, will give him the 'salam,' which means any thing or nothing, while they conceive it a religious duty to withhold other expressions of compliment, (abundant in their language, and used to tediousness on meeting, v. 29. and note, Luke 10:4.) which they think a Mohammedan only deserves. ED.

Verse 27.

(*M. R.*) It is plain from this verse, that the prophets derived all their supernatural knowledge from immediate communication; and not from any power of discerning, habitually inherent in them. SCOTT.

Verses 29—31.

It is difficult to determine what the prophet meant, by thus sending Gehazi. He, however, was ordered to proceed as a man on urgent business, who may not be delayed even by attention to ordinary civilities: (*Luke* 10:4.) and he would thus arrive at Shunem some time before Elisha could. Some think the prophet altered his purpose, at the importunity of the woman, and so did not pray for Gehazi's success. (5:20—27.) SCOTT.

Verses 33—35.

It is instructive to compare the *manner*, in which Elijah and Elisha wrought their miracles, especially in raising the dead, with that of Jesus Christ. Every part of their conduct expressed a consciousness of inability *in themselves*, and an entire dependence on another, and earnest application to Him for his interposition: but Jesus wrought by his own power; 'He spake, and it was done:' 'Young man, I say unto thee, arise;' '*Talitha, cumi*;' 'Lazarus, come forth.' (*Mark* 5:35—43. *Luke* 7:11—17. *John* 11:41—46. *Acts* 9:36—43.) ID.

(35.) *Seven times.*] 'I. e. abundantly.' DR. A. CLARKE.

Verses 36, 37.

(*Notes, 1 Kings* 17:21, 22. *Heb.* 11:35—38.) The joyful mother not only expressed her high respect for the prophet, but worshipped God also, giving Him humble thanks for his great goodness to her: for the words may be rendered, 'She fell at his feet, and worshipped.' SCOTT.

38 ¶ And Elisha [t]came again to Gilgal; and *there was* [u]a dearth in the land, and [x]the sons of the prophets [y]*were* sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, [z]Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.

39 And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found [a]a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred *them* into the pot of pottage: for they knew *them* not.

40 So they poured out for the men to eat: and it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out and said, [b]O *thou* man of God, *there is* [c]death in the pot! and they could not eat *thereof*.

41 But he said, Then bring meal: [d]and he cast *it* into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat: and [e]there was no [*]harm in the pot.

42 ¶ And there came a man from [f]Baal-shalisha, and brought the man of God [g]bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves [h]of barley, and full ears of corn in [†]the husk thereof: and he said, Give unto the people that they may eat.

43 And [i]his servitor said, [k]What! should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the LORD, [l]They shall eat, and shall leave *thereof*.

44 So he set *it* before them; and they did eat, and left *thereof*, according to the word of the LORD.

CHAP. V.

Naaman, captain of the host of Syria, is a leper, 1. By the report of a captive maid of Israel, concerning the prophet, he comes to the king of Israel at Samaria to be healed, 2—7. Elisha sends for him; he goes to him, and is ordered to wash seven times in Jordan: he is angry; but, persuaded by his servants, he complies and is cleansed, 8—14. He acknowledges the true God; offers presents to Elisha, who refuses them; and is sent away in peace, resolving to worship the LORD alone, 15—19. Gehazi, by a lie, obtains presents from Naaman, and is punished by leprosy, entailed also on his descendants, 20—27.

NOW [a]Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was

t 2:1. 1 Sam. 7:16,17. Acts 10:38. 15: 36.
u 8:1. Lev. 26:26. Deut. 28:22—24,38 —40. 2 Sam. 21:1. Jer. 14:1—6. Ez. 14:13. Luke 4:25.
x See on 2:3. 1 Sam. 19:20.
y Prov. 8:34. Luke 2:46. 8:35,38. 10: 39. Acts 22:3.
z Mark 6:37. 8:2—6. Luke 9:13. John 21:5,9.
a Is. 5:4. Jer. 2:21.
b See on 2. 1:9,11,13. Deut. 33:1. 1 K. 17:18.
c Ex. 10:17. 15:23. Mark 6:18.
d 2:21. 5:10. 6:6. Ex. 15:25. John 9:6. 1 Cor. 1:25.
e Acts 28:5.
* Heb. *evil thing*.
f 1 Sam. 9:4.
g 38. Ex. 23:16. Deut. 12:6. 26:2—10. 1 Sam. 9:7. 2 Chr. 31:13,14. Prov. 3:9,10. 1 Cor. 9:11. Gal. 6:6.
h 7:1,16—18. Deut. 8:8. 32:14. John 6:9,13.
† Or, *his scrip*, or, *garment*.
i See on 12.
k Matt. 14:16,17. 15:33,34. Mark 6: 37—39. 8:4. Luke 9:13. John 6:9.
l Matt. 14:20. 15:37. 16:8—10. Mark 6:42,43. 8:20. Luke 9:17. John 6: 11—13.
a Luke 4:27.

He made hurtful food to become safe and wholesome.

The sons of the prophets should be examples of temperance and mortification, not desirous of dainties, but content with plain food: if they have neither savory meats, nor sweet meats, nay, if a mess of pottage be all the dinner, let them remember that this great prophet entertained himself and his guests with no better. What is called *wild gourds*, *v.* 39. some think was *coloquintida*, an herb strongly cathartic, and, if not qualified, dangerous. The sons of the prophets, it seems, were better skilled in divinity than in natural philosophy. Nature has given man the sense of tasting, not only that wholesome food may be pleasant, but that that which is unwholesome, may be discovered before it comes to the stomach, Job 12: 11. The table often becomes a snare, and that which should be for our welfare, proves a trap, which is a good reason why we should not feed ourselves without fear; when receiving the supports and comforts of life, we must keep up an expectation of death, and fear of sin.

It is probable there was meal in it before, but that was put in by a common hand, only to thicken the pottage; this (*v.* 41.) was the same thing, but cast in by Elisha's hand, and with intent to heal the pottage; by which it appears that the change was not owing to the meal, that was the sign only, not the means, but to the divine power. We must acknowledge God's goodness in making our food wholesome and nourishing; *I am the Lord that healeth thee.*

II. He made a little food to go a great way.

1. Elisha had a present brought him, *v.* 42. a present in those ages, not despicable at any time, but now in a special manner valuable, when there was a dearth in the land.

2. Having freely received, he freely gave. It well becomes the men of God to be generous and open-handed, and the fathers of the prophets to be liberal to the sons of the prophets.

3. Though the loaves were little, it is likely, no more than what one man would ordinarily eat at a meal, yet with 20 of them he satisfied 100 men, *v.* 43, 44. God has promised his church, (Ps. 132: 15.) *that He will abundantly bless her provision, and satisfy her poor with bread;* for whom He feeds, He fills, and what He blesses, comes to much, as what He blows upon, comes to little. Hag. 1: 9.

CHAP. V. V. 1—8. Our Savior's miracles

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 38—44. While the servants of the Lord are contented with mean accommodations, and put their trust in Him, He can make their coarsest fare pleasant. Let them but observe his directions, and He will not only supply their wants, but extract *the death*, the evil, from such things as most alarm them. When He pleases, the scantiest provisions shall suffice; and whilst He communicates to us, we should in faith impart a portion to others; and thus all will be clean and salutary to us. But to those who feed themselves without fear, [disregarding the laws of their organization, so seldom studied] their table becomes a snare, and perdition entwines around their sensual enjoyments. Aware of this danger, let us learn to use temporal good things with caution and moderation, in dependence on Him, by whose blessing alone our food is made wholesome and nutrimental. SCOTT.

Verses 38, 39.

(*M. R.*) *Coloquintida* is of a most nauseous bitter, and, if taken improperly, [and so *Taylor*] operates as a fatal poison. SCOTT. '*Celsius* thus transl. the Heb. *pekaoth*. The leaves of the colocynth are large, placed alternate, the flowers white; and the fruit of the gourd kind, of the size of a large apple, which, when ripe, is yellow, and of a pleasant and inviting appearance; but to the taste intolerably bitter, and proves a drastic purgative.' HARRIS.

Verses 42—44.

The sons of the prophets seem at this time to have become very numerous: but perhaps some of the people, who came from a distance to receive instruction, shared the repast. And this might be one reason of the servant's objection, *v.* 43. (1—7. 1 *K.* 17:10—16.) SCOTT.

(42.) *In the husk.*] Marg. *in his garment*. So the natives of India, says *Roberts*, carry rice and other things in their mantles. ED.

NOTES.

CHAP. V. V. 1. The Syrians were idolaters, and often oppressors of Israel; yet the deliverance of which Naaman had been the instrument, is here ascribed to the power and goodness of God. 'By him JEHOVAH had given deliverance (or *salvation*,) to Syria.' Such is the

[b] a great man * with his master, and † honorable; because [c] by him the LORD had given ‡ deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valor; *but he was* [d] a leper.

2 And the Syrians had gone out [e] by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and [f] she § waited on Naaman's wife.

3 And she said unto her mistress, [g] Would God my lord *were* ‖ with the prophet that *is* in Samaria! for [h] he would ¶ recover him of his leprosy.

4 And *one* went in and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that *is* of the land of Israel.

5 And the king of Syria said, [j] Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, [k] and took ** with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand *pieces* of gold, and [l] ten changes of raiment.

6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have *therewith* sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

7 And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, [m] that he rent his clothes, and said, [n] *Am* I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and [o] see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

[*Practical Observations.*]

were for the lost sheep of the house of Israel, yet one, like a crumb, fell to a woman of Canaan; so, this one of Elisha, to Naaman, a Syrian; God does good to all, and will have all men to be saved. Here is,

I. Naaman's great affliction in the midst of all his honors, *v.* 1. He was a great man, particularly happy for two things, 1. He had been very serviceable to his country, God made him so; the preservation and prosperity even of those that do not know God and serve Him, must be ascribed to Him. Let Israel know that when the Syrians prevailed, it was from the Lord. 2. He was very acceptable to his prince, was his favorite, and prime-minister of state; so great, so high, so honorable, a mighty man of valor; but he was a leper, which made him loathsome and a burden to himself. Note, No man's greatness, or honor, or interest, or valor, or victory, can set him out of the reach of the sorest calamities of human life; there is many a sickly, crazy body under rich and gay clothing. Every man has some damp to his joy; he may be very happy, very good, yet, in something or other, not so good as he should be, nor so happy as he would be. Naaman was as great as the world could make him, yet (as Bp. Hall expresses it) the basest slave in Syria would not change skins with him.

II. The notice given him of Elisha's power, by a little maid, by birth an Israelite, providentially carried captive into Syria, and there preferred into Naaman's family, *v.* 2, 3. The unhappy dispersing of God's people has sometimes proved the happy occasion of the diffusion of the knowledge of God, Acts 8: 4. This little maid, 1. Consulted the honor of her country; could give an account, though but a girl, of the famous prophet they had among them. Children should early acquaint themselves with the wondrous works of God, that, wherever they go, they may have them to talk of. See Ps. 8: 2. 2. She desired the health and welfare of her master, though a captive, a servant by force; much more should servants of choice seek their master's good: the Jews in Babylon were to seek the peace of the land of their captivity, Jer. 29: 7. *Elisha* had *not cleansed any lepers in Israel;* (Luke 4: 27.) yet from the other miracles he had wrought, she infers he *could* cure her master, and from his common beneficence *would*, though he was a Syrian Servants may be blessings to the families where they are, by telling what they know of the glory of God, and the honor of his prophets.

III. The application which the king of Syria, hereupon, made to the king of Israel on Naaman's behalf. Naaman noticed the intelligence, and did not despise it. Oh that they who are spiritually diseased, would hearken thus readily to the tidings brought them of the great Physician!

See what Naaman did, on this little hint. 1 He would not send for the prophet to come to him but such honor would he pay to one that had so much of a divine power as to be able to cure diseases, he would go to him himself though sickly, unfit for society, the journey long, and the country an enemy's; princes, he thinks, must stoop to prophets, when they need them. 2. He would not go in disguise, but with a great retinue, the more to honor the prophet. 3. He would not go empty-handed, (what will we not give for ease,) nor without a letter to the king of Israel from the king his master, who himself earnestly desired his recovery; he takes it for granted the king knows where to find the prophet; and, to engage the prophet to do his utmost, he will go to him, supported with the interest of two kings. If the king of Syria must *entreat* his help, he hopes the king of Israel, being his liege-lord, may *command* it: the gifts of the subject must all be (he thinks) for the service and honor of the prince; therefore he desires the king that he would *recover the leper*, (*v.* 6.) taking it for granted there was a greater intimacy between the king and prophet than really there was.

IV. The alarm this gave the king of Israel, *v.* 7. He apprehended there was in this letter, 1. A great affront on God, therefore he rent his clothes, as was the Jews' custom, when they heard or read what they thought blasphemous; and what less could it be, than to attribute to him a divine power? 'No,' says he, 'I pretend not to such a power;' thus this great man, this bad man, is

8 And it was *so*,

b 4:3. Ex. 11:3. Esth. 9:4. 10:3.
* Heb. *before.*
† Or, *gracious.* Heb. *lifted up*, or, *accepted in countenance.*
c Prov. 21:31. Is. 10:5,6. Jer. 27:5,6. Dan. 2:37,38. John 19:11. Rom. 13: 18. ‡ Or, *victory.*
d 27. 7:3. Lev. 13:2,3,44—46. Num. 12:10—12. 2 Sam. 3:29. 2 Chr. 26: 19—23. 2 Cor. 12:7.
e 6:23. 13:20. Judg. 9:34. 1 Sam. 13: 17,18.
f Ps. 123:2.
§ Heb. *was before.*
g Num. 11:29. Acts 26:29. 1 Cor. 4:8.
‖ Heb. *before.*
h 8. Matt. 8:2,3. 11:5. Luke 17:12—14. ¶ Heb. *gather in.*
i 7:9—11. Mark 5:19. 16:9,10. John 1:42—46. 4:28,29. 1 Cor. 1:26,27.
j Gen. 11:3,4,7. Ex. 2:1. Is. 5:5. Jam. 4:13. 5:1.
k 8:8,9. Num. 22:7,17,18. 24:11—13. 1 Sam. 9:8. 1 K. 13:7. 45:3. Acts 8:18—20. ** Heb. *in his hand.*
l Gen. 45:22. Judg. 14:12. Jam. 5:2,3.
m 11:14. 18:37. 19:1. Num. 14:6. Jer. 36:24. Matt. 26:65. Acts 14:14.
n Gen. 30:2. Deut. 32:39. 1 Sam. 2: 6. Dan. 2:11. Hos. 6:1.
o 1 K. 20:7. Luke 11:54.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—7. The Lord over-rules, to his own glory, those events which originate in man's wickedness: the young, or the poor, are often better acquainted with his servants and service, than the rich or aged: but as He works by despised instruments, so wise men will avail themselves of a useful hint from the lowest of their inferiors.—Kind behavior to domestics generally ensures a valuable recompense: and no injuries or hardships should indispose us to seek the welfare, or to compassionate the sorrows, of those among whom our lot is cast; especially when they are kind to us. This 'little maid' proved a richer treasure to Naaman, than any Ben-hadad could bestow: and good and pious servants are indeed invaluable benefits.—We carry our knowledge of God and of true religion with us, wherever we remove; none can deprive us of these true riches and this blessed liberty; and the meanest believer will find opportunities of glorifying God and being useful to man, if he act consistently with his character and profession: for such a conduct will attract regard from those who are ignorant or careless about religion, and dispose them to attend to his words, particularly in times of affliction. (*P. O. Acts* 8: 1—8.)

—The great ones of the earth are apt to suppose, that wealth, authority, and influence can command every thing: but when they seek those blessings which the Lord communicates in answer to the prayers of his faithful servants, they will find that nothing can be done in this way; but that they must act as poor and needy persons, and come as humble supplicants for a free gift, and not as lords to demand, or to purchase. (*Notes, Matt.* 5: 3. *Jam.* 1: 9—11.) For the ministers of God must obey man, only so far as the will of their great Master allows them: and in his service they must not be directed or dictated to by any human authority —The ignorance of many, in spiritual things, is manifested by every part of their conversation: yet we should not impute that to a blasphemous or malevolent intention, which they utter merely because they know no better.—No judges are more severe towards their fellow sinners, than those who themselves have no fear of God before their eyes: and they are especially quick sighted to the atrocious conduct of those, whom they suspect of intentions to injure them; and vehement in their declamations against the crimes, of which themselves are not known to be guilty. SCOTT.

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rational language of the sacred writers: whilst the arguments and phraseology of those in general, who compose what is justly called *profane* history, too evidently show that God is not in all their thoughts. (*Josh.* 10:9, 10. *Ps.* 144:10.) SCOTT.

Verse 5.

'The gold and silver are estimated at 14,460*l.* 18*s.* 9*d.*'
Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 7.

By this concession of the king, the miracle wrought by Elisha became more illustrious. (*M. R.* n.) SCOTT.

Verse 8.

Probably Elisha was at or near Samaria, when Naaman arrived. ID.

when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had [p] rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? [q] let him come now to me, [r] and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.

9 So [s] Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

10 And Elisha [t] sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and [u] wash in Jordan [x] seven times, and [y] thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

11 But [z] Naaman was wroth, and [a] went away, and said, [b] Behold, * I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and † strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

12 *Are* not ‡ Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, [c] better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

13 And [d] his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, [e] My father, *if* the prophet had bid thee *do some* great thing, wouldest thou not have done *it*? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, [f] Wash, and be clean?

14 Then [g] went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, [h] according to the saying of the man of God: and [i] his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, [k] and he was clean.

made to own that he is but a man. Why did he not, upon this, correct himself for his idolatry? 'Shall I worship those as gods, that can neither kill nor make alive; can *do neither good nor evil?*' 2. A bad design on himself; which he suspects the rather, because Naaman was the king's general. Had he rightly understood that the king meant only, that he would take care he might be recovered, he had not been in this fright. Note, We often create uneasiness to ourselves, by misinterpreting the well intended words and actions of others; it is charity to ourselves, to think no evil. He is put into this confusion also, because a stranger to the prophet; the captive maid knew him better than the king did.

V. The proffer Elisha made of his service; though neglected, and forgotten, he was willing to do any thing to make his prince easy; hearing on what occasion the king had rent his clothes, he sent to him, to let him know that if his patient would come to him, he should not lose his labor, *v.* 8. not for his own honor, but for the honor of God, he would have them know *there was a prophet in Israel*, though obscure and overlooked.

V. 9—14. We have here the cure of Naaman's leprosy.

I. The short, plain direction of the prophet, *v.* 10. They that showed little respect to prophets at other times, when they needed them, were very complaisant to them, *v.* 9. They that would be cleansed from their spiritual leprosy, must wait at *Wisdom's gate, and watch at the posts of her doors*. Naaman expected to have his compliment returned, but Elisha answered him without formality; would not go to the door to him, but sent a messenger, saying, *Go wash in Jordan seven times;* this he meant not as the means of the cure; but only as a sign of the cure, and a trial of his obedience: they that will be helped of God, must do as He bids. But why did Elisha send a messenger to him with these directions? Because he was retired, at this time, for devotion, intent on his prayers for the cure, and would not be diverted; or, Because he knew Naaman to be a proud man, and would let him know, that before the great God, all men stand on the same level.

II. Naaman's disgust at the method prescribed, because not what he expected. Two things disgusted him; he thought, 1. Elisha slighted his person; sending orders by a servant, and not coming himself, *v.* 11. Big with the expectations of a cure, he had been fancying how this cure would be wrought, and because the thing is not done just thus, he falls into a passion, forgetting, (1.) He was a leper, and the law of Moses, which Elisha would religiously observe, shut lepers out from society; a leper, and therefore he ought not to insist on the punctilios of honor. Note, Many have hearts unhumbled under humbling providences; see Num. 12: 14 (2.) he was a petitioner, and beggars must not be choosers, patients not prescribe to their physician. See in Naaman the folly of pride; a cure will not content him, unless he be cured with ceremony, with pomp and parade; he scorns to be healed, unless he be humored. 2. His country; how magnificently he speaks of the two rivers that watered Damascus! how scornfully of all the waters of Israel! So common is it for God and man to differ in their judgments. How slightly does he speak of the prophet's directions! He was angry that the prophet bade him wash and be clean; he thought he would do all, or thinks this too cheap, too plain, too common; or did not believe it would at all affect the cure; or, if it would, what medicinal virtue was there in Jordan more than in the rivers of Damascus? He did not consider, (1.) That Jordan belonged to God's Israel, *the glory of all lands*, particularly for its *brooks of water*, Deut. 8: 7. and that, in a miraculous cure, relation to God was much more considerable than the depth of the channel, or the beauty of the stream. (2.) That Jordan had more than once obeyed the commands of Omnipotence; had, of old, yielded a passage to Israel, and, of late, to Elijah and Elisha, and therefore was fitter for such a purpose than those rivers which had only observed the common law of their creation, and had never been thus distinguished; above all, (3.) that Jordan was the river appointed, and if he expected a cure from the divine power, he ought to acquiesce in the divine will, without asking why or wherefore Note, It is common for those that are wise in their own conceits, to look with contempt on the dictates and prescriptions of divine wisdom, and to prefer their own fancies before them. Rom. 10: 3.

Naaman talked himself into such a heat, (as passionate men usually do,) that he turned away from the prophet's door in a rage, ready to swear he would never have any thing more to say to Elisha; and who then would be the loser? Note, *They that observe lying vanities, forsake their own mercies*, Jonah 2: 8. Proud men are the worst enemies to themselves, and forego their own redemption.

III. The modest advice his servants gave him, to observe the prophet's prescriptions, with an implied reproof of his resentments, *v.* 13. At other times, they kept their distance, and now saw him in a passion, yet, knowing him to be a man that would hear reason, (a good character of great men, but very rare,) they drew near, and made bold to argue the matter, *v.* 13. Note, It is a great mercy to have those about us, that will be free, and faithfully tell us of our faults and follies, though they be our inferiors. Masters must be willing to hear reason from their servants, Job 31: 13, 14. As we should be deaf to the counsel of the ungodly, though given by the greatest names, so we should have our ear open to good advice, though brought us by persons much below us: no matter who speaks, if it be well said. Observe,

1. The reproof was very modest and respectful; they call him, *Father;* servants must honor and obey their masters. In giving reproof and counsel, we must make it appear, that it comes from love and true honor, and that we intend, not reproach, but reformation.

2. It was very rational and considerate. If the rude and unthinking servants had stirred up their master's angry resentment, and offered to avenge his quarrel on the prophet, who, (he thought) affronted him, how mischievous had the consequences been! Fire from heaven, probably, on them all! But they, to our great surprise, took the prophet's part. They reason with him, (1.) From his earnest desire of a cure; *Wouldest not thou do* any thing? Note, When diseased sinners are content to do any thing, to submit to any thing, to part with any thing, for a cure, then, and not till then, we begin to indulge some hopes of them. Then they will take Christ on his own terms, when they are made willing to have Christ on any terms. (2.) From the easiness of the method prescribed; it is but, *Wash and be clean.* Note, The methods prescribed for the healing of the leprosy of sin, are so plain, that we are utterly inexcusable if we do not observe them. It is but, 'Believe, and be saved,' 'Repent,

p See on 7.—2 Sam. 3:31.
q 3,15. 1:6. 1 K. 17:24. 18:36.
r Ex. 11:8. Rom. 11:13. Hos. 12:13, 3:12. 6:32. Is. 60:14. Acts 16:29,30, 37—39.
t Matt. 15:23—26.
u 2:21. 3:16. 4:41. John 9:7. 1 Cor. 6:11.
x Lev. 14:7,16,51. 16:14,19. Num. 19: 4,19. Josh. 6:4,13—16.
y 14. Ex. 4:6,7.
z Prov. 13:10. Matt. 8:8. 15:27. Luke 14:11.
a Prov. 1:32. Matt. 19:22. John 6:66—69. 13:20. Heb. 12:25.
b Prov. 3:7. Is. 55:8,9. 1 Cor. 1:21—25. 2:14—16. 3:18—20.
* Heb. *I said, &c.* Or, *I said with myself, He will surely come out, &c.*
† Heb. *move up and down.*
‡ Or, *Amana.*
c 17. 2:8,14. Josh. 3:15—17. Ez. 47:1—8. Zech. 13:1. 14:8. Mark 1:9.
d 3. 1 Sam. 25:14—17. 1 K. 20:24,31. Job 32:8,9. Jer. 38:7—10.
e 2:12. 6:21. 13:14. Gen. 41:43. *Marg.* Mal. 1:6. Matt. 23:9. 1 Cor. 4:15.
f See on 10.—Ps. 51:2,7. Is. 1:16. John 13:8. Acts 22:16. Eph. 5:26,27. Tit. 3:5. Heb. 10:22. 1 Pet. 3:21. Rev. 7:14.
g Job 31:13. Prov. 9:9. 25:11,12.
h 2 Chr. 20:20. John 2:5. Heb. 11:7,8.
i 10. Job 33:25.
k Luke 4:27. 5:13. Tit. 2:14.

Verses 13, 14.

This Syrian was favored with very prudent, respectful, and affectionate servants; and probably he was in general a kind and considerate master. (1 *Sam.* 25:14—17.) They had, it may be supposed, heard a great deal from the Israelitish maid [or from the Israelites about Elisha] of Elisha's miracles; and were very desirous that Naaman should make the trial.—'This was the only cure of a leprosy, that we read of, till Christ, the great Prophet, came into the world.' *Bp. Patrick.* Though the remark be not quite correct, it is entitled to consideration. Miriam was cleansed, in answer to the prayer of Moses; but no other instance is recorded. (*Num.* 12:9—15.) SCOTT.

RIVER JORDAN.—Joshua, iii. iv. ; 2 Kings, v. 10.

15 And [l]he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came and stood before him: and he said, Behold, [m]now I know that *there is* no God in all the earth, but in Israel; now therefore, I pray thee, take [n]a blessing of thy servant.

16 But he said, [o]*As* the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, [p]I will receive none. And he urged him to take *it;* but he refused.

17 And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden [q]of earth? for thy servant [r]will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD.

18 In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, *that* when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he [s]leaneth on my hand, [t]and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon; when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, [u]the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing.

19 And [x]he said unto him, [y]Go in peace. So he departed from him a [*]little way.

20 ¶ But [z]Gehazi the servant of Elisha the man of God said, Behold, [a]my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought:

pent, and be pardoned,' 'Wash, and be clean.'

IV. The cure effected, in the use of the means prescribed, *v.* 14. This, men get by yielding to the will of God, by attending to his institutions. His being cleansed by washing, put an honor on the law for cleansing lepers: God will magnify his Word above all his name.

V. 15—19. Naaman here bespeaks himself, I. Convinced of the power of the God of Israel, not only that He is God, but God alone, and indeed *that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel, v.* 15. A noble confession, but such as bespeaks the misery of the Gentile world. Those are best able to speak of the power of divine grace, who have themselves experienced it.

II. Grateful to Elisha the prophet. He valued the cure, and would gladly pay for it accordingly; but Elisha generously refused the fee, even with an oath, though urged to accept it, *v.* 16; not because he did not need it, he was poor enough, knew what to do with it, and how to bestow it; nor did he think it unlawful, he received presents from others; but he would not be beholden to this Syrian, Gen. 14: 23. It would be much for the honor of God, to show this new convert that the servants of the God of Israel were taught to look on the wealth of this world with a holy contempt, which would confirm him in his belief, that *there is no God but in Israel.* See 1 Cor. 9: 18. 2 Cor. 11: 9.

III. Proselyted to the worship of the God of Israel. He resolves he will never offer sacrifice to any other gods, *v.* 17. It was a happy cure of his leprosy, which cured him of his idolatry, a more dangerous disease. But here are two instances of his weakness and infirmity in his conversion.

1. In one instance, he over-did it; he would have clods of earth (Ex. 20: 24.) out of the prophet's garden, or, at least, of the prophet's ordering, to *make an altar of, v.* 17. He that, a while ago, had spoken very slightly of the *waters* of Israel, (*v.* 12.) now is in another extreme, and over-values the *earth* of Israel, not considering that all *the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.* Or, perhaps, the transport of his affection and veneration for the prophet, not only on the account of his power, but of his virtue and generosity, made him, as we say, love the very ground he went on, and desire to have some of it home with him. The modern compliment equivalent to this, would be, 'Pray, sir, let me have your picture.'

2. In another instance, he under-did it; he reserved to himself a liberty to bow in the house of Rimmon, in complaisance to the king his master, and according to the duty of his place at court, *v.* 18. He owns he ought not to do it, but he cannot otherwise keep his place; protests his bowing is not, nor ever shall be, as it had been, in honor to the idol, but only in honor to the king; therefore he hopes God will forgive him. Perhaps, all things considered, this might admit of some apology, though it was not altogether justifiable. But as to us, I am sure, (1.) If, in covenanting with God, we make a reservation for any known sin, which we will continue to indulge in, that reservation is a defeasance of his covenant. We must cast away all our transgressions, and not except any house of Rimmon. (2.) Though encouraged to pray for the remission of our sins, yet if we ask for a dispensation to go on in any sin for the future, we mock God, and deceive ourselves. (3.) Those that know not how to quit a place at court, when they cannot keep it without sinning against God, and wronging their consciences, do not rightly value the divine favor. (4.) Those that truly hate evil, will make conscience of abstaining from all appearances of evil. Though Naaman's dissembling of his religion cannot be approved, yet because his promise, to offer no sacrifice to any but the God of Israel only, was a great point gained with a Syrian, and because, by asking pardon in this matter, he showed such a degree of conviction and ingenuousness as gave hopes of improvement, the prophet took fair leave of him, and bid him *Go in peace, v.* 19. Young converts must be tenderly dealt with.

V. 20—27. Naaman, a Syrian, a courtier, a soldier, had many servants, wise and good, *v.* 13. Elisha, a holy prophet, has but one, and he proves a base liar. Christ himself had a Judas among his followers. The means of grace cannot give grace.

Here is, I. Gehazi's complicated sin.

The love of money, that root of all evil, was at the bottom of it. Multitudes, by coveting worldly wealth, have *erred from the faith,* and *pierced themselves with many sorrows.* He not only imposed on Naaman, but basely misrepresented and abused his master. When Naaman, like a person of accomplished manners, alighted from his chariot to meet him, (*v.* 21.) he told him a deliberate lie, and so received that courtesy to himself, which Naaman intended to his master; he represented, too, that his master had soon repented of his generosity, was fickle, and did not know his own mind, would say and unsay, swear and un-

l Luke 17:15—18.
m 2 Sam. Josh. 2:9—11. 9:9,24. 1 Sam. 17:46,47. 1 K. 18:36. Is. 43:10,11. 44:6,8. 45:6. Jer. 10:10,11. 16:19—21. Dan. 2:47. 3:29. 4:34,35. 6:26, 27. Rom. 10:10.
n Gen 33:11. 1 Sam. 25:27. 2 Cor. 9: 5. *Marg.*
o See on 3:14. 1 K. 17:1. 18:15.
p 20,26. Gen. 14:22,23. 1 K. 13:8. Dan. 5:17. Matt. 10:8. Acts 8:18—20. 1 Cor. 6:12. 10:32,33. 2 Cor. 11: 9,10. 12:14.
q 12. Rom. 14:1.
r Acts 26:18. 1 Thes. 1:9. 1 Pet. 4:3.
s 7:2,17.
t 17:35. Ex. 20:5. 1 K. 19:18.
u 2 Chr. 30:18,19. Jer. 50:20.
x Matt. 9:16,17. John 16:12. 1 Cor. 3: 2. Heb. 5:13,14.
y Ex. 4:18. 1 Sam. 1:17. 25:35. Mark 5:34. Luke 7:50. 8:48.
* Heb. *a little piece of ground.* Gen. 35:16. *marg.*
z 4:12,31,36. Matt. 10:4. John 6:70. 12:6. 13:2. Acts 8:18,19.
a Prov. 26:16. Luke 16:8. John 12:5, 6. Acts 5:2.

Verses 15, 16.

What an awful representation does this give us of the state of the Gentiles, 'without hope, and without God in the world!' (*Eph.* 2:11—13.)—The case of Naaman was singular. It was of great importance what impressions he, at that crisis, should receive, concerning the God of Israel and his worshippers. Elisha would appear, as he was, perfectly disinterested. For 'it gives great authority to a teacher of virtue, not to be covetous.' *Bp. Patrick.* SCOTT.

Verse 17—19.

Some learned men have thought, that Naaman's conduct in bowing in the idol temple was justifiable; because he was not an Israelite, and so not under the law of Moses. It is evident, however, that the prohibition of every kind and degree of idolatry, belongs to the *moral* law, which is universally obligatory. Our strict rule of duty certainly forbids such a conformity; the Gospel grants no dispensations; and, in similar circumstances, a Christian would be absolutely required to renounce every advantage and preferment, which could not be retained without such communion with idolaters, and countenance of idolatry; nay, to endure the utmost effects of the persecutor's rage, rather than make such compliances, however palliated by salvos and mental reserves: [and the history of the primitive church, shows its opinion to have been the same.] (*Dan.* 3:8—18.) The prophet however seems to have perceived, that Naaman was convinced, that even bowing with the king in the house of Rimmon was not right, and he left those convictions gradually to produce their effects: if they were the result of regenerating grace, they would in time bring him to make a more public protest against idolatry, when his faith, judgment, and experience were matured. Moreover, as the whole work was from God in so extraordinary a manner, it is probable, that the prophet declined interposing his private judgment, when he had no immediate directions from heaven respecting it.—'In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, that when my lord went into the house of Rimmon, to bow down himself there, and leaned on my hand, I bowed down myself there; that I bowed down myself—the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing.' (*Whitby, Note on Luke* 12. 2.) This would imply, that Naaman had previously favorable thoughts of true religion, and had not been an idolater in other respects; though he had conformed in this particular, which now appeared to him the most heinous of his sins. Yet there is no intimation, that he had not been as gross an idolater as the other Syrians. This translation, which many learned men have endeavored to establish, disregards the *vau conversive,* which generally changes the preterite into the future. All the versions, or ancient translations, understand the words of the *future,* and not of the *past.*—Elisha seems also to have been silent concerning the earth, which Naaman requested, and probably for the reasons before mentioned. (*Matt.* 9:16, 17.) Nor was any thing proposed to him, concerning his embracing in other respects the religion of Israel. SCOTT.

(18.) *Goeth—leaneth—bow.*] 'Rather, hath gone—hath leaned—hath bowed—*Light. Gill.* Dr. *A. Clarke. Wil. Sut.* The *Sept.* here uses the future tense. The Jews asserted that a stranger was not bound not to bow before any idol, but only a Jew. *Selden.*' *Cond. Comm. Leaneth.*] 'Among the Hindoos, men walk leaning on each other's hands, like boys among us. It is also a mark of friendship to lean on the shoulder of a companion.' *Roberts.* This is often seen on the most ancient monuments of Egypt. See *Clarke* on this v. ED.

Even now. (22) At *this very crisis,* (as Gehazi pretended since Naaman had left Elisha's door, and had gone perhaps a furlong or two on the way.—*The tower.* (24) 'Secret place.' (*M.*) Heb. *Ophel:* 2 Chr. 27:3. 33:14. Perhaps a sort of store-house, for such provisions, as

but [b] *as* the LORD liveth, I will run after him, [c] and take somewhat of him.

21 So Gehazi followed after Naaman: and when Naaman saw *him* running after him, [d] he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, * *Is* all well?

22 And he said, All *is* well. [e] My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of [f] the sons of the prophets: [g] give them, I pray thee, [h] a talent of silver and two changes of garments.

23 And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. [i] And he urged him, and [k] bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid *them* upon two of his servants, [l] and they bare *them* before him.

24 And when he came to the † tower, he took *them* from their hand, [m] and bestowed *them* in the house; and he let the men go, and they departed.

25 But he went in, and [n] stood before his master: and Elisha said unto him, [o] Whence *comest thou*, Gehazi? And he said, [p] Thy servant went ‡ no whither.

26 And [q] he said unto him, [r] Went not mine heart *with thee*, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? [s] *Is it* a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and olive-yards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and maid-servants?

27 The [t] leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and [u] unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence [x] a leper *as white* as snow.

b 6:31. Ex. 20:7. 1 Sam. 14:39.
c Ex. 20:17. Ps. 10:3. Jer. 22:17. Hab. 2:9. Luke 12:15. 1 Tim. 6:9—11. 2 Tim. 4:10. Tit. 1:7. 1 Pet. 5:2. 2 Pet. 2:14,15.
d Luke 7:6,7. Acts 8:31. 10:25,26.
* Heb. Is there *peace?* 4:26. 9:17—22.
e 1 K. 13:18. Is. 59:3. Jer. 9:3,5. John 8:44. Acts 5:3,4. Rev. 21:8.
f See on 2:3.—1 K. 20:35.
g 2 Cor. 12:16—18.
h See on 5.—Ex. 38:24—28. 1 K. 20:39.
i 16. 2:17.
k 12:10. *Marg.*
l Is. 30:6.
† Or, *secret place.*
m Josh. 7:1,11,12,21. 1 K. 21:16. Hab. 2:6. Zech. 5:3,4.
n Prov. 30:20. Ez. 33:31. Matt. 26:15, 16,21—25. John 13:2,26—30.
o 20:14. Gen. 3:8,9. 4:9. 16:8.
p 22. Acts 5:3,4.
‡ Heb. *not hither or thither.*
q Ps. 63:11. Prov. 12:19. Acts 5:9.
r 6:12. 1 Cor. 5:3. Col. 2:5.
s 16. Gen. 14:23. Ex. 3:1—8. Matt. 10:8. Acts 20:33,35. 1 Cor. 9:11,12. 2 Cor. 11:8—12. 2 Thes. 3:8,9.
t See on d. 1.—Josh. 7:25. Mal. 2:3,4, 8,9. Matt. 27:3—5. Acts 5:5,10. 8: 20. 1 Tim. 6:10. 2 Pet. 2:3.
u 1 Sam. 2:30—36. 2 Sam. 3:29
x 15:5. Ex. 4:6. Num. 12:10.

swear; and would not do an honorable thing, but he must presently undo it again. His story of the two sons of the prophets was as silly as it was false; if he would have begged a token for two young scholars, surely less than a talent of silver [above £350 stg. *Scott.*] might serve them.

There was danger of his alienating Naaman from that holy religion he had espoused. He would be ready to say, as Paul's enemies suggested of him, that though Elisha himself did not burden him, yet, being crafty, he caught him with guile, sending those that made a gain of him. We hope he understood afterward, that Elisha's hand was not in it, and that Gehazi was forced to restore what he had unjustly got, else it might have driven him to his idols again.

His seeking to conceal what he had unjustly got, added much to his sin. 1. He hid it, as Achan did his gain, by sacrilege, in a secret, strong place, till he should have opportunity of laying it out, *v.* 24. 2. He denied it: he *went in, and stood before his master*, ready to receive his orders. His master asked him, where he had been. 'No where, sir,' (said he) 'out of the house.' Note, One lie commonly begets another: the way of that sin is down hill; therefore dare to be true.

II. The punishment of this sin. Observe,

1. How he was convicted. He thought to impose on the prophet, as Ananias and Sapphira on the apostles, but was soon given to understand the Spirit of prophecy could not be deceived. '*Went not my heart* [i. e. mind] *with thee?*' *v.* 26. Note, It is folly to presume on sin, in hopes of secrecy. When thou goest aside into any by-path, does not thy own conscience go with thee? Does not the eye of God go with thee? *He that covers his sin, shall not prosper;* particularly, *a lying tongue is but for a moment*, Prov. 12: 19. Truth will transpire, and often comes to light, strangely, to the confusion of those that make lies their refuge. What he designed, he kept in his own breast; but Elisha could tell him the very thoughts he was projecting, now that he had got these two talents, to purchase ground and cattle, to leave Elisha's service, and to set up for himself. Note, All the foolish hopes and contrivances of carnal worldlings are open before God. '*Is it a time to receive money?* Couldest thou find no better a way of getting money, than by belying thy master, and laying a stumbling block before a young convert?' Note, Those that are for getting wealth at any time, and by any ways and means whatsoever, right or wrong, lay themselves open to a great deal of temptation. They that will be rich, *by fair means or by foul; careless of principle, intent only on money, drown themselves in destruction and perdition*, 1 Tim. 6: 9. War, and fire, and plague, and shipwreck, are not, as many make them, times to get money. It is not a time to increase our wealth, when we cannot do it but in such ways as are dishonorable to God and religion, or injurious to our brethren, or the public.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 8—27. The minister of God should seize every opportunity to evince the truth and importance of his religious principles, and to display the glorious perfections of the Lord.—All the commands of God are suited to make trial of men's spirits; especially those which direct a sinner how to apply for the blessings of salvation. These do not accord with the self-importance and self-sufficiency, the carnal prejudices and pompous ideas, of an unbumbled heart: nor can they be cordially attended to, except by 'the poor in spirit,' or without that implicit faith which produces as implicit obedience. The way of a sinner's acceptance and sanctification, by the blood and Spirit of Christ, through faith alone in his name, does not sufficiently gratify or employ *self*, to please the sinner's heart. The method seems to many futile and inadequate: human wisdom and philosophy, (like Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus,) can furnish more rational and eligible methods of cleansing: nay, the operose and austere devices of superstition appear to numbers preferable to 'the Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness;' and the very proposal shocks and affronts all the sons of pride and self-sufficiency. But the sinner, who is deeply burdened with guilt, and longs to escape the wrath to come, and the service of Satan, would do 'great things,' if required, for that purpose. If pilgrimages, mortifications, and austerities could avail, they would not be evaded: to torture his body, to part with his wealth, or even lay down his life, would be deemed a low price at which to purchase forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation; but none of these things, *in this use of them*, can be accepted. (*Mic.* 6: 6—8.) As, however, the Fountain is opened, and the access free, he will 'much more wash and be clean,' as the Lord has directed.—Salvation is from the love and power of God, in the way of his appointing and revealing, for his own glory, and in the use of those means which He has instituted. In this manner the believer seeks for it, not neglecting, altering, or adding to the Savior's directions; and by repeated washings he is made clean from the guilt and pollution of sin: whilst others, neglecting this great salvation, through proud contempt, sensual indulgence, covetousness, or sloth, live and die in their leprosy, and must for ever be excluded from the presence of a holy God.—When temporal troubles and deliverances bring us acquainted with God, and lead us to his service, they are indeed precious blessings; and gratitude to the Lord will dictate liberality to the instruments of his mercies. From knowledge of the world, the great are apt to suspect all their inferiors of mercenary designs, and naturally suppose that ministers are only carrying on a trade like other men; while the conduct of too many so called confirms them in this sentiment. There is but one way of counteracting this prejudice; and that is by evidencing a disinterested spirit, and not asking any thing, and in many cases refusing to accept favors from them, until they have attained a further establishment in the faith; and by always persevering in an indifference to every personal interest.—It is not advisable violently to oppose every mistake which unites with men's first convictions, lest we should damp that earnestness which promises good fruit, when matured by experience, and duly regulated by the gradual teaching of the divine Spirit, attending suitable instruction. We cannot bring men forward faster, than the Lord prepares them to receive instruction: and where He works, He will in time lead them to renounce every secular interest, and bear any cross rather than sin against Him.—Let us beware of hypocrisy and covetousness, and dread above all things the curse of spiritual leprosy, remaining upon our souls, living and dying, and for ever. (*Rev.* 22: 10—12.) SCOTT.

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were brought for the sons of the prophets; of which Gehazi was storekeeper, like Judas, who kept the bag. (*John* 13:29.) SCOTT.

Verse 27.

And to thy seed.] 'This was not punishing his seed for his act, but the natural course of things. [It was however a punishment to Gehazi to know it.] A leprous parent would have leprous children.' GILL.

CHAP. VI.

The sons of the prophets prepare to enlarge their dwelling, and Elisha causes iron to swim, 1—7. He discloses to Jehoram the counsels of the Syrian king, who sends troops to apprehend him, 8—14. Elisha's servant is terrified; but is encouraged by seeing horses and chariots of fire round his master, 15—17. The Syrians, at Elisha's prayer, are partially blinded; and he conducts them into Samaria, where they regain their sight, and by the prophet's proposal are entertained, and dismissed in peace, 18—23. Ben-hadad besieges Samaria, and reduces it to extreme famine, 24, 25. Women contest about eating their own children; and appeal to the king, who in a rage resolves to kill Elisha, 26—33.

AND [a] the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, [b] the place where we dwell with thee is [c] too strait for us.

2 Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, [d] and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye.

3 And one said, [e] Be content, I pray thee, and [f] go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go.

4 So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, [g] they cut down wood.

5 But as one was felling a beam, the * axe-head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, [h] Alas, master! [i] for it was borrowed.

6 And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he showed him the place. And he [k] cut down a stick, and cast *it* in thither, and the iron did swim.

7 Therefore said he, [l] Take *it* up to thee. And he [m] put out his hand, and took it.

[*Practical Observations.*]

8 ¶ Then [n] the king of Syria warred against Israel, and [o] took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp.

9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are coming down.

10 And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

11 Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?

12 And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.

13 And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan.

14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

15 ¶ And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

19 And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria.

20 And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria.

21 And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them?

22 And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master.

23 And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

24 ¶ And it came to pass after this, that Ben-hadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria.

25 And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was *sold* for fourscore *pieces* of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five *pieces* of silver.

26 ¶ And as the king of Israel was passing upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king.

27 And he said, If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress?

28 And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to-day, and we will eat my son to-morrow.

29 So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son.

30 ¶ And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes; and he passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, he had sackcloth within upon his flesh.

31 Then he said, God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day.

32 But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him; and *the king* sent a man from before him: but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head? look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?

33 And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil is of the LORD; what should I wait for the LORD any longer?

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a See on 2:3. 4:1. 1 K. 20:35.
b 4:38. 1 Sam. 19:20.
c Josh. 17:14. 19:47. Job 36:16. Is. 49:19,20. 54:2,3.
d John 21:3. Acts 18:3. 20:34,35. 1 Cor. 9:6. 1 Thes. 2:9. 2 Thes. 3:8. 1 Tim. 6:6.
e 5:23. Judg. 19:6. Job 6:28.
f Judg. 4:8.
g Deut. 19:5. 29:11.
* Heb. *iron.* Ec. 10:10. Is. 10:34.
h 15. 3:10. Rev. 18:10,16,19.
i 4:7. Ex. 22:14,15. Ps. 37:21.
k 2:21. 4:41. Ex. 15:25. Mark 7:33, 34. 8:23—25. John 9:6,7.
l 4:7,36. Luke 7:15. Acts 9:41.
m Ex. 4:4.
n 24. 1 K. 20:1,34. 22:31.
o 1 K. 20:23. Job 5:12,13. Prov. 20:18. 21:30. Is. 7:5—7. 8:10.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—7. God has often increased his church, by the addition of faithful ministers and true believers, in times of great persecution: for the whole glory is secured to Him, when the effect is produced without the aid, and notwithstanding the opposition, of human authority, by the preaching of his Word, and the operation of the Holy Spirit. (*Zech.* 4: 4—7.)—Religion indeed always appears to advantage under the cross; when poverty and affliction are endured with cheerful meekness and patience, and when hard labor and mean fare excite no complaints. When men, honored by the Lord as instruments of much good to souls, willingly earn their living by working at some honest calling, rather than burden the people; and yet will not entangle themselves with the affairs of the world to acquire riches for themselves or families; their conduct evidently accords to the spirit of true religion, and seldom fails to attract the attention of numbers to persons, who act on principles, contrary to the general [selfish] propensities of human nature.—There is that pleasantness in the converse of the eminent servants of God, which can make men forget the pain and weariness of labor: and when condescension to the meanest unites with usefulness to the greatest, and with great eminence in the church of God, it confers a peculiar lustre on a man's character.

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI. V. 1—7. Probably, this event occurred either at Gilgal, or at Jericho, both of which were near Jordan.—It is not certain, whether the building intended was a place of assembly, where the prophets met for religious exercises with other pious Israelites; or whether they purposed to live together in it, with their families, as a collected body separate from others.—Probably they were accustomed to work in one way or other, that the people might not be burdened. (*Acts* 18:1—6. 1 *Cor.* 4:9—13. 2 *Cor.* 11:7—12. 2 *Thes.* 3:6—9.)—In so small a matter the Lord was pleased to work a miracle, to compose the young prophet's mind, to put honor on Elisha, to enable the company to proceed with their undertaking, and to encourage their faith and hope!—It is useless to inquire, in what way he made the iron to swim. (4:40, 41.)

SCOTT.

Verses 8—12.

(*M. R.* o—r.) Perhaps Naaman had been dismissed from his high

sel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place *shall be* my * camp.

9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, [p] Beware that thou pass not such a place; for [q] thither the Syrians are come down.

10 And the king of Israel [r] sent to the place, which the man of God told him and [s] warned him of, and [t] saved himself there, not once nor twice.

11 Therefore [u] the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, [x] Will ye not show me which of us *is* for the king of Israel?

12 And one of his servants said, † None, my lord, O king: but [y] Elisha the prophet, that *is* in Israel, [z] telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in [a] thy bed-chamber.

13 And he said, Go, and [b] spy where he *is*, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, *he is* in [c] Dothan.

14 Therefore [d] sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a ‡ great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

15 And when the § servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots: and his servant said unto him, [e] Alas, my master! how shall we do?

16 And he answered, [f] Fear not, for [g] they that *be* with us *are* more than they that *be* with them.

17 And Elisha [h] prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, [i] open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw: and, behold, the mountain *was* [k] full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, [l] Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness, according to the word of Elisha.

19 And Elisha said unto them, This *is* not the way, neither *is* this the city: ‖ follow me, and [m] I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria.

20 And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, [n] open the eyes of these *men*, that they may see. And the LORD [o] opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, *they were* in the midst of Samaria.

21 And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, [p] My father, [q] shall I smite *them?* shall I smite *them?*

22 And he answered, Thou shalt not smite *them:* [r] wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with [s] thy sword and with thy bow? [t] Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master.

23 And [u] he prepared great provision for them, and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. [v] So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

[*Practical Observations.*]

Elisha was much concerned for the satisfaction of his servant. Good men desire, not only to be easy themselves, but to have those about them easy. They whose faith is strong, ought tenderly to consider and compassionate those who are weak, and of a timorous spirit, and to do what they can, to strengthen their hands. As angels are God's messengers, so they are his soldiers, his hosts (Gen. 32: 2.) his legions, or regiments, (Matt. 26: 53.) for the good of his people. For the satisfaction of his servant, there needed no more than the opening of his eyes; *that* therefore he prayed for, and obtained for him. The eyes of his body were open, and with them he saw the danger; 'Lord, open the eyes of his faith, that with them he may see the protection we are under.' Note, The greatest kindness we can do for the fearful and faint-hearted, is, to pray for them, and so to recommend them to the mighty grace of God. The opening of our eyes will silence our fears; the clearer sight we have of the sovereignty and power of heaven, the less we shall fear the calamities of earth.

III. The shameful defeat Elisha gave the host of Syrians, *v.*18. 1. They were confounded; those among them whom they depended on for information, did not know this place to be Dothan, nor this person to be Elisha, but *groped at noon-day as in the night;* (Isa. 59: 10. Job 12: 24, 25.) their memory failed them, and their distinguishing faculty: they could see the light, but their sight was so altered, that they knew neither the persons nor places they were before acquainted with. See the power of God over the minds and

* Or, *encamping.*

† Heb. *No.*

‡ Heb. *heavy.* 18:17. *marg.*

§ Or, *minister.* See on 3:11. 5:20,27. —Ex. 24:13. 1 K. 19:21. Matt. 20: 26—28. Acts 13:5.

‖ Heb. *come ye after me.* Matt. 16:24. Mark 8:34. Luke 9:23.

[a] Ec. 10:20.
[b] 1 Sam. 23:22,23. Ps. 10:8—10. 37:12 —14,32. Jer. 36:26. Matt. 2:4—8. John 11:47—53.
[c] Gen. 37:17.
[d] 1:9—13. 1 Sam. 23:26. 24:2. Matt. 26:47,55. John 18:3—6.
[e] 5. 2 Chr. 20:12. Ps. 53:5. Matt. 8: 26.
[f] Ex. 14:13. Ps. 3:6. 11:1. 27:3. 118: 11,12. Is. 8:12,13. 41:10—14. Mark 16:6. Acts 18:9,10. Phil. 1:28.
[g] 2 Chr. 32:7,8. Ps. 46:7,11. 55:18. Is. 8:10. Matt. 26:53. Rom. 8:31. 1 John 4:4.
[h] Ps. 91:15. Jam. 5:16—18.
[i] 18—20. Ps. 119:18. Is. 42:7. Acts 26: 18. Eph. 1:18. Rev. 3:7.
[k] 2:11. Ps. 34:7. 68:17. 91:11. 104: 3. Ez. 1:13—16. Zech. 1:8. 6:1—7. Matt. 26:53. Heb. 1:14.
[l] Gen. 19:11. Deut. 28:28. Job 5:14. Zech. 12:4. John 9:39. 12:40. Acts 13:11. Rom. 11:7.
[m] 2 Sam. 16:18,19. Luke 24:16.
[n] See on 17.—Luke 24:31.
[o] Judg. 20:40—42. Luke 16:23.
[p] 2:12. 5:13. 8:9. 13:14.
[q] 1 Sam. 24:4,19. 26:8. Luke 9:54—56. 22:49.
[r] Deut. 20:11—16. 2 Chr. 28:8—13.
[s] Gen. 48:22. Josh. 24:12. Ps. 44:6. Hos. 1:7. 2:18.
[t] Prov. 25:21. Matt. 5:44. Rom. 12: 20,21.
[u] 1 Sam. 24:17,18. 2 Chr. 28:15. Prov. 25:21,22. Matt. 5:47. Luke 6:35. 10: 29—37.
[v] See on 8,9. 5:2. 24:2.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 8—23. The Lord knows, and can easily defeat, the secret machinations of his enemies. And the profession of being his worshippers will sometimes for a season engage his external protection; in order to the confusion of his avowed enemies, and for the sake of that remnant of true believers with whom they are connected. (*Ex.* 32: 7—14. *Deut.* 32: 26, 27. *Jer.* 14: 7—9. *Ez.* 20: 7—9.)—The obstinate rebellion and blindness of fallen man often induce him to strive and expect to prevail against those, whom he cannot deny to be the people of God: but as no outward miracles can extirpate the malignity of the heart, so nothing can injure those whom the Lord protects.—Strong faith will supply the want of sight: it realizes both the danger and the security, and with a clear idea of the force of the enemy confidently answers, 'Fear not, for they that be with us, are more than they, that be with them.' May God give us this faith, and especially strengthen it in the time of danger, and in the hour of death! SCOTT.

station, as no longer sufficiently compliant to the king. (1 *K.* 20: 22.) SCOTT.

24 ¶ And it came to pass after this, that Ben-hadad king of Syria [x] gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria.

25 And there was [y] a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until [z] an ass's head was *sold* for four-score *pieces* of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five *pieces* of silver.

26 And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, [a] Help, my lord, O king.

27 And he said, * If the LORD do not help thee, [b] whence shall I help thee? out of the barn-floor, or out of the wine-press?

28 And the king said unto her, [c] What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, [d] Give thy son that we may eat him to-day, and we will eat my son to-morrow.

29 So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the † next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him; and * she hath hid her son.

30 And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that [f] he rent his clothes; and he passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and behold *he had* sackcloth within upon his flesh.

x 17:5. 18:9. 25:1. Deut. 28:52. 1 K. 20:1. 22:31. Ec. 9:14.
y 28,29. 7:4. 25:3. Lev. 26:52. 1 K. 18:2. Jer. 14:13—15,18. 32:24. 52:6.
z Ez. 4:13—15.
a 2 Sam. 14:4. Is. 10:3. Luke 18:3. Acts 21:28.
* Or, *Let not the LORD save thee.*
b Ps. 60:11. 62:8. 118:8,9. 124:1—3. 127:1. 146:3. Is. 2:22. Jer. 17:5.
c Gen. 21:17. Judg. 18:23. 1 Sam. 1:8. 2 Sam. 14:5. Ps. 114:5. Is. 22:1.
d Lev. 26:29. Deut. 28:53—57. Is. 9: 20,21. Lam. 4:10. Ez. 5:10. Matt. 24:18—21. Luke 23:29.
† Heb. *other.*
e 1 K. 3:26. Is. 49:15. 66:13.
f See on 5:7.—19:1. 1 K. 21:27. Is. 58: 5—7.

understanding of men, both ways; He enlightened the eyes of Elisha's friend, and darkened the eyes of his foes, that they might see indeed, but not perceive, Isa. 6: 9. *For this* twofold judgment Christ came into this world, *that they which see not, might see, and that they which see, might be made blind;* (John. 9: 39.) as a savor of life to some, of death to others.

2. He led them to Samaria, (*v.* 19.) promising to show them the man they sought, and did so. He did not lie to them, when he told them, *This is not the way, nor is this the city* where Elisha is; for he was now come out of the city; and if they would see him, they must go to another city which he would direct them to. They that fight against God and his prophets deceive themselves, and are justly given to delusions.

3. When he had brought them to Samaria, he prayed God so to open their eyes, and restore them their memories, that they might see where they were; (*v.* 20.) *and, behold,* to their great terror, *they were in the midst of Samaria,* where, probably, was a standing force sufficient to cut them all off, or make them prisoners of war. The enemies of God and his church, when they fancy themselves ready to triumph, will find themselves conquered and triumphed over.

4. When he had them at his mercy, he made it appear he was influenced by a divine goodness, as well as a divine power.

(1.) He took care to protect them from the danger into which he had brought them, and was content to show them what he could have done; he needed not the sword of an angel to avenge his cause, the sword of the king of Israel is at his service, if he pleases, *v.* 21. But they were brought hither, to be convinced and ashamed, not killed, *v.* 22. Had they been the king's prisoners, it had been perfidious to do them hurt; it is against the law of arms to kill men in cool blood [though it was then done by the Egyptians, &c.]; but they were not his prisoners, they were God's prisoners, and the prophet's, therefore he must do them no harm; they that humble themselves under God's hand, take the best course to secure themselves.

(2.) He took care to provide for them; he ordered the king to treat them handsomely, and then dismiss them fairly, which he did, *v.* 23. It was the king's praise, that he was so obsequious to the prophet, and the prophet's praise, that he was so generous to his enemies. The great duty of loving enemies, and doing good to those that hate us, was both commanded, in the Old Testament, (Prov. 25: 21, 22. Ex. 23: 4, 5.) and practised, as here by Elisha; his predecessor had given a specimen of divine justice, when he called for flames of fire on the heads of his persecutors to consume them, but he gave a specimen of divine mercy, in heaping coals of fire on the heads of his persecutors to melt them; let not us then be *overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Lastly, The good effect this had, for the present, on the Syrians; they *came no more into the land of Israel,* (*v.* 23.) namely, on this errand, to take Elisha; they saw it was to no purpose to attempt that, nor would any of their bands be persuaded to make an assault on so great and good a man. The most glorious victory over an enemy is to turn him into a friend.

V. 24—33. This last paragraph of this ch. should, of right, have been the first of the next, for it begins a new story, which is there continued and concluded.

Here is, I. The siege of Samaria, and the great distress thereby; the Syrians had soon forgotten the kindnesses lately received in Samaria, and very ungratefully, for aught that appears, without provocation, seek its destruction, *v.* 24. Those are base spirits, that show no lasting gratitude. The country, we may suppose, was plundered and laid waste, when this capital city was brought to the last extremity, *v.* 25. The dearth which had of late been in the land was, probably, the occasion of the emptiness of their stores; or the siege was so sudden, they had not time to lay in provisions: so that while the sword devoured without, the famine within was more grievous; (Lam. 4: 9.) for, it should seem, the Syrians designed not to storm the city, but to starve it. An ass's head has but little flesh on it, and that unsavory, unwholesome, and ceremonially unclean, yet it sold for five pounds; and a small quantity of fitches, or lentiles, or some such coarse corn, then called *dove's dung,* no more of it than the quantity of six eggs, for five pieces of silver, about twelve or fifteen shillings. Learn to value plenty, and to be thankful for it; see how contemptible money is, when, in time of famine, it is so freely parted with for any thing that is eatable.

II. The sad complaint a poor woman had to make to the king, in the extremity of the famine; he was *passing by upon the wall* to give orders for the mounting of the guard, the posting of the archers, the repair of the breaches, and the like, when a woman of the city cried to him, *Help, my lord, O king, v.* 26. Some think his return, (*v.* 27.) was a *quarrelling* word, and the language of his fretfulness.—It rather seems to be a *quieting* word; 'Let us be content, and make the best of our affliction, looking up to God, for till He help us, I cannot help thee.' He laments the emptiness of the floor and the wine-press; and acknowledges himself thereby disabled to help, unless God would help them. Note, Creatures are helpless things without God, for every creature is that, all that, and only that, which He makes it to be. However, though he cannot help her, he is willing to hear her; *v.* 28. 'Is there any thing singular in thy case, or dost thou fare worse than thy neighbors?' Truly yes,—*v.* 28, 29. See an instance of the dominion the flesh has got above the spirit, when the most natural affections may be thus overpowered by the natural appetites: see the word of God fulfilled; among the threatenings of God's judgments on Israel for their sins, this was one, Deut. 28: 53—57.

III. The king's indignation against Elisha, on this occasion; he lamented the calamity, *v.* 30. as one heartily concerned for the misery of his people, and that it was not in his power to help them; but he laments not his own iniquity, nor the iniquity of his people, which was the procuring cause of the calamity; he is not sensible that his *ways and his doings have procured this to himself; this is his wickedness, for it is bitter;* the *foolishness of man perverts his way,* and then *his heart frets against the Lord;* instead of vowing to pull down the calves at Dan and Beth-el, or letting the law have its course against the prophets of Baal, and of the groves, he swears *the death of Elisha, v.* 31. Why, what is the matter? What has Elisha done? His head is the most innocent and valuable in all Israel, and yet that must be devoted, and made an anathema. Thus in the days of the persecuting emperors, when the empire groaned under any extraordinary calamity, the fault was laid on the Christians, and they were doomed to destruction. Perhaps Jehoram was in this heat against Elisha, because he had foretold this judgment, or had persuaded him to

Verse 25.

If the pieces of silver here mentioned were shekels, above ten pounds sterling was, on this occasion, paid for the ass's head; whilst about twelve shillings were given for about three pints of very mean pulse, called dove's dung; or, as some think, of the undigested corn taken from the crop, or craw, of that fowl. It is sufficient to suppose, that each of these bargains was once actually made, in the urgency of hunger. SCOTT.

Doves' dung.] 'The Tamul translation has, *doves' grain:* which is known in the E. by the name of *Kára-manne-piru. Boothr.* tr. it "a cab of vetches," which amounts to about the same thing. *Boch. Clarke,* and *many* others believe it to have been *pulse.* I have often eaten the pulse the pigeons are so fond of, and have found it very wholesome either in puddings or soup. The Orientals are exceedingly fond of eating leguminous grains, when parched; (Lev. 23:14. Ruth 2: 14. 2 Sam. 17:28.) and it is surprising to see to what a great distance they will travel on only that food and water. It was therefore in consequence of the famine that this, their favorite, and generally *very* cheap, sustenance was so dear.' *Roberts.* 'At Cairo and Damascus are magazines of this grain (peas, vetches, or parched pulse). It is now called by the Arabs "doves' dung."' *Cond. Comm.* ED.

Verse 27.

(*M.*) This may be understood as the language of passion, or desperation: as if Jehoram had said, 'The Lord will not, and I cannot, help thee; but we must all perish together.' SCOTT.

31 Then he said, [s] God do so and more also to me [h] if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day.

32 But Elisha sat in his house, and [i] the elders sat with him; and *the king* sent a man from before him: but [k] ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, [l] See how this [m] son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head? look when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: *is* not [n] the sound of his master's feet behind him?

33 And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, [o] this evil *is* of the LORD; what should I [p] wait for the LORD any longer?

CHAP. VII.

Elisha predicts great plenty in Samaria, and the death of an unbelieving lord, 1, 2. Four lepers venture into the Syrian camp, and bring word that it is entirely deserted, a terror from God having driven away the army, 3—11. Jehoram fears a stratagem, sends messengers to examine, and finds the report true, 12—15. The people spoil the Syrian camp; the predicted plenty takes place; and the unbelieving lord, having charge of the gate, is trodden to death, 16—20.

THEN [a] Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD, Thus saith the LORD, [b] To-morrow about this time *shall* [c] a measure of fine flour *be sold* for a shekel, and two measures [d] of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.

2 Then * a lord, on whose hand the king leaned, answered the man of God, and said, Behold, [e] *if* the LORD would make [f] windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, [g] thou shalt see *it* with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

3 And there were [h] four leprous men at

hold out, and not surrender, or rather, because he did not, by his prayers, raise the siege, and relieve the city, which he thought he could do, but would not; whereas till they repented and reformed, and were ready for deliverance, they had no reason to expect the prophet should pray for it.

IV. The foresight Elisha had of the king's design against him, *v.* 32. The same spirit of prophecy that enabled Elisha to tell what was done at a distance, authorized him to call the king *the son of a murderer*, which, unless we could produce such an extraordinary commission, it is not for us to imitate; far be it from us to despise dominion, and to speak evil of dignities. He appeals to the elders, whether he had deserved so ill at the king's hands; see whether in this he be not the son of a murderer? For, *what evil had Elisha done?* He *had not desired the woful day*, Jer. 17: 16.

V. The king's passionate speech, when he came to prevent the execution of his edict for the beheading of Elisha; he seems to have been in a struggle between his convictions and his corruptions, knew not what to say, but, seeing things brought to the last extremity, he even abandons himself to despair; (*v.* 33.) *This evil is of the Lord:* therein his notions were right, and well applied; it is a general truth, that all penal evil is of the Lord, as the First Cause, and Sovereign Judge, (Amos 3: 6.) and this we ought to apply to particular cases; if all evil, then this evil, whatever it is we are now groaning under; whoever are the instruments, God is the principal Agent of it; but his inference from this truth was foolish and wicked, *What should I wait for the Lord any longer?* When Eli, and David, and Job, said, *It is of the Lord*, they grew patient upon it, but this bad man grew outrageous. 'I will neither fear worse, for worse cannot, nor expect better, for better never will, come; we are all undone, and there is no remedy.' It is an unreasonable thing to be weary of waiting for God, for He is a God of judgment, and blessed are all they that wait for Him.

CHAP. VII. V. 1, 2.—Relief is here brought to Samaria and her king, when the case was, in a manner, desperate, and the king despairing.

Here, 1. Elisha foretells, that, notwithstanding the great straits the city of Samaria was reduced to, within 24 hours they should have plenty, *v.* 1. he said this, then, when things were at the worst; man's extremity is God's opportunity; his time to appear for his people, is, when *their strength is gone*, Deut. 32: 36. When they had given over expecting help it came. The king said, *What should I wait for the Lord any longer?* And perhaps some of the elders were ready to say the same; 'Well,' said Elisha, 'you hear what these say; *now hear ye the word of the Lord*, hear what He says, hear it and heed it, hear it and believe it; to-morrow, corn shall be sold at the usurate in the gate of Samaria;' that is, (1.) The siege shall be raised, the gate of the city opened, and the market held there as formerly; the return of peace is thus expressed, Judg. 5: 11. *Then shall the people of the Lord go down to the gates*, to buy and sell there. (2.) The consequence shall be great plenty; this would, in time, follow, of course, but that corn should be thus cheap in so short a time, was quite beyond what could be thought of.

2. A peer of Israel, that happened to be present, openly declared his disbelief of this prediction, *v.* 2. He was a courtier whom the king had an affection for, on whose prudence he much relied, and in whom he reposed much confidence; he thought it impossible, unless God should rain corn out of the clouds, as once He did manna; no less than the repetition of Moses's miracle will serve him, though that of Elijah might have served to answer this intention, the increasing of the meal in the barrel.

3. The just doom passed on him for his infi-

g Ruth 1:17. 1 Sam. 3:17. 14:44. 25:22. 2 Sam. 3:9,35. 19:13. 1 K. 2:23.
h 1 K. 18:17. 19:2. 22:8. Jer. 37:15, 16. 38:4. John 11:50. Acts 23:12,13.
i Ez. 8:1. 14:1. 20:1. 33:31.
k Is. 65:24.
l Luke 13:32.
m 1 K. 18:4. 21:10.
n 1 K. 14:6.
o Gen. 4:13. Ex. 16:6—8. 1 Sam. 28:6—8. 31:4. Job 1:11. 2:5,9. Prov. 19:3. Is. 8:21. Jer. 2:25. Ez. 33:10. Matt. 27:4,5. 2 Cor. 2:7,11. Rev. 16:9—11.
p Ps. 27:14. 37:7. 62:5. Is. 8:17. 26:3. 50:10. Lam. 3:25,26. Hab. 2:3. Luke 18:1.
a See on 6:33.—20:16. 1 K. 22:19. Is. 1:10. Ez. 37:4.
b 16,19. Ex. 8:23. 9:5,6. 14:13. 16:12. Josh. 3:5. 1 Sam. 11:9. Ps. 46:5
c 6:25. Rev. 6:6.
d 4:42. John 6:9.
* Or, *a lord which belonged to the king leaning on his hand.* 5:18.
e Gen. 18:12—14. Num. 11:21—23. Ps. 78:19—21,41.
f Gen. 7:11. Mal. 3:10.
g 17—20. Deut. 3:27. 2 Chr. 20:20. Is. 7:9. Rom. 3:3. 2 Tim. 2:13. Heb. 3:17—19.
h See on 5:1.—8:4. Lev. 13:46. Num. 5:2—4. 12:14.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 24—33. The regard wicked men pay to the servants of God, when they seem to favor them, is frequently turned into bitter enmity under their troubles.—In extreme distress, if they recollect that their affliction is from the Lord, that rage against Him, which vents itself in blasphemies, dictates also cruelty against his people. They blame any one as the cause of their calamities, rather than condemn themselves, and renounce their sins.—Alas! what miseries has sin entailed on mankind! Little do we know what extremities we may be called to endure in this world: what then will be the everlasting wrath of God against his enemies, in the world to come? But if we are reconciled to Him, He will help us when all human help fails. Let us then 'seek first the kingdom of God:' let us be thankful for our daily bread, and not contract habits of self-indulgence, nor set our affections on earthly objects: and may the whole Word of God, being truly believed, combine to increase in us reverent fear and holy hope, that we may be 'steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.' SCOTT.

Verses 28, 29.

The truth and awful justice of God on the idolatrous Israelites were displayed in this most horrible transaction. (*Notes, Lev.* 26:29. *Deut.* 28:49—57. *Lam.* 2:20—22. 4:10. *Ez.* 5:10.) SCOTT.

Verses 31, 32.

Son of.] 'A phraseology of contempt, still used in the E. *Sound of his feet*, &c. This form of speech is still used in the E. to denote the rapid approach of a person.' ROBERTS.

Verses 32, 33.

Elisha lodged at Samaria at this time, probably in the school of the prophets, sharing the hardships of that city during the siege and famine; and the elders had resorted to him to entreat his prayers, or to desire his counsel.—Probably Jehoram meant (33), that he might as well put Elisha to death, and surrender to Ben-hadad without further delay. (*Notes*, 25. *Job* 2:9—11. *Jer.* 2:25. *Lam.* 3:26—30.)—As the messenger was excluded till the king arrived, it is evident that the latter was the speaker of these words, and not his servant in his presence. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII. V. 1. This ch. is a continuation of the subject of the preceding: and immediately as Jehoram had spoken the profane and desperate words before considered, Elisha, in his presence and before the whole company, gave the merciful assurance contained in this v. The measure here spoken of is supposed to have contained about a peck, or two gallons; and the prices specified, no doubt, were those of plentiful times. SCOTT.

Measure.] 'A "Seah" or "Satum," 2½ wine galls. *A shekel.*] 2*s.* 4½*d.*' CUMBERLAND.

Verse 2.

A lord.] *Hashalish.* '*Dux.* Pagninus. *Satrapa.* Munster. Q. d. *third from the king.* Vatablus: or *prefect of a third part of the army. Tristates.* Josephus, &c. See note 2 Sam. 23:60, &c. '*Shalt not eat* &c.] A punishment for his profanity and unbelief.' *Poole. Pat. Henry, Gill, Scott.* Merely a prediction of his death. *Clarke.*' *Cond. Comm.* ED.

Verse 3.

While the weightier matters of the law were generally neglected, and idolatry prevailed, the prescribed rule about the exclusion of lepers seems to have been rigorously observed. (*Lev.* 13:45, 46. *Num.* 5:1—4.) These men probably were admitted *within the gate*, at the times when the Syrians made their assaults. SCOTT.

'It seems the Samaritans observed God's law as to lepers, while

the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, [i] Why sit we here until we die?

4 If we say, [k] We will enter into the city, then the famine *is* in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and [l] let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: [m] if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, [n] we shall but die.

5 And they rose up [o] in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, [p] behold, *there was* no man there.

6 For [q] the LORD had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, *even* the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us [r] the kings of the Hittites and [s] the kings of the Egyptians to come upon us.

7 Wherefore [t] they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents and [u] their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it *was*, [x] and fled for their life.

8 And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and [y] hid *it*; and came again and entered into another tent, and carried thence *also*, and went and hid *it*.

[*Practical Observations.*]

delity, he should see this great plenty for his conviction, yet not eat of it for his comfort. Note, Unbelief is a sin by which men greatly dishonor and displease God, and deprive themselves of the favors He designed for them; the murmuring Israelites saw Canaan, but could not enter in because of unbelief; such (says Bp. Patrick) will be the portion of those that believe not the promise of eternal life, they shall see it at a distance, Abraham afar off, but shall never taste of it; for they forfeit the benefit of the promise, if they cannot find in their heart to take God's word.

V. 3—11. We are here told,

I. How the siege of Samaria was raised just at twilight, *v.* 6, 7. The Syrians that besieged Dothan, had their *sight* imposed on; (*ch.* 6: 18.) these their *hearing;* God knows how to work on every sense, pursuant to his own counsels, Ex. 4: 11. Whether the noise was really in the air, by the ministry of angels, or only a sound in their ears, is not certain; God both *brings the wind out of his treasures*, and *formeth the spirit of man within him.* The sight of horses and chariots had encouraged the prophet's servant, (*ch.* 6: 17.) but now the noise of them terrified the hosts of Syria; notices from the invisible world are either very comfortable, or very dreadful, according as men are at peace with God, or at war with Him.

1. Hearing this noise, they concluded the king of Israel had procured assistance from some foreign power. There was, for aught we know, but one king of Egypt, and what kings there were of the Hittites nobody can imagine; but they imposed on themselves. Had they supposed it the king of Judah with his forces, it had been more probable; but even this fancy, their reason might soon have set aside: how could the king of Israel, who was closely besieged, hold intelligence with those distant princes? What had he to hire them with? It was impossible but some notice would come, before, of the motions of so great an host; but *there were they in great fear, where no fear was.*

2. Hereupon they all fled, *v.* 7. their horses might have hastened their flight, but they could not stay to take them, *v.* 7. None of them had

i 4. Jer. 8:14. 27:13.
k Jer. 14:18.
l 1 Chr. 12:19. Jer. 37:13,14.
m Esth. 4:16. Jer. 8:14. Jon. 3:9. Luke 15:17—19.
n 2 Sam. 14:14. Heb. 9:27.
o 1 Sam. 30:17. Ez. 12:6,7,12.
p Lev. 27:8,36. Deut. 28:7. 32:25,30.
q 3:23. 19:7. 2 Sam. 5:24. Job 15:21. Ps. 14:5. Jer. 20:3,4. Ez. 10:5. Rev. 6:15,16. 9:9.
r 1 K. 10:29.
s 2 Chr. 12:2,3. Is. 31:1. 36:9.
t Job 18:11. Ps. 48:4—6. 63:12. Prov. 28:1. Jer. 48:8,9.
u Ps. 20:7,8. 33:17. Am. 2:14—16.
x Num. 35:11,12. Prov. 6:5. Is. 2:20, 21. Matt. 24:16—18. Heb. 6:18.
y 5:24. Josh. 7:21. Jer. 41:8. Matt. 13:44. 25:18.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—8. In extreme distress unexpected relief is often preparing: and, whatever unbelievers may imagine, it is not in vain to wait for the Lord, how long soever He seems to delay his coming.—We are all prone to judge of God's promises by human probabilities, and to limit his power of performance by our capacity of discerning how it can be done; and whatever increases pride and self-confidence proportionably augments this [tendency.] But all those, who persist in despising either his promised blessings, or this method of obtaining them, will see the felicity of believers without partaking of it. For, though God will pardon the infirmities of his people's faith, while they pray, 'Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief;' yet He will not spare those, who harden themselves and others in rebellion, through their infidel objections and enmity against the truth, however they may enjoy the confidence of earthly princes, or the admiration of mankind.—Men reason justly in their secular concerns; yet, in the concerns of their souls, they will not be so convinced, even by demonstration, as to bestow pains, and put themselves to inconveniences, to escape the wrath to come, and obtain eternal life. But the awakened sinner fears an evil infinitely worse than death; and under the greatest discouragements, even when tempted to despair, he learns to argue, 'If I go on in sin, or sit down in sloth, or run into worldly dissipation, or have recourse to superstitions, or attempt to establish my own righteousness, I must perish. The mercy of God in Jesus Christ is my only refuge. If I cast myself at his feet and wait his time, who knows but He may save me? And if at last He spurns me, I can but be lost. All else is comparatively worthless: if then I must perish, I will perish under the means of grace, and supplicating his mercy and salvation.' (*Esth.* 4: 16.) In like manner the believer, exposed to the terrors of persecution, reasons with himself: 'If I am faithful to the Lord, I can but die, and He will give me the crown of life: but if I deny Christ, through dread of death, He will refuse to acknowledge me another day: and I 'fear Him who is able to destroy body and soul in hell,' more than those, 'who can only kill the body.' Thus believers venture themselves into the Savior's hands, and cleave to Him with purpose of heart; whilst others neglect or forsake him. SCOTT.

they shamelessly neglected his command concerning idolatry! Thus men are wont to observe diligently those commands which are more easy, and can be discharged compendiously, or in the lump as it were; but will despise the more difficult.' PETER MARTYR.

Verses 6, 7.

The infatuation, which seized the minds of the whole Syrian army, was equal to the illusion put on their senses. The excessive terror must have been caused immediately by supernatural influence on their minds. (*M. R.*—19:7. *Ex.* 15:14—16. *Deut.* 2:24, 25. 1 *Sam.* 14:11—15.) SCOTT.

(6.) *Kings of the Egyptians.*] So the ancient versions, except the *Syr.* which has *king*. *Boothr.* thinks *kings* an error of the transcriber for *king*. ED.

Some suppose these were contemporary kings, reigning in upper and lower Egypt respectively. Or were they military chieftains of nomes, or is the Heb. a copyist's error? This siege *Hales* places between 895 and 905 B. C. *Usher* between 885 and 892. *Hales*, in his dynasties of the Egyptian kings, makes 'a chasm here [as regards the names of the Egyptian kings] of 151 yrs. from B. C. 815 to 966;' and 'after the death of Sethon, a short interregnum of 2 yrs. prevailed, according to *Diod.*; when the Egyptians elected 12 kings, who united at Memphis and reigned 15 yrs. one for every nome or district.' This he thinks to be prophesied Is. 19:2. where 'kingdom against kingdom' (Heb.) is transl. by the Sept. 'nomos epi nomon.' *Wilkinson* gives the following list between these last periods. 'Osorthon (of Manetho, &c. Osorkon 1 of the hierogl. Zerah (the Ethiopian) who battled with Asa, 2 Chr. 14: 941 B. C. ascended the throne at Shishak's death (2 Chr. 12:9.) in 945. Tacellothis, (of Man. &c. Takelothe of hierog.) succeeded him in 925. With him ended the 22d. dynasty (Diospolitan). Osorkon 2. (hierogl.) 1st k. of the 23d. Diosp. dyn. succeeded him in 908. Sheshonk 2. (hierogl.) succeeded in 890, and reigned to about 860. To him succeeded 'other kings (?)' hierogl. It does not appear whether Tnephactus was in this or the succeeding dynasty (Saïte) which commenced with Bocchoris ('the wise,' son of Tnephactus, Asychis of Herod. (?) Peher Bakhor, or Amunse Pehor) in 812. According to *Diod.* a long time intervened between Bocchoris and Sabaco (the So of Scripture [2 K. 17:4. note], Sabakoftep or Sabakoph of hierogl.) who, as first of the 25th. Dyn. (Ethiopian) ascended the throne 778 B. C. (he was succeeded in 728 by Sebechon or Sevechus, his son, hierogl. Shebek) who was succeeded in 714 by Teraces or Tearchus (hierogl. Tehrak), Tearchon of *Strabo*, Tirhaka of SS. [2 K. 19:9. note.] This Teraces reigned till 690. The captivity of the 10 tribes happened in 721. I am not quite certain if Sabakoftep should be before or after Shebek. *Herod.* mentions Anysis expelled by Sabaco; and his Sethos was the contemporary of Tirhakah, and ruled at Memphis. According to *Africanus*, the 22d. Dyn. was of Bubastites and Tanites, but these 2 dyn. are also said to be both of Diospolitan kings. Stephinathis (of *Manetho*, &c.) was 1st of the 26th Dyn. (Saites,) then Nechepsus, and Nechao I. (*Man.* &c.) then Psammitichus (his son) Psamatik I. (hierogl.) who ascended the throne in 664. After the death of Sethos, it appears that the 12 chiefs seized the kingdom; but as Neco, the father of Psamaticus I. was put to death by Sabaco, it is probable that these 3 kings were contemporaries of the 25th Dyn. The 12 kings, or rather nomarchs, reigned (so Herod.) at this time. To Psamatik I. succeeded Nechao II. (hierogl. Neco) the Necho of SS, [2 Chr. 35:20. note,] who defeated and slew Josiah, in 610. To him succeeded Psammitichus, (Psammutis, Psammis, the Psamatik II. of the hierogl. in 604, who in 595 left the throne to Vaphres or Apries, (Psamatik III. of hierogl.) Pharaoh Hophra (?) of SS. [Jer. 44:30. note.] Amosis or Amasis, (Ames Neitse, hierogl.) next mounts the throne, in 570, and is succeeded by Psammicherites or Psammenites in 525; in which year Cambyses (Canbosh, hierogl.) conquers Egypt, and founds the 27th Dyn. (Persian).' WILKINSON ED.

9 Then [z] they said one to another, We do not well; [a] this day *is* a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning-light, * some [b] mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.

10 So they came and called unto [c] the porter of the city: and they told him, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, *there was* [d] no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they *were*.

11 And he called the porters; and they told *it* to the king's house within.

12 ¶ And the king arose in the night, and said [e] unto his servants, [f] I will now show you what the Syrians have done to us. They know [g] that we *be* hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to [h] hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.

13 And [i] one of his servants answered and said, Let *some* take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left † in the city, (behold, they *are* as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: behold, *I say*, [k] they *are* even as all the multitude of the Israelites that are consumed:) and let us send and see.

14 They took therefore two chariot-horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see.

15 And they went after them unto Jordan: and, lo, all the way *was* full of garments and [l] vessels, which the Syrians [m] had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned and told the king.

16 And the people went out, and [n] spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was *sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, [o] according to the word of the LORD.

17 And the king appointed [p] the lord on whose hand he leaned, to have the charge of the gate: and [q] the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him.

18 And it came to pass [r] as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying; Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be to-morrow about this time in the gate of Samaria:

19 And that lord answered the man of God, and said, Now, behold, *if* the LORD should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be. And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

20 And [s] so it fell out unto him: for the peo-

z 3. Hag. 1:4,5.
a 6. Is. 41:27. 52:7. Nah. 1:15. Luke 2:10. Phil. 2:4.
* Heb. *we shall find punishment.*
b 5:26,27. Num. 32:23. Prov. 24:16.
c 11. 2 Sam. 18:26. Ps. 127:1. Mark 13:34,35.
d See on 6,7.
e 6:8. Gen. 20:8. 41:38. 1 K. 20:7,23.
f See on 1.—5:7.
g 6:25—29.
h Josh. 8:4—12. Judg. 20:29—37.
i See on 5:13.
† Heb. *in it.*
k 4. 6:33. Jer. 14:18. Lam. 4:9.
l Esth. 1:7. Is. 22:24.
m Job 2:4. Is. 2:20. 10:3. 31:7. Ez. 18:31. Matt. 16:26. 24:16—18. Phil. 3:7,8.—Heb. 12:1.
n 1 Sam. 17:53. 2 Chr. 14:12—15. 20:25. Job 27:16,17. Ps. 68:12. Is. 33:1,4,23.
o Num. 23:19. Is. 44:26. Matt. 24:35.
p See on 2.
q 9:33. Judg. 20:43. Is. 25:10. Mic. 7:10. Heb. 10:29.
r See on 1,2.
s Num. 20:12. 2 Chr. 20:20. Job 20:23. Is. 7:9. Jer. 17:5,6. Heb. 3:18,19.

Verse 9.

Either some judgment from God would befall them, or some punishment from the magistrates, for prolonging the miseries of the people. SCOTT.

Verses 13, 14.

This person strenuously urged, in favor of his counsel, that these men and their horses would be no more exposed, than those who remained in the city. Many had been already consumed, and all the rest must die with hunger in a few days, if no relief were afforded: and they might as well be cut off, in examining the real state of the Syrian camp, as perish tamely and timidly in the city. ID.

(13.) *Five*, &c. 'Rather, "two of the five horses which remain, for behold, they only remained of all the multitude which were in Israel unconsumed."' BOOTHR. *Consume.*] '*Tmse.* Rather, "perfect," "fit for service."' Dr. A. CLARKE. The ancient versions are here quite various. ED.

Verses 16—20.

The people being vehemently eager for food, thrust down this nobleman, whilst he attempted, perhaps harshly, to restrain them from rushing out to plunder the Syrian camp: or, as some think, to regulate the market, held at the gate, and supplied from the camp. SCOTT.

ple trode upon him in the gate, and he died.

CHAP. VIII.

The Shunammite, by Elisha's advice, to avoid a famine of seven years, goes to sojourn in Philistia, 1, 2. On her return, she applies to the king, who is conversing with Gehazi on Elisha's miracles; and he restores her land, 3—6. Elisha goes to Damascus: Hazael is sent by Ben-hadad to inquire of him concerning his sickness: he predicts Hazael's cruelty to Israel, as destined to be king of Syria, 7—13. Hazael murders Ben-hadad and succeeds him, 14, 15. Jehoram reigns wickedly in Judah, 16—19. Edom and Libnah revolt, 20—22. Jehoram is succeeded by Ahaziah, who reigns wickedly, 23—27. He assists the king of Israel against Syria, and when wounded visits him at Jezreel, 28, 29.

THEN spake Elisha unto the woman, [a] whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and [b] sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for [c] the LORD hath [d] called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land [e] seven years.

2 And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went [f] with her household, and sojourned in [g] the land of the Philistines seven years.

B. C. 885. 3 And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines: and [h] she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land.

4 And the king talked with [i] Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, [k] Tell me, I pray thee, [l] all the great things that Elisha hath done.

5 And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how [m] he had restored a dead body to life, that, [n] behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, [o] My lord, O king, this *is* the woman, and this *is* her son, whom Elisha restored to life.

6 And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain * officer, saying, [p] Restore all that *was* hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.

[*Practical Observations.*]

7 ¶ And Elisha came to [q] Damascus; and [r] Ben-hadad the king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither.

8 And the king said unto Hazael, Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and inquire of the LORD by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

9 So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Ben-hadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

10 And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath shewed me that he shall surely die.

11 And he settled his countenance steadfastly, until he was ashamed: and the man of God wept.

12 And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child.

13 And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.

14 So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master; who said to him, What said Elisha to thee? And he answered, He told me that thou shouldest surely recover.

15 And it came to pass on the morrow, that he took a thick cloth, and dipped *it* in water, and spread it on his face, so that he died: and Hazael reigned in his stead.

16 ¶ And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign.

17 Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign, and reigned eight years in Jerusalem.

18 And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.

19 Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give unto him always a light, and to his children.

20 In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves.

21 So Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots with him: and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him about, and the captains of the chariots: and the people fled into their tents.

22 Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same time.

23 And the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

24 And Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

25 ¶ In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah begin to reign.

26 Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel.

27 And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, as did the house of Ahab: for he was the son in law of the house of Ahab.

28 And he went with Joram the son of Ahab to the war against Hazael king of Syria in Ramoth-gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram.

29 And king Joram went back to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

a See on 4:31—36.
b Gen. 12:10. 26:1. 47:4. Ruth 1:1.
c Gen. 41:25—28,32. Lev. 26:19,20,26. Deut. 28:22—24,38—40. 1 K. 17:1. 18:2. Ps. 105:16. 107:34. Hag. 1:11. Luke 21:11,22. Acts 11:28.
d Jer. 25:29.
e Gen. 41:27. 2 Sam. 21:1. 24:13. Luke 4:25.
f 1 Tim. 5:8.
g Judg. 3:3. 1 Sam. 27:1—3.
h 6. 4:43. 6:26. 2 Sam. 14:4. Ps. 82: 3 4. Jer. 22:16. Luke 18:3—5.
i 5:20—27. 7:3,10.
k Luke 9:9. 23:8. Acts 24:24.
l 2:14,20—22,24. 3:14—18. 4:3—6,16, 17. 5:14,27. 6:6,9—12,17—20,32. Ti 1 16—20.
m 4:35.
n Ruth 2:3. Esth. 5:14. 6:11,12. Prov. 16:9. Ec. 9:11. Matt. 10:29,30. Acts 8:27,&c. Rom. 8:31.
o 6:12,26. 1 Sam. 25:17. Ps. 145:1.
* Or, *eunuch.* 9:32. Gen. 37:36. 1 Chr. 28:1. *margins.*
p Deut. 22:2. Judg. 11:13. 2 Sam. 9: 7. Prov. 16:7. 21...
q Gen. 14:15. 1 K. 11:24. Is. 7:8.
r 6:24. 1 K. 15:18. 20:1,34. 22:31.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 9—20. Natural [benevolence and fear] are powerful checks on the selfishness of the ungodly, and tend to preserve some order and regularity in the world. Those, however, who have found 'the unsearchable riches of Christ,' will not delay to report the good tidings to others, that they may partake of that blessedness, which is sufficient for all: and from love to Him they will gladly communicate their temporal good things to their brethren.—True faith consists with prudent precautions: but unbelief suggests endless and unreasonable suspicions, and puts away those blessings, which are brought nigh to the soul, by the invitations and promises of God. The believer, on the other hand, makes trial of them, and experience confirms his faith: and a change, immensely more felicitating than that which is here recorded, takes place in his state, prospects, comforts, and character. May God help us seriously to inquire, whether we are now exposed to his awful threatenings, or interested in his exceedingly great and precious promises; that so we may profit by the warning, or by the encouragement, resulting from that knowledge of our own state and character, compared with the warnings, and promises of the holy Scriptures. SCOTT.

V. 1—6 Temporal deliverances are only respites, and, 'Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee,' is a warning of universal application. (*John* 5: 10—14.)—Where the moral law of God is not violated, a *real* necessity will justify many deviations from the *letter* of ritual appointments.—We know not what changes await us: we may soon be deceived by those who have

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII. V. 1, 2. This famine seems to have been sent in the latter part of Jehoram's reign, as a punishment of the pertinacious idolatry of both king and people, notwithstanding the miracles which they had witnessed, and the mercies which they had experienced. (*Am.* 7:4.)—Had not Judah also felt the effects of the famine, it is likely that this pious woman would have gone thither to sojourn. SCOTT.

Verses 7, 8.

The prophet doubtless was divinely directed to go to Damascus. Some suppose he retired thither during the famine.—Ben-hadad was

was told him, saying, [s]The man of God [t]is come hither.

8 And the king said unto Hazael, [u]Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and [x]inquire of the LORD by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

9 So [y]Hazael went to meet him, and took a present * with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, [z]Thy son Ben-hadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

10 And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit [b]the LORD hath showed me that [c]he shall surely die.

11 And he settled his countenance † steadfastly, until he was ashamed: and the man of God [d]wept.

12 And Hazael said, Why weepeth [e]my lord? And he answered, Because I know [f]the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strongholds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt [g]dash their children, and rip up their women with child.

13 And Hazael said, But what, *is* thy servant [h]a dog, that [i]he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, [k]The LORD hath showed me that thou *shalt be* king over Syria.

14 So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master; who said to him, What said Elisha to thee? And he answered, [l]He told me *that* thou shouldest surely recover.

15 And [m]it came to pass [n]on the morrow, that he took a thick cloth, and dipped *it* in water, and spread *it* on his face, [o]so that he died: and [p]Hazael reigned in his stead.

convert; the more needful now, because he seems out of his place. Hazael is supposed now to be captain of the host; either Naaman resigned, or was turned out, because he would not bow, or not bow heartily, in the house of Rimmon: some think he went to Damascus on account of the famine, or rather, in obedience to the orders God gave Elijah, (1 K. 19: 15.) *Go to Damascus to anoint Hazael*, thou, or thy successor.

II. We may wonder that the king of Syria, in sickness, should make Elisha his oracle. Notice was soon brought him, *the man of God* (by that title he was well known in Syria since he cured Naaman) was come to Damascus, *v.* 7. Never in better time, says Ben-hadad; now he is sick, he distrusts his idol, and sends to inquire of God. Affliction brings those to God, who, in prosperity, made light of Him; sometimes sickness opens men's eyes, and rectifies their mistakes. This is the more observable, 1. Because not long since a king of Israel had, in his sickness, sent to inquire of the god of Ekron, (*ch.* 1: 2.) as if there had been no God in Israel. Note, God sometimes fetches to Himself that honor from strangers, which is denied Him by his own professing people. 2. Because not long since this Ben-hadad had sent a great force to treat Elisha as an enemy, *ch.* 6: 14. Note, Among other instances of the change of men's minds by sickness and affliction, this is one, that it often gives them other thoughts of God's ministers, and teaches them to value the counsels and prayers of those whom they had hated and despised.

To honor the prophet, (1.) He sends *to* him, not *for* him, as if, with the centurion, he thought himself not worthy the man of God should come under his roof. (2.) He sends by Hazael, his prime minister, not by a common messenger. (3.) He sends a noble present, *v.* 6. testifying his affection to the prophet, bidding him welcome to Damascus, and providing for his sustenance while he sojourned there; it is probable Elisha accepted it, (why should he not?) [as God's provision for his sojourn, and for the poor, and poor prophets of Israel, says *Scott.*] (4.) He orders Hazael to call him *his son Ben-hadad*, conforming to the language of Israel, who called the prophets *fathers*. *Lastly*, He honored him as one acquainted with the secrets of Heaven, when he inquired, *Shall I recover?* It is natural to us, to desire to know things to come in time, while things to come in eternity are little thought of, or inquired after.

III. What passed between Hazael and Elisha, is especially remarkable. 1. Elisha answered, that the king might recover, the disease was not mortal, but that he should die another way, (*v.* 10.) not a natural, but a violent death. 2. He looked Hazael in the face with an unusual concern, till he made Hazael blush, and himself weep, *v.* 11. The man of God could outface the man of war. It was not in Hazael's countenance, that Elisha read what he would do, but revealed it to him: the more foresight men have, the more grief they are liable to. 3. When Hazael asked him why he wept, he told him what great mischief he foresaw he would do the Israel of God, *v.* 12. The sins of Israel provoked God to give them up into the hands of their cruel enemies, yet Elisha wept to think that ever Israelite should be thus abused; for though he foretold, he did not desire, the woful day. See what havoc war makes, what havoc sin makes, and how the nature of man is changed by the fall, and [become so depraved as to seem at times] stript even of humanity itself. 4. Hazael is greatly surprised at this prediction, *v.* 13. He looks upon it to be, an act of great power, not to be done but by a crowned head; (many are raised to that dominion they never thought of, and it often proves *to their own hurt*, Eccl. 8. 9.) —an act of great barbarity, which could not be done but by one lost to all honor and virtue. See here, (1.) What a bad opinion he had of the sin, looking upon it to be great wickedness, fitter for a brute, a beast of prey, than a man. Note, It is possible for a wicked man, under the convictions and restraints of a natural conscience, to express great abhorrence of a sin, and yet afterward be well reconciled to it. (2.) What a good opinion he had of himself, how much better than

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a 1:9,10. 2:15. 6:12.—See on Deut. 33: 1. 1 K. 13:1.
t Judg. 16:2. Acts 17:6.
u See on 5:5.—1 Sam. 9:7. 1 K. 14:3.
x 1:2. 3:11—13. 1 K. 14:1—4. Luke 13:23. Acts 16:30.
y See on 1 K. 19:15.
* Heb. *in his hand.* 5:5.
z 6:21. 13:14. 16:7. 1 Sam. 25:8. Philem. 10.
b 13. Gen. 41:39. Jer. 38:21. Ez. 11: 25. Am. 3:7. 7:1,4,7. 8:1. Zech. 1:20. Rev. 22:1.
c 1:4,16. Gen. 2:17. Ez. 18:13.
† Heb. *and set* it.
d Gen. 45:2. Ps. 119:136. Jer. 4:19. 9:1,18. 13:17. 14:17. Luke 19:41. John 11:35. Acts 20:19,31. Rom. 9: 2. Phil. 3:18.
e See on 4:28. 1 K. 18:13.
f 10:32,33. 12:17. 13:3,7. Am. 1:3,4. g 15:16. Ps. 137:9. Is. 13:16,18. Hos. 10:14. 13:16. Am. 1:13. Nah. 3:10.
h 1 Sam. 17:43. 2 Sam. 9:8. Ps. 22:16, 20. Is. 56:10,11. Matt. 7:6. Phil. 3: 2. Rev. 22:15.
i Jer. 17:9. Matt. 26:33—35.
k See on 19.—1 K. 19:15. Mic. 2:1.
l 10. 5:25. Matt. 26:16.
m 13. 1 Sam. 16:12,13. 24:4—7,13. 26: 9—11. 1 K. 11:26—37.
n Ps. 36:4. Mic. 2:1.
o 9:24. 15:10—14,25,30. 1 K. 15:28. 16:10,18. Is. 33:1.
p 13. 1 K. 19:15.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

hitherto been faithful to us, and need the help of those on whom we have not heretofore had any dependence.—The love of worldly riches induces men to various methods of fraud and oppression, and breaks through the most powerful obligations, or the strongest relative ties. Hence the benefit of magistracy, to preserve equity and order among mankind. Believers may, on important occasions, avail themselves of their privileges as members of the community; provided they are not actuated by covetousness or resentment, do not manifest a contentious spirit, and make no appeal in a doubtful cause, or in matters of no great importance: (*Matt.* 5: 38—42.) and rulers should award justice without respect of persons, and compel the injurious to restitution.—But the Lord Himself will plead the cause of the defenceless and the oppressed, of the fatherless and the widow: He often effects his purpose, by influencing the hearts of princes in their favor; and the most casual or trivial incident, which conduces to it, may prove an occasion of exciting praise and gratitude for his providential goodness.

SCOTT.

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no longer disposed to injure Elisha. The report of the prophet's miracles had excited respect and veneration for him, and perhaps his sickness had softened his mind; so that he welcomed him to his capital, and, according to the custom of the day, sent his chief minister with presents of very great value, to inquire of him concerning his recovery. (1:2. 1 *K.* 14:1—4.) It would have been far more rational, to request the instruction and prayers of 'the man of God.'

SCOTT.

Verse 10.

Ben-hadad's disease was not of itself mortal, though his life was near its end from another cause. But the prophet either did not know, or did not think it proper to inform Hazael, what that cause would be.—The Hebrew *text* however is, 'Thou shalt not surely recover,' or *live*; 'for the LORD,' &c. though ancient expositors, both Jews and Christians, adopting the reading of the *margin*, render it as it stands in our version: and indeed this appears to be the true reading; as the prophet's answer was probably intended to be obscure and ambiguous.

SCOTT.

Verses 12, 13.

'The Lord hath showed me, that thou shalt be king over Syria: Or, 'The Lord hath made me to see thee king over Syria.' ID.

Verses 14, 15.

Elisha's intimation might give Satan an *occasion* of suggesting this villany to Hazael; but it was not the *cause* of his crime, and formed no *excuse* for it. Had he been of David's disposition, he would have waited, in the path of duty, till the Lord had performed his word, in that manner which pleased Him. (1 *Sam.* 24:4—7. 1 *K.* 11:37. 12:2, 3, 26—29.) Thus he soon manifested the rapacity and cruelty of the dog, of which he desired to be thought incapable. (12, 13. *Is.* 56:9—12. *Mic.* 3:5—7.)—It is supposed, that Ben-hadad had no son; that

16 ¶ And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat *being* then king of Judah, [q] Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah * began to reign.

17 Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.

18 And he walked [r] in the way of the kings of Israel, as did [s] the house of Ahab; for [t] the daughter of Ahab was [u] his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.

19 Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah [x] for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give him alway a † light, *and* to his children.

20 In his days [y] Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and [z] made a king over themselves.

21 So Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots with him; and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him about and the captains of the chariots: and the people fled into their tents.

22 Yet [a] Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. Then [b] Libnah revolted at the same time.

23 And [c] the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

24 And Joram [d] slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and * Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

25 ¶ In the [f] twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel he deserved. Note, We are apt to think ourselves sufficiently armed against those sins which yet we are afterward overcome by, as Peter, Matt. 26: 35. *Lastly*, In answer, Elisha only told him *he should be king over Syria;* then he would have power to do it, and then he would find in his heart to do it. *Honors change men's tempers and manners*, and seldom for the better. Those that are little and low in the world, cannot imagine how strong the temptations of power and prosperity are, which if ever they arrive at, they will find how deceitful their hearts were, and how much worse than they suspected.

IV. What Hazael did, hereupon; if he took any occasion to do it from what Elisha had said, the fault was in him, not in the word.

1. He basely cheated his master, and belied the prophet, *v.* 10, 14. *He told me thou shouldest certainly recover:* either because he was loath to put the king out of humor with bad news, or because hereby he might the more effectually carry that bloody design, which he conceived* when he was told he should be his successor.

2. He barbarously murdered his master, and so made good the prophet's word, *v.* 15. The cloth was laid on the king's face, under pretence of cooling and refreshing him, but so that it stopped his breath, and stifled him, he being weak, (and not able to help himself,) or perhaps asleep, such a bubble is the life of the greatest of men. Some think Hazael was not suspected, and that the murder was never known, but through the inspired historian. We found this haughty monarch (1 K. 20.) *the terror of the mighty in the land of the living*, but he *goes down slain to the pit* with *his iniquity upon his bones*, Ezek. 32: 25.

V. 16—24. We have here a brief account of the life and reign of Jehoram, (or Joram,) one of the worst of the kings of Judah, but the son and successor of Jehoshaphat, one of the best. Note, 1. Many that have themselves been godly,† have had the grief and shame of seeing their children wicked and vile; let not families, thus afflicted, think it strange. 2. If the children of good parents prove wicked, commonly they are worse than others. 3. A nation is sometimes justly punished with the miseries of a bad reign, for not improving the blessings and advantages of a good one.

Concerning this Jehoram, observe,

I. No mistake is more fatal to young people, than a mistake in the choice of their company, and the examples they would respect and follow; Jehoram chose the house of Ahab for his pattern (*v.* 18.) rather than his father's house, and it was his ruin. We have a particular account of his wickedness, 2 Chr. 21. murder, idolatry, persecution, every thing bad.

II. The occasions of his badness; his father did ill, to marry him to the daughter of Ahab; no good could come of an alliance with an idolatrous family, but all mischief with such a daughter of such a mother, as Athaliah the daughter of Jezebel: the degeneracy of the old world took rise from the unequal yoking of professors with profane; those that are ill-matched, are already half-ruined. I doubt he did not do well, to make him king in his own life-time, *v.* 16. hereby he gratified his pride, (than which nothing is more pernicious to young people,) in hopes to reform him by humoring him, and so brought a curse on his family, as Eli did, *whose sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.* Jehoshaphat made him viceroy, once when he went with Ahab to Ramoth-gilead, from which Jehoshaphat's 17th year, (1 K. 22: 51.) is made Jehoram's second; (*ch.* 1: 17.) but afterward, in his 22d year, he made him partner in his government, thence Joram's 8 years are to be dated, 3 years before his father's death. It has been hurtful to many young men, to come too soon to their estates; Samuel got nothing by *making his sons judges.*

III. The rebukes of Providence he was under for his badness. 1. The Edomites revolted, who had been under the government of the kings of Judah ever since David's time, about 150 years, *v.* 20. He attempted to reduce them, and gave them a defeat, (*v.* 21.) but could not improve it so as to recover his dominion; *yet* again *Edom revolted;* (*v.* 22.) and the Edomites were, after this, bitter enemies to the Jews, as appears by the prophecy of Obadiah, and Ps. 137: 7. Now Isaac's prophecy was fulfilled, that this Esau the elder should serve Jacob the younger; yet in process of time, he should *break that yoke from off his neck*, Gen. 27: 40. 2. Libnah revolted, a city in Judah, in the heart of his country, a priests' city: they shook off his government, *because he had forsaken God*, and would have compelled them to do so too, 2 Chr. 21: 10, 11.

IV. The gracious care of Providence for keeping up the kingdom of Judah, and the house of David, notwithstanding the apostasies and calamities of Jehoram's reign, *v.* 19. for David's sake; not for any merit, but for the sake of a promise made him, that he should always have a lamp, i. e. a succession of kings from one generation to another; by which his name should be kept bright and illustrious, as a lamp is kept burning by a constant fresh supply of oil, the Lord would not destroy Judah: thus his family was not to be extinct, till it terminated in the Messiah, that son of David, on whom was to be *hung all the glory of his father's house*, and in whose everlasting kingdom that promise to David is fulfilled, *I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.*

V. The conclusion of this impious and inglorious reign, *v.* 23, 24. Nothing peculiar is here said of him; but we are told, 2 Chr. 21: 19, 20. that he *died of sore diseases*, and *died without being desired.*

V. 25—29. As, among common persons, there are some we call *little men*, who make no figure, are little regarded, and less valued; so among kings, some, in comparison with others, we may call *little kings*, as this Ahaziah; he looks mean in the history, and, because wicked, in God's account, vile. It is too plain an evidence of the affinity between Jehoshaphat and Ahab, that they had the same names in their families, at the same

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* As he was able to put it in execution so soon, it seems more probable that this design had *long been conceived*, (comp. v. 11.) and every thing got ready: so his language, (v. 13.) will be that of hypocrisy: and the prophecy thus became but one more temptation. *Ed.*

† We know not if Jehoram's *mother* was godly; and the proper education of children requires the exercise of *other* virtues than are *commonly* included under the term godliness: another character than that of merely *passive* goodness. Note, Prov. 22: 6. *Ed.*

q 1:17. 1 K. 22:50. 2 Chr. 21:1—20.
* Heb. *reigned.*
r 3:2,3. 1 K. 22:52,53.
s 9:7,8. 21:3,13. 2 Chr. 21:13. Mic. 6:16.
t 26. 1 K. 21:25. 2 Chr. 18:1. 19:2. 21:6. 22:1—4.
u Gen. 6:1—5. Deut. 7:3,4.—See on 1 K. 11:1—5. Neh. 13:25,26.
x 19:34. 2 Sam. 7:12,15. 1 K. 11:36. 15:4,5. 2 Chr. 21:7. Is. 7:14. 37:35. Jer. 33:25,26. Luke 1:32,33.
† Heb. *candle*, or, *lamp.*—See on 1 K. 11:36.
y 22. 3:9. 2 Chr. 21:8,10.
z 2 Sam. 8:14. 1 K. 22:47.
a See on Gen. 27:40.
b 19:8. Josh. 21:13. 2 Chr. 21:10.
c 15:6,36.—See on 1 K. 11:41. 14:29. 15:23.—2 Chr. 21:11—20.
d See on 1 K. 2:10. 11:43. 14:20,31.
e 1 Chr. 3:11. 2 Chr. 21:17. 25:23. *Jehoahaz.* 22:6. *Azariah.*
f See on 16,17.—9:29. 2 Chr. 21:20.

Hazael was in great favor with the people, and with the army especially; and that, for a time at least, he escaped the suspicion of having murdered Ben-hadad. SCOTT.

Verses 16, 17.

Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, began to reign with his father before the death of Ahab, so that Ahaziah the son of Ahab died in the 2nd year of his reign, or in the 18th of Jehoshaphat. About 5 years after he seems to have been more solemnly admitted to the exercise of the royal authority, within 2 years of his father's death. This took place when Jehoram was 32 years old, and from that time he reigned 8 years; though he reigned only 5 or 6, as sole king after the death of his father. (1:17.) ID.

Verse 18.

The daughter, &c.] Perhaps Jehoshaphat hoped, by thus marrying his son to Ahab's daughter, to cement a peace between the two kingdoms, and to bring back the Israelites to the worship of God at Jerusalem: but it was an unhallowed measure, and produced a contrary effect. SCOTT.

Verses 20—24.

The Jews did not again acquire the dominion over Edom, till long after the Babylonish captivity. (*M. R.* y. a.—*Gen.* 27:39, 40.)—Jehoram was buried in Jerusalem, but not in the sepulchres of the kings. (2 *Chr.* 21:12—20.) ID.

did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah begin to reign.

26 [g] Two and twenty years old *was* Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned [h] one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* [i] Athaliah, the * daughter of Omri king of Israel.

27 And [k] he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, as *did* the house of Ahab; for he *was* [l] the son-in-law of the house of Ahab.

28 And [m] he went with Joram the son of Ahab to the war against [n] Hazael king of Syria in [o] Ramoth-gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram.

29 And king [p] Joram went back to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds † which the Syrians had given him at ‡ Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And [q] Ahaziah, the son of Jehoram king of Judah, went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was § sick.

CHAP. IX.

A young prophet, by Elisha's orders, goes to Ramoth-gilead; anoints Jehu as king over Israel, and directs him to extirpate Ahab's family, 1—10. Jehu acquaints the captains, is proclaimed king, and marches in haste to Jezreel against Joram, 11—16. Joram sends messengers to Jehu, who detains them, 17—20. He and Ahaziah meet Jehu, who kills Joram, and casts him into the field of Naboth, 21—26. Ahaziah is slain at Gur, and buried at Jerusalem, 27—29. Jezebel, by Jehu's orders, is thrown out of the window, and trampled under foot, 30—33. She is eaten by dogs, as Elijah had predicted, 34—37.

AND Elisha the prophet called one of [r] the children of the prophets, and said unto him, [b] Gird up thy loins, and take this [c] box of oil in thine hand, and go to [d] Ramoth-gilead:

2 And when thou comest thither, look out there [e] Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him rise up from [f] among his brethren, and carry him to an ‖ inner chamber:

3 Then take the box of oil, and [s] pour *it* on his head, and say, Thus saith the LORD, [h] I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the

time, in which, we may suppose, they designed to compliment one another. Ahab had two sons, Ahaziah and Jehoram, who reigned successively; Jehoshaphat had a son and grandson named Jehoram and Ahaziah, who, in like manner, reigned successively. If Ahab lent names to that wretched family, he could not communicate with them the devotion of their significations, *Ahaziah, Taking hold of the Lord;* and *Jehoram, The Lord exalted.*

Ahaziah king of Israel had reigned but two years, Ahaziah king of Judah but one. We are here told, his relation to Ahab's family was the occasion, 1. Of his wickedness, *v.* 27. his mother was Ahab's daughter, *v.* 26. The child may be expected to resemble the mother. When men choose wives for themselves, they must remember they are choosing mothers for their children, and are concerned to choose accordingly.*

2. Of his fall; Joram, his mother's brother, courted him to join him for the recovery of Ramoth-gilead, an attempt fatal to Ahab; so it was to Joram his son, for in that expedition he was wounded, (*v.* 28.) and returned to Jezreel to be cured, leaving his army there in possession of the place. Ahaziah was likewise returned, but went to Jezreel, to see how Jehoram did, *v.* 29. Providence so ordered it, that he who had been debauched by the house of Ahab, might be cut off with them, when the measure of their iniquity was full, as we shall find in the next ch.

* *Spurzheim* remarks, that 'men have seldom become great, who were not the offspring of well-gifted mothers.' If any one doubted the expediency of regarding God's 'laws of hereditary descent,' one would think the history of the children of David's, Solomon's, or Ahab's wives would convince him. See *Buchan* and *Spurzheim.* *Ed.*

CHAP. IX. Hazael and Jehu were designed to be the instruments of God's justice, in punishing and destroying the house of Ahab. Elijah was bidden to appoint them to this service; but, on Ahab's humiliation, a reprieve was granted, and so it was left to Elisha to appoint them. Hazael's elevation to the throne of Syria we read of in the foregoing ch.; and we must now attend Jehu to the throne of Israel; for him that escapeth the sword of Hazael, as Joram and Ahaziah did, Jehu must slay, of which this ch. gives us an account.

V. 1—10. Jehu was, at this time, a commander (probably, in-chief) of the forces employed at Ramoth-gilead, *v.* 14. there fighting for the king his master. It does not appear he aimed at the government, or ever thought of it; the commission was a perfect surprise to him. Some think he had been anointed before by Elijah, but privately, and with an intimation not to act till further orders, as Samuel anointed David long before he was to come to the throne; but that is not at all probable, for then we must suppose Elijah had anointed Hazael too. No, when God bade him do these things, He bade him anoint Elisha to *be prophet in his room,* to do them when he was gone, as God should direct him.

I. The commission sent. Elisha did not go himself to anoint Jehu, because he was old, and unfit for such a journey, and so well known, that he could not do it privately, or without observa-

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[g] 2 Chr. 22:2.
[h] 9:21—27. 2 Chr. 22:5—8.
[i] 11:1,13—16.
* Or, *grand-daughter.* 18.
[k] See on 18.
[l] 18. 2 Chr. 22:3. Ec. 7:26. 2 Cor. 6:14—17.
[m] 3:7. 1 K. 22:4. 2 Chr. 18:2,3,31. 19:2. 22:5.
[n] 12,13. 1 K. 19:17.
[o] Josh. 21:38. 1 K. 4:13. 22:3.
[p] 9:15.
† Heb. *wherewith the Syrians had wounded.*
‡ Called *Ramoth,* 28.
[q] 9:16. 2 Chr. 22:6,7.
§ Heb. *wounded.* 1 K. 22:24.
[a] 4:1. 6:1—3. See on 1 K. 20:35.
[b] 4:29. 1 K. 18:46. Jer. 1:17. Luke 12:35—37. 1 Pet. 1:13.
[c] 1 Sam. 10:1. 16:1. 1 K. 1:39.
[d] 8:28,29. 1 K. 22:4,20.
[e] 14. 1 K. 19:16,17.
[f] 5,11.
‖ Heb. *chamber in a chamber.* 1 K. 20:30. 22:25. *margins.*
[g] Ex. 29:7. Lev. 8:12. 1 Sam. 16:13. 1 K. 19:16.
[h] 3:13. 1 Sam. 9:16. 15:1,17. 16:12. Ps. 75:6,7. Prov. 8:15,16. Jer. 27:5—7. Dan. 2:21. 4:35. 5:18. John 19:10,11.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 7—29. The Lord can procure his people a welcome, and spread them a table, even amidst their enemies; who, on some occasions, and especially in affliction, may be inclined to show them great kindness and respect. Yet few, even in that case, derive real benefit from their instructions, and disposition to do them good: but some honor redounds to God, and outward advantages accrue to his servants; who may without scruple receive them, as from Him, when they are not required to flatter, or in any other way to act inconsistently with their profession.—Those who love God and man must often weep, upon a survey of the wickedness and misery of mankind: and a particular foresight of the state of the church, and of the world, would augment their sorrow. Little are men aware, when not exposed to temptation, of the desperate wickedness of their own hearts! [for all have *the same* natural *propensities,* though in different degrees.] Those who, as mortified limbs, are continually cut off from the body politic, once no more thought of such criminality and condemnation, than any reader of these observations: and we are many of us capable, if left to ourselves, of the worst crimes perpetrated by the vilest pests and scourges of the world! This should remind us, 'not to be high-minded but to fear,' and to trust only in the Lord to preserve us from the deceitfulness of our own hearts. As the desire of greatness is a dangerous temptation, which has induced many to perpetrate the basest crimes, we ought to be content and thankful in more obscure situations; and those, who are called to this dangerous pre-eminence, have need of double watchfulness and fervency in prayer.—When iniquity is conceived in the heart, means will be devised for its perpetration: and flattering language often cloaks the most malignant purposes: for sinners in general are satisfied with concealing their crimes from man, regardless of the all-seeing eye of God.—It is, in every case, an awful cruelty to flatter those with the hope of life, whom we suppose to be near dissolution: because they ought to be preparing for that important change, and to be counselled and warned so to employ their few remaining days or hours. When men choose wives for themselves, or take any measures in the marriage of their children, they should remember that their remote posterity are concerned, and that an improper choice may entail misery and ruin upon them. SCOTT.

Verse 26.

Perhaps Omri adopted and educated Athaliah, who was his grand-daughter, and the daughter of Ahab. SCOTT.

Verses 28, 29.

(9:21—28.) Ahaziah was Jehoram's youngest son; his other sons having all been slain before his death. (*2 Chr.* 22:1.) ID.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX. V. 1.—Elisha lived above 40 years after this: (13:14.) and, probably, was not incapacitated, by age or infirmities, for the labor and activity required on this occasion, but was for other reasons induced, or directed, to send a deputy. (*M. R.*) ID.

Box.] *Phak.* Vulg. *lenticula.* Sept. *phakous.* Syr. *horn.* Chal. vase, vessel, Arab. *little vessel.* ED.

Verses 2—3.

Jehoram having retired from the army, (8:29.) Jehu seems to have been left first in command, having been long employed by Ahab's family. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

(2.) *An inner chamber.*] This is often mentioned, and appears to indicate a method of arrangement common to the Israelites and Egyptians. Wilkinson describes it from the Egyptian monuments. A long hall fills one side of the court, its entrance is at one end, a partition divides it, and forms a room at the further end, which is only entered from the first chamber. This room is called the *inner chamber.* ED.

door, [i]and flee, and tarry not.

4 So the young man, *even* the young man the prophet, went to Ramoth-gilead.

5 And when he came, behold, the captains of the host *were* sitting; and he said, [j]I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, Unto which of all us? And he said, To thee, O captain.

6 And [k]he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, [l]I have anointed thee king [m]over the people of the LORD, *even* over Israel.

7 And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that [n]I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, [o]at the hand of Jezebel.

8 For the whole house of Ahab shall perish: and [p]I will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and [q]him that is shut up and left in Israel:

9 And I will make the house of Ahab [r]like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like [s]the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah.

10 And [t]the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and *there shall be* none to bury *her*. And [u]he opened the door, and fled.

[*Practical Observations.*]

11 Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: and *one* said unto him, [x]*Is* all well? wherefore came this [y]mad *fellow* to

i 1 Sam. 16:2. Matt. 2:13. 10:16.
j Judg. 3:19.
k Acts 23:18,19.
l See on 3.—1 K. 1:34. 2 Chr. 22:7. Ps. 2:6. *marg.* Is. 45:1.
m 1 K. 3:8. 10:9. 14:7. 16:2.
n Deut. 32:35,43. Ps. 94:1—7. Matt. 23:35. Luke 18:7,8. Rom. 12:19. 13:4. Heb. 10:30. Rev. 6:9,10. 18:20. 19:2.
o 33—37. 1 K. 18:4. 21:15,25.
p See on 1 K. 14:10,11. 21:21,22.
q 14:26. Deut. 32:36.
r 1 K. 14:10,11. 15:29. 21:22.
s 1 K. 16:3,4,11,12.
t 35,36. 1 K. 21:23. Jer. 22:19.
u 3. Judg. 3:26.
x 17,19,22. 4:26. 5:21.
y Is. 59:15. *marg.* Jer. 29:26. Hos. 9:7. Mark 3:21. John 10:20. Acts 17:18. 26:24. 1 Cor. 4:10. 2 Cor. 5:13.

tion; therefore he sends *one of the sons of the prophets* to do it, *v.* 1. They not only *reverenced* him as their father, (*ch.* 2: 15.) but *observed* and *obeyed* him as such. The service was hazardous, (1 Sam. 16: 2.) and Elisha must not expose himself. It required labor, therefore was fitter for a young man. Let youth work, and age direct. Yet it was honorable, and he that did it might hope to be preferred; therefore, for the encouragement of the young prophets, Elisha employed one of them: he would not engross all the honors to himself.

When he sent him, 1. He put the oil into his hand, with which to anoint Jehu. Solomon was anointed with *oil out of the tabernacle*, 1 K. 1: 39. that could not now be had, but oil from a prophet's hand was equivalent. It was not the constant practice to anoint kings, but on the disturbance of the succession, as in the case of Solomon; or the interruption of it, as in the case of Joash; (*ch.* 11: 12.) or the translation of the government to a new family, as here, and in the case of David; yet it might be used generally, though the Scripture does not mention it. 2. He put *the words into his mouth* which he must say, (*v.* 3.) *I have anointed thee king*, no doubt, he told him all the rest he said, *v.* 7—10. Those whom God sends on his errand, shall not go without full instructions.

He also ordered him to do it, 1. Privately, (*v.* 2.) that Jehu's confidence in his commission might be tried, when he had no witness to attest it; his being, of a sudden, animated for the service, would be proof sufficient of his being anointed to it. The thing signified was the best evidence of the sign. 2. Expeditiously; when he went about it, he must *gird up his loins;* when he had done it, he must *flee, and not tarry* for a fee, or a treat, or to see what Jehu would do. It becomes the sons of the prophets to be quick and lively at their work, as men that hate sauntering and trifling. They should be as angels that fly swiftly.

II. The commission delivered, with despatch, *v.* 4. He found the general officers sitting together, either at dinner, or in a council of war, *v.* 5. and, with the assurance that became a messenger from God, notwithstanding the meanness of his appearance, he called Jehu out, not waiting his leisure, or begging pardon for disturbing him, but as one having authority. Perhaps Jehu had some intimation of his business; therefore, that he might not seem too forward to catch at the honor, he asked, *To which of all us?* That it might not be said afterward, he got it by speaking first, but they might all be satisfied he was indeed the person designed.

When the prophet had him alone, he anointed him, *v.* 6. The anointing of the Spirit is a hidden thing, that new name, which none knows but they that have it. Herewith,

I. He invests him with the royal dignity, gives him an incontestable title, but reminds him he was made king, (1.) *By the God of Israel;* from Him he must see his power derived, for Him he must use it, and to Him he must be accountable. Magistrates are the ministers of God, and must therefore act in dependence on Him, and with entire devotedness to Him and to his glory. (2.) *Over the Israel of God;* though the people of Israel were wretchedly corrupted, and had forfeited all the honor of relation to God, yet they are here called the *people of the Lord*, for He had a right to them, and had not yet given them a bill of divorce. Jehu must look on the people, as the *people of the Lord*, not as his vassals, but God's freemen, not to be abused or tyrannized over; *God's people*, and therefore to be ruled for Him, and according to his laws.

2. He instructs him in his present service, which was to destroy all the guilty house of Ahab; (*v.* 7.) not to clear his own way to the throne, and secure the possession of it, but to execute the judgments of God. He calls Ahab his *master*, that the relation might be no objection. 'Thou art under higher obligations to thy Master in heaven, than to thy master Ahab.'

That he might, intelligently, and in a right manner, do this great execution, he tells him,

(1.) Their crime, the ground of the controversy God had with them; that he might have an eye to that which God had an eye to, *the blood of God's servants the prophets.* Nothing fills the measure of the iniquity of any prince or people so as this, or brings surer and sorer ruin. This sin brought on Jerusalem its first destruction, (2 Chr. 36 : 16.) and its final one. Matt. 23: 37, 38. Jezebel's whoredoms and witchcrafts were not so provoking as her persecuting the prophets, killing some, and driving the rest into corners and caves, 1 K. 18: 4.

(2.) Their doom; they were sentenced to utter destruction; *v.* 8, 9, 10. The whole stock of royal blood was little enough, and too little, to atone for that of the prophets, saints and martyrs, which, in God's account, is of great price.

V. 11—15. 1. With what contempt the captains speak of the young prophet, *v.* 11. They call him *a mad fellow*, Hos. 9: 7. Note, Those that have no religion, commonly speak with disdain of those that are religious, and look upon them as mad. They said of our Savior, *He is beside Himself;* of John Baptist, *He has a devil*, is a poor, melancholy man; of Paul, *Much learning has made thee mad.* The highest wisdom is thus represented as folly, and those that best understand themselves, are looked upon as beside themselves. Perhaps Jehu intended it for a rebuke to his friends; '*Ye know the man* to be a prophet, and the way of his communication to be not from madness, but inspiration.' Or, 'Being a prophet, you may guess his business, to tell me my faults, and teach me my duty: I need not inform you.' Thus he thought to have put them off, but they urged him. 'It is false, we cannot conjecture his errand, therefore tell us.' Thus pressed, he told them; probably, showed them the oil on his head, *v.* 12. He knew not but some of them might oppose him, and go near to crush his interest in its infancy; but he relied on the divine appointment, and feared not to own it, knowing whom he had trusted:

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—10. The long-suffering of God enhances the condemnation of those, who are not led by it to repentance. (*Rom.* 2:4—6. 9:22,23.)—In his appointed time, He will raise up and qualify suitable instruments for performing his purpose, whether of vengeance or of mercy.—As the written Word is at present our only rule of duty, it seldom happens, that we are required to act, even in *apparent* violation of our relative obligations to princes, parents, masters, or other superiors; except in professing those truths, and attending on those ordinances, which they may disapprove, or prohibit; or in keeping aloof from those superstitious, or worldly practices, they would enjoin.—They, who are employed as ministers, will be the most exposed in these respects: for the message of the Lord, meeting sinners in the midst of their worldly pursuits, singles them out, by an application to their hearts and consciences, as if they were addressed by name: (2 *Sam.* 12:7.) and while some are thus separated from their companions, and, by the unction of the Holy Spirit, prepared for the service of God; others are marked out, in the midst of their prosperity, as in danger of eternal misery. Whilst, however, we conscientiously adhere to our instructions, we shall be accepted, and preserved as long as is really good for us. SCOTT.

Verse 11.

This mad fellow.] Probably there were some peculiarities in the young prophet's manner and address, which made the captains conclude he was one of the 'sons of the prophets,' and some reference

thee? And he said unto them, Ye know the man, and his communication.

12 And they said, *It is* false; tell us now. And he said, [z] Thus and thus spake he to me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel.

13 Then they hasted, [a] and took every man his garment, and put *it* under him on the top of the stairs, and [b] blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu * is king.

14 So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, [c] conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had [d] kept Ramoth-gilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael king of Syria.

15 But king † Joram was [e] returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians ‡ had given him, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.) And Jehu said, If it be your minds, *then* let § none go forth *nor* escape out of the city, to go to tell *it* in Jezreel.

16 So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there. [f] And Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see Joram.

17 And there stood [g] a watchman on the tower in Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company. And Joram said, [h] Take an horseman, and send to meet them, and let him say, [i] *Is it* peace?

18 So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, Thus saith the king, *Is it* peace? And Jehu said, [k] What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. And the watchman told, saying, The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again.

19 Then he sent out a second on horseback, which came to them, and said, Thus saith the king, *Is it* peace? And Jehu answered, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me.

20 And the watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the ‖ driving *is* like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; [l] for he driveth ¶ furiously.

z See on 8—10.
a Matt. 21:7,8. Mark 11:7,8.
b 2 Sam. 15:10. 1 K. 1:34,39. Ps. 47:5—7. 98:6.
* Heb. *reigneth.*
c 31. 8:12—15. 10:9. 15:30. 1 K. 15:27. 16:7,9,16.
d 8:28. 1 K. 22:3.
† Heb. *Jehoram.*
e 8:29. 2 Chr. 22:6.
‡ Heb. *smote.*
§ Heb. *no escape, go, &c.* 1 Sam. 27:9—11.
f 8:29. 2 Chr. 22:6,7.
g 2 Sam. 13:34. 18:24. Is. 21:6—9,11,12. 56:10. 62:6. Ez. 33:2—9. Acts 20:26—31.
h 7:14.
i 19. 1 Sam. 16:4. 1 K. 2:15. Luke 10:5,6.
k 19,22. Is. 48:22. 59:8. Jer. 16:5. Rom. 3:17.
‖ Or, *marching.* Hab. 1:6. 3:12.
l 10:16. Ec. 9:10. Is. 54:16. Dan. 11:44.
¶ Heb. *in madness.*

I. Joram's watchman discovers him, first at a distance, whether friend or foe he cannot tell. The king, impatient to know, and perhaps jealous the Syrians were coming to seize him, sent first one messenger, and then another, for intelligence, *v.* 17—19. Scarcely recovered from the fright of the battle, his guilty conscience put him into continual terror. Each messenger asked the same question, 'Are you for us, or for our adversaries?' Each had the same answer, *v.* 18, 19. 'It is not to thee, but to him that sent thee, I will answer; for thy part, if thou wouldst consult thine own safety, *turn thee behind me*, and enlist among my followers.' The watchman, at length, observes the leader drove like Jehu, noted for driving furiously, and thereby discovering himself to be a man of a hot, eager spirit, intent on his business, and pushing forward with all his might. The wisdom of God is seen in the choice of proper instruments in his work. But it is not much for any man's reputation, to be known by his fury. He that has rule over his own spirit, is better than the mighty. The Chaldee paraphrase gives this a contrary sense: *The leading is like that of Jehu, for he leads quietly.* And, it should seem, he did not come up very fast, for then there had not been time for all that passed. Some think he chose to march slowly, that he might give Joram time to come out to him, and so despatch him before he entered the city.

II. Joram and Ahaziah go out to meet him; neither equipped for war, as not expecting an enemy, but in haste to satisfy their curiosity. How strangely has Providence sometimes ordered it,

might be had to those vehement actions, which the prophets sometimes used, when influenced by the Spirit of prophecy: (1 *Sam.* 19:19—24.) Those, who have faithfully delivered the Lord's message to sinners, have in all ages been treated as madmen. (*M. R.* v.) They are so indifferent about those objects, which attract the senses, and which man naturally desires and pursues; and so engaged about those things which are invisible, and therefore generally neglected as if unreal; their judgment, conversation, maxims, and conduct are so contrary to those of other men; and they venture and endure so much, in pursuit of interests and objects of which others have no conception; that worldly men naturally conclude them to be mad, when they deem them honestly in earnest. (*Mark* 3:20, 21. 2 *Cor.* 5:13—15.) The charge however is often brought in *self-defence*: for, admitting the principles and practice of the devoted servants of God to be reasonable, wise, and necessary to happiness, the inference is undeniable; that the ambitious, the sensual, the covetous, the dissipated, the worldly, and the ungodly of every description, are fools and madmen to all intents and purposes. SCOTT

Ye know, &c.] It may be questioned, whether Jehu did not suspect, the young prophet acted in concert with the captains; and that they were previously acquainted with the man and his communication. ID.

Verses 12, 13.

It is probable this was done on the top of some edifice, from which the people were generally informed of such public transactions, as were proper to be communicated to them. Thus the conspiracy was openly avowed. While Jehoram had rendered himself odious, by his crimes and oppressions, to the nation in general; it may be supposed, that he was also unpopular in the army, through his severity and cruelty. ID.

(13.) *Top of the stairs.*] 'Top of a tower,' (in which was this council) *Harris.* Heb. *al gerem hammaâloth.* Vulg. in similitudinem tribunalis. Sept. garem tōn anabathmōn. Syr. thronum graduum. Arab. gradus fenestræ From all which discrepancy, we may see that the meaning is not known. Some transl. *gerem, bone*, and so make it have the force of *self*, 'the very stairs.' 'The Chaldee, the rabbins, and several interpreters, understand this of the *public sun-dial*; which, in those ancient times, was formed of steps, like stairs, each step serving to indicate, by its shadow, one hour, or such division of time as was commonly used in that country. This was in the most public place; and on the platform upon its top Jehu was probably seated.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* This coronation took place in *Ramoth-Gilead*, otherwise called *Ramoth-mizpeh*, and seems to describe a ceremony uncommon except E. of the Jordan, perhaps confined to nomadic and hunting tribes. Here then we have 'a conspicuous place,' (Ramoth) 'a heap of witness,' (Gilead) 'a watch tower,' (Mizpeh,) and probably, 'a pillar,' (11:14.) an *ascent* (hamaâloth) or place of ascent, by steps or a winding way, and the Tigurine version has, ad tumulum, quo ascenderet, whence we may conjecture, in the absence of knowledge, that possibly this coronation took place upon one of those mounds described and figured, Gen. 31:44—48, &c. which seem among many nations to have answered the manifold purpose of fortresses, places of assemblies (of different tribes), religious and political, and politico-religious, burying places, and watch-towers. But Poole thinks, that the text implies simply, they made Jehu a hasty throne on the *very steps* of the building where the council assembled, without waiting to get to the level ground: and indeed ancient public buildings often had these conspicuous steps, witness the temple-palace at Persepolis, and comp. 1 K. 10:5. ED.

Verse 14.

It is not certain, whether the Israelites had just taken Ramoth-gilead; or whether Hazael had raised the siege of it, having attempted in vain to retake it. SCOTT

Verses 15—17.

(8:28, 29.) The matter was of the Lord, and could not fail of success. *Company* (17.) *Troop*, or *army*. ID.

Verse 20.

Jehu was a vehement man, yet keen and sagacious. Probably he

21 And Joram said, *make ready. And his chariot was made ready. And [m]Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu, and †met him in [n]the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite.

22 And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, [o] *Is it* peace, Jehu? And he answered, [p] What peace, so long as [q]the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts *are so* many?

23 And Joram turned his hands and fled, and said to Ahaziah, [r] *There is* treachery, O Ahaziah.

24 And Jehu ‡drew a bow with his full strength, and *smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he §sunk down in his chariot.

25 Then said *Jehu* to Bidkar his captain, Take up, *and* cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, [t]the LORD laid this burden upon him;

26 Surely I have seen yesterday the ‖ blood of Naboth, and the blood [u]of his sons, saith the LORD; and [x]I will requite thee in this ¶ plat, saith the LORD. Now therefore take *and* cast him into the plat *of ground*, according to the word of the LORD.

27 But when [y]Ahaziah the king of Judah saw *this*, he fled by the way of the [z]garden-house. And Jehu followed after him, and said, Smite him also in the chariot. *And they did so* at the going up to Gur, which *is* by [a]Ibleam. And he fled to [b]Megiddo, and died there.

28 And [c]his servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his sepulchre with his fathers in the city of David.

29 And [d]in the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab began Ahaziah to reign over Judah.

1. The place where Joram met Jehu, was ominous, *in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite*, *v.* 21. The very sight of that ground was enough to make Joram tremble, and Jehu triumph; for Joram had the guilt of Naboth's blood fighting against him, and Jehu the force of Elijah's curse fighting for him. The circumstances of events are sometimes so ordered by Divine Providence, as to make the punishment answer to the sin.

2. Joram's demand was still the same, 'Is all well?' It seems, he looked for peace, and could not entertain any other thought. Note, It is very common for great sinners, even when on the brink of ruin, to flatter themselves with an opinion that all is well with them, and to cry peace to themselves.

3. Jehu's reply was very startling, *v.* 22. See how plainly he deals with him. Formerly, he durst not do so, but now he had another spirit. Note, Sinners will not always be flattered, Ps. 36: 2. Observe, He charges on him his mother's wickedness, and, on that account, throws him off from all pretensions to peace; 'What peace can come to that house in which there is so much wickedness unrepented of?' Note, The way of sin can never be the way of peace, Isa. 57: 21. What peace can sinners have with God, what peace with their own consciences, what good, what comfort, can they expect in life, in death, or after death, who go on still in their trespasses? No peace so long as sin is persisted in; but as soon as it is repented of and forsaken, there is peace.

4. The execution was done immediately. Joram's heart failed him, he presently concluded the

[*Practical Observations.*]

* Heb. *bind.* 1 K. 20:14. *marg.* Mic. 1:13.
m 2 Chr. 22:7.
† Heb. *found.* Num. 20:14. *marg.*
n 25. 1 K. 21:1—7,15,18,19.
o See on 17.
p See on 18.—Is. 57:19—21.
q 1 K. 16:30—33. 18:4. 19:1,2. 21:3—10,25. Nah. 3:4. Rev. 2:20. 17:4, 5. 18:3,23.
r 11:14. 2 Chr. 23:13.
‡ Heb. *filled his hand with a bow.*
s 1 K. 22:34. Job 20:23—25. Ps. 50:22. Prov. 21:30. Ec. 8:12,13. 1 Thes. 5: 3.
§ Heb. *bowed.*
t 1 K. 21:19,24—29. Is. 13:1. Jer. 23: 33—38. Nah. 1:1. Mal. 1:1. Matt. 11:30.
‖ Heb. *bloods.*
u Deut. 24:16. 2 Chr. 24:25. 25:4.
x Ex. 20:5. Deut. 5:9. Ez. 18:19.
¶ Or, *portion.*
y 8:29. Num. 16:26. 2 Chr. 22:7—9. Prov. 13:20. 2 Cor. 6:17.
z 1 K. 21:2.
a Josh. 17:11. Judg. 1:27.
b 23:29,30. Judg. 1:27. 5:19. 1 K. 4: 12.
c 12:21. 14:19,20. 23:30. 2 Chr. 25: 28. 35:24.
d 8:16,24,25. 2 Chr. 22:1,2.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 11—29. Every man should well consider, to what work the Lord calls him, and in what manner and for what ends he ought to do it. His *special* commission justifies the severest executions of his enemies; but our *general* instructions to do good, and to bless, and to overcome evil with good, point out to us more delightful services, in which we should thankfully abound from day to day.—The Lord often secretly disposes men to concur in his designs, in a manner contrary to their former conduct, and to all human probabilities: and then such events, as would otherwise have been impracticable, are speedily and easily accomplished: and, to ask advice, is often the readiest way of obtaining concurrence and assistance.—Notorious sinners entail judgment on their posterity unto the third and fourth generation, especially when these walk in the steps of their progenitors.—The circumstances of temporal judgment are, sometimes, remarkably calculated to call to remembrance the crimes for which they are inflicted: so that the most superficial observers must perceive the justice of God in them, and acknowledge that the Scriptures are fulfilled. SCOTT.

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travelled with as much celerity as he could.—The original word is exactly rendered in the margin, *in madness*; being from the same root as that above translated, *mad fellow*. (11) SCOTT.

Verse 22.

Idolatry is in scripture called *whoredom*; and, when committed by the professed people of God, *adultery*, to denote the Lord's abhorrence of it. Jezebel's idolatries had been manifold and long continued; and, as some think, attended by prostitution, according to the shameless practices of the Gentiles in their worship: of Jezebel's personal character in this respect nothing further is recorded. (*Rev.* 2: 20—23. 14:8. 17:1, 2.) The words, *witchcrafts*, may allude to the fascinating artifices that harlots use to allure men to wickedness, by which her various methods of seducing the Israelites to idolatry seem to be intended. For this purpose she doubtless employed promises, presents, caresses, and flatteries; and on the other hand, frowns, threats, and persecutions; by which great multitudes were induced to conform to her religion, and join in her spiritual whoredom. [The phrase comprehends every deception and abuse, practised, by philtres, or love-potions, medicaments, drugs, and poisons. *Hewlett.*] As Jehu had been long unsuspected, in the court of Ahab and his sons, he probably had never before in any way protested against the worship of Baal.—Jehoram was answerable for Jezebel's crimes, because he countenanced and imitated them, instead of using his authority to repress them. (1 *K.* 15:10—13.) ID.

Verse 24.

Drew a bow with his full strength.] Two methods of shooting with the bow are depicted on ancient Egyptian monuments. In one, the left hand (having a guard, on the wrist, and a groove, for the arrow to slide in, on the fore-finger) grasps the bow, which is held vertically; the end of the arrow is held upon the string, between the thumb and fore-finger of the right hand, and the string is thus drawn to the right ear. This appears to be the method described in the text: in which our version follows the *Arabic* alone. In another method, depicted as above, the end of the arrow is placed between the first two fingers of the right hand, upon the string, and thus drawn to the breast only; (the Indians of N. America still use both of these methods;) and a third in which the bow is held horizontally. A cut is given from *Hyde*, at Isa. 13: 17, 18. of a *darik*, on which is stamped the figure of a Persian king, who has just discharged a bow *with his full strength*. ED.

Verses 25, 26.

The dogs, in some sense, licked the blood of Ahab, as flowing from the wounds of his son. (1 *K.* 21:17—19.)—The words of the prophets were called *burdens*, as predicting a heavy burden of misery to the guilty party, which he could neither endure nor remove. (*M. R.* t.) Probably, Jehu had seldom reflected on Elisha's words during the intervening years, till these events brought the substance of them fresh to his recollection. SCOTT.

Rode together. (25) Ahab's 'guard were wont to ride in pairs, two and two; and Jehu and Bidkar rode at that time together, and heard Elijah's words.' *Bp. Patrick.* ID.

The blood of his sons. (26) This evidently implies that Naboth's sons were put to death along with him: [openly, or by secret practices:] for to suppose, that the words only mean that they were deprived of their estate, and so impoverished, and as it were starved, is altogether unreasonable. (1 *K.* 21:8—14.) ID. 'The charge being high treason, the whole family were probably involved in it.' HEWLETT.

Verses 27, 28.

Ahaziah was Ahab's grandson by Athaliah; and being also an idolater, he was within Jehu's commission. So that, being found with Jehoram, he shared his punishment; though, as son to pious Jehoshaphat, he was allowed an honorable burial. The circumstances elsewhere recorded concerning his death, render it probable, that he was not slain, till Jehu had inflicted vengeance on Jezebel at Jezreel. (30—37. 2 *Chr.* 22:7—9.) SCOTT.

Garden-house. (27) It seems, Ahab, notwithstanding Elijah's awful message to him, and his external humiliation, proceeded with his plan of forming Naboth's vineyard, or part of it, into a garden of herbs; and this house is supposed to have been built on it, for the accommodation of those who kept it. (1 *K.* 21:1, 2, 27—29.)—*Died there.*] Ahaziah was taken at Megiddo, and brought to Jehu, who slew him, probably at Jezreel. But he died with the others of the house of Ahab, which is supposed to be here meant. ID.

Verse 29.

Jehoram began to reign over Judah, in the 5th year of Jehoram king

30 ¶ And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, [*] Jezebel heard *of it*, and she [*] painted her face, and [f] tired her head, and looked out at a window.

31 And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, *Had* [g] Zimri [h] peace, who slew his master?

32 And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, [i] Who *is* on my side? who? And there looked out to him two *or* three † eunuchs.

33 And he said, [k] Throw her down. So they threw her down: and *some* of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses; [l] and he trode her under foot.

34 And when he was come in, [m] he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now [n] this cursed *woman*, and bury her: for [o] she *is* a king's daughter.

35 And they went to bury her: [p] but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands.

36 Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said [q] This *is* the word of the LORD, which he spake ‡ by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel:

37 And [r] the carcass of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; *so* that they shall not say, This *is* Jezebel.

[*Practical Observations.*]

long-threatened day of reckoning was now come, and cried out, '*There is treachery, O Ahaziah;* Jehu is our enemy, and it is time for us to shift for our safety.' Both fled, and,

(1.) Joram king of Israel was slain presently, *v.* 24. It was one of God's arrows which He *has ordained against the persecutor*, Ps. 7: 13. Joram died a criminal, under sentence of the law, which Jehu, the executioner, pursues in the disposal of the dead body. Naboth's vineyard was hard by; this put him in mind of the doom Elijah passed on Ahab, *v.* 25, 26. and that very piece of ground which he, with so much pride and pleasure, had made himself master of, at the expense of the guilt of innocent blood, now became the theatre on which his son's dead body lay exposed, a spectacle to the world. *The Lord is known by the judgment He executeth.* Higgaion. Selah.

(2.) Ahaziah was pursued, and soon slain not far off, *v.* 27, 28. Though now in Joram's company, he had not been slain, but that he was joined with the house of Ahab both in affinity and in iniquity; he was one of them; so he had made himself by his sins, therefore he must fare as they fare.

V. 30—37. The greatest delinquent in the house of Ahab, was Jezebel: she introduced Baal; slew the Lord's prophets; contrived the murder of Naboth; stirred up her husband first, and then her sons, to do wickedly; a *cursed woman*, (*v.* 34.) a curse to the country, and whom all that wished well to their country, had a curse for: three reigns her reign had lasted, but now, at length, her day is come to fall. We read of a false prophetess in the church of Thyatira, that is compared to Jezebel, and called by her name; (Rev. 2: 20.) her wickedness the same, seducing God's servants to idolatry; a long *space given her to repent*, (*v.* 21.) as to Jezebel; and a fearful ruin brought on her, at last, (*v.* 22, 23.) as here. Jezebel's destruction may be looked upon as typical of the destruction of idolaters and persecutors, especially that great harlot, that mother of harlots, that hath made herself *drunk with the blood of saints*, and the nations *drunk with the wine of her fornications*, when God shall put it into the heart of the kings of the earth to hate her, Rev. 17: 5, 6, 16. Now here we have,

1. Jezebel daring the judgment. She posted herself in a window at the entering of the gate, to affront Jehu, and set him at defiance. See how a heart, hardened against God, will brave it out to the last, *run upon Him, even upon his neck*, Job 15: 26. But never did any thus harden their hearts against Him, and prosper.

(1.) Instead of humbling herself, and mourning for her son, she *painted her face, and tired her head*, that she might appear like herself, that is, (as she thought,) great and majestic, hoping thereby to daunt Jehu, and stop his career. There is not a surer presage of ruin, than an unhumbled heart under humbling providences. Let painted faces look in Jezebel's glass, and see how they like themselves.

(2.) Instead of trembling before Jehu, the instrument of God's vengeance, she thinks to make him tremble with that threatening question, *Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?* We are very apt, when in trouble, to break out into a passion against the instruments of our trouble, when we ought to be submissive to God, and angry at ourselves only. Nor is it any new thing for those that are doing God's work, to be looked upon as out of the way of peace. She pleased herself with the thought, that what Jehu was now doing, would certainly end in his own ruin. Active reformers, faithful reprovers, are threatened with trouble; but let them be in nothing terrified, Philip. 1: 28. Her precedent, *Zimri*, was not parallel, or it had been proper enough to give him this memorandum: the judgments of God on those that have gone before us in any sinful way, should warn us against treading in their steps. But it was misapplied: Zimri had no warrant for what he did, but was incited merely by ambition and cruelty; whereas Jehu had, and did it by order from Heaven, which would bear him out. In comparing persons and things, we must carefully distinguish between the precious and the vile, and take heed, lest from the fate of sinful we read the doom of useful men.

2. Jehu looked up to the window, not daunted at the menaces of her impudent but impotent rage, and cried, *Who is on my side? Who?* *v.* 32. Called to do God's work, in reforming the land, and punishing those that had debauched it, he here calls for assistance, Isa. 63: 5. He lifts up a

[s] 1 K. 19:1,2.

[*] Heb. *put her eyes in painting.* Jer. 4:30. Ez. 23:40.
[f] Is. 3:18—24. Ez. 24:17. 1 Tim. 2:9, 10. 1 Pet. 3:3.
[g] 1 K. 16:9—19.
[h] See on 18—22.
[i] Ex. 32:26. 1 Chr. 12:18. 2 Chr. 11: 19. Ps. 118:6. 124:1,2.
† Or, *chamberlains.* Esth. 1:10. 2:15, 21. Acts 12:20.
[k] See on 1 K. 21:11.
[l] 26. 7:20. Is. 25:10. Lam. 1:15. Mic. 7:10. Mal. 4:3. Matt. 5:13. Heb. 10:29.
[m] 1 K. 18:41. Esth. 3:15. Am. 6:4.
[n] 1 K. 21:25. Prov. 10:7. Is. 65:15. Matt. 25:41.
[o] 1 K. 16:31.
[p] Job 31:3. Acts 12:23.
[q] See on 1 K. 21:23.
‡ Heb. *by the hand of.* 14:25. Lev. 8: 36. 2 Sam. 12:25.
[r] Ps. 83:10. Ec. 6:3. Is. 14:18—20. Jer. 8:2. 16:4. 22:19. 36:30. Ez. 32: 28—30.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 30—37. Some haughty transgressors have so long prospered in their crimes, and domineered over all around them, that they suppose they can outbrave all opposition, and defy even the justice of God Himself. Their hearts grow more hardened and insolent, when they are evidently upon the brink of destruction: and an unhumbled spirit, in alarming and humiliating circumstances, is a distinguishing mark of those, who 'are appointed unto wrath.'—Persons of royal extraction or authority, naturally annex the idea of *sacred* to their distinctions; yet they often pay no regard to the *sacred* service and honour of the King of kings: traitors are justly execrated, and seldom prosper: but the Lord often uses them as the instruments of his righteous vengeance against ungodly princes.—Let proud tyrants and oppressors study this chapter with fear and trembling: the loftiest will be brought low, and every one of them, in his turn, must give an account unto God, with whom 'is no respect of persons.' The anguish of Jezebel's death, and the disgrace of her mangled limbs, faintly shadow forth the misery and contempt, which at and after death will be the portion of those, who have been 'the terror of the mighty in the land of the living;' whose very memory shall rot in infamy. SCOTT.

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of Israel; it is probable, in the very beginning of it: and he died, and was succeeded by Ahaziah, in the 11th or 12th year of Jehoram; i. e. the close of the 11th, or beginning of the 12th. This space is called 8 *years*, as comprising 6 whole years, and a portion of 2 others, computed according to the reigns of the kings of Judah. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verses 30—37.

She used the method, customary in the east, of giving herself a majestic appearance, by a kind of paint which dilates the eye-brows, and makes the eyes look large and bright. [The method is, to put stibium, or antimony, or black-lead, round the edge of the eye-lid, just beneath the lashes, with a brush, and to curve the eye-brows into a semi-circle, by painting and trimming them: thus making the eyes look big, which, says *Grotius*, 'in some countries was thought amiable.' Thus Juno was called the ox-eyed Juno, &c. Perhaps she would tempt him with her beauty. So *Hewlett.* ED.] Zimri had destroyed the house of Baasha, and had soon after fallen before Omri the father of Ahab: 1 *K.* 16:8—19.—'See how suddenly courtiers change with the fortune of their master.' *Bp. Patrick.*—'This cursed woman,' the daughter of a king, was also the wife of a king, the mother of two kings, the mother-in-law of a king, and the grandmother of a king, all in her own life! So vain are all earthly honors and distinctions! SCOTT.

(30.) *Window.*] *Hallon.* Doubtless a balconied and latticed window, one only of which in all eastern houses looks into the street, note 2 Sam. 11:9. and cuts, 2 K. 1:2. and Cant. 8:10. 'It is during the celebration only of some Zeenah, as they call a public festival, that these houses, and their latticed windows, or balconies, are left open. For this being a time of great liberty, revelling and extravagance, each family is ambitious of adorning both the inside and the outside of their houses with the richest furniture; whilst crowds of both sexes, dressed out in their best apparel, and laying aside all modesty and restraint, go in and out where they please. The account of Jezebel gives us a lively idea of an eastern lady at one of these zeenahs, or solemnities. *Shaw*, in *Calm.* by *Rob.* art. HOUSE which see. ED.

CHAP. X.

Jehu, by letters to the elders, causes Ahab's seventy sons to be slain at Samaria, and their heads to be brought to Jezreel, 1—7. He shows this to be a fulfilment of Elijah's prophecy, and destroys all Ahab's kindred in Jezreel, 8—11. In his way to Samaria he slays forty-two of Ahaziah's brethren, 12—14. Attended by Jehonadab, he slays all that remained to Ahab in Samaria, 15—17. He assembles all the worshippers of Baal by stratagem; puts them to death, and breaks down Baal's images and temple, 18—28. He follows the sins of Jeroboam; yet the kingdom to the fourth generation is promised him, for destroying the house of Ahab, 29—31. Hazael smites Israel, 32, 33. Jehu dies, and Jehoahaz succeeds him, 34—36.

AND Ahab had [a] seventy sons [b] in Samaria. And Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto [c] the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to [*] them that brought up Ahab's *children*, saying,

2 Now [d] as soon as this letter cometh to you, seeing your master's sons *are* with you, and *there are* with you chariots and horses, a fenced city also, and armor;

3 [e] Look even out the best and meetest of your master's sons, and set *him* on his father's throne, and [f] fight for your master's house.

4 But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, [g] Behold, two kings stood not before him: [h] how then shall we stand?

5 And he that *was* over the house, and he that *was* over the city, the elders also, and the bringers up *of the children*, sent to Jehu, saying, [i] We *are* thy servants, and will do all that thou shalt bid us; we will not make any king: do thou *that which is* good in thine eyes.

6 Then he wrote a letter the second time to them, saying, If ye *be* † mine, and *if* ye will hearken unto my voice, [k] take ye the heads of the men [l] your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by to-morrow this time. Now the king's sons *being* seventy persons, *were* with the great men of the city, which brought them up.

7 And it came to pass, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons, and [m] slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent him *them* to Jezreel.

8 And [n] there came a messenger, and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons. And he said, Lay ye them in two heaps, at the entering in of the gate, [o] until the morning.

9 And it came to pass in the morning, that he went out, and stood, and said to all the people, [p] Ye *be* righteous: behold, [q] I conspired against my master and slew him; but who slew all these?

10 Know now, that there shall [r] fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the LORD, which the LORD spake concerning the house of Ahab: for [s] the LORD hath done *that* which he spake ‡ by his servant Elijah.

11 So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his § kinsfolks, and [t] his priests, until [u] he left him none remaining.

12 ¶ And he arose and departed, and came to Samaria. *And* as he *was* at the ‖ shearing house in the way,

a Judg. 8:30. 10:4. 12:14.
b 5:3. 1 K. 13:32. 16:28. 2 Chr. 22:9.
c See on Deut. 16:18.—1 K. 21:8—14.
* Heb. *nourishers.*
d See on 5:6.
e Deut. 17:14,15. 1 Sam. 10:24. 11:15. 2 Sam. 2:8,9. 1 K. 1:24,25. 12:20.
f 2 Sam. 2:12—17. 1 K. 12:21. John 18: 36.
g 9:24,27.
h Is. 27:4. Jer. 49:19. Nah. 1:6. Luke 14:31.
i 18:14. Josh. 9:11,24,25. 1 K. 20:4. Jer. 27:7,8,17. John 12:26.
† Heb. *for me.*—See on 9:32.—Matt. 12: 30. Luke 9:50.
k Num. 25:4.—See on 1 K. 21:8—11.
l Deut. 5:9. Josh. 7:24,25. Job 21:19. Is. 14:21,22. Rev. 2:20—23.
m 9. 11:1. 1 K. 21:21. 2 Chr. 21:4. Matt. 14:3—11.
n 2 Sam. 11:18—21. 1 K. 21:14. Mark 6:28.
o Deut. 21:23.
p 1 Sam. 12:3. Is. 5:3.
q See on 9:14—24.—Hos. 1:4.
r 1 Sam. 3:19. 15:29. Jer. 44:28,29. Zech. 1:6. Mark 13:31.
s See on 9:7—10. 1 K. 21:21—24,29.
‡ Heb. *by the hand of.* 9:36. *marg.*
§ Or, *acquaintance.*
t 23:20. 1 K. 18:19,40. 22:6. Rev. 19: 20. 20:10.
u Josh. 10:30. 11:8. 1 K. 14:10. 15: 29. 16:11. 21:22. Job 18:19. Ps. 109:13. Is. 14:21,22.
‖ Heb. *house of shepherds binding sheep.*

NOTES.

CHAP. X. V. 1—7. Jehu seems to have been aware of their base disposition. He was commissioned to destroy all the house of Ahab, and he was not at all scrupulous about the means of doing it.—The elders probably expected a reward from Jehu; but they seem to have been slain among the other adherents of Ahab's family. (17)—Most of these princes must have been grown men, though some might be minors or children. SCOTT.

(1.) *Seventy sons.*] 'From polygamy numerous sons are still common in the E. Artaxerxes Mnemon, king of Persia, had by his 360 concubines, 115 sons, and 3 by his queen.' *Plutarch.* 'Muley Abdalleh, emperor of Morocco in 1720, had by his four wives, and the many thousand women in his seraglio, during his long reign, 700 sons.' *Stewart.* Prof. *Parrot*, in his journal of a tour to the top of Ararat, (16,254 Paris ft. high,) in 1829, says, 'at Wladikaukas we met with the Persian prince Chosref-Mirza, one of the 380 male children and grand-children of the Kadschar Feth-Ali, the reigning Shah of Persia, who already in 1826 had 81 sons and 53 daughters, and who is not the first one who has had 20 members added to his family in less than one week.' ED.

Jezreel.] Sept. 'Samaria.' *Vulg.* 'the city.' Samaria is most likely the true reading. *Gill*, *Hewlett*, Dr. *A. Clarke*, *Boothr.* ED.

Verse 8.

In two heaps.] In ancient Egypt (see the monuments, and Gen) beheading of many at once was practised, and in modern times, in Persia, Turkey, &c. where the heads have been piled up like pyramids, or exhibited on the public gates. See *Burder*, *Hanway*, &c. ID.

Verse 11.

Priests.] These seem to have been the priests, or prophets, of Baal and other idols, who had eaten at Jezebel's table, and who presided over all the others. As they were strongly attached to Ahab's family, Jehu may be supposed to have put them to death from reasons of state, rather than from zeal against idolatry. SCOTT.

Verse 12.

Shearing house.] 'Lit. Tie-house, so called because the shepherds tied the legs of the sheep in shearing them.' *Hewlett*, *Gill.* The Egyptians, in slaughtering their animals, bound the 4 legs fast in one knot, beneath the belly. ED.

13 Jehu * met with [x] the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, Who *are* ye? And they answered, We *are* the brethren of Ahaziah; and we go down to † salute the children of the king, and the children of the queen.

14 And he said, [y] Take them alive. And they took them alive, and slew them at the pit of the shearing house, *even* two and forty men; [z] neither left he any of them.

[*Practical Observations.*]

15 ¶ And when he was departed thence, he ‡ lighted on [a] Jehonadab the son of [b] Rechab *coming* to meet him: and he § saluted him, and said to him, [c] Is thine heart right, as my heart *is* with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, [d] give *me* thine hand. And he gave *him* his hand; and [e] he took him up to him into the chariot.

16 And he said, [f] Come with me, and see my zeal for the LORD. So they made him ride in his chariot.

* Heb. *found.*
x 8:24,29. 9:21—27. 2 Chr. 21:17. 22:1—10.
† Heb. *the peace of.*
y 6,10,11. 1 K. 20:18.
z 8:18. 11:1. 2 Chr. 22:10.
‡ Heb. *found.* 13. 9:21. *margins.*
a Jer. 35:6,8,14—19. *Jonadab.*
b 1 Chr. 2:55.
§ Heb. *blessed.*—See on Gen. 31:55. 47:7,10.
c 1 Chr. 12:17,18. John 21:15—17. Gal. 4:12.
d Ezra 10:19. Ez. 17:18. Gal. 2:9.
e Acts 8:31.
f 31. 9:7—9. Num. 23:4. 24:13—16. 1 K. 19:10,14,17. Prov. 27:2. Matt. 6:2. Rom. 10:2.

their sense and their courage, and deserve to be upbraided with it.

2. Hereby he gained from them a submission, *v.* 4. They saw it was to no purpose to contend with him, and therefore it was their interest to submit. With much more reason may we thus argue ourselves into a subjection to the great God.

3. This is improved so far, as to make them the executioners of those whom they had the tuition of, *v.* 6. One would think he could not expect they should do it. Could they betray such a trust? Yet, so low did they stoop, in their adoration of the rising sun, that they did it, *v.* 7. Learn hence not to trust in a friend, nor to confide in a guide, not governed by conscience. One can scarcely expect that he who has been false to his God, should ever be faithful to his prince. But observe God's righteousness in their unrighteousness. These elders had been wickedly obsequious to Jezebel's order for the murder of Naboth, 1 K. 21: 11. now the same base spirit makes them as pliable to Jehu, and as ready to obey his orders for the murder of Ahab's sons. Let none aim at an arbitrary power, lest they be found rolling a stone which, some time or other, will return upon them. Rulers that make their people slaves, take the readiest way to make them rebels; by forcing men's consciences, as Jezebel did, they lose their hold of them.

When the separated heads were presented, he slily upbraided them, yet owned the hand of God in it. The heads were laid in two heaps, at the gate, the proper place of judgment. There he acquitted the people before God and the world, (*v.* 9. *Ye be righteous,*) and, by what the rulers of Samaria had now done, comparatively acquitted himself. It is common for those who have done something too bad, to endeavor the mitigation of their own reproach, by drawing others in to do something worse. But, he resolves all into the righteous judgment of God, *v.* 10. God is not the author of any man's sin, but even by that which men do from bad principles, God serves his own purposes, and glorifies his own name; and is righteous in that wherein men are unrighteous. When the Assyrian is made the *rod of God's anger*, and the instrument of his justice, *he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so*, Isa. 10: 7.

II. He proceeded to destroy all that remained of the house of Ahab, whatever their relation to him, officers of his household, ministers of state, and those in command under him, called here his *great men*, *v.* 11. all his kinsfolk and acquaintance, who had been partners with him in his wickedness, and his priests, or domestic chaplains, whom he employed in his idolatrous services, and who strengthened his hand, that he should not turn from his evil way. Having done this in Jezreel, he did the same in Samaria, *v.* 17. This was bloody work, and is not now, in any case, to be drawn into a precedent. Perhaps such terrible destructions as these, were intended as types of the final destruction of all the ungodly. God has a sword, bathed in heaven, which will come down on the people of his curse, and be *filled with blood*, Isa. 34: 5, 6. Then *his eye will not spare, neither will He pity.*

III. Providence bringing the brethren of Ahaziah in his way, as he was going on with this execution, he slew them likewise, *v.* 12—14. The brethren of Ahaziah were slain by the Arabians, (2 Chr. 22: 1.) but these were the sons of his brethren, as it is there explained; (*v* 8.) and they are said to be princes of Judah, and to minister to Ahaziah. Several things concurred to make them obnoxious to vengeance. 1. They were branches of Ahab's house, being descended from Athaliah, therefore fell within his commission. 2. They were tainted with the wickedness of the house of Ahab. 3. They were now going to make their court to the princes of the house of Ahab, to *salute the children of the king and the queen*, Joram and Jezebel, which showed they were linked to them in affection as well as in affinity. These princes, 42 in number, being appointed as sheep for the sacrifice, were slain with solemnity, *at the pit of the shearing-house.*

V. 15—28. Jehu, pushing on his work, is here,

I. Courting the friendship of a good man, *Jehonadab the son of Rechab, v.* 15, 16. This Jehonadab, though mortified to the world, and meddling little with the business of it, (as appears by his charge to his posterity, which they religiously observed 300 years after, not to drink wine, nor dwell in cities, Jer. 35: 6, &c.) yet, on this occasion, went to meet Jehu, that he might encourage him in the work to which God had called him. The countenance of good men is a thing which great men, if they be wise, will value, and value themselves by. David prayed, *Let those that fear Thee turn to me*, Ps. 119: 79.

1. Jehu saluted him; *blessed him*, so the word is; paid him the respect, and showed him the goodwill, owing to so great an example of serious godliness.

2. Jehonadab assured him he was sincere in his interest, and a hearty well-wisher to his cause. Jehu professed that *his heart was right with him;* that he had a true affection for his person, and a veneration for the crown of his Nazariteship, and desired to know whether he had the same affection for him, and satisfaction in that crown of royal dignity which God had put on his head, *Is thine heart right?* A question we should often put to ourselves. Jehonadab gave him his word, *It is*, and gave him his hand as a pledge of his heart,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—14. How soon are the most flourishing families and kingdoms desolated, when God arises to execute his judgments! —Such as bequeath his blessing to their children, in answer to their prayers, and as a gracious recompense of their faith and charity, provide in a far better manner for them, than those who leave estates to their descendants, burdened with the indignation of the Lord, for their injustice, oppression, and impiety.—Nothing, except faith, fear of God, love to his name, and the hope of eternal life, can give a decided victory over all temptations; and enable us to obey the Lord, and venture all consequences in his service.—If we call ourselves the servants of earthly potentates, they expect that our obedience to their mandates should evince the sincerity of our professions: and if we are the Lord's, we must show that we are devoted to Him by doing his will; and He never did, nor can, command any thing unjust or unreasonable.—When we look back on our deceased relatives, or forward to our own dissolution: when we reflect on the sufferings we or ours endure or fear, or on those miseries which render the earth like one great hospital, slaughter-house, and burying ground; when we consider the innumerable millions of human bodies, which have been consigned to the tomb, and are reverted to the dust; and the immense multitudes daily following: yea, when our believing thoughts make excursions into the invisible world, and survey the miseries of fallen angels, and departed souls consigned to the place of torment: or when we look forward to the resurrection and the final judgment, and view the innumerable millions of the wicked, appalled with horror and despair, attending to the awful sentence, 'Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil, and his angels:' in short, when the aggregate of all the misery in the whole creation, through eternal ages, has been considered, and the question occurs, 'Who slew all these?' the answer will be, SIN! TRANSGRESSION OF GOD'S LAW has made all this havoc, and introduced all this misery into his most perfect creation; and, worse than all this, SIN has crucified the LORD OF GLORY. Shall we then lodge this viper in our bosom, and madly seek for happiness from the cause of all possible misery? Rather we should abhor and dread it with that complete detestation, which would render its distant approach more formidable to us than any temporal pain or affliction imaginable. SCOTT.

Verses 13, 14.

All the sons of Jehoram, the father of Ahaziah, had been slain by the Philistines, during the life of Jehoram; (*Notes*, 2 *Chr.* 21:16—20. 22:1.) but these persons seem to have been the sons of Ahaziah's brethren, or his nephews. They belonged however to the family of Ahab, and fell within Jehu's commission. (*M. R.* x.) SCOTT.

Verses 15, 16.

(*Notes, Jer.* 35.) (*M. R.*) Some think, that Jehonadab first *blessed* Jehu, as Jacob had blessed Pharaoh; and that then Jehu addressed him. (*Note, Gen.* 47:7.) Had Jehu intended effectually to reform religion, he would doubtless have sent for Elisha, to counsel him and concur with him; and his neglect, in that particular, was no favorable

17 And when he came to Samaria, he slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria, [g] till he had destroyed him, [h] according to the saying of the LORD, which he spake to Elijah.

18 And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, [i] Ahab served Baal a little; *but* [k] Jehu shall serve him much.

19 Now therefore call unto me [l] all the prophets of Baal, [m] all his servants, and [n] all his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice *to do* to Baal; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live. [o] But Jehu did *it* in subtlety, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal.

20 And Jehu said, [*] Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal. And they proclaimed *it*.

21 And Jehu sent through all Israel: and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not. [p] And they came into [q] the house of Baal; and the house of Baal [r] was [†] full from one end to another.

22 And he said unto him that *was* over the vestry, Bring forth [s] vestments for all the worshippers of Baal. And he brought them forth vestments.

23 And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab, into the house of Baal, and said unto the worshippers of Baal, Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of the LORD, but the worshippers of Baal only.

24 And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt-offerings, Jehu appointed fourscore men without, and said, [t] *If* any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, *he that letteth him go*, his life *shall be* for the life of him.

25 And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt-offering, that Jehu said to the guard, and to the captains, [u] Go in, *and* slay them; [v] let none come forth. And they smote them with the [‡] edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast *them* out, and went to the city of the house of Baal.

26 And they brought forth the [§] images out of the house of Baal, [x] and burned them.

27 And they [y] brake down the image of Baal, and brake down the house of Baal, and made it [z] a draught-house unto this day.

g See on 11. 9:8.—Ps. 109:8,9. Mal. 4:1.
h See on 10. 9:25,26. 1 K. 21:21.
i 3:2. 1 K. 16:31,32. 18:19,22,40.
k Job 13:7. Rom. 3:8. Phil. 4:8.
l 3:13. 1 K. 22:6.
m 21.
n 11.
o See on 18.—2 Cor. 4:2. 11:3,13—15. 12:16—18. 1 Thes. 2:3.
* Heb. *Sanctify.* 1 K. 18:19,20. 21:12. Joel 1:14.
p Joel 3:2,11—14. Rev. 16:16.
q 1 K. 16:32.
r Judg. 16:27.
† Or, so *full* that they stood *mouth to mouth.*
s Ex. 28:2. Matt. 22:11,12.
t 1 K. 20:30—42.
u Ez. 9:5,6.
v Deut. 13:9—11. Ez. 22:21,22. Rev. 16:6,7.
‡ Heb. *mouth.*
§ Heb. *statues.* 1 K. 14:23. *marg.*
x 18:18. 2 Sam. 5:21.
y 18:4. 23:7—14. Lev. 26:30. Deut. 7:5,25. 1 K. 16:32. 2 Chr. 34:3—7.
z Ezra 6:11. Dan. 2:5. 3:29.

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indication of his designs. He seems to have ostentatiously boasted of his 'zeal for the LORD,' and wanted to have it noticed: (*Notes, Num.* 24: 16. *Prov.* 27: 2.) but in reality he was influenced by carnal policy, united with a temporary conviction, and not by genuine, pious zeal. SCOTT.

(15.) *Harris* considers this *giving of the hand*, not as an expression of private friendship, but as the solemn acknowledgment of him as king; 'for this has been usually done, as a token of subjection, at the election of rulers among the Arabs, of whose tribes was Jehonadab.' ED.

Verses 18—20.

The kings of Israel, who had seized the throne by conspiring against their predecessors, had commonly imitated or exceeded their idolatry; and this gave plausibility to Jehu's stratagem: but it was a measure which cannot be justified, or at all excused. It would have been sufficient, if he had destroyed the temples and images of Baal, and put to death the known abettors and ringleaders of his worship, and every one who should afterwards attempt to revive it. But to draw them into a snare, by a direct falsehood, and to tempt them to commit idolatry, that he might slay them in the very act, was 'to do evil, that good might come;' and resembled the abhorred maxim of those who maintain, that faith is not to be kept with heretics. (*Josh.* 9:19, 20. 2 *Sam.* 13:22—29. *Rom.* 3:5—8.) SCOTT.

Verse 21.

Numbers doubtless had been drawn in to bow the knee to Baal, in order to obtain the favor, or escape the displeasure of their rulers, who did not cordially approve of that idolatry, though indifferent about the worship of JEHOVAH. And these would keep away till Jehu's intentions were more manifest: but the *zealous* idolaters were judicially infatuated, and attended. Their number must have been small, compared with the state of things in the first days of Elijah: but Jehoram was not so zealous for the worship of Baal, as Ahab had been; and the incessant labors of Elisha, and the sons of the prophets, must have produced very great effects.—Some expositors, however, think that by the *servants* of Baal, (as in the original,) his worshippers in general are not meant, but the persons who ministered to the prophets and priests of Baal, as the Levites and Nethinims did to the sons of Aaron. ID.

Verses 21—27.

The house of Baal.] *Wilkinson* remarks, of the Egyptian temples of this and more ancient ages, 'Ponderous blocks [sometimes 40 or more ft. in length] formed those walls, which, as a *temple*, excited the people's religious awe,—as an impregnable fortress [comp. Judg. 9:46. 2 K. 11:11.], their submission; and their national vanity was flattered by the subjects and execution of the sculptures, and the grandeur of the monuments themselves.' The palace of the king was also connected with the temple, [comp. 2 K. 11:13, 16, 19. &c.] and 'the priests were, after the kings, the principal persons in the country; managed the affairs of state, filled all the learned professions, and were counsellors of the sovereign; who, if not of the military order, could be elected only from their order, (*Plut.* and *Plato,*) of which, in all cases, as king, it was absolute'y necessary he should become a member, and, like the caliphs, he was head of church and state. He bound himself by the rules established by their conclave, as well in the worship of the deities, to whom it was his office to sacrifice in the temples, (comp. Ezek. 45:17. 1 Sam. 13:9. 1 K. 12:31—33. &c.) as in his general mode of living; and his compliance with their regulations, was repaid by the external and public respect they manifested for his person.' Comp. Jeroboam's institutions, &c. The Egyptians, too, had their *solemn assemblies*, (v. 20.), 'or panegyrics,' &c. Their people were inspired with religious awe by 'the majesty of giant forms,' (the statue, called of 'Memnon,' was 23 ft. across the shoulders!) such probably was 'the image of Baal.' v.

28 Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.

29 ¶ Howbeit *from* [a] the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who [b] made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, *to wit*, [c] the golden calves that *were* [d] in Beth-el, and that *were* in Dan.

30 And the LORD said unto Jehu, [e] Because thou hast done well in executing *that which is* right in mine eyes, *and* hast done unto the house of Ahab [f] according to all that *was* in mine heart, [g] thy children of the fourth *generation* shall sit on the throne of Israel.

31 But Jehu * took [h] no heed to [i] walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: *for* [k] he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.

32 ¶ In those days the LORD began to † cut Israel short: and [m] Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel;

B. C. 860. 33 From Jordan ‡ eastward, all [n] the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which *is* by the river Arnon, § even Gilead and Bashan.

34 Now [o] the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

35 And Jehu [p] slept with his fathers: and they buried him in Samaria. And [q] Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead.

B. C. 856. 36 And ‖ the time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria, *was* twenty and eight years.

[*Practical Observations.*]

were vestments for all Baal's worshippers.

2. He takes care that none of the servants of the Lord should be among them, *v.* 23. This they took as a provision to preserve the worship of Baal from being profaned by strangers: but it was a wonder, they did not, by this, see themselves brought into a snare, and discern a design on them. They that suffer themselves to be deceived by Baal, (as all idolaters were by their idols,) no marvel if they are deceived by Jehu to their destruction.

3. He gives order for the cutting of them all off, and Jehonadab joined with him therein, *v.* 23. When a strict search was made, lest some of the servants of God should, either for company or curiosity, be got among them, and when 80 men were set to guard all the avenues to Baal's temple, that none might escape, (*v.* 24.) then the guards were sent in, to put them all to the sword, and to *mingle their blood with their sacrifices*, in just revenge, as they themselves had sometimes done, when they *cut themselves with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out*, 1 K. 18: 28. This, though seemingly barbarous, was, considering the nature of their crime, really righteous.

4. The idolaters being thus destroyed, the idolatry itself is utterly abolished. The buildings about the house of Baal, (so many, and so stately, that they are here called a *city*,) where Baal's priests and their families lived, were destroyed: all the little images, statues, pictures, or shrines, which beautified Baal's temple, with the great image of Baal himself, were brought out and burnt, (*v.* 26, 27.) and the temple of Baal broken down, and made a dunghill, the common sink, or sewer, of the city, that the remembrance of it might be blotted out, or made infamous. Thus was the worship of Baal quite destroyed, at least, for the present, out of Israel, though it had once prevailed so far, that there were but 7000 of all the thousands of Israel, that had not bowed the knee to Baal, and those concealed. Thus will God, sooner or later, triumph.

V. 29—36. Here is all the account of the reign of Jehu, though it continued 28 years. Its progress answered not to the glory of its beginning. We have here,

I. God's approbation of what Jehu had done. Many, it is probable, censured him as treacherous and barbarous; and it is justly questionable, whether he did it from a good principle, and whether he did not take some false steps in the doing of it; yet, (says God,) *Thou hast done well in executing that which was right in mine eyes.* Extirpating of idolaters and idolatry, was a thing right in God's eyes, for it is an iniquity He visits as surely and severely as any other: it was *according to all that was in his heart*, all He desired, all He designed; Jehu went through with his work, and God promised him a reward. His children of the fourth generation from him should *sit upon the throne of Israel.* This was more than what took place in any of the dignities or royal families of that kingdom; of the house of Ahab there were indeed four kings, Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah and Joram, but the last two were brothers, so that it reached but to the third generation, and that whole family continued but about 45 years in all, whereas Jehu's continued in four, beside himself, and, in all, about 120 years. Note, No services done for God shall go unrewarded.

II. Jehu's carelessness in what he was further

a 13:2,11. 14:24. 15:9,18,24,28. 17:22. 1 K. 12:28—30. 13:33,34. 14:16.
b Gen. 20:9. Ex. 32:21. 1 Sam. 2:24. Mark 6:24—26. 1 Cor. 8:9—13. Gal. 2:12,13.
c Ex. 32:4. Hos. 8:5,6. 10:5. 13:2.
d 1 K. 12:29.
e 1 K. 21:29. Ez. 29:18—20. Hos. 1:4.
f 1 Sam. 15:18—24. 1 K. 20:42. 21:22. g 35. 13:10. 14:23. 15:8,12.
* Heb. *observed not.*
h Deut. 4:15,23. 1 K. 2:4. Ps. 39:1. 119:9. Prov. 4:23. Heb. 2:1. 12:15.
i Deut. 5:33. 10:12,13. 2 Chr. 6:16. Neh. 10:29. Ps. 78:10. Ez. 36:27. Dan. 9:10.
k See on 29. 3:3.—1 K. 14:16.
† Heb. *cut off the ends of.*
m 8:12. 13:22. 1 K. 19:17.
‡ Heb. *toward the rising of the sun.*
n Num. 32:33—42. Deut. 3:12—17. Josh. 13:9—12.
§ Or, *even to Gilead, &c.* Am. 1:3,4.
o 12:19. 13:8.—See on 1 K. 11:41. 14: 19,29.
p See on 2 Sam. 7:12. 1 K. 1:21. 2:10. 14:20,31.
q 13:1,7,8.
‖ Heb. *the days* were.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 15—36. Men of eminent godliness should countenance every work of public reformation; but they are frequently too hasty in their concurrence, and too sanguine in their expectations, when those in exalted stations stand forth as the professed friends of religion: and thus they are drawn in, to sanction those wrong measures which they are unable to prevent, to the discredit of the common cause.—When men's professions are very strong, their progress very rapid, and their zeal tarnished with ostentation, or leavened with subtlety and a fickle or fierce demeanor; they may justly be suspected, and need to be watched and admonished by those, who would avoid subsequent painful reflections. Vehemence and severity indeed were in some measure consistent with the awful executions, which a righteous God commanded in these ancient times: yet the manner, in which his orders were performed, might indicate a very improper spirit. Zeal, however, in the cause of God, is worthless, except it be tempered with humility, meekness, kindness, and a peaceable frame of mind: as, furious contentions and bitter recriminations cannot adorn the Gospel, or meet the divine acceptance; for neither the wrath nor the falsehood of man can 'work the righteousness of God.' (*Luke* 9:51—56. *Jam.* 3:13—18.)—Hypocrites betray themselves by their earnestness about one part of religion, and their indifference about others: and generally profitable or plausible sins are spared, while those, which would injure them with their party, are cast off. Yet the church, and the world, may reap advantage from their partial obedience: and God will not remain as it were indebted to them; but will recompense their external services with external rewards, and at the same time visit their sins with deserved punishments. Much more then will He recompense the upright services of his believing people, who may be encouraged by this consideration to abound in his work.

SCOTT.

27. which they are said to 'break down,' implying that it was a work of labor and time to demolish it. *City of the house of Baal.* (25) Ther 'inner sanctuary of the temple of Baal.' *Dathe* and *Boothr.* The *vestments* are spoken of *v.* 22. These, among the Egyptian priests, 'were simple but imposing;' *Herod.* and *Plut.* say, of *linen*, *Pliny* says, of cotton. Comp. the cut of an Egyptian priest, from the monuments. An ample mantle or cloak descends in sweeping folds over the whole. ED.

(24, 25.) (1 *K.* 20:41, 42.) Perhaps, all the servants of Baal were not collected, nor all others separated, till the sacrifices were placed on the altar; and therefore they were permitted to go through with their worship.—We may suppose Jehonadab so much approved the substance of Jehu's service, that he was willing to allow for the informality with which it was performed: otherwise he certainly could not approve of his dissimulation, or his attendance on an idolatrous sacrifice with apparent satisfaction. SCOTT.

(26, 27.) *M. R.*—*A draught-house.* (27) The citizens thenceforth made a practice of carrying all the filth and rubbish of Samaria to that place, in contempt and abhorrence of the idolatry, which had been there committed. (*M. R.* z.) [A similar method of desecration is still practised in the E.] SCOTT.

Verse 28.

After this, the worship of Baal does not appear to have ever been restored in the kingdom of Israel, though other idolatry abounded. ID.

Verses 29—31.

Had Jehu acted from genuine zeal for the honor of God, in destroying the worship of Baal, he would also have put down the worship of the golden calves; that idolatry being as expressly forbidden by the *second*, as the other was by the *first* commandment. So that his religious zeal was partial, politic, and selfish.—The repetition used concerning Jeroboam, 'who made Israel to sin,' emphatically shows the extreme criminality of his conduct in the sight of God, as thus opening the way, and setting the example, for all the idolatries of Israel, till that kingdom was subverted. He was, in some respects, answerable for the whole. ID.

Verses 32—36.

Hazael *smote* but did not desolate: this was afterwards done by the kings of Assyria. (1 *Chr.* 5:25, 26.) ID.

CHAP. XI.

Athaliah murders the seed royal of Judah: but Joash, the infant son of Ahaziah, is preserved by Jehosheba in the temple, 1—3. Jehoiada the high priest, in the seventh year, having taken proper measures, anoints and crowns him, 4—12. Athaliah, pressing into the temple, is seized and slain, 13—16. Jehoiada makes a covenant between the LORD, the king, and the people; and destroys the worship of Baal, 17, 18. Joash reigns in peace, and the people rejoice, 19—21.

AND when [a] Athaliah [b] the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose, [c] and destroyed all the [*] seed royal.

2 But [d] Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took [f] Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons *which were* slain; and [g] they hid him, *even* him and his nurse, [h] in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain.

3 And he was with her hid in the house of the LORD six years. [i] And Athaliah did reign over the land.

B. C. 878. 4 And [k] the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the [l] rulers over hundreds, with [m] the captains and the guard, and brought them to him into the house of the LORD, and [n] made a covenant with them, and [o] took an oath of them in the house of the LORD, and showed them the king's son.

5 And he commanded them, saying, This *is* the thing that ye shall do: a third part of you [p] that enter in on the sabbath, shall even be keepers of [q] the watch of the king's house;

6 And a third part *shall be* at [r] the gate of Sur; and a third part at the gate behind the guard: so shall ye keep the watch of the house, that it be not broken down.

7 And two parts of all they that go forth on the sabbath, even they shall keep the watch of the house of the LORD about the king.

8 And ye shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand: and he that cometh within the ranges, let him be slain: and be ye with the king as he goeth out and as he cometh in.

9 And the captains over the hundreds did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest commanded: and they took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that should go out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest.

10 And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give king David's spears and shields, that were in the temple of the LORD.

11 And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, round about the king, from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple, along by the altar and the temple.

12 And he brought forth the king's son, and put upon him the crown, and *gave him* the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king.

13 Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard *and* of the people, she came to the people into the temple of the LORD.

14 And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason.

15 But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges: and him that followeth her kill with the sword. For the priest said, Let her not be slain in the house of the LORD.

16 And they laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which the horses came into the king's house: and there was she slain.

17 And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people, that they should be the LORD's people; between the king also and the people.

18 And all the people of the land went into the house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of the LORD.

19 And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the king from the house of the LORD, and came by the way of the gate of the guard to the king's house. And he sat on the throne of the kings.

20 And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet: and they slew Athaliah with the sword beside the king's house.

21 Seven years old was Jehoash when he began to reign.

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a 2 Chr. 22:10.
b 8:26. 9:27.
c Matt. 2:13,16.
* Heb. *seed* marg. Jer.
d 2 Chr. 22:11.
e 8:16. *Jehor*
f 12:1,2. *Jehd*
g 8:19. Prov.
32. Neh. 9:38.
o Gen. 50:25. 1 K. 18:10. Neh. 5:12. 10:29.
p 1 Chr. 9:25. 23:3—6,32. 24:3—6. Luke 1:8,9.
q 19. 16:18. 1 K. 10:5. Jer. 26:10. Ez. 44:2,3. 46:2,3.
r 1 Chr. 26:18—19. 2 Chr. 23:4,5.
35:2. Ez.
lal. 3:15.
3am. 18:3.
0. 34:31,

NOTES.

CHAP. XI. V. 1, 2. (*Notes*, 9:27, 28. 10:13, 14.) It is probable Athaliah was left in authority, when Ahaziah went to visit Jehoram. *All the seed royal.* This seems to include all the males whom Athaliah knew to belong to that family, especially in the line of Solomon and Rehoboam. By this concurrence of events, Jehoshaphat's alliance with the house of Ahab proved almost the total ruin of his family; and of the house of David, from which the Messiah was to descend! To appearance, and in Athaliah's intention, it was exterminated; and indeed that branch, which descended from Jehoshaphat, was so interwoven with Ahab's devoted family, that, without a favorable construction of the sentence, none of them could have been spared: for Jehoshaphat's other sons had been slain by Jehoram, as soon as he had got possession of the throne, so that all who survived were the descendants of Ahab, as well as of Jehoshaphat. (*Note*, 2 *Chr.* 21:4.) But by an act of grace, as it were, Joash, being both a branch of the house of David, and of that of Ahab, was considered as belonging to the former family, and snatched as 'a brand from the burning.' (3:7. 1 *K.* 22:1—4.)—Some think he was left for dead among the other victims of Athaliah's ambition; but being taken away, he revived and was recovered. SCOTT.

Verse 4.

All the persons, whom Jehoiada first employed, seem to have been Levites; though others, by their means, were afterwards brought to concur. (2 *Chr.* 23:1, 2.) Perhaps Athaliah's government had grown intolerably oppressive: or Jehoiada perceived that its continuance threatened the destruction of religion: therefore the priests, and the chief of the Levites, as most immediately engaged for the support of that cause, went among their brethren, to prepare their minds to attempt a deliverance. SCOTT.

Verses 5—9.

By 'the king's house' some understand the chamber in which Joash resided; others the royal palace, from which there was an entrance into the court of the temple. [Note 10:21—27.] This was guarded by one division of those who came in on the sabbath to prevent a surprise; another was set to guard 'the gate of *Sur*,' or, *the foundation*; and another to protect the temple and courts from injury; or, as the original may mean, *to guard the breach*, which had been made in the temple, or its out-buildings. (2 *Chr.* 24:7.) [*Wilson* says, 'the 3 parties were to keep the 3 gates to the temple. There was no gate on the W.'] Others, of those Levites who went out on the sabbath, were stationed to guard the king himself, with orders to slay any one who attempted to come within their ranks. Two-thirds are mentioned of these Levites; as some of them might have urgent calls to return to their families.—By employing the Levites almost exclusively, all suspicion was precluded. ID.

the gate behind the guard: so shall ye keep the watch of the house, *that it be not broken down.

7 And two † parts of all you that *go forth on the sabbath, even they shall keep the watch of the house of the LORD about the king.

8 And ye shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand: and *he that cometh within the ranges, let him be slain: and be ye with the king as he goeth out, and as he cometh in.

9 And *the captains over the hundreds did according to all *things* that Jehoiada the priest commanded: and they took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that should go out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest.

10 And to the captains over hundreds did the priests give *king David's spears and shields, that *were* in the temple of the LORD.

11 And the guard stood, *every man with his weapons in his hand, round about the king, from the right ‡ corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple, *along* *by the altar and the temple.

12 And *he brought forth the king's son, and *put the crown upon him, and *gave him* *the testimony; and they made him king, and *anointed him; and they *clapped their hands, *and said, § God save the king!

13 ¶ And *when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard, *and* of the people, she came to the people into the temple of the LORD.

14 And when she looked, behold, the king stood by *a pillar, as the manner *was*, and *the princes and the trumpeters by the king; and *all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, *Treason, treason!*

15 But Jehoiada the priest commanded the *captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges; and him that *followeth her kill with the sword. For the priest hath said, *Let her not be slain in the house of the LORD.*

16 And they laid hands on her: and she went by the way *by the which the horses came into the king's house: and *there was she slain.

have not a particular account of her reign; no doubt, it was of a piece with the beginning; while Jehu was extirpating the worship of Baal in Israel, she was establishing it in Judah, as appears, 2 Chr. 24: 7. The court and kingdom of Judah had been debauched by their alliance with the house of Ahab, and now one of that house is a curse and plague to both; sinful friendships speed no better: all this while, Joash lay hid; the sons and heirs of heaven are now hidden, *the world knows them not*; but the time is fixed when they shall appear in glory, as Joash here; by that time he was arrived at his first climacterical year, the people were grown weary of Athaliah's tyranny, and ripe for a revolution; how that revolution was effected, we are told:

I. The manager of this great affair. Jehoiada, probably the High Priest, or, at least, the *Sagan*, or suffragan to the High Priest; by birth and office a man in authority, whom the people were bound by the law to observe and obey, especially when there was no rightful king on the throne, Deut. 17: 12. By marriage, he was allied to the royal family, and if all the seed royal were destroyed, his wife, as daughter to Joram, had a better title to the crown than Athaliah had. By his eminent gifts and graces, he was fitted to serve his country, and better service he could not do it, than to free it from Athaliah's usurpation; and we have reason to think he did not make this attempt, till he had first asked counsel of God, either by prophets, or Urim, or both.

II. His management, discreet, and as became so wise and good a man.

1. The matter concerted with the men in office, ecclesiastical, civil, and military; he got them together, laid before them the grievances, gave them an oath of secrecy, and, finding them free and forward to join him, *showed them the king's son*, v. 4. So well satisfied were they too with his fidelity, that they saw no reason to suspect an imposition. We may well think what a pleasing surprise it was to the good people among them, who feared the house and lineage of David were quite cut off, to find such a spark as this in the embers.

2. The priests and Levites posted in the several avenues to the temple, to keep the guards, putting them under the command of the *rulers of hundreds*, v. 9. David had divided the priests into courses, which waited by turns; every sabbath day morning, a new company came into waiting, but the company of the foregoing week did not go out of waiting till the sabbath evening, so that on the sabbath day, when double service was to be done, there was a double number to do it; those Jehoiada employed to attend on this great occasion, and armed them, out of the magazines of the temple, with David's spears and shields, either his own or those taken from his enemies, which he devoted to God's honor, v. 10.

Two things they were ordered to do; protect the young king from being insulted, v. 5. and preserve the holy temple from being profaned, by the concourse of people that would come together on this occasion, v. 6. He was not so zealous for the projected revolution, as to forget his religion; in times of the greatest hurry, care must be taken that religion receive no injury. It is observable that Jehoiada appointed to each his place as well as his work; (v. 6, 7.) good order contributes very much to expedite and accomplish any great enterprise; let every man know, and keep, and make good, his post, then the work will be done quickly.

3. When the guards were fixed, then the king was brought forth, v. 12. a child indeed, but one that had a good guardian, and, which was better, a good God, to go to. Jehoiada, without delay, proceeded to the coronation; this was with great solemnity, (v. 12.) The regalia, it is probable, were kept in the temple, so the crown was ready at hand. In token of his obligation to govern by law, and to make the word of God his rule, he gave him the testimony, put a Bible into his hand, in which he must *read all the days of his life*, Deut. 17: 18, 19. In token of his receiving the Spirit, to qualify him for this great work, he anointed him; notice is taken of the anointing of their kings only in case of interruption, as here, and in Solomon's case; yet I know not but the ceremony might be used to all their kings, at least of the house of David, because their royalty was typical of Christ's, who was to be anointed above his fellows, above all the sons of David. In token of the people's acceptance of him, and subjection to his government, they clapped their hands for joy, and expressed their hearty good wishes to him, *Let the king live;* thus they made him king, their king, consented to, and concurred with, the divine appointment. They had reason to rejoice in the period now put to Athaliah's tyranny, and the prospect they had of the restoration and establishment of religion, by a king under the tuition of so good a man as Jehoiada; they had reason to welcome him to the crown, whose right it was, and to pray, *Let him live;* who came to them as life from the dead, and in whom the house of David was to live. With such acclamations of joy and satisfaction must the kingdom of Christ be welcomed into our hearts, when his throne is set up there, and Satan the usurper is deposed.

V. 13—16. We may suppose it was designed, when they had finished the solemnity of inauguration, to call Athaliah to an account; but, like her mother Jezebel, she went out to meet them, and hastened her own destruction.

* Or, *from breaking up.*
† Or, *companies.* Heb. *hands.*
s See on 5. 2 Chr. 23:6.
t 15. Ex. 21:14. 1 K. 2:28—31. 2 Chr. 23:7.
u See on 4. 2 Chr. 23:8.
x 1 Sam. 21:9. 2 Sam. 8:7. 1 Chr. 26: 26,27. 2 Chr. 5:1. 23:9,10.
y 8,10.
‡ Heb. *shoulder.*
z Ex. 40:6. 2 Chr. 6:12. Ez. 8:16. Joel 2:17. Matt. 23:35. Luke 11:51.
a 2,4. 2 Chr. 23:11.
b 2 Sam. 1:10. 12:30. Esth. 2:17. 6:8. Ps. 21:3. 89:39. 132:18. Matt. 27: 29. Heb. 2:9. Rev. 19:12.
c Ex. 25:16. 31:18. Deut. 17:18—20. Ps. 78:5. Is. 8:16,20.
d 9:3. 1 Sam. 10:1. 16:13. 2 Sam. 2: 4. 5:3. 1 K. 1:39. Lam. 4:20. Acts 4:27. 2 Cor. 1:21. Heb. 1:9.
e Ps. 47:1. 98:8. Is. 55:12.
f 1 K. 1:34. Ps. 72:15—17. Dan. 3:9. 6:21. Matt. 21:9.
§ Heb. *Let the king live.* 1 Sam. 10:24. 2 Sam. 16:16. *margine.*
g 2 Chr. 23:12—15.
h 23:3. 2 Chr. 34:31.
i 10,11. See on Num. 10:1—10.
k 1 K. 1:39,40. 1 Chr. 12:40. Prov. 29. 2. Luke 19:37. Rev. 19:1—7.
l 1,2. 9:23. 1 K. 18:17,18.
m 4,9,10. 2 Chr. 23:9,14.
n See on 8.
o Ex. 9:7.
p 2 Chr. 23:15.
q Judg. 1:7. Matt. 7:2. Jam. 2:13. Rev. 16:5—7.

Verse 10.

It is probable, these were arms, which David had taken from his conquered enemies, and dedicated to the Lord, by way of ascribing the honor of his success to Him. (*M. R.* x.) [*Josephus* calls it an 'arsenal David had prepared in the temple.' Comp. note, 10:21—27.] This tends to confirm the interpretation before given, concerning these captains: namely, that they were not military officers, as some suppose; but the leaders of the several courses and companies of the Levites, who did not usually wear the weapons of war. (*Note*, 4.)
SCOTT.

Verse 12.

Coronation is not before this expressly mentioned, in the appointment of any king, either in Judah or Israel; but it seems to have been customary: for the crown, as one of the insignia of royalty, is repeatedly mentioned (*M. R.* b.)
SCOTT.

Crown.] 'A *diadem*, or golden band, that went round the head.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* Comp. cut, 2 Chr. 12:8.
ED.

Verses 13—16.

Doubtless, Jehoiada acted in all this business, by the direction and according to the will of God.
SCOTT

17 ¶ And Jehoiada [r]made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people, that they should be the LORD's people; [s]between the king also and the people.

18 And all the people of the land [t]went into the house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images [u]brake they in pieces thoroughly, and [x]slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars: and the priest [y]appointed [z]officers over the house of the LORD.

19 And he [a]took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the king from the house of the LORD, and came [a]by the way of the gate of the guard to the king's house: and [b]he sat on the throne of the kings.

20 And all the people of the land [c]rejoiced, and the city was in quiet; and they [d]slew Athaliah with the sword *beside* the king's house.

21 [e]Seven years old *was* Jehoash when he began to reign.

CHAP. XII.

Jehoash reigns well so long as Jehoiada lives, 1—3. He gives orders that the temple should be repaired; yet the priests neglect the service; but he devises a plan for defraying the expense, and completes the work, 4—16. He gives the consecrated treasures to Hazael, to divert him from assaulting Jerusalem, 17, 18. He is slain by his servants, and succeeded by his son Amaziah, 19—21.

IN [a]the seventh year of Jehu, [b]Jehoash began to reign; and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Zibiah of Beer-sheba.

2 And [c]Jehoash did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD all his days, wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him.

3 But [d]the high places were not taken away: the people still sacrificed and burnt [r]incense in the high places.

1. Hearing the noise, she came in a fright to see what was the matter, *v.* 13. Jehoiada and his friends began in silence, but now that they found their strength, they proclaimed what they were doing. It seems Athaliah was little regarded, else she had had intelligence of what was doing; for aught that appears, she came alone; so neglected was she, or rather, so infatuated; whom God will destroy, He befools.

2. Seeing what was done, she cried out for help: Josephus says, she cried to have him killed, that possessed the king's place. What was now doing, was the highest justice, yet it is branded as the highest crime; she herself was the greatest traitor, and yet is first and loudest in crying, Treason, treason! Those that are themselves most guilty, are commonly most forward to reproach others.

3. Jehoiada gave orders to put her to death, as an idolater, a usurper, and an enemy to the public peace; but not in the temple, or any of the courts of it; that holy place must not be stained with the blood of any human sacrifice, though ever so justly offered. Whoever appeared for her also, should die with her, *v.* 15. According to these orders, she endeavoring to make her escape the back way to the palace, through the stalls, they pursued her, and there killed her, *v.* 16. *So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord.*

V. 17—21. Jehoiada has now got over the hardest part of his work; and his young prince, his way being cleared, is now to improve his advantages, perfect the revolution, and settle the government. Two things we have here:

I. The good foundation he laid, by an original contract, *v.* 17. Now that prince and people were together in God's house; as it should seem, before they stirred, he took care they should jointly covenant with God, and mutually with each other, that they might rightly understand their duty both to God and to one another, and be firmly bound to it.

1. He endeavored to settle and secure the interests of religion among them, by a covenant between them and God. King and people would then cleave most firmly to each other, when both had joined themselves to the Lord. God had, already, on his part, promised to be their God; now the king and people on their part must covenant; in this covenant, the king stands on the same level with his subjects, and is as much bound as any of them to serve the Lord. By this engagement they renounced Baal, whom many of them had worshipped, and resigned themselves to God's government. It is well with a people, when all the changes that pass over them, help to revive, strengthen, and advance, the interests of religion among them. And those are likely to prosper who set out in the world under fresh and sensible obligations to God and their duty. By our bonds to God the bonds of every relation are strengthened; they *first gave themselves to the Lord*, and then *to us*, 2 Cor. 8: 5.

2. He then settled both the coronation-oath, and the oath of allegiance, by which the king was obliged to govern according to law, and to protect his subjects, and they obliged, while he did so, to obey him, and to bear faith and true allegiance to him. Covenants are of use, both to remind us of, and to bind us to, those duties which are already binding on us. It is good, in all relations, for the parties to understand one another fully; and never may the ancient land-marks our fathers set before them, be removed.

II. The good beginnings he raised on those foundations. 1. They immediately abolished idolatry, which the preceding kings, in compliance with the house of Ahab, had introduced, *v.* 18. Every one, now they were so well headed, would lend a hand to pull down Baal's temple, his altars, and his images. All his worshippers, it should seem, deserted him; only his priest Mattan stuck to his altar alone, and there was slain, the best sacrifice ever offered on that altar. Having destroyed Baal's temple, they appointed *officers over the house of God*, to see that the service of God was regularly performed by the proper persons, in due time, and according to the instituted manner.

2. They expressed a mutual readiness to, and satisfaction in, each other. 1. The king was brought in state to the royal palace, and sat there on the throne of judgment, *the thrones of the house of David*, (*v.* 19.) ready to receive petitions and appeals, which he would refer to Jehoiada to give answers to, and to give judgments upon. 2. The people rejoiced, and Jerusalem was in quiet; (*v.* 20.) and Josephus says, they kept a feast of joy many days, making good Solomon's observation, (Prov. 11: 10.) *When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices, and when the wicked perish, there is shouting.*

CHAP. XII. This ch. gives us the history of the reign of Joash, which does not answer to that glorious beginning of it, in the foregoing ch.; he was not so illustrious at 40 years old as at 7, yet his reign is to be reckoned one of the better sort, and appears much worse in Chr. than here, (2 Chr. 24.) for there we find the blood of one of God's prophets laid at his door.

V. 1—3. The general account here given of Joash is,

[r] See on 4. Deut. 5:2,3. 29:1—15. Josh. 24:25. 2 Chr. 15:12—14. 29:10. 34:31. Ezra 10:3. Neh. 5:12,13. 9: 38. 10:28,29.
[s] 1 Sam. 10:25. 2 Sam. 5:3. 1 Chr. 11:3. 2 Chr. 23:16. Rom. 13:1—6.
[t] 9:25—28. 19:4. 23:4—6,10—14. 2 Chr. 23:17. 34:4,7.
[u] 18:4. Ex. 32:20. Deut. 12:3. Is. 2: 18. Zech. 13:2.
[x] Deut. 13:5,9. 1 K. 18:40. Zech. 13:3.
[y] 2 Chr. 23:18—20.
[z] Heb. *offices.*
[a] See on 4—11.
[a] See on 5.—2 Chr. 23:5,19.
[b] 1 K. 1:13. 1 Chr. 29:23. Jer. 17:25. 22:4,30. Matt. 19:28. 25:31.
[c] See on 14.—2 Chr. 23:21. Prov. 11:10.
[d] See on 15.
[e] 4. 22:1. 2 Chr. 24:1.
[a] 9:27. 11:1,3,4,21. 2 Chr. 24:1.
[b] 11:2. 1 Chr. 3:11. *Joash.*
[c] 14:3. 2 Chr. 24:2,17—22. 25:2. 26:4.
[d] 14:4. 18:4. 1 K. 15:14. 22:43. 2 Chr. 31:1.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When the thirst of dominion predominates, it extinguishes both common humanity and natural affection, and steels the hearts of parents, yea of *mothers*, against their own children or descendants. We should therefore repress the first emotions of this aspiring [self-worshipping] temper, and pray without ceasing to be kept out of the way of temptation.—What fatal consequences flow from matrimonial connections, or intimate acquaintance, with atrocious sinners! The mischiefs, which may thus be entailed on children and remote posterity, cannot be ascertained; and may extend even to the ruin of the interests of true religion, in those places where before it flourished. These reflections should add energy to the Lord's prohibition of these incongruous alliances.—The most successful villany will be short-lived: and, though in that little time dreadful havoc may be made in society, and irreligion or false religion may *apparently* be established on the ruins of true godliness; yet, the cause of God cannot be kept down, but, like the fabled Phœnix, it will revive from its ashes with renewed youth and vigor.—One pious man may, on some emergencies, become an instrument of most extensive good: especially when regard to the glory and worship of God, is united with prudent contrivance and well concerted measures.—Princes should be reminded, when intrusted with authority, of their accountableness to God for the use of it: and every opportunity should be embraced to enforce a conscientious regard to his Word. SCOTT.

Verses 17—20.

Jehoiada, as the protector and near relation of Joash, was authorized to act for him, and the whole compact was deliberately ratified, as in the presence of God. (23:3. *Deut.* 29:10—15. *Josh.* 24:25. 2 *Chr.* 15:12—15. *Neh.* 10:1.) Nothing is recorded of the burial of Athaliah; but in every respect she was treated with neglect and abhorrence. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII. V. 2, 3. The high places were never abolished till the days of Hezekiah. (*M. R.*—18:4, 22.) Jehoiada lived and retained

4 ¶ And Jehoash [e]said to the priests, All [f]the money of the *dedicated things that is brought into the house of the LORD, *even* [g]the money of every one that passeth *the account*, the money ‖ that every man is set at, [h] *and* all the money that ‡ cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the LORD,

5 Let [i]the priests take *it* to them, every man of his acquaintance; and [k]let them repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found.

B. C. 856. 6 But it was *so*, *that* in the § three and twentieth year of king Jehoash, [l] the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house.

7 Then [m]king Jehoash called for [n]Jehoiada the priest, and the *other* priests, and said unto them, [o]Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore, receive no *more* money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house.

8 And the priests consented to receive no *more* money of the people, neither to repair the breaches of the house.

9 But Jehoiada the priest [p]took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it [q]beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the LORD: and [r]the priests that kept the ‖ door put therein all the money *that was* brought into the house of the LORD.

10 And it was *so*, when they saw that *there was* much money in the chest, that [s]the king's ¶ scribe and the high priest came up, and they ** put up in bags, and told the money *that was* found in the house of the LORD.

11 And they [t]gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work, that had the oversight of the house of the LORD: and they †† laid it out to the carpenters and builders, that wrought upon the house of the LORD;

12 And to [u]masons and hewers of stone, and to buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the LORD, and for all that ‡‡ was laid out for the house, to repair *it*.

1. He reigned 40 years; as he began his reign when very young, he might, in the course of nature, have continued much longer; he was cut off when but 47, *v.* 1.

2. He did that which was right, as long as Jehoiada lived to instruct him, *v.* 2. Many young men have come too soon to an estate, have had wealth, and power, and liberty, before they knew how to use them, and it has been of bad consequence to them; but against this danger Joash was well guarded. Note, It is a great mercy to young people, and especially young men of consequence, to have those about them, that will instruct them to do *that which is right in the sight of the Lord;* and they then do wisely and well for themselves, when they are willing to be counselled and ruled by such: *a child left to himself, brings his mother to shame*, but a child left to such a tuition, may bring himself to honor and comfort.

3. The *high places were not taken away*, *v.* 3. Up and down the country, they had altars both for sacrifice and incense, to the honor of the God of Israel only, but in competition with, and at least in implied contempt of, his altar at Jerusalem. These private altars, perhaps, had been more used in the late bad reigns than formerly, because it was not safe to go up to Jerusalem, nor was the temple-service performed as it should have been; and, it may be, Jehoiada connived at them, because some well-meaning people were glad of them when they could not have better, and he hoped the reforming of the temple, and putting things into a good posture there, would, by degrees, draw people from their high places, and they would dwindle of themselves; or perhaps neither the king nor the priest had zeal enough to carry on their reformation so far, nor courage and strength enough to encounter such an inveterate usage.

V. 4—16. We have here an account of the repairing of the temple in the reign of Joash.

I. It seems, the temple was gone out of repair; Solomon built it very strong, of the best materials, and in the best manner; yet, in time, it went to decay, *v.* 5. even temples themselves are the worse for the wearing; the heavenly temple will never wax old. Not only the teeth of time, but the sons of Athaliah had *broken it*, 2 Chr. 24: 7. the priests too had not taken care to repair it in time, so it went worse and worse. Unworthy were those husbandmen to have this valuable vineyard let out to them on such easy terms, Matt. 21: 33.

II. The king himself was the first and forwardest man, and most zealous in the matter; God expects and requires those who have power, to use it for the maintenance and support of religion, the redress of grievances, and reparation of decays, to excite and engage ministers to do their part, and people theirs. The temple had been both his nursery and his sanctuary, when a child, in a grateful remembrance of which, he now appeared zealous for its honor. They who have experienced the comfort and benefit of religious assemblies, will make the reproach of them their burden, (Zeph. 3: 18.) the support of them their care, and the prosperity of them their chief joy.

III. The king had the affairs of his kingdom to mind, and could not himself inspect this affair; besides, the priests were the fittest persons, and, most likely, one would think, to be hearty in it. He gave them orders, 1. To levy the money of the dedicated things; they must not stay till it was paid in, but call for it where they knew it was due in their respective districts, either as redemption-money, by virtue of the law, (Ex. 30: 13.) or as estimation-money, by virtue of the law, (Lev. 27: 2, 3.) or as a free-will offering; (*v.* 4.) they were to gather every man of his acquaintance, and no man but had some. Note, We should take the opportunity God gives us of exciting those we have a particular acquaintance with, to good. 2. To lay out the money levied, in *repairing the breaches of the house*, *v.* 5.

IV. This method did not answer the intention, *v.* 6. Little money was raised; either the priests were careless [and dishonest], or the people backward: what money was raised, was not applied to the proper use; the priests thought *the house* might serve as well as it had done, therefore put it off from time to time. Church-work is usually slow work, but it is pity churchmen, of all men, should be slow at it. Perhaps, what little money they raised, they thought necessary for their own maintenance, which must needs fall much short, when ten tribes were wholly revolted, and the other two wretchedly corrupted.

V. Another method was therefore taken; the

[e] 22:4. 2 Chr. 29:4—11. 35:2.
[f] 18. 1 K. 7:51. 1 Chr. 18:11. 2 Chr. 15:18. 31:12.
[*] Or, *holy things*. Heb. *holinesses*. Lev. 5:15,16. 27:12—27,31.
[g] Ex. 30:12—16. 2 Chr. 24:9,10.
[†] Heb. *of the souls of his estimation*. Lev. 27:2—8.
[h] Ex. 25:1,2. 35:5,22,29. 36:3. 1 Chr. 29:3—9,17. Ezra 1:6. 2:69. 7:16. 8:25—28. Luke 21:1—4.
[‡] Heb. *ascendeth upon the heart of a man*.
[i] 2 Chr. 24:5.
[k] 12. 22:5,6. 1 K. 11:27. 2 Chr. 24:7. Is. 58:12.
[§] Heb. *twentieth year and third year*.
[l] 1 Sam. 2:29,30. 2 Chr. 29:34. Is. 56: 10—12. Mal. 1:10. Phil. 2:21. 1 Pet. 5:2.
[m] 2 Chr. 24:5,6.
[n] 2. 11:4. 2 Chr. 23:1. 24:16.
[o] 1 Chr. 21:3.
[p] 2 Chr. 24:8. Mark 12:41.
[q] 2 Chr. 24:10.
[r] 22:4. 23:4. 25:13. 1 Chr. 15:18,24. Jer. 35:4. 52:24.
[‖] Heb. *threshold*. Ps. 84:10. *marg.*
[s] 19:2. 22:3,12. 2 Sam. 8:17. 20:25.
[¶] Or, *secretary*.
[**] Heb. *bound up*. 5:23.
[t] 22:5,6. 2 Chr. 24:11,12. 34:9—11.
[††] Heb. *brought it forth*.
[u] 1 K. 5:17,18. Ezra 3:7. 5:8. Luke 21:5.
[‡‡] Heb. *went forth*.

his influence, during two-thirds at least of the years that Joash reigned. SCOTT.

Verses 4, 5.

The sons of Athaliah, doubtless encouraged by her, had impiously broken down some part of the buildings, to adorn the house of Baal with the most costly materials of the temple; as well as spoiled its consecrated treasures to enrich those of their idols. The money Jehoash ordered the priests to collect, seems to have arisen from the sale of such firstlings as were not fit for sacrifice; from the half shekel apiece levied of all the people; from the redemption of things dedicated; from the redemption of those who were vowed to the Lord by a singular vow; and from voluntary contributions. ID.

Verses 6—12.

Jehoash's orders must have been very long neglected; for nothing was done effectually, till the 23d year of his reign, or the 30th of his life. Jehoiada himself appears to have been remiss in this affair; but his great age would necessarily render him less capable of active services. (2 *Chr.* 24:15, 16.) As the chest is said in Chr. to have been 'set without at the gate,' and that the 'princes and people cast' the money into it; it has been thought, that the chest was at first placed in the inner court; so that the money still generally passed through the hands of the priests: but that not being satisfactory, it was removed to a situation, where all had ready access to it. (2 *Chr.* 24:8, 10.) SCOTT.

(6.) 'Though Jehoiada was a good man, he does not appear to have had much of the spirit of an active *zeal*; and simple [passive] *piety*, without zeal and activity, is of little use when a reformation in religion and manners is necessary to be brought about. *Melancthon* was orthodox, pious, and learned; but he was a man of comparative *inactivity*. In many respects *Luther* was far his inferior; but, in zeal and activity, a flaming and consuming fire. *Jehoiadas* and *Melancthons* might have *wished* "the Reformation" in vain: Luther *worked*; and God worked *by* him, *in* him, and *for* him.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(10.) *Bags.*] 'It is curious, that a bag of money, sealed up by a banker's seal, now often passes current in the E. without opening it.' *Burder.* Among the tribute brought from different nations to the Egyptian kings, are seen bags of pearls, or gold and silver money; this money was in rings, the most ancient coin. See the monuments, and *Wilkinson*. ED.

13 Howbeit [x] there were not made for the house of the LORD [y] bowls of silver, snuffers, basins, [z] trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money *that was* brought into the house of the LORD:

14 But they gave that to the workmen, and repaired therewith the house of the LORD.

15 Moreover [a] they reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen: [b] for they dealt faithfully.

16 The [c] trespass-money and sin-money was not brought into the house of the LORD: it was the priests'.

17 ¶ Then [d] Hazael king of Syria went up, and fought [e] against Gath, and took it: and Hazael [f] set his face [g] to go up to Jerusalem.

18 And Jehoash king of Judah [h] took all the hallowed things that Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own hallowed things, and all the gold *that was* found in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and in the king's house, and sent *it* to Hazael king of Syria: and he [*] went away from Jerusalem.

19 And [i] the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

king has his heart much upon it, *v.* 7. His apostasy, at last, gives us cause to question whether he had as good an affection for the *service* of the temple; many have been zealous for building and beautifying churches, and for other forms of godliness, who yet have been strangers to its power: however, we commend his zeal, and blame him not for reproving even his tutor Jehoiada, when he saw him remiss; and so convincing was his reproof, that the priests owned themselves unworthy to be longer employed, and consented to take some other measures, and give up the money [?] they had received, into other hands, *v.* 8. It was honestly done, when they found they had not spirit to do it themselves, not to hinder others from doing it. Another course was taken,

1. For raising money, *v.* 9, 10. It was not paid into private hands, but put into a public chest; then people brought it in readily, not only their dues, but their free-will offerings. The high priest and the secretary of state counted the money out of the chest, and laid it by *in specie* for the use to which it was appropriated. When public distributions are made faithfully, public contributions will be made cheerfully. But while they were getting all they could, for the repair of the temple, they did not break in upon the stated maintenance of the priests; (*v.* 16.) the trespass-money and the sin-money given them by that law, Lev. 5: 15, 16. were reserved to them. Let not the servants of the temple be starved, under color of repairing its breaches.

2. For laying out the money raised. They did not put it into the hands of the priests, who were not versed in affairs of this nature, but *into the hands of those that did the work*, or, at least, *had the oversight of it*, *v.* 11. They were fittest to be intrusted with this business, whose employment lay that way. Business is done with expedition, when those are employed in it, that understand it, and know which way to go about it. And such a reputation these got for honesty, that there was no occasion to examine their bills, or audit their accounts; let all intrusted with public money, or public work, learn hence to deal faithfully, as those that know God will reckon with them, whether men do or no; those that think it no sin to cheat the government, the country, or the church, will be of another mind, when God shall set their sins in order before them. They did not lay it out in ornaments for the temple, in vessels of gold or silver, but in necessary repairs first; (*v.* 13.) whence we may learn, in all our expenses, to give that the preference, which is most needful, and, in dealing for the public, to deal as we would for ourselves. After the repairs were finished, we find the overplus turned into plate, for the service of the temple, 2 Chr. 24: 14.

V. 17—21. When Joash had revolted from God, and was become both an idolater and a persecutor, the hand of the Lord went out against him, and his *last state was worse than his first*.

1. His wealth and honor became an easy prey to his neighbors. Hazael, when he had chastised Israel, (*ch.* 10: 32.) threatened Judah and Jerusalem likewise; took Gath, a strong city, (*v.* 17.) and thence intended to march against Jerusalem, but Joash hired him to march another way, *v.* 18 If it were lawful to do this for the public safety, better part with the gold of the temple than expose the temple itself; yet, had he not forsaken God, and forfeited his protection, his affairs had not been brought to this extremity. He diminished himself, and made himself very mean, in alienating the dedicated things. He impoverished himself and his kingdom; he tempted Hazael to come again, when he could bring home so rich a booty without striking a stroke; and it had this effect, for, the next year, the host of Syria came up against Jerusalem, destroyed the princes, and plundered the city, 2 Chr. 24: 23, 24.

2. His life became an easy prey to his own servants. They conspired against him, and slew him; (*v.* 20, 21.) not aiming at his kingdom, for they opposed not his son's succeeding him, but to be avenged on him for his murdering the prophet, (we are told in Chr.) Jehoiada's son. In this, how unrighteous soever they were, God was righteous; and this was not the only time He let even kings know it was at their peril, if they touched his anointed, and did his prophets any harm; and that when He comes to make inquisition for blood, the blood of prophets will run the account very high. Thus fell Joash, who began in the Spirit, and ended in the flesh. God usually sets marks of his displeasure on apostates, even in this life; for they, of all sinners, do most *reproach the Lord*.

20 And [k] his servants arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew Joash, in † the house of Millo, which goeth down to Silla.

21 For [l] Jozachar the son of Shimeath, and Jehozabad the son of [m] Shomer, his servants, smote him, and he died; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and [n] Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.

x 2 Chr. 24:14.
y See on Num. 7:13,14. 1 K. 7:48—50. Ezra 1:9—11.
z See on Num. 10:2.
a 22:7.
b 2 Chr. 34:12. Neh. 7:2. Matt. 24:45. Luke 16:1,10,11. 1 Cor. 4:2,3. 3 John 5.
c Lev. 5:15—18. 7:7. Num. 5:8—10. 18:8. Hos. 4:8.
d See on 8:12—15.
e 1 Sam. 27:2. 1 K. 2:39,40. 1 Chr. 8: 13. 18:1.
f Jer. 42:15. Luke 9:51,53.
g 2 Chr. 24:23,24.
h 18:15,16. 1 K. 15:18. 2 Chr. 16:2.
* Heb. *went up*.
i 8:23.—See on 1 K. 11:41. 14:19,29.
k 14:5. 2 Chr. 24:24,25. 25:27. 33:24.
† Or, *Beth-millo*. Judg. 9:6. 2 Sam. 5:9. 1 K. 11:27.
l 2 Chr. 24:26. *Sabad*.
m 2 Chr. 24:26. *Shimrith*.
n 2 Chr. 24:27.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Wise and pious instructors and counsellors are a singular benefit to young persons, especially when called to fill up important stations: and it is a happy case, when they acquire a proper influence, and make an unexceptionable use of it. A too favorable regard to *customary* violations of the divine law, and the fear of *consequences in making innovations*, often influence pious men to let slip the favorable opportunity of effecting still greater good. —The building or repairing of convenient places for divine worship, if done from a proper principle, is a good work which will not lose its reward.—Too often have *nominal* ministers been convicted of seeking their own interests, rather than those of religion. As a body, they must be suspected; and therefore should carefully avoid the appearance of this evil, lest they lose the confidence of the people, and become useless and contemptible (*Mal.* 1: 9—11. 2: 4—9.) It is most grievous, that the disinterested fidelity and punctuality of tradesmen and mechanics should shame the mercenary conduct of priests: or that the activity and zeal of laymen should expose the lukewarmness and indifference of the clergy! These things are not the fault of the ministerial office, but of human nature, which that office will not change. The collective body is placed in a conspicuous station, and their faults are not easily concealed: and, as more is expected from them than from others, they meet with less allowance, and indeed their misconduct admits of less excuse. It is therefore most for their own credit and comfort, and for the honor of their profession, to stand aloof from those concerns in which large sums of money are employed. (*P. O. John* 12: 1—8. 2 *Cor.* 8: 16—24.) SCOTT.

Verses 13—15.

It seems that orders were given to the workmen, that the repairs of the temple should first be completed, before any vessels were made. (2 *Chr.* 24:7, 14.) SCOTT.

Verses 20, 21.

The Syrians left Jehoash 'in great diseases;' and his servants, (probably some relations or friends of Jehoiada, who deeply resented the murder of his son Zechariah,) took that opportunity of slaying him.—Joash was buried in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings; 'because he had forsaken God, and slain one of his prophets.' *Bp. Patrick.* (2 *Chr.* 24:25—27.) Millo seems to have been a general name of public buildings for convening the people; and this Millo in the way to Silla, was a distinct place from Millo in the city of David. (*M.*—2 *Sam.* 5:9.) SCOTT.

CHAP. XIII.

Jehoahaz reigns wickedly over Israel, 1, 2. Israel is oppressed by Hazael, but relieved in answer to Jehoahaz's prayer, 3—7. Jehoahaz dies, and is succeeded by his son Joash, 8, 9; who reigns wickedly, dies, and is succeeded by his son Jeroboam, 10—13. An account of a visit paid by Joash to Elisha on his death-bed, who by a sign assured him of three victories over the Syrians, 14—19. Elisha dies; the Moabites invade the land; and a dead man is raised to life, on touching his bones, 20, 21. Hazael, who had oppressed Israel, dies, and Joash gains three victories over his son Ben-hadad, 22—25.

B. C. 856. IN the * three and twentieth year of Joash, the son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, [a] Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* seventeen years,

B. C. 849. 2 And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, [b] and † followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.

3 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, [c] and he delivered them into the hand of [d] Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of [e] Ben-hadad the son of Hazael, all *their* days.

4 And [f] Jehoahaz besought the LORD, and [g] the LORD hearkened unto him: for [h] he saw the oppression of Israel, [i] because the king of Syria oppressed them.

5 (And the LORD gave Israel [k] a savior, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians: and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents, as ‡ beforetime.

6 Nevertheless they [l] departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel sin, *but* § walked therein: [m] and there ‖ remained the grove also in Samaria.)

7 Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz, but [n] fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen: for [o] the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them [p] like the dust by threshing.

8 Now [q] the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

9 And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they [r] buried him in Samaria: and [s] Joash his son [t] reigned in his stead.

B. C. 841. 10 In the thirty and seventh year of Joash king of Judah, ** began Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* sixteen years.

11 And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD; [t] he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin; *but* he walked therein.

B. C. 825. 12 And [u] the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, and [x] his might wherewith he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

13 And Joash [y] slept

CHAP. XIII. This ch. brings us again to the history of the kings of Israel, and particularly of Jehu's family.

V. 1—9. This general account of the reign of Jehoahaz, and the state of Israel during his 17 years, though short, is long enough to let us see two things very affecting and instructive.

I. The glory of Israel raked up in the ashes, buried and lost, and turned into shame.

1. It was their honor, that they worshipped the only living and true God, a Spirit, an eternal Mind: but they lost this honor, and levelled themselves with the nations that worshipped the work of their own hands. The king *followed the sins of Jeroboam*, (*v.* 2.) and the people departed *not from them*, *v.* 6. In all the history of the ten tribes, we never find the least shock given to that idolatry, but, in every reign, still the calf was their god!

2. It was their honor, that they were taken under the special protection of Heaven. But here we find them stripped of this glory, and exposed to the insults of all their neighbors, *v.* 3, 22. Surely never was any nation so often plucked and pillaged as was Israel. This they brought on themselves by sin. So low was Israel brought in this reign by the many depredations the Syrians made on them, that the militia of the kingdom, and all the force they could bring into the field, were but 50 *horsemen*, 10 *chariots*, *and* 10,000 *footmen*, a despicable muster, *v.* 7. The debauching of a nation will certainly be the debasing of it.

II. It is not quite forgotten, notwithstanding all these quarrels, that this people is the Israel of God, and He the God of Israel.

1. It was the ancient honor of Israel, that they were a praying people: and here we find somewhat of that honor revived; Jehoahaz their king *besought the Lord*, *v.* 4. It becomes kings to be beggars at God's door; and the greatest of men to be humble petitioners at the footstool of his throne. Need will drive them to it.

2. It was the ancient honor of Israel, that they had *God nigh unto them in all they called upon Him for*, (Deut. 4: 7.) and so He was here. He might justly have rejected the prayer, yet *the Lord hearkened to Jehoahaz*, and *gave Israel a savior*; (*v.* 5.) not Jehoahaz himself, for, all his days, Hazael oppressed Israel, (*v.* 22.) but his son, to whom, in answer to his father's prayers, God gave success against the Syrians, so that he recovered the cities taken from his father, *v.* 25. This gracious answer God gave, in remembrance of his covenant with Abraham, (*v.* 23.) which, in such exigencies as these, He had long since promised to have respect to, Lev. 26: 42. See how swift God is to show mercy; how ready to hear prayers; how willing to find out any reason to be gracious! else He would not look so far back as that ancient covenant which Israel had so often broken, and forfeited all the benefit of. Let this invite and engage us for ever to Him; and encourage even those that have forsaken Him, to return and repent; for *there is forgiveness with Him, that He may be feared.*

V. 10—19. We have here Jehoash, or Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, and grandson of Jehu, on the throne of Israel. Probably, the house of Jehu intended some respect to the house of David, when they gave this heir-apparent to the crown, the same name with him that was then king of Judah.

I. The general account here given of him and his reign, is much the same with what we have already met with, and has little in it remarkable, *v.* 10—13. He was none of the worst, yet, because he kept up that ancient, politic idolatry of Jeroboam, it is said, *He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.* That one evil was enough to leave an indelible mark of infamy on his name; for, how little evil soever men saw in it, it was, *in the sight of the Lord*, a very wicked thing; and we are sure his judgment is according to truth. It is observable, how lightly the inspired penman passes over his acts, and his might wherewith he warred, leaving it to the common historians to record them, while he takes notice only of the respect he showed Elisha. One *good* action shall make a better figure in God's book, than twenty *great* ones.

II. The particular account of what past between him and Elisha, has several things in it remarkable. 1. Elisha fell sick, *v.* 14. He lived

* Heb. *twentieth year, and third year.* 8:26. 10:36. 11:4,21.

a 10:35.

b H. See on 10:29. 1 K. 12:26—33. 14:16.

† Heb. *walked after.* Hos. 5:11.

c Lev. 26:17. Deut. 4:24—27. 27:25. Judg. 2:14. 3:8. 10:7—14. Is. 10:5, 6. Heb. 12:29.

d 22.—See on 8:12,13. 1 K. 19:17.

e 24,25.

f Num. 21:7. Judg. 6:6,7. 10:10. Ps. 78:34. Is. 26:16. Jer. 2:27.

g Gen. 21:17. Ex. 3:7. Judg. 10:15,16. 2 Chr. 33:12,13,19. Ps. 50:15. 106: 43,44. Jer. 33:3.

h Gen. 31:42. Ex. 3:9. Is. 63:9.

i 22. 14:26.

k 25. 14:25,27. Neh. 9:27. Is. 19:20. Ob. 21. Luke 2:11.

‡ Heb. *yesterday* and *third day.* Ex. 4:10. Deut. 19:4. 1 Sam. 19:7. 1 Chr. 11:2. *margins.*

l See on 2. 10:29.—17:20—23. Deut. 32:15—18.

§ Heb. *he walked.* 1 K. 15:3. 16:26.

m 17:16. 18:4. 23:4. Deut. 7:5. 1 K. 16:33.

‖ Heb. *stood.*

n 1 Sam. 13:6,7,15,19—23. 1 K. 20:15, 27. Is. 36:8.

o 8:12. 10:32.

p Ps. 18:42. Is. 41:2,15,16. Joel 3:14. *marg.* Am. 1:3.

q 14:34,35. See on 1 K. 11:41. 14:19, 29,29,31.

r 13. 10:35. 1 K. 14:13.

s 10. 14:8. *Jehoash.*

¶ Alone.

** In concert with his father.

t See on 2, 6. 3:3. 10:29.

u 14—25.

x 14:8—16. 2 Chr. 25:17—24.

y See on 2 Sam. 7:12. 1 K. 1:21. 2:10. 14:31.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII. V. 1. Joash king of Judah began to reign in the 7th year of Jehu; (12:1.) but it was probably in the beginning of the year; and if Jehu reigned a little above 28 years, Joash might have entered on his 23d year, when Jehu died and was succeeded by Jehoahaz. SCOTT.

Verse 3.

All their *days.*] Or, 'all *his* days;' there is nothing answering to *their* in the original; and Joash the son of Jehoahaz delivered Israel from Ben-hadad. (22—25.) ID.

Verses 4, 5.

Jehoahaz, while he deprecated the wrath of God, and entreated the removal of his heavy judgments, seems not to have attempted any reformation; or if this took place towards the conclusion of his life, his faith and repentance might not have time to produce their genuine fruits: and this is probable; for the deliverance, in answer to his prayer, was not granted till the reign of his son Joash, as it appears from the subsequent narration.—Yet some think Joash began to deliver Israel during the life of his father. (22—25.) SCOTT.

Verses 7, 8.

Jehoahaz seems to have defended himself valiantly against Hazael, though without success: this might provoke the cruelty, which Elisha had foretold; and it eventually increased the miseries of Israel. (*M. R.*—8:12, 13. 10:32—36. 1 *Sam.* 13:13—15.) ID.

Verse 10.

The 17 years of Jehoahaz reach to the 39th or 40th year of Joash king of Judah; but Jehoash of Israel began to reign in the 37th year of Joash of Judah: Jehoash must therefore have reigned some time along with his father. ID.

with his fathers; and [z] Jeroboam sat upon his throne: and Joash [a] was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

14 ¶ Now Elisha was [b] fallen sick of his sickness whereof [c] he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, [d] O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.

15 And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows.

16 And he said to the king of Israel, [*] Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand *upon it:* and [e] Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands.

17 And he said, [f] Open the window eastward. And he opened *it.* Then Elisha said, Shoot: and he shot. And he said, [g] The arrow of the LORD's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in [h] Aphek, till thou have consumed *them.*

18 And he said, Take the arrows. And he took *them.* And he said unto the king of Israel, [i] Smite upon the ground. And [k] he smote thrice, and stayed.

19 And [l] the man of God [m] was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed *it:* whereas [n] now thou shalt smite Syria *but* thrice.

long, it was now about 60 years since he was first called to be a prophet. It was a great mercy he was continued so long. Elijah finished his testimony in a fourth part of that time. All the latter part of his time, from the anointing of Jehu, which was 45 years before Joash began his reign, we find no mention made of him, or of any thing he did. He might be useful, yet not so famous as he had sometimes been. The time of his flourishing was less than the time of his living. Let not old people complain of obscurity, but rather be well pleased with retirement. The Spirit of Elijah rested on him, yet he is not sent for to heaven in a fiery chariot, but goes the common road out of the world. If God honor some above others, who yet are not inferior to them in gifts or graces, who shall find fault? *May He not do what He will with his own?*

2. King Joash visited him in his sickness, and *wept over him, v.* 14. an evidence this of some good in him; so far was he from hating and persecuting a faithful prophet as a troubler of Israel. Some who would not be obedient to the Word of God, yet have had the faithful ministers of it so manifested in their consciences, that they could not but honor them. When the king heard of Elisha's sickness, he came to visit him, and to receive his dying counsel and blessing; and it was no disparagement to him. Note, It may turn much to our spiritual advantage, to attend the sick-beds and death-beds of good ministers and other good men, that we may learn to die, and may be encouraged in religion by the living comforts they have from it in a dying hour. Elisha was very old, had been a great while useful, and, in the course of nature, could not continue long; yet the king, when he saw him sick and likely to die, wept over him. The aged are most experienced, therefore can worst be spared. In many causes, one old witness is worth ten young ones. He lamented him as Elisha lamented Elijah, *My father, my father.* Probably he had heard or read the words in that famous story. Note, Those that give just honors to the generation that goes before them, are often recompensed with the like from the generation that comes after them. The king was herein selfish, he lamented the loss of Elisha, because he was the chariots and horsemen of Israel, therefore could be ill spared, when Israel was so poor in chariots and horsemen, *v.* 7. They who consider how much good men contribute to the defence of a nation, and the keeping off of God's judgments, will see cause to lament their removal.

3. Elisha gave the king great assurances of his success against the Syrians, and encouraged him to prosecute the war against them with vigor. Elisha was aware he was loath to part with him, because he looked on him as the great bulwark of the kingdom, and depended much on his blessings and prayers; so he encouraged him, '*I die, but God will surely visit you.*' He has the residue of the Spirit, and can raise up other prophets to pray for you.'

To animate him, he gives him a sign: orders him to *take bow and arrows,* (*v.* 15.) to intimate that, in order to deliverance from the Syrians he must put himself into a military posture; God would be the Agent, but he must be the instrument. And as a token of success, he directs him,

(1.) To shoot an arrow toward Syria, *v.* 16, 17. The arrow to be shot, was to have its significancy from the divine institution; therefore, as if he were now to be disciplined, he receives the words of command from the prophet. Nay, as if he had been a child that never drew a bow before, *Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands,* to signify that in all his expeditions against the Syrians, he must look up to God for direction and strength. *He teacheth my hands to war,* Ps. 18: 34.—144: 1 The Syrians had made themselves masters of the country that lay eastward, *ch.* 10: 33. Thitherward therefore the arrow is directed, and such an interpretation given by the prophet of the shooting of this arrow, though shot, in one respect, at random, as made it a commission to the king, to attack the Syrians, notwithstanding their power and possession, and a promise of success therein: it is the *arrow of the Lord's deliverance. Aphek* was where they are now encamped, or where they were to have a general rendezvous of their forces.

(2.) To *strike with the arrows, v.* 18, 19. The prophet having, in God's name, assured him of victory over the Syrians, will now try him what improvement he will make of his victories. For this, he bids him *smite with the arrows on the ground.* The king showed not that eagerness and flame one might have expected, but smote thrice, and no more; being willing to show mercy to them that never did, nor ever would, show mercy to him or his people. Or, perhaps, because he thought it but a silly thing, for a king to beat the floor with his arrows; thrice was enough for him to play the fool, merely to please the prophet But, by contemning the sign, he lost the thing signified, sorely to the grief of the dying prophet, who was wroth with him, and told him he should have smitten five or six times. Not being straitened in the power and promise of God, why should he be straitened in his own expectations and endeavors?

V. 20—24. 1. These verses show, 1. What power there was in Elisha's life to keep off judgments; as soon as he was dead, the bands of the Moabites invaded the land; not great armies, but roving, skulking bands, for murder and plunder by surprise. God has many ways to chastise a provoking people. The mention of this, immediately on the death of Elisha, intimates, that the re-

20 ¶ And Elisha died, and they [o] buried him. And [p] the bands of [q] the Moabites invaded the

z 14:28,29. a See on 9.
b 20:1. Gen. 48:1. John 11:3. Phil. 2:26,27.
c Ps. 12:1. Is. 57:1. Zech. 1:5. Acts 13:36.
d 2:12. 6:21. Prov. 11:11. Ez. 14:14. 22:30. Mark 6:20.
* Heb. *Make thine hand to ride.*
e 4:34. Gen. 49:24. Ps. 144:1.
f 5:10—14. John 2:5—8. 11:39—41.
g Ex. 4:2,17. Judg. 7:9—20. 2 Sam. 5:24. 1 Cor. 1:18.
h 1 Sam. 4:1. 1 K. 20:26,30.
i Is. 20:2—4. Ez. 4:1—10. 5:1—4. 12: 1—7. k 4:6. Ex. 17:11.
l 1:9—15. 4:16,40. 6:9.
m Lev. 10:16. Num. 16:15. Mark 3:5. 10:14. n 25. Mark 6:5.
o 2 Chr. 24:16. Acts 8:2.
p 5:2. 6:23. 24:2.
q 3:5,24—27. Judg. 3:12. 6:3—6.

Verse 14.

If Elisha was called to follow Elijah, no more than seven years before the death of Ahab; and if he died as soon as Joash mounted the throne, he prophesied at least 66 years! but many think this took place towards the close of the reign of Joash. From the beginning of the reign of Jehu to Elisha's sickness and death, (that is, at least, for more than 45 years,) his name is never once mentioned; but without doubt he was very usefully employed, especially in superintending the schools of the prophets. There is ground to conclude, that great numbers were converted to God by his labors; though the bulk of the nation conformed to the idolatry established by authority. (10:21.) Neither Jehu nor Jehoahaz paid any attention to the prophet: yet they were not persecutors, and probably they respected his character. Being, however, employed in state-affairs, and determined to maintain the idolatry of the golden calves, they were not disposed to hearken to his admonitions: and he expressed his disapprobation of their conduct by keeping at a distance. (*Eph.* 5:8—14. 2 *Thes.* 3:6—9.) But when Joash heard that he was apparently near death, at a time when Israel was brought very low by iniquity, he seems to have considered the dispensation as a divine rebuke; and, under the prevalency of present convictions, he visited and lamented over him; as one whose death would more expose them to ruin, than all Hazael's successes. Yet we read of nothing, in the character or conduct of Joash, to warrant a conclusion, that this was more than a transient impression on his mind, which soon wore off without producing any abiding good effect SCOTT.

Verses 15—19.

His [the king of Syria's] dominions which lay chiefly to the north of Canaan, would not be taken from him.—Probably Joash was not informed that his victories would equal the times, which he smote with the arrows. His conduct expressed the state of his mind, as not firmly believing the words of the prophet, or not duly valuing the promised deliverance. (25) ID.

In Aphek. (17) Aphek was near to Philistia to the W. of Samaria: (*M. R.* h.) but a decisive victory over Hazael and the Syrians, in that place, made way for Joash's rescuing the regions towards the E out of their hands. ID.

(17.) *Shoot.*] 'It was an ancient custom to shoot an arrow, or cast a spear, into a country, before the commencement of hostilities. See Virgil.' PATRICK.

Verse 23.

The reason here assigned, for the deliverance granted to Israel, seems to imply that there was nothing either in Joash, or his subjects, (except their miseries,) to induce the Lord thus to favor them. (*M. R.* t—y.) SCOTT.

land at the coming in of the year.

21 And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band *of men;* and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha; and when the man * was let down, and [r] touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.

22 ¶ But [s] Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz.

23 And [t] the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and [u] had respect unto them, [x] because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, [y] neither cast he them from his † presence as yet.

B. C. 839. 24 So [z] Hazael king of Syria died; and Ben-hadad his son reigned in his stead.

B. C. 836. 25 And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz ‡ took again, out of the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael, the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. [z] Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel.

CHAP. XIV.

Amaziah reigns well, yet not like David, 1—4. He justly punishes his father's murderers, 5, 6. He gains a victory over Edom, 7. He rashly challenges Jehoash king of Israel, and, obstinately persisting, is vanquished and taken prisoner by him; the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and the treasures of the temple spoiled, 8—14. Jehoash dies, and is succeeded by Jeroboam, 15, 16. Amaziah is slain by conspirators, 17—20. His son Azariah is made king, and builds Elath, 21, 22. Jeroboam's wicked reign, 23, 24. He restores the coast of Israel, 25—27. He dies, and is succeeded by his son Zachariah, 28, 29.

IN the second year of [a] Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel, [b] reigned Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah.

2 He was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.

3 And [c] he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like David his father: [d] he did according to all things as Joash his father did.

4 Howbeit [e] the high places were not taken away: as yet the people did sacrifice and burnt incense on the high places.

* Heb. *went* down.

r 4:35. Is. 26:19. Ez. 37:1—10. Matt. 27:52,53. John 5:25,28,29. 11:44. Acts 5:15. 19:12. Rev. 11:11.

s See on 3—7. 8:12.—Ps. 106:40—42.

t 14:27. Ex. 33:19. 34:6,7. Judg. 10: 16. Neh. 9:31. Ps. 86:15. Is. 30:18, 19. Jer. 12:15. Lam. 3:32. Mic. 7: 18,19.

u Ex. 2:24,25. 1 K. 8:28.

x Gen. 13:16,17. 17:7,8. Ex. 3:6,7. 32:13,14. Lev. 26:42. Deut. 32:36. Ps. 105:8. Mic. 7:20. Luke 1:54,55, 72,73.

y 17:18. 24:20. Ps. 51:11. Matt. 25: 41. 2 Thes. 1:9.

† Heb. *face.*

z Ps. 125:3. Luke 13:7,8.

‡ Heb. *returned and took.*

z 18,19.

a 15. 13:10.

b 1 Chr. 3:12. 2 Chr. 25:1.

c 12:2.—See on 1 K. 11:4. 15:3.—2 Chr. 25:2,3.

d 2 Chr. 24:2,17,18. 25:14—16. Jer. 16: 19. Zech. 1:4—6. 1 Pet. 1:18.

e See on 12:3. 15:4,35.

CHAP. XIV. This ch. continues the history of the succession in the kingdoms both of Judah and Israel. How many great men are made to stand in a little compass in God's book!

V. 1—7. Amaziah is the king here spoken of, the son and successor of Joash: let us take a view of him,

1. In the temple; there he acted, in some measure, well, like Joash, *v.* 3. began well, but did not persevere; kept up his attendance on God's altars, and his attention to God's Word, yet not like David. It is not enough merely to keep up pious usages, but we must do it from a principle of faith and devotion, with sincerity and resolution. It is here noticed, as before, that *the high places were not taken away, v.* 4. It is hard to get clear of those corruptions, which, by long usage, have gained both prescription and a favorable opinion.

2. On the bench; there we have him doing justice on the traitors that murdered his father; not too soon, lest it should have occasioned disturbance, but prudently, after *the kingdom was confirmed in his hand, v.* 5. To weaken a factious party gradually, when it is not safe to provoke, often proves the way to ruin it effectually. Justice strikes surely by striking slowly, and is often executed most prudently, when it is not executed presently. Wisdom here is profitable to direct. Amaziah did thus, according to that ancient rule, *he that sheds man's blood by man shall his blood be shed.* Never let traitors or murderers expect to come to their graves like other men: *let them flee to the pit, and let no man stay them.* Under the limitation of the law, *the children of murderers he slew not;* the law of Moses had expressly provided that *the children should not be put to death for the fathers, v.* 6. It is probable this is noticed, because there were those about him, that advised him to that rigor, both in revenge, and in policy. But he was to judge by the law of God, (Deut. 24: 16.) which he resolved to adhere to, and trust God with the issue. God visits the iniquity of the fathers on the children, because every man is guilty before Him, and owes Him a death; so that if He require the life for the father's sin, He does no wrong, the sinner having forfeited it already by his own: but He does not allow earthly princes to

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

'The Lord is slow to anger and of great mercy; [f] yet He will by no means acquit obstinate transgressors; and his just anger is the cause of all human misery. But if He answer the mere cry of distress for temporal relief, much more will He regard the prayer of faith for spiritual blessings: and, as He so long remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and spared the posterity for the sake of their pious ancestors, notwithstanding their manifold provocations; much more will He remember Jesus and the covenant He mediated, and for his sake pardon the abundant transgressions of all, who by true faith stand in a spiritual relation to Him.—The true believer, though chastened for his transgression, shall not be left to perish for ever: But being [g] delivered from the hand of his enemies, he shall serve God without fear, in righteousness and holiness, before Him all his days.'—There is such excellency in true and eminent godliness, that it often excites the esteem and respect of those, who cleave to their sins.—Some parts of the lives of eminent believers are more conspicuous than others; but in the general tenor of them, they aim to glorify God and do good to man. Yet the most devoted will be ashamed, that they have not been more earnest; and the most useful must regret, that the world has received so little benefit from them. SCOTT.

f Ex. 34:6,7. Num. 14:18. Nah. 1:3.

g Ps. 18:48. 97:10. Luke 1:74,75.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV. V. 1. Joash king of Israel began to reign about 4 years before Amaziah king of Judah: but he is supposed to have reigned part of the time with his father Jehoahaz; and Amaziah succeeded to the throne of Judah in the 2d year after the death of Jehoahaz king of Israel. Yet, as Amaziah survived Joash only 15 years, (17) either the 16 years of Joash's reign must be reckoned from his father's death; (*Note*, 13:10.) or, as some think, Amaziah's reign is computed from the time that his father Joash became incapable of managing public affairs. (2 *Chr.* 24:23—27.) SCOTT.

5 And it came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand, [f] that he slew [g] his servants which had slain the king his father.

6 But the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the LORD commanded, saying, [h] The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

7 He [i] slew of Edom in [j] the valley of salt ten thousand, and took [*] Selah by war, and called the name of it [k] Joktheel unto this day.

8 ¶ Then [l] Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, [m] Come, let us look one another in the face.

9 And Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, [n] The thistle that *was* in Lebanon sent to the cedar that *was* in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that *was* in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle.

10 Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and [o] thine heart hath lifted thee up: [p] glory *of this*, and tarry at † home; for [q] why shouldest thou meddle to *thy* hurt, that thou shouldest fall, *even* thou, and Judah with thee?

11 But [r] Amaziah would not hear: therefore Jehoash king of Israel went up; and he and Amaziah king of Judah looked one another in the face at [s] Bethshemesh, which *belongeth* to Judah.

12 And Judah was ‡ put to the worse before Israel, and [t] they fled every man to their tents.

13 And Jehoash king of Israel [u] took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash, the son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh, and came to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, from [x] the gate of Ephraim unto [y] the corner-gate, four hundred cubits.

14 And he took [z] all the gold and silver, and all the vessels *that were* found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, [a] and hostages, and returned to Samaria.

[*Practical Observations.*]

f Gen. 9:6. Ex. 21:12—14. Num. 35:33.
g 12:20,21. 2 Chr. 25:3,4.
h Deut. 24:16. Ez. 18:4,20.
i 8:20—22. 2 Chr. 25:11,12.
j 2 Sam. 8:13. 1 Chr. 18:12. Ps 60: *title.*
* Or, *the rock.*
k Josh. 15:38.
l 2 Chr. 25:17—24.
m II. 2 Sam. 2:14—17. Prov. 13:10. 17:14. 18:6. 20:18. 25:8.
n Judg. 9:8—15. 2 Sam. 12:1—4. 1 K. 4:33. Ez. 20:49.
o Deut. 8:14. 2 Chr. 26:16. 32:25. Prov. 16:18. Ez. 28:2,5,17. Dan. 5: 20—23. Hab. 2:4. Jam. 4:6.
p Ex. 8:9. Jer. 9:23,24. Jam. 1:9.
† Heb. *thy house.*
q 2 Chr. 35:21. Prov. 17:14. 20:3. 26: 17. Luke 14:31,32.
r 2 Chr. 25:16,20.
s Josh. 21:16. 1 Sam. 6:9.
‡ Heb. *smitten.*
t 1 Sam. 4:10. 2 Sam. 18:17. 1 K. 22: 36.
u 25:6. 2 Chr. 33:11. 36:6,10. Job 40: 11,12. Prov. 16:18. 29:23. Is. 2:11 12. Dan. 4:37. Luke 14:11.
x 2 Chr. 25:23,24. Neh. 8:16. 12.39.
y Jer. 31:38. Zech. 14:10.
z 24:13. 25:15. 1 K. 7:51. 14:26. 15: 18.
a 18:23. *marg.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—14. Many appear righteous unto men, whose inward parts are very wickedness, and whose base conduct at length betrays their hypocrisy. Yet the Lord gives due commendation to the actions which accord to his law, because *thus far* they honor Him.—Where his judgments are most evidently righteous, the wickedness of the instruments may deserve punishment by the sword of the magistrate: and 'the Judge of all the earth' may do many things consistently with his justice, and in his omniscience, unerring wisdom, and all-sufficiency, which would not be right for short-sighted, feeble mortals to imitate. It will appear, however, in the day of final retributions, that no one has suffered who did not deserve it, and that none perish but for their own sins.—The effects of pride in others are insufferable, even to those who are equally proud themselves; and all naturally delight in expressing contempt for such, as avowedly aim to outshine their neighbors.—Did men consider from whom, and for what, their talents and successes were given, and how prone they are to abuse them; and did they understand how mean, guilty, and polluted man is, at his best estate, their boastings must needs be excluded. In reality, all the distinctions between one sinful man and another would not be worth noting, except for the sake of relative obligations, and the peace of society: but what images can shadow forth the absurdity and madness of those, who by their daring crimes seem to challenge the Almighty to the conflict, and to rush on the thick bosses of his buckler? Or, who could have conceived such an amity and union, as the Lord invites us wretched sinners to enter into with Himself, through the mysterious union of the divine and human nature in our Emmanuel? SCOTT.

Verses 5, 6.

These references to the very words of the law, as they now stand in the books of Moses, should not be unnoticed. Undoubtedly these books were extant, and well known, when this history was written. SCOTT.

Verse 7.

The name which Amaziah gave to Selah, signifies *Obedience to God;* in which it is probable, he referred to his obedience to the word of God by the prophet in dismissing the auxiliaries of Israel, and considered his victory as the reward of it: but his behavior, in the whole transaction, and afterwards, very little agreed with this name. (*Notes*, 2 *Chr.* 25:5—16.) *Valley of salt.*] *M. R.* i. ID.

Selah.] 'A rock, and so *Petra*, in Greek, means a rock; whence the place is thought to be Petra, in Arabia Petræa, the country of the Edomites.' WELLS, GILL.

Verse 8.

The peace between Judah and Israel had continued from the time of Asa, during above 100 years: Perhaps Amaziah bore resentment against the family of Jehu, for the slaughter of his relations: he had also received injurious treatment from the Israelites, whom he had engaged in his service, and sent back, having been forbidden to employ them. (*Notes*, 2 *Chr.* 25:6—10, 13.) In effect, he informed Joash, that he scorned to attack him at a disadvantage: but wished him to bring forth all his forces, and make a fair trial of their military skill and valor in a pitched battle. (2 *Sam.* 2:14—16. 2 *Chr.* 25:17—24. *Prov.* 13:10. 17:14. 20:18. 25:8—10.) SCOTT.

Verse 9.

Thistle. . . cedar.] 'The orientals still speak of their rulers, under the similitude of different trees. Some men are always known by the name of certain trees. Thus a person who is tall and stoops a little is called the cocoa-nut tree, and he who has long legs and arms, the banyan, which spreads its arms and lets fall its supporters to the ground. It is therefore not very improbable, that Jehoash was known by the name of the cedar, and Amaziah by that of the thistle.' ROBERTS.

Verses 11—14.

Hostages. (14) 'The sons, I suppose, of the principal persons of the city, for a security that they would . . . give him no disturbance.' SCOTT.

Patrick.

15 ¶ Now [b]the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

16 And [c] Jehoash slept with his fathers, and [d] was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; and [e] Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead.

B. C. 810. 17 ¶ And [f] Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years.

18 And [g] the rest of the acts of Amaziah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

19 Now [h] they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem: and he fled to [i] Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there.

20 And they brought him on horses, and [k] he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David.

21 And all the people of Judah took [l] Azariah, (which *was* sixteen years old,) and [m] made him king instead of his father Amaziah.

22 He built [n] Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.

B. C. 825. 23 ¶ In [o] the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah, [p] Jeroboam, the son of Joash king of Israel, * began to reign in Samaria, *and reigned* forty and one years.

24 And he did *that which was* evil [q] in the sight of the LORD: [r] he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

25 He restored the coast of Israel, [s] from the entering of Hamath [t] unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant [u] Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which *was* of Gath-hepher.

26 For the LORD [y] saw the affliction of Israel, *that it was* very bitter: for *there was* [z] not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel.

27 And the LORD [a] said not that he would [b] blot out the name of Israel from under heaven; but [c] he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.

b See on 10:34,35. 1 K. 14:19,20.
c See on 2 Sam. 7:12. 1 K. 1:21.
d See on 13:9.
e 13:13. Hos. 1:1. Am. 1:1. 7:10,11.
f 1,2,23. 13:10. 2 Chr. 25:25.
g 13:8,12. 1 K. 11:41. 14:29.
h 12:20,21. 15:10,14,25,30. 21:23. 2 Chr. 25:27,28.
i Josh. 10:31. Mic. 1:13.
k 8:24. 9:28. 12:21. 1 K. 2:10. 11:43. 2 Chr. 21:20. 26:23. 33:20.
l 15:13. 2 Chr. 26:1. *Uzziah.* Matt. 1:8,9. *Ozias.*
m 21:24. 1 Chr. 3:12.
n 16:6. Deut. 2:8. 1 K. 9:26. 2 Chr. 26:2. *Eloth.*
o 17.
p 27. Hos. 1:1. Am. 1:1. 7:9—11.
* Now he begins to reign alone.
q 21:6. Gen. 38:7. Deut. 9:18. 1 K. 21:25.
r See on 13:2,6,11.
s Num. 13:21. 34:7,8. Ez. 47:16—18. Am. 6:14.
t Gen. 14:3. Deut. 3:17.
u Jon. 1:1. Matt. 12:39,40. 16:4. *Jonas.*
x Josh. 19:13. *Gittar-hepher.*
y 13:4. Ex. 3:7,9. Judg. 10:16. Ps. 106:43—45. Is. 63:9.
z Deut. 32:36. 1 K. 14:10. 21:21.
a 13:23. Hos. 1:6.
b Ex. 32:32,33. Deut. 9:14. 25:19. 29:20. Ps. 69:28. Rev. 3:5.
c 5:1. 13:5. Hos. 1:7. Tit. 3:4—6.

1. Joash king of Israel, *v.* 15, 16. We attended his funeral once before, *ch.* 13: 12, 13. But, because the historian had occasion to give a further account of his life and actions, he again mentions his death and burial.

2. Amaziah king of Judah; 15 years he survived his conqueror the king of Israel, *v.* 17. a man may live a great while after he has been shamed; his cruelty when a conqueror over the Edomites, and his insolence when he challenged the king of Israel, showed him void of true courage. He was slain by his own subjects, who hated him for his mal-administration; (*v.* 19.) ['and ill-success in his rash expedition;'] how long he continued concealed or sheltered at Lachish, we are not told, but, at last, he was there murdered, *v.* 19. No further did the rage of the rebels extend.

3. Azariah succeeded Amaziah, but not till 12 years after his father's death, for Amaziah died in the 15 year of Jeroboam, (as appears by comparing *v.* 23. with *v.* 1.) but Azariah did not begin his reign till the 27th of Jeroboam; (*ch.* 25: 1.) for he was but four years old at the death of his father, so that, for 12 years, till he came to be 16, the government was in the hands of protectors: he reigned very long, (*ch.* 15: 2.) and yet the account of his reign is here industriously huddled up, and broken off abruptly, *v.* 22.

V. 23—29. Here is an account of the reign of Jeroboam the second; I doubt it is an indication of the affection and adherence of the house of Jehu to the sins of *Jeroboam*, that they called an heir-apparent to the crown by his name.

I. His reign was the longest of all the reigns of the kings of Israel, 41 years; yet his contemporary Azariah, king of Judah, reigned longer, even 52 years. This Jeroboam reigned just as long as Asa; (1 K. 15: 10.) yet one did good, the other evil. We cannot measure men's characters by the length of their lives, or of their outward prosperity; *there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.*

II. His character was the same with that of the rest of those kings; *v.* 24. he kept up the worship of the calves, and never left it; but a sin is never the less evil in God's sight, whatever it is in ours, for its being an ancient usage; and a frivolous plea it will be against doing good, that we have been accustomed to do evil.

III. Yet he prospered more than most of them; for though, in that one thing, he did evil in the sight of the Lord, yet, it is likely, in other respects, there was some good found in him, and therefore God owned him,

Verse 21.

Azariah, or Uzziah, (words of similar meaning, the one signifying, *The help of the Lord*, and, the other, *the strength of the Lord*,) is thought by some to have been very young, not more than 4 years of age, when his father was slain; and they suppose that he was not made king till about 12 years afterwards. Thus he began to reign in the 27th year of Jeroboam; though his father was slain in the 15th year of Jeroboam. (23. 15:1.) But the years of Azariah's reign are reckoned from his father's death: and therefore others suppose, that Jeroboam reigned along with his father Joash 11 or 12 years; so that, reckoning his reign from this time, Azariah began to reign in his 27th year, though only 15 or 16 years after he began to reign alone. (23. 15: 1. *margins.*) SCOTT.

Azariah.] 'Called Uzziah in the next ch. and so 2 Chr. 26:1.' POOLE.

Verse 22.

Elath.] A town on the Red Sea, convenient for commerce, which the Edomites or Syrians had taken away from the kings of Judah. (*M. R.*) It is supposed that Amaziah had taken it, when he conquered the Edomites; but had not been able to derive much advantage from it, because of subsequent troubles; and that Azariah, after Amaziah's death, rebuilt and fortified it. SCOTT.

Verse 25.

The various enemies of Israel had encroached on their borders, from the northern to the southern extremity of the country belonging to the ten tribes; from Lebanon to the Dead or Salt Sea, which had been the plain of Sodom: but Jeroboam, encouraged by the predictions of Jonah, drove back these enemies, and recovered the country. (*Pref. to Jon.*) ID.

Verses 26, 27.

Joash had been successful, both against the Syrians and Judah. But probably the Syrians, not being totally subdued, still carried on destructive hostilities against Israel: and the neighboring nations, as the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, made continual incursions, and plundered whatever they could seize upon; so that the most valuable treasures of the Israelites were pillaged, those who seemed to

28 Now [d] the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered [e] Damascus, and Hamath, *which belonged* to Judah, for Israel, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

B. C. 784. 29 And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, *even* with the kings of Israel; and [f] Zachariah his son [*] reigned in his stead.

CHAP. XV.

Azariah's good reign, 1—4. He is smitten with leprosy, and Jotham his son governs for him, and succeeds him, 5—7. Zachariah reigns ill, and is slain by Shallum; and the fulfilment of the word of God to Jehu is noticed, 8—12. After one month, Shallum is slain, and succeeded by Menahem; who treats his opposers with savage cruelty; reigns wickedly; becomes tributary to Pul, king of Assyria; dies, and is succeeded by his son Pekahiah, 13—22. Pekahiah reigns ill, and is slain and succeeded by Pekah, 23—26. Pekah imitates the sins of his predecessor; Tiglath-pileser of Assyria carries captive part of Israel; and Hoshea kills and succeeds Pekah, 27—31. Jotham reigns well in Judah, 32—35. He dies, and is succeeded by his son Ahaz, 36—38.

IN [a] the † twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign.

2 [b] Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jecholiah of Jerusalem.

3 And [c] he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done;

4 Save that [d] the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the high places.

5 And [*] the LORD smote the king, [f] so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, [g] and dwelt in a several house: and [h] Jotham the king's son *was* over the house, [i] judging the people of the land.

6 And the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did, *are* [k] they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

B. C. 758. 7 So [l] Azariah slept with his fathers; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

B. C. 772. 8 ¶ In [m] the ‡ thirty and eighth year of Azariah king

d See on 15.
e 2 Sam. 8:6. 1 K. 11:24. 1 Chr. 18:5, 6. 2 Chr. 8:3,4.
f 15:5.
* After an interregnum of eleven years.

1. By prophecy; He raised up Jonah the son of Amittai, a Galilean; so much were they mistaken, that said, *Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet*, John 7: 52. It is a sign God has not cast off his people, if He continue faithful ministers among them; when Elisha was gone, who strengthened the hands of Joash, Jonah was sent to encourage his son. It is probable it was when he was a young man, and fit for such an expedition, that God sent him to Nineveh, and if so, this is an undoubted evidence of the forgiveness of his faults and follies, that he was afterward employed as a messenger of mercy to Israel. A commission amounts to a pardon, and some that have gone about their work awkwardly at first, yet afterward have proved useful and eminent; men must not be thrown away for every fault.

2. By providence; the event was *according to the word of the Lord;* he recovered those frontier-towns and countries that lay from Hamath in the N. to the sea of the plain, i.e. of Sodom in the S. all which the Syrians had possessed themselves of, *v.* 25. Two reasons are here given why God blessed them with those victories, (1.) The distress was very great, which made them objects of compassion, *v.* 26. Though not their repentance and reformation, yet *He saw their affliction, that it was very bitter;* they were miserably oppressed and enslaved, or impoverished and terrified, so that *there was none shut up or left*, both towns and countries were laid waste, and stripped of their wealth, and no helper appeared. To this extremity were they reduced, in many parts of the country, in the beginning of Jeroboam's reign, when God, in mere pity, wrought this deliverance by the hand of Jeroboam. Let those whose case is pitiable, take comfort from the divine pity: we read of God's bowels of mercy, (Isa. 63: 15. Jer. 31: 20.) and that He is full of compassion, Ps. 86: 15. (2.) The decree was not yet gone forth for their utter destruction; He had not as yet said, *He would blot out the name of Israel*, (*v.* 27.) and because He had not said it, He would not do it: if it be understood of the dispersion of the ten tribes, He did say it, and do it, not long after; if of the utter extirpation of Israel, He never said it, nor will ever do it, for that name still remains under heaven in the *gospel-Israel*, and will, to the end of time; and because they, at that time, bare that name, which was to have this lasting honor, He showed them this favor, as well as for the sake of the ancient honor of that name, *ch.* 13: 23.

CHAP. XV. V. 1—7. This is a short account of the reign of Azariah.

1. Most of it is general, and the same that has been given of others; he began young and reigned long; (*v.* 2.) and did, for the most part, what was right, *v.* 3.

2. What is peculiar, that God smote him with a leprosy, (*v.* 5.) is more largely related, with the occasion of it, 2 Chr. 26: 16, &c. where we have also a fuller account of the glories of the former part of his reign, as well as of the disgraces of the latter part of it. His son was his viceroy in the affairs both of his court, for *he was over the house*, and of his kingdom, for he was *judging the people of the land;* and it was both a comfort to him, and a blessing to his kingdom, that he had such a son to fill up his room.

V. 8—31. The best days of the kingdom of Israel were while the government was in Jehu's family; in his reign, and the next three, though there were many abominable corruptions and miserable grievances, yet the crown went in succession, the kings died in their beds, and some care was taken of public affairs.

I. Observe in general, 1. God had tried Israel both with judgments and mercies, explained and enforced by his servants the prophets, yet they continued impenitent and unreformed; therefore God justly brought these miseries on them; as Moses had warned them, Lev. 26: 24, &c.

2. God made good his promise to Jehu, that his sons, to the fourth generation after him, should sit on the throne; which was a greater favor than was shown to any royal family, before or after his.

3. All these kings did *evil in the sight of the Lord*, for *they walked in the sins of Jeroboam.* It was sad indeed, when their government was so often altered, (yet never for the better,) that among all those contending interests, none of them should think it as much their interest to destroy the calves, as others had done to support them.

4. Each of these (except one) conspired against his predecessor, and slew him, *Shallum*, *Menahem*, *Pekah*, and *Hoshea;* all traitors and murderers, yet all kings awhile; one of them 10, another 20, and another 9 years; God may suffer wickedness

a 8. 14:16,17.
† This is the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam's partnership in the kingdom with his father, who made him consort at his going to the Syrian wars. It is the sixteenth year of Jeroboam's monarchy.
b 14:21. 2 Chr. 26:1,3. *Uzziah.*
c 12:2,3. 14:3,4. 2 Chr. 26:4.
d 14:4. 18:4. 1 K. 15:14. 22:43. 2 Chr. 17:6. 33:12. 34:3.
e 2 Sam. 8:29. 2 Chr. 26:16—20. Job 34:19.
f 5:27. Num. 12:10.
g 7:3. Lev. 13:46. Num. 12:14. Deut. 24:8,9.
h 2 Chr. 26:21.
i 2 Sam. 8:15. 15:2—4. 1 K. 3:9,28. Ps. 72:1,2.
k See on 14:18.—2 Chr. 26:5—15.
l 2 Chr. 26:23. Is. 6:1. *Uzziah.*
m 1. 14:16,17,21.
‡ There having been an interregnum for eleven years.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 15—29. Wicked princes and nations are frequently successful, because opposed by others more guilty than themselves.—The proud are often visited with most humiliating providences; and if not humbled by them, their destruction is inevitable. Yet even in those places, where ungodliness is generally prevalent, the Lord takes notice of the extreme bitterness under which men groan, and spares them from time to time, that his goodness may lead them to repentance. Especially, is He thus long-suffering to those nations, where He has a remnant of true believers.—But the lives and successes of wicked men are contracted within narrow limits, and they are soon 'driven away in their wickedness,' one after another. And though the Lord will never blot out the name of his true Israel from under heaven, but will always raise them up helpers, that the enemy may never prevail against his cause on earth: yet there is an appointed period to his patience and long suffering; beyond which He will no longer bear with impenitent sinners, corrupt professing churches, or wicked nations; but will proceed to deal with them according to the most awful denunciations of his holy Word. SCOTT.

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have taken refuge in the safest places were destroyed, and there were none to help them. But as the time for their final dispersion was not yet come, the Lord saved them by the hand of Jeroboam, notwithstanding his idolatries. SCOTT.

Verse 28.

Damascus and Hamath belonged to *Judah*, in the reigns of David and Solomon: (2 *Sam.* 8:3—11. 1 *K.* 4:21.) and Jeroboam so effectually subdued the Syrians, that he obtained possession of them for *Israel;* which is called *recovering* them, because, though divided in government, Judah and Israel were still to be considered as one people. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV. V. 8. Amaziah reigned 15 years after Jeroboam came to the crown of Israel; (14:17.) so that the death of Jeroboam, who reigned 41 years, coincided with the 26th or 27th year of Azariah. An interregnum of about 11 years must therefore be allowed for, in the

of Judah did [n] Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over [o] Israel in Samaria six months.

9 And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, [o] as his fathers had done: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

10 And Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and [p] smote him before the people, and [q] slew him, and reigned in his stead.

11 And [r] the rest of the acts of Zachariah, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

12 This *was* [s] the word of the LORD which he spake unto Jehu, saying, [t] Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth *generation*. [u] And so it came to pass.

[*Practical Observations.*]

13 ¶ Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of [v] Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned [*] a full [x] month in Samaria.

14 For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from [y] Tirzah, and came to Samaria, [z] and smote Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his stead.

15 And [a] the rest of the acts of Shallum, and his conspiracy which he made, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

16 Then Menahem smote [b] Tiphsah, and all that *were* therein, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah: because they opened not *to him*, therefore he smote *it; and* [c] all the women therein that were with child he ripped up.

17 ¶ In [d] the nine and thirtieth year of Azariah king of Judah, began Menahem the son of Gadi to reign over Israel, *and reigned* ten years in Samaria.

18 And he did *that which was* [e] evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

[n] 14:29.

to prosper, and to carry away the wealth and honors awhile, but, sooner or later, blood shall have blood, and he that dealt treacherously shall be dealt treacherously with; one wicked man is often made a scourge to another, and every wicked man, at length, a ruin to himself.

5. The ambition of the great men made the nation miserable. Here is Tiphsah, a city of Israel, barbarously destroyed, with all the coasts thereof, by one of these pretenders; (*v.* 16.) and, no doubt, it was through blood that each of them waded to the throne; nor could any of these kings perish alone. No land can have greater pests, nor Israel worse troubles, than such men as care not how much the welfare and repose of their country are sacrificed to their revenge, and affectation of dominion.

6. While the nation was thus shattered by divisions at home, the kings of Assyria, first one, (*v.* 19.) and then another, (*v.* 29.) came against it, and did what they pleased. Nothing does more to make a nation an easy prey to a common enemy, than intestine broils, and contests for the sovereignty; happy the land where that is settled.

7. This was Israel's condition, just before they were quite ruined, and carried away captives, for that was done in the 9th year of Hoshea, the last of these usurpers. If they had, in these days of confusion and perplexity, humbled themselves before God, and sought his face, that final destruction might have been prevented; but when God judgeth, He will overcome; these factions, the fruit of an evil spirit sent among them, hastened that captivity; for a kingdom, thus divided against itself, will soon come to desolation.

II. A short view of the particular reigns.

1. Zachariah, the son of Jeroboam, began to reign in the 38th year of Azariah, or Uzziah, king of Judah, *v.* 8. Some of the most critical chronologers reckon an interregnum between Jeroboam and his son Zachariah, of 22 years, others 11 years, through the disturbances and dissensions that were in the kingdom; and then it was not strange Zachariah was deposed before he was well seated on the throne: Shallum *slew him before the people*, perhaps, as Cæsar was slain in the senate; or, he put him to death publicly as a criminal: so ended the line of Jehu.

2. But had Shallum peace, who slew his master? one month of days measured his reign, *v.* 13. Perhaps to this the prophet, who then lived, refers, (Hos. 5: 7.) *Now shall a month devour them with their portions.* That dominion seldom lasts long, which is founded in blood and falsehood. Menahem was, probably, general of the army, which then lay encamped at Tirzah, and, hearing of Shallum's treason and usurpation, hastened to punish it, as Omri did that of Zimri in a like case, 1 K. 16: 17.

3. Menahem held the kingdom ten years, *v.* 17 We have heard that the *kings of the house of Israel were merciful kings*, (1 K. 20: 31.) but this Menahem was so prodigiously cruel, that he not only ruined a city, and the coasts thereof, but, forgetting that he himself was born of a woman, *ripped up all the women with child*, *v.* 16. We may well wonder that ever it should enter into the heart of any man, to be so barbarous, so perfectly lost to humanity itself. He hoped to strengthen himself, no doubt, and to frighten all into his interests; but it seems he durst not confide in his people, to meet an enemy, but was obliged, at a vast expense, to purchase a peace with the king of Assyria. It was part of his bargain, that he should assist him against his own subjects that were disaffected to him. The money was exacted, it is probable, by military execution, *of all the mighty men of wealth*, very considerately sparing the poor, and laying the burden (as was fit) on those that were best able to bear it. But so rich a booty with so little trouble, encouraged the enemy to come again, not long after, when they laid all waste; thus was *he* the betrayer of his country, that should have been the protector of it.

4. Pekahiah, the son of Menahem, succeeded his father, but reigned only 2 years, and then was treacherously slain by Pekah, falling under the load both of his own and of his father's wickedness. It is repeated concerning him, as before, that he *departed not from the sins of Jeroboam:* still that is mentioned, to show that God was righteous in bringing that destruction on them, which came not long after, because they hated to be reformed, *v.* 24. Pekah, it seems, had some persons of figure in his interest, two of them are here named, (*v.* 25.) and with their help he compassed his design.

[o] See on 10:29,31. 13:2,11. 14:24.
[p] Am. 7:9.
[q] 14,25,30. 9:24,31. 1 K. 15:28. 16:9, 10. Hos. 1:4,5.
[r] See on 14:28.
[s] 10:30.
[t] 13:1,10,13. 14:29.
[u] 9:25,26,36,37. 10:10. Num. 23:19. Zech. 1:6. Mark 13:31. John 10:35. 19:24,36,37. Acts 1:16.
[v] 1. *Azariah.* Matt. 1:8,9. *Ozias.*
[*] Heb. *a month of days.*
[x] 1 K. 16:15. Job 20:15. Ps. 55:23. Prov. 28:2,17.
[y] 1 K. 14:17. 15:21,33. 16:8,9,15,17.
[z] See on 10.
[a] See on 11. 1 K. 14:19,29. 22:39.
[b] 1 K. 4:24.
[c] See on 8:12.—Am. 1:13.
[d] 13.
[e] See on 9.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12. The study of history has a tendency to render the reflecting person thankful even for a mediocrity of character, in those placed in authority; and to dispose him to bear patiently many evident faults in the administration of public affairs. And if the inhabitants of our land of liberty and peace can read this narration, without forgetting their imaginary or trivial causes for complaint, or without blessing God for their mercies, and praying for their rulers, and the continuance of our distinguishing privileges, they cannot be acquitted from the charge of base ingratitude.—But with regret we must observe, that such is the depraved tendency of human nature to evil, that revivals in religion are commonly transient: whereas corruptions endure from age to age, and few good men have at once power and courage effectually to remove them.—The imperfections of true believers are very different from the allowed, habitual, and pertinacious wickedness of ungodly men. In the former, the remains indeed of depravity are visible, and occasionally break forth into evident evil: but in the latter case, when restraints of conscience, regard to reputation, fear of human laws, and want of power, are surmounted; the desperate wickedness of the heart, like an impetuous torrent which has burst its banks, bears down all opposition, and spreads devastation all around. SCOTT.

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kingdom of *Israel*, between the death of Jeroboam, and the succession of his son: either because of his youth, or through the factious temper of the people. (*M.*) SCOTT.

Verses 13—16.

M. R.—Tiphsah. (16) A city called Tiphsah, near the Euphrates, was one boundary of Solomon's dominions. (1 *K.* 4:24.) But that was so far distant from Tirzah, that some other city of the same name, situated in Canaan, is supposed to be here meant. If, however, Menahem attempted to recover all that had been lost to Israel, after the death of Solomon, he might march to Tiphsah, on the Euphrates; and this might give occasion to the king of Assyria to invade his dominions.—Things were now hastening to a fatal crisis in the kingdom of the ten tribes. After the death of Elisha, true religion evidently began to decline; and neither the labors, nor the writings, of the succeeding prophets could stop the rapid increase of immorality, idolatry, or profaneness, which inundated that people. This ch. gives such an account of their public affairs, as will afford the attentive reader great assistance in understanding the writings of those prophets, who lived during that period, viz. Isaiah, Hoshea, Micah, and Amos. SCOTT.

19 *And* [f] Pul the king of Assyria came against the land; and [g] Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him, [h] to confirm the kingdom in his hand.

20 And [i] Menahem [*] exacted the money of Israel, *even* of all [k] the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria: so the king of Assyria turned back, and [l] stayed not there in the land.

21 And [m] the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

22 And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead.

23 ¶ In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekahiah the son of Menahem began to reign over Israel in Samaria, [n] *and reigned* two years.

24 And he did *that which was* [o] evil in the sight of the LORD; he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

B. C. 759. 25 But [p] Pekah the son of Remaliah, [q] a captain of his, [r] conspired against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the king's house, with Argob and Arieh, and with him fifty men of the Gileadites: and he killed him, and reigned in his room.

26 And [s] the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that he did, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

27 ¶ In [t] the two and fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah, [u] Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* twenty years.

B. C. 740. 28 And he did *that which was* [v] evil in the sight of the LORD; he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

29 In the days of Pekah king of Israel, came [x] Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and took [y] Ijon, and [z] Abel-beth-maachah, and [a] Janoah, and [b] Kedesh, and [c] Hazor, and [d] Gilead, and [e] Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and [f] carried them captive to Assyria.

30 And Hoshea, the son of Elah, [g] made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, [h] and smote him, and slew him, and B. C. 739. † reigned in his stead, [i] in ‡ the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah.

31 And the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

32 In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel,

f 1 Chr. 5:25,26. Is. 9:1.
g 12:18. 16:8. 17:3,4. 18:16. Hos. 5:13. 8:9,10. 10:6.
h 14:5. Jer. 17:5.
i 23:35.
* Heb. *caused to come forth.*
k Ruth 2:1. 2 Sam. 19:32. Job 1:3.
l 29. 17:3,4. 18:14—17.
m See on 15.
n 21:19. 1 K. 15:25. 16:8. 22:51. Job 20:5.
o See on 9,18.
p 27. 2 Chr. 28:6.
q 9:5. 1 K. 16:9.
r See on 10. 9:14.
s See on 15.
t 2,8,13,23.
u 25,37. Is. 7:1,9.
v See on 9,18. 13:2,6.—21:2.
x 16:7. 1 Chr. 5:6,26. 2 Chr. 28:20,21 *Tiglath-pileser.* Is. 9:1.
y 1 K. 15:20. 2 Chr. 16:4.
z 2 Sam. 20:14,15.
a Josh. 16:6,7. *Janohah.*
b Josh. 19:36,37.
c Josh. 11:1,10,13. 12:19. Judg. 4:2.
d Num. 32:1,40. Deut. 3:15. Am. 1:3,13.
e Josh. 20:7. 1 K. 9:11. Is. 9:1,2. Matt. 4:15,16.
f 17:6,23. Lev. 26:32,33,39. Deut. 4:26,27. 28:25,64,65. Is. 1:7. 7:20.
g See on 10.25.
h Hos. 10:3,7,15.
† After an anarchy for some years.
i 32,33. 16:1. 17:1. 2 Chr. 28:1—6, 16. Is. 7:1—9. 8:6.
‡ In the fourth year of Ahaz, in the twentieth year after Jotham had begun to reign.

Verses 19, 20.

A thousand talents of silver. Nearly 400,000 pounds.—The kingdom of Assyria is here mentioned, for the first time, after the building of Nineveh by Nimrod. (*Note, Gen.* 10:8—12.) And this shows, that the history, given by many writers, of a very prosperous and large monarchy, lasting for much above 1000 years previous to this time, is in great measure a romance. David and Solomon met with no opposition from the kings of Assyria, in establishing their kingdom, even to the Euphrates. Nor is Assyria once mentioned in their history. Assur indeed helped the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, on some occasions: but yet the very connection implies, that it was of itself not very considerable. (*Ps.* 83:6—8.) But it seems that Nineveh had by this time become a very great city, and no doubt the king of Nineveh had acquired a considerable territory. (*Jon.* 1:2. 3:3, 4. 4:11.) And some think that Pul was the king, when Jonah prophesied against Nineveh. It is not, however, agreed, whether he was one of the ancient line of the Assyrian kings; or whether he was one of those who effected that revolution, which, all allow, took place about this time; and so was the father of Tiglath-pileser. The latter indeed seems most probable: but such darkness and uncertainty rest on this part of ancient history, that the most learned men differ exceedingly in their opinions on the subject. (1 *Chr.* 5:25, 26. 2 *Chr.* 28:16—18.) SCOTT.

Of each man fifty shekels. (20) 'He gave to the king of Assyria so many shekels for every man . . . in his army. So they' (the Hebrew words) 'run exactly, "to give to the king of Assyria fifty shekels of silver for each man."' *Bp. Patrick.* It may be supposed, that Menahem compelled 'the mighty men of wealth' to give much more apiece than this sum, and each of them in some proportion to his affluence. ID.

(19.) *Pul.*] 'Called by heathen authors Pul-Belochus. By the help of Arbaces, the Mede, he vanquished Sardanapalus, the last monarch of Assyria, and translated the kingdom to Chaldea, and was the first king of Babylon and Assyria.' POOLE.

Verses 19—29.

Prideaux considers Pul to be the father of Sardanapalus (Sardan-pul) and Tilgath or Thilgath-Pileser to be Arbaces, called Thilgam by Ælian. But comp. notes 19, 20. 17: 6, &c. ED.

(25.) It does not clearly appear, whether Argob, Arieh, and the fifty Gileadites, were slain with the king; or whether they were conspirators with Pekah. SCOTT.

And smote, &c.] 'Rather, and with the aid of Argob and Arieh, and 50 Gileadites, smote him in Samaria, in the harem of his own palace.' BOOTHR.

(29.) Pul seems to have carried captive many out of those tribes which dwelt to the E. of Jordan: (1 *Chr.* 5:25, 26.) and Tiglath-pileser, who is, with great probability, thought to have been his son and successor, carried captive a considerable number of the inhabitants of the districts northern parts of the land, as well as the inhabitants of the districts to the east of Jordan. (*M. R.*)—Thus the prophecies, in this respect, had a gradual accomplishment. (17:5, 6. 18:9—12.) SCOTT.

Verse 30.

In the twentieth, &c.] That is, the 20th year from Jotham's accession; for he reigned only 16 years; (33) and Hoshea succeeded Pekah in the *4th* year of Ahaz, though he was not established in the kingdom till the 12th year of that king. It is also evident from the whole narrative, that Ahaz reigned over Judah some time before the death of Pekah. (17:1.) Perhaps the conspiracy was entered into before the death of Jotham; but was not successful till 4 years after. In respect of many of these difficulties in settling the chronology, (which infidels vainly magnify into objections against the sacred history,) it may be proper to observe, that no writer wilfully contradicts himself within a few lines: and therefore some solution of the difficulty should be sought, and *must exist*, whether our information enable us to solve it or not. ID.

Verse 31.

Notes, 16:5. 2 *Chr.* 28:6—8. *Is.* 7:1, 5—9. ID.

Verses 32—36.

M. R.—2 *Chr.* 27:—*In the second year.* (32) Pekah reigned 20 years. (27) Jotham therefore began his reign 17 or 18 years before the death of Pekah: consequently Pekah survived Jotham a considerable time

began [k] Jotham the son of [l] Uzziah king of Judah to reign.

33 Five and twenty years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. B. C. 758. And his mother's name *was* [m] Jerusha the daughter of Zadok.

34 And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD: he did [n] according to all that his father Uzziah had done.

35 Howbeit [o] the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still in the high places. He built [p] the higher gate of the house of the LORD.

36 Now [q] the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

37 In those days the LORD [r] began [s] to send against Judah [t] Rezin, the king of Syria, and [u] Pekah the son of Remaliah.

38 And [x] Jotham slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and [y] Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.

CHAP. XVI.

Ahaz reigns very wickedly, 1—4. Rezin and Pekah war against him; and Rezin takes Elath, 5, 6. Ahaz hires Tiglath-pileser against them, who takes Damascus and slays Rezin, 7—9. Ahaz sends a pattern of an altar from Damascus; and Urijah, the high priest, makes one like it for burnt-offerings; reserving the brazen altar for Ahaz to inquire by, 10—16. Ahaz robs and defaces the temple for the king of Assyria, 17, 18. He dies, and is succeeded by his son Hezekiah, 19, 20.

IN the [a] seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, [b] Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign.

2 Twenty years old *was* Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and [c] did not *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father.

3 But [d] he walked in the way of the kings of Israel: yea, and [e] made his son to pass through the fire, [f] according to the abominations of the heathen, whom [g] the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel.

4 And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and [h] on the hills, and under every green tree.

5 Then [b] Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, [i] but could not overcome *him*.

6 At that time Rezin king of Syria [k] recovered Elath to Syria, and

k 7. 1 Chr. 3:12. 2 Chr. 27:1. Matt. 1:9. *Joatham.*
l See on 1,7,13,17,23,27. 14:21.—1 Chr. 2:12. *Azariah.*
m 2 Chr. 27:1. *Jerushah.*
n 3,4. 2 Chr. 26:4,5. 27:2.
o See on 4.—18:4. 2 Chr. 32:12.
p 2 Chr. 27:3.
q See on 6,7.—2 Chr. 27:4—9.
r 10:32. 1 Sam. 8:12. Jer. 25:29. Luke 21:28.
s Deut. 28:48. Ps. 78:49. Is. 10:5—7. Jer. 16:16. 43:10.
t 16:5. 2 Chr. 28:6. Is. 7:1,8. Hos. 5: 12,13.
u See on 27.
x See on 2 Sam. 7:12. 1 K. 1:21. 14: 20.31.
y 16:1. 1 Chr. 3:13. 2 Chr. 28:1. Matt. 1:9. *Achaz.*
a 15:27—30.32,33.
b See on 15:38.—2 Chr. 28:1. Is. 1:1. 7:1. Hos. 1:1. Mic. 1:1.
c 14:3. 15:3,34. 18:3. 22:2. 1 K. 3: 14. 9:4. 11:4—8. 15:3. 2 Chr. 17: 3. 29:2. 34:2,3.
d 8:18. 1 K. 12:28—30. 16:31—33. 21: 25,26. 22:52,53. 2 Chr. 22:3. 28:2—4.
e 17:17. 23:10. Lev. 18:21. 20:2. Deut. 12:31. 18:10. 2 Chr. 33:6. Ps. 106:37,38. Jer. 32:35. Ez. 16:21. 20:26,31.
f 21:2,11. Deut. 12:31. 1 K. 14:24. 2 Chr. 33:2. Ps. 106:35. Ez. 16:47.
g Deut. 12:2. 1 K. 14:23. Is. 57:5—7. 65:4. 66:17. Jer. 17:2. Ez. 20:28,29.
h 15:37. 2 Chr. 28:5—15. Is. 7:1,2.
i 1 K. 11:36. 15:4. Is. 7:4—6,14. 8:8, 9,10. 9:6,7.
k 14:22. Deut. 2:8.

V. 1—4. We have here a general character of the reign of Ahaz, few and evil were his days: few, for he died at 36; evil, for,

1. He *did not what was right, like David;* (*v.* 2.) i. e. he had no love, as David had, for the temple, made no conscience of his duty to God, nor had any regard to his law. It was his honor, that he was of the house and lineage of David, and it was owing to God's ancient covenant with David, that he was now on the throne; this aggravated his wickedness.

2. He walked *in the way of the kings of Israel,* (*v.* 3.) who all worshipped the calves. They pleaded policy and reasons of state for their idolatry, but Ahaz had no such pretence, not even of affinity to these, his enemies, and who had proved enemies to themselves too by their idolatry.

3. He *made his sons to pass through the fire,* to the honor of his dunghill-deities; burnt them, 2 Chr. 28: 3. some of them, and perhaps made others (Hezekiah not excepted,) to pass between two fires, or to be drawn through a flame, in token of their dedication to the idol.

4. He did *according to the abomination of the heathen whom the Lord had cast out.* What folly and impiety!

5. He *sacrificed in the high places, v.* 4. Had his father taken them away, it might have prevented the debauching of his sons: they that connive at sin, know not what snares they lay for those that come after them. His was a religion of little worth, which was guided by fancy, not by faith.

V. 5—9. Here is,

1. The attempt on him of his confederate neighbors, the kings of Syria and Israel. They thought to master Jerusalem, and to set a king of their own in it, Isa. 7: 6. In that they fell short, but the king of Syria recovered Elath, a considerable port on the Red Sea, which Amaziah had taken from the Syrians, *ch.* 14: 22. What can they keep, that have lost their religion? Let them expect, thenceforward, to be always on the losing hand.

2. His project to get clear of them, *v.* 7. Those

CHAP. XVI. This ch. is wholly taken up with the reign of Ahaz; quite enough of it, unless it were better. He had a good father, and a better son, yet was himself one of the worst of the kings of Judah.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 13—38. The words concerning Jeroboam, so often repeated, for ages after his death, that 'he made Israel to sin,' should impress our minds with dread and horror, at the thought of tempting others to wickedness; as it can never be known how extensively or durably the mischief may spread.—When the gratification of ambition, avarice, revenge, or lust, requires it, there is no conceivable kind or degree of treachery and barbarity, which men may not be tempted to commit: yet the madness of those who thus act, equals their wickedness; for repeated examples of the fatal end of those, who through blood have waded to a throne, will not deter them from pressing forward in the same way, and mounting the slippery pre-eminence, to be thence hurried by a violent death to a premature grave! We should then be thankful for external restraints, and for being kept out of temptation; and beg of God incessantly to 'create in us a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within us:' and may He help us to seek that honor which comes from Him, to those who do good in their generation; and to dread that greatness, which is obtained and secured by doing mischief and diffusing misery.—Death in various forms hurries men to God's judgment-seat: the righteous are then taken from the evil to come, and enter into rest; and it is a mercy, to be spared the anguish of witnessing the miseries, that are coming on corrupted churches and nations. SCOTT.

as indeed the scriptures referred to (31.) fully prove. (*Note*, 30.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI. V. 3, 4. Hezekiah was born some years before the death of Jotham; if he was the son here intended, he was past his infancy at the time. (*Note*, 18:2.) SCOTT.

Verse 6.

(14:22.)—The word 'Jews' is here first used. It is literally the

drave the Jews from * Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day.

7 So Ahaz sent messengers [l] to † Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, [m] I *am* thy servant, and thy son: come up [n] and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me.

8 And Ahaz took [o] the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent *it for* a present [p] to the king of Assyria.

9 And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him; for the king of Assyria [q] went up against ‡ Damascus, and took it, and carried *the people of* it captive to [r] Kir, [s] and slew Rezin.

10 ¶ And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, [t] and saw an altar that *was* at Damascus: and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and [u] the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof.

11 And Urijah the priest [x] built an altar according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus: so [y] Urijah the priest made *it* against king Ahaz came from Damascus.

12 And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar; and the king [z] approached to the altar, and [a] offered thereon.

13 And [b] he burnt his burnt-offering, and his meat-offering, and poured his drink-offering, and sprinkled the blood § of his peace-offerings upon the altar.

14 And he brought also [c] the brazen altar which *was* before the LORD, from the forefront of the house, from between the altar and the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of [d] the altar.

15 And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great altar burn * the morning burnt-offering, and the evening meat-offering, and [f] the king's burnt-sacrifice, and his meat-offering, with the burnt-offering of all the people of the land, and their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt-offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice: and the brazen altar shall be [g] for me to inquire *by*.

16 Thus did [h] Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded.

whose hearts condemn them, will go any whither in a day of distress, rather than to God. The sin itself was its own punishment; it is true he gained his point, the king of Assyria hearkened to him, and made a descent on Damascus, whereby he gave a powerful diversion to the king of Syria, (*v.* 9.) carrying the Syrians captive to Kir, as Amos had expressly foretold, (*ch.* 1: 5.) yet, considering all, he made but a bad bargain; for, to compass this,

(1.) He enslaved himself, *v.* 7. Had he thus humbled himself to God, and implored his favor, he might have been delivered on easier terms; to save his money, he needed only to part with his sins; but if the prodigal forsake his father's house, he soon becomes a slave to the worst of masters, Luke 15: 15.

(2.) He impoverished himself, *v.* 8. Both church and state must be exhausted, to gratify his new patron and guardian. I know not what authority he had thus to dispose of the public stock; but it is common for those that have brought themselves into straits by one sin, to help themselves out by another; and those that have alienated themselves from God, will make no difficulty of alienating any of his rights.

V. 10—16. Ahaz had himself sacrificed in high places, on hills, and under every green tree, (*v.* 4.) yet God's altar had hitherto continued in its place, and in use, and the *king's burnt-offering and his meat-offering*, (*v.* 15.) had been offered on it by the priests that attended it; but here he takes it away, and puts another altar, an idolatrous one, in the room of it—a bolder stroke than the worst of the kings had yet given to religion. We have here,

I. The model of this new altar, taken from one at Damascus, by the king himself, *v.* 10. Ahaz went to Damascus, to congratulate the king of Assyria on his success. There, either while viewing the rarities of the place, or rather while joining in their devotions, he saw an altar that pleased his fancy extremely, not such a plain old-fashioned one as that at Jerusalem, but curiously carved, it is likely, and adorned with image-work; many things about it were significant, he thought, surprising, charming, calculated to excite his devotion. Solomon had but a dull fancy, he thinks, compared with the ingenious artist that made this altar. The hearts of idolaters walked after their eyes, but true worshippers worship the true God by faith.

II. But, whatever pretence he had, it was most base and wicked for Urijah, that was a priest, a chief priest, to make this altar, and so readily too, in compliance with an idolatrous prince. There is not a greater disgrace to the ministry, than obsequiousness to such wicked commands; and for him to assist and serve the king, in setting up an altar to confront the altar which, by divine appointment, he was consecrated to minister at, was such a piece of treachery and perfidiousness, as may justly render him infamous to all posterity.

III. Its dedication. Urijah took care to have it ready, and set it near the brazen altar, but somewhat lower, and further from the door of the temple. The king was exceedingly pleased with it, approached to it with all possible veneration, and offered thereon his burnt-offering, &c. *v.* 12, 13. His sacrifices were not offered to the God of Israel, but to the gods of Damascus, as we find, 2 Chr. 28: 23. when he borrowed the Syrians' altar, no marvel that he borrowed their gods. Naaman, the Syrian, embraced the God of Israel, when he got earth from the land of Israel to make an altar of.

IV. The removal of God's altar, to make room for it. Urijah was so modest, that he put this altar at the lower end of the court, and left God's altar in its place, *between this and the house of the Lord*, *v.* 14. But that would not satisfy Ahaz; he removed God's altar to an obscure corner, in the north side of the court, and put his own before the sanctuary, in the place of it: let that be laid aside as a vessel in which there was no pleasure. His superstitious invention, at first, justled *with*, but at length justled *out* God's sacred institution. Note, Those will soon come to make nothing of God, that will not be content to make Him their all. Ahaz durst not, (perhaps for fear of the people,) quite demolish the brazen altar; but while he ordered all the sacrifices to be offered on his new altar, (*v.* 15.) *The brazen altar* (says he) *shall be for me to inquire by.* It was instituted, to sanctify the gifts offered upon it, but he pretends

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* Heb. *Eloth.* 1 K. 9:26. 2 Chr. 26:2.
l See on 15:29.
† Heb. *Tilgath-pilezer.* 1 Chr. 5:26. 2 Chr. 28:20. *Tilgath-pilneser.*
m 1 K. 20:4,32,33.
n Ps. 146:3—5. Jer. 17:5. Lam. 4:17. Hos. 14:3.
o 17,18. 12:17,18. 18:15,16. 2 Chr. 16:2. 28:20,21.
p Ps. 7:15,16. Is. 7:17. 8:7,8.
q 2 Chr. 28:5. Am. 1:3—5.
‡ Heb. *Dammesek.*
r Is. 22:6. Am. 1:5. 9:7.
s Is. 7:16. 9:11.
t Deut. 12:30. 2 Chr. 28:23—25. Jer. 10:2. Ez. 23:16,17. Rom. 12:2. 1 Pet. 1:18.
u Ex. 24:4. 39:43. 1 Chr. 28 11,12,19. Ps. 106:39. Ez. 43:8,11. Matt. 15:9, 9.
x 1 K. 21:11—13. 2 Chr. 26:17,18. Jer. 23:11. Ez. 22:26. Dan. 9:7. Hos. 4: 6. 5:11. Mal. 2:7—9. Gal. 1:10.
y Is. 8:2.
z 1 K. 13:1. 2 Chr. 26:16—19. 28:23,25.
a Num. 18:4—7.
b Lev. 1: 2: 3:
§ Heb. *the peace-offerings which were his.*
c Ex. 40:6,29. 2 Chr. 1:5. 4:1. Matt. 23:35.
d 10—12.
e 3:20. Ex. 29:39—41. Num. 28:2—10. Dan. 9:21,27. 11:31. 12:11.
f Lev. 4:13—26. 2 Sam. 6:17,18. 1 K. 3:4. 8:64. 2 Chr. 7:4,5. 29:21—24, 32,35. Ez. 46:4—7,12—14.
g 18:4. Gen. 44:5. 2 Chr. 33:6. Is. 2: 6. Hos. 4:12.
h See on 11.—Acts 4:19. 5:29. 1 Thes. 2:4. Jude 11.

Judeans; i. e. the men of Judah; as all those, who adhered to the family of David, were called, to distinguish them from the subjects of the kings who reigned over the ten tribes, called Israel.—The general custom among even learned writers, of calling the nation of Israel *Jews*, from the days of Moses, and even before, is inaccurate and unscriptural. SCOTT.

Verses 7—9.

(15:19, 20, 28.) As the king of Assyria brought Ahaz into abject dependence on him, and both weakened him and drained his treasury, it is said that 'he distressed him, but strengthened him not,' (2 *Chr.* 28:20, 21.) though he averted the present storm.—From this time Syria ceased to be a kingdom: and the region formed successively a part of the kingdom of Assyria, of Chaldea, or of Persia; till it was subjugated by Alexander the Great; after whose death, a new kingdom of Syria was formed, which, with all his other dominions, at length became a part of the Roman empire. (*Dan.* 7:6.) Ahaz feared danger to his kingdom from Syria, and sought help from Assyria; whence indeed the greatest danger was to be apprehended. (*Is.* 7 17—25.) SCOTT.

Kir. (9) 'A place in . . . the upper Media, as Josephus tells us.' *Patrick.* (*M. R.*) SCOTT. Where the river Kir, Kyrus, Cyrus or Kour flows. See the map, vol. 1. ED.

Verses 10—16.

(2 *Chr.* 25:14—16. 28:22, 23.) It is uncertain whether sacrifices were offered to the gods of Damascus on this altar, or whether the oblations were presented to JEHOVAH alone.—It seems that Ahaz professed a purpose of converting the former altar into an oracle, at which he might inquire: as the church of Rome, by *adoring the host*, has converted the Lord's supper into the most absurd and detestable idolatry, under the pretence of *honoring* it. (*Note*, 18:4.) Ahaz's making a sun-dial of the brass of the altar is uncertain, and not probable: for we do not read, that Hezekiah made any altar, as in that case he must have done. SCOTT

17 And king Ahaz cut off [k] the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and took down [l] the sea from off the brazen oxen that *were* under it, and put it upon a pavement of stones:

18 And [m] the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king's entry without, turned he from the house of the LORD, for the king of Assyria.

B. C. 726. 19 Now [n] the rest of the acts of Ahaz, which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

20 And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and [o] was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and [p] Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.

CHAP. XVII.

Hoshea becomes tributary to Shalmaneser, conspires with the king of Egypt against him, and is shut up in prison by the king of Assyria, 1—4. Shalmaneser besieges Samaria, and after three years takes it, and carries Israel captive into Assyria and Media, 5, 6. The crimes, which brought this punishment from God on his people, 7—23. The strange nations, planted in the land, are plagued by lions, 24, 25: but, instructed by a priest of Israel in the worship of the Lord, they serve Him along with their own idols, 26—41.

IN the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, began [a] Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years.

to advance it above its institution, a common abuse for superstitious people. The altar was never designed for an oracle, yet Ahaz will have it for that use. The Romish church seemingly magnifies Christ's sacraments, yet wretchedly corrupts them. But some give another sense of Ahaz's purpose; 'As for the brazen altar, I will consider what to do with it, and give order about it.' The Jews say, that, afterward, of the brass of it he made that famous dial, which was called *the dial of Ahaz*, *ch.* 20: 11.

V. 17—20. Here is, 1. Ahaz abusing the temple: not the building itself, but some of the furniture of it: the bases on which the lavers were set, (1 K. 7: 28, 29.) and the molten sea, *v.* 17. These the priests used for washing; against them therefore he seems to have a particular spite. It is one of the greatest prejudices that can be done to religion, to obstruct the purifying of the priests, the Lord's ministers. He removed also *the covert for the sabbath;* erected either in honor of the Sabbath, or for the conveniency of the priests, when, on the sabbath, they officiated in greater numbers than on other days. Whatever it was, it should seem that in removing it, he intended to put a contempt on the Sabbath, and so to open as wide an inlet as any other to all manner of impiety. The king's entry, too, which led to the house of the Lord, for the convenience of the royal family, (perhaps, that ascent Solomon made, and the queen of Sheba admired,) he turned another way, to show that he did not intend to frequent the house of the Lord any more, and to oblige the king of Assyria. Those that have had a ready passage to the house of the Lord, but to please their neighbors, turn it another way, are going down hill apace toward ruin.

2. Ahaz leaving his kingdom to a better man, Hezekiah his son, as much a friend to the temple, as he had been an enemy to it: and whom God, by his grace, snatched as a brand out of the burning.

CHAP. XVII. This ch. gives us an account of the captivity of the ten tribes, and so finishes the history of that kingdom, after it had continued about 265 years, from the setting up of Jeroboam

2 And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, [b] but not as the kings of Israel that were before him.

3 Against him came up [c] Shalmaneser [d] king of Assyria; [e] and Hoshea the son of Nebat. Hoshea was the last of the kings of Israel; concerning whom observe,

V. 1—6. I. He forced his way to the crown by treason and murder, (*ch.* 15: 30.) yet gained not the possession of it till 7 or 8 years after; he slew Pekah in the 4th year of Ahaz, but did not himself begin to reign till the 12th. *v.* 1. Whether by the king of Assyria, or of Judah, or by some of his own people, does not appear; but, it seems, so long he was kept out of the throne. Justly were his bad practices thus chastised, and the word of the prophet was thus fulfilled, Hos. 10: 3.

II. He was bad, yet not so bad as the kings of Israel before him, (*v.* 2.) not so devoted to the calves. One of them, (that at Dan,) the Jews say, had been, before this, carried away by the king of Assyria in that expedition, *ch.* 15: 29 to which, perhaps, the prophet refers; (Hos. 8: 5.) *Thy calf, O Samaria, has cast thee off;* which made him put the less confidence in the other. And some say this Hoshea, not as the former kings, permitted those who wished to go up to Jerusalem to worship. But why the destruction of the kingdom of Israel in the reign of one of the best of its kings? *Thy judgments*, O God, *are a great deep.* God would hereby show, that in bringing this ruin on them, He designed to punish, 1. Not only the sins of that generation, but of foregoing ages, that had been long treasuring up wrath against this day of wrath. 2. Not only the sins of their kings, but the sins of the people. It was an aggravation of their badness, and brought ruin the sooner, that their king did not set them so bad an example as former kings, nor hinder them from reforming.

III. The destruction came gradually. They were for some time made tributaries, before they were made captives, (*v.* 3.) and if that less judgment had prevailed to humble and reform them, the greater had been prevented.

IV. They brought it on themselves, by the indirect course they took to shake off the yoke of the king of Assyria, *v.* 4. instead of going to God.

V. It was an utter destruction.

1. The king was made a prisoner; shut up and bound; being, it is probable, taken by surprise, before Samaria was besieged.

k 2 Chr. 28:24. 29:19.
l 1 K. 7:27—39. 2 Chr. 4:14.
m 25:13—16. 1 K. 7:23—26. 2 Chr. 4: 15. Jer. 52:20.
n 15:5,7,36,38. 20:20,21.—See on 1 K. 14:29.
o 21:18,26. 2 Chr. 28:27.
p 18:1. 1 Chr. 3:13. 2 Chr. 29:1. Is. 1:1. Hos. 1:1. Mic. 1:1. Matt. 1:9, 10. *Exodus.*
a 15:30. 18:9.
b 3:2. 10:31. 13:2,11. 15:9,18,24. 2 Chr. 30:5—11.
c 18:9. Hos. 10:14. *Shalman.*
d 15:19,29. 16:7. 18:13. 19:36,37. Is. 7:7,8. 10:5,6,11,12.
e 16:8. 18:14—16,31.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Word of God affords abundant encouragement to pious parents to give their children good instructions, enforced by good examples, and to pray for them: and these means are so generally made effectual, as sufficiently to verify the proverb, 'Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.' (*Note, Prov.* 22:6.) Yet there are exceptions recorded in the scriptures, to remind us, that every man is born in sin, and that the grace of God alone can change the heart; in order that we may expect the blessing from Him only. On the other hand, some who have been, as it were, early dedicated to Satan, and initiated into his service, have, by the victorious grace of God, been made eminent examples of faith and piety: and every accurate observer of mankind, in places favored with the light of the Gospel, has remarked instances of both.—Such is man's carnal enmity against God, that he will have recourse to any expedient, or make the most abject submission to his fellow creatures, rather than humble himself before God, and seek help from Him! But the relief thus obtained, tends to enfeeble and enslave men the more; and it often accelerates, as well as increases, that ruin which it seemed to retard.—Our natural proneness to some sort of religion [Introd. p. 4.] is not easily extinguished: but, except it be regulated according to the Word and by the Spirit of God, it produces the most absurd superstitions, or the most detestable idolatries; or at best it quiets the sinner's conscience, and amuses his mind, with a round of unmeaning ceremonies, frequently connected with the most immoral practices. Even *infidels* have been remarkable for credulity; and the *capacity of believing*, when not exercised on the truth, frequently embraces the most ridiculous falsehoods.—The arrogant self-wisdom, which induces men to new model divine ordinances after their own vain imaginations, is insufferably provoking to that 'God, who resisteth the proud:' and that external magnificence, which carnal minds affect in his worship, obscures the real glory of heavenly things, excites false ideas of the divine character, and turns men aside from that spiritual service, which alone the Lord accepts and delights in. (*John* 4:21—24.) Thus, new ways of worshipping God very speciously introduce gross idolatries: as the church of Israel, and that of Rome, among other examples, have abundantly evinced. SCOTT.

Verse 18.

The covert, &c.] 'Thought to have been a canopy or covered way.' *Gill*, *Clarke*, &c. The covert of the sabbath, and the entry, seem to have been accommodations for the king and his attendants to repair to the temple-service. 1 K. 10:5. Ez. 46:1—3. SCOTT. 'A seat covered with plates of gold, as well as the entrance to it, on which the king sat, during the times of worship.' *Geddes. Boothr.* 'An elevated seat enclosed with a canopy over it.' *Parkhurst.* See the Egyptian monuments, where similar canopies are observed. ED.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII. V. 1. The years of Hoshea's reign are reckoned from his establishment on the throne, not from the death of his predecessor. SCOTT.

Verse 2.

In finally destroying the kingdom of Israel, during the time of that king, who was less wicked than the rest; the Lord showed, that He punished the crimes of the people at large, and not those of their princes only, as many might be ready to imagine. (2 *Sam.* 24:1,2.) SCOTT.

Verse 3.

It is most probable that Shalmaneser was the son of Tiglath-pileser.—Menahem had given his predecessor Pul footing in the land, and encouragement to come again; by raising a large sum of money for him, and by rendering his kingdom dependent on him. Ahaz king of Judah likewise, by purchasing the help of Tiglath-pileser, had procured the destruction of the kingdom of Syria, which was of small extent and

became his servant, and *gave him † presents.

B. C. 725. 4 And the king of Assyria ᵉfound conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So ᶠking of Egypt, and ᵍbrought no present to the king of Assyria, as *he had done* year by year; therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and ʰbound him in prison.

5 Then ⁱ the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it ʲthree years.

6 In the ninth year of Hoshea, ᵐthe king of Assyria took Samaria, and ⁿcarried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in ᵒHalah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of ᵖthe Medes.

[*Practical Observations.*]

7 For so it was, that the children of Israel

2. The land of Israel was made a prey. The army of the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and made themselves masters of it, (*v.* 5.) and used them as traitors, punished with the sword of justice, rather than as fair enemies.

3. The royal city of Israel was besieged, and, at length, taken. Three years it held out, after the country was conquered, and, no doubt, through a great deal of misery, which is not particularly recorded; but the very brevity of the story, and the passing of this matter over lightly, methinks, intimate that they were abandoned of God, and He did not now regard the affliction of Israel, as sometimes He had done.

4. The people, those of any note, were carried captives, forced away into the conqueror's country, to be slaves and beggars there, *v.* 6. So this unworthy people were lost, as they were found, and ended, as they began, in servitude, and under oppression. We are here told in what places of his kingdom he disposed of them; places, we may suppose, far distant from each other, lest they should keep up a correspondence, incorporate again, and become formidable. There, we have reason to think, after some time, they were so mingled with the nations, that they were lost, and *the name of Israel was no more in remembrance.* They that forgot God, were themselves forgotten; they that studied to be like the nations, were buried among them; and they that would not serve God in their own land, were made to serve their enemies in a strange land. Probably many of the meaner sort were left behind, many of every tribe, who either went over to Judah, or became subject to the Assyrian colonies, and their posterity were *Galileans*, or *Samaritans*. Thus ended Israel as a nation; now Canaan spued them out. When we read of their entry under Hoshea the son of Nun, who would have thought such as this should have been their exit under Hoshea the son of Elah? Thus Rome's glory in Augustus, sunk, many ages after, under Augustulus. Providence so ordered the eclipsing of the honor of the 10 tribes, that the honor of Judah the royal tribe, and Levi the holy tribe, which yet remained, might shine the brighter. Yet we find a number sealed of each of the 12 tribes, (Rev. 7.) except Dan. James writes to the 12 tribes scattered abroad, (Jam. 1: 1.) and Paul speaks of the 12 tribes which *instantly served God day and night*, Acts 26: 7. So that, though we never read of the return of those that were carried captive, nor have any reason to credit the conjecture of some, that they yet remain a distinct body in some remote corner of the world; yet a remnant of them did escape, to keep up the name of Israel, till it came to be worn by the gospel-church, the spiritual Israel, in which it will ever remain, Gal. 6: 16.

V. 7—23. The destruction of the kingdom of the 10 tribes is in these vs. largely commented on, and the reasons of it assigned, not taken from the second causes, the weakness of Israel, their impolitic management, and the strength and growing greatness of the Assyrian monarch, these things are overlooked; but only from the First Cause.

1. It was *the Lord that removed Israel out of his sight;* whoever were the instruments, He was the Author of this calamity; the Assyrian was but the *rod of his anger*, Isa. 10: 5. We lose the benefit of national judgments, if we do not eye the hand of God in them, and the fulfilling of the Scripture; for that also is noticed here, *v.* 23. Rather shall heaven and earth pass, than one tittle of God's

* Heb. *rendered.*
† Or, *tribute.* 2 Sam. 8:2,6.
ᵉ 24:1,20. Ez. 17:13—19.
ᶠ 18:21. Is. 30:1—4. 31:1—3. Ez. 17: 15.
ᵍ Heb. *rendered.*
ʰ 18:14,15.
ⁱ 25:7. 2 Chr. 32:11. Ps. 149:7,8.
ᵏ 18:9.
ˡ 25:1—3. Jer. 52:4,5.
ᵐ 18:10,11. Hos. 1:6,9. 13:16.
ⁿ Lev. 26:32,33,38. Deut. 4:25—28. 28: 36,64. 29:28. 30:18. 1 K. 14:15,16. Am. 5:27.
ᵒ 19:12. 1 Chr. 5:26. Is. 37:12,13.
ᵖ Is. 13:17. 21:2. Dan. 5:28.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—6. The long-suffering of God, instead of leading sinners to repentance, often renders them more secure: for, having long transgressed with impunity, they conclude that there is no danger; and thus they 'treasure up wrath against the day of wrath.' (*Ec.* 8:11—13. *Rom.* 2:4—6.)—Ungodly men are not all alike abandoned to flagrant enormities: but the least criminal deserve worse than the most severe temporal calamities; and consequently none have any right to complain, if God the righteous Sovereign shall see good, in their days, to execute on a guilty people the accumulated vengeance of many generations. (*P. O.* 2 *Sam.* 24:1—9.)—When the service of God, which is perfect freedom, is renounced, men become slaves to the vilest and most tyrannical of masters: and sinners, left to themselves, never attempt any thing more than a change of one tyrant for another; not having the most remote idea or expectation of complete liberty in the service of God. The extravagant profligate sometimes, in advancing years, exchanges the bondage of his sensual lusts, for the yoke of avarice or ambition; and the immoral and profane may commence Pharisees, or hypocrites: but mere nature can advance little further than this. Yet the Gospel calls us, not only to break our league with every lust, and to renounce every sinful connection, however formed, confirmed, or palliated by specious pretences; but to refuse obedience to every superior who would require us to sin against God; which if we would do, we must seek the effectual assistance of his special grace. SCOTT.

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force, compared with that of Assyria: and thus every rampart was broken down, which could exclude the Assyrians from the land of Israel and Judah. (15:19, 20. 16:7—9.) SCOTT.

Verse 4.

So is supposed to be the same person, as is called Sabacus, or Sabacon, in pagan writers. He was king of Ethiopia; but he invaded Egypt, took possession of the kingdom, and reigned there for a long term of years.—About this time, or rather earlier, the rivalship [for the 2d or 3d time, probably, ED.] began between the kings of Egypt, and the monarchs of different nations, who successively were powerful in Asia, to the N. or N. E. of Canaan; which, lying between the contending powers, was for many ages brought into dependence on the one or the other of them. (2 *Chr.* 35.20—24. *Dan.* 11:5. *Zech.* 9:8.) But the people, contrary to the commands of God, were more disposed to unite with the Egyptians, than with any of their opponents.—It seems probable, that Shalmaneser by some means took Hoshea prisoner, before he laid siege to Samaria: and that Hoshea ended his days in a prison. ID.

So.] Heb. *Sva.* Seva or Seve. By heathen writers called Sabachon. *Usher. Prideaux.* Sua or Sabachus. *Poole.* But see note, 7:6. *Wilkinson* gives his hieroglyphical name (cut) 'Sabakoftep, or Sabakof.' 1st of the 25th Dynasty. (Ethiopian.) *Champ.* reads Sebekoteph, and thinks it the same with Sebechus, son of Sabbacon. ED.

Verses 5, 6.

The inhabitants of Samaria doubtless endured great extremities, in the long siege and terrible destruction of the city: but the brevity of the sacred historian seems significantly to intimate, that the Lord did not now notice their affliction, as He had done before the measure of their iniquities was filled. (14:26, 27. 18:9—12. *Hos.* 8:7, 8. 10: 14, 15. 13:15, 16. *Mic.* 1:6—7.)—When Shalmaneser had taken Samaria, and become absolute master of the whole land, he formed the project of changing the inhabitants, and in part accomplished it: but it was more fully completed by Esar-haddon, his grandson, several years afterwards. (*Ezra* 4:2.) It is, however, here spoken of by anticipation. Yet it seems, that some of the poorer Israelites were at last left in the land, many of whom were incorporated with the new inhabitants. (2 *Chr.* 34:6, 7.) But, as the northern part of the country, called Galilee, was, in the time of Christ, inhabited by persons acknowledged to be of the seed of Israel, who went up to Jerusalem to worship; whilst the middle of the country was occupied by the Samaritans, who were of another origin and religion; it is probable the new inhabitants did not so fully occupy the *northern*, as the *middle* parts of the land.—Probably, the Israelites, who were carried captive to a great distance, in the dominions of the conqueror, were chiefly incorporated among the nations: yet some of them seemed to have retained the knowledge of their original, and of part of their religion; and either to have returned with their brethren after the Babylonish captivity, or to have united with those Jews, who were afterwards dispersed in many different countries of the world. (*Note, Ezra* 2:64. *Luke* 2:36—38.)—Some, however, think, that incorporated bodies of them are still existing. SCOTT.

(6.) *Halah.*] 'Heb. *Chalah*, the Calachena of *Ptolemy*, at the N of Assyria. *Witsius, Patrick,* BOCHART. *Habor.*] The Chaboras of Ptolemy, a mountain between Media and Assyria. Between it and the Caspian Sea is the city Gauzania, i. e. Gauzan, between the two channels of the river Cyrus. *Patrick.* This is one name, as several modern critics agree, "Habar-nahar-gozan."' COND. COMM. '*Hyde* supposes Halah to be Holwan, so *Gesenius* and *Rosenm.* who suppose it the same as Calah, in the N. E. part of the present Irak, at the foot of the mountains which now separate the Ottoman and Persian empires here. There is a city Abhar, or Habor, on a branch of the Ozan (Kizil-ozan) in the remote N. of ancient Media, towards the Caspian and Ghilan; this city has the reputation of being exceedingly ancient. So *Rennell.*' [Comp. map. vol. 1.] *Medes.*] 'Ancient Media, (Heb. *Madai*) extended W. and S. of the Caspian, from Armenia on the N. to Farsistan or Persia proper on the S. and included Shirwan, Adserbijan, Ghilan, Masanderan, and Irak Adjemi; its territory was larger than Spain, and it was one of the most fertile [comp. 18:32.] and earliest cultivated kingdoms. The overthrow of Sennacherib before Jerusalem, &c. delivered Media from their 520 yrs. of subjection to the As-

had [q] sinned against [r] the LORD their God, [s] which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, [t] and had feared other gods,

8 And [u] walked in the statutes of the heathen, (whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel,) and [x] of the kings of Israel, which they had made.

9 And the children of Israel did [y] secretly *those* things that *were* not right against the LORD their God; and they built them high places in all their cities, [z] from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

10 And [a] they set them up * images and [b] groves [c] in every high hill, and under every green tree:

11 And there they [d] burnt incense in all the high places, as *did* the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things * to provoke the LORD to anger.

12 For they served idols, [f] whereof the LORD had said unto them, [g] Ye shall not do this thing.

13 Yet the LORD [h] testified against Israel, [i] and against Judah, [k] by † all the prophets, *and by* all the [l] seers, saying, [m] turn ye from your evil ways, and [n] keep my commandments, *and* my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

14 Notwithstanding they would not hear, but [o] hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that [p] did not believe in the LORD their God.

15 And they rejected his statutes, and [p] his covenant that he made with their fathers, and [r] his testimonies which he testified against them, and they followed [s] vanity, and [t] became vain, and went after the heathen that *were* round about them, *concerning* [u] whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them.

16 And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them [x] molten images, *even* two calves, and made [y] a grove, and [z] worshipped all the host of heaven, and served [a] Baal.

17 And [b] they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and [c] used divination and enchantments, and [d] sold themselves to do evil * in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

18 Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and [f] removed them out of his sight: there was none left but [g] the tribe of Judah only.

Word fall to the ground. But why would God ruin a people, raised and incorporated, as Israel was, by miracles and oracles? Was it purely an act of sovereignty? No, it was an act of necessary justice. For,

2. They provoked Him to do this by their wickedness. This the sacred historian shows here at large, that it might appear God did them no wrong, and that others might hear and fear. Come, and see what it was that did all this mischief, that brake their power, and laid their honor in the dust; it was sin; that, and nothing else, separated between them and God; this is here very movingly laid open, as the cause of all the desolations of Israel. He here shows,

I. What God had done for Israel, to engage them to serve Him. 1. He gave them their liberty; (*v.* 7.) effected their freedom with a high hand: thus they were bound in duty and gratitude to be his servants; nor would He that rescued them have contradicted Himself so far as to deliver them into the hand of the king of Assyria, had they not, by their iniquity, betrayed their liberty, and sold themselves. 2. He gave them their law, and was Himself their King; they could not plead ignorance, God had particularly charged them against those very things He here charges them with, *v.* 15. Nor could they doubt concerning their obligation to observe and keep *the commandments and statutes* of the Lord their God, *v.* 13. He had not *dealt so with other nations*, Ps. 147: 19, 20. 3. He gave them *their land;* and the casting out of *the heathen from before them*, (*v.* 8.) for their idolatries, was as fair a warning as could be given to Israel not to do like them.

II. What they had done against God, notwithstanding these engagements He had laid on them.

1. In general; they *sinned against the Lord their God*, (*v.* 7.) they *did those things that were not right*, (*v.* 9.) but *secretly;* an instance this of their atheism, that they thought, what was done in secret was from under the eye of God Himself, and would not be required. Again, they wrought wicked things in such a direct contradiction to the divine law, that it seemed as if it were done on purpose to *provoke the Lord to anger*, (*v.* 11.) in contempt

[a] 16:4. Ex. 34:13. Lev. 26:1. 1 K. 14:23. Is. 57:5.
* Heb. *statues.*
[b] Deut. 16:21. Mic. 5:14.
[c] See on 1 K. 14:23.—Deut. 12:2,3.
[d] 1 K. 13:1. 2 Chr. 28:25. Jer. 44:17.
[e] 21:6. Ps. 78:56—58.
[f] Ex. 20:3—5 34:14. Deut. 5:7—9.
[g] Deut. 4:15—19,23—25. 12:4.
[h] Deut. 8:19. 31:21. Neh. 9:29,30. Ps. 50:7. 81:8,9. Jer. 42:19. Acts 20:21.
[i] 2 Chr. 36:15,16. Jer. 3:8—11. Hos. 4:15.
[k] Deut. 4:26. Josh. 23:16. Judg. 6:10. 10:11—14. 1 Sam. 12:7—15. Is. 1:5—15,21—24. Jer. 5:29—31. Zech. 1: 3—6.
† Heb. *the hand of all.*
[l] See on 1 Sam. 9:9.—1 Chr. 29:29.
[m] Is. 1:16—20. 55:6,7. Jer. 7:3—7. 18: 11. 25:4,5. 35:15. Hos. 14:1.
[n] Jer. 7:22,23. 26:4—6.
[o] Deut. 31:27. 2 Chr. 36:13. Prov. 29: 1. Is. 48:4. Jer. 7:26. Rom. 2:4,5. Heb. 3:7,8.
[p] Deut. 1:32. Ps. 78:22,32. 106:24. Hab. 3:12.
[q] Ex. 24:6—8. Deut. 29:10—15,25. Jer. 31:32.
[r] 2 Chr. 36:15,16. Neh. 9:26,29,30. Jer. 44:4.
[s] Deut. 32:21. 1 Sam. 12:21. 1 K. 16: 13. Ps. 115:8. Jer. 10:8,15. Jon. 2:8.
[t] Jer. 2:5. Rom. 1:21—23. 1 Cor. 8:4.
[u] 8,11,12. 2 Chr. 33:2,9.
[x] Ex. 32:8. 1 K. 12:28. Ps. 106:18—20. Is. 44:9,10.
[y] 10. 1 K. 14:15,23. 15:13. 16:33.
[z] Deut. 4:19. Jer. 8:2.
[a] 10:18—28. 11:18. 1 K. 16:31. 22:53.
[b] 16:3. 21:6. Lev. 18:21. 2 Chr. 28:3. Ps. 106:37,38. Ez. 20:26,31. 23:37,39.
[c] 21:6. Deut. 18:10—12. 2 Chr. 33:6. Is. 8:19. 47:9,12,13. Jer. 27:9. Mic. 5:12. Acts 16:16. Gal. 5:20.
[d] 1 K. 21:20,25. Is. 50:1.
[e] 11. 21:6.
[f] 13:23. 23:27. Deut. 29:20—28. 32: 21—26. Josh. 23:13,15. Jer. 15:1. Hos. 9:3.
[g] 1 K. 11:13,32,36. 12:20. Hos. 11:12.

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syrian, and after 6 yrs. of anarchy, the wise and upright Dejoces was made king, about B. C. 700. Phraortes succeeded him, and extended the empire. Cyaxares, his successor, made Assyria a Median province,

and left his vast empire to Astyages; who in 556 B. C. left it to his grandson, Cyrus. In this way rose the Medo-Persian kingdom. Esth. Dan. &c.' ROD. CALM. The captivity described here and at 18:6. is thought by Sir *R. K. Porter* to be confirmed by a sculpture he discovered and copied from the mountain, Be-sitoon, on the borders of ancient Assyria near Kermanshah. See the cut. 'The first figure wears the Median habit, like the leaders of the guards at Persepolis, the third may be the K. of Assyria; the costume is regal, like such at Persepolis. The last of the series may perhaps represent the tribe of Levi. The 10 figures before the K. represent the 10 tribes.' ED.

Verse 9.

Built them high places.] Note and cut, Gen. 31:44—49. ID.

Verses 12—14.

(*M. R.—Notes, Neh.* 9:26—30. *Zech.* 1:5, 6.) 'To harden the neck,' is a metaphor taken from the stiffness of the neck of an ox, when with his full strength he resists the attempts of the husbandman, to put the yoke on him, or to bring him to draw in it: and it aptly represents the self-will, earnestness, and stubbornness, with which the presumptuous sinner sets himself to rebel against God, in the midst of warnings, convictions, judgments, and mercies. (2 *Chr.* 30:6—9. *Prov.* 29:1. *Is.* 48:3—5.) 'This was the original of all the sins they committed, they did not believe God's prophets, but hearkened to deceivers.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

Verse 15.

Became vain.] By making and worshipping lifeless images, the people became senseless, like unto them: and by worshipping imagined deities under these images, they learned to imitate all the vices ascribed to those demons. Thus among the Greeks and Romans, the worshippers of Bacchus revelled in intemperance, those of Venus rioted in licentiousness, and those of Mars delighted in shedding human blood. The case is the same with modern idolaters. By worshipping Satan under all these names, they were conformed to the very nature, and imbibed all the hateful qualities, of that arch-apostate and rebel. (*Note, Rom.* 1:24—32.) ID.

Verse 16.

It is probable that the words rendered *a grove* and *groves*, (10) mean some kind of images set up in the temples originally built in groves; and not the trees which formed the grove. (*Notes*, 21:7, 8. *v.* 7. 1 *K.* 14:22—24.) ID.

Verse 18.

The tribe of Judah only.] I. e. the tribe of Judah, with the Benjamites, Levites, and others, who were incorporated along with Judah into one people, (SCOTT) and called *Judahites* or *Jews*, note, 16:6. ED.

Some suppose the Afghans to be the descendants of the lost tribes, others find them in the North American Indians. See *Boudinot, Clarke, Rose*, Sir *W. Jones*, &c. ID.

19 Also [h] Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but [i] walked in the statutes of Israel which they made.

20 And the LORD [k] rejected [l] all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and [m] delivered them into the hand of spoilers, [n] until he had cast them out of his sight.

21 For [o] he rent Israel from the house of David: and [p] they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and [q] Jeroboam drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin [r] a great sin.

22 For the children of Israel [s] walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them:

23 Until [t] the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, [u] as he had said by all his servants the prophets. [x] So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria, unto this day.

[*Practical Observations.*]

24 ¶ And [y] the king of Assyria brought *men* from [z] Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from [a] Ava, and from [b] Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed *them* in the cities of Samaria, instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt [c] in the cities thereof.

25 And *so* it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, *that* of his authority, and defiance of his justice. They *rejected God's statutes, and his covenant;* (*v.* 15.) his command, and their own consent to the covenant; therefore God justly rejected them, *v.* 20. See Hos. 4: 6. They *left all the commandments of the Lord their God*, (*v.* 16.) the way, and the work, the commandments prescribed; nay, lastly, they *sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord*, that is, they wholly addicted themselves to sin, and, by their obstinate persisting in sin, so hardened their own hearts, that, at length, it was become morally impossible for them to recover themselves, as one that has sold himself has put his liberty past recall.

2. In particular; though guilty (no doubt) of many immoralities, yet nothing is here specified, but their idolatry; *that* was the sin that did most easily beset them, that was, of all others, most provoking to God; it was the spiritual adultery that broke the marriage covenant, and [as idolatry was but a deification of the lower propensities, it] was the inlet of all other wickedness; this is again and again mentioned here as the sin that ruined them. By this they prostituted the honor of their peculiarity, and defeated God's design concerning them, which was, that they should be distinguished from the heathen. They *set up images and groves, Asherim*, even *wooden images*, so some think that should be rendered, which we translate *groves;* or *Ashtaroth*, so others, *v.* 10. [the male and female principle of the universe;] probably placed in the temples originally. The setting up of these was directly contrary to the second commandment. Beside the molten images, even the two calves, they *worshipped all the host of heaven*, the sun, moon, and stars, for it is not meant of the heavenly host of angels; and withal, they served Baal, the deified heroes of the Gentiles, *v.* 16. and lastly, they used divinations and enchantments, that they might receive directions from the gods, to whom they paid their devotions.

III. What means God used with them, to bring them off from their idolatries, and to how little purpose; *v.* 13. We have read of the prophets, more or less in every reign; though they had forsaken God's family of priests, He did not leave them without a succession of prophets, who made it their business to teach them the good knowledge of the Lord, but all in vain; (*v.* 14.) they would not hear, but persisted in their idolatries, and were like their fathers: it seems to refer to their fathers in the wilderness; the same sin that kept them out of Canaan, turned these out, and that was, unbelief.

IV. How God punished them for their sins; He *was very angry with them;* (*v.* 18.) He afflicted them, (*v.* 20.) and *delivered them into the hand of spoilers*, in the days of the judges and of Saul, and afterward, in the days of most of their kings, to see if they would be awakened to consider and amend their ways; but when all these corrections did not prevail, God first *rent Israel from the house of David*, under which they might have been happy. As Judah was hereby weakened, so Israel was hereby corrupted; for they made king a man who *drove them from following the Lord, and made them sin a great sin*, *v.* 21. This was a national judgment, and the punishment of their former idolatries; and, at length, He *removed them quite out of his sight*, (*v.* 18, 23.) without giving them any hopes of a return from captivity.

Lastly, Here is a complaint against Judah in the midst of all; (*v.* 19.) though not as yet quite so bad as Israel, yet they *walked in the statutes of Israel;* and this aggravated the sin of Israel, that they communicated the infection of it to Judah; see Ezek. 23: 11. Those that bring sin into a country or family, bring a plague into it, and will have to answer for all the mischief that follows.

V. 24—41. When the children of Israel were dispossessed, and turned out of Canaan, the king of Assyria soon transplanted thither the supernumeraries of his own country, such as it could well spare, who should be servants to him, and masters to the Israelites that remained; and we have an account of these new inhabitants here, that we may take our leave of Samaria, as also of the Israelites that were carried captive into Assyria.

I. Concerning the Assyrians brought into the land of Israel, we are here told,

1. God *sent lions among them.* They were probably insufficient to people the country, which occasioned *the beast of the field to multiply against them;* (Ex. 23: 29.) yet, there was a manifest hand of God in it, who can serve his own purposes by small or great, lice or lions. God ordered them this rough welcome, to check their pride and insolence, and to let them know that, though they had conquered Israel, He had power to deal with them, could have prevented their settling here, and permitted it, not for their righteousness, but the wickedness of his own people, who were now under his visitation: they had lived without God in their own land, and were not plagued with lions; but if they do so in this land, it is at their peril. The God of Israel was the God of the whole world, but they ignorantly call Him the *God of the land*, [heathen-fashion,] apprehending themselves there-

h 1 K. 14:22,23. 2 Chr. 21:11,13. Jer. 2:28. 3:8—11. Ez. 16:51,52. 22:2—16. 23:4—13.
i 8:18,27. 16:3.
k 15. 1 Sam. 15:23,26. 16:1. Jer. 6: 30. Rom. 11:1,2.
l 1 Chr. 16:13. Neh. 9:2. Is. 45:25. Jer. 31:36,37. 33:24—26. 46:28.
m 13:3,7. 15:18—20,29. 18:9. 2 Chr. 28:5,8.
n See on 13.—Deut. 11:12. Jon. 1:3,10. Matt. 25:41. 2 Thes. 1:9.
o 1 K. 11:11,31. 14:8. Is. 7:17.
p 1 K. 12:19,20. 2 Chr. 10:15—19.
q See on 1 K. 12:28—30. 14:16. 2 Chr. 11:14,15.
r Gen. 20:9. Ex. 32:21. 1 Sam. 2:17, 24. Ps. 25:11. John 19:11.
s See on 3:3. 10:29,31. 13:2,6,11. 15:9.
t See on 18,20.
u See on 13. 1 K. 13:2. 14:16. Hos. 1:4—9. Am. 5:27. Mic. 1:6.
x 6. 18:11,12.
y Ezra 4:2—10.
z 30. 2 Chr. 33:11.
a 31. 18:34. Is. 37:13. *Ivah.*
b 19:13. Is. 10:9. 36:19.
c 6. Matt. 10:5.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 7—23. When God arises to judgment, all opposition is vain, and only tends to prolong or increase misery. He keeps an exact register of our advantages, as well as of our sins and their aggravations: and when the day of retribution arrives, He will produce the whole account; that all the world may see 'He hath not done without cause, all that He hath done' against the workers of iniquity: for the day of his wrath will be the revelation of his righteous judgment; and indeed his justice in the temporal sufferings of guilty nations is frequently evidenced in the same manner. (*Ez.* 14:22, 23.)—Enormous as the outward wickedness of the world evidently is, the secret crimes, and sinful thoughts, desires, and purposes of mankind are immensely worse.—Without turning from every evil way, and unreservedly keeping the commandments and statutes of God, there can be no true godliness: yet, this conversion must spring from a belief of his testimony, both concerning 'His wrath revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,' and concerning his mercy, in Jesus Christ, to all who repent and embrace this salvation. The rejection of his statutes and covenant is always the effect of unbelief; through which sinners harden their hearts against the fear of God, exclude the desire of his favor, and obstinately set themselves to break his commandments; and thus following lying vanities, become worthless and base, like their worldly idols.—God peculiarly abhors those, who seduce or *drive* others, by any means, from following Him, and cause them to sin against Him; and generations yet unborn may curse the inventors of any false religion, or plausible system of infidelity, as the occasions of their everlasting perdition: nay, bad examples alone may render men chargeable with this tremendous guilt of murdering the souls of others; for human nature is far more ready to copy the evil than the good, and to listen to tempters than to monitors. How circumspectly then should we walk, seeing such dreadful consequences may ensue, for ages to come, in various ways, from our misconduct! SCOTT.

Verse 24.

(*Note*, 5, 6.) Shalmaneser seems to have carried away all the chief men, and the bulk of the nation; but to have left some poor remains of the Israelites, who dwelt in the land, during the remainder of his reign, and the busy reign of Sennacherib. But Esarhaddon more entirely removed the old inhabitants, and peopled the country from different parts of his dominions: and by that time Babylon, which had formed a distinct kingdom, was brought under the government of the king of Assyria, and some of these new inhabitants were removed thence. (2 *Chr.* 33:11. *Ezra* 4:10.)—The cities in the region of Samaria had not been destroyed, but reserved for the new inhabitants. SCOTT. (*M. R.*)

[d] they feared not the LORD; therefore [e] the LORD sent lions among them, which slew *some* of them.

26 Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, [f] and placed in the cities of Samaria, [g] know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land.

27 Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither [h] one of the priests whom ye brought from thence, and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land.

28 Then one of the priests, whom they had carried away from Samaria, came and dwelt in Beth-el, and [k] taught them how they should fear the LORD.

29 Howbeit every nation [l] made gods of their own, and put *them* in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt.

30 And the men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima.

31 And [m] the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites [n] burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.

32 So they feared the LORD, and [o] made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in [p] the houses of the high places.

33 They [q] feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations * whom they carried away from thence.

34 Unto this day they do after the former manners: they [r] fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, [s] whom he named Israel;

35 With [t] whom the LORD had made a covenant, and [u] charged them, saying, Ye shall not [x] fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them:

36 But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power, and [y] a stretched-out arm, [z] him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice.

37 And [a] the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he [b] wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore; [c] and ye shall not fear other gods.

38 And the covenant that I have made with you [d] ye shall not forget, neither shall ye fear other gods.

39 But [e] the LORD your God ye shall fear; and [f] he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies.

40 Howbeit they did not hearken, [g] but they did after their former manner.

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d 28,32,34,41. Josh. 22:25. Jer. 10:7. Dan. 6:26. Jon. 1:9.
e 2:24. 1 K. 13:24. 20:36. Jer. 15:3. Ez. 14:15.
f See on 24.
g 27. 1 Sam. 8:9. 10:25. Am. 8:14.
h Judg. 17:13. 1 K. 12:31. 13:2. 2 Chr. 11:15.
i 1 K. 12:29—32.
k Is. 28:13. Matt. 15:14.
l Ps. 115:4—8. 135:15—18. Is. 44:9—20. Jer. 10:3—5. Hos. 8:5,6. Rom. 1:23.
m See on 17.
n See on 31.
o 1 K. 12:31. 13:33.
p 29. 23:19. 1 K. 13:32.
q 1 K. 18:21. Hos. 10:2. Zeph. 1:5. Matt. 6:24. Luke 16:13.
* Or, *who carried them away.*
r See on 25,27,28,33.
s Gen. 32:28. 35:10. 1 K. 18:31. Is. 48:1.
t 15. Ex. 19:5,6. 24:6—8. Deut. 29:10—15. Jer. 31:31—34. Heb. 8:6—13.
u Ex. 20:4,5. 34:12—17. Deut. 4:23—27. 13:1,&c. Josh. 23:7,16.
x Judg. 6:10. Jer. 10:5.
y See on Ex. 6:6. 9:15.—Deut. 5:15. Jer. 32:21. Acts 4:30.
z Lev. 19:32. Deut. 6:13. 10:20. 12:5,6,11,12. Matt. 10:28. Rev. 15:4.
a Lev. 19:37. Deut. 4:44,45. 5:31—33. 6:1,2. 12:32. 1 Chr. 29:19. Ps. 19:8—11. 105:44,45.
b Deut. 31:9,11. Neh. 9:13,14.
c See on 35.
d Deut. 4:23. 6:12. 8:14—18.
e See on 36.—1 Sam. 12:24. Is. 8:12—14. Jer. 10:7. Matt. 10:28.. Luke 1:50.
f Neh. 9:27. Luke 1:71,74,75.
g See on 8,12,34.—Deut. 4:28.

Verses 27, 28.

It is not at all probable, that this instructor was a priest of the family of Aaron, or that he taught the people from the book of the divine law; as some have thought. One of the priests 'carried away from Samaria' is expressly mentioned. He had doubtless assistants in the business.—It is, however, probable, that he did not teach them to worship JEHOVAH by images; though we can only know what he taught, by the result: but it is evident, they were led to consider JEHOVAH as the local, tutelary god of the land, one among a group of other deities; instead of worshipping Him as the one, true, eternal, almighty, and glorious Creator, Governor, and Judge of the world. (*Jer.* 10:6—8, 11. *Zeph.* 2:11. *Zech.* 14:6—9.) They probably learned to offer sacrifices, with some external regard to the ceremonies of the Mosaic law, but without understanding the meaning and use of the sacred ordinances: but it is not certain whether circumcision was introduced among the Samaritans at this time, or at a later period. (41. *Neh.* 13:23—30.) Along with these and such like observances, they were allowed, or they assumed, the liberty of serving their own idols, according to the customs of their several tribes. SCOTT.

Verses 29—31.

Such obsolete abominations, with which every thing brutal, cruel, and licentious was connected, are not worth understanding. (*Ex.* 23: 13. *Josh.* 23:7. *Jer.* 10:11. *Zech.* 13:2, 3.) SCOTT.

(31.) *Nibhaz and Tartak.*] Dr. A. Clarke and others make these to be, the Anubis (with a dog's head and man's body) and Cynocephalus, (with an ape's body and dog's head,) worshipped as gods by the Egyptians. ED.

Verses 33—40.

The remainder, now, of these verses seems to relate to the Israelites after they were carried captive. They still persevered in idolatry and disobedience; and, not being purified, were left to be consumed, in the furnace.—It is said, that the Israelites 'did not fear the LORD;' (34) yet the heathens, who followed their example, are said 'to have feared the LORD.' (32, 40.) The Israelites did not so much as fear the wrath of the Almighty God: but on the other hand the poor pagans feared the power of his wrath, and to avert it paid Him some ignorant worship, according to the wretched instructions given them. As this was an external acknowledgment of his power and

41 So [b] these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they [i] unto this day.

CHAP. XVIII.

Hezekiah reigns well, abolishes idolatry, and prospers, 1—8. In his time Samaria is taken, and Israel carried captive, 9—12. Sennacherib invades Judah, and Hezekiah pays him tribute, 13—16. Rabshakeh, sent by Sennacherib, in an insulting and blasphemous speech, aims to induce the people to revolt, 17—35. Hezekiah's servants hold their peace, and rend their clothes, 36, 37.

NOW it came to pass [a] in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, *that* [b] Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign.

2 Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* [c] Abi the daughter of Zechariah.

3 And he did *that which was* [d] right in the sight of the LORD, [e] according to all that David his father did.

4 He [f] removed the

b 32,33. Josh. 24:14—20. 1 K. 18:21. Zeph. 1:5. Matt. 6:24. Rev. 3:15,16.
i Ezra 4:1—3.
a 9. 15:30. 17:1.
b 16:20. 1 Chr. 3:13. 2 Chr. 29:1. Matt. 1:9,10. *Ezekias.*
c 2 Chr. 29:1. *Abijah.*
d 20:3. Ex. 15:26. Deut. 6:18. 2 Chr. 31:20,21. Job 33:27. Ps. 119:128. Rom. 7:12. Eph. 6:1.
e 22:2. 1 K. 3:14. 11:4,33. 15:5,11. 2 Chr. 29:2.
f 12:3. 14:4. 15:4,35. Lev. 2:6. 30. 1 K. 3:2,3. 15:14. 22:43. Ps. 78:58. Ez. 20:28,29.

away,) they worshipped both the God of Israel and those other gods; but what did the captives do in the land of their affliction? Were they reformed, and brought to repentance, by their troubles? No, they do after the former manner, *v.* 34. When the two tribes were afterward carried into Babylon, they were cured by it of their idolatry, and therefore, after 70 years, brought back with joy; but the 10 tribes were hardened in the furnace, and therefore justly lost in it, and left to perish.

This obstinacy of theirs is here aggravated by the considerations in *v.* 36—40. *What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise, for both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin.*

CHAP. XVIII. When the prophet had condemned Ephraim for lies and deceit, he comforted himself with this, that Judah yet *ruled with God, and was faithful with the most holy,* Hos. 11: 12. It was a very melancholy view the last ch. gave us of the desolations of Israel; but this shows us the affairs of Judah in a good posture at the same time, that it may appear God has not quite cast off the seed of Abraham, *Rom.* 11: 1.

V. 1—8. We have here a general account of the reign of Hezekiah; it appears, by comparing his age with his father's, that he was born when his father was about 11 or 12 years old, Divine Providence so ordering that he might be of full age, and fit for business then, when the measure of his father's iniquity should be full. Here is,

I. His great piety; his father was very wicked and vile, one of the worst of the kings, yet he one of the best. 1. What good there is in any, is of grace, Rom. 11: 24. 2. That grace gets over the greatest difficulties and disadvantages: Ahaz, it is likely, gave his son a bad education, as well as a bad example; Urijah, his priest, perhaps, had the tuition of him; his attendants and companions, we may suppose, were addicted to idolatry; yet Hezekiah became eminently good: when God's grace will work, what can hinder it?

(1.) He was a genuine son of David, *v.* 3. with whom the covenant was made, therefore he was entitled to the benefit of it. We have read of some, who did that which was right, *but not like David;* (*ch.* 14: 3.) but Hezekiah was a second David, had such a love for God's word, and God's house, as he. Let us not be frightened with an apprehension of the continual decay of virtue, as if, when times and men are bad, they must needs, of course, grow worse and worse.

(2.) He was a zealous reformer of his kingdom, (2 Chr. 29: 3.) began betimes, as soon as ever he came to the crown, and lost no time; he found his kingdom very corrupt; they had always been so, but in the last reign worse than ever, by the influence of his wicked father; a deluge of idolatry had overspread the land; therefore, as soon as he had power in his hands, he set himself to abolish it, (*v.* 4.) though, considering how the people were wedded to it, he might think it could not be done without opposition. We must never dishonor God, to honor our earthly parents.

The high places had sometimes been used by the prophets on special occasions, and had been hitherto connived at by the good kings, yet, because they were a breach of the law which required them to worship at the temple only, and an occasion of introducing idolatrous usages, Hezekiah, who made God's Word his rule, not the example of his predecessors, removed them; probably the terrible judgments, the kingdom of Israel was now under for their idolatry, made him the more zealous, and the people the more willing to comply with him. It is well, when our neighbors' harms are our warnings. The brazen serpent was originally of divine institution, and yet, because it had been abused to idolatry, he brake it to pieces; he showed the people it was *Nehushtan,* nothing else but *a piece of brass,* and that therefore it was an idle, wicked thing to burn incense to it; he then brake it to pieces; i. e. (so Patrick) ground it to powder, which he scattered in the air, that no fragment of it might remain. If any think the just honor of the brazen serpent was hereby diminished, they will find it abundantly made up again, John 3: 14. where our Savior makes it a type of Himself; good things, when idolized, are better parted with than kept. A firm belief of God's all-sufficiency to protect and reward us, will conduce much to make us sincere, bold, and vigorous, in the way of our duty, like Hezekiah. There was none like him, for courage and confidence in God, and for constancy and perseverance in his duty; he clave to the Lord with a fixed resolution, and never *departed from following Him, v.* 6. and, in every thing, made conscience of his duty.

II. His great prosperity; (*v.* 7, 8.) he was with God, and then God was with him, in his wars, his buildings, and especially his reformation; that good work was carried on with less difficulty than he could have expected. They that do God's work, with an eye to his glory, and with confidence in his strength, may expect to prosper in it; great is the truth, and will prevail. His throwing off the yoke of the king of Assyria, is called

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 24—41. When the Lord casts off his professing people, or delivers them into the hands of their enemies, He will take care of his own glory.—The terror of the Almighty sometimes induces unconverted sinners to a forced or feigned submission: but, when instructed by ignorant or hypocritical teachers, they form very unworthy thoughts of God; expect to please Him by an outside form and a lip-labor; and endeavor to reconcile his service with that of Mammon, the love of the world, and the indulgence of their darling lusts. Thus, slavish fear, united with ignorance, produces an unwilling worship, with the worthless dregs of men's time and spirits, when the prime of them have been spent and exhausted in pursuits and pleasures more agreeable to their carnal minds; and they remain destitute of true repentance, faith, love, and devotedness to God. This kind of religion abounds from age to age, being congenial to the human heart, meeting with little disquietude from the [abused] natural conscience, and exciting no opposition from the world; or from Satan, who willingly compounds to give up a part, for a time, that he may at length engross the whole. Yet, even such a worthless form of godliness is less dishonorable to the Lord, than the confident presumption of bold hypocrites and apostates.—May that 'fear of the LORD, which is the beginning of wisdom,' possess our hearts and influence our conduct, that we may be ready for every change! SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII. V. 1. Hoshea seems to have been placed on the throne above 4 years before the death of Ahaz; but his establishment in quiet possession of the kingdom might take place some time after, from which the 3d year here mentioned was reckoned. (9, 10. 15:30. 17:1.) For it is not likely, that Hezekiah reigned a year along with his father. SCOTT.

Verse 2.

Twenty and five, &c.] If we suppose Ahaz at his death had nearly completed his 37th year, and Hezekiah was only entering on his 25th when he began to reign, Ahaz must have been under 13 years of age, when his son was born! (16:1, 2.) But there are on record well-attested instances, especially in those climates, of men having children at as early a period. As Hezekiah was about 9 years of age at the death of Jotham his grandfather, perhaps some good seed, which that pious prince had sown in his tender mind, might conduce to the excellency of his character. (16:3, 4.) ID.

Verse 4.

We shall hereafter meet with a fuller account of Hezekiah's reformation.—(2 *Chr.* 29:—31:)—Isaiah began to prophesy in the reign of Uzziah, or Azariah: (*Is.* 1:1. 6:1—4.) and it is highly probable, Hezekiah became attached to him during Ahaz's life time; and received

Godhead, and a homage paid to Him, He was pleased in consequence to withdraw his judgments from them. SCOTT.

Verse 41.

Some ascribe these words to Jeremiah, the supposed writer of this part of the history, others to Ezra after the captivity. However, these *Cutheans,* (as the Jews call them, from *Cuthah,* 24.) maintained this mongrel religion till after that latter period, and so were proper successors of idolatrous Israel, the professed people of God. About 400, B. C. a temple was built by them, in competition with the temple at Jerusalem: for, having been joined by a number of apostate Jews and a priest of the family of Aaron, they renounced gross idolatry, and became schismatical worshippers of JEHOVAH, receiving some parts, and rejecting others, of the Jewish scriptures. (27, 28. *Neh.* 13:23—30.) It is not requisite to decide, whether there were any true godliness among them: but, as a people, 'they knew not what they worshipped, for salvation was of the Jews.' (*John* 4:19—24.) Christ commanded his disciples, whom He sent forth in his life-time, not to enter into any city of the Samaritans: yet He himself spent two days at Sychar, one of their cities; (*John* 4:39—42.) and the apostles, after the day of Pentecost, did not regard the Samaritans as Gentiles; for they preached in their cities before the conversion of Cornelius. (*Acts* 1: 4—8. 8:5—8. 10:1, 2.) ID.

high places, and [e] brake the * images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces [h] the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for [i] unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it; and he called it † Nehushtan.

5 He [j] trusted in the LORD God of Israel: so that [k] after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor *any* that were before him.

6 For [l] he clave to the LORD, *and* departed not ‡ from following him, but [m] kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses.

7 And [n] the LORD was with him, *and* [o] he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he [p] rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not.

8 He smote [q] the Philistines, *even* unto § Gaza, and the borders thereof, [r] from the tower of the watchman to the fenced city.

[*Practical Observations.*]

9 ¶ And it came to pass in [s] the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which *was* the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel; *that* [t] Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it.

B. C. 720. 10 And at the end of three years [u] they took it, *even* in the sixth year of Hezekiah, (that *is*, the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel,) Samaria was taken.

11 And [v] the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah, and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

12 Because [x] they obeyed not the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant, *and* all that [y] Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and would not hear *them*, nor do *them*.

B. C. 713. 13 ¶ Now in [z] the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did ‖ Sennacherib king the Philistines Isaiah prophesied, *ch.* 14: 28, &c.

V. 9—16. We have here,

I. The success of Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, against Israel; this was related more largely in the ch. before, but is here repeated, as that which, 1. Stirred up Hezekiah and his people to purge out idolatry with so much zeal, because they saw the ruin it brought on Israel. 2. Which Hezekiah much lamented, but had not strength to prevent: being of the seed of Israel, he could not be glad at their calamities. 3. Which laid Hezekiah and his kingdom open to the king of Assyria, and made it much more easy for him to invade

e 23:4,&c. Deut. 7:5. 12:2,3. Judg. 6:25,28. 1 K. 15:12,13. 2 Chr. 19:3. 31:1. 33:3.
* Heb. *statues*.
h Num. 21:8,9. John 3:14,15.
i 19:15.

† That is, *a piece of brass*.
j 19:10. 2 Chr. 32:7,8. Job 13:15. Ps. 13:5. 27:1,2. 46:1,2. 84:12. 146:5, 6. Jer. 17:7,8. Matt. 27:43. Eph. 1:12.
k 19:15—19. 23:25. 2 Chr. 14:11. 16: 7—9. 20:20,35.
l Deut. 10:20. Josh. 23:8. Acts 11:23.
‡ Heb. *from after him*.
m 17:13,16,19. Jer. 11:4. John 14:15, 21. 15:10,14. 1 John 5:3.
n Gen. 21:22. 39:2,3. 1 Sam. 18:14. 2 Chr. 15:2. Ps. 46:11. 60:12. Matt. 1:23. 28:20. Acts 7:9,10.
o Gen. 39:23. 1 Sam. 18:5,14. *marg.* 2 Sam. 5:6,14. 2 Chr. 31:21. 32:30. Ps. 1:3.
p 20. 16:7.
q 2 Chr. 28:18. Is. 14:29.
§ Heb. *Azzah*.
r 17:9. 2 Chr. 26:10. Is. 5:2.
s 1. 17:4—6.
t 17:3. Hos. 10:14. *Shalman*.
u Hos. 13:16. Am. 3:11—15. 4:1—3. 6:7. 9:1—4. Mic. 1:6—9. 6:16. 7:13.
v 17:6. 19:11. 1 Chr. 5:26. Is. 7:8. 8:4. 9:9—21. 10:5,11. 37:12. Hos. 8:8,9. 9:3. Am. 5:1—3,6,25—27. Acts 7:43.
x 17:7—23. Deut. 8:20. 11:28. 29:24 —28. 31:17. Neh. 9:17. Is. 1:19. Jer. 3:3. 7:23. Dan. 9:6—11. Mic. 3:4. 2 Thes. 1:8. 1 Pet. 2:8. 4:17.
y Num. 12:7. Deut. 34:5. Josh. 1:1. 2 Tim. 2:24. Heb. 3:5,6.
z 2 Chr. 32:1. Is. 36:1.
‖ Heb. *Sanherib*.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—8. It is not enough, that we do not imitate the conduct of atrocious offenders, or that we tread in the steps of those, who have, on the whole, served God sincerely: but we should aim high; and, in aspiring at that eminence which the Scripture proposes, we should set before our eyes the most approved patterns, whose actions are there recorded; that we may follow those who have most nearly followed Christ, and most effectually served God and their generation; and thus become good examples for others. (1 *Thes.* 1:5—8.)—In attempting personal or public reformation, those things should be removed or avoided, which have proved *occasions of evil*, though not sinful in themselves. Human depravity is prone to pervert the bounty of providence into fuel for sinful lusts; and, in some circumstances, is equally propense to abuse the peculiar mercies of God into occasions of superstition and idolatry. It is natural to fallen man to put the creature in the place of the Creator, and to regard the *instrument*, rather than the *Author*, of our comforts: and though this is more evidently absurd when the instrument is irrational or inanimate; it is equally idolatrous, when the most exalted of intelligent agents are thus unduly honored. True faith needs not such aids [of relics] to devotion: the Word of God, daily meditated upon, leads the mind to realize past, future, and invisible things, as if present: thus every good end proposed by other expedients is answered, without the danger to which they expose us; and the simple scriptural use of the sacramental signs, and pledges of heavenly things, may effectually be preserved from such abuse, and answer every purpose, which can be obtained by presenting the objects of our faith to our bodily senses, in any way not warranted by the Word of God; which only tends to distract the mind, to interrupt the simple exercise of faith, to excite spurious affections, to deprave the imagination with gross and false notions of heavenly things, and to introduce, either absurd superstition, or wild enthusiasm. SCOTT.

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from him those instructions, which, by the blessing of God, rendered him so illustrious an example of genuine piety, wisdom, and holiness. The prophet had occasionally been sent to Ahaz, but was the friend and counsellor of Hezekiah.—One instance of Judah's idolatry, and of Hezekiah's reformation, is mentioned in this place alone. The brazen serpent had been preserved by Israel, as a monument of the miracles wrought by means of it in behalf of their forefathers, in order to excite their gratitude, and encourage their faith and hope. (*Num.* 21:6—9. *John* 3.14, 15.) We are not informed where it was placed; but [a serpent was a form of one of the gods of Egypt, and Babylon, and] it seems that after a time the people stupidly and wickedly made an idol of it, and burnt incense to it; as if *it* had wrought the cures, instead of being the external sign of the powerful and merciful interposition of the Lord.—The superstitious veneration paid to sacred relics in the Christian church, and especially the adoration paid to the form of the cross, and even in express words to the wood and nails of it, with all the impostures which have arisen from that absurd idolatry, are exactly parallel to the worship of the brazen serpent; and Hezekiah's example fully authorizes the total abolition or disuse of every thing of that kind in religious worship. There were no relics under the Old Testament-church, except the pot of manna, Aaron's rod, and this brazen serpent. The two former were preserved by God's own appointment, but they were concealed in the holy of holies from popular inspection: the other was preserved by human contrivance, and became an occasion of idolatry, until a pious king, who doubtless recollected with reverence and gratitude the event commemorated by it, destroyed it with decided abhorrence. And there never were any relics preserved in the Christian church, however good the intention of the preserver might be, which have not issued in such abuses, superstitions, and impositions, as must cause all *judicious* friends to the Gospel to unite in earnestly praying for their extirpation. [*P. O. ch.* 16: and *Introd.* p. 4.] Yet, true piety, and fervent affection for holy things and holy men, naturally lead this way; unless sound judgment, and considerable acquaintance with human nature, and the history of superstition, counteract their efficacy. SCOTT.

Verses 5, 6.

None of the kings of Judah, from the time of the division of the kingdom, equalled Hezekiah, in the vigor and simplicity of his dependence on the Lord; in which he aspired to an equality with his progenitor David, who had reigned over the whole land. Even Asa, through weakness of faith, sought the assistance of a heathen prince; and Jehoshaphat formed an alliance with idolatrous Ahab: but Hezekiah clave to the Lord in entire confidence and unreserved obedience, to the end of his life. (22:1, 2. 1 *K.* 15:17—24, 2 *Chr.* 16:7—12. 19: 1—4.) ID.

Verse 7.

Hezekiah, who was under no personal engagements to the king of Assyria, would not stand to the agreement which his father had formed. (16:7—9. 17:3, 4.) It does not appear that he violated any treaties. ID.

Verses 9—12.

Shalmaneser began the siege of Samaria, in the beginning of the 4th year of Hezekiah, and the 7th of Hoshea; so that the *three years' siege* was concluded, by the end of the 6th of the former, and the 9th of the latter prince. (*Notes*, 1. 17:1—11.)—The desolations of Israel would tend to dispose the Jews to concur with Hezekiah, and thus facilitate his endeavors for reformation, as well as quicken him in them. ID.

Verse 13.

A few years after the reduction of Samaria, Shalmaneser died and was succeeded by his son Sennacherib. Shalmaneser doubtless would have attempted to subjugate Hezekiah; but he was otherwise employed, and this leisure was given to Hezekiah, to effect his reformation without interruption. (2 *Chr.* 29:—31:) Sennacherib, as soon as he

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2 Kings 18:17. Page 341.

of Assyria [a] come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.

14 And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria, to Lachish, saying, [b] I have offended; return from me: that which thou puttest on me, will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold.

15 And Hezekiah [c] gave *him* all the silver *that was* found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house.

16 At that time did Hezekiah cut off *the* [d] *gold from* the doors of the temple of the LORD, and *from* the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave [*] it to the king of Assyria.

[*Practical Observations.*]

B. C. 712. 17 ¶ And [e] the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rab-saris and Rabshakeh, from Lachish to king Hezekiah, with a [†] great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem: and when they were come up, they came and stood by [f] the conduit of the upper pool, which *is* in the highway of the fuller's field.

18 And when they had called to the king, him; it is said of the ten tribes here, that they would neither *hear* God's commandments, nor *do* them, *v.* 12. Many will be content to give God the hearing, that will give Him no more, (Ezek. 33: 31.) but these, being resolved not to do their duty, did not care to hear of it.

II. Of the attempt of Sennacherib, the succeeding king of Assyria, against Judah. It was a great calamity, by which God would try Hezekiah's faith, and chastise the people, who are called *a hypocritical nation*, (Isa. 10: 6.) because they did not heartily comply with Hezekiah's reformation, nor willingly part with their idols, but kept them up in their hearts, and, perhaps, in their houses, though their high places were removed. Even times of reformation may prove troublous times, made so by those that oppose it, and then the blame is laid on the reformers; this calamity will appear great upon Hezekiah, if we consider,

1. How much he lost of his country, *v.* 13. all, or most, of the fenced cities of Judah, the frontier-towns, and garrisons; and then all the rest, of course; the confusion the country was put into by this invasion, is described by Isaiah, 10: 28—32.

2. How dear he paid for his peace. Where was Hezekiah's courage? Where his confidence in God? Why did he not advise with Isaiah before he sent this crouching message? *v.* 14. A mean submission, and a vast sum of money; 300 talents of silver, and 30 of gold; not annually, but as a present ransom, above 200,000 pounds! How must he have felt to be forced not only to empty the public treasures, (*v.* 15.) but to take the gold plates off from the doors of the temple, and from the pillars, *v.* 16. His father Ahaz had plundered the temple in contempt; (2 Chr. 28: 24.) and he had repaid with interest what his father took, but now, with all due reverence, he begs leave to borrow it again in an exigence, and for a greater good, with a resolution to restore it in full, as soon as he should be in a capacity to do it.

V. 17—37. Here is,

I. Jerusalem besieged by Sennacherib's army, *v.* 17. Is this the great king, the king of Assyria? Base, false, perfidious man, worthy to be made infamous to all ages; those are wicked men indeed, and, let them be ever so great, we will call them so, whose principle is, not to make their promises binding, any further than is for their interest; now Hezekiah had too much reason to repent his treaty, which had made him much the poorer, and never the safer.

II. Hezekiah, and his princes and people, railed on by Rab-shakeh: instructed, no doubt, by Sennacherib, who intended hereby to pick a new quarrel with Hezekiah; he had promised, on the receipt of Hezekiah's money, to withdraw his army, (*v.* 14.) and therefore cannot for shame attack Jerusalem immediately, but sends Rab-shakeh to persuade Hezekiah to surrender it, and if he refuse, that shall serve him for a pretence to besiege it, and, if it hold out, to take it by storm. Rab-shakeh has the impudence to desire audience of the king himself without the walls; Hezekiah declines a personal treaty, and sends three commissioners, to hear what he had to say, but with a charge, not to answer him *according to his folly*, *v.* 36. One interruption they gave him, which was only to desire he would speak now in the Syrian language, and they would consider what he said, and report to the king, and if they did not give him a satisfactory answer, then he might appeal to the people, by speaking *in the Jews' language*, *v.* 26. This was a reasonable request, and agreeable to the custom of treaties, that plenipotentiaries settle matters between themselves, before any thing be made public; but Eliakim did not consider what an unreasonable man he had to deal with, for his request did but exasperate Rab-shakeh, and make him more rude and boisterous, *v.* 27. Against all decency and honor, instead of treating with the commissioners, he menaces the soldiery, persuades them to desert or mutiny, threatens, if they hold out, to reduce them to the last extremity, and then goes on with his discourse, the scope of which is, to persuade Hezekiah, and his princes and people, to surrender the city. In order to this,

1. He magnifies—idolizes, his master, *v.* 19, 23. and would possess them with the same veneration for him that he had, and thereby frighten them into submission to him; but to those who, by faith, see the King of kings in his power and glory, even the king of Assyria looks mean and little. Ps. 82: 6, 7.

2. He endeavors to make them believe it would be much for their advantage to surrender, that thus they would avoid distress and secure favor, *v.* 31. *Gild the chain, and the vulgar will let you bind them.* He thinks to soothe all with a promise, that if they would surrender on discretion, though they must expect to be prisoners and captives, yet it would really be happy for them to be so One would wonder he should ever think to prevail by such gross suggestions as these, but that the devil does thus impose on sinners every day by his temptations. Their goods are the conqueror's, yet they should have free use of them (*v.* 31.); but he does not explain it now as he would afterward, that it must be understood just as much

[a] Is. 7:17,&c. 8:7,8. 10:5. Hos. 12:1, 2.
[b] 1 K. 20:4. Prov. 29:25. Luke 14: 31.
[c] 12:18. 16:8. 1 K. 15:15,18,19. 2 Chr. 16:2.
[d] 1 K. 6:31—35. 2 Chr. 29:2.
[e] 2 Chr. 32:9. Is. 20:1. 36:2.
[*] Heb. *them.*
[†] Heb. *heavy.*
[f] 20:20. Is. 7:3. 22:9—11. 36:2.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 9—16. While the interests of religion decline or are run down in one place, the Lord takes care that they shall revive and flourish in another. The judgments, which desolate degenerate churches and nations, instead of injuring his cause, tend to warm, animate, and embolden others in personal religion, and in attempting public reformation; nay, they often facilitate the work of active instruments in religious revivals, by intimidating opposers, and exciting those who were indifferent, or reluctant to assist.—Yet the believer, when pursuing heavenly things, and seeking the glory of God, with the greatest simplicity and most vigorous affections, must stand prepared for trouble. For when the Almighty is pleased to remove his restraining hand, Satan and wicked men will assault him, with rancor and vehemence: and the Lord often permits them to do this; for He regards not so much the present transient feelings of his beloved servants, as the final happy and glorious event of their trials and conflicts. Nations also may meet with public calamities, when true religion is most vigorously and successfully promoted, by the general concurrence of all orders of men. (2 *Chr.* 20:1—4. *Ps.* 44:17—22.) The secret dislike, the hypocrisy, and the lukewarmness of numbers require correction: while trials tend to purify the faith and hope of upright persons; to bring them to greater simplicity in their zeal for the honor of God, and in their dependence on his help; and to increase the fervency of their addresses at the throne of grace: and thus they make way for the fuller display of the glory of God in their deliverance. SCOTT.

mounted the throne, emulated his father's military honors, and imitated his example. He therefore purposed to treat Jerusalem and Judah, as Shalmaneser had done Samaria and Israel: and it pleased God to chastise the lukewarmness, hypocrisy, or reluctancy, with which many of the Jews concurred in Hezekiah's reformation, and to try his faith, and that of other believers, by permitting this potent monarch to reduce the other fenced cities and strong-holds of Judah, and to threaten Jerusalem with a siege. (2 *Chr.* 32:1. *Is.* 7:17—25. 8:6—8. 10:5—14, 28—34. 36:1, 2.) SCOTT.

Verses 14—16.

Hezekiah seems rather to have sinned, by yielding in so timid a manner. He evidently distrusted God's protection: (*Gen.* 12.11—16.)—The event shows, that if he had boldly stood out, and committed his cause to God, he would have been protected. But though Hezekiah's conduct might perhaps be reprehensible; yet it served to render Sennacherib's subsequent violence more inexcusable. (*M. R.*—2 *Chr.* 32:3—8.) SCOTT.

Verse 17.

This 2nd invasion is computed by some to have been 3 years after the former agreement; during which time Sennacherib was occupied in other wars. But it seems more probable from the narrative, that he returned the ensuing year. (*Is.* 36:2.) ID.

Stood by the conduit, &c.] 'They took up their head-quarters, as we now speak, by the conduit, or canal, into which water was derived from the upper fish-pond or pool, which was in the highway to the field, where the fullers, after they had washed their clothes in the pool, were wont to spread them.' *Patrick.* (*M. R.*) [See the map at the end of Mark.] ID.

Tartan, &c.] 'These are not proper names, but offices. Tartan, 'the president of the council,' Rab-saris, 'the chief eunuch,' Rab-shakeh, 'the chief cup-bearer.' [So also, Rab-mag, 'chief of the magi,' Jer. 39: 3.] LE CLERC. CALMET.

there came out to them [e] Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which *was* over the household, and [h] Shebna the * scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph [i] the recorder.

19 And Rabshakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, [j] Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, [k] What confidence *is* this wherein thou trustest?

20 Thou † sayest, (but *they are but* ‡ vain words,) § *I have* counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou [l] rebellest against me?

21 Now, behold, thou ‖ trustest upon [m] the staff of this bruised reed, *even* [n] upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it: [o] so *is* Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him.

22 But if ye say unto me, [p] We trust in the LORD our God: *is* not that he, [q] whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?

23 Now therefore, I pray thee, give ¶ pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and [r] I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.

24 How then [s] wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put [t] thy trust on Egypt for [u] chariots, and for horsemen?

25 Am [v] I now come up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

26 Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants [x] in the Syrian language; for we understand *it*: and talk not with us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that *are* on the wall.

27 But Rabshakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? *hath he* not *sent me* to the men which sit on the wall, that they may [y] eat their own dung, and drink ** their own piss with you?

28 Then [z] Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of [a] the great king, the king of Assyria.

29 Thus saith the king, [b] Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand:

30 Neither let Hezekiah [c] make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and [d] this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

31 Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, †† Make *an agreement* with me by a present, and come out to me, and *then* [e] eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig-tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his ‡‡ cistern:

32 Until [f] I come and take you away to a land [g] like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vine-yards, a land of oil-olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he §§ persuadeth you saying, The LORD will deliver us.

33 Hath [h] any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

34 Where *are* [i] the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where *are* [k] the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? [l] have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand?

35 Who *are* they, among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, [m] that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?

36 But the people [n] held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's

Hezekiah, *v.* 19. To the people he says, (*v.* 29.) '*Let not Hezekiah deceive you* into your own ruin, for *he shall not be able to deliver you.*' It were well, if sinners would submit to the force of this argument, in making their peace with God—that it is *therefore* our wisdom to yield to Him, because it is in vain to contend with Him. But an just as long, as the conqueror pleases. Their captivity would be much more to their advantage, *I will take you away to a land like your own land;* what better would they be for that, when they must have nothing in it to call their own?

3. He aims especially to convince them it was to no purpose to stand out; So he insults over

g 19:2. Is. 22:20—24. 36:3,22. 37:2.
h Is. 22:15—19.
* Or, *secretary.* 2 Sam. 8:17. *marg.*
i 2 Sam. 8:16. 20:24. 1 K. 4:3. 2 Chr. 34:8.
j 2 Chr. 32:10. Is. 10:8—14. 36:4. 37: 13. Dan. 4:30.
k 22,29,30. 19:10. 2 Chr. 32:7,8,10,11, 14—16. Ps. 4:2. Is. 36:4,7. 37:10.
† Or, *talkest.*
‡ Heb. *word of the lips.*
§ Or, *but counsel and strength* are *for the war.* Prov. 21:30,31.
l 14.
‖ Heb. *trustest thee.*
m Is. 36:6. Ez. 29:6,7.
n Is. 30:2,7. 31:1—3.
o 17:4. Jer. 46:17.
p 5. Dan. 3:15. Matt. 27:43.
q 4. 2 Chr. 31:1. 32:12. Is. 36:7. 1 Cor. 2:15.
¶ Heb. *hostages.*
r 1 Sam. 17:42—44. 1 K. 20:10,18. Neh. 4:2—5. Ps. 123:3,4. Is. 10:13,14. 36:8,9.
s Is. 10:8. Dan. 2:37,38. 4:22,37.
t 21. See on Deut. 17:16. Is. 31:1,3. 36:6,9. Jer. 37:7. 42:14—18. Ez. 17: 15,17.
u Ps. 20:7,8.
v 19:6,32,&c. 1 K. 13:18. 2 Chr. 35:21. Is. 10:5,6.
x Ezra 4:7. Is. 36:11,12. Dan. 2:4.
y 6:25. Deut. 28:53—57. Ps. 73:8. Lam. 4:5. Ez. 4:13.
** Heb. *the water of their feet.*
z 2 Chr. 32:18. Is. 36:13—18.
a 19. Ezra 7:12. Ps. 47:2. Is. 10:8—13. Ez. 29:3. 31:3—10. Rev. 19:16.
b 2 Chr. 32:11,15. Dan. 3:15—17. 6:16. John 19:10,11. 2 Thes. 2:4.
c 22. 19:10,22. Ps. 4:2. 11:1. 22:7, 8. 71:9,11. Matt. 27:43. Luke 23:35.
d 19:32—34.
†† Or, *Seek my favor.* Heb. *Make with me a blessing.* Gen. 32:20. 33:11. Prov. 18:16.
e 1 K. 4:20,25. Zech. 3:10.
‡‡ Or, *pit.*
f 11. 17:6,23. 24:14—16. 25:11.
g Ex. 3:8. Num. 13:26,27. 14:8. Deut. 8:7—9. 11:12. 32:13,14.
§§ Or, *deceiveth.* 29.
h 19:12,17,18. 2 Chr. 32:14—17,19. Is. 10:10,11. 36:18—20.
i 19:13. Num. 13:21. 2 Sam. 8:9. Jer. 49:23.
k 17:24—33. *Acts.* Is. 36:18,19. 37:11, 12,18,19.
l 17:6,23,24,30,31. 19:12,13.
m Ex. 5:2. 2 Chr. 32:15. Job 15:25,26. Is. 10:15. 37:23—29. Dan. 3:15.
n Ps. 38:13,14. 39:1. Prov. 9:7. 26:4. Am. 5:13. Matt. 7:6.

Verses 20, 21.

It does not appear that Hezekiah, after the preceding agreement, had refused to pay tribute to the king of Assyria, or had attempted to shake off his yoke: but when he found him determined to destroy Jerusalem and enslave its inhabitants, he refused to surrender at discretion, and prepared to stand a siege.—He had not put his trust in Egypt, though probably many of his nobles were disposed to, and some engagements of that kind had before been attempted. (*Is.* 30:1—7. 31: 1—5.) SCOTT.

(21.) *Pharaoh king of Egypt.*] 'Tirhakah [19:9 note] was now king of Egypt, he reigned from 714 to 690.' *Wilkinson.* See notes on the contemporary kings of Egypt, 7:6, &c. ED.

Verse 27.

These were hyperbolical expressions, denoting the utmost extremities of famine, which the people must expect to endure, in case they dared to resist the king of Assyria. (*M.* and *M. R.*) SCOTT. Still, such things are related to have happened. 'The same disgusting allusions are employed by the heathen to this day, to express the highest contempt for a person, and to describe his coming calamities.' *Roberts.* ED.

Verses 28—35.

What mean thoughts of the infinite God, and what arrogant thoughts of himself, must have possessed the mind of Sennacherib, who doubtless had instructed his servant to speak of him in this style! Surely, if this proud worm had not been intoxicated with success, he must have admitted, that somewhere in the universe there was a power superior to that of mortal man! and if so, it must be highly irrational thus to set at defiance 'all that was called God, or worshipped!' But, by this plasphemy the Lord was expressly engaged in the cause; and his honor required Him to crush the self-important wretch, who dared to exalt himself against Him: so that the greatest kindness imaginable was done to the king and the people of Judah, by this language of impiety and defiance. (19:4, 14—19. *v.* 19, 25—29. *Ps.* 79:8—13. *Is.* 10:15—19.)—Rabshakeh argued very plausibly on his own principles, and his eloquence has been much admired: but when a man addresses himself to an uninformed populace, and has *sufficient effrontery*, and *no reserves as to what he says*, be it ever so false, impious, or malignant, provided it is suited to inflame their passions, to excite their fears or terrors, and to set them against the rulers whom God has placed over them; eloquence requires comparatively no great talent. SCOTT.

(31.) *Cistern, vine.*] Tanks were frequently cut in the solid rock: many of them exist to the present day in those countries. The ancient Egyptians (and probably the Hebrews) generally had one in the centre of their garden, round which, or on one side of which, their house was built. 'Much taste too was frequently displayed in the mode of dressing their *vines*, which, trained over rafters (as *at present* in Upper Egypt) supported by low columns, formed a series of shady avenues, and afforded, at the same time, great facility for gathering the ripened clusters.' *Wilkinson.* Comp. 1 K. 4:25. ED.

Verses 36, 37.

'This was a wise order: . . . and it was no less pious: for Hezekiah believed that God would answer for Himself, in words, but in such deeds as would demonstrate that He was above all gods.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

commandment was, saying, Answer him not.

37 Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah, [o]with *their* clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

CHAP. XIX.

Hezekiah in distress sends to desire Isaiah's prayers, and receives an encouraging answer, 1—7. Sennacherib, going to oppose the king of Ethiopia, sends a blasphemous letter to Hezekiah, 8—13. His prayer on the receipt of it, 14—19. Isaiah, in the name of God, rebuking the proud blasphemies of Sennacherib, foretells his overthrow, and the prosperity of Zion, 20—34. An angel destroys the Assyrian army, 35. Sennacherib is slain by his own sons, in the temple of his idol, 36, 37.

AND it came to pass, [a]when king Hezekiah heard *it*, that [b]he rent his clothes, and [c]covered himself with sack-cloth, and [d]went into the house of the LORD.

2 And [e]he sent Eliakim, which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, [f]to Isaiah the prophet [g]the son of Amoz.

3 And they said unto him, Thus saith Heze-

o 5:7. 22:11,19. Gen. 37:29,34. Job 1:20. Is. 33:7. 36:21,22. Jer. 36:24. Matt. 26:65.
a Is. 37:1.
b 5:7. 18:37. 1 Sam. 4:12. Ezra 9:3. Job 1:20. Jer. 36:24. Matt. 26:65.
c 6:30. Gen. 37:34. 1 K. 21:27,29. Esth. 4:1—4. Ps. 35:13. John 3:3. Matt. 11:21.
d 2 Chr. 7:15,16. Job 1:20,21.
e 18:18 22:13,14. Is. 37:2—5.
f 2 Chr. 26:22. Matt. 4:14. Luke 3:4. *Exodus.*
g Is. 1:1. 2:1.

Hezekiah was not thus helpless and defenceless. Three things he supposes Hezekiah might trust to, and endeavors to make out the insufficiency of each.

(1.) His own military preparations; *Thou sayest, I have counsel and strength for the war;* and so we find he had, 2 Chr. 32: 3. But this Rab-shakeh turns off with a slight, *v.* 20. With the greatest haughtiness and disdain, he challenges him to produce 2000 men that knew how to manage a horse, and will venture to give him 2000 horses, if he can; he falsely insinuates that he had no men, or none fit to be soldiers; (*v.* 23.) thus he thinks to run him down with confidence and banter, and will lay him any wager that one captain of the least of his master's servants is able to baffle him and all his forces.

(2.) His alliance with Egypt; he supposes he trusted to Egypt for chariots and horsemen, (*v.* 24.) because the king of Israel had done so, and of this confidence he truly says, It is *a broken reed*, *v.* 21. and will rend the shoulder, as the prophet further illustrates this similitude, with application to Egypt, Ezek. 29: 6, 7. and truly they that trust to any arm of flesh, will find it no better than a broken reed; but God is the Rock of ages.

(3.) His interest in God, and relation to Him; this was indeed the confidence Hezekiah trusted in; (*v.* 22.) he supported himself by depending on the power and promise of God, *v.* 30, 32. this, he was sensible, was their great stay, therefore he is most large in his endeavors to shake this, as David's enemies, Ps. 3: 2. 11: 1. and thus did Christ's enemies, Matt. 27: 43. Three things he suggests to discourage their confidence in God, and all false.

[1.] That Hezekiah had forfeited God's protection, by *destroying the high places and the altars*, *v.* 22. Here he measures the God of Israel by the gods of the heathen, who delighted [so they thought] in the multitude of altars and temples. But Hezekiah's obliging his people to offer at one altar, is one of the best deeds he ever did; if that be represented by ignorant and malicious men as evil and a provocation to God, which is really good and pleasing to Him, we must not think it strange.

[2.] That God had given orders for the destruction of Jerusalem, at this time, *v.* 25. This is all an empty boast; but he makes the pretence, to amuse and terrify the *people on the wall*. It might however be taken from the notice which, perhaps, he had had, by the writings of the prophets, of the hand of God, in the destruction of the 10 tribes, and he thought he had as good a warrant for seizing Jerusalem as Samaria; many that have fought against God, have pretended commissions from Him.

[3.] That if Jehovah, the God of Israel, should undertake to protect them from the king of Assyria, yet He was not able to do it; with this blasphemy he concludes his speech, (*v.* 33—35.) putting the God of Israel on a level with the gods of the nations whom he had conquered, and concluding that, because they could not defend and deliver their worshippers, the God of Israel could not his. The tradition of the Jews is, that Rab-shakeh was an apostate Jew, [as it was not customary to rend the clothes, (*v.* 37.) on hearing blasphemy from a mere heathen,] which made him so ready in the Jews' language; if so, his ignorance of the God of Israel was the less excusable, and his enmity the less strange, for apostates are commonly the most bitter and spiteful enemies, witness Julian. A great deal of art and management, it must be owned, there is in his speech, but, withal, a great deal of pride, malice, falsehood, and blasphemy.

Lastly, The commissioners, 1. Held their peace; not for want of something to say both on God's behalf and Hezekiah's, but the king had commanded them not to answer, and they observed their instructions: there are those to whom to offer any thing religious or rational, is to cast pearls before swine. Probably their silence made Rab-shakeh yet more proud and secure, and so his heart was lifted up and hardened to his destruction. 2. They rent their clothes, in detestation of his blasphemy, and in grief for the despised, afflicted condition of Jerusalem, the reproach of which was a burden to them. 3. They faithfully reported the matter to the king.

CHAP. XIX. Jerusalem's great distress we read of in the foregoing ch. and left it besieged, insulted, threatened, terrified, and just ready to be swallowed up. But in this ch. we have an account of its glorious deliverance, not by sword or bow, but by prayer, prophecy, and the hand of an angel.

V. 1—7. The contents of Rab-shakeh's speech being brought to Hezekiah, one would have expected (and it is likely Rab-shakeh did expect) he should have called a council of war, and it should have been debated, whether it was best to capitulate. Before the siege, he had *taken counsel with his princes, and his mighty men*, (2 Chr. 32: 3.) but that would not do now; his greatest relief is, that he has a God to go to, and here is what passed between him and his God.

I. Hezekiah discovered deep concern at the dishonor done to God by this blasphemy, *v.* 1. Good men were wont to do so, when they heard of any reproach cast on God's name; and great men must not think it any disparagement to them, to sympathize with the injured honor of the great God. Royal robes are not too good to be rent, nor royal flesh too good to be clothed with sackcloth, in hu-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 17—37. No dependence can be placed on the engagements of the covetous or ambitious: and all attempts to purchase their favor, or to soothe them into peace, are vain. Our only safety then consists, in committing our persons, property, connections, reputations, liberty, and every thing we value, into the powerful keeping of our God, in the exercise of faith, and by adhering to the path of duty.—What pride, reproaches, lies, impiety, atheism, and blasphemy have, in all ages, been vented by the tongue, that 'unruly evil,' to the dishonor of God, and the unutterable injury of mankind! We may form some estimate of the desperate wickedness of the human heart, from the horrible language uttered by the lips of men; 'for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' (*Matt.* 12:31—37. *Jam.* 3:3—6.) May the Lord replenish our hearts with his grace, that out of that good treasure we may speak such things, and such only, as may 'minister grace unto the hearers!' Many, because they have succeeded in exposing or seducing hypocritical and degenerate professors of Christianity, triumph as if they had, or soon should, completely ruin the cause of vital godliness: endeavoring to discourage scriptural worshippers, on the most false and preposterous grounds. Such cavils, objections, and arguments have no weight with the established believer: therefore these men pretend to despise him, that they may address the prejudices and passions of the ignorant, unstable, and unthinking multitude, with whom their specious declamations go further, than either solid arguments or scriptural testimonies. But, it is often best to leave persons of this description to rail and blaspheme, without directly answering: because such attempts ordinarily increase their self-importance, and tend to disseminate still more widely the effect of their poisonous tenets; while a decided expression of abhorrence of their guilt, generally forms the best testimony against them. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX. V. 2. Isaiah had at this time prophesied almost 50 years, if he entered on that office only a short time before the death of Uzziah: for he prophesied in the days of Uzziah, who died about 758, B. C. and these transactions occurred about 712. (*Is.* 1:1. 6:1—4, *v.* 1.) It must be supposed that Hezekiah had often consulted him: and the nature of this message implies a previous acquaintance, and a mutual confidence. (18.4.) Isaiah's visits to Hezekiah, at and after his sickness, are thought by some to have taken place before this, though recorded afterwards: (20:) and many parts of his prophecy evidently refer to these events.—There seems to have been an intended slight on the high priest. Some learned men indeed think, the appointed method of inquiring of God by the high priest, was disused from the time the temple was built: but this can be collected only from the silence of Scripture, as no express declaration to that effect is recorded.—Shebna, who was employed on this occasion, as well as in receiving the message of Rabshakeh, is elsewhere represented in an unfavorable light. (*Is.* 22:15—19.) Pious persons cannot always employ such characters, and such only, as they approve. SCOTT.

Verse 3.

Are come to the birth, &c.] 'This same expression is still used in the E. when a person has all but accomplished his object, and only a slight obstacle has prevented him.' ROBERTS.

kiah, [h] This day *is* a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and [*] blasphemy: [i] for the children are come to the birth, and *there is* not strength to bring forth.

4 It may be [k] the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rab-shakeh, [l] whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will [m] reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore [n] lift up *thy* prayer for [o] the remnant *that are* [†] left.

5 So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

6 And [p] Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, [q] Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which [r] the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.

7 Behold, I will send [s] a blast upon him, and he shall [t] hear a rumor, and shall return to his own land; and [u] I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

8 ¶ So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against [x] Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed [y] from Lachish.

9 And [z] when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee; [a] he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying,

10 Thus shall ye speak unto Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, [b] Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be

miliation for indignities done to God, and for the perils and terrors of his Jerusalem. This, God now called to, and was displeased with those who were not thus affected; Isa. 22: 12—14, 15. which refers to this very event.

II. He *went up to the house of the Lord*, (according to the example of the Psalmist, Ps. 73: 17.) to meditate and pray, and get his spirit into a sedate, composed frame, after this agitation. He was not considering what answer to return to Rab-shakeh, but refers himself to God, *Thou shalt answer, Lord, for me;* Herbert. Note, When the church's enemies are very daring and threatening, it is the wisdom and duty of the church's friends to apply themselves to God, appeal to Him, and leave their cause with Him.

III. He sent to the prophet Isaiah, by honorable messengers, in token of great respect, to desire his prayers, *v.* 2—4. Eliakim and Shebna having heard the words of Rab-shakeh, were the better able both to possess and to affect Isaiah with the case. The elders of the priests were themselves to pray for the people, in the time of trouble, Joel 2: 17. but they must go to engage Isaiah's prayers, because he could pray better, and had a better interest in heaven. The messengers were to go in sackcloth, because they were to represent the king, who was so clothed. Judah was but a *remnant* now the 10 tribes are gone; Jerusalem but a remnant now the defenced cities of Judah were taken. Note, 1. It is very desirable, and what we should be desirous of when in trouble, to have the prayers of our friends for us. In begging it, we honor God, honor prayer, honor our brethren. 2. Desiring the prayers of others for us, must not excuse us from praying for ourselves. Hezekiah himself *went into the house of the Lord*, to offer up his own prayers. 3. Those who speak from God to us, we should in a particular manner desire to speak to God for us. *He is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee*, Gen. 20: 7. The great Prophet is the great Intercessor. 4. Those are likely to prevail with God, that *lift up* their prayers, that is, that lift up their hearts in prayer. 5. When the interests of God's church are brought very low, so that there is but a remnant left, few friends, and those weak, and at a loss, then it is time to *lift up our prayers for that remnant.*

Two things are urged, to engage his prayers.

1. Their fears of the enemy, *v.* 3. 'He is insolent and haughty; it is *a day of rebuke and blasphemy*, we are despised, God is dishonored; never were such a king and kingdom so trampled on and abused; *our soul is exceedingly filled with the contempt of the proud;* it is *a sword in our bones*, to hear them reproach our confidence in God. And, which is worst of all, we see not which way we can help ourselves. Our cause is good, our people are faithful, but we are quite overpowered with numbers; now is the time, the critical moment, when, if ever, we must be relieved; one successful blow would accomplish our wishes. But alas, we are not able to give it; *there is not strength to bring forth.* Comp. Hos. 13: 13.

2. Their hopes in God. To Him they look, on Him they depend, to appear for them; one word from Him will turn the scale, and save the sinking remnant; if He but reprove the words of Rab-shakeh, i. e. disprove them, (*v.* 4.) if He undertake to convince and confound the blasphemer, all will be well. And this they trust He will do, not for their merit's sake, but for his own honor's sake, because he has *reproached the living God*, by levelling Him with dead and dumb idols They have reason to think the issue will be good, for they can interest God in the quarrel, Ps. 74: 22. 'He is the Lord thy God,' say they to Isaiah, '*thine*, whose glory thou art concerned for, and whose favor thou art interested in. Help us with thy prayers to bring the cause before Him, and then we are content to leave it with Him.'

IV. God, by Isaiah, sent to Hezekiah, to assure Him he would glorify Himself in the ruin of the Assyrians. Hezekiah sent to Isaiah, not to inquire concerning the event, as many did that sent to the prophets, (*Shall I recover?* or the like,) but to desire assistance in duty. Therefore God let him know what the event should be, in recompense of his care to do his duty, *v.* 6,7. He interests Himself in the cause, *They have blasphemed Me;* He encourages Hezekiah, *Be not afraid of the* windy *words thou hast heard;* and He promises to frighten the king of Assyria; *I will send a blast upon him*, that pestilential breath which killed his army, upon which, terrors shall seize him, and drive him into his own country, where death shall meet him.

V. 8—19. Rab-shakeh, having delivered his message, and received no answer, left his army before Jerusalem, under command of the other generals, and went himself, to attend the king his master for further orders. He found him besieging Libnah, a city that had revolted from Judah, *ch.* 8: 22. Whether he had taken Lachish or no, is not certain; some think he found it impracticable, *v.* 8. However, he was now alarmed with the rumor that the king of the Cushites, who bordered on the Arabians, was coming out against him with a great army, *v.* 9. This made him very desirous to gain Jerusalem with all speed. To take it by force, would cost him more time and men than he could well spare, therefore he renews his attack on Hezekiah, to persuade him tamely to surrender it. Having found him an easy man once, *ch.* 18: 14. when he said, *That which thou puttest on me I will bear*, he hoped again to frighten him into a submission, but in vain.

I. Sennacherib sent a railing, blasphemous letter, to the same purport with Rab-shakeh's speech; there is nothing new offered in it. Comp. *ch.* 18: 29. *v.* 10—12.

II. Hezekiah was not so haughty, as not to receive the letter, nor so careless as not to read it; nor in such a passion, when he had read it, as to write an answer to it in the same provoking language;

delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

h 18:29. Ps. 39:11. 123:3,4. Jer. 30:5—7. Hos. 5:15. 6:1.
* Or, *provocation.* Ps. 95:8. Heb. 3: 15,16.
i Is. 26:17,18. 66:9. Hos. 13:13.
k Gen. 22:14. Deut. 32:36. Josh. 14: 12. 1 Sam. 14:6. 2 Sam. 16:12.
l 18:17—35.
m 22. 1 Sam. 17:45. Ps. 50:21. 74:18.
n 2 Chr. 32:20. Ps. 50:15. Jer. 33:3. Ez. 36:37. Jam. 5:16,17.
o 17:5,6. 18:13. 2 Chr. 28:5,6. Is. 8: 7,8. 10:6.
† Heb. *found.*
p Is. 37:6,7.
q 6:16. Ex. 14:13. Lev. 26:8. Deut. 20:1,3,4. Josh. 11:6. 2 Chr. 20:15,17. Is. 41:10—14. 51:7,12,13.
r 18:35. Ps. 74:18,23. Rev. 13:6. 35,37. Job 4:9. Ps. 11:6. 18:14,15. 50:3. Is. 10:16—18. 11:4. Jer. 51:1.
t 7:6. Job 15:21. Jer. 49:14. 51:46. Ob. 1.
u 36,37. 2 Chr. 32:21.
x 8:22. Josh. 10:29. 12:15. 15:42.
y 18:14. Josh. 12:11. 15:39. Is. 37:8, 9. Mic. 1:13.
z 1 Sam. 23:27,28. Is. 37:9.
a 18:17.
b 18:5,29,30. 2 Chr. 32:15—19. Is. 37: 10—14.

Verse 7.

A blast, &c.] Some have supposed this expression related to the manner, in which the Assyrian army was destroyed: viz. by exciting one of those scorching winds, [the Samiel or Simoom,] which in those countries have been known to destroy great multitudes almost instantaneously. But this is uncertain: and perhaps it only means, that the Lord would destroy all his prosperity, as easily as the pinching gale of wind blasts the tender vegetables: while the death of his numerous forces, probably attended by a report, that Tirhakah and the Ethiopians were marching to assault him, as a terrifying rumor in his ears, would hurry him home with dismay and disgrace. (35—37. *Job* 20: 10—29, *vv.* 23—26.)—As the word, rendered *blast*, is often translated *spirit*; some explain the expression to mean, that God would send an *angel*, or *spirit*, to destroy Sennacherib's army; but others think it signifies, that God would fill his heart with terror by some supernatural agent. 'I will infuse a spirit into him.'—The phrase 'never signifies any thing, but putting a spirit into a person; this was *pneuma deilias*,' (a spirit of fear.) *Secker*, in *Lowth.* SCOTT.

Verse 8.

It is probable, Rabshakeh marched the army back from Jerusalem to join Sennacherib, when he found Hezekiah would neither surrender, nor return any answer to his insulting message. (23) For Jerusalem was so advantageously situated, and so well fortified, that, with a moderate garrison, it might have made a stout resistance against any detachment of the Assyrian army: (25:1—5. 2 *Sam.* 5:6—8. *Ps.* 48:12, 13. 125:2. *Lam.* 4:12.) though it must probably at length have shared the fate of Samaria, if the Lord had not immediately interposed. The siege, however, was postponed, or not carried on with vigor, till Sennacherib had leisure to come against it in person. ID.

Verses 9—13.

When Sennacherib had, the first time, levied contributions on Hezekiah, he marched his army into Egypt; probably in resentment against the king, for forming alliances with the vassals of the Assyrians, as he regarded the Jews and the Samaritans to be. After several successes

11 Behold [c] thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered?

12 Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; *as* [d] Gozan, and [e] Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of [f] Eden which *were* in Thelasar?

13 Where *is* [g] the king of Hamath, and the king of [h] Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah?

14 And [i] Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and [k] spread it before the LORD.

15 And Hezekiah [l] prayed before the LORD, and said, [m] O LORD God of Israel, which [n] dwellest *between* the cherubims, [o] thou art the God, *even* thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; [p] thou hast made heaven and earth.

16 LORD, [q] bow down thine ear, and hear: [r] open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, [s] which hath sent him to reproach the living God.

17 [t] Of a truth, LORD, [u] the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and the lands,

18 And [v] have [*] cast their gods into the fire: [x] for they *were* no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.

19 Now therefore, [y] O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou *art* the LORD God, *even* thou only.

20 ¶ Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *That* [z] which

c 17,18. 17:5,&c. 18:33,34. 2 Chr. 32:13,14. Isa. 10:8—11.
d 17:6. 1 Chr. 5:26.
e Gen. 11:31. 29:4. Acts 7:4. *Charran.*

but he immediately went up to the temple, presented himself, and then *spread the letter before the Lord*, *v.* 14. Not as if God needed to have letters showed Him, but hereby he signified that he acknowledged God in all his ways, desired not to aggravate the injuries his enemies did him, or to make them appear worse than they were, but desired they might be set in a true light; and that he referred himself to God, and his righteous judgment, on the whole matter. Hereby likewise he would affect himself in the prayer he came to the temple to make; and we have need of all possible helps to quicken us in that duty. In his prayer,

1. He adores the God whom Sennacherib had blasphemed; (*v.* 15.) calls Him *the God of Israel*, because Israel was his peculiar people; and *the God that dwelt between the cherubims*, because there was the peculiar residence of his glory on earth; but gives glory to Him as *the God of the whole earth*, and not as Sennacherib fancied Him to be, *the God of Israel only*, and confined to the temple.

2. He appeals to God concerning the insolence and profaneness of Sennacherib, *v.* 16. '*Lord, hear; Lord, see.* Here it is under his own hand.' Had Hezekiah only been abused, he would have passed it by; but it is God, the living God, that is reproached, the jealous God. *Lord, what wilt Thou do for thy great name?*

3. He owns Sennacherib's triumphs over the gods of the heathen, but distinguishes between them and the God of Israel, *v.* 17, 18. Ps. 115: 3, 4.

4. He prays that God would now glorify Himself in the defeat of Sennacherib, and the deliverance of Jerusalem, *v.* 19. If we be conquered, as other lands are, they will say that Thou art conquered, as the gods of those lands were: but, Lord, distinguish Thyself, by distinguishing us, and let all the world know, and be made to confess, that *Thou art the Lord God*, the self-existent, sovereign God, *even Thou only*, and that all pretenders are vanity and a lie.' Note, The best pleas in prayer are those which are taken from God's honor; therefore, the Lord's prayer begins with *Hallowed be thy name*, and concludes with *Thine is the glory.*

V. 20—34. We have here the gracious, copious answer God gave Hezekiah. The message He sent him by the same hand, *v.* 6, 7. one would think, had been sufficient; but, that he might have strong consolation, he is encouraged by two immutable things, *in which it was impossible for God to lie.* In general, God assures him his prayer was heard, *v.* 20. Note, The case of those is miserable, that have the prayers of God's people against them. If the oppressed cry to God against the oppressor, *He will hear*, Ex. 22: 23. God hears and answers; hears *with the saving strength of his right hand.* This message speaks two things:

I. Confusion and shame to Sennacherib and his forces. Not that this message was sent him, but what is here said to him he was made to know by the event; Providence spake it to him with a witness; and perhaps his own heart was made to whisper it; for God has more ways than one of speaking to sinners in his wrath, so as to *vex them in his sore displeasure.* Sennacherib is here represented,

1. As the scorn of Jerusalem, *v.* 21. He thought himself the terror of the daughter of Zion, that chaste and beautiful virgin, and that by his threats he could force her to submit to him; But, being a virgin in her Father's house, and under his protection, she defies thee, despises thee, laughs thee to scorn. By this word God intended to silence the fears of Hezekiah and his people.

2. As an enemy to God; and that was enough to make him miserable. Hezekiah pleaded this; 'Lord, he has reproached Thee,' *v.* 16. 'He has,' saith God, 'and I take it as against Myself,' *v.* 22. *Whom hast thou reproached?* The Holy One of Israel!

3. As a proud, vain-glorious fool, that spake *great swelling words of vanity*, and *boasted of a false gift;* by his boasts, as well as by his threats, reproaching the Lord, *v* 23, 24. This was not in the letter he wrote, but God lets Hezekiah know that He not only saw what was written there, but heard what he said elsewhere, probably in his speeches to his councils or armies. Note, God notices the boasts of proud men, and will call them to an account, that he *may look upon them, and abase them*, Job 40: 11. He took to himself the glory of doing these great things, whereas they were all *the Lord's doing*, *v.* 25, 26. Sennacherib, in his letter, had appealed to what Hezekiah had heard, *v.* 11, *what the kings of Assyria had done;* but, in answer, he is reminded of what God had done for Israel of old, drying up the Red Sea, leading them through the wilderness, planting them in Canaan. Sennacherib's boasts are expounded, Isa. 10: 13, 14. *By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom*, &c. and they are answered, *v.* 15. *Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith?* How absurd for the fly on the wheel to say, What a dust I make! Or for the sword in the hand to say, What execution I do! If God be the principal Agent in all that is done, boasting is for ever excluded.

4. As under the check and rebuke of that God whom he blasphemed. All his motions were, (1.) Under the divine cognizance, *v.* 27. God was as a constant spy on him 2 Chr. 16: 9. (2.) Under the divine control, *v.* 28. Note, It is a great comfort to all the church's friends, that God has a hook in the nose, and a bridle in the jaws, of all her enemies; can make even their wrath to serve and praise Him, and then restrain the remainder of it; *Here shall its proud waves be staid.*

II. Salvation and joy to Hezekiah and his peo-

f Gen. 2:8. Isa. 37:12. *Telassar.* Ez. 27:23.
g 18:34. Num. 13:21. 34:8. Is. 11:11. Jer. 39:5. 49:23. Zech. 9:2.
h 17:24. Is. 37:13. *Arphad.*
i Is. 37:14.
k 1 K. 8:28—30. Ezra 9:5. Ps. 74:10, 11. 91:1,2. 123:1—4.
l 2 Sam. 7:18,&c. 2 Chr. 14:11. 20:6. Dan. 9:3,4.
m Gen. 32:28. 33:20. 1 K. 8:23. 1 Chr. 4:10. Is. 41:17.
n Ex. 25:22. 1 Sam. 4:4. Ps. 80:1. 99:1.
o 5:15. 1 K. 18:39. Is. 43:10. 44:6,8. 45:22. Dan. 4:34,35.
p Gen. 1:1. 2:4. Ps. 33:9. 146:6. Jer. 10:10—12. John 1:3.
q Ps. 31:2. Is. 37:17.
r 1 K. 8:29. 2 Chr. 6:40. Dan. 9:18.
s 4. Is. 79:12. Is. 37:4,17. Heb. 11:26.
t Job 9:2. Is. 5:9. Jer. 26:15. Dan. 2: 47. Matt. 14:33. Luke 22:59. Acts 4:27. 1 Cor. 14:25.
u 16:9. 17:6,24. 1 Chr. 5:26. Is. 7:17, 18. 10:9—11.
v 2 Sam. 5:21. Is. 46:1,2.
* Heb. *given.*
x Ps. 115:4—8. Is. 37:18,19. 44:9 20. Jer. 10:3—9,14—16. Acts 17:29.
y Ex. 9:15,16. Josh. 7:9. 1 Sam. 17: 45—47. 1 K. 8:43. 18:36,37. Ps. 67: 1,2. 83:18. Dan. 4:34—37.
z 2 Sam. 15:31. 17:23.

there, while besieging Pelusium, an important fortress in that country, he heard that Tirhakah king of Ethiopia was marching against him with a great army: and, not choosing to wait his approach, he raised the siege; and, returning into Judea, began to commit hostilities there, as it has been before related. But, finding that Tirhakah pursued him as a fugitive, he marched back to encounter him; and, having totally routed his army, he returned to wreak his vengeance on Hezekiah and Jerusalem. This gave the Jews some respite for preparation and for prayer; and afforded Sennacherib an occasion for more deliberately uttering his blasphemies, by a letter sent to Hezekiah, when detained for a time from marching against him.—Learned men differ in opinion concerning Tirhakah; whether he were king of Ethiopia, or *Cush*, to the south of Egypt in Africa, or of the Cushites in Asia. He was, however, an ally of the king of Egypt. (*M. R.*—18 20, 21, 28—35. 1 *K.* 10:1, 2.) SCOTT.

(θ.) *Tirhakah.*] 'Sept. Tharaka, Terraces or Tarchus of some.

'Tearka the Ethiopian' of Strabo.] Hierog. *Tehrak*, [*Tarak* Champ.] (cut.) He reigned from 714 to 690.' Ethiopia and Egypt were now under the same government of the 25th dynasty (Ethiopian) of Egypt.' *Wilkinson.* Note 6:3. ED.

Now, &c. (19) It would have been comparatively a small matter for Hezekiah and his people to perish; but it would be an evil of infinite magnitude, for all the nations to conclude, that JEHOVAH was no more powerful than their worthless idols: and it would be unspeakably honorable to the name of God, to show the difference between the Creator of the world, and these his puny rivals; and to prove, that He only was the

thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, [a] I have heard.

21 This *is* the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him: [b] The virgin [c] the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, *and* laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath [d] shaken her head at thee.

22 [e] Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou [f] exalted *thy* voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? *even* against [g] the Holy *One* of Israel.

[*Practical Observations.*]

23 * By thy [h] messengers thou hast reproached the LORD, and hast said, [i] With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the [†] tall cedar-trees thereof, *and* the choice fir-trees thereof: and I will enter into the lodgings of *his* borders, *and into* ‡ the forest of his Carmel.

24 I have digged and drunk strange waters, and [k] with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of § besieged places.

25 ‖ Hast thou not heard long ago *how* [l] I have done it, *and* of ancient times that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities *into* ruinous heaps.

26 Therefore their inhabitants [m] were [¶] of small power, they were

ple. This shall be a sign to them of God's favor.

1. Provisions were scarce and dear; and what should they do for food? The fruits of the earth were devoured by the Assyrian army, Isa. 32: 9, 10, &c. Why, they shall not only dwell in the land, but *verily they shall be fed.* But the next year was the sabbatical year, when the land was to rest, and they must neither sow nor reap. What must they do that year? Why, The Lord will provide; God's blessing shall save them seed and labor, and, that year too, the voluntary productions of the earth shall serve to maintain them, to remind them that the earth brought forth before there was a man to till it, Gen. 1: 11. And then, the third year, their husbandry would return into its former channel, and they should sow and reap as they used to do.

2. The country was laid waste, families broken up and scattered, and all in confusion; how should it be otherwise, when overrun by such an army? As to this, it is promised that *the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah*, i. e. of the country people, shall yet again be planted in their own habitations, on their own estates, *v.* 30. See how their prosperity is described; it is *taking root downward*, and *bearing fruit upward*, being well fixed, and well provided for, themselves, and then doing good to others. Such is the prosperity of the soul; it is taking root downward by faith in Christ, and then being fruitful in fruits of righteousness.

3. The city was shut up, none went out or came in; but now the remnant in Jerusalem and Zion shall go forth freely, and there shall be none to

a 20:5. 2 Chr. 32:20,21. Job 22:27. Ps. 50:15. 65:2. Is. 58:9. 65:24. Jer. 33:3. Dan. 9:20—23. John 11:42. Acts 10: 4,31. 1 John 5:14,15.
b Is. 23:12. 37:22. 47:1. Jer. 14:17. 18: 13. 31:4. Lam. 1:15. 2:13. Am. 5:2.
c Ps. 9:14. 137:8. Is. 1:8. 23:10. 47:5. Jer. 46:11. Lam. 2:13. 4:21. Mic. 4: 8. Zech. 9:9.
d Job 16:4. Ps. 22:7,8. Is. 37:22. Lam. 2:15. Matt. 27:39.
e 18:28—35. Ex. 5:2. Ps. 73:9. 74:22, 23.
f Ex. 9:17. Prov. 30:13. Is. 10:15. 14: 13,14. Ez. 28:2—9. Dan. 5:20—23. 2 Cor. 10:5. 2 Thes. 2:4.
g Ps. 71:22. Is. 5:24. 30:11,12,15. Jer. 51:5.
* Heb. *the hand of.*
h 18:17. 2 Chr. 32:17.
i 18:23,33,34. Ps. 20:7. Is. 10:7—11, 14. 37:24,25. Ez. 31:3,&c.
† Heb. *tallness of the cedar-trees thereof.*
‡ Or, *the forest*, and *his fruitful field.* Is. 10:18.
k Ex. 15:9. 2 Sam. 17:13. 1 K. 20:10. Dan. 4:30.
§ Or, *fenced.*
‖ Or, *Hast thou not heard* how *I have made it long ago, and formed it of ancient times? Should I now bring it to be laid waste*, and *fenced cities* to be *ruinous heaps?*
l Ps. 33:11. 76:10. Is. 10:5,6,15. 37: 26,27. 45:7. 46:10,11. 54:16. Acts 4:27,28.
m Num. 14:9. Ps. 48:4—7. 127:1. Jer. 37:10. 50:36,37. 51:30,32.
¶ Heb. *short of hand.* Num. 11:23.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—22. In times of great distress and prevailing impiety, strong expressions of poignant sorrow and deep humiliation are peculiarly seasonable: for 'the LORD calls to weeping, and mourning, and girding with sackcloth,' and the contrary spirit and conduct are irrational, offensive, and tokens of a profane, sensual, and selfish heart. (*Is.* 22:8—14.)—They, who best know the efficacy of fervent, believing prayer, will most desire the supplications of others for them; and especially of those, who have long been eminent for piety and simplicity, and zealous for the glory of God. Alas! few kings are very earnest to form alliances with the faithful and devoted ministers of religion, against their hostile invaders; yet they are of more real utility, than increasing numbers of brave and disciplined troops: and whenever princes, prophets, and people unite in prayer, in real dependence on God, and a disposition to give Him the praise; a prosperous event may be confidently expected, notwithstanding their own weakness, and the rebukes and insults of haughty enemies.—The more we are humbly conscious, that we cannot help ourselves, but must be miserable and perish without God's aid; the more simple will be our dependence on Him, and the more fervent our applications to Him, whether in temporal or spiritual exigences.—The Lord finds wicked men other employment, when He would give his servants a respite from conflict and persecution. Absurd as it appears, worldly men do really think, that those who trust in God will be deceived; and they presume on success, while they despise Him, and set Him at defiance! Impunity and prosperity inspire confidence and arrogance.

We can easily say, 'If God be for us, who can be against us?'

LORD almighty, able to save and to destroy. Sennacherib's blasphemous challenge gave a fair opportunity of publicly demonstrating this most important truth: and a plea grounded so directly on the honor of God could not but prevail. (*Ex.* 32:11—14. 1 *Sam.* 17:45—47. *Is.* 37:20. *Matt.* 6:9, 10, 13.) SCOTT.

Verse 21.

The virgin, &c.] (*M. R.* c.) Perhaps the term, *virgin*, might refer to the state of Jerusalem, as free from idolatry, and reserved for the Lord alone; (2 *Cor.* 11:1—6, *v.* 2.) or as having never been exposed to the ravages of an enraged victor. (*Notes, Is.* 23:12. 47:1—3.) The city of David, or Zion, seems never to have been taken by any assailant, from the time when David got possession of it, till the Babylonish captivity.—The former part of this message is addressed, not to Hezekiah, but to Sennacherib, as if present; first by the daughter of Zion, and then by the Lord Himself. ID.

The Daughter.] '"The people." Cities are often called mothers, and the inhabitants daughters. See 2 Sam. 20:19. Num. 21 25. Josh. 17:16. Judg. 1:27, &c.' POOLE.

Verse 23.

The Assyrian monarch is here introduced as glorying in what he had done, and would do. Some suppose he meant, that he had marched his army through the defiles, or over the craggy summits, of mount Lebanon: but others think that by these expressions, the temple on mount Zion is intended; and that he gloried, as already indisputably master of the whole land; and as if he had marched his army, and driven his chariots, into the mountain of the Lord's house, and dispossessed Him of his habitation. The temple may be called Lebanon, either because difficult of access, or because it was built with cedars of Lebanon: the removal of all obstructions, by slaying the bravest of Hezekiah's captains, may be denoted, by cutting down the cedars and choice fir-trees: and, 'the lodgings of his borders, and the forest of his Carmel,' may mean the strong-holds on the borders of the land; and the fruitful fields, which would come into the possession of the conqueror. For Carmel being situated in a very fruitful part of the land, every fruitful spot seems to have been called by that name. (*M.—Notes, Is.* 10:12—15.) SCOTT.

Cut down the tall cedar-trees of Lebanon.] 'Of these noble trees, with forests of which Lebanon was covered, the most recent travellers find but some half dozen remaining, of very great size—and about 389 [*Fisk*] in all the grove, (which is about three fourths of a mile in circumference,) on the sides of Mt. *Lebanon*, above Byblos and Tripoli, E. They are remarkably thick and tall, some among them are from 35 to 40 ft. in girth. At 10 or 12 ft. from the ground,—it shoots out branches, [horizontally, and the delicate foliage, much resembling the larch or hackmetack, is so arranged upon the branches as to form vast horizontal sheets of verdure, of a foot and less in thickness, and scores of square feet in extent,] the branches are large and distant; its leaves are ever-green, and something like those of rosemary; the fruit [small cones like those of the pine, in miniature] hangs underneath; Cedar wood is reputed incorruptible; it is beautiful, solid, free from knots, and inclining to a red brown color.' *Fisk* and *King* (the missionaries) say, 'the largest of those remaining in 1833, is upwards of 40 ft. in circumference. The handsomest and tallest are those of 2 or 3 ft. in diameter, the body straight, the branches almost horizontal, forming a beautiful cone, and casting a goodly shade. We measured 12 by the shade, and found each about 90 ft. some are a little higher. There is a regular gradation in size, from the largest down to the merest sapling.' See *Rob. Calm.* ED.

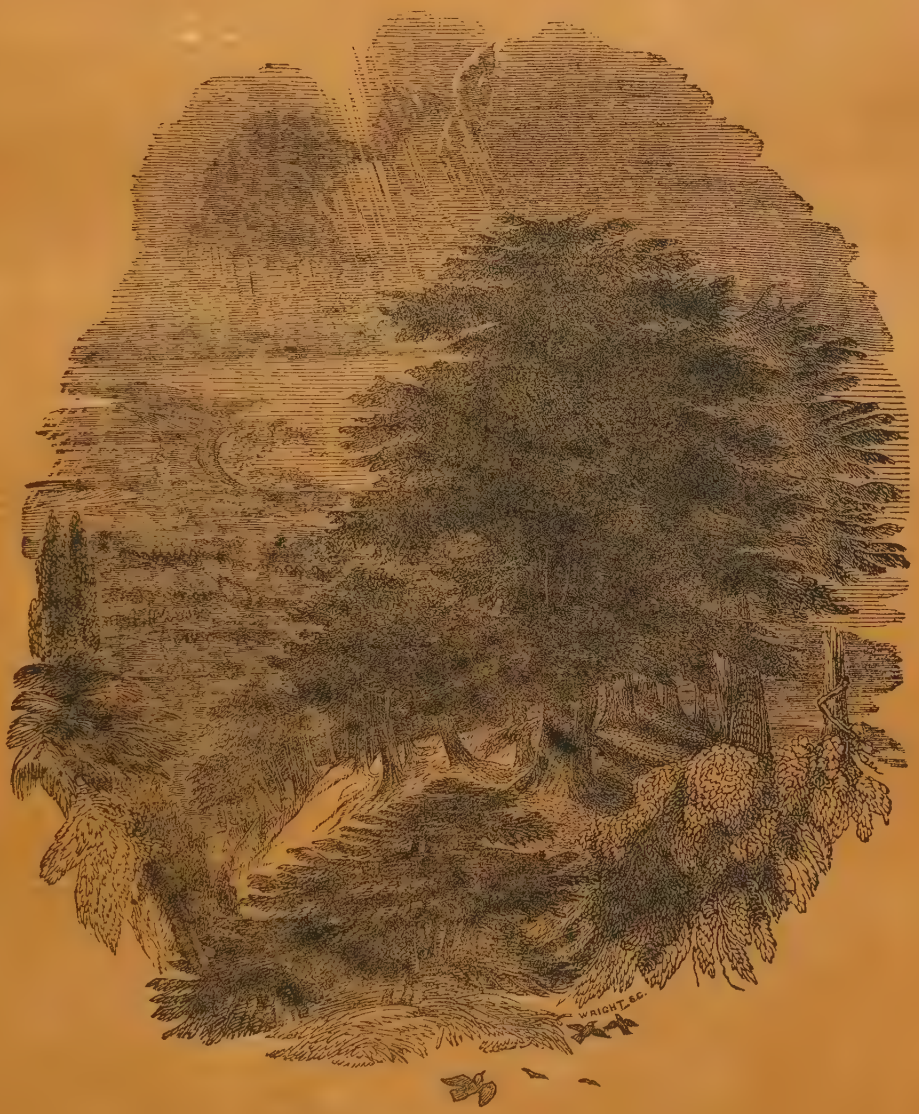
Verse 24.

Hezekiah had before taken measures to prevent the Assyrians from finding water near Jerusalem. (2 *Chr.* 32:3, 4.) But this haughty conqueror boasted, that wherever his armies marched to besiege cities, that by digging deep wells he found water where none had ever been found before, so that he and his army had 'drunk strange waters.'—The cities of Egypt, where Sennacherib had been very successful, were chiefly defended by rivers or deep moats. SCOTT.

Of besieged places.] Heb. *mtsor. Bochart* transl. of Egypt. *Harmer* paraphrases thus, 'I have digged channels and drunk, and caused my army to drink out of new made rivers, into which I have conducted the waters that used to flow elsewhere; and have laid these old channels dry with the sole of my foot; i. e. with as much ease as a gardener digs channels in his garden, and, directing the waters of a cistern into a new rill, stops up with his foot [note, Deut. 11:10] that in which it ran before—an evident allusion to the eastern mode of watering gardens.' HARMER.

Verse 26.

As the grass upon the house tops.] *Jowett* says, 'the master of the house, in the morning, laid in a stock of *earth*, which was carried up and spread evenly on the flat top of the house. The whole roof is thus formed of mere earth, [&c.] laid on [wattles over rafters?], and rolled flat, and on it is always a large roller for hardening and flattening. On this roof, of course, *grass* and weeds grow freely.' ED.



LEBANON, AND ITS CEDARS.

2 Kings 19:23. Page 346.

dismayed and confounded; [n] they were *as* the grass of the field, and *as* the green herb, *as* [o] the grass on the house-tops, and *as corn* blasted before it be grown up.

27 But [p] I know thy [*] abode, and [q] thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.

28 Because [r] thy rage against me, and [s] thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put [t] my hook in thy nose, and my brid[u]le in thy lips, and I will turn thee back [u] by the way by which thou camest.

29 And this *shall be* [x] a sign unto thee, [y] Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year, sow ye and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof.

30 [z] And [†] the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah [a] shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.

31 For [b] out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and [‡] they that escape out of mount Zion: [c] the zeal of the LORD *of hosts* shall do this.

32 Therefore thus saith the LORD, concerning the king of Assyria, [d] He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor [e] cast a bank against it.

33 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.

34 For [f] I will defend this city, to save it, [g] for mine own sake, and for [h] my servant David's sake.

35 ¶ And it came to pass [i] that night, that [k] the angel of the LORD went out, [l] and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand:

n Ps. 92:7. 102:11. Is. 40:6—8. Jam. 1:10,11. 1 Pet. 1:24.
o Ps. 129:6—8.
p Ps. 139:2—11. Jer. 23:23,24.
* Or, *sitting*.
q Deut. 28:6,19. Ps. 121:8. Is. 37:28, 29.
r Ps. 2:1—5. 7:6. 10:13,14. 46:6. 93: 3,4. Luke 6:11. John 15:18,23,24. Acts 7:54.
s Ps. 65:7. 74:4,23. 83:2.
t Job 41:2. Ps. 32:9. Ez. 29:4. 38:4. Am. 4:2.
u 33,36,37.
x 21,31—34. 20:8,9. Ex. 5:12. Is. 7: 11—14. Luke 2:12.
y Lev. 25:4,5,20—22. Is. 37:30.
z 4. 2 Chr. 32:22,23. Is. 1:9. 10:20—22.
† Heb. *the escaping of the house of Judah that remaineth*.
a Ps. 80:9. Is. 27:6. 37:31,32.
b Jer. 44:14. Rom. 9:27. 11:5.
‡ Heb. *the escaping*.
c Is. 9:7. 59:17. 63:15. Ez. 5:13. 20: 9. Zech. 1:14. John 2:17.
d Is. 8:7—10. 10:24,25,28—32. 37:33 —35.
e 2 Sam. 20:15. Ez. 21:22. Luke 19: 43,44.
f Ps. 46:5,6. 48:2—8. Is. 31:5. 38:6.
g Deut. 32:27. Is. 43:25. 48:9,11. Ez. 36:22. Eph. 1:6,14.
h 1 K. 11:12,13. 15:4. Is. 9:7. Jer. 23:5,6. 33:21,26.
i Ex. 12:29. Dan. 5:30. 1 Thes. 5:2,3.
k Ex. 12:29,30. 2 Sam. 24:16. 1 Chr. 21:12,16. 2 Chr. 32:21,22. Ps. 35:5, 6. Acts 12:23.
l Is. 10:16—19,33. 30:30—33. 37:36. Hos. 1:7.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

but in the crisis of danger, when the eye of sense perceives no way of escape, without removing mountains, and effecting apparent impossibilities, faith is constrained to maintain a severe conflict against unbelief, even in the experience of the most established believers. But prayer is the never-failing resource of the tempted Christian; whether he be called to struggle with outward difficulties, or to engage in the more distressing warfare with his inward enemies.— No weapon that is formed against the church can prosper: and the daughter of Zion, whilst untainted with idolatry or hypocrisy, and faithfully reserving herself for Him, who has 'espoused her in righteousness, and faithfulness, and loving kindness,' may despise and defy the feeble efforts of all assailants, and confidently predict their speedy and terrible destruction. Oh that such would consider, 'whom they have reproached and blasphemed!' SCOTT.

Verse 28.

Hook.] Still in the E. 'a person says of his deliverer from prison, or danger, "Ah! the good man took me out by his *tote*," i. e. hook. A culprit says of the officers who cannot catch him, "Their hooks are become straight." The man who cannot drag another from his secrecy, says, "My hook is not sufficient for that fellow."' *Roberts.* It is curious that the word *tote* (hook) is still in use in the United States, especially at the S. in the sense of *to lug, drag*, &c. *Roberts* says also of the phrase 'of small power,' v. 26. (Heb. 'short of hand,') 'Of feeble people it is still said in the E. "they have short hands."' Some commentators refer the phrase 'hook in thy nose,' to the method of leading bulls, &c. by a ring in the nose. ED.

Verse 29.

The Lord here addresses Hezekiah.—The devastations of the Assyrians had, probably, prevented the land from being sown that year; and the next is supposed to have been the sabbatical year; though this is the only intimation, in all the history of Israel, that any regard was paid to that institution: (2 *Chr.* 36: 21.) but the Lord here engaged, that the spontaneous produce of the land, from the corn shaken out, in gathering the preceding harvest, should be sufficient for the support of the people, during those two years, and till a supply was obtained in the ordinary way. (*Lev.* 25:20—22.) As the performance of this promise was evidently subsequent to the destruction of Sennacherib's army, it was a sign to Hezekiah's faith, that the present deliverance would be an earnest of the Lord's persevering care of the kingdom of Judah; and of the accomplishment of that part of the promise, which related to events still more remote. (*Ex.* 3:12.) SCOTT.

Verses 32, 33.

It is certain from these vs. that Sennacherib never approached near enough to Jerusalem, to lay siege against it, or even to make preparations for a siege: and there is no proof that Rabshakeh or Rabsaris had proceeded to besiege the city; though they had come with an army and menaced it. (8, 27, 28. 18:17. *Is.* 33:20—22.) SCOTT.

(32.) *Shield.*] Perhaps alluding to those shields, or *protections*, in the form of a hollow cone with a broad base, about 5 ft. high, under which two persons stood, and moved in rank to the wall, while others mounted on its top, armed with swords or spears, and covered by shields to attack the besieged. These curious testudines are seen in the Rameseion, at Thebes. ED.

Verse 34.

For my servant, &c.] That is, from a gracious regard to David's faith and piety, to perform the promises made to his family, and to make way for the coming of the Messiah, who was to descend from him. (1 *K.* 11:12, 13.) SCOTT.

Verse 35.

This angel was commissioned by divine authority, and armed with adequate power; and it is not requisite for us to determine in what manner he effected this tremendous slaughter. (*Ps.* 76: *Is.* 10:16—19, 28—34. 29:5—8. 31:8, 9. 33:23, 24.)—'Herodotus reports from the Egyptians, that their king, being also a priest, by his prayers to his god, brought this destruction on the Assyrians, as they lay before Pelusium: a great army of rats coming in the night, and gnawing all their bow-strings in pieces, so that they could not fight. So studious were they to pervert the truth, and corrupt the sacred story!' *Patrick.* ID.

The angel of the Lord.] 'In Scripture, any angel which Jehovah employs is called his angel. *Boothr.* [But see note, John 5:4.] Who, or what was this angel? Probably Tirhakah, who came unexpectedly on Sennacherib, and slaughtered his army. *Jewish writers.* A dreadful thunder-storm. *Vitringa.* A pestilential disease. *Josephus.* The plague caught in Egypt, where Sennacherib had been. *Boothr.* The Simoom, a suffocating wind. *Taylor*, Dr. *A. Clarke.* The blast of the

and [m] when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses.

36 So [n] Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went, and returned, and dwelt at [o] Nineveh.

B. C. 709. 37 And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of [p] Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer [q] his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of * Armenia. And [r] Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

CHAP. XX.

Hezekiah, when sick, is warned by Isaiah to prepare for death, 1; but praying, he receives the promise of fifteen years added to his life, and of deliverance from the Assyrians, 2—7. In confirmation, the shadow on Ahaz's dial goes back ten degrees, 8—11. The king of Babylon sends to congratulate Hezekiah, who shows the ambassadors all his treasures, 12, 13. Isaiah reproves him for this, and foretells the Babylonish captivity, 14—19. Hezekiah dies, and is succeeded by Manasseh, 20, 21.

IN those days [a] was Hezekiah sick unto death. And [b] the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, thus saith the LORD, † set thine house in order; for [c] thou shalt die, and not live.

2 Then [d] he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying,

3 I beseech thee, O LORD, [e] remember now [f] I have walked before thee [g] in truth, God, whom therefore he ought to worship; yet he persists in his idolatry, and seeks to his false god for protection against a God of irresistible power. Justly is his blood mingled with his sacrifices, who will not be convinced, by such a plain and dear-bought demonstration, of his folly in worshipping idols.

His sons that murdered him were suffered to escape, and no pursuit made after them; his subjects perhaps being weary of the government of so proud a man, and thinking themselves well rid of him. And his sons would be looked upon as the more excusable in what they had done, if it be true (as Bp. Patrick suggests) that he was now vowing to sacrifice them to his god, so that it was for their own preservation that they sacrificed him. His successor was another son, *Esar-haddon*, who (as it should seem) did not aim, like his father, to enlarge his conquests, but rather to improve them; for he it was that first sent colonies of Assyrians to inhabit the country of Samaria, though it is mentioned before, *ch.* 17: 24. as appears, Ezra 4: 2. where the Samaritans say it was *Esar-haddon that brought them thither.*

CHAP. XX. V. 1—11. I. Here is Hezekiah's sickness. In *those days*, i. e. in the year the king of Assyria besieged Jerusalem, for he reigning, in all, 29 years, and surviving this, 15, this must be in his 14th year, and so was that, *ch.* 18: 13. Some think it was at the time the Assyrian army was besieging the city, or preparing for it, because God promises, *v.* 6, *I will defend the city*, which promise was afterwards repeated, when the danger came to be most imminent, *ch.* 19: 34. Others think it was soon after the defeat of Sennacherib; and then it shows us the uncertainty of all our comforts in this world: we must therefore always rejoice with trembling. It seems he was sick of the plague, for we read of the boil or plague-sore, *v.* 7. The same disease which was killing to the Assyrians, was trying to him. Neither greatness nor goodness can exempt from sickness.

II. Warning brought him to prepare for death, by Isaiah. He tells him that, if not recovered by a miracle of mercy, he must certainly die; and that therefore he must, with all speed, get ready for death; this we should feel highly concerned to do, when in health, but are most loudly called to do, when sick; set the heart in order by renewed acts of repentance, and faith, and resignation to God, with cheerful farewells to this world, and welcomes to another; and if it be not done before, (which is the best and wisest course,) set the house in order, make thy will, settle thy estate, put thine affairs in the best posture thou canst, for the ease of those that shall come after thee. Isaiah speaks not to Hezekiah of his *kingdom*, only of his *house*; David, being a prophet, had authority to appoint who should reign after him, but other kings did not pretend to bequeath their crowns as part of their goods and chattels.*

III. His prayer, *v.* 2. Is any sick? Let him be prayed for, prayed with, and let him pray. Hezekiah had found in the foregoing ch. that the prayers of faith bring answers of peace; therefore will he *call upon God as long as he lives.* Happy returns of prayer are engagements and encouragements to continue instant in prayer; he had now received the sentence of death within himself, and, 1. If it were reversible, it must be reversed by prayer. When God purposes mercy, He will, *for this, be inquired of*, Ezek. 36: 37. We have not, if we ask not, or ask amiss. 2. If not, prayer is one of the best preparations for death, because by it we fetch in strength and grace from God to enable us to finish well. Observe,

(1.) The circumstances of this prayer, 1. He *turned his face to the wall*, probably, as he lay in his bed; this he did, perhaps, for privacy; when we cannot be so private as we would, in our devotions, nor perform them with the usual outward expressions of reverence and solemnity, yet we must not therefore omit them, but compose ourselves to them as well as we can; or, as some think, he turned his face toward the temple, to show how willingly he would have gone up thither, to pray this prayer, (as he did, *ch.* 19: 1, 14.) if able; and remembering what encouragements were given to all prayers made in or toward that house. Christ is our Temple; to Him we must have an eye in all our prayers, for no man, no service, *comes to the Father but by Him.* 2. He *wept sore*; some gather hence that he was unwilling to die; it is in the nature of man to have some dread of the separation of soul and body, and it was not strange, if the O. T. saints, to whom another

* 'The kingdom was hereditary; but the monarch might choose his successor among his sons.' *Rob. Calm.* *Ed.*

m Ex. 12:30. Ps. 76:5—7,10.
n 7,28,33.
o Gen. 10:11,12. Jon. 1:2. Nah. 1:1. 2:3. Matt. 12:41.
p 10. 18:5,30. Deut. 32:31. 2 Chr. 32: 14,19. Is. 37:37,38.
q 2 Chr. 32:21.
* Heb. *Ararat.* Gen. 8:4. Jer. 51:27.
r Ezra 4:2.
a 2 Chr. 32:24. Is. 38:1. John 11:1—5. Phil. 2:27,30.
b 19:2,20.
† Heb. *Give charge concerning thine house.* 2 Sam. 17:23. Is. 38:1. *margins.*
c Jer. 18:7—10. Jon. 3:4—10.
d 1 K. 8:30. Ps. 50:15. Is. 38:2,3. Matt. 6:6.
e Gen. 8:1. Neh. 5:19. 13:14,22,31. Ps. 25:7. 89:47,50. 119:49. Is. 63: 11.
f Gen. 5:22,24. 17:1. 1 K. 2:4. 3:6. Job 1:1,8. Luke 1:6.
g 2 Chr. 31:20,21. Ps. 32:2. 145:18. Jer. 4:2. John 1:47. 2 Cor. 1:12. 1 John 3:21,22.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 23—37. The greatest exploits of men are unworthy of notice, compared with the most ordinary works of God: the most powerful and successful of his enemies undesignedly accomplish his secret purposes, or express predictions; and prosper, only till they have filled up their part of his universal plan. Some the Lord employs, contrary to their own intentions, as executioners of his vengeance; but his believing people, safe under his protection, and living on his grace and providential bounty, are employed as willing instruments to perform his works of goodness and mercy, which when finished shall meet a sure reward.—The cause of God, however reduced, will surely revive: the remnant of every generation will yield an increase to that which succeeds; and at length 'Israel shall blossom, and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.' The zeal of the Lord of hosts, which appointed and sent the mighty Savior, is engaged to make his salvation triumphant over all opposers, and to fill the earth with the knowledge of his glory. May our hearts be prepared, as good ground, that his Word may strike root in them, and bring forth fruit in our lives! SCOTT.

Simoom occasions instantaneous death to every man or beast that happens to be with the face towards it. *Ives. D'Obsonville. R. K. Porter*, &c. [but see *Rob. Calm.*] The Simoom usually blows at noon. *Hale.* 20,000 were, however, on one occasion destroyed by it at night, *Thevenot.* The reader embraces no doctrinal error in adopting either of these opinions. All things are at the divine disposal: nor is the miraculous interference of God denied by any of these conjectures, for this army was destroyed at the seasonable moment, and in the manner *predicted.*' COND. COMM.

Verses 36, 37.

Sennacherib is supposed to have survived this catastrophe for some time; and to have lived under great contempt, but exercising the most odious cruelty towards his subjects. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX. V. 1. (18:13.)—It is not likely, all the events recorded in the two preceding chapters occurred within a part of one year; yet, this must have been the case, if Hezekiah's sickness was subsequent to the destruction of the Assyrian army. (*Notes*, 2 *Chr.* 32:24—26. *Is.* 38:6.)—The prophet spoke according to the *natural* tendency of the disorder, and not according to the Lord's *secret purposes.* Hezekiah's prayer showed, that he did not consider the sentence to be irreversible. ID.

Verse 3.

Hezekiah doubtless was very unwilling to die at that time. To account for this, it has been said, that believers under the O. T. having dark views of the eternal world, might be expected to die with more regret, than those under the New: but facts by no means support this supposition; for Abraham, Jacob, Aaron, Moses, Joshua, David, and others, seem to have left the world with as much joyfulness, as Paul himself. We must, therefore, ascribe Hezekiah's reluctance to die, either to the state of his mind, or to the circumstances of his family and the nation. Nothing appears peculiarly to have distressed him, in the view of immediate death, as to the state of his own soul. But the circumstances of his family, and the state of affairs in Israel seem to solve all the difficulty. The Lord knew, and Hezekiah could appeal to Him, that he had walked before Him in sincerity and uprightness of heart; having used all his authority and influence, with zeal and earnestness, to suppress idolatry and wickedness, and by every scriptural mean to promote the worship and service of God; and that he had done what was good in his sight, being an example to his people. The consciousness of his integrity gave him confidence; and he begged the Lord to remember the fruits of grace which had been produced, and to spare him, that he might be yet more fruitful and useful 2 *Chr.* 30:23—27. 31:20, 21. *Neh.* 13:14, 31. 2 *Cor.* 1:12—14.) SCOTT.

and with [h] a perfect heart, and have done *that which is* good in thy sight. And Hezekiah [i] wept * sore.

4 And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle † court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

5 [k] Turn again, and tell Hezekiah, [l] the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, [m] the God of David thy father, [n] I have heard thy prayer, [o] I have seen thy tears: behold, [p] I will heal thee; on the third day [q] thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD.

6 And [r] I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and [s] I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

7 And Isaiah said, [t] Take a lump of figs: and they took and laid *it* on the boil, and he recovered.

8 And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, [u] What *shall be* the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day?

9 And Isaiah said, [x] This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees or go back ten degrees?

10 And Hezekiah answered, [y] It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees.

11 And Isaiah the prophet [z] cried unto the LORD; and [a] he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the ‡ dial of Ahaz.

[*Practical Observations.*]

h 1 K. 8:61. 11:4. 15:14. 2 Chr. 16:9.
i 2 Sam. 12:21,22. Ps. 6:6. 102:9. Is. 38:14. Heb. 5:7.
* Heb. *with a great weeping.*

conversation in the world with right intentions; I have walked before thee, as under thine eye, and with an eye ever toward Thee, from a right principle, *in truth, and with an upright heart;* and by a right rule, *I have done that which is good in thy sight.*' 2. His comfort in reflection on it; it made his sick bed easy. Note, The testimony of conscience, that we have walked with God in integrity, will be much our support and rejoicing in death, 2 Cor. 1: 12. 3. His humble mention of it to God, *Lord, remember it now;* not as if God needed to be put in mind of any thing by us, or, as if the reward were of debt, and might be demanded as due; it is Christ's righteousness only that is the purchase of mercy and grace; but our own sincerity may be pleaded as the condition of the covenant God has wrought in us; 'It is the work of thine own hands, Lord, own it.' Hezekiah does not pray, 'Lord, spare me;' or, 'Lord, take me, God's will be done;' but, *Lord, remember me; whether I live or die, let me be thine.*

IV. The answer God immediately gave; the prophet was got but to the middle court, when he was sent back with another message to Hezekiah, (*v.* 4, 5.) to tell him he should recover: not that there is with God yea or nay, or that He ever

† Or, *city.*
k 2 Sam. 7:3—5. 1 Chr. 17:2—4.
l Josh. 5:14,15. 1 Sam. 9:16. 10:1. 2 Sam. 5:2. 2 Chr. 13:12. Heb. 2:10.
m 2 Chr. 34:3. Is. 38:5. 55:3. Matt. 22:32.
n 19:20. Ps. 65:2. Luke 1:13.
o Ps. 39:12. 56:8. Rev. 7:17.
p 7. Ex. 15:26. Job 33:19—26. Ps. 147:3. Jam. 5:14,15.
q 8. Ps. 66:13—15. 19:20. 116:12—14. 118:17—19. Is. 38:22. John 5:14.
r Ps. 118:15. Acts 27:24
s See on 19:34. 2 Chr. 32:22. Is. 10:24. t 2:20—22. 4:41. Is. 38:21.
u 5. 19:29. Judg. 6:17 37—40. Is. 7: 11,14. 38:22. Hos. 6:2.
x Is. 38:7,8. Matt. 16:1—4. Mark 8: 11,12. Luke 11:29,30.
y 2:10. 3:18. Is. 49:6. Mark 9:28,29. John 14:12.
z Ex. 14:15. 1 K. 17:20,21. 18:36—38. Acts 9:40.
a Josh. 10:12—14. 2 Chr. 32:24,31. Is. 38:8.
‡ Heb. *degrees.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—11. If the Lord seem in his providence to command us 'to set our house in order, for we must die,' and yet afterwards unexpectedly prolong our days; our preparation in that case will neither mar the comfort, nor lessen the usefulness, of our future lives.—It is frequently required of ministers, to intimate to sick persons the probability, or supposed certainty, of their approaching dissolution; as well as to assist them in improving the visitation, and in preparing for the event: and should such intimations afterwards prove erroneous, they ought not to be censured; for they can only speak according to their judgment, and deliver that message from God, which *appears to them* suited to the case of those whom they address. [Still, as the influence of fear, &c. is so great upon the bodily state of the patient, much judgment is requisite herein: and great knowledge (alas, that there is such neglect here) of God's natural laws.] Though miracles, properly so called, have ceased; yet the Lord hears the prayer of faith for the sick, and sometimes remarkably prospers simple means, used in dependence on his blessing.—There may be cases, in which men may with propriety be importunate for the continuance of life and health, in order to complete designs of public and allowed utility, which appear likely to be frustrated if they should be removed; or when in any way the important interests of families, churches, or nations *appear to them* connected with their lives. Yet, as we are all liable to mistake in these concerns, submission to the Divine Will ought invariably to be united with such petitions:—The mercy of our God, and the merits of our heavenly Advocate, form the sinner's never-failing plea at the throne of grace: yet the consciousness of sincerity, in our professed faith and piety, gives confidence in times of trial; and may, on some occasions, be pleaded before Him, without the imputation of pride or self-righteousness.—Secret, earnest prayer is the approved and successful method of obtaining relief in the deepest distress. If we would have promised mercies, we must observe the *instituted means;* for these, being connected with the end by the express promises of God, are far more certainly efficacious, when used properly, than any of those means which produce their effect in the ordinary course of providence [according to the natural laws]: and yet, the latter ought [by no means] to be neglected, lest we tempt rather than trust the Lord.—Recovery from sickness should always be publicly acknowledged, by first 'going up to the house of the LORD,' to render the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, if it can be done: yet alas! few observe this rule, and many of those few do it as a formal task; while reestablished health is employed in scenes of diversion or business, if not more directly devoted to the service of Satan by licentious pleasures. (*Luke* 17:11—19.)—True faith is not without its misgivings, so that the strongest believers desire to have theirs more strengthened: and in their experience, the Lord is pleased sometimes to give those evidences of his power, truth, and love to them, which establish their hearts as effectually as miraculous signs did of old. SCOTT.

'Hezekiah pleads his uprightness and holy conduct in his own behalf. Was it impious to do so? No; but it certainly did not savor much either of *humility*, or of a *due sense of his own weakness.* If he had a perfect heart, who made it such?—God. If he did good in God's sight, who enabled him to do so?—God. Could he, therefore, plead in his behalf dispositions and actions which he could neither have felt nor practised, but by the *power of the grace of God?* I trow not. But the times of this ignorance God winked at. The Gospel teaches us a different lesson.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 4, 5.

2 *Sam.* 7:1—5.—*The captain.* (5) This title implies that Hezekiah was spared, that he might lead the people to victory, by the prevailing weapons of faith and prayer. (*M. R.—Josh.* 5 13—15.)—*I have heard,* &c.] (*Is.* 65:24. 25.) (8) He should 'recover his strength so fast, as to be able in three days' time to go up to the 'temple, and give God thanks for his cure.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

Verse 6.

Hezekiah was the only person, that we read of, who was previously informed how long he was to live. Such information would be of very bad tendency to ungodly men: and it would not be either comfortable or useful to a believer, unless animated with vigorous faith, and glowing zeal for the honor of God. Hezekiah was not more than 54 years old when he died. SCOTT.

Verses 9—11.

It appears from Herodotus, that the Egyptians had observed some few instances, in which the course of the sun and moon was very different from what was usual: though their traditions of them were greatly distorted, and wholly unlike the real facts, as recorded in Scripture. ID.

11.) *Dial.*] See a description of one, note, 9:13. 'The business was not to lengthen the day, but only to put the shadow back.' This is thought to have been produced by an extraordinary refraction of the

12 ¶ At that time [b] Berodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, [c] king of [d] Babylon, [e] sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: [f] for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick.

13 And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and [g] showed them all the house of his * precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and *all* the house of his † armor, and all that was found in his treasures: [h] there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not.

14 Then [i] came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, [k] What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from [l] a far country, *even* from Babylon.

15 And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, [m] All *the things* that *are* in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not showed them.

16 And Isaiah said

b Is. 39:1. *Merodach-baladan.*
c 2 Chr. 32:31.
d Gen. 10:10. 11:9. Is. 13:1,19. 14:4.
e 2 Sam. 8:10. 10:2.
f Is. 39:1.
g 2 Chr. 32:27. Is. 39:2.
* Or, *spicery.* 1 K. 10:2,10,15,25.
† Or, *jewels.* Heb. *vessels.*
h 2 Chr. 32:25,26. Ec. 7:20.
i Is. 39:3—8.
k 5:25,26. 2 Sam. 12:7,&c. 2 Chr. 16:7—10. 25:7—9,15,16. Ps. 141:5. Prov. 25:12. Jer. 26:18,19. Am. 7:12,13. Mark 6:18,19.
l Deut. 28:49. Josh. 9:6,9. Is 13:5.
m 13. Josh. 7:19. Job 31:33. Prov. 28:13. 1 John 1:8—10.

says and unsays; but, on Hezekiah's prayer, which He foresaw, and which his Spirit inclined him to, God did for him, what otherwise He would not have done. God here calls Hezekiah *the captain of his people,* to intimate that he would reprieve him for his people's sake, because, in this time of war, they could ill spare such a captain: He calls Himself *the God of David,* to intimate that He would reprieve him, out of a regard to the covenant with David, and the promise always to ordain a lamp for him.

In this answer, 1. God honors his prayers by the notice He takes of them, and the reference he has to them in this message, *I have heard thy prayers, I have seen thy tears;* prayers that have much life and affection in them, are, in a special manner, pleasing to God. 2. God exceeds his prayers; he only begged God would remember his integrity, but God here promises, (1.) To recover him from his illness, *I will heal thee.* (2.) To restore him to such a degree of health, that, *on the third day, he should go up to the house of the Lord,* to return thanks: because nothing would please him better, he promises him this; *Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee;* the man whom Christ healed, was, soon after, *found in the temple,* John 5: 14. (3.) To add 15 years to his life. (4.) To deliver Jerusalem, *v.* 6. This Hezekiah's heart was on as much as his own recovery, therefore the promise of it is here repeated; if this was after the raising of the siege, yet there was cause to fear Sennacherib's rallying again; No, saith God, *I will defend this city.*

V. The means to be used for his recovery, *v.* 7. Isaiah ordered an outward application, a very cheap and common thing; this might contribute something to the cure, and yet, considering to what a height the disease was come, and how suddenly it was checked, the cure was no less than miraculous.

VI. The sign given for the encouragement of his faith. He begged it, not in any distrust of the power or promise of God, but because he looked on the things promised to be very great things, and worthy to be so confirmed, and because it had been usual with God thus to glorify Himself, and favor his people; and he remembered how much God was displeased with his father for refusing to ask a sign, Isa. 7: 10—12. Observe, Hezekiah desired to recover, that he might glorify God *in the gates of the daughter of Zion.* It is not worth while to live for any other purpose than to serve God. It was put to his choice, whether the sun should go back or forward, but the more seemingly difficult of the two would be the more likely to confirm his faith; perhaps, to this Isa. 45: 11. may refer, *Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.* It is supposed the degrees were half hours, and that it was just noon when the proposal was made, and the question is, 'Shall the sun go back to its place at seven in the morning, or forward to its place at five in the evening?' He humbly desired the sun might go back, which would seem more strange, and more significant of Hezekiah's *returning to the days of his youth,* (Job 33: 25.) and the lengthening out of his life. It was accordingly done, on the prayer of Isaiah, *v.* 11. It is likely, he could see the shadow on the dial through his chamber window: and the same was observed on all other dials, even in Babylon, 2 Chr. 32: 31. Whether this retrograde motion of the sun was gradual, or sudden; or whether, after a little while, it was restored again to its usual place, so that no change was made in the state of the heavenly bodies, (so Patrick,) we are not told: but this work of wonder shows the power of God in heaven as well as on earth, his great notice of prayer, and favor to his chosen. The most plausible idolatry of the heathen was theirs that worshipped the sun; by this it appeared that their god was under the check of the God of Israel. Lightfoot suggests that the 15 songs of degrees, Ps. 120, &c. might, perhaps, be so called, because selected by Hezekiah to be sung to his stringed instruments, Isa. 38: 20. in remembrance of the degrees on the dial which the sun went back, and the 15 years added to his life; and he observes how much of these psalms is applicable to Jerusalem's distress and deliverance, and Hezekiah's sickness and recovery.

V. 12—27. Here is,

I. An embassy from the king of Babylon, to congratulate Hezekiah on his recovery, *v.* 12. The kings of Babylon had hitherto been only deputies and tributaries to the kings of Assyria, and Nineveh was the royal city: we find Babylon subject to the king of Assyria, *ch.* 17: 24. But this king of Babylon began to set up for himself, and, by degress, things were so changed, that Assyria became subject to the kings of Babylon.* This king of Babylon sent to compliment Hezekiah, and ingratiate himself with him on a double account. 1. On account of religion. The Babylonians worshipped the sun, and, perceiving how their god had honored Hezekiah, in going back for his sake, they thought themselves obliged to honor him likewise. 2. On account of civil interest. If the king of Babylon was now meditating a revolt from the king of Assyria, it was policy to get Hezekiah into his interest, in answer to whose prayers, and for whose protection, Heaven had given that fatal blow to the king of Assyria. He found himself obliged to Hezekiah, and his God, for the weakening of the Assyrian forces, and had reason to think he could not have a more powerful and valuable ally, than one that had so good an interest in the upper world. He therefore made his court to him with all possible respect, by ambassadors, letters, and a present.

* "In 747 B. C. [the patience of the Medes becoming exhausted, when whole cities of W. Asia were depopulated by Tiglath Pileser and Shalmaneser, and their inhabitants planted in the cities of the Medes, *Rob. Calm.*] *Arbaces,* governor of Media, conspired with Belesis, governor of Babylon, and other nobles, against the effeminate Sardanapalus, with whom terminated the monarchy of the Assyrians.' *Frazer's Hist. Persia.* Ed. Cab. Library. See also note, 17:6. *Ed.*

sun's rays, by means of a layer of condensed air. See diss. and diagram in Dr. *A. Clarke.* But why is a ray of light bent in passing from a rarer to a denser medium? Such are 'the laws of optics.' Why do these consequents 'invariably' follow these antecedents, i. e. why do these laws exist? Alas! our boasted science but explains the mystery, by repeating it in other words. The laws of optics exist because God has willed those relations of light, which we name laws. Then why not *explain* the miracle as the scripture does, 'God willed it'? Can we lessen the miracle by multiplying scientific terms! Or shall we believe the laws of optics are something distinct and aside from the will of Him by whom all things stand! Some people seem to think the Omnipresent has set the world agoing, like some vast piece of machinery, and stands aside, as it were, a spectator, or forgetful of his work; but Scripture tells us, 'in Him we live and move and have our being.' Father, glorify Thyself in us! ED.

Verses 12, 13.

The king of Babylon, knowing that Hezekiah had refused submission to the Assyrians, seems to have proposed to enter into a confederacy with him against that potent nation, 'and Hezekiah hearkened unto them,' and, in order to convince the ambassadors, that he was a desirable ally, he showed them all his treasures, and armor, and preparations for war of every kind: from pride and ostentation. He seems likewise to have missed the opportunity of instructing the Chaldeans concerning the perfections, &c. of JEHOVAH, *who had wrought the miracles which had excited their attention.* Though Hezekiah's sickness preceded Sennacherib's invasion and overthrow, it is probable this embassy arrived after that event; when Hezekiah's exhausted treasuries had been abundantly replenished by the spoil of the Assyrians. (2 *Chr.* 32:27—29.) SCOTT.

(13.) *Hearkened.*] '*Vyshmā*: but *vyshmch,* "he rejoiced," is found in 12 of K. and De R's. mss. Is. 39:2. the Sept. Syr. Vulg. Arab. some copies of Targ. and the Bab. Talmud.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* It is still the custom for oriental monarchs thus to heap up 'precious things.' 'The treasure of precious stones, plates of gold, &c. belonging to the king of Calicut, were heaped together by 12 kings, and would fill two large ware houses.' *Vertomannus,* in *Burder.* From the greater prevalence of common-sense, and the greater security of property, modern princes, especially European, prefer to double their wealth by trade, &c. rather than to let it lie thus rusty and dead. Yet still, in every nation, how much more treasure is lavished, in providing for the gratification of this childish and miserable vanity of Hezekiah, than is spent in National Education. If the treasure lavished by Solomon, in his rage for building, amassed by Hezekiah to glut Babylonish cupidity, or profligately squandered at Rome, Versailles, Madrid, London, &c. had been wisely expended for the great object of existence, the education of the intellectual and moral nature, how much farther would the world be advanced in happiness! May the exhaustless resources of our own unbounded national prosperity ever be used to this end, and no other. Thus shall we as a nation best glorify God, in obedience to his laws, and escape that captivity to selfish and hurtful lusts, into which every nation before us has been led sooner or later. ED.

Verses 14. 15.

Hezekiah did not resent the prophet's interference in state-affairs; (2 *Chr.* 16:7—10. 25:14—16.) for he reverenced his person, confided in

unto Hezekiah, [n] Hear the word of the LORD.

17 Behold, the days come, that all that *is* in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, [o] shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.

18 And of [p] thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and [q] they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

19 Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, [r] Good *is* the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, [*] *Is it* not *good*, if [s] peace and truth be in my days?

20 And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how [t] he made a pool and a conduit, and brought water into the city, *are* they not written in [u] the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

21 And Hezekiah [x] slept with his fathers: and [y] Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

n 7:1. 1 K. 22:19. Is. 1:10. Am. 7:16.
o 24:13. 25:13—15. 2 Chr. 36:10,18. Jer. 27:21,22. 52:17—19.
p 24:12. 25:6. 2 Chr. 33:11.
q Dan. 1:3—7.
r Lev. 10:3. 1 Sam. 3:18. Job 1:21. Ps. 39:9. Lam. 3:22,39.
* Or, *Shall there not be peace and truth, &c.?*
s Esth. 9:30. Jer. 33:6. Zech. 8:19. Luke 2:10,14.
t 2 Chr. 32:4,30,32. Neh. 3:16. Is. 22:9—11.
u 8:23. 15:6,26. 16:29. 1 K. 14:19. 15:7,23.
x 21:18. 1 K. 2:10. 11:43. 14:31. 2 Chr. 28:23.
y 21:1.

II. The kind entertainment Hezekiah gave to these ambassadors, *v.* 13. It was his duty to be civil to them, and receive them with the respect due to ambassadors; but he exceeded, and did it to a fault. Though idolaters, yet he became intimate with them, was forward to come into a confederacy with their king, and granted them all they came for. He was more open and free than he should have been, and not so much on his guard. What reason had he that was in covenant with God, so eagerly to catch at an alliance with a heathen prince, or to value himself at all on his respectful notice? What honor could this embassy add to one whom God had so highly favored, that he should please himself so much with it? 2. He was too fond of showing them his palace, his treasures, and his magazines, that they might see, and report to their master, what a great king he was, and how well worthy of the honor done him. It is not said he showed them the temple, the book of the law, and the manner of his worship, that he might proselyte them to the true religion, which he had now a fair opportunity of doing; but, in compliment, lest it should affront, he waved that, and showed them the rich furniture of his closet, that house of his precious things, the wealth he had heaped up since the king of Assyria had emptied his coffers. And what harm in this? What is more commonly, and (as we think) more innocently, done, than to show strangers the riches and rarities of a country?—to show our friends our houses and their furniture, our gardens, stables, and libraries? But if we do this in the pride of our hearts, as Hezekiah, to gain applause from men, and not giving praise to God, it turns into sin to us, as to him.

III. The examination of Hezekiah concerning this matter, *v.* 14, 15. Isaiah, who had often been his comforter, is now his reprover. The blessed Spirit is both, John 16: 7, 8. Ministers must be both, as there is occasion. Isaiah spake in God's name, therefore called him to account as one having authority. Hezekiah not only submitted to the examination, but made an ingenuous confession. I hope Hezekiah had the same value for Isaiah now, that he had in his distress; but it had become him to show it, by bringing these ambassadors to him in the first place, which might have prevented this false step.

IV. The sentence passed for his pride, vanity, and too great relish of the things of the world, after that intimate acquaintance he had so lately been admitted to with divine things, *v.* 17, 18. It is just with God, to take that from us, which we make the matter of our pride, and in which we put our confidence. Not that it was for this sin, that the judgment should be brought on them: the sins of Manasseh, his idolatries and murders, were the cause of that calamity; but it is now foretold to Hezekiah, to convince him of the folly of his pride, and value for the king of Babylon, and to make him ashamed of it. It was fulfilled, Dan. 1: 1, &c. Hezekiah could not have been more mortified than by such a thought. Babylon will be the ruin of those that are fond of Babylon. Wise therefore and happy are they that *come out from her*, Rev. 18: 4.

V. Hezekiah's humble and patient submission to this sentence, *v.* 19. Observe how he argues himself into this submission. *Good is the word of the Lord*, even this threatening word, for every word of his is so; not only just and good, but He will bring good out of it: we should believe this of every providence, that it is good, is working for good. He notices that he should not live to see this evil, much less to share in it. He makes the best of the bad; 'Certainly, it is better than I deserve.' Note, 1. True penitents, when under divine rebukes, call them not only just, but good; not only submit to, but accept of, the punishment of their iniquity. 2. When, at any time, we are under dark dispensations, or have dark prospects, public or personal, we must notice what is *for* us, as well as what is *against* us, that we may, by thanksgiving, honor God, and may in our patience possess our own souls. 3. As to public affairs, it is good, and we are bound to think it so, *if peace and truth be in our day*, if we have peace and truth; the true religion professed and protected, Bibles and ministers, and enjoy these in peace, not terrified with the alarms of war or persecution. Whatever trouble may come when we are gone, it is good if all be well in our days. Not that we should be unconcerned for posterity; but we should own that, to have judgments deferred so long as that we may die in peace, is a particular favor to us. We know not how we shall bear the trial, therefore have reason to think it well, if we may but get safe to heaven before it comes.

Lastly, Here is the conclusion of Hezekiah's life and story, *v.* 20, 21. In 2 Chr. *chs.* 29, 30, and 31. much more is recorded of Hezekiah's work of reformation than in this book of Kings: and it seems that in the civil chronicles, not now extant, there were many things recorded of his might, and the good offices he did for Jerusalem, particularly his bringing water by pipes into the city. But here this historian leaves him *asleep with his fathers*, and a son in his throne that proved very untoward; wicked Ahaz was the son of a godly father, and the father of a godly son; holy Hezekiah the son of a wicked father, and the father of a wicked son. When the land was not reformed, as it should have been, by a good reign, it was plagued and ripened for ruin by a bad one; yet then tried again with a good one, that it might appear, how loath God was to cut off his people.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 12—21. Alas! how seldom do we make suitable returns to the Lord for his condescending mercies to us! Ambition and ostentation too generally intrude, where thankfulness alone should occupy the heart; and we are often chargeable with pride, vanity and carnal confidence, when we do not suspect ourselves.—It is very difficult to possess distinctions in rank, wealth, elegant furniture, or any thing valued by men, without a secret self-preference, and a desire that others should admire the possessor's ingenuity, taste, magnificence, or felicity. But it is hopeful, when persons in superior rank will endure to be reasoned with, and reproved by those, who in outward circumstances are greatly their inferiors: for generally such interference, however well meant and prudently conducted, excites resentment.—If we could look into futurity, it would damp our joy in present prosperity: and we may expect vexation from every object, in proportion as we have been inordinately pleased with it.—Our regard to posterity, and our grief for the gloomy prospects before us, in the church or the world, must not render us unmindful of our present mercies, or induce impatient murmurs. Shortly, our trials and services will end together, for our space is limited, though its limits are unknown to us; and then we shall sleep with our fathers. And 'blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord;... for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them!' SCOTT.

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his prudence and affection, and desired to hear the will of God from him. In his answer, he intimated, that he had counted it an honor to receive ambassadors from a far country. (*Josh.* 9:8—15.) Perhaps, he was not at first conscious of having done wrong; yet, in reviewing and relating his conduct, he was made deeply sensible of his sin and folly. (*Note*, 2 *Chr.* 32:30—33, *v.* 31.) SCOTT.

Verses 17, 18.

Considering the small and unsettled power of the king of Babylon, at this time, compared with that of the Assyrian kings, who seemed about to establish a permanent dominion over all the adjacent countries: nothing could be more unlikely, than the accomplishment of this prediction: yet in somewhat more than 100 years it was exactly fulfilled! (*Dan.* 1:3—7.)—If this transaction occurred before Sennacherib's overthrow, as many suppose, (*Note*, 12, 13.) it took place previously to Hezekiah's emptying his treasuries, to hire Sennacherib's departure, on his first invasion of the land. (*Note*, 18:14—16.) The chief reason for assigning this date to it is, that the power of the Assyrians, after the destruction of Sennacherib's army, ceased to be formidable; yet Hezekiah's conduct implied, that he chiefly feared danger from that quarter. But indeed, after that blow, the Assyrian power was far greater than that of any of the neighboring countries; and Hezekiah might desire to form a league, to defend himself and his kingdom against it. SCOTT.

CHAP. XXI.

Manasseh reigns very wickedly and idolatrously, 1—9. Prophets are sent to predict judgments upon Judah because of his wickedness, 10—16. He dies and is succeeded by Amon, 17, 18. Amon reigns wickedly, 19—22. He is slain by his servants; the people put the conspirators to death, and make his son Josiah king, 23, 24. Amon's acts and burial, 25, 26.

MANASSEH [a] *was* twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name *was* [b] Hephzi-bah.

2 And [c] he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, [d] after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

3 For he built up again [e] the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and [f] he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did [g] Ahab king of Israel; [h] and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.

4 And [i] he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, [j] In Jerusalem will I put my name.

5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven, [k] in the two courts of the house of the LORD.

6 And [l] he made his son pass through the fire, and [m] observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with [n] familiar spirits and wizards: he [o] wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke *him* to anger.

7 And [p] he set a graven image of the grove, that he had made, in the house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son, [q] In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:

8 Neither [r] will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; [s] only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them.

9 But [t] they hearkened not: and Manasseh [u] seduced them to do [x] more evil than did the nations, whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel.

10 And [y] the LORD

CHAP. XXI. In this ch. we have a short account of the reigns of two of the kings of Judah, Manasseh and Amon. By these two reigns Jerusalem was much debauched, and much weakened, and so hastened apace toward its destruction, which slumbered not.

V. 1—9. The reference, Isa. 33: 17. is to Hezekiah, and, as it follows there, *v.* 20. Jerusalem was *a quiet habitation*, because *a city of righteousness*, Isa. 1: 26. But now we have melancholy work on our hands, unpleasant ground to travel, and cannot but drive heavily. These vs. give such an account of this reign, as make it, in all respects, the reverse of the last, and, in a manner, the ruin of it.

I. Manasseh began young, *v.* 1. born when his father was about 42 years old, three years after his sickness. If he had sons before, either they were dead, or set by as unpromising. Perhaps his coming to the crown so young might help to make him bad, which yet will by no means excuse him, for his grandson Josiah came to it younger than he, and yet acted well. It is too common for novices to be lifted up with pride, and so to *fall into the condemnation of the devil*. They that were enemies to Hezekiah's reformation, and retained an affection for the old idolatries, flattered him, and thus easily gained his ear, and used his power at pleasure.

II. He reigned longest of any king of Judah, 55 yrs. This was the only very bad reign that was long; Joram's was but 8 years, and Ahaz's 16; as for Manasseh's, we hope that in the beginning of his reign, for some time, affairs continued to move in the course his father left them in; and that in the latter end, after his repentance, religion got head again; and, no doubt, when things were at the worst, God had his remnant that kept their integrity. Some of his time, he was a prisoner in Babylon, though these years are reckoned in the number, because then he repented, and began to reform.

III. He reigned very ill, *v.* 2, 9. When the holy seed degenerate, they are commonly worse than the worst of the profane. He *rebuilt the high places his father had destroyed*, *v.* 3. Thus did he trample on the dust, and affront the memory, of his worthy father. He set up other gods, *Baal*, and *Ashtaroth*, (which we translate *a grove*,) and all the host of heaven, the sun and moon, the other planets, and the constellations; these he worshipped and served, (*v.* 3.) gave their names to the images he made, and then did homage to them, and prayed for help from them. He *made his son pass through the fire*, by which he dedicated him a votary to Moloch, in contempt of the seal of circumcision by which he had been dedicated to God. He made the devil his oracle, and, in contempt both of Urim and prophecy, he *used enchantments and dealt with familiar spirits*, *v.* 6. like Saul; conjurers and fortune-tellers, who pretended, by the stars of the clouds, lucky and unlucky days, good and bad omens, the flight of birds, or the entrails of beasts, to foretell things to come. We find afterward, *v.* 16. that he shed innocent blood very much, in gratification of his own passion and revenge; some, perhaps, secretly and some by color of law. Probably, much of the blood he shed was theirs that opposed idolatry, and would not bow the knee to Baal. The *blood of the prophets* is, in a particular manner, charged on Jerusalem, and probably he put to death many. The Jews' tradition is, he caused Isaiah to be sawn asunder; and many think the apostle refers to that, Heb. 11: 37.

Three things are here mentioned as aggravations of Manasseh's idolatry. (1.) He set up his images and altars *in the house of the Lord*, *v.* 4. in the two courts of the temple, *v.* 5. in the very house of which God had said to Solomon, *Here will I put my name*, *v.* 7. Thus he defied God to his face, and impudently affronted Him. Here God's altars had been preserved, while the idolatrous altars were kept at a distance: but Manasseh thus did what he could to alter the property, and to make the name of the God of Israel to be no more in remembrance. (2.) Hereby he greatly slighted the word of God, and his covenant with Israel. Observe the favor shown that people, in putting his name among them—the kindness He intended them never to *make them move out of that good land*—and the reasonableness of his expectations from them, *only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them*, *v.* 7, 8. On these good terms did Israel stand with God, and had as fair a prospect of being happy as any people could have: but *they hearkened not*, *v.* 9. (3.) That hereby he seduced the people of God to idola-

a 20:21. 1 Chr. 3:13. 2 Chr. 32:33. 33: 1. Matt. 1:10. *Manasses.*
b Prov. 5:19. Is. 62:4. *Marg.*
c 7,16. 16:2—4. 22:17. 2 Chr. 33:2—4.
d Lev. 18:25—29. Deut. 12:31. 2 Chr. 33:14. Ez. 16:51.
e 18:4,22. 2 Chr. 32:12. 34:3.
f 10:18—20. 1 K. 16:31—33. 18:21,26.
g 8:18,27. Mic. 6:16.
h 17:16. 23:4. Deut. 4:19. 17:3. 2 Chr. 33:3—5.
i 16:10—16. Jer. 32:34.
j Ex 20:24. Deut. 12:5. 2 Sam. 7:13. 1 K. 8:29. 9:3. Ps. 78:68,69. 132: 13,14.
k 23:4,6. 1 K. 6:36. 7:12. 2 Chr. 33: 5,15. Ez. 40:28,32,37,47. 42:3. 43: 5. 44:19.
l 16:3. 17:17. Lev. 18:21. 20:2,3. 2 Chr. 28:3. 33:6.
m Lev. 19:26. 31. Deut. 18:10—14
n 1 Chr. 10:13. Is. 8:19. 19:3. Acts 16:16.
o 24:3,4. Gen. 13:13.
p 23:6. 2 Chr. 33:7,15.
q 4. 23:27. 1 K. 8:29,44. 9:3,7. 2 Chr. 7:7,16,20. Neh. 1:9. Ps. 74:2. 78:68,69. 132:13,14.
r 18:11. 2 Sam. 7:10. 1 Chr. 17:9. 2 Chr. 33:8.
s Lev. 26:3,&c. Deut. 5:28,29. 28:1, &c. Josh. 23:11—13. Ps. 37:3 81:11 —16. Is. 1:19. Jer. 7:3—7,23. 17: 20—27. Ez. 22:2—16. 33:25—29.
t 2 Chr. 36:16. Ezra 9:10,11. Neh. 9: 26,29,30. Ps. 81:11. Dan. 9:6,10,11. Luke 13:34. John 15:22. Jam. 4:17.
u 1 K. 14:16. 2 Chr. 33:9. Ps. 12:8. Prov. 29:12. Hos. 5:11. Rev. 2:20.
x Ez. 16:47,51,52.
y 2 Chr. 33:10. 36:15. Neh. 9:26,30. Matt. 23:34—37.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI. V. 1, 2. It is uncertain whether Hezekiah had any other children than Manasseh, or any other wife than Hephzi-bah, whose name signifies, *My delight is in her.* (*Is.* 62: 4.) The event, [Manasseh's reign,] as well as the testimony of the prophets, evinces, that Hezekiah's reformation had been complied with in a reluctant and hypocritical manner, especially by many of the chief men; and that the nation was ripening fast for destruction. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verse 3.

Pass through the fire.] We *wonder* that idolatry was not entirely abolished in Israel, even when 'idolatry was the common sense of the age:' but *Leland* mentions that 'pagan superstitions subsist at this day (about 1760) in Ireland; fires are light[ed] up, at particular times, and the more ignorant Irish still *drive their cattle through them, to preserve them from future accidents.*' See also *Moore's* Hist. of I. ED.

Verse 6.

His son.] 'His children.' 2 *Chr.* 33: 6. Amon was not born till the 33d year of Manasseh's reign, which is generally computed to have been subsequent to his captivity and repentance. (1, 19.) If so, some other son was thus dedicated to his idol, perhaps with some of his daughters likewise, of whom nothing is recorded. But it may be doubted whether Manasseh's captivity was so long before his death: the general character of his reign in Scripture, and the very imperfect reformation which afterwards took place, seem to render that opinion improbable; and there is no scriptural information concerning the date of his captivity, or even the name of the Assyrian king who carried him captive: so that perhaps Amon was the son here peculiarly intended. ['Amon-the-sun' was the chief deity of the Egyptians; note 1 K. 12: 28.] (2 *Chr.* 33: 11.) SCOTT.

Of the grove. (7) Perhaps this was a model of some grove, [Egyptian monuments often represent *a tree* among the offerings made by devotees to the idols,] used for idolatrous worship: though it is commonly supposed to have been the image of one of Manasseh's idols. (17: 16.) Some think it was a wooden image of Ashtaroth, or Astarte. (*Judg.* 2: 11—13, &c.)—Manasseh seems to have placed this image in the temple itself. ID.

Verses 10—12.

(*M. R.*) It is not certain, that any of the prophets, whose writings have come down to us, lived in the time of Manasseh. Isaiah and Hoses probably were dead. (16. 19: 2. *Is.* 1: 1. *Hos.* 1: 1.) Jeremiah

spake by his servants the prophets, saying,

11 [z] Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, *and* hath done wickedly [a] above all that the Amorites did, which *were* before him, and hath [b] made Judah also to sin with his idols;

12 Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, [c] I *am* bringing *such* evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that [d] whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle.

13 And [e] I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and [f] the plummet of the house of Ahab: and [g] I will wipe Jerusalem, as *a man* wipeth a dish, [*] wiping *it*, and turning *it* upside down.

14 And [h] I will forsake [i] the remnant of mine inheritance, and [j] deliver them into the hand of their enemies, and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies;

15 Because they have done *that which was* evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, [k] since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day.

16 Moreover, [l] Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from [†] one end to another, [m] beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD.

17 Now [n] the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

B. C. 643. 18 And Manasseh slept with his fathers, [o] and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

19 ¶ [p] Amon *was* twenty and two years old when he began to reign; and he reigned [q] two years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name *was* Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah.

20 And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, [r] as his father Manasseh did.

21 And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them:

22 And [s] he forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the LORD.

B. C. 641. 23 And [t] the servants of Amon conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house.

24 And [u] the people

z 23:26,27. 24:3,4. Jer. 15:4.
a 1 K. 21:26. Ez. 16:3,45.
b 1 K. 14:16. 15:30. 16:19.
c 22:16. Dan. 9:12. Mic. 3:12.
d 1 Sam. 3:11. Is. 28:19. Jer. 19:3. Matt. 24:21,22. Luke 23:28,29. Rev. 6:15—17.
e 17:6. Is. 28:17. 34:11. Lam. 2:8. Ez. 23:31—34. Am. 7:7,8. Zech. 1:16.
f 10:11. 1 K. 21:21—24.
g Is. 14:23. Jer. 25:9. Ez. 24:10,11. Rev. 18:21—23.
* Heb. *he wipeth and turneth* it *upon the face thereof.*
h Deut. 31:17. 2 Chr. 15:2. Ps. 37:22. Jer. 23:33. Lam. 5:20.
i 19:4,30,31. 24:2. 2 Chr. 36:16,17. Jer. 23:33.
j Lev. 26:17,36—38. Deut. 4:26,27. 28:25,31—33,48. Judg. 2:14,15. Neh. 9:27—37. Ps. 106:40—43. Is. 10:6. Lam. 1:5,10.
k Deut. 9:24. 31:27,29. Judg. 2:11—13. Ps. 106:34—40. Ez. 16:15,&c. 20:4,13,21,30. 23:3,8,&c. Dan. 9:5—11.
l 24:3,4. Num. 35:33. Deut. 21:8,9. Jer. 2:34. 7:6. 15:4. Matt. 23:30, 31. 27:6. Luke 13:34. Heb. 11:37.
† Heb. *mouth to mouth.*
m 7.11. Ex. 32:21. 1 K. 14:15,16. 2 Chr. 33:9.
n See on 20:20,21. 2 Chr. 33:11—19.
o 2 Chr. 21:20. 24:16,25. 28:27. 32:33. 33:20. Jer. 22:19.
p 1 Chr. 3:14. 2 Chr. 33:21. Matt. 1:10.
q 15:23. 1 K. 15:25. 16:8. 22:51.
r 2—7. Num. 32:14. 2 Chr. 33:22,23. Matt. 23:32. Acts 7:51.
s Deut. 32:15. 1 K. 11:33. 1 Chr. 28:9. Jer. 2:13. Jon. 2:8.
t 12:20. 14:19. 15:25,30. 1 K. 16:27. 16:9. 2 Chr. 33:24,25.
u 14:5.

V. 10—18. Here is the doom of Judah and Jerusalem—a heavy doom. The prophets were sent, in the first place, to teach them the knowledge of God, remind them of their duty, and direct them in it: if they succeeded not, their next work was to reprove them for their sins, and set them before them, that they might repent and return to their duty: if in this they prevailed not, their next work was, to foretell the judgments of God, that the terror of them might awaken those to repentance, who would not be made sensible of the obligations of his love, or else that the execution of them, in their season, might demonstrate the divine mission of the prophets that foretold them. The prophets were deputed judges to those that would not hear and receive them as teachers. Here is,

I. A recital of the indictment, *v.* 11. Manasseh has done wickedly himself, though he knew better things, has even justified the Amorites, outdoing them in impieties, has debauched the people of God, taught, and forced them to sin; and beside that, has multiplied his murders in every corner of the city, *v.* 16. and filled the measure of Jerusalem's blood-guiltiness (Matt. 23: 32.) up to the brim, all against the crown and dignity of the King of kings, the peace of his kingdom, and the statutes in these cases made and provided.

II. A prediction of the judgment; it should be, 1. Very terrible and amazing, the very report of it should make men's hearts tremble, *v.* 12. 2. It should be copied (as the sins of Jerusalem had been) from Samaria, and the house of Ahab, *v.* 13. marking out the same ruin to which that wretched family was devoted. See Isa. 28: 17. Note, Those who imitate others' sins, must expect their fate. 3. It should be an utter destruction: *I will wipe it as a man wipes a dish.* This intimates, (1.) That every thing should be put into disorder, and their state subverted. (2.) That the city should be emptied of its inhabitants, which had been the filth of it; they shall all be carried captive, the *land shall enjoy her sabbaths,* and be laid by as a dish when it is wiped. See the comparison of the boiled pot, not much unlike this, Ezek. 24: 1—14. (3.) That yet this should be in order to the purifying, not the destroying of Jerusalem. The dish shall not be dropped, not broken to pieces, or melted down, but only wiped. 4. That *therefore* they should be destroyed, because they should be deserted, *v.* 14. Justly are those that forsake God, forsaken of Him; nor does He ever leave any, till they have first left Him: they then become an easy prey to all enemies. Sin is spoken of here as the alpha and omega of their miseries.

This is all we have here of Manasseh; he stands convicted and condemned. True penitents take shame to themselves, not honor.

V. 19—26. Here is a brief account of the short and inglorious reign of Amon, son of Manasseh. Whether Manasseh, in his blind and brutish zeal for his idols, had sacrificed his other sons; or whether, having been dedicated to his idols, they were refused by the people, his successor was not born till he was 45 years old. And,

1. His reign was very wicked, *v.* 20—22. He trod in the steps of his father's idolatry, and revived that which he, in the latter end of his days, had put down. Note, those who set bad examples, though they may repent themselves, yet cannot be sure that those whom they have drawn into sin by their example, will repent; it is often otherwise.

2. His end was very tragical. He having rebelled against God, his own servants *conspired against him, and slew him;* probably, on some personal disgust, when he had reigned but 2 years, *v.* 23. He had profaned God's house with his idols, and now God suffered his own house to be polluted with

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did not begin to prophesy till several years after Manasseh's death. It is not known when Joel flourished. Nahum and Habakkuk seem to have lived at a later period. But a succession of prophets was raised up; and many, doubtless, addressed their contemporaries, whose writings and names have not reached us. SCOTT.

(10.) *Prophets.*] 'Joel, Nahum and Habakkuk, according to the Jewish chronology.' GILL. 'Hosea, Joel, Nahum, Habakkuk and Isaiah.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 13.

As the builder keeps his work exactly straight and perpendicular, by the line and the plummet: so the Lord would execute strict justice on the inhabitants of Jerusalem. SCOTT. *Line of Samaria.*] 'The same judgments, measure and lot. *Line* is put for lot, or portion (Ps. 16:6. 2 Cor. 10:16.), because men's portions used to be measured by a [schœnus or measuring] line, (Ps. 78: 55. Am. 7: 17;) or it may refer to David's act, 2 Sam. 8: 12.' POOLE. *Plummet.*] 'A metaphor from builders, who measure with a line and plummet what part of a building shall stand, and what part shall be demolished.' PATRICK.

Verse 14. *Forsake,* &c.] Not *finally,* but *for a season,* during the Babylonish captivity: yet this only related to the collective body of the nation, and their external privileges; for individual believers were preserved and peculiarly noticed, even during that visitation. (1 *Sam.* 12: 22.) SCOTT.

Verse 16.

Probably, infants were burnt in the fire, by Manasseh's authority and command, to Moloch; and the oppression, violence, and cruelty of his general administration might occasion much unrighteous shedding of blood: but his persecuting rage, against those who opposed and reproved his idolatries, seems especially intended.—It is not said that Isaiah prophesied in the days of Manasseh; nor is it probable he did. (*Is.* 1: 1.) ID.

Verses 17, 18.

His preparing a sepulchre for himself, not with the kings, seems to have been a penitent confession, that his crimes had rendered him unworthy to be numbered with the descendants of David. Some, however, suppose that the people would not allow him that honor. Yet, no doubt, he was a true penitent, though it is not here mentioned. (1 *K.* 11: 42, 43. 2 Chr. 33: 11—19.) ID.

of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and [x] the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead.

25 Now [y] the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

26 And he was buried in his sepulchre [z] in the garden of Uzza: and [a] Josiah his son reigned in his stead.

CHAP. XXII.

Josiah reigns well, 1, 2. He provides for the repairs of the temple, 3—7. Hilkiah finds the book of the law, which is read to the king; who is alarmed, and sends to inquire of God, by Huldah the prophetess, 8—14. She foretells the destruction of Jerusalem, but speaks peace to Josiah, 15—20.

JOSIAH *was* [b] eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name *was* Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah, of [c] Boscath.

2 And he did *that which was* [d] right in the sight of the LORD, and [e] walked in all the way of David his father, and [f] turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.

B. C. 624. 3 ¶ And it came to pass [g] in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *that* the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam the scribe, to the house of the LORD, saying,

4 Go up to [h] Hilkiah the high priest, that he may [i] sum the silver *which is* brought into the house of the LORD, which [j] the keepers of the * door have gathered of the people:

5 And let them [k] deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the doers of the work, which *is* in the

x 11:17. 14:21. 1 Sam. 11:15. 2 Sam. 5:3. 1 K. 12:1,20. 2 Chr. 22:1. 26: 1. 33:25.
y 17. See on 20:20.
z See on 18.
a 1 K. 13:2. 2 Chr. 34:1,2. Jer. 1,2. Zeph. 1:1. Matt. 1:10. *Josias.*
b 11:21. 21:1. Ps. 8:2. Ec. 10:16. Is. 3:4.
c Josh. 15:39. *Bozkath.*
d 16:2. 18:3. 2 Chr. 17:3. 29:2. Prov 20:11.
e 1 K. 3:6. 11:38. 15:5.
f Deut. 5:32. Josh. 1:7. Prov. 4:27. Ez. 18:14—17.
g 2 Chr. 34:3—8.
h 1 Chr. 6:13. 9:11. 2 Chr. 34:9—18.
i 12:4,8—11. 2 Chr. 24:8—12. Mark 12:41,42.
j 1 Chr. 9:19. 26:13—19. 2 Chr. 8:14. Neh. 11:19. Is. 84:10.
* Heb. *threshold.* k 12:11—14.

CHAP. XXII. This ch. begins the story of the reign of good king Josiah, whose goodness shines the brighter, because it came just after so much wickedness, he had the honor to reform; and just before so great a destruction, he yet had not the honor to prevent.

V. 1—10. Concerning Josiah, observe,

I. He was very young, when he began to reign, *v.* 1. Solomon says, *Wo unto thee, O land, when thy king is a child;* but happy art thou, O land, when thy king is *such* a child. Our English Israel had once a king (Edward VI.) that was such a child. Josiah, being young, had not received any bad impressions from the example of his father and grandfather, but soon saw their errors, and God gave him grace to take warning by them. See Ezek. 18: 14, &c.

II. He *did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, v.* 2. See the sovereignty of divine grace: the father passed by and left to perish in his sin; the son a chosen vessel. Many about him, no doubt, advised him to tread in his father's steps, and few gave him any good counsel; yet the grace of God makes him an eminent saint, Rom. 11: 24. Nothing is too hard for that grace to do.

III. He took care for the repair of the temple. This he did in the 18th year of his reign, *v.* 3. comp. 2 Chr. 34: 8. He began much sooner to *seek the Lord*, as appears, 2 Chr. 34: 3. but it is to be feared, the work of reformation went slowly on, and met with much opposition, so that he could not effect what he desired and designed, till his power was thoroughly confirmed. The consideration of the time we unavoidably lost in our minority, should quicken us, when we come to years, to act with so much the more vigor in the service of God. Having begun late, we had need work hard. It seems, *v.* 4. they took much the same way of raising the money that Joash took, *ch.* 12: 9. When people gave a little at a time, the burden was insensible, and the contribution, being voluntary, was not complained of. The workmen too, as in the days of Joash, acquitted themselves so well, that *there was no reckoning made with them, v.* 7. which is certainly mentioned to the praise of the workmen, but whether to the praise of those that employed them I know not; a man should count money, (we say,) after his own father; it had not been amiss to have *reckoned with the workmen*, that others also might be satisfied of their honesty.

IV. In the repairing of the temple, *the book of the law* was happily found and brought to the king, *v.* 8, 10. the autograph, or original manuscript, of the five books of Moses, under his own hand, so some; others think is was only an ancient and authentic copy; most likely it was that which, by the command of Moses, was laid up in the most holy place, Deut. 31: 24, &c.

1. It seems, this book of the law was lost and missing; either carelessly mislaid and neglected;

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—26. Young persons are generally desirous of being their own masters, and of obtaining early possession of riches or power, that they may indulge their inclinations and self importance: and too often, from such motives, are secretly rejoiced at the death of their parents. But it is much safer and happier, when youth is sheltered under the fostering care of affectionate and prudent parents, or of faithful guardians and tutors; till greater maturity of age and experience gives a more hopeful prospect of discretion. Such young persons may live to be thankful for the restraints, under which at present they are impatient.—None are more abandoned than those, who become wicked after a religious education; for they cannot have quietness in vice, till by desperate courses they have effectually stupefied their consciences; and in every case, the greater the obstacles which are surmounted, before men attain to the undisturbed indulgence of their lusts, the more lost they are afterwards to all sense of shame or decency.—The mind of man is disposed to vibrate from one extreme to another; so that times of remarkable revival in religion have often been succeeded by those of most notorious infidelity, impiety, and profligacy. [Especially when some feelings and propensities, rather than the reason and conscience have been most appealed to, and thus placed under undue excitement: over-action requiring over-rest.]—The ambition of excelling, prompts sinners to aspire after pre-eminence even in crimes; and men are capable of glorying in having gone beyond all their predecessors in iniquity, and in refining on the blasphemy and sensuality of former times, or of contemporary rivals in vice!—An infidel neglect of true religion, is often connected with the most absurd credulity and ridiculous superstitions!—Some daring sinners not only seek to gratify their lusts, but seem desirous of forcing their crimes on the notice of the Almighty; as if ambitious of provoking his indignation by every token of contempt and defiance! and they peculiarly delight in seducing others to commit the same wickedness, as if ambitious also of promoting the ruin of their souls!—The vain-glory of young persons often appears in affecting to be wiser than their prudent and pious parents, by reversing all their plans, and especially by treating with contempt their religious singularities, as they suppose them to be. It is well, when the removal of the ungodly makes way for better characters: yet those who, *instigated by any corrupt passion*, execute deserved vengeance on wicked men, will bring deserved vengeance on themselves also. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII. V. 1, 2. Josiah was seated on the throne by those, who brought his father's murderers to justice, and who doubtless were friends to the family of David: for 'the people of the land,' must be understood to mean, at least, a majority of the elders and great men assembling, and, with the approbation of the people, declaring to whom the right of succeeding to the throne belonged. It may be supposed, that some of the nobles were concerned in the conspiracy against Amon, or favored the cause. (21: 20—24.) We may therefore conclude that the persons, intrusted with Josiah's education, were at least averse to idolatry, and favorable to the worship of JEHOVAH. Perhaps his mother was a pious person, and instilled good principles into his tender mind.—We can obtain but a superficial knowledge of the state of Judah from these compendious historical records, unless we compare them with the writings of the contemporary prophets. SCOTT.

Verses 3—7.

Josiah began to seek the Lord in the 8th year of his reign, and to attempt a public reformation in the 12th; so that considerable progress had before been made in destroying the idols, which filled Judah and Jerusalem to an almost inconceivable degree: but in his 18th year he proceeded to reinstate the temple and its worship in their former splendor, and the principal reformation in his reign was effected at this time. (2 *Chr.* 34: 3—7.) IN.

house of the LORD, [l] to repair the breaches of the house,

6 Unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house.

7 Howbeit, [m] there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because [n] they dealt faithfully.

8 ¶ And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, [o] I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.

9 And [p] Shaphan [q] the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have [*] gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD.

10 And Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And [r] Shaphan read it before [s] the king.

11 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, [t] that he rent his clothes.

[*Practical Observations.*]

l 12:5. 2 Chr. 24:7,12,13,27. Ezra 3:7.
m 12:15. 2 Chr. 24:14.
n Ex. 38:5,6. Neh. 7:2. Prov. 28:20. Luke 16:10—12. 1 Cor. 4:2. 2 Cor. 8:20,21. 2 Tim. 2:2. 3 John 5.
o Deut. 31:24—26. 2 Chr. 34:14,15.
p 3,12. 25:22. Jer. 26:24. 29:3. 36:1)—12. 39:14. 40:11. 41:2. Ez. 8:11.
q See on 18:18.

or, maliciously concealed by some of the idolatrous kings; restrained by the providence of God, or their own consciences, from destroying it; or, (as some think,) carefully laid up by some of its friends, lest it should fall into the hands of its enemies: whoever were the instruments of its preservation, we ought to acknowledge the hand of God in it; if this was the only authentic copy of the Pentateuch then in being, sure we now have reason to thank God, on our knees, for that happy providence by which Hilkiah found it at this time, when *he sought it not*. If the holy Scriptures had not been of God, they had not been in being at this day; God's care of the Bible, is a plain indication of his interest in it.

2. Whether this was the only authentic copy in being or no, it seems, the things contained in it were new, both to the king himself and to the high priest, for the king, on the reading of it, rent his clothes; probably the command for the king's writing a copy of the law, and that for the public reading of the law every 7th year, Deut. 17: 18. —31: 10, 11. had neither of them been observed of a long time. When the instituted means of keeping up religion are neglected, religion itself will soon go to decay; yet on the other hand, if the book of the law was lost, it seems difficult to determine what rule Josiah went by, in doing that which was *right in the sight of the Lord*, and how the priest and people kept up the rites of their religion: I am apt to think the people generally took up with abstracts of the law, the priests had furnished them with; a sort of ritual, directing them in the observances of their religion, but leaving out what they thought fit, and particularly the promises and threatenings, Lev. 26. and Deut. 28, &c. for I observe, those were the portions of the law Josiah was so much affected with, *v.* 13. as being new to him; no summaries, extracts, or collections, out of the Bible, can effectually convey and preserve the knowledge of God and his will, like the Bible itself; no marvel the people were so corrupt, when the book of the law was such a scarce thing among them; where that vision is not, the people perish; they that endeavored to debauch them, no doubt, used all the arts they could to get that book out of their hands; the Church of Rome could not keep up the use of images, but by forbidding the use of the Scriptures.

3. It was a great instance of God's favor, and a token for good to Josiah and his people, that the book of the law was thus seasonably brought to light, to direct and quicken their reformation; it is a sign God has mercy in store for a people, when He magnifies his law among them, makes it honorable, and furnishes them with means for the increase of scripture knowledge: the translating of the Scriptures into vulgar tongues, was the glory, strength and joy of the Reformation from Popery.

V. 11—20. Here we have,

I. The impressions the reading of the law made on Josiah; he had long thought the case of his kingdom bad, by reason of the idolatries and impieties found among the people, but never so bad as he perceived it to be, by this book of the law; the rending of his clothes signified the rending of his heart for the dishonor done to God, and the ruin he saw coming on his people.

II. The application he made to God, hereupon, *v.* 13. Convictions of sin and wrath should put us on the inquiry, *What shall we do to be saved? Wherewithal shall we come before the Lord?* If ye will thus inquire, inquire quickly, before it be too late. He acknowledges, if this be the rule of right, certainly our fathers have been much in the wrong. Now that *the commandment came, sin revived*, and appeared sin. He infers hence certainly; if this be the Word of God, as, no doubt it is, and He will be true to his Word, as, no doubt, He will be, wrath is kindled against us, we are all undone. Note, Those who are truly apprehensive of the weight of God's wrath, cannot but be very solicitous to obtain his favor, and inquisitive how they may make their peace with Him; magistrates should inquire for their people, and study how to prevent the judgments of God they see hanging over them.

This inquiry Josiah sent by some of his great men, *v.* 12, 14. (honoring the oracle, by employing those of the first rank,) to Huldah the prophetess, *v.* 14. The spirit of prophecy was sometimes put not only into *earthen* vessels, but into the *weaker* vessels, *that the excellency of the power might be of God*. Miriam had helped to lead Israel out of Egypt, (Mic. 6: 4.) Deborah judged them, and now Huldah instructed them in the mind of God; her being a wife, was no prejudice to her being a prophetess, marriage is honorable to all. It was a mercy to Jerusalem, that when Bibles were scarce, they had prophets, as that, afterward, when prophecy ceased, they had more Bibles; God never leaves Himself without witness, because He will leave sinners without excuse. Jeremiah and Zephaniah prophesied at this time, yet the king's messengers made Huldah their oracle, probably because, her husband having a place at court, *v.* 14. they had had more and longer acquaintance with her, and greater assurances of her commission than of any other; [perhaps being young, and newly entered on their work, Jeremiah and Zephaniah were of inferior note, or elsewhere employed. *Scott.*] They had, it is likely, consulted Huldah on other occasions, and found the word of God in her mouth to be truth; she was near, for she dwelt at Jerusalem, in a place called *Mishneh*, the second rank of buildings from the royal palace; the Jews say she that prophesied among the women, the court ladies, being herself one of them, who, it is probable, had their apartments in that place;

* Heb. *melted.*
r Deut. 31:9—13. 2 Chr. 34:18. Neh. 8:1—7,14,15. 13:1. Jer. 36:21.
s Deut. 17:18—20. Jer. 13:18. 22:1,2.
t 2 Chr. 34:19. Jer. 36:24. Joel 2:13. Jon. 3:6,7.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V 1—11. Those who have been favored, in their tender years, with prudent and pious instructers, have very great cause for gratitude: it commonly proves the means of determining both the comfort and usefulness, and the happy close, of their future lives.—It is a peculiar favor to be brought to seek and serve God in early life, and to be led to copy closely the best examples.—In the worst of times, we meet with examples of liberality, fidelity, and integrity, worthy of praise and imitation.—The prevalence of impiety, infidelity, superstition, or licentiousness, renders the Word of God a neglected book; and that neglect reciprocally augments these evils. And when *professed* ministers grow careless, selfish, [fond of power,] or superstitious, the people of course become generally ignorant of the sacred oracles: and far more, when they employ their influence, and exert their authority, to keep the Scriptures, as translated into the language of their several countries, out of the hands of the common people; and to discountenance the study of them; and when they endeavor to obstruct those who would circulate, and encourage the study of, the oracles of God. Alas! that this stigma of popery should disgrace so many rulers and teachers of our protestant church!—'The Word of God is quick and powerful;' and, being 'sharper than any two-edged sword,' it penetrates the heart and conscience with irresistible energy. (*Jer.* 23:28,29. *Heb.* 4:12,13.) By the holy law is the knowledge of sin, and by the blessed gospel is the knowledge of salvation. When the former is understood, in its strictness, extent, excellency, and awful sanction, the sinner perceives his guilt, is convinced that the great wrath of the Lord is kindled against him for his transgressions: and begins to inquire, 'What must I do to be saved?'—The scarcity of the written Word did not *excuse* Israel's degeneracy and idolatry, because it was the *effect* of it; 'the people loved to have it so;' but the abundance of Bibles, with which this land is favored, will exceedingly aggravate the guilt of our national impiety, infidelity, and licentiousness: for what greater contempt of God can we show, than to refuse to read his Word, when put into our hands; or, reading it, to refuse to believe and obey it?

SCOTT.

Verses 8—11.

The inquiries and controversies, this account of finding the book of the law has occasioned, seem quite unnecessary. If it were conceded, that no other complete copy existed in all the world, at the time this book was found, it would not *in the smallest degree* invalidate the authenticity of that part of holy writ: because all the succeeding writers of the Scriptures, with Christ Himself and his apostles, have given the sanction of their testimony to its divine original. All the cavils and

12 And [u] the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and [x] Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and [y] Achbor the son of * Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying,

13 Go ye, [z] inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah concerning the words of this book *that is* found: for [a] great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, [b] because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all *that which is* written concerning us.

14 So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah [c] the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of [d] Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the † wardrobe, (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the ‡ college;) and they communed with her.

15 And she said unto them, [e] Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me,

16 Thus saith the LORD, [f] Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, *even* [g] all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read.

17 Because they [h] have forsaken me, and have burnt incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all [i] the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and [k] shall not be quenched.

18 But to [l] the king of Judah, which sent you to inquire of the LORD, [m] thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *As touching* the words which thou hast heard;

19 Because [n] thine heart was tender and thou hast [o] humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become [p] a desolation, and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and [q] wept before me; [r] I also have heard *thee*, saith the LORD.

20 Behold therefore,

u 19:2,3. 2 Chr. 34:19—21. Is. 37:1—4.
x See on 9.—Jer. 26:22,24.
y 2 Chr. 34:20. *Abdon.*
* Or, *Micah.*
z 3:11. 1 K. 22:7,8. 1 Chr. 10:13,14. Ps. 25:14. Prov. 3:6. Jer. 21:1,2. 37:17. Ez. 14:3,4. 20:1—3. Am. 3:7.
a Ex. 20:5. Deut. 4:23—27. 29:23—28. 31:17,18. Neh. 8:8,9. 9:3. Dan. 9: 5,6. Rom. 3:20. 4:15. 7:9.
b 2 Chr. 29:6. 34:21. Ps. 106:6. Jer. 16:12. 44:17. Lam. 5:7. Dan. 9:8, 10.
c Ex. 15:20. Judg. 4:4. Mic. 6:4. Luke 1:41,&c. 2:36. Acts 21:9. 1 Cor. 11:5.
d 2 Chr. 34:22. *Tikvath. Hasrah.*
† Heb. *garments.* 2 K. 10:22. Neh. 7: 72.
‡ Or, *second part.*
e 1:6,16. Jer. 23:23.
f 20:17. 21:12,13. 2 Chr. 34:24,25.
g 25:1—4. Lev. 26:15,&c. Deut. 28: 15,&c. 29:18—23. 30:17,18. 31:16— 18. 32:15—26. Josh. 23:13,15. Dan. 9:11—14.
h Ex. 32:34. Deut. 29:24—28. 32:15— 19. Judg. 2:12—14. 3:7,8. 10:6,7, 10—14. 1 K. 9:6—9. 1 s. 106:35—42. Jer. 2:11—13,27,28.
i Ps. 115:4—8. Is. 2:8,9. 44:17—20. 46:5—8. Mic. 5:13.
k Deut. 32:22. 2 Chr. 36:16. Is. 33:14. Jer. 7:20. 17:27. Ez. 20:47,48. Zeph. 1:18.
l 2 Chr. 34:26—28.
m Is. 3:10. Mal. 3:16,17.
n 1 Sam. 24:5. Ps. 51:17. 119:120. Is. 46:12. 57:15. 66:2,5. Jer. 36:24,29 —22. Ez. 9:4. Rom. 2:4,5. Jam. 4: 6—10.
o Ex. 10:3. Lev. 26:40,41. 1 K. 21:29. 2 Chr. 33:12,19,23. Mic. 6:8. 1 Pet. 5:5,6.
p Lev. 26:31,32. Deut. 29:23. Jer. 26: 6. 44:22.
q Num. 25:6. Judg. 2:4,5. 20:26. Ezra 9:3,4. 10:1. Neh. 8:9. Ps. 119:136. Jer. 9:1. 13:17. 14:17. Luke 19:41. Rom. 9:2,3.
r 19:20. 20:5.

His great tenderness and concern for God's glory and the welfare of his kingdom, are noticed, *v.* 19. God will distinguish those that distinguish themselves. Josiah's heart was tender; he trembled at God's word,—was exceedingly grieved for the dishonor done to God by the sins of his fathers, and people; was afraid of the judgments of God, and earnestly deprecated them; this is tenderness of heart, and thus he *humbled himself before the Lord*, and expressed these pious affections by rending his clothes, and weeping before God, probably, in his closet; but He that sees in secret, says it was before Him, and He heard it, and put every tear of tenderness into his bottle. Note, Those happy the court that had a prophetess within it, and knew how to value her.

III. The answer he received from God to his inquiry; Huldah returned it not in the language of a courtier, but of a prophetess speaking from Him before whom all stand on the same level, *v.* 15. She lets him know,

1. What judgments God had in store for Judah and Jerusalem, *v.* 16, 17. Observe the degree and duration of God's wrath; the decree is gone forth, it is too late now to think of preventing it, the iniquity of Jerusalem shall not be purged with sacrifice or offering. Hell is unquenchable fire.

2. What mercy God has in store for him. (1.)

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objections therefore of infidels, grounded on this circumstance, mean nothing; except to demonstrate their imbittered enmity to the Scriptures.—It is highly probable, that copies of the law were at that time very scarce, through the idolatry of the former reigns, and the lamentable ungodliness of the people. It may also be reasonably conjectured, that the priests had made abstracts from it, of the outlines of their worship, without specifying particulars, or inserting the solemn sanctions annexed to each. This would spare them the trouble of transcribing, or studying, or reading to the people, the whole book; and, as these abstracts would come into common use, few people would look any further. But had not a universal traditional recollection of the law, and in general of its contents, prevailed in the nation; how could the book, when found, have obtained proper and implicit credit as the Word of God by Moses? In the dark ages of popery this was precisely the case: the liturgies and rituals contained a few selected portions of Scripture; and not only were the *people* kept in the dark as to the entire contents of the Bible, but few even of the *priests* had ever read it through, and numbers of these had never seen a complete copy of it. The same naturally becomes the case still, (notwithstanding the multiplication of copies of the Bible by the art of printing, and its public allowance in the vulgar tongue, and the commendable pains bestowed by pious persons to disperse them,) whenever any set of men become strenuous for one part of religion in preference to the rest. The oracles of each party, insert in their writings those portions of Scripture, which are supposed to inculcate the doctrines for which they contend; but keep out of sight, perhaps without design, those passages which as strongly declare what they undervalue, overlook, or are prejudiced against. And these writings form the religion of the zealous friends of that party, while the rest of the Scripture is comparatively neglected or forgotten. Indeed we all are disposed to have favorite passages of Scripture, to which we are more attentive than to the rest; so that without great care we shall be led into this error.—And may it not be hinted with propriety, that some text-books, which were well designed, are yet capable of a dangerous abuse? I mean those books, which give a text of Scripture for every day, with pious observations upon it. Many read these in family-worship, instead of the Bible itself; and others, it is likely, do the same in their closets: but numbers are thus undesignedly led to substitute a part for the whole; the abstract with an exposition, instead of the book of the law: whereas 'all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' (2 *Tim.* 3: 14—17.) The proper use of such books is, to suggest subjects for pious meditations and ejaculations, in the intervals of conversation and business.—The book, which Hilkiah found, seems to have been the original book of the law, deposited by Moses at the side of the ark; (*Deut.* 31: 26.) but which in those distracted times had been removed, either for concealment, lest it should be destroyed by the idolaters, or in contempt by those who were turning every thing into confusion. Some argue that this circumstance occasioned Josiah's consternation: but he certainly acted like a man who had never seen the law before, and this most likely was the case, though there might be copies dispersed among his subjects. It is probable his reformation had hitherto been conducted by such abstracts, as have been mentioned, or by traditional knowledge. If the kings of Judah had observed the rule of transcribing the law with their own hands, very salutary effects might have been produced; but it seems to have been entirely neglected, as well as the command to read the law publicly to the people, every year at the feast of tabernacles. (*Deut.* 17: 18. 31: 9—13. *Neh.* 8: 1—18. 9: 3.)—It is supposed that the portion, which was first read to Josiah, was the 28th and 29th chs. of Deut. and these were doubtless well suited to convince him, that the guilt and danger of his people were much greater than he had apprehended, and to induce his expressions of fear, sorrow, and humiliation. We may conclude, that he afterwards conducted his reformation with more exactness; as he now wrought by rule, and was aware of the imminent danger to which he and his subjects were exposed. SCOTT.

(8.) 'The interval between the death of Moses, and that of Josiah, was 950 yrs. and we have MSS. of greater age than this.' *Kennicott.* Nay, we have writings of an age anterior to that of Moses even; *Champollion* says, of 1732 yrs. B. C. ED.

Verses 12, 13.

Very little is recorded concerning the high priests, as active instruments in reformation, and reviving true religion. Hilkiah indeed seems to have been a man of good character; though it is likely, not well acquainted with the divine law. (*M. R.*) Josiah, however, never proposed inquiring of the Lord, by him and the breast-plate of judgment; nor did Hilkiah object, when sent with others to inquire of a prophetess. Either he was ignorant, that to inquire of God was one distinguishing part of his office; or he humbly thought himself unworthy to perform it: or this method of inquiry was considered as obsolete; having fallen into disuse, perhaps, from the too general want of true piety in the high priests, who had been superseded in this respect by the prophets raised up in constant succession. (19: 2.) SCOTT.

Verse 14.

Huldah, &c.] (*Jer.* 1:1—3. *Zeph.* 1:1.)—The ordinary ministry, both under the O. and N. T. is confined to *men*: but the Lord is not bound by those restrictions which He imposes on us: and He has often conferred on *women* the spirit of prophecy. (*M. R.* c.—1 *Cor.* 14: 34, 35. 1 *Tim.* 2:11—14.)—Whether the word rendered 'the college' means an institution at Jerusalem, in some respects similar to the schools of the prophets in Israel; or whether it only denotes, according to the marg. the part of the city in which she lived, is not agreed. The latter opinion, however, seems most probable, as the same original word is in the next ch. translated 'of the second order.' (*Note*, 23:4.) SCOTT. *Boothr.* understands 'suburbs.' ED.

[a]I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be [t]gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.

CHAP. XXIII.

Josiah reads the law in a solemn assembly gathered for that and similar purposes, 1, 2. He enters into covenant with God; and abolishes idolatry in Judah, 3—14. He burns men's bones on the altar at Bethel; fulfils the prediction of the prophet sent to Jeroboam; destroys the high places in Samaria, and slays the priests, 15—20. He celebrates a solemn passover, 21—23. He puts away wizards, &c. 24; and excels all his predecessors, 25. The wrath of God against Judah is yet unappeased, 26—28. Josiah is slain in battle by Pharaoh-necho, and succeeded by Jehoahaz, 29, 30; who reigns wickedly three months, is led away prisoner by Pharaoh into Egypt, and succeeded by Jehoiakim, 31—34; who taxes the land for Pharaoh's tribute, and reigns wickedly, 35—37.

AND [a]the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem.

2 And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, [*]both [b]small and great: and [c]he read in their ears all the words of [d]the book of the covenant *which was* found in the house of the LORD.

3 And the king [e]stood by a pillar, and [f]made a covenant before the LORD, [g]to walk after the LORD, and to keep [h]his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, [i]with all *their* heart and all *their* soul, to perform the words of this covenant *that were* written in this book. [j]And all the people stood to the covenant.

4 And the king com-

a Gen. 25:8. Deut. 31:16. 1 Chr. 17: 11. 2 Chr. 34:28.
t 23:29,30. Ps. 37:37. Is. 57:1,2. Jer. 22:10,15,16.
a Deut. 31:28. 2 Sam. 6:1. 2 Chr. 29: 20. 30:2. 34:29,30.
* Heb. *from small even unto great.*
b Gen. 19:11. 1 Sam. 5:9. 30:2. 2 Chr. 15:13. Esth. 1:5. Job 3:19. Ps. 115: 13. Acts 26:22. Rev. 20:12.
c Deut. 31:10—13. 2 Chr. 17:9. Neh. 8:1—8. 9:3. 13:1.
d 22:8. Deut. 31:26. 1 K. 8:9.
e 11:14,17. 2 Chr. 23:13. 34:31,32.
f Ex. 24:7,8. Deut. 5:1—3. 29:1,10—15. Josh. 24:25. 2 Chr. 15:12—14. 23:16. 29:10. Ezra 10:3. Neh. 9:38. 10:28, &c. Jer. 50:5. Heb. 8:8—13. 12:24. 13:20.
g Deut. 8:19.
h Deut. 4:45. 5:1. 6:1. Ps. 19:7—9.
i Deut. 6:5. 10:12. 11:13. Matt. 22 36,37.
j Ex. 24:3. Josh. 24:24. 2 Chr. 34:32 33. Ec. 8:2. Jer. 4:2.

CHAP. XXIII. V. 1—3. Josiah had received a message from God, that there was no preventing the ruin of Jerusalem, but that he only should deliver his own soul; yet he does not therefore sit down in despair, and resolve to do nothing for his country, because he cannot do all he would; no, he will do his duty, and then leave the event to God; a public reformation is the thing resolved on; if any thing prevent the threatened ruin, it must be that, and here we have the preparations for it.

1. He summoned a general assembly of the states, the elders, the magistrates, or representatives, of Judah and Jerusalem, to meet him *in the house of the Lord*, with the priests and prophets, the ordinary and extraordinary ministers, that, they all joining in it, it might become a national act, and so be the more likely to prevent national judgments, *v.* 1, 2. that the business might be done with the more solemnity, that they might all advise and assist in it, and that those who were against it, might be discouraged from making any opposition; parliaments are no diminution to the honor and power of good princes, but a great support.

2. Instead of making a speech to this convention, he ordered the book of the law to be read; nay, it should seem he read it himself, *v.* 2. as one much affected with it, and desirous they should be so too. Beside the convention of the great men, he had a congregation of the *men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.* If the people be but as steadfastly resolved to obey by law, as he is to govern by law, the kingdom will be happy; al. people are concerned to know the Scripture, and all in authority to spread the knowledge of it.

3. Instead of proposing laws to confirm them in their duty, he proposed an association, by which they should all jointly engage themselves to God, *v.* 3. The book of the law was the book of the covenant, that if they would be to God a people, He would be to them a God; they here engage themselves to do their part, not doubting God would do his. The covenant was, that they should walk after the Lord, in compliance with his will, in his ordinances and providences, answer all his calls, attend all his motions, make conscience of all his commandments, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, and so fulfil the conditions of this covenant, in dependence on the promises of it. The covenanters were, first, the king himself, who stood by his pillar, *ch.* 11: 14. and publicly declared his consent to this covenant; it is no abridgment of the liberty even of princes themselves to be in bonds to God; then *all the people* likewise: it is of good use, with all possible solemnity, to oblige ourselves to our duty, and it is especially seasonable after notorious backslidings to sin, and decays in that which is good; he that bears an honest mind, does not shrink from positive engagements.

V. 4—24. We have here an account of such

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 12—20. The ministers of religion must communicate to the people whatever they have learned respecting the will of God, whether alarming or encouraging: otherwise they do not 'declare his whole counsel,' nor 'keep themselves pure from the blood of all men:' and they are guilty of the basest and most cruel unfaithfulness, if, from regard to their own safety or emolument, they keep back offensive truths.—It is also becoming, when superior stated pastors and rulers of the church discard prejudice and jealousy, respecting those among their inferiors, or of other orders in society, whom God endows with peculiar spiritual gifts for the edifying of his people; when, instead of standing on character and precedency, and hindering others from regarding their advice, they take the lead in honoring the grace of God in them, and gladly receive their profitable instructions. Such are wise men, and will daily grow wiser; because they are conscious that they have not attained, but need continual accessions to their measure of divine knowledge and grace: but those who are too great or too proud to learn, even from their inferiors, are likely to live and to die without true wisdom.—A tender, broken, and contrite heart, a humble consciousness of having deserved wrath, and an earnest application for mercy, are things which 'accompany salvation,' and will never be rejected by our gracious Lord and Savior

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII. V. 1, 2. *The prophets.* (2) Probably the king neither employed them, nor the priests, in reading the law to the elders of the people, at least not exclusively; but that he performed the service personally as the principal reader, though others might be employed in the same manner, in different stations; 'for it is not likely that one man's voice could reach so great a multitude.' *Patrick. Acts* 2:14—21.) The opinion, that he only engaged others to read the law, seems taken from modern refinements, and sentiments of royal dignity; and not from facts, good sense, or the examples of pious princes in those days. (2 *Sam.* 6:12—22. 1 *K.* 8.10—61. *Ec.* 1:1.) For such is human nature, that so trivial a circumstance, as the rank of the reader or speaker, will frequently excite greater attention, than matters of acknowledged superior importance.

SCOTT.

Verse 3.

(*M. R.*) We learn from the event, that the most of those present, who 'stood to the covenant,' were hypocritical in the transaction; being induced to concur, in order to please the king, or to avoid his displeasure and the reproach of singularity; or by some transient impression upon their minds. Yet Josiah did well in requiring them thus to engage, as far as they could be prevailed on without compulsion. A great deal of outward wickedness would be prevented; many individuals would receive essential benefit; and in every way the name, worship, and law of God were honored: while those who acted hypocritically, and violated their engagements by apostasy, were accountable to God for their conduct. (11:17—20. *Deut.* 29.10—15. *Neh.* 10:1.) Indeed, no effectual means can be used of doing extensive good, which will not eventually prove an occasion of deeper guilt and condemnation to many. (*John* 15:22—25. 2 *Cor.* 2:14—17.)—*Pillar.*] (*M. R.*) 'At the entrance of the court of the priests, by a marble pillar.' *Bp Patrick.*

SCOTT.

Verse 4.

'The priests of the second order' seem to have been the heads of the several courses, which served in rotation, under the person next in succession to the high priesthood, who acted on emergencies as deputy to the high priest. These were the chief priests mentioned so often in the N. T. (1 *Chr.* 24.1—19. *Ezra* 2:36—39.)—Josiah, in his former well-meant attempts for reformation, had probably removed the idols, and abolished the worship of them in Jerusalem: but, perhaps, he had supposed, that the vessels and other valuables might be reserv-

manded Hilkiah the high priest, and the [k] priests of the second order, and [l] the keepers of the door, [m] to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels *that were* made for [n] Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burnt them without Jerusalem in the fields of [o] Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto [p] Beth-el.

5 And he * put down † the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places, in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burnt incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the ‡ planets, and to [q] all the host of heaven.

6 And he brought out [r] the grove from the house of the LORD, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, [s] and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped *it* small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon [t] the graves of the children of the people.

7 And he brake down the houses of [u] the sodomites, that *were* by the house of the LORD, [v] where the women wove § hangings for the grove.

8 And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burnt incense, from [y] Geba to [z] Beer-sheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that *were* in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which *were* on a man's left hand at the gate of the city.

9 Nevertheless, [a] the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, [b] but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren.

10 And he defiled [c] Topheth, which *is* in [d] the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man [e] might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.

11 And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to [f] the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the ‖ chamberlain, which *was* in the suburbs, and burnt the chariots of the sun with fire.

12 And the altars that *were* [g] on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars [h] which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and ¶ brake *them* down from thence, and [i] cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.

13 And the high places that *were* before Jerusalem, which *were* on the right hand of ** the mount of corruption, which [j] Solomon the king of Israel had

[k] 1 Chr. 24:4—19. Matt. 26:3. 27:1.
[l] See on 22:4. 1 Chr. 26:1—19.
[m] 21:3,7. 2 Chr. 33:3,7. 34:3,4.
[n] 17:16. Judg. 2:13. 1 K. 16:31. 18: 19:26,40. 19:18. Is. 27:9. Jer. 7:9.
[o] 2 Sam. 15:23. John 18:1. *Cedron.*
[p] 1 K. 12:29. Hos. 4:15. Am. 4:4.
* Heb. *caused to cease.*
† Heb. *Chemarim.* Hos. 10:5. *marg.* Zeph. 1:4,5.
‡ Or, *twelve signs*, or, *constellations.*
[q] See on 21:3,4. Jer. 8:1,2. 44:17—19.
[r] 21:7. Judg. 3:7. 1 K. 14:23. 16:33. Jer. 17:2.
[s] Ex. 32:20. Deut. 7:25. 9:21.
[t] 10:27. 2 Chr. 34:4.
[u] Gen. 19:4,5. 1 K. 14:24. 15:12. 22: 46. 2 Chr. 34:33. Rom. 1:26,27.
[v] Ex. 35:25,26. Ez. 16:16. Hos. 2:13.
§ Heb. *houses.*
[y] Josh. 21:17. 1 K. 15:22. 1 Chr. 6:60. Is. 10:29. Zech. 14:10.
[z] Gen. 21:31. 26:33. Judg. 20:1. 1 K. 19:3.
[a] Ez. 44:10—14. Mal. 2:8,9.
[b] 1 Sam. 2:36. Ez. 44:29—31.
[c] Is. 30:33. Jer. 7:31,32. 19:6,11—13. *Tophet.*
[d] Josh. 15:8. 2 Chr. 28:3. 33:6. Jer. 19:2. 32:35. Matt. 5:22. *Gr.*
[e] 16:3. 17:17. 21:6. Lev. 18:21. Deut. 18:10. Jer. 32:35. Ez. 16:21. 20:26, 31. 23:37—39.
[f] 5. 2 Chr. 14:5. 34:4. *marg.* Ez. 8: 16.
‖ Or, *eunuch*, or, *officer.*
[g] Deut. 22:8. Jer. 19:13. Zeph. 1:5.
[h] 21:5,21,22. 2 Chr. 33:5,15.
¶ Or, *ran from thence.*
[i] See on 6.
** That is, the mount of Olives.
[j] 1 K. 11:7,8. Neh. 13:26.

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ed for the use of the temple. Being, however, now more fully instructed in the law of God, he destroyed all these vessels, however costly, by fire. SCOTT.

Verse 5.

Planets.] (*M.*) Different opinions are held as to the meaning of this word, found here only. [See concluding note.] ED.

Verses 5—7.

Burned incense . . . to the planets, &c.] See on contemporary Egyptian monuments, the worship of the heavens, under the form of a female placed in an arching posture, her body covered with stars, and the sun ascending and descending upon the arch in a boat, filled with various idolatrous emblems, &c. *Moore* (Hist. of Ireland) also mentions among the ancient superstitions of the 'Sacred Isle' of the West, the worship of *Baal-samyn* or *Bel-samhin*, 'The Lord of the Heavens:' as also of the crescent moon, &c. The worship of 'Heaven,' *Tien*, is also common in China. 'Is a child [in India] born when two opposing *planets* meet in any sign, the parents become greatly alarmed, and make offerings of *incense* and other things to the '12 signs or constellations.' *Hangings.*] 'Very large hangings are used in the temples, some of which are fastened to the roof, others used as screens, and others to cover the sacred cars. On them are painted the actions of the gods, as described in the books Rāmyanum and the Scanda Purāna; and there are portrayed things of the most indecent character.' *Roberts.* Comp. *Henry* above, and notes, Lev. 26:1, &c. For idolatry seems to be one and the same under all its forms, in all time, and over the whole earth, viz. that which is so called in Scripture, a deification of the lower propensities: would that even Christian nations were free from its effects! ED.

Verse 8.

From Geba, &c.] (*M. R.* y, z.) The northern and southern borders of the kingdom of Judah. SCOTT.

Verse 10.

'*Jerome* says, Tophet was a fine and pleasant place, well watered with fountains, and adorned with gardens. The valley of the son of Hinnom, or Gehenna, was in one part; here, it appears, the sacred rites of Molech were performed; and to this all the filth of the city was carried, and perpetual fires were kept up, in order to consume it. Hence it has been considered a *type* of *hell*; and in this sense it is used in the N. T.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 11.

The worshippers of the sun represented that luminary, by a man seated in a chariot drawn by swift and furious horses; and therefore they dedicated to him horses and chariots. SCOTT.

'The Hindoos believe that the sun is drawn in his course by 7 horses, and the deity sits in his one wheeled chariot.' *Roberts.* 'The Greeks believed the sun was drawn by 4 horses, named Pyrois, Eous, Æthon, and Phlegon.' *Lempriere.* ED.

Verses 12—14.

(*M. R.—Note*, 1 *K.* 11:1—8.) The sacred writer seems to call the hill on which these high places were erected, and which is supposed

builded for [k] Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for [l] Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for [m] Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile.

14 And [n] he brake in pieces the * images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with [o] the bones of men.

[*Practical Observations.*]

15 ¶ Moreover, [p] the altar that *was* at Bethel, *and* the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burnt the high place, *and* [q] stamped *it* small to powder, and burnt the grove.

16 And as Josiah

k Judg. 2:13. 10:6. 1 Sam. 7:4. 12:10. 1 K. 11:5,33.
l Num. 21:29. Judg. 11:24. Jer. 48:7, 13,46.
m Zeph. 1:5. *Malcham.*
n Ex. 23:24. Num. 33:52. Deut. 7:5, 25,26. 2 Chr. 34:3,4.
* Heb. *statues.*
o 16. Num. 19:16,18. Jer. 8:1,2. Ez. 39:12—16. Matt. 23:27,28.
p 10:31. 1 K. 12:28—33. 14:16. 15: 30. 21:22.
q See on 6.

nassch had built altars for his idols in the house of the Lord; when he repented, he removed them, and *cast them out of the city*, 2 Chr. 33: 15. but, not destroying them, his son Amon, it seems, had brought them again into the courts of the temple, there Josiah found them, and thence he *brake them down*, *v.* 12.

5. There was *Tophet, in the valley of the son of Hinnom*, very near Jerusalem, where was the image of Molech, to which some sacrificed their children, burning them in the fire, others dedicated them, making them to pass through the fire, *v.* 10. *laboring in the very fire*, Heb. 2: 13. It is supposed to have been called *Tophet*, from *toph*, a drum, because they beat drums at the burning of the children, that their shrieks might not be heard.

6. There were *high places before Jerusalem*, which *Solomon had built*, *v.* 13. The altars and images on those high places, we may suppose, had been taken away by some of the preceding godly kings, or, perhaps, Solomon himself when he became a penitent; but the buildings, or some parts of them, remained, with other high places, till Josiah's time. They that introduce corruptions into religion, know not how long they will last; antiquity is no certain proof of verity: there were also high places all the kingdom over, from *Geba to Beer-sheba*, *v.* 8. and *high places of the gates, in the entering in of the gate of the governor;* in those high places (Patrick thinks) they burnt incense to those tutelar gods, to whom their idolatrous kings had committed the protection of their city; and, probably, the governor of the city had a private altar for his *Penates—his household-gods.*

7. Idolatrous priests officiated at all those idolatrous altars, *v.* 5. *Chemarim*, black men, or that wore black; see Zeph. 1: 4. They that sacrificed to Osiris, or that wept for Tammuz, Ezek. 8: 14. or that worshipped the infernal deities, put on black garments as mourners. Those idolatrous priests, the kings of *Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places;* they were, it should seem, priests of the house of Aaron, who thus profaned their dignity, there were others also who had no right at all to the priesthood, who burnt incense to Baal.

8. There were conjurers and wizards, and such as *dealt with familiar spirits*, *v.* 24. When they worshipped the devil as their god, no marvel they consulted him as their oracle.

II. What a full destruction good Josiah made of all those relics of idolatry; such is his zeal for the Lord of Hosts, and his holy indignation against all that is displeasing to Him; the law was, that the monuments of the Canaanites' idolatry must be all destroyed, Deut. 7: 5. much more of the idolatry of the Israelites, in whom it was still more impious, profane, and perfidious.

1. He orders Hilkiah, and the other priests, to clear the temple; that was their province, *v.* 4. Beth-el had been the common source of idolatry, there was set up one of the calves, and that lying next to Judah, thence the infection had spread into that kingdom; therefore now he makes it the laystall of idolatry, the dunghill to which he carries the filth and off-scouring of all things, that, if possible, it might be made loathsome to those that had been fond of it.

2. The idolatrous priests were put down: those who were not of the house of Aaron, or had sacrificed to Baal, or other false gods, he put to death, according to the law, *v.* 20. those descendants from Aaron, who yet had burnt incense in the high places, but to the true God only, he forbade ever to approach the altar of the Lord, they had forfeited that honor, *v.* 9. he *brought them out of the cities of Judah*, *v.* 8. that they might not do mischief in the country, by secretly keeping up their old idolatrous usages; but he allowed them to *eat of the unleavened bread*, (the bread of the meat-offering, Lev. 2: 4, 5.) *among their brethren*, with whom they were to reside, that, being under their eye, they might be kept from doing hurt, and taught to do well; but whether they were permit-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—14. Nothing ought to discourage our endeavors to promote a revival of true religion.—As sinners cannot be preserved from eternal destruction, without repentance; so, degenerate nations cannot be rescued from public calamities, without general reformation.—All external obligations to the service of God may be entered into with a hypocritical, or self-righteous spirit: yet this should not make us object to such engagements ourselves, or averse to propose them; but only make us cautious in what manner we do it, and careful to inculcate the same caution on others. —In those nations, which profess to worship God, and which are favored with the light of revelation, we need only to investigate with diligence, and compare the result of our observations with the Word of truth, to discover such enormous and multiplied abominations, as could never have been conceived on a distant and superficial view, or a judgment formed by other rules. Even in worshipping congregations, an exact scrutiny would commonly bring to light such evils, as before were never suspected: but the most humiliating discoveries will be made, by an exact inquiry into our own hearts and conduct. That man, who previously deemed his behavior unexceptionable and his heart good, if he can be engaged in diligent self-examination and watchfulness, daily beholding himself in the mirror of God's Word, and for a long time comparing with it his thoughts, intentions, dispositions, words, and actions; will experience increasing convictions of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of his heart, and of the exceeding sinfulness of his whole life. And if he set about amendment, in dependence on the mercy and grace of God in Jesus Christ, and according to the rule of the Bible, he will, as he proceeds, find still more and more to be done; and to the end of his life perceive, that he is very far off from the perfect righteousness of the holy law.—The scriptural history may well excite the hatred and disgust of the proud admirers of the human heart and understanding; as it presents to our view a very mortifying picture of the blindness of man's mind, as well as of the perverseness of his will, and the depravity of his affections. But, suppose the appeal made to other histories, or to universal observation and experience:—if the records of Greece and Rome were presented to our view, as a detail of facts, without the varnish of declamation and panegyric, and impartially compared with the just and holy law of God; would not their idolatries and immoralities be found to exceed even those of Israel? (*Rom.* 1:28—32.) Would they not picture human nature as blinded and depraved as the Bible does? And do not all the encomiums bestowed on them, arise from man's disposition to 'call good evil, and evil good, to put darkness for light, and light for darkness?' (*Note, Is.* 5:20.) Pride, ambition, rapacity, cruelty, and revenge, have even been canonized by poets, and orators, and historians: and idolatry, impiety, brutal excess, and unnatural lusts have been called by soft names, and excused, if not vindicated, by these elegant and ingenious ancients. Otherwise the conclusion is as irrefragable from the study of profane history, as from the records of God's Word, that 'the imagination of man's heart is only evil from his youth:' and that *all the real godliness, or goodness, which has ever been found on earth, has been derived from the new creating Spirit of Jesus Christ.*—In reducing our conduct, or that of others, to the standard of Scripture, in evident and important matters, no allowance must be made for customary, reputable, ancient, or fashionable abuses: no man must be known after the flesh; nor any attention paid to persuasions, complaints, remonstrances, or reproaches; nor even to prejudices, except in matters of subordinate consequence. Therefore courage, constancy, and patience, are requisite for such attempts; and these, when genuine, can spring only from grace and faith, and be given in answer to prayer, without which every undertaking of this kind will be fruitless.—Not only should gross abominations be precluded; but every temptation, or occasion of sin, should be removed, whatever be the secular loss or expense, if we would effectually glorify God, and do good: and every method should be adopted to fill men's minds with abhorrence of iniquity, and to show plausible abuses in a contemptible and detestable light: especially where godly people are liable to be seduced into pernicious compliances. SCOTT.

to have been the mount of Olives, 'the mount of corruption,' because of the abominations there committed. SCOTT.

Verses 15—20.

Josiah had evidently some authority over a great part of the country, which the ten tribes had occupied; (2 *Chr.* 34:6.) but it is not certain, whether this was by grant from the king of Assyria, or by the willing subjection of the inhabitants: the former, however, appears the more probable. (29, 30.) On this occasion he exactly accomplished the prediction of the man of God concerning him, delivered about 360 years before: and though *he* may be supposed to have designed that accomplishment; yet so wicked a man as his father could have had no such intentions, in giving his son the name of *Josiah*.—It has been justly observed, that if Josiah had entertained the same notions of the sanctity of relics, which have so long prevailed among professed Christians; he would have bestowed at least as much pains in honoring the bones of the old prophet from Judah, as he did in disgracing

turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that *were* there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and [r] burnt *them* upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD, which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.

17 Then he said, What title *is* that that I see? And the men of the city told him, [s] *It is* the sepulchre of the man of God which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Beth-el.

18 And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones * alone, with [t] the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria.

19 And all [u] the houses also of the high places that *were* in [x] the cities of Samaria, which [y] the kings of Israel had made [z] to provoke *the* LORD to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Beth-el.

20 And [a] he † slew all the priests of the high places that *were* there upon the altars, and burnt men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem.

21 ¶ And the king commanded all the people, saying, [b] Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, [c] as *it is* written in the book of this covenant.

22 Surely [d] there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah;

23 But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *wherein* this passover was holden to the LORD in Jerusalem.

24 Moreover, [f] the *workers with* familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the ‡ images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, [g] that he might perform the words of the law, which were written in [h] the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD.

25 And [i] like unto him was there no king before him, [j] that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, [k] according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there *any* like him.

26 [l] Notwithstanding, the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the § provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal.

27 And the LORD said, [m] I will remove Judah also [n] out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, [o] My name shall be there.

28 Now [p] the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book

B. C. 610. of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

29 ¶ In his days [q] Pharaoh-nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of As-

r 1 K. 13:1,2,32. Matt. 24:35. John 10:35.
s 1 K. 13:1,30.
* Heb. *to escape.*
t 1 K. 13:10—22,31.
u 17:9. 1 K. 12:31. 13:32.
x 2 Chr. 30:6—11. 31:1. 34:6.
y 8:18. 1 K. 16:33. Mic. 6:16.
z 17:16—18. 21:6. Ps. 78:58. Jer. 7:18,19. Ez. 8:17,18.
a 10:25. 11:18. Ex. 22:20. Deut. 13:5. 1 K. 18:40. Zech. 13:2,3.
† Or, *sacrificed.* 1 K. 13:2. Is. 34:6.
b 2 Chr. 35:1,&c.
c Ex. 12:3,&c. Lev. 23:5—8. Num. 9:2—5. 28:16—25. Deut. 16:1—8.
d 2 Chr. 35:18,19.
e 2 Chr. 30:1—3,13—20. 35:3—17.
f 21:3,6. 1 Sam. 28:3—7. Is. 8:19. 19:3. Acts 16:16—18.
‡ Or, *teraphim.* Gen. 31:19. Judg. 17:5. 18:17,18. Hos. 3:4.
g Lev. 19:31. 20:27. Deut. 18:10—12. Is. 8:20. Rom. 3:20. Jam. 1:25.
h 22:8—13. 2 Chr. 34:14—19.
i 18:5.
j 3. Deut. 4:29. 6:5. 1 K. 2:4. 15:5. Jer. 29:13.
k Neh. 10:29. Mal. 4:4. John 1:17. 7:19.
l 21:11—13. 22:16,17. 24:3,4. 2 Chr. 36:16. Jer. 3:7—10. 15:1—4.
§ Heb. *angers.*
m 17:18,20. 18:11. 24:3. 25:11. Deut. 29:27,28. Ez. 23:32—35.
n Ps. 51:11. Jer. 31:37. 33:24. Lam. 2:7.
o See on 21:4,7. 1 K. 8:29. 9:3.
p See on 20.
q 33,34. 2 Chr. 35:20—24. Jer. 46:2.

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those of the idolatrous priests. But he thought it enough to let the bones of the man of God lie quietly in his grave. SCOTT.

Verse 24.

(*M. R.*) The whole narrative marks the care with which this pious prince had studied 'the book of the law,' after it was found; the diligent investigation which he made, to detect and destroy every thing forbidden in it; and the exactness, as well as earnestness, with which his reformation was conducted. Had the princes and people been as sincere and zealous as their king, the happiest effects would have followed. (*Jer.* 3:6—11. *Zeph.* 1:5—8.) ID.

Verses 26, 27.

Josiah lived above 13 years after this great reformation, and to the end retained the people in the external worship of God: (2 *Chr.* 34:33.) but in general they relapsed *secretly* into many of their former idolatries and iniquities; and, as a collective body, they were not greatly amended in the sight of a heart-searching God.—They had *heartily* concurred in the idolatries and crimes of Manasseh, but they had not imitated his repentance: on the other hand, they had *hypocritically* joined in Josiah's reformation, and were ripe, on his removal, to join the apostasy of his sons. (25.) Manasseh's wickedness, therefore, was accounted *national*, and filled up their measure of iniquity; whereas Josiah's piety was *personal*, and the hypocrisy and apostasy of the people aggravated their guilt and hastened their ruin. (21:13—16. 22:15—20. 24:3, 4.) But though the Lord did not turn from the fierceness of his great wrath, so as to spare Jerusalem from desolation, and the Jews from captivity: yet this event proved a kind of crisis in their disease: and while the wicked perished in vast numbers, the remnant was purified; and Josiah's reformation probably had a very happy effect, in raising up many persons to join this small remnant, which proved the precious seed of their future church and nation. SCOTT.

Verses 29, 30.

Nabopollazar, king of Babylon, assisted by the Medes, is supposed, before this time, to have conquered the Assyrians and destroyed Nineveh. [Note * p. 350.] Thus he became king of Assyria also: and some learned men are of opinion, that after Manasseh was freed from captivity, the kings of Judah reigned over the country formerly possessed by the ten tribes, as tributaries and allies to the kings of Babylon.—Josiah might therefore consider himself as under engagements to the king of Assyria, as well as unwilling that the contending parties should march their armies through his country: he however lost his life in the attempt. Megiddo was situated in the lot of Manasseh, in the northern part of the land: (*Judg.* 1:27.) but at this time it seems to have been under Josiah's government. Perhaps Josiah disguised himself, that the king of Egypt might not know him; but he, having discovered him, singled him out for slaughter.—As Zedekiah was no more than 21 years old, when he was made king, after Jehoiakim had reigned 11 years, and Jeconiah his son a short time; (24:18.) he of course was younger than Jehoahaz, though mentioned before him in Chr. (1 *Chr.* 3:15.) ID.

Josiah went against him. (29) 'Being afraid he intended to invade his country in his passage, or to divert him from his expedition against

syria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he [r] slew him at [s] Megiddo when [t] he had seen him.

30 And [u] his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And [v] the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead.

31 ¶ [w] Jehoahaz *was* twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* [x] Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

32 And [y] he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

33 And Pharaoh-necho [z] put him in bands at [s] Riblah, in the land of Hamath, * that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and † put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold.

34 And Pharaoh-necho made [b] Eliakim the son of Josiah king, in the room of Josiah his father, and [c] turned his name to ‡ Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz

r Ec. 8:14. 9:1,2. Is. 57:1,2. Rom. 11:33.
s 9:27. Judg. 1:27. 5:19. 1 K. 4:12. Zech. 12:11. *Megiddon.* Rev. 16:16. *Armageddon.*
t 14:8,11.
u 9:28. 1 K. 22:33—38.
v 14:21. 21:24. 2 Chr. 36:1,2.
w 1 Chr. 3:15. Jer. 22:11. *Shallum.*
x 24:18.
y 21:2—7,21,22.
z 2 Chr. 36:3,4. Ez. 19:3,4.
a 25:6. Jer. 39:5,6. 52:9,10,26.
* Or, *because he reigned.*
† Heb. *set a mulct upon the land.* 18:14.
b 2 Chr. 36:3,4.
c 24:17. Dan. 1:7.
‡ Called *Jakim*, Matt. 1:11.

to show that thus he would have done by the priests themselves, had they been alive, as he did by those whom he found alive, *v.* 20. thus he polluted the altar, desecrated it, and made it odious. This, as it was Josiah's act, seems to be the result of a very sudden resolve; he had not done it, but that he happened to turn himself, and spy the sepulchres, yet it was foretold above 350 years before, when this altar was first built by Jeroboam, 1 K. 13: 2. God always foresees, and has sometimes foretold as certain, what yet to us seems most contingent; *the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord;* king Josiah's was so, and He turned it, (or ever he himself was aware, Cant. 6: 12.) to do this; no word of God shall fail.

2. He destroyed all the houses of the high places, all those synagogues of Satan that were in the *cities of Samaria*, *v.* 19. the priests he justly made sacrifices *upon their own altars*, *v.* 20.

3. He carefully preserved the sepulchre of that man of God, who came from Judah to foretell this.

Lastly, We are here told what a solemn passover Josiah and his people kept, after all this. When they had cleared the country of the old leaven, then they applied themselves to the keeping of the feast; the way to keep out all abominable customs, is to keep up all instituted ordinances; (see Lev. 18: 30.) therefore he commanded all the people to keep the passover, which was not only a memorial of their deliverance out of Egypt, but a token of their dedication to Him that brought them out, and their communion with Him: this he found written in the *book of the law*, here called *the book of the covenant;* for though the divine authority may deal with us in a way of absolute command, divine grace condescends to federal transactions, and therefore he observed it. We have not such a particular account of this passover as of that in Hezekiah's time, 2 Chr. 30: but, in general, that *there was not holden such a passover* in any of the foregoing reigns, no not *from the days of the Judges*, *v.* 22. which, by the way, intimates that though the account which the book of Judges gives of the state of Israel under that dynasty, looks but melancholy, yet there were then some golden days. We have reason to think, that, during all the remainder of Josiah's reign, religion flourished, and the feasts of the Lord were very carefully observed; but in this passover, the satisfaction they took in the covenant lately renewed, the reformation in pursuance of it, and the revival of an ordinance of which they had lately found the divine original in the book of the law, and which had long been neglected or carelessly kept, put them into transports of holy joy; and God was pleased to recompense their zeal in destroying idolatry, with uncommon tokens of his presence and favor; all this concurred to make it a distinguished passover.

V. 25—30. Upon the reading of these vs. we must say, Lord, though *thy righteousness* be *as the great mountains*, evident, conspicuous, and past dispute, yet thy *judgments are a great deep*, unfathomable, and past finding out, Ps. 36: 6. What shall we say to this?

I. It is here owned, that Josiah was one of the best kings that ever sat on the throne of David, *v.* 25. As Hezekiah was a nonesuch for faith and dependence on God in straits, *ch.* 18: 5. so Josiah was a nonesuch for sincerity and zeal in carrying on a work of reformation. It is true religion to *turn to God*, as one we have chosen and love. He did what he could to turn his kingdom also to the Lord. He did it with *all his heart, soul*, and *might;* with vigor, courage and resolution: he could not otherwise have broken through the difficulties he had to grapple with. What great things may we bring to pass in the service of God, if we be but lively and hearty in it! He did this, *according to all the law of Moses;* in an exact observance of that law, and with an actual regard to it. His zeal did not transport him into any irregularities.

II. Notwithstanding this, he was cut off by a violent death, in the midst of his days, and his kingdom was ruined a few years after. Consequent on such a reformation, one would have expected nothing but the prosperity and glory both of king and kingdom; but,

1. Even the reformed kingdom continues marked for ruin, *v.* 26. That is certainly true, which God spake by the prophet, Jer. 18: 7, 8. That if a nation, doomed to destruction, *turn from the evil* of sin, God will *repent of the evil* of punishment; therefore we must conclude that Josiah's people, though they submitted to his power, did not heartily imbibe his principles, but still continued their affection for idols; therefore He, who knows men's hearts, would not recall that sentence. That Judah should be removed, as Israel, and Jerusalem itself cast off, *v.* 27. Yet even this destruction was intended to be their effectual reformation, so that this shall be all the fruit, even the taking away of sin.

2. As an evidence of this, even the reforming king is cut off in the midst of his usefulness, in mercy to him, that he might not see the evil which was coming on his kingdom; but in wrath to his people, for his death was an inlet to their desolations. Here, (1.) We cannot justify Josiah's conduct; he had no clear call to engage in this war between the king of Egypt and the king of Assyria, (so the king of Babylon is called,) nor do we find that he asked counsel of God by Urim, or prophets, concerning it. Some understand the promise made to him, That he should *come to his grave in peace*, in a sense in which it was not performed, because, by his miscarriage in this matter, he forfeited the benefit of it. I understand the promise so, as that I believe it was fulfilled, for he *died in peace* with God and his own conscience, and saw not, nor had any immediate prospect of, the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; [there was no war nor desolation in his land. *Clarke.*]; yet I understand the providence to be a rebuke to him for his rashness. (2.) We must adore God's righteousness, in taking away such a jewel from an unthankful people that knew not how to value it. They greatly lamented his death, 2 Chr. 35: 25. urged to it by Jeremiah, who told them the meaning of it, and what a threatening omen it was; but they had not made a due improvement of the mercies they enjoyed by his life, of which God taught them the worth by the want.

V. 31—37. Jerusalem saw not a good day after Josiah's death, but one trouble came after another, till, within 22 years, it was quite destroyed. Of the reign of two of his sons here is a short account; the former we find here a prisoner, and the latter a tributary, to the king of

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the Babylonians, with whom he was in league: it is likely the latter was the reason.' *Patrick.—Pharaoh-necho: . . . Megiddo.*] 'Whom Herodotus . . . calls (*Necos*) 'and mentions the fight which he had with the Syrians in *Magdolum*.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

(29.) *Pharaoh-necho.*] A cut is given of his hieroglyphic name, *Neco*, from contemporary Egyptian monuments. See *Wilkinson*, and note 7: 6. He is the Nechao II. of writers. Stephinathis, Nechepsus, and Nechao I. were probably contemporaries of the 25th Dyn. as Neco (I.) father of Psamaticus I. (who immediately preceded Nechao II. and ascended the throne in 664,) was put to death by Sabaco (1st of the 25th Dyn.). The 12 kings or nomarchs, according to Herodotus, reigned about this time, i. e. after the death of Sethos, K. at Memphis, the contemporary of Tirhakah, between 714 and 664. Nechao II. succeeded his father Psamatik I. in 610. So *Wilkinson.* ED.

Verse 33.

Jehoahaz had assumed the regal authority without Pharaoh's consent, and perhaps attempted to continue the war against him; which appears probable, because he was bound at Riblah, at the northern extremity of the promised land. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verse 34.

'Jehoiakim' means the same as 'Eliakim;' except that the latter is compounded with the word translated GOD, the former with a part of the name JEHOVAH. ID.

CONCLUDING NOTE. *Planets*—marg. 12 *signs* or *constellations*.] These *signs* were early invented, note, Gen. 37: 9. and concluding note, Gen. 49: However, 'the Zodiac of Dendera,' though ancient, is now universally acknowledged to be of the age of the Roman emperors. 'On the ceiling of the *pronaos*, or portico, of the temple of Dendera, is the zodiac, which led to so much learned controversy, and has at length, through the assistance of the Greek inscription (found at Rosetta?) and the hieroglyphical names of the Cæsars that cover its interior and exterior walls, been confined to the more modest and probable antiquity of 1800 yrs.' [Yet infidels in these U. States still

away: and [d] he came to Egypt, and died there.

35 And Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh; but he [e] taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh: he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give *it* unto Pharaoh-nechoh.

36 [f] Jehoiakim *was* twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah.

37 And [g] he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, according to [h] all that his fathers had done.

CHAP. XXIV.

Jehoiakim submits to Nebuchadnezzar, but afterwards rebels, 1. God hastens the fulfilment of his predictions against Judah, 2—4. Jehoiakim dies, and is succeeded by Jehoiachin, 5, 6. The king of Babylon prevails against the king of Egypt, 7. Jehoiachin reigns wickedly, 8, 9. Jerusalem is taken; and the king, with his family and treasures, and the sacred vessels, and chief persons of Judah, is carried captive to Babylon, 10—16. Zedekiah is made king, reigns wickedly, and rebels against the king of Babylon, 17—20.

IN [a] his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his B. C. 603. servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him.

2 And [c] the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah, to destroy it, [d] according to the word of the

d Jer. 22:11,12. Ez. 19:3,4.
e 15:19,20.
f 1 Chr. 3:15. 2 Chr. 36:5. Jer. 1:3.

Egypt, and both so in the very beginning of their reign. The king of Egypt having slain Josiah, though he had not any design on Judah, yet, being provoked by the opposition Josiah gave him, now, it should seem, bent all his force against his family and kingdom. If Josiah's sons had trodden in his steps, they would have fared the better for his piety; but deviating from them, they fared worse for his rashness.

I. Jehoahaz, a younger son, was first made king by *the people of the land;* probably, because he was observed to be of a more active, warlike genius than his elder brother, and likely to make head against the king of Egypt, and to avenge his father's death, which perhaps the people were more solicitous about, in point of honor, than keeping up and carrying on his father's reformation; and the issue was accordingly.

1. He did ill, *v.* 32. Though he had a good education, and a good example, given him, and many a good prayer, we may suppose, put up for him, yet he *did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord*, and it is to be feared, began to do so in his father's lifetime; for his reign was so short, that he could not, in that, show much of his character.

2. Doing ill, [e] no wonder he fared ill. Three months a prince, [f] then made a prisoner, so he lived and died, *v.* 33, 34. This Jehoahaz is that young lion, Ezek. 19: 1—4. See Jer. 22: 10—12.

II. Eliakim, another son of Josiah, was made king by the king of Egypt; it is not said *in the room of Jehoahaz*, (his reign was so short, that it was scarcely worth taking notice of,) but *in the room of Josiah.* The crown of Judah had, hitherto, always descended from a father to a son, and never, till now, from one brother to another; once, the succession had so happened in the house of Ahab, but never, till now, in the house of David.

Of this Jehoiakim we are here told, 1. That the king of Egypt made him poor, exacted from him a vast tribute, *v.* 33. which, with much difficulty, he squeezed out of his subjects, and gave to Pharaoh, *v.* 35. Formerly, the Israelites had spoiled the Egyptians, now the Egyptians spoil Israel: see what woful changes sin makes. 2. What made him poor, did not make him good; notwithstanding the rebukes of Providence, by which he should have been convinced, humbled, and reformed, he *did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, v.* 37. and so prepared against himself greater judgments; for such God will send, if the less do not the work for which they are sent.

CHAP. XXIV. Things are here ripening for, and hastening toward, the utter destruction of Jerusalem.

V. 1—7. We have here the first mention of *Nebuchadnezzar*, a name which makes a great figure both in the histories, and in the prophecies, of the O. T. He was a potent prince, and a terror of the mighty in the land of the living; yet his name had not been known in sacred writ, had he not been employed in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the captivity of the Jews.

I. He made Jehoiakim his tributary, and kept him in subjection 3 years, *v.* 1. Nebuchadnezzar began his reign in the 4th year of Jehoiakim; in his 8th he made him his prisoner, but restored him, on his promise of faithfulness to him; that promise Jehoiakim kept about 3 years, but then rebelled, probably, in hopes of assistance from the king of Egypt.

II. When he rebelled, he sent his forces against him to destroy his country, bands of Chaldeans Syrians, Moabites, Ammonites, who were all now in the service and pay of the king of Babylon, *v.* 2. and withal retained, and now showed, their ancient enmity to the Israel of God. Yet no mention is here made of their commission from the king of Babylon, but only of that from the King of kings. *The Lord sent, v.* 2. and *at the commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah, v.* 3. Many are serving God's purposes, who are not aware of it.

Two things God intended in suffering Judah to be thus harassed. 1. The punishment of the sins of Manasseh, which God now visited on *the third and fourth generation.* So long He waited before He visited them, to see if the nation would repent; but now he would let the world know that *time will not wear out the guilt of sin*, and that reprieves are not pardons. Is there any unpardonable sin but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost? This is meant of the remitting of the temporal punishment: though Manasseh repented, and we have reason to think that even the persecutions and murders he was guilty of, were pardoned, so that he

g Jer. 22:13—17. 26:20—23. 36:23—26, 31. Ez. 19:5—9.
h 2 Chr. 28:22—25. 33:4—10,22,23.
a 17:5. 2 Chr. 36:6. Jer. 25:1,9. 46:2. Dan. 1:1.
c 6:23. 13:20,21. Deut. 28:49,50. 2 Chr. 33:11. Job 1:17. Is. 7:17. 13:5. Jer. 35:11.
d 20:17. 21:12—14. Is. 6:11,12. Jer. 25:9. 26:6,20. 32:28. Mic. 3:12.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 15—37. The predictions of Scripture may be so long ere they are accomplished, that the expectation of the event may seem to expire; but they will all be punctually fulfilled in their season: and it must give singular encouragement to the pious, when they find themselves evidently employed in bringing about that accomplishment.—When the sins of a collective body are come to a crisis, no human endeavors can avert the wrath of God. (*Is.* 57:1, 2.) The best of men may be misled into unadvised meddling with matters not properly belonging to them: but if we are habitually living by faith, and walking with God, even should we be taken away in consequence of any indiscretion, it will not prevent our dying in peace, and being received to glory.—Piety is *personal*, the effect of special grace. The children even of the most pious parents inherit original depravity; nor can education, instruction, or example prevent its effects, without *regeneration:* yet abundant encouragement is given to the diligent use of the appointed means of grace, in respect of our children. (*Gen.* 18:17—19. *Prov.* 22: 6.)

SCOTT.

hold it up in disproof of the antiquity ascribed to the creation and deluge, in the Bible!] 'There is no zodiac in any ancient temple [of Egypt]. Dendera, Esneh and Dayr (Aphroditopolis) [where are zodiacs] are of Ptolemaic and Roman date. The celebrated *Visconti* had made a very accurate estimation of the antiquity of that at Dendera.' *Wilkinson.* See also *Champollion*, and *Encyc. Americana.* ED.

Verse 37.

In the prophecy of Jeremiah, the extreme wickedness of Jehoiakim is fully shown. (*Jer.* 26: 36:)

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV. V. 1. Pharaoh-nechoh, after Josiah's death, obtained a victory over the king of Babylon, and for some time retained Judea and Syria in subjection. But not long after, Nabopollazar seems to have associated his son Nebuchadnezzar with him in the kingdom, that by him the war with the Egyptians might be conducted with greater vigor. For when Daniel had been 3 *years* under tuition at Babylon, and had afterwards been introduced to Nebuchadnezzar, he interpreted the dream of that prince in *the* 2*d* year of his reign: yet Daniel had been carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar the king. (*Dan.* 2:1.) Two distinct dates respecting the beginning of his reign must therefore be admitted; and it appears that he was made king 2 or 3 years before his father died.—Nebuchadnezzar having obtained decisive advantages against the Egyptians, attacked Jehoiakim, as an ally of Nechoh, and, having taken him prisoner, he 'bound him in fetters to carry him to Babylon;' (2 *Chr.* 36:6, 7.) but on his submission he released him, and carried away some of the gold and silver vessels of the temple, and some of the most considerable persons of the land. Among the latter were Daniel and his companions. (*Dan.* 1:1—7.) This is the first epoch of the 70 years of the Babylonish captivity. Nebuchadnezzar left Babylon in the 3d year of Jehoiakim, and he reduced that prince in his 4th year. After this, Jehoiakim served the king of Babylon 3 years, and in his 8th year he rebelled against him, about 3 years before his death. (*M. R.*)

SCOTT.

Nebuchadnezzar.] 'The Nabocolasser in Ptolemy's Canon, and the son and successor of Nabo-polassar. He began his reign in the 4th yr. of Jehoiakim, as Jeremiah tells us, 25:1. when, having smitten the army of Pharaoh Nechoh at Carchemish near Euphrates (Jer. 46:2.) he came up to make the Jews tributary to him, as they had been to Pharaoh.' *Gill, Calm. Patrick.*

COND. COMM.

Verse 2.

It is probable that Jehoiakim was thus harassed during the remainder of his days; and perhaps he was at last slain in some sally, when they approached Jerusalem; and so left unburied, or otherwise very disgracefully treated. But some think, that *after* the transactions here

LORD, which he spake by *his servants the prophets.

3 Surely [c] at the commandment of the LORD came *this* upon Judah, to [d] remove *them* out of his sight, [e] for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did;

4 And also [h] for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, [i] which the LORD would not pardon.

5 Now [j] the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

B. C. 599. 6 So Jehoiakim [k] slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.

7 And [l] the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken, [m] from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates, all that pertained to the king of Egypt.

[*Practical Observations.*]

8 ¶ [n] Jehoiachin *was* [o] eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name *was* Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.

was delivered from the wrath to come; yet, as they were national sins, they lay still charged on the land, crying for national judgments. Perhaps, some were now living who were aiding and abetting; and the present king was guilty of innocent blood, as appears, Jer. 22: 17. See what a provoking sin murder is, how loud it cries, and how long! See what need nations have to lament the sins of their fathers, lest they smart for them. 2. The accomplishment of the prophecies, *v.* 2. Rather shall Judah be *removed out of his sight*, nay *heaven and earth pass away*, than any word of God fail. Threatenings will be fulfilled as certainly as promises, if the sinner's repentance prevent not.

III. The king of Egypt was likewise subdued by the king of Babylon, and a great part of his country taken, *v.* 7. But lately he had oppressed Israel, *ch.* 23: 33. now he is himself brought down, and disabled to attempt any thing for the recovery of his losses, or the assistance of his allies; he dares not *come any more out of his land.* Afterward, he attempted to give Zedekiah some relief, but was obliged to retire, Jer. 37: 7.

IV. Jehoiakim, seeing his country laid waste, and himself ready to fall into the enemy's hand, as it should seem, died of a broken heart, in the midst of his days, *v.* 6. So *Jehoiakim slept with his fathers;* but it is not said that he was *buried with them;* for, no doubt, the prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled, that he should not be lamented, as his father was, but *buried with the burial of an ass*, Jer. 22: 18, 19. [i. e.] his dead body cast out, [and left unburied,] Jer. 36: 30.

V. 8—20. This should have been the history of king Jehoiachin's *reign*, but, alas, it is only the history of Jehoiachin's *captivity*, as it is called, Ezek. 1: 2. He came to the crown, not to have the honor of wearing it, but the shame of losing it; *He came in only to go out.*

I. He reigned but three months, then was removed and carried captive to Babylon, as his father, it is likely, would have been, had he lived but so much longer. What an unhappy young prince, to be thus thrust into a falling house, a sinking throne! Yet this young prince reigned long enough to show that he justly smarted for his fathers' sins, for he trod in their steps, *v.* 9. He did nothing to cut off the entail of the curse, to discharge the encumbrance of his crown, therefore with his own iniquity that of his fathers shall come into the account.

II. The calamities that came on him, his family, and people, in the very beginning of his reign, were grievous.

1. The king of Babylon had sent his forces to ravage the country, *v.* 2. now he came himself, and laid siege to Jerusalem. Now the word of God was fulfilled, Deut. 28: 49, &c. *The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, of fierce countenance*, that shall first *eat the fruit of the land*, and then *besiege thee in all thy gates.*

2. Jehoiachin immediately surrendered at discretion; wanting the faith and piety of an Israelite, he had not the resolution of a man, of a soldier, of a prince.

3. Nebuchadnezzar rifled the treasures both of the church and state, and carried away the silver and gold of both, *v.* 13. Now the word of God, by Isaiah, was fulfilled, *ch.* 20: 17. *All that is in thine house shall be carried to Babylon.* Even the vessels of the temple which Solomon had made, and laid up in store to be used as the old ones were worn out, he cut off from the temple, and began to cut them in pieces; but, on second thoughts, reserved them for his own use, for we find Belshazzar drinking in them, Dan. 5: 2, 3.

4. He carried away a great part of Jerusalem into captivity, to weaken it, that he might effectually secure the dominion of it, and enrich himself with the wealth or service of those he took away: there had been some carried away, 8 years before this, in the 1st year of Nebuchadnezzar, and the 3d of Jehoiakim, among them were Daniel and his fellows. See Dan. 1: 1, 2. They had approved themselves so well, that this politic prince coveted more of them. Now he carried off, (1.) The young king himself, and his family, *v.* 15. and we find, *ch.* 25: 27—29. that, for 37 years, he continued a close prisoner. (2.) All the great men, the princes and officers, their riches tempting the enemies to make a prey of them first. (3.) All military men, the *mighty men of valor*, *v.* 14—16. (4.) All the craftsmen and smiths, who made weapons of war, according to the Philistines' policy, 1 Sam. 13: 19. In this captivity, Ezekiel the prophet was carried away, Ezek. 1: 1, 2. and Mordecai. Esth. 2: 6. This Jehoiachin was also called *Jechoniah*, 1 Chr. 3: 16. and, in contempt, *Coniah*, Jer. 22: 24. where his captivity is foretold.

III. The successor, the king of Babylon appointed, God had written childless, Jer. 22: 30. therefore his uncle, Mattaniah, son of Josiah, was intrusted with the government: and to remind him, and let all the world know, that he was his

* Heb. *the hand of his.*

c 18:25. Gen. 50:20. 2 Chr. 24:24. 25: 16. Is. 10:5,6. 45:7. 46:10,11. Am. 3:6.
d 23:26,27. Lev. 26:33—35. Deut. 4: 26,27. 28:63. 29:28. Josh. 23:15. Jer. 15:1—4. Mic. 2:10.
e 21:2—11.
h 21:16. Num. 35:33.
i Jer. 15:1,2. Lam. 3:42.
j 2 Chr. 36:8. Jer. 22:13—17. 26: 36:
k Jer. 22:18,19. 36:30.
l Jer. 37:5—7. 46:2.
m Gen. 15:18. Num. 34:5. Josh. 15:4.
1 K. 4:21. Is. 27:12.
n 1 Chr. 3:16. Jer. 24:1. *Jeconiah.* Jer. 22:24,28. 37:1. *Coniah.* Matt. 1:11,12. *Jechonias.*
o 2 Chr. 36:9.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—7. When the Lord leaves men to the blindness of their own minds, and to the lusts of their own hearts, some are infatuated to adopt and obstinately persist in the most destructive measures; and others are hurried on by ambition, avarice, or resentment, to execute on them the vengeance which had been predicted.—We are incompetent judges of the divine procedures; and ought to wait with silent patience.—Blessed be God, He pardons, to the true penitent, all personal guilt; such as commit 'the sin unto death,' however, 'it is impossible to renew unto repentance.' (Heb. 6: 4—6. 1 John, 5: 14—18.)—It is distressing for those, whose own transgressions are forgiven, to reflect that they have been the guilty occasions to others, by their examples, influence, or persuasions, of those sins, which, being continued in, the Lord will not pardon; and of which they have no power to bring them to repent. The good Lord preserve us from sin and temptation, and above all from being tempters to others! And may this reflection stir up young persons to seek and serve God without delay, lest they do that mischief, which, if they themselves live to repent, they will never be able to undo. SCOTT.

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recorded, Nebuchadnezzar carried him to Babylon, and at length put him to death, and treated his dead body most ignominiously. (*Jer.* 22: 13—19. 36:30, 31. SCOTT.

Verses 3, 4.

Out of his sight. (3) Out of that land, in which his worship had been established, and the special tokens of his gracious presence so wonderfully vouchsafed. (*Deut.* 11:12. *Ps.* 51:11.) ID.

Would not pardon. (4) The Lord in his wisdom and righteousness, did not see good to pardon this national guilt, in those circumstances; but judged it proper to inflict condign punishment for it: but the personal sins of such as repented and sought mercy, were pardoned notwithstanding this determination. (*Ez.* 18:3, 4, 19—32.) ID.

Verse 6.

As Jehoiakim was 'buried with the burial of an ass;' the expression, 'slept with his fathers,' can only mean that he died, without determining what became either of his soul or body. (*M. R.—Note*, 2.) ID.

Verse 7.

Came no more out.] B. C. 599. *Scott. Prideaux* says, 'Pharaoh Hophra (Apries) came out of Egypt to relieve Zedekiah in 589, (Zedekiah's 10th yr.) but when Nebuchadnezzar raised the siege and marched against him, Hophra durst not engage, but returned to Egypt: whereon Ezekiel denounces 40 yrs. of judgments on the Egyptians for their perfidy: and so not long after these 40 yrs. Cambyses reduced Egypt to a Persian province.' *Wilkinson* dates Cambyses' conquest in 525: and thinks Psametik III. to be the Apries and Vaphres, who 'ascended the throne in 595,' and 'took Sidon: it is not certain he is the same:' Amasis, (Amosis, Ames-Neitse, i. e. son of the goddess Neith,) succeeded Psamatik III. in 570 B. C. and was succeeded by Psammicherites (Psammenitus) in 525.' *Hales* has, 'Apries or Hophra 597; Nebuchadnezzar ravages Egypt, 570; Amasis, 569; Cyrus conquers Egypt, 535; Psammenitus I. Revolt of Egypt, 525, Cambyses reduces Egypt, 525.' See *Townsend's* Chron. end of his vol. ED.

Verses 8—16.

After all the depredations, to which the temple had been exposed, some of the vessels that Solomon had made remained in the treasuries of the temple: but all, except what were in immediate use, seem at this time to have been seized, and some of them cut in pieces, and sent to Babylon. And those, afterwards mentioned, might be such as had been before this carried away, or such as were found at the complete

9 And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done.

10 At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city * was besieged.

11 And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it.

12 And [p] Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his † officers: and the king of Babylon [q] took him in the eighth year of ‡ his reign.

13 And [r] he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and [s] cut in pieces all the vessels of gold, [t] which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said.

14 And he carried away all [u] Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valor, *even* ten thousand captives, and all the [v] craftsmen and smiths: none remained save [x] the poorest sort of the people of the land.

15 And [y] he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives and his § officers, and the mighty of the land, *those* carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.

16 And all the men of might, *even* [z] seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all *that were* strong *and* apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.

17 ¶ And [a] the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, [b] his father's brother, king in his stead, and [c] changed his name to Zedekiah.

18 Zedekiah *was* twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he [d] reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* [d] Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

19 And [e] he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done.

20 For [f] through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that [g] Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

CHAP. XXV.

Jerusalem is besieged and taken; Zedekiah flees, and is made prisoner; his sons are slain, his eyes are put out, and he is carried in chains to Babylon, 1—7. The temple, palaces, and city are burned, the walls are broken down, and the remnant of the people led captive, except a small number of the poor, 8—12. The residue of the sacred vessels and treasures are carried away, 13—17. The nobles are slain at Riblah, 18—21. Gedaliah, who is left governor, being treacherously slain, the rest flee into Egypt, 22—26. After many years, Evil-merodach shows great kindness to Jehoiachin, 27—30.

AND it came to pass, [a] in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, *that* [b] Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and [c] pitched

CHAP. XXV. Ever since David's time, Jerusalem had been a celebrated place; beautiful for situation, and the joy of the whole earth; while the book of Psalms lasts, that name will sound great. In the N. T. we read much of it, when it was, as here, ripening again for its ruin. In the close of the Bible, we read of a new Jerusalem; every thing therefore that concerns Jerusalem, is worthy our regard.

V. 1—7. We left king Zedekiah in rebellion against the king of Babylon, *ch.* 24: 20. contriving and endeavoring to shake off his yoke, when he was no way able to do it, nor took the right method by making God his friend first. Here are the fatal consequences.

I. The king of Babylon's army laid siege to Jerusalem, *v.* 1. Those that by sin have provoked God to leave them, will find that *innumerable evils will compass them about.* Two years this siege lasted; at first, the army retired, for fear of the king of Egypt, Jer. 37: 11. but, finding him not so powerful as they thought, they soon returned, with a resolution not to quit the city till they had mastered it.

II. During this siege, the famine prevailed, *v.* 3. So that, for a long time, they *ate their bread by weight, and with care,* Ezek. 4: 16. Thus they were punished for their gluttony and excess, their

* Heb. *came into siege.* 25:2.
p 2 Chr. 36:10. Jer. 24:1. 29:1,2. 38: 17,18. Ez. 17:12.
† Or, *eunuchs.*
q 25:27. Jer. 52:31.
‡ *Nebuchadnezzar's.* Jer. 25:1. 52:28.
r 20:17. Is. 39:6. Jer. 20:5.
s 25:13—15. Ezra 1:7—11. Jer. 27:16 —21. 28:3,4,6. Dan. 5:2,3.
t 1 K. 7:48—50. 2 Chr. 4:7—22.
u 2 Chr. 36:9,10. Jer. 24:1—5. 52:28. Ez. 1:1,2.
v 1 Sam. 13:19—22.
x 25:12. Jer. 39:10. 40:7. 52:16. Ez. 17:14.
y See on 8.—Esth. 2:6. Jer. 22:24—28.
§ Or, *eunuchs.*
z Jer. 29:2. 52:28.
a 2 Chr. 36:10,11. Jer. 37:1. 52:1.
b 1 Chr. 3:15,16.
c 23:34. 2 Chr. 36:4.
d 23:31.
e 23:37. 2 Chr. 36:12. Jer. 24:8. 37: 38. Ez. 21:25.
f 22:17. Ex. 9:14—17. Deut. 2:30. Is. 19:11—14. 1 Cor. 1:20. 2 Thes. 2:9 —11.
g 2 Chr. 36:13. Jer. 27:12—15. 38:17 —21. Ez. 17:15—20.
a 2 Chr. 36:17. Jer. 34:2,3. 39:1. 52: 4,5. Ez. 24:1,2.
b 24:1,10. 1 Chr. 6:15. Jer. 27:3.—32: 28. 43:10. 51:34. Ez. 26:7. *Nebuchadrezzar.* Dan. 4:1. &c.
c Is. 29:3. Jer. 32:24. Ez. 4:1—8. 21: 22—24. Luke 19:43,44.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 8—20. The gradual approach of divine judgments affords sinners space for repentance, and believers leisure to prepare for properly meeting the calamity: but it only evinces the desperate obduracy and obstinacy of those, who are not deterred from their sins by all which they witness or experience.—God delights in his ordinances, so long as they prove means of grace to those who are favored with them; but He abhors them, when they degenerate into a lifeless form: and that, which to the carnal eye appears most glorious in religious worship, is often in his account a vile abomination.— External pre-eminence, in times of public calamity, often gives the precedency in suffering; but riches, dignity, authority, and superior abilities, will assuredly increase the sinner's condemnation; for to whom much is given, of him will the more be required. Let us then neither envy nor covet such precarious advantages, but be warned to improve every talent intrusted to us. SCOTT.

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destruction of the temple and city. (25:14, 15. *Ezra* 1:7—11. *Jer.* 28:3, 6. *Dan.* 5:1—4.) It is nowhere said, what became of the ark of the covenant, and the mercy-seat: but in some way these were destroyed; for all allow, that there was no ark in the temple built after the captivity; and it is not improbable, that at this time the gold of the ark, &c. was cut off, and taken away. This event took place in the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, (12) and forms a second epoch to be regarded in computing the duration of the captivity. (2 *Chr.* 36: 21. *Ezra* 1:1—4. *Dan.* 1:1, 2.)—The chief and the most useful of the people were carried to Babylon, that the land might be reduced to absolute dependence on Nebuchadnezzar. 7000 soldiers, 1000 craftsmen and smiths, and 2000 persons of superior rank, may make up the sum total, 10,000. Some learned men, however, suppose, that there were 10,000 carried captive from Jerusalem alone, besides 1,000 craftsmen and smiths; and also 7000 from the rest of the land.—Jeremiah speaks of 3,023, who seem to have been carried away the year before, out of the open country. (*Jer.* 52:24—30.) Among the rest, Ezekiel was at this time made a captive. (*Ez.* 1:1—3.) SCOTT.

(15.) *To Babylon.*] This was 630 miles from Jerusalem, says *Bunting.* ED.

Verse 17.

'Mattaniah' signifies *the gift of JEHOVAH:* 'Zedekiah,' *the righteousness of JEHOVAH:* and the king of Babylon, by giving him this name, meant either an appeal to the justice of God against him, if he violated his engagements; or to refer to the judgments, which he had heard were denounced against Jerusalem by a righteous God. SCOTT.

Verse 20.

'God was so highly displeased with this wicked people, that He permitted Zedekiah to break his faith with Nebuchadnezzar, and to rebel against him, forgetting for what cause he changed his name.' *Patrick.* (17:4. 2 *Sam.* 17:7—14. *v.* 14. 24:1, 2. 2 *Chr.* 25:14—16. *Is.* 19:11—15. *Ez.* 17:3—21. 21:25—27.) ID.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXV. V. 1—5. Jerusalem was so fortified by nature and art, that notwithstanding the enfeebled state of the inhabitants, and Nebuchadnezzar's great power and military skill, it could not be taken

against it; and they built forts against it round about.

B. C. 588. 2 And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.

3 And on [d] the ninth *day* of the *fourth* month [*] the famine prevailed in the city, and [f] there was no bread for the people of the land.

4 And [g] the city was broken up, and all the men of war [h] *fled* by night, by the way of the gate, between two walls, which *is* by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees *were* against the city round about:) [i] and *the king* went the way toward the plain.

5 And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, [j] and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him.

6 So [k] they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to [l] Riblah; and they [*] gave judgment upon him.

7 And [m] they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, [n] and † put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and [o] bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.

8 ¶ And [p] in the fifth month, on the seventh *day* of the month, which *is* [q] the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came [r] Nebuzar-adan ‡ captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem:

9 And [s] he burnt the house of the LORD, and [t] the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great *man's* house, burnt he with fire.

10 And all the army of the Chaldees, that *were with* the captain of the guard, [u] brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.

11 Now [x] the rest of the people *that were* left in the city, and the § fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carry away.

12 But the captain of the guard [y] left of the poor of the land, *to be* vine-dressers and husbandmen.

13 ¶ And [z] the [a] pillars of brass that *were* in the house of the LORD, and the [b] bases, and the brazen sea that *was* in the house of the LORD, did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon.

14 And [c] the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass, wherewith they ministered, took they away.

15 And the fire-pans, and the bowls, [d] *and* such things as *were* of gold, *in* [*] gold, and of silver, *in* silver, the captain of the guard took away.

16 The two pillars, ‖ one sea, and the bases, which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD; [*] the brass of all these vessels was without weight.

17 The height of the [f] one pillar *was* eighteen cubits, and the chapiter upon it *was* brass; and the height of the chapiter three cubits; and the wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the

fulness of bread, and *feeding themselves without fear;* at length, *there was no bread for the people of the land*, i. e. the common people, the soldiers, whereby they were weakened, and rendered unfit for service; now they ate their own children for want of food; see this foretold by one prophet, Ezek. 5: 10. and bewailed by another, Lam. 4: 3. &c. Jeremiah earnestly persuaded the king to surrender, Jer. 38: 17. but his heart was hardened, to his destruction.

III. At length, the city was taken by storm, *v.* 4. the besiegers made a breach in the wall, at which they forced their way into it; the besieged, unable any longer to defend it, endeavored to quit it, and make the best of their way; many, no doubt, were put to the sword, the victorious army being much exasperated by their obstinacy.

IV. The king, his family, and all his great men, made their escape in the night, by some secret passages which the besiegers either had not discovered, or did not keep their eye on, *v.* 4. But those as much deceive themselves, who think to escape God's judgments, as those who think to brave them; when God judges, He will overcome. Intelligence was given to the Chaldeans of the king's flight, and which way he was gone, so that they soon overtook him, *v.* 5.

1. He was brought to the king of Babylon, and tried by a council of war, for rebelling; God and man had a quarrel with him for this; see Ezek. 17: 16, &c. The king of Babylon now lay at Riblah, (between Judah and Babylon,) that he might be ready to give orders both to his court at home and his army abroad.

2. His *sons were slain before his eyes*, though children, that this doleful spectacle, the last his eyes were to behold, might leave an impression of grief and horror on his spirit as long as he lived; in slaying his sons, they showed their indignation at his falsehood, and, in effect, declared that neither he, nor any of his, were fit to be trusted, and therefore that they were not fit to live.

3. His eyes were put out; by this, two prophecies, that seemed to contradict one another, were both fulfilled. Jeremiah prophesied that Zedekiah should be brought to Babylon, Jer. 32: 5. 34: 3. Ezekiel prophesied that he should not see Babylon, Ezek. 12: 13.

4. He was *bound in fetters of brass*, and so *carried to Babylon;* this was for his greater disgrace; whereas common malefactors are laid in iron, (Ps. 105: 18.—107: 10.) he, being a prince, was bound with fetters of brass.

V. 8—21. We have reason to think the army of the Chaldeans were much enraged against the city for holding out with so much stubbornness, yet they did not therefore put all to fire and sword as soon as they had taken the city, (which is too commonly done in such cases,) but, about a month after, (comp. *v.* 8. with *v.* 3.) Nebuzar-adan was sent to complete the destruction; this space God gave them to repent, after all the foregoing days of his patience, but in vain; their hearts (for aught that appears) were still hardened, therefore execution is awarded to the utmost.

1. The city and temple are burnt, *v.* 9. It does not appear that the king of Babylon designed to send any colonies to people Jerusalem, therefore he ordered it to be laid in ashes, as a nest of rebels. At the burning of the king's house, and *the houses of the great men*, one cannot so much wonder; but that the *house of the Lord* should perish in these flames, that that holy and beautiful house should be burnt with fire, Isa. 64: 11. is very strange; that house which David prepared for, and Solomon built, at such a vast expense; that house which had the eye and heart of God perpetually upon it, 1 K. 9: 3. might not that have been snatched as a brand out of the burning? No, it must not be fire-proof against God's judgments; this stately structure must be turned into ashes, and probably the ark in it; one of the apocryphal writers does indeed tell us the prophet Jeremiah got it out, and conveyed it to a cave in mount Nebo, 2 Macc. 2: 4, 5. but that could not be, for Jeremiah was a close prisoner at that time. By

d Jer. 39:2. 52:6. Zech. 8:19.
e Lev. 26:26. Deut. 28:52,53. Lam. 4:4—10. Ez. 4:9—17. 5:10,12. 7:15. 14:21.
f Jer. 37:21. 38:2.
g Jer. 5:10. 39:2,3. 52:6,7. Ez. 33:21.
h Lev. 26:17,36. Deut. 28:25. 32:24, 25,30. Jer. 39:4—7.
i 5. Ez. 12:12.
j Is. 30:16. Jer. 24:8. 39:5. 52:8. Am. 2:14—16.
k 2 Chr. 33:11. Jer. 21:7. 34 21,22. 38:23. Lam. 4:19,20. Ez. 17:20,21. 21:25—27.
l See on 23:33.
* Heb. *spake judgment with him.*
m Gen. 21:16. 44:34. Deut. 28:34. Jer. 22:30. 39:6,7. 52:10,11.
n Jer. 32:4,5. 34:3. Ez. 12:13.
† Heb. *made blind.*
o Judg. 16:21. 2 Chr. 33:11. 36:6. Ps. 107:10,11. 149:8. Ez. 7:27. 17:16—20.
p Jer. 52:12—14. Zech. 8:19.
q 24:12.
r Jer. 39:9—14. 40:1—4. 52:12—16. Lam. 4:12.
‡ Or, *chief marshal.*
s 2 Chr. 36:19. Ps. 74:3—7. 79:1. Is. 64:11. Jer. 7:14. 26:9. Lam. 1:10. 2:7. Mic. 3:12. Luke 21:5,6. Acts 6:13,14.
t Jer. 34:22. 37:8,10. 39:8. 52:13. Am. 2:5.
u Neh. 1:3. Jer. 5 0. 39:8. 52:14.
x Jer. 15:1,2. 39:9. 52:15. Ez. 5:2. 12:15,16. 22:15,16.
§ Heb. *fallen away.*
y 24:14. Jer. 39:10 40:7. Ez. 33:24.
z 20:17. 2 Chr. 36 .8. Jer. 27:19—22. 52:17—20. Lam. 1:10.
a 1 K. 7:15,21,41. 2 Chr. 4:12,13.
b 1 K. 7:23—45. 2 Chr. 4:2—6,14—16.
c Ex. 27:3. 38:3. 1 K. 7:48—50. 2 Chr. 4:20—22. 24:14.
d Ex. 37:23. Num. 7:13,14. 1 K. 7:48—51. 2 Chr. 24:14. Ezra 1:9—11. Dan. 5:2,3.
‖ Heb. *the one sea.*
e 1 K. 7:47.
f 1 K. 7:16. Jer. 52:21—23.

till the besieged were incapacitated by famine to make any further resistance. (*Lam.* 4:10, 12.) In the Prophecy and Lamentations of Jeremiah, we shall have an opportunity of more fully considering the circumstances of this catastrophe, and indeed the whole of this compendious history. SCOTT.

Verses 6, 7.

Zedekiah left daughters at Jerusalem, who went down with Johanan to Egypt, and doubtless died there. (*Jer.* 41:10. 43 6.) IB.

(7.) *Put out the eyes.*] 'Probably to render him incapable of ascending the throne. This is done in Persia by passing a red hot copper plate before the eyes, or with the point of a dagger.' *Chardin*, in BURDER.

Verses 8—10.

Nebuzar-adan seems to have arrived at Jerusalem on the 7th day of the month, but he began to execute his commission on the 10*th*. (*Jer.* 52:12.)—This [destruction] is computed to have been 424 years, from the time when Solomon laid the foundations of the temple. SCOTT.

Verses 13—17.

(*M. R.*—1 *K.* 7:13—51. *Jer.* 52:17—23.) By this it appears, that Nebuchadnezzar did not purpose wholly to desolate the land; but by

chapiter round about, all of brass: and like unto these had the second pillar with wreathen work.

18 ¶ And the captain of the guard took [e] Seraiah the chief priest, and [h] Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the * door:

19 And out of the city he took an † officer that was set over the men of war, and [i] five men of them that‡ were in the king's presence, which were found in the city, and the § principal scribe of the host, which mustered the people of the land, and threescore men of the people of the land *that were* found in the city:

20 And Nebuzar-adan captain of the guard took these, [j] and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah.

21 And the king of Babylon smote them, and slew them at Riblah in the land of Hamath. [k] So Judah was carried away out of their land.

[*Practical Observations.*]

22 ¶ And *as for* [l] the people that remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, even over them he made [m] Gedaliah, the son of [n] Ahikam the son of Shaphan, ruler.

23 And [o] when all the captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, there came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Careah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men.

24 And Gedaliah [p] sware to them, and to their men, and said unto them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, [q] and it shall be well with you.

the burning of the temple God would show how little He cares for the external pomp of his worship, when the life and power of religion are neglected; the people trusted to the temple, as if that would protect them in their sins, Jer. 7: 4. but God, by this, lets them know that when they had profaned it, they would find it but a refuge of lies.

2. The walls of Jerusalem are demolished, *v.* 10. as if the victorious army would be revenged on them that had kept them out so long, or, at least, prevent the like opposition another time; sin unwalls a people, and takes away their defence: these walls were never repaired till Nehemiah did it.

3. The residue of the people are carried captive to Babylon, *v.* 11. Most of the inhabitants had perished by sword or famine, or had made their escape when the king did, (for it is said, *v.* 5. *His army was scattered from him,*) so that there were very few left, who, with the deserters, making in all but 832 persons, as appears, Jer. 52: 29. were carried away into captivity; only *the poor of the land were left behind, v.* 12. to till the ground, and dress the vineyards, for the Chaldeans. Sometimes poverty is a protection; they that have nothing, have nothing to lose.

4. The brazen vessels, and other appurtenances of the temple, are carried away, those of silver and gold being most of them gone before; also those two famous columns of brass, *Jachin* and *Boaz*, which signified the *strength* and *stability* of the house of God, *v.* 13. When the things signified were sinned away, what should the signs stand there for? Ahaz had profanely *cut off the borders of the vases*, and put *the brazen sea upon a pavement of stones*, 2 K. 16: 17. justly therefore are the bases themselves, and the brazen sea, delivered into the enemy's hand: it is just with God to take away his ordinances from those that profane and abuse them; that curtail and depress them; some things remained of gold and silver, *v.* 15. which were now carried off; but most of the plunder was brass, such a vast quantity of it, that it is said to be *without weight*, *v.* 16.

5. Several of the great men are slain in cold blood; Seraiah the chief priest, the father of Ezra, (Ezra 7: 1.) the second priest, who, when there was occasion, officiated for him, three door-keepers of the temple, *v.* 18. the general of the army, five privy counsellors, (afterward, they made them up seven,) Jer. 52: 25. the secretary of war, or pay-master of the army, and sixty country-gentlemen who had concealed themselves in the city; these being persons of some rank, were brought to the king of Babylon, *v.* 19, 20. and all put to death, *v.* 21. These the king of Babylon's regency looked upon as most active in opposing him; but Divine Justice, we may suppose, looked upon them as ringleaders in the idolatry and impiety punished by these desolations. This completed the calamity: *so Judah was carried away out of their land*, about 860 years after they were put in possession of it by Joshua: now the Scripture was fulfilled, Deut. 28: 36. Sin kept their fathers forty years out of Canaan, and now turned *them* out: the Lord is known by those judgments, which He executes, and makes good that word which He has spoken, Amos 3: 2. *You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.*

V. 22—29. In these verses we have,

I. The dispersion of the remaining people; the city of Jerusalem was quite laid waste; some in the land of Judah, *v.* 22. (no small favor at this time, Jer. 45: 5.) had *their lives given them for a prey.* Now see,

1. The good posture they were put into; the king of Babylon appointed Gedaliah, one of themselves, to be their governor and protector under him, a very good man, and one that would make the best of the bad, *v.* 22. his father Ahikam was one that countenanced and protected Jeremiah, when the princes had vowed his death, Jer. 26: 24. It is probable this Gedaliah, by advice of Jeremiah, had gone over to the Chaldeans, and approved himself so well, that the king of Babylon intrusted him with the government; he resided not at Jerusalem, but at Mizpah, in the land of Benjamin, a place famous in Samuel's time; thither those came, who had fled from Zedekiah, *v.* 4. and put themselves under his protection, *v.* 23. which he assured them of, if they would be patient and peaceable under the government of the king of Babylon, *v.* 24. Gedaliah, though he had not the pomp and power of a sovereign prince, yet might have been a greater blessing to them than many of their kings had been, especially having such a privy-counsellor as Jeremiah, who was now with them and interested himself in their affairs, Jer. 40: 5, 6.

2. The fatal breach made on them, soon afterward, by the death of Gedaliah, within two months after he entered on his government. The utter extirpation of the Jews, for the present, was determined, therefore it is in vain for them to think of taking root again; the whole land must be plucked up, Jer. 45: 4. yet this hopeful settlement is dashed to pieces, not by the Chaldeans, but by some of themselves: the things of their peace were so hidden from their eyes, that they knew not when they were well off, nor would believe when told. (1.) They had a good governor of their own, and him they slew, out of spite to the Chaldeans, because he was appointed by Nebuchadnezzar, *v.* 25. Ishmael, of the royal family, envying Gedaliah's advancement, and the happy settlement of the people under him, though he could not propose to set up himself, resolved to ruin him, and basely slew him and all his friends, both Jews and Chaldeans: Nebuchadnezzar would not, could not, have been

[e] Jer. 52:25.
‡ Heb. *saw the king's face.* Esth. 1:14.
§ Or, *scribe of the captain of the host.*
[j] Jer. 52:26,27. Lam. 4:16.
[k] 17:20. 23:27. Lev. 26:33—35. Deut. 4:26. 28:36,64. Jer. 24:9,10. 25:9—11. Am. 5:27.
[l] Jer. 40:5,6.
[m] 25. Jer. 39:14. 41:2.
[n] 22:12. 2 Chr. 34:20. Jer. 26:24.
[o] Jer. 40:7,8,11,12.
[p] 2 Sam. 14:11. 19:23. Jer. 40:9,10. Ez. 33:24—29.
[q] Jer. 40:9. 42:6.

[g] 1 Chr. 6:14. Ezra 7:1. Jer. 52:24.
[h] Jer. 21:1. 29:25,29.
* Heb. *threshold.*
† Or, *eunuch.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—21. If repeated warnings and afflictions leave the sinner's heart more obdurate than before, it is an evidence that his ruin is at hand. (*Prov.* 29:1.)—If rebellion against earthly princes deserve penalties so severe, as by common consent have, in all ages and nations, been inflicted on those who were guilty of that crime: who can estimate what or how much punishment is due to rebellion against our Creator, Benefactor, and Sovereign!—Surely no sight can be so distressing, as the misery of our children, when occasioned by our own misconduct!—God over-rules, and imperceptibly guides, even the anger and the resentment of men, to execute his righteous purposes for his own glory: and as He 'spared not the angels, that sinned;' as He has doomed the whole race of fallen men to the grave, and all unbelievers to hell; and as 'He spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all;' we need not wonder at any desolation or miseries which, for sin, He may see good to bring on guilty nations and churches. SCOTT.

destroying Jerusalem to deprive the nation of the power of resistance, and so to continue in it a feeble company of men to cultivate the earth. (24:6—16. *Ezra* 1:7—11. *Hag.* 2:6—9.) SCOTT.

Verses 18—21.

M. R.—Five. (19) *Seven* men are mentioned by Jeremiah; (*Jer.* 52: 24—27.) but perhaps five were of superior rank to the others; or were more distinguished as the favorites and counsellors of Zedekiah. ID.

(21.) Comp. v. 9. 'Solomon's temple stood 424 yrs. 3 mos. and 8 days. Judah was carried away, 468 yrs. after the beginning of the reign of David, 388 from the secession of the 10 tribes, and 134 yrs. from the destruction of the 10 tribes.' USHER.

Verses 22—26.

Nebuchadnezzar intended to preserve some inhabitants in the land; but it was the Lord's purpose that it should be desolated. (12. *Jer.*

25 But it came to pass [r] in the seventh month, that [s] Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed * royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah.

B. C. 562. 26 And [t] all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose, and came to Egypt: for they were afraid of the Chaldees.

27 ¶ And [u] it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth *day* of the month, *that* Evil-merodach [x] king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, did [y] lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison;

28 And he spake † kindly to him, and set his throne above [z] the throne of the kings that *were* with him in Babylon;

29 And [a] changed his prison-garments: and [b] he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life.

30 And his allowance *was* a continual allowance given him of the king, [c] a daily rate for every day, [d] all the days of his life.

a more mischievous enemy to their peace, than this degenerate branch of the house of David was. (2.) They were as yet in their own good land, but they forsook it, and went to Egypt for fear of the Chaldees, *v.* 26. The Chaldeans had reason enough to be offended at the murder of Gedaliah; but if those, that remained, had humbly remonstrated, alleging that it was only the act of Ishmael and his party, we may suppose they who were innocent of it, nay, who suffered greatly by it, would not have been punished for it; but, under pretence of this apprehension, contrary to the counsel of Jeremiah, they all went to Egypt, where it is probable they mixed with the Egyptians by degrees, and were never heard of more as Israelites. Thus was there a full end made of them by their own folly and disobedience, and Egypt had the last of them, that the last verse of that chapter of threatenings might be fulfilled, after all the rest, Deut. 28: 68. *The Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again.* These events are more largely related by the prophet Jeremiah, *ch.* 40. to *ch.* 45. which scenes he was doomed to behold, and in which he bare a melancholy part.

II. The reviving of the captive prince; of Zedekiah we hear no more, after he was carried blind to Babylon; it is probable he did not live long, but that when he died, he was buried with some marks of honor, Jer. 34: 5. Of Jehoiachin, or Jeconiah, who surrendered himself, *ch.* 24: 12. we are here told, that as soon as Evil-merodach came to the crown, on the death of his father Nebuchadnezzar, he released him out of prison, (where he had lain 37 years, and was now 55 years old,) *spake kindly unto him*, paid more respect to him than to any other of the kings his father had left in captivity, *v.* 28. gave him princely clothing instead of his prison-garments, maintained him in his own palace, *v.* 29. and allowed him a pension for himself and his family, in some measure corresponding to his rank, *a daily rate for every day as long as he lived.* The most miserable know not what blessed turn Providence may yet give to their affairs, nor what comforts they are reserved for, *according to the days wherein they have been afflicted*, Ps. 90: 15. The Jews say, that this Evil-merodach had been himself imprisoned by his own father, when he returned from his madness, for some mismanagement at that time, and that in prison he contracted a friendship with Jehoiachin, in consequence of which, as soon as he had it in his power, he showed him this kindness as a sufferer, as a fellow sufferer. Some suggest, that Evil-merodach had learned from Daniel and his fellows the principles of the true religion, and was well affected to them, and, on that account, favored Jehoiachin.

Consider this as a kind dispensation of Providence, for the encouragement of the Jews in captivity, and the support of their faith and hope concerning their enlargement in due time; this happened just about the midnight of their captivity; 36 of the 70 years were now past, and almost as many were yet behind; and now to see their king thus advanced, would be a comfortable earnest to them of their own release in due time, in the set time: *unto the upright there* thus *ariseth light in the darkness;* when therefore we are perplexed, let us not be in despair.

r Jer. 41:16—18. 42:14—22. 43:5—7.
u Jer. 24:5,6. 52:31—34.
x Prov. 21:1.
y Gen. 40:13,20.
† Heb. *good things with him.*
z Jer. 27:6—11. Dan. 2:37. 5:18,19.
a 24:12. Gen. 41:14,42. Esth. 4:4. 8:15. Is. 61:3. Zech. 3:4. Luke 15:22.
b 2 Sam. 9:7.
c Neh. 11:23. 12:47. Dan. 1:5. Matt. 6:11. Luke 11:3. Acts 6:1.
d Gen. 45:15,16.
s Jer. 40:15,16. 41:1—15.
* Heb. *of the kingdom.* 11:1.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 22—30. The secret working of Providence disappoints the politic or humane purposes of such, as purpose to spare those whom God intends to destroy: and, while some are left to their ungoverned passions, and others to their groundless fears and infatuated devices, 'His counsel shall stand, and He will do all his pleasure.'—No state of misery on earth can be called absolutely hopeless or comfortless. In hell alone this blackness of darkness is to be found for ever.—The believer in this world is, as it were, imprisoned with sins, temptations, and tribulations, sometimes for many a tedious year: but death, as the servant of Jesus Christ, comes for his enlargement. Then, the prison-door is opened, his fetters are loosed, his prison garments changed for the robes of salvation and glory; his head is lifted up, and his throne advanced above the chief of the kings of the earth; and he shall be eternally feasted on the fulness of joy, to be found in the presence and favor of the Almighty. Even here, the Savior grants to the trembling, distressed, and enslaved sinner, who trusts in Him, a blessed release from condemnation and bondage: bestows on him liberty, change of raiment, royal immunities, and heavenly provisions, day by day; intended as earnests and foretastes of the 'pleasures, at his right hand, for evermore.' In short, sin alone can hurt us, and Jesus alone can do good to sinners. SCOTT.

25:8—10.) The small numbers, in all the accounts of these events, lead to a most melancholy reflection on the multitudes who must have previously perished, and been driven into other lands. SCOTT.

Vs. 27—30. God had foretold, that the captives at Babylon would be more favored, than those who remained at Jerusalem: and thus Jehoiachin was at length more favored than Zedekiah. (*Jer.* 24:)—As Evil-merodach reigned but 2 years, probably Jehoiachin did not live long after this. (*Ezra* 1:1i—4.' SCOTT.

(27.) '*Evil* means *foolish*, and was probably prefixed to his proper name (Merodach) because he was profligate and wicked.' PRIDEAUX.

BIBLE CHRONOLOGY, (FROM THE MONARCHY TO THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM,) AFTER HALES.

Continued from vol. 1. p. 880.

5TH PERIOD. From the REGAL STATE to the REVOLT, 120 yrs.			6TH PER. From REVOLT to DESTR. of JERUSALEM, 404 yrs. *Kings of Judah.*		
1. Saul—(Samuel Judge jointly, 38 yrs.)	40 y.	B. C. 1110	1. Rehoboam	17	B. C. 990
—— defeats the Ammonites		1110	2. Abijah	3	973
—— his first offence		1108	3. Asa	41	970
Jonathan defeats the Philistines		1106	4. Jehosaphat	25	929
Saul's second offence — David born		1100	5. Jehoram or Joram	8	904
David kills Goliah		1080	6. Ahaziah	1	896
—— marries Michal		1075	7. Queen Athaliah	6	895
—— first flight to Gath		1074	8. Joash or Jehoash	40	889
—— second flight to Gath		1071	9. Amaziah	29	849
Saul's third offence		1070	Interregnum	11	820
2. David	40	1070	10. Uzziah or Azariah	52	809
—— takes Jebus		1063	11. Jotham	16	757
Philistine war		1061	12. Ahaz	16	741
Ark brought home		1060	13. Hezekiah	29	725
Nathan's prophecy of MESSIAH, Son of David		1055	14. Manasseh	55	696
David's first offence		1052	15. Amon	2	641
Solomon born		1050	16. Josiah	31	639
Absalom's and Sheba's rebellions		1036	17. Jehoahaz, 3 months,		
David's second offence		1032	18. Jehoiakim	11	608
Adonijah's rebellion		1030	19. Jehoiachin, Jechoniah, or Coniah, 3 m.		
3. Solomon	40	1030	20. Zedekiah	11	597
Temple begun		1027		404	
—— finished		1020	Jerusalem destroyed		586
Tadmor built		1006			
Temples on the Mt. of Corruption	——	996	Evil Merodach succeeds Nebuchadnezzar	561	
The Revolt of the Ten Tribes	120	980	*To be Continued.*		

AN EXPOSITION,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS AND NOTES,

UPON THE FIRST BOOK OF

CHRONICLES.

In common things, repetition is thought needless and nauseous; but in sacred things, *precept must be upon precept, and line upon line. To me*, says the apostle, *to write the same things is not grievous, but for you it is safe*, Phil. 3: 1. These books of Chronicles are, in a great measure, repetition; so are much of the second and third of the four evangelists: yet no tautologies, either here or there, no *vain repetitions*. We may be ready to think, that of all the books of holy Scripture, we could best spare these two of Chronicles. Perhaps we might, yet we could very ill spare them; for many most excellent useful things are in them, which we find not elsewhere. And as for what we find here, which we have already met with, 1. It might be of great use to those who lived when these books were first published, before the canon of the O. T. was completed, and its parts put together; for it would remind them of what was more fully related in the other books. Abstracts, abridgments, and references, are of use in divinity as well as law. That, perhaps, may not be said in vain, which yet has been said before. 2. It is still of use, that *out of the mouth of two witnesses, every word may be established*, and that, being inculcated, i may be remembered. HENRY.

'They are not to be considered merely as an abridgment of other histories with additions; but as books written with a particular view: in consistency with which, the author sometimes disregards important particulars in those accounts from which he might have compiled his work, and adheres to the design proposed; which seems to have been [among other things] to furnish a genealogical sketch of the 12 tribes, deduced from the earliest times, in order to point out those peculiarities, which were necessary to distinguish the mixed multitude, that returned from Babylon [for restoring inheritances]; to ascertain the lineage of Judah; and to reestablish them on their ancient footing.....These genealogical tables must have been highly important among the Jews. Many advantages were often dependent upon their accuracy; and those who could not prove their descent were deprived of many privileges. A regular and unpolluted lineage was especially necessary to those who aspired to the priesthood; and such as could not produce it were deemed incapable of admission to that high office.' GRAY, and HEWLETT.

The penman of these books is supposed to be Ezra, Ezra, 7: 6. It is a groundless story of that apocryphal writer, 2 Esdr. 14: 21, &c. that, all the law being burnt, Ezra was divinely inspired to write it all over again, which yet might take rise from the books of Chronicles, where we find, though not all the same story repeated, yet the names of all who were subjects of that story. These books are called in Heb. *words of days;* journals, or annals, because, by divine direction, collected out of some public and authentic records. The collection was made after the captivity, yet the language of the originals, written before, is sometimes retained, as 2 Chr. 5: 9. *There it is unto this day;* which must have been written before the destruction of the temple. The Septuagint calls it a book *Paraleipomenōn*, of *things left*, or overlooked, by the preceding historians; and several such things are in it: that nothing might be lost. In this first book, we have,

I. A collection of sacred genealogies, from Adam to David:—none of those the apostle calls *endless*, but we have their use and end in Christ, *ch.* 1—9. Divers little passages of history are here inserted, which we have not before. II. A repetition of the history of the translation of the kingdom from Saul to David, and of the triumph of David's reign, with large additions, *ch.* 10—21. III. An original account of the settlement David made of the ecclesiastical affairs, and his preparations for building the temple, *ch.* 22—29. These are *words of days*, of the oldest days, of the best days, of the Old Testament church. The reigns of kings, and dates of kingdoms, as well as the lives of common persons, are reckoned by *days;* for a little time often gives a great turn, and yet all time is nothing to eternity. HENRY.

It is generally agreed, that the books of the Chronicles were compiled by Ezra, after the Babylonish captivity; and that they consist of extracts from the public records of the Jews, and the writings of preceding prophets. Anciently, the whole formed but one book in the Hebrew Bible; but the Septuagint divide it into two, and call them *The Books of things left out:* yet this is less proper than the original name; for there are many *repetitions* of facts before recorded, as well as further historical information. These repetitions, however, must not be deemed superfluous; for most, in some degree, and some, exceedingly, elucidate the preceding history: and the few, that seem not wanted for this, are suited to connect the whole into one narration, without referring to other books; which would be peculiarly useful, when copies of the whole Scriptures were both scarce and expensive.—In the genealogies are several *literal* or *verbal* variations, from those in other parts of Scripture: but it is evident, that many persons had more than one name, and were called by one or the other indiscriminately; and the spelling and pronunciation, in most languages, change considerably in a course of years. Some variations in the numerals have already been noted; and we are sometimes constrained to allow, that, probably, a trivial error of the transcriber has taken place: but there is no variation, which in the least interferes with our faith or practice, or weakens the external or internal evidence of the divine inspiration of the Scripture in general, or of these books in particular.—It was evidently a principal design of the sacred writer, in these records, to bring into one view, and comprise in a narrow compass, whatever immediately related to the nation of Israel, to each of the twelve tribes, and to the family of David, with reference to the settlement in the land after the captivity; and to ascertain the descent of the promised Messiah.—Many things might be very plain and useful to the ancient Jews, which appear obscure and uninteresting to us. Should it be allowed, that a small part of the Scripture was profitable to the church in some ages and places, but not at all in others, it would be no impeachment of the divine wisdom and goodness: and if we cannot understand or get any benefit from certain portions; it is more reasonable to blame our own dulness, than, so much as in thought, to censure them as useless.—The sacred writer seems to have dwelt on [the subjects of the temple and priesthood] the more fully, in order to stir up a holy emulation in his contemporaries, in restoring the worship at the temple to its ancient order and purity. So that in this book, 'the man after God's own heart' shines much brighter, than in 2 Sam. and the beginning of 1 Kings.—The genealogies, given by Matthew and Luke, may be supposed to refer in many respects to those in this book. And when it is said that Zacharias was 'of the course of Abia, the reference is still more indisputable. (24: 10. *Luke* 1: 5.)—The prophecies contained in it coincide indeed with those in 2 Sam. and in Ps.; and therefore cannot be adduced as full proofs of its divine inspiration: but the sentiments which pervade it are perfectly scriptural; and we are sure it formed a part of the Jewish Scriptures, when our Savior and his apostles appealed to them, as 'The Oracles of God.' SCOTT.

CHAP. I.

The genealogy, from Adam to Noah and his sons, 1—4. The sons of Japheth, 5—7: of Ham, 8—16; and of Shem, 17—23. A genealogy from Shem to Abraham and his sons, 24—28. The sons of Ishmael, 29—31: and of Keturah, 32, 33. The posterity of Abraham by Esau, 34—37. The sons of Seir, 38—42. The kings and dukes of Edom, 43—54.

ADAM, [a] Sheth, [b] Enosh,
2 [c] Kenan, [d] Mahalaleel, [e] Jered,
3 [f] Henoch, [g] Methuselah, [h] Lamech,
4 [i] Noah, [k] Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

B. C. 2348. 5 ¶ The [l] sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras.

6 And the sons of Gomer; [m] Ashchenaz, and * Riphath, and Togarmah.

7 And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and [n] Tarshish, [o] Kittim, and † Dodanim.

8 ¶ The [p] sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, [q] Put, and Canaan.

9 And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabta, and Raamah, and Sabtecha: and the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan.

10 And [r] Cush begat Nimrod; he began to be mighty upon the earth.

11 And [s] Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim,

12 And Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (of whom came the Philistines,) and [t] Caphthorim.

13 And [u] Canaan begat Zidon his first-born, and [x] Heth,

14 The [y] Jebusite also, and [z] the Amorite, and [a] the Girgashite,

15 And [b] the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite,

16 And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the [c] Hamathite.

17 ¶ The [d] sons of Shem; [e] Elam, and [f] Asshur, and Arphaxad, and [g] Lud, and [h] Aram, and Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and [i] Meshech.

18 And Arphaxad begat [j] Shelah, and Shelah begat Eber.

19 And unto [k] Eber were born two sons: the name of the one *was* ‡ Peleg, (because in his days the earth was divided,) and his brother's name *was* Joktan.

20 And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and [l] Hazermaveth, and Jerah,

21 Hadoram also, and Uzal, and Diklah,

22 And [m] Ebal, and Abimael, and Sheba,

23 And [n] Ophir, and [o] Havilah, and Jobab. All these *were* the sons of Joktan.

CHAP. I. This ch. and many that follow it, repeat the genealogies we have hitherto met with in the sacred history, and put them all together, with considerable additions. We may be tempted to think it had been well if they had not been written, because, when they come to be compared with other parallel places, there are differences to be found, which we can scarcely accommodate to our satisfaction; yet we must not therefore stumble at the word, but bless God that the things necessary to salvation are plain enough. And since the wise God has thought fit to write these things to us, we should not pass them over unread. All Scripture is profitable, though not all *alike* profitable; and we may take occasion for good thoughts and meditations even from those parts of Scripture that do not abound, as much as other parts do, with profitable remarks. These genealogies, 1. Were then of great use, when first preserved, after the Jews' return from Babylon; as they would help them to preserve the distinction of their tribes and families, even of some of the tribes that were carried captive into Assyria. Perhaps it might invite the Jews to study the sacred writings which had been neglected, to find the names of their ancestors, and the rise of their families in them. 2. They are still of some use to illustrate the scripture-story, and especially to clear the pedigrees of the Messiah, that it might appear that our blessed Savior was, according to the prophecies which went before of Him, the Son of David, the son of Judah, the son of Abraham, the son of Adam. And now that *He* is come for whose sake these registers were preserved, the Jews since have so lost all their genealogies, that even that of the priests, the most sacred of all, is forgotten, and they know not of any one man in the world, that can prove himself of the house of Aaron. When the building is reared, the scaffolds are removed. When the promised Seed is come, the line that was to lead to Him, is broken off.

In this ch. we have an abstract of all the genealogies in the book of Genesis, till we come to Jacob.

V. 1—27. This paragraph has *Adam* for its first word, and *Abraham* for its last. Between the creation of the former, and the birth of the latter, were 2,000 years; almost the one half of which time Adam himself lived. We are all, by nature, the seed of Adam, branches of that wild olive. Let us see to it, that, by faith, we become the seed of Abraham, (Rom. 4: 11, 12.) that we be planted into the good olive, and partake of its root and fatness.

I. The first four vs. of this paragraph, and the last four, linked together by Shem, *v.* 4, 24. contain the sacred line of Christ from Adam to Abraham, and are inserted in his pedigree; the order, Luke 3: 34—38. ascends, here it descends. This genealogy proves the falsehood of that reproach, *As for this man, we know not whence he is.* Patrick well observes here, that a genealogy being to be drawn of the families of the Jews, this appears as the peculiar glory of the Jewish nation, that they alone were able to derive their pedigree from the first man God created, which no other nation pretended to, but abused themselves and their posterity with fabulous accounts of their originals; the Arcadians fancying they were before the moon: the people of Thessaly that they sprang from stones; the Athenians that they grew out of the earth; much like the vain imaginations some of the philosophers had of the origin of the universe. The account the holy Scripture gives both of the creation of the world and the rise of nations, carries with it as clear evidences of its own truth, as those idle traditions do of their own vanity and falsehoods.

II. All the vs. between, repeat the account of the replenishing of the earth by the sons of Noah after the flood. 1. *Strangers to the church*, the sons of Japhet, who were planted in the isles of the Gentiles, those western parts of the world, the countries of Europe. Of these he gives a short account, *v.* 5—7. because with these the Jews had hitherto had little or no dealings. 2. *Enemies to the church*, the sons of Ham, who moved southwards towards Africa, and those parts of Asia which lay that way. Nimrod son of Cush began to be an oppressor, probably, to the people of God in his time. But Mizraim, from whom came the Egyptians, and Canaan, from whom came the Canaanites, are both of them names of great note in the Jewish story; for with their descendants, the Israel of God had severe struggles

a Gen. 4:25,26. 5:3,8. Luke 3:38. *Seth.*
b Gen. 5:9—11. Luke 3:38. *Enos.*
c Gen. 5:12—14. Luke 3:37. *Cainan.*
d Gen. 5:15—17. Luke 3:37. *Maleleel.*
e Gen. 5:18—20. Luke 3:37. *Jared.*
f Gen. 5:21—24. Heb. 11:5. Jude 14. *Enoch.*
g Gen. 5:25—27. Luke 3:37. *Mathusala.*
h Gen. 5:28—31. Luke 3:36.
i Gen. 5:32. 6:3,9. 7:1. 9:29. Is. 54: 9,10. Ez. 14:14. Matt. 24:37,38. Luke 3:36. 17:26,27. *Noe.* Heb. 11:7. 2 Pet. 2:5.
k Gen. 5:32. 6:10. 9:18.
l Gen. 10:1—5. Ez. 27:13. 38:2,3,6. 39: 1.
m Gen. 10:3. *Ashkenas.*
* Or, *Diphath*, as in some copies.
n Ps. 72:10. Is. 66:19.
o Num. 24:24. Is. 23:1,12. Jer. 2:10. Ez. 27:6. Dan. 11:30. *Chittim.*
† Or, *Rodanim*, as in some copies.
p Gen. 10:6,7.
q Gen. 10:6. *Phut.*
r Gen. 10:8—12. Mic. 5:6.
s Gen. 10:13,14.
t Deut. 2:23. Jer. 47:4. Am. 9:7.
u Gen. 9:22,25,26. 10:15—19. *Sidon.*
x Gen. 23:3,5,20. 27:46. 49:30—32. Ex. 23:28. Josh. 9:1. 2 Sam. 11:6.
y Gen. 15:21. Ex. 33:2. 34:11. Judg. 1:21. 19:11. 2 Sam. 24:16. Zech. 9:7.
z Gen. 48:22. Num. 21:21—32. Deut. 20:17. Josh. 3:10. 24:15. 2 Sam. 21: 2. 2 K. 21:11. Am. 2:9.
a Gen. 15:21. Deut. 7:1. Josh. 3:10. Neh. 9:8.
b Ex. 3:8,17. 13:5. 1 K. 9:20.
c Num. 34:8. 1 K. 8:65.
d Gen. 10:22—32. 11:10.
e Gen. 14:1. Is. 11:11. 21:2. 22:6. Jer. 25:25. Ez. 32:24. Dan. 8:2.
f Num. 24:22—24. Ezra 4:2. Ps. 83:8. *Assur.* Ez. 27:23. 32:22. Hos. 14:3.
g Is. 66:19. Ez. 27:10.
h Num. 23:7.
i Gen. 10:23. *Mash.*
j Gen. 10:24. 11:12—15. *Salah.*
k Gen. 10:21,25. 11:16,17. Num. 24: 24.
‡ That is, *Division.*
l Gen. 10:26,27. *Hazarmaveth.*
m Gen. 10:28. *Obal.*
n Gen. 10:29. 1 K. 9:28. 10:11. 1 Chr. 29:4. Job 22:24. Ps. 45:9. Is. 13:12.
o Gen. 2:11. 25:18. 1 Sam. 15:7.

NOTES.

CHAP. I. V. 1—4. (*M. R.*) 'No book in the world shows the original propagation of mankind, but only the holy Scriptures. They who were ignorant of them, having nothing of true antiquity, devised senseless fables of their descent, they knew not how, nor from whom.' *Patrick.* SCOTT. The author of 'Helon's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem' suggests, probably from other German writers, that Cain, seceding from Adam's paternal authority, falsified through pride the account of creation, gave *himself* out as not only the *first man*, but the Creator, God, and so was worshipped by those who called themselves '*sons of men*' in distinction from the Adamites, who were 'called by the name of the Lord' Gen. 4:26. 6:2, 4. and 'sons of God.' ED.

(*L.*) 'It is allowed that many errors have obtained in this catalogue, though the author exhibits from the Heb. archives a more complete catalogue of some tribes and families than Moses; some names too were added to them, long after the time of Ezra.' BOOTHROYD.

Verse 7.

Kittim and Dodanim.] 'The Sept. reads *Rhodioi*. These and other words in this list of similar terminations forming the Heb. plural, are names, not of individuals, says *Geddes*, but of nations. And it is to be remarked, once for all, that throughout the Heb. genealogies, the term "father," "son," "begat," and "begat other," do not always denote immediate procreation, or filiation; but extend to any distant progenitor. Thus, Laban is called "the son of Nahor," Gen. 29:5. though only his "grandson" by Bethuel. Similar instances frequently occur in the SS.' HEWLETT.

24 ¶ [p] Shem, Arphaxad, [q] Shelah,
25 [r] Eber, [s] Peleg, [t] Reu,
26 [u] Serug, [x] Nahor, [y] Terah,
27 [z] Abram, the same *is* Abraham.

28 ¶ The sons of Abraham; [a] Isaac, and [b] Ishmael.

29 ¶ These *are* their generations: [c] The firstborn of Ishmael, [d] Nebaioth; then [e] Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam,
30 Mishma, and [f] Dumah, Massa, * Hadad, and Tema,
31 Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These are the sons of Ishmael.

B. C. 1853. 32 ¶ Now [g] the sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine: she bare Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and [h] Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And the sons of Jokshan; [i] Sheba, and [j] Dedan.

33 And the sons of Midian; [k] Ephah, and Epher, and Henoch, and Abida, and Eldaah. All these *are* the sons of Keturah.

34 ¶ And [l] Abraham begat Isaac. [m] The sons of Isaac; Esau, and [n] Israel.

35 The [o] sons of Esau; Eliphaz, Reuel, and Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah.

36 The sons of Eliphaz; [p] Teman, and Omar, [q] Zephi, and Gatan, Kenaz, and Timna, and Amalek.

37 The sons of Reuel; Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

38 ¶ And [r] the sons of Seir; Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah, and Dishon, and [s] Ezar, and Dishan.

39 And the sons of Lotan; [t] Hori, and [u] Homam: and Timna *was* Lotan's sister.

40 The sons of Shobal; [v] Alian, and Manahath, and Ebal, Shephi, and Onam. And the sons of Zibeon; [x] Aiah, and Anah,

41 The sons of Anah; [y] Dishon. And the sons of Dishon; [z] Amram, and Eshban, and Ithran, and Cheran.

42 The sons of Ezer; Bilhan, and [a] Zavan, *and* Jakan. The sons of Dishan; [b] Uz, and Aran.

43 ¶ Now these *are* [c] the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before *any* king reigned over the children of Israel; Bela the son of Beor: and the name of his city *was* Dinhabah.

44 And when Bela was dead, Jobab the son of Zerah of [d] Bozrah reigned in his stead.

45 And when Jobab was dead, Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his stead.

46 And when Husham was dead, Hadad the son of Bedad, which smote Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his stead: and the name of his city *was* Avith.

47 And when Hadad was dead, Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead.

48 And when Samlah was dead, [e] Shaul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his stead.

49 And when Shaul was dead, Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead.

50 And when Baal-hanan was dead, Hadad reigned in his stead: and the name of his city *was* [f] Pai; and his wife's name *was* Mehetabel the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.

51 Hadad died also. And the dukes of Edom were; duke Timnah, duke [g] Aliah, duke Jetheth,

52 Duke Aholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon,

53 Duke Kenaz, duke

p Gen. 11:10—26.
q Luke 3:35. *Sala.*
r Luke 3:35. *Heber.*
s Luke 3:35. *Phalec.*
t Luke 3:35. *Ragau.*
u Luke 3:35. *Saruch.*
x Luke 3:34. *Nachor.*
y Luke 3:34. *Thara.*
z Gen. 11:27—32. 17:5. Josh. 24:2. Neh. 9:7.
a Gen. 17:19—21. 21:3—5,12.
b Gen. 16:11—16. 21:9,10.
c Gen. 25:12—16.
d Gen. 28:9. *Nebajoth.* Is. 60:7.
e Ps. 120:4. Cant. 1:5. Is. 21:17.
f Is. 21:11.
* Or, *Hadar.* Gen. 25:15.
g Gen. 25:1—4.
h Gen. 37:28. Ex. 2:15,16. Num. 22:4—7. 25:6. 31:2. Judg. 6:1—6.
i 1 K. 10:1. Job 6:19. Ps. 72:10,15. Is. 60:6.
j Is. 21:13. Jer. 25:23. 49:8. Ez. 25:13. 27:20.
k Is. 60:6.
l Gen. 21:2,3. Matt. 1:2. Luke 3:34. Acts 7:8.
m Gen. 25:24—28. Mal. 1:2—4. Rom. 9:10—13.
n Gen. 32:28.
o Gen. 36:4,5,9,10.
p 53. Gen. 36:11—15. Jer. 49:7,20. Am. 1:12. Ob. 9. Hab. 3:3.
q Gen. 36:15. *Zepho.*
r Gen. 36:20,29,30.
s Gen. 36:21. *Ezer.*
t Deut. 2:12,22.
u Gen. 36:22. *Heman.*
v Gen. 36:23. *Alvan—Shepho.*
x Gen. 36:24. *Ajah.*
y Gen. 36:25.
z Gen. 36:26. *Hemdan.*
a Gen. 36:27. *Zaavan—Achan.*
b Gen. 36:28. Lam. 4:21.
c Gen. 36:31—39. 49:10. Num. 24:17—19.
d Is. 34:6. 63:1. Jer. 49:13. Am. 1:12. Mic. 2:12.
e Gen. 36:37. *Saul.*
f Gen. 36:39. *Pau.*
g Gen. 36:40. *Aliah.*

I. We shall have little to say of the *Ishmaelites;* their case was to represent that of the unbelieving Jews, who were rejected, (Gal. 4: 22, &c.) therefore little notice is taken of that nation. Ishmael's 12 sons are just named here, (*v.* 29—31.) to show the performance of the promise God made to Abraham, in answer to his prayer for him, that, for Abraham's sake, he should become a great nation, and particularly that he should beget 12 princes, Gen. 17: 20.

II. The *Midianites* who descended from Abraham's children by Keturah, were *children of the east,* (probably Job was one of them,) and were dismissed from Isaac, the heir of the promise, Gen. 25: 6. therefore they are only named here, *v.* 32. The sons of Jokshan, the son of Keturah, are named also, and the sons of Midian, *v.* 32, 33. who became most eminent, and perhaps gave denomination to all these families, as Judah to the Jews.

III. The *Edomites* had an inveterate enmity to God's Israel; yet, because descended from Esau the son of Isaac, we have here an account of their families, and the names of some of their famous men, *v.* 35. to the end. Some slight differences there are between some of the names here, and as we had them, Gen. 36. whence this whole account is taken. Three or four names written with a *Vau* there, are written with a *Jod* here; probably, the pronunciation being altered, as is usual in other languages. We now write many words very differently from what they were written but 200 years ago.

Let us take occasion, from the reading of these genealogies, to think, 1. Of the multitudes that *them that are his.* But Israel was a chosen nation, elect in type; and no other nation, in its national capacity, was so dignified and privileged as the Jewish. This holy nation is the subject of the sacred story; therefore we are next to shake off all the seed of Abraham, but the posterity of Jacob only, which were all incorporated into one nation, and joined to the Lord, while the other descendants from Abraham, for aught that appears, were estranged both from God, and from one another.

V. 28—54. All nations, but the seed of Abraham, are already shaken off from this genealogy. *The Lord's portion is his people,* them He keeps account of; but strangers, He beholds afar off. Not that therefore no particular persons of any other nation, but the seed of Abraham, found favor with God. It was a truth before Peter perceived it, *that in every nation he that feared God, and wrought righteousness, was accepted of Him.* Multitudes will be brought to heaven out of *all nations,* (Rev. 7: 9.) and we are willing to hope there were many, very many, good people in the world, out of the pale of God's covenant of peculiarity with Abraham, whose names were in the book of life, though not descended from any of the following families written in this book. *The Lord knows*

Verse 24—27.

(*M. R.*) 'Shem . . . was the most eminent of Noah's sons, whom he solemnly blessed; the Messiah being to spring from him.' (*Gen.* 9: 28.) *Patrick.* SCOTT.

Verse 36.

Timna, and Amalek.] Timna was mother of Amalek. (*Gen.* 36:12.) to mean, *Of Timna, Amalek.* (39) The words here, therefore, seem concubine to Eliphaz, and SCOTT.

Teman, duke Mibzar,
54 Duke Magdiel, duke Iram. [h] These *are* the dukes of Edom.

CHAP. II.

The sons of Israel, 1, 2: of Judah, 3—12: of Jesse, 13—17: of Caleb, the son of Hezron, 18—20: of Hezron, by the daughter of Machir, 21—24: and of Jerahmeel, Hezron's son, 25—33: The posterity of Sheshan, by his daughter, 34—41. Another branch of Caleb's posterity, 42—49. The sons of Caleb, the son of Hur, 50—54. The families of the Kenites, 55.

THESE *are* the sons of [*] Israel; [b] Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun,

2 Dan, Joseph, and Benjamin; Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

3 The sons of Judah; [c] Er, and Onan, and Shelah: *which* three were born unto him of the daughter of Shua, the Canaanitess. And Er the first-born of Judah was evil in the sight of the LORD, and he slew him.

4 And [d] Tamar his daughter-in-law bare him [e] Pharez and [f] Zerah. All the sons of Judah *were* five.

5 The sons of Pharez; [g] Hezron, and Hamul.

6 And the sons of Zerah; [h] Zimri, and [i] Ethan, and Heman, and Calcol, and Dara: five of them in all.

7 And the sons of [k] Carmi; [l] Achar the troubler of Israel, who transgressed in the thing [m] accursed.

8 And the sons of Ethan; Azariah.

9 The sons also of Hezron, that were born unto him; [n] Jerahmeel, and [o] Ram, and [p] Chelubai.

10 And Ram begat [q] Amminadab, and Amminadab begat [r] Nahshon, prince of the children of Judah;

11 And Nahshon begat [s] Salma, and Salma begat Boaz,

12 And Boaz begat Obed, and Obed begat [t] Jesse,

13 ¶ And Jesse begat [u] his first-born [v] Eliab, and Abinadab the second, and [x] Shimma the third,

B. C. 1090.] 14 Nethaneel the fourth, Raddai the fifth,

15 Ozem the sixth, [y] David the seventh:

16 Whose sisters *were* Zeruiah, and Abigail. And [z] the sons of Zeruiah; Abishai, and Joab, and Asahel, three.

17 And Abigail bare [a] Amasa: and the father of Amasa *was* [b] Jether the Ishmaelite.

h Gen. 36:41—43.
* Or, *Jacob.* Gen. 32:28. 49:2.
b Gen. 29:32—35. 30:5—24. 35:18,22—26. 46:8,&c. 49.4—28. Ex. 1:2—4. Num. 1:5—15. 13:4—15. 26:5, &c. Rev. 7:5—8.
c 9:5. Gen. 38:2—10. 46:12. Num. 26:19,20.
d Gen. 38:13—30. Ruth 4:12. Matt. 1:3. *Thamar.*
e 9:4. Num. 26:21. Ruth 4:18. Neh. 11:4. *Perez.* Matt. 1:3. Luke 3:33. *Phares.*
f 9:6. Num. 26:13,20. Neh. 11:24. Matt. 1:3. *Zara.*
g Gen. 46:12. Num. 26:21. Matt 1:3. Luke 3:33. *Esrom.*
h Josh. 7:1,17,18. *Zabdi.*
i 1 K. 4:31. *Darda.*
k 4:1.
l Josh. 7:1—5. *Achan.*
m Dent. 7:26. 13:17. Josh. 6:18. 7:11—15. 22:20.
n 25—33.
o Ruth 4:19. Matt. 1:3. Luke 3:33. *Aram.*
p 18,19,24,42. *Caleb.*
q Ruth 4:20. Matt. 1:4. Luke 3:33. *Aminadab.*
r Num. 1:7. 2:3. 7:12,17. 10:14. Ruth 4:20. Matt. 1:4. Luke 3:32. *Naasson.*
s Ruth 4:21. Matt. 1:4,5. Luke 3:32. *Salmon—Booz.*
t 10:14. Ruth 4:22. 1 Sam. 16:1. Is. 11:1,10. Matt. 1:5. Luke 3:32. Acts 13:22. Rom. 15:12.
u 1 Sam. 16:6. 17:13,28.
v 27:18. *Elihu.*
x 20:7. *Shimea.* 1 Sam. 16:9. *Shammah.*
y 1 Sam. 16:10,11. 17:12—14.
z 1 Sam. 26:6. 2 Sam. 2:18—23. 3:39. 16:9—11. 19:22.
a 2 Sam. 17:25. 19:13. 20:4—12. 1 K. 2:5,32.
b 2 Sam. 17:25. *Ithra an Israelite.*

have gone through this world, acted their part in it, and then quitted it. Job, even in his early day, saw not only *every man drawing after him*, but *innumerable before him.* All these, and all theirs, had their day, many of them made a mighty noise and figure in the world; but their day came to fall, and their place knew them no more. The paths of death are trodden paths, but *none can retrace their steps.* 2. Of the providence of God, which keeps up the generations of men, and so preserves that degenerate race, though guilty, and obnoxious, in being on earth. How easily could He cut it off, without either a deluge or a conflagration! Write but all the children of men childless, as some are, and, in a few years, the earth will be eased of its burden under which it groans; but the divine patience lets the trees that cumber the ground, not only *grow*, but *propagate.* *Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it.*

CHAP. II. We are now come to what was principally intended, the register of the children of Israel, that distinguished people, that were to *dwell alone, and not to be reckoned among the nations.* The best exposition we can give of this and the following chs. and which will give the clearest view of them, is, those genealogical tables which were published with some of the first impressions of the last English Bible about a hundred years ago, and continued for some time; and it is pity but they were revived in some of our later editions; for they are of great use to those who diligently search the Scriptures. They are said to be drawn up by that great master in scripture learning, Mr. Hugh Broughton. We meet with them sometimes in old Bibles.

V. 1—17. Here is,

1. The family of *Jacob.* His twelve sons are here named, that illustrious number so often celebrated almost throughout the whole Bible. At every turn, we meet with the twelve tribes that descended from these twelve patriarchs. The personal character of several of them was none of the best, (the first four were much blemished,) yet the covenant was entailed on their seed: for it was of grace, free grace, that it was said, *Jacob have I loved: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

2. The family of *Judah.* That tribe was most praised, most increased, and most dignified, therefore the genealogy of it is the first and largest of them all. In the account here given, we have (1.) Some very *bad.* Er, Judah's eldest son, was *evil*, and the *Lord slew him*, *v.* 3. His next brother, Onan, was no better; and fared no better Here is Tamar, with whom Judah, her father-in-law, committed incest, *v.* 4. and Achan, called *Achar*, a troubler, *v.* 7. Note, The best and most honorable families may have those belonging to them, that have their blemishes. (2.) Some very *wise and good*, as Heman and Ethan, Calcol, and Dara, not, perhaps, the immediate sons of Zerah, but descendants from him, and named as being the glory of their father's house; when the Holy Ghost would magnify the wisdom of Solomon, He declares him wiser than these four men, who, though the sons of Mahol, are called *Ezrahites*, from *Zerah*, 1 K. 4: 31. That four brothers

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As we are descended from that 'one man, by whom sin and death entered into the world;' so we all resemble and imitate him: and this should remind us how sinful and frail we are; and excite us to repent, to value the Savior, to despair of happiness in this world, to seek those things which are above, and habitually to prepare to meet death, who is, to all unbelievers, 'the king of terrors.' But while we are spared, we should regard every human being, as a brother, a fellow sinner, and a fellow sufferer, without respect to climate, complexion, party, character, or even personal injuries: and, with expanded benevolence and compassion, we should aim to alleviate misery, to increase comfort, to promote peace, and to be instrumental to the salvation of men, by our example, prayers, and the improvement of our several talents. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. II. V. 5, 6. *M. R.—The sons of Zerah, &c.* (6) It is uncertain, whether Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Dara, the sons of Mahol, of whom we read, (1 *K.* 4:31.) were remote and eminent descendants of Zerah; or whether different persons, bearing nearly the same names, are there intended. SCOTT.

Verse 7.

(*Josh.* 7:1, 10—24.) Achan is here called *Achar*, or *the troubler*; with reference to Joshua's words to him. (*Note, Josh.* 7:25, 26.) Carmi is said in Joshua to be the son of Zabdi, who is here called Zimri. (6) [*D* and *r* in Heb. are much alike, and *m* and *b* are interchangeable in pronunciation among many peoples.]—The genealogies of Judah are very copious: because David, the progenitor of the Messiah, was of that tribe; and the whole nation of the Jews, to this day, is composed of such as either descended from Judah, or incorporated with those who did. (2 *K.* 16:6.) ID.

Verse 8.

'Sons' here signifies *descendants.* Note 1:1. These might be numerous, though but one son is mentioned. ID.

Verses 9—12.

Hezron, the son of Pharez. (5) (*M. R.—Ruth* 4:17—22. ID.

Verse 15.

Jesse had eight sons; (1 *Sam.* 16:10.) but it is probable, one died before David came to the throne. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verse 16.

Joppa.] 'Called by the Arabs Jaffa: it is the chief sea-port of Palestine. During the war of the Jews with the Romans it was burnt, but was soon rebuilt; afterwards, becoming a strong-hold of pirates, it was utterly destroyed. It was again rebuilt in the time of the crusades, and soon became a flourishing place, as being the only good harbor on the coast of Palestine: it now numbers four or five thousand inhabitants. Modern Jaffa, [see the engraving,] stands upon a conical hill or promontory, the base of which on three sides is washed by the sea: as a station for vessels, its harbor is one of the worst in the Mediterranean: and ships generally anchor about a mile from the town, in order to avoid the shoals and rocks of the place. Towards the land, the town is defended by a wall: it contains no very remarkable buildings, and the streets are narrow, irregular, and ill paved, as is the case with all oriental towns.' HORNE.

Verse 17.

Jether is generally supposed to have been an *Ishmaelite* by birth, but an *Israelite* by religion. SCOTT.

B. C. 1470. 18 ¶ And [c] Caleb the son of Hezron begat *children* of Azubah *his* wife, and of Jerioth: her sons *are* these; Jesher, and Shobab, and Ardon.

19 And when Azubah was dead, Caleb took unto him [d] Ephrath, which bare him Hur.

20 And Hur begat Uri, and Uri begat [e] Bezaleel.

21 And afterwards Hezron went in to the daughter of [f] Machir, the father of Gilead, whom he * married when he *was* threescore years old, and she bare him Segub.

22 And Segub begat [g] Jair, who had three and twenty cities in the land of Gilead.

23 And he took [h] Geshur, and Aram, with the towns of Jair, from them, with Kenath and the towns thereof, *even* threescore cities: all these *belonged to* the sons of Machir the father of Gilead.

24 And after that Hezron was dead in [i] Caleb-ephratah, then Abiah, Hezron's wife, bare him [j] Ashur, the father of [k] Tekoa.

25 ¶ And the sons of [l] Jerahmeel, the first-born of Hezron, were Ram, the first-born, and Bunah, and Oren, and Ozem, *and* Ahijah.

26 Jerahmeel had also another wife, whose name *was* Atarah, she *was* the mother of Onam.

27 And the sons of [m] Ram, the first-born of Jerahmeel, were Maaz, and Jamin, and Eker.

28 And the sons of [n] Onam were Shammai, and Jada. And the sons of Shammai; Nadab, and Abishur.

29 And the name of the wife of Abishur *was* Abihail; and she bare him Ahban, and Molid.

30 And the sons of [o] Nadab; Seled, and Appaim: but Seled died without children.

31 And the sons of Appaim; Ishi. And the sons of Ishi; Sheshan. And [p] the children of Sheshan; Ahlai.

32 And the sons of Jada, the brother of Shammai; Jethur, and Jonathan: and Jethur died without children.

33 And the sons of Jonathan; Peleth, and Zaza. These were the sons of Jerahmeel.

34 ¶ Now Sheshan had no sons, but daughters: and Sheshan had a servant, an Egyptian, whose name *was* Jarha.

35 And [q] Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant to wife, and she bare him Attai.

36 And Attai begat Nathan, and Nathan begat [r] Zabad,

37 And Zabad begat Ephlal, and Ephlal begat Obed,

38 And Obed begat Jehu, and Jehu begat Azariah,

39 And Azariah begat Helez, and Helez begat Eleasah,

40 And Eleasah begat Sisamai, and Sisamai begat Shallum,

41 And Shallum begat Jekamiah, and Jekamiah begat Elishama.

42 ¶ Now the sons of [s] Caleb, the brother of Jerahmeel, *were* Mesha [t] his first-born, which *was* the father of [u] Ziph: and the sons of Mareshah, [x] the father of Hebron.

43 And the sons of Hebron; Korah, and Tapuah, and Rekem, and Shema.

44 And Shema begat Raham, the father of Jorkoam; and Rekem begat Shammai.

45 And the son of Shammai *was* Maon: and Maon *was* the father of [y] Bethzur.

46 And Ephah, [z] Caleb's concubine, bare Haran, and Moza, and Gazez: and Haran begat Gazez.

47 And the sons of Jahdai; Regem, and

c 9. *Chelubai.* 42.
d 24:50. 4:4. Mic. 5:2. *Ephratah.*
e Ex. 31:2. 36:1,2. 37:1. 38:22. 2 Chr. 1:5.
f Gen. 50:23. Num. 26:29. 27:1. 32: 39,40. Deut. 3:15.
* Heb. *took.*
g Num. 32:41. Deut. 3:14. Josh. 13:30.
h Josh. 13:13.
i 9,18,19. 1 Sam. 30:14. 4:5.
j 2 Sam. 14:2. Am. 1:1.
l 9.
m 25.
n 26.
o 28.
p 34,35.
q 31.
r 11:41.
s 9. *Chelubai.* 18,19,24.
t Gen. 49:3. Ex. 4:22,23. Rom. 8:29. Heb. 12:23.
u Josh. 15:24. 1 Sam. 23:19. 26:1.
x 23,24,45,49,52. 8:29. Ezra 2:21—35. Neh. 7:25—38.
y Josh. 15:58.
z 18,19,48.

Verses 18—20.

This Caleb, or Chelubai, (9) was not the same as Caleb the son of Jephunneh, whose posterity is afterwards mentioned. (4:15.) He must have lived some time before Israel left Egypt; as Bezaleel was his great grandson; the son of Uri, the son of Hur, the son of Caleb. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verse 21.

'The father of Gilead' means, the prince of Gilead, or the father of a large portion of the inhabitants. The term occurs frequently in this sense, throughout the subsequent genealogies; as the reader will readily perceive by consulting the *M. R.* (*Notes*, 42—58.) ID.

Verse 22.

Jair was descended by his father from Judah, and properly belonged to that tribe: but Hezron, his grandfather, married a wife of the tribe of Manasseh; and Jair, as descended from her, united himself to that tribe, and at length inherited among them. ID.

Verse 23.

Jair seems to have taken Geshur, Aram, and some other places, from those who before possessed them. (*Num.* 32:39—42. *Deut.* 3:14. *Josh.* 13:29—32.) ID.

Verse 24.

Ashur was the posthumous son of Hezron, by Abiah, whom he married in his old age. (21) But he became a man of consequence; and his descendants principally peopled, or ruled over, Tekoa. ID.

Verses 25—33.

Nothing further is recorded of the persons mentioned in these vs. (*M. R.*) ID.

Verses 34—41.

It does not appear that Sheshan had more than one daughter, whom he gave in marriage to his servant, an Egyptian; who, it is probable, was a proselyte to the true religion, and had been faithful to him. But, as a numerous progeny might spring from this one daughter, the plural number is used, as it was before observed to be in the case of sons. (*Note*, 8.) SCOTT.

(35.) *Gave his daughter to his servant to wife.*] 'When the people of the east have no sons, they frequently *marry their daughters to their slaves*, even when they have much property to bestow on them.' DE MAILLET.

Verses 42—49.

This Caleb, being the brother of Jerahmeel, was the same person of whom we read before. His children by Azubah and by Ephrath, had been enumerated: (18—20.) so that 'Meshah, his first-born,' seems to have been born to him by another wife, whom he married before either Azubah or Ephrath.—The Jews, when they returned from the captivity, were principally of the tribe of Judah: and so these genealogies might be exceedingly useful to them. No doubt they were extracted from ancient public records of allowed authenticity. (*M. R.*) The cities, of which these persons are said to have been fathers, were all situated in Judah; and this confirms the preceding interpretation. (*Note*, 21.) SCOTT.

Achsa. (49) 'Caleb, the son of Jephunneh,' had a daughter called Achsa, who was married to Othniel, at the time when Joshua completed the division of the land. (*Notes, Josh.* 15:16—19.) But Caleb the son of Hezron lived some ages before (*Note*, 18—20.) and his

Jotham, and Geshan, and Pelet, and Ephah, and Shaaph.

48 Maachah, Caleb's [a] concubine, bare Sheber, and Tirhanah.

49 She bare also Shaaph [b] the father of [c] Madmannah, Sheva the father of Macbenah, and the father of [d] Gibea: and the daughter of Caleb *was* Achsa.

50 ¶ These were the sons of Caleb the son of Hur, the first-born [e] of Ephratah; Shobal the father of [f] Kirjath-jearim;

51 Salma [g] the father of [h] Beth-lehem, Hareph the father of Beth-gader.

52 And Shobal the father of Kirjath-jearim had sons; * Haroeh, *and* † half of the Manahethites.

53 And the families of Kirjath-jearim; the [i] Ithrites, and the Puhites, and the Shumathites, and the Mishraites: of them came [k] the Zareathites, and the Eshtaulites.

54 The sons of Salma; [l] Beth-lehem, and the [m] Netophathites, ‡ Ataroth, the house of Joab, and half of the Manahethites, the Zorites.

55 And the families of [n] the scribes which dwelt at [o] Jabez; the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, *and* Suchathites. These *are* [p] the Kenites that came of Hemath, the father of the house of [q] Rechab.

CHAP. III.

The sons of David, 1—9. His line to Zedekiah, 10—16. The sons and successors of Jeconiah, 17—24.

NOW these were [a] the sons of David, which were born unto him in Hebron; the firstborn, [b] Amnon, of [c] Ahinoam the [d] Jezreelitess; the second, [e] Daniel, [f] of Abigail the Carmelitess.

2 The third, [g] Absalom the son of Maachah, the daughter of Talmai king of [h] Geshur; the fourth, [i] Adonijah the son of Haggith:

3 The fifth, Shephatiah, of Abital; the sixth, Ithream, by [j] Eglah his wife.

4 *These* six were born unto him in Hebron; and [k] there he reigned seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years.

5 And these were born unto him in Jerusalem; [l] Shimea, and Shobab, and [m] Nathan, and [n] Solomon, four, of [o] Bathshua the daughter of [p] Ammiel:

6 Ibhar also, and [q] Elishama, and [r] Eliphelet,

7 And [s] Nogah, and Nepheg, and Japhia,

8 And Elishama, and [t] Eliada, and [u] Eliphelet, nine.

9 *These were* all the sons of David, beside the sons [x] of the concubines, and [y] Tamar their sister.

10 ¶ And Solomon's son *was* [z] Rehoboam; [a] Abia his son, [b] Asa his son, [c] Jehoshaphat his son,

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(HAP. III. V. 1—9. A full account of the illu rious family of David. We had an account of his sons, 2 Sam. 3: 2, &c. and 5: 14, &c. Some of them were a grief to him, as Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah. And we do not read of any of them, that imitated his piety and devotion, except Solomon, and he came far short of it. One by Bath-sheba, he called *Nathan*, probably, in honor of Nathan the prophet, who reproved him for his sin, and was instrumental to bring him to repentance. It is wisdom to esteem those our best friends, that deal faithfully with us. From this son of David our Lord Jesus descended, as appears, Luke 3: 31. Here are two Elishamas, and two Eliphelets, *v.* 6, 8. Probably, the two former were dead, therefore David called two more by their names; which he would not have done, if there had been any ill omen in it, as some fancy. David had many concubines; but their children are not named, as not worthy of the honor, *v.* 2. the rather, because the concubines had dealt treacherously with David in the affair of Absalom. Of all David's sons, Solomon was chosen to succeed him; perhaps not for any personal merits, (his wisdom was God's gift,) but so, *Father, because it seemed good unto Thee.*

V. 10—24. David having 19 sons, we may suppose them to have raised many noble families, whom we never hear of. Here we have an account only of the descendants of Solomon, and of Nathan, Luke 3. The rest had the honor to be the sons of David; these only, the honor to be related to the Messiah. The sons of Nathan were his fathers, as Man; the sons of Solomon his predecessors, as King. We have here,

1. The great and celebrated names of the line

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[a] 42. Gen. 25:5,6.
[b] See on 42.
[c] Josh. 15:31. Is. 10:31. *Madmenah.*
[d] Josh. 15:57. 2 Sam. 21:6. *Gibeah.*
[e] 19,20. *Ephrath.*
[f] 53. 13:5,6. Josh. 15:9,60. 1 Sam. 7:1.
[g] 4:4.
[h] Gen. 35:19. Ruth 1:19. 2:4. 4:11. Matt. 2:1,6. John 7:42.
[i] Or, *Reaiah.* 4:2.
† Or, *half of the Menuchites*, or, *Hatsihammenuchoth.*
[l] 11:40. 2 Sam. 23:38.
[k] Josh. 15:33. 19:41. Judg. 13:2,25. 16:31.
[l] 51.
[m] 11:30. 2 Sam. 23:29. Ezra 2:22. Neh. 7:26. 12:28.
‡ Or, *Atarites*, or, *crowns of the house of Joab.* Josh. 16:2.
[n] Ezra 7:6. Jer. 8:8.
[o] 4:9,10.
[p] Judg. 1:16. 4:11. 1 Sam. 15:6.
[q] 2 K. 10:15. Jer. 35:2—8, 19.
[a] 2 Sam. 3:2—5.
[b] 2 Sam. 13:1,20.
[c] 1 Sam. 25:43. 27:3.
[d] Josh. 15:56.
[e] 2 Sam. 3:3. *Chileab.*
[f] 1 Sam. 25:39—42.
[g] 2 Sam. 13:1,20—28,38. 13:14,18,33. 19:4—10.
[h] 2:23. Josh. 13:13. 2 Sam. 14:23,32. 15:8.
[i] 2 Sam. 3:4. 1 K. 1:5. 2:24,25.
[j] 2 Sam. 3:5.
[k] 2 Sam. 2:11. 5:4,5. 1 K. 2:11.
[l] 14:4. 2 Sam. 5:14. *Shammuah.*
[m] 2 Sam. 7:2—4. 12:1—15. Luke 3:31.
[n] 28:5,6. 2 Sam. 12:24,25.
[o] 2 Sam. 11:3. *Bath-sheba.* Matt. 1:6.
[p] 2 Sam. 11:3. *Eliam.*
[q] 14:5. 2 Sam. 5:15. *Elishua.*
[r] 14:5. *Elpalet.*
[s] 2 Sam. 5:15,16.
[t] 14:7. *Beeliada.*
[u] 14:7. 2 Sam. 5:16. *Eliphalet.*
[x] 2 Sam. 5:13.
[y] 2 Sam. 13:1—20.
[z] 1 K. 11:43. 14:31. Matt. 1:7. *Roboam.*
[a] 1 K. 15:1. *Abijam.* 2 Chr. 13:1. *Abijah.*
[b] 1 K. 15:8. 2 Chr. 14:1.
[c] 1 K. 15:24. 2 Chr. 17:1. Matt. 1:8. *Josaphat.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

No length of time will expunge the guilt or infamy of those, who do evil in the sight of the Lord, are troublers of his people, and die in their sins. But as the Savior was pleased to assume human nature, by descent through so many a heinous transgressor, and thus to be 'made in the likeness of sinful flesh,' as well as a sacrifice for sin, all manner of wickedness shall be purged away from those who believe in his name.—Atrocious sinners have in every age been transformed into the most eminent believers.—Difficulties, blemishes, and disgraces in the beginnings of life, or on the entrance of any undertaking; and remarkable blots in the origin of families; have often proved as foils to the lustre, success, or eminence, with which they were afterwards favored.—Submission to God's will is our duty and wisdom; but it is the privilege of the true believer alone to maintain this happy frame of mind.—The whole, that is truly valuable, consists in the favor, peace, and image of God; and a life spent to his glory, and in promoting the welfare of our fellow creatures. SCOTT.

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daughter Achsa was a different person. SCOTT.

Verse 50.

'With *Houbigant*, I think that the two names have been transposed. For it is certain that Caleb was the son of Hezron, and not of Hur, and that Hur was the son of Caleb. Comp. v. 18, 19.' BOOTHR. Caleb, here spoken of, was the grandson of him before mentioned, and brother to Uri, the father of that Bezaleel who erected the tabernacle. (9, 18, 19, 42.) ID.

Verses 52, 53.

The inhabitants of these cities consisted in general of Shobal's descendants; or they were the principal persons among them. This seems to be equivalent to the phrase, 'the father of Ziph, of Bethlehem, &c.' (42, 43.) ID.

Verse 54.

The word rendered 'the house of Joab,' seems to be a proper name, *Beth-Joab*; for a place, not a family, is evidently meant.—'Beth-joab; so these words, we translate "the house of Joab" should be rendered; for he is not speaking of Joab's family, but of Caleb's.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

Verse 55.

The Kenites, &c.] (*Judg.* 1:16. 4:11. *Jer.* 35:1—7, 18, 19.) It seems that some of the Kenites, the posterity of Hobab, incorporated with Judah, and became expert in writing, and eminent in their knowledge of the law of God. ID.

NOTES.

CHAP. III. V. 1—6. (*Notes*, 2 *Sam.* 3:1—5. 5:13—16.) David's other sons by Bathshua, or Bath-sheba, are mentioned before Solomon, though younger than he; because the genealogy is resumed from him. (*M. R.*) It seems David had children by his concubines, whose names are nowhere recorded. ID.

Verses 10—15.

(*M. R.*) Johanan seems to have died young. Shallum is also call-

11 [d] Joram his son, [e] Ahaziah his son, [f] Joash his son,

12 [g] Amaziah his son, [h] Azariah his son, [i] Jotham his son,

13 [k] Ahaz his son, [l] Hezekiah his son, [m] Manasseh his son,

14 [n] Amon his son, [o] Josiah his son.

15 And the sons of Josiah *were*, the firstborn Johanan, the second [p] Jehoiakim, the third [q] Zedekiah, the fourth [r] Shallum.

16 And the sons of Jehoiakim; [s] Jeconiah his son, [t] Zedekiah his son.

17 And the sons of Jeconiah, Assir; [u] Salathiel his son,

18 Malchiram also, and Pedaiah, and Shenazar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah.

19 And the sons of Pedaiah *were* [x] Zerubbabel, and Shimei: and the sons of Zerubbabel; Meshullam, and Hananiah, and Shelomith their sister:

20 And Hashubah, and Ohel, and Berechiah, and Hesadiah, Jushab-hesed, five.

21 And the sons of Hananiah; [y] Peletiah, and Jesaiah; the sons of Rephaiah, the sons of Arnon, the sons of Obadiah, the sons of Shechaniah.

22 And the sons of Shechaniah; Shemaiah: and the sons of Shemaiah; [z] Hattush, and Igeal, and Bariah, and Neariah, and Shaphat, six.

23 And the sons of Neariah; Elioenai, and * Hezekiah, and Azrikam, three.

24 And the sons of Elioenai *were* Hodaiah, and Eliashib, and Pelaiah, and Akkub, and Johanan, and Delaiah, and Anani, seven.

of David down to the captivity; the kings of Judah in a lineal succession; the history of whom we have had at large in Kings, and shall meet again in 2 Chr. Seldom has a crown gone in a direct line from father to son for 17 descents together, as here. This was the recompense of David's piety. About the captivity, the lineal descent was interrupted, and the crown went from one brother to another, and from a nephew to an uncle; which was a presage of the eclipsing of the glory of that house.

2. The less famous, and most of them very obscure, names, in which the house of David subsisted after the captivity. The only famous man of that house, we meet with at their return from captivity, was Zerubbabel, elsewhere called *the son of Salathiel*, but appearing here to be his grandson, *v.* 17—19. which is usual in Scripture. Belshazzar is called *Nebuchadnezzar's son*, but was his grandson. Salathiel is said to be *the son* of Jeconiah, because adopted by him, and because, as some think, he succeeded him in the dignity to which he was restored by Evil-merodach; otherwise Jeconiah was written childless: he was the *signet, God plucked from his right hand*, Jer. 22: 24. and in his room Zerubbabel was placed: therefore God saith to him, Hag. 2: 23. *I will make thee as a signet.* The posterity of Zerubbabel here bear not the same names they do in the genealogies, Matt. 1. or Luke 3. but those, no doubt, were taken from the then herald's office, the public registers which the priests kept of all the families of Judah, especially that of David.

The last person named in this ch. is Anani; of whom Patrick says the Targum adds these words, *he is the king Messiah, who is to be revealed;* and some of the Jewish writers give this reason, because it is said, Dan 7: 13. The Son of Man came *gnim gnanani—with the clouds of heaven.* The reason indeed is very foreign and far-fetched; but that learned man thinks it may be made use of as an evidence that their minds were always full of the thoughts of the Messiah, and that they expected it would not be very long after the days of Zerubbabel, before the set time of his approach would come.

CHAP. IV. V. 1—10. One reason, no doubt, why Ezra is here the most particular in the register of the tribe of Judah, is, because that tribe was it which, with its appendages, Simeon, Benjamin, and Levi, made up the kingdom of Judah; which not only long survived the other tribes in Canaan, but, in process of time, now, when this was written, returned out of captivity, when the generality of the other tribes were lost in the kingdom of Assyria.

CHAP. IV.

The posterity of Judah, in the line of Hezron, Carmi, and Hur, 1—4. The posterity of Ashur, Hezron's son, 5—8. Jabez, and his prayer, 9, 10. Other descendants of Judah by Pharez, 11—20. The posterity of Shelah, Judah's son, 21—23. The sons of Simeon and their cities, 24—38. They conquer Gedor and the Amalekites, 39—43.

THE sons of Judah; [a] Pharez, Hezron, and [b] Carmi, and Hur, and Shobal.

d 1 K. 22:50. 2 Chr. 21:1. *Jehoram.*
e 2 K. 8:24. 2 Chr. 21:17. *Jehoahaz.* 22:1,6. *Azariah.*
f 2 K. 11:21. 2 Chr. 24:1.
g 2 K. 14:1. 2 Chr. 25:1.
h 2 K. 14:21. 2 Chr. 26:1. *Uzziah.* Matt. 1:8,9. *Ozias.*
i 2 K. 15:5,32. 2 Chr. 27:1. Matt. 1:9. *Joatham.*
k 2 K. 16:1. 2 Chr. 28:1—3. Matt. 1:9. *Achaz.*
l 2 K. 18:1. 2 Chr. 29:1. Matt. 1:9. *Ezekias.*
m 2 K. 21:1. 2 Chr. 33:1. Matt. 1:10. *Manasses.*
n 2 K. 21:19. 2 Chr. 33:20,21.
o 2 K. 22:1. 2 Chr. 34:1. Matt. 1:10,11. *Josias.*
p 2 K. 23:34. *Eliakim.* 2 Chr. 36:5. Jer. 22:18.
q 2 K. 24:17,18. *Mattaniah.* 2 Chr. 36:11.
r 2 K. 23:30. 2 Chr. 36:1. *Jehoahaz.* Jer. 22:11.
s 2 K. 24:8. 25:27. 2 Chr. 36:9. *Jehoiachin.* Jer. 22:24,28. *Coniah.* Matt. 1:11. *Jechonias.*
t 15.
u Ezra 3:2,8. 5:2. *Shealtiel.* Matt. 1:12.
x Ezra 2:2. 3:2. Hag. 1:12—14. 2:2, 4. Zech. 4:6—9. Matt. 1:12,13. *Zorobabel.*
y Neh. 10:22.
z Ezra 8:2.
* Or, *Hiskijahu.*
a 2:5. Gen. 38:29. 46:12. Num. 26:20, 21. Ruth 4:18. Matt. 1:3. Luke 3: 33.—*Phares. Esrom.*
b 2:9. *Chelubai.* 2:18. *Caleb.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In the large families of wise, eminent, and pious men, many persons prove too insignificant to attract our notice, and others so vicious as to excite our grief and indignation. They therefore, who have no children, may hence learn submission to the will of God: for if, by that appointment, they are destitute of some comforts, they are also exempted from a variety of anxieties and trials. And those, to whom God has given children, may learn to bring up their offspring for Him to the best of their power, recommending them to his care and blessing: nor should they indulge the hope of much comfort from them, any more than seek great things for them, in this world. Yet, on the whole, the attentive and accurate observer will perceive that the posterity of the righteous enjoy advantages, sometimes for many generations, in consequence of the piety of their progenitors: so that this is the best way of laying up an inheritance for our beloved offspring.—Nothing more distinguishes the real believer from the slave of sin, than the manner in which each of them behaves towards a faithful reprover: the former, on reflection, will love and revere him as his best friend; the latter will habitually hate him as his enemy. (5. 2 *Sam.* 12: 1—7, 13. 1 *K.* 21: 20. 22: 8. *Ps.* 141: 5.) But all our gratitude to the instruments of our mercies should be ultimately directed to the glory of God: and all the prosperity of ourselves and our families will eventually terminate in misery, unless it centre in union with the Son of David, the King of Israel, and the Savior of sinners. SCOTT.

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ed Jehoahaz. He was older than Zedekiah, though mentioned after him. SCOTT.

Verse 16.

As the sons of Jeconiah are enumerated in the next vs. and as Zedekiah, a son of Jeconiah, is not elsewhere mentioned, it is thought by learned men, that 'his son' here means *his successor.* ID.

Verses 17, 18.

Many commentators take it for granted, that Salathiel, or Shealtiel, actually descended from Nathan, and was only the adoptive son of Jeconiah; that Solomon's line was extinct; and that Joseph, the husband of Mary, sprang from Nathan, as well as she. They ground this sentiment on these reasons: Jeremiah is supposed to have pronounced Jeconiah childless; but perhaps a satisfactory solution of that difficulty may be adduced. (*Jer.* 22:28—30.) Again, it is argued, that Luke mentions Zorobabel, the son of Salathiel, in the genealogy of Mary. But to this it may be answered, that it is scarcely the shadow of an argument to say, because a father and son are of the same names in one genealogy, as they are in another, therefore they were the same persons, when no other part of the genealogy supports, or can possibly accord with, the conclusion. Salathiel, the father of Zorobabel, mentioned by Luke, was 'the son of Rhesa, the son of Joanna, the son of Judah;' this Salathiel was the 'son of Assir, the son of Jeconiah.'—'Rhesa (*Luke* 3:27.) . . . is not found among the 8 children, here reckoned up.' *Patrick.* Matthew says, Jeconiah *begat* Salathiel; and it will be harsh to interpret this of mere adoption, or of less than being his progenitor; and here are several other sons, or descendants, of Jeconiah mentioned, who cannot all have been adopted. Upon the whole it scarcely admits of a doubt, that the line from Solomon to Joseph was uninterrupted; and that the two families met in Jesus, the real son of Mary, and the supposed and legal son of Joseph. (*Matt.* 1:2—17. *Luke* 3:23—38.) SCOTT.

Verses 19—24.

Perhaps Pedaiah was Salathiel's son, Jeconiah's grandson, and Zerubbabel's father: but, being of small note, his name is omitted in the other genealogies; which is a common case. Nothing is known except the names of the persons afterwards mentioned; but several of them must have lived a long time after the captivity, perhaps later than the days of Ezra. Matthew evidently deduces the line of Joseph from a different branch of the same stock: that is, from another branch of Zerubbabel's descendants. (*Matt.* 1:13—16.) ID.

(24.) 'This genealogy, says *Geddes*, deduced from David through 30 or 29 generations, gives room to conjecture the period in which the Chr. at least this part, were compiled; which must have been 13 generations after the Bab. captivity.' HEWLETT.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV. V. 1. *Carmi* seems to mean the same person before

B. C. 1500. 2 And [e] Reaiah the son of Shobal begat Jahath, and Jahath begat Ahumai and Lahad. These *are* the families of the [d] Zorathites.

3 And these *were of* the father of [e] Etam: Jezreel, and Ishma, and Idbash: and the name of their sister *was* Hazelelponi.

4 And Penuel the father of [f] Gedor, and Ezer the father of Hushah. These *are* the sons of [g] Hur, the firstborn of Ephratah, the father of Beth-lehem.

5 ¶ And [h] Ashur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah.

6 And Naarah bare him Ahuzam, and Hepher, and Temeni, and Haahashtari. These *were* the sons of Naarah.

7 And the sons of Helah *were* Zereth, and Jezoar, and Ethnan.

8 And Coz begat Anub, and Zobebah, and the families of Aharhel the son of Harum.

9 ¶ And Jabez was [i] more honorable than his brethren: and his mother called his name * Jabez, saying, Because [k] I bare him with sorrow.

10 And Jabez [l] called on [m] the God of Israel, saying, † Oh, that thou wouldest [n] bless me indeed, and [o] enlarge my coast, and that [p] thine hand might be with me, and that [q] thou wouldest ‡ keep *me* from evil, [r] that it may not grieve me! And [s] God granted him that which he requested.

11 ¶ And Chelub the brother of Shuah begat Mehir, which *was* the father of Eshton.

12 And Eshton begat Beth-rapha, and Paseah, and Tehinnah, the father of § Irnahash. These *are* the men of Rechah.

13 And the sons of [t] Kenaz; Othniel, and Seraiah: and the sons of Othniel; ‖Hathath.

14 And Meonothai begat Ophrah: and Seraiah begat Joab, the father of the ¶ valley of ** Charashim; for they were craftsmen.

15 And the sons of [u] Caleb the son of Jephunneh; Iru, Elah,

The most remarkable person in this paragraph is, Jabez. It is not said whose son he was; nor does it appear in what age he lived; but, it should seem, he was the founder of one of the families of Aharhel, mentioned *v.* 8.

Here is,

I. The reason of his name: his mother gave him the name with this reason, *Because I bare him with sorrow, v.* 9. All children are born with sorrow; but here, it seems, it was so extraordinary, that it was remembered when the child came to be circumcised, and care taken to perpetuate the remembrance of it while he lived. Perhaps, the mother called him *Jabez*, as Rachel called her son *Benoni*, when she was dying of the sorrow. Or, if she recovered, she recorded it, 1. As a memento to herself, to be thankful to God as long as she lived, for supporting her. It may be of use to be often reminded of our sorrows, that we may always have such thoughts of things as we had in the day of our affliction, and may learn to rejoice with trembling. 2. As a memento to him, that this world is a vale of tears, in which he must expect *few days and full of trouble*. The sorrow he carried in his name, might help to put a seriousness on his spirit. It might also remind him to love and honor his mother, and labor, in every thing, to be a comfort to her. It is piety thus to requite parents. 1 Tim. 5: 4.

II. The eminency of his character, *v.* 9. We are not told on what account he was *more honorable than his brethren;* we have most reason to think it was for his learning and piety; not only because these, above any thing, honor a man, but because we have reason to think Jabez was eminent in these; 1. In learning; because we find the *families of the scribes dwelt at Jabez, ch.* 2: 55. a city which, it is likely, took its name from him. The Jews say he was a famous doctor of the law, and left many disciples. And it should seem by the mentioning him so abruptly here, that his name was well known, when Ezra wrote this. 2. In piety; because we find here he was a praying man. His inclination to devotion made him truly honorable; and by prayer he obtained those blessings from God, which added much to his honor. The way to be truly great, is to be truly good, and to pray much.

III. The prayer he made, probably, like Solomon's for wisdom, just when he was setting out in the world. Perhaps, these were the heads on which he enlarged in his daily prayers; for this purpose, it was his constant practice to pray alone, and with his family, as Daniel. Some think it was on some particular occasion, when straitened and threatened by his enemies. Observe,

1. To whom he prayed, *v.* 10. to the living and true God, who alone can hear and answer prayer; and with an eye to Him as the God of Israel, a God in covenant with his people, the God with whom Jacob wrestled and prevailed, and was thence called *Israel*.

2. The nature of his prayer. (1.) As the *margin* reads it, it was a solemn vow, and then the sense is imperfect, but may easily be filled up from Jacob's vow, or some such like, *then Thou shalt be my God*. He does, as it were, give God a blank paper, let Him write what He pleases: 'Lord, if Thou wilt bless me and keep me, do what Thou wilt with me, I will be at thy command and disposal, for ever.' (2.) As the *text* reads it, it was the language of a most ardent and affectionate desire, *Oh, that Thou wouldest bless me!*

3. The matter of his prayer. Four things he prayed for: (1.) That God would *bless him indeed*. Perhaps, he had an eye to the promise of God made to Abraham, Gen. 22: 17. *In blessing, I will bless thee*. We can but *wish* a blessing, God *commands* it: those whom He blesses, are blessed indeed. (2.) That he would *enlarge his coast;* that God would enlarge our hearts, and so enlarge our portion in Himself, and in the heavenly Canaan, ought to be our desire and prayer. (3.) That God's *hand might be with him*. God's hand with us, to lead us, protect us, strengthen us, and to work all our works in us and for us, is indeed a hand sufficient for us, all-sufficient. (4.) That He would *keep him from evil;* the evil of sin, the evil of trouble, all the evil designs of his enemies, that they might not hurt, nor grieve him, nor make him a *Jabez* indeed, *a man of sorrow*. In the original, there is an allusion to his name, *Father in heaven, deliver me from evil*.

4. The success of his prayer. *God granted him what he requested;* prospered him remarkably, and gave him success in his undertakings, in his studies, in his worldly business, in his conflicts with the Canaanite; and so he became *more honorable than his brethren*. God was of old ready to hear prayer, and *his ear is not yet heavy*.

V. 11—23. 1. Here is a whole family of craftsmen, handicraft-tradesmen, that applied themselves to all sorts of manufactures, in which they

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c 2:52. *Haroeh.*
d 2:53,54. Josh. 15:33. Judg. 13:25.
e Judg. 15:11. 2 Chr. 11:6.
f 18,38. Josh. 15:36.
g 2:19,50.
h See on 2:24.
i Gen. 34:19. Is. 43:4. Acts 17:11.
* That is, *Sorrowful.*
k 7:23. Gen. 3:16. 35:18. 1 Sam. 4: 21.
l 16:8. Gen. 12:8. Job 12:4. Ps. 55: 16. 99:6. 116:2—4. Jer. 33:3. Rom. 10:12—14. 1 Cor. 1:2.
m Gen. 32:28. 33:20. 1 Sam. 1:17. Is. 41:17.
† Heb. *If thou wilt, &c.* Luke 19:42.
n Gen. 12:2. 32:26. Ps. 72:17. Acts 3:26. Eph. 1:3.
o Josh. 17:14—18. Judg. 1:27—36. Prov. 10:22.
p Ps. 119:173. Is. 41:10. John 10:28.
q Gen. 48:16. Prov. 30:8,9. Matt. 6: 13. Rom. 12:9. 16:19. 2 Tim. 4:18.
‡ Heb. *do me.*
r Ps. 32:3,4. 51:8,12. Matt. 26:75. John 21:17. 2 Cor. 2:1—7. Eph. 4:30. Rev. 3:19.
s 1 K. 3:7—13. Joh 22:27,28. Ps. 21:4. 65:2. 66:19,20. 116:1,2. Matt. 7:7—11. Eph. 3:20.
§ Or, *the city of Nahash.*
t Josh. 15:17. Judg. 1:13. 3:9—11.
‖ Or, *Hathath* and *Meonothai*, who *begat.*
¶ Or, inhabitants *of the valley.*
** That is, *craftsmen.* 2 K. 24.14. Neh. 11:35.
u Num. 13:6,30. 14:6—10,24,30. Josh. 14:6—14. 15:13—20. Judg. 1:12—14.

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called Chelubai, and Caleb. (*M. R.*—2:18—20, 42—49, *v.* 42.) SCOTT.

Verses 2—4.

The Zorathites were the inhabitants of Zorah: but they in general descended from Shobal, or were subject to him. 'The father of Etam,' seems to imply, that the persons spoken of were the sons of one, who was lord of Etam, and progenitor of its principal inhabitants.—Hur appears to have been the grandfather of Salma, who before was called the father of Beth-lehem. (2:52, 53.) ID.

(3.) *These were of the father of Etam.*] 'Lit. "And these are the father of Etam, Jezreel, and Ishma and Idbash;" which is nonsense. Doubtless instead of "father" the original ms. had "sons," agreeably to all the ancient versions.' HEWLETT.

Verses 9, 10.

It must be supposed, Jabez lived soon after Israel took possession of Canaan; and when they were greatly straitened by the remains of the ancient inhabitants. He seems to have been constrained to fight against the Canaanites: but he conducted the war with faith and prayer; and he entreated the Lord to be with him, and both to enlarge his coast, and to preserve him from disastrous events, which might occasion grief unto him.—Believers, under the O. T. saw, in the land of Canaan, a type of heaven; in their wars was represented the conflict of God's people with their enemies; and every clause of his prayer may be applied to, and doubtless was intended for, more noble and spiritual blessings.—This instructive example, in the midst of genealogies, to us so abstruse, seems like the fragrant rose, surrounded by thorns; or as refreshing streams in the desert: and it appears a recompense intended for the careful student of God's word, who diligently and reverently examines the whole, comparing one part with another, without disregarding or undervaluing any. SCOTT.

Grieve me. (10) 'Rather,' that I might be no more *sorrowful* (Jabez.)' BOOTHR. The verb from which his name Jabez was derived, and the noun translated *sorrow*. (9) ID.

Verse 12.

Of Rechah.] 'Something is wanting after this, viz. "who was the father of Kenaz."' BOOTHR.

Verse 13.

Kenaz is supposed to have been the son of Chelub. (11. *Notes, Josh.* 15:16, 17, *v.* 17. *Judg.* 3:9, 10, *v.* 9.) SCOTT.

Verse 14.

Craftsmen.] (*M.*) Smiths, carpenters, and other artificers, may be included under this general term. (22, 23.) SCOTT. In vs. 14, 21, 23. appears the first allusion, since Gen. 47:22. to *castes*, and to the exclusive pursuit of a craft by particular families: see note, Neh. 11:35. ED.

and Naam: and the sons of Elah, even * Kenez.

16 And the sons of Jehaleleel; Ziph, and Ziphah, Tiria, and Asareel.

17 And the sons of Ezra *were*, Jether, and Mered, and Epher, and Jalon: and she bare Miriam, and Shammai, and Ishbah the father of [v] Eshtemoa.

18 And his wife † Jehudijah bare Jered [x] the father of Gedor, and Heber the father of [y] Socho, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah. And these *are* the sons of Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh, which Mered took.

19 And the sons of *his* wife ‡ Hodiah the sister of Naham, the father of [z] Keilah the Garmite, and Eshtemoa the Maachathite.

20 And the sons of Shimon *were* Amnon and Rinnah, Ben-hanan, and Tilon. And the sons of Ishi *were* Zoheth, and Ben-zoheth.

21 ¶ The sons of [a] Shelah the son of Judah *were*, Er the father of Lecah, and Laadah the father of Mareshah, and the families of the house of them that wrought fine linen, of the house of Ashbea.

22 And Jokim, and the men of Chozeba, and Joash, and Saraph, who had the dominion in Moab, and Jashubi-lehem. And *these are* ancient things.

23 These *were* [b] the potters, and those that dwelt among plants and hedges; there they dwelt with the king for his work.

were ingenious and industrious above their neighbors, *v.* 14. There was a valley where they lived, which was, from them, called *The valley of craftsmen*. They that are craftsmen, are not therefore to be looked upon as mean men.

2. One of these married Pharaoh's daughter, *v.* 18. that was the common name of the kings of Egypt. If an Israelite in Egypt, before the bondage began, while Joseph's merits were yet fresh in mind, was preferred to be the king's son-in-law, it is not to be thought strange: few Israelites could, like Moses, refuse an alliance with the court.

3. Another is said to be the *father of the house of them that wrought fine linen*, *v.* 21. It is inserted in their genealogy as their honor, that they were the best weavers, and brought up their children, from one generation to another, to the same business, not aiming to make them gentlemen. This Laadah is said to be the *father of them that wrought fine linen;* as, before the flood, Jubal is said to be *the father of musicians*, and Jabal of *shepherds*, &c. His posterity inhabited the city of Mareshah, the manufacture or staple-commodity of which place, was, linen-cloth, with which their kings and priests were clothed.

4. Another family had had *dominion in Moab*, but were now in *servitude in Babylon*, *v.* 22, 23. (1.) It was found among the *ancient things*, that they had the *dominion in Moab;* probably, in David's time, when that country was conquered. (2.) Their posterity were now potters and gardeners, as is supposed, in Babylon, where they *dwelt with the king for his work;* got a good livelihood by their industry, and therefore cared not for returning with their brethren to their own land after the years of captivity were expired. They that now have dominion, know not what their posterity may be reduced to, nor what mean employments they may be glad to take up with. But they were unworthy the name of *Israelites*, that would dwell among *plants and hedges*, rather than be at the pains to return to Canaan.

V. 24—43. We here have some of the genealogies of the tribe of Simeon, (though not a tribe of great note,) especially the princes of that tribe, *v.* 38. Of this tribe it is said they *increased greatly*, but *not like to the children of Judah*, *v.* 27. They whom God increases, ought to be thankful, though they see others more increased.

Here observe, 1. The cities allotted them, *v.* 28. Of which see Josh. 19: 1, &c. When it is said, they were theirs *unto the reign of David*, it intimates, that, when the ten tribes revolted from the house of David, many of the Simeonites quitted these cities, because they lay within Judah, and seated themselves elsewhere.

2. The ground they got elsewhere. When those of this tribe, that revolted from the house of David, were carried captive with the rest into Assyria, those that adhered to Judah, were remarkably owned of God, and prospered in their endeavors to enlarge their coasts. In the days of Hezekiah, a generation of Simeonites, whose tribe had long crouched and truckled, was animated to make these bold efforts. (1.) Some mastered a place in Arabia, (as it should seem,) called *the entrance of Gedor*, inhabited by the posterity of cursed Ham, *v.* 40. and dwelt there This adds to the glory of Hezekiah's pious reign, that as his kingdom in general prospered, so did particular families. It is said they found fat pastures, and yet *the land was quiet;* even when Assyria was giving disturbance to all her neighbors, this land escaped their alarms. The inhabitants being shepherds, who molested none, were not themselves molested, till the Simeonites came and drove them out and succeeded them, not only in the plenty, but in the peace, of their land. Those who dwell (as we do) in a fruitful country, and whose land is *wide*, and quiet, and peaceable, have reason to own themselves indebted to that God who *appoints the bounds of our habitation*. (2.) Others of them, to the number of 500, under the command of 4 brethren, here named, made a descent on mt. Seir, and smote the remainder of the devoted Amalekites,

24 ¶ The sons of Simeon *were*, [c] Nemuel, and Jamin, [d] Jarib, [e] Zerab, *and* Shaul:

25 Shallum his son, Mibsam his son, Mishma his son.

26 And the sons of Mishma; Hamuel his son, Zacchur his son, Shimei his son.

27 And Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters; but his brethren had not many children, neither did all their family multiply § like to the children of Judah.

28 And they dwelt at [f] Beer-sheba, and Moladah, and Hazar-shual,

29 And at [g] Bilhah, and at Ezem, and at Tolad,

30 And at [h] Bethuel, and at Hormah, and at [i] Ziklag,

31 And at Beth-marcaboth, [j] and Hazar-susim, and at Beth-birei, and at Shaaraim. These *were* their cities unto the reign of David.

32 And their villages *were* [k] Etam, and Ain, Rimmon, and Tochen, and Ashan, five cities:

33 And all their villages that *were* round about the same cities, unto [l] Baal. These *were* their habitations, and ‖ their genealogy

* Or, *Uknaz.*
v 19. 6: 57. Josh. 15: 50. *Eshtemoh.* 21:14. 1 Sam. 30: 28.
† Or, *the Jewess.*
x 4,39. Josh. 15:58.
y Josh. 15:34,35,48. *Socoh.*
‡ Or, *Jehudijah.* 18.
z Josh. 15:44. 1 Sam. 23:1,&c.
a 2:3. 9:5. Gen. 38:5. 46:12. Num. 26:20. Neh. 11:5. *Shiloni.*
b 14. Ps. 81:6.
c Gen. 46:10. Ex. 6:15. *Jemuel.*
d Num. 26:12—14. *Jachin.*
e Gen. 46:10. *Zohar.*
§ Heb. *unto.* Num. 2:4,13. 26:14,22.
f Josh. 15:28,29. 19:2,3,9.
g Josh. 19:3,4. *Balah-Ezem-Eltolad.*
h Josh. 19:4. *Bethul.*
i 12:1. Josh. 15:31. 19:5. 1 Sam. 27: 6. 30:1. Neh. 11:28.
j Josh. 19:5,6. *Hazar-susah. Beth-lebaoth. Sharuhen.*
k Josh. 19:7. *Ether. Remmon.*
l Josh. 19:8. *Baalath-beer.*
‖ Or, *as they divided themselves by nations among them.*

Verses 17, 18.

Ezra seems to have been the person before called *Asareel*, (16) or, as some think, his son. SCOTT.

She bare. (17) That is, Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh bare to Mered: (18) for these appear to have been Ezra's grandsons. Many think Pharaoh was the name of an Israelite; yet it is not impossible that Mered might marry a daughter of an Egyptian king, by some of his concubines.—*Father of*, &c.] *Notes*, 2:21, 42—49, *v.* 49. ID.

'These two vs. as the text stands are unintelligible. By transposing the last clause of *v.* 18. to the middle of *v.* 17. the whole seems natural and easy. So *Michaelis*.' BOOTHR.

Verse 20.

Shimon is supposed to have been another son of Mered, by Hodiah, or *Jehudijah*. (18, 19.) As the name signifies a *Jewess*, (18, *marg.*) it rather favors the opinion, that Bithiah was not a Jewess, but an Egyptian. SCOTT.

Verses 21. 22.

Wrought fine linen.] Rather, 'were manufacturers of cotton.' *Geddes*; who tr. the latter part of *v.* 22. 'Who sojourned in Moab, but returned to Beth-lehem and Adaberim-aithakim: which is countenanced by the Sept. Certainly our translation seems strange and unconnected.' HEWLETT.

(21.) The sacred historian had mentioned the descendants of Judah by Zerah; (2:6—8.) and having more copiously given the genealogies of Judah's posterity by Pharez, he here mentions briefly a few of the line of Shelah, (2:3.) the son of Judah, by the Canaanitish woman whom he married; and who was his eldest surviving son. (*Gen.* 38: 4, 5, 11—16, 24. *Neh.* 11:4, 6.) SCOTT.

Verses 22, 23.

It was common in those ages, and still is in many places, for particular trades and professions to be continued in families, through successive generations. [Note, Neh. 11: 35.] ID.

(23.) *Plants and hedges.*] This might have been tr. 'Those that dwelt at Netaim and Gedarah. *Houbigant* translates the first word, but not the last.' HEWLETT.

Verse 24.

The families of Simeon are mentioned next to those of Judah, because their inheritances adjoined to each other. (*M. R.—Josh.* 19: 1—9.) SCOTT.

Verses 30, 31.

Ziklag was at first given to Simeon: (*Josh.* 19:5.) but the Philistines took it, and gave it to David; so that from his time it belonged to Judah. (*M. R.—Note*, 1 *Sam.* 27:5, 6.) ID.

34 And Meshobab, and Jamlech, and Joshah the son of Amaziah,

35 And Joel, and Jehu the son of Josibiah, the son of Seraiah, the son of Asiel,

36 And Elioenai, and Jaakobah, and Jeshohaiah, and Asaiah, and Adiel, and Jesimiel, and Benaiah,

37 And Ziza the son of Shiphi, the son of Allon, the son of Jedaiah, the son of Shimri, the son of Shemaiah:

38 These * mentioned by *their* names *were* princes in their families: and the house of their fathers increased greatly.

39 And they went to the entrance of [m] Gedor, *even* unto the east side of the valley, to seek pasture for their flocks.

40 And they found fat pasture and good, and [n] the land *was* wide, and quiet, and peaceable; for *they* of [o] Ham had dwelt there of old.

41 And [p] these written by name came in the days of [q] Hezekiah king of Judah, and smote their tents, and the habitations that were found there, and destroyed them utterly unto this day, and dwelt in their rooms: because *there was* [r] pasture there for their flocks.

42 And *some* of them, *even* of the sons of Simeon, five hundred men, went to [s] mount Seir, having for their captains Pelatiah, and Neariah, and Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi.

43 And they smote [t] the rest of the Amalekites that were escaped, and dwelt there [u] unto this day

CHAP. V.

Judah and Joseph preferred before Reuben, who forfeited his birthright, 1, 2. Reuben's descendants; some of whom vanquish the Hagarites, 3—10. The chief men of Gad, and their habitations, 11—17. Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh, obtain a victory over the Hagarites, 18—22. The habitations and chief men of that half of Manasseh, 23, 24. The captivity of the two tribes and half, for their sins, 25, 26.

NOW the sons of Reuben, the first-born of Israel, (for [a] he *was* the first-born; but, [b] forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, [c] his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel: [d] and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright.

2 For * Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him *came* [f] the † chief ruler; but the birthright *was* Joseph's:)

* Heb. *coming by names.* 5:24. Gen. 6:4.
m 4,18. Josh. 12:13. *Geder.* 15:58.
n Judg. 18:7—10.
o Gen. 9:22, &c. 10:6. Ps. 78:51. 105: 23.
p 33—38.
q 2 K. 18:8. Is. 14:28—32.
r Num. 32:1—4.
s Gen. 36:8, 9. Deut. 1:2.
t Ex. 17:14—16. Deut. 25:17—19. 1 Sam. 15:7, 8. 30:17. 2 Sam. 8:12.
u Deut. 34:6. Judg. 1:26. 2 Chr. 5:9. Jer. 44:6. Matt. 27:8. 28:15.
a 2:1. Gen. 29:32. 46:8. 49:3. Ex. 6: 14. Num. 1:5. 16:1. 26:5.
b Gen. 35:22. 49:4. Lev. 18:8. 20:11. Deut. 27:20. 1 Cor. 5:1.
c Gen. 48:15—22. Deut. 21:17.
d Gen. 25:23. 1 Sam. 16:6—11.
e Gen. 49:8—10. Num. 2:3. 7:12. Judg. 1:2. Ps. 60:7. 108:8.
f 1 Sam. 16:1, 10, 12. 2 Sam. 8:15. Ps. 78:68—71. Jer. 23:5, 6. Mic. 5:2. Matt. 2:6. Heb. 7:14.
† Or, *prince.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Children should consider how much their parents, especially their mothers, suffered for them, before they became capable of reflection; and they should endeavor in every method to requite them, as much as possible, by kindness, and by aiming to be a comfort to them, in their whole conduct. But it is basely ungrateful, (though alas! very common,) willingly to cause them still more exquisite and durable anguish, by ill-behavior.—Those events, which at first occasion most sorrow, often terminate in the greatest comfort: we should not therefore yield to despondency, but 'hope to the end,' and expect to extract good from every apparent evil.—But it is natural for us to record our sorrows rather than our mercies; though, considering our guilt and sinfulness, we may reasonably wonder that the latter are so many, and the former so few.—'The honor, which cometh from God,' is introduced by the gifts of wisdom, faith, and piety; and when these are bestowed, men will at length be honorable, whether they be renowned and prosperous, or not.—We go about our proper work in a right manner, when we use lawful and suitable means for success with all assiduity, and seek a blessing on them by fervent prayer.—A confluence of all earthly good things cannot 'bless us indeed:' the true felicity, which our hearts should eagerly desire, consists in the favor, image, and presence of God; and we should pray for this, as resolved not to depart without it.—We may very properly, with resignation, pray to be kept from the evil of *suffering*, which is grievous to nature; but the evil of *sinning*, most affrights and disquiets the spiritually minded.—In this checkered world, indeed, there is nothing durable or substantial: but possessing the hope of unchangeable felicity, we may cheerfully acquiesce in the Lord's allotment of our worldly settlements, and occupations. Nor is it desirable to advance our children much above our own rank; for those, who at one time have dominion, may at another become dependent on the worst of men for a penurious maintenance: whereas honest labor, in some regular and useful calling, best preserves that mediocrity which is most comfortable, and most advantageous to our spiritual concerns.

SCOTT.

Verses 34—38.

These were eminent men among the Simeonites; and perhaps leaders in that expedition, which is next recorded. SCOTT.

Verses 39—43.

Perhaps this tract belonged to the Simeonites in the division of the land, and at length they got possession of it. Some however think, that a country towards Arabia, without the borders of the promised land, is intended. It seems that the remains of the Amalekites, after the general destruction of them made by Saul and David, had settled near to the Edomites, in mount Seir: but this remnant was extirpated by a small company of Simeonites.—Some think, that the kings of Babylon permitted this part of Simeon to remain unmolested in their possessions, through the captivity, even to the time of Ezra: but perhaps Ezra extracted the words, 'unto this day,' from the ancient records without altering them.—*The habitations.* (41) Or, the *Meunnim*, or *Maonites.* (Heb.—*Judg.* 10:12. 2 *Chr.* 26:7.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. V. V. 2. 'By "*the chief ruler*" is here meant, first, David, and after him the Messiah, agreeably to the celebrated prophecy of Jacob, Gen. 49:10. The *Syriac* calls Him "Christ the King," and the *Arabic*, "Messiah the King." HEWLETT.

3 The [e] sons, *I say*, of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, *were*, Hanoch, and [h] Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

4 The sons of Joel; Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son,

5 Micah his son, Reaia his son, Baal his son,

B. C. 740. 6 Beerah his son, whom [i] Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria carried away *captive:* he *was* prince of the Reubenites.

7 And his brethren by their families, [k] when the genealogy of their generations was reckoned, *were* the chief, Jeiel, and Zechariah,

8 And Bela the son of Azaz, the son of [l] Shema, the son of Joel, who dwelt in [m] Aroer, even unto [n] Nebo, and [o] Baal-meon.

9 And eastward he inhabited, unto the entering in of the wilderness from the river Euphrates: [p] because their cattle were multiplied in the land of Gilead.

B. C. 1060. 10 And in the days of Saul they made war with [q] the Hagarites, who fell by their hand: and they dwelt in their tents * throughout all the east *land* of Gilead.

11 ¶ And the children of Gad dwelt over against them, [r] in the land of Bashan unto Salcah:

12 Joel the chief, and Shapham the next, and Jaanai, and Shaphat in Bashan.

13 And their brethren, of the house of their fathers *were*, Michael, and Meshullam, and Sheba, and Jorai, and Jachan, and Zia, and Heber, seven.

14 These *are* the children of Abihail the son of Huri, the son of Jaroah, the son of Gilead, the son of Michael, the son of Jeshishai, the son of Jahdo, the son of Buz:

15 Ahi the son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, chief of the house of their fathers.

16 And they dwelt in Gilead in Bashan, and in her towns, and in all the suburbs of [s] Sharon, upon their † borders.

B. C. 750. 17 All these were [t] reckoned by genealogies in the days of [u] Jotham king of Judah, and in the days of [v] Jeroboam king of Israel.

18 ¶ The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, of ‡ valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skilful in war, *were* [x] four and forty thousand seven hundred and threescore, that went out to the war.

19 And they [y] made war with the Hagarites, with Jetur, and [z] Nephish, and Nodab.

20 And [a] they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that *were* with them: for [b] they cried to God in the battle, and he was entreated of them; [c] because they put their trust in him.

21 And they § took away their cattle; of their camels fifty thousand, and of sheep two hundred and fifty thousand, and of asses two thousand, and of ‖ men an hundred thousand.

22 For there fell down many slain, because [d] the war *was* of God. And they dwelt

II. Of the tribe of Gad, some great families are here named, *v.* 12. Seven, children of Abihail, whose pedigree is carried upward from the son to the father, *v.* 14, 15. as that, *v.* 4, 5. is brought downward from father to son. These genealogies were perfected in the days of Jotham king of Judah, but begun some years before, in the reign of Jeroboam II. king of Israel; only it does not appear, why it was just before they were carried away captive by the Assyrians; as we read, 2 K. 15: 29, 32. When the judgments of God were ready to break out against them for their wretched degeneracy and apostasy, then were they priding themselves in their genealogies, that they were the children of the covenant; as the Jews, in our Savior's time, who, when they were ripe for ruin, boasted, *We have Abraham to our father.* Or, there might be a special providence in it, and a favorable intimation that though they were, for the present, cast out, they were not cast off for ever. What we design to call for hereafter, we keep an inventory of.

V. 18—26. The heads of the half tribe of Manasseh, on the other side Jordan, are named here, *v.* 23, 24. Their lot, at first, was Bashan; but afterward they increased so much in wealth and power, that they spread far north, even unto Hermon.

Two things only are here recorded of the tribes on the other side Jordan, in which they were all concerned. They all shared,

1. In a glorious victory over the *Hagarites;* so the Ishmaelites were now called, to remind them they were *the sons of the bond-woman*, that was *cast out.* We are not told when this victory was obtained: whether it be the same with that of the Reubenites, said, *v.* 10. to be *in the days of Saul;* or whether that success of one of these tribes animated and excited the other two to join them in another expedition, is not certain. It seems, though in Saul's time the common interests of the kingdom were weak and low, some of the tribes that acted separately, did well for themselves. These, (1.) Had a brave army, *v.* 18. How much more considerable might Israel have been than they were in the time of the judges, if all the tribes had acted in conjunction! (2.) They took the right course to engage God for them, *v.* 20. Now they acted as Israelites indeed. As the seed of believing Abraham, they *put their trust in God.* They relied not on their powerful army, but on the divine power, and the commission they had from God to enlarge their coasts, if there was occasion, by making war even with those that were very far off, beside the devoted nations. See Deut. 20: 15. They depended on God's providence to give them success. As the seed of praying Jacob, *they cried unto God*, especially *in the battle*, when, perhaps, at first, they were in danger of being overpowered. See the like done, 2 Chr. 13: 14. In distress, God expects we should cry to Him; He distrains on us for this tribute, this rent. In our spiritual conflicts, we must look up to Heaven for strength: and it is the believing prayer, that will be the prevailing prayer. (3.) We are told what success they had: *God was entreated of them;* God never yet failed any that trusted in Him. And then they routed the enemy's army, though far superior in number to theirs, slew many, *v.* 22. took 100,000 prisoners, enriched themselves greatly with the spoil, and settled themselves in their country, *v.* 21, 22. If the battle be the Lord's, there is reason to hope it will be successful. Then we may expect to prosper in any enterprise, and then only, when we take God along with us.

2. They shared, at length, in an inglorious captivity. Had they kept close to God and their duty, they had continued to enjoy both their an-

e Gen. 46:9. Ex. 6:14. Num. 26:5—9.
h Gen. 46:9. *Phallu.*
i 26. 2 K. 15:29. 16:7. *Tiglath-pileser.*
k 17.
l 4. *Shemaiah.*
m Num. 32:34. Deut. 2:36. Josh. 13: 15—21. Is. 17:2.
n Num. 32:38. Deut. 32:49. 34:1. Is. 15:2.
o Josh. 13:17. Ez. 25:9.
p Josh. 22:8,9.
q 19,20. Gen. 21:9. 25:12. Ps. 83:6.
* Heb. *upon all the face of the east.*
r Num. 32:34—36. Deut. 3:16—17. Josh. 13:11,24—28.
s 27:29. Cant. 2:1. Is. 35:2.
† Heb. *goings forth.*
t 7.
u 2 K. 15:5,32. 2 Chr. 27:1.
v 2 K. 14:16,23,28.
‡ Heb. *sons of valor.*
x Josh. 4:12,13.
y See on 10.
z 1:31. Gen. 25:15. *Naphish.*
a 22. Ex. 17:11. Josh. 10:14,42. 1 Sam. 7:12. 19:5. Ps. 46:1. 146:5,6.
b 2 Chr. 14:11—13. 18:31. 20:12. 32: 20,21.
c Ps. 9:10. 20:7,8. 22:4,5. 84:11,12. Jer. 17:7,8. Nah. 1:7. Eph. 1:12.
§ Heb. *led captive.*
‖ Heb. *souls of men.* Rev. 18:13.
d 2 Chr. 32:8. Rom. 8:31.

Verses 3—8.

Very brief extracts are made from the registers of Reuben, and of several other tribes: because, it is probable, but few persons of these tribes returned from the captivity to settle in Canaan: and therefore only a few of these tribes were concerned in the genealogies, compared with the numbers of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, of whom the Jews after that event principally consisted. It may be supposed, Ezra's contemporaries would see the reason, why the persons selected should be named, and not others; though we can assign none.—This ch. contains all that relates to the two tribes and a half, which settled E. of Jordan. (*Num.* 32: *Josh.* 22:) SCOTT.

Verse 9.

The inheritance of Reuben extended to the borders of that desert, which reached even to the Euphrates. [See note, Gen. 15: 18.] ID.

Verse 14.

Buz.] *Boothr.* joins this with the next name, and reads 'The son of Buzahi. (15) The son of Abdiel,' &c. ED.

Verses 18—22.

The Hagarites (10) were the descendants of Hagar, or the Ishmaelites properly so called; (*M. R.* 19.) and being a nation of plunderers, they would not fail to give their neighbors just cause of making war upon them. (*Gen.* 16:12.) If this was the same war, as was before mentioned, (10) the two tribes and half tribe beyond Jordan might be left, during a part of Saul's reign, to defend themselves: but some think that these tribes were numbered by genealogies, in the days of Jeroboam and Jotham, in order to make war against the Hagarites. (17)—The multitude of the prisoners may give an idea of the superiority in numbers of the enemy, and of the slaughter which was made.—The Ishmaelites have always been remarkable for the numbers of camels, which they take with them in their expeditions.—When we read of this conduct and success of these Israelites, we are ready to say, 'Oh, that there had' always 'been such an heart in them!' but the conclusion of the chapter gives us a different view of their character and condition. SCOTT.

in their steads [c] until the captivity.

23 ¶ And the children of the half tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land; they increased from Bashan, unto [d] Baal-hermon and Senir, and unto mount [e] Hermon.

24 And these *were* the heads of the house of their fathers, even Epher, and Ishi, and Eliel, and Azriel, and Jeremiah, and Hodaviah, and [f] Jahdiel, mighty men of valor, [*] famous men *and* heads of the house of their fathers.

25 And they transgressed against the God of their fathers, and [h] went a whoring [i] after the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed before them.

26 And the God of Israel [k] stirred up the spirit of [l] Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of [m] Tilgath-pilneser, king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, [n] and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day.

CHAP. VI.

The sons of Levi, by Aaron, to Eleazar, 1—3. The line of Eleazar to the captivity, 4—15. The families of Levi, 16—19. The sons of Gershom, 20, 21: of Kohath, 22—28: of Merari, 29, 30. The singers appointed by David, 31—48. The office of Aaron and his sons, 49. Aaron's line to Ahimaaz, 50—53. The cities of the priests and Levites, 54—81.

B. C. 1700. THE [a] sons of Levi; [b] Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

2 And [c] the sons of Kohath; [d] Amram, Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel.

3 And the children of Amram; [e] Aaron, and Moses, and [f] Miriam. The sons also of Aaron; [g] Nadab and Abihu, [h] Eleazar and Ithamar.

4 Eleazar begat [i] Phinehas, Phinehas begat [j] Abishua,

5 And Abishua begat Bukki, and Bukki begat Uzzi,

6 And Uzzi begat Zerahiah, and Zerahiah begat Meraioth,

7 Meraioth begat Amariah, and Amariah begat Ahitub,

8 And [k] Ahitub begat [l]

B. C. 1100. Zadok, and Zadok begat [m] Ahimaaz,

9 And Ahimaaz begat Azariah, and Azariah begat Johanan,

B. C. 760. 10 And Johanan begat Azariah, (he *it is* that [n] executed the priest's office in † the temple, that [o] Solomon built in Jerusalem,)

11 Azariah begat [p] Amariah, and Amariah begat Ahitub,

12 And Ahitub begat Zadok, and Zadok begat [q] Shallum,

13 And Shallum begat [r] Hilkiah, and Hilkiah begat Azariah,

B. C. 588. 14 And Azariah begat [s] Seraiah, and Seraiah begat Jehozadak.

15 And [t] Jehozadak went *into captivity*, [u] when the LORD carried away Judah and Jerusalem [x] by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

16 ¶ The sons of

B. C. 1700. Levi; [y] Gershom, Kohath, and Merari.

duced them not, then wholly to *root them out*, v. 26. These tribes were first placed, and they were first displaced. They would have the best land, not considering that it lay more exposed. But those who are governed more by sense than by reason or faith in their choices, may expect to fare accordingly.

CHAP. VI. Though Joseph and Judah shared between them the forfeited honors of the birthright, yet Levi was first of all the tribes, digni-

cient lot and their new conquests; but they *transgressed against the God of their fathers*, v. 25. They lay on the borders, and conversed most with the neighboring nations, by which means they learned their idolatrous usages, and transmitted the infection to the other tribe; for this, God had a controversy with them, and *stirred up the spirit of the kings of Assyria*, first one, and then another, against them, served his own purposes by the designs of those ambitious monarchs, employed them to *chastise* these revolters first, and when that re-

[c] 26. 2 K. 15:29. 17:6.
[d] Josh. 13:29—31.
[e] Deut. 3:8,9. 4:48. Josh. 13:11. Ps. 133:3. Cant. 4:8.
[*] Heb. *men of names.* 4:38.
[h] Judg. 2:17. 8:33. 2 K. 17:7,&c. Hos. 1:2. 9:1. Rev. 17:5.
[i] Judg. 2:12. 2 Chr. 25:14,15. Ps. 106: 34—39.
[k] 2 Sam. 24:1. 2 Chr. 33:11. Ezra 1:5 Is. 10:5,6. 13:2—5.
[l] 2 K. 15:19.
[m] See on 6.—2 K. 15:29. 16:7. *Tig lath-pilezer.*
[n] 2 K. 17:6. 18:11. 19:12. Is. 37:12.
[a] 23:6. Gen. 46:11. Ex. 6:16. Num 3:17. 26:57.
[b] 16,17,20. *Gershom.*
[c] 23:12. Ex. 6:18,21—24.
[d] 22. *Amminadab.*
[e] 23:13. Ex. 6:20.
[f] Ex. 2:4,7. 15:20. Mic. 6:4.
[g] 24:1,2. Ex. 5:23. 24:1. 28:1. Lev 10:1,12.
[h] 24:3—6.
[i] 50. 9:20. Ex. 6:25. Num. 25:6—11 31:6. Josh. 22:13,30—32. 24:33. Judg 20:28. Ezra 8:2. Ps. 106:30,31.
[j] Ezra 7:1—5.
[k] 2 Sam. 8:17.
[l] 2 Sam. 15:35. 17:15. 20:25. 1 K. 1 8,34,44. 2:35.
[m] 2 Sam. 15:27,36. 17:17,20. 18:19,22 27—29.
[n] 2 Chr. 26:17—20.
† Heb. *the house.*
[o] 1 K. 6: 7: 2 Chr. 3: 4:
[p] Ezra 7:3.
[q] 9:11. Neh. 11:11. *Meshullam.*
[r] 2 K. 22:12—14. 2 Chr. 34:14—20. 35: 8.
[s] 2 K. 25:18. Ezra 7:1. Neh. 11:11. Jer. 3:24—27. Zech. 6:11.
[t] Ezra 3:2. *Jozadak.* Hag. 1:1,12,14. 2:2. *Josedech.*
[u] 2 K. 25:21. 2 Chr. 36:17—21. Jer. 39:9. 52:12—15,28.
[x] Ex. 4:13. 2 K. 14:27. Acts 14:27. Rom. 15:18.
[y] 1. Ex. 6:16. *Gershon.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord punishes none above their deserts; and, as He sees good, He confers unmerited favors on mankind.—They, who are related to our chief Ruler of the tribe of Judah, as his true disciples and subjects, are far more favored, than those who have a two-fold, or ten-fold, portion of perishing riches. Let us seek and choose this better portion; and leave the children of this world to contend about their gilded baubles, without envying, coveting, or interfering. We need not in that case fear wanting any thing truly good for us, 'for our Father knoweth what things we have need of:' when our families increase, He will increase our provision; and it is our privilege to cast our care on Him, and to keep in the path of duty.—Happy is that people who live together in harmony, who readily assist each other; who strenuously oppose the common enemies of their souls; and who acknowledge God in all their ways, but are especially earnest in times of trial and temptation.—And let it be carefully noticed, that all genuine and warranted trust in God will be expressed by earnest prayer; and this in part distinguishes it from a presumptuous confidence, and an indolent reliance, which often subsist without application to Him, or habitual prayer; and are especially maintained by lifeless forms, and inefficacious notions.—Those who rebel against the Lord, and apostatise from Him, must eventually be ruined: especially, such as desert his worship and reject his salvation, for the sake of those idols which are set up either in temples, or in the hearts of the avaricious, [the selfish,] the sensual, or the ambitious. It will little avail them, to have their names inserted in the genealogies of honorable families, or recorded as famous in the page of history, while rejected by God, and excluded from his kingdom.—We should consider, that those actions, which are vain, foolish, and wicked in man, may be permitted and made use of by the Lord in justice, wisdom, and goodness. From Him the renowned ravagers of the earth derive their power and courage: and they are employed as his executioners, and classed with pestilences, earthquakes, and famines; being equally dreadful and fatal to mankind.—They, whose inordinate desire of earthly objects draws them to a distance from the ordinances of God, are assuredly preparing for their own correction, or destruction. SCOTT.

Verses 25, 26.

The Manassites, with the Reubenites and Gadites, forsook God, to worship idols; and the nation of Israel generally did the same: yet, the two tribes and a half seem to have been more early and entirely corrupted, than the other tribes.—These tribes, when carried captive before the rest of Israel, (*Num.* 32:1—5, 29. 2 *K.* 15:19, 20, 29.) were placed in the same regions by Pul and Tilgath-pilneser, to which Shalmaneser afterwards carried the other tribes. (2 *K.* 17:5, 6. 18:9—12.) —*Hara* is supposed to be the same as *Media*, or part of it. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI. V. 4—15. 'He . . . that executed the priest's office in the temple that Solomon built,' (10) an intimation that the writer lived when the second temple was built or building. (2 *Chr.* 26:16—23.) Johanan is thought by some to have been the same as Jehoiada, the firm friend to religion and the family of David, during Athaliah's usurpation. (2 *K.* 11: 12: 2 *Chr.* 23: 24:) Otherwise Jehoiada is not mentioned.—Urijah, who basely obeyed idolatrous Ahaz, is not named in this catalogue, and perhaps several others are omitted. (*M. R.*)—It is wonderful, that so little is recorded of the high priests, when the office is represented in the law, and by Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, as of a peculiar sanctity and importance. SCOTT.

(4.) *Eleazar begat*, &c.] 'We have no account of the high priests of the line of Ithamar, Eli and his successors, down to Abiathar, whom Solomon removed and substituted Zadok. Was this interruption considered only in regard to the discharge of the office, while the lineal descendant of Eleazar was looked upon as the real high-priest? From no mention being made of Eli, Ahitub, Ahimelech, or Ahijah, and Abiathar, of the line of Ithamar, I suspect that the above distinction obtained.' BOOTHR.

(14.) *Seraiah.*] 'Slain at Riblah by Nebuchadnezzar. 2 K. 25:18, 21. He ended the line of high-priests under the first temple.' BOOTHR. &c.

Verses 16—30.

The principal persons, who presided over the three families of Levi, till the time of David, seem to be mentioned in these vs.—The *M. R.* contain the variation in the names given to the same persons, in different parts of sacred history, as far as it can be ascertained; and nearly the whole, that is at present known concerning them, may be learned by carefully consulting them.—Samuel the son of Elkanah (27, 33, 34.) was not a priest, but descended from Izhar, Aaron's uncle

17 And these *be* the names of [z] the sons of Gershom; Libni, and [a] Shimei.

18 And the sons of Kohath *were* [b] Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel.

19 The sons of Merari; [c] Mahli, and Mushi. And these *are* the families of the Levites, according to their fathers.

20 Of Gershom; [d] Libni, his son, Jahath his son, Zimmah his son,

21 [e] Joah his son, Iddo his son, [f] Zerah his son, [g] Jeaterai his son.

22 The sons of Kohath; [h] Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son,

23 Elkanah his son, and Ebiasaph his son, and Assir his son,

24 Tahath his son, [i] Uriel his son, Uzziah his son, and Shaul his son.

B. C. 1100. 25 And the sons of [k] Elkanah; Amasai, and Ahimoth.

26 *As for* Elkanah: the sons of Elkanah; [l] Zophai his son, and [m] Nahath his son,

27 [n] Eliab his son, Jeroham his son, [o] Elkanah his son.

28 And the sons of Samuel; the first-born [p] Vashni, and Abiah.

29 The sons of Merari; [q] Mahli, Libni his son, Shimei his son, Uzza his son,

30 Shimea his son, Haggiah his son, Asaiah his son.

B. C. 1047. 31 ¶ And these *are they*, [r] whom David set over the service of song in the house of the LORD, [s] after that the ark had rested.

32 And [t] they ministered, before the dwelling-place of the tabernacle of the congregation, with singing, [u] until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem: [v] and *then* they * waited on their office according to their order.

33 And these *are* they that waited, with their children. Of the sons of the Kohathites: [x] Heman a singer, the son of [y] Joel, the son of [z] Shemuel,

34 The son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of [a] Eliel, the son of [b] Toah,

35 The son of [c] Zuph, the son of Elkanah, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai,

36 The son of Elkanah, the son of [d] Joel, the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah,

37 The son of Tahath, the son of Assir, the son of [e] Ebiasaph, the son of [f] Korah,

38 The son of [g] Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel.

39 And his brother [h] Asaph, (who stood on his right hand,) *even* Asaph, the son of Berachiah, the son of Shimea,

40 The son of Michael, the son of Baaseiah, the son of Malchiah,

41 The son of [i] Ethni, the son of Zerah, the son of [k] Adaiah,

42 The son of [l] Ethan, the son of Zimmah, the son of Shimei,

43 The son of [m] Jahath, the son of [n] Gershom, the son of Levi.

44 And their brethren, the sons of Merari, *stood* on the left hand. [o] Ethan the son of [p] Kishi, the son of Abdi, the son of Malluch,

45 The son of Hashabiah, the son of Amaziah, the son of Hilkiah,

46 The son of Amzi, the son of Bani, the son of Shamer,

47 The son of Mahli, the son of Mushi, the son of [q] Merari, the son of Levi.

48 Their [r] brethren also the Levites *were* appointed unto all manner of service of the tabernacle of the house of God.

B. C. 1490. 49 ¶ But [s] Aaron and his sons offered upon the altar of the burnt-offering, and on the altar of incense, *and were appointed* for all

fied and distinguished with an honor more valuable than either precedency or the double portion; and that was the priesthood. This tribe God set apart for Himself; it was Moses' tribe, and perhaps for his sake was thus favored. Of that tribe we have an account in this ch.

V. 1—30. The priests and Levites were more concerned than any other Israelites, to preserve their pedigree clear, and to be able to prove it; because all the honors and privileges of their office depended on their descent. And we read of those, who, though perhaps really children of the priests, yet, because they could not find the register of their genealogies, nor make out their descent by any authentic record, were, *as polluted, put from the priesthood*, and forbidden to eat of the holy things, Ezra 2: 62, 63.

Very little is here recorded of the genealogies of this sacred tribe.

1. The first fathers of it are here named twice, *v.* 1, 16. Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, are three we were very conversant with in Numb. when the families of the Levites were marshalled, and had their work assigned them. Aaron, and Moses, and Miriam, we have known, and cannot pass here without remembering that this was that Moses and Aaron whom God honored, in making them the instruments of Israel's deliverance and settlement, and *figures of Him that was to come;* Moses as a prophet, and Aaron as a priest. And the mention of Nadab and Abihu (though, having no children, there was no occasion to bring them into the genealogy) cannot but remind us of the terrors of that divine justice, which they were made monuments of for offering strange fire, that we may always fear before Him.

2. The line of Eleazar, the successor of Aaron, is here drawn down to the time of the captivity, *v.* 4—15. It begins with Eleazar, who came out of the house of bondage in Egypt; and ends with Jehozadak, who went into the house of bondage in Babylon. Thus, for their sins, they were left as they were found; which might also intimate that the Levitical priesthood made nothing perfect: that was to be done by the *bringing in of a better hope.* Of Azariah it is here said, *v.* 10. *He it is that executed the priest's office in the temple that Solomon built.* It is supposed this was that Azariah who bravely opposed the presumption of king Uzziah when he invaded the priests' office, 2 Chr. 26: 17. though he ventured his neck by it. This was done like a priest, like one that was truly zealous for his God.

3. Some other of the families of the Levites are here accounted for. One of the families of Gershom (that of Libni) is here drawn down as far as Samuel, who had the honor of a prophet added to that of a Levite. One of the families of Merari (that of Mahli) is likewise drawn down for some descents, *v.* 29, 30.

V. 31—53. When the Levites were first ordained in the wilderness, much of their work lay in carrying, and taking care of, the tabernacle and its utensils. In David's time, their number was increased; and, though the greater part of them were dispersed all the nation over, to teach the people the good knowledge of the Lord; yet there was not constant work for all that attended the house of God; therefore David, by special commission and direction from God, new modelled the Levites, as we shall find in the latter part of this book. Here we are told what work he assigned them.

1. *Singing work, v.* 31. David was raised up to be the sweet psalmist of Israel, 2 Sam. 23: 1. not only to pen psalms, but to appoint the singing of them in the house of the Lord; (not so much because he was musical, as because he was devout;) and this he did *after that the ark had rest.* These singers kept up that service in the taber-

z 23:7. Num. 3:18,21.
a Ex. 6:17. *Shimi.*
b 2,3. 23:12.
c 23:21. 24:26. Ex. 6:19. *Mahali.* Num. 3:20. 26:57,58.
d 17.
e 42. *Ethan.*
f 41. *Adaiah.*
g 41. *Ethni.*
h 2,18. Ex. 6:21,24. *Izhar.*
i 38. *Zephaniah. Azariah. Joel.*
k 35,36. Ex. 6:24.
l 35. 1 Sam. 1:1. *Zuph.*
m 34. *Toah.* 1 Sam. 1:1. *Tohu.*
n 34. *Eliel.* 1 Sam. 1:1. *Elihu.*
o 1 Sam. 1:1,19,20.
p 33. 1 Sam. 8:2. *Joel.*
q 19. Num. 3:33.
r 15:16—22,27. 25:1—31.
s 16:1. 2 Sam. 6:17. Ps. 132:8,14.
t 16:4—6,37—42. Ps. 68:24,25.
u 10. 1 K. 8:6—13.
v 9:33. 23:3—31. 2 Chr. 29:25—30. 31: 2. 35:15. Ezra 3:10,11. 6:18. Neh. 11:17—23. 12:27,28,45—47. Ps. 134: 1,2. 135:1—3.
* Heb. *stood.*
x 15:17,19. 16:41,42. 25:1—5. 2 Chr. 5:12. 29:14. Ps. 88: *title.*
y 28. *Vashni.*
z 28. 1 Sam. 1:20,28. *Samuel.*
a 27. *Eliab.*
b 26. *Nahath.*
c 26. *Zophai.*
d 24. *Shaul, Uzziah, Uriel.*
e Ex. 6:24—24. *Abiasaph.*
f Num. 16:1,&c. 26:10,11. Ps. 42: 44: 45: 49: 84: 85: *titles.*
g Num. 3:19. *Izehar.* 16:1.
h 15:17—19. 16:7. 25:2. 26:1. 2 Chr. 5:12. 20:14. 29:13,30. 35:15. Ezra 2:41. 3:10. Neh. 7:44. 11:17,22. 12: 35,46. Ps. 50:73:—83: *titles.*
i 21. *Jeaterai.*
k 21. *Iddo.*
l 21. *Joah.*
m 20.
n 1,16,17,20. 23:6. Gen. 46:11. Ex. 6: 16. Num. 3:17. *Gershon.*
o 25:1,3,6. *Jeduthun.* Ps. 39: *title.*
p 15:17. *Kushaiah.*
q 23:21,23. Ex. 6:19. Num. 3:20,33—36. 4:42. 7:8. 10:17. Josh. 21:7,34—40.
r 23:2,&c. 25: 26: Num. 3:4: 8: 5—26. 16:9,10. 18:
s Ex. 27:1—8. 30:1—7. Lev. 1:5,7,8. 8: 9: 10: 21: 22: Num. 16:16—50. 17: Deut. 18:1—8. Heb. 7:11—14.

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yet, as a prophet, he sacrificed personally, and not by the ministration of the priests, as some have conjectured. (1 *Sam.* 7:9. 9:12—14. 16: 1—5.) SCOTT.

Verse 48.

'It is observable, that in all genealogies of the Levites, there is not a word said of the sons of Moses and their posterity; he having no ambition to prefer them to any office, either in church or state!' *Patrick.* (*See on Num.* 27:18.) They are indeed mentioned; but as in no respect distinguished from the other Levites. (23:14—18.) SCOTT.

the work of the *place* most holy, and to [t] make an atonement for Israel, according to all that [u] Moses the servant of God had commanded.

50 And these *are* the sons of Aaron; [v] Eleazar his son, [x] Phinehas his son, Abishua his son,

51 Bukki his son, Uzzi his son, Zerahiah his son,

52 Meraioth his son, Amariah his son, Ahitub his son,

53 [y] Zadok his son, Ahimaaz his son.

54 ¶ Now [z] these *are* their dwelling places, throughout their [a] castles in their coasts, of the sons of Aaron, [b] of the families of the Kohathites: for theirs was the lot.

55 And they gave them [c] Hebron in the land of Judah, and the suburbs thereof round about it.

56 But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh.

57 And to the sons of Aaron they gave the cities of Judah, *namely*, Hebron, [d] *the city* of refuge, and [e] Libnah with her suburbs, and [f] Jattir, and Eshtemoa, with their suburbs,

58 And [g] Hilen with her suburbs, [h] Debir with her suburbs,

59 And [i] Ashan with her suburbs, and [k] Beth-shemesh with her suburbs:

60 And out of the tribe of Benjamin; [l] Geba with her suburbs, and [m] Alemeth with her suburbs, and [n] Anathoth with her suburbs. All their cities throughout their families *were* thirteen cities.

61 And [o] unto the sons of Kohath, *which were* [p] left of the family of that tribe, *were cities given* out of the half tribe, *namely, out of* the half *tribe* of Manasseh, by lot, ten cities.

62 And to the sons of [q] Gershom throughout their families, out of the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities.

63 Unto the sons of [r] Merari *were given* by lot, throughout their familes, out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad, and out of the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities.

64 And [s] the children of Israel gave to the Levites *these* cities, [t] with their suburbs.

65 And they gave by lot out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, and out of the tribe of the children of Benjamin, [u] these cities which are called by *their* nacle, till the temple was built, and then they *waited on their office* there, *v.* 32.

We have here an account of the three great masters in the service, with their respective families, *v.* 33. Heman, Asaph, and Ethan; one of each of the three houses of the Levites, that there might be an equality.

1. Of the house of Kohath, was Heman with his family, *v.* 33. a man of a sorrowful spirit, if the same Heman that penned the 88th psalm, and yet a singer. He was the grandson of Samuel the prophet, the son of Joel, of whom it is said, that *he walked not in the ways of Samuel*, 1 Sam. 8: 2, 3. but, it seems, though the son did not, the grandson did. Thus the blessing sometimes passes over one generation, and fastens on the next. Perhaps David, in making Heman the chief, had some respect to his old friend Samuel.

2. Of the house of Gershom, was Asaph, called *his brother*, because in the same office, and of the same tribe, though of another family. He was posted on Heman's right hand in the choir, *v.* 39. Several of the psalms bear his name, either penned by him, or tuned by him, as chief musician. It is plain he was the penman of some psalms; for we read of those that praised the Lord in the words of David, and of Asaph; he was a seer, as well as a singer, 2 Chr. 29: 30. His pedigree is run up here through names utterly unknown, as high as Levi, *v.* 39—43.

3. Of the house of Merari, was Ethan, *v.* 44. who was appointed to Heman's left hand. His pedigree is also run up to Levi, *v.* 47. If these were the Heman and Ethan that penned the 88th and 89th psalms, there appears no reason here why they should be called *Ezrahites*, (see the titles of those Psalms,) as there does why those should be called so, who are mentioned *ch.* 2: 6. and who were the sons of Zerah.

II. There was *serving work* in abundance, *in the tabernacle of the house of God*, *v.* 48. to provide water and fuel; to wash and sweep, and carry out ashes: to kill and slay, and boil the sacrifices; and to all such services there were Levites appointed, those of other families, or perhaps those that were not singers, that had either no good voice, or no good ear. *As every one hath received the gift, so let him minister.*

III. There was *sacrificing-work*, but for the priest only, *v.* 49. They only were to sprinkle the blood, and burn the incense; as for *the work of the place most holy*, that was to be done by the High Priest only. Concerning the work of the priests, we are here told, 1. The end they were to have in their eye; they were *to make an atonement for Israel*, to mediate between the people and God; not to magnify and enrich themselves, but to serve the public. They were *ordained for men*, 2. Their rule; they presided in God's house, yet must do as bidden, according to all God commanded. That law the highest are subject to.

V. 54—81. We have here an account of the Levites' cities; called their *castles*, *v.* 54. not only because walled and fortified, and well-guarded by the country; (every nation is interested to protect its ministers;) but because they and their possessions were, in a particular manner, the care of the divine providence: as God was their portion, so God was their protection; and a cottage will be a castle to those that abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

This account is much the same with that we had, Josh. 21. We need not be critical in comparing them; it will not hurt the credit of the holy Scripture, if the names of some of the places be not just the same here they were there. We know it is common for cities to have several names, *Sarum* and *Salisbury*, *Salop*, and *Shrewsbury*, are more unlike than *Hilen*, *v.* 58. and *Holon*, Josh. 21: 15. *Ashan*, *v.* 59. and *Ain*, Josh. 21: 16. *Alemeth*, *v.* 60. and *Almon*, Josh. 21: 18. Time changes names.

We are only to observe, that in this appointment of cities for the Levites, God took care, 1 For the accomplishment of dying Jacob's prediction concerning this tribe, that it should be *scattered in Israel*, Gen. 49: 7. 2. For the diffusing of the knowledge of Himself and his law in all parts of the land of Israel; every tribe had Levites' cities in it; so none could be ignorant of his duty, but it was either his own fault, or the

66 And [x] *the residue* of the families of the sons of Kohath, had cities of their coasts, out of the tribe of Ephraim.

67 And they gave unto them, *of* the cities of refuge, [y] Shechem in mount Ephraim with her suburbs; *they gave* also [z] Gezer with her suburbs,

68 And [a] Jokmeam with her suburbs, and [b] Beth-horon with her suburbs,

69 And [c] Aijalon with her suburbs, and [d] Gath-rimmon with her suburbs:

70 And out of the half tribe of Manasseh; [e] Aner with her suburbs, and [f] Bileam with her suburbs, for the family of the remnant of the sons of Kohath.

71 Unto the sons of Gershom *were given*,

t Ex. 29:33,36,37. 30:10—16. Lev. 4: 20. Num. 15:25. 16:46. Job 33:24. *marg.*
u Deut. 34:5. Josh. 1:1.
v 3—9. 24:1. Ex. 6:23. 28:1. Lev. 10:16. Num. 3:4,32. 20:26—28. 27: 22. Ezra 7:1—5. 8:33.
x See on 4.—9:20.
y 12:28. 29:16. 24:3,31. 1 Sam. 2:35. 2 Sam. 8:17. 15:24—27. 35,36. 17:15 —17. 20:25. 1 K. 1:8,26,34. 2:35. 4:4. Ez. 44:15.
z Num. 35:1—8. Josh. 21:3—8.
a Gen. 25:16.
b Josh. 21:4,5.
c Josh. 14:13. 15:13. 21:11—13. Judg. 1:20.
d Num. 35:13—15. Josh. 20:7—9.
e Josh. 15:42. 21:13,14.
f See on 4:17.—Josh. 15:48.
g Josh. 15:51. 21:15. *Holon.*
h Josh. 15:13. 15:49.
i Josh. 21:16. *Ain.*
k Josh. 15:10. 21:16. 1 Sam. 11:12—19.
l 8:6. Josh. 21:17.
m Josh. 21:18. *Almon.*
n 1 K. 2:26. Is. 10:30. Jer. 1:1. 11:23. 32:12.
o 1,2,18,33.
p 66. Josh. 21:4,5,20—26.
q 71—76. Josh. 21:27—33.
r 77—81. Josh. 21:34—40.
s Josh. 21:41,42.
t Num. 35:2—5.
u 57—60.
x 61.
y Gen. 35:4. Josh. 20:7. 21:21.
z Josh. 12:12. 16:3,10. 21:21.
a Josh. 21:22. *Kibzaim.*
b Josh. 10:11. 16:5. 1 Sam. 13:18.
c Josh. 10:12. *Ajalon.* 21:24.
d Josh. 21:24. *Tanach. Gathrimmon.*
e Josh. 21:25. *Taanach. Gathrimmon.*
f Josh. 17:11. *Ibleam.*

Verses 54—66.

(*M. R.*) 'These things seem to be mentioned so often, and with such exactness, that it might appear what care was taken by God, for the maintenance of his ministers, of all sorts, and for the instruction of his people.' *Patrick.* (*Josh.* 20:21:)—Juttah and Gibeon are here omitted. Perhaps they lay in ruins when the book was written: so that only 11 cities from Judah and Benjamin are enumerated; though 13 were allotted to the priests in the days of Joshua. (*Josh.* 21.16, 17, 19.) SCOTT.

Verses 67—81.

Some cities are here mentioned, as having belonged to Ephraim, which in Joshua are spoken of as cities of Dan: but various changes in such matters would occur in a course of ages. ID.

out of the family of the half tribe of Manasseh, [f] Golan in Bashan with her suburbs, and [h] Ashtaroth with her suburbs:

72 And out of the tribe of Issachar, [i] Kedesh with her suburbs, [k] Daberath with her suburbs,

73 And Ramoth with her suburbs, and Anem with her suburbs:

74 And out of the tribe of Asher; [l] Mashal with her suburbs, and Abdon with her suburbs,

75 And [m] Hukok with her suburbs, and Rehob with her suburbs:

76 And out of the tribe of Naphtali; [n] Kedesh in Galilee with her suburbs, and [o] Hammon with her suburbs, and Kirjathaim with her suburbs.

77 Unto the rest of the children of Merari *were given* out of the tribe of Zebulun, [p] Rimmon with her suburbs, Tabor with her suburbs:

78 And on the other side Jordan by Jericho, on the east side of Jordan, *were given them* out of the tribe of Reuben, [q] Bezer in the wilderness with her suburbs, and [r] Jahzah with her suburbs,

79 Kedemoth also with her suburbs, and Mephaath with her suburbs:

80 And out of the tribe of Gad; [s] Ramoth in Gilead with her suburbs, and [t] Mahanaim with her suburbs,

81 And [u] Heshbon with her suburbs, and [x] Jazer with her suburbs.

Levites[g]. 3. For a comfortable maintenance for those that ministered in holy things. Beside their tithes and offerings, they had glebe lands, and cities of their own to dwell in. Some of the most considerable cities of Israel fell to the Levites' lot. Every tribe had benefit by the Levites; therefore every tribe must contribute to their support. Let him that is taught in the Word, communicate to him that teacheth, and do it cheerfully.

CHAP. VII. Here is no account either of Zebulun or Dan. Why they only should be omitted, we can assign no reason; only it is the disgrace of the tribe of Dan, that idolatry began in that colony of the Danites, which fixed in Laish, and called it *Dan*, and there one of the golden calves was set up by Jeroboam. Dan is omitted, *Rev.* 7.

V. 1—19. We have here a short view,

1. Of the tribe of Issachar, whom Jacob had compared to a *strong ass, couching between two burdens*, Gen. 49: 14. an industrious tribe, that minded their country-business very close, and *rejoiced in their tents*, Deut. 33: 18. Here they appear numerous, valiant, chief men, *v.* 2, 3, 5. They that were inured to labor and business, were of all others the fittest to serve their country when there was occasion. The number of the respective families, as taken in the days of David, is here set down, amounting in the whole to above 145,000 men fit for war. The account, some think, was taken when Joab numbered the people, 2 Sam. 24: But I rather think it refers to some other computation made, perhaps, among themselves; because it is said, 1 Chr. 27: 24. that that account was not inserted into the chronicles of king David, it having offended God.

2. Of Benjamin. Some account is given here, but a much larger in the next ch. The militia scarcely reached to 60,000; but are said to be *mighty men of valor*, *v.* 7, 9, 11. *Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf*, Gen. 49: 27. It was the honor of this tribe, that it produced Saul the first king, and more its honor, that it adhered to the rightful kings of the house of David, when the other tribes revolted.

Here is mention, *v.* 12. of Hushim the son of Aher. The sons of Dan are said to be *Hushim*, Gen. 46: 23. therefore some read Aher appella-

CHAP. VII.

The sons of Issachar, 1—5: of Benjamin, 6—12: of Naphtali, 13: and of Manasseh, 14—19. The sons of Ephraim, of whom some were slain by the men of Gath, 20—22. His sons by Beriah, 23—27. Their habitations, 28, 29. The sons of Asher, 30—40.

B. C. 1700. NOW [z] the sons of Issachar *were*, Tola, and Puah, Jashub, and Shimron, four.

2 And the sons of Tola; Uzzi, and Rephaiah, and Jeriel, and Jahmai, and Jibsam, and Shemuel, heads of their father's house, *to wit*, of Tola: *they were* valiant men of might in their generations; [b] whose number *was* in the days of David two and twenty thousand and six hundred.

3 And the sons of Uzzi; Izrahiah: and the sons of Izrahiah; Michael, and Obadiah, and Joel, Ishiah, five: all of them chief men.

4 And [c] with them, by their generations, after the house of their fathers, *were* bands of soldiers for war, six and thirty thousand *men:* for they had many wives, and sons.

5 And their brethren among all the families of Issachar *were* valiant men of might, reckoned in all, by their genealogies, fourscore and seven thousand.

B. C. 1700. 6 ¶ *The sons* [d] of Benjamin; Bela, and Becher, and [e] Jediael, three.

7 And the sons of Bela, Ezbon, and Uzzi, and Uzziel, and Jerimoth, and Iri, five; heads of the house of *their* fathers, mighty men of valor; and

f Deut. 4:43. Josh. 20:8. 21:27.
h Deut. 1:4. Josh. 9:10. 21:27. *Beeshterah.*
i Josh. 19:37. 21:32. Judg. 4:9.
k Josh. 21:28,29. *Kishon. Daberah. Jarmuth. Engannim.*
l Josh. 21:30. *Mishal.*
m Josh. 21:31. *Helkath.*
n Josh. 12:22. 19:37. 20:7. 21:32. Judg. 4:6. *Kadesh-naphtali.*
o Josh. 21:32. *Hammoth-dor. Kartan.*
p Josh. 21:34,35. *Jokneam. Kartah. Dimnah. Nahalal.*
q Deut. 4:43. Josh. 20:8. 21:36.
r Josh. 21:36,37. *Jahazah.*
s Josh. 21:38,39. 1 K. 22:3. 2 K. 9:1.
t Gen. 32:2. Josh. 21:38. 2 Sam. 17:24, 27. 19:32.
u Num. 21:25. 32:37. Deut. 2:24. Josh. 13:26. Neh. 9:22. Cant. 7:4.
x Num. 32:1,3. Josh. 13:25. 21:39.
z Gen. 46:13. *Phuvah. Job.* Num. 26:23,24. *Pua.*
b 21:1—5. 27:1,23,24. 2 Sam. 24:1—9.
c 12:32.
d 8:1,&c. Gen. 46:21. Num. 26:38—41.
e 10,11.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In the judgment of God, none of the human race are more honorable or valuable, than those who consistently minister in holy things. And though many, who bear this sacred character, render themselves insignificant by their indolence, contemptible by their covetousness, or odious by their profligacy, or bring the divine vengeance on themselves by offering 'strange fire before the Lord:' (*Lev.* 10: 1, 2.) yet, instead of that order being despised on these accounts, those who are singularly humble, diligent, disinterested, zealous, and valiant for the truth, ought to be treated with the greater respect; and of this, God Himself has condescended to set the example in his holy Word.—None of the Lord's people, and especially of his ministers, should be unemployed: they who, through want of ability, or change of circumstances, are precluded from one method of glorifying God, should set themselves to devise another. And if they deem nothing, which may conduce to the advancement of true religion, too laborious, mean, disgusting, or discouraging; if they be disposed to be 'instant in season, and out of season;' to instruct, or encourage, one, ten, or ten thousand, in public, or in private, in a cottage, an hospital, a prison, or a palace; in safe and easy, or in difficult and perilous circumstances; if they consider nothing too little to be attended to, and nothing too arduous to be attempted; and if they do all in sincerity, humility, and simplicity of spirit, they cannot long be unoccupied or useless. But, nothing can be a more pleasant and honorable work, than to excite or assist the devotions of the pious, and to lead them to abound in thanksgivings and praises to the Lord.—If a rich inheritance, or the important station of a magistrate or civil governor, could with propriety be quitted for such a service, the enlightened understanding must perceive it to be an honorable and advantageous exchange; for this is the delightful employment of those above, who are arrived at their eternal rest.—They, who have shown themselves peculiarly disinterested in the cause of God and his people, should be peculiarly considered by their brethren, and their families respected for their sakes.—While ministers are bound to wait on their ministering, according to the work of their place; the people are equally bound, in their several stations, to strengthen their hands, and to contribute without grudging to their comfortable maintenance. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII. V. 1—5. (*M. R.*) When David numbered the people, (2 *Sam.* 24:1—9.) the effective men of Issachar amounted to 87,000: 22,600 of whom descended from Tola his eldest son; but whether the 36,000 (4) were descendants of Tola by Uzzi; and the 22,600, his descendants by Tola's other sons; or whether another of Issachar's sons is intended, does not clearly appear: for Uzzi was the son of Tola and grandson of Issachar. Izrahiah and his five sons are spoken of as five sons of Uzzi. (3) If the former be meant, which seems the more obvious meaning, by far the greatest part of the tribe of Issachar descended from Tola. SCOTT.

Verses 6—11.

The persons mentioned seem not, strictly speaking, to have been the *sons* of Bela and Becher; but renowned persons among their descendants, or such as were progenitors of those who returned from Babylon. ID.

[f] were reckoned, by their genealogies, twenty and two thousand and thirty and four.

8 And the sons of Becher; Zemira, and Joash, and Eliezer, and Elioenai, and Omri, and Jerimoth, and Abiah, and Anathoth, and Alameth. All these *are* the sons of Becher.

9 And the number of them, after their genealogy by their generations, heads of the house of their fathers, mighty men of valor, *was* twenty thousand and two hundred.

10 The sons also of Jediael; Bilhan: and the sons of Bilhan; Jeush, and Benjamin, and [g] Ehud, and Chenaanah, and Zethan, and Tharshish, and Ahishahar.

11 All these the sons of Jediael, by the heads of their fathers, mighty men of valor, *were* seventeen thousand and two hundred *soldiers*, fit to go out for war *and* battle.

12 [h] Shuppim also, and Huppim, the children of [i] Ir, *and* Hushim, the sons of [k] Aher.

13 ¶ The sons of Naphtali; [l] Jahziel, and Guni, and Jezer, and [m] Shallum, [n] the sons of Bilhah.

14 ¶ The sons of Manasseh; Ashriel, whom she bare: (*but* his concubine the Aramitess bare [o] Machir the father of Gilead:

15 And Machir took to wife *the sister* of [p] Huppim and Shuppim, whose sister's name *was* Maachah;) and the name of the second *was* Zelophehad: and [q] Zelophehad had daughters.

16 And Maachah the wife of Machir bare a son, and she called his name Peresh; and the name of his brother *was* Sheresh; and his sons *were* Ulam and Rakem.

17 And the sons of Ulam; [r] Bedan. These *were* the sons of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh.

18 And his sister Hammoleketh bare Ishod, and [s] Abiezer, and Mahalah.

19 And the sons of Shemida were Ahian, and Shechem, and Likhi, and Aniam.

20 ¶ And [t] the sons of Ephraim; Shuthelah, and Bered his son, and Tahath his son, and Eladah his son, and Tahath his son,

21 And Zabad his son, and Shuthelah his son, and Ezer, and Elead, whom the men of Gath *that were* born in *that* land slew because they came down to take away their cattle.

22 And Ephraim their father [u] mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him.

23 And when he went in to his wife, she conceived, and bare a son, and [x] he called his name * Beriah, because it went evil with his house.

24 (And his daughter *was* Sherah, who built [y] Beth-horon the nether, and the upper, and Uzzen-sherah.)

25 And Rephah *was* his son, also Resheph, and Telah his son, and Tahan his son,

26 Laadan his son, Ammihud his son, Elishama his son,

27 [z] Non his son, [b] Jehoshua his son.

28 ¶ And their possessions and habitations *were*, [c] Beth-el and the towns thereof, and eastward [d] Naaran, and westward [e] Gezer with the † towns thereof; Shechem also, and the towns thereof, unto Gaza and the towns thereof:

29 And by the borders of the children of [f] Manasseh, [g] Bethshean and her towns, [h] Taanach and her towns, [i] Megiddo and her towns, Dor and her towns. [k] In these dwelt the children of Joseph the son of Israel.

30 ¶ The sons of Asher; [l] Imnah, and Isuah, and [m] Ishuai, and Beriah, and Serah their sister.

31 And the sons of

f 21:1—5. 2 Chr. 17:17,18.
g Judg. 3:15,&c.
h 15. Gen. 46:21. *Muppim. Huppim.* Num. 26:39. *Shupham. Hupham.*
i 7. *Iri.*
k Num. 26:38. *Ahiram.*
l Gen. 46:24. Num. 26:48. *Jahzeel.*
m Gen. 46:24. Num. 26:49. *Shillem.*
n Gen. 30:3—8. 35:22. 46:25.
o 2:21—23. Gen. 50:23. Num. 26:29—34. 27:1. 32:39—42. Deut. 3:13—15. Josh. 13:31. 17:1—3. Judg. 5:14. p 12.
q Num. 26:33. 27:1—11. 36:1—12.
r 1 Sam. 12:11.
s Num. 26:30. *Jeezer.* Judg. 6:11,24, 34. 8:2.
t Num. 26:35,36.
u Gen. 37:34.
x 4:9. Gen. 35:18. 1 Sam. 4:21.
* That is, *In evil.*
y Josh. 16:3,5. 1 K. 9:17. 2 Chr. 8:5.
z Num. 13:8,16. *Num. Oshea.*
b Ex. 17:9—14. 24:13. 32:17. Num. 11:28. 14:6. 27:18. Deut. 31:23. *Joshua.* Acts 7:45. Heb. 4:8. *Jesus.*
c Gen. 28:19. Josh. 16:2. Judg. 1:22.
d Josh. 16:7. *Naarath.*
e See on 6:66,67.
† Heb. *daughters.*
f Josh. 17:7—11.
g 1 Sam. 31:10. *Beth-shan.*
h Judg. 5:19. 1 K. 4:12.
i Judg. 1:27. 1 K. 9:15. 2 K. 9:27. 23:29. 2 Chr. 35:22. Zech. 12:11. Rev. 16:16.
k Josh. 16: 17: Judg. 1:22—29.
l Gen. 46:17. Num. 26:44—46. *Jimnah.*
m Gen. 46:17. *Isui.*

(6.) 'From comparing this with Gen. 46: 21. Num. 26: 38, &c. 27: we see that, in many cases, *grandsons* are called *sons*, and both are often confounded in the genealogical tables. Dr. A. Clarke.

Verse 12.

Zebulun, as well as Dan, is here omitted; perhaps, because none of either of these tribes returned at first from Babylon.—Though the Benjamites had been almost destroyed, in the first days of the judges, they soon became numerous and powerful. (*Judg.* 20: 21:) Scott.

Verses 14, 15.

Ashriel was Manasseh's eldest son *by his wife*, who is not named: but the whole of that numerous tribe seems to have descended from Machir: for Ashriel as the son of Manasseh is not mentioned elsewhere; and Zelophehad 'the second' was a descendant of Machir, two generations having intervened between them: for he was the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir. (*Num.* 26:29—33. 27:1—11. 36:1—12. *Josh.* 17:1—6.)—'Of Asriel the family of the Asrielites.' (*Num.* 26:31.) This Asriel was a descendant of Machir by Gilead. Machir married a descendant of Benjamin. Scott.

Verse 18.

Hammoleketh seems to have been the sister of Gilead: though some think she was the sister of Bedan. (17) Id.

Verses 21, 22.

Ezer and Elead seem to have been the sons, or grandsons, of Ephraim, and not his more remote descendants; for it is evident that he was living when they were slain. Id.

Verses 25—29.

(*M. R.*) 'Rephah was his son,' (25) i. e. 'the son of Beriah.' . . . 'Jehoshua,' (27) 'for whose sake his pedigree seems to be thus largely deduced.' *Patrick.* Id.

Beriah; Heber, and Malchiel, who *is* the father of Birzavith.

32 And Heber begat Japhlet, and [n] Shomer, and Hotham, and Shuah their sister.

33 And the sons of Japhlet; Pasach, and Bimhal, and Ashvath: these *are* the children of Japhlet.

34 And the sons of [o] Shamer; Ahi, and Rohgah, Jehubbah, and Aram.

35 And the sons of his brother Helem; Zophah, and Imna, and Shelesh, and Amal.

36 The sons of Zophah; Suah, and Harnephar, and Shual, and Beri, and Imrah,

37 Bezer, and Hod, and Shamma, and Shilshah, and [p] Ithran, and Beera.

38 And the sons of Jether; Jephunneh, and Pispah, and Ara.

39 And the sons of Ulla; Arah, and Haniel, and Rezia.

40 All these *were* the children of Asher, heads of *their* father's house, choice *and* mighty men of valor, chief of the princes. And [q] the number, throughout the genealogy of them that were apt to the war *and* to battle, *was* twenty and six thousand men.

B. C. 1017.

CHAP. VIII.

The sons and chief men of Benjamin, 1—32. The family of Saul and his descendants by Jonathan, 33—40.

B. C. 1700. NOW Benjamin begat [a] Bela his first-born, Ashbel the second, and [b] Aharah the third,

2 Nohah the fourth, and Rapha the fifth.

3 And the sons of Bela were, [c] Addar, and Gera, and Abihud,

4 And Abishua, and Naaman, and Ahoah,

5 And [d] Gera, and [e] Shephuphan, and Huram.

6 And these *are* the sons of [f] Ehud: these are the heads of the fathers of the inhabitants of [g] Geba, and they removed them to [h] Manahath:

7 And Naaman, and Ahiah, and Gera, he removed them, and begat Uzza, and Ahihud.

8 And Shaharaim begat *children* [i] in the country of Moab, after [j] he had sent them away; Hushim and Baara *were* his wives.

9 And he begat of Hodesh his wife, Jobab, and Zibia, and Mesha, and Malcham,

10 And Jeuz, and Shachia, and Mirma. These *were* his sons, heads of the fathers.

11 And of Hushim he begat Ahitub, and Elpaal.

12 The sons of Elpaal; Eber, and Misham, and Shamed, who built [k] Ono, and Lod, with the towns thereof:

13 Beriah also, and [l] Shema, who *were* heads of [m] the fathers of the inhabitants of [n] Aijalon, who drove away the inhabitants of Gath:

14 And Ahio, Shashak, and Jerimoth,

15 And Zebadiah, and Arad, and Ader,

16 And Michael, and Ispah, and Joha, the sons of [o] Beriah;

17 And Zebadiah and Meshullam, and Hezeki, and Heber,

18 Ishmerai also, and Jezliah, and Jobab, the sons of Elpaal;

19 And Jakim, and Zichri, and Zabdi,

20 And Elienai, and Zilthai, and Eliel,

21 And Adaiah, and Beraiah, and Shimrath, the sons of [p] Shimhi;

n 34. *Shamer.*
o 32. *Shomer.*
p 38. *Jether.*
q 21:1—5. 2 Sam. 24:1—9.
a 7:6—12. Gen. 46:21.
b Num. 26:38. *Ahiram.*
c Gen. 46:21. Num. 26:40. *Ard.*
d Judg. 3:15.
e 7:12. *Shuppim.* Num. 26:39. *Shupham.*
f 7:10. Judg. 3:20,&c. 4:1.
g 6:60.
h 2:52,54.
i Ruth 1:1.
j Gen. 35:6.
k Ezra 2:33. Neh. 6:2. 7:37. 11:35.
l 21. *Shimhi.*
m 2:49,50,52. 4:4.
n Josh. 19:42. *Ajalon.*
o 13.
p 13. *Shema.*

CHAP. VIII. V. 1—32. We have some account of Benjamin in the foregoing ch. here we have a larger catalogue of the great men of that tribe; but there is little or nothing of history; we have not therefore much to observe.

1. As to the difficulties that occur in this and the foregoing genealogies, we need not perplex ourselves; some ascend, others descend; some have *numbers* affixed, others *places;* some historical remarks intermixed, others not; some are shorter, others longer; some agree with other records, others differ: those of Dan and Reuben were entirely lost. Ezra wrote as moved by the Holy Ghost; but there was no necessity for making up the defects, nor for rectifying the mistakes, of these genealogies by inspiration: it was sufficient that he copied them out as they came to his hand, or so much of them as was requisite to the present purpose, which was to direct the returned captives to settle, as near as they could, with those of their own family, and in the places of their former residence. We may suppose that many things in these genealogies, which to us seem intricate, abrupt, and perplexed, were plain and easy to them, (who knew how to fill up the deficiences,) and abundantly answered the intention of their publishing.

2. Many great and mighty nations there were now in being on earth, and many illustrious men in them, whose names are buried in perpetual oblivion, while the names of multitudes of the Israel of God are here carefully preserved in everlasting remembrance. They are *Jasher, Jeshurun,* just ones, and *the memory of the just is blessed.* Many of these, we have reason to fear, came short of everlasting honor, (for even the wicked kings of Judah come into the genealogy,) yet the perpetuating of their names here, was a figure of the friendly office, his brethren did, when *they came to comfort him* under this great affliction. Probably, they reminded him of the promise of increase with which Jacob had blessed him, when he laid his right hand on his head. Although his house was not so with God as he hoped, but a house of mourning, a shattered family, yet that promise was sure, 2 Sam. 23: 5.

3. The repair of this breach, in some measure, by the addition of another son to his family in his old age, *v.* 23. like Seth, Gen. 4: 25. When God thus restores comfort to his mourners, *makes glad according to the days wherein He afflicted,* setting the mercies over against the crosses, we ought therein to notice the kindness and tenderness of Divine Providence; it is as if *it repented God concerning his servants.* Yet, joy that a man was born into his family, could not make him forget his grief; for he gives a melancholy name to his son, *Beriah, in trouble.* It is good to have in remembrance the affliction and the misery, that our souls may be *humbled within us,* Lam. 3: 19. What name more proper for *man that is born of a woman,* than *Beriah,* because born into a troublesome world? It is added, as a further honor to the house of Ephraim, (1.) That a daughter of that tribe, *Sherah by name,* at the time of Israel's settling in Canaan, built some cities, either at her own charge, or by her own care; one of them bare her name, *Uzzen-sherah, v.* 24.

II. Of Asher. Some men of note of that tribe are here named. Their militia was not numerous, in comparison with some other tribes; but their princes were *choice and mighty men of valor, chief of the princes, v.* 40. perhaps it was their wisdom, not to make their trained bands numerous; but rather to have a few, apt to the war, and serviceable men.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Events frequently occur entirely beyond our expectations, and contrary to probabilities; the dispensations of Providence *seem* to run counter to the promises, in order that their performance may be the more observed and admired; and often a good cause is unsuccessful, while the wicked triumph in the success of their villany: but the day of judgment will clear up, and rectify, all such *apparent* obliquities in the divine administration.—Considering our state on earth, we may properly call all our children *Beriah; (marg.)* for 'man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards.' But the supports, consolations, and prospects, which the Gospel brings to believers, are sufficient to counterbalance every evil, and to render both life and death tolerable, if not joyful. SCOTT.

Verse 40.

'How barren to us are these registers both of incident and interest! and yet, as barren rocks and sandy deserts make integral and necessary parts of the globe, so do these genealogical tables make necessary parts of the history of providence and grace in the maintenance of truth, and the establishment of the church of Christ. Therefore none that fear God will despise or lightly esteem them.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII. V. 1—5. (7:7—11.) The tribe of Benjamin adhered to Judah, in the division of the kingdom, and returned with the Jews from Babylon: and, as the history is about to open with the translation of the kingdom from Saul of that tribe, to David of Judah; we have here a more copious account given of it than of several other tribes. But either some of the sons of Benjamin had several names, or those called his sons were his more remote descendants. Gera, called his son in Genesis, is here mentioned as his grandson by Bela. (*Gen.* 46:21.) but the whole subsequent genealogy is obscure. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

22 And Ishpan, and Heber, and Eliel,
23 And Abdon, and Zichri, and Hanan,
24 And Hananiah, and Elam, and Antothijah,
25 And Iphedeiah, and Penuel, the sons of Shashak;
26 And Shamsherai, and Shehariah, and Athaliah,
27 And Jaresiah, and Eliah, and Zichri, the sons of Jeroham.
28 These *were* heads of the fathers, by their generations, chief *men*. These [q] dwelt in Jerusalem.
29 And at Gibeon dwelt [r] the father of Gibeon, whose wife's name *was* Maachah:
30 And his first-born son [s] Abdon, and Zur, and Kish, and Baal, and Nadab,
31 And Gedor, and Ahio, and [t] Zacher.
B. C. 1200. 32 And Mikloth begat [u] Shimeah. And these also dwelt with their brethren in Jerusalem, over against them.
33 And [v] Ner begat [x] Kish, and Kish begat Saul, and [y] Saul begat Jonathan, and Malchishua, and [z] Abinadab, and [a] Esh-baal.
34 And the son of Jonathan *was* [b] Merib-baal; and Merib-baal begat [c] Micah.
35 And the sons of Micah *were*, Pithon and Melech, and [d] Tarea, and Ahaz.
B. C. 1000. 36 And Ahaz begat [e] Jehoadah; and Jehoadah begat Alemeth, and Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begat Moza,
37 And Moza begat Binea: [f] Rapha *was* his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son:
38 And Azel had six sons, whose names *are* these, Azrikam, Bocheru, and Ishmael, and Sheariah, and Obadiah, and Hanan. All these *were* the sons of Azel.
39 And the sons of Eshek his brother *were*, Ulam his first-born, Jehush the second, and Eliphelet the third.
40 And the sons of Ulam were mighty men of valor, [g] archers, and had [h] many sons, and sons' sons, an hundred and fifty. All these *are* of the sons of Benjamin.

CHAP. IX.

The original of the genealogies of Israel and Judah, 1. The first settlers in the land after the captivity, 2. The first who dwelt at Jerusalem, of the other tribes, 3—9: and of the priests and Levites, with their charge and service, 10—31. A repeated account of Saul's family, 35—44.

SO [a] all Israel were reckoned by genealogies; and, behold, they *were* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah, *who* were [b] carried away to Babylon for their transgression.

writing of the names of all God's spiritual Israel in the Lamb's book of life.

3. The tribe of Benjamin was once brought to a very low ebb, in the time of the judges, yet, in these genealogies, it makes as good a figure as almost any other of the tribes: for it is the honor of God to help the weakest, and raise up those that are most diminished and abased.

4. Here is mention of one Ehud, *v.* 6. In the verse before, of one Gera, *v.* 5. and *v.* 8. of one that descended from him, that *begat children in the country of Moab;* which inclines me to think it was that Ehud, who was the second of the judges of Israel; for he is said to be *the son of Gera*, and *a Benjamite*, Judg. 3: 15. and he delivered Israel from the oppression of the Moabites, by killing the king of Moab, which might give him a greater sway in the country of Moab than we find evidence of in his history, and might occasion some of his posterity to settle there.

5. Here is mention of some of the Benjamites that *drove away the inhabitants of Gath, v.* 13. Perhaps, those that had slain the Ephraimites, *ch.* 7: 21. or their posterity, by way of reprisal: and one of them that did this piece of justice, was named *Beriah*, too, that name in which the memorial of that injury was preserved.

6. Particular notice is taken of them that *dwelt in Jerusalem, v.* 28, 32. that they whose ancestors had had their residence there, might thereby be induced, at their return from captivity, to settle there too; which for aught that appears, few were willing to do, because it was the post of danger: therefore we find, Neh. 11: 2. *The people blessed those that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem*, the greater part being inclined to prefer the cities of Judah. They whose godly parents had their conversation in the new Jerusalem, should thereby be engaged to set their faces thitherward, and pursue the way thither, whatever it cost them.

V. 33—40. It is observable, that among all the genealogies of the tribes, there is no mention of any of the kings of Israel after their defection from the house of David, much less of their families; not a word of Jeroboam's house, or Baasha's, or Omri's, or Jehu's; for they were all idolaters. But the family of Saul, which was the royal family before the elevation of David, we have here a particular account of.

1. Before Saul, Kish and Ner only are named, his father and grandfather, *v.* 33. His pedigree is carried higher, 1 Sam. 9: 1. and there, Kish is said to be *the son of Abiel*, here, *of Ner*. He was, in truth, the son of Ner, but the grandson of Abiel; as appears by 1 Sam. 14: 51. where it is said that *Ner was the son of Abiel*, and Abner, who was the son of Ner, was Saul's uncle, i. e. his father's brother; therefore his father was also the son of Ner. It is common, in all languages, to put sons for grandsons, and other descendants, much more in the scanty language of the Hebrews.

2. After Saul, divers of his sons are named, but the posterity of none save Jonathan's, who was blessed with a numerous issue, and those honored with a place in the sacred genealogies, for his sincere kindness to David. The line of Jonathan is drawn down here for about ten generations. Perhaps David was, in a particular manner, careful to preserve that, and assigned it a page by itself, because of the covenant between his seed and Jonathan's for ever, 1 Sam. 20: 15, 23, 42. This genealogy ends in Ulam, whose family became famous in the tribe of Benjamin, for the number of its valiant men. Of that one man's posterity there were, as it should seem, at one time, 150 archers brought into the field of battle, *mighty men of valor*, *v.* 40.

CHAP. IX. Here we have an account of those who first took possession of Jerusalem, after their return from Babylon, and began the re-building of it on the old foundation.

V. 1—13. V. 1. looks back on the foregoing genealogies, and tells us they were gathered out of *the books of the kings of Israel and Judah;* not that which we have in the canon of Scripture, but another authentic civil record. Mentioning Israel and Judah, he notices their being *carried away to Babylon for their transgression*. Whenever we

[q] Josh. 15:63. 18:28. Judg. 1:21. Neh. 11:1,7—9.
[r] 9:35,36. *Jehiel.*
[s] 9:36,37.
[t] 9:37. *Zechariah.*
[u] 9:38. *Shimeam.*
[v] 9:39. 1 Sam. 9:1. 14:50,51.
[x] 1 Sam. 9:1. Acts 13:21. *Cis.*
[y] 1 Sam. 14:49. 31:2.
[z] 1 Sam. 14:49. *Ishui.*
[a] 2 Sam. 2:8. 4:12. *Ish-bosheth.*
[b] 2 Sam. 4:4. 9:6. 19:24—30. *Mephibosheth.*
[c] 2 Sam. 9:12. *Micha.*
[d] 9:41. *Tahrea.*
[e] 9:42. *Jarah.*
[f] 9:43. *Rephaiah.*
[g] 12:2. 2 Chr. 14:8.
[h] Ps. 127:3—5. 128:3—6.
[a] Ezra 2:59,62,63. Neh. 7:5,64. Matt 1:1—16. Luke 3:23—38.
[b] 2 Chr. 33:11. 36:9,10,18—20. Jer. 52:9. 52:14,15. Dan. 1:2.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord delights to exalt those who have been abased; and to honor those who adhere to Him, and to the King whom He has placed upon his holy hill of Zion, to his chosen people, and to his instituted worship. Numbers of renowned names are now buried in oblivion; but as God honors some of those, who have been faithful and useful in their generation, by recording their names in the sacred Scriptures; so He writes the names of all his people in the book of life. May this be our privilege, however unnoticed in the partial histories of mankind! SCOTT

Verses 29—40.

(*M. R.*—9:35—44. 2 *Sam.* 9: 16:1—4. 19:24—30.) 'Conradus Pellicanus makes this reflection:—'That hence we may learn, it is an unnecessary labor scrupulously to inquire after these things, from which we can reap no fruit, and of which we may be ignorant without danger. Especially in the matter of these genealogies, the reason of which is long since expired, together with the tribes to which they belong. As for the certainty of our belief, which depends on the authority of the Holy Scriptures, that stands firm and constant, though some things, by the length of time, be so obscure, that they are not now exactly understood; especially in the difference we find in the proper names of persons and places, which without prejudice to the faith may be neglected.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

(40.) *Archers.*] 'Heb. *treading the bow.* [And so Gesenius, 'to *bend or stretch the bow;* viz. by resting it on the ground, and treading on it.'] They used bows of steel, and, treading upon them with their feet, employed the strength of both their arms to bring the bowstring up to the notch. We use cross bows so. They were very expert in shooting; 5:18.' ASSEMB. ANN.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX. V. 1. This verse seems to be the sacred writer's account of the book, or books, from which he had transcribed the preceding genealogies. Both Israel and Judah had been thus reckoned, or registered; and he had made extracts from the books of the two kingdoms, which had been written before the captivity. (*Neh.* 7:5, 6.) The ten tribes had been carried into regions at a considerable distance from Babylon: but they were, at the time to which this refers, in general subject to the kings of Babylon 2 *K.* 17:6. 18:11. 19:12, 13. *Am.* 5: 25—27.) SCOTT.

2 ¶ Now [c] the first inhabitants, that *dwelt* in their possessions in their cities, *were* the Israelites, the priests, Levites, and [d] the Nethinims.

3 And [e] in Jerusalem dwelt of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin, and [f] of the children of Ephraim, and Manasseh;

4 Uthai the son of Ammihud, the son of Omri, the son of Imri, the son of [g] Bani, of the children of [h] Pharez the son of Judah.

5 And of the [i] Shilonites; Asaiah the firstborn, and his sons.

6 And of the sons of [k] Zerah; Jeuel, and their brethren, six hundred and ninety.

7 And of the sons of Benjamin; [l] Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Hodaviah, the son of Hasenuah.

8 And Ibneiah the son of Jeroham, and Elah the son of Uzzi, the son of Michri, and Meshullam the son of Shephatiah, the son of Reuel, the son of Ibnijah;

9 And their brethren, according to their generations, nine hundred and fifty and six. All these men *were* chief of the fathers in the house of their fathers.

10 ¶ And of the priests, Jedaiah, and [m] Jehoiarib, and Jachin,

11 And [n] Azariah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, [o] the ruler of the house of God;

12 And Adaiah the son of Jeroham the son of Pashur, the son of Malchijah, and Maasiah the son of Adiel, the son of Jahzerah, the son of Meshullam, the son of [p] Meshillemith, the son of [q] Immer;

13 And their brethren, heads of the house of their fathers, a thousand and seven hundred and threescore; [*] very able men for the work of the service of the house of God.

14 And of the Levites; [r] Shemaiah the son of Hashub, the son of Azrikam, the son of [s] Hashabiah, [t] of the sons of Merari;

15 And Bakbakkar, Heresh, and Galal, and [u] Mattaniah the son of Micah, the son of [v] Zichri, the son of Asaph;

16 And [x] Obadiah the son of Shemaiah, the son of Galal, [y] the son of Jeduthun; and Berechiah the son of Asa, the son of Elkanah, that dwelt in the villages of the [z] Netophathites.

17 And [a] the porters *were*, Shallum, and Akkub, and Talmon, and Ahiman, and their brethren: [b] Shallum *was* the chief;

18 Who hitherto *waited* in [c] the king's gate eastward; [d] they *were* porters in the companies of the children of Levi.

c Ezra 2:70. Neh. 7:73. 11:3.
d Josh. 9:21—27. Ezra 2:43,58. 8:20. Neh. 7:60,73. 11:3,21.
e Neh. 11:1,4—9.
f 2 Chr. 11:16. 30:11,18.
g Neh. 8:7. 10:13.
h 2:5. 4:1. Gen. 46:12. Num. 26:20. Neh. 11:4,6. *Perez.*
i Num. 26:20. *Shelanites.* Neh. 11:5. *Shiloni.*
k 2:4,6. Gen. 38:30. *Zarah.* Num. 26:20.
l Neh. 7:4. 10:20. 11:7.
m Neh. 11:10. 12:19. *Joiarib.*
n 6:8—15. Neh. 10:2. 11:11. *Seraiah.*
o 24:5. Num. 4:15,16,28,33. 2 K. 23: 4. 25:18. Neh. 11:11. Acts 5:24,26.
p Neh. 11:12,13. *Meshillemoth.*
q 24:14. Ezra 2:37. Neh. 7:40.
* Heb. *mighty men of valor.* 26:6,30, 32. Neh. 11:14.
r Neh. 11:15.
s Neh. 10:11. 12:24.
t See on 6:19,29,63. Num. 26:57.
u Neh. 11:17,22. *Micha.* 12:25.
v 25:2. Neh. 10:12. *Zaccur.* 11:17. *Zabdi.* 12:35. *Zaccur.*
x Neh. 11:17. *Abda.*—*Shammua.* 12:25.
y 25:1,3,6. 2 Chr. 35:15.
z 2:54. Neh. 7:26. 12:28—30.
a 23:5. 26: Neh. 11:19. b 19.
c 1 K. 10:5. 2 K. 11:19. Ez. 44:2,3. 46: 1,2. Acts 3:11. d 26:12—19.

courage and vigor of mind, as well as strength of body; therefore they are praised as *mighty men of valor.*

V. 14—34. We have here a further account of the good posture the affairs of religion were put into, immediately on their return out of Babylon. They had smarted for their former *neglect*, and late *want*, of ordinances; both these considerations made them now very zealous and forward in setting up the worship of God; so they began their work at the right end. For instance,

1. Before the house of the Lord was built, they had the house of the tabernacle; they that cannot yet have a temple, must not be without a tabernacle; but be thankful for that, and make the best of it. Never let God's work be left undone, for want of a place to do it in.

2. In allotting to the priests and Levites their respective employments, they had an eye to a model drawn up by David, and Samuel the seer, *v.* 22. Samuel laid the foundation, and David afterward finished it; both by immediate direction of God. Or David, as soon as he was anointed, had this matter in his mind, and consulted Samuel about it, though then in his troubles, and the plan was formed between them. This, perhaps, had been little regarded for many ages: but now, after a long interruption, it is revived. In dividing the work, they observed these ancient land-marks.

3. Most of them dwelt in Jerusalem, *v.* 34. yet some in the villages, *v.* 16, 22. because, it may be, there was not yet room in Jerusalem; but, however, they were employed in the service of the tabernacle, *v.* 25. *they were to come after seven days from time to time.* They had their week's attendance in their turns.

4. Many of the Levites were employed as porters at the gates of the house of God: 4 chief porters, *v.* 26. and, under them, to the number of 212, *v.* 22. They had the oversight of the *gates*, *v.* 23. were keepers of the *thresholds*, as it is in the margin, *v.* 19. and keepers of the *entry*. This seem-

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Verse 2.

The persons who first, after the captivity, regained possession of their cities and lands, contained among them, not only Jews properly so called, but many Israelites from the other tribes; and also a number of priests, Levites, and Nethinim. (*Neh.* 11:1—3.)—The Nethinim were the remainder of the Gibeonites, with others perhaps joined with them, who were *given* as servants to the priests and Levites. The word signifies *given*, or, *dedicated* persons. (*Josh.* 9:27. 1 *K.* 9:20—22. *Ezra* 2:55—58. 8:20.) SCOTT.

(1, 2.) *In the book of the kings.*] 'Not in the canonical book or books of kings, but in the annals, journals and diaries, which each king took care to be kept with some exactness, often referred to in the preceding books; out of which this writer, under a divine direction, had taken what was proper to be continued, and had carried the genealogy down to the captivity of the 10 tribes; but the genealogy being lost with them, he could proceed no farther, nor say any more concerning them: *but Judah*; for so the word should be stopped, and read according to the Hebrew accents: who *were carried* away to Babylon for their transgression; their idolatry, and were now returned again; of these the writer proposes to give a further account.' *First . . . that* dwelt.] 'Who first returned. The whole body that returned were divided into 4 classes; *the Israelites* were the common people in general, the body politic; *the priests*, the ecclesiastics who officiated in sacred things; the *Levites*, who ministered to them; and *the Nethinim* were such as were *given*, as the word signifies, to do servile work for the sanctuary.' GILL.

Verses 3—9.

From the subsequent names of the priests and Levites, it is probable, that the sacred writer is speaking of the transactions recorded by Nehemiah; (*Neh.* 11:4—6.) yet the names here mentioned so differ from those in the parallel passage, that it can hardly be supposed the same persons are always meant.—But in these matters there are difficulties, which are perhaps incapable of a satisfactory solution at this distance of time, though the whole might be plain to those, for whose use it was principally intended. SCOTT.

Verses 12—18.

Several names seem to be omitted, in the genealogies of these persons, and others introduced, which are elsewhere omitted: but the names are so far the same, as to show that the transactions recorded by Nehemiah are intended. (*Neh.* 11:10—19. 12:1—11.) ID.

19 And Shallum the son of Kore, the son of [a] Ebiasaph, the son of [b] Korah, and his brethren, of the house of his father, the Korahites, *were* over the work of the service, keepers of the [*] gates of the tabernacle: and their fathers, *being* [c] over the host of the LORD, *were* [d] keepers of the entry.

20 And [e] Phinehas the son of Eleazar was B. C. 1450. the ruler over them in time past, *and* [f] the LORD *was* with him.

21 [g] *And* Zechariah the son of Meshelemiah *was* porter of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

22 All these, *which were* chosen to be porters in the gates, *were* two hundred and twelve. These were reckoned by their genealogy [m] in their villages, whom [n] David and [o] Samuel the seer † did ordain in their ‡ set office.

23 So they and their children *had* [p] the oversight of the gates of the house of the LORD, *namely*, the house of the tabernacle, by wards.

24 In [q] four quarters were the porters, toward the east, west, north, and south.

25 And their brethren, *which were* in their villages, *were* to come after [r] seven days from time to time with them.

26 For these Levites, the four chief porters, were in *their* § set office, and were over the chambers [‖] and treasures of the house of God.

27 And they lodged round about the house of God, because [t] the charge *was* upon them, and [u] the opening thereof every morning *pertained* to them.

28 And *certain* of them had [x] the charge of the ministering vessels, that they should [¶] bring them in and out by tale.

29 *Some* of them also *were* appointed to oversee the vessels, and all the [**] instruments of the sanctuary, and the fine flour, and the wine, and [y] the oil, and [z] the frankincense, and the spices.

30 And *some* [a] of the sons of the priests made the ointment of the spices.

31 And Mattithiah, *one* of the Levites, who *was* the first-born of [b] Shallum the Korahite, had the †† set office, over the things that were made ‡‡ in the pans.

32 And *other* of their brethren, of [c] the sons of the Kohathites, *were* over the §§ shew-bread, [d] to prepare *it* every sabbath.

33 And these *are* [e] the singers, chief of the fathers of the Levites, *who remaining* in the chambers, [f] *were* free: for [‖‖] they were [g] employed in *that* work day and night.

34 These [h] chief fa- B. C. 1300. thers of the Levites *were* chief throughout their generations; these dwelt at Jerusalem.

35 ¶ And [i] in Gibeon dwelt [k] the father of Gibeon, Jehiel, whose wife's name *was* Maachah:

36 And his first-born son Abdon, then Zur,

7. The singers *were employed in that work, day and night, v.* 33. They made a business of it; remained in the chambers of the temple, that they might closely and constantly attend it; and were therefore discharged from all other services. It should seem, some companies were continually singing, at least, at stated hours, both day and night. Thus was God continually praised, as it is fit He should be, who is continually doing infinite good. Thus devout people might, at any hour, have assistance in their devotion. Thus was that temple a figure of the heavenly one, where they *rest not day nor night*, from praising God, Rev. 4: 8. *Blessed are they that dwell in thine house, they will be still praising Thee.*

V. 35—44. These vs. are the same with *ch.* 8: 29—38. giving an account of the ancestors of Saul, and the posterity of Jonathan. *There*, it is the conclusion of the genealogy of Benjamin; *here*, an introduction to the story of Saul. We take the repetition as we find it; some one, perhaps, in copying out these genealogies, having written these words, *v.* 34. (*These dwelt in Jerusalem,*) cast his eye on the same words, *ch.* 8: 28. (*These dwelt in Jerusalem,*) and so went on with what followed there; and, when he perceived his mis-

a 6: 22,23.
f Num. 26:9—11. Ps. 42: 44:—49 *titles.*
* Heb. *thresholds.* Ps. 84:10. *marg*
g 2 K. 11:9,15. 2 Chr. 23:4—10.
h 26:7,8,13—19.
i Num. 3:32. 4:16,28,33. 31:6.
k Num. 25:11—13. 1 Sam. 16:18. Act 7:9,10.
l 26:14.
m 16,25. Neh. 11:25—30,36. 12:28,29 44.
n 23: 25: 26: 28:13,21.
o 1 Sam. 9:9.
† Heb. *founded.*
‡ Or, *trust.* 26,31.
p 23:32. 2 Chr. 23:19. Neh. 12:45. Ez 44:10,11,14.
q 26:14—18.
r 2 K. 11:5,7. 2 Chr. 23:8.
§ Or, *trust.* 22,31.
‖ Or, *storehouses.*
s 26:20—27. 2 Chr. 31:5—12. Neh. 10 38,39. 13:5.
t 23:32. Rom. 12:7.
u 1 Sam. 3:15. Mal. 1:10.
x 26:22—26. Num. 3:25—37. Ezra 8. 25—30. Neh. 12:44. 13:4,5.
¶ Heb. *bring them in by tale, and carry them out by tale.*
** Or, *vessels.*
y Ex. 27:20.
z Ex. 30:23—38.
a Ex. 30:25,33,35—38. 37:29.
b 17,19.
†† Or, *trust.* 22,26.
‡‡ Or, on *flat plates*, or *slices.* Lev. 2 5,7. 6:21.
c 6:33,&c.
§§ Heb. *bread of ordering.*
d Ex. 25:30. Lev. 24:5—8.
e See on 6:31—33. 15:16—22. 16:4—6 25:1,&c. Ezra 7:24.
f Neh. 11:17,22,23.
‖‖ Heb. *upon them.*
g Ps. 134:1,2. 135:1—3.
h 13. Neh. 11:1—15.
i 8:29—40.
k 2:23,24,45,50—52.

Verses 19—21.

It has been conjectured that the Jews, on their return from Babylon, prepared a *tabernacle* for the worship of the Lord, before they had courage or ability to rebuild the temple. But the inspired historian evidently spoke of the times of Nehemiah; and the temple had been finished many years before.—The word *tabernacle* may, therefore, refer to the sanctuary erected by Moses, which the temple, built after the captivity, more resembled, than it did Solomon's magnificent edifice. Indeed, the sanctuary at first was only a *tent*, or *tabernacle*, when Phinehas superintended it, in time past: yet 'the Lord was with him.' (*Num.* 3:32. 4:27,28. 31:4—6.)—This seems to have been mentioned, as an instruction and encouragement to the priests and Levites, in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah: for there can be no reasonable doubt that Phinehas the grandson of Aaron was intended.—Among numerous instances in which the Word of the LORD is used, by the Jewish paraphrasts, *personally* for JEHOVAH, the following may be adduced: 'In the Targum, The WORD of the LORD was his Helper.—From whence Beckius frames this argument:—That if he who was with Phinehas was JEHOVAH the true God, and this WORD was with Phinehas; then the WORD, in the opinion of this paraphrast, was JEHOVAH the true God.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

Verse 23.

(*M. R.*) The expression here used, 'the house of the tabernacle,' is considered by many as confirming the opinion before mentioned, that a tabernacle was erected, after the captivity, till the temple was finished. (*Note*, 19—21.) No doubt can, I suppose, be made as to the *fact*: but, if the sacred historian wrote of Nehemiah's time, whatever allusion he might make to that fact; it is certain, that the temple had been completed many years before.—When David made those regulations concerning the courses and services of the Levites, there was no temple; but the ministrations were performed at the tabernacle: and perhaps on that account, 'the house of the tabernacle' is mentioned. SCOTT.

Verses 27—29.

The gold and silver vessels, and other treasures appropriated to the service of God, were deposited in the treasuries of the sanctuary; and the Levites lodged around it, as the appointed guard of them, as well as to be ready for their work. (26.20—28. *Ezra* 8:24—27.) ID.

Verse 30.

The Levites kept guard over the deposit of spices and frankincense, as well as over the other treasures: but the priests compounded the holy oil and incense. (*Ex.* 30:22—38.) It seems, however, that Bezaleel of Judah, made them in the time of Moses. (*Ex.* 37:1, 29.) ID.

Verses 31—33.

M. R.—Singers. (33) (*M. R.* e—g. *Ezra* 7:24—26. *Ps.* 134:) —Moses *commanded* nothing concerning singers or musicians; and he forbade any to add to his words: but this could only mean *uninspired persons*; for no doubt God, by his prophets, might add, diminish, or alter, as He saw good. ID.

Verses 35—44.

(8:29—40.) This repetition seems to have been intended merely as an introduction to the ensuing history. *Ner*, &c.] 39 (1 *Sam.* 14:50 51.) Perhaps Abiel, the father of Kish, was also called Ner.—Ner, the

and [l] Kish, and Baal, and Ner, and Nadab,

37 And Gedor, and Ahio, and [m] Zechariah, and Mikloth.

38 And Mikloth begat [n] Shimeam: and they also dwelt with their brethren at Jerusalem, over against their brethren.

39 And [o] Ner begat Kish, and Kish begat Saul, [p] and Saul begat Jonathan, and Malchishua, and Abinadab, and [q] Eshbaal.

40 And the son of Jonathan *was* [r] Meribbaal: and Merib-baal begat Micah.

41 And the sons of Micah *were* Pithon, and Melech, and Tahrea, *and Ahaz.*

42 And Ahaz begat [s] Jarah, and Jarah begat Alemeth, and Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begat Moza,

43 And Moza begat
B. C. 900. Binea; and [t] Rephaiah his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son.

44 And Azel had six sons, whose names *are* these, Azrikam, Bocheru, and Ishmael, and Sheariah, and Obadiah, and Hanan: these *were* the sons of Azel.

CHAPTER X.

Saul's defeat and death, 1—7. The Philistines abuse his dead body, 8—10. The men of Jabesh gilead rescue it, with the bodies of his sons, 11, 12. Saul's sin; for which he died, and the kingdom was transferred to David, 13, 14.

B. C. 1056. NOW [a] the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down * slain in [b] mount Gilboa.

2 And the Philistines followed hard after Saul, and after his sons; and the Philistines slew [c] Jonathan, and [d] Abinadab, and Malchishua, [e] the sons of Saul.

3 And the battle [f] went sore against Saul, and the † archers ‡ hit him, and [g] he was wounded of the archers.

4 Then said Saul to his armor-bearer, [h] Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these [i] uncircumcised come and § abuse me. But his armor-bearer would not; for [k] he was sore afraid. So [l] Saul took a sword and fell upon it.

5 And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise on the sword, and died.

6 So [m] Saul died, and his three sons, and all his house died together.

7 And when all the men of Israel, that *were* in the valley, saw that they fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, [n] then they forsook their cities and fled: and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

8 And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came [o] to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen in mount Gilboa.

9 And when they had stripped him, they [p] took

l 39. See on 8:33.
m 8:31. *Zacher.*
n 8:32. *Shimeah.*
o 1 Sam. 14:50,51.
p 10:2. 1 Sam. 13:22. 14:1,49. *Ishui.* 31:2.
q See on 8:33.
r See on 8:34—36.
s 8:36. *Jehoadah.*
t 8:37. *Rapha.*
a 1 Sam. 28:1. 29:1,2. 31:1,2.
* Heb. *wounded.*
b 8. 1 Sam. 28:4. 31:1. 2 Sam. 1:6,21. 21:12.
c 8:33. 9:39. 1 Sam. 14:6,39,40. 2 K. 23:29. Is. 57:1,2.
d 1 Sam. 14:49. *Ishui.*
e Ex. 28:5. 2 K. 25:7.
f 1 Sam. 31:3—6. 2 Sam. 1:4—10. Am. 2:14.
† Heb. *shooters with bows.*
‡ Heb. *found.*
g Gen. 49:23,24.
h Judg. 9:54.
i Judg. 15:18. 1 Sam. 14:6. 17:26,36. 2 Sam. 1:20.
§ Or, *mock.* Judg. 16:21,23—25.
k 1 Sam. 31:4. 2 Sam. 1:14—16.
l 5. 2 Sam. 1:9,10. 17:23. 1 K. 16:18. Matt. 27:4,5. Acts 1:18. 16:27.
m 1 Sam. 4:10,11,18. 12:25. Ec. 9:1,2. Hos. 13:10,11.
n Lev. 26:31,36. Deut. 28:33,43. Judg. 6:2. 1 Sam. 13:6. 31:7.
o 1 Sam. 31:8. 2 K. 3:23. 2 Chr. 20:25.
p 4. 1 Sam. 31:9,10. 2 Sam. 1:20. Matt. 14:11.

CHAP. X. The design of Ezra, in these books of the Chronicles, was, to preserve the records of the house of David, which, though much sunk and lessened, in a common eye, by the captivity, yet grew more and more illustrious in the eyes of those that lived by faith, by the nearer approach of the Son of David. And therefore he repeats, not the history of Saul's *reign*, but only of his *death*, by which, way was made for David to the throne.

V. 1—7. This account of Saul's death, is the same with that, 1 Sam. 31: 1, &c. We need not repeat the exposition of it. Only let us observe,

1. Princes sin, and the people suffer for it: [as when rulers do well, the people are benefited by it; how much more is this just in 'popular governments.'] It was a bad time with Israel, when they *fled before the Philistines*, and *fell down slain*, *v.* 1. when they quitted their cities, and *the Philistines came, and dwelt in them*, *v.* 7. We do not find that they were, at this time, guilty of idolatry, as they had been before, in the days of the judges, and were after, in the days of the kings. They were reformed: yet are thus *given to the spoil, and to the robbers.* No doubt, there was enough in them to deserve it; but what Divine Justice had chiefly an eye to, was the sin of Saul. Note, Princes and great men should, in a special manner, take heed of provoking God's wrath; for if they kindle that fire, they know not how many may be consumed by it for their sakes.

2. Parents sin, and the children suffer for it. When the measure of Saul's iniquity was full, and his day came to fall, (which David foresaw, 1 Sam. 26: 10.) he not only descended into battle, and perished himself, but his sons (all but Ish-bosheth) perished with him, and Jonathan among the rest, that gracious, generous, man; for *all things come alike to all.* Thus was the iniquity of the fathers visited on the children; they fell as parts of the condemned father. Note, They that love their seed, must leave their sins, lest they perish not alone in their iniquity, but bring ruin on their families with themselves, or entail a curse on them when they are gone.

3. Sinners sin, and, at length, suffer for it themselves, though long reprieved; though sentence be not executed speedily, it will be executed. It was so on Saul; and the manner of his fall was such, as, in divers particulars, answered to his sin. (1.) He had thrown a javelin more than once at David, and missed him; but the archers hit him, and he was wounded of the archers. (2.) He had commanded Doeg to slay the priests of the Lord; and now, in despair, he commands his armor-bearer to *draw his sword, and thrust him through.* (3.) Him that had disobeyed the command of God, in not destroying the Amalekites, his armor-bearer disobeys, in not destroying him. (4.) He that was the murderer of the priests, is justly left to himself to be his own murderer; and his family is cut off, who cut off the city of the priest. See, and say, *The Lord is righteous.*

V. 8—14. Here, 1. From the triumph of the Philistines over the body of Saul, we may learn, (1.) That the greater dignity men are advanced to, the greater disgrace they are in danger of falling into. Advancement makes men a mark for malice. (2.) That if we give not to God the glory of our successes, even the Philistines will rise up in judgment against us, and condemn us; for when they had obtained a victory over Saul, they *sent tidings to their idols.* Poor idols, they knew not what was done a few miles off, till the tidings were brought them; nor then neither! They also put Saul's armor *in the house of their gods*, *v.* 10.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In remembering the miseries of man, we should be careful not to lose sight of his transgressions, that the justice of God in them may be acknowledged and adored.—When sinners repent, and forsake their sins, they are in the way of being extricated from trouble: and the affairs of church and state are likely to be well ordered, when men of all ranks and orders in the community concur in endeavors for that purpose.—If employed in the service of the sanctuary, we have a charge to keep, as well as a work to do; and those, who 'watch for men's souls, as they that must give account,' are intrusted with that which is unspeakably more valuable, than the richest treasures of silver and gold. They should therefore reside on the spot, as much as possible; in order to be near and ready for their work, at every hour, as occasion may require. To prepare bread for the sanctuary, in their stated public preaching, may *perhaps* be only expected from them every sabbath: but some parts of their work must be needful every day; and they should generally be exempted from other cares and employments, that they may give themselves wholly to the Word of God and prayer. (*P. O. Acts* 6: 1—7.) Blessed be his name! if indeed we be now true believers, we shall for ever, (not in rotation, but altogether,) without interruption or cessation, praise Him night and day, in his temple above. SCOTT.

father of Abner or *Abiner*, (*my father, Ner,*) was Saul's uncle, not his grandfather. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. X. V. 1—12. *M. R.*—1 *Sam.* 31:—*All his house died*, &c. (6) 'All his men,' in Samuel. 'All that were present with him in the battle: and his family had received such a blow, that it never recovered itself again.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

(9) *Carry tidings to their idols.*] 'When the heathen of the present day gain a victory, they always take the tidings to their idols.' *Roberts.* Comp. also the inscriptions of Egyptian conquerors, on contemporaneous monuments. ED

his head, and his armor, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to carry [q] tidings unto their idols, and to the people.

10 And they put his armor in the house of [r] their gods, and fastened his head [s] in the temple of Dagon.

11 And when [t] all Jabesh-gilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul,

12 They arose, all the valiant men, and took away the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, and brought them to Jabesh, and buried their bones under [u] the oak in Jabesh, and [x] fasted seven days.

13 ¶ So Saul died for his transgression, which he * committed against the LORD, [y] *even* against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also [z] for asking *counsel of one that had* [a] a familiar spirit, to inquire *of it;*

14 And [b] inquired not of the LORD: therefore [c] he slew him, and [d] turned the kingdom unto David the son of † Jesse.

CHAP. XI.

David, by general consent, is made king over all Israel, at Hebron, 1—3. He takes Zion from the Jebusites; dwells there, and prospers, 4—9. The names and achievements of his principal warriors, 10—47.

THEN [a] all Israel gathered themselves to David unto [b] Hebron, saying, [c] Behold, we *are* thy bone and thy flesh.

2 And moreover ‡ in time past, even when Saul was king, thou *wast* he [d] that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD thy God said unto thee, [e] Thou shalt § feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be [f] ruler over my people Israel.

3 Therefore came all the [g] elders of Israel to the king to Hebron; and [h] David made a covenant with them in Hebron [i] before the LORD; and they [k] anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD || by Samuel.

4 ¶ And [m] David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which *is* [n] Jebus; where the Jebusites *were*, [o] the inhabitants of the land.

5 And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, [p] Thou shalt not come hither. Nevertheless David took [q] the castle of Zion, which *is* [r] the city of David.

6 And David said, [s] Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be ¶ chief and captain. [t] So Joab the son of Zeruiah went first up, and was chief.

7 And [u] David dwelt in the castle; therefore they called ** it, The city of David.

8 And he built the city round about, even from [x] Millo round about: and Joab †† repaired the rest of the city.

9 So David ‡‡ waxed greater and greater; [y] for the LORD of hosts *was* with him.

10 ¶ These also *are*

q Judg. 16:23,24. Dan. 5:2—4,23.
r 1 Sam. 31:10. *Ashtaroth.*
s 1 Sam. 5:2—7.
t 1 Sam. 11:1—11. 31:11—13. 2 Sam. 2:4—7.
u Gen. 35:8. 2 Sam. 21:12—14.
x Gen. 50:10. 2 Sam. 3:35.
* Heb. *transgressed.*
y 1 Sam. 13:13. 15:3,23.
z 1 Sam. 28:7—20.
a Ex. 22:18. Lev. 19:31. 20:6. Deut. 18:10—14. 2 K. 21:6. Is. 8:19. Acts 8:9—11. 16:16—18.
b Judg. 10:11—16. 1 Sam. 28:6. Ez. 14:3—5.
c Ps. 17:13. Is. 10:7,15.
d 1 Sam. 13:14. 15:28. 16:1,11,13. 28: 17. 2 Sam. 3:9,10. 5:3.
† Heb. *Isai.*
a 12:23—40. 2 Sam. 5:1.
b Num. 13:22. 2 Sam. 2:1. 15:10. 1 K. 2:11.
c Gen. 29:14. Deut. 17:15. Judg. 9:2. 2 Sam. 19:12,13. Eph. 5:30.
‡ Heb. *both yesterday and the third day.*
d Num. 27:17. 1 Sam. 18:13. Is. 55:4. John 10:4.
e 1 Sam. 16:1,13. 2 Sam. 7:7. Ps. 78: 71,72. Is. 40:11. Mic. 5:2,4. Matt. 2:6.
§ Or, *rule.*
f 2 Sam. 5:2. 1 K. 3:9. 14:7.
g 2 Sam. 5:3.
h 1 Sam. 11:15. 2 K. 11:17. 2 Chr. 23:3.
i Judg. 11:11. 1 Sam. 23:18.
k 1 Sam. 16:13. 2 Sam. 2:4. 2 K. 23.30.
l 1 Sam. 15:28. 28:17.
|| Heb. *by the hand of.*
m 2 Sam. 5:6—10.
n 5. Josh. 15:63. 18:28. *Jebusi.* Judg. 1:21. 19:10—12.
o Gen. 10:16. 15:21. Ex. 3:17.
p 1 Sam. 17:9,10,26,36.
q 1 K. 8:1. 2 Chr. 5:2. Ps. 2:6. 9:11. 48:2,12,13. 78:68. 87:2,5. 125:1,2. 132:13. Lam. 4:11,12. Rom. 9:33. Heb. 12:22. Rev. 14:1.
r 7. 2 Sam. 5:9. 6:10,12. Ps. 122:5
s Josh. 15:16,17. 1 Sam. 17:25.
¶ Heb. *head.*
t 2 Sam. 2:18. 3:27. 8:16. 20:23.
u Ps. 2:6.
** That is, *Zion.* 5.
x Judg. 9:6,20. 1 K. 9:15. 11:27. 2 K. 12:20.
†† Heb. *revived.* Neh. 4:2.
‡‡ Heb. *went in going and increasing* 2 Sam. 3:1. 5:10. Job 17:9. Is. 9:7.
y 9:20. Ps. 46:7,11. Is. 8:9,10. 41:10, 14. Rom. 8:31.

CHAP. XI. V. 1—8. David is here brought to the possession,

1. Of the throne of Israel, *v.* 3. Observe, (1.) God's counsels will be fulfilled at last, whatever difficulties lie in the way. If God have said, *David shall rule*, it is in vain to oppose it. (2.) Men that have long stood in their own light, when they have wearied themselves with their lying vanities, it is to be hoped, will understand the things that belong to their peace, and return *to their own mercies.* (3.) Between prince and people there is an original contract, which both ought religiously to observe. If ever any prince might have claimed an absolute, despotic power, David might, and might as safely as any have been intrusted with it; yet he covenanted with the people, and took the coronation-oath, to rule by law.

2. Of the strong hold of Zion, which was held by the Jebusites till David's time. Whether God had a particular eye on it as a place fit for a royal city, or David had a promise of it from God, it seems one of his first exploits was, to make himself master of that fort; and when he had it, he called it the *city of David*, *v.* 7. To this, reference is had, Ps. 2: 6. *I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.* Opposition, (*v.* 5.) and pros-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord punishes none except sinners; and no sinners can escape, who do not humbly cast themselves upon his mercy: but when transgressors inquire of God, and earnestly seek deliverance in his appointed way, they will certainly prevail; and if they be involved in domestic or national calamities in this world, they will be saved from the wrath to come.—Numbers, who profess to seek the Lord, are so superficial in doing it, so soon weary of it, and so ready to listen to Satan's temptations, that God accounts it no *inquiry* at all. And may the good Lord deliver us from unbelief, impatience, and despair, and teach us to trust in Him; to obey and submit to his will; and to render due honor and kindness to all, whatever their behavior to us may have been!

SCOTT.

Verses 13, 14.

Is it possible, more strongly to mark the excessive criminality of consulting witches, conjurors, fortune-tellers, or sorcerers of any kind, real or pretended, than by representing Saul's conduct in this respect, as one principal reason of his rejection and awful end? (*M. R.*—1 *Sam.* 28:3—10.)

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI. V. 1—3. In this recapitulation, the narrative begins with David's being submitted to, as God's appointed king, and as such anointed at Hebron, by the concurrence of the whole nation. (2 *Sam.* 5:1—3.) It is here added, 'according to the word of the LORD by Samuel.' (1 *Sam.* 13:13—15. 16:6—13.) ID.

'*Kennicott* has very minutely examined 2 Sam. 5. and 23. with 1 Chr. 11: He collates the chs. very carefully, pointing out the variations, correcting them as far as possible, and assigns these to their causes, considering that the discovery and correction of mistakes found in the present copies, and which appear to have arisen mostly from the negligence of transcribers, or the inattention of the translators, must restore those books nearer to the pure state in which they came from the hands of their inspired authors. By this collation he has reconciled the discrepancies which at first appear in some of the vs. and thence proceeds to give a clear testimony, that the Hebrew copies of the Scriptures are *much more free from mistakes of transcription, than any other books in the world*, in proportion to their size and antiquity.'

HENRY abr.

Verses 4—8.

Notes, 2 *Sam.* 5:6—9.—*Joab*, &c. (6) It is evident Joab was, before this, high in authority under David; but he was, as a reward of his courage and conduct on this occasion, established commander in chief over the whole army.

SCOTT.

[z] the chief of the mighty men whom David had, who * strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom, *and* with all Israel, [a] to make him king, [b] according to the word of the LORD concerning Israel.

11 And this *is* the number of the mighty men whom David had; [c] Jashobeam † an Hachmonite, the chief of the captains; he lifted up his spear against three hundred slain *by him* at one time.

12 And after him *was* [d] Eleazar the son of Dodo the [e] Ahohite, who *was one* of [f] the three mighties.

13 He was with David at [g] Pasdammim, and there the Philistines were gathered together to battle, where was a parcel of ground full of barley; and the people fled from before the Philistines.

14 And they ‡ set themselves in the midst of *that* parcel, and delivered it, and slew the Philistines: and [h] the LORD saved *them* by a great § deliverance.

15 ¶ Now three ‖ of the thirty captains went down to the rock to David, into [i] the cave of Adullam; and the host of the Philistines encamped in the valley of [l] Rephaim.

16 And David *was* then [m] in the hold, and [n] the Philistines' garrison *was* then at Bethlehem.

17 And David [o] longed, and said, Oh, that one would give me drink [p] of the water of the well of Beth-lehem, that *is* at the gate!

18 And the three [q] brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that *was* by the gate, and took *it*, and brought *it* to David: but David would not drink *of* it, but [r] poured it out to the LORD,

19 And said, [s] My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing: [t] shall I drink the blood of these men ¶ that have put their lives [u] in jeopardy? for with *the jeopardy of* their lives they brought it: therefore he would not drink it. [x] These things did these three mightiest.

B. C. 1047. 20 ¶ And [y] Abishai the brother of Joab, he was chief of the three: for, lifting up his spear against three hundred, he slew *them*, and had a name among the three.

21 Of the three, he was more honorable than the two; for he was their captain: [z] howbeit he attained not unto the *first* three.

22 [a] Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of [b] Kabzeel, ** who had done many acts; he slew two [c] lionlike men of Moab: also he went down and [d] slew a lion in a pit in a snowy day.

23 And he slew an Egyptian, †† a man of *great* stature, [e] five cubits high, and in the Egyptian's hand *was* [f] a spear like a weaver's beam; and he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and [g] slew him with his own spear.

24 These *things* did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had a name among the three mightiest.

25 Behold, he was honorable among the thirty, [h] but attained not to the *first* three: and [i] David set him over his guard.

26 ¶ Also the valiant men of the armies *were* [k] Asahel the brother of Joab, [l] Elhanan the son of Dodo of Beth-lehem,

27 [m] Shammoth the Harorite, Helez the [n] Pelonite,

28 [o] Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, Abiezer the [p] Antothite,

29 [q] Sibbecai the Hushathite, Ilai the [r] Ahohite,

30 [s] Maharai the Netophathite, [t] Heled the son of Baanah the Netophathite,

31 [u] Ithai the son of Ribai of Gibeah, *that pertained* to the children of Benjamin, Benaiah the Pirathonite,

32 [x] Hurai of the brooks of Gaash, [y] Abiel the Arbathite,

pect of preferment, (*v.* 6.) quicken and engage resolution in great undertakings.

V. 10—47. We have here an account of David's worthies. The first edition of this catalogue we had, 2 Sam. 23: 8, &c. This is much the same, only those named here, from *v.* 41. to the end, are added. Observe,

1. The connection of this catalogue with what is said of David, *v.* 9. By *this* it appeared that God was with him, that He inclined the hearts of those to come over to him, that were able to serve his interest. David ascribed his success and increase, not to his hosts, but to the *Lord of hosts;* not to his mighty men, but to the mighty God, whose presence with us is all in all.

2. The title of this catalogue, *v.* 10. In strengthening him, they strengthened themselves, and their own interest; for his advancement was theirs. What we do in our places for the support of the kingdom of the Son of David, we shall be gainers by. It may be read, *They held strongly with him, and with all Israel.* Note, When God has work to do, He will not want fit instruments to do it with. If it be work that requires mighty men, mighty men shall be either found, or made, to effect it, *according to the word of the Lord.*

3. What made all these men honorable, was, the good service they did to their king and country, *v.* 10. Note, The way to be great, is, to do good. Nor did they gain this honor without labor, and the hazard of their lives. The honors of Christ's kingdom are prepared for those that *fight the good fight of faith*, that labor and suffer, and are willing to venture all, even life itself, for Christ and a good conscience. It is by a patient continuance in well-doing, that we must seek for glory, and honor, and immortality; and they that are faithful to the Son of David, shall find their names registered and enrolled much more to their honor, than these are in the records of fame.

4. Among all the great exploits of David's mighty men, here is nothing great mentioned concerning David himself, but his *pouring out water before the Lord*, which he had *longed for*, *v.* 18, 19. Four very honorable dispositions of David appeared in that action, which, for aught I know, make it as great as any of the achievements of those worthies. 1. Repentance for his own weakness. It is really an honor to a man, when he is made sensible that he has said or done any thing unadvisedly, to unsay it, and undo it again by repentance; as it is a shame to a man, when he has said or done amiss, to stand to it. 2. Denial of his own appetite. He that has such a rule as this *over his own spirit, is better than the mighty.* It is an honor to a man to have the command of himself; but he that will command himself, must sometimes cross himself. 3. Devotion toward God. If we have any thing better than another, let God be honored with it. 4. Tenderness of his servants. That three brave men should hazard their lives, to fetch water for him, in his account, turns the water into blood. It is the honor of great men not to be prodigal of the blood of those they employ, but, in all the commands they give them, to put their own souls into their souls' stead.

5. In the wonderful achievements of these heroes, the power of God must be acknowledged, Josh. 23: 10.

One of these is said to be *an Ammonite*, *v.* 39. another *a Moabite*, *v.* 46. and yet the law was, that an *Ammonite*, and *a Moabite, should not enter the congregation of the Lord*, Deut. 23: 3. These, it is likely, had approved themselves so hearty for

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z 2 Sam. 23:8.
* Heb. *held strongly with.*
a 12:38. 2 Sam. 3:17,18,21.
b 1 Sam. 16:12—14.
c 27:2. 2 Sam. 23:8. *The Tachmonite, —Adino, the Eznite.*
† Or, *son of Hachmon.*
d 27:4. *Dodai.* 2 Sam. 23:9.
e 8:4.
f 19,21. 2 Sam. 23:17—19,23.
g 1 Sam. 17:1. *Ephes-dammim.*
‡ Or, *stood.*
h 1 Sam. 14:23. 19:5. 2 Sam. 23:10. 2 K. 5:1. Ps. 18:50.
§ Or, *salvation.* Ps. 144:10. Prov. 21: 31.
‖ Or, *captains over the thirty.* 2 Sam. 23:13.
i Josh. 12:15. 1 Sam. 22:1. Mic. 1:15.
k 14:9. 2 Sam. 5:18,22. Is. 17:5.
l Josh. 15:8. *the giants.*
m 1 Sam. 22:1. 23:25. Ps. 142: *title.*
n 1 Sam. 10:5. 13:4,23.
o Num. 11:4,5. 2 Sam. 23:15,16. Ps. 143:6.
p Ps. 42:1,2. 63:1. Is. 12:3. John 4:10, 14.
q 1 Sam. 19:5. Cant. 8:6. Acts 20:24. 21:13. 2 Cor. 5:14,15.
r 1 Sam. 7:6.
s 2 Sam. 23:17. 1 K. 21:3. Rom. 6:1,2.
t Lev. 17:10,11. Job 31:31. Ps. 72:14. Mark 14:24. John 6:55.
¶ Heb. *with their lives.* Rom. 16:4.
u Judg. 5:18. 1 Cor. 15:30.
x See on 12.
y 2:16. 1 Sam. 26:6. 2 Sam. 2:18. 3:30. 18:2. 20:6. 21:17. 23:18,19.
z Matt. 13:8,23. 1 Cor. 15:41.
a 27:5,6. 2 Sam. 8:18. 20:23. 23:20 —23. 1 K. 1:8,38. 2:30,34,35.
b Josh. 15:21.
** Heb. *great of deeds.*
c 12:8. 2 Sam. 1:23.
d Judg. 14:5,6. 1 Sam. 17:34—36.
†† Heb. *a man of measure.*
e Deut. 3:11. 1 Sam. 17:4—7.
f 20:5.
g 1 Sam. 17:51.
h 21.
i 2 Sam. 20:23.
k 27:7. 2 Sam. 2:18—23. 3:30. 23:24. 1 2 Sam. 21:19.
m 2 Sam. 23:25. *Shammah the Harodite.*
n 2 Sam. 23:26. *Paltite.*
o 27:9.
p 27:12. 2 Sam. 23:27. *Anethothite.*
q 27:11. 2 Sam. 23:27,28. *Mebunnai. —Zalmon.*
r 12.
s 27:13.
t 27:15. *Heldai.* 2 Sam. 23:29. *Heleb.*
u 2 Sam. 23:29. *Ittai.*
x 2 Sam. 23:30. *Hiddai.*
y 2 Sam. 23:31. *Abi-albon.*

Verses 26—47.

The M. R. and readings, show the principal differences between this part of the ch. and the passages referred to. Several names are added to the catalogue of worthies. It is probable, the persons intended were something less famous, than those mentioned also in 2 Sam.

SCOTT.

33 Azmaveth the [z] Baharumite, Eliahba the Shaalbonite.

34 The sons of [a] Hashem the Gizonite, Jonathan the son of Shage the Hararite,

35 Ahiam the son of [b] Sacar the Hararite, [c] Eliphal the son of Ur,

36 Hepher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite,

37 [d] Hezro the Carmelite, Naarai the son of Ezbai,

38 [e] Joel the brother of Nathan, Mibhar * the son of Haggeri,

39 Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Berothite, the armorbearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah,

40 Ira the [f] Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite,

41 [g] Uriah the Hittite, Zabad the son of Ahlai,

42 Adina the son of Shiza the Reubenite, a captain of the Reubenites, and thirty with him,

43 Hanan the son of Maachah, and Joshaphat the Mithnite,

44 Uzzia the Ashterathite, Shama and Jehiel the sons of Hotham the Aroerite,

45 Jediael the † son of Shimri, and Joha his brother, the Tizite,

46 Eliel the Mahavite, and Jeribai, and Joshaviah, the sons of Elnaam, and Ithmah the Moabite,

47 Eliel, and Obed, and Jasiel the Mesobaite.

the interest of Israel, that in their case it was thought fit to dispense with that law, and the rather, because is was an indication that the Son of David would have worthies among the Gentiles: with Him there is neither Greek nor Jew.

CHAP. XII. What the *mighty* men did toward making David king, we read in the foregoing ch. Here we are told what the *many* did toward it. It was not all at once, but gradually, that David ascended the throne. His kingdom was to last; therefore, like fruits that keep longest, is ripened slowly: ['a thousand years scarce serve to form a state.'] After he had long waited for the vacancy of the throne, it was at two steps, and those above seven years distant, that he ascended it.

V. 1—22. We have here an account of them that appeared and acted as David's friends, on the death of Saul, to bring about the revolution. He had, while persecuted, but 600 men, those served for his guards; but when he must begin to act offensively, Providence brought more to his assistance. They that trust God to do his work for them in his own way and time, shall find his providence outdoing all their forecast and contrivance. The war was God's, and He found out helpers, whose forwardness is here recorded to their honor.

I. Some, even of Saul's brethren, of the tribe of Benjamin, and akin to him, *v.* 2. What moved them to it, we are not told; probably, a generous indignation at the base treatment Saul gave him. They are described to be men of great dexterity; a few of them might do David great service. Several are here named. See Judg. 20: 16.

II. Some of the tribe of Gad, though sealed on the other side Jordan, had such a conviction of

CHAP. XII.

The companies which came to David at Ziklag, 1—22. The armed troops that came to him at Hebron, 23—40.

B. C. 1058. NOW [a] these *are* they that came to David to Ziklag, ‡ while he yet kept himself close because of [b] Saul the son of Kish; and they *were* among [c] the mighty men, helpers of the war.

2 *They were* armed with bows, and [d] could use both the right hand and the left [e] in *hurling* stones, and *shooting* arrows out of a bow, *even* of Saul's brethren of Benjamin.

3 The chief *was* Ahiezer, then Joash, the sons of § Shemaah the [f] Gibeathite: and Jeziel, and Pelet, the sons of [g] Azmaveth: and Berachah, and Jehu [h] the Antothite,

4 And Ismaiah the [i] Gibeonite, [k] a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty; and Jeremiah, and Jehaziel, and Johanan, and Josabad the [l] Gederathite,

5 Eluzai, and Jerimoth, and Bealiah, and Shemariah, and Shephatiah the Haruphite,

6 Elkanah, and Jesiah, and Azareel, and Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korhites,

7 And Joelah, and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham of [m] Gedor.

8 And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David [n] into the hold to the wilderness, men of might, *and* men ‖ of war *fit* for the battle, that could [o] handle shield and buckler, [p] whose faces *were like* the faces of lions, and *were* as ¶ [q] swift as the roes upon the mountains;

9 Ezer the first, Obadiah the second, Eliab the third,

10 Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth,

11 Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh,

12 Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth,

13 Jeremiah the tenth, Machbanai the eleventh:

14 These *were* of the sons of Gad, captains of the host: ** one of the least *was* over an hundred, and the greatest over a thousand.

15 These *are* they that went over Jordan in the first month, when [r] it †† had overflowed all his banks; and they put to flight all *them* of the val-

z 2 Sam. 23:31. *Barhumite.*
a 1 Sam. 23:32. *Jashen.*
b 2 Sam. 23:33. *Sharar.*
c 2 Sam. 23:34. *Eliphelet.—Ahasbai.*
d 2 Sam. 23:35. *Hezrai—Paarai the Arbite.*
e 2 Sam. 23:36. *Igal the son of Nathan.*
* Or, *the Haggerite.*
f 2 Sam. 20:26. *Jairite.*
g 2 Sam. 11:6, &c. 23:39.
† Or, *Shimrite.*
a 1 Sam. 27:6. 2 Sam. 1:1. 4:10.
‡ Heb. being *yet shut up.*
b 8:33. 9:39.
c 11:10,19,24,25.
d Judg. 3:15. 20:16.
e 1 Sam. 17:49.
§ Or, *Hasmaah.*
f 1 Sam. 11:4. 2 Sam. 21:6.
g 11:33.
h 11:28.
i Josh. 9:3,17—23.
k 11:15.
l Josh. 15:36.
m 4:18,39. Josh. 15:58.
n 16. 11:16. 1 Sam. 23:14,29. 24:22.
‖ Heb. *of the host.*
o 2 Chr. 25:5. Jer. 46:9.
p 11:22. 2 Sam. 1:23. 17:10. 23:20. Prov. 28:1.
¶ Heb. *as the roes upon the mountains to make haste.*
q 2 Sam. 2:18. Prov. 6:5. Cant. 8:14.
** Or, *one that was least* could resist *an hundred, and the greatest a thousand.* Lev. 26:8. Deut. 32:30.
r Josh. 3:15. 4:18. Jer. 12:5. 49:19.
†† Heb. *filled over.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When the time arrives for the performance of God's word, those persons who before were the most averse to the things predicted, will concur in accomplishing them.—Rulers should remember, and have need to be reminded, that they are not advanced for their own aggrandizement or self-indulgence; but that they should, with activity and vigor, provide for the defence and welfare of the nations over which they rule.—The desire of applause and pre-eminence seems to be the highest motive, of which carnal men are capable: but those, who are born from above, are actuated by purer and nobler principles. Yet, in seeking the glory of God and the good of man, by endeavoring to advance the kingdom of Jesus, the Lord's Anointed; they most effectually secure their own honor and exaltation.—The way to be truly great is to be really useful; and to give the use and glory of all our talents and services to the Lord: and if we be, at length, preserved from the destruction of the wicked, we shall perceive that the Lord has saved us with a great deliverance. May He teach us to regulate our desires, to govern our appetites, to acknowledge candidly our mistakes, and completely to rectify them when discovered; and to be gentle and tender to others, and only severe against our own sins. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII. V. 1, 2. The sacred writer here goes back in the history, to the times which preceded the death of Saul, and records some particulars not mentioned in the books of Samuel, respecting David's advancement to the throne.—Several considerable persons resorted to him at Ziklag. (*M. R. a*, b.) *Use both, &c.* (2). *Judg.* 20:16. [cut, 2 K. 3:25.] SCOTT.

Verse 4.

Perhaps Saul had conferred some honorable distinction on 30 of his most valiant captains; as David afterwards did on the same number of his: and Ismaiah was placed over this illustrious company. For Ahiezer (3) seems to have been the chief of those who came to David at this time.—'I suppose, there were 30 Benjamites came over t David at one time, and this was their leader.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

Verse 14.

Either these persons had the command, some over 100 men, and others over 1000, before they came to David; or he preferred them afterwards, in consideration of their services; or the passage may be understood according to the margin. ID.

Verse 15.

Perhaps, during some part of Saul's reign, the Philistines and other tribes made incursions into the land of Israel; and these resolute Gadites hastened to assist their brethren. Or perhaps they were coming to join David, in his extreme danger; and, being opposed by Saul's adherents, they put them to flight, and pursued them in every direction. ID.

leys, *both* toward the east, and toward the west.

16 And there came of [a] the children of Benjamin and Judah to [t] the hold unto David.

17 And David went out * to meet them, and answered and said unto them, [u] If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, [x] mine heart shall be † knit unto you: but if *ye be come* to betray me to mine enemies, seeing *there is* no ‡ wrong in mine hands, [y] the God of our fathers look *thereon*, and [z] rebuke *it*.

18 Then [a] the Spirit § came upon [b] Amasai, *who was* chief of the captains, *and he said*, [c] Thine *are we*, David, [d] and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: [e] peace, peace *be* unto thee, and peace *be* to thine helpers; for [f] thy God helpeth thee. Then David received them, and made them [g] captains of the band.

[*Practical Observations.*]

19 ¶ And there fell *some* of Manasseh to David, [h] when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle; but they helped them not: for the lords of the Philistines, upon advisement, sent him away, saying, He will fall to his master Saul ‖ to *the jeopardy of* our heads.

20 As he [i] went to Ziklag, there fell to him of Manasseh, Adnah, and Jozabad, and Jediael, and Michael, and Jozabad, and Elihu, and Zilthai, [k] captains of the thousands that *were* of Manasseh.

21 And they helped David ¶ against [l] the band *of the rovers:* for they *were* all [m] mighty men of valor, and were captains in the host.

David's title to, and fitness for, the government, that they *separated themselves from their brethren*, to go to him, though *in the hold in the wilderness*, *v.* 8. they were but few, 11, in all, here named, *v.* 8. but they added much to David's strength. Those that had hitherto come, were most of them men of broken fortunes, and soldiers of fortune, that came to him rather for protection, than service, 1 Sam. 22: 2. But these Gadites were brave men, *men of war, and fit for the battle*, *v.* 8. 1. They were *able-bodied men*, men of incredible swiftness, to pursue the scattered forces; and yet no man could out-fight them. 2. They were disciplined men, trained to military exercise; could handle shield and buckler, use both offensive and defensive weapons. 3. They were officers of the militia in their own tribe, *v.* 14. so that, though they did not bring soldiers with them, they had them at command, hundreds, thousands. 4. They were daring men, that could break through the greatest difficulties. On some expedition, perhaps this, they swam the Jordan, when it *overflowed all its banks*, *v.* 15. Those are fit to be employed in the cause of God, that venture thus in a dependence on the divine protection. 5. They were men that would go through with the business they engaged in. What enemies they were that they met with in the valleys, when they had passed Jordan, does not appear; but they put them to flight, and pursued them with matchless fury, which way soever they turned; they followed the blow, and did not do their work by halves.

III. Some of Judah and Benjamin came to him, *v.* 16. Their leader was Amasai; whether the same with that Amasa that afterward sided with Absalom, (2 Sam. 17: 25.) or no, does not appear. Now here we have,

1. David's prudent treaty with them, *v.* 17. Having been so often in danger by the treachery of the men of Ziph, and the men of Keilah, all men of Judah, no marvel he meets these men of Judah with caution. Observe how fairly he deals with them. As they are, they shall find him; so shall all that deal with the Son of David. (1.) If they be faithful and honorable, he will be their rewarder. Affection, respect, and service, that are cordial and sincere, will find favor with a good man, as they do with God, though clogged with infirmities, and turning to no great account. But, (2.) If they be false, and come to betray him to Saul, under color of friendship, he leaves them to God to be their Avenger, as He is, and will be, of every thing treacherous and perfidious. Never was man more violently run down, than David, (except the Son of David Himself,) yet he had the testimony of his conscience, that there was no wrong in his hands, which was his rejoicing in the day of evil, and committed his cause to Him that judges righteously. *The God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it.* Observe, in this appeal, [1.] He calls God, the *God of our fathers*, both his fathers and theirs. Thus he reminds them not to deal ill with him; for they were both descendants from the same patriarchs; both dependents on the same God. [2.] He does not imprecate any fearful judgment on them, though they should deal treacherously, but very modestly refers himself to the divine wisdom and justice. It becomes those that appeal to God, to express themselves with great temper and moderation; for the wrath of man *works not the righteousness of God.*

2. Their hearty closure with him, *v.* 18. Amasai was their spokesman, on whom the *Spirit* of the Lord *came;* not a spirit of prophecy, but of wisdom and resolution, according to the occasion, putting words into his mouth, unpremeditated, which were proper both to satisfy David, and animate those that accompanied him. Nothing could be said finer, more lively, or more pertinent to the occasion. In calling David *son of Jesse*, they remind themselves that he was lineally descended from Nahshon and Salmon, princes of the tribe of Judah. Saul called him so in disdain, 1 Sam. 20: 27. 22: 7. but they to his honor. They were convinced he was on God's side, and God on his; therefore *Thine are we, David, and on thy side.* It is good, if we must side, to side with those that side with God, and have God with them. He wishes prosperity to David and his cause, and assures him of help from heaven. From these expressions of Amasai, we may take instruction how to testify our affection and allegiance to the Lord Jesus; his we must be without reservation, or power of revocation; on his side we must be forward to appear and act; to his interest we must be hearty well-wishers: Hosanna; prosperity to his gospel and kingdom; for his God helpeth Him, and will, till He have put down all opposing rule principality and power.

3. Charity and honor teach us to let fall our jealousies, as soon as satisfaction is given us; *David received them*, cheerfully, into his interest and friendship, and preferred them to be *captains of the band.*

IV. Some of Manasseh likewise joined him, *v.* 19. See how Providence provides. David's interest grew strangely, just then when he had occasion to make use of it, *v.* 22. When the promise comes to the birth, leave it to God to find strength to bring forth.

V. 23—40. We have here an account of those who were active in perfecting the settlement of David on the throne, after the death of Ish-bosheth. We read, *ch.* 11: 1. and before, 2 Sam. 5: 1. that

22 For at *that* time, [n] day by day, there came to David to help him, until *it was* a great host, like [o] the host of God.

B. C. 1048. 23 ¶ And these *are* [p] the numbers of the ** bands *that were* ready armed to the war, *and* came to David to Hebron, [q] to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, [r] according to the word of the LORD.

* 2.
t See on 8.
* Heb. *before them.*
u 1 Sam. 16:4. 2 Sam. 3:20—25. 1 K. 2:13. 2 K. 9:22. Ps. 12:1,2.
x 1 Sam. 18:1,3. 2 K. 10:15. Ps. 86: 11. 2 Cor. 13:11. Phil. 1:27.
† Heb. *one.* Jer. 32:39. Acts 4:32. 1 Cor. 1:10.
‡ Or, *violence.*
y Gen. 31:42,53. 1 Sam. 24:11—17. 26: 23,24. Ps. 7:6. 1 Pet. 2:23.
z Zech. 3:2. Jude 9.
a Judg. 6:34. 13:25.
§ Heb. *clothed Amasai.*
b 2:17. 2 Sam. 17:25. 19:13. 20:4, &c. *Amasa.*
c 2 K. 10:5.
d Ruth 1:16. 2 Sam. 15:21. 2 K. 9:32. Matt. 12:30.
e Gal. 6:16. Eph. 6:23,24.
f 1 Sam. 25:28,29. 2 Sam. 5:2. Zech. 3:23. John 6:67,68.
g 1 Sam. 8:12. 22:7. 1 K. 9:22.
h 1 Sam. 29:2—4.
‖ Heb. *on our heads.*
i 1 Sam. 29:11.
k Ex. 18:21. Deut. 1:15. 33:17.
¶ Or, *with a band.*
l 1 Sam. 30:1—17.
m 20. 5:24. 11:10,21,22.
n 2 Sam. 2:2—4. 3:1. Job 17:9.
o Gen. 32:2. Josh. 5:14. Ps. 148:2.
p 11:1,3. 2 Sam. 5:1—3.
** Or, *captains*, or *men.* Heb. *heads.*
q 10:14.
r 11:10. 1 Sam. 16:1,12,13. 2 Sam. 3: 18. Ps. 2:6. 89:19,20.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—18. Earthly princes in general honor with marked distinction such persons, as have faithfully adhered to them in seasons of difficulty and danger: [how much more shall] Jesus Christ confer peculiar honor on those, who embrace and adhere to his Gospel, in times of persecution and distress; who deny themselves, renounce their worldly interests, break through difficulties, and bear the cross, for his sake and after his example.—Courage, strength, agility, ingenuity, or superior mental endowments, are valuable to the possessors and to the community, only when, being considered as talents committed to them by the great Lord of all, they are conscientiously improved in promoting the glory of God, and the welfare of mankind: for, when misused or neglected, they prove occasions of increasing condemnation.—Long experience of the deceitfulness of mankind will teach caution to every reflecting person; but we should be afraid of growing unreasonably suspicious. SCOTT.

Verse 22.

'The host of God;' i. e. his legions of angels. Some consider it merely as a Hebraism for a very great army. SCOTT.

Verses 23—40.

Some learned men understand this passage, or at least a part of it, as relating to the time when David was made king over Judah, on his

24 The children of Judah, that bare shield and spear, *were* six thousand and eight hundred, ready * armed to the war.

25 Of the children of Simeon, mighty men of valor for the war, seven thousand and one hundred.

26 Of the children of Levi four thousand and six hundred.

27 And Jehoiada *was* * the leader of the [t] Aaronites, and with him *were* three thousand and seven hundred.

28 And [u] Zadok, a young man mighty of valor, and of his father's house twenty and two captains.

29 And of the children of Benjamin, the † kindred of Saul, three thousand: for hitherto ‡ the greatest part of them had kept the ward of the house of Saul.

30 And of the children of Ephraim twenty thousand and eight hundred, mighty men of valor, § famous throughout the house of their fathers.

31 And of [x] the half tribe of Manasseh eighteen thousand, which were expressed by name, to come and make David king.

32 And of the children of Issachar, *which were men* that had [y] understanding of the times, [z] to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them *were* two hundred, and [a] all their brethren *were* at their commandment.

33 Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle, ‖ expert in war, with all instruments of war, fifty thousand, which could ¶ keep rank: *they were* ** not of double heart.

34 And of Naphtali a thousand captains, and with them, with shield and spear, thirty and seven thousand.

35 And of the Danites, expert in war, twenty and eight thousand and six hundred.

36 And of Asher, such as went forth to battle, †† expert in war, forty thousand.

37 And on [b] the other side of Jordan, of the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and of the half tribe of Manasseh, with all manner of instruments of war for the battle, an hundred and twenty thousand.

38 All these men of war that could keep rank, came [c] with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel: and [d] all the rest also of Israel *were* of one heart to make David king.

39 And there they were with David three days, [e] eating and drinking: for their brethren had prepared for them.

40 Moreover they that were nigh them, *even* unto Issachar, and Zebulun, and Naphtali, brought [f] bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen; *and* ‡‡ meat, meal, [g] cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep abundantly: for [h] *there was* joy in Israel.

* Or, *prepared.*
[o] 9:20. 2 K. 11:4,9. 25:18.
[t] 6:49—57. 27:17.
[u] 6:8,53. 2 Sam. 8:17. 1 K. 1:8. 2:35. Ez. 44:15.
† Heb. *brethren.* 2 Gen. 31:23.
‡ Heb. *a multitude of them.* 2 Sam. 2:8,9.
§ Heb. *men of names.* Gen. 6:4.
[x] Josh. 17:
[y] Gen. 49:14. Esth. 1:13. Is. 22:12—14. Mic. 6:9. Matt. 16:3. Luke 12: 56,57.
[z] Prov. 14:8. Eph. 5:17.
[a] Prov. 24:5. Ec. 7:19. 9:18.
‖ Or, *rangers of battle*, or, *ranged in battle.*
¶ Or, *set the battle in array.*
** Heb. *without a heart and a heart.* Ps. 12:2. John 1:47.
†† Or, *keeping their rank.*
[b] 5:1, &c. Num. 32:33—42. Deut. 3: 12—16. Josh. 13:7—32. 14:3. 22:1 —10.
[c] 1 K. 8:61. 11:4. 2 K. 20:3. Ps. 101:2.
[d] See on 17,18. Gen. 49:8—10. 2 Chr. 30:12. Ps. 110:3. Ez. 11:19.
[e] Gen. 26:30. 31:54. 2 Sam. 6:19. 19: 42.
[f] 2 Sam. 16:1. 17:27—29.
‡‡ Or, *victual of meal.*
[g] 1 Sam. 25:18.
[h] 1 K. 1:40. 2 K. 11:20. Prov. 11:10. 29:2. Jer. 23:5,6. Luke 19:37,38. Rev. 19:5—7.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 19—40. The cause of our King appears to a carnal eye weak and obscure, and his subjects have been hitherto comparatively few: but his kingdom and glory will, ere long, rapidly advance; and his host become, like 'the host of God,' innumerable and invincible.—The advancement of wise and good men to authority, is justly considered as a cause of great and general joy; but, what a joyful time will that be, 'when all kings shall fall down before the King of Zion, and all nations shall serve Him!' Nothing short of the perfect purity and harmony of heaven, can give us a higher idea of true happiness. Meanwhile, happy are they, 'who have understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do:' who wisely perceive it to be their duty and interest, to submit to and trust in Jesus Christ the Son of David: who renounce all inconsistent connections, pursuits, and employments for his sake; and unreservedly employ all their influence and ability to promote his cause, from love to Him and to their brethren: whose love also abounds in knowledge and in all judgment, so that their beneficent endeavors are directed by heavenly wisdom, through an acquaintance with the Word of God, and a maturity of experience and observation. 'If any man lack this wisdom, let him ask it of God, and it shall be given him.' SCOTT.

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first coming to Hebron: but it seems entirely to refer to his being made king over all Israel, after the death of Ish-bosheth; for there was no such union of the several tribes, on the former occasion, as is here described. (2 *Sam.* 2:1—4. 5:1—3.)—At that time, great numbers came to David from each of the tribes of Israel: but in different proportions, according to the degree of the cordiality and zeal of each tribe. It is probable, that so small a number of Judah was present, in order that David's own tribe, over which he had now reigned seven years, might not appear to impose a king on their brethren. There was a considerable number of Levites assembled; but not at all in proportion to the multitude of the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who appeared on this occasion under a leader named Jehoiada, probably appointed by Abiathar the high priest: while Zadok, who was afterwards high priest, being now a young man, headed a company of chief men, perhaps of the line of Eleazar. So greatly had that family increased, notwithstanding the slaughter which Saul had not long before made of them, (1 *Sam.* 20:6—19.) that almost 4000 attended on this occasion!—The Benjamites in general had favored the house of Saul; and numbers of them still waited for an opportunity of reviving the claim of that family, in some of its branches; for so the latter part of v. 29. may be interpreted. SCOTT.

CHAP. XIII.

David, with the princes and people, with great solemnity and zeal, fetches the ark from Kirjath-jearim, 1—8. Uzza is smitten, David is disconcerted, and the ark is left at the house of Obed-edom, 9—14.

AND David [a] consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, *and* with every leader.

2 And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, [b] If *it seem* good unto you, [c] and *that it be* of the LORD our God, let us * send abroad unto our brethren every where, *that are* [d] left in all the land of Israel, and with them *also* to [e] the priests and Levites *which are* in † their cities *and* suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us:

3 And let us ‡ bring again [f] the ark of our God to us: for [g] we inquired not at it in the days of Saul.

4 And all the congregation said that they would do so; for [h] the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.

5 ¶ So [i] David gathered all Israel together, from [k] Shihor of Egypt even unto the entering of [l] Hemath, to bring the ark of God from [m] Kirjath-jearim.

6 And David went up, and all Israel, to [n] Baalah, *that is*, to Kirjath-jearim, which *belonged* to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God the LORD, [o] that dwelleth *between* the cherubims, [p] whose name is called *on it*.

7 And they § carried the ark of God, [q] in a new cart, [r] out of the house of Abinadab; and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart.

[*Practical Observations.*]

8 And [s] David and all Israel played before God with all *their* might, and with ‖ singing, and [t] with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.

9 And when they came unto the thresh-

a 12:14,20,32. 2 Sam. 6:1. 2 K. 23:1. 2 Chr. 29:20. 34:29,30.

b 1 K. 12:7. 2 K. 9:15. Prov. 15:22. Philem. 8,9.

c Ex. 18:23. 2 Sam. 7:2—5.

* Heb. *break forth*, and *send*.

d 10:7. Is. 37:4.

e 15:2—14. Num. 4:4,&c. 2 Chr. 31: 4,&c.

† Heb. *the cities of their suburbs*. 6:54 —81. Num. 35:2—9.

‡ Heb. *bring about*.

f 1 Sam. 7:1,2. Ps. 132:6.

g 1 Sam. 14:18,36,37. 22:10,15. 23:2, 4,9—12.

h 1 Sam. 18:20. 2 Sam. 3:36. 2 Chr. 30:4. *marg.* Esth. 8:5.

i 2 Sam. 6:1.

k Num. 34:5—8. Josh. 13:3—6. *Sihor.* 1 K. 4:21. Jer. 2:18. *Sihor.*

l Num. 34:8. Josh. 13:5. 1 K. 8:65. 2 K. 25:21. *Hamath.*

m 6. 1 Sam. 6:21. 7:1.

n Josh. 15:9,60. 2 Sam. 6:2. *Baale.*

o Ex. 25:22. Num. 7:89. 1 Sam. 4:4. 2 K. 19:15. Ps. 80:1. 99:1. Is. 37: 16.

p Ex. 20:24. 23:21. Num. 6:27. 1 K. 8:16.

§ Heb. *made the ark to ride.*

q 15:2,13. Num. 4:15. 1 Sam. 6:7,8. 2 Sam. 6:3.

r 1 Sam. 7:1,2.

s 15:10—24. 1 Sam. 10:5. 2 Sam. 6:5. 2 K. 3:15. Ps. 47:5. 68:25—27. 150: 3—5.

‖ Heb. *songs.*

t 16:28. 15:5,42. 23:5. 25:1—6. Dan. 3:5—7. Am. 5:23. 6:5.

ing [u] floor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen shook it.

10 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God.

11 And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzza: wherefore that place is called [x] Perez-uzza to this day.

12 And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?

13 So David brought not the ark home to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of [y] Obed-edom the Gittite.

14 And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months. And the LORD blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had.

u Heb. *threshing of Nachon.* 2 Sam. 6:6. *Nachon.*

x Heb. *breach of Uzza.*

y 15:18,21,24. 26:4,5. 2 Sam. 6:10—12.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—7. When we set out in life, or obtain any temporal advancement, we should first inquire, how we may honor God and do good, and enjoy the divine blessing, in our several situations, and in the use of our possessions!—In rectifying abuses, it is generally best to shun personal reflections and severe accusations: they appear malevolent, and excite opposition. Suffice it to show, that things needful have been neglected, and that it is proper for us to attend to them: and, in public transgressions, humility will teach a man to consider himself as in some measure guilty, and more readily to condemn himself than others.—Even good men, in doing their duty, are liable to mistakes, and to act in an improper spirit: and rebukes, though merited and needed, often excite murmurs, discouragements, and hard thoughts of God. May we then, with redoubled diligence, seek to become acquainted with the whole Word of God, and to make it 'the lantern of our path.' SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII. V. 1—4. Probably David consulted about bringing back the ark, immediately after he had got possession of mt. Zion, and had fixed his residence there: yet it appears, from comparing the different parts of the narrative, that he did not accomplish the design till some time after, being retarded by the incursions of the Philistines, and by other hindrances. (2 *Sam.* 5: 6: 1, 2.)—During Saul's reign, or the latter part of it at least, the ark had been neglected, and even David had inquired of God by the high priest at a distance from it; (1 *Sam.* 23:1—6, 9—13. 30:7—10. 2 *Sam.* 2:1—3.) while Saul concerned himself very little in any way about religion. Thus the regular way of inquiring the will of God, by the high priest, with the breast plate of judgment, before the ark in the sanctuary, had been long neglected. SCOTT.

ing-floor of [u] Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen * stumbled.

10 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because [x] he put his hand to the ark: and [y] there he died before God.

11 And David was [z] displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzza: wherefore that place is called † Perez-uzza [a] to this day.

12 And David was [b] afraid of God that day, saying, [c] How shall I bring the ark of God *home* to me?

13 So David ‡ brought not the ark *home* to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of [d] Obed-edom [e] the Gittite.

14 And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months. And [f] the LORD blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had.

CHAP. XIV.

Hiram sends timber and builders to build David a house, 1. He prospers in his kingdom, takes more wives, and has several children, 2, 3. The names of his sons, 4—7. He gains two signal victories over the Philistines, 8—17.

NOW [a] Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, [b] and timber of cedars, with masons and carpenters, [c] to build him an house.

2 And David perceived that [d] the LORD had confirmed him king over Israel; for [e] his kingdom was lifted up on high, [f] because of his people Israel.

3 And David [g] took [h] more wives at Jerusalem: and David begat more sons and daughters.

4 Now these *are* the names of *his* children which he had in Jerusalem; [i] Shammua, and Shobab, [j] Nathan, and [k] Solomon,

5 And Ibhar, and [l] Elishua, and Elpalet,

6 And Nogah, and Nepheg, and Japhia,

7 And Elishama, and [m] Beeliada, [n] and Eliphalet.

8 ¶ And [o] when the Philistines heard that David was [p] anointed
B. C. 1047. king over all Israel, [q] all the Philistines went up to seek David. And David heard *of it*, and went out against them.

9 And the Philistines came and spread themselves in [r] the valley of Rephaim.

10 And David [s] inquired of God, saying, [t] Shall I go up against the Philistines? and wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto him, [u] Go up; for I will deliver them into thine hand.

11 So they came up to [v] Baal-perazim; and David smote them there. Then David said, [x] God hath broken in upon mine enemies by mine hand [y] like the breaking forth of waters: therefore they called the name of that place ‖ Baal-perazim.

12 And when they had left their gods there, David gave a commandment, and they [z] were burned with fire.

B. C. 1046. 13 And the Philistines [a] yet again spread themselves abroad in the valley.

14 Therefore David [b] inquired again of God; and God said unto him, Go not up after them: [c] turn away from them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees.

15 And it shall be, when thou shalt hear [d] a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry-

u 2 Sam. 6:6. *Nachon.*
* Or, *shook it.*
x 15:13,15. Num. 4:15. Josh. 6:6.
y Lev. 10:1—3. Num. 16:35. 1 Sam. 6:19. 2 Chr. 26:16—20. 1 Cor. 11: 30—32.
z 2 Sam. 6:7—9. Jon. 4:4,9.
† That is, *The breach of Uzza.*
a Gen. 32:32. Deut. 34:6. Josh. 4:9.
b Num. 17:12,13. 1 Sam. 5:10,11. 6: 20. Ps. 119:120. Is. 6:5. Luke 5:8,9.
c 1 K. 8:27. Job 25:5,6. Matt. 25:24.
‡ Heb. *removed.*
d 15:18. 16:5. 26:4,8. 2 Sam. 6:10,11.
e 2 Sam. 4:3.
f Gen. 30:27. 39:5. Prov. 3:9,10. Mal. 3:10,11.
a 2 Sam. 5:11,12. 1 K. 5:1,8—12. 2 Chr. 2:11,12. *Hiram.*
b 22:2. 1 K. 5:6,9,10,18. 2 Chr. 2:3,8 —10. Ezra 3:7.
c 17:1. 2 Sam. 7:2. 1 K. 7:1—12. Jer. 22:13—15.
d 17:17. 2 Sam. 7:16. Ps. 89:20—37.
e Num. 24:7. 2 Sam. 7:8,9.
f 1 K. 10:9. 2 Chr. 2:11. Esth. 4:14. Is. 1:25—27. Dan. 2:39.
g 3:1—4. Deut. 17:17. 2 Sam. 5:13. 1 K. 11:3. Prov. 5:18,19. Ec. 7:26 —29. 9:9. Mal. 2:14,15. Matt. 19: 4, 5, 8.
§ Heb. *yet.*
h 3:5. *Shimea.* 2 Sam. 5:14. *Shammuah.*
i 2 Sam. 12:1. Luke 3:31.
k 22:9—12. 28:5,6. 2 Sam. 12:24,25. 1 K. 1:13,17. 2:15. 3:3,5—11. Matt. 1:6.
l 3:6. *Elishama.* 2 Sam. 5:15.
m 2 Sam. 5:16. *Eliada.*
n 3:8. *Eliphelet.*
o 1 Sam. 21:11. 2 Sam. 5:17 —25.
p 11:3. 2 Sam. 5:3.
q Ps. 2:1—6. Rev. 11:15—18.
r 11:15. 2 Sam. 5:18,22. 23:13. Is 17:5.
s 14. 13:3. 1 Sam. 23:2—4,9—12. 2 Sam. 2:1. 5:19,23.
t 1 Sam. 30:8. Prov. 3:6.
u Judg. 4:6,7. 1 K. 22:6,15—17. v 2 Sam. 5:20. Is. 28:21.
x Ps. 18:13—15. 44:3. 144:1,10.
y Ex. 14:28. Job 30:14. Matt. 7:27.
‖ That is, *a place of breaches.*
z Ex. 12:12. 32:20. Deut. 7:5,25. 1 Sam. 5:2—6. 2 K. 19:18.
a 2 Sam. 5:22—25. 1 K. 20:22.
b See on 10. Ps. 27:4.
c Josh. 8:2—7. John 9:6,7.
d Lev. 26:36. 2 K. 7:6. 19:7. Acts 2:2.

had made David king; but he could not be easy, nor think himself happy, till he perceived that *the Lord had confirmed him king over Israel*, *v.* 1. Who shall unfix me, if God hath fixed me?

3. We must look on all our advancements as designed for our usefulness. *David's kingdom was lifted upon high*, not for his own sake, that he might look great; but for his people's sake, that he might guide and protect them. We are *therefore* blessed, that we may be blessings. See Gen. 12: 2. We are not born, nor do we live, for ourselves.

4. It is hard to thrive, and not grow secure and indulgent to the flesh. It was David's infirmity, that when settled in his kingdom, *he took more wives*, *v.* 3. yet the numerous issue he had, added to his honor and strength. Lo, *children are a heritage of the Lord.* We had an account of David's children, not only in Samuel, but in this book, *ch.* 3: 1, &c. and now here again; for it was their honor to have such a father.

V. 8—17. This narrative of David's triumph over the Philistines, is much the same with that, 2 Sam. 5: 17, &c.

1. Let the attack the Philistines made on David, forbid us to be secure in any settlement or advancement, and engage us to expect molestation in this world. Christ's kingdom will thus be insulted by the serpent's seed, especially when it makes any advances. 2. Let David's inquiry of God, once, and again, on occasion of the Philistines, invading him, direct us in all our ways to acknowledge God; in distress, to fly to Him; when wronged, to appeal to Him; and when we know not what to do, ask counsel at his oracles, and be, of Him to show us the right way. 3. Let David's success encourage us to resist our spiritual enemies, in observance of divine directions, and in dependence on divine strength. 4. Let the sound of the going in the top of the mulberry trees, direct us to attend God's motion, both in his providence and in the influence of his Spirit. 5. Let David's burning these gods, teach us a holy indignation against idolatry, and all the remains of it. 6. Let David's thankful acknowledgment, direct us to bring all our sacrifices of praise to

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV. V. 1—16. (5:1—9. 2 *Sam.* 5:11—25.) The events, recorded in this ch. are supposed to have taken place, in the order assigned to them in 2 Sam.; and before David attempted to bring the ark to mt. Zion. SCOTT.

trees, *that* [o]then thou shalt go out to battle: [f]for God is gone forth before thee to smite the host of the Philistines.

16 David therefore [g]did as God commanded him: and they smote the host of the Philistines from [h]Gibeon even to [i]Gazer.

17 And the [j]fame of David went out into all lands; and the LORD brought [k]the fear of him upon all nations.

CHAP. XV.

David prepares a place for the ark, and gives orders to the priests and Levites, about bringing it from the house of Obed-edom, 1—24. He and all the chiefs of Israel attend its removal, with sacrifices and songs of praise, 25—28. Michal despises David for dancing before the ark, 29.

AND *David* made him [a]houses in the city of David, [b]and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent.

2 Then David said, [*]None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for [c]them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and [d]to minister unto him for ever.

3 And David [e]gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, [f]to bring up the ark of the LORD unto his place, which he had prepared for it.

4 And David assembled [g]the children of Aaron, and the Levites:

5 Of the sons of Kohath; [h]Uriel the chief, and his † brethren an hundred and twenty:

6 Of the sons of [i]Merari; Asaiah the chief, and his brethren two hundred and twenty:

7 Of the sons of Gershom; [k]Joel the chief, and his brethren an hundred and thirty:

8 Of the sons of [l]Elizaphan; [m]Shemaiah the chief, and his brethren two hundred:

9 Of the sons of [n]Hebron; Eliel the chief, and his brethren fourscore:

10 Of the sons of [o]Uzziel; [p]Amminadab the chief, and his brethren an hundred and twelve.

11 And David called for [q]Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for [r]Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab,

12 And said unto them, [s]Ye *are* the chief of the fathers of the Levites: [t]sanctify yourselves, *both* ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel unto *the place that* I have prepared for it.

13 For because [u]ye *did it* not at the first, [v]the LORD our God made a breach upon us, [x]for that we sought him not after the due order.

14 So the priests and the Levites [y]sanctified themselves, to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel.

15 And the children of the Levites [z]bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded, according to the word of the LORD.

16 And [a]David spake to the [b]chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren *to be* [c]the singers with the instruments of music, psalteries, and harps, and cymbals, sounding, by [d]lifting up the voice with joy.

17 So the Levites appointed [e]Heman the son of Joel; and of his

Chap. XV. The bringing in of the ark to the city of David, was a very good work; it was resolved on, ch. 13: 3. and attempted, but not perfected; it *lay by the way* in the house of Obed-edom. Now this ch. gives us an account of the completing of that good work.

V. 1—24. Preparation is here made to bring the ark home to the city of David, from the house of Obed-edom. It is here owned, that in the former attempt, though they *sought God*, yet they *sought Him not after the due order*, *v.* 13. By suffering for our irregularities, we must learn to be more regular; then we answer the end of chastisement. Let us see how the matter was mended.

1. David now prepared a place for the ark, before he brought it to him; thus he sought in due order. He *pitched a tent* for it, *v.* 1. probably, according to the pattern showed Moses in the mount, or as near it as might be, of curtains and boards. Note, Wherever we build for ourselves, we must be sure to make room for God's ark, for a church in the house.

2. David now ordered that the Levites or priests should carry the ark on their shoulders. Now he thought of what he could not but know before, that *none ought to carry the ark but the Levites*, *v.* 2. We have all smarted for your neglect: *this has been by your means;* see Mal. 1: 9. therefore sanctify yourselves, and mind your business. When those that suffered for doing ill, thus learn to do better, the correction is well bestowed.

3. The Levites and priests were sanctified themselves, *v.* 14. and ready to carry the ark on their shoulders, according to the law, *v.* 15. Note, Many that are very remiss in their duty, if they were but faithfully told of it, would reform, and

e Judg. 4:14. 7:9,15. 1 Sam. 14:9—22. Phil. 2:12,13.
f Is. 13:4. 45:1,2. Mic. 2:12,13.
g Gen. 6:22. Ex. 39:42,43. John 2:5. 13:17. 15:14.
h 2 Sam. 5:25. *Geba.*
i 6:67. Josh. 16:10. *Gezer.*
j Josh. 6:27. 2 Chr. 26:8.
k Ex. 15:14—16. Deut. 2:25. 11:25. Josh. 2:9—11. 9:24.
a 2 Sam. 5:9. 13:7,8. 14:24.
b 3. 16:1. 17:1—5. Ps. 132:5. Acts 7:46.
* Heb. It is *not to carry the ark of God, but for the Levites.*
c Num. 4:2—15,19,20. 7:9. Deut. 10: 8. 31:9. Josh. 3:3. 6:6. 2 Chr. 35:3.
d Num. 8:13,14,24—26. 18:1—8. Is. 66:21. Jer. 33:17—22.
e 13:5. 1 Kings 8:1.
f 1. 2 Sam. 6:12.
g 6:16—29,49,50. 12:26—28. Ex. 6:16 —22. Num. 3:4.
h 6:22—24.
† Or, *kinsmen.*
i 6:29,30.
k 11. 23:8.
l Ex. 6:22. *Elzaphan.*
m 11.
n 6:2. 23:12,19. 26:23,30,31. Ex. 6: 18. Num. 26:58.
o 6:18. 23:12. Ex. 6:18,22.
p 6:22.
q 12:28. 18:16. 1 Sam. 22:20—23. 2 Sam. 8:17. 15:24—29,35. 20:25. 1 Kings 2:35.
r *See on* 5—10.
s 9:34. 24:31.
t 14. Ex. 19:14,15. 2 Chr. 5:11. 29: 4,5. 30:15. 35:6. Ez. 43:11. John 17:17. Rom. 12:1,2. Rev. 5:9,10.
u 13:7—9. 2 Sam. 6:3.
v 13:10,11. 2 Sam. 6:7,8.
x *See on* 2.—Num. 4:15. 7:9. Deut. 31:9. 2 Chr. 30:17—20. Prov. 28: 13. 1 John 1:8—10.
y Lev. 16:3. 2 Chr. 29:15,34. Joel 2: 16,17.
z Ex. 25:12—15. 37:3—5. 40:20. Num. 4:6. 1 Kings 8:8. 2 Chr. 5:9.
a 2 Chr. 30:12. Ezra 7:24—28. Is. 49:23.
b 22. Acts 14:23. 1 Tim. 3:1—15. 2 Tim. 2:2. Tit. 1:5.
c 27,28. 6:31—38. 13:8. 16:42. 23: 5. 25:1—6. 2 Chr. 29:28—30 Neh. 12:36,46. Ps. 87:7. 149:3. 150:3,4.
d 2 Chr. 5:13. Ezra 3:10,11. Neh. 12:43. Ps. 81:1. 92:1—3. 95:1. 100: 1. Jer. 33:11.
e 6:33. 25:1—5. 1 Sam. 8:2.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord has so arranged matters in his providence, that all have reciprocally need of each other's assistance: thus men learn to feel their own insufficiency, and to unite in society for their common benefit. But all our advantages are from God, by whatever means or instruments they are derived to us; and we should recollect, that we possess them for the good of others, and especially for the benefit of his people.—To repress that disposition to carnal security and self-indulgence, which gathers strength by prosperity, we must expect successive conflicts and troubles. But, if we inquire of the Lord in all our difficulties, and trust in Him simply; if we use the appointed means with diligence, and obey his orders without reserve; if we break every league with sin, give no quarter to our lusts, and neither spare our own idols, nor covet those of others; and if we be disposed to give all the glory to the Lord; we shall not only be conquerors, but every conflict will increase our felicity, and add lustre to our eternal triumphs. Yet all the praise and honor will ultimately be ascribed to the Savior: his kingdom is confirmed and made very high, for the benefit of all his believing people: may his fame go forth into all lands; and may all nations fear his indignation, trust his mercy, submit to his authority, [be happy in his love,] and unite in glorifying his name! SCOTT.

NOTES.

Chap. XV. V. 1. As David had many wives and children, he had occasion to build several houses for them. (3:1—9. 2 *Sam.* 13:7, 20, 23. 14:24.)—Some think the tabernacle made by Moses was become ruinous, from time and neglect. About 450 years had passed since it was erected. (16:37—43. 1 *K.* 6:1. 8:4.) SCOTT.

Verses 12—14.

It appears from David's language to the priests and Levites, that they had before neglected to 'sanctify themselves,' by carefully avoiding, or seeking to be cleansed from, all ceremonial pollutions; by abstraction from outward indulgences; and by repentance, faith, prayer, and meditation. (*Ex.* 19:10—15. 2 *Chr.* 29:3—5, *v.* 5. 30:15.)—The ark had been long stationary, and the priests and Levites, through negligence, had forgotten how it ought to be removed; so that the king himself first discovered the error which had been committed, and pointed it out to them: and though he joined himself with them, as 'not having sought the LORD after the due order;' (13:9—11. 2 *Sam.* 6:3—11. 2 *Chr.* 30:16—20.) yet it is plain a large proportion of the blame belonged to them, especially to the chief persons among them. (*Note, Mal.* 2:4—9.) SCOTT.

Verse 15.

The Levites of the family of Kohath were appointed to carry the ark, and the priests were of that family; so that, on some occasions the priests, and on others the ordinary Levites descended from Kohath, performed this service. (*Num.* 4:4—16. 7:4—9. *Josh.* 3:3, 4. 1 *K.* 8:3.) ID.

Verses 16, 19, 24, 28.

Instruments of music, cymbals of brass, trumpets, cornet, &c.

brethren, [f]Asaph the son of Berechiah; and of the sons of Merari their brethren, [g]Ethan the son of Kushaiah;

18 And with them their brethren of [h] the second *degree*, [i]Zechariah, Ben, and [k]Jaaziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, Eliab, and Benaiah, and Maaseiah, and Mattithiah, and Elipheleh, and Mikneiah, and Obed-edom, and Jeiel, the porters.

19 So the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, *were appointed* to sound with [m]cymbals of brass;

20 And Zechariah, and [n]Aziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, and Eliab, and Maaseiah, and Benaiah, with psalteries on [o]Alamoth;

21 And [p]Mattithiah, and Elipheleh, and Mikneiah, and Obed-edom, and Jeiel, and Azaziah, with [q] harps on the * Sheminith to excel.

22 And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, *was* † for ‡ song: [r]he instructed about the song, because he *was* skilful.

23 And Berechiah and Elkanah *were* [s] door-keepers for the ark.

24 And Shebaniah, and Jehoshaphat, and Nethaneel, and Amasai, and Zechariah, and Benaiah, and Eliezer, [t] the priests, did blow with the trumpets before the ark of God: and [u]Obed-edom and Jehiah *were* door-keepers for the ark.

25 ¶ So [x]David and the elders of Israel, and the [y]captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the house of [z] Obed-edom [a]with joy.

f 6:39 25:2. Ps. 73:—83: *titles.*
g 19. 6:44. *son of Kishi.*
h 25:2—6,9—31.
i 16:5,6.
k 20. *Aziel.*
l 13:14. 16:5,38. 26:4,8,15.
m 16. 13:8. 16:5,42. 25:1,6. Ps. 150:5.
n 18. *Jaaziel.*
o Ps. 46: *title.*
p 18. 16:5.
q 25:6,7. 1 Sam. 10:5. Ps. 33:2. 81: 1,2. 92:3. 150:3.
* Or, *eighth to oversee.* Ps. 6: 12: *titles.*
† Or, *for the carriage: he instructed about the carriage.*
‡ Heb. *lifting up.* 16,27.
r 25:7,8.
s 9:21—23. 2 Kings 22:4. 25:18. Ps. 84:10.
t 16:6. Num. 10:8. 2 Chr. 5 12,13. Ps. 81:3.
u 18,23.
x 2 Sam. 6:12,13. 1 Kings 8:1.
y Num. 31:14. Deut. 1:15. 1 Sam. 8: 12. 10:19. 22:7. Mic. 5:2.
z 13:14.
a 13:11,12. Deut. 12:7,18. 16:11,15. 2 Chr. 20:27,28. Ezra 6:16. Ps. 95: 1,2. 100:1,2. Phil. 3:3. 4:4.

do better. The breach on Uzza made the priests more careful to sanctify themselves, i. e. to cleanse themselves from all ceremonial pollution, and to compose themselves for the solemn service of God, so as to strike a reverence on the people. Some are made examples, that others may be made exemplary and very cautious.

4. Officers were appointed to be ready to bid the ark welcome, with all possible expressions of joy, *v.* 16. Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, were now first appointed, *v.* 17. They undertook to sound with cymbals, *v.* 19. others with psalteries, *v.* 20. others with harps, on the *Sheminith*, or *eighth*, eight notes higher or lower than the rest, according to the rules of concert, *v.* 21. Some that were priests blew with the trumpet, *v.* 24. as was usual at the removal of the ark, Num. 10: 8. and at solemn feasts, Ps. 81: 3. And one was appointed for song, *v.* 22. as being skilful in it, and able to instruct others. Note, As every man has *received the gift*, so he ought to *minister the same*. And those that excel in any endowment, should not only use it, but not grudge to make others as wise as themselves. This way of praising God by musical instruments had not hitherto been in use: but David, being a prophet, instituted it by divine direction, and added it to the other *carnal ordinances* of that dispensation, as the apostle calls them, Heb. 9: 10. The N. T. keeps up singing of psalms, but has not appointed church music. Some were appointed to be porters, *v.* 18. others door-keepers for the ark, *v.* 23, 24. one was Obed-edom, who reckoned it, no doubt, a place of honor, and accepted it as a recompense for his entertainment of the ark.

V. 25—29. All things being got ready, we have here an account of the solemnity of this conveyance from the house of Obed-edom.

1. God helped the Levites that carried it. It is good to notice the assistance of the Divine Providence, even in those things that fall within the compass of our natural powers. In all our religious exercises, we must particularly derive help from Heaven. See Acts 26: 22. All our sufficiency for holy duties is from God. God's ministers, that bear the vessels of the Lord, have special need of divine help in their ministrations, that God in them may be glorified, and his church edified. And if God help the Levites, the people have the benefit of it.

2. When they experienced the tokens of God's presence with them, they offered sacrifices of praise to Him, *v.* 26. This also He helped them to do.

(*Pipes*, 1. K. 1:40, &c.) Comp. notes and cuts, 1 Sam. 10:5. 18:6. 2 Sam. 6:5. Ps. 150: &c. A cut is given of ancient *cymbals*, and a *pipe* from pictures found at Herculaneum, &c. to which are added, from PFEIFFER, several kinds of ancient, oriental trumpets, an Egyptian pipe, a double pipe, and an oriental drum, or species of timbrel: the relative size of the instruments is not preserved. See an article *on*

'*Heb. Musical Instr.*' *from Pfeiffer*, in Nos. 19 and 20 of *Bib. Repertory*, 1835. The following notice of the *ancient Egyptian music* will assist us in forming an idea of that of the Hebrews, described in this ch. and elsewhere. 'Men and women played on the various instruments of the Egyptian band; which was composed of the harp, guitar, lyre, flute, single and double pipe, round and oblong tamborine, cylindrical maces, or clubs (probably of metal, surmounted by a head or other device, and struck together); cymbals, *darabooka* (a drum, still used, of parchment stretched over a circular cone of earthen ware, terminating in a cylinder like the spout of a watering-pot); trumpet, and drum, (the tomtom of India,) but these two were more peculiarly considered martial instruments, though the buffoons of the streets frequently danced to their sound. [Comp. Michal's reproach of David, as 'one of the vain fellows,' 2 Sam. 6:20. rep. in *v.* 29. of this ch.] Their harps were of elegant and diverse forms, of 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 17 and 21 strings. They had minstrels of both sexes, some played seated on the ground, [or kneeling and naked, cut, 1 Sam. 19:9.] others standing [cut, Ps. 33:2.], or sitting on a stool; and a light 4 stringed harp of smaller dimensions was sometimes carried and played on the shoulder; [comp. *v.* 29. and cut, 2 Sam. 6:14.] The lyre was equally varied in its form, and though *Diod.* limits its strings to 3, (to accord with the 3 Egyptian seasons, "the treble, summer, the base, winter and the tenor, spring,") it is found with 5, 7, and even 17; always with more than 3. It was generally held under the arm, but was sometimes supported on a stool or table. The guitar had 3, (was this Diodorus' lyre?) or 5 chords, and was played with the plectrum (occasionally without); but the drum, slung from the shoulder, was beaten by the hand at each end.'

'It is very evident the Egyptians were acquainted with the triple symphony: the harmony of instruments, that of voices, and instruments; and, though a band of choristers, who beat an accompaniment with their hands (which, at least, the modern peasants have succeeded in imitating) between each of the stanzas, must have injured the euphony, it is probable their music was of no inferior kind. Their songs were numerous, and made for certain occasions; [*Champ.* gives a chant for threshing grain;] and if *Herodotus* is to be credited, some were sung in a plaintive tone, and descended from father to son, from the early era of their first monarch. But the hymns in honor of the dead [2 Chr. 35: 25.] were of a lugubrious and less harmonious nature, and the mournful dirge of Maneros was nearly related to the Linus of the Greeks.' *Wilkinson.* ED.

(20, 21.) *Alamoth* and *Sheminith* are musical terms, which either signify treble and bass, or some particular tunes, or the construction of the instruments to which the compositions were adapted. SCOTT

(22.) Chenaniah seems to have been the *precentor*, and the principal instructer of all the company in singing: though Heman, Asaph, and Ethan had the chief authority over the singers and musicians of the families of Levites. (*M. R. v.* 17.) ID.

(23, 24.) Perhaps Berechiah and Elkanah were stationed on mt. Zion, to open the doors of the tent, when the ark approached to it; and when the singers called on them for admission. (*Ps.* 24:7—10.) And Obed-edom and Jehiah were afterwards appointed statedly to guard the door of the tent, that none might enter, but according to the law.—The blowing of the trumpets was exclusively the office of the priests. (*M. R.* t. *Num.* 10:2—10.) ID.

(26.) The Levites offered these sacrifices on their own account, besides those which David offered. (2 *Sam.* 6:12, 13.) Thus they acknowledged the unmerited goodness of God, in enabling them with safety to perform the service allotted them; probably being conscious, that Uzzah had been smitten, as much through their fault as for his own.—Some think they rested seven times, and offered a bullock and a ram each time. (*M. R.*) ID.

(27.) *A robe of fine linen—an ephod of linen.*] 'A robe of *buts* [so the Heb.] or *byssus*, not heard of in Israel before the time of David; afterwards frequently mentioned.' Dr. *A. Clarke*, who thinks the *buts* to be, 'probably, the tuft or beard of the Pinna magna, (an [edible] muscle of the Mediterranean, sometimes 1½ ft. in length.) of which very rich stuff he has seen a pair of gloves made; 'the color is deep dark yellow, something inclining to the lilac.' But this seems unnecessary to suppose, when both *linen* and *cotton* of the finest fab-

26 And it came to pass, when [b] God helped the Levites that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that [c] they offered [d] seven bullocks and seven rams.

27 And David *was* clothed with [e] a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bare the ark, and the singers, and [f] Chenaniah the master of the * song with the singers: David also *had* upon him an ephod of linen.

28 Thus all Israel [g] brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD [h] with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps.

29 And it came to pass *as* the [i] ark of the covenant of the [k] LORD came to the city of David, that [l] Michal, the daughter of Saul, looking out at a window, saw king David [m] dancing and playing: and [n] she despised him in her heart.

CHAP. XVI.

The ark being placed in its tent, David offers sacrifices, and liberally feasts the people, 1—3. He appoints singers and musicians to praise the Lord, 4—6. The psalm of thanksgiving then used, 7—36. The priests, singers, and porters appointed to minister continually before the ark, 37—42. David dismisses the people, 43.

SO [a] they brought the ark of God, and set it [b] in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it: and [c] they offered burnt-sacrifices and peace-offerings before God.

2 And when David had made an end of offering [d] the burnt-offerings, and the peace-offerings, [e] he blessed the people in the name of the LORD.

3 And he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, [f] to every one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon *of wine*.

4 And [g] he appointed *certain* of the Levites to [h] minister before the ark of the LORD, and [i] to record, and to thank and praise [j] the LORD God of Israel:

5 [k] Asaph the chief, and next to him Zechariah, Jeiel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Mattithiah, and Eliab, and Benaiah, and Obed-edom: and Jeiel with † psalteries and with harps; but Asaph made a sound with cymbals.

6 Benaiah also and Jahaziel the priests, [l] with trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of God.

7 ¶ Then [m] on that

b 29:14. 1 Sam. 7:12. Acts 26:22. 2 Cor. 2:16. 3:5.
c 2 Sam. 6:13. Ps. 66:13—15.
d Num. 23:1,2,4,29. 29:32. Job. 42:8. Ez. 43:23.
e 1 Sam. 2:18. 2 Sam. 6:14.
f 22.
* Or, *carriage*. 22.
g 2 Sam. 6:15.
h 16. 13:8. 2 Chr. 5:12,13. Ezra 3: 10,11. Ps. 47:1—5. 68:25. 98:4—6. 150:3—5.
i 17:1. Num. 10:33. Deut. 31:26. Josh. 4:7. Judg. 20:27. 1 Sam. 4:3. Jer. 3:16. Heb 9:4.
k 2 Sam. 6:16.
l 1 Sam. 18:27,28. 19:11—17. 25:44. 2 Sam. 3:13,14.
m Ex. 15:20. Ps. 30:11. 149:3. 150: 4. Ec. 3:4. Jer. 30:19. 33:11. [Cut, 2 Sam. 6:14.]
n 2 Sam. 6:20—23. Ps. 69:7—9. Acts 2:13. 1 Cor. 2:14. 2 Cor. 5:13.
a 2 Sam. 6:17—19. 1 K. 8:6. 2 Chr. 5:7.
b 15:1,12. 2 Chr. 1:4. Ps. 132:8.
c 1 K. 8:5. 2 Chr. 5:6. Ezra 6:16 —18.
d Lev. 1:3.
e Gen. 14:19. 20:7. 47:7,10. Num. 6:23—27. Josh. 22:6. 2 Sam. 6:18. 1 K. 8:55,56. 2 Chr. 29:29. 30:18—20,27. Luke 24:50,51. Heb. 7:7.
f 2 Chr. 30:24. 35:7,8. Neh. 8:10. Ez. 45:17. 1 Pet. 4:9.
g 15:16. 23:2—6. 24:3.
h 37—42. 23:27—32. Num. 18:1—6.
i 8. Ps. 33: 70: *titles*. 103:2. 105:5. Is. 62:6,7.
j Gen. 17:7. 32:28. 33:20. *marg.* 1 K. 8:15. Ps. 72:18. 106:48.
k *See on* 6:39. 15:16—24. 25:1—6.
† Heb. *instruments of psalteries and harps*. 15:20,21. 2 Chr. 29:25.
l Num. 10:8. 2 Chr. 5:12,13. 13:12. 29:26—28.
m 2 Sam. 23:1,2. 2 Chr. 29:30. Neh. 12:24.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The most zealous and useful reformers have, in all ages, been left to make mistakes, which inferior persons could easily discern; and especially, before their judgments were matured by experience and observation. Satan avails himself of these errors to prejudice the minds of men against their whole character and work: and the artifice readily succeeds with those, who are in quest of some specious pretence, for despising and opposing the humbling truths and the holy service of God. Wise and good men, however, will profit by rebukes; and, upon recollection, they will both justify God in his sharpest corrections, and proceed with their work with greater circumspection. It indeed seems one of the greatest attainments of human nature, to search out, confess, rectify, and profit by, our own mistakes and miscarriages.—When God accepts our persons and our works, makes our hearts joyful in Himself, and renders our services beneficial to his church; we may indeed expect, but need not regard, the scoffs and reproaches of unbelievers: and we must learn to bear them with patience, and to persevere in our compassionate prayers for those, who are thus enemies to their own souls by opposing the cause of God, which we are honored to promote. SCOTT.

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ric were known apparently long before to the Egyptians, Phœnicians and Babylonians. The form of David's *robe* is probably seen in the cut, 2 K. 10:22. and that of the *ephod*, (generally described as of 2 oblong or square pieces, one before and one behind, connected by clasps at the shoulders,) is probably seen in the cut, Gen. 41:42, 43. Among the Egyptians it was worn sometimes white, and very long, flowing majestically in a graceful train. ED.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI. V. 4—6. These Levites were appointed 'to record,' or to put the people in remembrance of the wonderful works of God for Israel, as well as to thank Him and praise his name. (*Is.* 62:6, 7.) Doubtless, David acted as a prophet in regulating this part of divine worship: and his example will not justify uninspired men, in introducing *human inventions* into the worship of God, and *imposing* them by their own authority; for when Hezekiah made similar arrangements, he only enforced what David had appointed. (2 *Chr.* 29:26—28.) Yet it is evident that the other kings of Judah, and Nehemiah after the captivity, in many things *commanded* and directed the Levites and priests, and even the high priest, in respect of their ministrations; and that when they exercised this authority in religious concerns, according to the Word of God, they were approved and commended for so doing. As this is nowhere enjoined on rulers in the law of Moses; it seems by no means exclusively to belong to that dispensation, but to be the proper improvement of the talents intrusted to them; while an unscriptural exercise of this authority constituted an abuse and perversion of their talents. (2 *K.* 16.10—16. 2 *Chr.* 15: 12—19. 29:12, 15, 21—24. 30:12. 31:2—4, 20, 21. 34:20—28. 35:1—9. *Neh.* 13:7—13, 28—31. *Ex.* 45:18—25.)—The use of *instrumental* music in the worship of God was evidently prior to the ceremonial law; and therefore could form no part of it, or be abrogated with it: and though it is not required in the N. T. yet it seems noway inconsistent with it, provided it be suited to the solemnity and seriousness of our religious rejoicing, and so regulated as really to assist the exercise of devout affections. The sad abuses of making, what is called *sacred music*, [the instrument of undue and unhealthy nervous excitement, or] a matter of mere *carnal diversion*, with some other subordinate evils of the same kind, form the strongest arguments against it. (*Ex.* 15:1.)—The trumpets alone were appointed in the law, and had a typical meaning. (*Num.* 10:2—10. *P. O.* 1—10.) SCOTT

day David delivered first *this psalm*, to thank the LORD, [n] into the hand of Asaph and his brethren.

8 [o] Give thanks unto the LORD, [p] call upon his name, [q] make known his deeds among the people.

9 [r] Sing unto him, sing [s] psalms unto him, [t] talk ye of all his wondrous works.

10 [u] Glory ye in his holy name: [x] let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.

11 [y] Seek the LORD and [z] his strength, [a] seek his face continually.

12 [b] Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and [c] the judgments of his mouth;

13 O [d] ye seed of Israel, his servant, ye children of Jacob, [e] his chosen ones.

14 He *is* [f] the LORD our God; [g] his judgments *are* in all the earth.

15 Be [h] ye mindful always of his covenant; the word *which* he commanded to [i] a thousand generations;

16 *Even of the covenant* [k] which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac;

17 And hath confirmed the same to Jacob [l] for a law, *and* to Israel *for* [m] an everlasting covenant,

18 Saying, [n] Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the * lot of your [o] inheritance;

19 When ye were but † few, even [p] a few, and strangers in it.

20 And *when* [q] they went from nation to nation, and from *one* kingdom to another people;

21 [r] He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, [s] he reproved kings for their sakes,

22 *Saying*, Touch not [t] mine anointed, and do my [u] prophets no harm.

23 [x] Sing unto the LORD, all the earth; [y] show forth, from day to day, his salvation.

24 [z] Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations.

25 For [a] great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised: [b] he also *is* to be feared above all gods.

26 For [c] all the gods of the people *are* idols: but [d] the LORD made the heavens.

27 [e] Glory and honor *are* in his presence; [f] strength and gladness *are* in his [g] place.

n Ps. 12: 18: *titles.*
o See on Ps. 105:1—15.
p Is. 12:4. Acts 9:14. 1 Cor. 1:2.
q 1 K. 8:43. 2 K. 19:19. Ps. 67:2—4. 78:3—6. 145:5,6.
r Ps. 96:1,2. 98:1,2. 98:1—4.
s Matt. 26:30. Eph. 5:19. Col. 3:16. Jam. 5:13.
t Ps. 40:10. 71:17,18. 96:3. 145:4—6, 12.
u Ps. 34:2. Is. 45:25. Jer. 9:23,24. 1 Cor. 1:30,31. *Gr.*
x 28:9. Prov. 8:17. Is. 45:19. 55:6, 7. Jer. 29:13. Matt. 7:7,8.
y Am. 5:8. Zeph. 2:2,3.
z 2 Chr. 6:41. Ps. 68:35. 78:61.
a Ps. 4:6. 27:8,9. 67:1.
b 8,9. Ps. 103:2. 111:4.
c Ps. 19:9. 119:13,20,75,137. Rom. 11:33. Rev. 16:7. 19:2.
d Gen. 17:7. 28:13,14. 35:10—12.
e Ex. 19:5,6. Deut. 7:6. Ps. 135:4. 1 Pet. 2:9.
f Ex. 15:2. Ps. 63:1. 95:7. 100:3. 118:28.
g 12. Ps. 48:10,11. 97:8,9.
h Ps. 25:10. 44:17. 105:8. Mal. 4:4.
i Deut. 7:9.
k Gen. 15:18. 17:2. 26:3. 28:13,14. Ex. 3:15. Neh. 9:8. Luke 1:72,73. Acts 3:25. Gal. 3:16—17. Heb. 6: 13—18. 1 Ps. 78:10.
m Gen. 17:7,8. 2 Sam. 23:5. Is. 55:3. Heb. 13:20.
n Gen. 12:7. 13:15. 17:8. 28:13,14. 35:11,12.
o Heb. *cord.* Mic. 2:5.
o Num. 26:53—56. Deut. 32:8.
† Heb. *men of number.*
p Gen. 34:30. Acts 7:5. Heb. 11:13.
q Gen. 12:10. 20:1. 46:3,6.
r Gen. 31:24, 29, 42.
s Gen. 12:17. 20:3. Ex. 7:16,17. 9: 13—18.
t 1 K. 19:16. 1 John 2:27.
u Gen. 20:7. 27:39,40. 48:19,20. 49: 8—10.
x See on 9. Ps. 96:1—13. Ex. 15:21. Ps. 30:4. Is. 12:5.
y Ps. 40:10. 71:15. Is. 51:6—8.
z 2 K. 19:19. Ps. 22:27. Is. 12:2—6. Dan. 4:1—3.
a Ps. 89:7. 145:3—6. Is. 40:12—17. Rev. 15:3,4.
b Ex. 15:11. Ps. 66:3—5. 76:7. Jer. 5:22. 10:6—10. Rev. 15:4.
c Lev. 19:4. Ps. 115:4—8. Acts 19:26. 1 Cor. 8:4.
d Is. 42:5. Jer. 10:11,12.
e Is. 8:1. 16:11. 63:2,3. John 17:24.
f Ps. 27:4—6. 28:7,8. 43:2—4.
g Ps. 96:6.

Psalm 105: 1. and divers others; and the two last verses are from the close of Ps. 106. which, some think, warrants us to do likewise, to make up hymns out of David's psalms, a part of one, and a part of another, put together, so as may be most proper to express and excite the devotion of Christians. These psalms will be best expounded in their proper places, if the Lord will.

When the Levites had finished this psalm of prayer and praise, then, and not till then, the people that attended, signified their consent and concurrence, by saying, *Amen*. And so they praised the Lord, much affected, no doubt, with this newly instituted way of devotion, hitherto used in the schools of the prophets only, 1 Sam. 10: 5. And if this way of praise *please the Lord better than an ox or a bullock, the humble shall see it, and be glad*, Ps. 69: 31, 32.

V. 37—43. The worship of God is not only to

Verse 10.

To 'glory in God,' is to value our relation to Him, as our honor and privilege, far above all other distinctions; to make that alone the ground of our confidence and exultation; to account ourselves in this, more happy, more honored, and more favored, than any other people. To 'glory *in his holy name*,' is to rejoice and exult in his immutable wisdom, justice, truth, and love. (*Is.* 45:23—25. *Jer.* 9: 23, 24. 1 *Cor.* 1:26—31. *Phil.* 3:1—7, *v.* 3.) And even they, who are only beginning to seek the Lord, may rejoice that He is on a mercy-seat, ready to receive their submissions, to hear their prayers, to forgive their sins, to supply their wants, and to save their souls. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verse 11.

'Seeking the LORD' implies an earnest and diligent endeavor to obtain the knowledge and favor of God, according to the revelation made of Him in his Word; the renewal of the soul to holiness by his grace, the safety to be enjoyed under his omnipotent protection, and the comfort and support of his Spirit under all trials and temptations, till his strength has perfected the work of his mercy in the full salvation of both body and soul; when present glimpses of his glory, and experience of his love, shall be perfected, by beholding the full display of that glory, and enjoying the full effects of that love, in heaven for ever. (*Ps.* 14:2, 3. 27:8, 9. *Is.* 55: 6, 7. *Matt.* 6: 33, 34. 7: 7—11.)—The gracious aid and protection of JEHOVAH were ensured to Israel, when they sought Him as dwelling between the cherubim above the ark: therefore the ark itself is called 'his strength;' and this implies, that we must 'seek the Lord,' through Christ, and according to the Gospel. (*M. R.*) ID.

Verses 12, 13.

'The judgments of his mouth,' may either mean, the righteous laws and statutes given to Israel, or the just vengeance God denounced and executed on his enemies, in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in Canaan. (*M. R.*—*Deut.* 7:6—8. *Is.* 41: 8, 9.) ID.

Verses 15—19.

(*Ps.* 105:8—15, *v.* 8.) The covenant of JEHOVAH with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, engaged to their posterity the inheritance of Canaan. This was *absolute*, as *a law* which required prompt obedience. Their descendants must inherit the land; but, which of their generations, or for how long a time that should be, depended on other circumstances which were declared and stipulated by the Sinai-covenant. (*Gen.* 17: 4—12. 26:2—5. 28:13—15. *Ex.* 19:5. 24:6—8. *Jer.* 31:31—34. *Gal.* 3: 15—18. *Heb.* 6:16—20. 8:7—13.)—'What He had first promised to Abraham, and confirmed to Isaac, by a solemn oath, He established to Jacob by an inviolable law, to endure for ever.' *Patrick.* A thousand generations is a large, definite number taken for an indefinite one; (*Deut.* 7:9.) and this language was suited to lead the thoughts of pious Israelites, to the eternal inheritance typified by Canaan. The oath, by which the Lord condescended to ratify this engagement, showed the immutability of his counsel, and represented the covenant of grace, as irreversibly confirmed with every true believer.—David called on the people to remember this covenant; that, considering from how small beginnings, through how many and formidable difficulties, and after how many delays, the engagement of the Lord had been fulfilled; they might be animated to praise Him, encouraged to trust Him, and induced to cleave to and obey Him. SCOTT.

Verses 20—22.

(*Gen.* 20:1—7. 26:11.) The Patriarchs were the Lord's *anointed*, as believers, prophets, and types and ancestors of Christ; in respect of the Lord's choice of them, his grace to them, and their spiritual consecration to his service; though not externally anointed with oil, that we read of. (*M. R.*—1 *John* 2:20—29.) ID.

Verses 25, 26.

The power and majesty, the authority and eternity, the omniscience, omnipresence, and unchangeableness of God, are his *greatness:* as his justice, wisdom, truth, goodness, and mercy, form his *holiness*. In both respects He is altogether glorious, and infinitely exceeds the most exalted praises, and even the comprehension, of the noblest c all created intelligences. Thus He is the sole Object of reverential worship, and adoring love and fear. (*Ps.* 96:5. *Jer.* 10:6—8, 11—15. *Rev.* 15:1—4. ID.

Verse 27.

(*Ps.* 96:6.) Wherever the Lord displays his presence by his works, He shows the glory and honor of his perfections: but, in heaven, where his presence is manifested, in a manner to us inconceivable and ineffable, his glory and honor beam forth on the blessed inhabitants, so as to transform them fully into his holy image of light, purity, and felicity, and to be reflected back in their rapturous unceasing worship and service of Him. This is, in a feeble way, imitated and emulated, 'in his *place*,' his *sanctuary*, his church on earth. There his power and beauty are in a measure displayed; and the true believer, beholding in Christ Jesus the glory of the Lord, 'is changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord;' and thus is both made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, and enjoys the earnests of it. (*Ps.* 27:4—6. 50:1,2. 63:1—4. 2 *Cor.* 3: 17, 18.) ID.

28 [h] Give unto the LORD [i] ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD [j] glory and strength.

29 Give unto the LORD [k] the glory *due* unto his name: [l] bring an offering, and [m] come before him: worship the LORD in [n] the beauty of holiness.

30 Fear [o] before him, all the earth: the world also shall be [p] stable, that it be not moved.

31 Let [q] the heavens be glad, and [r] let the earth rejoice: and let *men* say among the nations, [s] The LORD reigneth.

32 Let [t] the sea roar, and the fulness thereof: let the [u] fields rejoice, and all that *is* therein.

33 Then shall [x] the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the LORD, [y] because he cometh to judge the earth.

34 O [z] give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good; for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

35 And say ye, [a] Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, [b] that we may give thanks to thy holy name, *and* [c] glory in thy praise.

36 [d] Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel for ever and ever. And all the people [e] said Amen, and praised the LORD.

37 ¶ So he left there, [f] before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, Asaph and his brethren, to minister before the ark continually, [g] as every day's work required:

38 And [h] Obed-edom, with their brethren, threescore and eight; Obed-edom also the son of [j] Jeduthun, and Hosah *to be* porters:

39 And [k] Zadok the priest, and his brethren the priests, [l] before the tabernacle of the LORD, [m] in the high place that *was* at Gibeon,

40 To [n] offer burnt-offerings unto the LORD upon the altar of the burnt offering continually, * morning and evening, and *to do* according to all *that is* written in the law of the LORD, which he commanded Israel;

41 And with them [o] Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest *that were* chosen, who were [p] expressed by name, [q] to give thanks to the LORD, because his mercy *endureth* for ever;

42 And with them Heman and Jeduthun with [r] trumpets and cymbals, for those that should make a sound, and with [s] musical instruments of God. And the sons of Jeduthun *were* † porters.

43 And [t] all the people departed every man to his house: and David returned to bless his house.

h Ps. 29:1,2. 68:34.
i Ps. 66:1,2. 67:4,7. 96:8—10. 98:4. 100:1,2. Is. 11:10.
j 29:10—14. Ps. 115:1,2. 1 Cor. 15:10. 2 Cor. 12:9,10. Eph. 1:6,17—19. Phil. 4:13.
k Ps. 89:5—8. 103:3—5. 148:13,14. Is. 6:3. Rev. 4:9—11. 5:12—14. 7:12.
l 1 K. 8:41—43. Ps. 68:30,31. 72:10, 15. Is. 60:6,7.
m Ps. 95:2. 100:4.
n 2 Chr. 20:21. Ps. 29:2. 50:2. 96:8, 9. 110:3. Ez. 7:7. 20:5.
o See on 23,25. Ps. 96:9. Rev. 11:15.
p Ps. 33:9. 93:1. 148:5,6. Is. 48:3. Jer. 10:12. Col. 1:17. Heb. 1:3.
q Ps. 19:1. 89:5. 148:1—4. Luke 2:13,14. 15:10.
r Ps. 97:1. 98:4. Luke 2:10.
s Ps. 93:1,2. 96:10. 99:1. 145:1. Is. 33:22. Matt. 6:13. Rev. 19:6.
t Ps. 93:4. 98:7.
u Ps. 98:8. 148:9,10. Is. 44:23.
x Ps. 96:12,13. Ez. 17:22—24.
y Ps. 98:9. 2 Thes. 1:8,10. 2 Pet. 3:14. Rev. 11:17,18.
z Ezra 3:11. Ps. 106:1. 107:1. 118:1. 136:1, &c. Jer. 33:11.
a Ps. 14:7. 53:6. 79:9,10.
b Ps. 105:45. Is. 43:21. Eph. 1:12. 1 Pet. 2:5 9.
c 9,10. Ps. 44:8. Is. 45:25. 1 Cor 1:31.
d 1 K. 8:15,56. Ps. 72:18,19. 106:48. Eph. 1:3. 1 Pet. 1:3.
e Deut. 27:15—26. Neh. 8:6. Jer. 28: 6. 1 Cor. 14:16.
f See on 4—6. 15:17—24. 25:1—6.
g 2 Chr. 8:14. Ezra 3:4.
h 13:14. 26:4—8.
i 25:3.
k See on 12:28.
l 21:29. 2 Chr. 1:3,4.
m 1 K. 3:4.
n Ex. 29:38—42. Num. 28:3—8. 1 K. 18:29. 2 Chr. 2:4. 31:3. Ezra 3:3. Ez. 46:13—15. Dan. 9:21. Am. 4:4.
* Heb. *in the morning and in the evening.*
o 37. 6:39—47. 25:1—6.
p 12:31. Num. 1:17. Ezra 8:20.
q See on 34. 2 Chr. 5:13. 7:3. 20:21. Is. 103:17. Luke 1:50.
r 2 Chr. 29:25—28. Ps. 150:3—5.
s 25:6.
† Heb. *for the gate.*
t 2 Sam. 6:19,20. 1 K. 8:66.

1. At Jerusalem, where the ark was, Asaph and his brethren were appointed to attend, to *minister before the ark continually*, with songs of praise, *as every day's work required*, v. 37. No sacrifices were offered, nor incense burnt, because the altars were not there; but David's prayers were *directed as incense, and the lifting up of his hands as the evening sacrifice*, Ps. 141: 2. So early did spiritual worship take place of ceremonial.

2. Yet the ceremonial worship, being of divine institution, must by no means be omitted; therefore at Gibeon were the altars where the priests attended; their work was to sacrifice, and burn incense; which they did *continually, morning and evening, according to the law of Moses*, v. 39, 40. These must be kept up, because, however in their own nature inferior to the moral services of prayer and praise, yet, as types of the mediation of Christ, they were greatly honored, and their observance was of great consequence. Here Zadok attended, to preside in the service of the

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Verses 28, 29.

This is an exhortation to all who then heard, and all who now hear or read it, to 'ascribe to JEHOVAH' the tribute of praise and adoration, which He demands as his due; to allow that all glory belongs to Him, and that all power resides in Him, or is derived from Him; and to render to Him that gratitude, love, and service, which is due to Him from all, as their Creator and hourly Benefactor. (*Notes, Ps.* 29:1, 2. 96:7—9.) This cannot be withheld without the basest ingratitude.—'All the kindreds of the earth' form but one family, and ought to unite in the service of their common Father. But all had sinned, and fallen under condemnation: yet, through the Redeemer, who was promised from the beginning, all were invited to approach the Lord with their worship and oblations at his sanctuary. This may be called, 'the beauty of holiness,' from the especial presence of the Lord, dwelling above the ark between the cherubim, on the mercy-seat, as Israel's God; as typifying the human nature of Jesus Christ; and representing the believer's heart, now become 'an habitation of God through the Spirit.' When, however, we approach the Father, on a mercy-seat, through the sacrifice and mediation of the Son, and under the influences of the Holy Spirit; then, and then only, do we, in the full meaning of the words, 'worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.'

SCOTT.

Verse 30.

Let all men fear the power, justice, and majesty of God: and learn to worship and obey Him. This would render the moral state of the world as stable and immovable, in as great order and regularity, as is its natural state: and to this the Gospel is suited to bring all who embrace it. (*Ps.* 75:2, 3. 96:10.) ID.

Verse 31.

Wise, righteous, and good kings, and equitable laws, impartially administered, make prosperous nations; and all good subjects must rejoice in a government of this description. The Lord, who reigns over all, is perfect in his character, law, and administration: this alone would cause universal joy, if all were loyal and obedient; but it speaks terror to the sinner's conscience. Yet, as the Lord reigneth in Jesus Christ on a throne of grace; even sinners, yea, the chief of sinners, may rejoice, when, desirous of forgiveness and reconciliation, they are made humbly willing to become his subjects. SCOTT.

Verses 32, 33.

All the parts of nature are here poetically addressed, by the royal prophet, to join the universal song of joy and praise; in their several ways, to welcome JEHOVAH as the Sovereign of the universe; and to wait the great decisive day, when He will come, as the Savior of his people, to judge the world in righteousness. (*Ps.* 96:11—13. 98:7—9. 148: *Is.* 55:12, 13.) Perhaps all the different ranks and descriptions of the human species, who have feared the Lord, and hoped in his mercy, are here intended under figurative expressions. The first coming of Christ likewise, with the calling of the gentiles, and the surprising and most happy change effected by the Gospel, in the moral and religious state of the world, as preparatory to his second coming, seems also to have been predicted. ID.

Verses 34—36.

(*Ps.* 136:1—3. *Jer.* 33:10, 11.) Many Israelites, even when David came to the throne, might be dispersed in other nations, by the frequent wars waged with their neighbors. And he prayed that they might be gathered from their dispersions, to join this joyful worship. (*Ps.* 14:7. 106:47, 48.) Perhaps the Spirit of God, who spake by the Psalmist, intended the gathering of Israel from future and greater dispersions: and it may well be accommodated to the present state of that nation, and our hope of their future calling into the church; as well as to the collecting together of believers from all the nations of the earth, to bless and adore the God of Israel, in and through Christ.—We can scarcely enlarge our thoughts to conceive the effect, which these high praises of God, sung by so vast a multitude, with harmonious elevation of heart and voice, on this joyful occasion, must have produced. It naturally leads us to consider the songs of the redeemed of the Lord in glory; and perhaps we are not, in this world, capable of more just and spiritual ideas of them, than are suggested by this subject, though we may be sure that they are unspeakably more sublime [enlarged] and refined. (*Ps.* 41:11—13, *v.* 13. 89:52.) ID.

Verses 37—43.

It seems that these regulations were made and declared, before the people separated, and were continued from that very day. (*2 Sam.* 6: 20. *1 K.* 3:4.) ID.

ple departed, every man to his house: and David returned [u] to bless his house.

CHAP. XVII.

David, purposing to build a temple, is encouraged by Nathan, 1, 2. The Lord afterwards, by Nathan, prohibits it: but with many encouraging promises, 3—15. David's prayer and thanksgiving, 16—27.

NOW it came to pass, [a] as David sat in his house, that David said to [b] Nathan the prophet, Lo, [c] I dwell in an house of cedars, but [d] the ark of the covenant of the LORD *remaineth* [e] under curtains.

2 Then Nathan said unto David, [f] Do all that *is* in thine heart: [g] for God *is* with thee.

3 And it came to pass the same night, that [h] the word of God came to Nathan, saying,

4 Go and [i] tell David my servant, Thus saith the LORD, [j] Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in:

5 For I have not [k] dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up Israel, unto this day; but have * gone [l] from tent to tent, and from *one* tabernacle *to another*.

6 Wheresoever I have [m] walked with all Israel, spake I a word to any of [n] the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to [o] feed my people, saying, Why have ye not built me an house of cedars?

7 Now therefore thus shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, [p] I took thee from the sheep-cote, *even* † from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be [q] ruler over my people Israel:

8 And [r] I have been with thee withersoever thou hast walked, and [s] have cut off all thine enemies from before thee, and have [t] made thee a name like the name of the great men that *are* in the earth.

9 Also [u] I will ordain a place for my people Israel, and will [x] plant them, and they shall dwell in their place, [y] and shall be moved no more; neither shall [z] the children of wickedness [a] waste them any more, [b] as at the beginning,

10 And [c] since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over my people Israel. [d] Moreover I will subdue all thine enemies. Furthermore I tell thee, that [e] the LORD will build thee an house.

11 And it shall come to pass, [f] when thy days be expired, that thou must [g] go *to be* with thy fathers, that [h] I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom.

12 [i] He shall build me an house, and [k] I will establish his throne for ever.

13 [l] I will be his Father, and he shall be [m] my son: and [n] I will not take my mercy away from him, [o] as I took *it* from *him* that was before thee:

14 But I will settle him [p] in mine house, and in my kingdom for ever: and his throne shall be established for evermore.

u Gen. 18:19. Josh. 24:15. Ps. 101:2.
a 2 Sam. 7:1,2. Dan. 4:4,29,30.
b 29:29. 2 Sam. 12:1,25. 1 K. 1:8,23, 44.
c 14:1. Jer. 22:15. Hag. 1:4,9.
d Ps. 132:5. Acts 7:46.
e 5. 15:1. 16:1. Ex. 40:19—21. 2 Sam. 6:17. 2 Chr. 1:4.
f 22:7. 28:2. Josh. 9:14. 1 Sam. 16:7. Ps. 20:4. 1 Cor. 13:9.
g 1 Sam. 10:7. 2 Sam. 7:3. Zech. 8: 23. Luke 1:28.
h Num. 12:6. 2 K. 20:1—5. Is. 30:21. Am. 3:7.
i Is. 55:3,9. Rom. 11:33,34.
j 22:7,8. 28:2,3. 2 Sam. 7:4,5. 1 K. 8:19. 2 Chr. 6:8,9.
k 2 Sam. 7:6. 1 K. 8:27. 2 Chr. 2:6. 6:18. Is. 66:1,2. Acts 7:44—50.
* Heb. *been.*
l Ex. 40:2,3. 2 Sam. 6:17. 1 K. 8:4,16.
m Ex. 33:14,15. 40:35—38. Lev. 26: 11,12. Num. 10:33—36. Deut. 23:14. 2 Cor. 6:16. Rev. 2:1.
n Judg. 2:16—18. 1 Sam. 12:11. 2 Sam. 7:7. *tribes.* Acts 13:20.
o 11:2. Ps. 78:71,72. Jer. 23:4. Ez. 34:2. Mic. 5:4. Matt. 2:6. *marg.*
p Ex. 3:1—10. 1 Sam. 17:15. 2 Sam. 7:8. Ps. 78:70,71. Am. 7:14,15. Matt. 4:18—22. Luke 5:10.
† Heb. *from after.*
q 2 Sam. 6:21. Matt. 2:6.
r 2. 1 Sam. 18:14,28. 2 Sam. 7:9. 8:8, 14. Ps. 46:7,11.
s 1 Sam. 26:10. 31:1—6. 2 Sam. 22:1, 38—41.
t 17. 2 Sam. 8:13. Ezra 4:20. Ps. 71: 21. 75:7. 113:7,8. Luke 1:52.
u Jer. 31:3,12. Ez. 34:11.
x Ps. 44:2. Jer. 24:6. 31:41.
y Ez. 36:14,15. 37:25. Am. 9:15.
z Ps. 89:22. Eph. 2:2,3. 5:6.
a Is. 49:17. 60:18.
b Ex. 1:13,14. 2:23.
c Judg. 2:8. 4:3. 6:3—6. 1 Sam. 13: 5,6,19,20.
d Ps. 21:8,9. 89:23. 110:1.
e Ex. 1:21. 2 Sam. 7:11. Ps. 127:1.
f 29:15,28. Acts 13:36.
g Gen. 15:15. Deut. 31:16. 1 K. 1:21. 2:10. Acts 2:29.
h 28:5. 2 Sam. 7:12,13. 12:24,25. 1 K. 8:20. Ps. 132:11. Jer. 23:5,6. Rom. 1:3,4.
i 22:9,10. 28:6—10. 1 K. 5:5. 2 Chr. 3:4. Ezra 5:11. Zech. 6:12,13. John 2:19—21. Acts 7:47,48. Col. 2:9.
k Ps. 89:4,29,36,37. Is. 9:7. Dan. 2: 44. 1 Cor. 15:25. Rev. 11:15.
l 2 Sam. 7:14. Ps. 89:26,27. Heb. 1:5.
m Ps. 2:7,12. Luke 3:35. John 3:35.
n 2 Sam. 7:15,16. 1 K. 11:12,13,36.
o 12. 10:14. 1 Sam. 15:28.
p Ps. 2:6. 89:36. Luke 1:32,33. Heb. 3:6.

altar; as (it is probable) Abiathar settled in Jerusalem, to attend the ark, because he had the breast-plate of judgment, which must be consulted before the ark: this is the reason why we read that in David's time, both Zadok and Abiathar were the priests, 2 Sam. 8: 17. 15: 29. one, where the altar was, and the other, where the ark was. At Gibeon, where the altars were, David also appointed *singers to give thanks to the Lord;* and the burden of all their songs must be, *For his mercy endureth for ever, v.* 41. They did it *with musical instruments of God;* such instruments as were appointed and appropriated to this service, not such as they used on other occasions. Between common mirth, and holy joy, there is a vast difference; and the limits and distances between them must be carefully kept up.

Matters being thus settled, and the affairs of religion put into a happy channel, the people were satisfied, and went home pleased; David returned to bless his house, resolving to keep up his family-worship still, which public worship must not supersede.

CHAP. XVII. This excellent ch. is the same with 2 *Sam.* 7: It will be worth while to look back on what was there said upon it.

V. 1—15. Let us observe here,

I. How desirous and solicitous good people should be, to serve the interests of God's kingdom in the world, to the utmost of their capacity, *v.* 1. The concerns of the public should always be near our hearts. What pleasure can we take in our own prosperity, if we see not the good of Jerusalem? When David is advanced to wealth and power, see what his cares and projects are,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Ministers are especially appointed, by the Son of David our King, to animate and assist the people to glorify and rejoice in God, by preaching the Gospel of salvation, and by every other mean in their power.—The streams of mercy, of which we partake, should be traced back to that Fountain of love whence they are derived; and, in thanking the Lord for his benefits to us, and to his church, we should celebrate the glorious excellences of his nature.—Riches, pre-eminence, wisdom, and strength, are precarious blessings, in which we must not glory and rejoice. To know, love, and belong to God constitutes the chief honor and happiness of man. Let us, however, be careful of prematurely concluding, that we are numbered with those, who are interested in his promise of eternal life, by faith in Christ; and seriously appeal herein to conscience and experience. Do we perceive and adore the glory of the divine perfections, and rejoice in celebrating his praise? Do we yield ourselves to his service; depending on his mercy and grace, and lamenting that we love Him no more and serve Him no better? All this, and immensely more, is his due: for He is infinitely great, holy, and good; all our praises are beneath his excellency; and nothing can be compared with his uncreated majesty. Let us then devote all we have and are to Him, and aim to worship Him 'in the beauty of holiness.' Oh, that there were such a heart in us and in all men, as to fear Him and to hope in his mercy; that we might look forward with comfort and exultation to our meeting Him on his awful judgment seat! He is continually collecting, before his throne, that chosen remnant, which the Savior has redeemed from all nations. As we successively depart this life, may our souls be gathered unto them: and may that time speedily arrive, when the scattered Jews shall at length be gathered into the church, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in, to 'give thanks to his holy name, and to glory in his praise!' Amen, and Amen. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII. V. 1—6. This ch. almost entirely answers to 2 Sam. 7: [on which see the comment and notes] many minute variations indeed are found; but those only which are more material need here be noticed. (2 *Sam.* 7:1—7.) *Tent to tent,* &c. (5) In the wilderness, the ark was taken out of the tent, when the camp of Israel marched; and was returned into it, when they rested.—It was afterwards taken from the tabernacle at Shiloh, and then stationed at Kirjathjearim, doubtless in a tent prepared for it; thence David removed it to another tent on mt. Zion. (16:1—3. 1 *Sam.* 7:1, 2. 21:1, 2. 2 *Sam.* 6:10, 11, 17.) SCOTT.

V. 14. [16,17.] In the parallel passage, the Lord says to David, '*thine* house, *thy* kingdom;' here, [16, 17.] '*mine house,* &c.' The Lord was Israel's King; and David and Solomon were his vicegerents, as well as types of the Messiah, in whose church and kingdom all these promises and predictions have their grand fulfilment: which shows 'that this principally belonged to the Messiah, of whom David was but a figure.' *Patrick.* SCOTT. Notes, 2 Sam. 7:15—25, 18, 19. ED.

15 [q] According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

16 ¶ And David the king came and [r] sat before the LORD, and said, [s] Who *am* I, O LORD God, and [t] what *is* mine house, [u] that thou hast brought me hitherto?

17 And *yet* this was [x] a small thing in thine eyes, O God; for [y] thou hast *also* spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and [z] hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O LORD God.

18 What can David *speak* more to thee for [a] the honor of thy servant? for [b] thou knowest thy servant.

19 O LORD, for [c] thy servant's sake, and [d] according to thine own heart, hast thou done all this greatness, in making known all *these* * great things.

20 O LORD, *there is* • none like thee, neither *is there any* God [f] besides thee, [g] according to all that we have heard with our ears.

21 And [h] what one nation in the earth *is* like thy people Israel, whom God went to [i] redeem *to be* his own people, to [k] make thee a name of [l] greatness and terribleness, [m] by driving out nations from before thy people, whom thou hast redeemed out of Egypt?

22 For [n] thy people Israel didst thou make thine own people for ever; and thou, LORD, becamest their God.

23 Therefore now, LORD, [o] let the thing that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, be established for ever, and do as thou hast said.

24 Let it even be established, [p] that thy name may be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts *is* the God of Israel, *even* [q] a God to Israel: and *let* the house of David thy servant *be* established before thee.

25 For thou, O my God, hast † told thy servant, [r] that thou wilt build him an house: therefore thy servant hath [s] found *in his heart* to pray before thee.

26 And now, LORD, [t] thou art God, and hast promised this goodness unto thy servant:

27 Now therefore ‡ let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may be before thee for ever: for thou [u] blessest, O LORD, and *it shall be* blessed for ever.

They that are contriving where to bestow their fruits and their goods, would do well to inquire what condition the ark is in, and whether some may not be well bestowed on it. II. How ready God's prophets should be to encourage every good purpose, *v.* 2. Ministers should stir up the gifts and graces that are in others, as well as in themselves. III. How little God affects external pomp and splendor in his service. His ark was content with a tabernacle, *v.* 5. and He never so much as mentioned the building of a house for it; no, not when He had fixed his people in great and goodly cities which they builded not, Deut. 6: 10. He commanded the judges to *feed his people*, but never bid them *build Him a house*, *v.* 6. We may well be content a while with mean accommodations; God's ark was so. IV. How graciously God accepts his people's good purposes, yea, though He Himself prevents their performance.

V. 16—27. We have here David's solemn address to God, in answer to the gracious message he had now received from Him. By faith he receives the promises, embraces them, and is persuaded of them, as the patriarchs, Heb. 11: 13. We shall therefore here observe only those few expressions, in which the prayer here, differs from the record of it in Sam. and has something added.

I. What is there expressed by way of question, (*Is this the manner of men, O Lord God?*) is here an acknowledgment, '*Thou hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree.* Thou hast made me a great man, and then treated me accordingly.' Having Himself distinguished them, He treats them as persons of distinction, according to the quality He has been pleased to put upon them. Some read, '*Thou hast looked upon me in the form of a man, who art in the highest, the Lord God;* or, *Thou hast made me to see, according to the form of a man, the majesty of the Lord God.*' So it points at the Messiah; as Abraham, so David, saw his day, and was glad; and this was it, that God spake concerning his house, for a great while to come, the foresight of which affected him more than any thing. Nor let it be thought strange, David should speak so plainly of the two natures of Christ, who in spirit called Him *Lord*, though he knew He was to be his *Son*, Ps. 110: 1. and foresaw Him *lower than the angels* for a little while, but afterward *crowned with glory and honor*, Heb. 2: 6, 7.

II. *What can David say more unto thee*, it is here added, *for the honor of thy servant? v.* 18. Note, The honor God puts on his servants, by taking them into covenant and communion with Himself, is so great, that they need not, they cannot, desire to be more highly honored: were they to sit down and wish.

III. It is very observable that what in Sam. is said to be *for thy word's sake*, is here said to be *for thy servant's sake*, *v.* 18. Jesus Christ is both *the Word of God*, Rev. 19: 13. and *the Servant of God*, Isa. 42: 1. and it is for his sake, on the score of his mediation, that the promises are both made, and made good, to all believers; it is in Him, that they are *yea and amen*. For his sake it is done, for his sake it is made known; to Him we owe all this greatness, from Him we are to expect all these great things; they are *the unsearchable riches of Christ*, which, if by faith we see in themselves, and see in the hand of the Lord Jesus, we cannot but magnify as great things, the only true greatness.

IV. The closing words, in Sam. are, *With thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.* That is the language of a holy desire. But the closing words here, are the language of a most holy faith; *For Thou blessest, O Lord, and it shall be blessed for ever, v.* 27. God's Word looks at things eternal, and so should our desires and hopes.

CHAP. XVIII.

David subdues the Philistines, and makes the Moabites tributary, 1, 2. He smites Hadarezer and the Syrians, 3—8. Tou, king of Hamath, sends his son to David with presents, which he dedicates, with the spoil, unto God, 9—11. He puts garrisons into Edom, 12, 13. He reigns in equity, 14. His principal officers, 15—17.

NOW [a] after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them,

CHAP. XVIII. David's piety and his prayer

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q 2 Sam. 7:17. Jer. 23:28. Acts 20:27.
r 2 Sam. 7:18. 2 K. 19:14.
s Gen. 32:10. Ps. 144:3.
t Judg. 6:15. 1 Sam. 9:21.
u Gen. 48:15,16. 1 Sam. 7:12. Acts 26:22. 2 Cor. 1:10.
x 7,8. 2 Sam. 7:19. 12:8. 2 K. 3:18. Is. 49:6.
y 11—15. Eph. 3:20.
z 8. 1 K. 3:13. Ps. 78:70—72. 89:19, &c. Phil. 2:8—11.
a 1 Sam. 2:30. 2 Sam. 7:20—24.
b 1 Sam. 16:7. Ps. 139:1. John 21:17. Rev. 2:23.
c Is. 37:35. 42:1. 49:3,6.
d Matt. 11:26. Eph. 1:9—11. 3:11.
* Heb. *greatnesses.* 29:11,12. Ps. 111: 3,6.
e Ex. 15:11. 18:11. Deut. 3:24. Ps. 89:6,8. Is. 40:18,25. Jer. 10:6,7.
f Deut. 4:35,39. 1 Sam. 2:2. Is. 43:10. 44:6. 45:5,22.
g Ps. 44:1. 78:3,4. Is. 63:12.
h Deut. 4:7,32—34. 33:26—29. Ps. 147: 20.
i Ex. 3:7,8. 19:4—6. Deut. 15:15. Ps. 77:15. 107:2. 111:9. Is. 63:9. Tit. 2:14.
k Neh. 9:10. Is. 48:9. 63:12. Ez. 20: 9,10.
l Deut. 4:34. Ps. 65:5. 66:3—7. 114: 3—8. Is. 64:3.
m Deut. 7:1,2. Josh. 10:42. 21:43—45. 24:11,12. Is. 44:2,3.
n Gen. 17:7. Ex. 19:5,6. Deut. 7:6—8. 26:18,19. 1 Sam. 12:22. Jer. 31: 31—34. Zech. 13:9. Rom. 9:4—6, 25,26. 1 Pet. 2:9.
o Gen. 32:12. 2 Sam. 7:25—29. Ps. 119:49. Jer. 11:5. Luke 1:38.
p 2 Chr. 6:33. Is. 21:13. 72:19. Matt. 6:9,13. John 12:28. 17:1. Phil. 2: 11. 1 Pet. 4:11.
q Jer. 31:1. Heb. 8:10. 11:16.
r Heb. *revealed the ear of.* 1 Sam. 9: 15.
s See on 10.
t Ex. 34:6,7. Tit. 1:2. Heb. 6:18.
‡ Or, *it hath pleased.*
u Gen. 27:33. Ps. 72:17. Rom. 11:29. Eph. 1:3.
a 2 Sam. 8:1,2.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The repetitions in the Word of God may be considered, as tacit reproofs of our negligence, forgetfulness, and unteachableness. Indeed, we are very backward to get familiarly acquainted with *every part* of the sacred volume, and very prone to forget what we have read; so that we need to be taught again what we seem to have already learned: and for all these reasons it is very useful to have the same important truths, precepts, and examples enforced on us, in different parts of the Scriptures. If, in reading any chapter, or hearing any sermon, we learn nothing new; yet are reminded of those things of which we had lost sight, and stirred up to the exercise of faith and holy affections, and to the more diligent, fervent, and delightful practice of our several duties; very important purposes are answered. (2 *Pet.* 1: 12—15. *P. O.* 12—18. 3: 1—4.) SCOTT.

Verse 19.

Thy servant's sake.] 'For thy *word's* sake,' in Sam.—The promise, in fulfilling which God conferred these benefits on David and his race, was first given from love to Him, as a type of Christ, 'his Servant in whom his soul delighteth.' 'He had passed his word to David by his prophets out of his own mere goodness, without any other motive. It may be also thought to signify, *for the sake of the Messiah*, who is *the Word of God*, and by way of eminence is called *his Servant. Is.* 42:1. 49:5.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII. V. 1. This ch. which is for substance the same, as 2 Sam. 8: has already been commented on. (*M. R.*) ID.

and took [b] Gath and her towns out of the hand of the Philistines.

2 And [c] he smote Moab; and the Moabites became David's servants, *and* [d] brought gifts.

3 And David smote [e] Hadarezer king of [f] Zobah unto Hamath, as he went to stablish his dominion [g] by the river Euphrates.

4 And David took from him a thousand chariots, and [h] seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: David also [i] hought all the chariot-*horses*, but reserved of them [k] an hundred chariots.

5 And when [l] the Syrians of [*] Damascus came [m] to help Hadarezer king of [n] Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men.

6 Then David put *garrisons* in Syria-damascus; and the Syrians [o] became David's servants, *and* brought gifts. [p] Thus the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

7 And David took the [q] shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadarezer, and brought them to Jerusalem.

8 Likewise from [r] Tibhath, and from Chun, cities of Hadarezer, brought David very much brass [s] wherewith Solomon made the brazen sea, and the pillars, and the vessels of brass.

9 ¶ Now when [t] Tou king of Hamath heard how David had smitten all the host of Hadarezer king of Zobah;

10 He sent † Hadoram his son to king David, to ‡ inquire of his welfare, and to § congratulate him, because he had fought against Hadarezer, and smitten him; (for Hadarezer ‖ had war with Tou;) and *with him* [u] all manner of vessels of gold, and silver, and brass.

11 Them also king David [v] dedicated unto the LORD, with the silver and the gold that he brought from all *these* nations; from Edom, and from Moab, and from [x] the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines, and from [y] Amalek.

12 [z] Moreover [¶] Abishai the son of Zeruiah [a] slew of the Edomites, in [b] the valley of salt, eighteen thousand.

13 And he put [c] garrisons in Edom; and [d] all the Edomites became David's servants. [e] Thus the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

14 ¶ So [f] David reigned over all Israel, and [g] executed judgment and justice among all his people.

15 And [h] Joab the son of Zeruiah *was* over the host; and [i] Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud [**] recorder.

16 And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and [k] Abimelech the son of [l] Abiathar, *were* the priests; and [m] Shavsha was [**] scribe;

17 And [n] Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the [o] Cherethites and the Pelethites; and the sons of David *were* chief †† about the king.

CHAP. XIX.

David sends ambassadors to comfort the king of Ammon, who abuses and insults them, 1—5. The Ammonites and Syrians are vanquished by Joab and Abishai, 6—15. The king of Syria sends another army, which David conquers, slaying its commander, 16—18. The Syrians submit to David, 19.

NOW it came to pass [a] after this, that [a] Nahash the king of the children of Ammon died, and his son reigned in his stead.

2 And David said, [b] I will shew kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, because his father shewed kindness to me. And David sent messengers to comfort him concerning his father. So the servants of David came into the land of [c] the children of Ammon, to Hanun, to comfort him.

we had an account of in the foregoing ch. Here follows immediately that which one might reasonably expect, an account of his prosperity; for they that seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, as David did, shall have other things added to them, as far as God sees good for them.

V. 1—8. *After this*, v. 1. i. e. after the sweet communion he had with God by the word and prayer in the foregoing ch. he went on in his work with an extraordinary vigor and courage, *conquering, and to conquer*. Thus Jacob, after his vision, Gen. 29: 1. We have taken a view of these victories before. Observe,

As the tabernacle was built of the spoils of the Egyptians, so the temple of the spoils of other Gentile nations. A happy presage of the interest the Gentiles should have in the gospel church.

V. 9—17. Here learn,

1. It is our interest to make those our friends, who have the presence of God with them, v. 9, 10. It is in vain to contend with the Son of David: *Kiss the Son*, therefore, *lest He be angry;* let the kings and judges of the earth, and all inferior people too, be thus wise, thus instructed. The presents we are to bring Him, are not *vessels of gold and silver;* (those shall be welcome, who have none such to bring;) but our hearts and sincere affections, our own selves, our whole selves, we must present to Him as living sacrifices.

2. What God blesses us with, we must honor Him with, v. 11. That is most truly and most comfortably our own, which we have consecrated to the Lord, and which we use for his glory. Let our *merchandise and our hire be holiness to the Lord*, Isa. 23: 18.

3. God gives men power, not that they may look great with it, but that they may do good with it. When David reigned, he *executed judgment and justice*, and so answered the end of his elevation. Herein he served the purposes of that God who *sits in the throne judging right;* and was an eminent type of the Messiah, the *sceptre of whose kingdom is a right sceptre.*

CHAP. XIX. The story is here repeated of David's war with the Ammonites, and the Syrians their allies, and the victories he obtained over them, which we read just as it is here related, 2 *Sam.* 10. Observe,

V. 1—5. It becomes good people to be neighborly, and especially to be grateful. David will pay respect to Hanun, because he is his neighbor; and religion teaches us to be civil and obliging to all, and to be ready to do all offices of kindness to those we live among; nor must difference in reli-

b 1 Sam. 5:8. 27:4. 2 Sam. 1:20. 8: 1. *Metheg-ammah.*
c Num. 24:17. Judg. 3:29,30. 2 Sam. 8:2. Ps. 60:8. Is. 11:14.
d 1 Sam. 10:27. 1 K. 10:2,25. 2 K. 3: 4,5. Is. 60:29,30. 72:8—10. Is. 16:1.
e 2 Sam. 8:3. *Hadadezer.*
f 1 Sam. 14:47. 2 Sam. 10:6. Ps. 60: *title.*
g Gen. 15:18. Ex. 23:31.
h 2 Sam. 8:4. *seven hundred.*
i Deut. 17:16. Josh. 11:6,9. Is. 20:7. 33:16,17.
k 1 K. 4:26. 10:26.
l 2 Sam. 8:5,6. 1 K. 11:23,24.
* Heb. *Darmesek.*
m Is. 8:9,10.
n 3. 1 Sam. 14:47.
o See on 2.—Ps. 18:43,44.
p 17:8. Ps. 121:8. Prov. 21:31.
q 1 K. 10:16,17. 14:26—28. 2 Chr. 9: 15,16. 12:9,10.
r 2 Sam. 8:8. *Betah. Berothai.*
s 22:14. 1 K. 7:15—47. 2 Chr. 4:2—6, 12—18. Jer. 52:17—23.
t 2 Sam. 8:9. *Toi.*
† Or, *Joram.* 2 Sam. 8:10.
‡ Or, *salute him.*
§ Heb. *bless him.*
‖ Heb. *was the man of wars.*
u 2 Chr. 9:1,23,24. Is. 39:1.
v 22:14. 26:20,26,27. 29:14. Ex. 35: 5,21—24. 2 Sam. 8:11,12. 1 K. 7:51. 2 K. 12:18. 2 Chr. 5:1. Mic. 4:13.
x 20:1,2.
y 1 Sam. 27:8,9. 30:13,20. Ps. 83:6,7.
z 2:16. 11:20. 1 Sam. 26:6,8. 2 Sam. 3:30. 10:10,14. 16:9—11. 19:21,22. 20:6. 21:17. 23:18.
¶ Heb. *Abshai.* 19:11. *marg.*
a 2 Sam. 8:13. Ps. 60: *title.* 8,9.
b 2 K. 14:7. 2 Chr. 25:11.
c 6. 1 Sam. 10:5. 13:3. 14:1. 2 Sam. 23:14. 2 Cor. 11:32.
d Gen. 25:23. 27:29,37,40. Num. 24. 18.
e See on 6.—Ps. 18:48—50. 121:7. 144: 10.
f 12:38.
g 2 Sam. 8:15. Ps. 78:71,72. Is. 9:7. 32:1,2. Jer. 22:15. 23:5,6. 33:15.
h 11:6. 2 Sam. 8:16.
i 1 K. 4:3.
** Or, *remembrancer.*
k 2 Sam. 8:17. *Ahimelech.*
l 2 Sam. 20:25. 1 K. 2: 35.
m 2 Sam. 8:17. *Seraiah.* 20:25. *Sheva.* 1 K. 4:3. *Shisha.*
n 2 Sam. 8:18. 15:18. 20:7,23. 23:18 —23. 1 K. 1:38,44. 2:34,35.
o Zeph. 2:5.
†† Heb. *at the hand of.* 23:28. *marg.*
a 1 Sam. 11:1,2. 12:12. 2 Sam. 10: 1—3.
b 1 Sam. 30:26. 2 Sam. 9. 1. 2 K. 4:13. Esth. 6:3. Ec. 9:15
c Gen. 19:37,38. Deut. 23:3—6. Neh. 4:3,7. 13:1.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Those who 'seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,' shall, in due time and manner, have all other things added unto them.—Communion with God, and his consolations, are intended to animate us to diligence in our proper work, and vigor in our spiritual warfare.—Earthly possessions are often lost by attempting to establish them: and sinners ruin themselves by encouraging and assisting one another, in rebellion against God, and opposition to his cause.—Our good fight of faith, under the Captain of our salvation, will assuredly terminate in everlasting triumph and peace. But the happiness of Israel, through David's victories and equitable administration, very faintly shadowed forth the felicity of the redeemed in the realms above. (*Heb.* 12: 2. *Matt.* 25: 19—23. *Rev.* 3: 20—22.) Let us then, without delay, join ourselves to Christ, trusting and serving Him constantly and faithfully, that at length we may be for ever with Him.

SCOTT.

Verses 2—8.

Establish his dominion. (3) In Samuel, 'Recover his border.'—*Seven thousand.* (4) In the parallel passage, 'Seven hundred.' (*Notes,* 2 *Sam.* 8:3, 4.)

SCOTT.

3 But [d] the princes of the children of Ammon said to Hanun, * Thinkest thou that [e] David doth honor thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? are not his servants come unto thee for [f] to search, and to overthrow, and to spy out the land?

4 Wherefore Hanun [g] took David's servants, and [h] shaved them, [i] and cut off their garments in the midst, hard by their buttocks, and [k] sent them away.

5 Then there went *certain*, [l] and told David how the men were served. And he sent to meet them: for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, Tarry [m] at Jericho until [n] your beards be grown, and *then* return.

6 And when the children of Ammon saw that they [o] had made themselves † odious to David, Hanun and the children of Ammon sent [p] a thousand talents of silver, to hire them chariots and horsemen out of Mesopotamia, and out of [q] Syria-maachah, and out of [r] Zobah.

7 So they [s] hired thirty and two thousand chariots, and [t] the king of Maachah and his people; who came and pitched before [u] Medeba. And the children of Ammon gathered themselves together from their cities, and came to battle.

8 And when David heard *of it*, he sent [x] Joab and all the host of the mighty men.

9 And the children of Ammon came out, and [y] put the battle in array before the gate of the city: and [z] the kings that were come *were* by themselves in the field.

10 Now [a] when Joab saw that the ‡ battle was [b] set against him before and behind, he chose out of all the § choice of Israel, and put *them* in array against the Syrians.

11 And the rest of the people he delivered unto the hand of ‖ Abishai his brother, [c] and they set *themselves* in array against the children of Ammon.

12 And he said, [d] If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will help thee.

13 Be [e] of good courage, and let us behave ourselves valiantly for our people and for the cities of our God: and [f] let the LORD do *that which is* good in his sight.

14 So Joab, and the people that *were* with him, drew nigh before the Syrians unto the battle; and [g] they fled before him.

15 And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, [h] they likewise fled before Abishai his brother, and entered into the city. Then Joab came to Jerusalem.

16 ¶ And when the Syrians saw that they were put to the worse before Israel, they sent messengers, [i] and drew forth the Syrians that *were* beyond the ¶ river: and [k] Shophach the captain of the host of Hadarezer *went* before them.

17 And it was told David: and he gathered all Israel, and passed over Jordan, and came upon them, [l] and set *the battle* in array against them. So when David had put the battle in array against the Syrians, they [m] fought with him.

18 But the Syrians [n] fled before Israel; and David slew of the Syrians seven thousand *men*, *which fought in* chariots, and forty thousand [o] footmen, and killed Shophach the captain of the host.

19 And when [p] the servants of Hadarezer saw that they were put to the worse before Israel, they made peace with David, and became his servants: neither [q] would the Syrians help the children of Ammon any more.

d 1 Sam. 29:4,9. 1 K. 12:8—11.
* Heb. *In thine eyes doth David.*
e 1 Cor. 13:5—7.
f Gen. 42:9—18. Josh. 2:1—3. Judg. 1:23,24. 18:2,8—10.
g Ps. 35:12. 109:4,5.
h Lev. 19:27. Is. 15:2. Jer. 41:5. 48:37.
i Is. 20:4. 47:2,3.
k 2 Sam. 10:4,5. 2 Chr. 36:16. Mark 12:4. Luke 20:10,11.
l Matt. 18:31.
m Josh. 6:4—26. 1 K. 16:34.
n Judg. 16:22.
o Luke 10:16. 1 Thes. 4:8.
† Heb. *to stink.* Gen. 34:30. Ex. 5:21. 1 Sam. 13:4 27:12. Ps. 14:3. *margins.*
p 2 Chr. 16:2,3. 25:6. 27:5.
q 2 Sam. 10:6.
r 18:3,5,9. 1 Sam. 14:47. 2 Sam. 8:3. 1 K. 11:23,24.
s 18:4. Ex. 14:9. Judg. 4:3. 1 Sam. 13:5. 2 Chr. 14:9. ‡ ch. 20:7—9.
t 2 Sam. 10:6. *King Maacah.*
u Num. 21:30. Josh. 13:9. Is. 15:2.
x 11:6,10, &c. 2 Sam. 23:8, &c.
y 1 Sam. 17:2. 2 Sam. 18:4. 2 Chr. 13:3. 14:10. Is. 28:6. Jer. 50:42. Joel 2:5.
z 2 Sam. 10:8. 1 K. 20:1,24.
a 2 Sam. 10:9—14.
‡ Heb. *face of the battle was.*
b Josh. 8:22. Judg. 20:42,43.
§ Or, *young men.*
‖ Heb. *Abishai.* 11:20.—See on 18:12.
c See on 9.
d Neh. 4:20. Ec. 4:9—12. Gal. 6:2 Phil. 1:27,28.
e Deut. 31:6,7. Josh. 1:7. 10:25. 1 Sam. 4:9. 14:6—12. 17:32. 2 Sam. 10:12. Ezra 10:4. Neh. 4:14. Ps. 27:14. 1 Cor. 16:13.
f Judg. 10:15. 1 Sam. 3:18. 2 Sam. 15:26. 16:10,11. Jer. 1:21.
g 1 K. 20:13,14,19—21,28—30. 2 Chr. 13:5—16.
h Lev. 26:7. Rom. 8:31.
i Ps. 2:1. Is. 8:9,10. Mic. 4:11,12. Zech. 14:1—3.
¶ That is, *Euphrates.*
k 2 Sam. 10:16. *Shobach.*
l See on 9.—Is. 22:6,7.
m 13,14. Ps. 18:32. 33:16. 46:11.
n 2 Sam. 10:18. *horsemen.*
o Gen. 14:4,5. Josh. 9:9—11. 2 Sam. 10:19. 1 K. 20:1,12. Is. 10:8.
p 14:17. Ps. 48:3—6.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We may expect, that in this world our kindest actions will often be requited with the basest returns, and our best intentions expose us to the most injurious suspicions. Even in our implicit obedience to our great and gracious Lord, when we most sincerely desire to do good to our fellow creatures, we must lay our account with ingratitude, contempt, and abuse.—In every case, the servants of God, though here disgraced, will finally be honored: but none of his enemies will bring on themselves more sudden and terrible vengeance, than those who insult his ambassadors, when sent with a message of peace and salvation.—When prudence, vigilance courage, and diligence, have been used in a good cause, and we have mutually assisted each other; we may confidently leave the event to the Lord, saying, 'Let Him do what seemeth Him good.' But let us look to ourselves, and examine our hearts and lives, and fear, lest having been instruments of good to others, we should ourselves be found to come short of salvation, through unbelief and impenitent continuance in sin. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX. V. 6. *Syria-maachah.*] Or, *Aram-maachah.* Maachah (or *Maachathi*) lay to the E. of Jordan, and had been allotted to Manasseh: but it is probable, the Syrians had got possession of it; and that it was thence called Syria-maachah. (*Deut.* 3:14. *Josh.* 12:5.) SCOTT.

Verse 7.

32,000 *soldiers*, (exclusive of 1000 sent by the king of Maachah,) are mentioned in the parall. pass. (2 *Sam.* 10.6.) but 32,000 *chariots* are here stated. (*Note*, 1 *Sam.* 13:5.) Either some trivial mistake has crept into the text, in respect of the number or kind of these auxiliaries; or they were used in general to fight, some on foot, and others on horseback; yet on some occasions they all could drive, and fight from chariots of war. SCOTT.

Verses 8—15.

Note, 2 *Sam.* 10:8—14.—*The kings*, &c. (9) The people of the allied kings are mentioned in Samuel.—*Behave ourselves valiantly.* (13) 'Let us play the men.' 2 *Sam.* 10:12.—The original is the same, in both places. ID.

CHAP. XX.

Rabbah is taken and spoiled, and the inhabitants are treated with great severity, 1—3. Three giants are slain by David's servants, in three battles against the Philistines, 4—8.

B. C. 1035. AND [a] it came to pass, that * after the year was expired, at the time that kings go out *to battle*, Joab led forth the power of the army, and [b] wasted the country of the children of Ammon, and came and besieged [c] Rabbah. But David tarried at Jerusalem. And [d] Joab smote Rabbah, and destroyed it.

2 And David took the crown of their king from off his head, and found † it to weigh a talent of gold, and *there were* precious stones in it; and it was set upon David's head: [e] and he brought also exceeding much spoil out of the city.

3 And [f] he brought out the people that *were* in it; and cut *them* [g] with saws, and with harrows of iron, and with axes. Even so dealt David with all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

B. C. 1018. 4 ¶ And it came to pass after this, that [h] there ‡ arose a war [i] at Gezer with the Philistines; at which time [j] Sibbechai the Hushathite slew [k] Sippai, *that was* of the children of § the giant: and they were subdued.

5 And there was war again with the Philistines; and Elhanan the son of [l] Jair slew Lahmi, the brother of [m] Goliath the Gittite, whose spear's staff *was* like a weaver's beam.

6 And yet again there was war at Gath, where was a man ‖ of *great* stature, whose fingers and toes *were* four and twenty, six *on each hand*, and six *on each foot:* and he also was [n] the son of the giant.

7 But when [o] he ** defied Israel, Jonathan the son of [p] Shimea David's brother slew him.

8 These were born unto the giant in Gath; and [q] they fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

CHAP. XXI.

David, tempted by Satan, requires Joab to number the people, 1—4. The number is returned to the king, 5, 6. God is displeased, and David owns his fault, 7, 8. The Lord, by Gad the prophet, proposes three judgments to David, who chooses three days' pestilence, 9—13. Seventy thousand are cut off; and David, seeing the destroying angel, intercedes for the people, 14—17. Directed by Gad, he buys Ornan's threshing-floor; and sacrifices: fire consumes the oblation, and the plague is stayed, 18—27. He again sacrifices there, fearing to go unto Gibeon, 28—30.

AND [a] Satan stood up against Israel, and [b] provoked David to number Israel.

2 And David said to [c] Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel, from [d] Beer-sheba even to Dan; and [e] bring the number of them to me, [f] that I may know *it*.

3 And Joab answered,

3. How vain the greatest art and strength are against justice and equity. The Ammonites did their utmost; yet, having a bad cause, and acting in defence of wrong, they were put to the worst. Right will prevail, and triumph at last.

4. To how little purpose is it for those to rally again, and reinforce themselves, that have not God on their side. The Syrians, though no way concerned in the merits of the cause, but serving only as mercenaries, to the Ammonites, when beaten, thought to retrieve their honor; and therefore called in the assistance of the Syrians on the other side Euphrates; but to no purpose, still they *fled before Israel*, *v.* 18. they lost 7000 men, who are said to be the men of 700 chariots, 2 Sam. 10: 18. For as now, in a man-of-war for sea-service, they allot ten men to a gun; so then, in land-service, ten men to a chariot.

5. Those who have *meddled with strife that belongs not to them*, and have found that they *meddled to their own hurt*, do well to learn wit at length, and meddle no further. The Syrians finding Israel the conquering side, not only brake off their alliance with the Ammonites, *v.* 19. *but made peace with David, and became his servants*. Let those who have in vain stood it out against God, be thus wise for themselves, and *agree with Him quickly while they are in the way*. Let them become his servants; for they cannot but see themselves undone, if they be his enemies.

CHAP. XX. V. 1—3. How the army of the Ammonites, and their allies, were routed in the field, we read in the foregoing chs. Here we have the destruction of Rabbah, the metropolis of their kingdom, *v.* 1. the putting of their king's crown on David's head, *v.* 2. and the great severity used toward the people, *v.* 3. This we had more fully, 2 Sam. 11, and 12. and cannot but remember how, while Joab was besieging Rabbah, David fell into that great sin, in the matter of Uriah.

But it is observable, that though the rest of the story be repeated, that is not; a hint only is given of it. *But David tarried at Jerusalem*, and as relating it, is an instance of the impartiality and fidelity of the sacred writers; so avoiding the repetition of it is designed to teach us, that though there may be a just occasion to speak of the faults and miscarriages of others, yet we should not delight in the repetition of them. The persons or actions, we can say no good of, we had best say nothing of.

V. 4—8. The Philistines were nearly subdued, *ch.* 18: 1. but as in the destruction of the Canaanites by Joshua, the sons of Anak were last subdued, Josh. 11: 21. so here in the conquest of the Philistines, the giants of Gath were last brought down. In the conflicts between grace and corruption, there are some sins, which, like these giants, keep their ground a great while, and are not mastered without much difficulty, and a long struggle; but judgment will be brought forth into victory at last.

Observe, here, We never read of giants among the Israelites, as we do among the Philistines. The growth of God's plants is in usefulness, not in bulk; and in the balance of the sanctuary, David far outweighs Goliath. None are more visibly marked for ruin, than those who reproach God and his Israel, *v.* 7. Deut. 32: 27. The victories of the Son of David, too, are gradual. *We see not yet all things put under Him;* but it will be seen shortly: and death itself, the last enemy, like these giants, triumphed over.

CHAP. XXI. As this rehearsal makes no mention of David's sin in the matter of Uriah, so neither of the troubles of his family, that followed upon it; not a word of Absalom's rebellion, or Sheba's. But David's sin, in numbering the people, is here related, because, in the atonement made for that sin, an intimation was given of the spot of ground on which the temple should be built. This awful story we met with, and meditated upon, 2 *Sam.* 24.

V. 1—6. There is no sin that has in it more

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a 2 Sam. 11:1.
* Heb. *at the return of the year.* 1 K. 20:22,26. 2 K. 13:20.
b Is. 6:11. 54:16.
c Deut. 3:11. 2 Sam. 12:26. 17:27. Jer. 49:2,3. Ez. 21:20. 25:5. Am. 1:14.
d 2 Sam. 11:16—25. 12:26—31.
† Heb. *the weight of it.*
e 18:11. 2 Sam. 8:11,12.
f 19:2—6. Is. 21:3,9.
g Ex. 1:14. Josh. 9:23. Judg. 8:6,7, 16,17. 1 K. 9:21.
h 2 Sam. 21:15.
‡ Or, *continued.* Heb. *stood.*
i Josh. 12:12. 16:3. Or, *Gob.* 2 Sam. 21:18.
j 11:29. *Sibbecai.*
k 2 Sam. 21:18. *Saph.*
§ Or, *Rapha.*
l 2 Sam. 21:19. *Jaare-oregim.*
m 1 Sam. 17:4. 21:9. 22:10. 2 Sam. 21:19.
‖ Heb. *of measure.* 2 Sam. 21:20.
¶ Heb. *born to the giant, or Rapha.*
n 1 Sam. 17:10,26,36. Is. 37:23.
** Or, *reproached.*
o 2:13. *Shimma.* 1 Sam. 16:9. *Shammah.*
p Josh. 14:12. Ec. 9:11. Jer. 9:23. Rom. 8:31.
q 2 Sam. 21:1. 1 K. 22:20—22. ch. 1:6—12. 2:4—6. Zech. 3:1. Matt. 4:5. Luke 22:31. John 13:2. Acts 5:3. Jam. 1:13. Rev. 12:10.
b Luke 11:53. Heb. 10:24.
c See on 2 Sam. 24:2—4.
d Judg. 20:1. 1 Sam. 3:20. 2 Sam. 3: 10. 17:11. 24:15. 1 K. 4:25. 2 Chr. 30:5.
e 27:23,24.
f Deut. 8:13—17. 2 Chr. 32:25,26. Prov. 29:23. 2 Cor. 12:7.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

A pious and benevolent mind cannot possibly *delight* in mentioning the transgressions of useful and eminent men. So that if truth and candor will permit, and if no good purpose can be answered by speaking, persons of this character will choose to be silent; though they will by no means deny, excuse, or extenuate the sins of any man, when they cannot honestly conceal them. It however proves a malignant or an unfeeling mind, to be always searching into the miscarriages of others, especially those of superior reputation, in the world, or in the church.—The conflicts of believers, like those of David, will be successive, as long as they live here, and sometimes the sharpest are reserved till the last: and their victories will be gradual, as their enemies will still be renewing their assaults, and recovering their strength.—Though the Lord severely correct the sins of his own believing people, He will not leave them in the hands of their enemies.

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI. V. 1. (*Note*, 2 *Sam.* 24:1, 2.) God suffered Satan to move David. Here the phrase *stood up* is to be observed; it was the posture of those who charged or accused any person of a crime, in a court of justice. See 1 *K.* 22 21. Thus Satan is represented as 'the accuser of the brethren.' in Rev. and here to lay some sin to the charge of the Israelites, which he represented to God as a reason to punish them. For it is the way of the holy Scripture, thus to bring down these things, and accommodate them to the lowest capacities.' *Patrick.* (*Job* 1:9—12. *Zech.* 3:1—4. *Rev.* 12:7—12.) SCOTT.

Verses 2—6.

Notes, 2 *Sam.* 24:3, 9.—*Why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?* (3) This part of Joab's expostulation with David is not found in Samuel; and it shows, that Joab, amidst all his crimes, had considerable

[g] The LORD make his people an hundred times so many more as they *be*. but, my lord the king, *are* they not all my lord's servants? why then doth my lord require this thing? [h] why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?

4 Nevertheless [i] the king's word prevailed against Joab. [j] Wherefore Joab departed [k] and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem.

5 And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all *they of* Israel were [l] a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand men that drew sword: and Judah *was* four hundred threescore and ten thousand men that drew sword.

6 But [m] Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them: for the king's word was abominable to [n] Joab.

7 * And [o] God was displeased with this thing; therefore [p] he smote Israel.

8 And David said unto God, [q] I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech thee, [r] do away the iniquity of thy servant; for [s] I have done very foolishly.

9 ¶ And the LORD spake unto [t] Gad, David's seer, saying,

10 Go and tell David, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I † offer thee three *things:* [u] choose thee one of them, [x] that I may do *it* unto thee.

11 So Gad came to David, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD; ‡ Choose thee,

12 Either [y] three years' famine; or three months [z] to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh *thee;* or else three days [a] the sword of the LORD, [b] even the pestilence, in the land, and [c] the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. [d] Now therefore advise thyself, what word I shall bring again to him that sent me.

13 And David said unto Gad, [e] I am in a great strait: [f] let me fall now into the hand of the LORD; [g] for very § great *are* his mercies: but [h] let me not fall into the hand of man.

14 ¶ So [i] the LORD sent pestilence upon Israel; and there fell of Israel [j] seventy thousand men.

15 And God sent an angel [k] unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and he [l] repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, [m] It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshing floor of [n] Ornan the Jebusite.

16 And David lifted up his eyes, and [o] saw the angel of the LORD stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders *of Israel, who were* [p] clothed in sackcloth, [q] fell upon their faces.

17 And David said unto God, [r] *Is it* not I *that* commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed: but *as for* [s] these sheep, [t] what have they done? [u] Let thine hand, I pray thee, O LORD my God, be on me, and [x] on my father's house: but not on thy people, [y] that they should be plagued.

18 ¶ Then [z] the angel of the LORD commanded

I. How active the tempter was in it, v. 1. It is said, 2 Sam. 24: 1. that *the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and He moved David* to do it. The righteous judgments of God are to be observed and acknowledged even in the sins and unrighteousness of men. We are sure that God is not the Author of sin, He *tempts no man;* therefore when it is said that He moved David to do it, it must be explained by what is intimated here, that, for wise and holy ends, He permitted the devil to do it. Here we trace this foul stream to its fountain. That Satan, the enemy of God and all good, should *stand up against Israel*, is not strange; but, that he should influence David, the man after God's own heart, to do a wrong thing, may well be wondered at. One would think him one of those whom the wicked one touches not. No, even the best saints, till they come to heaven, are forbidden to think themselves out of the reach of Satan's temptations. The devil does us more mischief by tempting us, than by accusing us. He destroys none but by their own hands; and the greatest spite he can do the church of God, is, to tempt the rulers of the church to pride; for none can conceive the fatal consequence of that sin in all, especially in church rulers. *Ye shall not be so*, Luke 22: 26.

II. How passive the instrument was. Joab was the person employed, an active man in public business; but to this perfectly forced, doing it with the greatest reluctancy imaginable. 1. It was *needless*. God had promised to multiply them, and David needed not question the accomplishment of that promise: they were all his servants, and he needed not doubt of their loyalty and affection. 2. It was *dangerous*. In doing it, he might be a cause of trespass to Israel, and might provoke God against them. This Joab apprehended, and yet David himself did not. The most learned in the laws of God, are not always the most quick-sighted in the application of those laws.

Joab was quite weary of it before he had done it; *the king's word was abominable to Joab, v.* 6. Time was, when whatever king David did, *pleased all the people*, 2 Sam. 3: 36. But now there was a general disgust at these orders, which confirmed Joab in his dislike of them; so that, though the produce of this muster was really very great, yet he had no heart to perfect it, but left two tribes unnumbered, *v.* 5, 6. two considerable ones, Levi and Benjamin; and, perhaps, was not very exact in numbering the rest, because he did not do it with any pleasure; which might be one occasion of the difference between the sums here and 2 Sam. 24: 9.

V. 7—17. I. David is here under the rod for numbering the people. Let us briefly observe,

If God's dearest children do amiss, they must

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g 19:13. Ps. 115:14. Prov. 14:28. Is. 26:15. 48:19.
h Gen. 20:9. Ex. 32:21. Num. 32:9,10. 1 Sam. 2:24. 1 K. 14:16.
i Ec. 8:4.
j Ex. 1:17. Dan. 3:18. Acts 5:29.
k See on 2 Sam. 24:8—8.
l 27:23,24. 2 Sam. 24:9.
m Num. 1:47—49.
n 2 Sam. 3:27. 11:15—21. 20:9,10.
* Heb. *And it was evil in the eyes of God concerning this thing.*
o 2 Sam. 11:27. 1 K. 15:5.
p 14. Josh. 7:1,5,13. 22:16—26. 2 Sam. 21:1,14. 24:1.
q 2 Sam. 12:13. Ps. 25:11. 32:5. Jer. 3:13. Luke 15:18,19. 1 John 1:9.
r Ps. 51:1—3. Hos. 14:2. John 1:29.
s Gen. 34:7. 1 Sam. 13:13. 26:21. 2 Sam. 13:13. 2 Chr. 16:9.
t 29:29. 1 Sam. 9:9. 2 Sam. 24:11.
† Heb. *stretch out.*
u Josh. 24:15. Prov. 1:29—31.
x Num. 20:12. 2 Sam. 12:10—12. 1 K. 13:21,22. Prov. 3:12. Rev. 3:19.
‡ Heb. *Take to thee.*
y Lev 26:26—29. 2 Sam. 21:1. 1 K. 17:1. 2 K. 8:1. Lam. 4:9. Luke 4:25.
z Lev. 26:17,36,37. Deut. 28:15,25,51, 52. Jer. 42:16.
a 16. Is. 66:16. Jer. 12:12. 47:6.
b Lev. 26:16,25. Deut. 28:22,27,35. Ps 91:6. Ez. 14:19—21.
c 15,16. Ex. 12:23. 2 K. 19:35. Matt. 13:49,50. Acts 12:23. Rev. 7:1—3.
d 2 Sam. 24:13,14.
e 2 K. 6:15. 7:4. Esth. 4:11,16. John 12:27. Phil. 1:23.
f Heb. 10:31.
g Ex. 34:6,7. Ps. 86:5,15. 103:8. 130: 7. Lam. 3:32. Jon. 3:9. 4:2. Mic. 7:18. Hab. 3:2.
§ Or, *many.* Ps. 5:7. 51:1,2. 69:13, 16. 106:7. Is. 55:7. 63:7,15.
h 2 Chr. 28:9. Prov. 12:10. Is. 47:6.
i Num. 16:46—49. 2 Sam. 24:15.
j Ex. 12:30. Num. 25:9. 1 Sam. 6:19. 2 K. 19:35.
k 2 Sam. 24:16. Jer. 7:12. 26:9,18. Matt. 23:37,38.
l See on Gen. 6:6.—Ex. 32:14. Judg. 2:18. 10:16. Ps. 78:38. Jer. 18: 7—10.
m Ex. 9:28. 1 K. 19:4. Ps. 90:13. Mark 14:41.
n 2 Sam. 24:18. *Araunah.* 2 Chr. 3:1.
o Ex. 14:19,20. 2 K. 6:17.
p 1 K. 21:27. 2 K. 19:1. Ps. 35:13, 14. Jon. 3:6—8.
q Num. 14:5. 16:22.
r 8. 2 Sam. 24:17. Ps. 51:4. Ez. 16:63.
s 1 K. 22:17. Ps. 44:11.
t 2 Sam. 24:1.
u Gen. 44:33. Ex. 32:32,33. John 10: 11,12. Rom. 9:3. 1 John 3:16.
x Ex. 20:5. 2 Sam. 12:10. Ps. 51:14. Is. 39:7,8.
y Josh. 22:18.
z 11. Acts 8:26, &c.

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knowledge in religion, and much sagacity in discerning the motives, and presaging the consequences, of other men's conduct. (*M. R.* h.)
SCOTT.

(5.) 'The following method of accounting for the difference of 300,000 between this enumeration and that 2 Sam. 24. from *Baruh* in *Frag. Calm.* appears most satisfactory. We learn from 1 Chr. 27. that there was an army of 288,000, who attended the king's orders in a monthly rotation of 24,000 each. These troops added to 12,000, the guards of the princes of the tribes, makes the numbers to agree. In Sam. they are not noticed, being in the actual service of the king. In Chr. they are added; it is there expressly stated that the number is of "all Israel," while in Sam. it is merely said "and Israel were." The difference in the numbers of Judah is explained by the army of 30,000 in the Philistine's country, 2 Sam. 6:1. being included in Sam. but not in Chr. where it may be observed the expression is only "and those of Judah," not "all Judah." Even if we were not aware of any circumstances which would reconcile these and similar differences, they could not justly be deemed contradictory, as we are ignorant of the particulars on which they were founded. The Syriac version reads 800,000 in both places.'
HENRY abr.

Verse 7.

He smote Israel.] 'He resolved to punish them; because it was for their sins, that God permitted David to indulge himself in this vanity.' *Patrick.*
SCOTT.

Verses 18—25.

2 *Sam.* 24:18—25.—*Saw*, &c. (20) It is probable, this awful vision of the angel, with a 'drawn sword in his hand, stretched out over Jerusalem,' continued apparent to all the inhabitants, till David had offered the appointed sacrifices. The variations in the narrative are noted in the exposition of the parall. pass. in Sam.
ID.

Gad to say to David, [a] that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the LORD, in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

19 And David [b] went up at the saying of Gad, which he spake in the name of the LORD.

20 * And Ornan turned back, and saw the angel; and his four sons with him hid themselves. [c] Now Ornan was threshing wheat.

21 And as David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David, and went out of the threshing floor, and [d] bowed himself to David with *his* face to the ground.

22 Then David said to Ornan, † Grant me the place of *this* threshing floor, that I may build an altar therein unto the LORD: [e] thou shalt grant it me for the full price: [f] that the plague may be stayed from the people.

23 And Ornan said unto David, [g] Take *it* to thee, and let my lord the king do *that which is* good in his eyes: lo, I give *thee* [h] the oxen *also* for burnt-offerings, and the threshing instruments for wood, and the wheat for the meat-offering; I give it all.

24 And king David said to Ornan, [i] Nay, but I will verily buy it for the full price; for I will not take *that* which *is* thine for the LORD, nor offer burnt-offerings without cost.

25 So [k] David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight.

26 And David [l] built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings, [m] and called upon the LORD; and he answered him from heaven [n] by fire upon the altar of burnt-offering.

27 And [o] the LORD commanded the angel; and [p] he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof.

28 At that time when David saw that the LORD had answered him in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there.

29 For [q] the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt-offering, *were* at that season in the high place at [r] Gibeon.

30 But David could not go before it to inquire of God: for [s] he was afraid, because of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

expect to smart for it.—He is informed that God is displeased; and that is no small uneasiness to so good a man as David, *v.* 7. God notices, and is displeased with, the sins of his people; and no sin is more displeasing to Him than pride of heart: nor is any thing more humbling, and grieving, and mortifying to a gracious soul, than to see itself under God's displeasure.—For his further humiliation, he is put into a strait, a great strait; and has the terror of three judgments impressed on his mind, no doubt, to his great amazement, while he is considering which he shall choose.—He hears of 70,000 of his subjects, in a few hours, struck dead by the pestilence, *v.* 14. Justly is that taken from us, weakened, or imbittered to us, which we are proud of. David must have the people numbered, but now God numbers them after another manner; *numbers to the sword*, Isa. 65: 12. While we lie under the wrath of God, the holy angels are armed against us, though we see them not as David did.

II. How he bore the correction.

1. He made a very penitent confession of his sin, and prayed earnestly for the pardon of it, *v.* 8. he entreats that however he might be corrected for it, the iniquity of it might be done away. 2. He accepted his punishment of his iniquity; let me be the sufferer, for I am the sinner. 3. He cast himself on the mercy of God; *though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.* 4. It went to his heart to see the people plagued for his transgression.

V. 18—30. We have here the controversy concluded, and, on David's repentance, his peace made with God.

1. When David repented him of the sin, God repented Him of the judgment, (*v.* 15.) and ordered the destroying angel to *stay his hand*, and *sheath his sword*, *v.* 27.

2. The same angel that carried on the war, is here forward in the peace; angels do not desire the woful day. The angel could have given this order about the altar, (*v.* 18.) to David himself; but he chose to do it by Gad, his seer, that he might honor the prophetical office. Thus the revelation of Jesus Christ was notified by the angel to John, and by him to the churches.

3. David immediately made a bargain with Ornan for the threshing-floor; for he would not serve God at other people's charge. Ornan generously offered it him gratis, not only in complaisance to the king, but because he had himself *seen the angel*, *v.* 20. which terrified him and his four sons Those that are duly sensible of the terrors of the Lord, will do all they can, in their places, to promote religion, and use all the methods of reconciliation to turn away God's wrath.

4. God testified his acceptance of David's offerings on this altar, *v.* 26. To signify that God's anger was turned away from him, the fire that might justly have fastened on the sinner, fastened on the sacrifice, and consumed that, and, on this, the destroying sword was returned into its sheath. Thus Christ was made sin, and a curse, for us, and it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, that through Him God might be to us, not a consuming Fire, but a reconciled Father.

5. He continued to offer his sacrifices on this altar. The brazen altar Moses made, was at Gibeon,

[a] 15. 2 Sam. 24:18. 2 Chr. 3:1.

[b] 2 K. 5:10—14. John 2:5. Acts 9:6.
* Or, *When Ornan turned back and saw the angel*; then he, *and his four sons with him hid themselves.*
[c] Judg. 6:11.
[d] 1 Sam. 25:23. 2 Sam. 24:18—20.
† Heb. *Give.* 1 K. 21:2.
[e] 2 Sam 24:21.
[f] Num. 16:48. 25:8.
[g] Gen. 23:4—6. 2 Sam. 24:22,23. Jer. 32:8.
[h] 1 Sam. 6:14. 1 K. 19:21. Is. 28. 27:28.
[i] Gen. 14:23. 23:13. Deut. 16:16,17. Mal. 1:12—14. Rom. 12:17.
[k] 2 Sam. 24:24,25.
[l] Ex. 20:24,25. 24:4,5.
[m] 1 Sam. 7:8,9. Ps. 51:15. 91:15. 99:6. Prov. 15:8. Is. 65:24. Jer. 33:3.
[n] Lev. 9:24. Judg. 6:21. 13:20. 1 K. 18:38. 2 Chr. 7:1.
[o] 15,16. 2 Sam. 24:16. Ps. 103:20. Heb. 1:14.
[p] 12,20. Jer. 47:6. Ez. 21:30. Matt. 26:52. John 18:11.
[q] Ex. 40:1,&c.
[r] 16:39. 1 K. 3:4. 2 Chr. 1:13.
[s] 16. 13:12. Deut. 10:12. 2 Sam. 6:9. Job. 13:21. 21:6. 23:15. Ps. 119: 120. Heb. 12:28,29. Rev. 1:17. 15:4.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

So long as we abide on earth Satan has access to us, through the remains of sin in our hearts, especially of pride: and the Lord has wise and righteous reasons for permitting this enemy, under certain restrictions, to tempt his servants. As far as he obtains this permission, he is unwearied in his malicious efforts to deceive, to defile, or to distress us; and he can vary his devices in many plausible ways: but he does us more harm as a seducer than as an accuser, as a subtle serpent than as a roaring lion. We are therefore called on to be sober and vigilant, and to pray always that we 'enter not into temptation:' and, as men advance in rank and reputation, authority, or usefulness, they have need to redouble the guard, and to be more watchful and instant in prayer than ever; for the enemy levels his assaults especially against those who are eminent in character, or fill up public stations, in the church or in the community; because their falls involve numbers either in sin or suffering.—It is a mercy to be speedily made sensible of our guilt, when we have been left to transgress: but no confession or humiliation can secure us from present sufferings, when we have committed such crimes, as appear abominable even to ungodly men, and bring an open scandal on our profession.—By thus yielding to temptation we bring ourselves into dreadful straits, from which we can by no means extricate ourselves: yet, even in this case, there is encouragement for us to leave our cause in the hand of the Lord, that He may do with us as He pleases; 'for very great are his mercies.'—Of all the painful consequences of transgression, none in this world can be more distressing to an ingenuous mind, than to see those whom we most love, and desire the most to do good to, suffering heavily through our sins. But even under the anguish of this trial, we must not allow ourselves to murmur, or to despond.—The fear of impending vengeance, from the wrath of an offended God, is naturally calculated to drive men *from Him*. But, in subserviency to the Gospel, and through the influence of the Spirit of God, it concurs in showing sinners the preciousness of Christ; disposing them to forsake all for Him, and afterwards enlarging the mind in grateful obedience to Him, who has saved them from so great a destruction. SCOTT.

(20.) *Saw the angel.*] 'Saw the king,' *Sept.* The *Syr.* and *Arab.* say, David saw the angel, and do not mention Ornan in this place. *Houbigant* fr. the same, reading *hmlk* (hamalek, *the king*) for *hmlak*, (hamalak,) [spelled with the letter *aleph*,] *the angel*, and vindicates his version from 2 Sam. 24:20. where it is said he *saw David*; but there is no word of his seeing the *angel*. *Houb.* supposes the *seeing David* of this verse refers to seeing him at a distance, which caused his sons to hide, while the seeing him, *v.* 21. was when he came into the threshing-floor. One of *Kennicott's* mss. has *hmlk, the king.*'
Dr. A. CLARKE.

CHAP. XXII.

David makes large preparations for the temple, 1—5. He instructs Solomon, and charges him to build it, 6—16. He commands the elders of Israel to assist him, 17—19.

THEN David said, [a] This *is* the house of the LORD God, [b] and this *is* the altar of the burnt-offering for Israel.

2 And David commanded to gather together [c] the strangers that *were* in the land of Israel: and he set [d] masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God.

3 And David [e] prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the joinings; and brass in abundance [f] without weight;

4 Also [g] cedar-trees in abundance: for the Zidonians, and they of Tyre brought much cedar-wood to David.

5 And David said, [h] Solomon my son *is* young and tender, and the house *that is* to be builded for the LORD *must be* [i] exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will *therefore* now make preparation for it. So [k] David prepared abundantly before his death.

6 Then he called for Solomon his son, and [l] charged him to build an house for the LORD God of Israel.

7 And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, [m] it was in my mind to build an house [n] unto the name of the LORD my God:

8 But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, [o] Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: [p] thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight.

9 Behold, [q] a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and [r] I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be * Solomon, and [s] I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days.

10 [t] He shall build an house for my name, and [u] he shall be my son, and I *will be* his father; and [x] I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever.

[*Practical Observations.*]

v. 29. and there all the sacrifices of Israel were offered: but David was so terrified at the sight of the sword of the angel, that he *could not go thither*, *v.* 30. nor leave the angel, with his sword drawn over Jerusalem, lest the fatal stroke should be given, before he came back.

CHAP. XXII. There is a great difference between the frame of David's spirit in the beginning of the former chapter, and in the beginning of this. There, in the pride of his heart, he was numbering the people; here, in his humility, preparing for the service of God. There, corruption was uppermost; here grace has recovered the upper hand.

V. 1—5. I. Here is, the place for the building of the temple, *v.* 1; it had pertained to a Jebusite, and, perhaps, there was not a spot of ground besides, in or about Jerusalem, that did so; a happy presage of the setting up of the gospel-temple among the Gentiles. See Acts 15: 16, 17. The ground was a threshing-floor; the church is *the corn of* God's *floor*, Isa. 21: 10. Christ's fan is in his hand, thoroughly to purge his floor. This is to be the house, because this is the altar: for its sake the temple was built: there were altars long before there were temples.

II. Preparations for that building; 1. What induced David to make them; (1.) Solomon was young and tender, and not likely to apply himself with any great vigor to this business at first, and might be tempted to put it off; whereas, if he found the materials got ready to his hand, the most difficult part of the work would be over, and it would excite and encourage him to go about it in the beginning of his reign. Note, The aged and experienced, should consider the young and tender, and make the work of God as easy to them as possible. (2.) The house must be exceeding magnificent, very stately, sumptuous, strong and beautiful, every thing about it the best in its kind; as intended for the honor of the great God, the Lord of the whole earth, and a type of Christ; in whom all fulness dwells, and in whom are hid all treasures. Men were then to be taught by sensible methods: the grandeur of the house would help to affect the worshippers, and would invite strangers to come to see it; therefore it is here designed to be of fame and glory throughout all countries. David foretold this good effect of its being magnificent, Ps. 68: 29.

2. His preparation: in general, he prepared abundantly, *v.* 2—4. Cedar he had from the Tyrians and the Zidonians, *The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift*, Ps. 45: 12. He also got workmen together, *the strangers in the land of Israel*. Some think, because they were generally better artists, and more ingenious in manual operations, than the Israelites; or, rather, because he would not employ the free-born Israelites in any thing that looked mean and servile. They were proselytes to the Jewish religion, who, though not enslaved, yet were not of equal dignity with Israelites.

V. 6—16. When David came to the throne, he

[a] 21:18—28. Gen. 28:17. Deut. 12:5—7,11. 2 Sam. 24:18. 2 Chr. 3:1. 6: 5,6. Ps. 78:60,67—69. 132:13,14. John 4:20—22.
[b] 2 K. 18:22. 2 Chr. 32:12.
[c] 1 K. 9:20,21. 2 Chr. 2:17. 8:7,8. Is. 61:5,6. Eph. 2:12,19—22.
[d] 14:1. 2 Sam. 5:11. 1 K. 5:17,18. 6:7. 7:9—12. 2 K. 12:12. 22:6. Ezra 3:7.
[e] 29:2,7.
[f] 14. 1 K. 7:47. 2 Chr. 4:18. Jer. 52:20.
[g] 2 Sam. 5:11. 1 K. 5.6—10. 2 Chr. 2:3. Ezra 3:7.
[h] 29:1. 1 K. 3:7. 2 Chr. 13:7.
[i] 1 K. 9:3. 2 Chr. 2:5. 7:21. Is. 64: 11. Ez. 7:20. Hag. 2:3,9. Luke 21:5.
[k] Deut. 31:2—7. Ec. 9:10. John 3:30. 4:37,38. 9:4. 13:1. 2 Pet. 1:13—15.
[l] Num. 27:18,19,23. Deut. 31:14,23. Matt. 28:18—20. Acts 1:2. 10:25—31. 1 Tim. 5:21. 6:13—17. 2 Tim. 4:1.
[m] 17:1. 28:2. 29:3. 2 Sam. 7:2. 1 K. 8:17—19. 2 Chr. 6.7—9. Ps. 132: 5. Acts 6:46.
[n] Deut. 12:5,11,21. 1 K. 8:16,20,29. 9:3. 2 Chr. 2:4. Ezra 6:12.
[o] 28:3. Num. 31:19,20,24. 1 K. 5:3.
[p] 17:4—10. 2 Sam. 7:5—11.
[q] 17:11. 28:5—7. 2 Sam. 7:12,13.
[r] 1 K. 4:20—25. 5:4. Ps. 72:7. Is. 9:6,7.
[s] That is, *Peaceable*. 2 Sam. 12:24,25.
[t] Judg. 6:24. *Marg.* Job 34:29. Is. 26:12. 45:7. 57:19. 66:12. Hag. 2:9.
[u] 17:12,13. 28:6. 1 K. 5:5. 8:19,20. Zech. 6.12,13.
[x] Ps. 89:26,27. Heb. 1:5.
[x] 17:14. 28:7. Ps. 89:36,37. Is. 9:7.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—10. When the grace of God possesses the heart, a man's falls and mistakes will eventually be overruled to form him to such a humble and watchful frame of mind, as will exceedingly increase the simplicity, purity, and activity of his zeal in the service of God.—When the Lord refuses to employ us in those kinds and in that measure of service to his church, which we desired and hoped to perform; we must not on that account yield to indolence or discouragement. But we should be doing what we can, in a subordinate sphere, and on a smaller scale; and rejoice in affording any assistance to those who are honored with more extensive usefulness. —We are not likely on earth to witness those glorious times which are foretold in the Scriptures, when Satan shall no more deceive the nations, and 'the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea:' yet, it is possible we may be, as it were, collecting materials for that work. These considerations should encourage us, when grieved that we see no more fruits of all our labors. Much good may appear after our death, which was hidden from us, 'lest we should be exalted above measure.' 'Let us not then be weary of well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.'—Above all, they who are aged, and expect shortly to be removed to a better world, should diligently instruct, encourage, charge, and caution those, who are young and inexperienced, and who are likely to succeed them in their work.—Among other unspeakable advantages of public peace, this is peculiarly important, that it affords the fairest opportunities of executing useful designs to promote true religion: and then, we should be active and earnest to seize the favorable opportunity. (*Acts* 9: 31.)—But especially peace among Christians is conducive to this most desirable end; which is grievously counteracted by the animosities, divisions, and vehement controversies, which, alas! prevail and are multiplied. Did all real believers 'endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,' and to *strive together* for 'the faith of the Gospel:' such effects would follow, as seem at present to exceed our largest expectations or conceptions. (*Note* and *P. O. Eph.* 4: 1—6.) The work is, however, in the hands of 'the Prince of peace:' may He compose all our differences, and build the spiritual temple so magnificent and glorious, that the fame of it may be spread into all countries, till all the nations of the earth become his willing subjects, and live in love and peace with each other! SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII. V. 1. David was assured, probably by immediate inspiration, that it was God's will, the temple should be built by Solomon on this very spot.—It does not appear, whether David removed the ark thither with its tent, or whether it remained in its former place.—Henceforth this became the spot, which God 'chose, to place his name there,' and where sacrifices were regularly offered, as long as that dispensation lasted. (*Deut.* 12:5—7. 2 *Chr.* 3:1. 2. *Ps.* 78:67—69. *John* 4:19—24.) SCOTT.

Verses 2—5.

The *strangers*, here mentioned, seem to have been the remnant of the old inhabitants, who, having submitted to David, had their lives spared, and had been reduced to bondage. (1 *K.* 9:20—22.) (*M. R.*) —(1 *K.* 3:5—14.) SCOTT.

Verses 6—10.

(*Num.* 27:18, 19. 2 *Tim.* 4:1—8.) David was a type of Christ, in his conflicts, victories, and the destruction of his obstinate enemies: but Solomon represented the Savior triumphant, glorified, and giving peace

11 Now, my son, [y] the LORD be with thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the LORD thy God, as he hath said of thee.

12 Only [z] the LORD give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, [a] that thou mayest keep the law of the LORD thy God.

13 Then [b] shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed [c] to fulfil the statutes and judgments, which the LORD charged Moses with concerning Israel: [d] be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed.

14 Now, behold, in my * trouble I have prepared for the house of the LORD [e] an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron [f] without weight; for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto.

15 Moreover *there are* workmen with thee in abundance, † hewers and workers of stone and timber, and [g] all manner of cunning men for every manner of work.

16 Of [h] the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, *there is* no number. [i] Arise *therefore*, and be doing, [k] and the LORD be with thee.

had many things to do, the foundations were all out of course; but Solomon had only one thing in charge, and that was, *to build a house for the Lord God of Israel*, *v.* 6. Now, David here instructs Solomon,

I. Why he did not do it himself: God forbade him, because *he had shed much blood*, *v.* 8. Some think it refers to the blood of Uriah, but he was forbidden before he had shed that blood: therefore it must be meant, as here explained, of the blood he shed in his wars, which, though shed very justly and honorably, in the service of God and Israel, yet made him unfit to be employed in this service, or rather less fit than one never called to such bloody work. God thus showed how precious human life is to Him, and intended a type of Him who should build the gospel-temple, not by *destroying men's lives*, but *saving them*, Luke 9: 56.

II. Why he imposed this task on him. 1. Because God had designed and nominated him to do it, *v.* 9, 10. Nothing is more powerful to engage us to, and encourage us in, any service for God, than to know that hereunto we are appointed. 2. Because he would have leisure and opportunity to do it, and peace and quietness at home; therefore let him build the house. Where God gives rest, He expects work. 3. Because God had promised to establish his kingdom. God's gracious promises should quicken and invigorate our religious service.

III. He delivers him an account of the vast preparations he had made for this building, *v.* 14. not in a way of pride or vain-glory, but of encouragement. The treasure here mentioned of 100,000 talents of gold, and 1,000,000 talents of silver, amounts to such an incredible sum, that most interpreters either allow an error in the copy, or think the talent here signifies no more than a plate or piece; *ingots* we call them. I am inclined to suppose that a certain number is here put for an uncertain, because it is said, *v.* 16. that of the gold and silver, as well as of the brass and iron, there was no number; and that David here includes all the dedicated things, *ch.* 18: 11. which he designed *for the house of the Lord*, i. e. not only for the building of it, but for the treasure of it; and, putting all together, it might come near what is here spoken of. Hundreds and thousands are numbers which we often use to express that which is very much, when yet we would not be understood strictly.

IV. He charges him to keep God's commandments, and heed his duty in every thing, and encourages him, *v.* 13.

V. He quickens him not to rest in the preparations he had made, but to add thereto, *v.* 14. Those that enter into the labors of others, and build on their advantages, must still be improving.

Lastly, He prays for him: *The Lord give thee wisdom and understanding, and charge concerning Israel*, *v.* 12. Whatever charge we have, if we see God giving it, and calling to it, we may hope He will give us wisdom for the discharge of it. Perhaps Solomon had an eye to this prayer of his father for him, in the prayer he offered for *a wise and understanding heart*. He concludes, *v.* 16. *Up, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee.* Hope of God's presence must not slacken our endeavors. Work out your salvation, and God will work in you.

V. 17—19. David here engages the princes of Israel to assist Solomon. Those that are in the throne, cannot do the good they would, unless those about the throne, set in with them.

1. He shows them what obligations they lay under to be zealous in this matter, in gratitude to God for the great things He had done for them; He had given them victory, rest, a good land, *v.* 18.

17 ¶ David also commanded [l] all the princes of Israel to help Solomon his son, *saying*,

18 *Is* [m] not the LORD your God with you? [n] and hath he *not* given you rest on every side? for he hath given the inhabitants of the land into mine hand; and the land is subdued [o] before the LORD, and before his people.

19 Now [p] set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God; [q] arise therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the LORD God, [r] to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built [s] to the name of the LORD.

y 16. 28:20. Is. 26:12. Matt. 1:23. 28:20. Rom. 15:33. 2 Tim. 4:22.
z 1 K. 3:9—12. 2 Chr. 1:10. Ps. 72:1. Prov. 2:6,7. Luke 21:15. Jam. 1:5.
a Deut. 4:6. 1 K. 11:1—10. Prov. 14: 8. 1 John 2:3.
b 28:7. Josh. 1:7,8. *marg.* 1 K. 2:3. Jer. 22:3,4.
c Matt. 3:15. Acts 13:22. Gal. 6:2. Jam. 2:8.
d 28:10,20. Deut. 31:7,8. Josh. 1:6—9,18. 1 Cor. 16:13. Eph. 6:10. 2 Tim. 2:1.
* Or, *poverty*. 2 Cor. 8:2.
e 29:4—7. 1 K. 10:14.
f 3. 2 K. 25:16. Jer. 52:20.
† That is, *masons and carpenters*. See on 2—4.
g Ex. 28:3. 31:3—5. 35:32—35. 1 K. 7:14.
h See on 3,14.
i Josh. 1:2,5,9. 7:10. Judg. 4:14. 18: 9,10. 2 Chr. 20:17. 1 Cor. 15:58. Eph. 5:14. Phil. 2:12,13. 4:13.
k 1 Sam. 17:37. 20:13.
l 28:21. 29:6. Rom. 16:2,3. Phil. 4:3. 3 John 8.
m Judg. 6:12—14. Rom. 8:31.
n See on 9.—23:25. Deut. 12:10,11. Josh. 22:4. 23:1. 2 Sam. 7:1. Acts 9:31.
o Deut. 20:4. Josh. 10:42. 1 Sam 25: 28. 2 Sam. 5:19,20. Ps. 44:1—5.
p 16:11. 28:9. Deut. 4:29. 32:46,47. 2 Chr. 20:3. Dan. 9:3. Hag. 1:5. *Marg.* Acts 11:23.
q See on 16.—Is. 60:1. Acts 22:16.
r 1 K. 8:6,21. 2 Chr. 5:7. 6:11.
s See on 7.—1 K. 5:3.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 11—19. No abilities or diligence can render us durably and extensively useful to others, if we do not take heed to our own conduct, that it be regulated according to the Word of God. —All our advantages, and all the promises of the Gospel, are intended to encourage our activity, and not to excuse our sloth. And, whether we seek our own salvation, or that of other men, we must 'arise, and be doing.'—The whole weight of public services should not be laid on those who sustain public characters. Others are commanded to assist in proportion to their talents and abilities; and the leading persons in congregations should second to the uttermost the labors of the minister for the good of souls: their unanimity, forbearance, and cordiality, their pious examples, family-religion, and earnest prayers, should never be wanting, that they may add weight to his exhortations, strengthen his hands, encourage him in his arduous work, and bring a blessing upon it. Yet, alas! how often is it otherwise! SCOTT.

and felicity to his willing subjects. In this latter character, 'the Prince of peace' erects his spiritual temple; and it more accorded to the nature of the Christian dispensation, and to the character of Jesus, both of which were represented in this transaction, that the temple should be built by a peaceable prince, than by a successful warrior. Yet, David in his wars did the work and sought the honor of God, and was eminently serviceable to his people: and was desirous of building the temple. SCOTT.

For ever. (10) 'This can belong to none in the proper and full sense of the word, but Christ alone. For Solomon reigned but 40 years, and after that his kingdom was torn in pieces. Therefore to Christ the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews applies them, *Heb.* 1:5.' *Patrick.* ID.

Verses 11, 12.

David had given Solomon exhortations and instructions; but the powerful influence of divine grace alone could form him to that wisdom, piety, and zeal, which such a work required. ID.

Verse 14.

The gold and silver here mentioned, if computed by the ordinary weight of the talent, would amount to *eight or nine hundred millions* sterling: and this enormous quantity would have more than sufficed to erect an edifice, as large as the temple itself, apart from its courts, of solid gold and silver. Compared therefore with the size of the temple, and with the gains of Solomon, when the precious metals became common at Jerusalem; (1 *K.* 9:14, 28.) it is generally concluded, either that some mistake has taken place in the numeral letters, or that a talent of inferior weight and value is meant.—David had collected this wealth for the temple in his trouble, or in his poverty. He had set out in life very poor; he had passed through a constant succession of trials and troubles, not only before he came to the kingdom, but during his whole reign; and all his prosperity was the result of the Lord's singular kindness, in making him a gainer by all the attempts of his numerous enemies.—He seems also to speak of his preparation as a small matter, whether compared with the greatness of the Lord to whom it was dedicated, or with his own obligations to Him. (29:10—19.) SCOTT.

Verses 15—19.

M. R.—Set your heart, &c. (19) Earnestly seize the present opportunity, and make it your grand concern to seek and serve the Lord in all respects, as well as to build the temple. ID.

CHAP. XXIII.

David makes Solomon king, 1. The Levites are numbered, and classed for different services, 2—6. The sons of Gershon, 7—11. Of Kohath, 12—20. Of Merari, 21—23. The several officers of the Levites, 24—32.

SO when David was [a] old and full of days, [b] he made Solomon his son king over Israel.

2 And [c] he gathered together all the princes of Israel, with the priests and the Levites.

3 Now [d] the Levites were numbered from the age of thirty years and upward: and their number by their polls, man by man, was [e] thirty and eight thousand.

4 Of which [f] twenty and four thousand *were* to [*] set forward the work of the house of the LORD; and six thousand *were* [g] officers and judges.

5 Moreover four thousand *were* [h] porters; and four thousand [i] praised the LORD with [j] the instruments which I made, *said David*, to praise *therewith*.

6 And David [k] divided them into [†] courses among the sons of Levi, *namely*, [l] Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

7 ¶ Of the [m] Gershonites *were* [n] Laadan and Shimei.

8 The sons of Laadan; the chief *was* [o] Jehiel, and Zetham, and [p] Joel, three.

9 The sons of Shimei; Shelomith, and Haziel, and Haran, three. These *were* the chief of the fathers of Laadan.

10 And the sons of Shimei *were* Jahath, [q] Zina, and Jeush, and Beriah. These four *were* the sons of Shimei.

11 And Jahath was the chief, and [r] Zizah the second: but Jeush and Beriah [‡] had not many sons; therefore they were in one reckoning, according to *their* father's house.

12 ¶ The [s] sons of Kohath; Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, four.

13 The [t] sons of Amram; Aaron and Moses: and Aaron was [u] separated, that he should [x] sanctify the most holy things, he and his sons for ever, [y] to burn incense before the LORD, to minister unto him, and [z] to bless in his name for ever.

14 Now *concerning* Moses [a] the man of God, [b] his sons were named of the tribe of Levi.

15 The sons of Moses *were* [c] Gershom and Eliezer.

16 Of the sons of Gershom, [d] Shebuel *was* the chief.

17 And the sons of Eliezer *were*, Rehabiah [§] the chief. And Eliezer had none other sons; but the sons of Rehabiah [‖] were very many.

18 Of the sons of Izhar, [*] Shelomith the chief.

19 Of the sons of [f] Hebron; Jeriah the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth.

20 Of the sons of Uzziel; Micah the first, and Jesiah the second.

21 ¶ The sons of [g] Merari; [h] Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli; Eleazar and Kish.

22 And Eleazar died, and [i] had no sons, but daughters: and their [¶] brethren the sons of Kish [k] took them.

23 The sons of Mushi; Mahli, and Eder, and [l] Jeremoth, three.

The more God has done for us, the more we should study to do for Him.

2. He presses that upon them, which should make them zealous in it, *v.* 19. Let but the heart be sincerely engaged for God, and the head and hand, the estate and interest, and all, will be cheerfully employed for Him.

CHAP. XXIII. David, having given charge concerning the building of the temple, in this and the following chapters, settles the method of the temple-service, and puts in order its offices. In the late irregular times, and during the wars in the beginning of his reign, we may suppose that though the Levitical ordinances were kept up, yet it was not in the order, nor with the beauty and exactness, that were desirable. Now David, being a prophet, as well as a prince, by divine warrant and direction, *set in order the things that were wanting*. And in this, he prepared for the temple, as truly as when he laid up gold and silver for it; for the place is of small account, in comparison with the work.

V. 1—23. Here we have,

I. The crown entailed, according to the divine appointment, *v.* 1. David made Solomon king, not to reign with, or under, but only after him. This he did, 1. When old and full of days. He was but 70 when he died, yet he was full of days, *satisfied with living* in this world. 2. He did it in a solemn assembly of all the princes of Israel, which made Adonijah's attempt to break in on his title, notwithstanding this public recognition and establishment of it, the more impudent, impious, and ridiculous. Note, The settling and securing of the crown in the interests of the temple, is a great blessing to a people, and a great satisfaction to those who are themselves leaving the world.

II. The Levites numbered, according to the rule in Moses' time, from 30 years old to 50, Num. 4: 2, 3. Their number, in Moses' time, by this rule, was 8580, Num. 4: 47, 48. but now it was increased above four-fold, much more in proportion than the rest of the tribes; for the serviceable men of Levi's tribe, were now 38,000; unless we suppose those above 50 reckoned, here, which was not the case there. Joab had not numbered the Levites, *ch.* 21: 6. but David now did; not in pride, but for a good purpose, and then he needed not fear wrath for it.

III. The Levites distributed to their respective posts, *v.* 4, 5. that every hand might be employed, (of all men, an idle Levite makes the worst figure,) and that every part of the work might be carefully done. Now, 1. It was for the honor of God, that so great a number of servants attended his house, and its business. Much of the state of great men consists in the greatness of their retinue. 2. It was the happiness of Israel, that they had among them such a considerable body of men, who were obliged by their office to promote and keep up religion. If the worship of God go to decay in Israel, let it not be said that it was for want of due provision for the support of it, but that they who should have done it, were careless and false.

The work assigned the Levites, was four-fold, (1.) Some, and indeed far the greater number, almost two-thirds, were to set forward the work of the house of the Lord; to attend the priests in killing, slaying, washing, cutting up, and burning the sacrifices; to have the meat-offerings and drink-offerings ready, to carry out dirt, and keep all the vessels and utensils of the temple clean, and every thing in its place, that the service might be performed both with expedition and with exactness. These served 1000 a week, and so went round in 24 courses. Perhaps, while the temple was in building, some of these were employed to set forward that work, to assist the builders, at least, to quicken them, and keep good order among them, and the decorum which became temple-work. (2.) Others were officers and judges, not in the affairs of the temple, (for there, we may suppose, the priests presided,) but in the country; they were magistrates, to give the laws of

a 29:28. Gen. 25:8. 35:29. 1 K. 1:1. Job 5:26.
b 28:5. 29:22—25. 1 K. 1:33—39.
c 13:1. 28:1. Josh. 23:2. 24:1. 2 Chr. 34:29,30.
d Num. 4:2,3,23,30,35,43,47.
e Num. 4:48.
f 28—32. 6:48. 9:28—32. 26:20—27.
* Or, *oversee*. Neh. 11:9,22. Acts 20:28.
g 26:29—31. Deut. 16:18. 17:8—10. 2 Chr. 19:8. Mal. 2:7.
h 9:17—27. 15:23,24. 16:38. 26:1—12. 2 Chr. 8:14. 35:15. Ezra 7:7. Neh. 7:73.
i 6:31—48. 9:33. 15:16—22. 16:41,42. 25:1—7. 2 Chr. 20:19—21. Ps. 87:7.
j 1 K. 10:12. 2 Chr. 29:25,26.—See on Am. 6:5.
k 2 Chr. 8:14. 29:25. 31:2. 35:10. Ezra 6:18.
† Heb. *divisions*. 24:1. 26:1.
l 6:1,16. *Gershom*. Ex. 6:16—24. Num. 26:57,58.
m 6:17—20. 15:7. 26:21.
n Ex. 6:17. *Libni. Shimi*.
o 15:18,20,21.
p 6:33,34. 15:7,11,17.
q 11. *Zizah*.
r 10. *Zina*.
‡ Heb. *did not multiply sons*.
s See on 6:2.—Ex. 6:18. Num. 3:27. 26:58.
t See on 6:3.—Ex. 6:20. Num. 3:27. 26:59.
u Ex. 28:1. Num. 18:1. Ps. 99:6. 106: 16. Acts 13:2. Rom. 1:1. Gal. 1:15. Heb. 5:4.
x Ex. 29:33—37,44. 40:9—15. Lev. 10:10,17,18. 16:11—19,32,33. 17:2—6. Num. 18:3—8.
y Ex. 30:6—10,34—38. Lev. 10:1,2. 16:12,13. Num. 16:16—18,35—40,46, 47. 2 Chr. 26:18—21. Luke 1:9. Rev. 8:3.
z Lev. 9:22,23. Num. 6:23—27. Deut. 21:5.
a See on Deut. 33:1. Ps. 90: *title*.
b 26:23—25.
c Ex. 2:22. 4:20. 18:3,4.
d 25:20. *Shubael*.
§ Or, *the first*. 26:25.
‖ Heb. *were highly multiplied*.
e 24:22. *Shelomith*. 26:26.
f 12. 15:9. 24:23.
g 6.—See on 6:29,30.—24:26—30.
h Ex. 6:19. *Mahali*.
i 24:28.
¶ Or, *kinsmen*.
k Num. 36:6—8.
l 24:30. *Jerimoth*.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII. V. 2—6. We may suppose that, towards the close of David's reign, the occasional sacrifices were far more numerous than they had been; and it was of importance to make every thing ready for conducting the service, with proportionable splendor and solemnity, as soon as the temple was finished. It does not appear, that such as were above fifty years old (3) were omitted. (24—28. *Num.* 4:3. 8:24—26.) The priests, who were very numerous, were not included in the sum total here mentioned; so that this tribe [the Levites] had increased in greater proportion than the others.—(*M. R.*—*Note*, 2 K. 11:5—9.) Doubtless it was also intended, that the Levites should be instructers of the people, in their several districts, when not employed at the sanctuary. (*Num.* 35:2—8. 2 *Chr.* 30:21, 22.)

SCOTT.

Verse 14.

As the sons of Moses were excluded from the priesthood, evidently with Moses' most cordial and disinterested concurrence, and, as it appears from the history, by their own also; no other person, not of Aaron's race, could on any account reasonably think of intruding into that sacred office. (6:48.)

ID.

24 ¶ These *were* [m] the sons of Levi [n] after the house of their fathers: *even* the chief of their fathers, as they were counted by number of names [o] by their polls, that did the work for the service of the house of the LORD, from the age of [p] twenty years and upward.

25 For David said, [q] The LORD God of Israel hath given rest unto his people, [r] that they may dwell in Jerusalem for ever;

26 And also unto the Levites: they shall no *more* [s] carry the tabernacle, nor any vessels of it for the service thereof.

27 For [t] by the last words of David, the Levites *were* † numbered from twenty years old and above:

28 Because their ‡ office *was* to wait on the sons of Aaron [u] for the service of the house of the LORD, in the courts, and [v] in the chambers, and in the [x] purifying of all holy things, and the work of the service of the house of God;

29 Both for [y] the shewbread, and for [z] the fine flour for meat-offering, and for the [a] unleavened cakes, and for *that which is baked in* the §pan, and for that which is fried, and for all manner of [b] measure and size;

30 And to [c] stand [d] every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at even;

God in charge, to resolve difficulties, and to determine controversies. Of these there were 6000 in the several parts of the kingdom, that assisted the princes and elders of every tribe, in the administration of justice. (3.) Others were porters, to guard all the avenues of the house of God, to examine them that desired entrance, and to resist those that would force an entrance. These were the life-guards of the temple, and, probably, armed accordingly. (4.) Others were singers, and players on instruments, whose business it was to keep up that part of the service; this was a new-erected office.

IV. The Levites mustered, and disposed of into their respective families and kindreds, that an account of them might the better be kept, and those that neglected their duty, might the more easily be discovered, by calling over the roll. When those of the same family were employed together, it would engage them to love and assist one another. When Christ sent forth his disciples two and two, he put together those that were brethren.

That which is most observable in the account of the families of the Levites, is, that the posterity of Moses (that great man) stood on the level with common Levites, while the posterity of Aaron were advanced to the priest's office, *v.* 13. It is said indeed of the grandson of Moses, Rehabiah, that *his sons were highly multiplied*, *v.* 17. margin. When God proposed, if he would let fall his intercession for Israel, He would make of him a great nation, he generously refused it; in recompense for which, his family is here greatly increased, and makes up in number what it wants in figure, in the tribe of Levi. Now, 1. The levelling of Moses' family with the rest, is an evidence of his self-denial: he was no self-seeking man, as appears from his leaving to his children no marks of distinction. 2. The elevation of Aaron's family above the rest, was a recompense for his self-denial in submitting to Moses though his junior, in compliance with the will of God. Those that are content to stoop, are in the fairest way to rise. Before honor is humility.

V. 24—32. Here is,

I. An alteration made in the computation of the effective men of the Levites. In Moses' time, they were not enlisted, or taken into service, till 30 years old, nor admitted as probationers till 25, (Num. 8: 24.) but David, by direction from God, ordered, they should be numbered *for the service of the house of the Lord*, from 20 and upward, *v.* 24. This he confirmed by his last words, *v.* 27. and expressly appointed for ever after; yet not he, but the Lord. This discipline would prevent idleness and dissipation in the young Levites, and promote their reputation, and usefulness. Those that will be eminent, must learn to take care, and take pains, betimes. When the Levites had to carry the tabernacle and its furniture, God would not call any to it till they were come to their full strength; but now there was no more occasion to carry these, the service was much easier, so they might enter on it at 20 years old. Now also Israel were multiplied, and the resort to Jerusalem would be more, when the temple was built, than had ever been to Shiloh, or Nob, or Gibeon; therefore there should be more hands employed in the temple-service, that every Israelite who brought an offering, might find a Levite ready to assist him. When the harvest is plenteous, why should the laborers be few?

II. A further account of the Levites' work. What the priests' work was, we were told, *v.* 13. That the Levites were not to meddle with, yet they had work enough, and good work, as appointed, *v.* 4, 5. 1. Those of them that were to *set forward the work of the house of God*, *v.* 4. were therein to *wait on the sons of Aaron*, *v.* 28. were to do the drudgery, keep the courts and chambers of the house of God clean, set things in their places, and have them ready for use. They were to prepare

31 And to offer all burnt-sacrifices unto the LORD [e] in the sabbaths, in the new-moons, and on the [f] set feasts, by number, according to the order commanded unto them continually before the LORD:

32 And that they should [g] keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the holy *place*, and [h] the charge of the sons of Aaron their brethren, in the service of the house of the LORD.

m Num. 10:17,21.
n Num. 1:4. 2:32. 3:15,20. 4:34—49.
o Num. 1:2,18,22. 3:47.
p 3,27. Num. 1:3. 4:3. 8:24. Ezra 3:8.
q See on 22:18.—2 Sam. 7:1 11.
r Or, *and he dwelleth in Jerusalem*, &c. 1 K. 8:13,27. Ps. 9:11. 68:18. 78. 132:13,14. 135:21. Is. 8:18. Joel 3:21. Zech. 8:3. 2 Cor. 6:16. Col. 2:9.
s Num. 4:5,49. 7:9.
t 2 Sam. 23:1. Ps. 72:20.
† Heb. *numbers*.
‡ Heb. *station* was *at the hand of*. 18: 17. *marg*. Neh. 11:24.
t 4. 28:13. Num. 3:6—9. 8:11—22, 26. 18:2—6.
u 9:26. 1 K. 6:5. 2 Chr. 31:11. Ezra 8:29. Neh. 13:4,5,9. Jer. 35:4. Ez. 41:6—11,26. 42:3—13.
x 9:28,29. 2 Chr. 29:5,18,19. 35:3—6, 11—14.
y 9:31,32. Ex. 25:30. Lev. 24:5—9. 1 K. 7:48. 2 Chr. 13:11. 29:18. Neh. 10:33. Matt. 12:4. Heb. 9:2.
z 9:29. Lev. 6:20—23.
a See on Lev. 2:4—7. 7:9.
§ Or, *flat plate*.
b Lev. 19:35,36. Num. 3:50.
c 6:31—33. 9:33. 16:37—42. 25:1—7. 2 Chr. 29:25—28. 31:2. Ezra 3:10, 11. Ps. 135:1—3,19,20. 137:2—4. Rev. 5:8—14. 14:3.
d Ex. 29:39—42. Ps. 92:1—3. 134:1,2.
e Lev. 23:24,39. Num. 10:10. Ps. 81: 1—4. Is. 1:13,14.
f Lev. 23: Num. 28: 29:
g 9:27. Num. 1:53. 1 K. 8:4.
h Num. 3:6—9,38.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We should be thankful, in declining years, to be eclipsed by men of real integrity, piety, and useful endowments, who are coming forward on the stage of action: yet, we should still endeavor to do all we can to promote the common cause of religion; and sometimes the sagacity and experience of old age, when incapable of much bodily exertion, may suggest and effect more real good, than the vigor and activity of youth.—The increase of ministers is of great importance, provided they be men of God, zealous for his glory, and earnestly seeking the salvation of souls. In this case they will desire employment, and in one way or other will be usefully active.—Every method should be used to prevent the irregularity, indolence, and worldly lusts, of this order of men, whose example, influence, and conversation are more useful, or more pernicious, than those of any other; and who are commonly either better or worse employed, than the other orders in society.—Though it is generally inexpedient, that the more arduous part of the sacred ministry should be performed by very young men; yet those intended for this service, ought by no means to waste their youth, but to employ their time in preparatory and initiatory studies and exercises.—A *new heart*, *a spiritual mind*, which delights greatly in God's commandments, is the first and most essential qualification for the ministry; as indeed it forms the great distinction between the true Christian, and all other men in the world. To the spiritual man every successive service will yield renewed satisfaction; and he will be unwearied, and always abounding and delighting in the work of the Lord; being never so happy, as when employed for such a good Master, in so pleasant a service. With him the work itself, and the success of his labors, are the principal objects: the emolument or maintenance (though he has a right to it, and perhaps cannot live without it,) is a very subordinate consideration: nor will he much regard whether he be called to take the lead, or whether he keep the charge of others who are placed over him, provided they do not bind his hands, or impede his usefulness. (1 *Tim.* 3: 1—7. 1 *Pet.* 5: 1—4.) These are indeed 'men of God:' may He supply his church with numbers of them; in the place of those hirelings, who have in all ages swarmed in the professing church, to the scandal of religion and the ruin of their own souls! SCOTT.

Verse 29.

Honesty is nearly connected with piety; and therefore the Levites, being sufficiently numerous, were employed to superintend the [weights and measures] as well as the [temple-service.] (*Deut.* 25:13—16. *Prov.* 11:1. 16:11. 20:10, 23. *Am.* 8:4—10. *Mic.* 6:10—15.) They probably kept standard-weights and measures at the temple, by which all those allowed in traffic, were tried and approved: and from this 'the shekel of the sanctuary,' took that name. (*Note*, [Ex. 37:1, 6, 10, 25.] *Ez.* 45: 10—12.) SCOTT.

Verses 30—32.

The Levites assisted the priests, in offering the sacrifices; though some parts of that service were performed by the priests alone. (*Lev.* 1:5—9. *Num.* 8:19—26. 18:2—6.) ID.

CHAP. XXIV.

The priests are divided by lot into twenty-four courses, 1—19. The rest of the Kohathites, and the Merarites, are divided in like manner, 20—31.

NOW *these are* [a] the divisions of the sons of Aaron. [b] The sons of Aaron; Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

2 But [c] Nadab and Abihu [d] died before their father, and had no children: therefore [e] Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office.

3 And David distributed them, both [f] Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and [g] Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, according to their offices in their service.

4 And there were more [h] chief men found of [i] the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar: and *thus* were they divided. Among the sons of Eleazar *there were* sixteen chief men of the house of *their* fathers, and eight among the sons of Ithamar [k] according to the house of their fathers.

5 Thus were [l] they divided by lot, one sort with another; for [m] the governors of the sanctuary, and governors *of the house* of God, were of the sons of Eleazar, and of the sons of Ithamar.

6 And Shemaiah the son of Nethaneel [n] the scribe, *one* of the Levites, wrote them before the king, and the princes, and Zadok the priest, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and *before* the chief of the fathers of the priests and Levites: one * principal household being taken for Eleazar, and *one* taken for Ithamar.

7 Now the first lot came forth to [o] Jehoiarib, the second [p] to Jedaiah,

8 The third to [q] Harim, the fourth to Seorim,

9 The fifth to Malchijah, the sixth to [r] Mijamin,

10 The seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to [s] Abijah,

11 The ninth to [t] Jeshuah, the tenth to Shecaniah,

12 The eleventh to [u] Eliashib, the twelth to Jakim,

13 The thirteenth to Huppah, the fourteenth to Jeshebeab,

14 The fifteenth to Bilgah; the sixteenth to [x] Immer,

15 The seventeenth to Hezir, the eighteenth to Aphses.

16 The nineteenth to Pethahiah, the twentieth to Jehezekel,

17 The one and twentieth to Jachin, the two and twentieth to Gamul,

18 The three and twentieth to Delaiah, the four and twentieth to Maaziah.

19 These *were* [y] the orderings of them in their service, to come into the house of the LORD, according to their manner, [z] under Aaron their father, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him.

20 ¶ And the rest of the sons of Levi *were these:* Of the sons of [a] Amram; [b] Shubael: of the sons of Shubael; Jehdeiah.

21 Concerning [c] Rehabiah: of the sons of Rehabiah, the first *was* [d] Isshiah.

22 Of the [e] Izharites; [f] Shelomoth: of the sons of Shelomoth; Jahath.

23 And the sons *of Hebron;* [g] Jeriah *the first,* Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, Jekameam the fourth.

24 *Of* the sons of Uzziel, [h] Michah: of the sons of Michah; Shamir.

25 The brother of Michah *was* [i] Isshiah: of the sons of Isshiah; [k] Zechariah.

26 ¶ The [l] sons of Merari *were* Mahli and Mushi: the sons of Jaaziah; Beno.

CHAP. XXIV. This ch. gives us a more particular account of the distribution of the priests and Levites into their respective classes, for the more regular discharge of their offices, according to their families.

V. 1—19. The particular account of these establishments is of little use to us now; but when Ezra published it, it was of great use to direct their church affairs, after their return from captivity, into the old channel again. The title of this record we have, *v.* 1. not divisions of variance, but of distribution, in order to the dividing of their work among themselves; it was a division God made for Himself.

1. It was made for the more regular discharge of their office. God was, and still is, the God of order, not of confusion; particularly in the things of his worship. Number without order is but a clog, and an occasion of tumult; but when every one has, and knows, and keeps, his place and work, the more the better. In the mystical body, every member has its use, for the good of the whole, Rom. 12: 4, 5. 1 Cor. 12: 12.

2. It was made by lot, that it might be of the Lord, and so, all quarrels and contentions be prevented, no man charged with partiality, nor any say they were wronged. As God is the God of order, so He is the God of peace. Solomon says the lot *causeth contention to cease.*

3. The lot was cast publicly, and with great solemnity, in the presence of the king, princes, and priests, that there might be no room for any fraudulent practices, or the suspicion of them. The lot is an appeal to God, and ought to be managed with corresponding reverence and sincerity. Matthias was chosen to the apostleship by lot, with prayer, Acts 1: 24, 26. and I know not but it might be still used in faith, in parallel cases, as an instituted ordinance. We have here the name of the public notary employed in writing the names, and drawing the lots, *v.* 6. *Shemaiah, one of the Levites.*

4. Those priests were chosen to preside in the affairs of the sanctuary, *v.* 5. in their several courses and turns. What was to be determined by the lot, was only the precedency, who should serve first, and who next, that every one might know his course, and attend in it. Of the 24 chief men of the priests, 16 were of the house of Eleazar, and 8 of Ithamar; for the house of Ithamar might well be supposed to have dwindled since the sentence passed on the family of Eli, who was of that house. The method of drawing the lots, is intimated, *v.* 6. one chief household being taken for Eleazar, and one for Ithamar. The 16 chief names of Eleazar, were put in one urn, the 8 for Ithamar,

a 23:6. *Marg.*
b 6:3. Ex. 6:23. 28:1. Lev. 10:1—6. Num. 3:2. 26:60.
c Ex. 24:1,9.
d Lev. 10:2. Num. 3:4. 26:61.
e Ex. 28:2. Lev. 10:12. Num. 16:39, 40. 18:7.
f 6,31. 6:4—8,50—53. 12:27,28. 15: 11. 16:39. 2 Sam. 20:25. 1 K. 2:35.
g 1 Sam. 21:1. 22:9. 2 Sam. 8:17.
h 15:6—12,16.
i Num. 25:11—13. 1 Sam. 2:30—38.
k See on 23:24.
l Josh. 18:10. Prov. 16:33. Acts 1:26.
m 9:11. 2 Chr. 35:8. Neh. 11:11. Matt. 26:3. 27:1. Acts 4:1,6. 5:24.
n 1 K. 4:3. 2 Chr. 34:13. Ezra 7:6. Neh. 8:1. Matt. 8:19. 13:52. 23:1,2.
* Heb. *house of the father.* 4:23,24.
o 9:10. Neh. 12:19. *Joiarib.*
p Ezra 2:36. Neh. 7:39. 11:10.
q Ezra 2:39. 10:21. Neh. 7:35. 12:15.
r Neh. 12:17. *Miniamin.*
s Neh. 12:4,17. Luke 1:5. *Abia.*
t Ezra 2:36. Neh. 7:39. 12:10.
u Neh. 12:10.
x Ezra 2:37. 10:20. Neh. 7:40.
y 9:25. 2 Chr. 23:4,8. 1 Cor. 14:40.
z See on 1.—Heb. 7:11.
a 6:18. 23:12—14.
b 23:16. 26:24. *Shebuel.*
c 23:17.
d 26:25. *Jeshaiah.*
e 23:18. Ex. 6:21. Num. 3:19,27. *Izeharites.*
f 23:18. 26:26. *Shelomith.*
g 23:19. 26:31. *Jerijah.*
h 23:20. *Micah.*
i 23:20. *Jesiah.*
k 15:18,20.
l 6:19. 23:21. Ex. 6:19. Num. 3:20.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV. V. 1—4. (*M. R.—Notes, Lev.* 10:1—5. *Num.* 18:7.) SCOTT.

Verse 5.

Governors, &c.] Or, principal ministers in holy things, and rulers in behalf of God, or superior magistrates. (*M. R.* m.) ID.

Verse 7.

It was thought, by the Jews in after ages, a great honor to be descended from Jehoiarib. The Maccabees were descended from him; (1 *Mac.* 2:1—4.) and Josephus thought himself noble, because he sprang from the first of these 24 courses. SCOTT.

27 The sons of Merari by Jaaziah; Beno, and Shoham, and Zaccur, and Ibri.

28 Of Mahli *came* Eleazar, [m] who had no sons.

29 Concerning Kish: the son of Kish *was* Jerahmeel.

30 The sons also of [n] Mushi; Mahli, and Eder, and Jerimoth. These *were* the sons of the Levites after the house of their fathers.

31 These likewise cast [o] lots over against their brethren the sons of Aaron in the presence of David the king, and Zadok, and Ahimelech, and the chief of the fathers of the priests and Levites, even [p] the principal fathers over against their younger brethren.

CHAP. XXV.

The names and offices of the principal singers and musicians. 1—7. They are divided by lot into twenty-four courses, 8—31.

MOREOVER David and [a] the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of [b] Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should [c] prophesy with [d] harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals: and the number of the workmen according to their service was:

2 Of the sons of [e] Asaph; Zaccur, and Joseph, and Nethaniah, and [f] Asarelah, the sons of Asaph [g] under the hands of Asaph, which prophesied * according to the order of the king.

3 Of [h] Jeduthun: the sons of Jeduthun; [i] Gedaliah, and [j] Zeri, and [k] Jeshaiah, Hashabiah, and [l] Mattithiah, † six, under the hands of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied with a harp, [m] to give thanks and to praise the LORD.

4 Of [n] Heman: the sons of Heman; [o] Bukkiah, [p] Mattaniah, [q] Uzziel, [r] Shebuel, and [s] Jerimoth, [t] Hananiah, [u] Hanani, [x] Eliathah, [y] Giddalti, and [z] Romamti-ezer, [a] Joshbekashah, [b] Mallothi, [c] Hothir, *and* Mahazioth.

5 All these *were* the sons of Heman [d] the king's seer in the ‡ words of God, to lift up the horn. And [e] God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters.

6 All these *were* [f] under the hands of their father [g] for song *in* the house of the LORD, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God,

m 23:22.
n 6:47. 23:23.
o 5,6. Num. 26:56.
p 25:8. 26:13.
a 12:28. 23:2. 24:5,6. 2 Chr. 23:1,9.
b See on 6:33,39,44. 15:16—19.
c 3. 1 Sam. 10:5. 2 K. 3:15. 1 Cor. 14:24—26.
d 15:16—21. 16:4,5,42. 23:5—7. 2 Chr. 23:13. 29:25,26. 31:2. 34:12. Ezra 3:10,11. Neh. 12:24,27,43—46. Ps. 81:2. 92:1—3. 150:3—5. Rev. 15:2—4.
e 1. 6:39. 15:17. 16:5. Ps. 73:—83: *titles.*
f 14. *Jesharelah.*
g 3,6. Is. 3.6.
* Heb. *by the hands of the king.* 6. *marg.*
h 9:16. 16:41,42. 2 Chr. 29:14.
i 9.
j 11. *Izri.*
k 15.
l 21. 15:18,21.
† With Shimei, mentioned 17.
m Ps. 92:1. Jer. 33:11.
n 6:33. 15:17,19. 16:41,42. Ps. 88: *title.*
o 13.
p 13.
q 18. *Azarel.* 24:24.
r 20. 24:20. *Shubael,*
s 22. 24:30.
t 23.
u 25.
x 27.
y 29.
z 31.
a 24.
b 26.
c 28,30.
d 21:9. 1 Sam. 9:9.
‡ Or, *matters.*
e 28:5. Gen. 33:5. Ps. 127:3. Is. 8:18.
f 2,3.
g 1—3. 15:22. 23:5. Ps. 68:25. Eph. 5:19. Col. 3:16.

CHAP. XXV. David, having settled the courses of the Levites that were to attend the priests in their ministrations, proceeds, in this ch. to arrange those who were to be singers and musicians in the temple.

V. 1—7. Observe, 1. Singing the praises of God, is here called *prophesying*, *v.* 1—3. not that all employed in this service, were honored with the visions of God, or could foretell things to come. Heman indeed is said to be the *king's seer in the words of God*, *v.* 5. and the psalms they sang were composed by prophets, and many were prophetical; the edification of the church was intended in it, as well as the glory of God. In Samuel's time, singing the praises of God went by the name of *prophesying*, 1 Sam. 10: 5. 19: 20. and perhaps that is intended in what Paul calls *prophesying*, 1 Cor. 11: 4. 14: 24.

II. This is here called a *service*, and the persons employed in it, *workmen*, *v.* 1. Not but that it is the greatest liberty and pleasure to be praising God: what is heaven but that? But it intimates our duty to make a business of it, and stir up all within us to it; and that, in our present state of corruption and infirmity, it will not be done, as it should be done, without labor and struggle. We must take pains with our hearts to bring them, and keep them, to the work.

III. In compliance with the temper of that dispensation, a great variety of musical instruments used, *harps, psalteries, symbols*, *v.* 1, 6. and here was one that *lifted up the horn*, *v.* 5. that is, used wind-music: those who use such concerts for their own entertainment, should preserve them always free from any thing that savors of immorality or profaneness; by this consideration, time was, when they were sacred; and then *they* were justly condemned, who brought them into common use: Am. 6: 5.

IV. The glory and honor of God were principally intended in all this temple-music, whether vocal or instrumental, *v.* 3, 7, 6. This agrees with the intention of perpetuating psalmody in the gospel-church, which is, *to make melody with the heart*, in conjunction with the voice, *unto the Lord*, Eph. 5—19.

V. The order of the king is likewise noticed, *v.* 2, 6. In those matters, indeed, David acted as a prophet; but his taking care for the due and regular observance of divine institutions, both ancient and modern, is an example to all in authority, to use their power to promote religion, and enforce the laws of Christ.* Let them thus be *ministers of God, for good.*

* Force cannot sway the conscience: and one modern objection to direct penal sanctions for thus 'enforcing the laws of Christ,' (derived from the melancholy records of ecclesiastical tyranny) is, that, when a sect gets the power of a government on its side, it becomes bigoted, domineering, persecuting, corrupt; and thus the true interests of Christ's kingdom suffer. Still, a state whose whole social fabric is founded on belief that there is a God, and that men are accountable to Him, has a right to banish or silence those who teach that there is no God, and no obligation to Him. It is the right of self-preservation. Comp. notes, " p. 36:, vol. I. and on Ex. 20: 7. 13: 49. *Ed.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Much wisdom and equity is requisite to exclude occasions of envy, jealousy, and contention, in the regulation of public affairs, where numbers are concerned: but what is done fairly and openly, and in the fear of God, is placed on the most permanent basis.—The solemn appointment and orderly attendance of ministers, is of considerable importance; but they are all under the hand of Jesus, from whom they receive their commission and instructions, as well as their qualifications; and to whom they are all accountable.—Difference of age, learning, piety, reputation, and other circumstances, gives external precedency to some ministers; but they are all brethren, and none ought to act as lords, with despotic rule, or domineer over the others. (1 *Pet.* 5: 1—4. *P. O* 1—7.) Thus, in Jesus Christ, there is neither male nor female, bond nor free; but all believers are one in Him, being children of God, fellow-heirs of eternal life, and brethren to each other. May they all on earth emulate that love, peace, and harmony, which will subsist in the heavenly world! SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXV. V. 1—6. 'The captains of the host,' (1) seem to mean the leaders, or heads, of the several courses of the priests and Levites.—Jeduthun either was the same person, as was before called Ethan; or Ethan was dead, and Jeduthun succeeded him. (15:17—19, 22.)—The word *prophesy*, in this place, seems to mean no more, than praising God by singing inspired prophetical hymns, with great earnestness and devout affections, under the influences of the Holy Spirit. As the prophets in Samuel's days used music and singing; it has been conjectured, that he first introduced them into the regular worship of Israel, and that David reduced to order what he found already established. (9:22. 1 *Sam.* 10:5, 6.)—These persons are said to have 'prophesied according to the order of the king;' because he instituted the order of their services.—Only five sons of Jeduthun are here named; but Shimei, afterwards mentioned, is supposed to have been the sixth. (17) Perhaps, though as Jeduthun's son he was chosen to be the head of one course, he was at this time young, and not fit for present service.—Heman seems to have been a prophet, or 'seer,' in the common

* according to the king's order to [h] Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman.

7 So the number of them, with their brethren, that were instructed in the songs of the LORD, *even* all that were cunning, *was* two hundred fourscore and eight.

8 ¶ And they [i] cast lots, [j] ward against *ward*, as well the small as the great, [k] the teacher as the scholar.

9 Now the first lot came forth for Asaph to [l] Joseph: the second to Gedaliah, who with his brethren and sons *were* twelve:

10 The third to [m] Zaccur, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

11 The fourth to [n] Izri, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

12 The fifth to [o] Nethaniah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

13 The sixth to Bukkiah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

14 The seventh to [p] Jesharelah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

15 The eighth to Jeshaiah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

16 The ninth to Mattaniah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

17 The tenth to Shimei, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

18 The eleventh to [q] Azareel, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

19 The twelfth to [r] Hashabiah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

20 The thirteenth to [s] Shubael, *he* his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

21 The fourteenth to Mattithiah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

22 The fifteenth to Jeremoth, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

23 The sixteenth to Hananiah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

24 The seventeenth to Joshbekashah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

25 The eighteenth to Hanani, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

26 The nineteenth to Mallothi, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

27 The twentieth to Eliathah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

28 The one and twentieth to Hothir, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

29 The two and twentieth to Giddalti, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

30 The three and twentieth to [t] Mahazioth, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

31 The four and twentieth to Romamti-ezer, *he*, his sons, and his brethren *were* twelve.

VI. The fathers presided in this service; Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, *v.* 1. and the children were *under the hands of their father*, *v.* 2, 3, 6. This gives a good example to parents to train up their children, and indeed to all seniors to instruct their juniors, in the service of God, and particularly in praising Him, than which there is no part of our work more necessary, or more worthy to be transmitted to succeeding generations. It gives also an example to the younger *to submit themselves to the elder*, (whose experience and observation fit them for direction,) and, as far as may be, to do what they do, *under their hand*. Probably Heman, Asaph, and Jeduthun, were bred up under Samuel, and had their education in the schools of the prophets, which he had founded and presided over. Those that would be eminent, must begin early, and take time to prepare themselves. Solomon perfects what David began, so David what Samuel began. Let all, in their day, do what they can for God and his church; and when they are gone, God can raise up others, to build on their foundation, and bring forth the top stone.

VII. There were others also, beside the sons of these three great men, who are called their *brethren*, (probably, because they had been wont to join them in their private concerts,) who were *instructed in the songs of the Lord*, and were cunning or well skilled therein, *v.* 7. They were all Levites, and in number 288. When David the king was so much addicted to divine poesy and music, many others, all that had a genius for it, applied their studies and endeavors that way. Those do religion great service, that bring its exercises into reputation. Yet these were but a small number in comparison with the 4000 whom David appointed thus to *praise the Lord*, *ch.* 23: 5. Probably the rest were divided into as many courses, and were to follow as these led. Or, perhaps, these were *for song in the house of the Lord*, *v.* 6. and the rest for the country congregations; though the sacrifices instituted by the hand of Moses, might be offered but at one place, the psalms penned by David, might be sung every where, 1 Tim. 2: 8.

V. 8—31. 24 persons are named in the beginning of this ch. as sons of those three great men, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun. Ethan was the third, *ch.* 6: 44. but, probably, dead before the establishment was perfected, and Jeduthun came in his room. Of these three, Providence so ordered it that Asaph had 4 sons, Jeduthun 6, and Heman 14, in all 24, who were named, *v.* 2—4. who were all qualified for the service, and called to it. The order of their service was determined by lot, to prevent strife for precedency, a sin which most easily besets many otherwise good people.

1. The lot was thrown impartially. They were placed in 24 companies, 12 in a company, in two rows, 12 companies in a row; so they cast lots, *ward against ward*, putting them all on a level; they did not go according to their age, or their standing, or the degrees they had taken in the music-schools; but it was referred to God, *v.* 8. Small and great, teachers and scholars, stand alike before God, who goes not according to our rules of distinction and precedency. See Matt. 20: 23.

2. God determined it as He pleased. Let us compare them with the preceding catalogue, and we shall find that, 1. Joseph was the 2nd son of Asaph. 2. Gedaliah, the eldest son of Jeduthun. 3. Zaccur, the eldest of Asaph. 4. Izri, the 2nd of Jeduthun. 5. Nethaniah, the 3d of Asaph. 6. Bukkiah, the eldest of Heman. 7. Jesharelah, the youngest of Asaph. 8. Jeshaiah, the 3d of Jeduthun. 9. Mattaniah, the 2nd of Heman. 10. Shimei, the youngest of Jeduthun. 11. Azareel, the 3d of Heman. 12. Hashabiah, the 4th of Jeduthun. 13. Shubael, the 4th of Heman. 14. Mattithiah, the 5th of Jeduthun. 15. Jerimoth, the 5th of Heman. 16. Hananiah, the 6th. 17. Joshbekashah, the 11th. 18. Hanani, the 7th. 19. Mallothi, the 12th. 20. Eliathah, the 8th. 21. Hothir, the 13th. 22. Giddalti, the 9th. 23. Mahazioth, the 14th. And, *lastly*, Romamti-ezer, the 10th.

3. Each of these had in his chorus the number of 12, called, *their sons and their brethren;* because they observed them as sons, and concurred with them as brethren. Probably, twelve, some for the voice, and others for the instrument, made up the concert. Let us learn, with one mind, and one

* Heb. *by the hands of the king.* 2. *marg.*
h See on 1—4.
i See on 24:5. Lev. 16:8. 1 Sam. 14: 41,42. Prov. 16:33. Acts 1:26.
j 24:31. 26:13,16. Neh. 12:24.
k 15:22. 2 Chr. 23:13.
l 2.
m 3.
n 3. *Zeri.*
o 2.
p 2. *Asarelah.*
q 4. *Uzziel.*
r 3.
s 4. *Shebuel.*
t 4.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord is in Himself exalted far above all blessing and praise, and our obligations to Him are infinite: we ought therefore to give Him thanks, and to praise Him, with our noblest powers; and to render every kind and degree of capacity, ingenuity, or skill, which we possess, subservient to that highest end: but especially our best and most lively affections are his due.—Human prudence must regulate certain circumstances relative to religious worship; and every society, larger or smaller, should order such matters *for themselves*, to the best of their judgment: but unless the Spirit of God put life and fervor into our devotions, they will, however appointed, be a lifeless, worthless form.—We should all be ready to give or to receive instructions, without self-preference, or accounting ourselves degraded: for in God's sight the teachable scholar is nearly as honorable as the able instructer.—It is pleasant to receive all our temporal and domestic comforts, as given unto us of God, and then to devote them all to his service: and it is a singular mercy to have a large family, all employed and accepted by Him. SCOTT.

acceptation, and was much consulted by David: 'he lifted up the horn,' or presided [note 15:21, 22.] over those who used wind-instruments of music. *(M. R.)* SCOTT.

Verse 7.

These 288, being 24 courses of 12 each, were more skilful than the other Levites; and being placed under the 24 sons of the chief singers, they had the 4000 before mentioned divided among them, to officiate by courses, according to their instructions. (23:5.) 'Twelve of those singers, with their governor, came and waited every week; at the end of which they were succeeded by other 12, till the course was finished.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

CHAP. XXVI.

The divisions of the porters, 1—12. The gates assigned to them by lot, 13—19. The Levites who had the charge of the treasures, 20—28. Those who were officers and judges, 29—32.

CONCERNING [a] the divisions of [a] the porters: Of the [b] Korhites *was* [c] Meshelemiah the son of Kore, of the sons of [d] Asaph.

2 And the sons of Meshelemiah *were*, Zechariah the first-born, Jediael the second, Zebadiah the third, Jathniel the fourth,

3 Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, Elioenai the seventh.

4 Moreover the sons of [e] Obed-Edom *were*, Shemaiah, the first-born, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, and Sacar the fourth, and Nethaneel the fifth,

5 Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh, Peulthai the eighth: for [f] God blessed * him.

6 Also unto Shemaiah his son were sons born, that ruled throughout the house of their father: for they *were* [g] mighty men of valor.

7 The sons of Shemaiah; Othni, and Rephael, and Obed, Elzabad, whose brethren *were* strong men, Elihu and Semachiah.

8 All these of the sons of Obed-edom: they and their sons and their brethren, able men for strength for the service, *were* threescore and two of Obed-edom.

9 And [h] Meshelemiah had sons and brethren, strong men, eighteen.

10 Also [i] Hosah, of the children of Merari, had sons: Simri the chief, (for *though* he was not the first-born, yet [k] his father made him the chief;)

11 Hilkiah the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth: all the sons and brethren of Hosah *were* thirteen.

12 Among these *were* the divisions of the porters, *even* among the chief men, *having* [l] wards one against another, to minister in the house of the LORD.

13 ¶ And they cast lots, † as well the small as the great, according to the house of their fathers, for every gate.

14 And the lot eastward fell to [m] Shelemiah. Then for [n] Zechariah his son, a wise counsellor, they cast lots; and his lot came out northward.

15 To Obed-edom southward; and to his sons, the house of ‡ Asuppim.

16 To Shuppim and [o] Hosah *the lot came forth* westward, with the gate Shallecheth, by the [p] causeway of the going up, [q] ward against ward.

17 [r] Eastward *were* six Levites, northward four a day, southward four a day, and toward Asuppim two *and* two.

18 At Parbar westward, four at the causeway, *and* two at Parbar.

19 These *are* the divisions of the porters among the sons of [s] Kore, and among the sons of Merari.

20 ¶ And of the Levites, Ahijah *was* over the [t] treasures of the house of God, and over the treasures of the § dedicated things.

21 *As concerning* the sons of [u] Laadan; the sons of the Gershonite Laadan, chief fathers, *even* of Laadan the Gershonite, *were* [x] Jehieli.

a 9:17—27. 15:18,23,24. 2 Chr. 23:19.
b Num. 26:9—11. Ps. 44 :—49 : *titles.*
c 14. *Shelemiah.*
d 6:37. 9:19. *Ebiasaph.*
e 15:18,21,24. 16:5,38.
f 13:14.
* That is, Obed-edom.
g 8. 12:28. 2 Chr. 26:17. Neh. 11:14. 1 Tim. 6:12. 2 Tim. 2:3.
h 1,14.
i 16:38.
k See on 5:1,2.
l See on 25:8.
† Or, *as well for the small as for the great.* 24:31. 25:8.
m 1. *Meshelemiah.*
n 2.
‡ Heb. *gatherings.* 17.
o 10,11.
p 1 K. 10:5. 2 Chr. 9:4.
q 12. 25:8. Neh. 12:24.
r 9:24. 2 Chr. 8:14.
s Num. 26:11. *Korah.*
t 22. 9:26—30. 22:3,4,14—16. 28:12—19. 29:2—8. 1 K. 14:26. 15:18. Mal. 3:10.
§ Heb. *holy.* 26—28. 18:11. 1 K. 7:51. 2 Chr. 31:11,12.
u 6:17. *Libni.* 23:7.
x 23:8. 29:8. *Jehiel.*

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVI. V. 1. *M. R.—Asaph.*] Not Asaph the chief musician, who was of the family of Gershom; (6:39—43.) but another Asaph, of the sons of *Korah*, called also Abiasaph. (6:37. 9:19.) SCOTT.

Verses 6—12.

M. R.—Mighty men, &c. (6) Josephus speaks of the gates of the temple being so massy, as to require 20 persons to open or shut them: this too would find employment for the strength of the porters. The temple indeed was not yet built; but David had received from the Lord a pattern of what it was to be, and he arranged every thing with reference to it. (*Notes*, 28:11—18.)—It is supposed, that the families of the Levites succeeded to the lot of their fathers, whether as singers, porters, or whatever was the service assigned them; and this from one generation to another, without passing from one company to another. ID.

Verse 13—18.

Lot eastward, ... northward, &c.] *Roberts* describes what he supposes a similar method still in use in India, of casting lots for the parts of an inheritance: lines are drawn to the 8 points of the compass from a common centre, and the names of the parties written on a rolled leaf of the Palmirah, and, mingled together, are drawn forth by a child and placed on any point he chooses, and the field lying towards that point is then given to the person whose name was placed on that point. ED.

Verse 14.

A wise counsellor.] It seems Zechariah, being renowned for his wisdom, was preferred to be the king's counsellor. The office of porter in the temple was a place of great trust, and therefore honorable. SCOTT.

Verse 15.

'Asuppim' signifying *gatherings*, it is supposed, that the house of Asuppim was a building erected to contain the money that was collected, for the use of the sanctuary, with the vessels employed in the sacred services. ID.

22 The sons of Jehieli, Zetham, and Joel his brother, *which were* [y] over the treasures of the house of the LORD.

23 Of the [z] Amrammites, *and* the [a] Izharites, the Hebronites, *and* the Uzzielites:

24 And [b] Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, *was* ruler of the treasures.

25 And his brethren by [b] Eliezer; [c] Rehabiah his son, and Jeshaiah his son, and Joram his son, and Zichri his son, and [d] Shelomith his son:

26 Which Shelomith and his brethren *were* [e] over all the treasures of the dedicated things, which David the king, and the chief fathers, the captains over thousands and hundreds, and the captains of the host, had dedicated.

27 Out of the * spoils won in battles did they dedicate, [f] to maintain the house of the LORD.

28 And all that [g] Samuel the seer, and Saul the son of Kish, and [h] Abner the son of Ner, and [i] Joab the son of Zeruiah, had dedicated; *and* whosoever had dedicated *any thing*, *it was* under the hand of Shelomith and of his brethren.

29 ¶ Of the [k] Izharites, Chenaniah and his sons *were* for [l] the outward business over Israel, for [m] officers and judges.

30 *And* of the [n] Hebronites, Hashabiah and his brethren, men of valor, a thousand and seven hundred, *were* † officers among them of Israel on this side Jordan westward, in all the business of the LORD, and in the service of the king.

31 Among the Hebronites *was* [o] Jerijah the chief, *even* among the Hebronites, according to the generations of his fathers. In the [p] fortieth year of the reign of David they were sought for, and there were found among them mighty men of valor at [q] Jazer of Gilead.

32 And his brethren, [r] men of valor, *were* two thousand and seven

y 20: Neh. 10:38.
z 23:12. Num. 3:19,27.
a 23:15,16. 24:20. *Shubael.*
b 23:15. Ex. 18:4.
c 23:17.
d 23:18.
e 18:11. 22:14. 29:2—9. Num. 31:50—52.
* Heb. *battles and spoils.*
f 2 K. 12:14. Neh. 10:32—34.
g 1 Sam. 9:9.
h 1 Sam. 14:47—51. 17:55.
i 2 Sam. 10:9—14.
k 23. 23:12,18.
l 2 Chr. 34:13. Neh. 11:16.
m 23:4. 2 Chr. 19:8—11.
n 23:12,19.
† Heb. *over the charge.*
o 23:19. *Jeriah.*
p 29:27. 1 K. 2:11.
q Josh. 21:39. Is. 16:9.
r 6—9.

1. The Levites were employed in the administration of justice, in concurrence with the princes and elders of the several tribes, who could not be supposed to understand the law so well as the Levites, who made it their business to study it. None of those Levites who were employed in the service of the sanctuary, none of the singers or porters, were concerned in this outward business; either one was enough to engage the whole man, or it was presumption to undertake both.

2. Their charge was both *in all business of the Lord*, and *in the service of the king*, v. 30, 32. They managed the affairs of the country, as well ecclesiastical as civil, took care both of God's tithes and the king's taxes; punished offences against God and his honor, and those against the government and the public peace; guarded both against idolatry and against injustice; and took care to put the laws in execution against both: so God and the king were well served. It is happy with a kingdom, when its civil and sacred interests are thus interwoven, and jointly minded and advanced.

3. More Levites were employed as judges with the two tribes and a half on the other side Jordan, than with all the rest of the tribes; there were 2700; whereas on the west side of Jordan, there were but 1700, v. 30, 32. Either those remote tribes were not so well furnished as the rest with judges of their own; or because they, lying furthest from Jerusalem, and on the borders of the neighboring nations, were most in danger of being infected with idolatry, and most needed the help of Levites to prevent it. The frontiers must be well guarded.

4. This is said to be done (as were all the fore-

Verses 24—27.

These are the only persons among the descendants of Moses, who are mentioned, as appointed to any office of honor and distinction. (*M. R.*—18:11. 22:6—14.) SCOTT.

Verse 28.

Samuel, &c.] It had been customary from the time of Abraham, (*Gen.* 14:18—20. 28:20—22.) and probably from the beginning of the world, for persons to dedicate a portion of their gains to the service of God, as an acknowledgment that all came from Him: but it is uncertain whether Samuel, or the other persons here mentioned, had an expectation of a temple being built, for which they desired to make preparation. ID.

Verse 29.

M. R.—*Note*, 23:2—6.—*The outward business*, &c.] These Levites seem not to have performed any service within the precincts of the sanctuary: and their employment on that account may be called 'the outward business.' In general, it may be supposed, that, as well as the other Levites, they were expected to be instructers of the people in the law of God: and in particular they were made magistrates of different orders, to administer justice to the people. As the Levites were more numerous, than could be employed in the sanctuary; and as they ought to be, and had opportunities of being, better acquainted with the law than the other Israelites [and understood writing, accounts, &c.]; they were appointed to this service, along with the elders of every tribe. (2 *Chr.* 19:5—11.) From these, the scribes, lawyers, or doctors of the law, mentioned in the New Testament, seem to have arisen. As the office of the magistracy reaches only to the regulation of the *outward conduct*; whilst the ministry of the Word forms the means of regulating the mind or judgment, with the conscience and affections of the heart; the former may in this sense also be called *the outward business*. The lawyers above mentioned made the whole of religion a mere *outward* business; and they have always had abundance of disciples in this respect. (*Matt.* 23:25—28. *Luke* 11:37—41.) ID.

Verses 30—32.

Hebron was first assigned to the priests; (*Josh.* 21:11, 12.) but it was afterwards occupied by Levites, perhaps as tenants whilst the priests were but few. The Levites here mentioned, it seems, lived there, till they had acquired the name of Hebronites, and then removed over Jordan into the land of Gilead. But being sought out, they were appointed judges, and officers, for various purposes, civil and ecclesiastical, superior and inferior, on each side Jordan, in two divisions: though the larger proportion was assigned to those who lived east of that river; perhaps because, being more remote from the sanctuary and the seat of government, they needed more attention to keep them to their duty, both to God, and to the king. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Fortieth year. (31) It is generally thought that most or all of these regulations were made in the last year of David's life: but, though this be uncertain, they were certainly arranged towards the close of his reign. ID.

(32.) Dr. A. *Clarke* concludes his notes on this ch. in these words. 'Thus courts of *ecclesiastical* and *civil* judicature were established in the land; and due care taken to preserve and ensure the peace of the church, and the safety of the state; without which the public welfare would neither be secured nor promoted. Whatever affects religion in any country, must affect the state, or government of that country: *true religion alone can dispose men to civil obedience*. Therefore it is the interest of every state to protect and encourage religion. It would certainly be ruinous to true religion, to make the state dependent on the church; nor should the church be dependent on the state. Let them mutually support each other; and let the state rule by the *laws*, and the church live by the Bible.'

Consonant to the train of thought thus suggested is the closing paragraph of a 'Thanksgiving Proclamation' of the Chief Magistrate of Mass. in 1835. 'Let us cherish that fraternal regard for all men, which is inculcated and illustrated in the Gospel. Let us fear to light up the flame of discord and commotion. Let us shun every deviation from right principles, holding fast to law, order and religion; nor, in our prosperity and greatness, neglect to fear and serve the God of our fathers: but let us keep his Sabbaths, and reverence his Sanctuary, lest we also become as those nations whose light is extinct, and whose glory is in the dust.' Would that this abiding sense of national dependence, might be intimately felt; conscientiously and piously acted upon; sincerely, momently, and gratefully acknowledged, throughout the vast length and breadth of our most highly favored land, for ever! ED.

hundred [*] chief fathers, whom king David made rulers over the [t] Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, for every matter pertaining to God, [u] and [*] affairs of the king.

CHAP. XXVII.

David's twelve captains, one for each month, 1—15. The princes of the twelve tribes, 16—22. The numbering of the people was hindered, 23, 24. David's several officers and counsellors, 25—34.

NOW the children of Israel after their number, *to wit*, the chief fathers and [a] captains of thousands and hundreds, and their officers that [b] served the king in [c] any matter of the courses, which came in and went out [d] month by month throughout all the months of the year, of every course, *were* twenty and four thousand.

2 Over the first course for the first month, *was* [*] Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

3 Of the children of [f] Perez, *was* [g] the chief of all the captains of the host for the first month.

4 And over the course of the second month *was* [h] Dodai an Ahohite, and of his course *was* Mikloth also the ruler: in his course likewise *were* twenty and four thousand.

5 The third captain of the host for the third month *was* [i] Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, a † chief priest: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

6 This *is that* Benaiah, *who was* [k] mighty *among* the thirty, and above the thirty: and in his course *was* Ammizabad his son.

7 The fourth *captain* for the fourth month *was* [l] Asahel the brother of Joab, and Zebadiah his son after him: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

8 The fifth captain for the fifth month *was* [m] Shamuth the Izrahite: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

9 The sixth *captain* for the sixth month *was* [n] Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

10 The seventh *captain* for the seventh month *was* [o] Helez the [p] Pelonite, of the children of Ephraim; and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

11 The eighth *captain* for the eighth month *was* [q] Sibbecai the Hushathite, of the [r] Zarhites: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

12 The ninth *captain* for the ninth month *was* Abiezer the [s] Anetothite, of the Benjamites: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

13 The tenth *captain* for the tenth month *was* [t] Maharai the Netophathite, of the [u] Zarhites: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

14 The eleventh *captain* for the eleventh month *was* [x] Benaiah the Pirathonite, of the children of Ephraim: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

15 The twelfth *captain* for the twelfth month *was* [y] Heldai the Netophathite, of [z] Othniel: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

16 ¶ Furthermore over the tribes of Israel: the

s 15:12. 23:24. 24:31.
t 12:37.
u 2 Chr. 19:11.
* Heb. *thing.*
a 13:1. Ex. 18:25. Deut. 1:15. 1 Sam. 8:12. Mic. 5:2.
b 28:1. 2 Chr. 17:12—19. 26:11—13.
c 1 K. 5:14.
d 1 K. 4:7,27.
e 11:11. 2 Sam. 23:8. *Adino the Eznite.*
f Gen. 38:29. Num. 26:20. *Pharez.*
g Gen. 49:8—10. Num. 7:12. 10:14.
h 11:12. 2 Sam. 23:9. *Dodo.*
i 18:17. 1 K. 4:4.
† Or, *principal officer.* 1 K. 4:5.
k 11:22—25. 2 Sam. 22:20—23.
l 11:26. 2 Sam. 2:18—23. 23:24.
m 11:27. *Shammoth the Harorite.* 26. 29. 2 Sam. 23:25. *Shammah the Harodite.*
n 11:28. 2 Sam. 23:26.
o 11:27.
p 2 Sam. 23:26. *Paltite.*
q 11:29. 2 Sam. 21:18.
r Num. 26:20.
s 11:28. *Antothite.* 2 Sam. 23:27. *Anethothite.*
t 11:30. 2 Sam. 23:28.
u 11.
x 11:31. 2 Sam. 23:30.
y 11:30. *Heled.* 2 Sam. 23:29. *Heleb.*
z 4:13. Judg. 3:9.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Wisdom, courage, strength of faith, holy affections, and constancy of mind in our duty, are requisite for every station. But those, who minister in the house of the Lord, and are required, without respect of persons, to prevent the profanation of holy things, have peculiar need of these qualifications. Great integrity, firmness, and discretion, are necessary to do this according to the mind of the great Master of the family, and to prevent abuses, and prostitution of sacred ordinances to secular purposes, by ungodly men. From these sacred treasuries, 'the unsearchable riches of Christ,' all our wants are supplied: but receiving from his fulness, and being victorious over our enemies by his grace, we must give Him the glory, and endeavor to dispose of the whole of our abilities and substance according to his will; allotting a proportion to maintain the expense of his worship, as well as to provide for the poor. Many unbelievers, however, join in these external services, and we must not in any degree rest our hopes of salvation on them.—The work of the minister requires the whole man: *internal* renovation is immediately its object; and the *outward* business of external order in society properly belongs to the magistrate. These services are therefore best preserved distinct; yet particular circumstances may warrant exceptions. However, both magistrates and ministers should concur in leading people, by different means, to fear God, and honor the king, and to do justice, and show kindness to their brethren.—It is very wrong for able men to get out of the way, when their help is wanted; but they should be sought out, and set to work: and as our end approaches, we should be more earnest to render our last services to mankind. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVII. V. 1—15. (*M. R.*—11:10—47. 2 *Sam.* 23:8—39.) The word translated *priest*, and applied to Benaiah, evidently means, and should be rendered, *ruler, or officer.* (*M.*) SCOTT.

Verses 16—22.

These persons, called 'the princes of the tribes,' (28:1.) seem to have

afford, unless on extraordinary occasions, and then they might all be got together quickly. It is the wisdom of governors, and much their praise, while they provide for the public safety, to contrive how to make it effectual, and yet easy, and as little as possible burdensome, to the people.

3. Every course had a commander-in-chief over it, beside the subaltern officers that were rulers over thousands, and hundreds, and fifties; there was one general officer to each course or legion. All these 12 great commanders are mentioned among David's worthies and champions, 2 Sam. 23. and 1 Chr. 11. It is well with a kingdom, when honor thus attends merit. Benaiah is here called *a chief priest*, *v.* 5. But *cohen* signifying both a *priest* and *prince*, it might better be translated here, *a chief ruler*, or, (as in the margin) *a principal officer*. Dodai had Mikloth, (*v.* 4.) either for his substitute, when he was absent or infirm, or for his successor when he was dead. Benaiah had his son under him, *v.* 6. Asahel had his son after him, *v.* 7. and by that, it seems that this plan of the militia was laid in the beginning of David's reign; for Asahel was killed by Abner, while David reigned in Hebron. When his wars were over, he revived this method, and left the military affairs in this posture, for the peaceable reign of his son Solomon. When we think ourselves most safe, yet, while we are here in the body, we must keep in a readiness for spiritual conflicts.

V. 16—34. We have here an account,

I. Of the princes of the tribes: something of the ancient order instituted by Moses in the wilderness, was still kept up, that every tribe should have its prince or chief. Probably it was kept up all along, either by election or by succession,

ruler of the Reubenites *was* Eliezer the son of Zichri: of the Simeonites, Shephatiah the son of Maachah:

17 Of the Levites, Hashabiah the son of Kemuel: [b] of the Aaronites, Zadok:

18 Of Judah, [c] Elihu, *one* of the brethren of David: of Issachar, Omri the son of Michael:

19 Of Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah: of Naphtali, Jerimoth the son of Azriel:

20 Of the children of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Azaziah: of the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joel the son of Pedaiah:

21 Of the half *tribe* of Manasseh in Gilead, [d] Iddo the son of Zechariah: of Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of [e] Abner:

22 Of Dan, Azareel the son of Jeroham. These *were* the princes of the tribes of Israel.

23 ¶ But David took not the number of them [f] from twenty years old and under: because the LORD had said [g] he would increase Israel like to the stars of the heavens.

24 Joab the son of Zeruiah [h] began to number, but he finished not, because there fell wrath for it against Israel; neither *was the number put in the account of the chronicles of king David.

25 And over [i] the king's treasures *was* Azmaveth the son of Adiel: and over [k] the store-houses in the fields, in the cities, and in the villages, and in the castles, *was* Jehonathan the son of Uzziah:

26 And over them that did the work of the field for tillage of the ground *was* Ezri the son of Chelub:

27 And over the vineyards *was* Shimei the Ramathite; over † the increase of the vineyards for the wine-cellars *was* Zabdi the Shiphmite:

28 And [l] over the olive-trees and the sycamore-trees that *were* in the low plains, *was* Baalhanan the Gederite: and over the cellars of oil *was* Joash:

29 And over the herds that fed in [m] Sharon *was* Shitrai the Sharonite: and over the herds *that were* in the valleys *was* Shaphat the son of Adlai:

30 Over [n] the camels also *was* Obil [o] the Ishmaelite: and over the asses *was* Jehdeiah the Meronothite:

31 And over the flocks *was* Jaziz the Hagarite. All these *were* the rulers of the substance which *was* king David's.

32 Also Jonathan David's [p] uncle was a counsellor, a wise man, and a ‡ scribe: and Jehiel the § son of Hachmoni *was* with the king's sons:

33 And [q] Ahithophel *was* the king's counsellor: and [r] Hushai the Archite *was* the king's [s] companion:

34 And after Ahithophel *was* Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, and Abiathar: and [t] the general of the king's army *was* Joab.

a 26:30.
b 12:27,28. 24:4,31.
c 1 Sam. 16:6. 17:13,29. *Eliab.*
d 1 K. 4:14.
e 1 Sam. 14:50,51. 2 Sam. 3:27,37.
f Num. 1:18.
g Gen. 15:5. Heb. 11:12.
h 21:11—17. 2 Sam. 24:1—15.
* Heb. *ascended the number.*
i 2 K. 18:15. 2 Chr. 16:2.
k Gen. 41:48. Ex. 1:11. 2 Chr. 26:10. Jer. 41:8.
† Heb. *that which was of the vineyards.*
l 1 K. 4:7.
m 5:16. Is. 65:10.
n Job 1:3.
o Gen. 47:6.
p 2 Sam. 13:3. 21:21. *Nephew.*
‡ Or, *secretary.*
§ Or, *Hachmonite.* 11:11.
q 2 Sam. 15:12. 16:23. 17:23.
r 2 Sam. 15:32,37. 16:16.
s 2 Sam. 16:17. Ps. 55:13. Zech. 13:7.
t 11:6.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The prudent management of secular affairs is conducive to the interests of godliness; provided it be kept in its proper place, and the favor and glory of God have a decided preference. In the kingdoms of this world, habitual readiness for war forms a better security of peace, than any treaties or alliances: in like manner, nothing so much encourages Satan's assaults, as our unwatchfulness; and while we stand armed with 'the whole armor of God,' in the exercise of faith, and preparation of heart for the conflict, we shall certainly be safe, and probably enjoy inward peace.—Usefulness is the proper standard of valuableness: and he who estimates by this rule, will give the Word of God, the salvation of Christ, and true religion, a decided preference to all other things, because infinitely more useful.—Well chosen counsellors prove the wisdom of princes: yet, some will be found wise men and scribes, and eminent for worldly policy and plausibility, who are in fact very [selfish and] wicked characters. But the faithful, the upright, and godly, should be our friends and chosen companions; and no king will be well advised in all things, or in those of the greatest importance, who does not make the testimonies of God 'his delight and his counsellors;' however he may be surrounded by powerful family-connections, faithful friends, and able politicians. SCOTT.

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been *civil* rulers over their sever l tribes, not entirely unlike the lord lieutenants of counties in England.—Gad and Asher are not mentioned, probably because they were joined to the neighboring tribes. Elihu, or Eliab, was David's elder brother. The Levites had a prince, or ruler, as the other tribes had; and the family of Aaron, as distinguished from the rest, had Zadok, for their ruler, or prince. The son of Abner was, probably, advanced on his father's death, as an expression of David's unfeigned concern for that event. (*2 Sam.* 3:26—39.)
SCOTT.

Verses 25—31.

(*M. R.*) This account mentions only such persons, as filled up needful or useful stations, not any superfluous officers, retained merely to make a show of magnificence. Luxury, ambition, and venality have multiplied these attendants on courts; and selfish opposers will so impede the most unexceptionable measures of government, in limited monarchies, that, without a number of retainers whose interest it is to support the crown, the public business must move heavily, if it could at all proceed. Yet ancient simplicity was preferable to modern refinement; and the useful productions of the earth, to all the devices of luxury and indulgence. (*1 K.* 4:2—19. *2 Chr.* 26:10.)—These officers are called, 'the stewards over all the substance and possessions of the king.' (28:1.) SCOTT.

'Here we see David's *personal property* consisted, [and such enumerations are common on Egyptian monuments of his and of previous ages] in:—1. Treasures, gold, silver, &c. 2. Goods and grain in castles, cities, villages, and in the fields. 3. Vineyards and their produce. 4. Olive trees, and their produce. 5. Neat cattle, in different districts. 6. Camels and asses; they had no horses. 7. Flocks, sheep, goats, &c. —It is worthy of remark, that Obil, an Ishmaelite, or Arab, was put over the camels, a creature of Arabia; and Jaziz, a Hagarene, (the Hagarenes were shepherds by profession,) was put over the flocks: nothing went by favor; each was appointed to the office for which he was best qualified; and thus men of worth were encouraged, and the public service effectually promoted.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

CHAP. XXVIII.

David assembles the chiefs of Israel; shows them how his purpose of building a temple had been disallowed, and relates the LORD'S special favor to him; and his promises to Solomon, 1—8. He charges Solomon to know and serve God, and to build the temple, 9, 10. He gives a pattern for the form of the several parts, (as God had showed it to him,) and gold and silver for the materials, 11—19. He encourages Solomon with the assurance of help, both from God, and from his people, 20, 21.

AND David [a] assembled all the princes of Israel, [b] the princes of the tribes, and the [c] captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course, and the captains over the thousands, and captains over the hundreds, and [d] the stewards over all the * substance and possessions of the king, † and of his sons, with [e] the ‡ officers, and with [f] the mighty men, and with all the valiant men, unto Jerusalem.

2 Then David the king [g] stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, [h] my brethren, and my people: *As for me*, I *had* in mine heart to build an house of [k] rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for [l] the footstool of our God, and [m] had made ready for the building:

3 But God said unto me, [n] Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou *hast been* a man of war, and hast shed § blood.

4 Howbeit the LORD God of Israel [o] chose me before all the house of my father, to be king over Israel for ever: for he hath [p] chosen Judah *to be* the ruler; and of [q] the house of Judah the house of my father; and [r] among the sons of my father he liked me to make *me* king over all Israel:

5 And of [s] all my sons, (for the LORD hath given me many sons,) [t] he hath chosen Solomon my son [u] to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel.

6 And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, [x] he shall build my house and my courts: for [y] I have chosen him *to be* my son, and I will be his father.

7 Moreover [z] I will establish his kingdom for ever, [a] if he be ‖ constant to do my commandments and my judgments, [b] as at this day.

8 Now therefore [c] in the sight of all Israel the congregation of the LORD, and [d] in the audience of our God, [e] keep and seek for all the commandments of the LORD your God: [f] that ye may possess this good land, and leave *it* for an inheritance for your children after you for ever.

9 And thou, Solomon my son, [g] know thou [h] the God of thy father, and [i] serve him with a perfect heart, and with [k] a willing mind: for [l] the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all [m] the imaginations of the thoughts: [n] if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but [o] if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

10 [p] Take heed now; for the LORD hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do *it*.

CHAP. XXVIII. The account we have of David's exit, in the beginning of 1 K. does not make his sun near so bright as that given in this and the following ch. where we have his solemn farewell both to his son and his subjects, and must own that he finished well.

V. 1—10. A great deal of service David had done in his day, Acts 13: 36. but now the time draws nigh, that he must die, and, as a type of the Son of David, the nearer he comes to his end, the more busy he is: he is now a little recovered from the bad indisposition mentioned, 1 K. 1: 1. which he improves, as an opportunity of serving God and his country a little more.

I. He summons all the great men to attend him, that he might take leave of them altogether, *v.* 1. as Moses, Deut. 31: 28. and Joshua, *ch.* 23: 2. 24: 1. David would not declare the settlement of the crown, but in the presence, and to the satisfaction, of the representatives of the people.

II. He addresses them with great respect and tenderness. His age and infirmities, as well as his dignity, might well have allowed him to keep his seat; but he would show that he was indeed humbled for the pride of his heart, both in the number of his people, and his dominion over them. Then it was too much his pleasure, that they were all his *servants*, *ch.* 21: 3. now he calls them his *brethren*, whom he loved, his people whom he took care of. It becomes superiors thus to speak, with affection and condescension, to inferiors; they will not be the less honored for it, but the more loved. Thus he engages their attention.

III. He declares his purpose to build a temple, and God's disallowing it, *v.* 2, 3. This he had signified to Solomon before, *ch.* 22: 7, 8. *A house of rest for the ark* is here said to be *a house of rest for the footstool of our God:* for heaven is his throne of glory; the earth, and the most magnificent temples that can be built upon it, are but his footstool. So much difference is there between the manifestations of the divine glory in the upper, and the lower world. Angels surround his throne, Isa. 6: 1. We, poor worms, do but *worship at his footstool*, Ps. 99: 5. 132: 7. As an evidence of the sincerity of his purpose to build the temple, he tells them that he had made ready for it, but that God would not suffer them to proceed; he must serve the public with the sword, another must do it with the line and plummet. Times of rest are building times, Acts 9: 31.

IV. He produces his own title first, and then Solomon's, to the crown; both were, undoubtedly, divine; such a title as no monarch on earth can make out; the Lord God of Israel chose them both immediately by prophecy, not providence, *v.* 4, 5. No right of primogeniture is pretended; Judah was not the eldest son of Jacob, yet God chose that tribe to be the ruling tribe; Jacob entailed the sceptre on it, Gen. 49: 10. The family of Jesse was not the senior house of that tribe; from Judah, it certainly was not, for Shelah was before Pharez; whether from Nahshon and Salmon, is not certain. Ram, the father of Nahshon, had an elder brother, 1 Chr. 2: 9. perhaps so had Boaz, Obed, Jesse; yet, '*God chose the house of my father.*' [It was not known till David's time from which family in Judah the Messiah would descend. *Scott.*] David was the youngest son of Jesse, but God takes whom He likes, and likes whom He makes like Himself, as He did David, a man after his own heart. Solomon was one of the youngest sons of David, yet God chose him to sit on the throne, because the likeliest to build the temple, the wisest and best inclined.

V. He opens to them God's gracious purposes concerning Solomon, *v.* 6, 7. Thus he declares the decree, that the Lord had said to Solomon, as a type of Christ, *Thou art my son*, Ps. 2: 7. Of him, God said, as a figure of Him that was to come, 1. *He shall build my house;* Christ is both the Founder, and the Foundation, of the gospel-temple. 2. *I will establish his kingdom for ever.* This must have its accomplishment in the kingdom of the Messiah, which shall continue in his

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a 23:2. Josh. 23:2. 24:1.
b 27:16—22.
c 27:1—15.
d 27:25—31.
* Or, *cattle.*
† Or, *and his sons.*
e 27:32—34.
‡ Or, *eunuchs.*
f 11:10, &c.
g Gen. 48:2. 1 K. 1:47.
h 11:1—3. Deut. 17:15,20. Ps. 22:22. Heb. 2:11,12.
i 17:1,2. 2 Sam. 7:1. 1 K. 8:47,18.
k 6:31. Ps. 132:3—5,8,14.
l Ps. 99:5. 132:7. Is. 66:1. Lam. 2:1. Acts 7:49.
m 18:7—11. 22:2—5,14.
n 17:4. 22:8. 2 Sam. 7:5—13. 1 K. 5:3. 2 Chr. 6:8,9.
§ Heb. *bloods.*
o 1 Sam. 16:6—13. 2 Sam. 7:8—16. Ps. 78:68—72. 89:16—27.
p 5:2. Gen. 49:8—10. Ps. 60:7. 108:8.
q 1 Sam. 16:1.
r 1 Sam. 16:12,13. Ps. 18:19. 147:10,11.
s 3:1—9. 14:4—7.
t 22:9. 23:1. 29:1.
u 17:14. 1 Chr. 1:8,9. 2 Chr. 1:8,9. Ps. 72: *title.* 1, &c. Is. 9:6,7.
x 17:11—14. 22:10. 2 Sam. 7:13,14. Zech. 6:12,13. Heb. 3:3,6.
y Heb. 4:5.
z Ps. 89:28—37. 132:12. Dan. 2:44.
a 22:13. 1 K. 6:12,13. 9:4,5. 11:9—13.
‖ Heb. *strong.* 10. Josh. 1:6,7. 1 K. 2:2—4.
b 1 K. 8:61. 11:4.
c Deut. 4:6. Matt. 5:16. Phil. 2:15,16. Heb. 12:1,2.
d Deut. 4:26. 29:10,15. Acts 10:33.
e Ps. 119:4,10,11,27,33,34,44. Prov. 2: 1—5. 3:1.
f Deut. 4:1. 5:32,33. 6:1,2.
g Deut. 4:35. 1 K. 8:43. Ps. 9:10. Jer. 9:24. 22:16. 24:7. 31:34. Hos. 4:1,6. John 8:55. 17:3. Acts 17:23, 30. Rom. 1:28. 1 Cor. 15:34. 2 Cor. 4:6.
h Gen. 28:13. Ex. 3:16. 15:2. 1 K. 3:6. Is. 18:2. 89:26.
i 29:9,17—19. 1 K. 8:61. 2 K. 20:3. 22:2. Ps. 101:2. John 1:47.
k 2 Cor. 8:12. 9:7. 1 Pet. 5:2.
l 29:17. 1 Sam. 16:7. 1 K. 8:39. Ps. 7:9. Prov. 17:3. Jer. 11:20. 17:10 20:12. John 2:25. 21:17. Acts 1:24 Heb. 4:13. Rev. 2:23.
m Gen. 6:5. 8:21. Deut. 31:21. Ps. 139:2. Ez. 38:10.
n 2 Chr. 15:2. Prov. 2:1—6. Is. 45 19. 55:6,7. Jer. 29:13. Matt. 7:7,8. Jam. 4:8—11.
o Deut. 31:16,17. 1 K. 9:6—9. Ezra 8:22. Is. 1:28. Heb. 10:38,39.
p 6. 22:16—19. 1 Tim. 4:16.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVIII. V. 1. *Princes.*] 27:16—22.—*Captains*, &c.] 'I. e. those great commanders of 24,000 apiece, mentioned in the beginning of the foregoing ch. . . . The commanders of every one of those thousands, with the centurions, who commanded the several companies of 100.' *Patrick.* (27 the chief priests and l lem; but it is not ex sion.

15.)—*Stewards*, &c.] 27:25—31.—Many of tes generally resided with David at Jerusa ly said, that they were present on this occa SCOTT.

11 ¶ Then David gave to Solomon his son, [q] the pattern of [r] the porch, and of [s] the houses thereof; and of [t] the treasuries thereof, and of the [u] upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlors thereof, and of [x] the place of the mercy-seat,

12 And the pattern of all * that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of [y] the treasuries of the dedicated things:

13 Also for [z] the courses of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all [a] the vessels of service in the house of the LORD.

14 *He gave* of gold by weight for *things* of gold, for all instruments of all manner of service; *silver also* for all instruments of silver by weight for all instruments of every kind of service:

15 Even the weight for [b] the candlesticks of gold, and for their lamps of gold, by weight for every candlestick, and for the lamps thereof; and for the candlesticks of silver by weight, *both* for the candlestick, and *also* for the lamps thereof, according to the use of every candlestick.

16 And by weight *he gave* gold for the [c] tables of shew-bread, for every table; and *likewise* silver for the tables of silver:

17 Also [d] pure gold for the flesh-hooks, and [e] the bowls, and the cups: and for the golden basins *he gave gold* by weight for every basin; and *likewise silver* by weight for every basin of silver;

18 And for [f] the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and gold for the pattern of [g] the chariot of the cherubims, that spread out *their wings*, and covered the ark of the covenant of the LORD.

19 All *this, said David,* [h] the LORD made me understand in writing [i] by *his* hand upon me, *even* all the works of this pattern.

q 19. Ex. 25:40. 26:30. 39:42,43. 2 Chr. 3:3. Ez. 43:10,11. Heb. 8:5.
r 1 K. 6:3. 2 Chr. 3:4. Ez. 40:8,9,15, 48,49.
s 1 K. 6:16—29. 2 Chr. 3:5—10. Ez. 41:13,&c. Heb. 9:2—8.
t 9:26—29. 26:20—27. Luke 21:1.
u 1 K. 6:5,6,10. 2 Chr. 3:9. Neh. 10: 38,39. 13:5. Jer. 35:2. Ez. 41:6,&c.
x Ex. 25:17—22. 40:20,21. 1 K. 6:19. 2 Chr. 5:7. Heb. 9:5.
* Heb. *that was with him by.*
y 26:26—28. 1 K. 14:26. 15:15,18. 2 K. 16:8. 18:15.
z 24:1,&c. 25:1,&c.
a 9:29. Ezra 8:25—30,33.
b Ex. 25:31—39. 1 K. 7:49. 2 Chr. 4:7. Zech. 4:2,3,11—14. Rev. 1:12,20. 2:1.
c Ex. 25:23—30. 1 K. 7:48. 2 Chr. 4: 8,19.
d 1 Sam. 2:13,14. 2 Chr. 4:20—22.
e Num. 7:13,14. 1 K. 7:48—50. 10:21.
f Ex. 30:1—10. 1 K. 7:48.
g Ex. 25:18—22. 1 Sam. 4:4. 1 K. 6: 23—30. Ps. 18:10. 68:17. 80:1. 99:1. Ez. 1:15—24. 10:2,&c.
h 11,12. Ex. 25:40. 26:30.
i Ez. 1:3. 3:14,22.

God never casts any off, till they have first cast Him off. Here is one argument peculiar to Solomon; *v.* 10, '*Thou art to build a house for the sanctuary;* therefore seek and serve God, that that work may be done from a good principle, in a right manner, and may be accepted.' 3. The means prescribed in order hereunto, and they are prescribed to us all. (1.) Caution. *Take heed;* beware of every thing that looks like, or leads to, that which is evil. (2.) Courage. *Be strong, and do it.* We cannot do our work as we should, unless we put on resolution, and fetch in strength from divine grace.

V. 11—21. As for the general charge David gave his son to seek God and serve Him, the book of the law was, in that, his only rule, and there needed no other; but, in building the temple, David was now to give him three things:

1. A model of the building, because it was to be such a building as neither he nor his architects ever saw. Moses had a pattern of the tabernacle showed him in the mount, Heb. 8: 5. so had David of the temple, by the immediate hand of God upon him, *v.* 19. It was given him in writing, probably, by the ministry of an angel, or as clearly and exactly represented to his mind, as if it had been in writing. But it is said, *v.* 12. *He had the pattern by the Spirit.* The contrivance either of David's devotion, or of Solomon's wisdom, must not be trusted to in an affair of this nature. The temple must be a sacred thing, and a type of Christ; there must be in it, not only convenience, but significancy: it was a kind of sacrament, therefore its contrivance must not be left to man's art or invention; but must be by divine institution. This pattern David gave to Solomon, that he might know what to provide, and might go by a certain rule. When Christ left with his disciples a charge to build his gospel-church, he gave them an exact model of it, ordering them to observe that, and that only, which he commanded. The particular models are here mentioned; Patrick supposes that, among other things, the tabernacle Moses reared, and all its utensils were laid up here; signifying, that, in the fulness of time, all the Mosaic economy, all the rites and ceremonies of that dispensation, should be respectfully laid aside, and something better come in their room. He gave him a table of the courses of the priests, patterns of the vessels of service, *v.* 13. and a pattern

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Verses 11—13.

In what way soever this writing was made and sent to David, he gave it to Solomon just before his death: so that nothing was left even to 'the wisdom of Solomon,' but all was done by rule, even to the quantity of metal used in each vessel. (14—18.)—In vain do men of opposite sentiments contend for such uniformity in the circumstances of our worship, under the N. T. seeing it is manifest, that exact, precise, and express rules are nowhere to be found, in respect of every particular.—It is, however, most evident, that to model divine ordinances according to man's imagination, would have been the height of presumption even in Solomon himself. SCOTT.

Verses 14—16.

(*M. R.*—1 *K.* 7:48—51.) The candlesticks of silver, and tables of silver, are not elsewhere mentioned, and it is not known to what use they were put. 'The former' . . . (the candlesticks of silver) 'were less, to be carried in their hands from place to place, as there was occasion.' *Patrick.* It seems there were in the temple several tables of gold for the shew-bread, and the vessels belonging to that part of the stated service. (2 *Chr.* 4:19.) ID.

Verse 17.

The word, rendered *basins*, seems to be derived from the *atonement* made by the blood of the sacrifices, which was received into them till it was sprinkled. (*Num.* 7:13, 14.) SCOTT. A cut is given

of *flesh-hooks* from the ancient Egyptian monuments. These monuments, repeatedly referred to, have been preserved (even to the colors) in the mild, dry climate of Egypt; and as being such undoubted relics of antiquity, their value in illustration and confirmation of Scripture is becoming more and more manifest. Notes, 2 Chr. 12: 8, &c. ED.

Verse 18.

The phrase *chariot* means doubtless nothing more than *the stand* (which was at first the lid of the ark) on which the cherubims were affixed, similarly to the segment on which the figure sits, cut, Ex. 25: 18. which segment, perhaps, had a name in Coptic corresponding to the Heb. here. We have a like word, probably, in the technical term, *mounting, cradle, chair,* or *carriage.* ED. It is not absolutely certain, that, amidst the many removals of the ark which had taken place, the cherubim had not been separated from it; and whether Solomon did any thing more than make two others in their stead. SCOTT.

Verse 19.

(11—13.) This comprises all the particulars, mentioned in the pre-

20 ¶ And David said to Solomon his son, [k] Be strong, and of good courage, and do *it:* [l] fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God *even* my God, *will be* with thee; [m] he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work of the service of the house of the LORD.

21 And, behold, [n] the courses of the priests and the Levites, *even they shall be with thee* for all the service of the house of God: and *there shall be* with thee, for [o] all manner of workmanship, every [p] willing skilful man, for any manner of service: [q] also the princes and all the people *will be* wholly at thy commandment.

CHAP. XXIX.

David shows the princes and people what treasures he had prepared for the building and service of the temple, 1—5. After his example, and at his exhortation, they offer liberally, 6—9. He adores and blesses God, and prays for the people and for Solomon, 10—19. The people worship, sacrifice, and feast with joy; and then make Solomon king the second time, 20—22. He reigns in majesty and prosperity, 23—25. David's long and prosperous reign, and happy death, 26—30.

FURTHERMORE, David the king said [a] unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, [b] whom alone God hath chosen, *is yet* [c] young and tender, and the work *is* great: [d] for the palace *is* not for man, but for the LORD God.

2 Now [e] I have prepared [f] with all my might for the house of my God: [g] the gold for *things to be made* of gold, and the silver for *things* of silver, and the brass for *things* of brass, the iron for *things* of iron, and wood for *things* of wood; [h] onyx-stones, and *stones* to be set, glistering stones, and of divers colors, and all manner of precious stones, and marble-stones in abundance.

3 Moreover, because [i] I have set my affection to the house of my God, [k] I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, *which* I have given to the house of my God, [l] over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house,

4 *Even* three thousand talents of gold, of the [m] gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses *withal:*

5 The gold for *things* of gold, and the silver for *things* of silver, and

k 10. 22:13. Deut. 31:7,8. Josh. 1:6—9. 1 Cor. 16:13.
l Ps. 27:1,2. Is. 41:10,13. Rom. 8:31.
m Josh. 1:5. Heb. 13:5.
n 24: 25: 26:
o Ex. 31:3.
p Ex. 35:25,26,35. 36:1—4. *Ps.* 110 3.
q 22:17,18. Tit. 3:1.
a 28:1,8.
b 28:5,6. 1 K. 8:19,20.
c 22:5. 1 K. 3:7. 2 Chr. 13:7. Prov. 4:3. Jer. 1:6,7.
d 28:10. 2 Chr. 2:4,5.
e 22:3—5,14—16.
f 2 Chr. 31:20,21. Ec. 9:10. 2 Cor. 8:3. Col. 3:23. 1 Pet. 4:10,11.
g 28:14—18.
h Gen. 2:12. Ex. 28:20. 39:13. Job 28:16. Is. 54:11,12. Rev. 21:18—21.
i Ps. 26:8. 27:4. 84:1,10. 122:1—9.
k 21:24. Prov. 3:9,10.
l 22:4,5,14—16.
m 1 K. 9:28.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

While life continues, it is desirable to spend it in promoting the peace, prosperity, and spiritual good, of those who may remain behind. (*Ec.* 9: 10. 2 *Pet.* 1: 12.—15.)—In that monarchy, which God established in Israel, and sanctioned by his approbation, we see no traces of the *unalterable right of primogeniture*, or of ruling with absolute authority. It may be comfortable to us in a dying hour, to recollect the plans we framed to promote true religion, though we have been unable to accomplish them: hence also we may infer, that we are the chosen and called of God; as such designs prove, that He has given us a heart to account his service a delightful privilege, and to long and love to be employed in it. But, in the nature and measure of our services, we must learn acquiescence in his will, whose choice of us is the source of all our grace, comfort, or usefulness. But we should never forget, that the whole of the salvation for sinners, is of the Lord: the wondrous plan, the great and glorious Redeemer, and redemption, and the revelation of it in the scriptures of truth; the way of access, the ministry of the gospel, the throne of grace also, the public ordinances, the sacramental seals, and every thing pertaining to our reconciliation and walk with God, are from Him; and may not be modelled by human authority. Even mere circumstances, which must be regulated by man's discretion, and in which every society has a right to judge for its *willing* members, are not to be imposed on our brethren: and we are accountable to God, though not to man, for that judgment and practice which we ourselves form and adopt. We should therefore in every thing be circumspect, and not leave the Scripture in any particular, where it affords us directions; yet we should not endanger the peace of the church, for the sake of minute external regulations. Let us cease from self-confident boastings, and acrimonious controversies. Hitherto much has been amiss in every age, in every state, and in every division of the church: ere long our Prince of Peace, the Builder of the true temple, the Son of God, will come, and set all right SCOTT.

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ceding vs.—'God made him to understand all this so plainly and distinctly, as if it had been written on his mind, as the ten commandments were on the tables of stone.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIX. V. 1. *Whom alone God,* &c.] David by this expression declared, that God had chosen Solomon in preference to the rest of his sons; and that this was the sole reason of his succession to the throne, and not any partial affection of his own towards him. This would tend to satisfy the people, and to induce David's other sons to submit to the divine appointment. ID.

Verses 3—9.

David gave, from his own treasury, about 18,000,000 stg. of gold and silver.—The prosperity of Israel must have been immense, under the reign of David; and it seems there was also much true piety among the people, especially towards the close of his reign. We can scarcely form a conception of the magnificence of the temple and adjacent edifices, about which such immense quantities of gold and silver were employed. (*Ez.* 41:22.) But 'the unsearchable riches of Christ' excel the splendor of the temple, infinitely more than that surpassed the meanest cottage on earth.—The *refined silver* seems to have been used, in covering the inner walls of the chambers and other out-buildings; for those of the temple itself were plated with gold. (1 *K.* 6:21, 22.) *Mine own proper good,* Heb. (3) rendered *a peculiar treasure,* *Ex.* 19:5. *special, Deut.* 7:6. *jewels, Mal.* 3:17. (*Tit.* 2:14.) SCOTT.

With perfect heart, &c. (9) 'This is the virtue which Paul calls *aplotes, singleness of heart;* which hath respect purely to the service of God, the honor of religion, and the good of the church: 2 *Cor.* 8:2. 9:11, 13.' (2 *Cor.* 1:12—14. *Eph.* 6:5—9.)—'It was a singular comfort to David in his old age to see the people so well disposed, and his exhortation so effectual on their heart.' *Patrick.* ID.

for all manner of work *to be made* by the hands of artificers. And [n] who *then* is willing to [*] consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?

6 Then [o] the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers of the king's work, offered willingly,

7 And gave for the service of the house of God, of gold five thousand talents and ten thousand drams, and of silver ten thousand talents, and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron.

8 And they with whom *precious* stones were found gave *them* to the treasure of the house of the LORD, by the hand of [p] Jehiel the Gershonite.

9 Then the people rejoiced, for that [q] they offered willingly; because with [r] perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD: and [s] David the king also rejoiced with great joy.

[*Practical Observations.*]

10 ¶ Wherefore [t] David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, [u] Blessed *be* thou, [x] LORD God of Israel, [y] our Father, for ever and ever.

11 Thine, O LORD, [z] *is* the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and [a] the victory, and the [b] majesty: for [c] all *that is* in the heaven and in the earth *is thine;* [d] thine *is* the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art [e] exalted as head above all.

12 Both [f] riches and honor *come* of thee, and thou [g] reignest over all; and in thine hand *is* [h] power and might; and in thine hand *it is* to make great, and to [i] give strength unto all.

13 Now therefore, our God, [k] we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.

14 But [l] who *am* I, and what *is* my people, [m] that we should †be able to offer so [q] willingly after this sort? for [r] all things *come* of thee, and ‡ of thine own have we given thee,

15 For [s] we *are* strangers before thee, and sojourners, as *were* all our fathers: [t] our days on the earth *are* as a shadow, and *there is* none § abiding.

16 O LORD our God, [u] all this store, that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name, *cometh* of thine hand, and *is* all thine own.

17 I know also, my God, that thou [x] triest the heart, and [y] hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, [z] in the uprightness of mine heart have I willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with [a] joy thy people, which are ‖ present here, to offer willingly unto thee.

18 O [b] LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, [c] keep

n Ex. 25:2—9. 35:5,&c. Num. 7:2,3, 10—14,&c. Ezra 1:4—6. 2:68,69. 7: 15,16.
* Heb. *to fill his hand.*
o 27:1. Is. 60:3—10.
p 26:21,22. *Jehieli.*
q Deut. 16:10,11. Judg. 5:9. Ps. 110: 3. 2 Cor. 8:3,12. 9:7,8.
r 17. 1 K. 8:61.
s Prov. 23:15,16. Luke 15:6. John 15: 11. Phil. 2:15—17. 4:1,10. 1 Thes. 3:6—9.
t 20. 2 Chr. 20:26,27. Ps. 103:1,2. 138:1. 146:2.
u 1 K. 8:15. 2 Chr. 6:4. Ps. 72:18,19. Ez. 3:12. Eph. 1:3. 1 Pet. 1:3.
x Gen. 32:28. 33:20.
y Is. 63:16. Matt. 6:9. Luke 11:2. Rom. 1:7. 8:15. Phil. 4:20. 2 Thes. 2:16.
z Dan. 4:30,34,35. Matt. 6:13. 1 Tim. 1:17. 6:15,16. Jude 25. Rev. 4:10, 11. 5:12,13. 7:9—12. 19:1.
a 1 Sam. 15:29. *Marg.* Ps. 98:1.
b Job 37:22. Ps. 29:4. 45:3,4. 104:1. 145:12. Is. 2:10. Heb. 1:3.
c Gen. 1:1. 14:19,22. Ps. 115:15,16. Is. 42:5. 66:1. Jer. 10:10—12. 27:5. Dan. 4:32,34,35.
d Ps. 97:1. 99:1. 145:1,12,13. Dan. 4:3. Rev. 11:15.
e Neh. 9:5. Ps. 21:13. 46:10. 47:9. 57:5,11. 97:9. Is. 2:11. 12:4.
f Deut. 8:18. 1 Sam. 2:7,8. Job 42:10. Ps. 75:6,7. 113:7,8. Prov. 10:22. Luke 1:51—53. Rom. 11:35,36.
g Dan. 6:26.
h Job 9:19. Ps. 62:11. Is. 43:13. 46: 10. Dan. 5:18—21. Matt. 28:18. John 19:11. Eph. 3:20. Rev. 11:17.
i 2 Chr. 16:9. Ps. 18:31,32. 28:8. 29:1,11. 68:34,35. 144:1,2. Is. 45: 24. Eph. 3:16. Phil. 4:13. Col. 1:11.
k Ps. 105:1. 106:1. Dan. 2:23. 2 Cor. 2:14. 8:16. 9:15. 1 Thes. 2:13.
l Gen. 32:10. 2 Sam. 7:18. Dan. 4:30. 1 Cor. 15:9,10. 2 Cor. 3:5. 12:9—11.
m Ps. 115:1. Rev. 4:10.
† Heb. *retain,* or *obtain strength.*
q 9. Phil. 2:13. Jam. 1:17.
r Gen. 28:22. Ps. 50:10—12. Rom. 11:36. 1 Cor. 16:2.
‡ Heb. *of thine hand.*
s Gen. 47:9. Ps. 39:12. 119:19. Heb. 11:13—16. 1 Pet. 2:11.
t Job 14:2. Ps. 90:9. 102:11. 144:4. Ec. 6:12. Jam. 4:14.
§ Heb. *expectation.*
u 14. 2 Chr. 31:10. Ps. 24:1. Hos. 2:8. Luke 19:16.
x 28:9. Deut. 8:2. 1 Sam. 16:7. Ps. 7:9. 51:6. Prov. 16:2. 21:2. Jer. 17:10. Heb. 4:12. Rev. 2:23.
y Prov. 11:20. 15:8,9. John 1:47.
z Acts 24:16. 2 Cor. 1:12. 1 Thes. 2:10.
a 2. Philem. 7:20.
‖ Heb. *found.*
b Ex. 3:6,15. 4:5. Matt. 22:32. Acts 3:13.
c Deut. 30:6. Ps. 51:10. 119:116,117. Jer. 10:23. 32:39,40. Phil. 1:6,9—11. 1 Thes. 3:11,12. Heb. 13:21.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—9. The due support and scriptural promotion of religion, is always more important, and in many cases more arduous, than the administration of civil government: because the honor of God, and the most essential interests of immortal souls, are concerned in it; compared with which all other interests are trivial. They alone, whom the Lord hath chosen for such a work, will prosper in it; and it is the duty of all to assist by every proper mean in their power.—Strong affection to God, and to all that relates to Him for his sake, will constrain men to the most disinterested, self-denying, and liberal services.—Those who would excite others to consecra e their service to the Lord, must set the example: and then a hint from them will go further, than a labored and eloquent oration from a man, who persuades others to those things, which he himself evidently does not practise.—Our holy joy in God will commonly bear proportion to the willingness, uprightness, and liberality, with which we devote our all to Him.—The bodily pain and infirmities of age, and the chilling hand of death, while they indispose us for all other enjoyments, or separate us from them, cannot preclude or extinguish this, which emulates that of angels, who 'rejoice over one sinner that repenteth.' SCOTT.

(4—7.) 'According to the usual estimates, the treasure accumulated for the temple, would be nearly £1,000,000,000, stg. There may be a corruption or error; we know not the comparative value of the precious metals then, nor of their means of procuring them, nor their degree of purity; several sorts of gold are mentioned in the SS. And if the "talent" here was Syriac, the amount would be only 7,000,000; if Babylonish, 30,000,000; or if the Arabic vers. of 1 Chr. 22:14. is correct, "gold 1000 talents, and silver 1000 talents," this would be 50, to 60 millions. Either estimate brings the amount within the bounds of probability. Eastern kings and princes have, in all ages, been accustomed to lay up vast quantities of gold and silver. *Dow* (Hist. of Hindostan) mentions princes possessing larger sums than either of the last three estimates. And when we consider David's successful wars with the nations around, we may be satisfied he would have been able to collect very large treasures. See *W. Brown* and *T. H. Horne.*' HENRY abr.

Verses 18, 19.

Lord God, &c. (18) or, 'JEHOVAH our Father, the God of Israel. In this view, the words may be considered, as the first instance in Scripture, of God being addressed in prayer, as 'Our Father.' (*Matt.* 6:9.) This is properly the language of the Spirit of adoption. (*Rom.* 8:14—17.)—All that treasure, they gave the Lord to build his temple, was his own before; if they had attempted to keep it, death would soon have removed them: so that the only use they could make of it

this for ever [d] in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and [*] prepare their heart unto thee.

19 And [e] give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all *these things*, and to build the palace, *for* [f] the which I have made provision.

[*Practical Observations.*]

20 ¶ And David said to all the congregation, [g] Now bless the LORD your God. And all the congregation blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and [h] bowed down their heads, and [i] worshipped the LORD, and the king.

21 And they [k] sacrificed sacrifices unto the LORD, and offered burnt-offerings unto the LORD, on the morrow after that day, *even* a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, *and* a thousand lambs, with their [l] drink-offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel;

22 And did [m] eat and drink before the LORD on that day with great gladness. And they made Solomon the son of David king [n] the second time, [o] and anointed

d 28:9. Gen. 6:5. Ps. 119:113.
* Heb. *stablish*. Ps. 10:17. 2 Thes. 2: 16,17. 1 Pet. 5:10.
e 28:9. Ps. 72:1. 119:80. Jam. 1:17.
f 2. 22:14.
g 16:36. 2 Chr. 20:21. Ps. 134:2. 135: 19—21. 146:1,2. 148:13,14, &c.
h Gen. 24:26,48. Ex. 4:31. Ps. 29:1,2. 95:6.
i Ex. 14:31. 1 Sam. 12:18. Prov. 24: 21. 1 Pet. 2:17.
k 1 K. 8:62—65. 2 Chr. 7:4—9. Ezra 6:17.
l Lev. 23:13. Num. 15:5,7,10.
m Ex. 24:11. Deut. 12:7,11,12. 16: 14—17. 2 Chr. 7:10. Neh. 8:12. Ec. 2:24. 3:12,13. 8:15. 9:7. 1 Tim. 6:17,18.
n 23:1.
o 1 K. 1:35—39.

everlasting praise, the more we should speak the language, and do the work, of that world. In this address,

1. He adores God, and ascribes glory to Him, as the God of Israel, *blessed for ever and ever*. Our Lord's prayer ends with a doxology, much like this which David here begins with. This is properly praising God, with holy awe and reverence, and agreeable affection, acknowledging his infinite perfections; not only that He is great, powerful, glorious, &c. but that He is so in, and of, Himself; He is the Fountain and Centre of every thing bright and blessed. All that we can, in our most exalted praises attribute to Him, He has an unquestionable title to. His is the *greatness*, immense, incomprehensible; His is the *power*, almighty and irresistible; His is the *glory;* for his glory is his own end, and the end of the whole creation: His is the *victory;* He transcends and surpasses all, and is able to conquer and subdue all things to Himself; and his is the *majesty;* with Him is terrible majesty, inexpressible and inconceivable.

2. He acknowledges with thankfulness the grace of God enabling them to contribute so cheerfully, *v.* 13, 14. Note, The more we do for God, the more we are indebted to Him for the honor of being employed in his service, and for grace enabling us, in any measure, to serve Him. *Does He therefore thank that servant?* Luke 17: 9. No: but that servant has great reason to thank Him. It is a great instance of God's grace in us, to be able to do the work of God *willingly*. Ps. 110: 3. We must give God all the glory of all the good at any time done by ourselves or others; He works both to will and to do. Our own good works must not be the matter of our pride, nor the good works of others the matter of our flattery, but both the matter of our praise: for certainly it is the greatest honor and pleasure in the world, faithfully to serve God.

3. He speaks very humbly of himself, and his people, and the offerings they had now presented to God.

(1.) David was the most honorable person, and Israel the most honorable people, then in the world; yet thus he speaks of himself and them as unworthy the divine cognizance and favor. Angels in heaven are at home there, saints on earth but strangers here, *v.* 15. *our days on earth are as a shadow*. David's days had as much of substance in them as most men's; for he was a great, a good, a useful, and now, an old man; one that lived long, and to good purpose: yet he puts himself not only into the number, but in the front, of those who must acknowledge that their *days on the earth are as a shadow;* which intimates that our life is vain, dark, transient, a life that will have its period in perfect light, or perfect darkness. The next words explain it, *there is no abiding*, Heb. *no expectation*. We cannot expect any great matters from it, nor can we expect any long continuance of it. This is mentioned here, as that which forbids us to boast of the service we do to God: alas! it is confined to a scantling of time, it is the service of a frail and short life, therefore what can we pretend to merit by it!

(2.) *Of thine own have we given Thee*, *v.* 14. and again, *v.* 16. *It cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own*. 'We have it from Thee, as a free gift, therefore are bound to use it for Thee; and what we present to Thee, is but rent or interest from thine own.' 'In like manner' (says Patrick) 'we ought to acknowledge God in all spiritual things, referring every good thought, good purpose, good work, to his grace, from whom we receive it.' *Let him that glories*, therefore, *glory in the Lord*.

(3.) He appeals to God concerning his own sincerity, *v.* 17. It is a great satisfaction to a good man, to think that God *tries the heart*, and *has pleasure in uprightness;* that whoever misinterpret or contemn it, He is acquainted with, and approves the *way of the righteous*. David was neither proud of his own good work, nor envious of the good work of others.

(4.) He prays to God both for the people and for Solomon, that both might hold on as they began. *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, were kept in their integrity, by the grace of God establishing their way; let the same grace that was sufficient for them, be so for us. Great consequences depend on what is innermost, and what uppermost, in our heart; what we aim at, and what we love to think of, *v.* 18. If any good have got possession of our hearts, or the hearts of our friends, it is good by prayer to commit the custody of it to the grace of God: Lord, keep it there, for ever there. David has prepared materials for the temple; but, Lord, do thou prepare the people's hearts for such a privilege; *establish* their hearts, so the margin. 'Confirm their resolutions; they are in a good mind, keep them so, when I am gone, them and theirs for ever.' He had charged Solomon, *ch.* 28: 9. to serve God *with a perfect heart*, now here (*v.* 19.) he prays to God to give him such a heart. He does not pray, 'Lord, make him rich, great, learned;' but, 'Lord, make him honest;' that is better than all. His building the house would not prove him to have a *perfect heart*, unless he made conscience of *keeping* God's *commandments*. Helping to build churches, will not save us, if we live in disobedience to God's law.

II. The cheerful concurrence of this great assembly in this great solemnity, *v.* 20. Whoever is the mouth of the congregation, those only have the benefit, who join with him, not by *bowing down the head*, so much as by *lifting up the soul*.

They paid their respects to the king, looking on him as an instrument in God's hand of much good to them; and in honoring him, they honored God.

They made Solomon king, the second time. He having been before anointed, in haste, on occasion of Adonijah's rebellion, it was thought fit to repeat it, for the greater satisfaction of the people. They *anointed him to the Lord*. Magistrates must look on themselves as set apart for God, to be his ministers, and must rule accordingly in the fear of God. Zadok also was anointed to be

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 10—19. Those, who are most 'zealous of good works,' will never boast of them, or trust in them. To them it appears an unspeakable favor, that a holy God will accept any worship or service from such polluted creatures; they are conscious that their best needs forgiveness, falls infinitely beneath his glorious majesty, and is utterly unworthy his acceptance. 'In like manner, we ought to acknowledge God in all spiritual things: referring every good thought, good purpose, good work, to his divine grace, from whom we receive it; beseeching him, as David doth, . . . to preserve it in us.' *Patrick*. Thus our best and most useful works will terminate in admiration of his inconceivable majesty, goodness, power, and holiness; in unfeigned praises and thanksgivings; and in the deepest self-abasement before Him. This is genuine grace.—While we bless the Lord for putting good desires into our hearts, or the hearts of others, we should never forget to pray to Him to preserve and fix them there, and to bring them to good effect.—When we feel that there is no abiding for us on earth, we should be peculiarly fervent in our prayers, that those who are to succeed us, or whom we consider as having profited by our instructions, may have their 'hearts prepared unto the LORD,' and disposed for the work to which they are called. Parents and ministers also, when they perceive any of their children or people under serious impressions, should 'travail in birth for them till Christ be formed in them,' by earnest, constant prayer, that 'the LORD would keep for ever in the imaginations of the thoughts of their hearts,' those good desires which He has excited, 'and prepare their hearts unto Himself.' (*Gal.* 4: 17—20. *Col.* 2: 1—4.) SCOTT.

to their own real advantage, was thus to consecrate it to the service of Him who gave it, and whose gracious acceptance of their oblation would add still more to their obligations. Nothing on this side heaven can be conceived, more humble, pure, evangelical, spiritual, devout, or exalted, than the praise, adoration, gratitude, confidence, love, zeal, and philanthropy, breathing through this address. SCOTT.

Verses 21—25.

As Abiathar was removed from the high priesthood, and Zadok substituted in his place, after David's death; it has been thought, that the second anointing of Solomon was also subsequent to that event. (1 *K.* 2: 26, 27.) The whole kingdom was peculiarly GOD's. We may suppose that every kind of personal accomplishment united with justice,

him unto the LORD *to be* the chief governor, and [p] Zadok *to be* priest.

23 Then Solomon [q] sat on the throne of the LORD, as king instead of David his father, and [r] prospered; and [s] all Israel obeyed him.

24 And [t] all the princes, and the mighty men, and [u] all the sons likewise of king David, [*] submitted themselves unto Solomon the king.

25 And the LORD [x] magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and [y] bestowed upon him *such* royal majesty, as had not been on any king before him in Israel.

26 ¶ Thus David the son of Jesse reigned [z] over all Israel.

27 And the time that he reigned over Israel *was* [a] forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three *years* reigned he in Jerusalem.

28 And he died in [b] a good old age, [c] full of days, riches, and honor; and Solomon his son reigned in his stead.

29 Now [d] the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they *are* written in the † book of [e] Samuel the seer, and in the book of [f] Nathan the prophet, and in the book of [g] Gad the seer,

30 With all his reign and [h] his might, and [i] the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries.

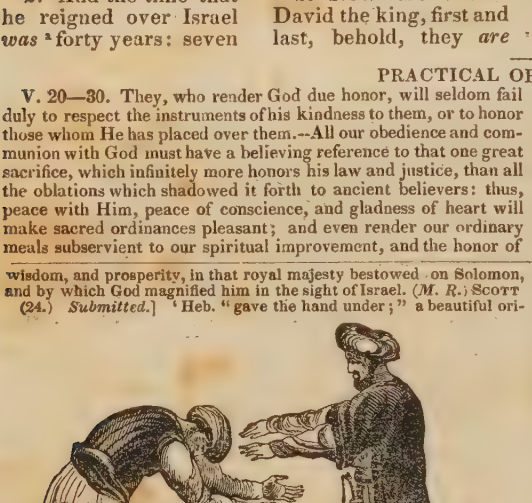
p 1 K. 2:35.
q 17:11,12. 28:5. Ps. 132:11. Is. 9: 6,7. r 22:11.
s Ec. 8:2—5. Rom. 13:1.
t 22:17. 28:21.
u 3:3—9. 1 K. 1:50—53. 2:24,25.
* Heb. *gave the hand under.* Gen. 24: 2. 47:29. 2 Chr. 30:8. *marg.* Ez. 17:18.
x Josh. 3:7. 4:14. 2 Chr. 1:1. Job 7:17. Acts 19:17.
y 1 K. 3:13. 2 Chr. 1:12. Ec. 2:9. Dan. 5:18,19. Heb. 2:9.
z 18:14. Ps. 78:71,72.
a 3:4. 2 Sam. 5:4,5. 1 K. 2:11.
b Gen. 15:15. 25:8. Job 5:26. Prov. 16:31. Acts 13:36.
c 23:1. Gen. 35:29.
d 1 K. 11:41. 14:29. Heb. 11:32,33.
† Or, *history.* Heb. *words.*
e 1 Sam. 9:9.
f 2 Sam. 7:2—4. 12:1—7. g 21:9—11.
h 2 K. 10:34. 14:28. i Dan. 2:21.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 20—30. They, who render God due honor, will seldom fail duly to respect the instruments of his kindness to them, or to honor those whom He has placed over them.--All our obedience and communion with God must have a believing reference to that one great sacrifice, which infinitely more honors his law and justice, than all the oblations which shadowed it forth to ancient believers: thus, peace with Him, peace of conscience, and gladness of heart will make sacred ordinances pleasant; and even render our ordinary meals subservient to our spiritual improvement, and the honor of God; while they are attended with gratitude, temperance, liberality, and a heavenly mind.—Let us mark the difference between the spirit and character of the man after God's own heart, living and dying, and those of such worthless professors, as resemble him in nothing but his sin, and who apologize for their crimes by his example. Let us also compare him with those who profanely carp at the blemishes in illustrious scriptural characters; but never raise their minds to an idea of such exalted excellency, piety, and philanthropy, as David showed. SCOTT.

wisdom, and prosperity, in that royal majesty bestowed on Solomon, and by which God magnified him in the sight of Israel. (*M. R.*) SCOTT

(24.) *Submitted.*] 'Heb. "gave the hand under;" a beautiful ori-



entalism to denote submission. See the man who wishes to submit to a superior; he stands at a short distance, then stooping, he keeps moving his hands to the ground, and says, "I submit, my lord." "Well, Kandan and Chinnan have settled their quarrel now, for Chinnan went to him last evening, and 'gave his hand under.'" "The Modeliar [an officer] is no longer angry with me, because I have put down my hand to the ground." "That rebellious son has, for many years, refused to acknowledge his father's authority, but has at last put his hand under," i. e. submitted to him, become obedient.' ROBERTS.

Verses 26—28

(*M. R.*) When we read 2 Sam. 12 ch. and the sequel, we could scarcely expect to behold David appear so illustrious in his closing scene, in which every thing heavenly and excellent is combined; and the people seem to have considered him with a veneration and affection, which language fails to express. But his repentance had been as remarkable as his sins; and his conduct, during his afflictions, and towards the end of his life, seems to have had more effect on his subjects, than all they had before witnessed.—It is indeed hard to say, which shines the brightest in this ch. the *rising, or the setting sun*: but it is better to rise behind clouds, and to be much obscured in the course of our lives, and to set, like David, with splendor; than with Solomon to rise very bright, and shine very splendid, and then to set behind an almost impenetrable cloud. (1 *K.* 11:42, 43.) SCOTT.

For a view of David's character, see at the end of 1 K. ED.

Verses 29, 30.

It is plain from these vs. that the contemporary prophets were the historians, or annalists, of God's people; and that they left far more copious records of public transactions, both in respect of Israel and the adjacent countries, than have come down to us. (2 *Sam.* 24:11.) Learned men may indeed regret the loss of these histories; but 'God knows better than we, what was most fit to be preserved for the use and benefit of his church.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

TABLE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE PARALLEL PASSAGES OF THE BOOKS OF CHR. AND THOSE OF SAM. AND KINGS.

1 Chronicles with	1 Samuel.	2:	5: 15—32.	24: 1—14.	12: 1—16.
10: 1—12.	31:	3: }	6:	25: 1—4. 11:17—24.	14: 1—14.
	2 Samuel	4: }	7.	25: 27,28.	14: 19,20.
11: 1—9.	5: 1—10.	5: 2—14.6:7—10.	8:	26: 1,2.	14: 21,22.
11: 10—41.	23: 8—39.	7:11—22.	9: 1—9.	27: 1—3.	15: 33—35.
13: 1—14.	6: 3—11.	8:	11: 15—28.	28: 1—4.	16: 2—4.
14: 1—7.	5: 11—25.	9: 1—12.	10: 1—13.	29: 1,2.	18: 2,3.
17:	7:	9: 13—31.	10: 14—29.	32: 9—21.	18: 17—37.
18:	8:	10: 1. 11:4.	12: 1—24.	32: 24—31.	20: 1—19.
19:	10:	12: 2—11.	14: 25—28.	33: 1—10.	21: 1—10.
20: 1—3.	11: 1,12:30,31.	16: 1—6.	15: 17—22.	34: 1,2,8—28.	22:
20: 4—8.	21: 18—22.	18:	22: 2—35.	34: 29—33.	23: 1—20.
21:	24:	20: 31—37.	22: 41—50.	35: 18,20—25.	23: 22,23.
2 Chronicles with	1 Kings.	21: 6—10. with 2 Kings	8: 17—24.	36: 1.	23: 29,30.
1: 3—13.	3: 4—14.	22: 2—6.	8: 26—29.	36: 2—4.	23: 31—34.
1: 14—17.	10: 26—29.	22: 10—12. 23:	11:		

As these books relate the same histories, they should be constantly read and collated together, to obtain a more comprehensive view of Jewish history, and also to illustrate or amend from one what is obscure in either.—*Horne.* HENRY abr.

AN EXPOSITION,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS AND NOTES,

UPON THE SECOND BOOK OF

CHRONICLES.

THIS book begins with the reign of Solomon, and the building of the temple, and continues the history of the kings of Judah thenceforward, to the captivity; and so concludes with the fall of that illustrious monarchy, and the destruction of the temple. That monarchy of the house of David, as it was prior in time, so it was superior in worth and dignity, to all those four celebrated ones which Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of. The Babylonian monarchy I reckon to begin in Nebuchadnezzar himself: *Thou art that head of gold*, that lasted but about 70 years; the Persian monarchy, in several families, about 130; the Grecian, in their several branches, about 300; and 300 more went far with the Roman, but as I reckon David a greater hero than any of the founders of those monarchies, and Solomon a more magnificent prince than any of those that were the glories of them, so the succession was kept up in a lineal descent throughout the whole monarchy, which continued considerable between 400 and 500 years; and, after a long eclipse, shone forth again in the kingdom of the Messiah, *of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end.* This history of the Jewish monarchy, as it is more authentic, so it is more entertaining and more instructive, than the histories of any of those monarchies. We had the story of the house of David, before, in 1 and 2 K. intermixed with that of the kings of Israel, which *there* took more room than that of Judah; but here, we have it entire. Much is repeated here, which we had before, yet many passages are enlarged upon, and divers added, which we had not before, especially relating to religion; for it is a church history, and written for our learning, to let nations and families know, that then, and then only, they can expect to prosper, when they keep in the way of their duty to God; for, all along, the good kings prospered, and the wicked kings suffered.

The peaceable reign of Solomon, we have, *ch.* 1—9. Rehoboam's blemished reign, *ch.* 10—12. Abijah's, short but busy, *ch.* 13. Asa's, long and happy, *ch.* 14—16. Jehoshaphat's, pious and prosperous, *ch.* 17—20. The impious and infamous reigns of Jehoram and Ahaziah, *ch.* 21, 22. The unsteady reigns of Joash and Amaziah, *ch.* 24, 25. Uzziah's, long and prosperous, *ch.* 26. Jotham's, regular, *ch.* 27. Ahaz's, profane and wicked, *ch.* 28. Hezekiah's, gracious and glorious, *ch.* 29—32. Manasseh's, and Amon's, wicked, *ch.* 33. Josiah's reforming reign, *ch.* 34, 35. and the ruining reigns of his sons, *ch.* 36. Put all these together, and the truth of that word of God will appear; *They that honor Me, I will honor, but they that despise Me, shall be lightly esteemed.*

HENRY.

THIS book continues the history, begun in the former; and concludes with an intimation of Cyrus's decree for the restoration of the Jews, and the rebuilding of the temple, about 480 years after.—Besides the additional practical instruction here afforded, especially in respect of the different effects of piety, or profaneness, in the affairs of nations favored with revelation; this history throws great light on the prophetical writings, which can by no means be well understood without constantly adverting to it. The prophecies contained in it, either were fulfilled soon after they were spoken, or coincide with those before considered: and it is not always easy to determine concerning subsequent scriptural references, whether they relate to this book or to the books of Kings.

SCOTT.

Whiston, in his chronology, suggests that the historical books written after the captivity, namely, the two of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, have more mistakes in names and numbers than all the O. T. besides, through the carelessness of transcribers: but though that be allowed, the things are so very minute, we may be confident, that yet *The foundation of God stands sure.*

HENRY.

B. C. 1015.

CHAP. I.

Solomon, established as king, calls on his nobles and people, to join in sacrificing at Gibeon, 1—6. The Lord appears to him there by night, and allows him to choose what blessing to ask: he asks wisdom, and is promised also riches and honor, 7—12. Solomon's forces, riches, and commerce, 13—17.

AND Solomon the son of David [a] was strengthened in his kingdom; and [b] the LORD his God *was* with him, and [c] magnified him exceedingly.

2 Then Solomon spake unto all Israel, [d] to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and to the judges, and to every governor in all Israel, [e] the chief of the fathers.

3 So Solomon and all

a 1 K. 2:12,46.
b Gen. 21:22. 39:2,21. Ex. 3:12. 1 Chr. 17:8. Matt. 28:20.
c 1 Chr. 29:25. Phil. 2:9—11.
d 29:20. 30:2. 34:29,30. 1 Chr. 13:1. 15:3. 28:1. 29:1.
e 1 Chr. 15:12. 24:4,31.

CHAP. I. V. 1—12. Here is,

I. Solomon's great prosperity, *v.* 1. He had a contested title, yet, God being with him, he was *strengthened in his kingdom*, his heart, hands, and interest in the people. God's presence will be our strength.

II. His great piety and devotion. His father was a prophet, a psalmist, and kept mostly to the ark; but Solomon, having read much in his Bible of the tabernacle Moses built, and the altars, paid more respect to them than, it should seem, David had done. Both did well, and let neither be censured. Let not the man whose zeal is employed chiefly in one religious direction, despise him whose zeal is employed chiefly in another. Let them not judge, or despise, one another.

I. All his great men must thus far be good men, that they must join him in worshipping God, *v.* 2, 3. Authority and interest are well bestowed on those, that will thus use them for the glory of God, and the promotion of religion. Solomon began his reign with this public, pious visit to God's altar, a very good omen. Magistrates are then likely to do well for themselves and their people, when they thus take God with them at their setting out.

2. He offered abundance of sacrifices to God there, *v.* 6. *a thousand burnt-offerings*, and perhaps a greater number of peace-offerings, on which he and his company *feasted before the Lord.* Where God sows plentifully, He expects to reap accordingly. David had left him flocks and herds in abundance, 1 Chr. 27: 29, 31. and thus he gave God his dues of them. The ark was at Jerusalem, *v.* 4. but the altar at Gibeon, *v.* 5. thither he brought his sacrifices; for *it is the altar that sanctifieth every gift.*

3. He prayed a good prayer to God: this, with the answer to it, we had before, 1 K. 3: 5, &c. God bade him ask what he would, that He might try him, what was in his heart. Men's characters appear in their choices and desires. As we choose, we shall have; and that is likely to be our portion, to which we *gave* the preference, whether the wealth and pleasure of this world, or spiritual riches and delights. Two things are here pleaded, which we had not in Kings: (1.) *Thou hast made me reign in my father's stead*, *v.* 8. 'Lord, Thou hast put me into this place; therefore I can in faith ask of Thee grace to enable me to do the duty of it.' But that is not all; 'Lord, thou hast put me into this place, in the stead of David, the great and good man that filled it up so well; therefore give me wisdom, that Israel may not suffer damage by the change. Must I reign in my father's stead? Lord, give me my father's spirit.' Note, The eminency of those that went before us, and the obligation that lies on us to keep up and carry on the good work they were engaged in, should provoke us to a gracious emulation, and quicken our prayers to God for wisdom and grace, that we may do the work of God in our day, as faithfully and well as they, in theirs. (2.) *Let thy promise to David my father be estab-*

the congregation with him, went to the high place that *was* at [f] Gibeon; for there was [g] the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses [h] the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness.

B. C. 1045. 4 But [i] the ark of God had David brought up from Kirjath-jearim, to *the place which* David had prepared for it: [k] for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem.

5 Moreover, [l] the brazen altar that [m] Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, * he put before the tabernacle of the LORD: and Solomon and the congregation sought unto it.

6 And Solomon went up thither to the brazen altar before the LORD, which *was* at the tabernacle of the congregation, and offered [n] a thousand burnt-offerings upon it.

7 [o] In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, [p] Ask what I shall give thee.

8 And Solomon said unto God, [q] Thou hast showed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me [r] to reign in his stead.

9 Now, O LORD God, [s] let thy promise unto David my father be established; for thou hast made me king over a people, † like the dust of the earth in multitude.

10 [t] Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may [u] go out and come in before this people: [x] for who can judge this thy people *that is so* great?

11 And God said to Solomon, Because [y] this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honor, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, [z] that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king;

12 Wisdom and knowledge *is* granted unto thee: and [a] I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honor, [b] such as none of the kings have had, that *have been* before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.

13 ¶ Then Solomon came *from his journey* to the high place that *was* [c] at Gibeon to Jerusalem, from before the tabernacle of the congregation, and [d] reigned over Israel.

14 And [e] Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, which he placed in the chariot-cities, and with the king at Jerusalem.

15 And [f] the king ‡ made silver and gold at Jerusalem *as plenteous* as stones, and cedar-trees made he as the [g] sycamore-trees that *are* in the vale for abundance.

16 And § Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price.

17 And they fetched up, and brought forth out of Egypt, a chariot for six hundred *shekels* of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty: and so brought they out *horses* for all [h] the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, by their ‖ means

f 1 K. 3:4. 1 Chr. 16:39. 21:29.
g Ex. 26:1,&c. 40:2,34. Lev. 1:1.
h Deut. 34:5.
i 2 Sam. 6:2,17. 1 Chr. 13:5,6. 15: 25—28.
k 1 Chr. 16:1. Ps. 132:5,6.
l Ex. 27:1—8. 38:1—7.
m Ex. 31:2. 1 Chr. 2:19,20.
* Heb. was *there*.
n 1 K. 3:4. 8:63. 1 Chr. 29:21. Is. 40:16.
o 1 K. 3:5—15. Prov. 3:5,6.
p Matt. 7:7,8. Mark 10:36,37,51. John 16:23. 1 John 5:14,15.
q 2 Sam. 7:8,9. 12:7,8. 22:51. 23:1. Ps. 86:13. 89:20—28,49. Is. 55:3.
r 1 Chr. 28:5. 29:23.
s 2 Sam. 7:12—16,25—29. 1 Chr. 17: 11—14,23—27. 28:6,7. Ps. 89:35—37. 132:11,12.
† Heb. *much as the dust of the earth*. Gen. 13:16. 22:17. Num. 23:10.
t Ps. 119:34,73. Prov. 2:2—6. 3:13—18. Jam. 1:5.
u Num. 27:17. Deut. 31:2. 2 Sam. 5:2.
x 2 Cor. 2:16. 3:5.
y 1 Sam. 16:7. 1 K. 8:18. 1 Chr. 28:2. 29:17,18. Acts 5:4.
z 1 K. 3:28. Prov. 14:8. Jam. 3:13,17.
a Matt. 6:33. Eph. 3:20.
b 9:22. 1 Chr. 29:25. Ec. 2:9.
c 3.
d 1 K. 4:24,25.
e 9:25. Deut. 17:16. 1 K. 4:26. 10:26.
f 12. 9:27. 1 K. 10:27. Job 22:24,25. Is. 60:17.
‡ Heb. *gave*.
g 9:27. Is. 9:10. Am. 7:14.
§ Heb. *the going forth of the horses which was Solomon's*. 9:28. 1 K. 10:28,29.
h 2 K. 7:6.
‖ Heb. *hand*.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It would be a comely sight, to behold kings with their nobles, and the chief estates of their dominions, assembling together for the purposes of religious worship, stirring up each other by the fervency of their devotions, and giving evident demonstrations how generally and deeply their hearts were engaged in the sacred services. Alas! even in Christian countries such scenes are seldom, if ever, exhibited! But the example, the influence, and the exhortations of princes, who greatly fear and love the Lord, and who are eminent for piety and wisdom, may effect very great things; especially when one succeeds to another, walking before God in the steps of his predecessor: and those, who love the truths and service of God, should unite in praying, not *formally*, but *fervently*, for all in authority; that, being enriched with grace and wisdom, they may become instruments of extensive good.—To us the desires of men's hearts can be known only by their habitual conduct; but in themselves they as certainly distinguish characters, as actions do: and if the Lord see, that it is in our heart to desire wisdom and grace, more than riches, honor, or pleasure, He will delight to fulfil all our mind.—To know and to do our duty in the station of life assigned us, to the glory of God and the benefit of society, requires much wisdom, and is one principal exercise and evidence of it: and if we humbly feel our need of this wisdom, and faithfully ask it of God, He will give it liberally. (*Jam.* 1: 5—8.)—Secular employments, commenced by the worship and service of God, are likely to be well managed and prosperous: and as He 'gives grace and glory; so He will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly.'—But alas! prosperity is always dangerous, because our hearts are extremely deceitful: and it is with great propriety, that we pray, 'in all time of our wealth, . . . 'Good Lord deliver us,' from pride, ostentation, indolence, self-indulgence, and a worldly mind. Let us then improve our present talent, seek heavenly blessings, and be contented without those great things, which men generally covet, but which commonly prove fatal snares to their souls. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. I. V. 11. *This was in thine heart.* This does not occur in Kings: and it implies that the request of Solomon, as arising from a spiritual judgment and heart, was peculiarly acceptable to that God, who searches, regards, and demands, the heart. God promised Solomon all he had not asked, except the life of his enemies: but he was to be a peaceable king, a type of the Prince of peace. (12) SCOTT.

Verse 16.

Had horses.] 'This Moses expressly prohibited, by which future kings were forbidden to establish a body of cavalry; [see on Deut. 17: 16. and note * p. 599, vol. 1.] because this could not be effected without sending to Egypt, the most dangerous of all foreign commerce to true religion. When Solomon had violated this law, and multiplied horses to excess (1 K. 4:26.) it was soon attended with those fatal consequences the law foretold. For he having, likewise, in violation of another law of Moses, married Pharaoh's daughter, the early fruits of this intercourse; and then, by a repetition of the same crime, but by the transgression of another law, having espoused more strange women, (1 K. 3:1. 11:1.) they first, in defiance of a 4th law, persuaded him to build them idol-temples for their use; and, afterwards against a 5th law, still more fundamental, they induced him to erect other temples for his own. Now the origin of all this mischief was the forbidden traffic with Egypt for horses.' [Resist the beginnings of evil. WARBURTON. CLARKE. HEWLETT.

CHAP. II.

Solomon purposes to build the temple, and a palace, 1. His workmen, 2. He sends to Huram for skilful artificers, and for timber, 3—10. Huram's friendly answer, 11—16. Solomon employs strangers, as laborers and overseers, 17, 18.

AND Solomon [a] determined to build an house [b] for the name of the LORD, and [c] an house for his kingdom.

2 And Solomon [d] told out threescore and ten thousand men to bear burdens, and fourscore thousand to hew in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred to oversee them.

3 And Solomon sent to [e] Huram the king of Tyre, saying, [f] As thou didst deal with David my father, and didst send him cedars to build him an house to dwell therein, *even so deal with me.*

4 Behold, [g] I build an house to the name of the LORD my God, [h] to dedicate *it* to him, *and* [i] to burn before him * sweet incense, and for [k] the continual shew-bread, and for [l] the burnt-offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on [m] the solemn feasts of the LORD our God. This *is an ordinance* for ever to Israel.

5 And the house which I build *is* [n] great: for [o] great *is* our God above all gods.

6 But [p] who is † able to build him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? [q] who *am* I then, that I should build him an house, [r] save only to burn sacrifice before him?

7 Send me now therefore a man [s] cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, and that can skill ‡ to grave with the cunning men that *are* with me in Judah and in Jerusalem, [t] whom David my father did provide.

8 [u] Send me also cedar-trees, fir-trees, [x] and § algum-trees, out of Lebanon: for I know that thy servants can skill to cut timber in Lebanon; and behold, my servants *shall be* with thy servants,

9 Even to prepare me timber in abundance: for the house which I am about to build *shall be* ‖ wonderful great.

10 And, behold, [y] I will give to thy servants, the hewers that cut timber, twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat, and twenty thousand measures of barley, and twenty thousand [z] baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil.

11 ¶ Then Huram the king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon, [a] Because the LORD hath loved his people, he hath made thee king over them.

a 1 K. 5:3.
b Deut. 12:5,11. 23:23. 1 K. 8:18,20. 1 Chr. 22:10. Matt. 6:9,10.
c 1 K. 7:1. 9:1.
d 18. 1 K. 5:15,16.
e 1 K. 5:1. *Hiram.*
f 2 Sam. 5:11. 1 Chr. 14:1.
g 1. 1 K. 8:18.
h 1 K. 8:63.
i Ex. 30:7.
* Heb. *incense of spices.*
k Ex. 25:30. Lev. 24:5—8.
l Ex. 29:38—42. Num. 28:3,4,9—11.
m Lev. 23: Num. 28: 29:
n 9. 1 K. 9:8. 1 Chr. 29:1. Ez. 7:20.
o Ex. 15:11. 1 Chr. 16:25. Ps. 86:8,9. 135:5. 145:3. Jer. 10:6.
p 6:18. 1 K. 8:27. Is. 66:1. Acts 7: 48,49.
† Heb. *hath retained,* or, *obtained strength.*
q 1:10. Ex. 3:11. 2 Sam. 7:18. 1 Chr. 29:14. 2 Cor. 2:16. Eph. 3:8.
r Deut. 12:5,6,11,14,26
s Ex. 31:3—5. 1 K. 7:14. Is. 28:26, 29. 40:10.
‡ Heb. *to grave gravings.*
t 1 Chr. 22:15,16.
u 1 K. 5:6.
x 1 K. 10:11. *almug-trees.*
§ Or, *algummim.*
‖ Heb. *great and wonderful.* 5. 7:21 1 K. 9:8.
y 1 K. 5:11. Luke 10:7. Rom. 13:7,8
z 1 K. 7:26,38. Ezra 7:22.
a 9:8. Deut. 7:7,8. 1 K. 10:9.

CHAP. II. V. 1—10. Solomon's wisdom was given him, not merely for speculation to entertain himself, (though it is indeed a princely entertainment,) nor merely for conversation to entertain his friends, but for action; therefore to action he immediately applies himself. Observe,

I. *He determined to build,* first a temple, then a palace; a house, not so much for his own convenience, as for the kingdom, its honor among neighbors, and for the decent reception of the people, whenever they had occasion to apply to their prince; so that, in both, he aimed at the public good. Those are wisest that lay out themselves most for the honor of the name of the Lord, and the welfare of communities: we are not born for ourselves, but for God and our country.

II. The purport of his errand to Huram, is much the same here as we had it, 1 K. 5: 2, &c. only here it is more largely set forth: and the reasons more fully represented, for information to Huram, as well as for inducement.

He endeavors to possess Huram with great and high thoughts of the God of Israel, by expressing the mighty veneration he had for his holy name. Let not Huram think the God of Israel, like the gods of the nations, *dwells in temples made with hands;* no, the *heaven of heavens cannot contain Him.* The house is intended only for the convenience of the priests and worshippers, that they may have a fit place wherein to burn sacrifice before Him. He looked upon himself, though a mighty prince, as unworthy the honor of being employed in this great work. *Who am I, that I should build a house?* It is part of the wisdom wherein we ought to walk toward them that are without, carefully to guard against all misapprehension, which any thing we say or do may occasion, concerning God; so Solomon does here in his treaty with Huram.

His requests to him, are more particular here. 1. That Huram would furnish him with a good hand to work, *v.* 7. *send me a man.* He had *cunning men* with him in Jerusalem and Judah, whom David provided, 1 Chr. 22: 15. but *send me a man* to direct them. 2. With good materials to work on, *v.* 8, 9. for the house must be *wonderful great,* i. e. very stately and magnificent, no cost must be spared, nor any contrivance wanting in it.

Solomon's engagement to maintain the workmen, is in *v.* 10. He fed his workmen with plenty, and every thing of the best. They that employ laborers, ought to take care they be not only well paid, but well provided for, with sufficient of what is wholesome and fit for them. Let rich masters do for their poor workmen, as they would be done by, if the tables were turned.

V. 11—18. Here we have,—I. Huram's return to Solomon's embassy, in which he shows a great respect for Solomon, and a readiness to serve him. Less people may learn of those great ones to be neighborly and complaisant.

1. He congratulates Israel, on having such a king as Solomon was, *v.* 11. Note, a wise and good government is a great blessing to a people, and may well be accounted a singular token of God's favor. He does not say, *Because He loved*

NOTES.

CHAP. II. V. 1, 2. *M. R.—Note,* 1 *Kings* 5:13—18. SCOTT.

Verses 3—10.

Solomon, it appears, thought it no impropriety to speak freely and particularly on religious subjects, in treating with a heathen prince about secular business. ID.

(10.) *Beaten wheat.*] Perhaps that beaten out, after an ancient Egyptian method, with a stick, as being preferable to that trodden out by oxen, rams, &c. But *Hewlett* makes it 'probably a coarse kind of meal, made by crushing the grains of corn, without winnowing. Some Rabbis interpret it "fine flour."' ED.

12 [b] Huram said moreover, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, [c] that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, * endued with prudence and understanding, that might build [d] an house for the LORD, and an house for his kingdom.

13 And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding, [e] of Huram my father's,

14 [f] The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father *was* a man of Tyre, [g] skilful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device which shall be put to him, with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David thy father.

15 Now therefore the wheat, and the barley, the oil, and the wine, [h] which my lord hath spoken of, let him send unto his servants:

16 And [i] we will cut wood out of Lebanon, † as much as thou shalt need; and we will bring it to thee in floats by sea to ‡ Joppa, and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem.

17 And Solomon [k] numbered all § the strangers that *were* in the land of Israel, [l] after the numbering wherewith David his father had numbered them; and they were found an hundred and fifty thousand, and three thousand and six hundred.

18 And he set [m] threescore and ten thousand of them *to be* bearers of burdens, and fourscore thousand *to be* hewers in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred overseers to set the people a-work.

thee, (though that was true, 2 Sam. 12: 24.) He *made thee king*, but because He *loved his* people. Princes must look on themselves as preferred for the public good, not for their own personal satisfaction, and should rule so, as to prove that they were given in love, not in anger.

2. He blesses God for raising up such a successor to David, *v.* 12. It should seem Huram was proselyted to the Jewish religion, and worshipped Jehovah, *the God of Israel*, (who was not known by that name to the neighboring nations,) as *the God that made heaven and earth*, and as the Fountain of power as well as being; for He sets up kings. Now that Israel kept close to the law and worship of God, and so preserved their honor, the neighboring nations were as willing to be instructed by them in the true religion, as *they* had been, in the days of their apostasy, to be infected with the idolatries and superstitions of their neighbors.

3. He sent him a very ingenious, curious workman, his mother an Israelite, (Huram thought of the tribe of Dan, *v.* 14. but, it seems, she was of the tribe of Naphtali, 1 K. 7: 14.) and his father a Tyrian; a good omen of uniting Jew and Gentile in the gospel-temple; as it was afterward when the building of the second temple was greatly furthered by Darius, (Ezra 6.) who is supposed to have been the son of Esther, an Israelite by his mother's side.

4. He engaged for the timber, as much as he would have occasion for, and undertook to deliver it at Joppa; and, withal, signified his dependence on Solomon for the maintenance of the workmen, as he had promised, *v.* 15, 16. This agreement we had, 1 *K.* 5: 8, 9.

II. Solomon's orders about the workmen. He would not employ the free-born Israelites, but proselyted strangers, who had no inheritance in Canaan, as the Israelites had, and therefore applied themselves to trades, and got their living by their ingenuity and industry: there was, at this time, a vast number of them in the land, *v.* 17. who, if of any of the devoted nations, perhaps fell within the case, and therefore under the law, of the Gibeonites, to be hewers of wood for the congregation; if not, yet being, in many cases, well provided for by the law of Moses, and put on an equal footing with the native Israelites, they were bound in gratitude to do what they could for the service of the temple; yet, no doubt, they were well paid; the law was, *Thou shalt not oppress a stranger.* The distribution of them we have here, *v.* 2. and again, *v.* 18. in all, 150,000. The expedient peculiar to this structure, of framing all before hand, left room for this vast multitude to be employed in it; for in Lebanon they might all work together, without crowding one another, which they could not on mt. Sion. And if there had not been such vast numbers employed, so large and curious a fabric, begun and ended in 7 years, might have been as long in building as St. Paul's.

CHAP. III.

The place of the temple, and the time when the building of it was begun, 1, 2. Its dimensions and ornaments, 3—7. Those of the most holy place, 8—10. The cherubim placed in it, 11—13. The veil, 14. The two pillars, 15—17.

THEN [a] Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem [b] in mount Moriah, ‖ where *the LORD* appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing-floor of [c] Ornan the Jebusite.

CHAP. III. V. 1—9. Here is,

1. The place for the temple: before determined, 1 Chr. 22: 1. which was an ease to Solomon's mind. (1.) Jerusalem was the place God had chosen to put his name there, and the royal city must be the holy city: *there* must be *the testimony of Israel; for there are set the thrones of judgment*, Ps. 122: 4, 5. It must be on mt. Moriah, the very place (so some) where Abraham offered Isaac, Gen. 22: 2. So the Targum expressly. That was typical of Christ's sacrifice of Himself; therefore fitly was the temple, likewise a type of Him, built there. It must be *where the Lord appeared to David*, and *answered him by fire*, 1 Chr. 21: 18, 26. Where God has met with me, it is to be hoped He will still. It must be in the place David had

b 1 K. 5:7. 1 Chr. 29:20. Ps. 72:18,19. Luke 1:68. 1 Pet. 1:3.
c Gen. 1: 2. Ps. 33:6. 102:25. 124:8. 136:5,6. 146:5,6. Jer. 10:11. Acts 4:24. 14:15. Col. 1:16,17. Rev. 4: 11. 10:6.
* Heb. *knowing prudence, &c.* 1:10 12.
d 1.
e 4:16.
f 1 K. 7:13,14.
g 7. Ex. 31:3,4.
h 10. 1 K. 5:11.
i 1 K. 5:8,9.
† Heb. *according to all thy need.*
‡ Heb. *Japho.* Josh. 19:46. Ezra 3:7. Jon. 1:3. Acts 9:36. 10:32.
k 2. 2:7,8. 1 K. 5:13—16. 9:20,21.
§ Heb. *the men the strangers.*
l 1 Chr. 22:2.
m 2.
a 1 K. 6:1, &c.
b Gen. 22:2,14.
‖ Or, *which was seen of David.*
c 2 Sam. 24:18—25. *Araunah.* 1 Chr. 21:18. 22:1.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ought always to attend to the work of God, in decided preference to our own indulgence or accommodation: and our hearts should be resolved for every service, that we may endure hardship, struggle with difficulties, and not yield to weariness or discouragement.—The greatest monarchs on earth are as nothing, in comparison with the God of heaven; and they should deem it their highest honor to be his servants, and to speak of his glorious majesty.—The genuine love of God, abounding in the heart, infuses the savor of piety into the ordinary concerns and converse of life. Indeed, we should be neither afraid nor ashamed, to embrace every opportunity of speaking honorably of Him, and of impressing the minds of men with a deep sense of his majesty and excellency, and of the importance of his favor, worship, and service. (*Ps.* 119: 46.)—It is a great part of our 'wisdom towards them that are without,' so to explain our meaning in every doctrine and ordinance, and so to guard our discourses about them, as may best prevent misapprehension or prejudice: and the neglect of this rule is not boldness or faithfulness, as some well-meaning zealots suppose, but indiscretion and folly.—In pleading the cause of God and religion, we should always speak humbly of ourselves; but, unless we be humbled, our temper and conduct will betray the hypocrisy of our self-abasing language. May the Lord Himself therefore 'clothe us with humility!'—Possessions, endowments, or royal authority, are given men for the sake of others; and a wise and pious king is an evidence of the Lord's special love to the people. Who then can express the greatness of his love to his people, in giving them his only begotten Son, to be their Prince and Savior!—Let us be unwearied in spreading the knowledge of his name and truth; and let us devote our several talents to his service; endeavor to be helpful to one another in this good work; and be thankful that poor heathens, and even slaves, may be usefully and acceptably employed by our great and gracious Lord!

SCOTT.

Verse 13.

Of Huram my father's.] Or, *Huramabi*. It seems that this man, being the most eminent in his line of business, was called *father*, or *my father Huram*. King Huram called him so, and Solomon did the same. (4:16.) For it is evident that the artist's name is here meant, and not that of the king's father. SCOTT.

Verses 14—16.

M. R.—My lord David. (14) An honorable title given by Hurum to David, expressive of veneration and affection: for, probably, he had derived his knowledge of the true God, and of his holy worship, from his intercourse with David, to whom on that account he looked up, as to a superior. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. III. V. 1, 2. It is thought, that the temple and its courts were situated, partly in the lot of Judah, and partly in that of Benjamin. (*Deut.* 33:12. *Ps.* 78:67—69.) ID.

2 And he began to build [d] in the second *day* of the second month, in the fourth year of his reign.

3 ¶ Now these *are the things wherein* [e] Solomon was * instructed for the building of the house of God. [f] The length by cubits after the first measure *was* threescore cubits, and the breadth twenty cubits.

4 And the porch that *was* in the front *of the house*, the length *of it was* according to the breadth of the house, twenty cubits, and the height *was* an hundred and twenty: and he overlaid it within with pure gold.

5 And [g] the greater house he ceiled with fir-tree, which he overlaid with fine gold, and set thereon palm-trees and chains.

6 And he † garnished the house with [h] precious stones for beauty: and the gold *was* gold of Parvaim.

7 He [i] overlaid also the house, the beams, the posts, and the walls thereof, and the doors thereof, with gold; and [k] graved cherubims on the walls.

8 And he made [l] the most holy house, the length whereof *was* according to the breadth of the house, twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits: and he overlaid it with fine gold, *amounting* to six hundred talents.

9 And the weight of the nails *was* fifty shekels of gold. And he overlaid the upper chambers with gold.

10 And in the most holy house he made [m] two cherubims of ‡ image-work, and overlaid them with gold.

11 And the wings of the cherubims *were* twenty cubits long: one wing *of the one cherub was* five cubits reaching to the wall of the house; and the other wing *was likewise* five cubits, reaching to the wing of the other cherub.

12 And *one* wing of the other cherub *was* five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house; and the other wing *was* five cubits *also* joining to the wing of the other cherub.

13 The wings of these cherubims spread themselves forth twenty cubits: and they stood on their feet, and their faces *were* § inward.

14 ¶ And he made [n] the veil *of* blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen, and ‖ wrought cherubims thereon.

15 Also he made before the house [o] two pillars of thirty and five cubits ¶ high, and the chapiter that *was* on the top of each of them *was* five cubits.

16 And he made [p] chains, *as* in the oracle, and put *them* on the heads of the pillars; and made [q] an hundred pomegranates, and put *them* on the chains.

17 And he [r] reared up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand, and the other on the left; and called the name of that on the right hand ** Jachin, and the name of that on the left †† Boaz.

d 1 K. 6:1.
e 1 Chr. 28:11—19.
* Heb. *founded.*
f 1 K. 6:2,3.
g 1 K. 6:15—17,21,22.
† Heb. *covered.*
h 1 Chr. 29:2,8. Is. 54:12. Rev. 21:19, 20.
i Ex. 26:29. 1 K. 6:20—22,30. Ez 7:20.
k Ex. 26:1. 1 K. 6:35.
l Ex. 26:33. 1 K. 6:19,20. Heb. 9:3,9. 10:19.
m 1 K. 6:26—28.
‡ Or, *movable work.*
§ Or, *toward the house.* Ex. 25:20.
n Ex. 26:31—35. Matt. 27:51. Heb. 9:3. 10:20.
‖ Heb. *caused to ascend.*
o 1 K. 7:15—24. Jer. 52:21—23.
¶ Heb. *long.*
p 1 K. 6:21.
q 1 K. 7:20.
r 1 K. 7:21.
** That is, *He shall establish.*
†† That is, *In it is strength.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Blessed be God, the sacred Scriptures are sufficient to render 'the man of God thoroughly furnished for every good work:' and all our mistakes and embarrassments, in matters of importance, arise from not knowing the Scriptures, or not attending to this our heavenly rule. Let us then search them daily; and beseech the Lord to enable us to understand, believe, remember, and obey his whole Word; that our way may be made plain before us. Let us endeavor, that all our works may be 'begun, continued, and ended in Him:' let us seek his grace to adorn our souls with the beauties of holiness, and his strength to establish us in faith and steady obedience, and to prosper our labors for his glory. Beholding God in Christ, his true Temple, infinitely more glorious than that of Solomon, may we too become 'a spiritual house, 'an habitation of God through the Spirit,' and 'an holy priesthood;' that here on earth we may begin to join the worship of cherubim and seraphim before the throne; and at length in his courts above, sing 'praises to Him, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.' SCOTT.

Verses 3, 4.

The first measure.] 'I. e. the original cubit of Moses, not that of Babylon, used after the captivity, which was a palm or one-sixth shorter.' *Wil.* COND. COMM. 'The first measure' seems to mean the *original plan*. 'He projected the sanctuary, and the oracle, both together; and in their first description they were to be in length 60 cubits: that is, 40 for the sanctuary, and 20 for the most holy place.' *Patrick.* The height of the porch is not mentioned in Kings; but the description of the temple, in the exposition, [there,] takes in this account. SCOTT.

(4.) *A hundred and twenty.*] 'If this was the building mentioned 1 K. 6:2. it is there said to be 30 cubits high. Probably the letters in *meah* (100) are transposed for *amah* (cubit): if so the proper reading is 20 cubits. So the *Syr. Arab.* and *Sept.* (of Cod. Alex.) appear to have read, for they translate 20. This measure will be proportionate.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* But are we sure there was no substructure, rendered necessary by the uneven and narrow summit of Moriah, which, at least, in some parts, would have required the 120 ft. of building? Note, Matt. 4: 5—7. See Ezek. 8: 7—9. ED.

Verses 6—8.

(*M. R.*) It is not known on what account the gold, here mentioned, is called gold of Parvaim; that word not elsewhere occurring in Scripture: probably it was brought from a place so called. SCOTT. 'A place in Armenia.' *Wil.* Ceylon was called by the Phœnicians Taphparvan, which signifies 'the shore of Parvan.' BOCHART.

Verse 9.

Some, by the word rendered 'the upper chambers,' suppose the ceiling of the most holy place to be meant; but perhaps some of the upper chambers, on the outside of the temple, were thus decorated; the lower being used for more common purposes. (1 *K.* 5:5—10.) SCOTT.

Verses 10—13.

The meaning of the word, rendered 'image-work,' (10) is not well known; but it implies something highly ornamented. ID.

CHAP. IV.

The altar of brass, 1. The molten sea supported by twelve oxen, 2—5. The lavers, candlesticks, and tables, 6—8. The two courts of the temple, 9, 10. The vessels, furniture, and instruments of brass, 11—18. Those of gold, 19—22.

MOREOVER, he made [a] an altar of brass, twenty cubits the length thereof, and twenty cubits the breadth thereof, and ten cubits the height thereof.

2 Also he made [b] a molten sea of ten cubits from * brim to brim, round in compass, and five cubits the height thereof; and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about.

3 And under it *was* [c] the similitude of oxen, which did compass it round about: ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about. Two rows of oxen *were* cast, when it was cast.

4 It [d] stood upon twelve oxen, * three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea *was set* above upon them, and all their hinder parts *were* inward.

5 And the thickness of it *was* an hand-breadth, and the brim of it like the work of the brim of a cup, † with flowers of lilies: *and* it received and held [f] three thousand baths.

6 He made also [g] ten lavers, and put five on the right hand, and five on the left, to wash in them: ‡ such things as they offered for the burnt-offering, they washed in them; [h] but the sea *was* for the priests to wash in.

7 ¶ And he made [i] ten candlesticks of gold [k] according to their form, and set *them* in the temple, five on the right hand, and five on the left.

8 He made also [l] ten tables, and placed *them* in the temple, five on the right side, and five on the left. And he made an hundred § basins of gold.

9 ¶ Furthermore, he made [m] the court of the priests, and the great court, and doors for the court, and overlaid the doors of them with brass.

10 And [n] he set the sea on the right side of the east end, over against the south.

11 And Huram made

God as they do it. The thought that we are worshipping Him before whom the angels cover their faces, will help to inspire us with reverence in all our approaches to God. Comp. 1 Cor. 11: 10. with Is. 6: 2.

2. The veil that parted between the temple and the most holy place, *v.* 14. This denoted the darkness of that dispensation, and the distance the worshippers were kept at; but, at the death of Christ, this veil was rent; for through Him we are made nigh, and have boldness not only to look, but to enter, into the holiest. On this he wrought cherubim, Heb. *caused to ascend*, i. e. made in raised work, embossed; or, on the wing in an ascending posture, to remind the worshippers to lift up their hearts, and to soar upward in their devotions.

3. The two pillars together were somewhat above 35 cubits in length, *v.* 15. about 18 cubits high apiece: see 1 K. 7: 15, &c. We there took a view of those pillars, *Jachin* and *Boaz*, *establishment* and *strength* in temple-work, and by it.

CHAP. IV. Vs. 1—10. David often speaks with much affection, both of the *house of the Lord*, and of the *courts of our God*. Both without doors and within, was that which typified the grace of the Gospel, and *shadowed* out Christ.

I. There were things in the open court, in view of all the people, very significant.

1. The *brazen altar*, *v.* 1. The making of this was not mentioned in Kings. On this, all the sacrifices were offered, and it sanctified the gift. Moses', in the tabernacle, was 5 cubits square, this, 20. God had greatly increased and enriched them, it was therefore fit they should enlarge his altars. Our returns should bear some proportion to our receivings. It was 10 cubits high, so that the people who worshipped in the courts, might see the sacrifices burnt, and their eye might affect their heart with sorrow for sin. They might thus be led to consider the great Sacrifice, which should be offered in the fulness of time. And, with the smoke of the sacrifices, their hearts might ascend to heaven in holy desires toward God and his favor. In all our devotions, we must keep the eye of faith fixed on Christ, the great Propitiation. How they went up to this altar, we are not told; but doubtless it was so that the end of the law, mentioned Ex. 20: 26. might be answered.

2. The molten sea. A very large brass pan, in which was water for the priests to wash in, *v* 2. 6. It was put just at the entrance into the court of the priests, like the font at the church-door. Filled to the brim, it would hold 3000 baths, as here, *v.* 5. but in common, only 2000 were in it, 1 K. 7: 26. The Holy Ghost by this signified, our great gospel-*privilege*, that *the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin*, 1 John 1: 7. and our great gospel-duty, to cleanse ourselves by true repentance from all pollutions of the flesh, and corruption in the world. They that draw nigh to God, must *cleanse their hands, and purify their hearts*, Jam. 4: 8. *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me;* and he that *is washed*, still needs *to wash his feet*, to renew his repentance whenever he *goes in to minister*, John 13: 10.

3. The *ten lavers* of brass, in which *they washed things offered for burnt-offerings*, *v.* 6. as the priests must be washed, so must the sacrifices. We must not only purify ourselves in preparation for our religious performances, but carefully put away all those vain thoughts, and corrupt aims, which cleave to our performances themselves, and pollute them.

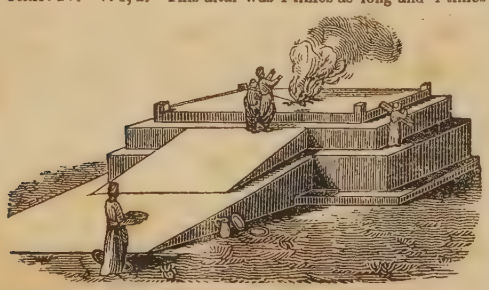
4. The doors of the court were overlaid with brass, *v.* 9. both for strength and beauty, and that they might not be rotted with the weather. *Gates of brass*, we read of, Ps. 107: 16.

II. There were things very significant in *the*

a 1:5. Ex. 27:1—8. 1 K. 8:22,64. 9: 25. 2 K. 16:14,15. Ez. 43:13—16.
b Ex. 30:18—21. 1 K. 7:23—26. Zech. 13:1. Tit. 3:5. Rev. 7:14.
* Heb. *his brim to his brim.*
c Ez. 1:10. 10:14. 1 Cor. 9:9,10. Rev. 4:7.
d Matt. 16:18. Eph. 2:20. Rev. 21:14.
e Matt. 28:19,20. Mark 16:15. Luke 24:46,47. Acts 9:15.
† Or, *like a lily-flower.*
f 1 K. 7:26.
g Ex. 30:18—21. 1 K. 7:38,40. Ps. 51: 2. 1 Cor. 6:11. 1 John 1:7.
‡ Heb. *the work of burnt-offering.* Lev. 1:9,13. Ez. 40:38.
h 2. Ex. 29:4. Heb. 9:14. Rev. 1:5,6. 7:14.
i 1 K. 7:49. 1 Chr. 28:15. Zech. 4:2, 3,11—14. Matt. 5:14—16. John 8:12. Rev. 1:20.
k Ex. 25:31—40.
l Ex. 25:23—30. 37:10—16. 1 K. 7:48. Is. 25:6. Ez. 44:16. Mal. 1:12. 1 Cor. 10:21.
§ Or, *bowls.* Jer. 52:18,19. Zech. 14:20.
m 1 K. 6:36. 7:12.
n 1 K. 7:39.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV. V. 1, 2. This altar was 4 times as long and 4 times as broad, and above 3 times as high, as that made by Moses; (*Ex.* 27:1—8. *Ezra* 3:2, 3. *Ez.* 43:13—17.) and it formed a scaffold, above 11 yards square, and 5 yards high. SCOTT. Cuts are given, after *Taylor's Calm.* of the supposed form of the *Altar* and *Sea*. 'Calm. supposes the bowl or cavity held 2000 baths, and the foot or hollow, 1000 more. *Taylor*, however, suggests that this Sea resembled the Fountain of Lions in the Alhambra at Granada; that, as most Jewish purifications were made in running water—as the Jer. Talm. and Maimonides say, a pipe of water came into it from the well Etam, constantly—and as the phrase in 1 K. 7:26. is, it '*held* 2000 baths,' and here both 'it held' and 'it received,' *v.* 5. are used—the sacred writer means, 'that the water necessary to supply the whole, (pipes, basin, and the 12 fountains pouring from the mouths of the oxen,) or what was *received* by the entire fountain when at work, was 3000 baths; while the *basin*



alone *held* only 2000 baths.' Others suppose, one writer means dry measure baths and the other liquid-measure, or that the bath had varied since Solomon's time.' ROB. CALM. 'Oxen, (3) "*Bekarim;*" in 1 K. 7. it is "*pekaim,*" *knops*, in the form of colocynths: the difference arises from a change of letters.' HENRY abr.

Verse 7.

Form.] Either the *form*, in which Moses had been taught to make the golden candlestick for the tabernacle; (*Ex.* 25:31—39. Cut 37:17—24. 1 *K.* 7:48—51.) or, according to the pattern David gave him. (1 *Chr.* 28:11—19.) SCOTT.

V. 10—12. *M. R.—Pommels.* (12) Or *Globes.* Called *bowls*, 1 *K.* 7: 41. Perhaps they were globes placed above the chapiters, which were

[o] the pots, and the shovels, and the * basins. And Huram † finished the work, that he was to make for king Solomon for the house of God:

12 *To wit,* [p] the two pillars, and [q] the pommels, and the chapiters, *which were* on the top of the two pillars, and the two wreaths to cover the two pommels of the chapiters which *were* on the top of the pillars;

13 And [r] four hundred pomegranates on the two wreaths; two rows of pomegranates on each wreath, to cover the two pommels of the chapiters which *were* upon the ‡ pillars.

14 He made also [s] bases; and § lavers made he upon the bases;

15 [t] One sea, and twelve oxen under it.

16 The [u] pots also, and the [v] shovels, and the [x] flesh-hooks, and all their instruments, did [y] Huram [z] his father make to king Solomon, for the house of the LORD, of ‖ bright brass.

17 In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the ¶ clay-ground between Succoth and [a] Zeredathah.

18 Thus Solomon made all these vessels in great abundance: for [b] the weight of the brass could not be found out.

19 And Solomon made [c] all the vessels that *were for* the house of God, [d] the golden altar also, and [e] the tables whereon the shew-bread *was set;*

20 Moreover [f] the candlesticks with their lamps, that they should [g] burn after the manner, before [h] the oracle of pure gold;

21 And [i] the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs, *made he of* gold, *and* that ** perfect gold,

22 And the [k] snuffers, and the †† basins, and the spoons, and the censers, *of* pure gold: and [l] the entry of the house, the inner doors thereof for the most holy *place,* and the doors of the house of the temple, *were of* gold.

CHAP. V.

The temple is finished, and the dedicated treasures deposited in it, 1. The ark is brought into the most holy place, 2—10. While the Levites sing praises to God, a cloud fills the temple, 11—14.

THUS all the work that Solomon made for the house of the LORD was finished: and Solomon [a] brought in *all* the things that David his father had dedicated; and the silver, and the gold, and all the instruments, put he among the treasures of the house of God.

2 [b] Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, [c] the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD [d] out of [e] the city of David, which *is* Zion.

3 Wherefore all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto the king, [f] in the feast which *was* in the seventh month.

4 And all the elders of Israel came; and [g] the Levites took up the ark.

house of the Lord, into which the priests went only. All was of gold there. The nearer we come to God, the purer we *must* be, the purer we *shall* be.

1. The 10 *golden candlesticks,* according to the form of that in the tabernacle, *v.* 7. The written Word is a lamp and a light, shining in a dark place. In Moses' time, they had but one candlestick, the Pentateuch; but the additions, in process of time, to be made of other books of Scripture, might be signified. Light was growing. The candlesticks are the churches, Rev. 1: 20. Moses set up but one, the church of the Jews; but, in the gospel-temple, not only believers, but churches, are multiplied.

2. The 10 *golden tables, v.* 1. *Tables whereon the shew-bread was set, v.* 19. Perhaps every one of the tables had 12 loaves of shew-bread on it. As the house was enlarged, the house-keeping was.

3. A *golden altar, v.* 19. on which they burnt incense. Probably this was enlarged, in proportion to the brazen altar. Christ, who, once for all, made atonement for sin, ever lives, making intercession, in virtue of that atonement.

V. 11—22. We have here such a summary, both of the brass-work, and the gold-work of the temple, as we had before, 1 K. 7: 13, &c. *Huram his father, v.* 16. probably was a sort of a nick-name by which Huram was commonly known, *Father Huram;* the king of Tyre called him *Huram Abi, my father;* in compliance with whom Solomon called him his; he being a great artist, and *father of the artificers* in brass and iron. He acquitted himself well, both for ingenuity and industry. Solomon was very generous. Freely he has received, and he will freely give. When he had made vessels enough for the present, he would not convert the remainder of the brass to his own use; it is devoted to God, and shall be used for Him.

CHAP. V. V. 1—10. This agrees with what is said, 1 K. 8: 2, &c. of the solemn introducing of the ark into the new-erected temple.

1. No great solemnity was needed on bringing in the dedicated things, *v.* 1. They added to its wealth and perhaps to its beauty; but could not add to its holiness; the *temple sanctified the gold,* Matt. 23: 17. Solomon would be just both to God and to his father. Whatever David had dedicated he would by no means alienate. Children that would inherit their godly parents' blessing, must religiously pursue their pious intentions. Dedicated things must not be alienated. It is sacrilege.

2. But it was fit the ark should be brought in with great solemnity; and so it was, *v.* 4—7. All the other vessels were made new, and larger, in proportion to the house, than they had been in the tabernacle; but the ark, the mercy-seat, and the cherubim were the same; the presence and the grace of God are the same in little assemblies as in large ones, in the poor condition of the church, as in its prosperous estate; wherever two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, there is He as truly, as if there were two or three thousand. *Unto this day, v.* 9. does not mean the day when this book was written after the captivity, but when that was written, out of which this story was transcribed. It might be better read, *they were there unto this day,* the day of Jerusalem's desolations, that fatal day, Ps. 137: 7. The ark was a type of Christ, and, as such, a token of God's presence. That gracious promise, *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,* does, in effect, bring the ark into our religious assemblies, if we by faith and prayer put that promise in suit; and this we should be most solicitous and earnest for; *Lord, if thy presence go not up with us,* wherefore should we go up? The temple itself, if Christ leave it, is a desolate place, Matt. 23: 38.

3. With the ark they brought up the tabernacle, and all the *holy vessels in* it, *v.* 5. They were not alienated, because dedicated to God; not altered or melted down for the new work, because not needed; but they were carefully laid up as monuments of antiquity; probably as many of the vessels as were fit, were still used.

4. This was done with great joy, *v.* 3, 6. Note, (1.) The establishment of the public worship of God, according to his institution, and with the tokens of his presence, is, and ought to be, matter

o 1 K. 7:40,45.
* Or, *bowls.*
† Heb. *finished to make.*
p 3:15—17.
q 1 K. 7:41.
r Ex. 28:33,34. 1 K. 7:42. Cant. 4:13. Jer. 52:23.
‡ Heb. *face of the.*
s 1 K. 7:27—43.
§ Or, *caldrons.* 6.
t 2—5.
u 11. Ex. 27:3. 38:3. Zech. 14:20,21.
x 1 Sam. 2:13,14. 1 Chr. 28:17.
y 1 K. 7:13,14,45. *Hiram.*
z 2:13.
‖ Heb. *made bright,* or *scoured.*
¶ Heb. *thicknesses of the ground.*
a 1 K. 7:46. *Zarthan.*
b 1 K. 7:47. 1 Chr. 22:3,14. Jer. 52:20.
c 36:10,18. 1 K. 7:48—50. 2 K. 24:13. 25:13—15. Ezra 1:7—11. Jer. 28:3. 52:18,19. Dan. 5:2,3,23.
d 26:16—18. Ex. 30:1—10. 37:25—29. Rev. 8:3. 9:13.
e Ex. 25:23—30. Lev. 24:5—8. 1 Chr. 28:16.
f 7. Ex. 25:31—37.
g Ex. 27:20,21.
h 1 K. 6:5,16,17. 8:6. Ps. 28:2.
i 5. Ex. 25:31. 37:20. 1 K. 6:18,29,35.
** Heb. *perfections of.*
k Ex. 37:23. 1 K. 7:50. 2 K. 12:13. 25:14. Jer. 52:18.
†† Or, *bowls.*
l 1 K. 6:31,32.
a 1 K. 7:51. 1 Chr. 22:14. 26:26—28.
b 1. 2 K. 8:1—11. 1 Chr. 28:1.
c 1 Chr. 15:12. 24:6,31. 26:26.
d 1 4. 2 Sam. 6:12. 1 Chr. 16:1.
e 2 Sam. 5:7.
f 7:8—10. Lev. 23:34—36. 1 K. 8:2.
g Num. 4:15. Josh. 3:6. 6:6. 1 K. 8:3. 1 Chr. 15:2,12—14.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The furniture of the temple, compared with that of the tabernacle, plainly instructed God's ancient people, that his church would be gradually enlarged, and his worshippers immensely multiplied: and, blessed be God, in the person, sacrifice, and offices of Christ, there is an abundant sufficiency for any multitudes, however large, who can ever come to the Father through Him —May the preaching of the Gospel hold Him forth, as crucified for sinners, to all the nations of the earth; and may his Spirit prepare the hearts of all the inhabitants, to welcome his salvation; for all things else are now ready. SCOTT.

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seen through the ornaments with which they were decorated. 1 K. 7:15—22.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. V. V. 2—5. *M. H.—Levites.* (4) Perhaps the Levites, of

5 And they brought up the ark, and [h] the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that *were* in the tabernacle, these did the priests *and* the Levites bring up.

6 Also [i] king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled unto him before the ark, sacrificed sheep and oxen, which could not be told nor numbered for multitude.

7 And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, [k] to the oracle of the house, into the most holy *place*, *even* under the wings of the cherubims.

8 For the cherubims spread forth *their* wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and [l] the staves thereof above.

9 And they drew out the staves *of the ark*, that [m] the ends of the staves were seen from the ark before the oracle; but they were not seen without. And [*] there it is unto this day.

10 *There was* nothing in the ark [n] save the two tables which Moses put *therein* at Horeb, † when [o] the LORD made *a covenant* with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt.

11 ¶ And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy *place;* (for all the priests *that were* ‡ present were [p] sanctified, *and* did not *then* [q] wait by course:

12 Also [r] the Levites *which were* the singers, all of them of [s] Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, *being* [t] arrayed in white linen, having [u] cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them [x] an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets:)

13 It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers *were* [y] as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up *their* voice with [z] the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, *saying*, For [a] *he is* good; for his mercy *endureth* for ever: that [b] *then* the house was filled with a cloud, *even* the house of the LORD;

14 So that [c] the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for [d] the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.

CHAP. VI.

Solomon blesses the people, and praises God, 1—11. His prayer at the dedication of the temple, 12—39. He concludes by earnestly entreating the Lord's special presence and blessing, 40—42.

THEN said Solomon, [e] the LORD hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness.

of great joy to any people. (2.) When Christ is formed in a soul, the law written in the heart, the ark of the covenant settled there, so that it becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost, there is true satisfaction in that soul. (3.) Whatever we have the comfort of, we must, by the sacrifices of praise, give God the glory of, and not be straitened therein.

V. 11—14. Observe here,

I. How God took possession of the temple, *v.* 13. 1. Thus He signified his acceptance of it, to be the same to Him, the tabernacle of Moses was, and assured them He would be the same in it; for by a cloud He made his public entry into that, Ex. 40: 34. 2. Thus He considered the infirmity of those to whom He manifested Himself; the dazzling lustre of the divine light, would have overpowered them; He therefore *spreads a cloud upon it*, Job 26: 9. Christ revealed things to his disciples, as they were able to bear, and in parables, which wrapped divine things as in a cloud. 3. Thus He would affect all that worshipped in his courts with holy reverence and fear, Luke 9: 34. 4. Thus He would intimate the darkness of that dispensation, by reason of which, they could not steadfastly look to the end of the things now abolished, 2 Cor. 3: 13.

II. When He took possession. 1. *When the priests were come out, v.* 11. This is the way of giving possession. All must come out, that the rightful Owner may come in. Would we have God dwell in our hearts? We must leave room; let every thing else give way. We are here told that, on this occasion, the whole family of the priests attended, and not any one particular course, *v.* 11. there was work enough for them all, when such a multitude of sacrifices were to be offered, and it was fit they should all be eye-witnesses of this solemnity, and receive the impressions of it. 2. When the singers and musicians praised God. This is very observable; the sacrifice of praise *pleaseth the Lord* better than that of *an ox or bullock*, Ps. 69: 31. All the singers and musicians were employed, *v.* 12. and when this part of the service began, the glory of God appeared. Observe, (1.) It was when they were unanimous; the Holy Ghost descended on the apostles, when they met with one accord, Acts 2: 1. Where unity is, the Lord commands the blessing. (2.) It was when they were lively and hearty, and *lifted up their voice to praise the Lord.* God is pleased with fervent service. (3.) It was when they were, in their praises, celebrating the everlasting mercy and goodness of God. As there is no one saying oftener repeated in scripture than this, *his mercy endureth for ever*, (26 times in Ps. 136. and often elsewhere,) so there is none more signally owned from heaven; it was not the expression of some rapturous flights the priests were singing when the glory of God appeared, but this plain song, *He is good, and his mercy endureth for ever*

This should endear those words to us. God's goodness is his glory, and He is pleased when we give Him the glory of it.

III. The effect. The *priests themselves could not stand to minister, by reason of the cloud, v.* 14 which, as it was an evidence that the law made men priests that had infirmity, so (as Patrick observes) it was a plain intimation, that the Levitical priesthood should cease, and stand no longer to minister, when the Messiah should come, in whom *the fulness of the Godhead should dwell bodily.* In Him the glory of God dwelt among us, but covered with a cloud. The Word was made flesh; and when He comes to his temple, like a refiner's fire, *who may abide the day of his coming?* And *who shall stand when He appeareth?* Mal. 3. 1, 2.

CHAP. VI. The glory of the Lord, in the cloud, having filled the house, by which God manifested his presence there, Solomon immediately improves

h 1:3. 1 K. 8:4,6.
i 2 Sam. 6:13. 1 K. 8:5. 1 Chr. 16: 1,2. 29:21.
k 4:20. Ex. 37:6—9. 1 K. 6:23—28. 8:6,7.
l Ex. 25:12—15. 37:3—5. Num. 4:6.
m 1 K. 8:8,9.
* Or, *they are there*: as, 1 K. 6:8.
n Ex. 31:18. 32:15,16,19. 34:1. 40:20. Deut. 10:2—5. Heb. 9:4.
† Or, *where.*
o Ex. 19:5. 24:7,8. Deut. 29:1,10—14. Jer. 31:31—34. Heb. 8:6—13.
‡ Heb. *found.*
p 29:5,15,34. 30:15,17—20. Ex. 19:10, 14,15. Job 1:5.
q 35:4. 1 Chr. 24:
r 29:25. 1 Chr. 15:16—22. 16:4—6,41, 42. 23:5.30. 25:1—7. Ezra 3:10,11
s 1 Chr. 6:33,39. 25:6. Ps. 50: 62: 88. *titles.*
t 1 Chr. 15:27. Rev. 15:6. 19:8.
u Ps. 92:3. 149:3. 150:3—5.
x Num. 10:1—5. Josh. 6:6—20. 1 Chr 15:24. 16:6.
y Ps. 95:1,2. 100:1,2. Is. 52:8. Jer. 32:39. Acts 4:32. Rom. 15:6. Rev 5:8—14.
z Ps. 68:25,26.
a 7:3. 20:21. 1 Chr. 16:34,41. Ezra 3:11. Ps. 136:1,&c. Jer. 33:11.
b Ex. 40:34,35. 1 K. 8:10—12.
c 7:2. 1 Tim. 6:16.
d Ex. 40:35. Is. 6:1—4. Ez. 10:4 Rev. 15:8.
e Ex. 20:21. 24:15—18. Lev. 16:2. Deut. 4:11. 1 K. 8:12. Ps. 18:8—11 97:2. Neh. 1:3. Heb. 12:18.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The eye of our faith must, in every service, be primarily directed to the atoning sacrifice of Christ: but, in subordination to it, our sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving are peculiarly well pleasing unto God; if the harmony of our voices, or musical instruments, is really accompanied with the sweet melody of a humble and grateful heart.—The ministers of God should always be ready, both in body and soul, for every service, ordinary or extraordinary: and it has a very unfavorable appearance, even in the eyes of men in general, when they manifest an unwillingness, or even backwardness, to exceed that measure, which entitles them to their emoluments. (*Mal.* 1: 9—11.)—When the worshippers of God are of one mind, as well as in one place, they may expect his more immediate presence and blessing: if He take possession of our hearts to sanctify them, He will exclude whatever interferes with his design of filling them with his glory; and though darkness now rests upon our views of heavenly things, yet, in the temple above, 'the LORD Himself will be our everlasting Light,' and we shall know even as we are known. (*Rev.* 21: 22—27. 22: 2—5.) May He prepare us for that land of perfect knowledge, purity, and felicity! SCOTT.

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the family of Kohath, carried the ark into the courts of the temple, and then the priests conveyed it into its proper place. (*Num.* 4:6—13. 1 *K.* 8:1—3.) SCOTT.

Verse 6.

'The observation of *Victorinus Strigelius* on this history is very pious: That nothing is more lovely in human things than such concord, as here appeared among all orders of men, both of teachers and learners, magistrates, soldiers, and people, who were all combined to promote the honor and service of God. *Such unity ought to be studied by Christian people, that we may be all one, as our Savior prayed.*' Patrick. SCOTT.

2 But [b] I have built an house of habitation for thee, and a place for thy dwelling for ever.

3 And the king [c] turned his face, and [d] blessed the whole congregation of Israel: and [e] all the congregation of Israel stood.

4 And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, [f] who hath with his hands fulfilled *that* which he spake with his mouth to my father David, saying,

5 [h] Since the day that I brought forth my people out of the land of Egypt, I chose no city among all the tribes of Israel, to build an house in, that [i] my name might be there; [k] neither chose I any man to be a ruler over my people Israel:

6 But I have [l] chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there; and have [m] chosen David to be over my people Israel.

7 Now [n] it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

8 But the LORD said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, [o] thou didst well in that it was in thine heart:

9 Notwithstanding, thou shalt not build the house; but [p] thy son which shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house for my name.

10 The LORD therefore hath [q] performed his word that he hath spoken; for [r] I am risen up in the room of David my father, and am set on the throne of Israel, [s] as the LORD promised, and have built the house for the name of the LORD God of Israel:

11 And in it have [t] I put the ark, wherein *is* the covenant of the LORD, that he made with the children of Israel.

12 ¶ And [u] he stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and [x] spread forth his hands;

13 (For Solomon had made a brazen [y] scaffold, of five cubits * long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of [z] the court: and upon it he stood, and [a] kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven;)

14 And said, [b] O LORD God of Israel, *there is* [c] no god like thee in the heaven, nor in the earth; which [d] keepest covenant, and *showest* [e] mercy unto thy servants, that [f] walk before thee with all their hearts:

15 Thou which hast kept with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him; and [g] spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled *it* with thine hand, as *it is* this day.

16 Now therefore, O LORD God of Israel, [h] keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him, [i] saying, † There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit upon the throne of Israel; yet so that thy children take heed to their way [k] to walk in my law, as thou hast walked before me.

17 Now then, [l] O LORD God of Israel, [m] let thy word be verified, which thou hast spoken unto thy servant David.

[*Practical Observations.*]

18 But [n] will God in the opportunity, and addresses himself to God, as a God now, in a peculiar manner, nigh at hand.

V. 1—11. It is of great consequence, in all our religious actions, that we design well, and our eye be single. If Solomon had built this temple in the pride of his heart, as Ahasuerus made his feast, it would not have turned at all to his account. But he here declares on what inducements he undertook it, and they are such as not only justify, but magnify, the undertaking.

1. For the glory and honor of God, *v.* 10, 2. 'He has indeed, as to us, *made darkness his pavilion*, *v.* 1. but let this house be the residence of that darkness; for it is in the upper world that He dwells in light, such as no eye can approach.'

2. In compliance with the choice God had been pleased to make of Jerusalem, *v.* 6.

3. In pursuance of his father's good intentions, which he never had an opportunity to execute, *v.* 7. God approved of it, though He permitted him not to execute it, *v.* 8. Temple-work is often thus done; one sows, and another reaps, John 4: 37, 38. one age begins what the next brings to perfection; and let not the wisest think it any disparagement to them, to pursue the good designs of their predecessors, and build on their foundation. Every good piece is not an original.

4. He did it in performance of the word God had spoken, *v.* 9, 10. It is fit He who appoints the work, should appoint the workmen; and those may go on in their work with great satisfaction, who see their call to it clear.

V. 12—42. Solomon had, in the foregoing vs. signed, and sealed, as it were, the deed of dedication, by which the temple was appropriated to the honor and service of God. Now here he prays the consecration-prayer, by which it was made a figure of Christ, the great Mediator, through whom we are to offer all our prayers, and to expect all God's favors, and to whom we are to have an eye in every thing wherein we have to do with God.

We opened the particulars of this prayer, 1 K. 8. therefore shall now only glean up some few passages in it, which may be the proper subjects of our meditation. Here are,

I. Some doctrinal truths occasionally laid down. As, 1. That the God of Israel is a Being of incomparable perfection, *v.* 14. 2. That He is, and will be, true to every word He has spoken; and all that serve Him in sincerity, shall certainly find Him both faithful and kind: He will both keep covenant with them, and show mercy to them, *v* 14. 3. That He is a Being infinite and immense, whom the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain, and to whose felicity nothing is added by the utmost we can do in his service, *v.* 18. He is infinitely beyond the bounds of the creation, and infinitely above the praises of all intelligent creatures. 4. That He, and *He only knows the hearts of the children of men*, *v.* 30. All men's thoughts, aims, and affections, are naked and open before Him. 5. That there is no such thing as a sinless perfection in this life, *v.* 36. *There is no man*

b 2:4—6. 2 Sam. 7:13. 1 K. 8:13. 1 Chr. 17:12. 22:10,11. 28:6,20. Ps. 132:5,13,14. John 4:21—23. Heb. 9: 11,12. Rev. 21:3.
c 1 K. 8:14.
d 29:29. Josh. 22:6. 1 K. 8:55—61. 1 Chr. 16:2. Luke 24:50,51.
e 1 K. 8:14. Neh. 8:5—7. Matt. 13:2.
f 1 K. 8:15. 1 Chr. 29:10,20. Ps. 41: 13. 68:4,32—35. 72:18,19. Luke 1: 68. Eph. 1:3.
g 1 Chr. 17:12. Ps. 138:1,2. Matt. 24: 35. Luke 1:70.
h 2 Sam. 7:6,7. 1 K. 8:16.
i Ex. 20:24. 23:21. Deut. 12:5,11. Dan. 9:19.
k 1 Sam. 10:24. 13:13,14. 15:23. 2 Sam. 7:15,16.
l 12:13. Ps. 48:1. 78:68—70. 132:13. Is. 14:32.
m 1 Sam. 16:1. Ps. 89:19,20.
n 2 Sam. 7:2,3. 1 K. 5:3. 8:17. 1 Chr. 22:7. 28:2.
o 1 K. 8:18—21. Mark 14:8. 2 Cor. 8:12.
p 2 Sam. 7:12,13. 1 Chr. 17:4,11,12.
q See on 4.
r 1:1. 1 K. 2:12. 3:6,7. 1 Chr. 29: 15,23. Ec. 1:4. 2:18,19.
s 1 Chr. 28:5.
t 5:10. Ex. 40:20. 1 K. 8:9,21. Heb. 9:4.
u 1 K. 8:22. 2 K. 11:14. 23:3. Ps. 29:1,2.
x Ex. 9:33. Job. 11:13. Ps. 28:2. 63: 4. 68:31. 141:2. 143:6. Is. 50:15. 1 Tim. 2:8.
y Neh. 8:4.
* Heb. *the length thereof, &c.*
z 4:9. 1 K. 6:36. 7:12.
a 1 K. 8:54. Ezra 9:5. Ps. 95:6. Dan. 6:10. Luke 22:41. Acts 20:36. 21:5.
b Gen. 39:20. 35:10. Ex. 3:15. 1 K. 8:23. 18:36. 1 Chr. 29:10,20.
c Ex. 15:11. 2 Sam. 7:22. Ps. 86:8. 89:6,8. Jer. 10:6,16.
d Deut. 7:9. Neh. 1:5. Ps. 89:28. Dan. 9:4. Mic. 7:18—20. Luke 1:72.
e Ps. 103:17,18. Luke 1:50,54,55.
f Gen. 5:24. 17:1. 1 K. 3:6. 6:12. Luke 1:6. 1 Thes. 2:12.
g 2 Sam. 7:12. 1 K. 8:24. 1 Chr. 22: 9,10.
h Ez. 36:37. John 15:14,15.
i 7:18. 2 Sam. 7:12—16. 1 K. 2:4. Ps. 132:12.
† Heb. *There shall not a man be cut off.*
k Ps. 26:3. 119:1.
l 4,14. Ex. 24:10. Is. 41:17. 45:3.
m 2 Sam. 7:25—29. Jer. 11:5.
n 1 K. 8:27. Ps. 113:5,6. Is. 57:15. 66:1. Acts 7:48,49. 17:24.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—17. It is a great mercy to be enabled to go through important services to the church, in simple obedience, and in dependence on the Lord; and to witness the accomplishment of them, with humble gratitude to the Giver of both the will and ability, with the success; adoring his power, faithfulness, and goodness in every part of it, without expressing self-importance or self-complacency, which rob God of his glory. Here then the main guard should be placed, by persons employed as instruments for the good of others: this, this above all the rest, should dictate their constant prayers; and all, who wish success to their attempts, should join in prayer for them, that they may be kept humble, and rendered more and more humble, in proportion as they are honored by God for usefulness. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI. V. 5, 6. *Neither chose I, &c.* The judges and Saul were chosen by God, for a season, to be rulers of Israel; but not *to establish a permanent and hereditary authority over that people*, as was the case with David.—*Jerusalem.* (6) This is not found in Kings.—Jerusalem was expressly marked out, *by the building of the temple*, to be the centre of the worship of Israel; as the Lord had before spoken by Moses. (*M. R.* l.—*Deut.* 12:5—7.) SCOTT.

very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, [o] heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee: [p] how much less this house which I have built!

19 [q] Have respect therefore to the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, [r] to hearken unto the cry and the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee:

20 That [s] thine eyes may be open upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof thou hast said that thou wouldest [t] put thy name there; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth *toward this place.

21 Hearken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall † make toward this place: hear thou from [u] thy dwelling place, *even* from heaven; and when thou hearest, [x] forgive.

22 ¶ If a man [y] sin against his neighbor, ‡ and an oath be laid upon him to make him swear, and [z] the oath come before thine altar in this house;

23 Then hear thou [a] from heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, by [b] requiting the wicked, by recompensing his way upon his own head; and by [c] justifying the righteous, by giving him according to his righteousness.

24 ¶ And if thy people Israel be § put to the worse before the enemy, [d] because they have sinned against thee; and [e] shall return and confess thy name, and [f] pray and make supplication before thee ‖ in this house;

25 Then hear thou from the heavens, and [g] forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land [h] which thou gavest to them and to their fathers.

26 ¶ When [i] the heaven is shut up, and [k] there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; *yet* [l] if they pray towards this place, and confess thy name, and [m] turn from their sin, when [n] thou dost afflict them;

27 Then hear thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, [o] when thou hast taught them the [p] good way wherein they should walk; and [q] send rain upon thy land, which thou hast given unto thy people for an inheritance.

28 ¶ If there be [r] dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting, or mildew, [s] locusts, or caterpillars; if [t] their enemies besiege them in the ¶ cities of their land; [u] whatsoever sore or whatsoever sickness *there be:*

29 *Then* [x] what prayer *or* what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall [y] know his own sore and his own grief, and shall [z] spread forth his hands ** in this house:

30 Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and [a] render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for [b] thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men;)

31 That they may [c] fear thee, to walk in thy ways, †† so long as they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers.

32 ¶ Moreover, concerning [d] the stranger, which is not of thy people Israel, but [e] is come from a far country for thy great name's sake, and [f] thy mighty hand, and thy stretched-out arm; [g] if they come and pray in this house;

33 Then hear thou from the heavens, *even* from thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for; [h] that all people of the earth may know thy name, and fear thee, as *doth* thy people Israel, and may know that ‡‡ this house which I have built is called by thy name.

34 ¶ If [i] thy people go out to war against their enemies [k] by the way that thou shalt send them, and [l] they pray unto thee [m] toward this city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name;

35 Then [n] hear thou from the heavens their prayer and their supplication, and [o] maintain their §§ cause.

36 ¶ If [p] they sin against thee, (q for *there is* no man which sinneth not,) and [r] thou be angry with them, and deliver them over before *their* enemies, and ||| they

2. Hear and accept the prayers made in, or toward, that place, *v.* 21. He asks not that God should help them, whether they prayed for themselves or no, but in answer to their prayers. Even Christ's intercessions do not supersede, but encourage, our supplications. *When Thou hearest, forgive.* Note, The forgiveness of sin makes way for all answers to our prayers.

3. Give judgment according to equity, on all appeals to Him, *v.* 23, 30. God sitteth on the throne, judging right.

4. Return in mercy to his people, when they repented and reformed, and sought unto Him, [t] 25, 27, 38, 39. This we also may, in faith, pray for, building on the repeated declarations God has made of his readiness to accept penitents.

5. Welcome the strangers to this house, and

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o 2:6. Ps. 139:7—10. Jer. 23:24. 2 Cor. 12:2.
p 32:15. Job 4:19. 9:14. 25:4—6. Matt. 7:11.
q 1 K. 8:28. Ps. 74:20. 130:2. Dan. 9:17—19. Luke 18:1—7.
r Ps. 4:1. 5:1,2. 20:1—3. John 17:20.
s 16:9. 1 K. 8:29,30. 2 K. 19:16. Neh. 1:6. Ps. 34:15.
t 6. Deut. 26:2. Col. 2:9.

* Or, *in this place.* Dan. 6:10.
† Heb. *pray.*
u 30. Job 22:12—14. Ps. 123:1. Ec. 5:2. Is. 57:15. Matt. 6:9.
x Ps. 85:2,3. 130:3,4. Is. 43:25. Dan. 9:19. Mic. 7:18,19. Matt. 6:12.
y 1 K. 8:31,32.
‡ Heb. *and he require an oath of him.* Ex. 22:11. Lev. 5:1. Prov. 30:9.
z Num. 5:19—22. Matt. 23:18.
a 21.
b Num. 5:27. Prov. 1:31. Is. 3:11. Rom. 2:9.
c Deut. 25:1. Prov. 17:15. Is. 3:10. Ez. 13:20. Rom. 2:10.
§ Or, *be smitten.* Lev. 26:17,37. Deut. 28:25,48. Josh. 7:8. 1 K. 8:33,34. Ps. 44:10.
d Josh. 7:11,12. Judg. 2:11,14,15. 2 K. 17:7—18.
e Lev. 26:40—42. Deut. 4:29—31. 30: 1—6. Neh. 1:8,9. Prov. 28:13. Jer. 3:12,13.
f Ezra 9:5,&c. Neh. 9:1,&c. Is. 63: 64: Dan. 9:3,&c.
‖ Or, *toward.* 20.
g Ezra 1:1—6. Ps. 106:47. Jer. 33: 6—13.
h Gen. 13:15. Ex. 6:8. Josh. 21:43.
i Lev. 26:19. Deut. 11:17. 28:23. 1 K. 17:1. Luke 4:25.
k Is. 50:1,2. Ez. 14:13. Am. 4:4—9. Rev. 11:6.
l Jer. 14:1—9. Joel 1:13—20. 2:15—17.
m Prov. 28:13. Ez. 18:27—32.
n 33:12,13. Hos. 5:15. 6:1.
o 1 K. 8:35,36. Ps. 25:4,5,8,12. 94:12. 119:33. Mic. 4:2. John 6:45.
p Is. 30:21. Jer. 6:16. 42:3.
q 1 K. 18:40—45. Job 37:11—14. Ps. 68:9. Jer. 14:22. Joel 2:23. Zech. 10:1. Jam. 5:17,18.
r Lev. 26:16,25,26. Deut. 28:21—61. Ruth 1:1. 1 K. 8:37—40. 2 K. 6:25 —28. 8:1.
s Ex. 10:12—15. Joel 1:4—7. 2:25. Rev. 9:3—11.
t 12:2—5. 20:9—13. 32:1. Lev. 26:25. Deut. 28:52—57.
¶ Heb. *land of their gates.*
u 1 K. 8:37,38.
x Ps. 33:12,13. 50:5. 91:15.
y Prov. 14:10.
z 12,13. Is. 1:15.
** Or, *toward.*
a Ps. 18:20—26. Jer. 17:10. Ez. 18:30. Matt. 16:27.
b 1 K. 8:39. 1 Chr. 28:9. 29:17. Ps. 11:4,5. John 2:25. Heb. 4:13. Rev. 2:23.
c Ex. 20:20. 1 Sam. 12:24. Job 28:28. Ps. 128:1. 130:4. Acts 9:31.
†† Heb. *all the days which they live upon the face of the land.*
d Ex. 12:48,49. Ruth 1:16. 2:11,12. 1 K. 8:41—43. 10:1,2. Is. 56:3—7. Matt. 2:1. 8:10,11. John 12:20. Acts 8:27. 10:1—4. Eph. 2:12,13.
e Ex. 18:8—12. Josh. 2:9. 9:9. 2 K. 5:3,8,15. Is. 60:1—10. Zech. 8:22. Matt. 12:42.
f Ex. 3:19,20. 13:14. Ps. 89:13.
g Is. 66:20. Zech. 14:16,17. Acts 2:10.
h 1 Sam. 17:46. 2 K. 19:19. Ps. 22:27. 67:2. 137:4,5. Is. 11:10. 49:6. 54: 1—3. Rev. 11:15.
‡‡ Heb. *thy name is called upon this house.* Num. 6:27. 1 K. 8:16.
i Deut. 20:1—4. Josh. 1:2—5. 1 K. 8: 44,45.
k Num. 31:2—6. Josh. 8:1—8. Judg. 1:1,2. 1 Sam. 15:3,18.
l 14:9—12. 18:31. 20:6—13. 32:20,21. m 6. 1 K. 8:13. Is. 14:32. Dan. 6:10.
n Dan. 9:17—19.
o Is. 37:21—36.
§§ Or, *right.* Ps. 9:4. Jer. 5:28.
p 1 K. 8:46,50.
q Job 15:14—16. Ps. 130:3. 143:2. Prov. 20:9. Ec. 7:20. Jam. 3:2. 1 John 1:8—10.
r Lev. 26:34—44. Deut. 4:26,27. 28: 36,64—68. 29:24—28. 2 K. 17:6,18, 23. 25:21. Dan. 9:7—14. Luke 21:24.
||| Heb. *they that take them captives carry them away.*

Verses 22—40.

Turn from their sin. (26) All the prayers contained in these vs. for deliverance from suffering, imply that sin would be the cause of that outward anger, which inflicted the suffering, and are connected with prayers for the repentance and conversion of the sufferers. (24, 25, 36, 37, 39. 7:14.) The prophecies of Israel's restoration are all connected in a similar manner. (*Is.* 59:20, 21. *Jer.* 31:18—20, 33, 34. 32:37—41. *Ez.* 36:25—32. *Mic.* 7:14—20. *Zech.* 12.9—14. 13:1.)—*Bethink themselves.* (37) *Notes, Ps.* 119:57—63, *v.* 59, 60. *Ez.* 18:28. *Hag.* 1:5—11. *Luke* 15:17—19. SCOTT.

carry them away captives unto a land far off or near;

37 Yet [s] *if* they * bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captive, and turn and pray unto thee in the land of their captivity, saying, [t] We have sinned, we have done amiss, and have dealt wickedly:

38 If they [u] return to thee with all their heart and with all their soul, in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captives, and [x] pray toward their land which thou gavest unto their fathers, and *toward* [y] the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name:

39 Then hear thou from the heavens, *even* from thy dwelling place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their † cause, and [z] forgive thy people which have sinned against thee.

40 Now, [a] my God, let, I beseech thee, [b] thine eyes be open, and *let* [c] thine ears *be* attent unto the prayer ‡ *that is made* in this place.

41 Now therefore [d] arise, O LORD God, into [e] thy resting place, thou, and [f] the ark of thy strength: let [g] thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let [h] thy saints rejoice in goodness.

42 O LORD God, turn not away the face of [i] thine anointed: [k] remember the mercies of David thy servant.

CHAP. VII.

God testifies his acceptance of Solomon's prayer by fire from heaven; The glory of the Lord fills the temple, and the people worship, 1—3. Solomon's numerous sacrifices at the dedication, 4—7. The congregation keep the feast of tabernacles, and the feast of the dedication, fourteen days, 8, 9. He dismisses the people joyful, and is prospered, 10, 11. God again appears to Solomon, and makes a covenant with him, 12—22.

NOW [a] when Solomon had made an end of praying, [b] the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices; and [c] the glory of the LORD filled the house.

2 And [d] the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house.

3 And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, [e] they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, *saying*, [f] For *he is* good; for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

4 Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD.

5 And king Solomon offered [g] a sacrifice of twenty and two thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep: so the king and all the people [h] dedi-

answer their prayers, *v.* 33. for if there be in duty, why should there not be in privilege one law for the stranger, and one born in the land, Lev. 24: 22.

6. That God would, on all occasions, own and plead the cause of Israel, against all opposers, *v.* 35; and again, *v.* 39.

Lastly, He concludes this prayer with some expressions, learned of his good father, and borrowed from one of his psalms, *v.* 41, 42. we had them not in Kings. The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; how can we express ourselves in better language to God, than that of his own Spirit? But these words were of use, in a special manner, to direct Solomon, because they had reference to this very work he was now doing. We have them, Ps. 132: 8—10. He pleads two things, *v.* 42. [1.] His own relation to God, as one *anointed*, and God's covenant with his father: *Remember the mercies of David thy servant;* the *piety* of David toward God, so some, and so the word sometimes signifies. See Ps. 132: 1, 2, &c. Or, the *promises* of God to David, which were mercies to him, his great support and comfort in all his troubles. We too may plead, in the name of the Lord Jesus, *thine Anointed, thy Messiah*, so the Word is; *thy Christ*, so the LXX. Him thou hearest always, and wilt never *turn away his face.* We have no righteousness of our own to plead, but, Lord, *remember the mercies of David thy servant.* Christ is God's Servant, Isa. 42: 1. and is called *David*, Hos. 3: 5. Lord, remember his mercies, and accept us on account of them, Isa. 55: 3. Acts 13: 34. This must be all our desire, and all our hope, all our prayer, and all our plea, for it is all our salvation.

CHAP. VII. V. 1—11. Here is,

I. God's gracious return immediately made to Solomon's prayer. The *fire came down from heaven, and consumed the sacrifice*, *v.* 1. So God testified his acceptance of Moses, Lev. 9: 24. of Gideon, Judg. 6: 21. of David, 1 Chr. 21: 26. of Elijah, 1 K. 18: 39. and, in general, to accept the burnt-sacrifice, is, in the Hebrew phrase, to turn it to ashes, Ps. 20: 3. Let us apply this, 1 To the sufferings of Christ. That sacrifice was consumed, that we might escape: *Here am I, let these go away.* 2. To the sanctification of the Spirit, who descends like fire, burning up our lusts and corruptions, which must be sacrificed, or we are undone; and kindling in our souls a holy fire of pious and devout affections, always to be kept burning on the altar of the heart. The surest evidence of God's acceptance of our prayers, is the descent of this holy fire on us; *Did not our*

* 1—3. Luke 15:17.
† Heb. *bring back to their heart.*
s Ezra 9:6,7. Neh. 1:6. 9:26—30. Job 33:27,28. Ps. 106:6. Is. 64:6—12. Jer. 3:12—14. 31:18—20. Dan. 9:3—11. Luke 15:18,19.
u Deut. 30:2—6. Jer. 29:12—14. Hos. 14:1—4. Joel 2:12,13.
x 33:11—13. Dan. 9:3,4.
y 34.
† Or, *right.* 35. Zech. 1:15,16.
z Ps. 25:18. Mic. 7:18—20.
a Ps. 7:3. 13:3. 22:1,2. 88:1.
b 7:15. 16:9. 1 K. 8:52. Ps. 34:15. Is. 37:17. Dan. 9:17—19.
c Ps. 17:1. 31:2. 116:2.
‡ Heb. *of this place.*
d Ps. 132:8—10,16.
e 1 Chr. 28:2.
f Josh. 3:13. 6:4,5. Ps. 110:2. Rom. 1:16.
g Is. 59:16—18. 61:3,6,10. Rom. 13:14. Gal. 3:27. Eph. 4:22—24. Rev. 19:8,14.
h Neh. 9:25. Is. 65:18,19. Phil. 3:3. 4:4.
i 1 K. 1:34. Ps. 2:2. Is. 61:1.
k Ps. 132:1. Is. 55:3. Acts 13:34.
a 1 K. 8:54. Is. 65:24. Dan. 9:20. Acts 4:31. 16:25,26.
b Gen. 15:17. Lev. 9:24. Judg. 6:21. 1 K. 18:24,38. 1 Chr. 21:26.
c 5:13,14. Ex. 40:34,35. Lev. 9:23. 1 K. 8:10,11. Is. 6:1—4. Ez. 10:3,4. 43:5. 44:4. Hag. 2:7—9. Rev. 21:23.
d 5:14. Ex. 24:17. Is. 6:5. Rev. 15:8.
e Ex. 4:31. Lev. 9:24. Num. 14:5. 16:22. 1 K. 18:39. 1 Chr. 29:20. Ps. 95:6.
f 5:13. 20:21. Ezra 3:11. Ps. 103:17. 136:1,&c. Is. 63:7. Jer. 33:11. Luke 1:50.
g 1:6. 5:6. 15:11. 29:32,33. 30:24. 35:7—9. 1 K. 8:62,63. 1 Chr. 29:21. Ezra 6:16,17. Ez. 45:17. Mic. 6:7.
h 2:4. Num. 7:10. 1 K. 8:63. Ezra 6:16. John 10:22.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 18—42. The more we know of God and religion, *spiritually and experimentally*, the more humbly we shall think of ourselves and of all our performances; the more reverentially we shall adore the infinitely glorious God, and the more entirely we shall trust to his covenant of mercy and grace, made with believing sinners in Christ.—We may and ought, unworthy as we are, to expect large answers to all our prayers, which we present for ourselves and others, through the Savior's intercession.—JEHOVAH has made our nature his resting place for ever, in the person of Emmanuel; and through Him He dwells and delights in his church of redeemed sinners. May all his ministers, of every name, be clothed with righteousness and salvation; may all his saints be made joyful in his goodness; may the numbers of both be continually increasing, till the boundaries of his church extend as wide as those of the human species! May the heart of the writer and of every reader become his resting place; may Christ dwell in us by faith, casting out every idol, cleansing us from all filthiness, consecrating us as his temples, and shedding abroad his love in us. SCOTT.

Verses 41, 42.

The temple was called the resting place of the ark, because it there had a permanent settlement. The temple likewise typified the human nature of Christ, 'in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;' the ark typified his meritorious obedience and sufferings, by which the holy law was magnified, and through which believing sinners approach, and hold communion with a reconciled God. The ark, the sacramental pledge of JEHOVAH's strength engaged for Israel's help, would not avail without his actual presence. This might be expected, and indeed would be visible in its effects, if 'his priests were clothed with salvation,' or righteousness. If they were partakers of salvation in their souls, and brought forth the fruits of it in their holy lives and conversation: then, their example, instructions, and ministrations, would be greatly blessed, and made very successful. Those who, as penitent believers, have obtained mercy, and are separated from the love and spirit of the world, by the influences of the sanctifying Spirit of God, are *saints*. Their edification, comfort, and joy, in subserviency to the glory of God, and in connection with the conversion of sinners, form the great object of religious ordinances: and the faith and piety of ministers, the purity and solemnity of their services, and the flourishing of true religion, cause them 'to rejoice in goodness,' even the goodness of the LORD; by enlarging and gratifying all their holy, pious, and benevolent affections.—These seem, therefore, the blessings peculiarly intended; though the outward protection and prosperity, of both priests and people, were also implied. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII. V. 1. No similar tokens of the divine acceptance attended the dedication of the second temple, after the captivity; nor was the ark restored to its place, but finally lost. (*Ezra* 3:12, 13. 6: 16—21.) ID.

Verses 4—10.

Solomon's blessing the people, when risen from his knees; praising

cated the house of God.

6 And [i] the priests waited on their offices: [j] the Levites also with instruments of music of the LORD, [k] which David the king had made to praise the LORD, [l] because his mercy *endureth* for ever, when David praised by their * ministry: and [m] the priests sounded trumpets before them, and all Israel stood.

7 Moreover Solomon [n] hallowed the middle of the court that *was* before the house of the LORD: for there he offered burnt-offerings, and the fat of the peace-offerings, because [o] the brazen altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt-offerings, and the meat-offerings, and the fat.

8 Also at the same time Solomon [p] kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him, [q] a very great congregation, from [r] the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt.

9 And in the eighth day they made a † solemn assembly: for they kept the dedication of the altar [s] seven days, and the feast seven days.

10 And on the [t] three and twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away into their tents, [u] glad and merry in heart [x] for the goodness that the LORD had showed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people.

11 Thus [y] Solomon finished the house of the LORD, and the king's house: and [z] all that came into Solomon's heart to make in the house of the LORD, and in his own house, he prosperously effected.

hearts burn within us? Luke 24: 32.

II. The grateful return to God, *v.* 3, 4, 5. They now increased their sacrifices. Tokens of God's favor to us should enlarge our hearts in his service, and make us to abound therein more and more. The king's example stirred up the people. Good work is then likely to go on, when the leaders of a people lead it. Rather than any sacrifice should be turned back, (though we may suppose the blood of all was sprinkled on the altar,) the flesh of the burnt, and fat of the peace offerings, were burnt *in the midst of the court*, *v.* 7. which Solomon either hallowed for that service, or by it. The priests too did their part, and the singers and musicians theirs, *v.* 6. with the instruments David made, and the *hymn David had put into their hand*, as some think it may be read, meaning that, 1 Chr. 16: 7. Or, as he employed, directed, and encouraged, them in this work of praising God; their performances were accepted as his act, and he is said *to praise by their ministry*.

The whole congregation expressed the greatest joy and satisfaction. They kept the feast of the dedication of the altar seven days, from the 2d to the 9th; the 10th day was the day of atonement, when they were to afflict their souls for sin, and that was not unseasonable in the midst of their rejoicings; then, on the 15th day, began the feast of tabernacles, which continued to the 22d, and they did not part till the 23d. We must never grudge the time that we spend in the worship of God, and communion with Him; nor think it long, or grow weary of it. Solomon then went on in his work, and by God's grace prosperously effected all he designed, *v.* 11.

V. 12—22. That God accepted Solomon's prayer, appeared by the fire from heaven. But a prayer may be accepted, and yet not answered in the letter; therefore God appeared to him in the night, as He did once before, *ch.* 1: 7. and after

12 ¶ And [a] the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, [b] I have heard thy prayer, and [c] have chosen this place to myself, for [d] an house of sacrifice.

13 If [e] I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if [f] I command the locusts to devour the land, or if [g] I send pestilence among my people;

14 If [h] my people, ‡ which are called by my name, shall [i] humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and [k] turn from their wicked ways; then [l] will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will [m] heal their land.

15 Now [n] mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer § *that is made* in this place.

16 For now [o] have I chosen and sanctified this house, that [p] my name may be there for ever: and [q] mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

17 And as for thee, [r] if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and shalt [s] observe my statutes and my judgments;

18 Then [t] will I establish the throne of thy kingdom, according [u] as I have covenanted with David thy father, saying, There [x] shall not ‖ fail thee a man *to be* ruler in Israel.

19 But [y] if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and [z] shall go and serve other gods, and worship them;

20 Then [a] will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it *to be* [b] a proverb and a by-word among all nations.

21 And [c] this house, which is high, shall be [d] an astonishment to every one that passeth by it; so that he shall say, [e] Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and unto this house?

22 And it shall be answered, [f] Because they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them

i 1 Chr. 16:39,40. 24:1—3.
j 29:25. 1 Chr. 6:31,32. 15:16—21. 16: 4—6,41,42. 25:1—7.
k Am. 6:5.
l See on f. 3.—1 Chr. 16:34. Ps. 106. 1. 107:1. 118:1—4. 138:8.
* Heb. *hand*. Is. 52:6.
m 5:12. Num. 10:1—10. Josh. 6:4. 1 Chr. 13:8. 15:24. 16:6,42.
n 36:14. Num. 16:37,38. 1 K. 8:64. Heb. 13:10—12.
o 4:1.
p Lev. 23:34—43. Num. 29:12—38. Deut. 16:13—15. 1 K. 8:65. Neh. 8: 13—18. Zech. 14:16—19. John 7:2, 37—39.
q 30:13.
r Gen. 15:18. Num. 34:5—8. Josh. 13: 3—5. 1 K. 4:21—25. Am. 6:14.
† Heb. *restraint*. Lev. 23:36. Deut. 16:8. Neh. 8:18. Joel 1:14. *margins*.
s 30:23. 1 K. 8:65.
t 1 K. 8:66.
u 29:36. 30:26. Deut. 12:7,12,18. 16: 11,14. Neh. 8:10. Ps. 32:11. 33:1. 92:4. 100:2. 105:3. 106:5. Acts 2: 46. 16:34. Phil. 4:4.
x 6:41. Ex. 18:1.
y 2:1. 1 K. 9:1.
z Ec. 2:4,10,11.
a 1:7. Gen. 17:1. 1 K. 9:2.
b 2 K. 20:5. Ps. 10:17. 66:19. Luke 1:13. Acts 10:31. 1 John 5:14,15.
c 16. Deut. 12:5,11. Ps. 78:68,69. 132: 13,14.
d 2:6. Deut. 12:6.
e 6:26—28. Deut. 11:17. Job 11:10. 12:14. Luke 4:25. Rev. 3:7. 11:6.
f Ex. 10:4—6. Ps. 105:34. Joel 1:1—7. 2:25.
g Num. 14:12. 16:46,47. 2 Sam. 24: 13—15. Ez. 14:19—21.
h Is. 63:19.
‡ Heb. *upon whom my name is called*.
i 6:37—39. 33:12,13,18,19. Lev. 26:40, 41. Deut. 4:29,30. 30:1—6. Ez. 33: 11. Jam. 4:9,10.
k Prov. 28:13. Is. 55:6,7. Ez. 18:27—30.
l See on 6:39.
m Ps. 60:2. Jer. 3:22. 33:6. 51:9.
n 6:20,40. Deut. 11:12. Neh. 1:6. Ps. 65:2. 130:2. 1 Pet. 3:12.
§ Heb. *of this place*. 6:40.
o Deut. 12:21. 16:11. 1 K. 8:16,44,48. Ps. 132:14. Zech. 3:2.
p See on 6:5,6,20. 33:4—7. 1 K. 8:35. 9:3. 2 K. 21:4,7,8.
q See on 15.—Matt. 3:17. John 2:19—21. Col. 2:9.
r Deut. 28:1,&c. 1 K. 2:3. 3:14. 8: 25. 11:38. 1 Chr. 28:9. Zech. 3:7.
s Deut. 4:40. Ps. 105:45. Ez. 36:27. John 14:21. 15:10.
t See on 2 Sam. 7:13—16.
u Ps. 89:28—40. 132:11,12.
x 1 K. 9:5. Jer. 33:20,21,25,26.
‖ Heb. *be cut off to thee*. 6:16.
y Lev. 26:14,&c. Deut. 28:15,&c. 1 Sam. 12:25. 1 Chr. 28:9.
z See on Deut. 4:23—27. Josh. 23:15, 16.—1 K. 9:6,7. 12:4—8.
a 2 K. 17:20. Ps. 52:5. Jer. 12:17. 18: 7. 31:28. 45:4. Jude 12.
b Deut. 28:37. 1 K. 9:7. Neh. 4:1—4. Ps. 44:14. Jer. 24:9. Lam. 2:15,16.
c 1 K. 9:8.
d 29:8. Jer. 19:8. 49:17. 50:13.
e Deut. 29:24—28. 1 K. 9:8,9. Jer. 5:19. 13:22. 16:10—12. 22:8,9,28.
f Judg. 2:12,13. Jer. 1:16. Lam. 2:16, 17. 4:13—15. Ez. 14:23. 36:17—20.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The mercies of God to sinners are communicated in a manner suited to impress all who receive them, with the most profound reverence of his majesty, justice, and holiness; thus leading them to unite humble confidence with fear of offending so holy a God. Especially, whoever beholds, with true faith, the divine Savior agonizing and dying for man's sin, will, by that view, find his godly sorrow enlarged, his hatred of sin increased, his soul made more watchful, and his life more holy; and they are speculating hypocrites, who profess to expect salvation by the cross of Christ, while the world has their hearts, and sin is allowed in their habitual conduct.—In the best state of nations favored with revelation, there has hitherto been a succession of prosperity, ingratitude, corrections, repentance, forgiveness, renewed mercies and prosperity, and renewed ingratitude and forgetfulness of God. SCOTT.

God for performing his promises to them; and praying that God would incline their hearts to obedience, that all the earth might know that JEHOVAH alone is God; are here omitted. (1 *K.* 8:54—61.) SCOTT.

Verses 11—22.

(*M. R.*)—*If I shut*, &c. (13) This is not in Kings. Solomon connected the repentance of the people, with their deliverance from divine judgments, in his prayers; and God does the same in his gracious answer. SCOTT.

Which is high.] Some say the second temple was in some parts built up 700 ft. from the valley. Note, Matt. 4: 5—7. ED.

TADMOR (PALMYRA) IN THE WILDERNESS.—S Chron. 8:4. Page 445.

forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them, and served them: [s]therefore hath he brought all this evil upon them.

CHAP. VIII.

The cities built by Solomon, 1—6. The remnant of the devoted nations are subjected to tribute, and the Israelites employed in honorable services, 7—10. Pharaoh's daughter removes to her house, 11. Solomon's daily sacrifices, and those on festival days, 12, 13. He appoints the priests and Levites to their services in order, 14, 15. The work of the house of God is finished, 16. Solomon's navy brings gold from Ophir, 17, 18.

B. C. 992. AND it came to pass [a] at the end of twenty years, wherein Solomon had built the house of the LORD and his own house,

2 That [b] the cities which Huram had restored to Solomon, Solomon built them, and caused the children of Israel to dwell there.

3 And Solomon went to [c] Hamath-zobah, and prevailed against it.

4 And [d] he built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the store-cities, which he built in Hamath.

5 Also he built [e] Beth-horon the upper, and Beth-horon the nether, fenced cities, with walls, gates, and bars;

6 And [f] Baalath, and all [g] the store-cities that Solomon had, and all the [h] chariot-cities, and the cities of the horsemen, and * all that Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, [i] and in Lebanon, and throughout all the land of his dominion.

7 ¶ *As for* [j] all the people *that were* left of [k] the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which *were* not of Israel,

8 *But* of their children who were left after them in the land, [l] whom the children of Israel consumed not, them did Solomon make [m] to pay tribute until this day.

9 But [n] of the children of Israel did Solomon make no servants for his work; but [o] they *were* men of war and chief of his captains, and captains of his chariots and horsemen.

10 And these *were* the chief of king Solomon's officers, *even* [p] two hundred and fifty, that bare rule over the people.

11 ¶ And Solomon [q] brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David, unto the house that he had built for her: for he said, My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because *the places are* † holy, whereunto the ark of the LORD hath come.

12 ¶ Then Solomon offered burnt-offerings unto the LORD, [r] on the altar of the LORD, which he had built before the porch;

13 Even after a certain rate [s] every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts, [t] three times in a year, *even* in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.

14 And he appointed, according to the order of David his father, [u] the courses of the priests to their service, and [x] the Levites to their charges, to praise and minister before the priests, as the duty of every day required: [y] the porters also by their courses at every gate: for ‡ so [z] had David [a] the man of God commanded.

15 And [b] they departed not from the commandment of the king unto the priests and Levites concerning any matter, or concerning [c] the treasures.

16 Now [d] all the work of Solomon was prepared unto the day of the foundation of the

g 36:17. Dan. 9:12.
a See on 1 K. 9:10.
b See on 1 K. 9:11—13.
c Num. 13:21. 34:8. 2 Sam. 8:3. 1 K. 11:23—25. 1 Chr. 18:3.
d 1 K. 9:17—19.
e Josh. 16:3,5. 1 Chr. 7:24.
f Josh. 19:44. 1 K. 9:18.
g 4. 17:12. 1 K. 9:19.
h 1:14. 1 K. 10:26.
* Heb. *all the desire of Solomon which he desired to build.* 1 K. 9:19. Ec. 2:10.
i 1 K. 7:2. Cant. 4:8.
j See on 1 K. 9:20—22.
k Gen. 15:19—21. Deut. 7:1.
l Judg. 1:21—36. Ps. 106:34.
m 2:17,18. 1 K. 5:13,14.
n Ex. 19:5,6. Lev. 25:39—46. Gal. 4:26,31.
o 1 Sam. 8:[illegible]2.
p 2:18. 1 [illegible] 5:16. 9:23.
q 1 K. 3:[illegible] 7:8. 9:24.
† Heb. *holiness.* Ex. 3:5. 29:43. Ez. 21:2 4 Pet. 1:18.
r 4:1. 1 Chr. 28:11. Ez. 8:16. Joel 2:17
s Ex. 29:38—42. Lev. 23: Num. 28: 29: Ez. 45:17. 46:3—15.
t See on Ex. 23:14—17. Deut. 16:16.—1 K. 9:25.
u 5:11. 23:4. 31:2. 1 Chr. 24:1—19 Luke 1:5,8.
x 35:10. 1 Chr. 6:31,32,&c. 15:16—22 16:4—6,42. 23: 24:20—31. 25: Ezra 6:18.
y See on 1 Chr. 26:1—19.
‡ Heb. *so was the commandment of David.*
z 2 Sam. 23:2. 1 Chr. 28:19. Acts 13 22,36.
a See on Deut. 33:1. 1 K. 13:1.
b See on 30:12. Ex. 39:42,43.
c 1 K. 7:51. 1 Chr. 9:29. 26:20—26.
d 1 K. 5:18. 6:7.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII. 1—3. Perhaps Hamath-zobah had revolted: but Solomon regained possession. SCOTT.

Verse 4.

Tadmor.] '*Josephus* says, "Solomon, making an incursion into the desert, possessed himself of it, and (as in this place only water was to be had) there built a very great city, which he encompassed with strong walls, and gave it the name of Thadamora, by which the Syrians called it in his day. He states, that it is one day's journey from the Euphrates, two from Upper Syria, and six from Babylon." Probably Solomon built it to facilitate his commerce with the E. Alexander conquered it, and changed its name to Palmyra: Its intermediate position between Mesopotamia and Syria, made it an excellent place of interchange for the commerce of the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. The protection of its deserts for a long time secured its independence, and enabled it to maintain a friendly intercourse with each of the neighboring and rival empires. It submitted to the Romans in A. D. 130. and continued in alliance with them nearly 150 yrs. Its magnificence and prosperity under its queen Zenobia, and utter subversion by Aurelian (who took her prisoner), A. D. 275, are related by Roman historians. Its advantageous position soon restored its prosperity: it was, however, sacked a second time by the Saracens, after which it gradually sunk to an obscure town and trifling fortress: Burckhardt gives it 1000 inhabitants.'

'It is scarcely possible to conceive any thing more magnificent than the view of its ruins, when they burst upon the eye, as seen from the Valley of the Tombs. On which side soever we look, the earth is strewed with vast stones, half-buried, with broken entablatures, mutilated friezes, disfigured reliefs, effaced sculptures, violated tombs, and altars defiled by the dust. The view (p. 234) is taken from the N. E.' [See the engraving and note, 1 K. 9:18.] HORNE.

Verse 10.

300 overseers, omitted in one place, are added in another, completing the same number. (Comp. 2:18.) SCOTT.

Verse 11.

If there were no open idolatry or profaneness in her court, there might be many things inconsistent with spiritual religion. Perhaps Solomon wanted resolution wholly to suppress all that he did not entirely approve. ID.

house of the LORD, and until it was finished. *So* the house of the LORD was perfected.

17 ¶ Then went Solomon to [e] Ezion-geber, and to [f] Eloth, at the sea-side in the land of Edom.

18 And [g] Huram sent him, by the hands of his servants, ships, and servants that had knowledge of the sea; and they went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, and took thence four hundred and fifty talents of gold, and brought *them* to king Solomon.

CHAP. IX.

The queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon; her admiration of his wisdom and magnificence; her presents and return, 1—12. Solomon's annual revenue in gold, 13, 14. His golden shields and targets, 15, 16. His ivory throne, and rich vessels of gold, 17—21. The honor paid him by other kings, 22—24. His stalls, horses, and chariots, 25. The extent and wealth of his dominions, 26—28. He dies, and is succeeded by Rehoboam, 29—31.

AND [a] when the queen of [b] Sheba heard of [c] the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon [d] with hard questions at Jerusalem, with a very great company, and [e] camels that bare [f] spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, [g] she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

2 And Solomon [h] told her all her questions: and [i] there was nothing hid from Solomon which he told her not.

3 And when the queen of Sheba had [k] seen the wisdom of Solomon, and [l] the house that he had built,

4 And [m] the meat of his table, and [n] the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his * cup-bearers also, and their apparel; and [o] his ascent by which he went up into the house of the LORD; [p] there was no more spirit in her.

5 And she said to the king, *It was* a true † report which I heard in mine own land of thine ‡ acts and of thy wisdom:

6 Howbeit [q] I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen *it:* and, behold, [r] the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: *for* thou [s] exceedest the fame that I heard.

7 [t] Happy *are* thy men, and happy *are* these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom.

8 [u] Blessed be the LORD thy God, [x] which delighted in thee to set thee on his throne, *to be* king for the LORD thy God: [y] because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them, [z] to do judgment and justice.

9 And [a] she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and [b] of spices great abundance, and precious stones: neither was there any such spice, as the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon.

10 And the servants also of Huram, and the servants of Solomon, [c] which brought gold from Ophir, brought [d] algum-trees, and precious stones.

CHAP. IX. Solomon here continues to appear great, both at home and abroad. We had this account of his grandeur, 1 K. 10: nothing is here added; but his defection, *ch.* 11. is here omitted; and the close of this ch. brings him to the grave with an unstained reputation. Perhaps no ch. of Chr. agrees so much with a ch. in Kings, as this does with 1 K. 10. verse for verse, only that the first two vs. there are put into one here, and v. 25. here is taken from 1 K. 4: 26. and the three last vs. here from 1 K. 11: 41—43.

V. 1—12. This passage of story, our Savior having proposed as an example to us in our inquiries after Him, Mat. 12: 42. we must not pass it over, without observing briefly, 1. *Those who honor God, He will honor,* 1 Sam. 2: 30. Solomon had greatly honored God, in building, beautifying, and dedicating, the temple: all his wisdom, and all his wealth, were employed to make that a consummate piece: and now God made his wisdom and wealth to redound greatly to his reputation. The way to have both the credit and comfort of all our endowments, and enjoyments, is, to consecrate them to God, and use them for Him. 2. Those who know the worth of true wisdom, will grudge no pains or cost to compass it. Heavenly wisdom is that *pearl of great price,* to purchase which, if we part with all, we make a good bargain. 3. Solomon was communicative. Freely he had received, freely he gave. Let them that are rich in wisdom, as well as wealth, learn *to do good,* and *be ready to distribute. Give to every one that asketh.* 4. Good order in a family, (*v.* 4.) a great family, especially in the things of God, and a regular discharge of the duties of religious worship,

e 20:36. Num. 33:35. *Ezion-gaber.* 1 K. 9:26. 22:48.
f Deut. 2:8. 2 K. 14:22. 16:6. *Elath.*
g 9:10,13.—See on 1 K. 9:27,28. 10:22. *Hiram.*
a See on 1 K. 10:1,2. Matt. 12:42. Luke 11:31.
b Gen. 10:7,28. 25:3.
c 1:1,12. 1 K. 4:31.
d Is. 49:4. 78:2. Prov. 1:6. Matt. 13:11,35.
e Ps. 72:10,15. Is. 60:6.
f 9. Matt. 2:11.
g 1 Sam. 1:15. Ps. 142:2. Matt. 12:34.
h Prov. 13:20. Mark 4:11,34. John 15:15.
i 1 K. 3:12. 4:29. Col. 2:3. Heb. 4: 12,13.
k See on 1 K. 10:3,4. Acts 11:23.
l 3: 4: 1 K. 6: 7:
m 1 K. 4:22,23. Prov. 9:5. John 6:53 —57.
n 1 K. 10:5. Luke 12:37. Rev. 3:20.
* Or, *butlers.* Neh. 1:11.
o 23:13. 2 K. 16:18. 1 Chr. 9:18. Ez. 44:3. 46:2.
p Ps. 119:81. 143:7. Cant. 5:8. Dan. 10:17. Rev. 1:17.
† Heb. *word.* See on 1 K. 10:6.
‡ Or, *sayings.*
q John 20:25—29.
r See on 1 K. 10:7.—Ps. 31:19. Zech. 9:17. 1 Cor. 2:9. 1 John 3:2.
s 5. 1 K. 4:31,34. Cant. 5:9—16.
t Deut. 33:29. 1 K. 10:8. Ps. 27:4. 84:10—12. Prov. 3:13,14. 8:34. 10: 21. 13:20. Luke 10:39—42. 11:28.
u 1 Chr. 29:10,20. Ps. 72:18,19. 2 Cor. 9:12—15.
x 2 Sam. 15:25,26.—See on 1 K. 10:9.—Ps. 18:19. 22:8. Is. 42:1. 62:4.
y 2:11. Deut. 7:8. 1 Chr. 17:22.
z 2 Sam. 8:15. 23:3. Ps. 72:2. 99:4. Is. 9:7. 11:1—5. 32:1,2. Jer. 33:15, 16. Heb. 1:8,9.
a 24. 1 K. 9:14. 10:10.
b See on 1.—Gen. 43:11. Ex. 30:34.
c See on 8:18. 1 K. 9:27,28. 10:22.
d 1 K. 10:11. *almug-trees.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Some difficulty or conflict must be expected in every state on earth: but those whom the Lord loveth, will prevail; and in heaven their peace will be perfect and eternal.—We shall never be satisfied with our possessions, enjoyments, or achievements; unless we limit our desires by the precept and the providence of God: yet, He indulges his people in things indifferent, as far as this is consistent with their real good.—His 'service is perfect freedom;' all else is bondage: but if we, poor, condemned criminals and strangers, are brought nigh, pardoned, and employed by our merciful Lord, we shall surely render Him our tribute of praise and grateful obedience, though the lowest and most laborious service in his house be allotted to us.—It is hard to keep up a proper distinction between things sacred and common, in the palaces of the great, or in the courts of kings: and it sometimes requires more wisdom and resolution to govern a large family in the fear of God, without conniving at evident evil, than it does to govern a large kingdom with reputation, and in prosperity: (1 *Tim.* 3: 4, 5.) and the difficulty is increased, when by any means a man has got a hinderance, instead of a helper, in the wife of his bosom. But we ought to offend or grieve any one, rather than disobey God and grieve his people, by allowing his ordinances to be profaned. —Leaving the children of this world to contend for its toys, may we, as the children of God, 'lay up our treasure in heaven, that where our treasure is, there our hearts may be also!' SCOTT.

Verse 18.

Ships, &c.] The materials perhaps were ready prepared, [and carried over land,] and the workmen sent, that the ships might be constructed there; [as the great thoroughfare of trade was from Rhinocolura, in Philistia, to Elath; see *Robertson, Jahn.* &c. ED.] Vessels could not sail from Tyre to Ezion-geber, or Eloth: as there was no communication by water [for ships], between the Mediterranean and Red seas, on which these seaports were situated. SCOTT

NOTES.

CHAP. IX. V. 1—11. (1 *K.* 10:1—12.) 'The hard questions, she came to ask, were not the curious inquiries into the secrets of natural things, or new political matters, but about things pertaining to piety and the service of God. For our Savior saith, she came to hear "the wisdom of Solomon," and should therefore rise up in judgment against that generation, which would not learn of Him. And in 1 K. 10:1. it is said, the fame that she heard of Solomon was "concerning the name

11 And the king made *of* the algum-trees * terraces to the house of the LORD, and to the king's palace, and * harps, and psalteries for singers: and there were none such seen before in the land of Judah.

12 And king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba, [f] all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside *that* which she had brought unto the king. So she turned, and went away to her own land, she and her servants.

13 ¶ Now [g] the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and threescore and six talents of gold,

14 Besides *that which* chapmen and merchants brought. And all the kings of Arabia, and † governors of the country, brought gold and silver to Solomon.

15 And king Solomon made [h] two hundred targets *of* beaten gold: six hundred *shekels* of beaten gold went to one target.

16 And three hundred shields *made he of* beaten gold: three hundred *shekels* of gold went to one shield. And the king put them [i] in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

17 Moreover the king made [k] a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold.

18 And *there were* six steps to the throne, with a footstool of gold, *which were* fastened to the throne, and ‡ stays on each side of the sitting place, and [l] two lions standing by the stays:

19 And [m] twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps. There was not the like made in any kingdom.

20 And all [n] the drinking vessels of king Solomon *were of* gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon *were of* § pure gold: ‖ none *were of* silver; ° it was *not* any thing accounted of in the days of Solomon.

21 For the king's ships went to [p] Tarshish with the servants of Huram: every three years once came the ships of Tarshish bringing gold, and silver, ¶ ivory, and apes, and [q] peacocks.

22 ¶ And king Solomon [r] passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.

23 And all the kings of the earth [s] sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that [t] God had put in his heart.

24 And they brought [u] every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, harness, and spices, horses and mules, a rate year by year.

25 And Solomon had [x] four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen; whom he bestowed in the chariot-cities, and with the king at Jerusalem.

26 And he [y] reigned over all the kings, from ** the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt.

27 And [z] the king †† made silver in Jerusalem as stones; and cedar-trees made he [a] as the sycamore-trees that *are* in the low plains in abundance.

28 And they [b] brought unto Solomon horses out of Egypt, and out of all lands.

29 ¶ Now [c] the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, *are* they not written in the ‡‡ book of [d] Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of [e] Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of [f] Iddo the seer against Jeroboam the son of Nebat?

30 And [g] Solomon reigned in Jerusalem

V. 13—31. I. Here is Solomon reigning in wealth and power, in ease and fulness, such as, for aught I know, could never since be paralleled by any kings whatsoever; the most illustrious of them were famed for their wars, whereas Solomon reigned 40 years in profound peace. 1. Never any prince appeared in public with greater splendor than Solomon, which to those that judge by the sight of the eye, as most people do, would very much recommend him, *v.* 15—19. This lustre was typical of the spiritual glory of the kingdom of the Messiah, and but a faint representation of his throne. Solomon's pomp was all artificial; therefore our Savior prefers the natural beauty of the *lilies of the field:* Matt. 6: 29. 2. Never any prince had greater plenty of gold and silver, though there were no gold or silver mines in his own kingdom. *v.* 13, 14—21. 3. Never any prince had such presents from all his neighbors, *v.* 14. Not as tribute extorted, but as free-will offerings to procure his favor, or in exchange for productions of his husbandry, corn, or cattle. All the kings of the earth brought him presents, i. e. all in those parts of the world, *v.* 24, 28. because they coveted his acquaintance and friendship. Herein he was a type of Christ, to whom the wise men of the east brought presents, Matt. 2: 11. and to whom all that are about Him must bring presents, Ps. 76: 11. Rom. 12: 1. 4. Never any prince was so renowned for wisdom, *v.* 23. natural philosophy, skill in physic, state policy, or rules of prudence, or perhaps the principles of his religion, and the reasons of it. The application *kings* made to Solomon to hear his wisdom, will aggravate, shame, and condemn, men's general contempt of Christ, and his Gospel. 1 Cor. 2: 8, 14.

* Or, *stays.* Heb. *highways.*
e See on 1 K. 10:12. 1 Chr. 23:5. 25: 1. Ps. 92:1—3. 150:3—5.
f 1 K. 10:13. Ps. 20:4. Eph. 3:20.
g 1 K. 10:14,15. Ps. 68:29. 72:10,15.
† Or, *captains.*
h 12:9,10.—See on 1 K. 10:16,17.
i 1 K. 7:2.
k See on 1 K. 10:18—20.—Ps. 45:8. Rev. 20:11.
‡ Heb. *hands.*
l Gen. 49:9,10. Num. 23:24. 24:9. Rev. 5:5.
m Matt. 19:28. Rev. 21:12.
n 1 K. 10:21. Esth. 1:7. Dan. 5:2,3.
§ Heb. *shut up.*
‖ Or, there was *no silver* in them.
o 27. Is. 2:22. Jer. 31:5.
p See on 1 K. 10:22. 22:48. *Tharshish.*
¶ Or, *elephant's teeth.*
q Job 39:13.
r 1:12. 1 K. 3:12,13. 4:30,31. 10:23, 24. Ps. 89:27. Matt. 12:42. Col. 2:2,3.
s 6,7. 1 K. 4:34. Is. 11:2,10.
t 1:10—12.—See on 1 K. 3:28.—Prov. 2:6. Dan. 1:17. 2:21—23. 5:11. Luke 21:15. 1 Cor. 1:30. 12:8. Eph. 1: 17. Jam. 1:5,16,17. 3:17.
u 9. 1 Sam. 10:27. 1 K. 9:14. 10:10, 25. Job 42:11.
x 1:14. Deut. 17:16. 1 K. 4:26. 10:26.
y 1 K. 4:21,24. Ps. 72:8—11. Dan. 7: 14. Rev. 19:16.
** That is, *Euphrates.* Gen. 15:18. Ex. 23:31. Josh. 13:2—7.
z 20. 1:15. 1 K. 10:27. Job 22:24,25.
†† Heb. *gave.*
a 1 Chr. 27:28. Ps. 78:47. Is. 9:10. Am. 7:14. Luke 19:4.
b 25. 1:16. 1 K. 10:28. Is. 2:7,8. 31:1.
c See on 1 K. 11:41,42.
‡‡ Heb. *words.*
d 2 Sam. 7:1—3. 12:1,25. 1 K. 1:8,10 11,22—27,32—38. 1 Chr. 29:29.
e 1 K. 11:29. 14:2.
f 12:15. 13:22.
g 1 K. 11:42,43.

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of the Lord;" which moved her to this journey.' *Patrick.*—The throne on which Solomon reigned, was the throne of God: for he was God's vicegerent, and thus 'king for the LORD his God,' to promote his glory and support religion. (2:11, 12.) SCOTT.

Verse 12.

'In 1 K. 10:13. . . . the words are, 'besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty,' . . . here explained to have been done, to requite her for the great presents she made the king.' *Patrick.* ID.

Verse 18.

Footstool.] Cut, Ps. 110:1. ED.

Verse 21.

Apes.] The imports here mentioned indicate, that prosperity had enervated the minds of Solomon and his subjects, and led them to love things curious and uncommon, though useless in themselves: and indeed the East Indian trade has helped to render every nation luxurious and self-indulgent, which has prospered in it, from the beginning to this day. SCOTT.

Verse 24.

Raiment.] Oriental kings have, 'in their wardrobes, garments for thousands, the loose robes equally fitting all.' Note, 1 K. 10:25, &c. ED.

Note, 1 K. 10:23. ID.

Verses 29—31

In the book, &c. (29) 'It appears by this, that the prophets . . . were also historians, who gave an account of what passed in their times;

over all Israel forty years.

B. C. 975. 31 And Solomon [h] slept with his fathers, and he was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

CHAP. X.

The Israelites, at Shechem, make Rehoboam king; and with Jeroboam require him to lighten their yoke, 1—5. Rehoboam, rejecting the advice of his father's counsellors, and consulting with the young men, answers very roughly, 6—15. The ten tribes revolt, kill Hadoram, and drive away Rehoboam, 16—19.

AND [a] Rehoboam went to Shechem: for to [b] Shechem were [c] all Israel come to make him king.

2 And it came to pass, when [d] Jeroboam the son of Nebat, (who *was* in Egypt, whither he had fled from the presence of Solomon the king,) heard *it*, that Jeroboam returned out of Egypt.

3 And [e] they sent and called him. So Jeroboam and all Israel came, and spake to Rehoboam, saying,

4 Thy [f] father made our yoke grievous: now therefore ease thou somewhat the [g] grievous servitude of thy father, and his heavy yoke that he put upon us, and we will serve thee.

5 And he said unto them, [h] Come again unto me after three days. And the people departed.

6 And king Rehoboam [i] took [k] counsel with the old men that had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, saying, [k] What counsel give ye *me* to return answer to this people?

7 And they spake unto him, saying, [l] If thou be kind to this people, and please them, and [m] speak good words to them, they will be thy servants for ever.

8 But [n] he forsook the counsel which the old men gave him, and took counsel with the young men that were brought up with him, that stood before him.

9 And he said unto them, [o] What advice give ye that we may return answer to this people, which have spoken to me, saying, [p] Ease somewhat the yoke that thy father did put upon us?

10 And the young men that were brought up with him spake unto him, saying, [q] Thus shalt thou answer the people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou *it* somewhat lighter for us: thus shalt thou say unto them, [r] My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father's loins.

11 For whereas [s] my father [*] put a heavy yoke upon you, [t] I will put more to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I *will chastise you* with [u] scorpions.

12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king bade, saying, [x] Come again to me on the third day.

13 And the king [y] answered them roughly; and king Rehoboam

h See on 2 Sam. 7:12. 1 K. 1:21. 2:10.
a 1 K. 12:1. 1 Chr. 3:10. Matt. 1:7. *Roboam.*
b Gen. 12:6. *Sichem.* 37:12,13. Josh. 20:7. 24:1. Judg. 9:1.
c 1 K. 4:1. 1 Chr. 12:38.
d 1 K. 11:26,28,40. 12:2.
e 1 K. 12:3.
f 1 Sam. 8:11—18. 1 K. 12:4. Is. 47:6. Matt. 11:29,30. 23:4. 1 John 5:3.
g Ex. 1:13,14. 2:23. 1 K. 4:20,25. 9:22.
h 1 K. 12:5. Prov. 3:28.
i Job 12:12,13. 32:7. Prov. 27:10. Jer. 42:2—5,20.
k 2 Sam. 16:20. 17:5,6.
l 1 K. 12:7,8. Prov. 15:1.
m Gen. 49:21. 2 Sam. 15:2—6.
n 25:15,16. 2 Sam. 17:14. Prov. 1:25. 9:9. 19:20. 25:12. Ec. 10:2,3,16.
o 6. 2 Sam. 17:5,6. 1 K. 22:6—8.
p See on 4.
q 2 Sam. 17:7—13. Prov. 21:30. Is. 19:11—13.
r 1 K. 12:10,11. Prov. 10:14. 13:16. 14:16. 18:6,7. 28:25. 29:23.
s See on 4.
* Heb. *laded.*
t Ex. 1:13,14. 5:5—9,18. 1 Sam. 8:18. Is. 47:6. 58:6. Jer. 23:13,14. Matt. 11:29.
u Luke 10:19. Rev. 9:3,5,10.
x 5. 1 K. 12:12—15.
y Gen. 42:7,30. Ex. 10:28. 1 Sam. 25:10,11. 1 K. 20:6—11. Prov. 15:1.

I. Here is Solomon dying; stripped of his pomp, leaving all his wealth and power, not to one concerning whom he knew not *whether he would be a wise man or a fool*, Eccl. 2: 19. but who, he knew, would be a fool. This was not only vanity, but vexation of spirit, *v.* 29—31.

It is very observable, that not even a hint is here given of Solomon's departure from God in the latter days. 1. Because the Holy Ghost would teach us not to delight in repeating the faults and follies of others. Why can we not do as the sacred historian here does, speak largely of what in others is praise-worthy, without saying any thing of their blemishes, yea, though they have been gross and obvious. This is but doing as we would be done by. 2. Because his sin was repented of, and pardoned, and so became as if it had never been. Scripture-silence sometimes speaks. I am willing to believe its silence here intimates, that none of the sins he committed were mentioned against him, Ezek. 33: 16. When God pardons sin, He *casts it behind his back, and remembers it no more.*

CHAP. X. This ch. is copied almost *verbatim* from 1 K. 12: 1—19. where it was opened at large. Solomon's defection from God was not repeated, but the defection of the ten tribes from his family is, in this ch.; where we find, how just and righteous God was in all this, *v.* 15. whereby his counsel was fulfilled. With Him are strength and wisdom; both *the deceived and the deceiver* (the fool and the knave) *are his*, *Job*, 12: 16. i. e. are made use of by Him, to serve his purposes. Observe,

V. 1—11. 1. The wisest and best cannot content every body. No man is perfectly wise. Probably it was when Solomon had declined from God and duty, that his wisdom failed him, and God left him to himself to act thus impoliticly. Even Solomon's treasures were exhausted by his love of women; and, probably, it was to maintain them, their pride, luxury, and idolatry, that he oppressed his subjects by taxes.

2. Turbulent and ungrateful spirits will find fault with government, and complain of grievances, for very little reason. Had they not peace in Solomon's time? Never plundered by invaders, nor put in fear by the alarms of war, nor obliged to jeopard their lives in the high places of the field. Had they not plenty? Meat enough, and money enough? What would they more? *O but too happy, if they knew their happiness!* If any complain thus of the yoke of Christ, we are sure He never gave them any cause to complain, whatever Solomon did.

3. Many ruin themselves, and their interests, by trampling on and provoking their inferiors. Rehoboam thought, because he was king, he might do what he would, and carry all before him. But though he wore his father's crown, he wanted his father's head-piece; such a wise man as Solomon may, perhaps, do as he will, but such a fool as Rehoboam must do as he can. It was Job's wisdom, as well as virtue, that he *despised not the cause of his man-servant or maid-servant*, Job 31: 13. but heard their reasons, and gave them a soft answer. And the like tender consideration of those in subjection, and a forwardness to make them easy, will be the comfort and praise of all in authority, in the church, in the state, and in families.

4. Moderate counsels are generally wisest. Gentleness will do what violence will not. Good words cost nothing but a little self-denial, and yet purchase great things.

5. God often fulfils the counsels of his own wisdom, by infatuating men, and giving them up to the counsels of their own folly. No more needs be done to ruin men, than to leave them to themselves, and their own pride and passion.

V. 12—19. We may learn here,

1. When public affairs are in a ferment, violent proceedings do but make bad worse. The pilot

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In proportion as we possess true wisdom, we shall perceive its excellency, and labor to obtain an increase of it: and in the same proportion we shall become more indifferent about worldly wealth, and more liberal in our use of it to good purposes, if God has bestowed it on us. For true wisdom and happiness are inseparably combined: but no such alliance is formed between riches and the enjoyment even of this present life. (*Luke* 12: 15—21.) It is therefore far more desirable to be connected with those who can teach us wisdom, than with those who can give us wealth: let us then acquaint ourselves with the divine Savior, that, becoming his disciples and servants, we may 'find rest for our souls;' and we shall in that case see more glory, experience more pleasure, and appropriate more riches, than our hearts can previously conceive. Next to this, let us value the acquaintance of those who love and serve Him, that we may hear the wisdom that 'God hath put into their hearts:' and let us follow them as far as they follow Christ, but no further whatever may be their reputation in the church. SCOTT.

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out of whose work this short history was extracted.... These three did not join to make one book, but severally and distinctly gave an account of such things as occurred to their knowledge; out of which, it is probable, Ezra took many things which he hath supplied in this book.' *Patrick.* (*M. R.—Preface to* 1 *K.*—1 *K* 11:41. 14:19. 1 *Chr.* 29:19, 20.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. X. V. 1—19 *M R* ID.

[a] forsook the counsel of the old men,

14 And answered them after [b] the advice of the young men, saying, [c] My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add thereto: my father chastised you with whips, but I *will chastise you* with scorpions.

15 So the king hearkened not unto the people: for [d] the cause was of God, [e] that the LORD might perform his word, which he spake by the hand of [f] Ahijah the Shilonite, to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16 ¶ And when all Israel *saw* that the king would not hearken unto them, the people answered the king, saying, [g] What portion have we in David? and *we have* no inheritance in [h] the son of Jesse: every man to your tents, O Israel: *and* now, [i] David, see to thine own house. [k] So all Israel went to their tents.

17 But [l] *as for* the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

18 Then king Rehoboam sent [m] Hadoram, that *was* over the tribute; and the children of Israel [n] stoned him with stones, that he died. But king Rehoboam * made speed to get him up to *his* chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.

19 And [o] Israel rebelled against the house of David [p] unto this day.

CHAP. XI.

Rehoboam, preparing to reduce Israel, is forbidden by the prophet Shemaiah, 1—4. He builds and fortifies several cities, 5—12. The priests and Levites, being cast off by Jeroboam, resort to Jerusalem, attended by other pious Israelites, 13—17. Rehoboam's wives and children, 18—23.

AND [a] when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he gathered of the house of Judah and Benjamin [b] an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen *men*, which were warriors, to fight against Israel, that he might bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam.

2 But the word of the LORD came [c] to Shemaiah [d] the man of God, saying,

3 Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and [e] to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying,

4 Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up nor fight [f] against your brethren: [g] return every man to his house; [h] for this thing is done of me. And [i] they obeyed the words of the LORD, and returned from going against Jeroboam.

5 ¶ And Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and [j] built cities for defence in Judah.

6 He built even [k] Beth-lehem, and [l] Etam, and [m] Tekoa,

7 And [n] Beth-zur, and [o] Shoco, and [p] Adullam,

8 And [q] Gath, and [r] Mareshah, and [s] Ziph,

9 And Adoraim, and [t] Lachish, and Azekah.

10 And [u] Zorah, and Aijalon, and [x] Hebron, which *are* in Judah and in Benjamin, fenced cities.

11 And he fortified the strong-holds, and put [y] captains in them, and store of victual, and of oil and wine.

12 And in every several city *he* [z] *put* shields and spears, and made them exceeding strong holds, [a] having Judah and Benjamin on his side.

13 ¶ And the priests and the Levites that *were* in all Israel † resorted to him out of all their coasts.

a 8.
b 22:4,5. Prov. 12:5. Dan. 6:7.
c See on 10,11.—Prov. 17:14. Ec. 2:19. 7:8. 10:16. Jam. 3:14—18. 4:1,2.
d 25:16—20. Deut. 2:30. Judg. 14:4. 1 Sam. 2:25. 1 K. 22:20. Acts 2:23. 4:28.
e See on 1 K. 11:29—39. John 12:37—39. 19:24,32—36.
f See on 9:29.
g 2 Sam. 20:1. 1 K. 12:16,17.
h 1 Sam. 20:27,30,31. 22:7,9,13.
i 2 Sam. 7:15,16. 1 K. 11:13,34—39. 1 Chr. 17:14. Ps. 2:1—6. 76:10. 89: 29—37. 132:17. Is. 9:6,7. 11:1. Jer. 33:20,21,25,26. Ez. 37:24,25. Am. 9: 11. Luke 1:32,33. 19:14,27. Acts 2: 30. 1 Cor. 15:25. Rev. 22:16.
k 19. Judg. 8:35. 2 Sam. 15:13. 16: 11. John 6:66. 7:53.
l 11:1. 1 K. 11:36. 12:17.
m 1 K. 4:6. 5:14. *Adoniram.* 12:18. *Adoram.*
n 24:21. Acts 7:57,58.
* Heb. *strengthened himself.*
o 16. 13:5—7. 1 K. 12:19,20. 2 K. 17: 21—23.
p 5:9. Josh. 4:9. Ezra 9:7.
a See on 1 K. 12:21.
b Ps. 33:10,16. Prov. 21:30,31.
c 12:7,15. 1 K. 12:22—24.
d 8:14.—See on Deut. 33:1.—1 Sam. 2: 27. 1 Tim. 6:11.
e Gen. 49:28. Ex. 24:4. 2 K. 17:34. Phil. 3:5. Rev. 7:4—8.
f Gen. 13:8. 2 Sam. 2:26. Acts 7:26. 1 Cor. 6:5—8. Heb. 13:1. 1 Pet. 3:8. 1 John 3:11—13.
g 10:16. 1 K. 22:36.
h See on 10:15. Gen. 50:20.—1 K. 11: 29—38. Hos. 8:4.
i 25:7—10. 29:9—15.
j 8:2—6. 14:6,7. 16:6. 17:12. 26:6. 27:4. Is. 22:8—11.
k Gen. 35:19. 1 Sam. 17:12. Matt. 2: 5,6.
l Judg. 15:8. 1 Chr. 4:32.
m 20:20. 2 Sam. 14:2. Neh. 3:5,27. Jer. 6:1. Am. 1:1.
n Josh. 15:58.
o Josh. 15:35. *Socoh.*
p Josh. 12:15. 15:35. 1 Sam. 22:1. 2 Sam. 23:13. Mic. 1:15.
q 1 Chr. 18:1. r Josh. 15:44.
s Josh. 15:24. 1 Sam. 23:14,19. Ps. 54: *title.*
t 32:9. Josh. 10:5,11. 15:35,39.
u Josh. 15:33. *Zoreah.* 19:41,42. *Ajalon.*
x Gen. 23:2. Num. 13:22. Josh. 14:14. 20:7. 2 Sam. 2:11.
y 23. 17:19.
z 26,14,15. 32:5. 1 Sam. 13:19,22.
a See on 1.
† Heb. *presented themselves to him.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The wisest of mere men in some things act imprudently, especially when, by sin, they provoke God to leave them to themselves: nay, the most equitable princes may be betrayed into partial, oppressive, or unwarrantable measures; and this is the general consequence of being drawn, by their favorites, or their passions, into lavish expenses. Thus, some cause of complaint must exist in every kingdom, of which turbulent and ambitious men will avail themselves. (2 *Sam.* 15: 1—6. *P. O.* 1—12.) For, while we all need so many allowances for *ourselves*, we are naturally indisposed to make allowances for *others*. Indeed, very many would be dissatisfied, even if God were to place over them perfectly wise and righteous governors: for do they not murmur against his own most righteous dispensations?—Being so culpable ourselves, we should learn to bear with the perverseness of others, and to prefer lenient to violent measures; and experienced, to inexperienced counsellors.—No man can bequeath his prosperity, any more than his wisdom, to his heirs; though our children will generally be affected by our conduct. Let us then seek those good things which will be our own for ever; and implore the blessing of God on our posterity, in preference to wealth or worldly exaltation.

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI. V. 5—12. (*M. R.*) The Lord did not permit Rehoboam to wage war against the newly erected kingdom of Israel; yet it was allowable and prudent for him to take all proper measures, for the defence of his remaining dominions: this he did by repairing and fortifying several cities.—Etam (6) belonged to Simeon, (1 *Chr.* 4:32.) and Zorah and Aijalon (10) to Dan. (*Josh.* 19:40—42.) So that some cities of the other tribes, beside Judah and Benjamin, remained under Rehoboam.

SCOTT.

Verses 13—17.

Probably all the priests and Levites unanimously protested against Jeroboam's idolatry. As Jeroboam established no other idolatry than

14 For the Levites left [b] their suburbs and [c] their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for [d] Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the LORD.

15 And he ordained him priests for the high places, and [e] for the devils, and [f] for the calves which he had made.

16 And [g] after them, out of all the tribes of Israel, such as [h] set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel, came to Jerusalem, [i] to sacrifice unto the LORD God of their fathers.

17 So they [k] strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong three years: for [l] three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon.

18 ¶ And Rehoboam took him Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David to wife, *and* Abihail the daughter of [m] Eliab the son of Jesse;

19 Which bare him children; Jeush, and Shamariah, and Zaham.

20 And after her he took [n] Maachah the daughter of [o] Absalom; which bare him [p] Abijah, and Attai, and Ziza, and Shelomith.

21 And Rehoboam loved Maachah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines: (for he took [q] eighteen wives, and threescore concubines; and begat twenty and eight sons, and threescore daughters.)

22 And Rehoboam [r] made Abijah the son of Maachah the chief, *to be* ruler among his brethren: for *he thought* to make him king.

23 And [s] he dealt wisely, and [t] dispersed of all his children throughout all the countries of Judah and Benjamin, unto [u] every fenced city: and he gave them victual in abundance. And he desired * many wives.

cially a war, contrary to the will of God. God calls him, *v.* 3. *the son of Solomon*, to intimate that this was determined for the sin of Solomon, and it would be to no purpose to oppose a decree that was gone forth.

2. Like a discreet man, he fortified his own country. A few good words might have prevented their defection, but now all the force of his kingdom cannot bring the revolted back. It was probably by the advice and consent of the old men that he fortified and furnished his frontiers, and many principal cities, for whose defence no care had been taken in Solomon's peaceable reign, *v.* 11, 12. Because God forbade him to fight, he did not therefore sit down sullen, and say he would do nothing for the public safety.

V. 13—23. See here, I. How Rehoboam was strengthened by the accession of the priests and Levites, and all the devout and pious Israelites.

1. Jeroboam cast them off; i. e. set up such a way of worship as he knew they could not, in conscience, comply with, and at the same time would not allow them to go up to Jerusalem, to worship there; so he totally *cast them off from the priest's office*, *v.* 14. And very willing he was they should turn themselves out of their places, that room might be made for those mean and scandalous persons he *ordained priests for the high places*, *v.* 15. Comp. 1 K. 12: 31. No marvel if he that cast off God, cast off his ministers.

2. They, thereupon, *left their suburbs and possessions*, *v.* 14. It was a comfort to them, that the law so often reminded them that the *Lord was their inheritance*, and therefore they should find Him, when turned out of their possessions. But why did they leave them? (1.) Because they saw they could do no good among their neighbors, in whom, (now that Jeroboam set up his calves,) the old proneness to idolatry revived. (2.) Because they themselves would be in a continual temptation, to some base compliances, and in danger of being drawn insensibly to evil. If we pray, in sincerity, not to be led into temptation, we shall get and keep as far as we can out of its way. (3.) Because, if they retained their integrity, they had reason to expect persecution from Jeroboam and his sons. No secular advantages whatsoever should draw us, or detain us, where we are in danger of making shipwreck of faith and conscience.

3. It was a mercy to them, that they had a place of refuge to flee to, (*v.* 14, 15.) and were not forced into the lands of the heathen. It was an evidence they loved their work better than their maintenance. Better live on alms, or die in a prison, with a good conscience, than roll in wealth and pleasure with a prostituted one. Conscientious refugees will bring a blessing with them to the countries that entertain them, as they leave a curse behind with those that expel them. *Open the gates, that the nation which keepeth truth, may enter in;* it will be good policy. See Is. 26: 1, 2.

4. When they came, all the devout, pious Israelites of every tribe followed. Such as *set their heart, to seek the Lord God*, that made conscience of their duty, and were sincere and resolute in it, left the inheritance of their fathers, and went and took houses in Jerusalem, to have free access to the altar of God, and be out of the temptation to worship the calves, *v.* 16. Note, That is best for us, which is best for our souls; and in all our choices, advantages for religion must take place of all outward conveniences. Where God's faithful priests are, his faithful people should be. When *the ark removes, remove ye, and go after it*, Josh. 3: 3.

b Num. 35:2—5. Josh. 21:20—42. 1 Chr. 6:66—81.
c Lev. 27:30—54. Num. 18:21—28.
d 13:9. 1 K. 12:28—33. 13:33.
e Lev. 17:7. Deut. 32:17. 1 Cor. 10: 20,21. 1 Tim. 4:1. Rev. 16:14.
f Ex. 32:4—8,31. 1 K. 12:28. 14:9. Ps. 106:19,20. Hos. 8:5,6. 13:2.
g 15:9. 30:11,18,19. Josh. 22:19.
h Ex. 9:21. *marg.* Deut. 32:46. 1 Sam. 7:3,4. 1 Chr. 22:19. Job 34:14. Ps. 62:10. 108:1. Dan. 6:14. Hos. 4:8. Hag. 1:5. *Marg.* Acts 11:23.
i Deut. 12:5,6,11,13,14. 1 Chr. 16:29. 22:1.
k 12:1.
l 1:1—12. 7:17—19. 8:13—16. Hos. 6:4. Matt. 13:20,21.
m 1 Sam. 16:6. 17:13,28. 1 Chr. 2:13. 27:18. *Elihu.*
n 21. 13:2. *Michaiah the daughter of Uriel.*
o 1 K. 15:2. *Abishalom.*
p 12:16. 1 K. 15:1. *Abijam.* Matt. 1:7. *Abia.*
q 23. Deut. 17:17. Judg. 8:30. 2 Sam. 3:2—5. 5:13. 1 K. 11:3. 1 Chr. 3: 1—9. Cant. 6:8,9.
r Deut. 21:15—17. 1 Chr. 5:1,2. 29:1.
s 10:8—15. Luke 16:8.
t 21:3. Gen. 25:6. 1 K. 1:5,6.
u 11.
* Heb. *a multitude of wives.* See on 21.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is commonly more prudent to manage moderate possessions well, than to risk losing them by grasping at greater advantages: and when an egregious error has exposed us to heavy loss, it is generally wisest to sit down by it, lest we be betrayed into still more fatal mistakes.—It is in vain to contend with the purpose of God, when He makes it known unto us: and, as his Word declares, that none shall enjoy durable peace in the practice of wickedness, it is madness to expect it; yet, by this rule of judgment, what a world of madness and folly do we live in!—In seasons of prevailing ungodliness and public disturbances, the ministers of religion will be exposed to peculiar trials; on these great occasions, God peculiarly calls on them to bear testimony to his truth, and to protest, at all events, against enormous evils, by whomsoever patronised.—Untried faith is not much to be depended on: but when we have been proved, and it appears, that we are willing to renounce worldly interests, as far as called to it, for the sake of Christ and the Gospel, we have got one good evidence that we are truly his disciples. SCOTT.

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that of the calves; the language here employed teaches us, that the worship paid to them was actually rendered to devils; though he professed, and probably intended, by them to worship the God of Israel. For it was in a way He had expressly prohibited, and which was infinitely dishonorable to Him; therefore it was acceptable to Satan alone, and his detestable associates in rebellion. (*Lev.* 17:3—7, *v.* 7.) —The word rendered *devils*, in the texts of the N. T. referred to, is *demon*; (*M. R.* e.) which often, in heathen writers, has a good sense; i. e. it is used for the objects of their worship: but these were *evil spirits*; and the word has always a bad meaning in Scripture, and denotes abominable idols, and evil spirits as worshipped under their names. Holy angels are never called demons.—It is not certain whether Jeroboam had deprived the priests and Levites of their dues, to maintain his new priesthood. In the days of David and Solomon, they had become generally attached to the worship of God at the sanctuary, as well as to the royal family of Judah: and, as a body, they seem to have been more pious and zealous, than at any other period. Probably, scarcely a priest or Levite remained behind, for we read nothing of them in the subsequent history of Israel. This must be allowed to have been as noble a testimony for the cause of God, against apostates and idolaters, as any history has recorded of a whole body of professed ministers.—It is not probable, Solomon would have been thus joined with David, as the good pattern which Rehoboam and his subjects followed, if he had persevered and perished in his apostasy. SCOTT.

Verses 18—21.

Daughter of Eliab. (18) Eliab was David's eldest brother; yet more than 80 years had elapsed, since David, at the age of 30, began to reign. Abihail must, therefore, have been grand-daughter, or great-grand-daughter to Eliab, and this shows the latitude in which the words *son* and *daughter* are used in Scripture, for a descendant, even after several intervening generations. (*Notes, Ruth* 4:18—22. 1 *Chr.* 1: 7.)—*The daughter of Absalom.* (20) It is said of Abijah, that 'his mother's name was Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah.' (13:2.) Gibeah belonged to Benjamin, and probably Absalom, here mentioned, was a Benjamite. (1 *K.* 15:1—3.) ID.

Verses 22, 23.

Rehoboam acted from partial affection, and by his own authority, in advancing Abijah above his elder brethren: whereas, God Himself chose Solomon to be king, in preference to David's other sons. (1 *Chr.* 29:1.) ID.

CHAP. XII.

Rehoboam forsakes God, and Shishak king of Egypt invades Judah, 1—4. Rehoboam and his princes, being warned by Shemaiah, humble themselves; and, though spoiled, are not destroyed, 5—12. Rehoboam's reign and death. Abijah succeeds him, 13—16.

AND it came to pass, [a] when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, [b] he forsook the law of the LORD, and [c] all Israel with him.

2 And it came to pass, *that*, in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, [d] Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, [e] because they had transgressed against the LORD,

3 With [f] twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen: and the people *were* [g] without number that came with him out of Egypt: the [h] Lubims, the Sukkiims, and the [i] Ethiopians.

4 And he took [k] the fenced cities which *pertained* to Judah; and [l] came to Jerusalem.

5 Then came [m] Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam, and *to* the princes of Judah that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, [n] Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also [o] left you in the hand of Shishak.

6 Whereupon the princes of Israel and the king [p] humbled themselves; and they said, [q] The LORD *is* righteous.

7 And when [r] the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, They have humbled themselves; *therefore* I will not destroy them, but I will grant them [*] some deliverance; [s] and my wrath shall not be poured out

a 13. 11:17.
b 26:13—16. Deut. 6:10—12. 8:10—14. 32:15. 1 K. 9:9. Jer. 2:31. Hos. 13: 1,6—8.
c 11:3. 1 K. 12:17. 14:22—24. 2 K. 17:19. Hos. 5:10,11. Mic. 6:16.
d See on 1 K. 11:40. 14:25,26.
e 7:19,20. 36:14—19. Judg. 2:13—15.

5. They *strengthened Judah*, *v.* 17. not only by the addition of so many persons to it, who, it is likely, brought what they could of their effects with them, but by their piety and prayers. See Zech. 12: 5. It is the interest of a nation to protect and encourage religion and religious people, and adds more than any thing to its strength, [and how low must a government be sunk, which rejects a candidate from office simply because he is religious!] They made him and his people *strong*, *three years:* for so long they *walked in the good way of David and Solomon;* but when they forsook that, the best friends they had, could no longer strengthen them. We retain our strength no longer than we cleave to God and duty.

II. How Rehoboam was weakened by indulging his pleasures. He *desired many wives*, as his father did, *v.* 23. yet, he does not appear to have married strange wives. The wives mentioned here were not only daughters of Israel, but of the family of David, *v.* 18, 20. In *this*, he was more happy than his father, that he had many sons and daughters; whereas we read not of more than one son that his father had. One can scarcely imagine he had no more; but if he had, they were not worth mentioning; whereas several of Rehoboam's are here named, *v.* 19, 20. as men of note, and such active men, that he thought it his wisdom to *disperse them throughout the countries of Judah and Benjamin*, *v.* 23. either, 1. That they might not be rivals with his son Abijah, whom he designed for his successor; or, rather, 2. Because he confided in them, to preserve the public peace and safety; he took care to have the fenced cities well-victualled, that they might stand him in stead, in case of an invasion. Thus he that acted foolishly at first, dealt wisely afterward. After-wisdom is better than none at all; nay, they say, 'Wit is never good till it is bought;' though his was dear bought, with the loss of a kingdom

CHAP. XII. This ch. gives us a more full ac-

f Judg. 4:13. 1 Sam. 13:5. 2 Sam. 10: 18.
g 14:9. Judg. 6:5. Rev. 9:16.
h 16:8. Ez. 30:5. Nah. 3:9.
i 14:12. 16:8. Is. 43:3. Dan. 11:43. Nah. 3:9. *Cushim.* *Heb.* Gen. 10: 6—8.
k 11:5—12. Is. 36:1. Jer. 5:10.
l 2 K. 18:17. Is. 8:8. 10:11.
m 11:2. 1 K. 12:22.
n See on 1,2.—15:2. Deut. 28:15,&c. Judg. 10:9—14. 1 Chr. 28:9. Jer. 2: 19. 4:18. 5:19. 23:33.
o 2 Sam. 24:14. Ps. 37:33.
p 32:26. 33:12,19,23. Ex. 10:3. Lev. 26:40,41. 1 K. 8:37—39. Ps. 78:31, 35. Jer. 44:10. Dan. 5:22. Hos. 5: 15. Luke 18:14. Jam. 4:10.
q Ex. 9:27. Judg. 1:7. Job 33:27. Ps. 129:4. Lam. 1:18. Dan. 9:14. Rom. 10:3.
r Judg. 10:15,16. 1 K. 21:28,29. Jer. 3:13. Luke 15:18—21.
* Or, *a little while.* 2 K. 13:4—7,23. Am. 7:6—8.
s 34:21,25. Ps. 79:6. Is. 42:25. Jer. 7:20. Rev. 14:10. 15:2—17.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII. V. 1. Rehoboam's religion seems to have proceeded wholly from his fears of being given up into the hands of Jeroboam: when become strong, he became openly rebellious and idolatrous. (1 K. 14:22—24.) The leading men also, and the bulk of the nation, so generally and openly renounced the worship of God at the temple, that it was adjudged a national apostasy.—The ten tribes had before apostatized with Jeroboam; and when Rehoboam, with Judah and Benjamin, followed their example, 'all Israel,' as a nation, 'had forsaken the law of the LORD;' and the pious remnant formed only a few exceptions. SCOTT.

Verse 2.

(*Note*, 1 *K.* 14:25—28.) Probably, Shishak was of another family than Pharaoh, whose daughter Solomon had married; and was excited to this invasion by the reports of the immense treasures that prince had collected at Jerusalem, [and so the Rabbins,] with the division in his dominions, and the weakness of Rehoboam's administration. But the Lord gave him power because of the people's transgressions. ID.

Verses 3, 4.

(*M. R.*) The Lubims inhabited Lybia, adjoining Egypt on the W. the Sukkiims are supposed to have been the people called Troglodytes, because they dwelt in caves: and the Ethiopians, probably, were the inhabitants of Ethiopia, S. of Egypt.—It is likely several of Rehoboam's sons were slain, or taken captive, by Shishak, when he took the cities they governed. (11:22, 23.) ID.

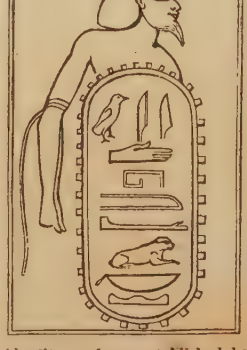
(3.) *Horsemen.*] 'The battle scenes in the temple of Karnac (note, *v.* 8, &c.) represent individuals, of routed nations, on horse-back, mounted sideways. They had no saddles, but always bridles. The Numidian cavalry had neither.' WILKINSON. *Patrick* remarks that *Sukkiim* means the same as Troglodytæ, [which the *Sept.* and *Vulg.* have here] i. e. 'dwellers' *en traglois*, 'in caves or dens.' ED. 'The statement of Herodotus, that Sesostris was the only Egyptian monarch who ruled in Ethiopia, is utterly devoid of foundation, as several other Pharaoh's not only extended their conquests, but erected temples and other buildings in that country, both before and after Sesostris' time, the remains of which still exist, and that too in Upper Ethiopia . . . Remeses II, (as appears by the Pharaonic sculptures at Bait-el Wellee, Nubia,) reduced the revolted Ethiopians (Cush), and also the Shorii, an *eastern* nation, apparently of Arabia Petræa, formerly tributaries, also. . . . . *Strabo* says "the Ethiopians above Syene, consisted of the Troglodytæ, Blemmyes, Nubæ, and Megabari." The Megabari and Blemmyes inhabited the E. desert, N. of Mëroe to the frontiers of Egypt, and were under the dominion of the Ethiopians; the Troglodytæ, on the shore of the Red Sea, from Berenice southwards. The Nubæ, a *Lybian* nation, were on the left bank, and *independent of Ethiopia*. . . It does not appear, that the monarchs after the 18th dyn. continued to extend or even to maintain their conquests in this country, and few of them appear to have included Lower Ethiopia, between the first and second cataracts, within the limits of their Egyptian territory.' WILKINSON.

Verses 5, 6. (*M. R.* p.) SCOTT.

Verses 7—11.

Probably, Shishak had intended to give up the city to be plundered by his army: but God suddenly disposed him to greater moderation and clemency, than could possibly have been expected from such a man in his circumstances; so that he did not proceed to rob the temple of its sacred vessels. Neither did he deprive the inhabitants of their private property; but perhaps he exacted a sum of money, in token of their becoming his servants. *Bp. Patrick.* SCOTT.

(8.) 'At Karnac [note and cut, 1 K. 7:2—12.] appeared all the Pharaonic magnificence, all that men have imagined and executed of the most grand. All that I had yet seen at Thebes, all that I had enthusiastically admired on the left bank [of the Nile], appeared to me miserable in comparison with the gigantic conceptions which surrounded me. I shall be very careful not to undertake to describe any thing; for, either my expressions would not come up to the thousandth part of what should be said in speaking of such objects, or if I should indeed trace out a feeble sketch of it, even very much out of color, I should be taken for an enthusiast, perhaps even for a madman. It suffices to add that no ancient nor modern people has conceived of the art of architecture upon a scale so sublime, so broad, so grandiose, as did the ancient Egyptians; their conceptions are those of men 100 feet high, and the imagination which in Europe soars far above our columned porticoes, checks itself and falls powerless at the foot of the 140 columns of the pillared (hypostyle) hall of Karnac. [Comp. Ezek. 30: 18, and note there]. In this marvellous palace, I have contemplated the *portraits* of most of the ancient Pharaohs, known for their great acts, and they are veritable *portraits*, [and so *Wilkinson*,] represented a hundred times in the bas-reliefs of the walls, interior and exterior: each one preserves a peculiar physiognomy, and one which has no relation [or particular resemblance] to that of his predecessors or successors [i. e. is not a mere repetition of the same features, air, &c.]; there, in the colossal pictures, of a sculpture truly grand and altogether heroic, more perfect than can be believed in Europe, we see *Mandouei* battling nations the enemies of Egypt, and re-entering his country in triumph; farther on, are the campaigns of Rhamses-Sesostris; elsewhere *Sesonchis* is seen dragging to the feet of the Theban triad (Amon, Mouth and Khons) the chiefs of more than 30 conquered nations, among whom I have discovered, (as was to be expected, of course,) letter for letter, *Ioudahamalek*, [IOUDH. MALK and another character] *the kingdom of the Jews*, or of *Judah*. Thus the identity we have established between the Egyptian *Scheschonk*, the *Sesonchis* of Manetho, and the *Sesac* or *Scheschok* of the Bible, [note 1 K. 14:25] is confirmed in the most satisfactory manner.' *Champollion Le Jeune.* 'According to the Bible, Sesonchis attacked and took



upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak

8 Nevertheless, [t] they shall be his servants; that [u] they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries.

9 So [v] Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and [x] took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he took all: he carried away also [y] the shields of gold which Solomon had made.

10 Instead of which, king Rehoboam made [z] shields of brass, and committed *them* to the hands of [a] the chief of the guard, that kept the entrance of the king's house.

11 And when the king entered into the house of the LORD, the guard came and fetched them, and brought them again into the guard-chamber.

12 And [b] when he humbled himself, the wrath of the LORD turned from him, that he would not destroy *him* altogether: and [*] also in Judah things went well.

13 So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned: for [c] Rehoboam *was* one and forty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, [d] the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, [e] to put his name there. And his mother's name *was* Naamah, [f] an Ammonitess.

14 And he did evil, because [g] he [†] prepared not his heart [h] to seek the LORD.

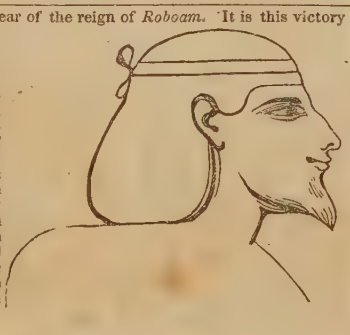
15 Now the acts of Rehoboam, [i] first and last, *are* they not written in the [‡] book of [k] Shemaiah the prophet, and of [l] Iddo the seer concerning genealogies? And *there were* [m] wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually.

16 And Rehoboam [n] slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David: and [o] Abijah his son reigned in his stead.

t Is. 28:13.
u Deut. 28:47,48. Judg. 3:1,2. Jer. 18:24. Hos. 8:10.
v 1 K. 14:25,26.
x 1 K. 15:18. 2 K. 16:8. 18:15,16. Lam. 1:10.
y 9:15,16. 1 K. 10:16,17.
z 1 K. 14:27,28. Lam. 4:1.
a 2 Sam. 8:18. 23:23. 1 Chr. 11:25. Cant. 3:7,8.
b See on 6,7.—Lam. 3:22,33,42.
* Or, *yet in Judah there were good things.* 19:3. Gen. 18:24. 1 K. 14:13. Is. 6:13.
c 13:7. 1 K. 14:21.
d See on 6:6.—Ps. 48:1—3. 78:68,69.
e Ex. 20:24. Deut. 12:5,11. Ez. 48:35.
f Deut. 23:3. 1 K. 11:1. Neh. 13:1,26.
g 11:16. 19:3 30:19. 1 Sam. 7:3. 1 Chr. 29:18. Ps. 78:8.
† Heb. *fixed.* Ps. 57:7. 78:37. 1 Ccr. 15:58. 16:16.
h Ps. 105:3,4 Is. 45:19. 55:6,7. Matt. 7:7.
i 9:29.
‡ Heb. *words.*
k 5. 1 K. 12:22.
l 13:22.
m 1 K. 14:30.
n See on 1 K. 14:29—31.
o 13:1. 1 K. 14:31. *Abijam.* 1 Chr. 3:10. Matt. 1:7. *Abia.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is a very common but most lamentable case, that men, who, in distress or danger, or apparently near death, seem very much engaged in seeking God, often throw aside their religion when they have received a merciful deliverance. But the warning, 'Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee,' deserves the most serious consideration of all, who are tempted to such base ingratitude. When there are merely external appearances of contrition, our merciful God will often grant respites, in order to encourage true penitents by showing his readiness to forgive. This is especially the case in his dealings with sinful nations: for a general external humiliation before God, under national judgments, is a good evidence that their iniquities are not yet full. When the Lord is pleased to show mercy, He can dispose the hardest hearts to compassion; the most rapacious, to moderation; and the most impious, to fear profaning sacred things: for He rules the impetuous lusts of men, as He does the raging ocean, saying, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further.'—It is good to be convinced by any sufferings, short of eternal misery, that by forsaking the Lord we are cruel to ourselves; and that his service, which is but another name for liberty, peace, and felicity, cannot be renounced, without our becoming the miserable slaves of the worst of tyrants and oppressors: and whenever the heart is truly humbled, the afflictions will be removed, or alleviated and counterbalanced by divine consolations. SCOTT.



Jerusalem in the 5th year of the reign of *Roboam.* It is this victory which the bas-relief of Karnac refers to. It is copied in the cut here given. The kingdom of Judah is here personified, and doubtless with that *fidelity to physiognomy remarked in all* the ancient works of art of the Egyptians, in reference to the foreign nations which they have represented upon their monuments: in the cut there is found the *physiognomy of the Jewish people*, in the 10th century before the Christian era, according to the Egyptians. Indeed, *Rehoboam himself*, perhaps, *sat for the original* of this picture.' *Champollion Figeac, Lettres D'Egypte.* We see too in the cut the badges of the 'service' spoken of in this verse! ED.

Verse 9.

Shields.] These seem anciently to have been hung round upon the walls, as a glittering battlement; at least, the pictures of fortifications on the most ancient monuments of Egypt, represent the battlements in the shape of shields. ID.

Verse 12.

We read no more of Shishak, who, by one mean or other was kept from coming to extort any further tribute or services. SCOTT.

Verse 13.

One and forty.] 'Houbigant brings many arguments to prove this a mistake, and thinks he wes but 16. At 10:8. ten *young men* brought up *with him*, are spoken of, of course he must have been young *then*. In 13:7. Abijah calls him *tender-hearted* then, and no man could be reputed *young* and *tender-hearted*, quite devoid of experience, who was above 40 years old.' DR. A. CLARKE.

CHAP. XIII.

Abijah reigns; he and Jeroboam, with vast preparations, engage in war, 1—3. Abijah shows the justice of his cause, 4—12. Judah, relying on God, gains a signal victory, with immense slaughter of the Israelites, 13—19. Jeroboam dies, 20. Abijah's wives and children, 21, 22.

NOW [a] in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam began Abijah to reign over Judah.

2 He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* [b] Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of [c] Gibeah. [d] And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam.

3 And Abijah [*] set the battle in array with an army of valiant men of war, *even* [e] four hundred thousand chosen men: Jeroboam also set the battle in array against him, with [f] eight hundred thousand chosen men, *being* mighty men of valor.

B. C. 957.

4 ¶ And Abijah stood up upon mount [g] Zemaraim, which *is* in mount Ephraim, and said, [h] Hear me, thou Jeroboam, and all Israel;

5 [i] Ought ye not to know, that [j] the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel [k] to David for ever, *even* to him and to his sons by [l] a covenant of salt?

6 Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, is risen up, and hath [m] rebelled against his lord.

7 And there are gathered unto him [n] vain men, [o] the children of Belial, and have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was [p] young and tender-hearted, and [q] could not withstand them.

8 And now ye think to withstand [r] the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David; and ye *be* [s] a great multitude, and *there are* [t] with you golden calves, which Jeroboam made you for gods.

9 Have ye not [u] cast out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and have [v] made you priests after the manner of the nations of *other* lands? so that whosoever cometh to † consecrate himself [x] with a young bullock and seven rams, *the same* may be a priest of *them that are* [y] no gods.

10 But as for us, [z] the LORD *is* our God, and we have not forsaken him; and [a] the priests, which minister unto the LORD, *are* the sons of Aaron, and the Levites *wait* upon *their* business:

11 And [b] they burn unto the LORD, every morning and every evening, burnt-sacrifices, and [c] sweet incense: the [d] shew-bread also *set they in order* upon the pure table; and [e] the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereof, to burn every evening:

a See on 12:16.—1 K. 15:1.
b 11:20. *Maachah the daughter of Absalom.* 1 K. 15:2. *Abishalom.*
c Josh. 18:28. *Gibeath.* Judg. 19:14, 16. 1 Sam. 10:26.
d 1 K. 15:6,7.
* Heb. *bound together.* 1 Sam. 7:1—3.
e 11:1. 14:8. 17:14—18. 26:12,13. 1 Chr. 21:5.
f 14:9.
g Gen. 10:18. Josh. 18:22.
h 15:2. Judg. 9:7.
i Neh. 5:9. Prov. 1:29. 2 Pet. 3:5.
j Judg. 11:21—24. Jer. 27:5—7. Dan. 4:25—32. 5:18.
k 1 Sam. 16:1,12. 2 Sam. 7:12,16. 1 K. 8:20. 1 Chr. 17:11,14. 28:4,5. Ps. 89:19—37. Jer. 33:21,22,26. Luke 1: 31—33.
l Lev. 2:13. Num. 18:19. Ez. 43:24. Mark 9:49,50.
m 10:19. 1 K. 11:26. 12:20,27.
n Judg. 9:4. 11:3. 1 Sam. 22:2. Job 30:8. Ps. 26:4. Prov. 12:11. 28:19. Acts 17:5. Tit. 1:10.
o See on Deut. 13:13. 1 K. 21:10,13.
p 12:13. Ec. 10:16. Is. 3:4. 1 Cor. 14:20. Heb. 5:12.
q 11:1—4.
r 9:8. Ps. 2:1—6. Is. 7:6,7. 9:6,7. Luke 19:14,27.
s 14:9—11. 20:6,12. Ps. 32:16.
t See on 11:15. 1 K. 12:28. 14:9.—Hos. 8:6.
u 11:14,15.
v 1 K. 12:31—33. 13:33.
† Heb. *fill his hand.* Ex. 32:29. Lev. 16:32. 1 Chr. 29:5. *margins.*
x Ex. 29:1,35. Lev. 8:2.
y Deut. 32:17. 2 K. 19:18. Jer. 2:11. Hos. 8:6. Acts 19:26. Gal. 4:8.
z 11:16,17. Ex. 19:5,6. Zech. 13:9.
a Ex. 29:1,&c. Num. 16:40. 18:1—7.
b See on 2:4. Ex. 29:38—42.
c Ex. 30:1—10. Lev. 2:1—3. Num. 16:6,7,46,47. Luke 1:9. Rev. 8:3,4.
d Ex. 25:30. Lev. 24:6.
e Ex. 25:31—39. 27:20,21. Lev. 24:3,4.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII. V. 3. The numbers brought into the field here were immense: but when every man was a soldier, small kingdoms could raise very large armies upon any great emergency. SCOTT. 400,000. . . 800,000.] 'The Hebrews then brought all from 20 to 50 years of age into the field. Many copies, says *Kennicott*, read 40,000 . . . 80,000. So, at *v.* 17. the *Vulg.* has 50,000 instead of 500,000.' ED.

Kennicott, Clarke, Hewlett, &c. would read 40,000 and 80,000, after ancient versions. ID.

Verses 4—12.

Abijah bears a bad character in Kings; (1 *K.* 15:1—4.) yet on this occasion he spoke religiously; and he seems to have had a strong confidence in God, grounded on the maintenance of his ordinances, and the number of pious worshippers, in his kingdom. The *basis* of his address was truth; but there was much false coloring in his manner of stating it, according to the too general custom of eloquent orators. For the covenant respecting the kingdom over Israel, made with David in behalf of his posterity, (except as it related to the Messiah,) was *conditional*; and neither Solomon, Rehoboam, nor Abijah, had been attentive to the restipulations.—Jeroboam had indeed acted very wickedly in his manner of seizing and governing the kingdom of Israel: yet it had been granted to him by God Himself, and Abijah never mentioned that circumstance.—The persons, who revolted from Rehoboam and made Jeroboam king, had acted with great precipitation and ingratitude; but perhaps it was not candid to call them indiscriminately 'vain men, the children of Belial.' Rehoboam had given them no small provocation; he was surely old enough to have behaved more wisely, if he had not been actuated by a proud, domineering disposition; and it was not so much owing either to his lenity, his timidity, or his weakness, that he had not prosecuted his pretensions by war, as to the divine prohibition. (1 *K.* 12:9—24.)—But Abijah's words were more forcible, when he exposed the apostasy and idolatry of the kingdom of Israel; their impiety and sacrilege in excluding the priests of the Lord from their possessions; and the shameful manner, in which any worthless man was made a priest, who could and would bring the sacrifice appointed by way of consecration. But what Abijah urged, concerning the state of true religion in Judah, was not strictly just; and, as spoken by him, it savored of ostentation. Abijah himself was not a godly man; and idolatry was evidently connived at in his days. Yet it was true, that the men of Judah had the priests, ordinances, and worship of God among them; that there were numbers of pious worshippers in the land; that theirs was the more righteous cause; that the LORD was on their side, and their Captain, while the Israelites fought against Him; and that the presence of the priests blowing the sacred trumpets, according to the law, was a token of his presence with them and favor to them. (*Num.* 10:2—10.)—The expression, 'after the manner of the nations,' (9) shows that the laws of Moses were not made according to the customs of the gentiles, as many suppose; but entirely distinct from them: and that the similarity which in many instances has been traced, actually arose from the

CHAP. XIII. We have here a much fuller account of the reign of Abijah, the son of Rehoboam, than in Kings. There we found his character no better than his father's, 1 K. 15: 2, 3. But here we find him more brave and successful in war. He reigned but three years, and was chiefly famous for a glorious victory over the forces of Jeroboam.

V. 1—12. Abijah's mother was called *Maachah*, the daughter of Absalom, *ch.* 11: 20; here, *Michaiah*, the daughter of Uriel: probably she was a grand-daughter of Absalom, by his daughter Tamar, 2 Sam. 14: 27. and her immediate father this Uriel.

I. God gave him leave to engage Jeroboam, and owned him in it, though He would not permit Rehoboam to do it, *ch.* 11: 4. Jeroboam, probably, was now the aggressor; happening to survive Rehoboam, he claimed the crown of Judah by survivorship; at least, hoped to get it from this young king, on his accession. It was brave and necessary, then, in Abijah to take up arms, and God stood by him. Now that Jeroboam had discovered what manner of man he was, by setting up the calves, and casting off the priests, Abijah is allowed to chastise him; and it does not appear that he intended any more; whereas Rehoboam aimed at the utter reduction of the 10 tribes, which was contrary to the counsel of God.

II. Jeroboam's army was double Abijah's, *v.* 3. he had ten tribes to raise an army out of, Abijah

for [f] we keep the charge of the LORD our God; but ye have forsaken him.

12 And, behold, [g] God himself *is* with us [h] for *our* Captain, and [i] his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, [k] fight ye not against the LORD God of your fathers; for [l] ye shall not prosper.

[*Practical Observations.*]

13 ¶ But Jeroboam caused [m] an ambushment to come about behind them: so they were before Judah, and the ambushment *was* behind them.

14 And when Judah [n] looked back, behold, the battle *was* before and behind: and they [o] cried unto the LORD, and [p] the priests sounded with the trumpets.

15 Then the men of Judah gave a shout: and [q] as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that [r] God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.

16 And the children of Israel fled before Judah: and [s] God delivered them into their hand.

17 And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter: so there fell down slain of Israel [t] five hundred thousand chosen men.

18 Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed, [u] because they relied upon the LORD God of their fathers.

19 And Abijah pursued after Jeroboam, and [x] took cities from him, Beth-el with the towns thereof, and Jeshanah with the towns thereof, and [y] Ephraim with the towns thereof.

20 Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Abijah; and [z] the LORD struck him, and [a] he died.

21 But Abijah [b] waxed mighty, and married [c] fourteen wives, and [d] begat twenty and two

f Gen. 26:5. Num. 9:19,23. Ez. 44:8, 15. 48:11.
g Num. 23:21. 1 Sam. 4:5—7. Is. 8. 10. Zech. 10:5. Rom. 8:31.
h Deut. 20:4. Josh. 5:13—15. Ps. 20: 7. Heb. 2:10.
i Num. 10:9. 31:6. Josh. 6:20.
k Job 15:25,26. 40:9. Is. 45:9. Acts 5:39. 9:4,5.
l 24:20. Num. 14:41. Deut. 28:29. Job 9:4. Is. 54:17. Jer. 2:37. Ez. 17:9.
m 20:22. Josh. 8:4. Prov. 21:30. Jer. 4:22.
n Ex. 14:10. Josh. 8:20. Judg. 20:33—43. 2 Sam. 10:8—14.
o 14:11. 18:31. Ps. 50:15. 91:5.
p See on 12.
q 20:21. Josh. 6:16,20. Judg. 7:18—22. Ps. 47:1,5.
r 14:12. Num. 32:4. Josh. 11:3. Judg. 4:15. 2 K. 5:1. Ps. 118:4—7. Is. 37:36.
s Gen. 14:20. Deut. 2:36. 3:3. Josh. 10:12. 21:44. Judg. 1:4. 11:21. 1 Sam. 23:7.
t 3,12. 28:6. Is. 10:16—19. 37:36. Nah. 1:5. 1 Cor. 10:22.
u 16:8,9. 20:20. 2 K. 18:5. 1 Chr. 5: 20. Ps. 22:4,5. 146:5. Dan. 3:28. Eph. 1:12.
x Josh. 10:19,39. 11:12. 1 Sam. 31:7.
y 15:8. Josh. 15:9. *Ephron.* John 11:54.
z 1 Sam. 25:38. 26:10. Ez. 24:16. Acts 12:23.
a 1 K. 14:20. 15:9.
b 2 Sam. 5:12,13.
c See on 11:21.
d Judg. 8:30,31. 9:5. 10:4.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12. The promptness of mankind to war, lamentably proclaims the depravity of our nature, and the influence that the great murderer of bodies and souls possesses over the minds of men, even in the determinations of senates and in the cabinets of kings. Nor can vain-glorious commanders more delight in seeking renown, power, or revenge, by the destruction of the human species, than many of their inferiors do, in listing under their banners, seconding their aims, and rushing on danger and death, that they may attempt the slaughter of those who never injured or even saw them. [Introd. note g, p. 12. vol. I.] Such stubborn facts stand in the page of every history, a confutation of the absurd encomiums, which self-flattering speculators have passed on the philanthropy * of the human heart, and the sufficiency of human reason, for every purpose of virtue and religion. The annals of mankind form one continued narration of blood shed in the most wanton and unnecessary manner, in pursuit of honor and dominion, or in seeking to wrest the sword of vengeance from the hands of the Supreme Judge. The millions, who have thus perished miserably, 'hateful, and hating one another,' exceed almost imagination: and, to crown the whole, the chief actors in this bloody tragedy have engrossed almost the whole applause of their fellow mortals; or shared it with the poets, orators, and historians, who have excited them by infamous panegyrics to such destructive pursuits! Compare the whole with the short command, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;' and then bring in an impartial verdict concerning the heart of man, and the state of human nature. (*Lev.* 19: 18.)—Yet all the blood thus shed must be one day accounted for, as *murder*, on whomsoever that load of guilt may fall!—But, it is easy to speak on these topics without the fear of God possessing the heart. Many palliate the offences of their own party, while they aggravate the misconduct of their adversaries. These are not only the arts of those, who purposely frame *manifestos* to varnish their ambition with the show of equity; but are often employed by such as really have justice on their side, yet forget that genuine beauty is disgraced and rendered suspected, by being painted. It is obvious, however, that ungodly princes have often prospered, because their enemies have been still more abandoned; because they had justice on their side; because many of their subjects were pious; because more external honor was paid to the truth and ordinances of God among their subjects; or because the appeal to Him, and professed reliance on Him, was more openly made in the decision of the contest. SCOTT.

* That there is more or less of philanthropy, or benevolence, in every human being that ever lived, is true; but that it is a *ruling* motive of action in many, (compared with the millions on the earth,) history and every day's experience teach us to deny. *Ed.*

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idolaters, in several particulars, adopting or imitating the usages of Israel. *Zemaraim.* (4) A city allotted to Benjamin: but mt. Zemaraim, no doubt adjacent to it, was in mt. Ephraim, on the borders of the two tribes. (*Josh.* 18:22.) SCOTT.

Verses 13—22.

Abijah, though destitute of piety, seems to have possessed great vigor and capacity, and during his short reign he became very powerful. (*M.* and *M R.* c.—1 *K.* 15:1—8.) SCOTT.

sons, and sixteen daughters.

22 And the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways, and his sayings, *are* written in the *story of the prophet [e] Iddo.

CHAP. XIV.

Abijah dies, and Asa succeeds him, I. He abolishes idolatry, 2—5. Enjoying peace, he fortifies his kingdom, and establishes a large army, 6—8. Being attacked by Zerah, with an immense army of Ethiopians, he calls on God, is victorious, and acquires much spoil, 9—15.

SO Abijah [a] slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and [b] Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years.

2 And Asa did *that which was* [c] good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God:

3 For [d] he took away the altars of the strange *gods*, and the [e] high places, and [f] brake down the †images, [g] and cut down the groves:

4 And [h] commanded Judah to [i] seek the LORD God of their fathers, and [k] to do the law and the commandment.

5 Also he took away, out of all the cities of Judah, the high places and the ‡images: and the kingdom was quiet before him.

6 And [l] he built fenced cities in Judah: [m] for the land had rest, and he had no war in those years; because [n] the LORD had given him rest.

7 Therefore [o] he said unto Judah, Let us build these cities, and make about *them* walls and towers, gates and bars, [p] *while* the land *is* yet before us; because we have sought the LORD our God, [q] we have sought *him*, and [r] he hath given us rest on every side. So they built and prospered.

17. more; it is said, than ever we read of in any history to have been killed in one battle; but the Lord would thus chastise the idolatry of Israel, and own the house of David. But see the sad effect of division: it was the blood of Israelites that was thus shed like water by Israelites, while the heathen, their neighbors, to whom the name had formerly been a terror, cried *Aha, so would we have it!*

IV. The consequence of this was, that the children of Israel, though not brought back to the house of David, yet, for that time, were *brought under*, v. 18. Many cities were taken, and remained in the possession of the kings of Judah; as Beth-el particularly, v. 19. What became of the golden calf there, when it came into the hands of the king of Judah, we are not told; perhaps it was removed to some place of greater safety, and, at length, to Samaria, Hos. 8: 5. yet in Jehu's time we find it at Beth-el, 2 K. 10: 29. Perhaps Abijah, when it was in his power to demolish it, suffered it to stand, for *his heart was not perfect* with God; and not improving what he had got for the honor of God, he soon lost it all again.

Jeroboam never looked up after this defeat, v. 20. The Lord struck him, either with some bodily disease, of which he languished; or with melancholy and trouble of mind, his heart was broken, and vexation brought his head, probably, a hoary head, with sorrow to the grave.

Abijah waxed mighty upon it. What number of wives and children he had before, does not appear; but now he multiplied his wives to 14 in all, by whom he had 38 children, v. 21. It seems, he had ways peculiar to himself, and sayings of his own, which were recorded with his acts in the history of those times, v. 22. Perhaps he was too much lifted up with his victories, therefore God would not let him live long to enjoy the honor of them.

CHAP. XIV. In this and the two following chs. we have the history of the reign of Asa; a good reign, and a long one.

V. 1—8. I. Here is, Asa's general character, v. 2. 1. He aimed at pleasing God: studied to approve himself to Him. Happy they that walk by this rule! 2. He saw God's eye always upon

* Or, *commentary*.

a 9:31.—See on 1 K. 2:10. 14:31.
b 1 K. 15:8. 1 Chr. 3:10. Matt. 1:7,8.
c 31:20. 1 K. 15:11,14. Luke 1:75.
d Deut. 7:5. 1 K. 11:7,8. 14:22—24.
e 15:17. Lev. 26:30. 1 K. 15: 12:14.
f 34:4. Ex. 34:13. Deut. 7:5,25.
† Heb. *statues*. 2 K. 23:14. *marg.*
g Judg. 6:25—28. 2 K. 18:4. 23:6,14.
‡ 29:21,27,30. 30:12. 33:16. 34:32,33. Gen. 18:19. Josh. 24:15. 1 Sam. 3: 13. Ezra 10:7—12. Neh. 13:9,19—22. Ps. 101:2—8.
h See on 11:16.—30:19. Is. 55:6,7. Am. 5:4.
i Neh. 10:29—39. Ps. 119:10.
k Heb. *sun images*. 34:4. *marg.*
l 8:2—6. 11:5—12.
m Judg. 3:11,30. 5:31. 1 K. 5:4. 1 Chr. 22:9.
n 15:15. Job 34:29. Ps. 46:9.
o 32:5. Acts 9:31.
p John 9:4. 12:35,36. Heb. 3:13—15.
q See on 4.—1 Chr. 28:9. Ps. 105:3,4. Jer. 29:12—14. 1 Pet. 3:12.
r See on 6.—Josh. 23:1. Matt. 11:28,29.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 13—22. The wise politicians of the world, generally treat with contempt, all arguments grounded on the state of religion, and the favor of God toward his worshippers: their whole dependence is 'on an arm of flesh,' and if their confidence be disappointed, they ascribe it to fortune, or to the chance of war! To triumph in those contests, which, [besides the fearful demoralization they necessarily promote,] cause so many thousands and hundreds of thousands of the human species to expire in agony, and their immortal souls to be sent to the tribunal of God and an eternal state, [shocks a feeling heart;] but his justice, and faithful care of his people, are seen and adored in them. And least of all, can success in *civil wars*, which are commonly conducted with the most unrelenting rancor and most tremendous slaughter, give satisfaction to any benevolent mind. Nor are the victories acquired in those fierce contests which rend the church of Christ, to the disgrace of the common cause, and joy of the common enemy to be more rejoiced in. But to conquer our own passions, to prevail against the tempter and the world, and overcome evil with good, are victories to be gained by faith, patience, and prayer, in which we may safely and purely rejoice. And when the conquerors and conquered, in bloody battles, will join in execrating their own and each other's madness; 'when the earth shall disclose her blood, and no more cover her slain;' then shall we receive the unsullied palm, the conqueror's noblest crown. SCOTT.

(22.) *Story.*] 'The marg. "*commentary*" is right. This, as far as I recollect, is the first place where a *midrash*, (so the Heb.) or commentary is mentioned.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV. V. 1. Jeroboam, and his son Nadab, remained quiet during the short time they reigned over Israel, after Abijah's victory. Baasha began to reign before the close of Asa's third year; but though 'there was war between him and Asa all their days;' (1 *K.* 15:16.) it did not for some time occasion much disturbance to the peace of Judah, through the enfeebled state of Israel. SCOTT.

V. 2—5. The high places, where JEHOVAH was irregularly worshipped, were not removed, though the idolatrous altars were. (15:17. 1 *K.* 15:14.) Id. *High places.*] Qu. Were these the mounds (found all over the world) of earth (cut) or stones, used for sacrifices, burying places, &c. (note, 2 K. 9:13.)? Some (as in Mexico, St. Louis, U. S. &c.) are square, with steps or a slope. Several are sometimes found together, perhaps one for each federate tribe assembled. Some in Minorca have projecting stones to ascend spirally (cut); others a spiral way. A cut is given from *Vallancey*, of the section of a circular mound, with its altar, (*cromleach* or *BEALagh*) and its circumvallation, (579 ft. in diam.) near *BELfast*, Ireland. The banks are 45 ft. high, and 12 broad,

at top. Similar intrenchments are found in the U. S. &c. see *Archæologia Americana*. The Parsees, near Bombay, still expose their dead on circular high places (cut); conspicuously located, to birds of prey, and the elements. See *Forbes*, and *Hyde*. Pr. *Pallas* gives a plate of a Tartar temple (Siberia) surrounded by mounds with flags on them (cut). ED.

(5.) *Sun images*, marg.] 'Connected with the worship of Baal, 34:4. So the Heb. in Is. 27:9. and Ez. 6:4. This, in addition to the Peor and Lingam, confirms the *identity* of Baal and Siva [the Destroyer, or changer of forms, or Regenerator]. The "sun images" are principally, if not *exclusively*, kept in the temple of Siva [of India]. They are made of black granite, in the shape and about the size of a man. There are, however, many of them with only a head, having a halo or coruscation to represent the orb of day. Thus in the houses of the rich natives may be seen, near a niche, on one side, the representation of the sun, and on the other, the crescent moon. The temple images are placed on the *east* side.' [Comp. note, 29:6, 7.] ROBERTS.

Meteoric stones seem also to have been early connected with sun worship; as well as the oval, hard, black stones (1 to 2 ft. in length) covered with the arrow head character, delicately cut, found at Persepolis. This stone worship, as connected with Baal, the Sun, extended to Ireland, and the centre stone of Stonehenge is black. *Moore* (Hist. of Ireland) mentions ancient 'sun images' found in Ireland 'of *black wood*, covered and plated with thin gold, the chased work on them in lines radiated from a centre.' Note, Gen. 28:18. ED.

V. 6—8. The union of piety and prudence, in Asa, is worthy of notice and commendation. We may suppose his army generally served in divisions by rotation, but could be marshalled all together on occasion. (1 *Chr.* 27:1—15.) Various concurring events formed the *second cause* of this rest, (6) both from external wars and internal disturbances; but the Lord, the GREAT FIRST CAUSE, directed and over-ruled all, to effect his own merciful purpose to Asa and Judah. This Asa saw, and piously acknowledged. (7) SCOTT.

V. 9. *Zerah the Ethiopian.*] 'Called *Zara*, by the Vulg. *Zare*, by the Sept. and *Zaraios* by Jos. *Champollion* finds his name on Egyptian monuments, thus inscribed; *Amnmai* OSRKN. This Pharaoh was the son and successor of Sheshonk, (Shishak) as is proved by Manetho, who with great probability calls him Osorchôn, a name which the copyists or abbreviators have improperly confounded with that of Osorthôn or Osorthôs. It is in Osorchon, 2d. king of the 22d dynasty, (Bubastite)

8 And Asa had an army *of men* that bare targets and spears: [s] out of Judah three hundred thousand; and out of Benjamin, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and fourscore thousand: all these *were* mighty men of valor.

9 ¶ And there came out against them [t] Zerah the Ethiopian with an host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots; and came unto [u] Mareshah.

10 Then Asa went out against him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of [x] Zephathah at Mareshah.

11 And Asa [y] cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, *it is* [z] nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with [a] them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we [b] rest on thee, and [c] in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou *art* our God; [d] let not * man prevail against thee.

12 So [e] the LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled.

13 And Asa and the people that *were* with him pursued them unto [f] Gerar: and the Ethiopians were overthrown, that they could not recover themselves; for they were † destroyed [g] before the LORD and before his [h] host; and they carried away very much spoil.

14 And they smote all the cities round about Gerar; for [i] the fear of the LORD came upon them: and they spoiled all the cities; for there was [k] exceeding much spoil in them.

15 They smote also [l] the tents of cattle, and [m] carried away sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem.

CHAP. XV.

The encouraging prophecy of Azariah before Asa, 1—7. Asa puts away idolatry, assembles the people, and enters into covenant with God, 8—15. He removes his mother from being queen, for her idolatry; yet the high places are not taken away, 16, 17. He brings the dedicated things into the temple, and enjoys a long peace, 18, 19.

AND [a] the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded:

2 And he went out ‡ to meet Asa, and said unto him, [b] Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; [c] the LORD *is* with you, while ye be

s 11:1. 13:3. 17:14—19. 25:5.
t See on 12:2,3.—16:8. 2 K. 19:9. Is. 8:9,10. Ez. 30:5. Rev. 16:14.
u Josh. 15:44. Mic. 1:15.
x Judg. 1:17. *Zephath.*
y 13:14. 18:31. 32:20. Ex. 14:10. 1 Chr. 5:20. Ps. 22:5. 34:6. 50:15. 91:15. Acts 2:21.
z Lev. 26:8. Deut. 32:30. Judg. 7:7. 1 Sam. 14:6. 1 K. 20:27—30. Amos 5:9. 2 Cor. 12:9,10.
a 20:12. Deut. 32:36. Is. 40:29—31.
b 32:8. 1 Sam. 17:35,36. Ps. 37:5. Prov. 18:10. Is. 26:3,4. 41:10—14.

differently armed, both offensively and defensively. The men of Judah guarded themselves with targets, the men of Benjamin with shields, the former much larger than the latter, 1 K. 10: 16, 17. [Cuts, Ps. 18: 2. Ex. 15: 4. 17: 10.] The men of Judah fought with spears, when they closed in with the enemy: the men of Benjamin drew bows, to reach the enemy at a distance. Different gifts and employments are for the common good.

V. 9—15. Here, 1. A formidable army of Ethiopians disturbs the peace of Asa's kingdom, (*v.* 9, 10.) that their faith in God might be tried, and that God might do great things for them. Now Asa found the benefit of having a good army ready raised against such a time of need.

2. The application Asa made to God, *v.* 11. He that sought God in the day of his peace and prosperity, could, with holy boldness, cry to God in the day of his trouble, and call Him *his God*. His prayer is short, but has much in it.

3. The glorious victory God gave him, *v.* 12. Asa and his soldiers took the advantage God gave them against the enemy. They destroyed them, took the plunder of their camp, and *smote the cities* in league with them, to which they fled for shelter, and despoiled them, *v.* 13. and they were not able to make any resistance, *for the fear of the Lord came upon them*, i. e. a fear God struck them with, to that degree that they had no heart to withstand the conquerors. Thus the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.

CHAP. XV. V. 1—7. Here was a prophet sent to Asa and his army, when they returned victorious, not to compliment and congratulate them on their success, but to quicken them to their duty; that is the proper business of God's ministers, even with princes and the greatest of men.

He told them plainly on what terms they stood with God: and set before them the dangerous consequences of forsaking God, and that there was no way of having grievances redressed, but by repenting, and returning to God. When Israel forsook their duty, they were overrun with a deluge of

John 14:1,27. Rom. 8:31.
c 13:12,18. 1 Sam. 17:45,46. Ps. 20: 5,7. Is. 26:13. Acts 3:16.
d Deut. 32:27. Josh. 7:8,9. 1 Sam. 2: 9. Ps. 9:19. 79:9,10. Jer. 1:19. Zech. 2:8. Matt. 16:18. Acts 9:4.
* Or, *mortal man.* Is. 2:22.
e 13:18. 20:22. Ex. 14:25. Deut. 28: 7. 32:39. Josh. 10:10. Ps. 60:12. 136:17,18. 1 Cor. 9:26. 15:57.
f 14. Gen. 10:19. 20:1. 26:1.
† Heb. *broken.*
g Job 6:9. 9:4. 2 Thes. 1:9.
h Josh. 5:14. 1 Sam. 25:28. 1 Chr. 12:22. Ps. 103:11.
i 17:10. 20:29. Gen. 35:5. Deut. 2:25. Josh. 2:9—11. 5:1. 1 Sam. 14:15. 2 K. 7:6. Job 15:21. Ps. 48:5,6. Is. 31:9.
k 20:25. Judg. 14:19. 2 K. 7:7,8,16. Ps. 68:12. Is. 33:23. Rom. 8:37.
l 1 Chr. 4:41.
m Num. 31:9,30—47. 1 Sam. 30:20. 1 Chr. 5:21.
a 20:14. 24:20. Num. 24:2. Judg. 3: 10. 2 Sam. 23:2. 2 Pet. 1:21.
‡ Heb. *before Asa.*
b 13:4. 20:15,20. Judg. 9:7. Is. 49:1, 2. Is. 7:13. Matt. 13:9. Rev. 2:7, 11,17,29. 3:6,13,22.
c 13:12. 32:8. Deut. 20:1. Jam. 4:8.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Nothing will profit our own souls, except that religion, which induces us to 'do that which is good and right in the eyes of the LORD.' Indeed, this alone can prepare us for arduous and perilous services, and influence us to undertake, pursue, and accomplish, designs of usefulness.—In all our prosperity we should notice and acknowledge the hand of God: if He gives rest, none can cause trouble; and those who uprightly seek Him shall find peace and comfort. Our utmost watchfulness and diligence will not secure us from tribulation: but the consciousness of having heartily served the Lord in prosperity, will turn to us for a testimony, that we are indeed his people and He our God; and this will encourage our confidence in Him in the hour of trouble and temptation. SCOTT.

that we recognise (with *Champ.*) the *Ethiopian* of the SS. The monumental name, its Egyptian termination and vowels being abstracted, exactly corresponds with the Heb. here, ZRCH.

The identity of these two names, already conjectured by *Desvignolles*, is then established by the monuments. The collation of dates furnishes equally strong proof of it.' *Greppo*; who places Zerah's defeat in 941 B. C. So *Wilkinson*, who calls him, Osorkon 1. and remarks that the 21st. and 22d dyn. called by *Africanus*, respectively, Bubastites and Tanites, are also said to be both of Diospolitan kings. Perhaps Zerah was called '*the Ethiopian*,' from his own or his father's conquests, or power, in Ethiopia (note, 12:3.); or his father called him so to flatter and quiet that people, as the title 'Prince of Wales' was given to the heir apparent to the British throne. Comp. Hist. note, end of Esth. ED.

Verses 9—15.

It is not certain, whether the Ethiopians or Cushites of Africa, or those near Arabia, are here intended, though it is more generally thought that the latter are meant; which *Patrick* thinks proved by the abundance of camels. But they who suppose the former, conjecture that Zerah had subjugated his neighbors, the Egyptians; had taken possession of the cities and territories bordering on Egypt; and intended still further to extend his conquest, when he had seized on the kingdom of Judah.—Asa's prayer is the genuine language of faith. He was conscious that his aim had been to glorify the Lord, and promote his worship, in the time of his prosperity; and this encouraged him to look upon God as his reconciled Friend and Father. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV. V. 1—7. (*Note*, 8.) It is not easy to determine what times or events were intended by the prophet, in the following vs. Some think, he referred to the state of Israel, in the days of the judges, and this seems most satisfactory. Others again suppose the passage to be pro-

with him; and [d] if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but [e] if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.

3 Now for [f] a long season Israel *hath been* without the [g] true God, and without [h] a teaching priest, and [i] without law.

4 But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought him, he was [k] found of them.

5 And in those times *there was* [l] no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but [m] great vexations *were* upon all the inhabitants of the countries.

6 And [n] nation was [*] destroyed of nation, and city of city: for [o] God did vex them with all adversity.

7 Be [p] ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for [q] your work shall be rewarded.

8 ¶ And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of [r] Oded the prophet, he [s] took courage, and put away [t] the † abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of [u] the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed [x] the altar of the LORD, that *was* before the porch of the LORD.

9 And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and [y] the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for [z] they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when [a] they saw that the LORD his God *was* with him.

B. C. 941. 10 So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in [b] the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa.

11 And they [c] offered unto the LORD ‡ the same time, of the spoil *which* they had brought [d] seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep.

12 And [e] they entered into a covenant to [f] seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart, and with all their soul;

13 That [g] whosoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, [h] whether small or great, whether man or woman.

14 And [i] they sware unto the LORD with a loud voice, and with shouting, and [k] with trumpets, and with cornets.

15 And all Judah [l] rejoiced at the oath: for they had [m] sworn with all their heart, and [n] sought him with their whole desire; and [o] he was found of them: and [p] the LORD gave them rest round about.

16 ¶ And also *concerning* [q] Maachah § the mother of Asa the king, [r] he removed her from *being* queen, because she had made an ‖ idol

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atheism, impiety, irreligion, and all irregularity, *v.* 3. and were continually embarrassed with vexations and destroying wars, foreign and domestic, *v.* 5, 6. But when their troubles drove them to God, they found it not in vain to seek Him, *v.* 4. But what time does this refer to?

1. Some think it looks as far back as the days of the Judges, *v.* 3. These were sad times, when they were frequently oppressed by one enemy or other, and grievously harassed by Moabites, Midianites, Ammonites, and other nations, they were *vexed with all adversity*, *v.* 6. yet when they turned to God by repentance, prayer, and reformation, He raised up deliverers.

2. Others think it describes the state of the ten tribes, (now properly called *Israel*,) in the days of Asa. *Now*, since Jeroboam set up the calves, his idolatry has brought them to downright infidelity, they are *without the true God*, and no marvel, when they were without teaching priests; Jeroboam's priests were not teachers, and thus they came to be without law: it is next to impossible, religion should be kept up without a preaching ministry. In those times, there was no peace, *v.* 5. Their war with Judah gave them frequent alarms; so the late insurrection of Baasha, and other occasions not mentioned. Let Judah notice this, let their neighbors' harms be their warnings. Give no countenance to graven images, for you see what mischief they produce.

3. Others think the whole passage may be read in the future tense, and that it looks forward; hereafter, *Israel will be without the true God, and a teaching priest*, and they will be destroyed by one judgment after another, till they *return to God*, and *seek Him*. See Hos. 3: 4.

On this he grounded his exhortation to prosecute the work of reformation with vigor, *v.* 7. God's work should be done with diligence and cheerfulness, but will not be done without resolution. This should quicken us to the work of religion, that we shall be sure not to lose by it ultimately. How should it go unrewarded, when the work is its own reward?

V. 8—19. We are here told, what good effect the foregoing sermon had on Asa.

I. He grew more bold for God than he had been; his victory would inspire him with some new degrees of resolution, but this message from God with much more; now he ventured to destroy all the abominable idols, (all idolaters are abominable, 1 Pet. 4: 3.) as far as his power went. He also renewed the altar of the Lord, which, it seems, was gone out of repair, though it was not above 35 years since Solomon's head was laid, who erected it. So soon did these ceremonial institutions begin to wax old, as things which, in the fulness of time, must *vanish away*, Heb. 8· 13.

II. He extended his influence further than before, *v.* 9. He summoned a solemn assembly, and particularly brought the strangers to it. All strangers are to be helped, but those that cast themselves on God's good providence, purely to keep a good conscience, are worthy of double honor. Asa ordered the gathering of them together, *v.* 9. yet it is said, *v.* 10. they *gathered themselves together*, made it their own act, so forward were they to obey the king's orders. This meeting was held in the third month; probably, at the feast of Pentecost, which was in that month.

III. He and his people offered sacrifices to God, as his share of the spoil they had got, (*v.* 11.) by way of thanksgiving for favors received, and supplication for further favors. Prayers and praises are now our spiritual sacrifices. And so also he took care the temple should have its gold, *v.* 18. Will a man rob God, or make slow payment to Him, who is always ready to do us good?

IV. *They entered into covenant with God*, (*v.* 12—14.) repenting that they had violated their engagements to Him, and resolving to do better for the future. It is proper for penitents, for converts, to renew their covenants. It should seem, the motion came not from Asa, but from the people themselves: let every man be a volunteer that covenants with God. *Thy people shall be willing*, Ps. 110: 3. Observe,

1. The matter of this covenant. No vow or

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d 4,15. 33:12,13. Is. 55:6,7. Jer. 29: 13,14. Matt. 7:7,8.
e 12:1—3. 24:20. 2 K. 21:14. 1 Chr. 28:9. Rom. 11:1,2. Heb. 12:25.
f 1 K. 12:28—33. Hos. 3:4.
g Jer. 10:10. John 17:3. 1 Thes. 1:9. 1 John 5:20.
h 17:8,9. Lev. 10:11. Deut. 33:10. Neh. 8:9. Ez. 44:21—23. Mic. 3:11. Mal. 2:7. Matt. 2:4,5. 1 Tim. 3:2.
i Rom. 2:12. 7:8,9. 1 Cor. 9:21.
j Deut. 4:29,30. Judg. 3:9,10. 10:10—16. Ps. 106:44. Hos. 6:1. 14:1—3.
k 15. Is. 55:6. 65:1,2. Rom. 10:20.
l Judg. 5:6. 1 Sam. 13:6. Ps. 121:8. m Matt. 24:6,7. Luke 21:25.
n 12:15. 13:17. Mark 13:8. Luke 21: 9,10.
* Heb. *beaten in pieces*.
o 33:11. 36:17. Judg. 2:14. Ps. 106:41. Is. 10:6. Am. 3:6. Luke 21:22—24.
p Josh. 1:7,9. 1 Chr. 28:20. Ps. 27: 14. Is. 35:3,4. Dan. 10:19. 1 Cor. 16:13. Eph. 6:10.
q Gen. 15:1. Ruth 2:12. Ps. 19:11. 58:11. Matt. 5:12,46. 6:1,4,6,18. 10: 41,42. Luke 6:35. Rom. 4:4,5. 1 Cor. 3:8,14. 9:17,18. 15:58. Col. 3: 24. Heb. 6:10. 10:35. 2 John 8.
r 1.
s 19:11. Is. 44:14. *margine*. Acts 28:15.
t Lev. 18:30. Deut. 27:15. Is. 65:4. Jer. 16:18. Ez. 8:10. 1 Pet. 4:3. Rev. 17:4,5.
† Heb. *abominations*. 1 K. 11:5,7. 2 K. 23:13.
u 13:19.
x 4:1. 8:12. 29:18. 2 K. 16:14. 18:22.
y 11:16. 30:1—11,25.
z 1 K. 12:19. 1 Chr. 12:19.
a Gen. 39:3. 1 Sam. 18:28. 1 K. 3:28. Zech. 8:21—23. Acts 7:9,10. 9:31.
b Esth. 3:9.
c 14:13—15. Num. 31:28,29,50. 1 Sam. 15:15,21. 1 Chr. 26:26,27.
‡ Heb. *in that day*.
d 1:6. 7:5.
e 23:16. 29:10. 34:31,32. Deut. 29:1, 12. Neh. 9:38. 10:29. Jer. 50:5. 2 Cor. 8:5.
f See on 4.—Deut. 4:29. 10:12. 1 K. 8:48. Jer. 29:12,13.
g Ex. 22:20. Deut. 13:5,9,15. 17:2—5. 1 K. 18:40.
h Gen. 19:11. Ex. 12:29. Deut. 29:18. Job 3:19. 34:19. Ps. 115:13. Acts 26:22. Rev. 6:15. 20:12.
i Neh. 5:13. 10:29.
k Ps. 81:1—4.
l 23:16—21. 29:10,36. Deut. 26:11. Neh. 8:9. Ps. 32:11. 119:111. Prov. 3:17. 2 Cor. 1:12.
m Ps. 119:106.
n See on 2,4.—Is. 26:8. 45:19 Phil. 1:23.
o See on 4.
p See on 6.—Josh. 23:1. Job 34:29.
q 1 K. 15:13.
§ That is, *grand-mother*. 1 K. 15:2,10.
r 14:3—5. Ex. 32:27,28. Deut. 13:6—8. 33:9. Zech. 13:3. Mark 3:21,31—35. 2 Cor. 5:16.
‖ Heb. *horror*.

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phetic of the Babylonish captivity, and even of the present dispersion and future conversion of the Jews, to which the words are doubtless applicable. Perhaps the prophet had some reference to God's general method of dealing with Israel in all ages, and then no wonder his expressions are descriptive of several distinct transactions. SCOTT.

V. 8. Perhaps the prophet was called Oded, as well as his father, (1) and Azariah by way of distinction: though some think, Oded confirmed his son's words by a prophecy to the same effect. As the calf was not removed from Beth-el, probably that city had been previously ceded to the king of Israel, or retaken by him. (13:13—22.) ID.

Verse 9.

Simeon, &c.] The situation of this tribe, in part of the lot of Judah (*Josh.* 19:1—9.) had not prevented them from joining the general revolt. But at this time many of them, with numbers from the other tribes, submitted to Asa, and probably a great part of the tribe of Simeon permanently adhered to Judah. SCOTT.

Verses 10, 11.

Fifteenth year, &c.] It is said, 'The land was quiet 10 years:' (1) hence it is concluded that Zerah's invasion was in the 11th year of Asa. Yet that the sacrifices from the spoil should not be offered from the spoil taken, till the 15th of Asa, can hardly accord to that supposition.—*The same time.*] 'Heb. "in that day," which the Targum takes to have been in the feast of weeks, . . . which was kept in the third month, called Sivan.' *Patrick.*—Some previous appointment,

in a grove: and Asa [s] cut down her idol, and stamped *it*, and burnt *it* at the brook Kidron.

17 But [t] the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless [u] the heart of Asa was perfect all his days.

18 And he [x] brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated, and that he himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels.

19 And there was no *more* war unto the [y] five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa.

CHAP. XVI.

Asa makes a league with Benhadad against Baasha, who is hindered from building Ramah; and Asa with the stones of it builds Geba and Mizpah, 1—6. Hanani the prophet reproves him for trusting in the Syrians, rather than in God, and is imprisoned by Asa, who at the same time oppressed some of his subjects, 7—10. When sick, Asa seeks to physicians, and not to God, 11, 12. His death and burial, 13, 14.

IN the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa, [a] Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, [b] to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.

2 Then Asa [c] brought out silver and gold, out of the treasures of the house of the LORD, and of the king's house, and sent to Benhadad king of Syria, that dwelt at * Damascus, saying,

3 *There is* [d] a league between me and thee, as *there was* between my father and thy father: behold, I have

s See on 14:3.—34:7. Ex. 32:20. Lev. 26:30. Deut. 7:5,25,26. 9:21. 2 K. 23:6,12,15.
t 14:3—5. Deut. 12:13,14. 1 K. 3:2—4. 22:43. 2 K. 12:3. 14:4.
u 16:7—12. 1 K. 11:4.
x 1 K. 7:51. 15:14,15. 1 Chr. 26:20—26.
y 16:1. 1 K. 15:16,17,32,33.
a See on 1 K. 15:16—22.
b See on 11:13—17.—15:9. 1 K. 12:27.
c 28:21. 2 K. 12:18. 16:8. 18:15.
* Heb. *Darmesek.*
d 18:3. 19:2. Judg. 2:2. Is. 31:1 ¶. 2 Cor. 6:16.

promise could lay any higher obligation on them, than they were already under from the divine precept, yet it would help to increase their sense of the obligation, to arm them against temptations, and would be a testimony to the equity and goodness of the precept. And by joining all together in this covenant, they strengthened the hands one of another. Two things they engaged themselves to. (1.) That they would diligently seek God themselves, seek his precepts, his favor; seek Him as the *God of their fathers*, in the way their fathers sought Him, and in dependence on the promise ם their fathers; and that they would do it *with all their heart*, and *soul;* for those only seek God acceptably and successfully, that are inward with Him, intent on Him, and entire for Him, in their seeking of Him. We make nothing of our religion, if we do not make heart-work of it; God will have all the heart, or none; and when a jewel of such inestimable value as the divine favor is to be found, it is worth while to seek it *with all our soul.* (2.) That they would, to the utmost of their power, oblige others to seek Him, *v.* 13. They agreed, that *whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel*, i. e. would either worship other gods, or refuse to worship with them the true God, that was either an obstinate idolater, or an obstinate atheist, he should be put to death. This was no new law. See Deut. 17: 2, &c. If this law had been duly executed, there had not been so many abominable idols found in Judah and Benjamin, *v.* 8. Men may not now, under the Gospel, be compelled by such methods as these, to seek the Lord; the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, yet they are mighty.

2. They made this covenant, with great cheerfulness, and all possible expressions of joy; not secretly, as if ashamed of what they did, or afraid of binding themselves too fast; but with a loud voice, to express their own zeal, and to animate one another; they all rejoiced at the oath, *v.* 14, 15. they swore, not with reluctancy, but with all pleasure and satisfaction imaginable, as the bridegroom plights his troth to the bride in the marriage covenant. Every honest Israelite was pleased with his own engagements to God, and all with one another's. They rejoiced in it as a hopeful expedient to prevent their apostasy, and a happy indication of God's presence. Note, The times of renewing our covenant with God, should be times of rejoicing. National reformation cannot but give general satisfaction to all the good. It is an honor and happiness to be in bonds to God. They did it too with great sincerity, zeal, and resolution. Those only experience the pleasure and comfort of religion, that are sincere and upright in it. What is done in hypocrisy, is a mere drudgery. But if God have the heart, we have the joy.

Lastly, We are told its effect, *v.* 15. there was no war, for a long time after, *v.* 19. no open, general war, though there were constant bickerings between Judah and Israel on the frontiers, 1 K. 15: 16. National piety procures national blessings.

V. They carried the reformation so far, that Maachah the queen-mother was deposed for idolatry, and her idols destroyed, *v.* 16. This was bravely done, that Asa would not connive at idolatry in those nearest to him; like Levi, Deut. 33: 9. Asa knows he must honor God more than his grandmother. We may suppose Maachah so far convinced of sin, that she was willing to subscribe the association mentioned, *v.* 12, 13. and therefore was not put to death, as those were, who refused to sign it; but because she had been an idolater, Asa thought fit to divest her of her dignity and authority, and, probably, he banished her the court, and confined her to privacy, lest she should influence and infect others. But the reformation was not complete, the high places were not all taken away, though many were, *ch.* 14: 3, 5. Those in the cities were removed, but not those in the country villages; or those in the cities of Judah, but not those in the cities of Israel now reduced to the house of David; or those that were used in the service of false gods, but not those that were used in the service of the God of Israel; those he connived at, and yet his heart was perfect. There may be defects in some particular duties, where yet the heart, in the main, is upright with God; sincerity is something less than sinless perfection.

CHAP. XVI. This ch. concludes the history of the reign of Asa, but does not furnish so pleasing an idea of his latter end as of his beginning.

V. 1—6. How to reconcile the date of this event with the history of the kings, I am quite at a loss; Baasha died in the 26th year of Asa, 1 K. 16: 8. How then could this be done in his 36th year, when Baasha's family was quite cut off, and Omri on the throne? It is generally said to be meant of the 36th year of the kingdom of Asa, namely, that of Judah, beginning from the first of Rehoboam, and so it coincides with the 16th of Asa's reign. But then *ch.* 15: 19. must be so understood; and how could it be spoken of as a great thing, that there was no more war till the 15th year of Asa, when that passage immediately before was in his 15th year, *ch.* 15: 10. and after this miscarriage of his, here recorded, he had wars, *v.* 9. Jose-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Prosperity and comfort should animate us to more diligent obedience; but we need the ministry of the Word to remind us of our duty, when successful, as much at least as when afflicted.—The history of the church in all ages, and the experience of every believer, demonstrate, that vexation and distress are the never-failing consequences of negligence and sin, even to those who are not left to final apostasy; and that humiliation before God, and diligent seeking Him, uniformly make way for peace and comfort. Hence the benefit of a teaching ministry, of the holy law, and of the blessed gospel.—The assured expectation of assistance, acceptance, and a gracious recompense, inspires the soul with courage and strength for present duty; and we ought to exhort and encourage one another, that we may be 'strong in the Lord,' when called to arduous and perilous attempts, for the honor of God, and to promote true religion.—Whatever the Lord gives should be employed according to his will: especially we should devote our bodies and souls unto Him, according to his everlasting covenant; by accepting of his salvation, and yielding ourselves to his service. Our devotedness to God our Savior should be avowed and professed, in the most solemn and public manner.—We are not called on to inflict death, or any secular punishment, on those who are guilty of impiety, apostasy, or idolatry; yet, they who neglect the great salvation of the Gospel, will by no means escape a more dreadful doom.—No relative affections are to be indulged, when they interfere with our evident duty to God: but where the heart is upright, there will be peace and acceptance, though we come short of the perfection proposed to us, and to which we should continually be pressing forwards. SCOTT.

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however, evidently produced a much more general concourse on this occasion, than would otherwise have taken place. SCOTT.

Verse 17.

Out of Israel, &c.] Some have thought, that this only relates to the cities taken from Israel: but it is probable some high places at least were still connived at in Judah; perhaps as a human device, to render the people more willing to renounce idolatry. ID.

Verse 19.

Baasha died in the 26th year of Asa's reign: and, as there were wars between Asa and Baasha, (16:1. 1 *K.* 15:16, 17, 32, 33.) it seems impossible to reconcile this v. and the date of the ensuing ch. with the other history, except by allowing a trivial error of the transcribers, and reading the 25*th* instead of the 35*th*, in this v. and the 26*th* instead of the 36*th*, in v. 1. of the following ch. This very probable date Josephus affixes. Other ways of solving the difficulty have been proposed, but they appear liable to insuperable objections. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI. V. 1—6. Baasha seems to have meditated war against Judah from the beginning of his reign: and probably he had made some hostile attempts before; but he was not able to make any formidable attack, till the year preceding his death. At that time, he so

sent thee silver and gold; go, [e] break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.

4 And Benhadad [f] hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of [*] his armies against the cities of Israel; and they smote [g] Ijon, and [h] Dan, and Abel-maim, and all the [i] store cities of Naphtali.

5 And it came to pass, when Baasha heard *it* [j] that he left off building of Ramah, and let his work cease.

6 Then Asa the king took all Judah, and [k] they carried away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha was building; and he built therewith [l] Geba and [m] Mizpah.

7 ¶ And at that time [n] Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, [o] Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not [p] relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is [q] the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand.

8 Were not [r] the Ethiopians and the Lubims † a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, [s] because thou didst rely on the LORD, he delivered them into thine hand.

9 For [t] the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, ‡ to show himself strong in the behalf of *them* [u] whose heart *is* perfect toward him. Herein [v] thou hast done foolishly: therefore from [x] henceforth thou shalt have wars.

10 Then Asa was [y] wroth with the seer, and [z] put him in a prison-house; for *he was* in a rage with him because of this *thing*. And Asa § oppressed *some* of the people [a] the same time.

11 And, behold, [b] the acts of Asa, first and last, lo, they *are* written in the book of the kings [c] of Judah and Israel.

12 And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was [d] diseased in his feet, until his disease *was* exceeding *great:* yet [e] in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the [f] physicians.

13 And Asa [g] slept with his fathers, and B. C. 914. died in the one and fortieth year of his reign.

phus places it in his 26th year, and then we must suppose a mistake in the transcriber here, and *ch.* 15: 19. which, if we admit, the computation is easy.

This passage we had before, 1 K. 15: 17, &c. and Asa was several ways faulty in it. 1. He did not do well to make a league with Ben-hadad, a heathen king, and to value himself so much on it as he seems to do, *v.* 3. He should have relied more on his covenant, and his father's, with God. 2. Had he had a due regard to the honor of Israel in general, he would have found some other expedient to give Baasha a diversion, than by calling in a foreign force, and inviting into the country a common enemy, which, in process of time, might be a plague to Judah too. 3. It was, doubtless, a sin in Ben-hadad to break his league with Baasha, on no provocation, but merely through the influence of a bribe; and if so, certainly it was a sin in Asa to move him to it, especially to hire him to do it. The public faith of kings and kingdoms must not be made so cheap a thing. 4. To take silver and gold out of the house of the Lord for this purpose, was a great aggravation of the sin, *v.* 2. 5. It was well if Asa had not to answer for all the mischief the army of Ben-hadad did unjustly to the cities of Israel, all the blood they shed, and all the spoil they made, *v.* 4. Perhaps Asa intended not they should carry the matter so far. But they that draw others to sin, know not what they do, nor where it will end. However the project succeeded.

V. 7—14. Here is,

I. A plain and faithful reproof to Asa by a prophet of the Lord, for making this league with Ben-hadad. Hanani was the father of Jehu, another prophet, whom we read of, 1 K. 16: 1. 2 Chr. 19: 2. We observed several things amiss in Asa's treaty with Ben-hadad. But what the prophet here charges on him as the greatest, is, his *relying on the king of Syria, and not on the Lord his God*, *v.* 7. God is much displeased, when He is distrusted, and when an arm of flesh is relied on more than his power and goodness. By putting our confidence in God we honor Him, therefore He thinks Himself affronted, if we honor another instead. To convince him of his folly herein, (*v.* 9.) he shows him,

1. That he acted against his experience, *v.* 8. *ch.* 13: 18. 14: 11. Note, Our many experiences of God's goodness to us, aggravate our distrust of Him. But see how deceitful our hearts are! We trust in God when we have nothing else to trust to, when need drives us to Him; but when we have other things to stay on, we are apt to stay too much on them, and to lean to our own understanding; but a believing confidence will be in God only, when a smiling world courts it most.

2. That he acted against his knowledge of God and his providence, *v.* 9. Asa could not be ignorant that God governs the world in infinite wisdom, and that the creatures, and all their actions, are continually under his eye. He knew, that God governs the world for the good of his people; does all in pursuance of the counsels of his love concerning their salvation, all *for Jacob his servant's sake, and Israel his elect*, Isa. 45: 4. *Christ is head over all things to his church*, Eph. 1: 22. They then whose hearts are upright with Him, may be sure of his protection, and have all the reason in the world to depend on it. A practical disbelief of this, is at the bottom of all our departures from God, and double-dealing with Him.

3. That he acted against his interest. He had lost an opportunity of checking the growing greatness of the king of Syria, *v.* 7. His *host is escaped out of thy hand*, which otherwise would have joined with Baasha's, and fallen with it. He had incurred God's displeasure, and henceforth must expect no peace, but the constant alarms of war, *v.* 9. They that cannot find in their hearts to trust God, forfeit his protection, and throw themselves out of it.

II. Asa's displeasure at this reproof. Though it came from God by one known to be his messenger, though the reproof was just, and the reason-

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[e] Gen. 20:9,10. Ex. 32:21. Josh. 9:19, 20. 2 Sam. 21:2. Ps. 15:4. Ez. 17: 18,19. Rom. 1:31,32. 2 Tim. 3:3.
[f] 1 Tim. 6:10. 2 Pet. 2:15.
[*] Heb. *armies which* were *his*.
[g] 1 K. 15:20.
[h] Gen. 14:14. Judg. 18:28,29. 20:1.
[i] 8:6. 17:12. 1 K. 9:19.
[j] See on 1.
[k] 1 K. 15:22.
[l] Josh. 18:24—26. *Gaba*. 21:17. 1 Chr. 6:60. Is. 10:29. Zech. 14:10.
[m] Josh. 15:38. 18:26. 1 Sam. 7:6,16. 10:17. *Mizpeh*.
[n] 19:2. 20:34. 1 K. 16:1.
[o] Ps. 146:3—6. Is. 31:1. 32:2. Jer. 17:5,6. Eph. 1:12,13.
[p] 13:18. 32:7,8. 2 K. 18:5. 1 Chr. 5:20.
[q] See on 8.
[r] See on 14:9—12.
[†] Heb. *in abundance*.
[s] See on 7.—Ps. 9:9,10. 37:39,40.
[t] 6:20. Job 34:21. Ps. 34:15. 113:6. Prov. 5:21. 15:3. Jer. 16:17. 32:19. Zech. 4:10. Heb. 4:13. 1 Pet. 3:12.
[‡] Or, *strongly to hold with*.
[u] See on 15:17. 2 K. 20:3.—Ps. 37:37.
[v] 1 Sam. 13:13. 2 Sam. 12:7—12. 1 Chr. 21:8. Job 34:18,19. Jer. 5:21. Matt. 5:22. Luke 12:20. 1 Cor. 15: 36. Gal. 3:1.
[x] 1 K. 15:32.
[y] 25:16. 26:19. 2 Sam. 12:13. 24:10—14. Ps. 141:5. Prov. 9:7—9.
[z] 18:26. Jer. 20:2. 29:26. Matt. 14: 3,4. Luke 3:20. Acts 16:23,24.
[§] Heb. *crushed*. Job 20:19. *marg* Is. 51:23. Jer. 51:34. Lam. 3:34.
[a] 2 Sam. 11:4. 12:31.
[b] 9:29. 12:15. 20:34. 26:22.
[c] 25:26. 27:7. 32:32. 33:18. 35:27. 1 K. 15:23.
[d] Matt. 7:2. Luke 6:37,38. Rev. 3:19.
[e] See on 9.—28:22. 1 Chr. 10:14. Jer. 17:5.
[f] Gen. 50:2. Job 13:4. Jer. 8:22. Matt. 9:12. Mark 2:17. 5:26. Col. 4:14.
[g] 1 K. 15:24.

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fortified Ramah, on the frontiers of the land, that he not only prevented his own subjects from migrating into Judah, but stopped all travellers from passing: and this both hindered the Israelites from going over to the king of Judah, and was likely, it seems, to reduce him and his subjects to distress. SCOTT.

(3.) '*There is*' is supplied by our translators; rather read 'Let there be a league,' &c. HOUB. BOOTHR. Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 7—10.

Asa's misconduct entirely originated from unbelief. His subsequent conduct seems to be without parallel in Scripture. No one decidedly *pious* man, as I recollect, is recorded to have so deeply resented a reproof from a prophet in the name of God, as to have used severity against him for it: yet the expressions concerning Asa's character are so strong, (14:2. 15:17.) that we must consider him as an exception; and a lamentable proof that there is no kind of sin, which a believer is not capable of committing, if left to himself: so that we must not form our judgment of men's characters from any detached actions, but the general tenor of their conduct.—It is probable, however, that he speedily released the prophet; and as he lived at least 15 years after this event, (for so long he lived after Baasha's death,) and as we do not find that he oppressed or persecuted any person, except on this occasion; we may conclude that he repented, and adhered to the service of God to the close of his life. But, having openly dishonored the Lord, the latter part of his reign was obscure, inglorious, and troublesome.—It is not said what wars he was engaged in; but probably they were more perplexing to him, than fatal to his people. SCOTT.

Lubims. (8) 'The people of Libya, or the Africans beyond Egypt.' *Patrick.* (*Note*, 12:3, 4.) This favors the opinion that the Ethiopians, commanded by Zerah, were those of Africa, not the Cushites in Arabia. (*Note*, 14:9—15.) ID.

(7.) Some think *Hanani* should be Ben-Hanani, 'the son of Hanani,' and that Jehu, 1 K. 16:1. 2 Chr. 19:2. 20:34. is meant. ED.

(10.) *Prison-house.*] Heb. 'house of stocks;' probably like such as were then in use in Egypt: consisting of two semi-elliptical bits of wood, with holes at the joining, on the straight side. A figure of one is seen in the character for r. cut, 14:9. Comp. also cut, Prov. 13:27. of modern oriental stocks. ID.

Verses 13, 14.

(*M. R.*) Some have considered this funeral, as an argument of the improper state of Asa's heart, even at death, supposing that he appointed it for himself, out of vain glory, and in conformity to heathen customs. But probably the pomp of his interment, which had nothing idolatrous or unlawful in it, was intended by the people as an expression of respect for his memory; (*M. R.*) for, notwithstanding the

14 And they buried him in [h] his own sepulchres, which he had [*] made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed, which was filled with [i] sweet odors, and divers kinds *of spices* prepared by [k] the apothecaries' art: and they made [l] a very great burning for him.

CHAP. XVII.

Jehoshaphat succeeds Asa, reigns well, and prospers, 1—6. He sends priests and Levites, accompanied by princes, to teach the law throughout Judah, 7—9. God overawes the minds of Jehoshaphat's neighbors, so that they submit to him, 10, 11. His greatness, and his army, with the captains, 12—19.

AND [a] Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead, [b] and strengthened himself against Israel.

2 And he [c] placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and [d] in the cities of Ephraim, which Asa his father had taken.

3 And [e] the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because [f] he walked in the first ways of † his father David, and [g] sought not unto Baalim;

h 35.24. Is. 22:16. John 19:41,42.
* Heb. *digged.*
i Gen. 50:2. Mark 16:1. John 19:39,40.
k Ex. 30:25—37. Ec. 10:1.
l 21:19. Jer. 34:5.
a 1 K. 15:24. 22:41. 1 Chr. 3:10.—Matt. 1:8. *Josaphat.*
b 12:1. 26:8. 32:5. 1 Sam. 23:16. Ezra 7:28. Eph. 6:10.
c See on 11:11,12.
d 15:8.
e 15:2,9. Gen. 39:2,3,21. Ex. 3:12. 4:12. Josh. 1:5,9. Judg. 2:18. 6:12. 2 Sam. 5:10. 1 Chr. 22:18. Ps. 46:7, 11. Is. 8:10. 41:10. Matt. 1:23. 18: 20. 28:20. 2 Tim. 4:22.
f 2 Sam. 8:15. 1 K. 11:6. 15:3,4. 2 K. 14:3. 16:2. 18:3. 22:2. Ps. 132: 1—3.
† Or, *his father, and of David.* 14: 2—5,11. 15:8—13.
g Judg. 2:11. 8:33. Jer. 2:23.

ing fair, and all intended for his good, yet *he was wroth with the seer,* for telling him of his folly; nay, *he was in a rage with him, v.* 10. Is this Asa? Well, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. A wise man! and yet in a rage! An Israelite! and yet in a rage with a prophet! A good man! and yet impatient of reproof, and that cannot bear to be told of his faults! What is man, when God leaves him to himself? They that idolize their own conduct, cannot bear contradiction; and they that indulge a peevish, passionate temper, may be transported by it into impieties as well as into indecencies, and will, some time or other, fly in the face of God Himself. See what gall and wormwood this root of bitterness bore. He that abused his power to persecute God's prophet, was left to himself, further to abuse it to crush his own subjects, whereby he weakened himself and lost his interest. Most persecutors have been tyrants.

III. His sickness, *v.* 12. Which was the gout in a high degree. It *was exceeding great;* it came to the height, so some; it flew up to his head, so others; and then it was mortal. This was his affliction; but his sin was, that in his disease, instead of seeking to the Lord for relief, he *sought to the physicians.* His making use of physicians, was his duty; but trusting to them, and expecting that from them, which was to be had from God only, *were* his sin and folly. Some think these physicians were strangers to Israel, and a sort of conjurers, to whom he applied, as if there were not a God in Israel.

IV. His death and funeral, of extraordinary solemnity, *v.* 14. I am loath to think (as some do) that he himself ordered this funeral pomp, and that it was an instance of his vanity, that he would be buried like the Gentiles, and not after the way of the Jews. It is said, indeed, *He digged the sepulchre for himself,* as one mindful of his grave; but I am willing to believe it was rather an expression of the great respect his people retained for him, notwithstanding the failings and infirmities of his latter days. Let the faults of good men be buried in their graves, while their services are remembered over their graves. He that said, *There is not a just man that doeth good and sinneth not,* yet said also, *The memory of the just is blessed;* and let it be so.

CHAP. XVII. Here begin the life and reign of Jehoshaphat, one of the first three among the royal worthies, one of the best that ever swayed the sceptre of Judah, since David, a good son of a good father, so, at this time, grace ran in the blood, even the blood-royal. Happy the son that had such a father, happy the father that had such a son, and happy the kingdom blessed with two such kings, two such reigns, together!

V. 1—9. I. His wisdom; As soon as he came to the crown, he *strengthened himself against Israel v.* 1. Ahab had now been three years on the throne of Israel, an active, warlike prince; the vigor of his beginning falling in with the decay of Asa's conclusion, probably Israel had, of late, got ground of the kingdom of Judah, and began to grow formidable to it; so the first thing Jehoshaphat had to do, on that side, was to check the growing greatness of Israel, which he did so effectually, *v.* 2. and without bloodshed, that Ahab soon courted his alliance, and proved more dangerous as a friend, than he could have been as an enemy.

II. His goodness. An excellent character is here given him, and very observable:

1. He *walked in the ways of David.* In the characters of the kings, David's ways are often made the standard, as 1 K. 15: 3, 11. 2 K. 14: 3. 16: 2. 18: 3. But the distinction is nowhere else so strongly marked, as here, between his *first ways* and his last: his fall in the matter of Uriah, is mentioned long after as the bar in his escutcheon, 1 K. 15: 5. Though he happily recovered, yet perhaps he never fully retrieved the spiritual strength and comfort he lost by it. Jehoshaphat followed David, no farther than he followed God. Paul himself thus limits our imitation of him, 1 Cor. 11: 1. *Follow me, as I follow Christ,* not otherwise. Many good people have had their first ways, their best; their first love, their strongest. The words here will admit another reading; thus, *He walked in the ways of David,* (*hareshonim,*) *those first ways;* or those *ancient ways;* he proposed, for his example, the primitive times of the royal family, those purest times, before the corruptions of the late reigns came in. See Jer. 6: 16. The LXX leave out David, and so refer it to Asa; whom he did not imitate in what was amiss in him, toward the latter end of his time. It is good to be cautious in following the best men, lest we step aside after them.

2. He *sought not to Baalim, but to the Lord God his father, v.* 3, 4. The neighboring nations had their Baalim, one had one Baal, and another another; but he abhorred them all, and *worshipped the Lord God of his father,* and Him only; prayed to Him only, and inquired of Him only; both are included in seeking Him.

3. He *walked in God's commandments,* not only worshipped the true God, but worshipped Him according to his own institution, *and not after the doings of Israel,* (*v.* 4.) though their king was his neighbor and ally.

4. *His heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord, v.* 6. or *he lifted up his heart;* i. e. he had a sincere regard to God in his work, Ps. 119: 32. He never thought he could do enough for God. He was lively and affectionate in his religion, enlarged

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Those, who, on some occasions, 'being strong in faith, glorify God,' and bring blessings on themselves and others by so doing; at other times show, that faith is lamentably out of exercise: (*Gen.* 12: 1—5, 11—16.) and whenever men waver, as to confidence in God, they grow negligent and heartless in waiting on Him, and serving Him, and in using proper means for their own defence or deliverance; and become ready to turn aside into by-paths, and employ sinful expedients. Well may we then be cautioned.—The self-sufficient are impatient of reproof or contradiction; and then the plain language of faithful ministers appears ill-nature, ill-manners, impertinence, or insolence. In this case, if power unite with haughty resentment, persecution will follow: so that they are not qualified, at all times, to deliver the messages of God, even to good princes, who are not ready to bear the cross. For, in general, 'the flatterer, who spreads a net for a man's feet,' and merits execration, may more reasonably expect a reward from men, than he who most affectionately labors for their present and eternal good, but who will, when needful, speak offensive truth, unreservedly, and in plain language. (*Matt.* 14: 3—11.)—But, notwithstanding incidental faults, we should honor the memory of those who have been useful in their generation, and that of our benefactors: leaving their eternal state to the heart-searching Judge.—In all our conflicts and sufferings, we have need especially to look to our own hearts, that they be 'perfect towards God,' in the exercise of faith, patience, and obedience: remembering that 'his eyes run to and fro, throughout the earth, to show Himself strong in behalf of them,' who thus trust and serve Him; being an ever-present, and all-sufficient Helper and Comforter. SCOTT.

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blemishes recorded in this ch. he had been an excellent, valuable, and successful prince: and the state of Judah during his reign was most happy, compared with the distractions and miseries of Israel. (1 *K.* 16:23.) SCOTT.

(14.) 'The bed was probably a funeral pyre, and the body burnt [after the manner of the Greeks, Romans, &c.] by setting fire to odoriferous woods and spices.' Dr. A. CLARKE. 'I believe the bodies were actually burned on the funeral pile, (see 1 Sam. 31:12.) and that Asa's bed, and the sweet odors, and the spices, were exactly the same as are used in the east to this day.' ROBERTS. Some sepulchres '*digged*' or hewn in the rock, are still shown as the 'tombs of the kings' near Jerusalem: and it was a common custom of antiquity to prepare such, which were sometimes of astonishing extent and magnificence. 'The bowels, &c. only, were burnt.' HENRY abr. ED.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII. V. 1, 2. (*M. R.* a, b.) Probably Asa had been engaged in war with Israel, after the establishment of Omri on the throne, though no events occurred so considerable as to be recorded. SCOTT.

Verse 3.

The first ways, &c.] Jehoshaphat copied the example of David, by proceeding to reform the state of religion immediately on his accession to the throne; and in his zeal for the pure, orderly, and spiritual worship of God: but he carefully avoided those sins, into which David afterwards fell. This is the common explication of the expression.—But as David's piety and zeal never shone brighter than at the close of his life; perhaps the words might as properly be read, 'In the first ways, even those of David his father:' proposing him as his model,

4 But sought to the *LORD* God of his father, and [h] walked in his commandments, and [i] not after the doings of Israel.

5 Therefore [k] the LORD established the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah * brought to Jehoshaphat [l] presents: and [m] he had riches and honor in abundance.

6 And [n] his heart was † lifted up [o] in the ways of the LORD: moreover [p] he took away the high places and groves out of Judah.

[*Practical Observations.*]

7 ¶ Also in the third year of his reign [q] he sent to his princes, *even* to Ben-hail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and to Micaiah, [r] to teach in the cities of Judah.

8 And with them *he sent* Levites, *even* Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, B. C. 912. and Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and Tob-adonijah, Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, [s] priests.

9 And they taught in Judah, and *had* [t] the book of the law of the LORD with them, and went about [u] throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.

10 ¶ And [x] the fear of the LORD ‡ fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that *were* round about Judah, [y] so that

h Luke 1:6. 1 Thes. 2:12. 4:1.
i 1 K. 12:28,33. 13:33,34. 16:31—33. 2 K. 8:18. 17:19. Jer. 3:7,8. Hos. 4:15.
k 2 Sam. 7:25,26. 1 K. 9:4,5. Ps. 127: 1. 132:12. 1 Pet. 5:10.
* Heb. *gave.*
l 32:23. 1 Sam. 10:27. 1 K. 4:21. 10: 25. Ps. 68:29. 72:10. 76:11. Matt. 2:11.
m 1:15. 9:27. 18:1. 32:27—29. Gen. 13:2. 26:13,14. Deut. 8:13,14. Job 42:12. Matt. 6:33.
n Deut. 28:47. Job 22:26.
† That is, *was encouraged.*
o Ps. 18:21. 119:1. 138:5. Hos. 14:9. Acts 13:10.
p 14:3. 15:17. 19:3. 20:33. 31:1. 34: 3—7. 1 K. 22:43.
q Deut. 4:5. Ps. 34:11. 51:13. Ec. 1: 12. 12:9,10. Is. 49:23.
r 15:3. 30:22. 35:3. Deut. 33:10. Neh. 8:7,8,13,14. 9:3. Matt. 4:23. Mark 4:2. Luke 4:43,44. Acts 1:1.
s Ezra 7:1—6. Mal. 2:7.
t Deut. 6:6—9. 31:11—13. Josh. 1:7,8. Is. 8:20. Matt. 15:2—9. 28:19,20. Luke 4:17—19. John 5:39,46. Acts 13:15. 15:21. 28:23. Rom. 3:2. 1 Pet. 4:11.
u Matt. 10:23. 11:1. Acts 8:40.
x See on 14:14.—Gen. 35:5. Ex. 15: 14—16. Josh. 2:9—11.
‡ Heb. *was.*
y 16:9. Ex. 34:24. Prov. 16:7.

in heart, *fervent in spirit*, cheerful and pleasant in it; he went on in his work with alacrity; as Jacob, who, after his vision of God at Beth-el, *lifted up his feet*, Gen. 29: 1. marg. He was bold and resolute in the ways of God, his heart was lifted up above the consideration of difficulties in the way of his duty, Eccl. 11: 4. Let us walk in the same spirit.

III. His great usefulness.

1. He took away *the teachers of lies*, so images are called, Heb. 2: 18. the *high places* and *the groves*, *v.* 6. It is meant of those in which idols were worshipped; (those dedicated to the true God only, were not taken away, *ch.* 20: 33.) nothing debauched the nation more than these idolatrous groves or images.

2. He sent forth teachers of truth. He found his people generally very ignorant, they *knew not that they did evil;* even in the last good reign, there had been little care taken to instruct them in their duty; therefore Jehoshaphat resolves to begin his work at the right end, and endeavors to have them well taught; in doing which work, he employed, (1.) His princes in the administration of justice, *v.* 7. Princes or judges on the bench have a great opportunity of teaching people their duty to God and man, and it is not out of their province, for the laws of God are to be looked upon as laws of the land. (2.) The *Levites* and *priests with the princes*, *v.* 8, 9. They were teachers by office, Deut. 33: 10. but, it seems, had neglected their duty. 'Well,' says Jehoshaphat, 'you shall go along with the princes, and they shall oblige the people to come and hear you; and then if they be not well instructed, it is your fault.' What an abundance of good may be done, when Moses and Aaron thus go hand in hand in doing it; when princes with their power, and priests and Levites with their scripture-learning, agree to teach the people the good knowledge of God and their duty! These itinerant judges, and itinerant preachers together, were instrumental to diffuse a blessed light throughout the cities of Judah. *They had the book of the law of the Lord with them.* For their own direction, that they might not *teach for doctrines the commandments of men.* For the conviction of the people, that they might see that they had a divine warrant, and delivered only what they received from the Lord. Ministers, when they go to teach the people, should take their Bibles.

IV. How happy he was, 1. In the favor of his God who signally owned, blessed, and established him, *v.* 3, 5.

2. *In the affections of his people, v.* 5. *All Judah brought him presents*, in acknowledgment of his kindness in sending preachers among them. The more there is of true religion among a people, the more there will be of conscientious loyalty [to government.] A governor that answers the end of government, will be supported. He had *riches and honor in abundance.* It is undoubtedly true, though few believe it, that religion and piety are the best friends to outward prosperity. Riches and honor prove to many a clog and a hindrance in the ways of the Lord, an occasion of pride, security, and sensuality; but had a quite contrary effect on Jehoshaphat, being oil to the wheels of his obedience; the more he had, (observe, it follows immediately,) the more was his heart *lifted up in the ways of the Lord.*

V. 10—19. Here is a further account of Jehoshaphat's great prosperity, and the flourishing state of his kingdom.

1. He had good interest in the neighboring princes and nations. *The fear of the Lord fell so upon them*, i. e. God so influenced and governed their spirits, that they all reverenced him, *v.* 10. so that while the princes and priests were instructing and reforming the country, none of his neighbors gave him any molestation, to take him off from that good work. Thus when Jacob and his sons were going to worship at Beth-el, the terror of God was upon the neighboring cities, that they *did not pursue after them*, Gen. 35: 5. and see Ex 34: 24. Many of them brought presents to him, *v.* 11. to secure his friendship. Perhaps it was a

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—6. It is a signal blessing, when the Lord raises up pious and able men, in church or state, to succeed one another. [While, therefore, we exert the power given us by the laws of the state, and the church covenant, to promote such to office,] it behooves us all to pray for a succession of useful men; and did all pious persons, with one accord and without intermission, unite in such prayers, [and exertions,] in behalf of the community, the church at large, and particular congregations; they would witness blessed effects, and brighter prospects would open before us.—It is happy when prudence, vigor, and piety unite in distinguished characters; when they carefully imitate the best parts of the conduct of eminent believers, and as carefully avoid their mistakes; and when the purest ages of the church are made the models of personal religion and public reformation. Indeed, we should all study to walk in those 'first ways' of Christians, when 'great grace was upon them all,' and not be satisfied with the current standard of modern profession: this would tend to the establishment of our hearts in peace and assurance, and to the prosperity of our endeavors to glorify God and to do good.—This exalted piety springs from genuine poverty of spirit: and a deep sense of the condescension of the Infinite God, in employing and accepting us, inspires the heart with renewed vigor in his service. SCOTT.

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and not the succeeding princes, under whom idolatry had been introduced, tolerated, or but feebly opposed; and not being satisfied even with walking in the steps of his father Asa, but aiming to reduce matters to their ancient purity. SCOTT.

Verses 7—9.

While the priests and Levites neglected their duty, as public teachers, the people remained ignorant of the truth and law of God, and were easily seduced into superstition or idolatry: so that the reformations which took place were rather the result of authority than conviction and distinct knowledge; and thus only external and transient. Asa and his people had done well, in covenanting together to punish those who would not seek the Lord: (15:12—15.) for this was according to the tenor and intention of that introductory dispensation; under which the capital punishment of apostate Israelites was one divinely appointed method of preserving that people from sinking wholly into idolatry, till the coming of Christ. But Jehoshaphat did better, when he added the public teaching of the people from the law of God: for this not only tended to the same object, but promoted the salvation of souls, and the increase of spiritual worshippers, who would hand down religion to their posterity. The princes joined with the priests and Levites, probably acted as magistrates, and were men of known probity, piety, and acquaintance with the law of God; and the persons from among the priests and Levites, who were appointed to be the itinerant instructers, were doubtless selected, because they were known to be eminent for piety and ability. It has before been shown, that the prophets in the kingdom of Israel held stated assemblies for religious worship, on the sabbath-days, and on some of their solemn feasts. (2 *K.* 4:23.) And it is probable, that from this time it became gradually the practice of the priests and Levites in Judah, as far as they paid regard to their duty; but this alas, was but seldom done. Synagogues, as it appears from this history, were not yet regularly formed in Judah; and the book of the law seems to have been very scarce, and but little attended to by the people in general, or made known to them by their regular instructers (15:1—7, *v.* 3.) SCOTT.

(9.) *Taught.*] 'The princes perhaps taught the civil law and the constitution; the Levites, the temple service and ritual law; and the priests, the nature and design of their religion.' DR A. CLARKE.

Verse 10.

(*Notes, Ex.* 34 24. *Lev.* 26 3, 4.) SCOTT.

'No ruler but might read this ch. with advantage. 1. It shows, most forcibly, That true religion is the basis of the state; and that wherever it prospers there the state prospers. 2. That it is the wisdom of governments to encourage religion with all their power and influence; for if the hearts of the citizens be not influenced by true religion, vain

they made not war against Jehoshaphat.

11 Also *some* of the Philistines [z] brought Jehoshaphat presents, and tribute-silver: and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand and seven hundred rams, and seven thousand and seven hundred he goats.

12 And Jehoshaphat [a] waxed great exceedingly: and he built [b] in Judah * castles, and cities of store.

13 And he had [c] much business in the cities of Judah: and the men of war, mighty men of valor, *were* in Jerusalem.

14 And these *are* [d] the numbers of them according [e] to the house of their fathers: Of Judah, the captains of thousands; Adnah the chief, and with him mighty men of valor [f] three hundred thousand.

15 And † next to him *was* Jehohanan the captain, and with him two hundred and fourscore thousand.

16 And next him *was* Amasiah the son of Zichri, who [g] willingly offered himself unto the LORD; and with him two hundred thousand mighty men of valor.

17 And of Benjamin; Eliada, a mighty man of valor, and with him [h] armed men with bow and shield, two hundred thousand.

18 And next him *was* Jehozabad, and with him an hundred and fourscore thousand ready prepared for the war.

19 These waited on the king, beside *those*, whom the king [i] put in the fenced cities throughout all Judah.

tribute imposed on them by Asa, who made himself master of the cities of the Philistines, and the tents of the Arabians, *ch.* 14: 14, 15. With the 7700 rams, and 7700 he-goats, which the Arabians brought, there was, probably, a proportionable number of ewes and lambs, she-goats and kids.

2. He had very considerable stores laid up in the cities of Judah; he pulled down his barns, and built larger, *v.* 12. *castles and cities of store*, for arms and victuals. He was a man of business, and aimed at the public good in all his undertakings, either to preserve the peace, or prepare for war.

3. He had the militia in good order; it was never in better, since David modelled it. It is said, one of his great commanders, *Amasiah, willingly offered himself unto the Lord*, *v.* 16. He was the most eminent for religion; he accepted his place, not for the honor, or power, or profit, of it; but for conscience-sake toward God, that he might serve his country. It was usual for great generals then to offer their spoils to the Lord, 1 Chr. 26: 26. but this good man offered himself first to the Lord, and then his dedicated things.

The number of the soldiers under five generals, amounts to 1,160,000 men. A vast number for so small a compass of ground as Judah and Benjamin, to furnish and maintain.* Abijah could bring into the field but 400,000, *ch.* 13: 3. Asa not 600,000, *ch.* 14: 8. yet Jehoshaphat has almost 1,200,000. But it must be considered, God had promised to make the seed of Abraham like the sand of the sea for number; there had now been a long peace; Jerusalem, we may suppose, was very much enlarged; many were come over from Israel, *ch.* 15: 9. and Jehoshaphat was under a special blessing of God, which made his affairs to prosper greatly. The armies, we may suppose, were dispersed all the country over, and each man resided, for the most part, [like the Egyptian military caste,] on his own estate; but they appeared often, to be mustered and trained, and were ready at call whenever there was occasion; the commanders waited on the king, *v.* 19. as officers of his court, privy-counsellors, and ministers of state.

But, *lastly*, observe; It was not this formidable army that struck a terror upon the neighboring

* Some portions of China are said to have 400, and even 700 persons to the square mile. London, with 20 sq. ms., contains about 1,400,000. Commercial places, where 'much business,' v. 13. is done, grow with astonishing rapidity, especially in a peaceful state, surrounded by warring kingdoms. Judah seems now to have had many such cities. Peaceful Egypt, in Amasis' time, (B. C. 570) contained, says *Pliny*, 20,000 cities. Comp. also, notes, Ex. 12:37. Num. 1:44—47. *Ed.*

[z] See on 5.—9:14. 26:8. 2 Sam. 8:2. 2 K. 3:4.
[a] 18:1. 1 Chr. 29:25.
[b] 8:2—6. 11:5—12. 14:6,7. 26:6—9. 27:4. 32:5,27—29.
* Or, *palaces*.
[c] 26:10—15. 1 Chr. 27:25—31.
[d] Gen. 12:2. 13:16. 15:5.
[e] See on Num. 1:2,18.
[f] 11:1. 13:3. 14:8. 26:13.
† Heb. *at his hand*.
[g] Judg. 5:2,9. 1 Chr. 29:9,14,17. Ps. 110:3. 2 Cor. 8:3—5,12.
[h] 14:8. 2 Sam. 1:21,22.
[i] 2,12. 11:12,23.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 7—19. The public teaching of the Word of God forms, in all ages, the grand method of promoting the power of godliness: for by it the understanding is informed, the judgment regulated, the conscience awakened and directed, and the hopes, fears, and affections suitably excited; and, as far as the divine blessing is vouchsafed, religious worship is rendered a voluntary, reasonable, and spiritual service. Kings and princes, therefore, render a most essential service to the cause of God, when they use their influence to excite and countenance those, who 'labor in the word and doctrine;' and by their example and public declarations make it known, that they most approve of such as diligently attend on the instructions of such teachers. And though no violence must be done to any man's conscience, nor any one constrained to teach in contradiction to his judgment; yet surely they, who are publicly maintained as teachers of the people, may be required either to do their work, or to give place to those who will!—Notwithstanding the prejudices of mankind, and the indiscretions of individuals, *an itinerant preacher*, if duly qualified and sent forth, is one of the most honorable and useful characters, that can be found on earth: and there needs no other proof that, when this work is done properly and with perseverance, it forms the grand method of spreading widely, and rendering efficacious, religious knowledge, than the experience of the church in all ages; for great reformations and revivals of religion have generally been thus effected. It is especially sanctioned by the example of Christ and his apostles, and recommended as the divine method of spreading the Gospel through the nations of the earth; *itinerant preaching* having almost always preceded, and made way for, the stated ministry of *regular pastors*. But it is a work which requires peculiar talents and dispositions, and a peculiar call in Providence; and is not rashly and hastily to be ventured upon by every novice, who has learned to speak about the Gospel, and has more zeal, than knowledge, prudence, humility, or experience. An unblemished character, a disinterested spirit, an exemplary deadness to the world, unaffected humility, deep acquaintance with the human heart, and preparation for enduring the cross, not only with boldness, but with meekness, patience, and sweetness of temper, are indispensably necessary in such a service. They who engage in it should go on broad scriptural grounds, and dwell chiefly on those grand essentials of religion, in which pious men of different persuasions are agreed; plainly proving every thing from the Word of God, running nothing into extremes, and avoiding all disputes, however urged to it, about the *shibboleths* of a party. In this way itinerant preaching is a blessing which all, who love the souls of men, must wish to be vouchsafed to every part of every nation upon earth. And if those who are in authority, would employ select men of known and approved piety and ability, protected and countenaced by them, to go from city to city, and from village to village, teaching in every place the plain acknowledged truths and precepts of the Bible, immense good might be done. Those stated teachers, who have been grossly negligent or profligate, must either be disgraced or reformed; others might be stirred up to use greater diligence; and the instructions of stated faithful ministers would receive an additional sanction, which could not fail of producing a happy effect.—Thus it was in the days of Jehoshaphat; and thus it will be, wherever or whenever God shall please to stir up the hearts of kings, princes, and ministers, to teach the people in every part of their territories, according to the Word of God.—This is also the proper way of promoting public peace and prosperity; and it will prove a better protection of nations, than an increase of powerful armies or navies: yet it may very properly be connected with the ordinary methods of defence.—Persons in authority have 'much business,' to which they ought to attend: and they should consider that stable peace, and increasing numbers of well maintained and orderly subjects, are more honorable than the most successful wars: and whatever ability any man possesses, he should willingly devote himself to God, and serve Him with all that he has. SCOTT.

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is the application of laws, fines, imprisonments, or corporal punishments. 3. A religious nation is ever a great nation; it is loved by its friends, it is dreaded by its enemies. 4. It is ever a peaceable and united nation: the blessings of religion, and a wholesome and paternal government, are so fully felt and prized, that all find it their interest to preserve and defend them. Harmony, peace, piety, and strength, are the stability of such times. May every nation know and value them!' Dr. *A. Clarke*, varied. ED.

Verse 11.

It is not certain, whether the Philistines and the Arabians brought these presents to Jehoshaphat, as submitting to his authority, or only as desiring to conciliate his friendship. SCOTT.

Verses 13—19.

It is probable that these troops served by rotation; (1 *Chr.* 27:1—15.) and some of them might be employed in the buildings and other business, which he had in the cities of Judah. (*M. R.*) ID.

Much business. (13) 'To settle religion, and purge out idolatry, as well as to provide for their safety, by fortifications, and whatsoever was necessary for the public tranquillity.' *Patrick.* ID

CHAP. XVIII.

Jehoshaphat joins affinity with Ahab, and agrees to go with him against Ramoth-gilead, 1—3. The false prophets assure them of success, 4, 5. At Jehoshaphat's request Micaiah is sent for, who foretells Ahab's death, and shows that his prophets were instigated by a lying spirit, 6—22. He is reviled and sent back to prison, 23—27. Ahab goes in disguise to the battle; where Jehoshaphat, in imminent danger, calls on God, and is preserved, 28—32. Ahab is slain by an arrow shot at a venture, 33, 34.

NOW Jehoshaphat had [a] riches and honor in abundance, and [b] joined affinity with Ahab.

2 And [*] after *certain* years [c] he went down to Ahab to Samaria. And Ahab killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance, and for the people that *he had* with him, and [e] persuaded him to go up *with him* to [f] Ramoth-gilead.

3 And Ahab king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Wilt thou go with me to Ramoth-gilead? And he answered him, [g] I *am* as thou *art*, and my people as thy people; and *we will be* with thee in the war.

4 And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, [h] Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to-day.

5 Therefore the king of Israel gathered together of [i] prophets four hundred men, and said unto them, [j] Shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, [k] Go up; for God will deliver *it* into the king's hand.

6 But Jehoshaphat said, [l] *Is there* not here a prophet of the LORD † besides, that we might inquire of him?

7 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, *There is* yet [m] one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD: but [n] I hate him; for he never prophesieth [o] good unto [p] me, but always evil: the same *is* Micaiah the son of Imla. And Jehoshaphat said, [q] Let not the king say so.

8 And the king of Israel called for one *of his* ‡ officers, and said, § Fetch quickly Micaiah the son of Imla.

9 And the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat king of Judah, [r] sat either of them on his throne, [s] clothed in *their* robes, and they sat in a ‖ void place at the entering in of the gate of Samaria: and [t] all the prophets prophesied before them.

10 And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made him [u] horns of iron, and said, [x] Thus saith the LORD, With these thou shalt push Syria, until [¶] they be consumed.

11 And [y] all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper; for the LORD shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king.

12 And the messenger that went to call Micaiah spake to him, saying, [z] Behold, the words of the prophets *declare* good to the king with one ** assent: let thy word, therefore, I pray thee, be like one of theirs, and speak thou good.

13 And Micaiah said, *As* the LORD liveth, [a] even what my God saith, that will I speak.

14 ¶ And when he was come to the king, the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And he said, [b] Go ye up, and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand.

CHAP. XVIII. V. 1—3. The story of this ch. we had, just as it is here related, in the reign of Ahab, 1 K. 22: While his league with so good a man, as Jehoshaphat, redounds to the credit of Ahab more than any thing else recorded of him, it is a great blemish in the reign of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat is here growing greater: his wealth and honor increased, (*v.* 1.) by piety and good management, but not wiser, else he would not have joined with Ahab, that degenerate Israelite, who had sold himself to work wickedness. I wonder what Jehoshaphat could promise himself by it. His religion forbade him to marry his son to a daughter of any heathen prince about him, and, having riches and honor in abundance, perhaps he thought it a disparagement to marry him to a subject. A king's daughter it must be, therefore Ahab's, little considering that Jezebel was her mother. Some think, by this policy he hoped to unite the kingdoms in his son, Ahab perhaps falsely flattering him that he would make him his heir.

This match drew Jehoshaphat, 1. Into an intimate familiarity with Ahab; he made him a visit at Samaria. And Ahab, proud of the honor, gave him a very splendid entertainment, *v.* 2. In this, Jehoshaphat did not walk so closely, as he ought, in the ways of his father David, for he *hated the congregation of evil-doers, and would not sit with the wicked*, Ps. 26: 5. nor desired to *eat of their dainties*, Ps. 141: 4. 2. Into a league with Ahab against the Syrians. Ahab persuaded him to join him in an expedition to recover Ramoth-gilead, a city in Gad, on the other side Jordan. Did not Ahab know that that, and all the other cities of Israel, belonged of right to Jehoshaphat, as heir of the house of David? With what face could he ask Jehoshaphat to assist him in recovering it for himself, whose title to the crown was usurped and precarious? Yet Jehoshaphat, an easy man, yields to go with him, *v.* 3. Some men's kindnesses are dangerous, as well as their society infectious. Ahab's feast was designed only to wheedle him into this expedition. The *kisses of an enemy are deceitful*.

V. 4—27. This is almost word for word the same we had, 1 K. 22: nor have we much to add, but may take occasion to think,

1. Of the great duty of acknowledging God in all our ways, *and inquiring at his Word*, *v.* 4. By particular believing prayer, by an unbiassed consulting of the Scripture and our own consciences, and by an observant regard to the hints of Providence, we may make such inquiries, and very much to our satisfaction.

2. Of the great danger of bad company even to good men; those that have most wisdom, grace, and resolution, cannot be sure they can converse familiarly with wicked people, and get no hurt by them. Jehoshaphat here, in complaisance to Ahab, sits in his robes, patiently hearing the false prophets speaking lies in the name of the Lord, *v.* 9. can scarcely find in his heart to give him a too mild and gentle reproof for hating a prophet of the Lord, *v.* 7. and dares not rebuke that false prophet who basely abused that faithful seer, nor oppose Ahab who committed him to prison. They who venture among the seats of the scornful, cannot come off without great guilt attaching to, at least, the omission of their duty, unless they have such measures of wisdom and courage as few can pretend to.

3. Of the unhappiness of those who are surrounded with flatterers, especially flattering prophets. Those do best for themselves, that give their friends leave, and particularly their ministers, to deal plainly and faithfully with them, and take it not only patiently, but kindly. That counsel is not always best for us, that is most pleasing.

4. Of the power of Satan, by divine permission, *in the children of disobedience*. One lying spirit can make 400 lying prophets, and use them to deceive Ahab, *v.* 21. The devil becomes a murderer by being a liar, and destroys men by deceiving them.

5. Of the justice of God in giving those up to strong delusions, to believe a lie, who will not receive the love of the truth, but rebel against it, *v* 21. Let the *lying spirit prevail* to entice those to their ruin, that will not be persuaded to their duty and happiness.

6. Of the hard case of faithful ministers, whose

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a 1:11—15.—See on 17:5,12.—Matt. 6: 33.
b 31. 19:2. 21:6. 22:2,3. 1 K. 16: 31—33. 21:25. 2 K. 8:18,26,27. 11: 1. 2 Cor. 6:14.
* Heb. *at the end of years.* 1 K. 17: 7. Neh. 13:6. *margins.*
c 19:2. 1 K. 22:2.
d 1 K. 1:9. Is. 22:12,13. Luke 17: 27—29.
e 1 K. 22:4,20—22.
f Dent. 4:43. Josh. 20:8. 1 K. 4:13. 2 K. 9:1.
g See on 1 K. 22:4. 2 K. 3:7.—Ps. 139: 21. Eph. 5:11. 2 John 10,11.
h 34:26. 1 Sam. 23:2,4,9—12. 2 Sam. 2:1. 5:19,23. 1 K. 22:5,6. Ps. 27:4. Jer. 21:2. Ez. 20:3.
i 1 K. 18:19. 2 K. 3:13. 2 Tim. 4:3.
j Jer. 38:14,&c. 42:2,3,20.
k 14,20,21. Jer. 8:10,11. 23:17. Ez. 13:3—16,22. Mic. 2:11. 3:11. Rev. 19:20.
l See on 1 K. 22:7—9. 2 K. 3:11—13.
† Heb. *yet*, or, *more.*
m 1 K. 18:4. 19:10.
n 1 K. 18:17. 20:42,43. 21:20. Prov. 9:8. Jer. 18:18. Am. 5:10. Mark 6: 18,19,27. John 7:7. 15:18,19,24. Gal. 4:16.
o Is. 30:10. Jer. 38:4.
p 13. 2 K. 9:22. Ez. 3:17—19. Acts 20:26,27.
q Prov. 25:12. Mic. 2:7.
‡ Or, *eunuchs.* 1 Sam. 8:15. 1 Chr. 28:1. *margins.* Is. 39:7. Dan. 1:3, 7,8.
§ Heb. *Hasten.* 25,26. 1 K. 22:9.
r See on 1 K. 22:10—12. Is. 14:9. Ez. 26:16. Dan. 7:9. Matt. 19:28.
s 29. Matt. 6:29. 11:8.
‖ Or, *floor.*
t Jer. 27:14—16.
u Jer. 27:2. 28:10—14. Zech. 1:18—21. 2 Tim. 3:8.
x Jer. 23:17,21,25,31. 28:2,3. 29:21. Ez. 13:7. 22:28.
¶ Heb. thou *consume them.*
y 5:12,33,34. Prov. 24:24,25. Mic. 3 5. 2 Pet. 2:1—3. Jude 16. Rev. 16 13,14. 19:20.
z Job 22:13. Ps. 10:11. Hos. 7:3. Am. 7:13. Mic. 2:6,11. 1 Cor. 2:14—16.
** Heb. *mouth.* Josh. 9:2. *marg.*
a Num. 22:18—20,35. 23:12,26. 24:13. 1 K. 22:14. Jer. 23:28. 42:4. Ez. 2: 7. Mic. 2:6,7. Acts 20:27. 1 Cor. 11:23. 2 Cor. 2:17. Gal. 1:10. 1 Thes. 2:4.
b 1 K. 18:27. 22:15. Ez. 11:9. Lam. 4:21. Am. 4:4,5. Matt. 26:45.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII. V. 1. *Affinity*, &c.] Perhaps pride and ambition had some influence in forming this fatal union: but probably Jehoshaphat was allured to it, by the hopes of cementing a durable peace between Judah and Israel, whom he wished to consider as brethren. (2 *K.* 8, 18.) Ahab perceived Jehoshaphat to be so strong, that he had no hopes of prevailing against him, and therefore courted his friendship. SCOTT.

15 And the king said to him, How many times [a] shall I adjure thee, that thou say nothing but the truth to me, in the name of the LORD?

16 Then [d] he said, I did see all Israel scattered upon the mountains, [e] as sheep that have no shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no [f] master; let them return *therefore* every man to his house in peace.

17 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, [g] Did I not tell thee *that* he would not prophesy good unto me, * but evil?

18 Again he said, Therefore [h] hear the word of the LORD: [i] I saw the LORD sitting upon his throne, and [j] all the host of heaven standing on his right hand, and *on* his left.

19 And the LORD said, [k] Who shall entice Ahab king of Israel, that he may [l] go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one spake, saying after this manner, and another saying after that manner.

20 Then [m] there came out a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will entice him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith?

21 And he said, I will go out, and be [n] a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And *the* LORD said, [o] Thou shalt entice *him*, and thou shalt also prevail: go out, and do *even* so.

22 Now therefore, behold, [p] the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets, [q] and the LORD hath spoken evil against thee.

23 Then [r] Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah came near, and smote Micaiah upon the cheek, and said, [s] Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee?

24 And Micaiah said, [t] Behold, thou shalt see on that day, when thou shalt go † into an inner chamber to hide thyself.

25 Then the king of Israel said, Take ye Micaiah, [u] and carry him back to Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son;

26 And say, Thus saith the king, [x] Put [y] this *fellow* in the prison, and feed him with [z] bread of affliction, and with water of affliction, [a] until I return in peace.

27 And Micaiah said, [b] If thou certainly return in peace, *then* hath not the LORD spoken by me. And he said, [c] Hearken, all ye people.

28 ¶ So [d] the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, went up to Ramoth-gilead.

29 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, [e] I will disguise myself, and will go to the battle; but [f] put thou on thy robes. So [g] the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went to the battle.

30 Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of the chariots that *were* with him, saying, [h] Fight ye not with [i] small or great, save only with the king of Israel.

31 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, It *is* the king of Israel: therefore they compassed about him to fight: but [k] Jehoshaphat cried out, and [l] the LORD helped him; and [m] God moved them *to depart* from him.

32 For it came to pass, that, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back again ‡ from pursuing him.

33 And [n] a *certain* man drew a bow § at a venture, and smote the king of Israel ‖ between the joints of the harness: therefore he said to his chariot-man, Turn thine hand, that thou mayest carry me out of the host; for I am ¶ wounded.

34 And the battle increased that day: howbeit the king of Israel stayed *himself* up in *his* chariot against the Syrians until the even; and about the time of the sun going down [o] he died

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ot it has often been to be hated, persecuted, and ill-treated, for being true to their God, and just and kind to the souls of men. But, as Micaiah, all may appeal to the issue, *v.* 27. The day will declare who is in the right, and who in the wrong, when Christ will appear, to the unspeakable consolation of his persecuted people, and the everlasting confusion of their persecutors, who will be

a 1 Sam. 14:24. 1 K. 22:16. Matt. 26:63. Mark 5:7. Acts 19:13.
d Matt. 26:64.
e 33,34. 1 K. 22:17,34—36. Jer. 23:1, 2. Ez. 34:5,6,8. Zech. 10:2. 13:7. Matt. 9:36. Mark 6:34.
f 2 Sam. 2:7. 5:2. 2 K. 10:3.
g See on 7. 1 K. 22:18.—Prov. 29:1. Jer. 43:2,3.
* Or, *but for evil.*
h Is. 1:10. 28:14. 39:5. Jer. 2:4. 19:3. 34:4. Am. 7:16.
i 1 K. 22:19—23. Is. 6:1—5. Dan. 7:9,10. Acts 7:55,56.
j Gen. 32:2. Ps. 103:20,21. Zech. 1:10.
k See on 1 K. 22:20.—Job 12:16. Is. 6:9,10. 54:16. Ez. 14:9. 2 Thes. 2:11, 12. Jam. 1:13,14.
l 25:8,19. Prov. 11:5.
m Job 1:6. 2:1. 2 Cor. 11:3,13—15.
n 22. Gen. 3:4,5.—See on 1 K. 22:21, 22.—John 8:44. 1 John 4:6. Rev. 12:9. 16:14. 20:8.
o See on 19.—Judg. 9:23. Job 1:12. 2:6. Ps. 109:17.
p Ex. 4:21. Ez. 14:3—5,9. Matt. 24:24,25. 2 Cor. 11:11—13. 2 Thes. 2:9—11. 1 Tim. 4:1,2.
q See on 7,17.—25:18. Is. 3:11. Matt. 26:24,25. Mark 14:20,21.
r See on 10. 1 K. 22:23—25.—Is. 50:5, 6. Jer. 20:2. Lam. 3:30. Mic. 5:1. Matt. 26:67. John 18:22,23. Acts 23:2,3.
s Jer. 29:26,27. Matt. 26:67,68. John 9:40,41.
t Is. 26:11. Jer. 28:16,17. 29:21,22,32.
† Or, *from chamber to chamber.* Heb. *into a chamber in a chamber.* 1 K. 20:30. Is. 26:20.
u 8. Jer. 37:15—21. 38:6,7. Acts 24:25—27.
x See on 15. 16:10.—1 K. 22:26—28 Jer. 20:2,3. Matt. 5:12. Luke 3:19, 20. Acts 5:18. 2 Cor. 11:23. Rev. 11:10.
y 1 Sam. 25:21. Matt. 12:24. Luke 23:2. Acts 22:22.
z Ps. 80:5. 102:9. Is. 30:20.
a Deut. 29:19. Ps. 10:5. Prov. 14:16 1 Thes. 5:2,3.
b Num. 16:29. Acts 13:10,11.
c Matt. 13:9. 15:10. Mark 7:14. Luke 20:45,46.
d See on 1 K. 22:29—33.
e 1 Sam. 28:8. 1 K. 14:2 6. 20:38. Job 24:15. Jer. 23:24.
f Ps. 12:2. Prov. 26:25.
g 35:22.
h 1 K. 20:33,34,42.
i See on 15:13. Gen. 19:11. Deut. 1:17.
k 13:14. 14:11. Ex. 14:10. Ps. 116:1, 2. 2 Cor. 1:9,10.
l 26:7. Ps. 46:1,11. 94:17. 118:13.
m Ezra 1:1. 7:27. Neh. 1:11. Prov. 16:7. 21:1.
‡ Heb. *from after him.*
n See on 1 K. 22:34.
§ Heb. *in his simplicity.* 2 Sam. 15:11.
‖ Heb. *between the joints and between the breast-plate.* 1 K. 22:34,35.
¶ Heb. *made sick.* 35:23.
o See on 16,19,27.—Num. 32:23. Prov. 13:21. 28:17.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Abundant riches and honor do indeed give large opportunities of doing good; but they are attended with such strong temptations, as very few who possess them are enabled to withstand. It is therefore a certain proof, that men are not well acquainted with the artifices of Satan, and the deceitfulness of their own hearts, and that they have much self-confidence, when they covet riches in order to do good; for they are far more likely to get harm by them. Among other evils, they often betray pious persons into improper marriages, for themselves or their children. It appears beneath them to join affinity with inferior families; but 'not many mighty or noble are called:' and so they are seduced to prefer titles and estates, to faith and holiness; and the effects are generally lamentable to themselves, to posterity, and to the cause of godliness.—We should follow peace with all men: but we ought to have no intimacies with the workers of iniquity; for their caresses, flatteries, and feasts, are more dangerous than their most imbittered rage; and in fact they are frequently the result of politic enmity, and at best proceed from mercenary self-love. Indeed, the most enormous wickedness is often veiled under a show of piety.—A very great majority of professed ministers, in many ages and places, have been teachers of lies: who, while they acted their parts with the name of God in their mouths, have secretly been prompted by Satan, 'deceiving and being deceived.' We should therefore not only be reminded to 'inquire of the LORD,' but careful likewise *by whom* we inquire of Him; and also that we inquire his will, before we commit ourselves, by engagements that may be contrary to it.—They who flatter the humors of the rich and great will in general be most favored; and those who offend the pride, or disturb the consciences, of such as are strangers to the power of godliness, will be hated, and may lay their account with hard usage: nay, such pious persons as associate with ungodly people, must often witness, and seem to approve of, very abominable things. The event, however, will show faithful teachers in their proper light. In the mean time, let them go on with confidence in God, simply declaring his whole message, and patiently bearing the cross; for 'great will be their reward in heaven.'—Satan is allowed to deceive those, who reject the testimony of God's prophets. SCOTT

Verses 28, 29.

It has been thought, that Ahab wished Jehoshaphat to fall by the Syrians, in expectation that the affairs of Judah would come under his management, as the father-in-law of Jehoram. SCOTT.

Verse 31.

God moved, &c.] In the extremity of danger, Jehoshaphat made the Lord his Refuge, who remembered his servant, though out of the path of duty; and, in answer to his prayer, inclined his pursuers to depart from him, by a secret but powerful influence on their minds. SCOTT.

V. 24. *An inner chamber.*] M. *chamber in a chamber*, as is described at 2 K. 9:2. Some make it the *harem*, or women's apartment ED.

CHAP. XIX.

Jehoshaphat, on his return, is reproved by Jehu the prophet, for joining alliance with Ahab; but commended in other respects, 1—3. He visits and reforms his kingdom, 4; and gives a charge to the judges, priests, and Levites, in the cities of Judah, and at Jerusalem, 5—11.

AND Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned to his house [a] in peace to Jerusalem.

2 And [b] Jehu the son of [c] Hanani [d] the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, [e] Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that [f] hate the LORD? therefore [g] *is* wrath upon thee from before the LORD.

3 Nevertheless, there are [a] good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast [i] prepared thine heart to seek God.

4 And Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem: and he * went out again through the people from [k] Beer-sheba to [l] mount Ephraim, and [m] brought them back unto the LORD God of their fathers.

5 ¶ And [n] he set judges in the land, throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city;

6 And said to the judges, [o] Take heed what ye do: for [p] ye judge not for man, but for the LORD, who *is* with you in the † judgment.

7 Wherefore now, [q] let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do *it:* for *there is* [r] no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor [s] respect of persons, nor [t] taking of gifts.

8 Moreover in Jerusalem did Jehoshaphat set [u] of the Levites, and *of* the priests, and of the chief of the fathers of Israel, for [x] the judgment of the LORD, and for controversies, when they returned to Jerusalem.

9 And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do [y] in the fear of the LORD, faithfully, and with a perfect heart.

10 And what cause soever shall come to you of your brethren that dwell in their cities, [z] between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and judgments, ye shall even [a] warn them that they trespass not against the LORD, and *so* [b] wrath come upon you, and

made *to see in that day*, *v.* 24. what they will not now believe.

V. 28—34. We have here, 1. Good Jehoshaphat exposing himself in his robes, thereby endangered, and yet delivered. The enemy had soon an eye on the robes, and vigorously attacked the unwary prince, who now, too late, wished himself in the habit of the poorest soldier, rather. He cried out, either to his friends, to relieve him; (but Ahab took no care of that;) or to his enemies, to rectify their mistake, and let them know he was not the king of Israel; or to God, for succor and deliverance; to whom else should he cry? And he found it was not in vain, *the Lord helped him out* of his distress, by *moving the captains to depart from him*, *v.* 31. God has all men's hearts in his hand, and turns them as He pleases, contrary to their own first intentions, to serve his purposes. Many are moved unaccountably both to themselves and others, but an invisible power moves them. 2. Wicked Ahab disguising himself, arming himself, thereby, he thought, securing himself, and yet slain, *v.* 33. No art, no arms, can save those whom God has appointed to ruin. What can hurt those whom God will protect?

CHAP. XIX. V. 1—4. I. Here is, God's great favor to Jehoshaphat, *v.* 1. Whenever we return in peace to our houses, we ought to acknowledge God's providence in preserving our going out and our coming in, and especially if we have been kept through more than ordinary dangers. He had been out on an expedition he could not well account for to God and his conscience, yet he returned in peace; God is not extreme to mark what we do amiss, nor does He withdraw his protection every time we forfeit it. It is a great mercy also to be made sensible of our faults, (*v.* 2.) and to be told, in time, wherein we have erred, that we may repent, and amend the error, before it be too late. It is the black character of wicked people, that they are *haters of God*, Rom. 1: 30. Idolaters are so reputed in the second commandment: therefore it is not for those that love God, to delight in them, or contract intimacy with them. Ps. 139: 21, 22. Those whom the grace of God has dignified, ought not to debase themselves.

God was displeased with him for doing this; '*There is wrath upon thee*, and thou must, by repentance, make thy peace, or it will be worse for thee.' He did so, and God's anger was turned away. Yet his trouble, as recorded in the next ch. was a rebuke to him for meddling with strife that belonged not to him, and the great mischief his seed after him fell into by the house of Ahab, was the just punishment of his affinity with that house. Yet Jehu notices what was praiseworthy, as is proper for us when we give a reproof, *v.* 3.

II. Jehoshaphat's return of duty to God for this favor. He took the reproof well, and was not wroth with the seer as his father was, but submitted. *Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness.* See the effect of the reproof. 1. He *dwelt at Jerusalem*, *v.* 4. minded his own business at home, and would not expose himself by making any more such visits to Ahab, Prov. 9: 8, 9. 2. To atone (as I may say) for his visit to Ahab, he made a pious, profitable visitation of his own kingdom; he *went out through the people* in his own person from Beer-sheba in the S. to mt. Ephraim in the N. and *brought them back to the Lord God of their fathers*, i. e. did all he could towards it. If we truly repent of our sin, we shall do our utmost to repair the damage we have any way done by it to religion, or the souls of others. We are particularly concerned to recover those that have fallen into sin, or been hardened in it by our example.

V. 5—11. Jehoshaphat having done what he could, (17: 7—9, &c.) to make his people good, is here providing, if possible, to keep them so by the influence of a settled magistracy. Probably there were judges up and down the country before, but either they neglected their business, or the people slighted them, so that the end of the institution was not answered; therefore it was necessary it should be new modelled, new men employed, and a new charge given them, which is here done.

I. He erected inferior courts in the several cities of the kingdom, *v.* 5. whose judges were to keep the people in the worship of God, punish violations of the law, and decide controversies. Here is his charge, *v.* 6. In which we have,

1. The means he prescribes to them to keep them to their duty; which are two: (1.) Great caution and circumspection, *v.* 6, 7. Judges, of all men, need be cautious, so much depends on their taking a thing right. (2.) Great piety and religion: '*Let the fear of God be upon you*, that will restrain you from doing wrong, Neh. 5: 15. Gen. 42: 18. and encourage you to be active in doing the duty of your place.' Let destruction from God be a terror to them, as Job speaks, then they will be a terror to none but evil doers.

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a 18:31,32.
b 20:34. 1 K. 16:1,7,12.
c 16:7.
d See on 1 Sam. 9:9.
e 18:3,28. 1 K. 21:25. Ps. 15:4. 139: 21,22. Prov. 1:10—19. Rom. 1:32. Eph. 5:11. 2 John 10,11.
f 19:7. Ex. 20:5. Deut. 5:9. 7:10. 32:41. 33:11. Ps. 21:8. 68:1. 81: 15. John 15:18,23. Rom. 1:30. 8:7. Jam. 4:4.
g 32:25. Ps. 90:7,8. Rom. 1:18. 1 Cor. 11:31,32.
h 17:3—6. 1 K. 14:13. Rom. 7:18.
i See on 12:14.—30:19. Ezra 7:10. Ps. 57:7.

* Heb. *returned and went out.* 1 Sam. 7:15—17.
k Gen. 21:33. Judg. 20:1.
l Josh. 17:15. Judg. 19:1.
m See on 15:8—13.—29:10,11. 1 Sam. 7:3,4. Mal. 4:6. Luke 1:17.
n 8. Deut. 16:18—20. Rom. 13:1—5. 1 Pet. 2:13,14.
o Josh. 22:5. 1 Chr. 28:10. Luke 12: 15. 21:8. Acts 5:35. 22:26.
p Deut. 1:17. Ps. 82:1—6. Ec. 5:8.
† Heb. *matter of judgment.*
q Gen. 42:18. Ex. 18:21,22,25,26. Neh. 5:15. Is. 1:23—26.
r Gen. 18:25. Deut. 32:4. Rom. 9:14.
s Deut. 10:17,18. Job 34:19. Matt. 22:16. Acts 10:34. Rom. 2:11. Gal. 2:6. Eph. 6:9. Col. 3:25. 1 Pet. 1:17.
t Ex. 23:8. Deut. 16:19. Is. 1:23. 33: 15. Mic. 7:3.
u 17:8. Deut. 17:8—13. 1 Chr. 23:4. 26:29.
x Ex. 18:19—26. Deut. 21:5. 25:1.
y See on 7.—Deut. 1:16,17. 2 Sam. 23: 3. Is. 11:3—5. 32:1.
z Deut. 17:8.
a Ez. 3:18—21. 33:6. Acts 20:31. 1 Thes. 5:14.
b Num. 16:46. Josh. 22:18—20.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX. V. 1. 'I suppose, as soon as the battle was over, he immediately went to Jerusalem, to return thanks to God for his wonderful preservation.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

Verse 2.

Jehu was the son of Hanani, who was cast into prison by Asa for reproving him; (16:7—10.) yet he was not afraid of bringing a similar message to Jehoshaphat. Ahab's expedition was undertaken in defiance of the word of God, and attended with such circumstances, as rendered Jehoshaphat inexcusable in helping him. For this misconduct 'wrath was upon him from before the LORD:' not the wrath of an Enemy, or avenging Judge, but that of an offended Father; and the fatal effects of this affinity on his family and kingdom, were as awful evidences of this wrath, as could be experienced by one that did not finally perish. ID.

Verses 5—11.

(*M. R.* o—t. y.) 'It is most agreeable to the scripture to understand by the things of God, (*v.* 11) those which were defined by the law of God, and were to be judged of by that law: and by 'the king's matters,' such as, not being defined by the divine law, were left to the judgment of the king; of which kind were all deliberations about what was expedient, or not expedient.' . . . *Grotius*, quoted by *Bp. Patrick.* —Some interpret, *blood and blood*, of relationship and titles to estates; but it seems rather to mean causes concerning murder, maiming, or accidentally killing any one.—The judges were required to warn the people not to transgress; lest, beside other reasons, their brethren should be involved in the consequences of their crimes. SCOTT.

The LORD, who is with you in judgment. (6) Which the Talmud thus translates. '*Ye do not judge before the sons of men, but before the WORD of the* LORD, *and his glorious presence resides among you in the act of judgment;* which is an illustrious testimony that the ancient Jews believed more persons than one in the Deity.' *Patrick.* ID.

(8.) *Returned.*] '*Patrick, Hallet, Ken. Boothr.* and others read,

upon your brethren: this do, and ye shall not trespass.

11 And, behold, [c] Amariah the chief priest *is* over you in [d] all matters of the LORD; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters: also the Levites *shall be* officers before you. * Deal [e] courageously, and [f] the LORD shall be with [g] the good.

CHAP. XX.

Jehoshaphat, alarmed by an invasion of the Moabites, Ammonites, and others, proclaims a fast, 1—4. His prayer, 5—13. Jahaziel, the prophet, assures him of a signal deliverance, 14—17. Jehoshaphat and his people receive the promise with adoring thankfulness, 18, 19. He exhorts them to believe, and appoints singers to praise the Lord, 20, 21. The invaders destroy one another, and the people of Judah gather immense spoils, 22—25. They bless God at Berachah, return in triumph, and enjoy peace, 26—30. Jehoshaphat's good reign and acts, 31—34. He joins with Ahaziah in sending ships to Tharshish, which are wrecked, according to the prediction of Eliezer, 35—37.

IT came to pass [a] after this also, *that* [b] the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them *other* beside the Ammonites, [c] came against Jehoshaphat to battle.

c 1 Chr. 6:11.
d 8. 1 Chr. 26:30. Mal. 2:7.
* Heb. *take courage and do.*
e Josh. 1:6,9. 1 Chr. 22:11,16,19. 1 Cor. 16:13. 2 Tim. 2:1.
f 6. 15:2. Ps. 18:25,26. John 14:23, 24. Rom. 2:4—13. Phil. 4:8,9.
g Ps. 37:23. 112:5. Prov. 2:20. Ec. 2:26. Luke 23:50. Acts 11:24.
a 19:5,11. 32:1.
b Ps. 83:5—8. Is. 7:1. 8:9,10. 16:6.
c 19:2. Jer. 10:24. Rev. 3:19.

2. The motives he would have them consider, to engage them to faithfulness: these are three, all taken from God. (1.) From Him they had their commission; his ministers they were. (2.) His eye was upon them: 'He is *with you*, to notice what you do, and call you to an account if you do amiss.' (3.) He is the great Example of justice to all magistrates: *There is no iniquity with Him*, no bribery, nor respect to persons. Magistrates are called *gods*, therefore they must endeavor to resemble God.

II. He erected a supreme court at Jerusalem, which was advised with, and appealed to, in all the difficult causes that occurred in the inferior courts, and gave judgment on demurrers, special verdicts, and writs of error. In Jerusalem *were set* these *thrones of judgment*, there they would be under the inspection of the king himself. Observe,

1. The causes cognizable in this court, were of two kinds, as with us in England. (1.) Pleas of the crown, called here *the judgment of the Lord*, because the law of God was the law of the realm. All criminals were charged with the breach of some part of his law, and were said to offend against his peace, his crown and dignity. (2.) Common pleas, between party and party, called here *controversies*, *v.* 8. and *causes of their brethren*, *v.* 10. differences *between blood and blood*. This refers to Deut. 17: 8. between the blood of the slain and that of the slayer. Since the revolt, all the cities of refuge, except Hebron, belonged to the kingdom of Israel; therefore, we may suppose, the courts of the temple, or the horns of the altar, were chiefly used as sanctuaries in that case, and hence the trial of homicides was reserved for the court at Jerusalem. If the inferior judges did not agree about the sense of any law or commandment, any statute or judgment, this court must determine the controversy.

2. The judges of this court were some of *the Levites and priests* most learned in the law, eminent for wisdom, and of approved integrity, and some of *the chief of the fathers of Israel*, persons of age and experience, that had been men of business, who would be the most competent judges of matters of fact, as the priests and Levites were of the sense of the law.

3. The two chiefs, or presidents, of this court. Amariah, the high priest, was to preside in ecclesiastical causes, to direct the court, and be the mouth of it, or perhaps to be last consulted in cases which the judges themselves doubted of. Zebadiah, the prime minister of state, was to preside in all civil causes, *v.* 11. Blessed be God both for magistrates and ministers; scribes and statesmen; men of books, and men of business.

4. The inferior officers of the court; some of *the Levites* (such as had not abilities to qualify them for judges) *shall be officers before you*, *v.* 11. They were to bring causes into the court, and to see the sentence of the judges executed. And these hands and feet were as necessary in their places, as the eyes and heads, (the judges,) in theirs.

5. The charge the king gave them. (1.) They must see to it that they acted from a good principle, the *fear of the Lord*, setting Him always before them, then they would act faithfully, conscientiously, and *with a perfect, upright heart*, *v.* 9. (2.) They must make it their great and constant care to prevent sin, *to warn the people that they trespass not against the Lord*, inspire them with a dread of sin, not only as [destructive to their happiness,]—hurtful to themselves and the public peace, but as offensive to God, and that which would bring wrath on the people if they committed it, and on the magistrates if they did not punish it. *This do, and ye shall not trespass;* this implies, that those who have power in their hands, contract the guilt of sin themselves, if they do not use their power to prevent and restrain sin in others. (3.) They must act with resolution. 'Deal courageously, and fear not the face of man in the discharge of your duty, and whoever is against you, God will protect you, *The Lord shall be with the good.*'

CHAP. XX. V. 1—13. I. A formidable invasion of Jehoshaphat's kingdom by the Moabites and Ammonites, and their auxiliaries, *v.* 1. Jehoshaphat was surprised with the intelligence of it, when the enemy had already entered his country, *v.* 2. What pretence they had to it, does not appear;—*sea* here means *the Dead Sea*, where Sodom stood. It should seem, they marched through the tribes beyond Jordan, who gave them passage through their borders; so ungrateful were they to Jehoshaphat, who had lately helped them recover Ramoth-gilead. Several nations joined this confederacy, but especially *the children of Lot*, whom the rest helped, Ps. 83: 6—8. The neighboring nations had feared Jehoshaphat, *ch.* 17: 10. but perhaps his affinity with Ahab had lessened him in their esteem, and they had some intimation that his God was displeased with him for it, which they fancied would give them an opportunity to make a prey of his kingdom.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Nothing but perils, wrath, and painful effects, can be expected from intimacies with ungodly men; and that in proportion to the degree of their avowed hatred to the character, worship, and service of God. We ought therefore to shun all needless familiarity with them, and to show them, and all the world, our disapprobation of their principles and conduct; whatever may be their rank, abilities, or accomplishments; or however political interests or relative ties may plead for a coalition. We should indeed bear them good will, and be ready to relieve their distress, and to help them in their most important interests: but we ought to be cautious of involving ourselves with their secular undertakings, and still more of concurring with them in any of their sinful projects. (*Notes*, 2 *Cor.* 6: 14—18. *Eph.* 5: 8—14. 2 *John* 7—11. *P. O.*)—The unmerited mercies of God are often united with severe rebukes and corrections; and these again are moderated by tokens of his approbation, where our conduct has been good in his sight: for He would not have those discouraged, who 'prepare their hearts to seek Him;' and when there are *really* good things found in us, He will mercifully forgive the evil which we allow not or repent of, and accept the good, through the Savior's advocacy. In these things, we should be followers of God: we must not 'hate our offending brother, nor suffer sin upon him; but in any wise rebuke him;' (*Note*, *Lev.* 19: 17.) but we should take more pleasure in commending what is evidently good; and bear much from those in whom 'good things are found.'—While ministers ought not to fear or respect the persons of men, or be intimidated by the sufferings of others in the same cause, but must deliver their whole message plainly; they should also endeavor to do it with forbearance, tenderness, and candor, which will render reproofs less offensive and more effectual.—The tendency of human nature to evil renders unremitting vigor necessary in all those, who would suppress abuses and effect reformation: for, on every relaxation, evils will revive and gather strength rapidly, and all will need to be done over again.—The ministry and the magistracy, when restricted to their distinct methods, may concur in promoting godliness, as well as preserving public peace: and all legal decisions should be expedited in a regular and easy method, and with little expense; that the poor may be placed, as nearly as possible, at an equal advantage with the rich, in obtaining their dues.—Magistrates are the vicegerents of the Governor and Judge of the world, and are therefore to be obeyed in all things lawful for the Lord's sake. (*Notes*, *Rom.* 13: 1—7.) But there lies an appeal from their decisions to a superior tribunal; and *they* should be constantly and solemnly reminded, that they will be exposed to condemnation, if they do not act uprightly in the fear of God, without respect of persons, or taking of gifts. And, besides executing the laws of man impartially, it is their duty also to warn men not to trespass against the Lord, lest wrath come on them and their brethren, (*Note*, 17: 7—9.) They should therefore take heed and deal courageously, not fearing the displeasure of man, but confiding in the protection of God, who is with them in the judgment; that He may indeed be with them for their good. May He provide increasing numbers of good ministers and good magistrates, to suppress vice, and to promote the cause of truth and holiness! SCOTT.

"and for controverted causes of the inhabitants of Jerusalem." They substitute *yvshby* for *vyshbv*. The *Vulg.* and *Sept.* justify this rendering; the latter has, "and to judge the inhabitants of Jerusalem." So *Boothr.* and Dr. *A. Clarke.*' COND. COMM.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX. V. 1, 2. (14:1—15. 31:20, 21. 32:1—8. 1 *Sam.* 7:1—7.) Jehoshaphat had so long enjoyed peace, that he seems to have neglected his military arrangements, and to have relaxed his vigilance.

2 Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from [d] beyond the sea on this side Syria; and, behold, they *be* in [e] Hazazontamar, which *is* [f] Engedi.

3 And Jehoshaphat [g] feared, and set * himself to [h] seek the LORD, and [i] proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

4 And Judah gathered themselves together, to [j] ask *help* of the LORD: even out of all [k] the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

5 And [l] Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court,

6 And said, [m] O LORD God of our fathers, *art* not thou [n] God in heaven? and [o] rulest *not* thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and [p] in thine hand *is there not* power and might, so that [q] none is able to withstand thee?

7 *Art* not thou [r] our God, † who didst [s] drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and [t] gavest it to the seed of Abraham [u] thy friend for ever?

8 And they dwelt therein, and have [v] built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying,

9 [x] If, *when* evil cometh upon us, *as* the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for [y] thy name *is* in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.

10 And now, behold, the children of Ammon, and Moab, and mount Seir, [z] whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not;

11 Behold, *I say* [a] *how* they reward us, to come [b] to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit.

12 O our God, [c] wilt thou not judge them? for [d] we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; [e] neither know we what to do: but [f] our eyes *are* upon thee.

13 And [g] all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.

[*Practical Observations.*]

II. Jehoshaphat's preparation against the invaders. No mention is made of his mustering his forces, yet most probably he did, for God must be trusted in the use of means. But his great care was, to obtain the favor of God, which perhaps he was the more solicitous about, because he had been lately told there was *wrath upon him from before the Lord, ch.* 19: 2. 1. He feared; consciousness of guilt made him fear: those that have least sin, are most sensible of it; the surprise added to the fright. Holy fear is a spur to prayer and preparation, Heb. 11: 7. 2. *He set himself to seek the Lord*, and, in the first place, to make Him his friend. They that would seek the Lord so as to find Him, must do it with fixedness of thought, sincerity of intention, and the utmost vigor and resolution to continue seeking Him. 3. He appointed a day of humiliation and prayer, that they might join together in confessing their sins, and *asking help of the Lord.* Fasting from bodily refreshments on such extraordinary occasions, is a token of self-judging for the sins we have committed, and of self-denial for the future. Magistrates are to call their people to the duty of fasting and

d Gen. 14:3. Num. 34:12. Josh. 3:16
e Gen. 14:7.
f Josh. 15:62. 1 Sam. 23:29. Cant. 1:14.
g Gen. 32:7. 11,24—28. Ps. 56:3,4. Is 37:3—6. Jon. 1:16. Matt. 10:28.
* Heb. *his face.*
h See on 11:16. 19:3.
i Judg. 20:26. 1 Sam. 7:6. Ezra 8 21—23. Esth. 4:16. Jer. 36:9. Joe 1:14. 2:12—18. Jon. 3:5—9.
j Ps. 34:5,6. 50:15. 60:16—12.
k 19:5. Ps. 69:35.
l See on 6:12,13.—34:31. 2 K. 19:15—19.
m See on Ex. 3:6,15,16. 1 Chr. 29:18.
n Deut. 4:39. Josh. 2:11. 1 K. 8:23 Is. 57:15,16. 66:1. Matt. 6:9.
o 1 Chr. 29:11,12. Ps. 47:2,8. Jer. 27 5—8. Dan. 4:17,25,32—35.
p 1 Chr. 29:11,12. Ps. 62:11. Matt 6:13.
q Acts 11:17.
r 14:11. Gen. 17:7. Ex. 6:7. 19:5—7. 20:2. 1 Chr. 17:21—24.
† Heb. *thou.*
s See on Ex. 33:2.—Ps. 44:2.
t Gen. 12:7. 13:15. Josh. 24:3,13. Neh. 9:8.
u Is. 41:8. John 11:11. 15:15. Jam. 2:23.
v See on 2:4. 6:10.
x See on 6:28—30. 1 K. 8:33,37.
y See on 6:20. Ex. 20:24. 23:21.
z Num. 20:17—21. Deut. 2:4,5,9,19 Judg. 11:15—18.
a Gen. 44:4. Ps. 7:4. 35:12. Prov. 17:13. Jer. 18:20.
b Judg. 11:23,24. Ps. 83:3—12.
c Deut. 32:36. Judg. 11:27. Ps. 7:6,8. 9:19. 43:1. Is. 2:4. 72:4. Joel 3: 12. Rev. 19:11.
d See on 14:11.—1 Sam. 14:6. 2 Cor. 1:8,9.
e 2 K. 6:15.
f Ps. 25:15. 121:1,2. 123:1,2. 141:3. Jon. 2:4.
g Deut. 29:10,11. Ezra 10:1. Jon. 3:5. Acts 21:5.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—13. Uninterrupted peace must not be expected in this world, even when we are most devotedly serving God.—In calamities or dangers, public or personal, our first business should be to seek help from the Lord. Hence the advantage of days appointed for national fasting and prayer. What then shall we think of those, who call themselves Christians and patriots, yet not only neglect, but ridicule or revile, this scriptural method of seeking help in danger, from our Almighty Friend, after an example so honored by God Himself? or of those, who give occasion to such reproach and contempt, by their absurd and manifest hypocrisy in these observances?—In all ages of the church, *fasting* has been deemed expedient on particular occasions, personal and public; being expressive of a mind abstracted from earthly things; conscious of having forfeited every enjoyment by sin; and attentive only to obtain the great objects which the soul is then pursuing.—When most indisposed to avenge themselves, and least able to ward off injuries, the dependence of believers on God will become more unreserved, and their prayers more fervent: and He will no more forsake those, who 'know not what to do,' but look up to Him alone for help; than a fond mother will desert her helpless infant, that clings to her bosom, and knows and seeks no other refuge. Indeed, this is the very frame of mind, to which He designs to form his people.—The covenant is made with believers 'for the good of their children after them;' and they should bring them, and the rest of their families, as soon as possible, to the ordinances of God, that they may be trained up in his house, and become truly a part of his family. SCOTT.

(17:10—19.) Perhaps his enemies observed this, and thought to take advantage of it.—This formidable armament were encamped in his dominions, at Engedi, (*M. R.* e, f.) before he was informed of their approach, or apprised of their intentions. This would prevent his mustering all his forces. SCOTT.

Verses 3, 4.

Probably, this invasion took place not long after Jehoshaphat's return from Ramoth-gilead; and he was afraid, that God was about to chastise his sin by permitting the devastation of his kingdom. *A fast.*] 'High living tends to inflame the propensities, while moderate and temperate living is more favorable to the calm action of the higher sentiments, and higher intellect: one, therefore, should regulate his diet, not only from immediate regard to health, but in reference to mental and moral condition.' *S. Jones.* ED. We have in the preceding books of scripture, read of private fasting with prayer; of 'afflicting the soul' at the day of atonement; of the people's fasting at the instance of Samuel the prophet; and of their fasting by common consent: (*Notes, Lev.* 16:29—31. *Deut.*) 9:18, 25. *Judg.* 20:26—28. 1 *Sam.* 7:5, 6. 2 *Sam.* 12: 16.) but the fast here mentioned was observed at *the proclamation of the chief magistrate*, who acted by the authority of his station, and not by the Spirit of prophecy: and the event of this measure, both warrants civil governors in times of distress to act in this manner, and encourages them to expect the most important benefits from it. Every one was called on to humble himself before God for his own sins, and the sins of the public, as the aggregate of the whole. Thus they united in expressing their sorrow and self-displacency for their sins; and they publicly honored God as the righteous Author of their calamity, and as their only Hope and Refuge in distress. Doubtless serious impressions would be made on many, who before had been inattentive; the pious affections of others would be revived, and rendered more fixed and lively; and in every way it would tend to the honor of God, and the good of his people. SCOTT

Verse 5.

New court.] It is not known what is meant: but, probably, Jehoshaphat had rebuilt some of the courts, or had added one to them SCOTT. 'There were but 2 courts (2 K. 21:5. 23:12.) and Jehoshaphat stood in one, which must be that of the people's, before the other, which must be that of the priest's, called the *new court*, because it had been lately renewed when the altar was renewed, (15:8.)' COND. COMM.

'What an instructive sight! The king offering in the congregation, without *form* or *premeditation*, one of the most sensible, pious, correct (and, as to its composition, one of the most elegant) prayers, ever offered under the O. T. dispensation.' DR. A. CLARKE.

Verses 6—9.

A careful examination of the M. R. will be found the best comment on this prayer. *Thy friend.* (7) *A lover of Thee.* (*M. R.—John* 15:12 —16. *Jam.* 2:22—29.) SCOTT.

Verses 10, 11.

The mention of mt. Seir, the country of Edom, shows what is meant in v. 1. by 'other beside the Ammonites.' ID.

Verse 12.

The language of this v. is peculiarly expressive of humble, genuine faith. ID.

Verse 13.

With their little ones.] M. R.—*Neh.* 8:1, 2. *Joel* 2:15—17.—Not only the women, and the children who were grown up, attended on this occasion, but the infants also: for it is probable the people intended their presence, as a silent plea with the Lord to have mercy on

14 ¶ [h] Then upon Jahaziel, the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite, of the sons of Asaph, [i] came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation;

15 And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat; Thus saith the LORD unto you, [k] Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for [l] the battle *is* not yours, but God's.

16 To-morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the * cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the † brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel.

17 Ye shall [m] not *need* to fight in this *battle:* set yourselves, [n] stand ye *still*, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: [o] for the LORD *will be* with you.

18 And Jehoshaphat [p] bowed his head with *his* face to the ground: and all Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD.

19 And [q] the Levites of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the [r] Korhites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel, with [s] a loud voice on high.

20 And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of [t] Tekoa: and, as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, [u] Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; [x] Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; [y] believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.

21 And when he had [z] consulted with the people, he [a] appointed singers unto the LORD, and ‡ that should praise [b] the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, [c] Praise the LORD; for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

22 And § when they began ‖ to sing and to praise, [d] the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they ¶ were smitten.

23 For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of [e] mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy *them:* and when they had made an end

h Is. 58:9. 65:24. Dan. 9:20,21. Acts 10:4,31.
i 15:1. 24:20. Num. 11:25,26. 24:2.
k 32:7. Deut. 1:29,30. 20:1,4. 31:6,8. Josh. 11:6. Neh. 4:14. Ps. 27:1,2. Is. 41:10—16.
l 32:8. 1 Sam. 17:47.
* Heb. *ascent.*
† Or, *valley.*
m 22,23. Ex. 14:13,14,25.
n Ps. 46:10,11. Is. 30:7,15. Lam. 3:26.
o 15:2. 32:8. Num. 14:9. Ps. 46:7,11. Is. 8:9,10. 41:10. Am. 5:14. Matt. 1:23. 28:20. Rom. 8:31. 2 Tim. 4:22.
p 7:3. Gen. 24:26. Ex. 4:31.
q 1 Chr. 15:16—22. 16:5,42. 23:5. 25:1—7.
r Ps. 44 :—49 : *titles.*
s 5:13. Ezra 3:12,13. Neh. 12:42,43. Ps. 81:1. 95:1,2.
t 11:6. 2 Sam. 14:2. 1 Chr. 4:5. Jer. 6:1.
u See on 15.
x Is. 7:9. 28:3. John 11:40. 14:1. Rom. 8:31.
y Ex. 14:31. Luke 16:31. John 5:46, 47. 13:20.
z 1 Chr. 13:1,2. Prov. 11:14.
a 29:25—30. 30:21. Ezra 3:10,11. Neh. 12:27.
‡ Heb. *praisers of.*
b 1 Chr. 16:29. Ps. 29:2. 50:2. 90:17. 96:9.
c 5:13. 7:3,6. † Chr. 16:34,41. Ezra 3:11. Ps. 106:1. 107:1. 136:1, &c. Jer. 33:11.
§ Heb. *in the time that, &c.*
‖ Heb. *in singing and praise.*
d Judg. 7:22. 1 Sam. 14:16,20. 2 K. 6:17. Ps. 35:5,6. Is. 19:2. Ez. 38:21.
¶ Or, *smote one another.*
e Gen. 14:6. 36:8,9. Deut. 2:5. Josh. 24:4. Ez. 35:2,3.

1. The spirit of prophecy came on a Levite present, not in any place of eminency, but *in the midst of the congregation*, v. 14. The Spirit, like the wind, *blows where*, and on whom, *He listeth.* He was of the sons of Asaph, therefore one of the singers; that office God would honor: whether a prophet before this or no, is uncertain, most probably he was, which would make him the more regarded. There needed no sign; the thing itself, next day, would confirm his prophecy.

2. He encouraged them to trust in God, though the danger was very threatening, v. 15. 'Be not *afraid;* you have admitted fear enough to bring you to God, do not now admit that which will drive you from Him again. *The battle is not yours, but God's,* He does and will, as you have desired, interest Himself in the cause.'

3. He gives them intelligence of the motions of the enemy, and orders them to march toward them, with particular directions where they should find them. *To-morrow,* (the day after the fast,) *go ye down against them*, v. 16, 17. It is fit, He who commands the deliverance, should command the delivered, both as to time and place.

4. He assures them, they should be, not the glorious instruments, but the joyful spectators, of the total defeat of the enemy, v. 17. So Moses told Israel at the Red Sea, Ex. 14: 13. Let but the Christian soldier go out against his spiritual enemies, and the God of Peace will make him *more than a conqueror.*

5. They received these assurances with faith, reverence, and thankfulness. Jehoshaphat first, and then all the people, *fell before the Lord, and worshipped*, v. 19. An active faith can give thanks for a promise, though it be not yet performed, knowing that God's bonds are as good as ready money, Ps. 60: 6.

V. 20—30. We have here the foregoing prayer answered, and the foregoing promise performed, in the total overthrow of the enemy, and the triumph (rather than victory) of Jehoshaphat.

1. Never was army drawn out to the field of battle so as Jehoshaphat's. He had soldiers *ready prepared for war*, ch. 17: 18. no notice is taken of their military equipment, but he took care, 1. That faith should be their armor; then they should *prosper* and *be established*, v. 20. That is true courage, which faith inspires; nor will any thing contribute more to establish the heart in shaking times, than a firm belief of the power, mercy, and promise of God. In spiritual conflicts, this is the victory, this the prosperity, even our faith. 2. That praise and thanksgiving should be their vanguard, v. 21. He called a council of war, and it was resolved to appoint *singers to go out before the army*, to charge in the front, who had nothing else to do but to praise God. By this strange advance, Jehoshaphat intended to express his firm reliance on the word of God, to animate his own soldiers, to confound the enemy,

them, for the sake of their helpless offspring. (*Jon.* 4:9—11.) SCOTT.

Verses 20, 21.

'*Should praise the beauty of holiness :*' i. e. according to some expositors, exactly as *they used to do at his beautiful sanctuary.* But perhaps the expression rather means, that they should celebrate the glorious excellences of God, which render Him 'the Perfection of beauty.' SCOTT.

Verses 22—25.

Some commentators, both ancient and modern, think that angels were employed on this occasion, who came on the invaders by sur-

of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped * to destroy another.

24 And when Judah came toward the watch-tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, [f] they *were* dead bodies fallen to the earth, and † none escaped.

25 And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, [g] they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and [h] precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much.

26 And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of ‡ Berachah; for there they [i] blessed the LORD: therefore [j] the name of the same place was called, The valley of Berachah, [k] unto this day.

27 Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the §forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for [l] the LORD had made them to rejoice over their enemies.

28 And they came to Jerusalem [m] with psalteries, and harps, and trumpets, unto the house of the LORD.

29 And [n] the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of *those* countries, when [o] they had heard that the LORD fought against the enemies of Israel.

and to engage the divine blessing.

II. Never was army so unaccountably destroyed; not by thunder, hail, the sword of an angel, dint of sword, or strength of arm, or any surprising alarm, like that Gideon gave the Midianites; but the Lord set ambushments against them, either hosts of angels, or, as Patrick thinks, their own ambushments, whom God struck with such confusion, that they fell on their own friends [by mistake] as if they had been enemies, and *every one helped to destroy another*, so that *none escaped*. [Comp. note, Judg. 7: 22.] What ground there was for their jealousies one of another, does not appear, perhaps there was none: but so it was, that the Ammonites and the Moabites fell foul on the Edomites and cut them off, and then they fell out with one another, and cut one another off, *v.* 23. Thus God often makes wicked people instruments of destruction to one another. See the mischievous consequences of divisions, of the reason of which neither of the contending parties can give any good account.

III. Never was spoil so cheerfully divided, for Jehoshaphat's army had nothing to do besides; the rest was done for them, *v.* 24. See how rich God is in mercy to them that call upon Him in truth, and how often He outdoes the prayers and expectations of his people. They prayed to be delivered; and God not only did that, but thus greatly enriched them, *v.* 25. Now appeared God's end in bringing this great army against Judah; to humble and prove them, that He might *do them good in their latter end*. It seemed, at first, a disturbance to their reformation, but it proves a recompense of it.

IV. Never was victory celebrated with more solemn and enlarged thanksgivings. 1. They kept a day of praise in the camp, before they drew their forces out of the field; which gave a name to the valley, *Berachah*, i. e. *of blessing*, *v.* 26. The remembrance of this work of wonder was hereby perpetuated, for the encouragement of succeeding generations to trust in God. 2. Yet they did not think this enough, but came in solemn procession, all in a body, Jehoshaphat at their head, to Jerusalem; that the country, as they passed along, might join them in their praises, and give thanks for the mercy there where they had by prayer obtained it, *in the house of the Lord*, *v.* 27, 28. Praising God must not be the work of a day only; but be continued as our prayers were, when we were in the pursuit of mercy. While we have being, we must praise God, spending our time in that work in which we hope to spend our eternity. Public mercies call for public acknowledgments, *in the courts of the Lord's house*, Ps. 116: 19.

V. Never did victory turn to a better account than this, for, 1. Jehoshaphat's kingdom was hereby made to look very great abroad, *v.* 29. It begat in the neighbors a reverence of God, and a cautious fear of injuring his people. 2. It was made very easy and quiet at home, *v.* 30. They that

30 So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for [p] his God gave him rest round about.

31 ¶ And [q] Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah: *he was* thirty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi.

32 And [r] he walked in [s] the way of Asa his father, and [t] departed not from it, doing *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD.

33 Howbeit, [u] the high places were not taken away: for as yet the people [x] had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers.

34 Now [y] the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first, and last, behold, they *are* written in the ‖ book of [z] Jehu the son of Hanani, who ¶ is mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel.

B. C. 896. 35 ¶ And after this [a] did Jehoshaphat king of Judah join himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, [b] who did very wickedly:

36 And he joined himself with him to make ships to go to [c] Tarshish: and they made the ships in [d] Ezion-gaber.

37 Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah, prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, [e] Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, [f] the LORD hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

* Heb. *for the destruction.*
f Ex. 14:30. Ps. 110:6. Is. 37:36. Jer. 33:5.
† Heb. there was *not an escaping.* Ezra 9:14.
g Ex. 12:35,36. 1 Sam. 30:19,20. 2 K. 7:9—16. Ps. 68:12. Rom. 8:37.
h Ex. 3:22. Num. 31:51. Judg. 8:24—26. Prov. 3:15.
‡ That is, *Blessing.*
i Ex. 15:1—19. 2 Sam. 22:1. Ps. 103: 1,2. 107:21,22. Luke 1:68. Rev. 19:1—6.
j Gen. 28:19. 32:30. Ex. 17:15. 1 Sam. 7:12. Is. 62:4. Acts 1:19.
k 5:9.
§ Heb. *head.* 2 Sam. 6:14,15. Mic. 2:13. Heb. 6:20.
l 1 Sam. 2:1. Neh. 12:43. Ps. 20:5. 30:1. Is. 35:10. 51:11. Rev. 18:20.
m 2 Sam. 6:5. 1 Chr. 13:8. 23:5. 25: 6. Ps. 57:8. 92:3. 149:3. 150:3—5. Rev. 14:2,3.
n 17:10. Gen. 35:5. Ex. 23:27. Josh. 5:1. 2 K. 7:6.
o Ex. 15:14—16. Josh. 2:9—11. 9: 9—11.
p 14:6,7. 15:15. Josh. 23:1. 2 Sam. 7:1. Job 34:29. Prov. 16:7. John 14:27.
q 1 K. 22:41—44.
r See on 17:3—6.
s See on 14:2—5,11—13. 1 K. 15:11.
t 16:7—12. Ps. 18:21. 36:3.
u See on 14:3. 17:6.
q See on 12:14. 19:3.—30:19. Deut. 29:4. 1 Sam. 7:3.
y See on 12:15. 13:22. 16:11.
‖ Heb. *words.*
z 19:2. 1 K. 16:1,7.
¶ Heb. *was made to ascend.*
a 1 K. 22:48,49.
b 2 K. 1:2—16.
c See on 1 K. 10:22. *Tharshish.*
d 1 K. 9:26. *Ezion-geber.*
e See on 19:2.
f 16:9. Prov. 9:6. 13:20. Heb 12:6. Rev. 3:19.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 14—37. The Lord will surely speak peace to those, who seek Him in a due manner: and when his Word banishes our fears and calms our spirits, our prayers are answered in good measure, even previously to those providential deliverances, of which we have received a blessed pledge.—When vigorous faith receives the promises, their accomplishment is anticipated with humble gratitude. But alas! our faith is apt to waver, and then our joys decline: believers need frequent exhortations to persevering faith and hope in God; and it becomes the strong in this manner to animate the weak.—As we cannot know the truth and promises of God, except by his prophets and apostles; how can we believe in Him, unless we firmly credit their infallible testimony, as recorded in the sacred Scriptures?—Many things must remain imperfect in the church on earth; for there are many desirable regulations which the greatest reformers have not ventured to attempt, or have not been able to accomplish: and indeed, except men's 'hearts are prepared to seek the LORD,' magistrates and ministers can do nothing effectual. The zealous, however, will never labor in vain. Much good will be done, though not all which they desire. SCOTT.

prise, as from an ambushment, and slew some of them; but perhaps the Lord only left the several nations to a natural distrust and jealousy of each other. SCOTT.

Verses 26—28.

No undertaking, recorded in Scripture, was entered on, conducted, and concluded, in a more unexceptionable manner. ID.

Verse 36.

'Connecting this passage with 1 K. 22:48, 49. we have the complete account of this transaction. Jehoshaphat prepared a fleet to sail to Ophir in partnership with Ahaziah. As the ships were passing out of the port of Ezion-geber, a storm which God sent to punish this confederacy drove them upon the rocks, and they were lost. The station of the king's ships was thereupon removed to Elath, whence Jehoshaphat sent out another fleet, in which he would not permit Ahaziah to have any concern. Elath was lost in the revolt of the Edomites in the reign of Jehoram, recovered by Uzziah, and finally lost by Ahaz.' PRIDEAUX.

CHAP. XXI.

Jehoshaphat dies; Jehoram succeeds, slays his brethren, and reigns wickedly, 1—7. Edom and Libnah revolt, 8—10. He establishes idolatry, 11. Elijah's written prophecy against him, 12—15. The Philistines and Arabians invade and plunder his kingdom, and carry all his family captive, except Jehoahaz, 16, 17. Elijah's prophecy fulfilled in Jehoram's incurable disease and death; and ... 's interred without honor, 18—20.

NOW [a] Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and [b] was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And [c] Jehoram his son reigned in his stead.

2 And he had brethren, the sons of Jehoshaphat, Azariah, and Jehiel, and Zechariah, and Azariah, and Michael, and Shephatiah: all these *were* the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel.

3 And their father [d] gave them great gifts of silver, and of gold, and of precious things, with fenced cities in Judah: but the kingdom gave he to Jehoram; because he *was* the firstborn.

4 Now when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself, and [e] slew all his brethren with the sword, and *divers* also of the princes of Israel.

5 Jehoram *was* thirty and two years old when he began to reign, and [f] he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.

6 And he walked [g] in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab; for [h] he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he wrought *that which was* evil in the eyes of the LORD.

7 Howbeit [i] the LORD would not destroy the house of David, [k] because of the covenant that he had made with David, and [l] as he promised to give a * light to him and his sons for ever.

8 ¶ In his days [m] the Edomites revolted from under the † dominion of Judah, [n] and made themselves a king.

9 Then Jehoram went forth with his princes, and all his chariots with him: and he rose up by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him in, and the captains of the chariots.

10 So the Edomites

a 1 K. 22:50.
b 20.—See on 9:31; 12:16.
c 2 K. 8:16,17.
d 11:23. Gen. 25:6. Deut. 21:15—17.
e 17. 22:8,10. Gen. 4:8. Judg. 9:5, 56,57. 1 John 3:12.
f 2 K. 8:16,17.
g 1 K. 16:25—33.
h 18:1. 22:2. 2 K. 8:18. Neh. 13:25, 26.
i 22:11. Is. 7:6,7.
k 2 Sam. 23:5. Ps. 89:28—34,39. Jer. 33:20—26.
l 2 Sam. 7:12—17. 1 K. 11:13,36. 2 K. 8:19. Ps. 132:17,18. Luke 1:69, 79.
* Heb. *lamp*, or, *candle*.
m Gen. 27:40. 2 K. 8:20—22.
† Heb. *hand*.
n 1 K. 22:47. 2 K. 3:9.

Chap. XXI. Never surely did any kingdom change its king so much for the worse as Judah, when Jehoram, one of the vilest, succeeded Jehoshaphat, one of the best. Thus were they punished for not making a better use of Jehoshaphat's good government, and their disaffectedness (or coldness, at least) to his reformation, ch. 20: 32. They that knew not how to value a good king, are justly plagued with a bad one.

V. 1—11. We find here,

I. Jehoshaphat a very careful, indulgent father to Jehoram. He had many sons, here named, *v.* 2. and it is said (*v.* 13.) they were better than were displeased at the destroying of the images and groves, were now satisfied, and obliged to own, that since the God of Israel could deliver after this sort, He only is to be worshipped, and in that way only which Himself has appointed. If God give rest, who can give disturbance?

V. 31—37. We are now drawing toward the close of Jehoshaphat's reign, for a further account of which, they who lived when this book was published, were referred to an authentic history of it, written by Jehu the prophet, *ch.* 19: 2. then extant, *v.* 34. This was the general character of his reign, that he did what was right in the sight of the Lord; kept close to the worship of God himself, and did what he could to keep his people close to it. But two things are here to be lamented:

1. The people still retained a partiality for the high places, *v.* 33. Those erected to the honor of strange gods, were taken away, *ch.* 17: 6. but Jehoshaphat was loath to disoblige the people so far, as to take away those where the true God was worshipped, for as yet they had not prepared their hearts to the God of their fathers. They complied with Jehoshaphat's reformation, because they could not, for shame, do otherwise, but they were not hearty in it; the best magistrates cannot bring to pass what they would in reformation, when the people are cool in it.

2. Jehoshaphat himself still retained a partiality for the house of Ahab. He saw and knew that Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, did very wickedly, and therefore could not expect to prosper; yet he joined him in trade, in an East-India fleet bound for Ophir, *v.* 35, 36. Emphasis is laid on the time—*after this*, after God had given him not only victory, but wealth, after this, to go and join a wicked king, was very ungrateful. What could he expect but that *God should be angry with him?* Ezra 9: 13, 14. Yet He sends to him, to show him his error, and bring him to repentance, 1. By a prophet, who foretold the blasting of his project, *v.* 37. And, 2. By a storm, which brake the ships in the port before they set sail, by which he was warned to break off his alliance, and, it seems, took the warning; for when Ahaziah afterward pressed him to join him he *would not*, 1 K. 22: 49. See how pernicious it is to join friendship and society with evil-doers, it is hard to break off. A man may much better keep himself from the snare, than recover himself out of it.

II. Jehoram a most barbarous brother. Jehoram, it is likely, hated his brethren, and slew them, for the same reason that Cain hated Abel, and slew him; because their piety condemned his impiety, and won them that esteem with the people, which he had lost. With them he slew divers of the princes of Israel, who adhered to them, and were likely to avenge their death. The princes of Judah were those who had taught the good knowledge of the Lord, *ch.* 17: 7. here called *princes of Israel*, as before, *fathers of Israel*, *ch.* 19: 8. because Israelites indeed, men of integrity. The sword, the good father had put into their hands, this wicked son sheathed in their bowels. Wo unto him that thus *foundeth a kingdom in blood*, Hab. 2: 12. it will prove a foundation that will sink the superstructure.

III. Jehoram a most wicked king, who corrupted and debauched his kingdom, and ruined the reformation his good father and grandfather had carried on; he *walked in the way of the house of Ahab*, *v.* 6. made high places which the people were of themselves too forward to make, and did his utmost to set up idolatry again, *v.* 11. As for Jerusalem, where he kept his court, he easily drew them into his spiritual whoredom. The country people seem to have been brought to it with more difficulty; but they that would not be corrupted by flatteries, were driven by force, he *compelled Judah thereto*. He used that power for the destruction of the church, which was given him for the edification of it.

IV. When he forsook God and his worship, his subjects withdrew their allegiance. 1. Some tributary provinces abroad did so, as the Edomites, *v.* 8. and though he chastised them, *v.* 9. he could not reduce them, *v.* 10. 2. One of the cities of his own kingdom did so, *v.* 10. as of old it had a king of its own, Josh. 12: 15. The reason is here given; as he had forsaken the God of his fathers, they could not continue subject to him, without danger of being themselves also drawn

NOTES.

Chap. XXI. V. 2. The second Azariah, in the original, is called *Azariahu.—King of Israel.*] Jehoshaphat is called here 'the king of Israel,' not 'king of Judah;' as the whole nation sprang from Jacob, whom God surnamed Israel; and he reigned over a considerable part of it. (4. 23:19.) Scott. '*Israel* is an error of the transcriber, and should be Judah. *Houb.* Dr. *A. Clarke*; so the Sept. Vulg. Arab. Syr. and 40 MSS.' Cond. Comm.

Verse 3.

Perhaps Jehoram had acted the hypocrite during his father's lifetime: but, even if he showed his evil disposition, Jehoshaphat, having no command from God, did not think it proper to set him aside; otherwise his brethren were better than he, more wise and more righteous. (*Note*, 18.) Scott.

Verse 4.

Some think, the princes were the magistrates whom Jehoshaphat had appointed. (19:5—11.) Id.

Verses 8—11.

All kinds of licentious and unnatural practices, to the extreme disgrace of human nature, were encouraged, and even held sacred, in the worship of these abominable idols, as may undeniably be proved even from pagan authors. [Notes, Lev. 26: 1, &c.] Id.

revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. The same time *also* did [o] Libnah revolt from under his hand; [p] because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers.

11 Moreover, [q] he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and [r] caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit [s] fornication, and [t] compelled Judah *thereto.*

12 ¶ And there came [u] a writing to him from [x] Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of David thy father; Because thou hast not walked [y] in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor [z] in the ways of Asa king of Judah;

13 But hast walked [a] in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a [b] whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also [c] hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, *which were* better than thyself:

14 Behold, with a great * plague will the LORD smite [d] thy people, and [e] thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods.

15 And thou *shalt have* great sickness [f] by disease of thy bowels, until [g] thy bowels fall out, by reason of [h] the sickness day by day.

B. C. 884. 16 ¶ Moreover [i] the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the [k] Philistines, and of the Arabians, that *were* near the Ethiopians:

17 And they came up into Judah, and brake into it, and † carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, and [l] his sons also, and his wives; so that there was never a son left him, save [m] Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons.

18 And after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with [n] an incurable disease.

19 And it came to pass, that in process of time, after the end of two years, his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness: so he died of sore diseases. And his

o Josh. 21:13. 2 K. 19:8.
p 13:10. 15:2. Deut. 32:21. 1 K. 11: 31,33. Jer. 2:13.
q Deut. 12:2—4. 1 K. 11:7. Ps. 78: 58. Ez. 20:28.
r 1 K. 14:9,16. 2 K. 21:11. Hab. 2:15. Rev. 2:20.
s 13. Lev. 17:7. 20:5. 2 K. 9:22. Ps. 106:39. Ez. 16:15,&c. Rev. 17:1—5.
t 33:9. Dan. 3:5,6,15. Rev. 13:15—17. 17:5,6.
u Jer. 36:2,23,28—32. Ez. 2:9,10. Dan. 5:5,25—29.
x 2 K. 2:11.
y 17:3,4. 1 K. 22:43.
z 14:2—5. 1 K. 15:11.
a 1 K. 16:25,30—33.
b 11. Ex. 34:15. Deut. 31:16. 2 K. 9:22.
c 4. Gen. 4:10—12. 42:21,22. Judg. 9: 56,57. 1 K. 2:31—33. Is. 26:21. Hab. 2:12. 1 John 3:12.
* Heb. *stroke.* Lev. 26:21.
d Hos. 5:11. Mic. 6:16.
e Ex. 20:5.
f 18,19. Num. 5:27. Deut. 28:61. Acts 1:23.
g Ps. 109:18. Acts 1:18.
h 18. Deut. 28:27,35,59,67.
i 33:11. 1 Sam. 26:19. 2 Sam. 24:1. 1 K. 11:11,23. Ezra 1:1,5. Is. 45:5—7. Am. 3:6.
k 17:11.
† Heb. *carried captive.* Job 5:3,4.
l 22:1. 24:7.
m 22:1. *Ahaziah.* 6. *Azariah.*
n See on 15.

Verse 12.

This writing, coming in so extraordinary a manner, would have a peculiarly awful energy.—Some have not improbably conjectured, that *Elisha*, and not *Elijah*, is intended.—The opinion, found in Josephus, and elsewhere, that this letter was sent by Elijah from heaven, only shows, that the papists have not the honor of being the first inventers of such legendary tales. (*Acts* 19:35.) SCOTT.

Verse 13.

Better.] Jehoram's brethren seem to have been pious persons, and hated for the same cause as Abel was hated by Cain. 'This seems to signify that they were pious persons, who abhorred idolatry: and therefore his sin was the more heinous, in cutting them off, proceeding from enmity to God, as well as to them.' *Patrick.* (*Gen.* 4:8—9. 1 *John* 3:11, 12.) I.

Verse 14.

Many of the people had concurred in Jehoram's idolatry; and some of them must have been instruments in his base, unnatural murders They were therefore joined in his punishment. SCOTT.

Verses 16, 17.

The Philistines 'invaded him on the W. side of his kingdom, as the Arabians did on the E. *Patrick.* (17:11.) The spirit of these invaders was especially stirred up against Jehoram, and they do not seem to have done any great mischief to the country, or to Jerusalem. Having taken captive all his sons, except Jehoahaz, or *Ahaziah*, (names of similar meaning,) they put them to death. (*Note*, 22:1.)—Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, was left by the invaders; but she proved a still further curse to the family of Jehoram. Probably she concealed herself and her youngest son. ID.

people [o] made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers.

20 [p] Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years, and departed * without being desired. Howbeit they buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings.

CHAP. XXII.

Ahaziah succeeds Jehoram, reigns wickedly, joins Jehoram king of Israel, and is slain by Jehu, 1—9. Athaliah murders the seed royal, and usurps the throne, 10. Joash is preserved by Jehoshabeath, 11, 12.

AND [a] the inhabitants of Jerusalem made [b] Ahaziah his youngest son king in his stead: for the band of men that came with the Arabians to the camp had [c] slain all the eldest. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah reigned.

2 [d] Forty and two years old *was* Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Athaliah the daughter of Omri.

3 He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for [f] his mother was [g] his counsellor to do wickedly.

4 Wherefore he did evil in the sight of the LORD, like the house of Ahab: for [h] they were his counsellors, after the death of his father, to his destruction.

5 He [i] walked also after their counsel, and [k] went with Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel, to war against Hazael king of Syria at [l] Ramoth-gilead: and the Syrians smote Joram.

6 And he returned to be healed in Jezreel, because of the wounds † which were given him at Ramah, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria. And [m] Azariah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down [n] to see Jehoram the son of Ahab at Jezreel, because he was sick.

7 And the ‡ destruction of Ahaziah [o] was of God by coming to Joram: for when he was come, [p] he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom [q] the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab.

8 And it came to pass, that [r] when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab, and found the

o 16:14. Jer. 34:5.
p 5.
* Heb. *without desire.* 23:21. Prov. 10:7. Jer. 22:18,19,28.
a 23:3. 26:1. 33:25. 36:1.
b 6. *Azariah.* 21:17. *Jehoahaz.* 1 Chr. 3:11.
c 21:16,17.
d 2 K. 8:26.
e 21:6. 1 K. 16:28.
f Gen. 6:4,5. Deut. 13:6—8. Judg. 17:4,5. Neh. 13:23—27. Mal. 2:15. Matt. 14:3—11.
g Gen. 27:12,13. Matt. 10:37.
h 24:17,18. Prov. 1:10. 13:20. 19:27
i Ps. 1:1.
k 2 K. 8:28,29.
l 18:3,31. 19:2. 1 K. 22:3,4. Dan. 5: 22,23.
† Heb. *wherewith they wounded him.*
m 1,7. *Ahaziah.* 21:17. *Jehoahaz.*
n 2 K. 8:29. 10:13,14.
‡ Heb. *treading down.* Mal. 4:3.
o 10:15. Judg. 14:4. 1 K. 12:15. 22: 20. Ps. 9:16. Is. 46:10.
p 2 K. 9:21.
q 1 K. 19:16. 2 K. 9:1—7.
r 2 K. 10:11—14.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The effects of sin may be very dreadful and durable, even when it does not prove finally destructive to him who committed it.—No means can ensure divine grace to our children; but intimate connections with atrocious sinners render their ungodliness almost certain.—We are reminded to bless God for equitable rulers, a mild administration, and a limited and well arranged constitution of government; and to pray for a continuance of these blessings; for, notwithstanding the most prudent regulations, we may be suddenly and irreparably bereaved of them, unless God mercifully protect us.—Ambition, envy, and jealousy destroy natural affection, and convert men into savage monsters, when they have obtained power, and are afraid of losing it, and when 'there is no fear of God before their eyes.' In the mystery of Providence, such persons prosper for a time, and murder much wiser and better men than themselves: but the Lord has righteous purposes in permitting these events; part of which may now be discerned, and all the rest will be discovered by the light of the eternal world.—The vilest characters are, in some way, connected in the great chain of causes and effects: and are reserved to be undesignedly instrumental in carrying on the purposes of God, and in fulfilling his promises to his church and servants: or they are spared a while, for the sake of their relation to those, whom 'He delighteth to honor.' But his plan will not long require them; their measure of iniquities will speedily be full, and then all their prosperity will end in ruin and despair.—The Lord, by one mean or other, awfully reminds offenders of their guilt, and warns them of their danger: and those, who despise these admonitions, will experience the truth of them when it is too late; for, if neither judgments nor respites bring men to repentance, destruction cannot be far distant.—The dreadful torments and deaths of some murderers, persecutors, and other haughty criminals, who defy human justice, proclaim, that 'verily there is a God, that judgeth the world;' and show what all such enemies of God and man may expect, in the day of wrath and righteous vengeance. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII. Ver. 1. The Arabian [horde] seems to have taken Jehoram's family captive, in the prospect of a ransom: but some band of men in their camp slew them; and thus defeated their purpose, but accomplished that of God. (*Note*, 21:16, 17.) SCOTT.

Verses 2—4.

Ahaziah was born when his father was 18 years of age, yet he had several elder brethren: so that Jehoram must have been married to Athaliah when he was very young; and this circumstance rendered Jehoshaphat's conduct in this alliance still more blamable. (18:1.) ID.

Verse 5.

This tendency in human nature, not only to copy bad examples, but even to select the bad part of good characters for imitation, is an awful and conclusive proof of deep depravity. SCOTT.

Verse 6.

(2 *K.* 8:28, 29.) The name given the king of Judah in this v. though in the translation the difference is not great, yet it is greater in the original, and seems to have been a distinct name by which he was known. (*Ahaziah, Azariah.*)—It signifies *the help of the LORD.* ID.

Verses 7—9.

Ahaziah lay concealed in the kingdom of Samaria, though not in the city so called. When he had seen Jehoram slain, he fled and endeavored to conceal himself in some part of that country: but Jehu ordered him to be pursued, and at length he was taken at Megiddo, and brought to Jehu, who caused him to be put to death. ID.

princes of Judah, and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, that ministered to Ahaziah, he slew them.

9 And [s] he sought Ahaziah; and they caught him, (for he was hid [t] in Samaria,) and brought him to Jehu: and when they had slain him, they buried him: [u] Because, said they, he *is* [x] the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart. So [y] the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom.

10 ¶ But when [z] Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah.

11 But [a] Jehoshabeath the daughter of the king took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons that were slain, and put him and his nurse in a [b] bedchamber. So Jehoshabeath the daughter of king Jehoram, the wife of [c] Jehoiada the priest, (for she was the sister of Ahaziah,) hid him from Athaliah, so that [d] she slew him not.

12 And he was with them [e] hid in the house of God six years: and [f] Athaliah reigned over the land.

CHAP. XXIII.

Jehoiada takes proper measures, and makes Joash king, 1—11. Athaliah is slain, 12—15. Jehoiada subverts idolatry; restores the worship of God, and places Joash on the throne, to the great joy of the people, 16—21.

AND in the [a] seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took the captains of hundreds, Azariah the son of Jehoram, and Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, and Azariah the son of Obed, and Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri, into [b] covenant with him.

2 And they [c] went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and [d] the chief of the fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem.

3 And all the congregation [e] made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said unto them, Behold, the king's son shall reign, [f] as the LORD hath said of the sons of David.

4 This *is* the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you [g] entering on the sabbath, of the priests and of the Levites, *shall be* [h] porters of the * doors;

5 And a third part *shall be* at [i] the king's house; and a third part at [k] the gate of the foundation: and all the people *shall be* in the courts of the house of the LORD.

6 But let none come into the house of the LORD save the priests, and [l] they that minister of the Levites; they shall go in, for they *are* holy: but all the people shall keep the watch of the LORD.

7 And [m] the Levites shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand; and [n] whosoever *else* cometh into the house, he shall be put to death: but be ye with the king when he cometh in, and when he goeth out.

8 So [o] the Levites and all Judah did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest had commanded, and took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that were to go *out* on the sabbath: for Jehoiada the priest dismissed not [p] the courses.

9 Moreover Jehoiada the priest delivered to the captains of hundreds, [q] spears, and bucklers, and shields that *had been* king David's, which *were* in the house of God.

10 And he set all the people, every man having his weapon in his hand from the right † side of the temple to the left side of the temple, [r] along by the altar and the temple, by the king round about.

s 2 K. 9:27.
t 1 K. 13:32.
u 2 K. 9:28,34.
x 17:3,4. 21:20.
y 1,8. 21:4,17.
z 2—4. 2 K. 11:1,&c.
a 2 K. 11:2. *Jehosheba.*
b Ex. 40:45,46.
c 23:1.
d 21:7. 2 Sam. 7:13. 1 K. 15:4. Ps. 33:10. 76.10. Prov. 21:30. Is. 65:8. Acts 4:28.
e Ps. 27:5.
f Ps. 12:8. 73:14,18,19. Jer. 12:1. Hab. 1:12.
a 2 K. 11:4,&c.
b 15:12. 1 Sam. 18:3. Neh. 9:38.
c Ps. 112:5. Matt. 10:16. Eph. 5:15.
d 11:13—17. 1 Chr. 15:12. 24:6.
e 16. 2 Sam. 5:3. 2 K. 11:17. 1 Chr. 11:3.
f 6:16. 7:18. 21:7. 2 Sam. 7:16. 1 K. 2:4. 9:5. Ps. 89:29,36.
g] Chr. 9:26. 23:3—6. 24:3—6. Luke 1:8,9.
h 1 Chr. 26:13—16.
* Heb. *thresholds.*
i 2 K. 11:5,6. Ez. 44:2,3. 46:2,3.
k Acts 3:2.
l 2 K. 11:6,7. 1 Chr. 23:28—32.
m 2 K. 11:8,9.
n Ex. 19:12,13. 21:14.
o 2 K. 11:9.
p 1 Chr. 24 : 25 : 26 :
q 1 Sam. 21:9. 2 Sam. 8:7.
† Heb. *shoulder of the house.* 2 K. 11:11.
r 6:12. Ex. 40:6. Matt. 23:35.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

No tongue can express, no imagination can conceive, the guilt and condemnation of those parents, who *counsel* their own children to do wickedly, and who thus become their murderers in the most awful sense. Yet, this fatal calamity, to families and to society, is frequently the consequence of contracting marriages with those who are irreligious and wicked. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII. V. 1, 2. These 'chief fathers of Israel' seem to have been the descendants of those priests and Levites from the ten tribes, and pious persons, who left their cities and joined themselves to Judah, in the days of Jeroboam. (*Note*, 11:13—17.) The word 'Israel,' however, is sometimes used as a general term for the nation, and so applied to the people of Judah. SCOTT.

Verse 6.

'The house of the LORD,' must mean the *inner court*; for no Levites, who were not also priests, entered the sanctuary. This shows, that on some occasions, the people were admitted into the inner courts; else the injunction had been needless. ID.

11 Then [s] they brought out the king's son, and [t] put upon him the crown, and *gave him* [u] the testimony, and made him king. And Jehoiada and his sons [x] anointed him, and said, * God save the king.

12 ¶ Now [y] when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, [z] she came to the people into the house of the LORD:

13 And she looked, and, behold, [a] the king stood at his pillar at the entering in, [b] and the princes and the trumpets by the king: and [c] all the people of the land rejoiced, and [d] sounded with trumpets; also [e] the singers with instruments of music, and such as taught to sing praise. Then Athaliah rent her clothes, and said, † Treason, Treason.

14 Then Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds that were set over the host, and said unto them, Have her forth of the ranges: and [f] whoso followeth her, let him be slain with the sword. For the priest said, [g] Slay her not in the house of the LORD.

15 So they laid hands on her: and when she was come to the entering [h] of the horse-gate, by the king's house, they slew her there.

16 And Jehoiada [k] made a covenant between him, and between all the people, and between the king, [l] that they should be the LORD's people.

17 Then all the people went to [m] the house of Baal, and brake it down, and [n] brake his altars and his images in pieces, and [o] slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars.

18 Also Jehoiada appointed the officers of the house of the LORD, by the hand of the priests the Levites, [p] whom David had distributed in the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt-offerings of the LORD, [q] as *it is* written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, *as it was ordained* ‡ by David.

19 And he set the [r] porters at the gates of the house of the LORD, that none *which was* unclean in any thing should enter in.

20 And he took [s] the captains of hundreds, and the nobles, and the governors of the people, and all the people of the land, and brought down the king from the house of the LORD: and they came through the high gate into the king's house, and set the king upon the throne of the kingdom.

21 And [t] all the people of the land rejoiced: and the city was quiet, after that they had slain Athaliah with the sword.

CHAP. XXIV.

Joash reigns well during Jehoiada's life, and zealously repairs the temple, 1—14. Jehoiada dies, and is honorably buried, 15, 16. Joash, seduced by his princes, turns aside to idolatry, and causes Zechariah, Jehoiada's son, to be stoned, for reproving him in the name of God, 17—21. Zechariah's dying prediction, 22. Joash is plundered by the Syrians, left sick, and then slain by his own servants, 23—26. Amaziah succeeds him, 27.

[a] JOASH *was* seven years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Zibiah of Beer-sheba.

2 And [b] Joash did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, [c] all the days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him.

3 And Jehoiada took for him two wives; and he begat sons and daughters.

4 ¶ And it came to pass after this, that Joash was minded to repair the house of the LORD.

5 And he gathered together the priests and the Levites, and said to them, Go out unto the cities of Judah, and gather of all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that ye hasten the matter. Howbeit the Levites hastened it not.

6 And the king called for Jehoiada the chief, and said unto him, Why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah and out of Jerusalem the collection, according to the commandment of Moses the servant of the LORD, and of the congregation of Israel, for the tabernacle of witness?

7 For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD did they bestow upon Baalim.

8 And at the king's commandment they made a chest, and set it without at the gate of the house of the LORD.

9 And they made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem, to bring in to the LORD the collection that Moses the servant of God laid upon Israel in the wilderness.

10 And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end.

11 Now it came to pass, that at what time the chest was brought unto the king's office by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw that there was much money, the king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it, and carried it to his place again. Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance.

12 And the king and Jehoiada gave it to such as did the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and hired masons and carpenters to repair the house of the LORD, and also such as wrought iron and brass to mend the house of the LORD.

13 So the workmen wrought, and the work was perfected by them, and they set the house of God in his state, and strengthened it.

14 And when they had finished it, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, whereof were made vessels for the house of the LORD, even vessels to minister, and to offer withal, and spoons, and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada.

15 But Jehoiada waxed old, and was full of days when he died; a hundred and thirty years old was he when he died.

16 And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house.

17 Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them.

18 And they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass.

19 Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear.

20 And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you.

21 And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the LORD.

22 Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son. And when he died, he said, The LORD look upon it, and require it.

23 ¶ And it came to pass at the end of the year, that the host of Syria came up against him: and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people, and sent all the spoil of them unto the king of Damascus.

24 For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and the LORD delivered a very great host into their hand, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. So they executed judgment against Joash.

25 And when they were departed from him, (for they left him in great diseases,) his own servants conspired against him for the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest, and slew him on his bed, and he died: and they buried him in the city of David, but they buried him not in the sepulchres of the kings.

26 And these are they that conspired against him, Zabad the son of Shimeath an Ammonitess, and Jehozabad the son of Shimrith a Moabitess.

27 Now concerning his sons, and the greatness of the burdens laid upon him, and the repairing of the house of God, behold, they are written in the story of the book of the kings. And Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.

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[s] 22:11. 2 K. 11:12.
[t] 2 Sam. 1:10. Ps. 21:3. 89:39. 132:18. Heb. 2:9. Jam. 1:12. 2:5. Rev. 4:4,10. 5:10. 19:12.
[u] Ex. 25:16. 31:18. Deut. 17:18. Ps. 2:10—12. 78.5. Is. 8:16,20. 49:23.
[x] 1 Sam. 10:1. 2 Sam. 5:3. 1 K. 1:39. Ps. 89:20. Acts 4:26,27.
* Heb. *Let the king live.* 1 Sam. 10:24. 2 Sam. 16:16. 1 K. 1:34. Matt. 21:9.
[y] 2 K. 11:13—16.
[z] 2 K. 9:32—37.
[a] 34:31. 2 K. 23:3.
[b] Num. 10:1—10. 1 Chr. 15:24.
[c] 1 K. 1:39,40. 1 Chr. 12:40. Prov. 11:10. 29:2.
[d] Judg. 7:8,18—22. 2 K. 9:13.
[e] 1 Chr. 15:16—22,27. 25:1—8.
† Heb. *Conspiracy.* 1 K. 18:17,18. 2 K. 9:23. Rom. 2:1,2.
[f] 2 K. 10:25. 11:8,15.
[g] Ez. 9:7.
[h] Neh. 3:28.
[i] 22:10. Judg. 1:7. Matt. 7:2. Jam. 2:13. Rev. 16:5—7.
[k] 15:12,14. 29:10. 34:31,32. Deut. 5:2,3. 29:1,10—15. 2 K. 11:17. Ezra 10:3. Neh. 5:12,13. 9:38. 10:29,&c.
[l] Deut. 26:17—19. Josh. 24:21—25. Is. 44:5.
[m] 34:4,7. 2 K. 10:25—28. 11:18. 18:4.
[n] Deut. 12:3. Is. 2:18. Zech. 13:2,3.
[o] Deut. 13:5,9. 1 K. 18:40. 2 K. 11:18,19.
[p] 1 Chr. 23 : 24 :
[q] Num. 28:2,&c.
‡ Heb. *by the hands of David.* 29:25. 1 Chr. 25 :
[r] 1 Chr. 9:23,24. 26 :
[s] 2 K. 11:9,10,19.
[t] 2 K. 11:20. Ps. 58:10. Prov. 11:10. Rev. 18:20. 19:2—4.
[a] 2 K. 11:21. 12:1. *Jehoash.* 1 Chr. 3:11.
[b] 25:2. 26:4,5. 2 K. 12:2. Ps. 78:36, 37, 106:12,13. Mark 4:16,17.
[c] 17—22.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord commonly effects great and important changes by those persons whom He has furnished with wisdom, courage, piety, and integrity; and who intend to do his will and promote his glory, and not to advance their own interests.—Civil transactions should be managed with a regard to the Word and worship of God; and while men's hearts overflow with good wishes for their princes, commendations of them, or joy in their advancement; they should remember to conduct and terminate all in thanksgivings and praises unto God. This is peculiarly becoming, when persecuting tyrants and usurpers are removed, and equitable rulers come in their places: the work is the Lord's, whatever instruments He is pleased to employ. Such national mercies should be acknowledged by public reformations; and by a concurrence of all ranks, in solemnly yielding themselves up to be the Lord's people, and in establishing his worship and ordinances according to his Word. Where this is neglected, the joy and singing, which takes place upon great deliverances, or the accession of kings to the throne, will commonly be short-lived, and will terminate in complaints, and discords, and calamities. SCOTT.

Verses 12—21.

2 *K.* 11:13—20.—*His pillar at the entering in,* &c. (13) The king's pillar was at the entrance of the inner court; but the two pillars, Boaz and Jachin, stood at the porch of the temple. One of these therefore could not, as some have supposed, be the king's pillar. (*M. R.* a.—1 *K.* 7:21.)—*Singers,* &c. (13) (*M. R.*) It is observable, that this particular is noted in Chr. and not in K.; in which the appointment of the sacred Psalmody is not recorded. (Comp. 1 *K.* 8:1—11. with 2 *Chr.* 5:11—14.—1 *K.* 8:62—66. with 2 *Chr.* 7:1—10.)—*Jehoiada,* &c. (16) Jehoiada, as priest, and probably high priest, represented God in this solemn transaction.—*The officers.* (18) The arrangements made by David, as to the worship and attendance at the temple, had been wholly disregarded; but were restored by Jehoiada. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

the days of Jehoiada the priest.

3 And Jehoiada [d] took for him [e] two wives; and he begat sons and daughters.

4 ¶ And it came to B. C. 865. pass after this, *that* Joash was minded to [*] repair the house of the LORD.

5 And he gathered together the priests and the Levites, and said to them, Go out unto the cities of Judah, and [f] gather of all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year B. C. 856. to year; and see that ye hasten the matter. [g] Howbeit the Levites hastened *it* not.

6 And the king called for Jehoiada the chief, and said unto him, [h] Why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah, and out of Jerusalem, [i] the collection, *according to the commandment* of Moses the servant of the LORD, and of the congregation of Israel, for the [k] tabernacle of witness?

7 For the [l] sons of Athaliah, [m] that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD [n] did they bestow upon Baalim.

8 And [o] at the king's commandment they made a chest, and set it without at the gate of the house of the LORD.

9 And they made a [†] proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem, to bring in to the LORD the [p] collection *that* Moses the servant of God *laid* upon Israel in the wilderness.

10 And all the princes and all the people [q] rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end.

11 Now it came to pass, that [r] at what time the chest was brought unto the king's office by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw that *there was* much money, the king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it, and carried it to his place again. Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance.

12 And the king and Jehoiada [s] gave it to such as did the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and hired [t] masons and carpenters to repair the house of the LORD, and also such as wrought iron and brass to mend the house of the LORD.

13 So the workmen wrought, and [‡] the work was perfected by them, and they set the house of God [u] in his state, and strengthened it.

14 And when they had finished *it*, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, whereof were made [x] vessels for the house of the LORD, *even* [y] vessels to minister, and § to offer *withal*, and spoons, and vessels of gold and silver. And they [z] offered burnt-offerings in the house of the LORD continually, [a] all the days of Jehoiada.

B. C. 845. 15 ¶ But Jehoiada waxed old, and was [b] full of days when he died; [c] an hundred and thirty years old *was he* when he died.

16 And they buried him [d] in the city of David among the kings, [e] because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house.

[*Practical Observations.*]

This account of Joash's good beginnings we had, as it stands here, 2 K. 12: 1, &c. though the latter part of this ch. concerning his apostasy, we had little of there. We shall here only observe,

1. It is a happy thing for young people, as Joash here, when setting out in the world, to be under the direction of those that are wise and good, and faithful to them; let them reckon it a blessing, not a burden and check; a mark of wisdom and discretion, not of weakness and subjection, to hearken to such. He that will not be counselled, cannot be helped. It is especially prudent for young people to take advice in their marriages, as Joash, who left it to his guardian to choose him his wives, because Jezebel and Athaliah had been such plagues, *v.* 3. That is a turn of life, which often proves either the making or marring of young people, and therefore should be attended to with great care.

2. Men may go far in the external performances of religion, and keep long to them, merely by the power of education, and influence of friends, who yet have no hearty affection nor inward relish for divine things. In the shows of devotion, those who have only the form of godliness, may outstrip those who have the power of it. Joash is more solicitous and more zealous about the repair of the temple than Jehoiada himself, whom he reproves for remissness herein, *v.* 6 It is easier to *build* temples than to *be* temples to God.

3. The repairing of churches is a good work, which all in their places should promote, for the decency and conveniency of religious assemblies. The learned tell us, that in the Christian church, anciently, part of the tithes were applied that way.

4. Many a good work would be done that now lies undone, if there were but a few active men to stir in it and put it forward. When Joash found that money did not come in as he expected one way, he tried another way; many have honesty enough to follow, that have not zeal enough to lead, in that which is good. Perhaps the very novelty of throwing money into a chest, through a hole in the lid, made it a successful expedient; a great deal was thrown in, and with a great deal of cheerfulness, *v.* 10. An invention to please people's humor may sometimes bring them to their duty. Wisdom herein is profitable to direct.

5. Faithfulness is the greatest praise, and will be the greatest comfort, of those who are intrusted with public treasure, or employed in public business, *v.* 12, 13.

V. 15—27. We have here a sad account of the degeneracy and apostasy of Joash. God had done great things for him; and he something for God; but now he proved ungrateful, and false. Here we find,

I. The occasions of his apostasy; when he did that which was right, it was *not with a perfect heart;* he never was sincere, never acted from principle; but in complaisance to Jehoiada, who had helped him to the crown, and because he had been protected in the temple, and rose on the ruins of idolatry. Therefore when the wind turned, he turned with it.

[a] Gen. 21:21. 24:4.
[b] Gen. 4:19. Matt. 19:4—8.
[*] Heb. *renew.* 5—7.
[f] 29:3. 34:8,9. 2 K. 12:4,5.
[g] 2 K. 12:6,7.
[h] 2 Sam. 21:3.
[i] Ex. 30:12—16.
[k] Num. 1:50. 17:7,8. 18:2. Acts 7:44.
[l] 21:17.
[m] 28:22—24. Esth. 7:6. Prov. 10:7. 2 Thes. 2:8. Rev. 2:20.
[n] Deut. 32:15—17. Ez. 16:17,19—21. Dan. 5:2—4,23. Hos. 2:8,9. o 2 K. 12:8,9. Mark 12:41.
[†] Heb. *voice.*
[p] See on 6. Matt. 17:24—27.
[q] 1 Chr. 29:9. Is. 64:5. Acts 2:45—47. 2 Cor. 8:2.
[r] 2 K. 12:10—12.
[s] 34:9—11.
[t] 1 K. 5:15.
[‡] Heb. *the healing went up upon the work by their hands.* Neh. 4:7.
[u] 1 Chr. 22:5. Hag. 2:3. Mark 13:1,2.
[x] 2 K. 12:13,14.
[y] 1 K. 7:50.
[§] Or, *pestles.* Prov. 27:22.
[z] Ex. 29:38—42. Num. 28:2,&c.
[a] 2.
[b] Gen. 15:15. 25:8. 1 Chr. 23:1. Job 5:26. Ps. 91:16.
[c] Gen. 47:9. Ps. 90:10.
[d] 1 Sam. 2:30. 1 K. 2:10. Acts 2:29.
[e] 28: 31:20,21. Neh. 13:14. Heb. 6:10.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—16. The best education, the most scriptural instructions, and the brightest examples, are insufficient of themselves to convert the soul: they are, however, the general means by which the Lord works; and even, when not eventually successful to change the sinner's heart, they commonly produce effects salutary to the community.—If we live to the glory of God, and endeavor to do good to men, especially in the great concerns of salvation; we may be satisfied that we have lived long enough, though we should die young. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV. V. 3. The Jewish expositors are of opinion, that Jehoiada took these two wives for himself, not for Joash: and they consider this as inconsistent with the character of the high priest. But it is most obvious to understand the words, *for him*, of Joash: and Jehoiada's advanced age, at this time, renders it highly improbable that he should take them for himself; for he must, on any computation, have been above 100 years old, when Joash began to reign. Nor are any sons of Jehoiada mentioned, afterwards, except such as were grown up.—It is not indeed expressly said that Jehoiada was high priest, but the way in which he is distinguished from the other priests, and the authority which he exercised, seem to put it beyond all reasonable doubt, that he was. SCOTT.

The sons of Athaliah, &c. (7) Jehoram's sons, Ahaziah excepted, whether by Athaliah, or his other wives, were slain before his death. (22:1.) But either his sons by Athaliah, during his life-time, or her sons by some other man, as many suppose, had thus spoiled the temple to consecrate its treasures to Baalim. SCOTT.

And they offered, &c. (14) It appears from this, that the daily offering, morning and evening, had been intermitted previously; and that it was neglected after the death of Jehoiada. (*Notes*, 23:18, 19. *Ex.* 29:38—41. *Dan.* 8:9—12. 11:31. 12:11—13.) ID.

(13.) *The work was perfected.*] 'Heb. *the healing went up upon the work.* A metaphor, whereby the ruins of the temple are resembled to the wounds of a body, [John 2.19.] and the repairs of those ruins to the healing of wounds.' ASSEMB. ANN

17 ¶ Now [f] after the death of Jehoiada, came [g] the princes of Judah, [B. C. 840.] and made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them.

18 And [h] they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and [i] wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass.

19 Yet [k] he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not [l] give ear.

20 And [m] the Spirit of God * came upon Zechariah [n] the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, [o] Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? [p] because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you.

21 And they [q] conspired against him, and [r] stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king, in the court of the house of the LORD.

22 Thus Joash the king [s] remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son. And when he died, he said, [t] The LORD look upon *it*, and require *it*.

23 ¶ And it came to pass, † at the end of the year, *that* [u] the host of Syria came up against him: and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed [x] all the princes of the people from among the people, and sent all the spoil of them unto the king of ‡ Damascus.

24 For the army of the Syrians [y] came with a small company of men, and the LORD [z] delivered a very great host into their hand, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. [a] So they executed judgment against Joash.

25 And when they were departed from him, (for they left him in [b] great diseases,) [c] his own servants conspired against him, [d] for the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest, and slew him on his bed, and he died: and they buried him in the city of David, but they buried him [e] not in the sepulchres of the kings.

26 And these *are* they that conspired against him; § Zabad the son of Shimeath, an Ammonitess, and Jehozabad the son of Shimrith a Moabitess.

I. His good counsellor died and left him. It was a mercy he lived so long, 130 years, *v.* 15. By this it appears he was born in Solomon's time, and had lived six entire reigns before this. It was an encouragement to him to go on in that good way Jehoiada had trained him up in, to see what honor was done Jehoiada at his death: they buried him among the kings, with this encomium, perhaps it was part of the inscription on his gravestone, that *he had done good in Israel*. Note, It is the greatest honor to do good in our generations; which those who do, *shall have praise of the same*. He had done good toward God; that is, toward his house, in reviving the temple-service, *ch.* 23: 8. Note, Those do the greatest good to their country, that lay out themselves in their places to promote religion. Jehoiada finished his course with honor; but the little religion Joash had was all buried in his grave. See how much one head may sustain, and what a great judgment to any prince or people, the death of godly, zealous, useful men is. See how necessary it is that, as our Savior speaks, we *have salt in ourselves*, that we act in religion from an inward principle, which will carry us on through all changes. Then the loss of a parent, a minister, a friend, will not be the losing of our religion.

2. Bad counsellors insinuated themselves into his affections, and wheedled him, *made obeisance*, and, instead of condoling, congratulated him on the death of his old tutor, as his release from the discipline he had been so long under, unworthy a man, a king: and (would you think it?) the princes of *Judah* were the men so industrious to debauch him, *v.* 17. His father and grandfather were corrupted by the house of *Ahab*, from whom no better could be expected; but they that incline to the *counsels of the ungodly*, will never want ungodly counsellors. They *made obeisance to the king*, flattered him into an opinion of his absolute power, promised to stand by him in making his royal will and pleasure pass for a law, any divine precept or institution to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding; and he hearkened to them. Princes, and inferior people, have been many a time thus flattered to their ruin by those who have promised them liberty and dignity, but who have really brought them into the greatest servitude and disgrace.

II. The apostasy, *v.* 18. The princes, it is likely, requested the king, which they durst not while Jehoiada lived, but now hope it will give no offence, to set up the groves and idols again, which were thrown down in the beginning of his reign; for they hate to be always confined to the dull, old-fashioned service of the temple: and he not only gave them leave to do it themselves, but joined them. King and princes, awhile ago, were repairing the temple, and pulling down groves and idols! So inconsistent a thing is man, and so little confidence to be put in him!

III. The aggravations of it, and the additional guilt. God *sent prophets to them*, *v* 19. to reprove them, and tell them what would be in the end, and so *bring them again to the Lord*. It is the work of ministers to bring people, not to themselves, but to God. In the most degenerate times, God *left not Himself without a witness;* for He would rather sinners should *turn and live*, than *go on and die;* and they that perish, shall be left inexcusable. But they slighted all the prophets, and slew one of the most eminent; *Zechariah, son of Jehoiada*, and perhaps others. Of whom observe,

1. His message to them in the name of God, *v.* 20. The people were assembled in the court of the temple, (for they had not quite left it,) on occasion, probably of some solemn feast, when this Zechariah, being filled with the spirit of prophecy, and known (it is likely) to be a prophet, stood up in some of the desks in the court of the priests, and very plainly, but without any provoking language, or personality, told the people of their sin, and its consequences: referring them to their bibles, Deut. 29: 25. 31: 16, 17. This is the work of ministers, by the Word of God, as a lamp, and a light, to discover the sin of men, and expound the providences of God.

2. Their barbarous treatment of him for this kindness and faithfulness, *v.* 21. They stoned him to death immediately; not, under color of law, accusing him as a blasphemer, traitor, or false prophet, but in a popular tumult, *in the court of the house of the Lord*—as horrid a piece of wickedness as perhaps any in all the history of the kings. The *person*, the *place*, the *message*, all sacred; the reproof just, the warning fair, and the delivery very gentle and tender; yet nothing less than the blood of the prophet can satisfy their indignation at the prophecy! The Jews say, There were seven transgressions in this; for they killed a priest, a prophet, a judge, they shed innocent blood, polluted the court of the temple, the sabbath, and the day of expiation; for, on that day, their tradition says, this happened.

3. The aggravation of this sin; this Zechariah was the son of Jehoiada, who had done so much good in Israel, and particularly had been as a father to Joash, *v.* 22. The affront to God, and the contempt put on religion, are not so particularly noticed, as the ingratitude to the memory of Jehoiada. Call a man ungrateful, and you can call him no worse.

4. The dying martyr's prophetical imprecation of vengeance on his murderers; *The Lord look upon it, and require it!* This came not from a spirit of revenge, but of prophecy; *He will require it*. This would be the continued cry of the blood they shed, as Abel's blood cried against Cain. This precious blood was reckoned for quickly in the judgments that came on this apostate prince; it came into the account also afterward in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans: their misusing the prophets was what brought on them ruin without remedy, *ch.* 36: 16. nay, our Savior makes the persecutors of Him and his Gospel answerable for the blood of this Zechariah; so loud, so long, does the blood of the martyrs cry; see Matt. 23: 35. Rev. 6: 10.

Lastly, The judgments of God which came on Joash for this aggravated wickedness.

1. A small army of Syrians made themselves masters of Jerusalem, destroyed the princes, plun-

f Deut. 31:27. Acts 20:29,30. 2 Pet. 1:15.
g 10:8—10. 22:3,4. Prov. 7:21—23. 20:19. 26:28. 29:5. Dan. 11:32.
h 4. 21:13. 33:3—7. 1 K. 11:4,5. 14: 9,23.
i 19:2. 28:13. 29:8. Josh. 22:20. Judg. 5:8. 2 Sam. 24:1. Hos. 5:10,11.
k 36:15,16. 2 K. 17:13—15. Neh. 9: 26. Jer. 7:25,26. 25:4,5. 44:4,5. Luke 11:47—51. 16:31. 20:9—15.
l Is. 28:23. 42:23. 51:4. 55:3. Matt. 13:9,15,16.
m 15:1. 20:14.
* Heb. *clothed*. Judg. 6:34. 1 Chr. 12:18. *margins*.
n 23:11.
o Num. 14:41. 1 Sam. 13:13,14. 2 Sam. 12:9,10. Zech. 7:11—14.
p 15:2. Deut. 28:25,6. 1 Chr. 28:9. Jer. 2:19. 4:18. 5:19,25.
q Jer. 11:19. 18:18. 38:4—6.
r Matt. 21:35. 23:34 37. Acts 7:58,59.
s Ps. 109:4. Luke 17:15—18. John 10:32.
t Gen. 9:5. Jer. 11:20. 26:14,15. 2 Tim. 4:14. Rev. 6:9—11. 18:20. 19: 2,3.
† Heb. *in the revolution*. 1 K. 20:22,26.
u Deut. 32:35. 2 K. 12:17,18.
x 17,18. Is. 2:10,11. 58:10,11. 32:6,7.
‡ Heb. *Darmasek*.
y Lev. 26:8. Deut. 32:30. Is. 30:17 Jer. 37:10.
z 16:8,9. 20:11,12. Lev. 26:25. Deut. 28:25.
a 22:8. Is. 10:5,6. 13:5. Hab. 1:12.
b 21:16,18,19. 22:6.
c 2 K. 12:20. 14:19,20.
d 21,22. Ps. 10:14. Rev. 16:6.
e 16. 21:20. 28:27.
§ Or, *Jozachar*. 2 K. 12:21.

Verse 20.

Zechariah's dying words would be best rendered, 'The LORD will look upon it and require it:' as a prophecy, and not a prayer. [*So Houb. Boothr. Poole.*] (*M. R.—Notes, Matt.* 23:29—36.) 'Though Zechariah spoke by the Spirit of God, he only applied the prediction of Moses (*Deut.* 31:16, 17.) to the present time.' *Patrick* SCOTT.

monitess, and Jehozabad the son of * Shimrith, a Moabitess.

27 Now *concerning* his sons, and the greatness of the [f] burdens *laid* upon him, and the [†] repairing of the house of God, behold, they *are* written in the [‡] story of the book of the Kings. And [g] Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.

CHAP. XXV.

Amaziah at first reigns well, and justly punishes his father's murderers, 1—4. He gathers a great army, and hires, for a hundred talents, a hundred thousand Israelites against Edom: but, having paid the money, he dismisses them at the word of a prophet, and they depart in great anger, 5—10. He smites the Edomites, and exercises great cruelty towards the captives, 11, 12. The Israelites, on their return, spoil the cities of Judah, 13. Amaziah serves the gods of Edom, and rejects the admonitions of a prophet, 14—16. He challenges Joash, who in vain warns him: he is vanquished, and Jerusalem spoiled, 17—24. The rest of his reign, 25, 26. He is slain by a conspiracy, 27, 28.

AMAZIAH *was* [a] twenty and five years old *when* he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.

2 And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, [b] but not with a perfect heart.

3 Now it came to pass, when the kingdom was § established to him, that [c] he slew his servants that had killed the king his father.

4 But he slew not their children, but *did* [d] as *it is* written in the law in the book of Moses, where the LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin.

B. C. 827. 5 ¶ Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together, and made them [e] captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, according to the houses of *their* fathers, throughout all Judah and Benjamin: and he numbered them [f] from twenty years old and above, and found them [g] three hundred thousand choice *men*, *able* to go forth to war, that could handle spear and shield.

6 He hired also an hundred thousand mighty men of valor out of Israel, for an hundred talents of silver.

7 But there came [h] a man of God to him, saying, O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee; [i] for the LORD *is* not with Israel, *to wit*, *with* all the children of Ephraim.

8 But if thou wilt go, do *it*, [k] be strong for the battle: God shall make thee fall before the enemy: for [l] God hath power to help, and to cast down.

9 And Amaziah said to the man of God, But what shall we do for the hundred talents, which I have given to the ‖ army of Israel? And the man of God answered, [m] The LORD is able to give thee much more than this.

10 Then [n] Amaziah dered the city, and sent the spoil to Damascus, *v.* 23, 24. Their God not only departed from them, but turned to be their enemy, and fought against them. The Syrians were employed as instruments in God's hand to *execute judgments against Joash*, though they little thought so, Isa. 10: 6, 7. and see Deut. 32: 30.

2. Before they departed, God smote him with great diseases of body, or mind, or both; either like his grandfather, *ch.* 21: 18. or like Saul, an evil spirit from God troubling him. If [God's] vengeance pursue men, the end of one trouble will but be the beginning of another.

3. His own servants conspired against him; when he thought to escape death by sickness, he met it by the sword; they slew him in his bed, for the blood of the sons of Jehoiada; by which it should seem he did not only slay Zechariah, but others of the sons of Jehoiada for his sake. Perhaps they that slew him, *intended* to take vengeance for that blood; this, however, was what God intended, in permitting them to do it. The regicides are here named, *v.* 26. and it is observable that the mothers of them both were foreigners, one an Ammonitess, and the other a Moabitess. The idolatrous kings, it is likely, countenanced those marriages which the law prohibited for the prevention of idolatry; and see how they resulted in their own destruction.

4. His people would not bury him in the sepulchres of the kings, because he had stained his honor by mal-administration, Ps. 69: 28. These judgments are called the *burdens laid on him*, *v.* 27. for the wrath of God is a heavy burden, too heavy for any man to bear. Or it may be meant of the threatenings denounced against him by the prophets, for those are called *burdens;* usually God sets some special marks of his displeasure on apostates, in this life, for warning to all to remember Lot's wife.

CHAP. XXV. Amaziah's reign is recorded in this ch.; none of the worst, and yet far from good. Most of the passages in this ch. we had before more briefly related, 2 K. 14.

V. 1—13. Here is,

I. The general character of Amaziah, *He did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord*, worshipped the true God, kept the temple-service a-going, and countenanced religion in his kingdom; but he did not do it *with a perfect heart*, *v.* 2. that is, he was not a man of serious piety or devotion himself, nor had he any zeal for the exercises of religion. Such is the character of too many in this Laodicean age: they do that which is good, but not with the heart, not with a perfect heart.

II. A necessary piece of justice which he did on the traitors that murdered his father, *v.* 3. Though we should suppose they intended to avenge on their king the death of the prophet, as was intimated, *ch.* 24: 25. yet that would by no means justify their wickedness; for *they* were not the avengers, but presumptuously took God's work out of his hands. Therefore Amaziah did what became him in calling them to an account.

III. His expedition against the Edomites, who, some time ago, had revolted from under the dominion of Judah, to which he attempted to reduce them. Observe,

1. The great preparation he made for this expedition. (1.) He mustered and marshalled his own forces, *v.* 5. In Jehoshaphat's time, 50 or 60 years before, they were four times as many; sin weakens a people, diminishes them, dispirits them, and lessens their number and figure. (2.) He hired auxiliary troops out of Israel, *v.* 6. If he had advised with any of his prophets before he did this, or had but considered how little any of his ancestors got by their alliances with Israel, he would not have had this to undo again. But rashness makes work for repentance.

2. The command God sent him by a prophet to dismiss the forces of Israel, *v.* 7, 8. He would not have him call in assistance, it looked like distrust of God; if he made sure of his presence, his own army was sufficient; but particularly, he must not take in *their* assistance, for they worship the calves. This was a good reason why he should not make use of them, because he could not depend on them to do him any service. It is comfortable to employ those who, we have reason to hope, have an interest in heaven; and dangerous to associate with those from whom the Lord is departed.

3. The objection Amaziah made against this command, and the satisfactory answer the prophet

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* Or, *Shomer.*
f 2 K. 12:18.
† Heb. *founding.* 13.
‡ Or, *commentary.* 9:29. 16:11. 20:34. 25:1. 1 Chr. 3:12.
g 2 K. 14:1—3.
a 14. 24:2. 26:4. 1 Sam. 16:7. Ps. 78:37. Is. 29:13. Hos. 10:2. Acts 8:21.
§ Heb. *confirmed upon him.*
b 24:25,26. Gen. 9:5,6. Ex. 21:14. Num. 35:31—33.
c Deut. 24:16. 2 K. 14:5. Jer. 31:29, 30. Ez. 18:4,20.
d Ex. 18:25. 1 Sam. 8:12. 1 Chr. 13: 1. 27:1.
e Num. 1:3.
f 11:1. 14:8. 17:14—18.
g 2 Sam. 12:1. 1 K. 13:1. 1 Tim. 6: 11. 2 Tim. 3 17.
h 13:12. 19:2. 1 K. 12:28. Is. 28:1—3. Hos. 5:13—15. 9:13.
i 18:14. Ec. 11:9. Is. 8:9,10. Joe 3: 9—14. Matt. 26:45.
k 14:11. Judg. 7 7. 1 Sam. 14:6. Job 5:18. 9:13. Ps. 20:7. 33:16—20
‖ Heb. *land.*
l 1:12. Deut. 8:18. Prov. 10:22. Hag. 2:8. Luke 18:29,30.
m 1 K. 12:24.
n 1 K. 12:24.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 17—27. The authority or influence of parents, ministers, and pious friends, joined with transient, serious impressions, and other incidental circumstances, may produce, and long maintain, a plausible profession of religion: but the lamp will go out when it is especially wanted; unless supplied from the oil in the vessel, the grace of God possessing the heart. (*Notes* and *P. O. Matt.* 25: 1—13.)—Some regard to justice, decency, and gratitude, may be expected from ignorant and profligate characters, and from infidels and heathen idolaters: but the rage of an apostate bursts all obligations and restraints; for he has so done violence to his conscience, that it has lost all its energy; and, except he be restrained by human laws, every thing desperate may be expected from his resentment. Without the Spirit of prophecy, we may confidently foretell, that the Lord will look upon, and require, all the persecutions, slanders, mockeries, and ill usage, which his servants meet with, except their prayers be answered, and He give the persecutors repentance and better minds. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXV. V. 6—10. As 100 talents would not divide above 8 shillings apiece, among 100,000 men; we may suppose it was only an earnest of their pay, or that they expected to be enriched with the plunder of the Edomites.—Perhaps the army which Amaziah had hired, was chiefly of the tribe of Ephraim; or that tribe, being the most considerable in the kingdom of Israel, is put for the whole. [Note, end of 1 Sam.] SCOTT.

separated them, *to wit*, the army that was come to him out of Ephraim, to go * home again: wherefore their anger was greatly kindled against Judah, and they returned home in † great anger.

[*Practical Observations.*]

11 ¶ And Amaziah strengthened himself, and led forth his people, and went to the [o] valley of salt, and smote of the children of Seir ten thousand.

12 And *other* ten thousand *left* alive did the children of Judah carry away captive, and brought them unto the top of the rock, and [p] cast them down from the top of the rock, that they all were [q] broken in pieces.

13 But the ‡ soldiers of the army which Amaziah sent back, that they should not go with him to battle, fell upon the cities of Judah, from [r] Samaria even unto [s] Beth-horon, and smote three thousand of them, and took much spoil.

14 ¶ Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of the Edomites, that [t] he brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up *to be* [u] his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them.

15 Wherefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Amaziah, and he sent unto him [x] a prophet, which said unto him, [y] Why hast thou sought after [z] the gods of the people, [a] which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand?

16 And it came to pass, as he talked with him, that *the king* said unto him, [b] Art thou made of the king's counsel? [c] forbear: why shouldest thou be smitten? Then the prophet forbare, and said, I know that God [d] hath § determined to destroy thee, because thou hast

* Heb. *to their place.*
† Heb. *heat of anger.* 2 Sam. 19:43. Prov. 29:22.

gave to that objection, *v.* 9. It is an objection men often make against their duty, they are afraid of losing by it. 'Regard not that,' says the prophet, '*the Lord is able to give thee much more;* and what is 100 talents between thee and Him? He has ways enough to make up the loss to thee: it is below thee to speak of it.' Note, A firm belief of God's all-sufficiency to bear us out in our duty, and to make up all the loss and damage we sustain in his service abundantly to our advantage, will make his yoke very easy, and his burden very light. What is it to trust in God, but to be willing to venture the loss of any thing for Him, in confidence of the goodness of the security He gives us that we shall not lose by Him, but that it shall be made up to us in kind or kindness. The king lost 100 talents by his obedience; and we find just that sum given to his grandson Jotham as a present, *ch.* 27:5. and, for interest, 10,000 measures of wheat, and as many of barley.

4. His obedience to the command of God, which is upon record, to his honor. He would rather lose his money, disoblige his allies, and dismiss a fourth part of his army, just as they were going to take the field, than offend God, *v.* 10. but they went home in great anger, thus to be made fools of, and cashiered as men not fit to be employed, and being, perhaps, disappointed of the spoil and plunder, they promised themselves by joining Judah against Edom. Men are apt to resent that which touches them in their profit or reputation, though it frees them from trouble.

5. His triumphs over the Edomites, *v.* 11, 12. He left dead, in the field of battle, 10,000 men, 10,000 more he took prisoners, and barbarously killed them, by throwing them down some deep and craggy precipice.

6. The mischief the disbanded soldiers of Israel did to the cities of Judah, either in their return or soon after, *v.* 13. Several cities that lay on the borders they plundered, and killed 3000 men that made resistance. But why should God suffer this? Was it not in obedience to Him that they were sent home; and yet shall the country suffer by it? Surely God's way is in the sea! Did not the prophet say God was not with the children of Ephraim, and yet they are suffered to prevail against Judah? Doubtless God intended thereby to chastise those cities of Judah for their idolatries, which were found most in those parts that lay next to Israel. The men of Israel had corrupted them, and now they were made a plague to them: Satan both tempts and torments.

V. 14—16. Here is, 1. The revolt of Amaziah from God to the gods of the Edomites. Egregious folly! Ahaz worshipped the gods of those that had conquered him; he had some little color for that, *ch.* 28: 23. But to worship the gods of those whom he had conquered, (*v.* 14.) who could not protect their own worshippers, was the greatest absurdity! But, perhaps, for his barbarous inhumanity, (*v.* 12.) he was given up to this ridiculous idolatry.

2. The anger of the Lord was justly kindled against him; yet before He sent to destroy him, He sent to convince and reclaim him, and so to prevent his destruction. The prophet reasoned with him very fairly, and mildly, *v.* 15. If men would but duly consider the inability of all those things to help them, which they have recourse to

[o] 2 Sam. 8:13. 2 K. 14:7. Ps. 60: *title.*
[p] 2 Sam. 12:31. 1 Chr. 20:3.
[q] 20:10. 21:8—10.
‡ Heb. *sons of the band.*
[r] 1 K. 16:24,29.
[s] 9:5. 1 K. 9:17.
[t] 28:23.
[u] Ex. 20:3—5. Deut. 7:5,25. 2 Sam. 5:21.
[x] 7. 16:7—9. 19:2. 20:37. 2 Sam. 12:1—6.
[y] 24:20. Judg. 2:2. Jer. 2:5.
[z] Ps. 96:5.
[a] 11. Ps. 115:4—8. Is. 44:9,10. 46: 1,2. Jer. 10:7. 1 Cor. 8:4. 10:20.
[b] 16:10. 18:25,26. 24:21. Am. 7:10—13. Matt. 21:23.
[c] Prov. 9:7,8. Is. 30:10,11. Jer. 29:26. 2 Tim. 4:3. Rev. 11:10.
[d] Ex. 9:16. Deut. 2:30. 1 Sam. 2:25. Acts 4:28. Rom. 9:22.
§ Heb. *counselled.* 18:20,21. Is. 46: 10. Eph. 1:11.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—10. Many favor and support religion from motives of policy, who either do not appear, or who only appear, to be religious; but the Lord has no pleasure in dissemblers.—Unrepented sin will inevitably and finally ruin every one who continues in it: and in like manner it will infallibly enfeeble those nations where it prevails, and diminish their prosperity and consequence. Princes and statesmen professing Christianity, when forming alliances, or stipulating succors from foreign courts, seldom inquire, whether 'the LORD be with them' or not. Indeed, the very question would too generally excite ridicule and disgust: yet this will be found of far greater efficacy, in the success of wars, and the prosperity of kingdoms, than the most sagacious ungodly devices. Success cannot reasonably be expected by those, who act in defiance of the divine commands: and if men prosper in presumptuous wickedness, their success is the prelude of their ruin. —When those who have not true faith, or a spiritual mind, are convinced of the sinfulness of any part of their conduct or pursuits, they always object to self-denying obedience; and seem to say, 'But what shall we do for the hundred talents?' 'What shall we do, if, by hallowing the Sabbath, we lose so many good customers? What shall we do, if we renounce this illegal traffic and exorbitant profit, to compensate so important a loss? What shall we do, if we affront our friends, obstruct our preferment, or lose the friendship of the world? How shall we maintain our families? "What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?" Penury and distress face us in the way which you point out to us: we are almost persuaded it is the road to heaven; but what shall we do about the expenses of the journey?' Here numbers stumble and turn aside, or endeavor to quiet their conscience in a vain pretence, that such and such practices are necessary *in their case;* and that they may be Christ's disciples without 'denying themselves, taking up the cross, and forsaking all for Him.' But the answer to such objections is obvious: 'The LORD is able to give thee much more than this;' and He has promised to 'add all other things' to those, 'who seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness:' yea, to make up a hundred fold, even in this present world, all that has been conscientiously renounced for his sake and the Gospel: and we are 'compassed about with an innumerable cloud of witnesses' of his faithfulness to this promise.—A single instance of self-denying obedience, performed on a sudden, under some vehement impression, does not prove that a man has true faith: but the deliberate daily renouncing of the world, and opposing our strongest sinful inclinations, for the sake of the Gospel, and in obedience to the Savior, forms the constant evidence of an interest in Him, and all his precious promises; (*Phil.* 3: 1—11. *v.* 7—9.) and to some measure of this temper and conduct every true believer has attained. SCOTT.

Verses 11, 12.

(*M. R.—Note,* 2 *K.* 14:7.) The enmity between Israel and Esau seems to have been reciprocal, and deeply malignant. The victorious king and his army considered every individual of Edom, as a traitor and a rebel; and so adjudged them to death, and acted according to that judgment SCOTT.

(12.) *Cast them down.*] A punishment with the Greeks, (for sacrilege,) Romans and Turks, as well as Jews, Luke 4:29. ED.

Verse 13. Amaziah had indeed dismissed these auxiliaries in obedience to God; but his savage cruelty to the prisoners of Edom, so wholly inexcusable, and his subsequent idolatry, (14—16.) proved that he acted by constraint or terror, when obedient. SCOTT.

Verses 14—16.

'Perhaps Amaziah worshipped them from fear they should owe him a spite, and contrive some mischief against him, in revenge of what he had done against the Edomites.' *Patrick.* But Amaziah, who had borne with the prophet, who spoke to him concerning dismissing the Israelites, by which he lost 100 talents, was so mad upon his idols, that he would not endure that subject to be insisted on.—The prophet was a *counsellor,* whom the Lord had appointed him: and none of

done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel.

17 ¶ Then [a] Amaziah king of Judah took advice, and sent to Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, [f] let us see one another in the face.

18 And Joash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The [*] thistle that *was* in Lebanon sent to the cedar that *was* in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by [†] a wild beast that *was* in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle.

19 Thou sayest, Lo, thou hast smitten the Edomites; and [g] thine heart lifteth thee up [h] to boast: abide now at home; [i] why shouldest thou meddle to *thine* hurt, that thou shouldest fall, *even* thou, and Judah with thee?

20 But Amaziah would not hear: for [k] it *came* of God, that he might deliver them into the hand *of their enemies*, because they sought after the gods of Edom.

21 So Joash the king of Israel went up, and they [l] saw one another in the face, *both* he and Amaziah king of Judah, at [m] Beth-shemesh, which *belongeth* to Judah.

22 And Judah was [‡] put to the worse before Israel, and they [n] fled every man to his tent.

23 And Joash the king of Israel [o] took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of [p] Jehoahaz, at Beth-shemesh, and brought him to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, from the [q] gate of Ephraim to the § corner-gate, four hundred cubits.

24 And *he took* [r] all the gold and the silver, and all the vessels *that were* found in the house of God, with Obed-edom, and the treasures of the king's house, the hostages also, and returned to Samaria.

25 ¶ And Amaziah, the son of Joash king of Judah, lived after the death of [s] Joash, son of Jehoahaz king of Israel, fifteen years.

B. C. 810. 26 Now the [t] rest of the acts of Amaziah, first, and last, behold, *are* they not written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel?

27 Now after the time that Amaziah did turn away ‖ from following the LORD, they [¶] made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem; and he fled to [u] Lachish: but they sent to Lachish after him, and slew him there.

28 And they brought him upon horses, and buried him with his fathers in [x] the city of Judah.

e 13. 2 K. 14:8—14.
f 2 Sam. 2:14. Prov. 20:3.
* Or, *furze-bush*, or *thorn*. Judg. 9. 8—15. 1 K. 4:33.
† Heb. *a beast of the field*. Ps. 80:13.
g 26:16. 32:25. Deut. 8:14. Prov. 13: 10. 16:18. 28:25. Dan. 5:20—23. Hab. 2:4. Jam. 4:6. 1 Pet. 5:5.
h Jer. 9:23,24. 1 Cor. 1:29.
i 35:21. Prov. 18:6. 20:3. 26:17. Luke 14:31.
k 16. 22:7. 1 K. 12:15. Ps. 81:11,12. Acts 28:25—27. 2 Thes. 2:9—11. 1 Pet. 2:8.
l 17.
m Josh. 21:16. 1 Sam. 6:9,19,20.
‡ Heb. *smitten*. 28:5,6.
n 1 Sam. 4:10. 1 K. 22:36.
o 33:11. 36:6,10. Prov. 16:18. 29:23. Dan. 4:37. Ob. 3. Luke 14:11.
p 21:17. 22:1. *Ahaziah*. 22:6. *Azariah*.
q Neh. 8:16. 12:39.
§ Heb. *the gate of it that looketh*. Jer. 31:38.
r 12:9. 2 K. 14:14.
s 2 K. 14:17. *Jehoash*.
t 20:34. 2 K. 14:15.
‖ Heb. *from after*.
¶ Heb. *conspired a conspiracy*. 24:25. 2 K. 14:19.
u Josh. 10:31.
x 2 K. 14:20. *City of David*.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 11—28. Abused mercies occasion man's most aggravated wickedness, and accelerate his ruin: so that, when we are prospered by Providence, we should be peculiarly careful what return we make for the goodness of God, and what use we make of his bounty —The absurdities of superstition and idolatry, to which the human race has in all ages shown so strange a propensity, are as disgraceful to the understanding as to the heart: and if we did but consider how unavailing those worldly objects, which we are apt to idolize, have always proved, to the peace, safety, and happiness of their possessors; the reflection must check our eager pursuits of wealth, honor, or sensual pleasure; or at least show them to be as irrational, as the worship of useless, helpless idols. —They, who are mad on their lusts, will not bear control or counsel: and he, who would expostulate with them for their good, may expect to be treated as impertinent, intermeddling, or insolent: especially if an inferior venture to admonish, in the name of the Lord, sinners of superior rank and station. These, indeed, seem generally to claim it as one of their prerogatives, to walk unmolested in 'the broad way that leadeth to destruction.' If, however, mild, serious, rational, and scriptural reproof is proudly rejected and resented, we are not required further to urge our admonitions, but must desist, by plainly giving men to understand what the consequence will be.—When the remonstrances of conscience are silenced, and the ministers of God are rejected and menaced, it is to be feared that He has determined on the sinner's destruction; and that the longer he is spared, the more will he 'treasure up wrath against the day when God shall render to every man according to his works.' May the Lord preserve us from this dreadful doom, and prepare our hearts to receive his truth, to welcome his counsels and reproofs, and obediently to submit to his authority, and do his will! SCOTT.

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those, whom he had chosen for himself, gave him such honest, wise, and salutary counsel. But, as he would not hearken to it, the prophet desisted, having most solemnly warned him that the Lord had *counselled* to destroy him. (*M.—Notes*, 17—27. *Deut.* 2:30. 1 *K.* 22:19—23. *Luke* 22:21—23. *Acts* 2:22—24.) SCOTT.

V. 24. *Hostages.*] 'Probably given that Amaziah might regain his liberty.' GREENFIELD.

Verses 25—27.

No intimation is given, that Amaziah repented during the whole space of the Lord's long-suffering. Probably he added tyranny and oppression to his idolatry: and this, with his imprudent and unsuccessful administration, rendered him so odious, that he was slain, as it appears, by the general consent of his subjects, and no one was called to account for his death. SCOTT.

CHAP. XXVI.

Uzziah succeeds Amaziah, reigns well for a time, and is greatly prospered, 1—8. His buildings, husbandry, army, and engines of war, 9—15. Being lifted up in pride he attempts to burn incense in the temple, is opposed by the priests, and smitten with leprosy by God, 16—21. He dies, and is succeeded by Jotham, 22, 23.

THEN [a] all the people of Judah took [b] Uzziah, who *was* sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah.

2 He built [c] Eloth, and [d] restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.

3 Sixteen years old *was* [e] Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* [f] Jecoliah of Jerusalem.

4 And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, [g] according to all that his father Amaziah did.

5 And [h] he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who [i] had understanding in the [*] visions of God: and, [k] as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper.

6 And he went forth and [l] warred against the Philistines, and brake down [m] the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities † about Ashdod, and among the Philistines.

7 And [n] God helped him against the Philistines, and against [o] the Arabians that dwelt in Gur-baal, and the Mehunims.

8 And [p] the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: and [q] his name ‡ spread abroad *even* to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened *himself* exceedingly.

9 Moreover Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the [r] corner-gate, and at [s] the valley-gate, and at [t] the turning *of the wall*, and § fortified them.

10 Also he built towers in the desert, and || digged many wells:

a 22:1. 33:25.
b 2 K. 14:21. 15:1. 1 Chr. 3:12. *Azariah.* Matt. 1:8,9. *Ozias.*
c 8:17. 2 K. 14:22. 16:6. *Elath.*
d 25:23,28.
e Is. 1:1. 6:1. Hos. 1:1. Am. 1:1. Zech. 14:5.
f 2 K. 15:2,3. *Jecholiah.*
g 25:2.
h 24:2. Judg. 2:7. Hos. 6:4. Mark 4:16,17. Acts 20:30.
i Gen. 41:15. Dan. 1:17. 2:19. 5:16. 10:1.
* Heb. *seeing of God.*
k 15:2. 25:8. 1 Chr. 22:11,13. Ps. 1:3.
l 21:16. Is. 14:29.
m 2 Sam. 8:1. 1 Chr. 18:1.
† Or, *in* the country of *Ashdod.* 1 Sam. 5:1,6.
n 14:11. 1 Chr. 5:20. 12:18. Ps. 18: 29,34,35. Acts 26:22.
o 17:11. 21:16.
p 20:1. Gen. 19:38. Deut. 2:19. Judg. 11:15—18. 1 Sam. 11:1.
q Gen. 12:2. 2 Sam. 8:13. 1 K. 4:31 Matt. 4:24.
‡ Heb. *went.*
r 25:23. 2 K. 14:13. Jer. 31:38. Zech. 14:10.
s Neh. 2:13. 3:13.
t Neh. 3:20,24.
§ Or, *repaired.*
|| Or, *cut out many cisterns.* Gen. 26: 18—21.

II. His prosperity. In general, *as long as he sought the Lord*, and minded religion, *God made him to prosper.* Those only prosper, whom *God makes to prosper;* prosperity is his gift. Religion and piety are friendly to outward prosperity. Many have found and owned, that as long as they sought the Lord, and kept close to their duty, they prospered; but since they forsook God, every thing had gone cross.

The particular instances of this prosperity, are, 1. His success in his wars, *v.* 6, 8. He made all quiet about him, and kept them in awe. 2. Greatness, fame, and reputation, *v.* 8. a good name, a name for good things with God and good people. This is true fame, and makes a man truly honorable. 3. Buildings. He did not neglect defences at home, *v.* 9. Much of the wall of Jerusalem was, in his father's time, broken down, particularly at *the corner gate, ch.* 25: 23. probably, his father had repaired it, but he, to prevent the like mischief, fortified it, and *built a tower at the corner gate.* But his best fortification of Jerusalem was his close adherence to the worship of God, which if his father had not forsaken, its wall had not been broken down. While he fortified the city, he did not forget (*v.* 10.) to protect the country from the inroads of plunderers, bands of which sometimes alarmed and plundered them, as *ch.* 21: 16. 4. His husbandry. He dealt much in cattle and corn, employed many hands, and got much wealth by it, took a pleasure in it, *v.* 10. and, probably, inspected his country affairs himself, which encouraged industry among his subjects. It is an

CHAP. XXVI. V. 1—15. This ch. gives us the reign of Uzziah, (called Azariah in the Kings,) more fully than we had it before; though long, and in some respects illustrious, yet it was very briefly related, 2 K. 14, 21.—15. 1, &c. We have here two things concerning Uzziah:

I. His piety. In this he was not very eminent or zealous; yet *he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord;* we have no reason to think he ever worshipped idols as his father did, no not in his latter days, when *his heart was lifted up. Zechariah, v.* 5. some think, was the son of that Zechariah whom his grandfather Joash slew. He was one that *had understanding in the visions of God;* either those he himself was favored with, or those of the preceding prophets. He was well versed in prophecy, and conversed much with the upper world, was an intelligent, devout, good, man; and, it seems, had great influence with Uzziah. Happy the great men, who have such about them, and are willing to be advised by them; but unhappy those, who seek God only while they have such with them, and have not a principle in themselves to bear them out to the end.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVI. V. 5. It is not known of what tribe or family this Zechariah was; though some conjecture, he was the son of that Zechariah whom Joash murdered. This, however, would be a singular instance in Scripture, of a son called by his father's name,—He was perhaps endued with a peculiar gift in distinguishing between those, who were actually favored with prophetic visions, and those who only pretended to be so SCOTT.

Verses 6—9.

These verses contain some particulars, in which Uzziah, by the special help and blessing of God, was greatly prospered, while he adhered strictly to the worship of God according to the law. (*M. R.*)—'These Mehunims were a people in *Arabia deserta.*' *Bp. Patrick.* Jabneh is not mentioned elsewhere, nor Gur-baal.—'He built cities about Ashdod,' or '*in the country* of Ashdod.' (*M.*) ID.

Verse 10.

Towers.] These towers seem to have been built in the desert, for the protection of Uzziah's shepherds and flocks, from the depredations of the Arabian free-booters and others, on whom he seems to have retaliated. [Others suppose them also a mean of collecting tribute and retaining the nomade tribes there in subjection.] A prince can hardly have a more rational, inoffensive, and indeed useful recreation from public business, than these rural occupations. ID.

In Carmel.] 'Not . . . the famous mount of that name, (for that was not in the tribe of Judah,) but a very fertile country, as the word Carmel signifies in several places. *Is.* 16:10. *Jer.* 2:7. 48:33.' *Patrick.* (*M.*—1 *Sam.* 25:2. *Is.* 35:1, 2.) ID.

For he loved husbandry.] Comp. also v. 4, 7, 8, 13, 15. 'The *encouragement of agriculture* necessarily ameliorated the condition, of the early Egyptians: [and the same remark applies to those who lived under the Mosaic Polity, of which, says *Michaelis,* 'agriculture was the foundation:'] and it enabled them to spare a great portion of their population for the improvement of manufactures of every kind. Hence, no doubt, their superiority over neighboring nations, their riches, the advancement of their military tactics, and their power. Neither a nation of huntsmen nor of shepherds (for which last, on this account, perhaps they entertained the greatest contempt, as a low caste, and comp. Gen. 43:32. 46:34.) have the same advantages as an agricultural people; and it is pretty evident, in the early history of man, that those who possessed and tilled a fertile country were the first to make a progress in the arts of civilization.' *Wilkinson.*

The following remarks, by the same author, will illustrate the military state of the Jews, described in this chapter, and ch. 17:13—19. &c. 'A *standing army* was constantly maintained by the Egyptian government, for the *garrisons* of the different *fortified towns* from Pelusium to Syene, and for the constant excursions the Egyptians made to the N. E. to extend their conquests and maintain their authority over the provinces they had subdued. Besides the native troops, mercenaries were also kept in pay, [comp. 25:6.] who, as well as the rest of the forces, were divided into regiments, and disciplined according to the rules of regular tactics. [Comp. the Heb. phrase, *to learn war,* Is. 2: 4. Mic. 4:3. and 1 Sam. 20:20, 35—40. 2 Sam. 1:23. 22:35.] Each battalion had a certain standard peculiarly belonging to it, [Num. 1:52.] and the nature of their arms distinguished and portioned out the different brigades. So the Greeks: [and comp. 14:8, &c.] On the former was represented some sacred animal, a boat, shrine, the name of the king, or some other Egyptian device, [cut, Ps. 20:5.] and it was intended as a rallying point in the confusion of battle; raised, says *Diod.* on a lofty pike, and borne by an officer. Their *arms* consisted of the bow, sword, shield, battle axe, knife or atagan, spear, club, sling, and a curved stick still used by the Ababdeh and Ethiopians. Their *engines* (in sieges) consisted of the battering-ram, (or a long pike,) (the Roman terebra, and Greek trypanon,) armed with a metal head, similarly used, [2 Sam. 20: 15.] the scaling ladder and testudo, (like the testudo arietaria, covered by a shroud, or chelone, to protect the soldiers.) This last was supported by framework, and formed a step or terrace for the ascent of the besiegers; [note, 2 K. 19:32.] but as, at the same time, it sheltered the men it contained, it may have been also intended for a covert to the sappers, [comp. note, 2 Sam. 5:8.] whilst they mined the place. The Jews were also acquainted with these engines for sieges, long before the Greeks. Deut. 20:20. They were of course borrowed from the Egyptians. [Note, 14, 15.] The *military caste* [note, *Neh.* 11:35.] enjoyed considerable privileges, and the profession of arms was in the greatest repute among the Egyptians. Besides, too, other necessary measures instituted for their comfort, "each soldier was allowed 12 arourae" (9½ acres, about the size of Regulus' farm), "exempt from every charge and tribute." So *Herod.* The two native corps, the Calasiries and Hermotybies, took it by turns, to do the duty of royal guards, and 1000 of each were selected for this purpose, who, besides the above general allowances, received daily rations, consisting of 5 minæ (5 lbs. 5 oz. 1 dwt.) of bread, 2 of beef, (2 lbs. 2 oz. 8 grs.) and 4 arusters, (a little more than 2 pints?) of wine. The total

for [u] he had much cattle, both in the low country and in the plains; husbandmen *also*, and vine-dressers in the mountains, and in * Carmel: for he loved † husbandry.

11 ¶ Moreover Uzziah had an host of fighting men, that [x] went out to war by bands, according to the number of their account, by the hand of Jeiel the scribe, and Maaseiah the ruler, under the hand of Hananiah, *one* of the king's captains.

12 The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valor *were* two thousand and six hundred.

13 And under their hand *was* ‡ an army, [y] three hundred thousand and seven thousand and five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy.

14 And Uzziah prepared for them, throughout all the host, shields, and spears, and helmets, and habergeons, and bows, and § slings *to cast* stones.

15 And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by [z] cunning men, to be on the towers, and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal: and his name ‖ spread far abroad, for he was marvellously helped till he was strong.

[*Practical Observations.*]

16 ¶ But [a] when he was strong, his heart

u 2 K. 3:4. 1 Chr. 27:26—31.
* Or, *fruitful fields.* 2 K. 19:23. Is. 29:17.
† Heb. *ground.*
x 2 K. 5:2.
‡ Heb. *the power of an army.*
y 11:1. 13:3. 14:8. 17:14—19.
§ Heb. *stones of slings.* Judg. 20:16. 1 Sam. 17:49.
z 51:7,14. Ex. 31:4.
‖ Heb. *went forth.* Matt. 4:24.
a 25:19. 32:25. Deut. 8:14,17. 32:13—15. Prov. 16:18. Hab. 2:4. Col. 2:18.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—15. Wise and pious instructers are an invaluable treasure to young people; especially to those, who are advanced to exalted stations, and who are generally poisoned with the flattery of interested sycophants and dependants. Yet, unless they seek and serve God from an inward principle of piety; they will at length lose, or shake off, their preceptors and their religion together.—Many have experienced, and some have confessed, that, when they paid regard to the service of God, they prospered; but that every thing went wrong, from the time they grew negligent in religion. Indeed, external prosperity does not now so uniformly attend godliness, as it did in the case of Israel: yet every undertaking will succeed with the true Christian, as far as it is good for him; and God will help and prosper him in his spiritual warfare, in proportion to the simplicity of his dependence and obedience.—No lawful business will be the worse managed, or prove less pleasant to any man, on account of his diligence in the service of God, if he have learned to arrange his temporal and spiritual concerns in due order.—It would be happy for mankind, if able and powerful monarchs took more delight, and spent more of their leisure hours, in rural occupations, which are manly, useful, and truly honorable: but hitherto man's chief ambition, exertion, and ingenuity, have been directed to the destruction of his own species! If, however, it must be a part of his occupation to invent and forge instruments of destruction, and of shortening the already contracted duration of human life; surely these should be used only in self-defence, or in awing the turbulent spirits of those public depredators, who cannot otherwise be prevented from disturbing the world. SCOTT.

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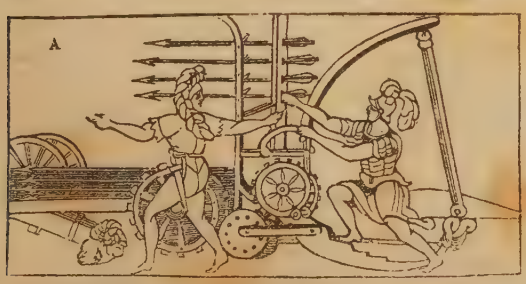
of these two corps was 410,000 men, at the time Egypt was most populous; these, of course, were not always employed, or kept in pay; their farms, provided for them, in part, and employed them, and were also tilled by husbandmen, like the land of the kings and priests. *Diod.* But mechanical trades were forbidden the soldier, as detrimental to his physical force. Their agricultural possessions also gave them a love for, and interest in defending, their native land. *Strabo* mentions a million of men, but this doubtless included their foreign auxiliaries. [Comp. 14:9.] Military punishments were established by law. The soldiers were inured to the fatigues of war, by the occupations of the chase, and above all by the games and gymnastic exercises they constantly practised, in common with all the Egyptians; as wrestling, cudgelling, throwing and catching the ball, leaping, racing, mock-fights, [comp. 2 Sam. 2:14.] feats of strength, and a variety of other exercises.' WILKINSON.

Verses 11—15.

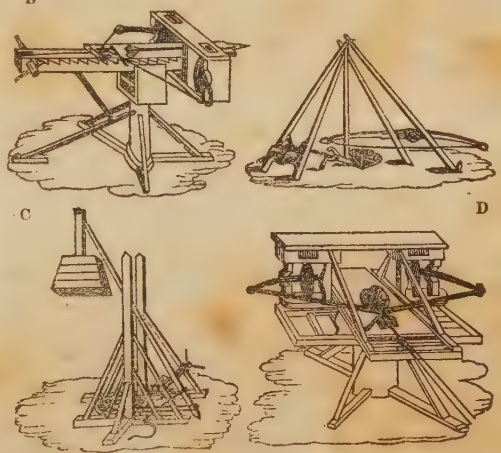
'How hard it is to bear great prosperity with moderation and humble thankfulness.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

(11.) *Hand.*] Notes, *v.* 10. Ps. 20:5, 2 Sam. 18:18, &c. ED.

(14, 15.) See note, v. 10. and cuts, Ex. 17:10. 2 Sam. 1:9. 1 K. 22:34, &c. Cuts are here given of the most ancient *known*, or supposed, forms of the Roman *catapult*, for *shooting arrows*, from *Vegetius*, (A) and the 'catapult or steel bow,' from *Calmet's* eds. (B) perhaps the *scorpio*, for smaller darts; (*Kennett*,&c.) also of the *balista* for casting *great stones*, from *Calmet's* eds. (C) and from *Vegetius* (D). 'Balistæ threw stones,(500 in a night and 1000 by day,) of 100, 120, (*Nonnius*) and even 360 lbs. (*Diod.*) to the distance of 3 stadia, a mile perhaps.' CALMET. Of the above engines there were many kinds, about which ancient authors disagree. Dr. *A. Clarke* remarks, (and there is nothing known on Egyptian monuments, (note *v.* 10) to contradict him,) 'This is the first intimation on record of warlike engines for sieges. [Except the Egyptian battering ram, mound, and testudo-shield, adopted probably by the Hebrews from them, Deut. 20:20. 2 Sam. 20:15. 2 K. 19:32. The word in Deut. is *matsor*, probably 'a circumvallation,' Sept. *Charakosis*, (*vallum*,) Vulg. *Machinas*. So Targ. and Arab. In 2 Sam. 20:15 the word for 'bank' is *Sollah*, which seems to have stood



on the outer bank of the trench surrounding the city, or perhaps was advanced thence into the trench itself. The Sept. has *proschoma*, *agger*, and so other translators. Vulg. *circumdederunt munitionibus.* Gesenius. tr. *mound*, *trench*, *rampart*. The Heb. 2 K. 19:32. is *magen*, Sept. *thyreos*, which, says Gesenius, 'covered the whole body,' though he makes this larger shield to be the *tsinnah* (Heb.) and the small shield or buckler to be the *magen:* and *both* to be from roots signifying to *protect*. So that there is also much uncertainty about these engines.] This account in the SS. is long prior to any thing of the kind among the Greeks and Romans. Previously, the besieged could only be *starved out*; and hence sieges were very *long* and *tedious*. Shalmanezer was 3 yrs. in reducing so inconsiderable a place as Samaria, 2 K. 17:5, 6. Sardanapalus kept Nineveh 7 yrs. Troy was besieged 10 yrs. No wonder that, in consequence of these inventions, Uzziah's



name spread far abroad, and struck terror into his enemies.' ED. 'The arts of destruction are often preserved and transmitted from age to age, whilst the chain of those useful inventions which contribute to the happiness of mankind is broken by intervening barbarism.' WHEATON.

Verses 16—23.

Burning incense was the most honorable part of the sacerdotal office.—It is not said how long this occurred before Uzziah's death: but the age of Jotham, when he began to reign, implies, that it was late in Uzziah's reign, before he was smitten with the leprosy: and his reign must be considered as a very prosperous one for his kingdom.—His

was lifted up to *his* destruction; for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and [b] went into the temple of the LORD [c] to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

17 And [d] Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, *that were* [e] valiant men:

18 And they [f] withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, *It appertaineth* [g] not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but [h] to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; [i] neither *shall it be* for thine honor from the LORD God.

19 Then Uzziah was wroth, and *had* a censer in his hand to burn incense; and while [k] he was wroth with the priests, [l] the leprosy even rose up in his forehead, before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense-altar.

20 And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests looked upon him, and, behold, he *was* leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself [m] hasted also to go out, because [n] the LORD had smitten him.

21 And [o] Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and [p] dwelt in a * several house, *being* a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son *was* over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

with mighty power; no enemy durst face them, or, at least, could stand before them. Men unarmed can do little in war; Uzziah therefore furnished himself with a great armory, whence his soldiers were supplied with arms offensive and defensive, *v.* 14. swords are not mentioned, because probably every man had a sword of his own, which he wore constantly. Engines of war, too, were invented, *v.* 15. What pity it is, that wars and fightings, which come from men's lusts, have made it necessary for cunning men to employ their skill in inventing instruments of death!

V. 16—23. Here is the only blot we find on the name of Uzziah, and it is such a one as lies not on any other of the kings.

I. His sin was, [a direct violation of the constitution, by] invading the priests' office. The good way is one, by-paths are many. His predecessors' sin was, forsaking the temple; his, intruding *into* it, further than was allowed him, and attempting to *burn incense on the altar* of God, for which, it is likely, he pretended an extraordinary zeal and affection. See how hard it is to avoid one extreme, and not run into another.

1. The bottom of his sin was, pride of heart, a lust that ruins more than any other whatever. Thus the prosperity of fools, by puffing them up with pride, destroys them. Now that he had done so much business, and won so much honor, he began to think no business, no honor, too great or too good for him; no, not that of the priesthood.

2. Perhaps he fancied the priests did not do their office as they ought, and he could do it better. Or, He observed that the idolatrous kings burnt incense at the altars of their gods; [after the custom of the idolatry of the day, especially the Egyptian, which allowed the king, chosen from the priestly order, to burn incense;] his father did so, and Jeroboam, 1 K. 13: 1. an ambition of which honor was perhaps one thing that tempted them from the house of God, where it was not permitted them.

3. He was opposed by the chief priest and other priests, *v.* 17, 18. Aaron and his sons were appointed by the law to burn incense, Ex. 30: 7. See Deut. 33: 10. 1 Chr. 23: 13. David had blessed the people, Solomon and Jehoshaphat had prayed with them, and preached to them; Uzziah might have done this, and it would have been to his praise; but burning incense was to be performed by the priests only. The kingly and priestly offices were separated by the law of Moses, not to be united again but in the person of the Messiah. It shall not be *for thine honor from the Lord God;* more is implied; 'It will be thy disgrace, and it is at thy peril.' The law runs express against all strangers that came nigh, Num. 3: 10.—18: 7. i. e. all not priests. Korah and his accomplices, though Levites, paid dear for offering to burn incense, which was the work of the priests only, Num. 16: 35. The incense of our prayers must be, by faith, put into the hands of our great High Priest, else we cannot expect it should be accepted by God, Rev. 8: 3.

4. He fell into a passion, *v.* 19. and would not part with the censer.

II. His punishment. If he had submitted, acknowledged his error, and gone back, all had been well; but *when he was wroth with the priests,* and fell foul on them, then God was wroth with him, and smote him with a plague of leprosy. And some conjecture, with Josephus, [whom see,] that then was the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, Amos 1: 1. and Zech. 14: 5.

1. This sudden stroke ended his controversy with the priests; they thrust him out; nay, *himself hasted to go out, because the Lord had smitten him* with a disease, in a particular manner a token of his displeasure, and which he knew secluded him from common converse with men, much more from the altar of God. If presumptuous men will not be made to see their error by the judgments of God's mouth, they shall be made to see it by the judgments of his hand. Though he strove with the priests, he would not strive with his Maker.

2. It remained a lasting punishment, *v.* 21. intended to possess the people with a great veneration for the temple, the priesthood, and other sacred things, they had been apt to think meanly of. While a leper, he was as good as dead, and buried alive; and so the law was, in effect, answered, that the stranger which cometh nigh, shall be put to death.

3. The punishment answered the sin. (1.) Pride was at the bottom, and thus God humbled, and dishonored him. (2.) He invaded the priests' office in contempt of them, and his disease, in a particular manner, subjected him to the inspection and sentence of the priests, Deut. 24: 8. (3.) He thrust himself into the temple of God, whither the priests only had admission, and for that was thrust out of the very courts of the temple, into which the meanest of his subjects, that were ceremonially clean, had free access. (4.) He confronted the priests that faced him herein, and for that the leprosy *rose in his forehead,* which, in Miriam's case, is compared to her father's *spitting in her face,* Num. 12: 14. (5.) He invaded the dignity of the priesthood which he had no right to, and is for that deprived even of his royal dignity which he had a right to. They that covet forbidden honors, forfeit allowed ones. Adam, by catching at the tree of knowledge, which he might not eat of, debarred himself from the tree of life, of which he

22 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, [q] first and last, did [r] Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, write.

23 So Uzziah [s] slept with his fathers, and [t] they buried him with his fathers in the field of the burial which *belonged* to the kings; for they said, He *is* a leper: and Jotham his son reigned [*] in his stead.

b 2 K. 16:12,13.
c Num. 16:7,17,18,35. 1 K. 12:33. 13: 1—4.
d 1 Chr. 6:10.
e 1 Chr. 12:28. 26:8.
f 16:7—9. 19:2. Jer. 13:18. Matt. 10:18,28. 14:4. 2 Cor. 5:16. Gal. 2:11.
g Num. 16:40,46—48. 18:7.
h Ex. 30:7,8. Heb. 5:1.
i 1 Sam. 2:30. Dan. 4:37. John 5:44. Jam. 2:1.
k 16:10. 25:16.
l Num. 12:10. 2 K. 5:27.
m Esth. 6:12.
n Lev. 14:34. Deut. 28:22,35.
o 2 K. 15:5.
p Lev. 13:46. Num. 5:2,3. 12:15. 2 K. 7:3.
* Heb. *free.*
q 9:29. 12:15.
r Is. 1:1. 6:1.
s 2 K. 15:6,7.
t 18. 21:20. 28:27. 33:20.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 16—23. It is written, as with a sun-beam, that prosperity is most dangerous to fallen man.—Extremes are on every side. To avoid enthusiasm and credulity, men become profane and infidel; and, in shunning infidelity, they rush into superstition. Those who are not chargeable with immorality or gross profaneness, may yet provoke the Lord by their hypocrisy or self-righteous pride.—We are not indeed, at present, kept at that awful distance from sacred things, which the people of God formerly were: yet let us not suppose, that we are in no danger of offending in this way. The sacred ministry may be intruded into, with a presumption and impiety bordering on sacrilege and blasphemy; while mercenary and ungodly men make those professions, engagements, and protestations, in the presence of God, 'for filthy lucre's sake,' which they deride as enthusiastic or superstitious! The Lord's table may be approached in hypocrisy, pride, unbelief, and impenitency; or even as a step to preferment, by infidels and debauchees who are the slaves to every lust! and in many ways men may be guilty of most awful and presumptuous profanations. Alas! few are found, who are *valiant men,* that dare, in meekness and faithfulness, oppose the powerful who attempt the most scandalous profanations; and venture all the consequences of their displeasure in refusing to concur in them. But the Lord will assuredly stand by those few, and mark their opposers with evident tokens of his anger. SCOTT.

patient and quiet submission to this severe rebuke, and to all its most painful consequences, (as they must have been to so honorable and prosperous a monarch,) forms no inconsiderable proof of his repentance; and implies that his retirement was well improved, and his death happy. (2 *K.* 15:1—7.) SCOTT.

CHAP. XXVII.

Jotham reigns well and prospers, 1, 2. His buildings, 3, 4. He subdues the Ammonites, 5, 6. He dies, and is succeeded by Ahaz, 7—9.

JOTHAM *was* [a] twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok.

2 And [b] he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah did: howbeit [c] he entered not into the temple of the LORD. And [d] the people did yet corruptly.

3 He built the [e] high gate of the house of the LORD, and on the wall of * Ophel he built much.

4 Moreover [f] he built cities in [g] the mountains of Judah, and in the forests he built castles and towers.

5 He fought also with [h] the king of the Ammonites, and prevailed against them. And the children of Ammon gave him the same year an hundred talents of silver, and ten thousand measures of wheat, and ten thousand of barley. † So much did the children of Ammon pay unto him, both the second year, and the third.

6 So Jotham became mighty, because he ‡ prepared his ways before the LORD his God.

7 ¶ Now [i] the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars, and his ways, lo, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

8 He was five and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem.

9 And [k] Jotham slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Ahaz reigns very wickedly, 1—4. He is defeated with terrible slaughter of his army by the kings of Syria and Israel, 5—7. The Israelites lead to Samaria an immense number of captives, 8. The people are induced, by the remonstrance of a prophet, and the interference of the princes, to treat them kindly and send them home, 9—15. Ahaz, attacked by the Edomites and Philistines, sends to the king of Assyria, but receives no benefit from his assistance, 16—21. In his distress he adds to his idolatries, 22—25. He dies, and is succeeded by Hezekiah, 26, 27.

* AHAZ *was* twenty years old when he began to reign; and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: but he did not *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, [b] like David his father;

2 For [c] he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also [d] molten images for [e] Baalim.

3 Moreover he § burnt incense in [f] the valley of the son of Hinnom, and [g] burnt his children in the fire, [h] after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

CHAP. XXVII. V. 1—9. Not much more is related here of Jotham, than before, 2 K. 15: 32, &c.

1. He reigned well: *did what was right in the sight of the Lord; prepared his ways before Him, v.* 6. i. e. walked circumspectly and with much caution. Or, he established or fixed his ways before the Lord, i. e. walked steadily and constantly in the way of duty, was uniform, and resolute in it; not like some before him, who, though they had some good in them, lost their credit by inconstancy, and inconsistency. What was amiss in his father he amended in himself, *v.* 2. would not imitate what he did amiss; but took warning by his fate. Let us not imitate even the best, farther than they did well, but take warning by their falls to walk the more circumspectly. What was amiss in his people he could not prevail to amend, *v.* 2. Perhaps it reflects some blame on him, that he was wanting in his part toward the reformation. Men may be very good themselves, and yet not have courage and zeal to do what they might to reform others. However, it certainly reflects great blame on the people, that they did not what they might have done to improve the advantages of so good a reign: they had good instructions, and a good example, but would not be reformed; so that even in the reign of their good kings, as well as the bad ones, they were *treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.*

2. He prospered, and became truly reputable. He built, conquered, and *became mighty, v.* 3—6. in wealth, power, and influence on the neighboring nations, who courted his friendship, and feared his displeasure; and this he got by *preparing his ways before the Lord his God.* The more steadfast we are in religion, the more mighty we are both to resist evil, and to do good.

3. He finished his course too soon, but with honor; he died in the midst of his days, *v.* 8. but, to balance that, outlived not his reputation, as his last three predecessors did. His *wars* abroad and *ways* at home, were so glorious, that they were recorded in the book of the kings of Israel, as well as the kings of Judah, *v.* 7. The last words of the ch. convey the painful intelligence, that *Ahaz reigned in his stead,* whose character, in all respects, was the reverse. When the wealth and power wise men have done good with, devolve on fools that will do hurt with them, it shall be for a lamentation.

CHAP. XXVIII. V. 1—5. This ch. is the history of the reign of Ahaz, the son of Jotham; a bad reign, which helped to augment the fierce anger of the Lord. Here we have him, in these few verses,

1. Wretchedly corrupted and debauched. He had had a good education, but all instruction was lost on him, *v.* 1, 2. He forsook the temple, and sacrificed and burnt incense on the hills, as if those would place him nearer heaven; and under every green tree, as if those would signify the protection and influence of Heaven by their shade and dropping. To complete his wickedness, as one perfectly divested of all natural affection as well as religion, and perfectly devoted to the service and interest of the great enemy of mankind, *he burnt his children in the fire to Moloch, v.* 3. not thinking it enough to dedicate them to that infernal fiend by causing them to pass through the fire. See what an absolute sway the prince of the power of the air bears among the children of disobedience!

2. Wretchedly spoiled and made a prey of, *v.* 5. The people suffered, their blood was shed, their country wasted, their families ruined; for when they had a good king, though *they did, corruptly, ch.* 27: 2. yet then his goodness sheltered them; but now they had a bad one, all their defence was departed, and an inundation of judgments broke in.

a 2 K. 15:32,33. 1 Chr. 3:12. Is. 1:1. Hos. 1:1. Mic. 1:1. Matt. 1:9. *Joatham.*
b 26:4. 2 K. 15:34.
c 26:16—21. Ps. 119:120. Acts 5:13.
d 2 K. 15:35.
e 23:15,20. Jer. 20:2.
* Or, *the tower.* 33:14. Neh. 3:26.
f 11:5—10. 14:7. 26:9,10.
g Josh. 14:12,13. Luke 1:39.
h 20:1. Judg. 11:4,&c. 2 Sam. 10:1—14. Jer. 49:1—6.
† Heb. *This.*
‡ Or, *established.* 19:3.
i 20:34. 26:22,23. 32:32,33.
k 2 K. 15:38.
a 2 K. 16:1,2. 1 Chr. 3:13. Is. 1:1. 7:1—12. Hos. 1:1. Mic. 1:1. Matt. 1:9. *Achaz.*
b 17:3.
c 21:6. 22:3,4. 1 K. 16:31—33. 2 K. 10:26—28.
d Ex. 34:17. Lev. 19:4.
e Judg. 2:11,13.
§ Or, *offered sacrifice.*
f 2 K. 23:10. Jer. 7,31,32. 19:2—6,13.
g 33:6. Lev. 18:21. 2 K. 16:3. Ps. 106. 37,38. Jer. 2:34. Ez. 16:20,21. Mic. 6:7.
h 33:2. Deut. 12:31.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The severest judgments of God have mercy connected with them, either to the persons themselves, or to others, who thence learn caution and circumspection.—It ought to be the constant aim of every one of us, to imitate the faith, piety, equity, kindness, self-denial, patience, and meekness, of those servants of God with whom we are acquainted, and of whom we read or hear; and carefully to avoid their failings, and the sins into which they have been betrayed: but the reverse of this is general, and natural to mankind.—Many pious men have not fortitude or vigor to combat the difficulties, which must be expected by those, who attempt reformation, in opposition to inveterate prejudices, errors, superstitions, and immoralities; yet all in public stations should remember, that this is incumbent on them, and forms that improvement of their talents, which God requires.—In righteous displeasure against those who hate to be reformed, the Lord often prematurely removes wise, prosperous, and pious rulers in church or state; and sends others, whose follies and vices severely punish a people, who did not value their mercies till they were withdrawn. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVII. V. 1, 2. The general character of the people, as to unrighteousness, fraud, oppression, and other crimes; as well as their ungodliness, hypocrisy, or idolatrous worship, seems to be implied. SCOTT

Verse 3.

Ophel.] This seems to have been a cliff, or high rock, where a tower and wall were built to fortify the city. ID.

Verse 5.

(*M. R.*) It is probable that, at the end of three years, the Ammonites recovered strength, and refused to pay the tribute. SCOTT.

Verse 6.

It has been observed, that most, if not all, the pious kings of Judah, have some evil thing laid to their charge: but Jotham has not; except as 'the people did corruptly,' and the high places were not demolished. ID.

4 He [i] sacrificed also, and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

5 Wherefore the LORD [k] his God [l] delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria; and they smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought *them* to * Damascus: and he also was delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter.

6 For [m] Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah [n] an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, *which were* all † valiant men: [o] because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers.

7 And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king's son, and Azrikam the governor of the house, and Elkanah *that was* ‡ next to the king.

8 And the children of Israel [p] carried away captive of their [q] brethren, two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters; and took also away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria.

[*Practical Observations.*]

9 ¶ But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name *was* Oded; and [r] he went out before the host that came to Samaria, and said unto them, Behold, [s] because the LORD God of your fathers was wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hand, and ye have slain them in a rage *that* [t] reacheth up unto heaven.

10 And now ye purpose to [u] keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem for bondmen and bond-women unto you: *but are there* [x] not with you, even

i Lev. 26:30. Deut. 12:2,3. 2 K. 16:4.
k 36:5. Ex. 20:2,3.
l 24:24. 33:11. 36:17. Judg. 2:14. 2 K. 16:5. Is. 7:1,6.

V. 6—15. We have here,

I. Treacherous Judah under the rebukes of God's providence, and they very severe. Never was such bloody work made among them, since they were a kingdom, and by Israelites too. Ahaz walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and the king of Israel was the instrument God made use of for his punishment. It is just with God to make those our plagues, whom we make our patterns, or make ourselves partners with in sin. A war broke out between Judah and Israel, in which Judah was worsted. For, 1. Vast numbers were slain in battle, *v.* 6. and some of the first rank; the king's son for one. He had sacrificed some of his sons to Moloch, justly therefore is this sacrificed to the divine vengeance. Another that was *next the king*, his friend, the prime minister of state, or perhaps next him in the battle, so that the king himself had a narrow escape, *v.* 7. 2. There was a great captivity of *women and children*, *v.* 8. When the army in the field was routed, the cities, towns, and country villages, were all easily stripped.

II. Even victorious Israel under the rebukes of God's word, for their bad principle in making war with Judah, and their bad use of their success; and the good effect of this rebuke.

1. God's prophet tells them how they came by this victory, of which they were so proud; it was not because God favored them, or they merited it at his hand, but *because He was wroth with Judah*, and made them the rod of his indignation. *Not for your righteousness*, be it known to you, but *for their wickedness*, (Deut. 9: 5.) *they are broken off*; therefore *be not ye high-minded, but fear, lest God* also *spare not you*, Rom. 11: 20, 21.

2. He charges them with the abuse of the power God had given them over their brethren. They understand not what victory is, who think it gives them authority to do what they will; as it is impolitic not to use a victory, so it is impious to abuse it. The conquerors are here reproved, (1.) For the cruelty of their slaughter in the field. They had indeed *shed the blood of war, in war*; which is supposed lawful, but it turned into sin to them, because they did it from enmity to their brethren, and with a barbarous fury, *a rage reaching up to heaven*, i. e. that cries to God for vengeance against such bloody men. They that serve God's justice, if they do it with rage and a spirit of revenge, make themselves obnoxious to it, and forfeit the honor of acting for Him: *the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.* (2.) For their imperious treatment of their prisoners. '*Ye now purpose to keep them under*, to use them or sell them as slaves, though your brethren, and free-born Israelites.' God notices what men purpose, as well as what they say and do.

3. He reminds them of their own sins, by which they also were obnoxious to God's wrath; appeals to their own consciences, and to the notorious evidence of the thing. This is intended as a check to their triumph in their success; and to their severity toward their brethren. It ill becomes sinners to be cruel.

4. He commands them to release the prisoners, and send them home carefully, *v.* 11. for, having sinned, there is no other way of escaping *the fierce wrath of God.*

5. The princes, hereupon, *stood up*, and told *them that came from the war*, plainly, they should not bring their captives to Samaria, *v.* 12, 13. They had sin enough already to answer for. In this they were obedient to the word of God by his prophet, and compassionate to their brethren, through the tender mercy of God; for He regarded the affliction of this poor people, Ps. 106: 44, 46.

6. The compliance of the soldiers (*v.* 14.) with the resolution of the princes, in which they show-

* Heb. *Darmasek.*
m 2 K. 15:27,37. Is. 7:4,5,9. 9:21.
n 13:17.
† Heb. *sons of valor.*
o 15:2. Deut. 6:14,15. 28:15,25. 29:24—28. 31:16,17. 32:30. Josh. 23:16. Is. 24:5,6. Jer. 2:19.
‡ Heb. *the second to.*
p Deut. 28:25,41.
q 11:4. Acts 7:26. 13:26.
r 19:1,2. 25:15,16. 1 K. 20:13,22,42. 2 K. 20:14,15.
s 5. Judg. 3:8. Ps. 69:26. Is. 10:5. 47:6. Ez. 25:12,15. 26:2. Ob. 10—16. Zech. 1:15.
t Gen. 11:4. Ezra 9:6. Rev. 18:5.
u Lev. 25:39—46.
x Jer. 25:29. Rom. 12:20,21. 1 Pet. 4:17,18.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—8. Those, who succeed eminently wise and pious men in the same important station, seldom enter into their views or imitate their conduct, in 'doing that which is right in the sight of the LORD:' nay, frequently they seem ambitious of being as opposite to them as possible; especially when they run into wickedness, after having received a pious education. (*Note*, 2 *K.* 21: 3.)—They who are groaning under the oppression of cruel tyrants, or suffering from the effects of their infatuated counsels, are called on to humble themselves before God for *their own* sins, to submit to his justice, and to seek deliverance from his mercy. On the other hand, if we are governed with equity and clemency, and live in peace and prosperity, through the prudent and successful administration of our rulers; we should bless God for his mercies, and show forth our gratitude in our daily conduct: and it is the constant duty of us all to pray for those who are, or shall be, placed over us, that they may be the instruments of God's goodness and mercy to us, and not of his wrath.—Tempters and examples of iniquity are often employed as scourges; and the sentence, which God *righteously* denounces, man may *unrighteously* execute. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVIII. V. 5. Had Ahaz been born and educated a heathen, he might perhaps have escaped remarkable judgments: but, as he was an apostate, 'the LORD his God' delivered him to be punished, into the hands of the Syrians and Israelites. (2 *K.* 16:5—9.) His people also were involved in the same guilt, and in the same punishment. Thus, the sins and sufferings of kings and people resemble the case of the human body; in which the head must share the sufferings of the members, and the members those of the head, by reason of that unity which subsists between them. (2 *Sam.* 24:1, 2. *P. O.* 1—9.) SCOTT.

Verses 6—8.

This is the greatest slaughter of the men of Judah that we read of, (13:17.) and must be ascribed to some *supernatural* terror or confusion. ID.

Verses 9—11.

This was the Lord's message to the conquerors by his prophet; and it naturally leads us to consider some questions concerning slavery.—Let it then be remembered, that there do not at present subsist any such distinctions between nations, as God, for wise reasons, was pleased, for a time, to establish between Israel and the Gentiles; but every man is now our *neighbor*, and in one sense our *brother*; our *fellow man*, if not our *fellow Christian*.—They indeed attempt too much who argue, that slavery in *all cases* is contrary to scriptural principles; and this has given its advocates some advantage in the controversy. But no man, well acquainted with the Word of God, needs fear to maintain, that the modern slave-trade stands in diametrical opposition to both the law and the gospel; as well as to the true interests of mankind. Those who have forfeited their lives by crimes against the state, have also forfeited their natural right to liberty; and might justly be sold for slaves, *by public authority*, declaring the crimes for which they were thus punished: [not in revenge, but that they may be restrained, by lawful power, from further injuring others; while, at the same time, they are placed in circumstances where their own reform and betterment may be attended to. ED.] Some other criminals, and some kind of fraudulent debtors, might be sold for a *limited* time, consistently with equity. Perhaps some prisoners taken in wars, evidently undertaken by all concerned from avarice and cruelty, might thus be punished, without transgressing the law of God; for the *policy* of it forms quite a distinct question. But to seize, enslave, and sell a fellow creature, who has, by *no criminality* known to us, or cognizable by us, merited so severe a treatment, must in all cases be contrary to the law of 'loving our neighbor as ourselves.' The poor Africans cannot be proved to be either criminals, debtors, or prisoners taken in rapacious or revengeful wars, waged by them against those who enslave them: on the contrary, they appear generally to be persons, who have been kidnapped from their relatives, or bought of them; or taken

with you, sins against [y] the LORD your God?

11 Now hear me therefore, and [z] deliver the captives again, which ye have taken captive of your brethren: for [a] the fierce wrath of the LORD *is* upon you.

12 Then certain of [b] the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, and Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, [c] stood up against them that came from the war,

13 And said unto them, Ye shall not bring in the captives hither: for whereas we have offended against the LORD *already*, ye intend to [d] add *more* to our sins and to our trespass: for our trespass is great, and *there is* fierce wrath against Israel.

14 So the armed men left the captives and the spoil, before the princes and all the congregation.

15 And the men which were [e] expressed by name rose up, and took the captives, and with the spoil [f] clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them, and shod them, and [g] gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon asses, and brought them to Jericho, [h] the city of palm trees, to their brethren: then they returned to Samaria.

16 ¶ At that time [i] did king Ahaz send unto the kings of Assyria to help him.

17 For again [k] the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, and carried away [*] captives.

18 The [l] Philistines also had invaded the cities of the low country, and of the south of Judah, and had taken [m] Beth-shemesh, and [n] Ajalon, and [o] Gederoth, and [p] Shocho with the villages thereof, and [q] Timnah with the villages thereof, Gimzo also and the villages thereof: and they dwelt there.

19 For [r] the LORD brought Judah low, [s] because of Ahaz king

ed a more true, heroic bravery than in taking the prisoners. It is a great honor for any man, to yield to the authority of reason and religion against his interest. The princes very generously sent home the poor captives well accommodated, *v.* 15. Those who hope to find mercy with God, must learn hence with what tenderness to carry themselves toward those who lie at their mercy.

V. 16—27. I. Here is the great distress, the kingdom of Ahaz was reduced to, for his sin. In general, 1. *The Lord brought Judah low*, *v.* 19. who had lately been very high in wealth, and power; they that will not humble themselves, God will justly humble by his judgments. Iniquity *brings men low*, Ps. 106: 43. 2. Ahaz made Judah naked. As his sin debased them, so it exposed them. It made them naked to their *shame;* naked to their *danger;* Ex. 32: 25. Sin strips men. In particular, the Edomites, to be revenged for Amaziah's cruel treatment of them, *ch.* 25. smote Judah, and carried off many captives, *v.* 17. The Philistines also insulted them, took and kept possession of several cities and villages that lay near them, *v.* 18. and so were revenged for Uzziah's incursions, *ch.* 26: 6. And, to show that it was purely the sin of Ahaz that brought the Philistines on his country, in the very year he died, the prophet Isaiah foretold the destruction of the Philistines by his son, Isa. 14: 28, 29.

II. The addition Ahaz made both to the national distress, and the national guilt.

1. To the distress, by making court to strange kings, in hopes of relief, *v.* 16. he could not confide in God, therefore at a vast expense got an interest in Assyria. He pillaged the house of God, and the king's house, and squeezed the princes for money to hire these foreign forces, *v.* 21. nor could he make any interest in them but with this. It is often found, that wicked men themselves have no real affection for those that revolt to them, nor care to do them a kindness. But what did Ahaz get by the king of Assyria? *He came*, but *distressed him*, and *strengthened him not*, *v.* 20. *helped him not*, *v.* 21. These forces quartered on his country, and so impoverished and weakened it; they grew insolent and imperious, and created him great vexation.

2. To the guilt, by making court to strange gods, in hopes of relief, *v.* 22. A brand of infamy is here set on him for it; *This is that king Ahaz*, that wretched man, who was the scandal of the house of David, and the curse and plague of his genera-

y 5.
z Is. 58:6. Jer. 34:14,15. Heb. 13:1—3.
a Ezra. 10:14. Matt. 5:7. 7:2. Jam. 2:13.
b 1 Chr. 28:1.
c Jer. 26:6.
d Num. 32:14. Josh. 22:17,18. Matt. 23:32,35. Rom. 2:5.
e 12.
f Job 31:15—23. Is. 58:7. Matt. 25: 35—45. Acts 9:39. 1 Tim. 5:10. Jam. 2:15,16. 1 John 3:17,18.
g 2 K. 6:22. Prov. 25:21,22. Luke 6; 27. Rom. 12:20,21.
h Deut. 34:3. Judg. 1:16.
i 2 K. 16:5—7. Is. 7:1—9,17.
k 25:11,12. Lev. 26:18.
* Heb. *a captivity.*
l Ez. 16:27,57.
m Josh. 15:10. 1 Sam. 6:9,18.
n 11:10. *Aijalon.*
o Josh. 15:41.
p Josh. 15:48. *Socoh.*
q Judg. 14:1. *Timnath.*
r Deut. 28:43. 1 Sam. 2:7. Job 40:12. Ps. 106:41—43. Prov. 29:23.
s Hos. 5:11. Mic. 6:16.

prisoners in wars, excited on purpose to supply that infamous market. If any of them be criminals, the European merchants know it not: they have no authority from either God or man to be their executioners; and their descendants certainly are not criminals. Were it indeed true, (which is far from being the case,) that if not bought by the Europeans, they would be slain by the conqueror; we need only answer, 'You must not "do evil, that good may come."' . . . If you have no other way of rescuing them, you had better leave them to fight their own battles, and treat their captives as they please, without interfering: and you certainly would do so, if *avarice* were no more concerned in the business than *humanity* is.' It is true, that the Scripture throughout speaks of slavery as actually existing: but the *judicial* law was very distinct from the *moral* law, as has before been shown. (*Note*, *Ex.* 21:1—6.) [and an account of *Heb. Slavery*, p. 661. vol. I.] Like other municipal laws, it aimed to prevent those evils, which originated from abuses and human passions, and which could not be terminated except by constant miracle; as in the case of divorces, [and polygamy.] The apostles and evangelists were *preachers*, not *legislators;* they were not empowered to subvert the foundations of civil government throughout the world; and they found slavery universally and inseparably interwoven with them. Every one must therefore perceive what confusion, what reproach, and what additional enmity to Christianity, must have been occasioned by such an attempt. They indeed laid down the principles, which, when reduced to practice, will infallibly annihilate slavery: and, taking things as they then stood in civil society, they taught all Christians, how to accommodate themselves to their stations, consistently with their profession, even if they were slaves, and slaves in a heathen family. [See '*Wayland's* Elts. Mor. Science,' and '*Channing* on Slavery.']—The question is, therefore, to be decided not by *facts*, but by *The moral Law of God*, and the tendency of the GOSPEL. [Christ says, 'If a man strike thee on one cheek, turn the other,' but this does not give a *right to strike*. Paul says 'Obey your masters,' but, 'as to the Lord,' i. e. from duty to God; he does not touch the abstract question of rights. See as above. ED.] The practice could not *then* be regularly opposed, without creating convulsions in society; nor can it ever be successfully rectified by *preachers:* it is the work of enlightened, humane, and pious *legislators*.—Individual believers under both dispensations possessed slaves: they took matters as they were; and treated their slaves with such equity and humanity, as rendered it a kindness to them, to take them out of ungodly families. And a pious West Indian, who laments the enormities which he cannot but witness, arising from this unnatural trade, and who sincerely wishes and prays for its entire abolition, may, in the meantime, deem it better, quietly to set his neighbors an example of treating slaves with brotherly lenity and kindness, conducive to their real happiness, than indiscriminately to liberate them: when perhaps it might occasion fatal effects on the minds of the other planters and their slaves; if this were done by an individual, in opposition to all his neighbors, and without the interference of legal authority. When strangers are brought so far from home, and are not able to return, a truly pious and humane man may render the yoke tolerable to them. But, who had a right by compulsion to bring his unoffending brethren so far from their native land? And what proportion do pious and humane persons, in most communities, bear to those of an opposite character? A succession of very wise and good kings, if that could be ensured, might render even absolute monarchy a blessing. But, while mankind are what they are, men of reflection, and lovers of their brethren, will never be friends to despotism in kingdoms, or in families: and absolute monarchs, and the holders of slaves, (except of such as are condemned, by an equitable sentence, to that condition, as the punishment of their crimes,) will ever be justly exposed to the determined opposition of mankind, even when they do not merit detestation by any direct abuse of power. SCOTT.

Verses 12—15.

It is remarkable, that Pekah is not mentioned in this transaction concerning the prisoners: but probably he was at the head of the army, when the prophet addressed them. (6)—The courage of these princes, who ventured thus determinedly to oppose the whole army, insolent with victory and enriched with booty, was admirable and highly commendable; and the compliance of the army was very wonderful, and perhaps unparalleled in history; and the humane treatment, and the *carrying back of the captives to their brethren*, deserve all possible applause.—The narrative shows, that even Israel, amidst all their idolatries and iniquities, had not forgotten, and were not disposed to question, the divine authority of the law of Moses. ID.

Verses 16—18.

(2 *K.* 16.7—9.) 'This is the first time we read of the king of Assyria, excepting 2 *K.* 15:19. where Pul king of Assyria is mentioned as a powerful prince, who invaded the Israelites. Before his time, we read nothing of the Assyrian monarchy, which grew by degrees to its greatness from small beginnings. . . . If their large empire had been of long standing, we should in all probability have heard of them before this time, as we do often afterwards.' *Patrick.* (*Note*, 2 *Kings* 15:19, 20.) —*The Philistines*, &c. (18) *M. R.* 26:6.—2 *K.* 18:8. *Is.* 14:28—32. ID.

Verse 19.

He made Judah naked.] The Lord Himself was the glory and defence of Judah: but Ahaz, by seducing his subjects from his worship

of [t] Israel; for he [u] made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the LORD.

20 And [x] Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria came unto him, and [y] distressed him, but strengthened him not.

21 For Ahaz [z] took away a portion *out* of the house of the LORD, and *out* of the house of the king, and of the princes, and gave *it* unto the king of Assyria: but he helped him not.

22 And [a] in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the LORD: [b] this *is that* king Ahaz.

23 For [c] he sacrificed unto the gods of * Damascus, which smote him; and he said, [d] Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, *therefore* will I [e] sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But [f] they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel.

24 And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and [g] cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and [h] shut up the doors of the house of the LORD; and [i] he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem.

25 And in every several city of Judah he made high places to † burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger the LORD God of his fathers.

26 ¶ Now [k] the rest of his acts, and of all his ways, first and last, behold, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

27 And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the
B. C. 726. city, *even* in Jerusalem: but [l] they brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.

CHAP. XXIX.

Hezekiah reigns well, opens the doors of the temple, and exhorts the priests and Levites to prepare every thing for the worship of God, 1—11. They sanctify themselves, and cleanse the temple and its vessels, 12—19. Hezekiah offers solemn sacrifices; and the Levites show more zeal than the priests, 20—36.

[a] HEZEKIAH began to reign *when he was* five and twenty years old, and he reigned nine and twenty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Abijah, the daughter of [b] Zechariah.

2 And he [c] did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done.

3 He, [d] in the first year of his reign, in the first month, [e] opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them.

4 And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the [f] east-street,

5 And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites; [g] Sanctify now

t 21:2.
u Gen. 3:7,11. Ex. 32:25. Rev. 3:17, 18. 16:15.
x 2 K. 15:29. 16:7—10. *Tiglath-pileser.* 1 Chr. 5:26. Hos. 5:13.
y 2 K. 17:5. Is. 7:20. 30:3,16. Jer. 2:37.
z 12:9. 2 K. 18:15,16. Prov. 20:25.
a 33:12. Ps. 50:15. Is. 1:5. Ez. 21: 13. Hos. 5:15. Rev. 16:9—11.
b Esth. 7:5. Ps. 52:7.
c 25:14. 2 K. 16:12,13.
* Heb. *Darmesek.*
d Hab. 1:11.
e Jer. 44:15—18.
f Jer. 44:20—28.
g 2 K. 16:17,18. 25:13,&c.
h 29:3,7.
i 33:3—5. Jer. 2:28. Hos. 12:11. Acts 17:16,23.
† Or, *offer.*
k 20:34. 27:7—9. 2 K. 16:19,20.
l 21:20. 26:23. 33:20. 1 Sam. 2:30. Prov. 10:7.
a 2 K. 18:1—3. 1 Chr. 3:13. Is. 1:1. Hos. 1:1. Mic. 1:1. Matt. 1:9,10. *Ezekias.*
b 26:5. Is. 8:2.
c 28:1. 34:2. 2 K. 18:3.
d 34:3. Ec. 9:10. Matt. 6:33.
e 28:24. 2 K. 16:14—18.
f 32:6. Neh. 3:29. Jer. 19:2.
g 35:6. Ex. 19:10,15. 1 Chr. 15:12.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 9—27. It is happy, when the authority of God's Word, or the expostulations of his ministers, deter men from persisting in mercenary cruelties; or excite legislators and princes to put a stop to their iniquity. If 'he shall have judgment without mercy, who has showed no mercy;' what will be his doom, who has been guilty of the most flagrant injustice to the inoffensive stranger, merely because he had it in his power to oppress him! Surely, in such a case, while the ministers of the Gospel warn, exhort, and beseech the oppressors to deliver the captives up, whom they have taken of their brethren: the legislators and rulers of every state should peremptorily refuse admission into their dominions, to those bond-slaves, whom men have so unjustly reduced under their subjection. For we have offended against the Lord already, and this connivance must add still more to our sin and to our trespass, till fierce wrath come upon the nation. Nay, if the poor captives, who have been violently torn from their native country, and who have no power to return to their beloved relatives, could, when dismissed and kindly treated, be carried back again to them, it would be a conduct becoming the disciples of Christ; it might tend to render the name of CHRISTIAN respectable in those distant regions, where the cruelty, treachery, and avarice of those who bear it, have rendered it odious; and thus at length prepare the way for the propagation of the Gospel among these poor benighted heathens. And, instead of injuring the interests of the community, or of any individuals; (except the most atrocious of the oppressors, who have no right to be considered;) we may venture, on general scriptural principles, to foretell, that above all other measures, it would tend the most effectually to the lengthening of our tranquillity and prosperity. (*Dan.* 4: 27.)—But if those, who commiserate their oppressed fellow creatures, long to see their grievous servitude terminated, they must unite in prayer for the divine blessing on the exertions of those, who honorably stand forth in this benevolent cause. For, except the Lord touch the hearts of such as are to decide on it, every exertion will be in vain. SCOTT.

and service, had degraded them, stripped them of all their ornament, deprived them of all their protection, and left them defenceless and contemptible in the hands of their feeblest enemies. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verses 20, 21.

(*Note*, 2 *K.* 16:7—9.) Tiglath-pilezer 'did come to his assistance against the king of Syria, . . . he took Damascus, carried the people captive, and delivered Ahaz from the power of the Syrians. . . . But this did Ahaz little good; for he . . . rather weakened him by exhausting his treasures, and by destroying Samaria, whereby the way was opened to invade his country the more easily in the next reign. Thus many countries, in latter ages, by calling in the assistance of some foreign prince against their enemies, have been overthrown and conquered by those who came to their help.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIX. V. 3—5. It seems, public worship at the temple was entirely suppressed and prohibited, during the latter years of Ahaz.

yourselves, and [h] sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy *place*.

6 For [i] our fathers have trespassed, and done *that which was* evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and [k] have forsaken him, and have [l] turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and [*] turned *their* backs.

7 Also [m] they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense, nor offered burnt-offerings in the holy *place* unto the God of Israel.

8 [n] Wherefore the wrath of the LORD was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to [†] trouble, [o] to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes.

9 For, lo, [p] our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives *are* in captivity for this.

10 Now [q] *it is* in my heart [r] to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, [s] that his fierce wrath may turn away from us.

11 My sons, be not now [‡] negligent: for [t] the LORD hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and [§] burn incense.

12 Then the Levites arose, Mahath the son of Amasai, and Joel the son of Azariah, of the sons of the [u] Kohathites: and [x] of the sons of Merari; Kish the son of Abdi, and Azariah the son of Jehalelel: and [y] of the Gershonites; Joah the son of Zimmah, and Eden the son of Joah:

13 And of the sons of [z] Elizaphan; Shimri, and Jeiel: and of the sons of [a] Asaph; Zechariah, and Mattaniah:

14 And of the sons of [b] Heman; Jehiel, and Shimei: and of the sons of [c] Jeduthun; Shemaiah, and Uzziel.

15 And they gathered their brethren, and [d] sanctified themselves, and came, according to the commandment of the king, [‖] by the words of the LORD, [e] to cleanse the house of the LORD.

16 And the priests went into [f] the inner part of the house of the LORD, to cleanse *it*, and brought out [g] all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the LORD, into the court of the house of the LORD. And the Levites took *it*, to carry *it* out abroad into the brook [h] Kidron.

17 Now they began on the first *day* of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day of the month came they to [i] the porch of the LORD: so they sanctified the house of the LORD in eight days; and in [k] the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end.

18 Then they went in to Hezekiah the king, and said, We have cleansed all the house of the LORD, and [l] the altar of burnt-offering, with all the vessels thereof, and [m] the shew-bread table, with all the vessels thereof.

19 Moreover, [n] all the vessels, which king Ahaz in his reign did cast away in his transgression, have we prepared and sanctified: and, behold, they *are* before the altar of the LORD.

20 ¶ Then Hezekiah the king [°] rose early, and gathered the rulers of the city, and went up

h 16, 34:3—8. Ex. 36:25. Matt. 21: 12,13. 1 Cor. 3:16,17. 2 Cor. 6:16. 7:1. Eph. 5:26,27.
i 28:2—4,23—25. 34:21. Ezra 5:12. 9: 7. Neh. 9:16,32. Jer. 16:19. 44:21, 22. Lam. 5:7. Dan. 9:8,16. Matt. 10:37. 23:30—32.
k Jer. 2:13,17.
l Jer. 2:27. Ez. 8:16.
* Heb. *given the neck.*
m 28:24. Lev. 24:2—8. 2 K. 16:17,18.
n 24:18. 34:24,25. 36:14—16. Deut. 28:15—20.
† Heb. *commotion.*
o Lev. 26:32. Deut. 28:59. 1 K. 9:8. Jer. 18:16. 19:8. 25:9,18. 29:18.
p 28:5—8,17. Lev. 26:17.
q 6:7,8.
r 15:12,13. 23:16. 34:30—32. Ezra 10:3. Neh. 9:38. 10:1,&c. Jer. 34: 15,16. 50:5. 2 Cor. 8:5.
s 2 K. 23:3,26.
‡ Or, *deceived.* Gal. 6:7,8.
t Num. 3:6—9. 8:6—14. 18:2—6. Deut. 10:8.
§ Or, *offer sacrifice.* Num. 16:35—40. 18:7.
u Ex. 6:16—25. Num. 4:2,&c. 1 Chr. 6:16—18. 15:5. 23:12—20.
x 1 Chr. 6:19,44. 15:6. 23:21—23.
y 1 Chr. 6:17,20,21. 15:7. 23:7—11.
z Lev. 10:4. *Elzaphan.* 1 Chr. 15:8.
a 1 Chr. 6:39. 15:17. 25:2.
b 1 Chr. 6:33. 15:19.
c 1 Chr. 25:1,3,6.
d 5.
‖ Or, *in the business.* 30:12.
e 1 Chr. 23:28.
f 3:8. 5:7. Ex. 26:33,34. 1 K. 6:19 20. Heb. 9:2—8,23,24.
g Ex. 36:29. Matt. 23:27.
h 15:16. 2 K. 23:4—6. John 18:1. *Cedron.*
i 7. 3:4. 1 K. 6:3. 1 Chr. 28:11.
k Ex. 12:2—8.
l 4:1—8.
m 4:8. 13:11.
n 28:24.
o Gen. 22:3. Ex. 24:4. Josh. 6:12. Jer. 25:4.

V. 12—19. We have here busy work, good work, needful work, the cleansing of the house of the Lord.

Several of the Levites, employed in this work are here named, (*v.* 12, 13.) we cannot think merely because chief in place, for then surely the high priest, or some of the heads of the courses of the priests, would have been mentioned; but because more zealous and active than the rest. They began on the first day of the first month, a happy beginning of the new year, and that promised a good year; thus should every year begin with the reformation of what is amiss, and the purging away, by repentance, of all the defilements contracted the foregoing year. Though the vessels of the sanctuary may be profaned for a while, God will find a time and way to sanctify them. Neither his ordinances, nor his people, shall be suffered to fail for ever.

V. 20—36. The temple being cleansed, we have here an account of the good use immediately made of it. A solemn assembly was called to meet the king at the temple, the very next day; (*v.* 20.) and very glad, no doubt, were all the good people in Jerusalem, Ps. 122: 1. As soon as Hezekiah heard the temple was ready for him, he rose early

(7. 28:24. 2 *K.* 16:17, 18.) The only reason advanced for a contrary opinion, is this: it is not said, that the sacred fire on the altar of burnt-offering was extinguished, or that it was re-kindled by fire from heaven, as at the dedication of the temple.—*Sanctify*, &c. (5) The altar, made after the model of that Ahaz saw at Damascus, formed by far the worst filthiness, from which they needed to be cleansed. SCOTT.

Verses 6, 7.

(*M. R.*) *Our fathers*, &c. (6) When the honor of God was concerned, Hezekiah did not hesitate to criminate those who had gone before. (*Matt.* 10:37—39. 2 *Cor.* 5:16. *P. O.* 1 *Pet.* 1:17—21. ID.

Turned away, &c.] 'This seems to signify, that Ahaz brought in a way of worship directly contrary to the law of God, which commanded them to worship toward the ark, which was placed in the W. But he ordered that they should turn their backs on that, . . . and worship toward the E. [like the sun and fire worshippers,] where he had set his altar. And at last he shut up the doors of the temple, that they should not worship there at all.' *Patrick.* (*Note*, *Ez.* 8:16.) ID.

Verses 8, 9.

The defeat and dreadful slaughter recorded in the foregoing ch. seem here referred to, as the effect of some extraordinary terror from God on the minds of the Jews. ID.

Be not now negligent. (11) Do not err · 'do not persist in that error; in which you have neglected that worship of God, to which you were chosen.' *Junius, in Robertson.* SCOTT.

Verses 12—19.

(*M. R.* u—c.) When the ark was to be removed, and on other necessary occasions, the priests might enter the holy of holies, though not at other times. (*Num.* 4:5.)—Ahaz died about the close of the year; and Hezekiah had given timely orders to the priests and Levites, for them to begin this work with the new year. It is surprising that Ahaz did not cut in pieces all the tables of shew-bread, and the other golden and silver furniture of the temple; but merely cast them aside. ID.

According to the commandment of the king, &c. (15) When Ahaz commanded Urijah contrary to the law of God, both he, and the priest who obeyed his impious command, acted most wickedly. (2 *K.* 16:10—16.) But the priests and Levites acted right, in proportion as they obeyed 'the commandment of the king by the words of the Lord.' Hezekiah properly improved his talent, without intermeddling out of his province; and they as properly yielded obedience.—Why should not the case be the same, under the Christian dispensation? Was Hezekiah's interposition any part of the ritual law of Moses, which Christianity has superseded? (*Note*, 30:12.) ID.

to the house of the LORD.

21 And they brought [p] seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he-goats, for [q] a sin-offering for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah. And he commanded the priests the sons of Aaron to offer *them* on the altar of the LORD.

22 So they killed the bullocks, and the priests received the blood, and [r] sprinkled *it* on the altar: likewise, when they had killed the rams, they sprinkled the blood upon the altar: they killed also the lambs, and they sprinkled the blood upon the altar.

23 And they brought * forth the he-goats *for* the sin-offering before the king and the congregation; and [s] they laid their hands upon them:

24 And the priests killed them, and they made [t] reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make an atonement for all Israel: for the king commanded *that* the burnt-offering and [u] the sin-offering *should be made* for all Israel.

25 And [x] he set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, [y] according to the commandment of David, and of [z] Gad the king's seer, and [a] Nathan the prophet: [b] for *so was* the commandment † of the LORD by his prophets.

26 And the Levites stood with [c] the instruments of David, and [d] the priests with the trumpets.

27 And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt-offering upon the altar. And ‡ when the burnt-offering began, [e] the song of the LORD began *also* with the trumpets, and with § the instruments *ordained* by David king of Israel.

28 And [f] all the congregation worshipped, and || the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: *and* all *this continued* until the burnt-offering was finished.

29 And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all *that were* ¶ present with him, [g] bowed themselves, and worshipped.

30 Moreover, Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the LORD, [h] with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And [i] they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.

31 Then Hezekiah answered and said, Now ye have ** consecrated yourselves unto the LORD, come near, and bring [k] sacrifices and [l] thank-offerings into the house of the LORD. And the congregation brought in sacrifices, and thank-offerings; and [m] as many as were of a free heart, burnt-offerings.

32 And [n] the number of the burnt-offerings, which the congregation brought, was threescore and ten bullocks, an hundred rams, *and* two hundred lambs: all these *were* for a burnt-offering to the LORD.

33 And the [o] consecrated things *were* six hundred oxen, and three thousand sheep.

34 But [p] the priests were too few, so that they could not flay all the burnt-offerings: wherefore [q] their brethren the Levites †† did help them, till the work was ended, and until the *other* priests had sanctified themselves: [r] for the Levites *were* more [s] upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests.

35 And also [t] the burnt-offerings *were* in abundance, with [u] the fat of the peace-offerings, and [x] the drink-offerings for *every* burnt-offering. [y] So the

1. The people were free: though not as in the glorious days of Solomon, but according to what they had, and as much as one could expect, considering their poverty and the great decay of piety among them, *v.* 32—35.

2. *The priests were few*, too few for the service, *v.* 34. It is recorded here, to the perpetual shame of the priests, that though so well provided for out of the offerings of the Lord made by fire, yet they did not mind their business!

3. The Levites were forward. They (*v.* 34.) were better affected to the work, and better prepared and qualified for it; this was their praise, and, in recompense, they had the honor to be employed in the priests' work; they *helped them flay the offerings*. This was not according to the law, (Lev. 1: 5, 6.) but the irregularity was dispensed with in cases of necessity, and thus encouragement given to the faithful, zealous Levites, and a just disgrace put on the careless priests.

4. All rejoiced in this blessed turn of affairs, *v.* 36. (1.) As it was so soon brought about, without opposition. (2.) For the hand of God was plainly in it; *God had prepared the people* by the secret influences of his grace, which did very much ex-

p Num. 23:1,14,29. 1 Chr. 15:26. Ezra 8:35. Job 42:8. Ez. 45:23.
q Lev. 4:3—14. Num. 15:22—24. 2 Cor. 5:21.
r Lev. 1:5. 4:7,18,34. 8:15,19,24. Heb. 9:21,22.
* Heb. *near.*
s Lev. 1:4. 4:15,24.
t Lev. 6:30. 8:15. Ez. 45:15,17. Dan. 9:24. Rom. 5:10,11. 2 Cor. 5:18—21. Col. 1:20,21. Heb. 2:17.
u Lev. 4:13,&c.
x 1 Chr. 9:33. 15:16—22. 16:4,5,42. 25:1—7.
y 8:14. 35:15. 1 Chr. 23:5. 28:12,19.
z 2 Sam. 24:11. 1 Chr. 21:9. 29:29.
a 2 Sam. 7:2—4. 12:1—7.
b 30:12.
† Heb. *by the hand of the LORD, by the hand of his prophets.*
c 1 Chr. 23:5. Am. 6:5.
d 5:12,13. Num. 10:10. Josh. 6:4—9. 1 Chr. 15:24. 16:6. Ps. 81:3. 98:5, 6. 150:3.
‡ Heb. *in the time.*
e 7:3. 20:21. 23:18. Ps. 136:1.
§ Heb. *hands of instruments.*
f Ps. 66:24—26. Rev. 5:8—14.
|| Heb. *song.* Ps. 89:15.
¶ Heb. *found.*
g 20:18. 1 Chr. 29:20. Ps. 72:11. Rom. 14:11. Phil. 2:10,11.
h 2 Sam. 23:1,2. 1 Chr. 16:7—36.
i Ps. 32:11. 33:1. 95:1,2. 100:1,2. 149: 2. Phil. 4:4.
** Or, *filled your hand.* 13:9.
k Lev. 1: 3:
l Lev. 7:12.
m Lev. 1:3. 23:38. Ezra 1:4.
n 1 K. 3:4. 8:63. 1 Chr. 29:21. Ezra 6:17.
o 31.
p 5. 30:16,17.
q 35:11. Num. 8:15,19. 18:3,6,7.
†† Heb. *strengthened them.*
r 30:3.
s 1 Chr. 29:17. Ps. 7:10.
t 32.
u Ex. 29:13. Lev. 3:15,16.
x Gen. 35:14. Lev. 23:13. Num. 15: 5,7,10.
y 1 Chr. 16:37—42. Ezra 6:18. 1 Cor. 14:40.

Verses 21—24.

It is not here stated, that the prescribed rules, respecting the sin-offerings, for the priest, the ruler, or the nation, as to carrying the blood into the most holy place, and burning the bodies without the camp, were observed. Perhaps this was not done: and in that case, these sin-offerings must be considered, as in some respects different from those prescribed in that part of the law. (*Lev.* 4:4—7, 11, 12. 6:30. *Heb.* 13:9—14, *v.* 11, 12.)—The word here rendered *he-goats*, (21) is not used in Scripture till after the captivity, and learned men think that this is one proof that Ezra compiled these books.—Hezekiah seems to have had respect to the plan which he afterwards proposed, and which is recorded in the ensuing ch. namely, of uniting the whole nation of Israel in celebrating the passover, and in the worship of God. SCOTT.

Verses 25, 30.

The temple-psalmody was regulated with the concurrence of these other prophets, as well as by the appointment of David. (23:11—21, *v.* 13. 1 *Chr.* 9:22. 15:16. 16:4—6. 25:1—8. *Ezra* 3:8—11. *Ps.* 33:2, 3. 81:1—5. 95:1—6. 150.) ID.

The priests with the trumpets. (26.) The blowing of trumpets by the priests, on various occasions, and in particular over the sacrifices, was a part of the ritual law of Moses, and is here exactly distinguished from the psalmody instituted by David and the prophets.—*Asaph the seer.* (30) *Ps.* 73: *title.* 74: *title.* SCOTT.

Verses 31, 32.

As the burnt sacrifices were wholly consumed on the altar, the offering of them evinced greater zeal and liberality, than the oblation of peace-offerings, a great part of which was eaten by the offerer and his friends. (*Lev.* 1:3:) ID.

Verse 33.

It is probable *the consecrated things* denote the peace-offerings and thank-offerings. ID.

Verse 34.

It does not appear that any idolatrous priests were punished. It was deemed more proper, that upright and duly sanctified Levites should flay the sacrifices, than unclean or profane priests. This is considered by many as irregular, but it is nowhere prohibited. Indeed, before the Levites were given to the sons of Aaron, it is proba

service of the house of the LORD was set in order.

36 And [z] Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that [a] God had prepared the people: for [b] the thing was *done* suddenly.

CHAP. XXX.

Hezekiah proclaims a solemn passover to be kept in the second month, and calls on both Judah and Israel to unite in celebrating it, 1--5. His message to the Israelites, and the reception with which it met, 6—12. A great multitude, having destroyed the altars for idolatry in Jerusalem, prepare to keep the feast, 13—18. Hezekiah prays for those who are not ceremonially clean, and is graciously answered, 17—20. They keep the feast fourteen days with great joy, 21—26. The priests bless the people, 27.

AND Hezekiah sent [a] to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters [b] also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come [c] to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, [d] to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel.

2 For [e] the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the passover [f] in the second month.

3 For they could not keep it [g] at that time, [h] because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem.

4 And the thing [i] pleased the king and all the congregation.

5 So they [j] established a decree [k] to make proclamation throughout all Israel, [l] from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem: [m] for they had not done *it* of a long *time in such sort* as it was written.

6 So [n] the posts went with the letters from † the king and his princes, throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, [o] turn again unto the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you, that are [p] escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria.

7 And be not ye [q] like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, *who* therefore gave them up to desolation, [r] as ye see.

8 Now ‡ be ye not stiff-necked as your fathers *were, but* § yield yourselves unto the LORD, and [s] enter into his sanctuary, [t] which he hath sanctified for ever: and [u] serve the LORD your God, that [x] the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.

9 For [y] if ye turn again unto the LORD, your brethren and your children *shall find* compassion before them that lead them captive, [z] so that they shall come again into this land: for [a] the LORD your God *is* gracious and merciful, and [b] will not [c] turn away *his* face from you, if ye return unto him.

10 So [d] the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, even unto Zebulun: but [e] they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them.

11 Nevertheless, [f] divers of Asher, and Manasseh, and of Zebulun, [g] humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem.

12 Also in Judah [h] the hand of God was to

[z] 1 Chr. 29:9,17. Ezra 6:22. 1 Thes. 3:8,9.
[a] 30:12. 1 Chr. 29:18. Ps. 10:17. Prov. 16:1.
[b] Acts 2:41.
[c] 11:13,16.
[d] 10,11. 25:7. 35:6. Hos. 5:4. 7:8, 9. 11:8.
[e] Deut. 16:2—6.
[f] Ex. 12:3—20. 1 Cor. 5:7,8.
[g] 1 Chr. 13:1—3. Prov. 11:14. 15:22. Ec. 4:13.
[h] Num. 9:10,11.
[i] Ex. 12:6,18.
[j] 29:34.
[k] Heb. *was right in the eyes of.* 1 Chr. 13:4.
[l] Ezra 6:8—12. Esth. 8:12—15. 8:8—10. 9:20,21. Dan. 6:8.
[m] 24:9. 35:12. Lev. 23:2,4. Dan. 4: 1,&c.
[n] Judg. 20:1.
[o] 35:18.
[p] Job 9:25. Esth. 3:14. Jer. 51:31.
† Heb. *the hand of the.*
[q] Is. 55:6,7. Jer. 4:1. Ez. 33:11. Hos. 14:1. Joel 2:12,13. Jam. 4:8.
[r] 28:20. 1 K. 15:19,29. 1 Chr. 5:26. Is. 1:8.
[s] Ez. 20:18. Zech. 1:3,4.
[t] 29:8.
‡ Heb. *harden not your necks.* 36:13. Ex. 32:9. Deut. 10:16.
§ Heb. *give the hand.* 1 Chr. 29:24. *marg.* Ezra 10:19. Ps. 68:31. Rom. 6:13,16,19.
[u] Ps. 63:2. 68:24. 73:17.
[x] Ps. 132:13,14.
[y] Deut. 6:13,17. Josh. 24:15. Matt. 4:10. John 12:26. Rom. 6:22. Col. 3:22—24. Rev. 7:15.
[z] 28:11,13. 29:10. 2 K. 23:26. Ps. 78:49.
[a] 7:14. Lev. 26:40—42. Deu 30:2—4. 1 K. 8:50. Ps. 106:46.
[b] Jer. 29:12—14. 31:27,28.
[c] Ex. 34:6,7. Ps. 86:5,15. ...5:7,8. Mic. 7:18.
[d] 15:2. Is. 55:7. Ez. 18:30—32.
[e] Jer. 18:17.
[f] 6. Esth. 3:13,15. 8:10,14. Job 9:25.
[g] 36:16. Gen. 19:14. Neh. 2:19. Job 12:4. Luke 8:53. 16:14. 22:63,64. 23:35. Acts 17:32. Heb. 11:36.
[h] 18. 11:16. Acts 17:34.
[i] 12:6,7,12. 33:12,19,23. 34:27. Ex. 10:3. Lev. 26:41. Dan. 5:22. Luke 14:11. 18:14. Jam. 4:10. 1 Pet. 5:6.
[k] 29:36. 1 Chr. 29:18,19. Ezra 7:27. Ps. 110:3. Jer. 32:39. Phil. 2:13. 2 Thes. 2:13,14.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The removal of a single individual of very bad character, from any public situation, and the succession of a wise and pious person in his stead, may be productive of most important and extensive good effects. What an honor is it to be employed, in diffusing piety and felicity through whole nations! But how dreadful will be the condemnation of those, who spread guilt and misery in so extensive a manner!—Whether a godly man inherit a kingdom, or an estate; whether he change his station in society, or his place of abode, or be removed to a new situation in the church; his *first actions* will be of considerable importance, and often leave an abiding impression: and regulations may frequently be then made without difficulty, before different habits and expectations have been formed, which would afterward become almost impracticable.—Even in that nation, in which God had appointed that apostates and idolaters should be punished with death, the most effectual revivals of true religion were produced by example, exhortation, and encouragement. Happy and honorable will they be, who shall thus become 'nursing fathers' to the church, not by bribes and preferments, but by countenancing those, who zealously labor to promote acknowledged truth and practical godliness, even though not all exactly in the same way. —The nominal ministers of religion have, in all ages, been lamentably backward, in laboring and venturing to promote the cause of God: and the higher their *dignities*, and the greater their *emoluments*, the more evident, alas, frequently, has been their aversion to the *work* of the ministry.—The true minister of Christ, however, should take heed first to himself, and then to his ministry. His own conscience, heart, and life must first be purified, by repentance, and faith in the divine Savior; and then he may hope to prosper in endeavoring to convert others also, and to promote the pure and spiritual worship of God. SCOTT.

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ble, they who brought the sacrifice both slaughtered and flayed it; (*Note, Lev.* 1:5—9.) afterwards these services seem to have formed a part of the ministry assigned to the Levites, at the will of the priests; but at length it became customary for the priests to perform them. The Levites might not in any case sprinkle the blood, burn the fat and flesh, or approach the altar. SCOTT.

Verse 36.

The great and sudden change produced in the conduct of the people, and the alacrity with which they concurred in measures, to which much opposition had been expected, evidenced that 'God had prepared' them. (*M. R.—Note*, 30:12.) ED.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXX. V. 1. The other tribes of Israel were as much bound to obey the law of Moses, as Judah and Benjamin were; but Hezekiah had no authority over them. Ephraim and Manasseh, as principal tribes, seem to be put for the whole kingdom of Israel. SCOTT. See also note, end of 1 Sam. p. 120. ED.

Verses 6—9.

The word rendered 'posts' signifies *runners:* for men were then, and still are in many places, trained, and kept on purpose, to convey depatches speedily by running. [Note, Mat. 5:41. *latter part.*] SCOTT.

Verse 12.

The language of this v. is entitled to special attention. 'The commandment of the king and his princes, by the word of the LORD,' met with ready and general obedience from the men of Judah, because 'the hand of God was to give them one heart to do it.' If the rulers had

give them one heart to do [i] the commandment of the king and of the princes, [j] by the word of the LORD.

[*Practical Observations.*]

13 ¶ And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in [k] the second month, a very great congregation.

14 And they arose, and took away the [l] altars that *were* in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast *them* into [m] the brook Kidron.

15 Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth *day* of the second month: and the priests and the Levites [n] were ashamed, [o] and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt-offerings into the house of the LORD.

16 And [p] they stood in their * place [q] after their manner, according to the law of [r] Moses, the man of God: [s] the priests sprinkled the blood, *which they received* of the hand of the Levites.

17 For *there were* many in the congrega-

i Deut. 4:2,5,6. 1 Thes. 4:2.
j 29:25. Acts 4:19.
k See on 2.
l 28:24. 34:4,7. 2 K. 18:22. 23:12,13. Is. 2:18—20.
m 15:16. 29:16. 2 Sam. 15:23. John 18:1. *Cedron.*
n 29:34. Ez. 16:61—63. 43:10,11.
o 24. 5:11. 29:15,34. 31:18.—Ex. 19: 10:22.
p 35:10,15.
* Heb. *standing.*
q 2 K. 11:14.
r See on Deut. 33:1.
s 35:10,11. Lev. 1:5. Heb. 11:28.

over, and to summon the people to it.

1. Expresses are sent post throughout all the tribes of Israel, (*v.* 1, 6.) with memorials earnestly pressing the people to take this opportunity of returning to God from whom they had revolted. Now, in these circular letters, Hezekiah discovers a great concern both for the honor of God, and the welfare of the neighboring kingdom, the prosperity of which he seems passionately desirous of, though he not only received no tribute from it, but it had often, and not long since, been vexatious to his kingdom. This is rendering good for evil.

Observe, (1.) What he presses them to, (*v.* 8.) *Yield unto the Lord. Give the hand*, so the word is; i. e. 'Consent to take Him for your God:' a bargain is confirmed by giving the hand. 'In order to this, be not *stiff-necked as your fathers;* let not your corrupt and wicked wills rise up in rebellion against the will of God. Say not that you will do what you please, but resolve to do what He pleases.' We perceive in the carnal mind a stiffness and obstinacy, an unaptness to comply with God; we have it from our fathers, it is bred in the bone with us; this must be conquered, and the will melted into the will of God. Thus they who through grace have turned to God themselves, should do all they can to bring others back to Him.

(2.) What arguments he uses, *v.* 6, 7, 8, 9. Could any thing be expressed more pathetically, more movingly? Could there be a better cause, and better pleaded?

2. The entertainment Hezekiah's messengers and message met with. It does not appear that Hoshea, now king of Israel, took umbrage from, or gave opposition to, the dispersing of these proclamations through his kingdom, nor forbade his subjects to accept the invitation; for though he did evil, yet *not like the kings of Israel before him*, 2 K. 17: 2. He saw ruin coming on his kingdom, and if any of his subjects would try this expedient to prevent it, they had his full permission. But, for the people,

(1.) The generality slighted the call, and turned a deaf ear to it; so far from complying with it, they abused them that brought it, (*v.* 10.) not only refused, but with disdain. No marvel the *king's* messengers were thus despitefully used by this apostate race, when *God's* messengers were so, his servants the prophets, who produced credentials from Him. The destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes was now at hand; two or three years after this, the king of Assyria laid siege to Samaria, which ended in their captivity: had they generally accepted this invitation, it might have prevented their ruin; but their contempt of it hastened and aggravated it, and left them inexcusable.

(2.) Yet some few accepted the invitation; to whom it was a *savor of life unto life*, *v.* 11. In the worst times, God has had a remnant; so here, divers *humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem*, i. e. were sorry for their sins, and submitted to God. Pride keeps men from yielding themselves to the Lord; when that is brought down, the work is done.

3. A command was given to the men of Judah to attend; and they universally obeyed it, *v.* 12, *the hand of God gave* them *one heart;* for it is in the day of power Christ's subjects are made willing. It is God that works both *to will* and *to do*. When people, at any time, discover an unexpected forwardness to what is good, we must acknowledge God's hand in it.

V. 13—20. The time appointed for the passover had now come, and a very great congregation came together, *v.* 13. Here we have,

I. Their good preparation for the passover; they took away all the idolatrous altars found, not only in the temple, but in Jerusalem, *v.* 14. Before they kept the feast, they cast out this old leaven. The best preparation for the gospel passover, is, to cast away our iniquities, our spiritual idolatries.

II. The celebration; in this the people were so forward and zealous, that the priests and Levites blushed to see themselves outdone by the commonalty, who were more ready to bring sacrifices, than they to offer them. This put them on sanctifying themselves, *v.* 15. The notice we take of the zeal of others, should make us ashamed of our own coldness, and quicken us not only to do our duty, but to do it well, and to sanctify ourselves to it. They did according to the duty of their place, (*v.* 16.) sprinkling *the blood on the altar*, a type of Christ our Passover sacrificed for us.

III. The irregularities in this solemnity. The substance was well managed, and with great devotion; but, beside being a month out of time, 1. The *Levites killed the passover*, which should have been done by the priests only, *v.* 17. They also assisted, more than the law ordinarily allowed, in offering the other sacrifices, particularly those for purifying, many of which there was now occasion for. Some think, it was the officers' work, not the priests', the Levites had here the charge of. Ordinarily, every man killed his lamb, but now for those under any ceremonial pollution the Levites did it. 2. Many were permitted to eat the passover, who were not purified according to the strictness of the law, *v.* 18. There was no warrant to put them off further to the third month, and they were loath to forbid them communicating at all, lest they should discourage new converts, and send them away complaining, whom they desired to send away rejoicing. Grotius observes from this, that ritual institutions must give way,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V 1—12. Favorable opportunities of fixing good impressions ought by no means to be neglected: and it is better that *circumstantial* irregularities should be admitted, than that divine ordinances should not be observed, or substantial usefulness prevented. —We ought to embrace every proper opportunity of addressing men on their eternal concerns, and of engaging as many as possible in the service of God. Numbers may and will 'laugh us to scorn:' but several will be humbled and benefited; and perhaps where success was least expected, where impiety and profligacy were most notorious, and among those who appeared ripe for destruction.—The rich mercy of God forms the grand argument, by which to enforce repentance on the sinner's conscience.—Oh, that messengers were sent forth to carry these invitations to every city and village, through our land, and every land! It is true, the Lord alone can render them effectual; but He works by the word of his ministers, and also by the commandment of kings and princes, when it accords with his Word.—Faith comes by hearing; and true religion has uniformly flourished, in proportion to the measure in which faithful, scriptural preaching has abounded. In general, persons of wealth or authority might be instrumental in promoting this faithful preaching of the Word of God, if they had the inclination, and were willing to bear the expense of it: nor can superior rank enjoy a higher privilege. SCOTT.

commanded any thing contrary to the Word of the LORD, or beyond it, in affairs of religion; it would have been a misapplication of their authority: but, as they required nothing but what God had expressly enjoined, they duly improved their talent; and the people, by the grace of God, knew and performed their duty.—It does not appear, to me at least, that Christianity has at all altered the duty either of rulers or subjects in this respect. [If the *ruler* was preternaturally inspired and directed, and so proved himself, this argument would apply: and we should have an authoritative interpreter of Scripture. But as it now is, interference by the government to compel certain modes of worship, would give us at once a sectarian despotism: and religious liberty would end. The subject is however too wide to be more than hinted at here. ED.] (29:10, 11, 12—19, *v.* 15.) 'There was a marvellous unanimity in Judah, who were so obedient to the motions of the divine grace, (without which so great a change could not have been made,) as generally to comply with the king's proclamation, made with the consent of the princes. They looked upon it as a divine command, which was brought to them by that authority: and it appeared so to be, by the mighty power of God, which wrought their hearts to a cheerful obedience.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

Verse 13.

The emphatical language here used fully proves, that the concourse of people, to celebrate this passover, was exceedingly great, compared with all other instances with which the writer was acquainted. (35: 18, 19.) ID.

Verse 14.

The people assembled at Jerusalem some days before the passover, and employed the intermediate time, in clearing the city of altars for idolatry, and other abominations. This was an excellent preparation. (2 *K.* 23:4—28.) ID.

Verses 16—20.

(*M. R.*) Either the Levites, or the offerers, might *receive* the blood

tion that were not sanctified: therefore [t] the Levites had the charge of [u] the killing of the passovers, for every one *that was* not clean, to sanctify *them* unto the LORD.

18 For a multitude of the people, *even* [x] many of Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, [y] had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat [z] the passover otherwise than it was written. But Hezekiah [a] prayed for them, saying, [b] The good LORD pardon every one,

19 *That* [c] prepareth his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, [d] though *he be* not *cleansed* according to the purification of the sanctuary.

20 And the LORD hearkened to Hezekiah, and [e] healed the people.

21 And the children of Israel that were [*] present at Jerusalem kept [f] the feast of unleavened bread seven days, with [g] great gladness: and the Levites and [h] the priests praised the LORD day by day, *singing* with [†] loud instruments unto the LORD.

22 And Hezekiah spake [‡] comfortably unto all the Levites, [i] that taught [k] the good knowledge of the LORD: and they did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace-offerings, [l] and making confession to the LORD God of their fathers.

23 And the whole assembly [m] took counsel [n] to keep other seven days: and they kept *other* seven days with gladness.

24 For Hezekiah king of Judah § did [o] give to the congregation a thousand bullocks, and seven thousand sheep: and the princes gave to the congregation a thousand bullocks, and ten thousand sheep: and [p] a great number of priests sanctified themselves.

25 And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and [q] the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, [r] rejoiced.

26 So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for [*] since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel, *there was* not the like in Jerusalem.

27 Then [t] the priests the Levites arose, and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and [u] their prayer came *up* to [‖] his holy dwelling-place, *even* unto heaven.

t 29:34. 35:3—6.
u Ex. 12:6.
x See on 11.
y Num. 19:20. 1 Cor. 11:28.
z Ex. 12:43, &c.
a Gen. 20:7,17. Job 42:8,9. Jam. 5: 15,16. 1 John 5:16.
b 6:21. Ex. 34:6—9. Num. 14:18—20. Ps. 25:8. 86:5. 86:5. 119:68. Dan. 9:19.
c 19:3. 20:33. 1 Sam. 7:3. 1 Chr. 29:18. Ezra 7:10. Job 11:13. Ps. 10:17. Prov. 23:26.
d Lev. 12:4. 15:31—33. 21:17—23. 22: 3—6. Num. 9:6. 19:13—20.
e Ex. 15:26. Ps. 103:3. Jam. 5:16.
* Heb. *found.*
f Ex. 12:15. 13:6. Lev. 23:6. Luke 22:1,7. 1 Cor. 5:7,8.
g 26. 7:10. Deut. 12:7,12. 16:14. Neh. 8:10. Acts 2:46. Phil. 4:4.
h See on 20:21. 29:25—27.
† Heb. *instruments of strength.* Ps. 150:3—5.
‡ Heb. *to the heart of all.* 32:6. Is. 40:1. Hos. 2:14. *margins.*
i 15:3. 17:9. 35:3. Deut. 33:10. Ezra 7: 10,25. Neh. 8:7,8,18. 9:3. 2 Tim. 4:2.
k Prov. 2:6,7. 8:6. John 17:3. 2 Cor. 4:6. Phil. 3:8.
l Deut. 26:3—11. Ezra 10:11. Neh. 9:3.
m See on 2.
n 7:9. 1 K. 8:65.
§ Heb. *lifted up,* or, *offered.*
o 35:7,8. 1 Chr. 29:3—9. Ez. 45:17. Eph. 4:8.
p 29:34.
q See on 18.—Ex. 12:43—49.
r 1 Chr. 16:10,11. Ps. 92:4. 104:34.
s 7:9,10.
t See on Num. 6:23—26. Deut. 10:8.
u See on 1 K. 8:30,39. Acts 10:4.
‖ Heb. *the habitation of his holiness.* Deut. 26:15. Ps. 68:5. Is. 57:15. 63: 15. 66:1.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 13—20. When we are humbled for our transgressions, and declare war against all our idols, expecting and seeking forgiveness and salvation only through the atonement of Christ, we become welcome communicants at the Lord's table. No trembling believer, who desires to trust in the Redeemer, and to show his gratitude by obeying his plain command, needs to be alarmed, lest he should fail in that exactness, which he supposes is required in this ordinance: for the good LORD lays no snares in the way of penitent, humble, upright inquirers.—Previous preparation is indeed profitable; but the true believer is *habitually* ready, and ought not to retire for want of *actual* preparation. Yet every defect is sin, and needs forgiveness; and should be matter of humiliation, though not of discouragement. (*P. O.* 1 *Cor.* 11: 23—34.)—Man's authority cannot disannul or alter divinely instituted externals in the worship of God: yet these may be idolized; and the Lord will, on some occasions, approve the conduct of those, who prefer the *spirit* to the *letter* of an instituted observance, where both *cannot possibly* be attained; and who seize an opportunity of glorifying Him, in seeking the conversion and salvation of souls, by postponing or relaxing in the exact observance of an external regulation. Many allowances ought indeed to be made for those, who are newly brought forth out of very ignorant places, to attend on the ordinances of God; yet they must not be left in their mistakes.—When the ignorant, the mean, and the profligate, as well as those of superior stations, become earnest in God's service, Pharisees will either be exasperated or ashamed.—True godliness will be attended with proportionable joy. A few more interruptions of our joy, by conflicts and temptations, (whilst in Christ we still have peace,) and we shall be with Him to behold his glory: then our worship, our love, and our rejoicing, will be uninterrupted, unalloyed, and eternal. SCOTT.

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of the victims; but the priests alone might *sprinkle* it.—It is evident from this passage, that, in ordinary cases, the persons who brought the paschal lambs slew them; or this exception would not have been stated: and it is at least probable, that the case was at first the same with other sacrifices. (29:34. *Lev.* 1:5—7.) (*M. R.* a—d.) '*Healed the people.*' (20) Perhaps God had visited them with some sickness, for their irregular attendance, which He then graciously healed. (1 *Cor.* 11:29—34.) Or, He gave peace to their consciences, and healed their souls. SCOTT.

Verses 23—25.

'They did not observe other 7 days of unleavened bread, but offered sacrifices, with praises, and thanksgivings, and feasting, 7 days.' *Patrick.*—The people in general, and those who came out of the kingdom of Israel, would be unprepared for the expense attending these sacrifices: therefore both Hezekiah and his princes liberally gave cattle for sacrifices; in which no doubt they acted properly, and should be imitated, according to the nature of the Christian dispensation, by princes and nobles, liberally supplying what is wanting to support the worship of God, and to make glad the hearts of their poorer brethren. (*Ez.* 45:16, 17.) The example had also a salutary influence on the priests, who sanctified themselves, to take their part in the service.—Probably, 'the strangers that came out of the land of Israel,' as distinguished from 'the congregation of Israel,' were not Israelites by birth, but circumcised proselytes. SCOTT

Verse 26.

As this occurred in the 1st year of Hezekiah's reign, and he reigned 29 years, it must be supposed that he witnessed the effects of so good a beginning, to the end of his life. It was done *suddenly*, but, by the grace of God, it was done *effectually*.—Doubtless, the passovers and other solemn feasts were kept up, and attended to, during this reign, though not in so remarkable a manner as this first passover. ID.

CHAP. XXXI.

The people destroy the idols, and their temples and altars, through the cities of Judah and in Ephraim and Manasseh, 1. Hezekiah orders the courses of the priests and Levites, and provides for their maintenance, as well as for the stated sacrifices, 2—4. The people readily bring their first fruits and tithes, 5—10. Hezekiah appoints officers to dispose of these oblations, 11—19. A high commendation of his zeal and integrity, 20, 21.

NOW [a] when all this was finished [b] all Israel *that were* * present went out to the cities of Judah, and * brake the † images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars, out of all Judah and Benjamin, [d] in Ephraim also and Manasseh, ‡ until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities.

2 And Hezekiah appointed [e] the courses of the priests, and the Levites after their courses, every man according to his service, the priests and Levites for burnt-offerings, and for peace-offerings, to minister, and [f] to give thanks, and to praise in the gates of the tents of the LORD.

3 *He appointed* also [g] the king's portion of his substance for the burnt-offerings, *to wit* [h] for the morning and evening burnt-offerings, and [i] the burnt-offerings for the sabbaths, and [j] for the new moons, and for [k] the set feasts, as *it is* written in the law of the LORD.

4 Moreover he commanded the people, that dwelt in Jerusalem, to give [l] the portion of the priests and the Levites [m] that they might be encouraged in [n] the law of the LORD.

5 And [o] as soon as the commandment § came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance [p] the first-fruits of corn, wine, and oil, and ‖ honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all *things* brought they in abundantly.

6 And *concerning* [q] the children of Israel and Judah, that dwelt in the cities of Judah, they also brought in [r] the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of holy things which were consecrated unto the LORD their God, and laid *them* ¶ by heaps.

7 In [s] the third month

a 30:1.
b 1 K. 18:38—40. 2 K. 23:2—20.
* Heb. *found.* Gen. 19:15. Esth. 4:16. *margins.*
c 14:3. 23:17. 32:12. 34:3—7. Ex. 23:24. Deut. 7:5. 2 K. 18:4.
† Heb. *statues.*
d 30:18. 34:6,7. 2 K. 17:2. 23:15.
‡ Heb. *until to make an end.*
e 5:11. 8:14. 23:8. 1 Chr. 15:37,40. 23:24:25:26: Ezra 6:18. Luke 1:5.
f 29:24—26. 1 Chr. 16:4—6,41,42. 23:30. 25:1—3. Neh. 11:17. Ps. 134: 1:3. 135:1—3,26. Jer. 33:11.
g 30:24. 1 Chr. 26:26. Ez. 45:17. 46:4—7,12—18.
h See on Ex. 29:38—42. Num. 28:3—8.
i See on Num. 28:9 10.
j See on Num. 28:11—15.—Num. 28:16—31. 29: Deut. 16:1—17. Ps. 81:1—4. Col. 2:16,17.
k Lev. 23:2, &c.
l 16. Lev. 27:30—33. Num. 18:8—21, 26—28. Mal. 3:8—10.
m Neh. 13:10—13. 1 Cor. 9:10—14.
n Mal. 2:7.
o 24:10,11. Ex. 35:5,20—29. 36:5,6. 2 Cor. 8:2—5.
§ Heb. *brake forth.*
p Ex. 22:29. 23:19. 34:22,26. Num. 18:12. Neh. 10:35—39. 12:44. 13:31. Prov. 3:9. 1 Cor. 15:20. Jam. 1:18. Rev. 14:4.
‖ Or, *dates.*
q 11:16,17.
r Lev. 27:30. Deut. 14:28.
¶ Heb. *heaps, heaps.*
s Lev. 23:16—24.

and comfort in his favor, and reconciliation to Him. I believe neither Hezekiah nor his princes were the poorer at the year's end for this their pious liberality.

2. Many good prayers were put up, *v.* 22. They *made confession*, in which the intent and meaning of the peace-offerings were directed and explained. They made a religious confession of their relation to God and dependence on Him; a penitent confession of their sins and infirmities; a thankful confession of God's mercies to them; a supplicatory confession of their wants and desires; and, in all these, they had an eye to God as *the God of their fathers*, a God in covenant with them.

3. There was an abundance of good preaching. The Levites (whose office it was, Deut. 33: 10.) *taught the people the good knowledge of the Lord*, read and opened the Scriptures, and instructed the congregation concerning God, and their duty to Him; there was great need of it, after so long a famine of the Word in the last reign. Hezekiah did not himself preach, but *spake comfortably to the Levites* that did, attended their preaching, commended their diligence, and assured them of his protection and countenance; hereby he encouraged them to study hard and take pains, and put a reputation on them, that the people might respect and regard them, the more. Princes and magistrates, by owning and encouraging faithful and laborious preachers, greatly serve the interest of God's kingdom among men.

4. They sang psalms every day, *v.* 21. exciting one another's joy in God, and thankfulness to Him. Praising God should be much of our work in our religious assemblies.

5. Having kept the seven days of the feast in this religious manner, they had so much comfort in it, that they *kept other seven days*, *v.* 23. They did not institute any new modes of worship, but repeated and continued the old. The case was extraordinary, they had been long without the ordinance, guilt had been contracted by the neglect of it. They had now got a very great congregation together, and were in a devout and serious frame; they knew not when they might have such another opportunity, and therefore could not now find in their hearts to part till they had doubled the time. Many of them were a great way from home, and had business to look after, being in the midst of their harvest; yet they were in no haste to return, the zeal of God's house made them forget themselves and their secular affairs. How unlike those who snuffed at God's service, and said, *What a weariness is it!* Or those who asked, *When will the Sabbath be gone?* The servants of God should abound in his work.

6. All this they did *with gladness*, *v.* 23. Holy duties should be performed with holy gladness; we should be forward to them, and take pleasure in them, relish the sweetness of communion with God, and look upon it as a matter of unspeakable joy and comfort, that we are thus favored, and have such earnests of everlasting joy.

7. The congregation was at length dismissed with a solemn blessing, *v.* 27. 1. The priests pronounced it: it was part of their office to *bless the people*, Num. 6: 22, 23. in which they were both the people's mouth to God, by way of prayer; and God's mouth to the people, by way of promise; for their blessing included both. What a comfort to a congregation to be sent home thus crowned! 2. God said *Amen* to it, perhaps gave some sensible token of the ratification of it. The prayer that comes up to heaven in a cloud of incense, will come down again in showers of blessings.

CHAP. XXXI. V. 1—10. We have here a further account of that blessed reformation of which Hezekiah was a glorious instrument, and of the happy advances he made in it. When the passover was finished, there was more to be done.

I. They applied themselves with vigor to destroy all the monuments of idolatry The king had done what he could of this kind, (2 K. 18: 4.) but the people could discover those profane relics which escaped the eye of the king's officers, *v.* 1. Note, The comfort of communion with God should kindle in us a holy zeal and indignation against every thing offensive to God: *What have I now to do any more with idols?* 1. Some think those cities of Ephraim and Manasseh are meant, which were come under the protection and jurisdiction of the kings of Judah; others, that, Hoshea, king of Israel, not forbidding it, their zeal carried them out to the destruction of idolatry, even in many parts of this kingdom. At least, those that came out of Ephraim and Manasseh to keep the passover, (as many did, *ch.* 30: 18.) destroyed all their own images and groves, and did the like for as many more as they had influence upon, or could make interest in for leave to do it: we should not only reform ourselves, but do all we can to reform others too. 2. They destroyed all. Those that sincerely set themselves against sin, will set themselves against all sin. Perhaps Isaiah pointed to this, when, a little before, he spake of a day in which men should cast away the very idols themselves had made. So surprising was the blessed change, Isa. 2: 20. 31: 6, 7.

II. Hezekiah revived and restored the courses of the priests and Levites, *v.* 2. The temple service was put into method again. The priests were appointed in their courses for *burnt-offerings and peace-offerings*, the Levites, some to minister to the priests, others to *give thanks and praise*. See 1 Chron. 23: 4, 5. The temple is here called a *tent*, because the temple-privileges are movable things, and this temple was shortly to be removed.

III. The people were to be at the charge of the daily offerings, and those on the Sabbaths, new moons, and feasts, yet, rather than they should be burdened with the expense, Hezekiah allowed out of his own estate, or out of his exchequer, for all

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NOTES.

CHAP. XXXI. V. 1. (*Note*, 30:14.) It is probable some of the Israelites, who had been at the feast, retired into the land of Judah, during the ravages of Shalmaneser, and so escaped the general ruin. SCOTT.

Verse 2.

The tents, &c.] The buildings which surrounded the temple, in which the priests and Levites were stationed, resembled the tents in which soldiers are regularly encamped. ID.

Verses 3, 4.

(*Notes*, 30:21, 22. *Neh.* 12:44—47. 13:10—13. 1 *Cor.* 9:7—18.) SCOTT.

Verses 5—7.

(*M. R.*) It is probable, some of the first-fruits, tithes, and offerings, were generally sold, and the money reposited in one common stock. 'They began to offer first-fruits in the 3d month, when their harvest began, and finished their tithing in the 7th month, when their harvest was ended, *Ex.* 23:16.' *Patrick.* ID.

they began to lay the foundation of the heaps, and finished *them* in the seventh month.

8 And when Hezekiah and the princes came and saw the heaps, they [t] blessed the LORD, [u] and his people Israel.

9 Then Hezekiah questioned with the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps.

10 And [v] Azariah the chief priest of the house of Zadok answered him, and said, [x] Since *the people* began to bring the offerings into the house of the LORD, [y] we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for [z] the LORD hath blessed his people; and that which is left *is* this great store.

[*Practical Observations.*]

11 Then Hezekiah commanded to prepare [*] chambers in the house of the LORD; and they prepared *them*,

12 And brought in the offerings and the tithes and the dedicated *things* faithfully: [a] over which Cononiah the Levite *was* ruler, and Shimei his brother *was* the next.

13 And Jehiel, and Azaziah, and Nahath, and Asahel, and Jerimoth, and Jozabad, and Eliel, and Ismachiah, and Mahath, and Benaiah, *were* overseers [†] under the hand of Cononiah and Shimei his brother, [b] at the commandment of Hezekiah the king, and [c] Azariah the ruler of the house of God.

14 And Kore the son of Imnah the Levite, [d] the porter toward the east, *was* over [e] the free-will offerings of God, to distribute the oblations of the LORD, and [f] the most holy things.

15 And [‡] next him *were* Eden, and Miniamin, and Jeshua, and Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah, in [g] the cities of the priests, in *their* [§] set office, to give to their brethren by courses, [h] as well to the great as to the small:

16 Beside their genealogy of males, from three years old and upward, *even* unto every one that entereth into the house of the LORD, [i] his daily portion for their service in their charges, according to their courses,

17 Both to the [k] genealogy of the priests by the house of their fathers, and the Levites from [l] twenty years old and upward, in their charges, [m] by their courses;

18 And to the genealogy of all their little ones, their wives, and those offerings, *v.* 3. Let princes and great men reckon that well bestowed, and set out to the best interest, which they give for the support and encouragement of religion in their country.

IV. He issued an order to the inhabitants of Jerusalem first, *v.* 4. but which was afterward extended to, or, at least admitted by, the *cities of Judah*, that they should carefully pay in their dues, according to the law of the priests and Levites. This had been long neglected, which made the work to be neglected. But Hezekiah, having himself been liberal, might with a good grace require his subjects to be just, to the temple-service. Observe, 1. It is fit ministers should be not only maintained, but encouraged, not only be kept to do their work, but also have wherewith to live comfortably, that they may do it with cheerfulness. 2. Yet they are to be maintained, not in idleness, pride, and luxury, but in *the law of the Lord*, in observance of it themselves, and in teaching others the good knowledge of it.

V. The people, thereupon, brought in their tithes very readily; they wanted nothing but to be called on; therefore, *as soon as the commandment came abroad*, the first-fruits and all the holy things were duly brought in, *v.* 5, 6. and the overplus was *laid in heaps*, *v* 6. When harvest ended, they finished their heaps, *v.* 7. 1. Hezekiah *questioned the priests and Levites* concerning them, why they did not use what was paid in, but hoarded it up thus, *v.* 9. To which it was answered, that they had used all they had occasion for, for the maintenance of themselves and families, and for their winter-store, and that this was left over and above, *v.* 10. They did not hoard for covetousness, but to show what plentiful provision God by his law had made for them, if they could but have it collected and brought in; and that they who conscientiously give God his dues out of their estates, bring a blessing on all they have. *Since they began to bring in the offerings, the Lord had blessed his people.* See for this, Hag. 2: 19. Mal. 3: 10, 11. Ezek. 44: 30. 2. The acknowledgment of the king and princes, *v.* 8. to God for his providence, which gave them something to bring, and his grace, which gave them hearts to bring it. And they also *blessed the people*, i. e. commended them for doing well now, without reproaching them for former neglects. It is observable, that after they had tasted the sweetness of God's ordinance in the late comfortable passover, they were thus free in maintaining the temple service. They that experience the benefit of a settled ministry, will not grudge the expense of it.

V. 11—21. Having put church-matters in good order, here is Hezekiah's care to keep them so. He provides,

1. That the tithes and other holy things brought in, should be carefully laid up under treasurers or store-keepers, and not left exposed in loose heaps, liable to be wasted and embezzled, *v.* 11, 12, 13. This wisdom, (which we may learn from the ant,) was an encouragement to people to contribute. That will be given cheerfully by the public, which appears to be well-husbanded.

2. That they should be faithfully laid out, ac-

t Gen. 14:20. Judg. 5:9. 1 K. 8:14,15. 1 Chr. 29:10—20. Ezra 7:27. 2 Cor. 8:16. Eph. 1:3. 1 Thes. 3:9. 1 Pet. 1:3.
u 6:3. Gen. 14:19. 2 Sam. 6:18. 1 K. 8:55,56.
v 26:17. 1 K. 2:35. 1 Chr. 6:8,14. Ez. 44:15.
x Prov. 3:9,10. Hag. 2:18, 19. Mal. 3:10,11. 1 Tim. 4:8.
y 2 K. 4:43,44. Matt. 15:37. Phil. 4: 18.
z Gen. 26:12. 30:27—30. 39:5,23. Lev. 25:21. 26:4,5. Deut. 28:8. Prov. 10:22. 2 Cor. 9:8—11.
* Or, *store-houses*. Neh. 10:38,39. 13: 5,12,13.
a See on 1 Chr. 26:20—26.
† Heb. *at the hand*.
b 4,11.—See on 30:12.
c See on 10.—1 Chr. 9:11. 24:6. Neh. 11:11.
d 1 Chr. 26:12,14,17.
e Lev. 22:18. 23:38. Num. 29:39. Deut. 12:6,17. 16:10. Ezra 1:4. 3:5. 7: 16. Ps. 119:108.
f Lev. 2:10. 6:16,17. 7:1—6. 10:12, 13. 27:28.
‡ Heb. *at his hand*. 18. *marg.*
g Josh. 21:9—19. 1 Chr. 6:54—60.
§ Or, *trust*. 1 Chr. 9:22. *marg.*
h 1 Chr. 25:8.
i Lev. 21:22,23.
k Num. 3:15,20. 4:38,42,46. 17:2,8. Ezra 2:59.
l Num. 4:3. 8:24. 1 Chr. 23:24,27.
m See on 2.—1 Chr. 24:20—31. 25: 26:

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—10. The finishing of one duty should form an introduction to the beginning of another; and he, who 'delighteth greatly in God's commandments,' will not complain of this as a weariness.—Public ordinances, and divine consolations, should stir up men to cleanse their hearts, houses, or shops, and every thing in which they are concerned, from the filthiness of sin, and the idolatry of covetousness; and to exhort and excite others to do the same, by every method, consistent with relative duties and the peace of society.—Examples should concur with exhortations or injunctions, whether men act as magistrates or ministers: and this will give them greater effect, in many cases, than menaces, coercive measures, or severe rebukes. Those, who would have others expend their wealth in useful works, ought to take the lead: nay, the easiest method of enforcing the laws, and prevailing with others to pay their dues, is often found to be by receding from personal claims, and joining liberality with justice, in the magistrate's own conduct.—Every exercise of human authority in the church of God must be regulated and bounded by his law, and must enforce obedience to it, and not make additions to it, or alterations in it.—A man is never impoverished by prudent liberality, in works of piety and charity: indeed, this is the way to ensure the blessing of God on his substance and his labors. (*M. R.*) And when the portion, *due* to the ministers of religion, and to the poor, is conscientiously rendered, it shall be recompensed as if it were a free-will offering. SCOTT.

Verses 9, 10.

The disinterestedness of the priests was highly commendable; for they might easily have enriched themselves, without being suspected: and the whole transaction enlarges our idea of the blessing which had attended the preceding solemnity: for before this, the priests seem to have been generally very careless and ungodly. (*Mal.* 1:9—14.) Probably, Azariah was the chief priest, under the high priest, and nearly related to him. (13. 1 *Chr.* 6:13, 14.) SCOTT.

Verse 11.

Chambers.] Marg. store-houses: probably like those of the Egyptians, which, from the earliest times of which any monuments are left, were *arched vaults*, generally of crude brick. ED.

Verses 15—19.

A list was taken of the wives, and children, of the priests and Levites, and a proportionable allowance was assigned them. Thus none appropriated an exorbitant proportion, and none wanted a suitable provision; and this regular provision kept them from the temptation of entangling themselves in worldly cares and employments, to the neglect of their ministry. (*M. R.—Neh.* 13:10 13 2 *Tim.* 2:3—7.) SCOTT.

(15.) *Miniamin.*] 'Three of *Ken.* and *De R's* MSS., the Vulg. Syr. Sept. and Arab. read Benjamin.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(18.) *Boothr.* renders this verse, 'And the whole multitude of their little ones, their wives and their sons and their daughters, were taken into the account of those who had faithfully hallowed themselves.' '*Houbigant* renders the last clause, "Because the sacred gifts were committed to their trust."' HEWLETT.

their sons, and their daughters, through all the congregation: for in their * set office [n] they sanctified themselves in holiness:

19 Also of the sons of Aaron the priests, *which were* in [o] the fields of the suburbs of their cities, in every several city, [p] the men that were expressed by name, to give portions to all the males among the priests, and to all that were reckoned by genealogies among the Levites.

20 And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and [q] wrought *that which was* good, and right, and truth, before the LORD his God.

21 And in every work, that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, [r] he did *it* with all his heart, and [s] prospered.

CHAP. XXXII.

Sennacherib invades Judah; and Hezekiah fortifies Jerusalem, and encourages the people, 1—8. Sennacherib's blasphemous messages and letters, 9—19. Hezekiah and Isaiah pray for deliverance: an angel destroys the Assyrian army; and their king, when returned to Nineveh, is slain by his sons when worshipping his idol, 20, 21. Hezekiah prospers and is renowned, 22, 23. In his sickness he prays, and is miraculously recovered: his heart is lifted up, but he afterwards humbles himself, 24—26. His riches and works, 27—30. His misconduct in respect of the ambassadors from the king of Babylon, 31. He dies, his memory is honored; and Manasseh succeeds him, 32, 33.

AFTER [a] *these* things, and the establishment thereof, Sennacherib [b] king of Assyria came, and entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities, and thought to † win them for himself.

2 And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that ‡ he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem,

3 He [c] took counsel with his princes and his mighty men [d] to stop the waters of the fountains which *were* without the city: and they did help him.

4 So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains, and [e] the brook that § ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the [f] kings of Assyria come, and [g] find much water?

5 Also [h] he strengthened himself and built up all the wall [i] *that was* broken, and raised *it* up to the towers, and [k] another wall without, and repaired [l] Millo *in* the city of David, and made ‖ darts and shields in abundance.

6 And [m] he set captains of war over the people, and gathered them together to him [n] in the street of the gate of the city, and spake [¶] comfortably to them, saying,

7 Be [o] strong and regard must be had to their families, that they may have food convenient. (5.) To the priests in the country, that lived *in the fields of the suburbs*, *v.* 19. They also had their share, who were *inhabitants of the villages*, though they might be supposed to live at a less expense.

A general character is given of Hezekiah's services for the support of religion, *v.* 20, 21. All his good intentions were brought to a good issue. What is undertaken with a sincere regard to the glory of God, will succeed to our own honor and comfort at last.

CHAP. XXXII. V. 1—8. This chapter continues and concludes the history of the reign of Hezekiah.

I. Here is, the formidable design and vigorous attempt of Sennacherib against Hezekiah's kingdom. This Sennacherib, as Nebuchadnezzar afterward, was now a great oppressor, and aimed to raise a boundless monarchy for himself on the ruins of all his neighbors; his predecessor Shalmaneser had lately mastered Israel, and carried the ten tribes captive: Sennacherib thought, in like manner, to win Judah for himself. Pride and ambition put men on grasping at universal dominion; and it is observable that, just about this time, Romulus built Rome, a city which afterward came to reign more than any other had done *over the kings of the earth*. Perhaps Senna-

* Or, *trust*. 15. 1 Chr. 9:22. *margins*.
[n] Is. 5:16. Rom. 15:16.
[o] 15. Lev. 25:34. Num. 35:2—5. 1 Chr. 6:54,60.
[p] 12—15. 28:15.
[q] 1 K. 15:5. 2 K. 20:3. 22:2. John 1:47. Acts 24:16. 1 Thes. 2:10.
[r] Deut. 6:5. 10:12. 1 K. 2:4. 1 Chr. 22:19. Ec. 9:10. Jer. 29:13.
[s] 14:7. 20:20. 26:5. Josh. 1:7. 1 Chr. 22:13. Ps. 1:3. Matt. 9:33.
[a] 20:1,2. 2 K. 18:13. Is. 36:1,&c.
[b] 2 K. 15:19. 17:6. 18:11,19,20. Is. 7:17,18. 8:6—8. 10:5,6. Hos. 11:5.
† Heb. *break them up*. Is. 10:7—11. 37:24,25. Mic. 2:13.
‡ Heb. *his face* was *to war*. 2 K. 12:17. Luke 9:51,53.
[c] 30:2. 2 K. 18:20. Prov. 15:22. 20:18. 24:6. Is. 40:13. Rom. 11:34.
[d] 2 K. 20:20. Is. 22:8—11.
[e] 30. 30:14.
§ Heb. *overflowed*.
[f] See on 1.—2 K. 18:9,13. 19:17. Is. 10:8.
[g] 2 K. 3:9,16,17. 19:21.
[h] 12:1. 14:5—7. 17:1,2. 23:1. 26:8. Is. 22:9,10.
[i] 25:23.
[k] 2 K. 25:4. Jer. 39:4.
[l] Judg. 9:6. 2 Sam. 5:9. 1 K. 9:24. 11:27. 2 K. 12:20.
‖ Or, *swords*, or, *weapons*. 26:14,15.
[m] 17:14—19. 1 Chr. 27:3,4,&c.
[n] Ezra 10:9. Neh. 8:1—3,16.
¶ Heb. *to their heart*. 30:22. Gen. 34:3. Is. 40:2. *marg*.
[o] Deut. 31:6,7,23. Josh. 1:6—9. 1 Chr. 28:10,20. Is. 35:4. Dan. 10:19. Zech. 8:9,13. Eph. 6:10. 2 Tim. 2:1.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 11—21. Disinterestedness, impartiality, and frugality, are requisite in those who have the management of public charities, or other public funds: for when proper care is taken of the sums already contributed, and they are evidently expended for the sole purpose intended, encouragement is given to further contributions. —It would tend greatly to the welfare of the church, if ministers were provided for, with some degree of equality, proportioned to their diligence, their families, and their necessary expenses. But the faithful servant of God needs not be discouraged: let him study to live, and to preach, according to the Word of truth, and 'give himself wholly' to his work; and let him do it in faith, and the Lord will not suffer him to want; yea, He will provide for his children after him. But all pious men are not able to go on comfortably in this manner; and it is a grievous thing, that their spirits should be depressed, and their hands weakened, in their work, on this account: but it is still far worse, when they are tempted to leave their proper employment, to earn a morsel of bread for their wives and children. SCOTT.

Verses 20, 21.

What a commendation was this as given by God Himself! What a happy instrument was this pious king of good to his people! and what an encouraging and worthy example is this for princes, magistrates, ministers, and Christians to imitate! SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXII. V. 1. Most of the transactions, recorded in the preceding chs. took place in the 1st year of Hezekiah's reign: and from that time he proceeded to establish and complete his reformation, without any very memorable occurrences, till his 14th year, in which Sennacherib's first invasion occurred. (*M. R.*—2 *K.* 18:13—16.) ID.

Verses 3, 4.

(*M. R.*) The brook, here mentioned, is supposed to have been Kidron, or Cedron, called also 'the upper water-course of Gihon.' This measure [turning the water] was intended, not only for a present defence against Sennacherib, but also as a security against future invasions of him or his successors. (*Is.* 22:8—14.) ID.

(4.) *Stopped*, &c.] So the inhabitants did, much to the distress of the Christian army of crusaders, who besieged Jerusalem 1800 yrs. after (in 1099). See *Hewlett*, from *William* of *Tyre*, who says, 'they stopped the *mouths* of the fountains or cisterns for 5 or 6 miles round the city, the citizens in the meantime not only having plenty of rain water [in their tanks], but enjoying the benefit of the springs too without the town, their waters being conveyed by *aqueducts* into two very large basins within it.' 'The Heb. of verse 30. may as well be rendered "Hezekiah stopped the *upper going out* of the waters of Gihon, and directed them underneath, to the W. of the city of David;" and so *Pagninus* and *Montanus*. "He stopped up," i. e. the outlet of the waters of Gihon into the open air, by which they used to flow into the pool of Siloam, and became a brook; and by some subterraneous contrivance, he directed the waters to the W. side of Jerusalem.' [Comp. note, 2 Sam. 5:8.] HARMER.

Verse 5—8.

(*M. R.*—20:14—19. 2 *K.* 6:15—17. 1 *John* 4:4—6.) These measures seem to have been adopted, and this most encouraging exhortation given, at the approach of Sennacherib's first invasion: Yet Hezekiah was afterwards induced to submit to Sennacherib, and pay him tribute; on this he departed, but not long after renewed his attempts. (2 *K.* 18:13—16.) SCOTT

courageous, [p] be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that *is* with him: [q] for *there be* more with us than with him:

8 With him *is* [r] an arm of flesh; but [s] with us *is* the LORD our God, to help us, and [t] to fight our battles. And the people [*] rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

9 ¶ After this did [u] Sennacherib king of Assyria send his servants to Jerusalem, B. C. 710. (but he *himself laid siege* against [x] Lachish, and all his [†] power with him,) unto Hezekiah king of Judah, and unto all Judah that *were* at Jerusalem, saying,

10 [y] Thus saith Sennacherib, king of Assyria, Whereon do ye trust, that ye abide in the [‡] siege in Jerusalem?

11 Doth not Hezekiah persuade you [z] to give over yourselves to die by famine and by thirst, saying, [a] The LORD our God shall deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

12 [b] Hath not the same Hezekiah taken away his high places and his altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, [c] Ye shall worship before [d] one altar, and burn incense upon it?

13 Know ye not what [e] I and my fathers have done unto all the people of *other* lands? [f] were the gods of the nations of those lands any ways able to deliver their lands out of mine hand?

14 Who *was* *there* [g] among all the gods of those nations, that my fathers utterly destroyed, that could deliver his people out of mine hand, that [h] your God should be able to deliver you out of mine hand?

15 Now therefore let not Hezekiah [i] deceive you, nor [k] persuade you on this manner, neither yet believe him: for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people out of mine hand, and out of the hand of my fathers: how [l] much less shall your God deliver you out of mine hand?

16 And his servants spake [m] yet *more* against the LORD God, and [n] against his servant Hezekiah.

17 He [o] wrote also letters [p] to rail on the LORD God of Israel, and to speak against him, saying, [q] As the gods of the nations of *other* lands have not delivered their people out of mine hand, so shall not the God of Hezekiah deliver his people out of mine hand.

18 Then [r] they cried with a loud voice in the Jews' speech unto the people of Jerusalem that *were* on the wall, [s] to affright them, and to trouble them; that they might take the city.

19 And they [t] spake against [u] the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people of the earth, *which were* [x] the work of the hands of man.

20 And for this *cause* [y] Hezekiah the king, and [z] the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz, [a] prayed and cried to heaven.

21 And [b] the LORD sent an [c] angel, which [d] cut off all the mighty men of valor, and [e] the leaders and captains, in the camp of the king of Assyria: so he returned [f] with shame of face to his own land. And when [g] he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels, § slew him there with the sword.

22 Thus [h] the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all *other*, and [i] guided them on every side.

23 And many brought [k] gifts unto the LORD to Jerusalem, [l] and ‖ pres-

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[p] 20:15. 2 K. 18:30. 19:6,7.
[q] 2 K. 6:16. Rom. 8:31. 1 John 4:4.
[r] Job 40:9. Jer. 17:5.
[s] 13:12. 14:11. Ps. 46:7,11. Is. 8:10. 41:10. Acts 18:10. 2 Tim. 4:17,22.
[t] 20:15. Deut. 20:1,4. Josh. 10:42.

[*] Heb. *leaned.* 15. 20:20. Is. 36:18.
[u] See on 2 K. 18:17. Is. 36:2.
[x] Josh. 10:31. 12:11. 15:39. Is. 37:8. Mic. 1:13.
[†] Heb. *dominion.*
[y] See on 2 K. 18:19. Is. 36:4.
[‡] Heb. *strong-hold.*
[z] See on 2 K. 18:27. Is. 36:12,18.
[a] 15. 2 K. 19:10. Ps. 3:2. 11:1—3. 22:8. 42:10. 71:11. Matt. 27:43.
[b] See on 31:1. 2 K. 18:4,22. Is. 36:7.
[c] See on Deut. 12:13,14,5,6,27.
[d] 4:1. Ex. 27:1—8. 30:1—6. 40:26—29. 1 K. 7:48.
[e] 2 K. 15:29. 17:5,6. 19:11—13,17,18. Is. 10:9,10. 37:12,13,18—20. Dan. 4:30,37.
[f] See on 19. 2 K. 18:33—35. 19:18,19. —Ps. 115:3—8. Is. 44:8—10. Jer. 10:11,12,16. Acts 19:26. 1 Cor. 8:4.
[g] See on Is. 10:11,12.
[h] Ex. 14:3. 15:9—11. Is. 42:8.
[i] See on 2 K. 18:29. 19:10.
[k] 11. 1 K. 22:22. Is. 36:18. Acts 19:26. Gal. 1:10.
[l] Ex. 5:2. Dan. 3:15. John 19:10,11.
[m] Job 15:25,26. Ps. 73:9.
[n] John 15:21.
[o] See on 2 K. 19:14. Neh. 6:5. Is. 37:14.
[p] See on 2 K. 19:22,28. Is. 10:15. 37:23,24,28,29. Rev. 13:6.
[q] 2 K. 19:12.
[r] 2 K. 18:26—28. Is. 36:13.
[s] 1 Sam. 17:10,26. Neh. 6:9.
[t] See on 13—17.
[u] 6:6. Ps. 76:1,2. 78:68. 87:1—3. 132:13,14. Is. 14:32. Heb. 12:22.
[x] Deut. 4:28. 27:15. 2 K. 19:18. Ps. 135:15—18. Is. 2:8. 37:19. 44:16—20. Jer. 1:16. 10:3,9. 32:30. Hos. 8:5,6.
[y] See on 2 K. 19:14—19. Is. 37:14—20.
[z] 2 K. 19:2—4. Is. 37:2—4.
[a] 14:11. 20:6—12. Ps. 50:15. 91:15.
[b] See on 2 K. 19:20,35. Is. 37:21,36,37.
[c] 2 Sam. 24:16. Matt. 13:49,50. Acts 12:23.
[d] Job 9:4. Ps. 76:5,7,12.
[e] Is. 10:8,16—19,33,34. 17:12—14. 29:5—8. 30:30—33. 33:10—12. 36:9. Rev. 6:15,16. 19:17,18.
[f] Ps. 132:18. Prov. 11:2. 16:18.
[g] See on 2 K. 19:36,37. Is. 37:37,38.
§ Heb. *made him fall.*
[h] Ps. 18:48—50. 144:10. Is. 10:24,25. 31:4,5. 33:22.
[i] Ps. 48:14. 73:24. Is. 58:11. John 16:13. 2 Thes. 3:5.
[k] 2 Sam. 8:10,11. Ezra 7:15—22,27. Ps. 68:29. 72:10. Is. 60:7—9. Matt. 2:11.
[l] 17:11. 1 K. 4:21. 10:10,25.
‖ Heb. *precious things.* 9:9,10,24.

Verse 19.

God of Jerusalem.] Sennacherib called JEHOVAH 'the God of Jerusalem,' either because that city alone remained in the hands of his worshippers; or because Hezekiah, by abolishing the high places, seemed to have confined to Jerusalem alone, the worship of his God, which before had been spread over the land. SCOTT.

ents to Hezekiah king of Judah: so that [m] he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth.

[*Practical Observations.*]

B. C. 713. 24 ¶ In those days [n] Hezekiah was sick to the death, and prayed unto the LORD: and he spake unto him, and he * gave him a sign.

25 But Hezekiah [o] rendered not again, according to the benefit *done* unto him; for [p] his heart was lifted up: [q] therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.

26 Notwithstanding [r] Hezekiah humbled himself for the † pride of his heart, *both* he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them [s] in the days of Hezekiah.

27 ¶ And Hezekiah had [t] exceeding much riches and honor: and he made himself [u] trea-

B. C. 700. suries for silver, and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields, and for all manner of ‡ pleasant jewels;

28 [x] Storehouses also for the increase of corn, and wine, and oil; and [y] stalls for all manner of beasts, and [z] cotes for flocks.

29 Moreover he provided him cities, and [a] possessions of flocks and herds in abundance: for [b] God had given him substance very much.

B. C. 712. 30 This same Hezekiah also [c] stopped the upper water-course of [d] Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works.

31 Howbeit [f] in *the business of* the § ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of [g] the wonder that was *done* in the land, God [h] left him [i] to try him, [k] that he might know all *that was* in his heart.

32 Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his ‖ goodness, behold they *are* written [l] in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, *and* [m] in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

B. C. 698. 33 And Hezekiah [n] slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the ¶ chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of *brought presents to him*, v. 22, 23. By the favor of God, enemies are lost, and friends gained.

V. 24—33. Here we conclude the story of Hezekiah, with three things concerning him:

I. His sickness, and recovery, v. 24. briefly mentioned here; largely, 2 K. 20.

II. His sin, and repentance; also more largely related, 2 K. 20: 12, &c. yet several things here, we had not there.

1. As to the occasion, it is here added, that the king of Babylon's honorable embassy, to congratulate him on his recovery, came to inquire of *the wonder done in the land*, (v. 31.) either the destruction of the Assyrian army, or the going back of the sun. The sun was their god, they came to inquire concerning the favor he had shown to Hezekiah, that they might honor him whom their god honored, v. 31. These miracles were wrought to alarm and awaken a stupid, careless world, but men were not converted till a greater wonder was there done in the appearing of Jesus Christ; Matt. 2: 1, 2.

2. God left him to himself in it, to try him, v. 31. that, by this trial and his weakness in it, He might know, i. e. it might be known, (an usual Hebraism,) what was in his heart. It is good for us to know ourselves, and our own weakness and sinfulness, that we may not be conceited, or self-confident, but may always think meanly of ourselves, and live in a dependence on divine grace. We know not the corruption of our own hearts, nor what we shall do if God leave us to ourselves. *Lord, lead us not into temptation.*

3. His sin was, that *his heart was lifted up*, v. 25. He was proud of the honor God had put on him in so many instances; the honor his neighbors did him in bringing him presents; and now the king of Babylon's sending an embassy to caress and court him, exalted him above measure. When Hezekiah had destroyed other idolatries, he began to idolize himself. O what need have great, and good, and useful men, to study their own infirmities and follies, and their obligations to free grace, that they may never think highly of themselves; and to beg earnestly of God, that He will hide pride from them, and always keep them humble!

4. The aggravation of his sin, was, that he made even those favors of God the food and fuel of his pride, v. 25. It is justly expected, that they who receive mercy from God, should make some suitable returns for the mercies received; and if they do not, their ingratitude will certainly be charged on them. Though we cannot render an equivalent, or the payment of a debt, we must render the acknowledgment of a favor: *What shall I render*, that may be so accepted? Ps. 116: 12.

5. The divine displeasure he was under for this sin; though but a heart-sin, and the overt-act seemed not only innocent, but civil, (the showing of his treasures to a friend,) yet wrath came on him and his kingdom for it, v. 25. Note, Pride is a sin God hates as much as any other, and particularly in his own people. They that exalt themselves, must expect to be abased, and put under humbling providences. Wrath came on David for his pride in numbering the people.

6. His repentance for this sin, v. 26. Note, (1.) Though God may, for wise and holy ends, suffer his people to fall into sin, yet He will not suffer them to lie still in it; they *shall not be utterly cast down*. (2.) Heart-sins are to be repented of, though

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[a] 1:1, 1 Chr. 29:25.
[b] See on 2 K. 20:1—3. Is. 38:1—8.
[c] Or, *wrought a miracle for him.* See on 2 K. 20:4—11. Is. 38:4—8,21,22.
[d] Deut. 32:6. Ps. 116.12,13. Hos. 14: 2. Luke 17:17,18.
[e] 31. 25:19. 26:16. Deut. 8:12—14, 17. 2 K. 14:10. 20:13. Ez. 28:2,5, 17. Dan. 5:20,23. Hab. 2:4. 2 Cor. 12:7. 1 Tim. 3:6. 1 Pet. 5:5,6.
[f] 24:18. See on 2 Sam. 24:1,10—17. 1 Chr. 21:1,12—17.
[g] 33:12,19,23. 34:27. Lev. 26:40,41. 2 K. 20:19. Jer. 26:18,19. Jam. 4:10.
[h] Heb. *lifting up.*
[i] 34:27,28. 1 K. 21:29.—See on 2 K. 20:16—18. Is. 39:6—8.
[k] 1:12. 9:27. 17:5.
[l] 1 Chr. 27:25, &c.
[m] ‡ Heb. *instruments of desire.*
[n] 26:10.
[o] 1 K. 4:26.
[p] 2 Sam. 7:8.
[q] 26:10. Gen. 13:2—6. 1 Chr. 27:29 31. Job 1:3. 42:12.
[r] 25:9. Deut. 8:18. 1 Sam. 2:7. 1 Chr. 29:12. Prov. 10:22. 1 Tim. 6 17,18.
[s] See on 4.—Is. 22:9—11.
[t] 1 K. 1:33,38,45.
[u] Josh. 1:7,8. 1 s. 1:1—3.
[v] 2 K. 20.12,13. Is. 39:1,2.
[w] § Heb. *interpreters.*
[x] 2 K. 20:8—11. Is. 38:8.
[y] Judg. 16:20. Ps. 27:9. 51:11,12. 119: 116,117. John 15:5.
[z] Gen. 22:1. Deut. 8:16. Job 1:11,12. 2:3—6. Ps. 139:1,2,23,24. Prov. 17: 3. Zech. 13:9. Mal. 3:2,3. 1 Pet. 1:7.
[a] Deut. 8:2. 13:3.
[b] ‖ Heb. *kindnesses.* 31:20,21.
[c] Is. 36:—39:
[d] 2 K. 18:—20:
[e] See on 1 K. 1:21. 2:10. 11:43.
[f] ¶ Or, *highest.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—23. Satan and his emissaries are most eager to give us disturbance, when we are most usefully employed: but God restrains them, till He sees it needful to correct our misconduct, or to try our faith and constancy, and then they are permitted, under certain restrictions, to assault us.—It is very lawful and proper to employ prudent precautions and means of defence, when there is a prospect of danger or difficulty: but men seldom *attend* to these things, without *confiding* in them. We should therefore encourage ourselves and each other, to trust wholly in the Lord. What need then have we to fear the strongest arm of flesh, when we have the 'LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles?' Yet such a confidence will excite the contempt and reviling of proud, ungodly men.—The more undaunted any one is, while trusting the Lord in the path of duty, the more will some impious wretches rail, blaspheme, menace, boast, and triumph; especially when grown insolent by success, and intoxicated with absolute authority. But let the oppressed and insulted believer pray earnestly to the Lord, that he may not be driven from his confidence. None were ever confounded, who put their trust in Him.

SCOTT.

Verses 24—26.

(2 *K.* 20: *Is.* 38:39:) These events are supposed, by many learned men, to have been previous to Sennacherib's first invasion, as evidently occurring in the 14th year of Hezekiah's reign. (2 *K.* 18:13. 20:1.)—The princes and the people of Judah, as well as the king, had been very ungrateful for their many mercies: and when 'Hezekiah was humbled for the pride of his heart,' and had received Isaiah's alarming message, it is probable he made open confession of his offence, and called on the people to join him in solemn humiliation and prayer on that account. It may, however, be doubted, whether the ambassadors from the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem before Sennacherib's last invasion of the land; as the treasures, which Hezekiah showed them, seem to have been obtained by the result of that invasion, and the presents, which were afterwards brought to him. (*Note*, 27—29.)—This chapter is in great measure an abridgment of those chs. in 2 K. and in the prophecy of Isaiah, which are referred to.—*Gave him a sign.* (24) Or, 'wrought a miracle for him.' *M.* SCOTT.

Verses 27—29.

The riches, here spoken of, seem to have arisen, in great measure, from the immense spoil found in the Assyrian camp. (*Is.* 33:2—6, 23, 24.) *Storehouses*, &c. (28) 26:10. 1 *Chr.* 27:25—31. *Job* 1:2, 3 v. 3. 42:10—17, v. 12. *Prov.* 27:23—27. *Ec.* 5:9—12.) SCOTT.

Verses 30—33.

M. R.—*Note*, 3, 4, v. 4.—2 *K.* 20:20, 21.—*The princes.* (31) 'The princes of Babylon sent to inquire of the wonder that had been done in the land:' but it is not certain, that the Chaldeans observed any change in the motion of the heavenly bodies. The report of the miracles which attended Hezekiah's recovery, might suffice for that purpose. Yet, in Isaiah it is said, 'The sun returned, &c.' (*Is.* 38:8.)—The Lord on this occasion withdrew from Hezekiah the immediate efficacy of his grace, and left him to follow the dictates of his own natural propensity, 'to try him, that He might know all that was in his heart.' The omniscient God before knew the whole; but, having by the trial made the case evident, He thus pointed it out to Hezekiah,

David: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem [o] did him honor at his death. [p] And Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Manasseh reigns long, is very wicked, multiplies idolatries, corrupts the people, and rejects the admonitions of God, 1—10. He is carried captive to Babylon; he humbles himself greatly before God, with earnest and fervent prayer; and is restored to his kingdom, 11—13. He fortifies his dominions, and restores the worship of God, 14—17. His acts and prayers, 18, 19. He dies, and Amon succeeds, who reigns wickedly, and is murdered, 20—24. The people slay the murderers, and make Josiah king, 25.

[a] MANASSEH *was* [b] twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem;

2 But did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, [c] like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

3 For [d] he [*] built again the high places [e] which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and [f] he reared up altars for Baalim, and [g] made groves, and worshipped all [h] the host of heaven, and served them.

4 Also [i] he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said, [k] In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever.

5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven, [l] in the two courts of the house of the LORD.

6 And he [m] caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also [n] he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and [o] dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

7 And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, [p] in the house of God, of which [q] God had said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, [r] which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:

8 Neither [s] will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land, which I have appointed for your fathers; [t] so that they will take heed [u] to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances [x] by the hand of Moses.

o 16:14. Gen. 50:10,11. Num. 20:29. Deut. 34:8. 1 Sam. 2:30. 25:1. Prov. 10:7.
p See on 33:1,&c.
a 32:33. 2 K. 21:1. 1 Chr. 3:13. Matt. 1:10. *Manasses.*
b 34:1,2. Ec. 10:16. Is. 3:4,12.
c 28:3. 36:14. Lev. 18:24—30. 20:22, 23. Deut. 12:31. 18:9—14. 2 K. 17: 11,15. 21:2,9. Ezra 9:14. Ps. 106: 35—40. Ez. 11:12.
d Ec. 2:19. 9:18.
* Heb. *returned and built.*
e 30:14. 31:1. 32:12. 2 K. 18:4. 21:3.
f 28:2—4. Judg. 2:11—13.
g Deut. 16:21. 1 K. 14:23. Jer. 17:2.
h Deut. 4:19. 17:3. 2 K. 23:5,6,11. Jer. 8:2. 19:13. Zeph. 1:5. Acts 7:42.
i 15. 34:3,4. 2 K. 21:4,5. Jer. 7:30.
k 6:6. 7:16. 32:19. Deut. 12:11. 1 K. 8:29. 9:3.
l 4:9. Jer. 32:34,35. Ez. 8:7—18.
m 28:3. Lev. 18:21. 20:2. Deut. 12: 31. 18:10. 2 K. 21:6. 23:10. Jer. 7:31,32. Ez. 23:37,39.
n Lev. 19:26. 20:6. Deut. 18:10—14. 1 Sam. 15:23. 2 K. 17:17. Is. 47:9—12. Gal. 5:20.
o 2 K. 21:6. 23:24. 1 Chr. 10:13. Is. 8:19. 19:3.
p 2 K. 21:7,8. 23:6.
q See on 4.—1 K. 8:29. Ps. 132:13,14.
r 6:6. 1 K. 8:44,48. 11:13,32. Ps. 78: 68.
s See on 2 Sam. 7:10. 1 Chr. 17:9.
t See on 7:17—22.—Deut. 28:1—14. 30: 15—20. Is. 1:19,20. Ez. 33:25,26.
u Deut. 4:40. 5:1,31—33. 6:1. 8:1. 27:26. Luke 1:6. Gal. 3:10—13.
x See on Lev. 8:36. 10:11.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 24—33. Alas! how seldom do we in any good degree render to the Lord according to his benefits! None, who know themselves, and watch over their own hearts, will venture to cast a stone at Hezekiah; but they will all, one by one, depart convicted in their consciences of similar guilt, and crying out, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!'—Blessed be God, death will soon end the believer's conflict; then every sin will be abolished, and he may safely be trusted with the most glorious exaltation and uninterrupted felicity; and will no more, to all eternity, be tempted to intercept the least mite of that revenue of praise, which belongs to the God of his salvation.—While we are here, we ought to honor those to whom honor is due, though they be far from perfect: and we may well respect the memories, and should imitate the example, of those who have been pious and useful in their generation: for, a short time may perhaps awfully convince survivors, that the loss of them was far greater, than at first could be at all supposed. SCOTT.

and to all succeeding ages, for their humiliation, warning, and instruction. (*Deut.* 8:2, 3.) For it hence appears undeniable, that the best of men, if left to themselves, are prone to pride and ostentation, to idolize themselves and their fellow creatures, to withdraw their dependence from God, to rob Him of his glory, and to be ungrateful for his mercies. (2 *Cor.* 12:7—10.) 'God suffered him to behave according to his own inclinations, without any special motion from Him; that Hezekiah might know, he was not so strong as he imagined, if left to himself without God. . . . God made proof of Hezekiah, as he had done of many other good men, whether he would entirely obey Him or not. . . . God, no doubt, . . . saw the pride and vanity that lurked in Hezekiah's heart; which was hid from every one but God Himself, who now suffered him to discover it for his humiliation.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIII. V. 7. *A carved image, the idol,* &c.] 'A graven image of the grove,' says 2 K. 21:7. *Wilkinson,* on opening (in 1827) one of the tombs of Qoornet Murraee, at Thebes, wherein was written 'the name of the elder brother of Amunoph 3d, [p. 214. vol. I. and note, Ex. 5:2.] found the following picture. 'The king is seated on his throne, within a richly ornamented canopy [note, 2 K. 17:18.], attended by a fan-bearer, who also holds his sceptre; a procession advances in 4 lines: the lowest is of Egyptians of the sacerdotal and military classes, some ladies of consequence, and young people bringing bouquets and boughs of trees. They have just entered the gates of the royal court, and are preceded by a *scribe,* and others of the priestly order, who do obeisance before the deputy of his majesty, as he stands to receive them. (Prostration before kings, &c. and persons of consequence, was common with the Egyptians: [comp. 1 Sam. 24:8, &c.] and the present Copts kneel down and kiss the ground before their patriarch.) In the 2d line black "Chiefs of Cush" or Ethiopia bring presents of gold rings, copper, skins, fans or umbrellas of featherwork, and an ox, bearing on its horns *an artificial garden,* and a lake of fish. This offering will appear less singular, when we think of our own flower-pots, and vases of gold and silver-fish; which last are not less incomprehensible to the modern Egyptian than the above mentioned lake may seem to us. The garden indeed may have been of *artificial flowers,* which were known to the Egyptians. [The above *little* facts may serve as a caution to *some* translators, who are fond of departing from and explaining away the literal meaning of the words of Scripture, because they seem *so strange.*] Having placed their offerings, these prostrate themselves before the monarch. In the 3d line, besides

9 So Manasseh [y] made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, *and* [z] to do worse than [a] the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

10 And [b] the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken.

[*Practical Observations.*]

11 Wherefore [c] the LORD brought upon them [d] the captains of the host * of [e] the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh [f] among the thorns, and [g] bound him with † fetters, and carried him to Babylon.

12 And [h] when he was in affliction, [i] he besought [k] the LORD his God, [l] and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers,

13 And prayed unto him: and [m] he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and [n] brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh [o] knew that the LORD he *was* God.

14 ¶ Now after this [p] he built a wall without the city of David, on the west side of [q] Gihon, in the valley, even to the entering in at [r] the fish-gate, and compassed about ‡ Ophel, and raised it up a very great height, and [s] put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah.

15 And [t] he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast *them* out of the city.

16 And he [u] repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon [v] peace-offerings, and [x] thank-offerings, and [y] commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel.

y 1 K. 14:16. 15:26. 2 K. 21:16. 23:26. 24:3,4. Prov. 29:12. Mic. 6:16.
z See on 2. 2 K. 21:9—11.—Ez. 16:45—47.
a Lev. 18:24. Deut. 2:21. Josh. 24:8. 2 K. 17:8—11.
b 36:15,16. Neh. 9:29,30. Jer. 25:4—7. 44:4,5. Zech. 1:4. Acts 7:51,52.
c Deut. 28:36.
d Is. 10:8. 36:9.
* Heb. *which* were *the king's.*
e Neh. 9:32,37. Is. 5:26—30. 7:18—20.
f 1 Sam. 13:6.
g 2 K. 23:33. 25:6. Job 36:8—11. Ps. 107:10—12. † Or, *chains.*
h 28:22. Lev. 26:39—42. Deut. 4:30, 31. Jer. 31:18—20. Hos. 5:15. Mic. 6:9. Luke 15:16—18.
i 18,19. Ps. 50:15. Acts 9:11.
k See on 28:5.
l 19,23. 32:26. Ex. 10:3. Luke 18:14, 15. Jam. 4:10. 1 Pet. 5:5,6.
m Ezra 8:23. Job 22:23,27. 33:16—30. Ps. 32:3—5. 36:5. Is. 55:6—9. Jer. 29:12,13 Matt. 7:7,8. Luke 23:42, 43. John 4:10.
n Ezra 7:27. Prov. 16:7. 21:1. Matt. 6:33.
o Deut. 29:6. Ps. 46:10. Jer. 24:7. Dan. 4:34,35. John 17:3. Heb. 8:11.
p 32:5.
q 32:30. 1 K. 1:33,45.
r Neh. 3:3. 12:39. Zeph. 1:10.
‡ Or, *the tower.* 27:3. Neh. 3:26,27.
s 11:11,12. 17:19.
t See on 3—7.—2 K. 21:7. Is. 2:17—21. Ez. 18:20—22. Hos. 14:1—3. Matt. 3:8.
u 29:18. 1 K. 18:30.
v Lev. 3:1,&c.
x Lev. 7:12—18.
y 9. 14:4.—See on 30:12.—Gen. 18:19. Luke 22:32.

V. 11—20. We have seen Manasseh by his wickedness undoing the good his father had done; here we have him by repentance undoing the evil he himself had done. It is strange this was not so much as mentioned in *Kings.* But, perhaps, the design of that history being to show the wickedness of the nation which brought destruction on them; and this repentance of Manasseh, and the benefit of it, being personal only, and not national, it is overlooked there; yet here it is fully related, and a memorable instance it is of the riches of God's pardoning mercy, and the power of his renewing grace. As to Manasseh's repentance, here is,

I. The occasion of it, to wit, his afflictions. In his distress, he humbled himself, and returned to God. Sanctified afflictions often prove happy means of conversion. God brought a foreign enemy upon him; the king of Babylon, here called *king of Assyria,* because he had made himself master of Assyria, which he would the more easily do, for the defeat of Sennacherib's army, and its destruction, before Jerusalem. He aimed at the treasures the ambassadors had seen, and all those precious things; but God sent him to chastise a sinful people, and reduce a straying prince. The captains took *Manasseh among the thorns,* in some bush or other, perhaps in his garden, where he had hid himself. Or, it is spoken figuratively; he was perplexed in his counsels, and embarrassed in his affairs. They bound him, who had been held before with the cords of his own iniquity, and carried him prisoner to Babylon. About what time of his reign this was, we are not told; the Jews say it was in his 22d year.

II. The expressions of it; (*v.* 12, 13.) *when in affliction,* he had time to bethink himself, and reason enough too. Had he been a prince in the palace of Babylon, probably he had been confirmed in his idolatry; but, being a captive in the prisons

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—10. It would be extremely distressing to pious parents, magistrates, or ministers, if they could foresee the consequences of their removal, in the conduct of their children or people, and in the subversion of their most important regulations. Yet good instructions and examples may remain, like seed under the ground, for a long time unperceived, and at length spring up and bring forth much fruit. Without disquieting ourselves about futurity, we may therefore cheerfully commit our families, and our endeavors to do good, as well as our souls and bodies, into the hand of God, assured that our labors will not prove wholly ineffectual. (*Ps.* 90: 17. *Ec.* 9: 1—3.)—The tendency of human nature to evil is so strong, that nothing but divine grace can give it a contrary bias: and when that power is in any degree suspended or withheld, men return to evil, as a stone falls downwards; and run, with rapid and accelerated motion, continually further and further into transgression. Yet, 'where sin hath abounded, grace hath often much more abounded:' (*Rom.* 5. 20, 21.) and some of every description of sinners shall be brought to repentance and salvation, to prove that 'with God nothing is impossible.'

SCOTT.

rings of gold, (which with rings of silver was the money of the Egyptians and Ethiopians; and is still about Sennaar,) and bags of precious stones, [comp. 31:23, 27, &c.] the presents are a camelopard, panthers' skins, and long-horned cattle, with heads strangely ornamented with the hands and heads (probably artificial) of negroes. In the upper line, the *queen* of the same people arrives in a chariot drawn by oxen and overshadowed by an umbrella accompanied by her attendants, some with presents of gold. She alights and advances, but whether this refers to any marriage, or to the annual tribute, I cannot decide. Among the presents are a chariot, shields covered with bull's hides, bound with metal borders, and studded with pins, [comp. Job 15:26.] (not unlike some described by *Homer,*) chairs, couches, head-stools, (a half-cylinder of well-polished (acacia) wood to support the head, *Porphyry*) [comp. 1 Sam. 26:8, 12.] and other objects.' ED.

Verses 9, 10.

(2 *K.* 21:9, 10.) 'A most prodigious change from the height of piety in his father's time, into the sink of impiety in this! . . . *Strigelius,* . . . prof. of theol. at Heidelberg, left this remark in his lectures on this place, near 140 years ago: (i. e. soon after the establishment of the reformation in Germany:)—"Now we have the word of God abundantly in all wisdom, and pious princes patronise both those that preach, and those that learn the Gospel. But this plenty of the word we now enjoy, (I tremble to speak it, but I must speak it, because it will come to pass,) shall be taken away: and that sad, mournful time will come, when the public assemblies of the church shall be scattered, and a few pious souls shall meet with fear in a corner, to communicate among themselves the fragments of the heavenly doctrine, and give God thanks for these remainders." Which we have seen fulfilled in that country, and in France, and other places.' *Patrick.*—This apparent prophecy seems to have been merely a presage grounded on the vicissitudes of things, especially in respect of religion, and the tendency of prosperity to induce carnal security. SCOTT.

Verse 11.

Here we find a most instructive view of Manasseh's latter years; and this very man became as eminent an instance of the power, riches, and freeness of divine mercy and grace, as any recorded in the Scripture.—We are not informed what devastations these invaders made in Judah and Jerusalem.—Many suppose, that Esar-haddon, having got possession of Babylon, and entirely changed the inhabitants of the kingdom of Israel, about the same time sent to invade Judah, and carried Manasseh captive to Babylon, in the 22d year of his reign. But the Scripture does not mention the date of this event, nor the name of the Assyrian king: and from the scriptural description of Manasseh's reign, as exceedingly wicked, it seems highly improbable, that he lived above 30 years after his repentance and reformation, as on this supposition he must have done. 'This was 33 years before his death, as the Jews make account. . . . But both Kimchi and Abarbinel confess, that this relies upon a weak foundation; as doth the other thing, that he was carried away in the 22d year of his reign.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

Among the thorns.] The Heb. may mean 'they put upon him manacles.' *Hewlett.* 'Who took him alive.' *Syr. Arab. Boothr.* ED.

Verses 12, 13.

When Manasseh was deprived of his authority and liberty, and secluded from his evil counsellors and companions, and from all his pleasures; in chains, and in a prison; without any other prospect, than of ending his days in that wretched situation; he had leisure to reflect on what had passed. Thus, by the special grace of God, his solitude and affliction brought him to view his own conduct and character in another light than he had done before; and he began to pray for mercy and deliverance, 'humbling himself greatly before the God of his fathers.' (*Note, Luke* 15:17—19.) These humble supplications the Lord graciously accepted: and inclined the king of Assyria to liberate his prisoner, and to reinstate him in his authority. 'Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God,' alone able to punish, or to deliver: he likewise became acquainted with Him as a God of salvation; and learned to fear, trust, love, and obey Him. (1 *Chr.* 28:9.) SCOTT.

Verses 15—17.

Manasseh totally suppressed all open idolatry: and it might arise from other causes than his want of zeal, that the high places were not removed. The inveterate habits of the people; the powerful opposition of that party, [the *aristocracy,* perhaps, as opposed to the *hierarchy,* comp. 23:1, 2, 14, 16. 24:17, 18, 20.] which had concurred in his former idolatries, and of the nation in general; and the weakness of his authority, through ill success, and the power of the Assyrian monarch; would occasion obstacles, which he might not be able to overcome. (14:2—5. 17:6. 20:31—34, *v* 33. 1 *K.* 15:14.) But there is not

17 Nevertheless [z] the people did sacrifice still in the high places, *yet* unto the LORD their God only.

18 ¶ Now [a] the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and [b] his prayer unto his God, and the words of [c] the seers that spake to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, behold, they *are written* [d] in the book of the kings of Israel.

19 [e] His prayer also, and *how God* was entreated of him, and [f] all his sin, and his trespass, and the places wherein he built high places, and set up groves and graven images, [g] before he was humbled; behold, they *are* written among the sayings of [*] the seers.

B. C. 643. 20 So [h] Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house: and [i] Amon his son reigned in his stead.

21 ¶ Amon *was* two and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned [j] two years in Jerusalem.

22 But he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, [k] as did Manasseh his father: for Amon sacrificed unto all the carved images which Manasseh his father had made, and served them;

23 And [l] humbled not himself before the LORD, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself; but Amon [†] trespassed more and more

24 And [m] his servants conspired against him, and slew him in his own house.

25 But the people of the land [n] slew all them that had conspired against king Amon: and [o] the people of the land made [p] Josiah his son king in his stead.

of Babylon, he was convinced of it, and reclaimed from it. He applied himself to Jehovah as *his* God now, renouncing all others, and resolving to cleave to Him only; the God of his fathers, and a God in covenant with him. He humbled himself greatly before Him; was truly sorry for his sins, ashamed of them, and afraid of the wrath of God. Our hearts should be humble under humbling providences, then we accommodate ourselves to them, and answer God's end in them. He prayed to Him for the pardon of sin, and the return of his favor. Prayer is the relief of penitents, the relief of the afflicted. That is a good prayer, and very pertinent in this case, which we find among the apocryphal books, entitled, *The prayer of Manasses, when holden captive in Babylon;* whether it was his or no, is uncertain.

III. God's gracious acceptance of it, *v.* 13, 19. Though affliction drives us to God, He will not therefore reject us, if in sincerity we seek Him, for afflictions are sent on purpose to bring us to Him. As a token of favor, God made a way for his escape; afflictions are continued no longer than till they have done their work; when Manasseh is brought back to his God and his duty, he shall soon be *brought back to his kingdom.* See how ready God is to accept and welcome returning sinners, and how *swift to show mercy.* Let not great sinners despair, when Manasseh himself, on his repentance, found favor with God. 1 Tim. 1: 16. Isa. 1: 18.

IV. The *fruits meet for repentance* after his return, *v.* 15, 16. He turned from his sins: returned to his duty; for he *repaired the altar of the Lord*, and sacrificed thereon. Nay, he now used his power to reform his people, as before he had abused it to corrupt them. Those that truly repent, will not only return to God themselves, but will do all they can to bring back those that have been seduced by their example We find he prevailed to bring them off from their *false gods*, but not from their *high places*, *v.* 17. he could not carry the reformation so far as he had carried the corruption. It is easy to debauch, but not so easy to reform again.

V. His prosperity, in some measure, after his repentance. He might plainly see it was sin that ruined him; for when he returned to God, God returned: and then he *built a wall about the city of David*, *v.* 14. for by sin he had unwalled it. He also put captains of war in the fenced cities, for the security of his country. Josephus says, that all the rest of his time, he was so changed for the better, that he was looked upon as a very happy man.

Lastly, Here is the conclusion of his history. The heads of those things, for a full narrative of which we are referred to other writings then extant, are more than of any of the kings, *v.* 18, 19. He was buried privately. Penitents may recover their comfort sooner than their credit.

V. 21—25. We have little recorded concerning Amon, but enough, unless it were better. He did as *Manasseh had done* in the days of his apostasy *v.* 22. They who think this an evidence that Manasseh did not truly repent, forget how many good kings had wicked sons. Only, it should seem Manasseh was in *this* defective, that he did not utterly destroy *the images*, according to the law, Deut. 7: 5. How necessary that law was, this shows: for the *carved images* being only thrown by, and not burnt, Amon knew where to find them, soon set them up, and sacrificed to them. It is added, to justify God in cutting him off so soon, That he outdid his father in sinning; and came short of him in repenting. It is not so much sin, as impenitence in sin, that ruins men; not so much that they offend, as that they do not humble themselves for their offences; not the disease, but the neglect of the remedy.

Observe his speedy destruction, *v.* 24. Perhaps, he promised himself he should repent, as his father did, in the latter end of his days. But his case shows what a madness it is to presume on that. He rebelled against God, and his own servants rebelled against him. Herein God was righteous, but they wicked, and justly did the *people of the land* put them to death as traitors. The lives of kings are particularly under the protection of Providence, and the laws both of God and man.

z 15:17. 32:12. 1 K. 22:43. 2 K. 15:4.
a 20:34. 32:32.—See on 1 K. 11:41.
b See on 12,13,19.
c 19. 1 Sam. 9:9. 2 K. 17:13. Is. 29: 10. 30:10. Am. 7:12. Mic. 3:7.
d See on 1 K. 14:19. 15:31.
e 11,12,19. Prov. 15:8. Acts 9:11.
f See on 1—19.
g See on 12.—30:11. 36:12. Jer. 44:10. Dan. 5:22.
* Or, *Hosai.*
h See on 3:33. 2 K. 21:18.
i 2 K. 21:19—25. 1 Chr. 3:14. Matt. 1:10.
j 1. Luke 12:19,20. Jam. 4:13—15.
k See on 1—10. 2 K. 21:1—11,20.—Ez. 20:18.
l See on 1,12,19.—Jer. 8:12.
† Heb. *multiplied trespass.* 28:22: 2 Tim. 3:13.
m 24:25,26. 25:27,28. 2 Sam. 4:5—12. 2 K. 21.23—26. Ps. 55:23. Rom. 11: 22.
n Gen. 9:5,6. Num. 35:31,33.
o 26:1. 36:1.
p See on 34:1.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 11—25. When the objects of the Lord's special love disregard the rebukes of his Word, He will let them feel his chastening rod: and they may truly say, 'Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept thy word.' The effects of a pious education, or of solid religious instructions, often show themselves in affliction: the troubles themselves verify the warnings of pious relatives or teachers; and worse things arise before the mind, as the dreaded consequence of continuing in sin. Yet all this would not have an abiding effect, if afflictions were not a 'mean of grace,' which God Himself uses and blesses, as evidently as He does those which He commands us to employ for ourselves and for each other. Wherever there is a sinner of whom it can truly be said, 'Behold he prayeth,' there will the Lord be found a God that heareth prayer. When a sinner in his affliction beseeches the Lord, and 'humbles himself greatly before Him;' when he condemns himself, ingenuously confesses his sins, and is covered with shame, and melted into godly sorrow; when he renounces all hope but in undeserved mercy, and every plea but in the Redeemer's name, and seeks forgiveness and salvation before all other things; he will assuredly find access and acceptance; and his future life will evince, that his repentance, faith, and love, have united in bringing him to hate and renounce all his sins, and to 'walk henceforth in newness of life.' Let sinners then be willing to know the worst of their case; for it is by no means desperate: let them consider all their pains and sorrows as so many calls to humble themselves before God, to call upon Him, and to 'acquaint themselves with Him, that they may be at peace.' And let not the hearts of those, who are thus seeking Him, yield to discouragement; but let them humble themselves yet more and more, and 'pray always and not faint.'—Let those who trifle and procrastinate, because a merciful God has long borne with a few most notorious rebels, and at length granted them repentance and forgiveness of sins, meditate upon the example of Amon; and tremble, lest He make them monuments of his righteous vengeance. SCOTT.

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the most remote intimation, that God did not accept his endeavors. Yet the opposition or hypocrisy of the people, who had readily concurred in his iniquities, but refused to imitate his repentance, prevented it from being a national blessing, as his crimes had formed and occasioned a load of national sin, 'which the LORD would not pardon.' (2 *K.* 23:26, 27. *Jer.* 15:2—4.) SCOTT.

Verses 18, 19.

The repeated mention of Manasseh's *prayer*, 'and how God was entreated of him,' and of his being *humbled*, are well worthy our notice. This humble, supplicating frame of mind forms, as it were, a crisis in the sinner's case; and from the moment he is brought into it, he enters on a new state, and commences a new life, however wicked he before has been. (*M. R.*) The prayer, contained in the Apocrypha, and ascribed to Manasseh, probably was composed long after: but no doubt he prayed continually and fervently, with particular confessions of his sins, and with all that unstudied copiousness, which a burdened conscience, a broken heart, trembling fears, wavering hopes, and fervent desires, will invariably dictate. (*Job* 33:19—30. *Acts* 9:10—14, *v.* 11.) 'As if he had said, *How he continued to pray till God was entreated of him.*' *Patrick.*—Instead of 'the seers,' (19) the M. R. is *Hosai*, and some suppose it to have been the name of a prophet in those days. SCOTT.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Josiah reigns well, and destroys idolatry both in Judah and Israel, 1—7. He provides for the repair of the temple, 8—13. Hilkiah finds the book of the law, and reads it before the king; who is greatly alarmed, and sends to inquire of God by the prophetess Huldah, 14—22. Huldah predicts the destruction of Jerusalem, but not till after Josiah's death, 23—28. He causes the law to be read in a solemn assembly, and renews the covenant between God and the people, 29—33.

[a] JOSIAH *was* [b] eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years.

2 And he did *that which was* [c] right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of
B. C. 634. David his father, and [d] declined *neither* to the right hand nor to the left.

3 For in the eighth year of his reign, [e] while he was yet young, he began [f] to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year [g] he began to purge
B. C. 630. Judah and Jerusalem from [h] the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.

4 And they [i] brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the * images that *were* on high above them he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images he brake in pieces, and [k] make dust *of them*, and strowed *it* upon the † graves of them that had sacrificed unto them.

5 And [l] he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and [m] cleansed Judah and Jerusalem.

6 And *so did he* [n] in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their ‡ mattocks round about.

7 And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had [o] beaten the graven images § into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, [p] he returned to Jerusalem.

B. C. 624. 8 ¶ Now in [p] the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land, and the house, he [r] sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and [s] Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the [t] recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God.

9 And when they came to [u] Hilkiah the high priest, [x] they delivered the money *that was* brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of [y] Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin; and [z] they returned to Jerusalem.

10 And they put *it* [a] in the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the LORD, and they gave it to the workmen that wrought in the house of the LORD, to repair and mend the house:

11 Even to the artificers and builders gave they *it*, to buy hewn stone, and timber for couplings, and to ‖ floor the houses which [b] the kings of Judah had destroyed.

12 And the men did the work [c] faithfully: and the overseers of them *were* Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set *it* forward; and *other of* the Levites, [d] all that could skill of instruments of music.

13 Also *they were* over [e] the bearers of burdens, and *were* overseers of all that wrought

CHAP. XXXIV. Before we see Judah and Jerusalem ruined, we shall yet see some glorious years, while good Josiah sits at the helm. By his pious endeavors for reformation, God tried them yet once more; *if they had known, in this their day of visitation, the things that belonged to their peace*, and improved them, their ruin might have been prevented. But, after this reign, they were hid from their eyes, and the next reigns brought an utter desolation on them.

V. 1—7. 1. I fear, that in the beginning of Josiah's reign, things went much as in his father's time, because, being a child, he must have left the management of them to others; so that it was not till his 12th year, which goes far in the number of his years, that the reformation began, *v.* 3.

2. He reigned well, *v.* 2.

3. While young, about 16 years old, he *began to seek after God*, *v.* 3. We have reason to think he had not so good an education as Manasseh had; yet he thus sought God when young. It is the duty and interest of young people, and will particularly be the honor of young gentlemen, as soon as they come to years of understanding, to *begin to seek God;* for they that seek Him early shall find Him.

4. In his 12th year, when, it is probable he took the administration of the government entirely into his own hands, he *began to purge his kingdom from the remains of idolatry;* he destroyed the high places, groves, images, altars, all the utensils of idolatry, *v.* 3, 4. This is here said to be in his 12th year, but it was said, 2 K. 23: 23. to be in his 18th year; something was done toward it now in his 12th year; but, probably, it was not thoroughly done till they found the book of the law six years after; but here the whole work is laid together briefly, which was much more largely and particularly related in *Kings*.

V. 8—13. Here, 1. Orders are given by the king for the repair of the temple, *v.* 8. When he had purged the house of its corruptions, he began to fit it for the services to be performed in it. Thus we must do by the spiritual temple of the heart; get it cleansed from the pollutions of sin, and then renewed, so as to be transformed into the image of God.

2. Effectual care is taken about it; the Levites went about the country, and gathered money towards it, which was returned to the three trustees mentioned, *v.* 8. They brought it to Hilkiah the high priest, (*v.* 9.) and he and they put it into the hands of workmen, both overseers and laborers, who undertook to do it, as we say, *in the gross*, *v.* 10, 11. It is observed, the workmen were industrious and honest, (*v.* 12.) and workmen are not completely faithful if they are not both careful and diligent, also that the overseers were ingenious; not that their skill in music could be of any use in architecture, but it was an evidence they were men of sense and ingenuity, and particularly that their genius lay toward the mathematics, which qualified them very much for this trust. [Indeed, it seems probable, that the same contrivance, or faculty of constructing, is used in building, as in adjusting a composition in music, or, as the phrase may mean, the constructing of a musical instrument; and the use of the faculty in one way would fit it for use in another; nor would the ready command of the muscles of the hand, acquired in playing on an instrument, be at all amiss in handling the tools of the mechanic. But these persons were probably appointed, because they had been accustomed to arrange work for large bodies of

a 33:25. 1 K. 13:2. 2 K. 22:1. 1 Chr. 3:14,15. Jer. 1:2. Zeph. 1:1. Matt. 1:10,11. *Josias.*
b 24:1. 25:1. 33:1. 1 Sam. 2:18,26. 1 K. 3:7—9. Ec. 4:13.
c 14:2. 17:3. 29:2. 1 K. 14:8. 15:5. 2 K. 22:2.
d Deut. 5:32. Josh. 1:7. 23:6. Prov. 4:27.
e 1 Chr. 22:5. 29:1. Ps. 119:9. Ec. 12: 1. 2 Tim. 3:15.
f See on 1 Chr. 28:9.—Prov. 8:17. Matt. 6:33.
g See on 33:17,22. 2 K. 23:4,14.
h 30:14. See on 2 K. 18:4.
i 33:3. Ex. 23:24. Lev. 26:30. Deut. 7:5,25.
* Or, *sun images*. 14:5. 2 K. 23:4,5,11.
k 7. Ex. 32:20. Deut. 9:21. 2 K. 23: 12. Ps. 18:42. Is. 27:9.
† Heb. *face of the graves*. 2 K. 10:26, 27. 23:4,6.
l 1 K. 13:2. 2 K. 23:16. Jer. 8:1,2.
m 7. Num. 35:33. Jer. 3:10. 4:14. Ez. 22:24.
n 30:1,10,11. 31:1. 2 K. 23:15—20.
‡ Or, *mauls*. 1 Sam. 13:20,21. Prov. 25:18. Is. 7:25.
o See on h.—Deut. 9:21.
§ Heb. *to make powder*.
p 31:1.
q Jer. 1:2,3.
r 2 K. 22:3,12,14. Jer. 26:24. 29:3. 36: 10. 39:14. 40:11. Ez. 8:11.
s Jer. 21:1. 29:21,25. 37:3.
t 2 Sam. 8:16. 20:24. 1 Chr. 18:15.
u 14,15,18,20,22. 2 K. 22:4. 23:4
x See on 24:11—14. 2 K. 22:5—7. Phil. 4:3.
y 30:10,18. 31:1.
z 7.
a 2 K. 12:11,12,14. 22:5,6. Ezra 3:7.
‖ Or, *rafter*.
b See on 33:4—7,22.
c 2 K. 12:15. 22:7. Neh. 7:2. Prov. 28:20. 1 Cor. 4:2.
d 1 Chr. 6:31,&c. 15:16—22. 16:4,5, 41,42. 23:5. 25:1,&c.
e 2:18. 8:10. Neh. 4:10.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIV. V. 3—7. This passage seems a compendious account of Josiah's reformation, perhaps without much respect to the order of time. SCOTT.

Verses 8—13.

The temple began to go to decay during the idolatries of Manasseh: and the wicked reign of Amon, and the long minority of Josiah, rendered it much in need of a thorough repair. *All that could skill*, &c. (12) It seems, that the Levites, who attended by courses, in the intervals of their proper work, assisted by turns in superintending the workmen; nor were those excepted who were employed in psalmody: thus they became doubly useful, and saved the expense of other overseers. (1 *Chr.* 23.2—6.) ID.

(12.) 'Did the musicians play to enliven the workmen? *Philodemus* (Treatise on Music) says, the skilful harper, Amphion, "was frequently employed by the Theban *workmen* to play to them while engaged in their labor. So powerful and pleasing was his music, that they went lightly and comfortably through their work; and *time* and *labor* passed on without tedium or fatigue; and the *walls* and *towers were speedily raised*." Hence the fable of Amphion's causing the stones and timber to rise up of themselves, and take their places in the wall of Thebes.' Dr. *A. Clarke*. Military and naval commanders know and use the power of music both to excite to great and harmonious exertion, and to keep up the spirits and preserve the health of their men, sinking under fatigue or ennui: to both which their hard life exposes them. The Egyptians had 'sacred masons,' in the sacer-

the work in any manner of service: and of the Levites *there were* [r] scribes, and [s] officers, and [h] porters.

14 ¶ And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, [i] Hilkiah the priest found a book of [k] the law of the LORD *given* by * Moses.

15 And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan.

16 And [l] Shaphan carried the book to the king, and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to † thy servants, they do *it*.

17 And [m] they have ‡ gathered together the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen.

18 Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book. [n] And Shaphan read § it before the king.

19 And it came to pass, when the king had heard [o] the words of the law, [p] that he rent his clothes.

20 And the king commanded Hilkiah, and [q] Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and [r] Abdon the son of Micah, and Shaphan the scribe, and [s] Asaiah a servant of the king's, saying,

21 Go, [t] inquire of the LORD for me, and for them [u] that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found: [x] for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book.

22 And Hilkiah, and men of different capacities, adapting their work to each, and overseeing its accurate performance in concert.] Witty men are then wise, when they employ their wit in doing good. Observe, in this work, how God dispenses his gifts variously. Let not the overseers of the work despise the bearers of burdens, nor let them that work in the service, grudge at those whose office is to direct; but let each esteem and serve the other in love, and God have the glory, and the church the benefit, of the different gifts and dispositions of both.

V. 14—28. This whole paragraph we had just as here, 2 K. 22: 8—20. and have nothing to add here to what was there observed.

But, 1. We may hence take occasion to bless God, that we have plenty of Bibles, and that they are, or may be, in all hands. What a great deal shall we have to answer for, if the great things of God's laws, being thus made common, should be accounted by us as strange things!

2. We may hence learn, whenever we read or hear the Word of God, to affect our hearts with it, and to get them possessed with a holy fear of that wrath of God, which is there revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, as Josiah's tender heart was, *v.* 19, 27. Were the things contained in the Scripture new to us, as to Josiah, surely they would make deeper impressions on us than commonly they do; but they are nevertheless weighty, nor to be less considered by us, for being well known. Rend the heart, therefore, not the garment.

3. We are here directed, when under convictions of sin, and apprehensions of divine wrath, to inquire of the Lord, *v.* 21. Acts 2: 37. *What must I do to be saved?* Acts 16: 30. And blessed be God, we have the lively Oracles to which to apply ourselves.

V. 29—33. Here are noticed the further advances Josiah made in the reformation. Happy the people that had such a king: for,

1. They were well taught. He called all the people together, great and small, young and old, rich and poor, high and low, *to hear* the words of *the book of the covenant;* all are concerned in those words. To put an honor on the service, and to engage attention the more, though priests and Levites were present, the king himself read the book to the people, *v.* 30. no doubt in such a manner as to show that he was himself affected with it, which would be a mean of affecting the hearers.

2. They were well fixed. The articles of agreement between God and Israel being read, that they might intelligently covenant with God, both king and people here, with great solemnity, do, as it were, subscribe the articles. The repetition of *serve*, *v* 33. denotes intensity, and that their serving God was the only thing his heart was set on; he aimed at nothing else in what he did, but to engage them to God and their duty.

3. They were well tended; were honest with good looking to. *All his days* were days of restraint on them; but this intimated that there was in them a *bent to backslide*, a strong inclination to idolatry. Therefore we find, that *in the days of Josiah*, (Jer. 3: 6.) God charged it on treacherous Judah, that she *had not returned to Him with all her heart, but feignedly*, (*v.* 10.) nay, had *played*

they that the king *had appointed*, went to Huldah [y] the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvath, the son of [z] Hasrah, keeper of the ‖ wardrobe, (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the ¶ college;) and they spake to her to that *effect*.

23 And she answered them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, [a] Tell ye the man that sent you to me,

24 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, [b] I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, *even* [c] all the curses that are written in the book, which they have read before the king of Judah:

25 Because [d] they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore [e] my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and [f] shall not be quenched.

26 And [g] as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *concerning* the words which thou hast heard;

27 Because [h] thine heart was tender, and thou didst [i] humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and [k] didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard *thee* also, saith the LORD.

28 Behold [l] I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave [m] in peace, [n] neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same. So they brought the king word again.

29 ¶ Then [o] the king sent, and [p] gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.

30 And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, ** great and small: and [q] he read in their ears all the words of [r] the book of the covenant that was found in

f Ezra 7:6. Jer. 8:8. Matt. 26:3.
g 19:11. 1 Chr. 23:4. 26:29,30.
h 8:14. 1 Chr. 9:17. 15:18. 16:38,42. 26:1,&c. Ezra 7:7.
i See on 2 K. 22:8.—Deut. 31:24—26.
k 12:1. 31:4. 35:26. Ezra 7:10. Ps. 1:2. Is. 5:24. 30:9. Jer. 8:8. Luke 2:39.
* Heb. *the hand of Moses.* Lev. 8:36. 10:11. 26:46.
l See on 2 K. 22:9,10.
† Heb. *the hand of thy.*
m See on 8—10.
‡ Heb. *poured out*, or *melted.*
n Deut. 17:19. Josh. 1:8. Ps. 119:46, 97—99. Jer. 36:20,21.
§ Heb. *in it.*
o Rom. 3:20. 7:7—11. Gal. 2:19. 3: 10—13.
p 2 K. 19:1. 22:11,19. Jer. 36:22 -24 Joel 2:13.
q 2 K. 25:22. Jer. 26:24. 40:6,9,14.
r 2 K. 22:12. *Achbor.* Jer. 26:22.
s 2 K. 22:12. *Asahiah.*
t Ex. 18:15. 1 Sam. 9:9. 1 K. 22:5—7. Jer. 21:2. Ez. 14:1,&c. 20:1—7
u 28:6. 33:11. 2 K. 17:6,7. 22:13. Is 37:2—4. Jer. 42:2.
x Lev. 26:14,&c. Deut. 28:15,&c. 29: 18—28. 30:17—19. 31:16—18. 32: 15—25. Rom. 4:15.
y Ex. 15:20. Judg. 4:4. Luke 1:41—45. 2:36. Acts 21:9.
z See on 2 K. 22:14. *Harhas.*
‖ Heb. *garments.*
¶ Or, *school*, or, *second part.*
a See on 2 K. 22:15—20.—Jer. 21:3—7. 37:7—10.
b 36:14—20. Josh. 23:16. 2 K. 21:12. 23:26,27. Is. 5:4—6. Jer. 6:19. 19: 3,15. 35:17. 36:31.
c See on 21.
d See on 12:2. 15:2. 33:3—9.—2 K. 24:3,4. Is. 2:8,9. Jer. 15:—4.
e Is. 42:25. Jer. 7:20. Lam. 2:4 4. 11. Nah. 1:6. Rev. 14:10,11.
f 2 K. 22:17.—See on Jer. 4:4. 7:20.—Ez. 20:48. Mark 9:43—48.
g 21,23.
h See on 2 K. 22:18,19.—Ps. 34:18. 51 17. Is. 57:15. 66:2. Ez. 9:4. 36:26.
i See on 32:26. 33:12,19.—Jam 4:6—10.
k See on 19.—Je. 36:23,24.
l 35:24. See on 2 K. 22:20.—Is 57:1,2. Jer. 15:1. Ez. 14:14—21.
m Is. 37:37.
n 1 K. 21:29. 2 K. 20:19. Is. 39:8.
o 1 Sam. 12:23. 1 Chr. 29:2,&c. Mark 14:9.
p 30:2. 2 K. 23:1—3.
** Heb. *from great even to small.* 15: 12,13. 18:30. Deut. 1:17. Job 3:19.
q 6:1,&c. 17:7—9. Deut. 17:18—20. Neh. 8:2—5. Ec. 1:12. 12:9,10.
r 15,18,19,24. Ex. 24:7. 2 K. 23:2,21. Jer. 31:31,32.

dotal order; and chants for various occasions. *Champollion*, as has been elsewhere remarked, [note, 1 Chr. 15:16, &c.] gives one used while beating out grain with sticks. ED.

Verses 20—28.

2 *K.* 22:12—20. *Jer.* 3:6—11.—*All the curses*, &c. (24) This confirms the opinion, that the 27th, and following chs. of Deut. were first

the house of the LORD.

31 And the king stood [s]in his place, and [t]made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, [u]with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant *which are* written in this book.

32 And [x]he caused all *that were* [*]present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand *to it*. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem [y]did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.

33 And Josiah [z]took away all [a]the abominations out of all the countries that *pertained* to the children of Israel, and made all *that were* present in Israel to serve, *even* to serve the LORD their God. *And* [b]all his days they departed not [†]from following the LORD, the God of their fathers.

CHAP. XXXV.

Josiah causes a solemn passover to be celebrated, 1—19. He is slain in battle against Pharaoh-necho, 20—24. Great lamentations are made for him, 25. His acts and goodness, 26, 27.

MOREOVER [a]Josiah kept a passover unto the LORD in Jerusalem: and they killed the passover on [b]the fourteenth *day* of the first month.

2 And he set the priests in their [c]charges, and [d]encouraged them to the service of the house of the LORD,

3 And said unto [e]the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the LORD, [f]Put the holy ark [g]in the house, which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build: *it shall* [h]not *be* a burden upon *your* shoulders: [i]serve now the LORD your God, and his people Israel;

4 And prepare *yourselves* by [k]the houses of your fathers, [l]after your courses, according to the writing of David king of Israel, and [m]according to the writing of Solomon his son;

5 And [n]stand in the holy *place* according to the divisions of the [‡]families of the fathers of your brethren, the[§] people, and *after* the division of the families of the Levites.

6 So [o]kill the passover, and [p]sanctify yourselves, and prepare your brethren, that *they* may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

7 And [q]Josiah [‖]gave to the people, of the flock, lambs and kids, all for the passover-offerings, for all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bullocks: these *were* of [r]the king's substance.

8 And [s]his princes [¶]gave [t]willingly unto the people, to the priests, and to the Levites: [u]Hilkiah, and Zechariah, and Jehiel, [x]rulers of the house of God, gave unto the priests for the passover-offerings, two thousand and six hundred *small cattle*, and three hundred oxen.

9 Conaniah also, and Shemaiah and Nethaneel his brethren, and Hashabiah, and Jeiel, and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, [**]gave unto the Levites for passo-

and, 3. to the *grave*, where we see him bitterly lamented; so we must take our leave of Josiah.

V. 1—19. The destruction Josiah made of idols and idolatry, was more largely related in the *Kings*, and but just mentioned in the foregoing ch. *v.* 33. But his solemnizing the passover, just touched upon, (2 K. 23: 21.) is very particularly related here. Many were the feasts of the Lord, but the passover was the chief; it *began them*, *all* the night wherein Israel came out of Egypt. It *concluded them*, *all* the night wherein Christ was betrayed; and in the celebration of it, Hezekiah and Josiah, those two great reformers, revived religion in their day. The ordinance of the Lord's supper resembles the passover more than it does any of the Jewish festivals; and the due observance of it, according to the rule, is an instance and mean both of the growing purity and beauty of churches, and of the growing piety and devotion of particular Christians. Religion cannot flourish where it is either wholly neglected, or not duly observed; return to that, revive that, make a solemn business of that affecting, binding ordinance, and then, it is to be hoped, there will be a reformation in other instances also.

In the account of Hezekiah's passover, the great zeal of the people was observable, and the transport of devout affection they were in; but little

s 6:13. 2 K. 11:14. 23:3. Ez. 46:2.
t 23:16. 29:10. Ex. 24:6—8. Deut. 29:1,10—15. Josh. 24:25. Neh. 9:38. 10:29. Jer. 50:5. Heb. 8:6—13.
u 15:12,15. See on 31:21.—Deut. 6:5. Luke 10:27—29.
x 14:4. 30:12. 33:16. Gen. 18:19. Ex. 9:21.
* Heb. *found*. 29:29.
y Jer. 3:10.
z See on 3—7. 2 K. 23:4—20.
a See on 1 K. 11:5—7.
b Josh. 24:31.
† Heb. *from after*.
a 30: 2 K. 23:21—23.
b Ex. 12:6. Num. 9:3. Deut. 16:1—8. Ezra 6:19. Ez. 45:21.
c 23:8. 31:2. Num. 18:5—7. 1 Chr. 24: Ezra 6:18.
d 29:5—11. 31:2. 1 Chr. 22:19.
e 17:8,9. 30:22. Deut. 33:10. Neh. 8:7,8. Mal. 2:7.
f 8:11. 34:14.
g See on 5:7.
h Num. 4:15—49. 1 Chr. 23:26.
i Num. 8:19. 16:9,10. 2 Cor. 4:5.
k 1 Chr. 9:10—34. Neh. 11:10—20.
l 1 Chr. 23:—26:
m 8:14.
n Ps. 134:1. 135:2.
‡ Heb. *house of the fathers*.
§ Heb. *sons of the people*.
o 30:15—17. Ex. 12:6,21,22. Ezra 6. 20,21.
p 29:5,15,34. 30:3,15—19. Gen. 35:2. Ex. 19:10,15. Num. 19:11—20. Job 1:5. Ps. 51:7. Joel 2:16. Heb. 9: 13,14.
q 30:24. Is. 32:8. Ez. 45:17.
‖ Heb. *offered*. 1 K. 8:63.
r 1 K. 8:63. 1 Chr. 29:3.
s 29:31—33. 1 Chr. 29:6—9,17. Ezra 1:6. 2:68,69. 7:16. 8:25—35. Neh. 7:70—72. Is. 45:12. Acts 2:44,45. 4:34,35.
¶ Heb. *offered*.
t 2 Cor. 8:12. 9:7.
u 34:14—20.
x 1 Chr. 9:20. 24:4,5. Jer. 29:25,26. Acts 4:1. 5:26.
** Heb. *offered*. Is. 1:10—15. Jer. 3: 10. 7:21—23. Mic. 6:6—8.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Several years of our lives must pass before we become capable of performing useful services: our earliest youth should therefore be dedicated to God, that we may not waste any of our remaining span. None can express the anguish which is prevented by early piety, and its happy consequences.—If we would be useful, we must first 'take heed to ourselves;' and when we are established in faith and grace, we shall be fitted for instruments of good to others. In this important work we must expect many opposers, and but few cordial helpers: and the more we look into the world, the church, or our own hearts, by the light of God's Word, the more evidently shall we see how very much reformation and renovation are every where needed. (*P. O. Ez.* 8:1—6.) SCOTT.

read to Josiah. SCOTT.

Verse 33.

While Josiah lived, the people were restrained from open idolatry: yet we learn from the prophets, especially Jeremiah, that, at this very time especially, they were ripening for destruction, by their hypocrisy and iniquity. (*Jer.* 3.6—11. 4:14. 25:3—7. *Zeph.* 1:1—8.) ID.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXV. V. 3. *Taught*, &c.] The Levites, by courses, served the priests at the sanctuary, as their primary employment: but, when at home in their several cities, they were the stated teachers of the people. (*M. R.* e.—17:7—9. 30:21, 22, *v.* 22.)—*Put*, &c.] It is probable, that the most holy place had gone to decay, through neglect; and that while it was cleansed and repaired, the high priest had committed the ark to the custody of some Levites of the family of Kohath, who had been set apart and sanctified for that service: but when it was carried again into its place, they would be at liberty for other services, to the glory of God, and the benefit of his people. ID.

Verse 5.

The meaning of this verse seems to be, that the Levites should be as exact, in ascertaining to what family, or subdivision of a family, every man belonged, as those of the other tribes were: that each might know and do his proper work, with as much certainty and accuracy, as the others knew what lands belonged to them by inheritance. Some, however, suppose, that only the arrangement of the Levites at this time is intended; and that they were directed to stand in regular order, according to their families, to receive the paschal lambs, which their brethren of the other tribes would bring, according to their families, one for each household. (6, 10, 11.) SCOTT.

Verse 6.

Notes, 30:16—20. *Ex.* 12:3—10, *v.* 6. *Lev.* 1:5—9. ID

Verses 7—9.

According to the calculation, that not fewer than 10, nor more than 20 persons, were to join for one lamb or kid, the numbers given on this occasion, would suffice for above 400,000 persons, young and old: be-

ver-offerings five thousand *small cattle*, and five hundred oxen.

10 So the service was prepared, and [y] the priests stood in their place, and the Levites in their courses, according to the king's commandment.

11 And they killed the passover, and [z] the priests sprinkled *the blood* from their hands, and the Levites [a] flayed *them*.

12 And they removed the burnt-offerings, that they might give according to the divisions of the families of the people to offer unto the LORD, [b] as *it is* written in the book of Moses: and so *did they* with the oxen.

13 And they [c] roasted the passover with fire, according to the ordinance: but the *other* holy *offerings* [d] sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans, and [*] divided *them* speedily among all the people.

14 And afterwards they made ready for themselves, and for the priests: [e] because the priests the sons of Aaron *were busied* in offering of burnt-offerings and the fat until night; therefore the Levites prepared for themselves and for the priests the sons of Aaron.

15 And the singers the sons of Asaph *were* in their [†] place, [f] according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer; and [g] the porters *waited* at every gate; they might not depart from their service, for their brethren the Levites prepared for them.

16 So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the passover, and to offer burnt-offerings upon the altar of the LORD, according to the commandment of king Josiah.

17 And the children of Israel *that were* [‡] present kept the passover at that time, and [h] the feast of unleavened bread, seven days.

18 And [i] there was no passover like to that kept in Israel, from the days of Samuel the prophet; [k] neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel *that were* present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

19 In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept.

[*Practical Observations.*]

y 4,5. 30:16. Ezra 6:18.
z 29:22—24. 30:16. Lev. 1:5,6. Num. 18:3,7. Heb. 9:21,22.
a 29:34.
b Lev. 3:3,5,9—11,14—16.
c Ex. 12:8,9. Deut. 16:7. Ps. 22:14. Lam. 1:12,13.
d Lev. 6:28. Num. 6:19. 1 Sam. 2: 13—15. Ez. 46:20—24.
* Heb. *made* them *run*. Rom. 12:11.
e Acts 6:2—4.
† Heb. *station*.
f 29:25,26. 1 Chr. 16:41,42. 23:5. 25: 1—7. Ps. 77: 78: 88: *titles*.
g 1 Chr. 9:17—19. 26:14—19.
‡ Heb. *found*.
h 30:21—23. Ex. 12:15—20. 13:6,7. 23: 15. 34:18. Lev. 23:5—8. Num. 28: 16—25. Deut. 16:3,4,8. 1 Cor. 5:7,8.
i 30:5. 2 K. 23:21—23.
k 30:26,27.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—19. Extensive good may be done by persons in authority, who spare no labor or expense, in promoting the honor of God; and who unite their example and influence with most zealous endeavors, to excite and encourage other members of the community to do their duty.—God alone can *efficaciously* sanctify and prepare our hearts for his holy worship; but the blessing must be sought, for ourselves and others, by attending to our several duties. In this way revivals of religion are both manifested and forwarded; and sacred ordinances at once honor the Lord, and become 'means of grace' to the souls of men. The support of them, in an orderly and public manner, must always be attended with expense; and the multitude of the poor will often be unable to defray it. On this account religion will, in some places and at some times, be neglected, to the discouragement of many, and the ruin of far more: it then becomes a noble generosity for rulers, and wealthy persons, to step forward and to communicate liberally to the assistance of the poor, that they may not want 'the Bread of Life' for their souls; and God will honor those who thus honor Him.—Those who are continually so taken up in the work of God and his church, that they cannot attend to their secular interests, ought particularly to be provided for by their brethren who have more leisure.—Alas! how are the ordinances of God disregarded, or formally attended on! The church *in its best days* has fallen short hitherto of what it ought to be *at all times:* our most religious hours, in public or private, need forgiveness; and the mercy of God, through the Savior's atonement, must still be our only plea, to the close of our days. SCOTT.

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sides those given for peace-offerings and other sacrifices. (30:23—25, v. 24. 1 *K.* 8:63—65.)—*Rulers of*, &c. (8) The heads of the several courses of the priests, or the captains of the temple. (*M. R.* x.) SCOTT.

Verse 12.

The Levites separated, as speedily as they could, the parts of the peace-offerings, which were to be burnt, from the rest, and added them to the other burnt-offerings; that the remainder, together with the paschal lambs, might, without delay, be prepared and distributed as the occasion required. (*Lev.* 3:) ID.

Verses 13—17.

'The singing and music continued till all the sacrifices were offered, that is till night. . . . And their brethren, who were not singers, took care to provide for them their portion, when they had done.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

Verses 18, 19.

Nothing is recorded on this subject, from the time that Israel obtained possession of the promised land: (*Josh.* 5:10.) but even this passover, under Josiah, which exceeded all for several centuries, seems to have been very deficient as to genuine devotion. ID.

(20.) *Carchemish.*] 'Probably the Cercusium of the ancients, now called Karkisa, near the junction of the Khabour and the Euphrates.' HENRY abr.

20 ¶ After all this, when Josiah had prepared the * temple, [l]Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against [m]Carchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him.

21 But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, [n]What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? *I come* not against thee this day, but against the † house wherewith I have war: for [o]God commanded me to make haste: [p]forbear thee from *meddling with* God, who *is* with me, that he destroy thee not.

22 Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, [q]but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from [r]the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of [s]Megiddo.

23 And [t]the archers shot at king Josiah: and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore ‡ wounded.

24 His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in [u]the second chariot that he had; and [x]they brought him to Jerusalem, and [y]he died, and was buried § in *one of* the sepulchres of his fathers. And [z]all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.

25 And [a]Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and [b]all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they *are* written in the lamentations.

26 Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and his ‖ goodness, according to *that which was* written in the law of the LORD,

27 And [c]his deeds, first and last, behold, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

* Heb. *house.*

cording to their families, (*v.* 11, 12.) not fewer than ten, nor more than twenty, to a lamb; they took it to their several apartments, roasted it, and ate it *according to the ordinance*, *v.* 13. As for the other sacrifices that were eucharistical, the flesh of them was boiled according to the law of the peace-offerings, and was *divided speedily among the people*, that they might feast on it as a token of their joy in the atonement made, and their reconciliation to God thereby. And *lastly*, The priests and Levites took care to honor God, by *eating of the passover* themselves, *v.* 14. Let not ministers think, that their care for the souls of others excuses their neglect of their own; or, that being employed so much in public worship will supersede the religious exercises of their closets and families. The Levites here *made ready for themselves and for the priests*, because the priests were wholly taken up all day in the service of the altar. Let ministers learn hence to help one another, and to forward one another's work, as brethren, and fellow servants of the same Master.

IV. The singers and porters attended in their places, and did their office, *v.* 15. the singers with their sacred songs, and the porters at the gates. While thus employed, their brethren the Levites prepared paschal lambs for them.

V. The whole solemnity was performed with great exactness, according to the law, (*v.* 16, 17.) and, on that account, there was none like it since Samuel's time, (*v.* 18.) for in Hezekiah's passover there were several irregularities. And Patrick observes, that in this also it exceeded the passovers preceding kings had kept, that, though Josiah was by no means so rich as David, Solomon, or Jehoshaphat, yet he furnished the whole congregation with sacrifices, both paschal and eucharistical, at his own cost and charge, which was more than any king ever did before him.

V. 20—27. It was 13 years from Josiah's famous passover to his death; during which time, we may hope, things went well in his kingdom; yet those years are passed over in silence, because the people, for all this, were not turned from the love of their sins, nor God from the fierceness of his anger. The next news therefore we hear of Josiah, is, that he is cut off in the midst of his days and usefulness, before he is full 40 years old. We had this sad story, 2 K. 23: 29, 30. here it is somewhat more largely related. What appears here, more than there, reflects such blame on Josiah, and such praise on the people, as one would not have expected.

I. Josiah was a very good prince, yet is much to

l 2 K. 23:29. *Pharaoh-necho.* Jer. 46:2.
m Is. 10:9.
n 2 Sam. 16:10. Matt. 8:29. John 2:4.
† Heb. *house of my war.*
o 2 K. 18:25. Is. 36:10.
p 25:19.
q 18:29. 1 K. 14:2. 22:30.
r 21. 18:4—6. Josh. 9:14.
s Judg. 5:19. 2 K. 9:27. 23:30. Zech. 12:11. *Megiddon.* Rev. 16:16. *Armageddon.*
t 18:33. Gen. 49:23. 2 K. 9:24. Lam. 3:12,13.
‡ Heb. *made sick.* 1 K. 22:34. 2 K. 8:29.
u Gen. 41:43. x 2 K. 23:30.
y Ps. 36:6. Ec. 8:14. 9:1,2.
§ Or, *among the sepulchres.* 34:28.
z Zech. 12:11.
a Jer. 22:10.
b Job 3:8. Ec. 12:5. Jer. 9:17—21. Matt. 9:23.
‖ Heb. *kindnesses.* 31:20. 32:32.
c 20:34. 24:27. 25:26. 28:22. 32:32. 33:19. 2 K. 10:34. 16:19. 20:20. 21:25.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 20—27. No man suffers, or ever will suffer, who has not merited his sufferings; yet public persons are often laid aside or removed, to punish the wickedness of the community.—We are not bound to believe all those, who profess to speak by the authority of God: but it is always right to act with caution, to search the Scriptures, to seek the Lord's direction by prayer, and to consult wise, experienced, and pious friends; that we may discover, as far as possible, what is the truth and will of God concerning us, and that we may not be found in any instance to fight against Him.—Men seldom prosper in those measures which are unadvisedly adopted: and those, who are honored with great usefulness, should be doubly circumspect in their conduct, and careful of their [health as well as] lives; because so many are interested in them.—Many mourn over their own calamities, who do not repent, and forsake those sins, which have provoked God to inflict them. Yet this alone can avert still more tremendous judgments. SCOTT.

Verses 20—24.

Josiah's conduct at the close of his life has been treated with great severity by most commentators: and he has been charged with engaging in an *unjust* war, and *disregarding the express command of God*; which may in great measure be ascribed to the groundless censure passed on him by the apocryphal Esdras, 'Not regarding the words of the prophet Jeremy, spoken by the mouth of the LORD.' (1 *Esdras* 1:28.) But the Scripture nowhere condemns him. (*Note*, 2 *K.* 23:29, 30.) Pharaoh, in marching his army through Josiah's territories, against his will, certainly committed an act of hostility. It is evident Josiah was in possession of the whole land, and not of Judah only: (34:6.) and probably he held the northern parts of it as a grant from the king of Babylon; and was not only in alliance with him, but bound to guard his frontiers against hostile invaders. Doubtless the kings of Judah had been in some measure dependent on the kings of Assyria and Babylon, from the time of Manasseh's captivity and release. Pharaoh declared indeed by his ambassadors, that he did not mean to attack Josiah, but to march against a power with which he was at war. He was, however, in the heart of Josiah's kingdom, before he sent this embassy, and he avowed his intention of attacking his ally: therefore Josiah may fairly, on both accounts, be justified from the charge of *unjustly* meddling with a war that did not belong to him; for no king on earth would think it *unjust* to declare war against another prince, who should forcibly march an army into his dominions, in order to attack another prince who was in alliance with him. It is true, the ambassadors assured Josiah that 'God had commanded Pharaoh to make haste;' and said, 'Forbear thee from *meddling with* God who is with me, that He destroy thee not:' and he is therefore said, 'not to have hearkened to the words of Necho, from the mouth of God.' But Necho produced no proof, that he was a prophet of JEHOVAH, and Sennacherib had used similar language to Hezekiah, who had paid no regard to it. (2 *K.* 18:25.) The word used by Necho, (*elohim*) may signify *gods*, or *idols:* and critics have noted, that the expression 'from the mouth of God,' is nowhere used in the Hebrew Bible, for a revelation from the true God; but that it is always 'from the mouth of the LORD.' [Comp. the phrase, note * p. 147 vol. I.]—It is not indeed at all probable, that God had commanded Pharaoh-necho by Jeremiah, or by any other prophet, to undertake this expedition: for in that case Josiah would doubtless have been informed, and have submitted. And if Pharaoh had received any monition in a dream or vision, which he concluded to be from the God of Israel, (and so meant something more, than his own auguries and superstitions,) Josiah might not give credit to his testimony, in matters so closely connected with his own interests.—Josiah, however, seems to have been guilty of precipitation, and in not inquiring of the Lord when thus warned, before, he proceeded to attack so formidable an enemy: his premature and violent death might therefore be a rebuke for his rashness; but whatever sin Josiah committed, he doubtless repented of it: and the final state of one, who habitually lives a life of repentance, faith, and obedience, cannot be affected, by the manner in which he is suddenly taken away.—*The second chariot* seems to have been one that waited for him in case of necessity; into which he was removed, the other being perhaps covered with blood. SCOTT.

Verses 25—27.

The book of Lamentations of Jeremiah was written on another occasion: (*Pref. to Lam.*) and what that prophet composed on the death of Josiah has not come down to us. But both the prophet and the people, took several methods of doing honor to the memory of their prince; and of perpetuating the lamentations on his death; probably by an annual commemoration of that fatal event. (*Jer.* 22:10—12.) ID.

(25.) *Their lamentations.*] 'The Hebrews had poetical compositions for all important events, *military* songs, songs of *triumph*, marriage odes, funeral elegies, &c.' [Comp. note, 1 Chr. 15, 16, &c.] Dr. A. CLARKE.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Jehoahaz succeeds Josiah, but Necho carries him into Egypt; and makes Jehoiakim king, 1—4. He reigns wickedly, and is put in chains by Nebuchadnezzar, who carries some of the sacred vessels to Babylon, 5—7. Jehoiachin is made king, who in a short time is carried captive to Babylon, with other of the sacred vessels; and Zedekiah succeeds, 8—10. He reigns very wickedly, despises the warnings of Jeremiah, and rebels against Nebuchadnezzar, 11—13. The sins of the priests and people cause the utter destruction of Jerusalem, and the desolation of the land, for seventy years, 14—21. Cyrus's proclamation for rebuilding the temple, 22, 23.

THEN [a] the people of the land took [b] Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's stead in Jerusalem.

2 Jehoahaz *was* twenty and three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem.

3 And the king of Egypt * put him down at Jerusalem, and † condemned the land in an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold.

4 And the king of Egypt [c] made Eliakim his brother, king over Judah and Jerusalem, and turned his name to Jehoiakim. And [d] Necho took Jehoahaz his brother, and carried him to Egypt.

5 [e] Jehoiakim *was* twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusa-
B. C. 607. lem: and he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD his God.

6 Against him [f] came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in ‡ fetters, to carry him to Babylon.

7 Nebuchadnezzar also carried of [g] the vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon.

8 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and his abominations which he did, and that which was found in him, behold, [h] they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah: and [i] Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.

9 ¶ Jehoiachin *was* [k] eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD.

10 And § when the
B. C. 599. year was expired, [l] king Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him to Babylon, with the ‖ goodly vessels of the house of the LORD, and made [m] Zedekiah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem.

11 ¶ Zedekiah *was* [n] one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.

12 And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD his God, *and* [o] humbled not himself [p] before Jeremiah the prophet, *speak-*

a 25:1. 33:25. 2 K. 23:30.
b 2 K. 23:31—34. 1 Chr. 3:15. Jer. 22:11. *Shallum.*
* Heb. *removed him.* 2 K. 23:33.
† Heb. *mulcted.*
c 2 K. 23:34,35. 1 Chr. 3:15.
d Jer. 22:10—12. Ez. 19:3,4.
e 2 K. 23:36,37. Jer. 22:13—19. 26: 21—23. 36:1,27—32.
f 2 K. 24:1,2,5,6. Ez. 19:5—9. Dan. 1:1,2. Hab. 1:5—10.
‡ Or, *chains.*
g Ezra 1:7—11. Jer. 27:16—18. 28:3. Dan. 5:2—4.
h 2 K. 24.5,6.
i 1 Chr. 3:16,17. *Jeconiah.* Jer. 22:24, 28. *Coniah.* Matt. 1:11,12. *Jechonias.*
k 2 K. 24:8,9.
§ Heb. *at the return of the year.*
l 2 K. 24:10—16. 25:27—30. Jer. 29: 2. Ez. 1:2.
‖ Heb. *vessels of desire.* 7. Jer. 27: 18—22. Dan. 5:2,23.
m 2 K. 24:17. *Mattaniah.* 1 Chr. 3:15, 16. Jer. 37:1.
n 2 K. 24:18—20. Jer. 52:1—3.
o 32:26. 33:12,19,23. Ez. 10:3. Dan. 5:22,23. Jam. 4:10. 1 Pet. 5:6.
p Jer. 21:1,&c. 27:12,&c. 28:1,&c. 34: 2,&c. 37:2,&c. 38:14,&c.

be blamed for his rashness and presumption in going to war against the king of Egypt, without cause or call. Here it looks worse than in the Kings; for, it seems, the king of Egypt sent ambassadors to warn him against this enterprise, *v.* 21.

He argues, 1. From principles of justice. He professes he had no design to do him any hurt, and therefore it was unfair, against common equity and the law of nations, for Josiah to take up arms against him. See Prov. 3: 30. 25: 8.

2. From principles of religion. '*God is with me;* nay, *He commanded me to make haste;* if thou, then, retard my motions, thou *meddlest with God.*' It cannot be he only *pretended* this, (as Sennacherib in a like case, 2 K. 18: 25.) hoping thereby to make Josiah desist, because he knew he had a veneration for the word of God; for it is said here, (*v.* 22.) the words of Necho were *from the mouth of God;* we must therefore suppose that either by a dream, or by a strong impulse on his spirit, which he had reason to think was from God, or by Jeremiah, or some other prophet, He had ordered him to make war on the king of Assyria.

3. From principles of policy.

It was not in wrath to Josiah, but to a hypocritical nation, who were unworthy of so good a king, that he would not hearken to those fair reasonings, and desist from his enterprise, *v.* 22. If perhaps he could not believe the king of Egypt had a command from God to do what he did, yet, on his pleading such a command, he ought to have consulted the oracles of God before going out against him. His not doing that, was his great fault, and of fatal consequence. How can we think to prosper in our ways, if we do not acknowledge God in them?

II. The people were a wicked people; yet they are much to be praised for lamenting the death of Josiah as they did. That Jeremiah lamented him, I do not wonder; he was the weeping prophet, but it is strange all Judah and Jerusalem should do so, *v.* 24. yet so they did: they made an ordinance in Israel, that the mournful ditties, penned on this sad occasion, should be learned and sung by all sorts of people. They contrived also how to perpetuate the remembrance of it; these elegies were inserted in the collections of State Poems; they are written in the Lamentations. We are often taught to value mercies by their loss, which, when enjoyed, we did not prize as we ought. Jeremiah told them, it is likely, of the evil they might now expect to come on them, from which he was taken away; and they so far credited it, as to lament the death of him who was their defence. Many will more easily be persuaded to lament miseries coming on them, than to take the proper way by universal reformation, to prevent them. But godly sorrow worketh repentance, and that repentance will be to salvation.

CHAP. XXXVI. V. 1—10. The destruction of Judah and Jerusalem is here coming on by degrees. God so ordered it, to show He has no pleasure in the ruin of sinners, but had rather they would turn and live, and therefore gives them both time and inducement to repent, and waits to be gracious. The history of these reigns was more largely recorded in the last three chs. of 2. K.

1. Jehoahaz was set up by the people, (*v.* 1.) but in one quarter of a year was deposed by Pharaoh-necho, and carried a prisoner to Egypt, and the land fined for setting him up, *v.* 2—4. Of this young prince we hear no more; had he trodden in the steps of his father's piety, he might have reigned long, and prospered; but we are told in *Kings* that *he did evil,* therefore his triumphing was short.

2. Jehoiakim was set up by the king of Egypt, and reigned 11 years. The *abominations he did,* (*v.* 8.) were idolatries, which generally go under that name. The king of Babylon came against him, (*v.* 6.) to carry him to Babylon; but, either changed his mind, and suffered him to reign as his vassal, or death released the prisoner before he was carried away. However, the most valuable vessels of the temple were now taken, and used in Nebuchadnezzar's temple in Babylon; (*v.* 7.) we may suppose, no temple in the world was so richly furnished as that of Jerusalem. These were the vessels, with hopes of whose return the false prophets flattered the people, Jer. 27: 16. But Jeremiah told them the rest should go after them, (*v.* 22.) and they did so. But, as the carrying them away began the calamity of Jerusalem, so Belshazzar's daring profanation of them there, filled the measure of the iniquity of Babylon; Dan. 5: 2, &c. In the reference to the book of the *Kings,* concerning this Jehoiakim, mention is made of *what was found in him,* (*v.* 8.) which seems to be meant of the treachery found in him toward the king of Babylon; but some of the Jewish writers understand it of certain private marks or signatures found in his dead body, in honor of his idol; forbidden, Lev. 19: 28.

3. Jehoiachin, or Jeconiah, the son of Jehoiakim, attempted to reign in his stead, and reigned long enough to show his evil inclination; but, after 3 months and 10 days, the king of Babylon sent and fetched him away captive, with more or the goodly vessels of the temple. He is here said to be 8 years old, but in *Kings* 18, when he began to reign; so that this seems to be a mistake of the transcriber, unless we suppose his father took him at 8 years old to join him in the government, as some think.

V. 11—21. We have here an account of the destruction of the kingdom of Judah and the city of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; and,

I. The sins that brought it.

1. Zedekiah's folly brought it on himself. For his ruin would have been prevented, (1.) If he had but made God his friend. Jeremiah brought him messages from God, which, if he had duly regarded, might have lengthened his tranquillity; but it is here charged on him, that he *humbled not himself before Jeremiah,* when *he spake from the*

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXVI. V. 9. *Eight*] Either this is an error of the transcribers, which is most probable; or Jehoiachin reigned 10 years with his father, which is very unlikely; for at his death he was 18 years old. (2 *K.* 24:8.) SCOTT.

Verse 10.

Jehoiakim, probably, died towards the close of the year: and soon after the entrance of the new year, Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin captive, and carried him to Babylon, with many other prisoners, and many of the vessels of the temple. SCOTT.

ing from [q] the mouth of the LORD.

13 And he also [r] rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, [s] who had made him swear by God: but [t] he stiffened his neck, [u] and hardened his heart, from turning unto the LORD God of Israel.

14 Moreover [x] all the chief of the priests and the people transgressed very much, [y] after all the abominations of the heathen; and [z] polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem.

15 And [a] the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by * his messengers, rising up † betimes, and sending; [b] because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place:

16 But they [c] mocked the messengers of God, and [d] despised his words, and [e] misused his prophets, until [f] the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, [g] till *there was* no ‡ remedy.

17 Therefore [h] he brought upon them [i] the king of the Chaldees, [k] who slew their young men with the sword, [l] in the house of their sanctuary, and had [m] no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave *them* all into his hand.

B. C. 590. 18 And [n] all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, [o] and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all *these* he brought to Babylon.

19 And [p] they burnt the house of God and [q] brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.

20 And § them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where [r] they were servants to him and his sons, [s] until the reign of the kingdom of Persia:

21 To [t] fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, [u] until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: *for* as long as she lay desolate, she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

22 ¶ Now [x] in the first B. C. 536. year of [y] Cyrus king of Persia, [z] that the word of the LORD *spoken* by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished,

mouth of the Lord. *v.* 12. Because he would not thus make himself a servant to God, he is made a slave to his enemies. God will find some way or other to humble them that will not humble themselves. (2.) If he had but been true to his covenant with the king of Babylon; but *he rebelled against him*, though he had sworn to be his faithful tributary, and perfidiously violated his engagements to him, *v.* 13. All nations hold an oath as sacred, and those that durst break through the obligations of it, as the worst of men, abandoned of God, and to be abhorred of all mankind: if therefore Zedekiah falsify his oath, he *shall not escape*, Ezek. 17: 18. Nebuchadnezzar was a heathen, an enemy, yet if, having sworn to him, he be false to him, he shall know *there is a God to whom vengeance belongs.* What ruined Zedekiah, was, not only that he *turned not to God*, but that he *stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart, from turning*, i. e. was obstinately resolved not to turn.

2. The great sin that brought it, was idolatry, *v.* 14. The priests, the chief who should have opposed, were ringleaders in it. That place is not far from ruin, in which religion is already ruined.

3. Its great aggravation, and which filled its measure, was, abuse to God's prophets sent to call them to repentance, *v.* 15, 16. Where we have,

(1.) God's tender compassion in sending prophets. *Rising up betimes, and sending*, denotes not only the greatest care and concern imaginable, as men rise betimes, when their heart is on their business; but that, on their first deviation from God to idols, God immediately sent messengers to reprove them, and gave them early, timely notice of their danger and duty. The more pains ministers take in their work, the more will the people have to answer for, if it be all in vain. God's methods to reclaim sinners by his Word, by ministers, by conscience, by providences, are all instances of his compassion, and unwillingness *that any perish.*

(2.) Their base and disingenuous carriage toward God, *v.* 16. Their ill usage to Jeremiah, of which we read much in the book of his prophecy, is an instance. This mocking evinced an implacable enmity to God, and an invincible resolution to go on in their sins. Nothing is more provoking to God, than abuses of his faithful ministers; for what is done against them, He takes as done against Himself; *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?* Persecution brought on Jerusalem its *final* destruction. See Matt. 23: 34—37 Those that mock at God's faithful ministers, and do all they can to render them despicable or odious, and to keep others from hearkening to them, should be reminded, that a wrongd one to an ambassador is construed as done to the prince that sends him, and that the day is coming, when they will find it had been better for them, if they had been thrown *into the sea* with a mill-stone about their necks; for hell is deeper, and more dreadful.

II. The desolation itself, and some few particulars of it, which we had more largely, 2 K. 25:

1. Multitudes were put to the sword, even *in the house of their sanctuary*, *v.* 17. whither they fled, hoping its holiness would be their protection: but how could they expect this, when they themselves had polluted it with their abominations? *v.* 14. Those that cast off the dominion of their religion, forfeit all the benefit and comfort of it. The Chaldeans not only paid no reverence to the sanctuary, but showed no natural pity to sex, or age.

2. All the remaining vessels of the temple, great and small, and all the treasures, sacred and secular, were brought to Babylon, *v.* 18.

3. The temple was burnt, the walls of Jerusalem demolished, the houses (here called *palaces*, as Ps. 48: 3. so stately, rich, and sumptuous, were they) laid in ashes, and all the furniture, called here *the goodly vessels thereof*, destroyed, *v.* 19 See here what woful havock sin makes!

4. The remainder of the people that escaped the sword, were carried captives to Babylon, *v.* 20. impoverished, enslaved, insulted, and exposed to all the miseries, not only of a strange and barbarous land, but of an enemy's land, where those that hated them, bare rule over them. They were servants to those monarchs, and, no doubt, were ruled with rigor so long as that monarchy lasted. Now they sat down by the rivers of Babylon, with which they mingled their tears, Ps. 137: 1. And though there, it should seem, they were cured of idolatry; yet, as appears by Ezekiel, they were not cured of mocking the prophets.

5. The land lay desolate while they were captives in Babylon, *v.* 21. This may be considered, (1.) As the just punishment of their former abuse of it. They had served Baal with its first fruits, *cursed* therefore *is the ground for their sakes.* Now

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q 35:22.
r 2 K. 24:20. Jer. 52:2. Ez. 17:11—20.
s Josh. 9:15,19,20. 2 Sam. 21:2.
t 2 K. 17:14. Neh. 9:16,17. Is. 48:4.
u Ex. 8:15,32. 9:17. Neh. 9:29. Rom. 2:4,5. Heb. 3:8,13.
x 2 K. 16:10—16. Ezra 9:7. Jer. 5:5. 37:13—15. 38:4. Ez. 22:6,26—28. Dan. 9:6,8. Mic. 3:1—4,9—11. 7:3. Zeph. 3:3,4.
y 29:3. 33:9.
z 33:4—7. Ez. 8:5—16.
a 24:18—21. 33:10. 2 K. 17:13. Jer. 25:3,4. 26:5. 35:15. 44:4,5.
* Heb. *the hand of his.*
† That is, *continually and carefully.*
b Judg. 10:16. 2 K. 13:23. Hos. 11:8. Luke 19:41—44.
c 30:10. Ps. 35:16. Is. 28:22. Jer. 5: 12,13. 20:7. Luke 18:32. 22:63,64. 23:11,36. Acts 2:13. 17:32. Heb. 11:36.
d Prov. 1:25—30. Luke 16:14. Acts 13:41. 1 Thes. 4:8.
e Jer. 32:3. 38:6. Matt. 5:12. 21:33—41. 23:34—37. Acts 7:52.
f Ps. 74:1. 79:1—5.
g Prov. 6:15. 29:1.
‡ Heb. *healing.*
h 33:11. Deut. 28:49. 2 K. 24:2,3. Jer. 15:3. 22:42. 40:3. Dan. 9:14.
i 2 K. 25:1,&c. Jer. 39:1,&c. 52:1,&c.
k Lev. 26:14,&c. Deut. 28:15,&c. 29: 18—28. 30:18. 31:16—18. 32:15—28. Ps. 79:2,3. Jer. 16:9. 18:21. Lam. 2:21,22.
l 34:21. Lam. 2:20. Ez. 9:5—7. Luke 13:1,2.
m Deut. 28:50. Ps. 74:20.
n 7,10. 2 K. 25:13—17. Jer. 27:18—22. 52:17—23. Dan. 5:3.
o 2 K. 20:13—17. Is. 39:6. Zech. 1:6.
p 2 K. 25:9. Ps. 74:4—8. 79:1,7. Is. 64:10,11. Jer. 7:4,14. 52:13. Lam. 4:1. Mic. 3:12. Luke 21:6.
q 2 K. 25:10,11. Jer. 52:14,15.
§ Heb. *the remainder from the sword.*
r Deut. 28:47,48. Jer. 27:7.
s 22. Ezra 1:1,&c.
t Jer. 25:9—11. 26:6,7. 27:12,13. Dan. 9:2. Zech. 1:4—6.
u Lev. 26:4—6. 26:34,35. Zech. 1:12.
x Ezra 1:1—3.
y Dan. 10:1.
z 21. Jer. 25:12,14. 29:10. 32:42—44. 33:10—14. Heb. 10:23.

Verses 14, 15.

(*M. R.*) The Lord acted towards Judah, as a man would do, who had the welfare of his son much at heart, and would lose no time, but meet him with warnings as soon as he began to turn aside; missing no opportunity and sparing no pains: for God had compassion on the people; and proceeded, as if reluctantly, to execute vengeance, and to give up Jerusalem, and the temple, to the rage of heathen conquerors. (*Jer.* 25 3.) SCOTT.

(15.) *Rising up betimes.*] 'And he rose up early,' or 'very early,' is a very common Arabic expression in narratives, especially of journeys, and there is a verb expressly to denote 'rising early' and 'rising very early.' The expression originated in the common oriental custom of setting out on a journey as soon as, or even before, dawn, in order to avoid travelling or moving in the heat of the day, which is excessive long before noon. The dawn is their most refreshing hour, and in such dry and hot countries it is, therefore, the hour of greatest activity. ED.

Verse 16.

Jer. 2:26—30. 11:18—23. 18:18—23. 20:1—6. 26:10—24. 32:2, 3. 36:5. 37:11—21. 38:1—6. 43:3—7. *Lam.* 3:52—57. *Matt.* 5:10—12. 21: 33—39. 23:29—39. *Acts* 7:51—53. 1 *Thes.* 2:13—16.—*No remedy*, &c.] It no longer consisted with the honor of God to protect so wicked a people, who professed to be his worshippers, and who encouraged themselves in sin by a presumptuous confidence in Him. It was become necessary to display the glory of the divine holiness and justice, in bringing signal miseries on them: and this God did, by giving them up to their own infatuated counsels, and the imbittered resentment of their cruel invaders. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verse 21.

The 70 years here mentioned may either be computed from the first captivity in the 4th year of Jehoiakim, to the 1st of Cyrus the Persian; or from the later and more complete desolations of the land, to the finishing of the temple, in the 6th of Darius, as the land was both desolated, and re-peopled gradually. (2 *K.* 24:1, 8—16. *Dan.* 1:1, 2.) ID.

[a] the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made [b] a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying,

23 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, [c] All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and [d] he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah. [e] Who *is there* among you of all his people? the LORD his God *be* with him, and let him go up.

the land *enjoyed her sabbaths*, *v.* 21. as God had threatened by Moses, Lev. 26: 34. and the reason there given, *v.* 35. is, 'Because *it did not rest on your sabbaths*, you profaned the sabbath-day, did not observe the sabbatical year.' They many a time ploughed and sowed their land in the 7th year when it should have rested, and now it lay unploughed and unsown for 10 times 7 years. Note, God will be no loser in his glory at last, by the disobedience of men: if the tribute be not paid, He will distrain and recover it, as He speaks, Hos. 2: 9. Some think, they had neglected the observance of 70 sabbatical years in all, and just so many, by way of reprisal, the land now enjoyed; or if those that had been neglected, were fewer, it was fit the law should be satisfied, with interest. We find that one of the quarrels God had with them at this time, was, for not observing another law which related to the 7th year, and that was the release of servants; see Jer. 34: 13, &c. (2.) Yet we may consider it as giving some encouragement to their hopes, that they should, in due time, return to it again. While it lay desolate, it did, as it were, lie waiting for them again, and refuse to acknowledge any other owners.

V. 22, 23. These two vs. have a double aspect.

1. They look back to the prophecy of Jeremiah, and show how that was accomplished, *v.* 22. God had, by him, promised to restore the captives, and rebuild Jerusalem, at the end of 70 years; and God will be found true to every word He has spoken.

2. They look forward to the history of Ezra, which begins with the repetition of these last two vs. There they are the introduction to a pleasant story, here the conclusion of a very melancholy one; so we learn from them, that though God's people be corrected, they are not abandoned; though thrown into the furnace, yet not lost there, nor left there any longer than till the dross be separated.

[a] 21:16. 1 Sam. 26:19. 1 K. 11:14,23. 1 Chr. 5:26. Ezra 1:1. Is. 13:3—5, 17,18. 45:1—5. Hag. 1:14.
[b] 24:9. 30:5.
[c] Ps. 75:5—7. Dan. 2:21,37. 4:35. 5: 18,28.
[d] Is. 44:26—28.
[e] 1 Chr. 22:16. 29:5. Ezra 7:13. Zech. 2:6,7. Rom. 8:31.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When the wickedness of nations provokes God to remove wise and pious princes, and to advance others of a contrary character; avowed impiety and desolating judgments may be expected to come in like a flood, and to bear down all before them.—Infatuated counsels and treacherous measures concur in ruining those, who, in proud contempt of God, reject the warnings of his ministers from his Word: and who thus 'stiffen their neck, and harden their heart from turning unto the LORD.' The whole plan of redemption, the warnings, invitations, and entreaties of his Word, and his long-suffering towards us, prove his rich compassion and love: but these endearing attributes are exercised in exact consistency with his justice, holiness, truth, and infallible wisdom; and when no means, mercies, or warnings are effectual to bring sinners to repentance, there is no remedy, but He must vindicate the honor of his despised authority, patience, and mercy, in their condign punishment.

SCOTT.

'GEOGRAPHY OF S. W. ASIA. I. *Countries this side the Euphrates.* (*a*) The peninsula of Asia Minor (Natolia). Chief rivers: Halys and Sangarius. Countries:—3 on the W. side, Mysia, Lydia, Caria. Along the coast, the Greek maritime cities, Phocæa, Ephesus, Miletus, Smyrna, Halicarnassus, &c. In the interior the cities of Sardis, Lydia, and Pergamus in Mysia.—3 on the S. side: Lycia, Pamphylia and Cilicia, with the chief city Tarsus.—3 on the N. side: Bithynia, Paphlagonia, Pontus; with the Greek maritime cities Heraclea, Amisus and Sinope.—2 in the centre: Phrygia with Galatia, chief cities Gordium and Celænæ, and Cappadocia, city Mazaca. (*b*) Islands along the coast of Asia Minor. Lesbis, city Mitylene, Chios, Samos, Cos, Rhodes, with cities of the same name. (*c*) Syria with Phenicia and Palestine. 1. Syria proper. Cities: Damascus, Emesa, Heliopolis, (Baalbec). In the desert, Palmyra. 2. Phenicia. A mountainous land on the coast. Mts. Libanus and Anti-libanus. Cities: Tyre on an island, opposite ancient Tyre on the continent. Sidon, Byblus, Berytus, Tripolis, Aradus. 3. Palestine. Mts. Carmel, Tabor. River: Jordan. Division originally into 12 tribes; afterwards into the districts, Judea, chief city Jerusalem; Samaria, (cities Samaria and Sichem,) and Galilee.' [See also note, Josh. 12: 8. on *Geogr. of Syria.*] (*d*) Arabia. Full of monstrous deserts, and inhabited by nomades. But its S. and E. coasts give it great commercial importance. In the N. Arabia Petræa, from the place Petra. In the centre, the Arabian desert. In the S. Arabia Felix; rich, by its native products, as various kinds of incense, frankincense, &c. and as the most ancient depot for India wares. Cities: Mariaba, Aden, &c. On the E. side, the commercial city Gerra, and the opposite islands Tylus and Aradus (Bahrein islands,) likewise the staples as well of Arabian as of India wares, especially cinnamon from Taprobane Ceylon, [Parvaim].'

'II. *Between Euphrates and Tigris.* (*a*) Mesopotamia. In the interior a dry plateau, inhabited only by nomadic hordes. Cities on the Euphrates: Thapsacus, Circesium (Carchemish), Cunaxa. In the N. Zoba or Nisibis. (*b*) Armenia, to the N. above the preceding. Full of mountains: for a long time without cities, at a late period it had Tigranocerta. Rivers: Cyrus, and Araxes, and Phasis. (*c*) Babylonia, the S. part of Mesopotamia, divided from it by the Median wall. A plain with a rich soil; once, by careful culture, canals, dams, and lakes, the most fruitful, and by situation the richest commercial country in the interior of Asia. Cities: Babylon on the Euphrates, Borsippa.

'III. *Between the Tigris and Indus.* (*a*) Assyria, or the district Adiabene, an extensive plateau. Cities: Nineveh (Ninus), Arbela. The name Assyria is often used by the Greeks in a wider signification, and then it embraces both Mesopotamia and Babylonia; it is even sometimes put for the name Syria. (*b* Susiana, a fruitful country, with the city Susa on the River Choaspes or Eulæus (Ulai), one of the residences of the Persian kings. (*c*) Persis, in the N. rough and mountainous, in the middle a fruitful plain, in the S. sandy. Rivers: Cyrus and Araxes. Cities: Persepolis or Pasargada, where was the national palace, and burying-place of the kings of Persia. Persis is used in antiquity, as in modern geography, in a wider sense, and then embraces all the countries between the Tigris and Indus, except Assyria. In this case it comprises 3 S. districts, Persis, properly so called [Fars], Carmania, Gedrosia; 3 central, Media, Aria, Arachosia, and 3 N. Parthia, with Hyrcania, Bactria, Sogdiana. (*d*) Carmania, a large, for the most part desolate land, along the Persian Gulf and the Indian Sea. Cities: Carmania, Harmozia. (*e*) Gedrosia, the district on the coast between Carmania and India. Along the Indian Sea it is a desert of sand; in the N. mountainous. Town: Pura. (*f*) Media, above Persis. An extensive, very fruitful, and in the N. mountainous district. Rivers: Araxes, Cyrus, and Mardus. Cities: Ecbatana [Acmetha], Rages. The N. part is also called Atropatene (Aderbitschan or Media Minor. (*g*) Aria, a plain, with a lake and river Arius; and a city Aria or Artacoana. (*h*) Arachosia; a rich and fruitful country on the boundary of India; bounded on the N. by the mountain Paropamisus. Cities: Arachotus and Prophthasia. The neighboring, thickly peopled, mountainous countries, (at present Cabul and Candahar,) although they properly belong to India, yet, as they were so often subjected to the Persian rule, were often distinguished by the name of Paropamisus, and considered as forming a part of Persia. (*i*) Parthia and Hyrcania, rough mountain districts, N. from Media, but full of noble and fruitful valleys. Before and during the Persian supremacy, they were little known and esteemed, and were without cities. It was at a late period that the inhabitants of Parthia came in turn to possess a rule widely extended through the world. (*k*) Bactria, the country on the S. bank of the Oxus. It is rich in its natural products, and one of the oldest commercial countries of Asia. River: Oxus. Cities: Bactra and Zariaspa. Bactria, on the boundary of India, the less Thibet, and little Bucharia, (the N. India of *Herod.* and *Ctesias*,) and the desert Cobi, (the desert abounding in gold, of *Herod.*) through which the road to China passes, is by its geographical situation naturally destined to be one of the first staples of the wares of S. Asia; and appears, the farther we extend our researches in history, to have been, as Babylon, one of the first principal places of the intercourse between nations, and in consequence of dawning culture. (*l*) Sogdiana, the country between the upper Oxus and the upper Jaxartes, which divides it from Middle Asia (a part of the greater Bucharia). It resembles in character and advantages the neighboring Bactria. Chief city: Marakanda (Samarcand).' [See the maps, p. 64. vol. I. &c.]

'IV. *Egypt.* [Included by some geographers in S. W. Asia.] The land on the banks of the Nile, as far as its floods extend [its valley is 900 miles in length and from 12 to 25 in breadth], are alone fruitful in corn; the remainder on the W. is a desert of sand, and on the E. a rocky, mountainous region. [Only 17,000 sq. miles out of 200,000 are cultivable.] The E. of the branches of the Nile, entered the sea at Pelusium, the W. at Canopus: between was the Delta, (so called as resembling that Greek letter,) filled with cities and excellently well tilled. A few spots, fertile from abounding in fountains, are found in the W. desert, and are called oases. Egypt is divided into Upper Egypt, from Syene to the city Chemmis, (chief city, Thebes or Diospolis; Middle Egypt, from Chemmis to Cercasorus, where the Nile divides,) chief city, Memphis; and Lower Egypt, comprising the Delta and the land on both sides of it: it was full of cities, of which Sais is particularly worthy of note. Ethiopia, above, from the earliest times seems to have stood in an intimate connection with Egypt, especially of a commercial nature. The countries, just above Egypt, usually included under the name of Nubia, are mostly a mere desert of sand, traversed from the beginning by marauding nomades; whilst along the shore of the Arabian Gulf a rocky chain extends, and derived, in Nubia, a still greater importance, from its rich mines of gold, just above the Egyptian boundary. [*Wilkinson* states, that these were already worked as early as 1656 B. C. about the time of Joseph, (who he thinks arrived in Egypt in the reign of Osirtesen I. in 1706,) and that the port of Ænum or Philoteras (Old Kossaer) was probably already built for trade.] At this boundary, the Nile is full of rocks, and bends to the W. its banks are fruitful and inhabited, and rich in monuments of antiquity. Ascending to 16° N. L. fruitful districts commence; and their costly products, gold as well as incense, have always made these provinces, rich commercial countries. Here, even in Herodotus's time, (460 B. C.) Meroe was celebrated, with a capital of the same name. It formed a state of priests, with a king at its head, like the Egyptian states. The cities Axum and Adule also seem, from their ruins, of equal antiquity with the ancient Egyptian cities, and with Meroe.

HEEREN.

AN EXPOSITION,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS AND NOTES,

UPON THE BOOK OF

EZRA.

It is recorded by Jewish writers, that Ezra revised all the preceding parts of Scripture, and published a correct copy of the whole: and indeed this appears highly probable. He is not called a prophet, in Scripture: yet, doubtless, he performed these services under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; as no distinction is made in the N. T. between one part and another of that volume, then called 'The Oracles of God,' and, as such, sanctioned by our Lord and his apostles. The prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah confirm the history in the former part of this book: and as Ezra alone records the rebuilding of the temple; whatever in the N. T. relates to the temple, as then standing, is, in some sense, a sanction to the authenticity of the narrative: though I do not recollect any express references to it except in the genealogies. Neither does the book appear to contain any direct prophecies: but it is written in so pious a strain, and so much in the manner of the other Scriptures, that it has strong internal evidences of divine inspiration. As express mention is made in it of Jeremiah's prophecies, and plain intimations are given of Isaiah's extraordinary prediction concerning Cyrus; (1:1—4.) it is evident the writings of these prophets were then extant: and the constant reference to the law of Moses and the preceding histories, in this book, and that of Nehemiah, proves the same respecting them.—Ezra was peculiarly had in honor by the ancient Jews, and is so by the modern: and to this we must ascribe the forgery of several other books, under his name, especially the two apocryphal books of Esdras, or Ezra; for forgeries they undoubtedly are, and of a much later date than the authentic record of Ezra.—During the captivity nothing is recorded of Israel, except what may be collected from Ezekiel and Daniel: and exceedingly little is contained in the Scripture of their condition, during 536 years, till the birth of Christ, compared with the regular history given of the nation from Moses to the captivity. The old dispensation was about to expire and make way for Christianity; the Spirit of propheey was about to be withdrawn for a season; and the people had so often and so flagrantly violated their national covenant, that they were not honored and noticed as in former ages. [See concluding note to Ezra.] Scott.

The Jewish church puts on quite another face, in this book, from what it *had* appeared with; much better, and more pleasant, than of late in Babylon, yet far inferior to what it had been formerly. Kings we hear no more of, *the crown is fallen from their heads*. Prophets they are blessed with, to direct their re-establishment, but, after a while, prophecy ceases among them, till the great Prophet appears, and his fore-runner. The history of this book is the accomplishment of Jeremiah's prophecy concerning their return out of Babylon, at the end of 70 years, and a type of the accomplishment of the prophecies of the Apocalypse, concerning the deliverance of the gospel-church out of the New Testament Babylon. Ezra preserved the records of that great revolution, and transmitted them to the church in this book. His name signifies *a helper;* and so he was to that people. The book gives us an account, I. Of the Jews' return from captivity, *ch.* 1, 2. II. Of the building of the temple, the opposition it met with, and yet the perfecting of it at last, *ch.* 3—6. III. Of Ezra's coming to Jerusalem, about 78 or 79 years afterward, *ch.* 7, 8. IV. Of the good service he did there, in obliging those that had married strange wives, to put them away, *ch.* 9, 10. This beginning again of the Jewish nation was small, yet its latter end greatly increased. Henry.

B. C. 536.

CHAP. I.

Cyrus issues a proclamation, allowing the Jews to go up to Jerusalem and build the temple; and exhorting those who staid behind to assist them, 1—4. Many prepare to return, and others contribute to the expense, 5, 6. Cyrus restores the vessels of the temple to Sheshbazzar, 7—11.

NOW [a] in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord [b] by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, [c] that he * made

a See on 2 Chr. 36:22,23.
b Jer. 25:12—14. 29:10. 33:7—13.
c 5:13—15. 6:22. 7:27. Ps. 105:46. Prov. 21:1.
* Heb. *caused a voice to pass.* Matt. 3:1—3. John 1:23.

Chap. I. V. 1—4. It will be proper here to consider,

1. The state of the captive Jews in Babylon; it was on many accounts very deplorable; they were under the power of those that hated them, and had nothing they could call their own: no temple, no altar. If they sang psalms, their enemies ridiculed them; yet they had prophets among them, as Ezekiel and Daniel: some of them were preferred at court, others had comfortable settlements in the country, and all were borne up with hope that, in due time, they should return to their own land; so they preserved the distinction of their families, the knowledge of their religion, and an aversion to idolatry.

2. The state of the government, under which they were. Nebuchadnezzar carried many away, in the 1st year of his reign, the 4th of Jehoiakim; he reigned 45 years, his son Evil-merodach 23, and his grandson Belshazzar 3, which make up the 70. So Lightfoot. It is charged on Nebuchadnezzar, that he *opened not the house of his prisoners*, Isa. 14: 17. And if he had showed mercy to the poor Jews, Daniel told him it would have been the *lengthening of his tranquillity*, Dan. 4: 27 But the measure of the sins of Babylon was, at length, full, and then destruction was brought on them by Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian, which we read of, Dan. 5: Darius, being old, left the government to Cyrus, who was employed as the instrument of the Jews' deliverance, which he ordered, as soon as he was master of the kingdom of Babylon, either in contradiction to Nebuchadnezzar, or in policy, to recommend his newly-acquired dominion as merciful and gentle; or, as some think, in a pious regard to the prophecy of Isaiah, published, and well known, above 150 years before, Isa. 44: 28. 45: 1, &c. and which perhaps was showed him by those about him. His name, some say, in Persian, signifies the *sun*, for he brought light and healing to the church of God, and was an eminent type of Christ the *Sun of Righteousness*. Some say his name signifies a *father*, and Christ is the everlasting Father.

Respecting this proclamation, we have here, I. Its rise. *The Lord stirred up Cyrus*. The hearts

NOTES.

Chap. I. V. 1—4. (2 *Chr.* 36:22, 23.) Nebuchadnezzar's son, Evil-merodach, was slain by Neriglissar, his brother-in-law, after he had reigned two years; and probably Jehoiachin died before him. (*Note*, 2 *K.* 25:27—30.) After 4 years, Neriglissar was slain in battle by Cyrus: after a few months, Belshazzar, son of Evil-merodach, mounted the throne; and at the end of 17 years was slain in Babylon by Cyrus. (*Dan.* 5:) Then Cyaxares, or Darius the Mede, the uncle and father-in-law of Cyrus, succeeded to the throne of all these kingdoms; and after 2 years he died, and left the whole of them to Cyrus, who, in the first year after his predecessor's death, proclaimed liberty to the captive Jews. This is the first computation of the 70 years of the Babylonish captivity. (2 *Chr.* 36:21.)—As Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius the Mede, and of Cyrus the Persian, there can be little doubt, that he was instrumental in procuring this extraordinary proclamation in favor of the Jews: and probably he showed that prince the prophecy of Isaiah, [so *Josephus* asserts,] and also those of Jeremiah, which foretold the exact duration of the captivity. (*Is.* 13:17. 21:1—5. 41:25. 44:25—28. 45:1—6. *Jer.* 25:10—13. 27:4—9. 29:10. 50: 51: *Dan.* 1:17—20. 6:25—28.) The prophecy of Isaiah was delivered about 120 years before the temple was destroyed; and about the same time before the birth of Cyrus. These predictions, set before Cyrus, by a person of Daniel's venerable age, and high reputation for wisdom, and eminent station, seem to have produced in the mind of this prudent and humane

a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying,

2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The [d] LORD God of heaven [e] hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and [f] he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem which *is* in Judah.

3 Who *is there* among you of all his people? [g] his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, ([h] he *is* the God,) which *is* in Jerusalem.

4 And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, [i] let the men of his place [*] help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside [k] the free-will-offering for the house of God, that *is* in Jerusalem.

5 Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all *them* [k] whose spirit God had raised to go up to build the house of the LORD, which *is* in Jerusalem.

6 And all they that *were* about them of kings are in his hand, and, like the rivulets of water, He turneth them which way He will. It is said Cyrus knew not God, nor how to serve Him; but God knew him, and how to serve Himself by him, Isa. 45: 4. God governs the world by his influence on men's spirits, and, whatever good is done at any time, God *stirs up the spirit* to it, puts thoughts into the mind, gives to the understanding to form a right judgment, and directs the will which way He pleases. Whatever good offices therefore are, at any time, done for the church of God, He must have the glory of them. II. Its reference to the prophecy of Jeremiah, by whom God had not only promised they should return, but had fixed the time, which set time to favor Sion was now come. 70 years were determined; (Jer. 25: 12. 29: 10.) and He that kept the promise concerning Israel's deliverance out of *Egypt, to a day*, (Ex. 12: 41.) was, doubtless, as punctual to this. Jeremiah, while he lived, was hated and despised; yet thus did Providence honor him long after, that a mighty monarch shall act in pursuance of the word of the Lord by his mouth. Isa. 44: 36. III. Its date; in his 1st year, not of his reign over Persia, the kingdom he was born to, but Babylon, which he had conquered. Those are much honored, whose spirits are stirred up to begin with God, and to serve Him in their first years. IV. Its publication; by word of mouth, *a voice passing throughout all his kingdom*, like a jubilee trumpet proclaiming liberty to the captives; the publication was made also by writing, that it might be the more satisfactory, and might be sent to those distant provinces where the ten tribes were scattered, in Assyria and Media, 2 K. 17: 6. V. Its purport.

1. The preamble shows the causes and considerations him thereunto moving, *v.* 2. It should seem, his mind was enlightened with the knowledge of *Jehovah*, *v.* 3. Though he had not known God by education, God made him so far to know Him now, as that he did his service with an eye to Him. He professes to do it, (1.) In gratitude to God. What he says sounds a little vainglorious, for there were *many kingdoms of the earth* which he had nothing to do with; but he means, that God had given him all that was given to Nebuchadnezzar, whose dominion, Daniel says, was *to the end of the earth*, Dan. 4: 22. 5: 19. God is the Fountain of power; and those entrusted with it, should look on themselves as obliged thereby to do much for Him. (2.) In obedience to God. He hath *charged me to build Him a house at Jerusalem;* probably, by a dream or vision of the night, confirmed by comparing it with the prophecy of Isaiah, where it was foretold. Israel's disobedience to God's charge, which they were often told of, is aggravated by the obedience of this heathen king.

2. He gives free leave to all Jews in his dominions, to go to Jerusalem, and *build the temple of the Lord* there, *v.* 3. Piety is the best policy.

3. He subjoins a brief for a collection to bear the charges of such as were poor, and not able to bear their own, *v.* 4. Some take it as an order to the king's officers to supply them out of his revenue, as *ch.* 6: 8. But it may mean a warrant to ask and receive the alms and charitable contributions of all the king's loving subjects. And we may suppose the Jews had conducted themselves so well among their neighbors, that they would be as forward to accommodate them, because they loved them, as the Egyptians were, because they were weary of them. At least, many would be kind to them, because they saw the government would take it well. Cyrus not only gave his good wishes with them that went, (*Their God be with them*, *v.* 3.) but took care also to furnish such things as they needed. He took it for granted, that those among them who were of ability, would offer their *free-will offering for the house of God*, to promote the rebuilding of it. But he would also have them supplied out of his kingdom. Well-wishers to the temple should be well-doers for it.

V. 5—11. We are here told,

I. How Cyrus's proclamation succeeded with others. 1. Many went up accordingly, *v.* 5. The leaders were the *chief of the fathers* of Judah and Benjamin, eminent and experienced men, who might justly be expected, as they were above their brethren in dignity, to go before them in duty. The priests and Levites were (as became them) with the first. If any good work is to be done, let ministers lead in it. They that accompanied, were such as God had inclined, Zech. 4: 6. The temptation perhaps was strong, to some, to stay

d 1 K. 8:27. 2 Chr. 2:12. Is. 66:1. Jer. 10:11. Dan. 2:28. 5:23.
e Jer. 27:5,7. Dan. 2:37,38. 4:25,32. 5:19—21.
f Is. 44:26—28. 45:1,12,13.
g Josh. 1:9. 1 Chr. 28:20. Matt. 28:20.
h Deut. 32:31. Dan. 2:47. 6:26. Acts 10:36.
i 7:16—18. Acts 24:17. 3 John 6—8.
* Heb. *lift him up.* Ec. 4:9,10. Gal. 6:2.
k 3:68—70. 1 Chr. 29:3,9,17.
k 1. 2 Chr. 36:22. Neh. 2:12. Prov. 16:1. 2 Cor. 8:16. Phil. 2:13. Jam. 1:16,17.

conqueror, a conviction that the God of Israel was the true God, and that the captive Jews were his chosen people, and Jerusalem the place where He was especially pleased to be worshipped.—Cyrus's dominions being far superior to any other empire then in the world, (as comprising the dominions of the Medes and Persians increased by those of the Assyrians, Babylonians, and others,) were called in the customary style, 'all the kingdoms of the earth.'—By this decree, the Jews, who had been held in bondage and captivity, were virtually released, provided they chose to engage in this enterprise. Any attempt of this kind would previously have been punishable as rebellion; but now, the government being favorable, their opposers would be restrained, and many would readily help them on that account alone.—As the kings of Persia still retained the sovereignty of the land, it could be no real impolicy to encourage the people to re-inhabit and cultivate a fertile territory, which had long lain desolate. But this measure was so contrary to the ancient prejudices and superstitions of these kings, that it was probably dictated by conscience, and a sense of duty to the God of heaven: though we find nothing in the subsequent history of this prince to favor a conclusion, that he finally renounced idolatry, and became a true worshipper of JEHOVAH. The proclamation, however, was honorable to God; and would encourage the Jews to adhere to their religion, and be more zealous for it; and perhaps induce many of the Gentiles to respect, and even to embrace it. SCOTT.

(1, 2.) 'On the conquest of Babylon, [note, 2 K. 17:6.] at the death of Belshazzar, (grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. 5:) Cyrus made his uncle Cyaxares, (there called Darius the Median,) king of Babylon. Such was his title, but, according to Xenophon, Cyrus had the throne and remained in the city. After 2 yrs. Darius died, when Persia, and all the dominions of Assyria and Babylon, became subject to his sole sway.' BOOTHROYD. *All the kingdoms.*] 'He ruled over all Asia, says *Herod.* Over the Medes and Hyrcanians, Syrians, Assyrians, Arabians, Cappadocians, both Phrygias, the Carians, Phoenicians, Babylonians, Bactrians, Indians, Cilicians, Sacæ or Scythians, Paphlagonians, Megadinians, and many other nations, the Greeks inhabiting Asia, and the Cyprians and Egyptians; the borders of his kingdom were to the E. of the Red Sea; to the N. the Euxine Pontus; to the W. Cyprus and Egypt; and to the S. Ethiopia. *Xenoph.*' *Cond. Comm.* See Geogr. note, end of 2 Chr. and Hist. note, end of Esther. ED.

He hath charged.] 'So he understood from Is. 45:13 and 44:28.' PATRICK.

(3.) *He is the God.*] 'There is no doubt that the aboriginal founders of the Median and Persian nations, were orthodox: for Shem was father of Elam, who was father or ancestor of the Persians. But as the corrupted and depraved human nature verges to worse, so they gradually mixed superstitions with their true religion; adding Sabianism, i. e. a veneration (not divine indeed, but yet too great) for the heavenly bodies and the elements. And, at length, imitating the fire of the altar in the temple of God, the Persians also learned to keep a perpetual fire in their Pyrees (fire-towers), and although they did not adore this with divine worship, yet they paid, and still pay it, too superstitious a veneration. They affirm, that their religion was reformed and brought back to its ancient purity by Abraham. Again relapsing into these superstitions, they were again reformed: and were indeed the worshippers of the true God, free from all iconolatry (or image-worship); and afterwards at length became zealous iconoclasts, destroying the idolatrous temples of the Greeks: [as well as those of the Jews, Egyptians, &c.?] believing that God, who filled the universe, could not be contained in walls. Therefore the Persians had then no temples, as *Herodotus* notes: nor adored any images or statues, nor made or fashioned any sculpture or handiwork: except once in the decline of the empire, when a heretical king set up a statue of Venus. Though accused of it, by Greeks, and Mohammedans, they deny that they ever worshipped any other than the one true God. The precepts of Zoroaster prescribe *Niyaish, salutations*, only, [Job 31:26—28.] to the Sun, no mention is made of *Prestish, servitus.*' HYDE. The judgment of Job, see as above, seems less lenient, and 'in the time of Sapor many thousand Christians in Armenia and Persia suffered martyrdom, rather than turn towards the Sun, (as is the custom of Mohammedans and even Armenian Christians in Persia now,) or the king, with this kind of external homage, at the order of a Persian king. . . . 'Indeed there is sufficient certainty of the faith of the Medes and Persians in the one only God, from the beginning of their monarchy.' . . . 'They have preserved the true faith in God, a d, which can be said of no other nation, but the Jewish, have continue : to the present time the most ancient church derived from Shem, and the post-diluvian Patriarchs.' HYDE; whom see for the reformations of the Zoroasters, &c. ZOROASTER's prophecy of Christ; and the sending of the magi to Bethlehem, to find Christ, by the Parthian monarch of Persia. But see pref. to *Harris's* 'Great Teacher,' ed. by Pres. *Humphrey*, p. 29. ED.

Verses 5, 6.

Some readers may perhaps wonder, that, on this proclamation of Cyrus, the Jews did not assemble in one body, and directly go and

* strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all *that was* [l] willingly offered.

7 ¶ Also [m] Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which [n] Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods;

8 Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto [o] Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah.

9 And this *is* the number of them: thirty [p] chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, [q] nine and twenty knives,

10 Thirty basins of gold, silver basins of a second *sort* four hundred and ten, *and* other vessels a thousand.

11 All [r] the vessels of gold and of silver *were* five thousand and four hundred. All *these* did Sheshbazzar bring up with *them of* the † captivity, that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.

in Babylon; they had convenient settlements there, and an agreeable acquaintance with the neighbors; the discouragements to return were many and great, the journey long, their wives and children unfit for travelling, their own land a strange land, the road to it an unknown road. Jerusalem was all in ruins, and in the midst of enemies to whom they would be an easy prey. Many were wrought upon by these considerations to stay at least, not to go with the first; but some got over those difficulties, and they were those whose spirits God raised. He, by his Spirit and grace, filled them with a generous ambition of liberty, a gracious affection to their own land, and a desire of the free and public exercise of their religion. Had He left them to themselves, and to the counsels of flesh and blood, they had staid in Babylon; but He put it into their hearts to set their faces Zionward, and, as strangers, to ask the way thither; (Jer. 50: 5.) Being a new generation, they went out, like their father Abraham, from this land of the Chaldees, not knowing whither they went, Heb. 11: 8. Whatever good we do, it is owing purely to the grace of God, and He raises up our spirits to do it, *works in us both to will and to do.* Our spirits naturally incline to this earth and the things of it; if they move upward, in any good affections or good actions, it is God that raises them.

The call and offer of the Gospel are like Cyrus's proclamation; *deliverance to the captives*, Luke 4: 18. out of the slavery of sin into the *glorious liberty of the children of God.* The offer is general to all; Christ makes it, in pursuance of the grant the Father has made Him of *all power both in heaven and in earth*, (a much greater dominion than that given to Cyrus; *v.* 2.) and of the charge given Him to *build God a house*, to set Him up a church in the world, a kingdom among men. Many that hear this joyful sound, are in love with their sins, and will not venture on the difficulties of a holy life; but some there are, that break through their discouragements,—those *whose spirit God has raised* above the world and the flesh, and whom He has made *willing in the day of his power*, Ps. 110: 3.

2. Their neighbors helped them, *v.* 6. All about them, furnished them with plate and goods. As the tabernacle was made of the spoils of Egypt, and the first temple built by the labors of the strangers, so the second by the contributions of the Chaldeans; all intimating the admission of the Gentiles into the church, in due time.

II. How this proclamation was seconded by Cyrus himself. He not only released the people of God, but restored the vessels of the temple, *v.* 7, 8. Observe here, 1. How careful Providence was of these, that they were not lost, melted down,

• That is, *helped them.* 7:15,16. 8:25—28,33.

l 4. Ps. 110:3. 2 Cor. 9:7.

m 5:14. 6:5.

n 2 K. 24:13. 25:13—16. 2 Chr. 36:7, 10,18. Jer. 27:21,22. 28:3—6. Dan. 1:2. 5:3,23.

o 11. 5:14,16. Hag. 1:1,14. 2:2—4. Zech. 4:6—10.

p Num. 7:13,19. 1 K. 7:50. 2 Chr. 4: 8,11,21,22. 24:14. Matt. 14:8.

q Matt. 10:29—31.

r Rom. 9:23. 2 Tim. 2:19—21.

† Heb. *transportation.* Matt. 1:11,12.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As the architect progressively executes every part of the plan, he had delineated for his intended structure, till the whole is completed; so God in his providence performs in due order all the prophecies of his Word: a great proportion of his grand design has already been accomplished, and revolving ages will hasten the performance of all the rest, in the appointed periods.—When He has work to do, they, whom He has chosen to perform it, find their minds enlarged to entertain noble designs; and, forgetful of their former habits, maxims, and superstitions, they serve his cause with all the authority, which He has conferred on them. Even they, who live and die strangers to the power of true religion, have often received deep convictions of 'his eternal power and Godhead,' and of their obligations and accountableness to 'the God of heaven:' and, under these convictions, they have made public and honorable confessions to Him, have shown for a time a regard for his authority, and have done many and great things for his cause and people; speaking the language of piety, and being very useful to his worshippers: and yet at last they have relapsed into their former idolatry or ungodliness! (7: 11—28.) —If such things have heretofore been done in fulfilling former prophecies; the Lord is equally able and faithful to provide for the ruin of every antichrist, the conversion of the Jews, and the calling of all the Gentiles into his church.—In every useful undertaking, all should endeavor to be helpful; some by their labors, some with their substance, and all by their prayers; and whatever is done *willingly*, and from love to God and his people, will be graciously accepted. SCOTT.

take possesion of their ancient inheritances: but a little reflection shows the matter in another light. . . . None of the Jews had seen Jerusalem or the temple, except such as were considerably above 50 years of age; at which period of life the spirit of enterprise commonly begins to decline: and those, who had merely seen it as children, would have little stimulating recollection of it. Few were attached to the temple by true piety: and most of them wanted even that attachment, which men naturally feel for the land of their nativity; having been born in the places, where they were then settled. Some persons of true and eminent piety were so situated, that they did not think it their duty to remove; as Daniel in the court of Cyrus: others would be hindered by the infirmities of old age, and the peculiar circumstances of their families and connections. In short, the difficulties, hardship, and peril were manifest; the success of the attempt would be doubtful to all, but those who were 'strong in faith:' its temporal advantages were remote and precarious, and not worth the venture; especially to such as had obtained comfortable settlements or occupations, in the land of their captivity. Even the spiritual advantages would appear to the pious mind, more intended for posterity than for that generation; and to engage in it, in this view, would require vigorous faith, lively hope, and an active zeal for the honor of God, and the benefit of his church, and establishment of his worship, in ages to come.—We may conclude, that in consequence of the captivities, many Israelites, and some of the Jews, were finally incorporated with the heathen, among whom they dwelt: yet these calamities seem to have had a very good effect on considerable numbers. . . . Many more returned, than we read of being carried away captive: (2:64—67. *Jer.* 52:28—30.) but as the land had been utterly desolated, all the surviving inhabitants must have been driven into other countries, and most of them into those lands, which had been subject to the kings of Babylon, and which were now fallen under the dominion of the kings of Persia: and doubtless many of the ten tribes accompanied the Jews at this time. It is, however, evident that a great majority, even of the latter, chose to continue in the settlements they had there gained: some of them afterwards returned, but very many never did; and immense numbers of Jews were from that time dispersed, in every city and country, over all that part of the world. So that the new settlement, in Judea and at Jerusalem, formed but a small part of that people, as they continued to be distinguished from other nations: for they still increased and multiplied very rapidly, according to the promise of God to their fathers.—It is worthy of observation, that no Jews, who chose to go, were excluded by Cyrus's proclamation: yet the language of the sacred historian implies, that none would actually have gone, if He, who 'stirred up the spirit of Cyrus,' had not also 'raised the spirit of the people,' to avail themselves of this permission: the original words are the same in both clauses. This transaction, (as Abp. Usher has particularly observed,) furnishes a most striking *illustration*, or, as I would rather say, *representation*, of the way in which the Gospel is proposed to sinners, and embraced by believers. It is in general set before the ruined descendants of Adam, with the Savior's most solemn assurance, that 'Him who cometh . . . He will in nowise cast out.' Yet 'no man can come unto Him, except the Father draw him.' On one pretence or other, all who are left to themselves 'neglect so great salvation,' and are *justly* condemned. But God, by his preventing grace, 'stirs up the spirits' of some, who thus thankfully embrace the proffered blessing, and are *mercifully* saved. SCOTT.

Verses 7—11.

It is generally agreed, that the ark was lost or destroyed, when the temple was burnt: and it is likely, that by the absence of it, and the visible glory, 'God would signify, He was withdrawing his presence from that house of stone, to dwell in the temple of Christ's body, who offered Himself to God, and thereby put an end to these figurative sacrifices.' *Patrick.* The knives were used for slaying and preparing the sacrifices, as the original word signifies; and the vessels, for receiving the blood, for the meat-offerings, and other similar purposes. (*M. R.*)—The sum total of the vessels here stated far exceeds the particular account given of them: but it is supposed, that many spoons, tongs, and other instruments of service, not before numbered, were included. —Sheshbazzar was the grandson of Jehoiachin by Salathiel, and the heir of the house of David: as such he was regarded by the conquerors; he possessed authority over the captive Jews; and he was authorized, and willingly undertook, to lead those back, who now returned to rebuild the city and temple. (*M. R.* e.—2:2. 3:2, 8. 5:14—16. *Jer.* 22: 28—30.) ID.

Sheshbazzar. (8) This name appears to be compounded of a Hebrew word which signifies, *fine linen*, and another which signifies, *in affliction.*—The wearing of fine linen and white garments was an expression of rejoicing. ID.

CHAP. II.

The principal persons who returned from Babylon, 1, 2. The number of the several families which accompanied them, 3—35. The priests, 36—39. The Levites, 40—42. The Nethinims, 43—54. The children of Solomon's servants, 55—60. The priests who could not show their pedigree, 61—63. The sum total, with their retinue, 64—67. Their oblations towards the temple and its service, 68—70.

NOW these *are* [a] the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, [b] whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city;

2 Which came with [c] Zerubbabel: [b] Jeshua, Nehemiah, [e] Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel:

3 The children of [f] Parosh, two thousand an hundred seventy and two.

4 The children of [g] Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two.

5 The children of [h] Arah, seven hundred seventy and five.

6 The children of [i] Pahath-moab, of the children of Jeshua *and* [k] Joab, two thousand eight hundred and twelve.

7 The children of [l] Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.

8 The children of [m] Zattu, nine hundred forty and five.

9 The children of [n] Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore.

10 The children of [o] Bani, six hundred forty and two.

11 The children of [p] Bebai, six hundred twenty and three.

12 The children of [q] Azgad, a thousand two hundred twenty and two.

13 The children of [r] Adonikam, six hundred sixty and six.

14 The children of [s] Bigvai, two thousand fifty and six.

15 The children of [t] Adin, four hundred fifty and four.

16 The children of [u] Ater, of Hezekiah, ninety and eight.

17 The children of [x] Bezai, three hundred twenty and three.

18 The children of [y] Jorah, an hundred and twelve.

19 The children of [z] Hashum, two hundred twenty and three.

20 The children of [a] Gibbar, ninety and five.

21 The [b] children of Beth-lehem, an hundred twenty and three.

22 The men of [c] Netophah, fifty and six.

23 The men of [d] Anathoth, an hundred twenty and eight.

24 The children of [e] Azmaveth, forty and two.

25 The children of [f] Kirjath-arim, Chephirah and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty and three.

26 The children of [g] Ramah and Gaba, six hundred twenty and one.

27 The men of [h] Michmas, an hundred twenty and two.

28 The men of Bethel and [i] Ai, two hundred twenty and three.

29 The children of [k] Nebo, fifty and two.

30 The children of Magbish, an hundred fifty and six.

31 The children of the other [l] Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.

32 The children of [m] Harim, three hundred and twenty.

33 The children of [n] Lod, * Hadid, and

a 5:8. 6:2. Neh. 7:6. Esth. 1:1. 3:8, 11. 8:9. Acts 23:34.
b 2 K. 24:14—16. 25:11. 2 Chr. 36. Jer. 39: 52:
c 1:11. *Sheshbazzar.* Neh. 7:7. Hag. 1:1,12,14. 2:2,4,21. Zech. 4:6—10 Matt. 1:12,13. *Zorobabel.*
d 3:8,9. 4:3. 5:2. Hag. 1:12,14. 2:4. Zech. 3:1,3,8,9. *Joshua.*
e Neh. 7:7. *Azariah. Nahamani. Raamiah. Mispereth. Nehum.*
f 8:3. *Pharosh.* 10:25. Neh. 7:8.
g 8:8. Neh. 7:9.
h Neh. 6:18. 7:10. 652.
i 8:4. 10:30. Neh. 7:11. 2818. 10:14.
k 8:9.
l 8:7. 10:26. Neh. 7:12.
m 10:27. Neh. 7:13. 845.
n Neh. 7:14.
o 10:34. Neh. 7:15. *Binnui.* 648.
p 8:11. 10:28. Neh. 7:16. 628.
q 8:12. Neh. 7:17. 2322.
r 8:13. Neh. 7:18. 667.
s 8:14. Neh. 7:19. 2067.
t 8:6. Neh. 7:20. 655.
u Neh. 7:21.
x Neh. 7:23. 324.
y Neh. 7:24. *Hariph.*
z 10:33. Neh. 7:22. 328.
a Neh. 7:25. *Gibeon.*
b 1 Chr. 2:50—52.
c 2 Sam. 23:28. 1 Chr. 2:54. Neh. 7:26. 188. Jer. 40:8.
d Josh. 21:18. Neh. 7:27. Is. 10:30. Jer. 1:1. 11:21.
e Neh. 7:28. *Beth-azmaveth.*
f Josh. 9:17. Neh. 7:29. *Kirjath-jearim.*
g Josh. 18:24,25. Neh. 7:30.
h 1 Sam. 13:5:23. Is. 10:28. *Michmash.* Neh. 7:31.
i Gen. 12:8. *Hai.* Josh. 7:2. 8:9,17. Neh. 7:32. 123.
k Num. 32:3. Deut. 32:49. Neh. 7:33. Is. 15:2. Jer. 48:1,22.
l 7. Neh. 7:34.
m 10:31. Neh. 7:35.
n Neh. 6:2. 7:37. 11:34,35.
* Or, *Harid*, as in some copies.

NOTES.

CHAP. II. V. 2. These were the chief fathers, who were next in authority to Zerubbabel, and assisted him in this expedition. Jeshua, or Joshua, was the high priest, the grandson of Seraiah, slain by Nebuchadnezzar. (2 *K.* 25:18, 21. Comp. 1 *Chr.* 6:14, 15. with *Note*, *Hag.* 1:1.)—As these persons renounced many advantages, and encountered many hardships and dangers, in attempting to rebuild the temple and city, and resume possession of the promised land; it was proper their names should be recorded, as a mark of honorable distinction to them and their descendants. *The people of Israel.*] 'They who were called 'the children of the province,' (i. e. Judea,) before, are now called 'the people of Israel:' for from him they were derived, though most were of the tribe of Judah.' *Patrick.* (*Note*, 1:5. 9.)

SCOTT.

'We find that Nehemiah mentions 1765 not in Ezra, and Ezra 494 not in Nehemiah. *Alting* thinks that this, which seems to render all hope of reconciling them impossible, is precisely the point by which they can be reconciled: for, if we add Ezra's *surplus* to the *sum* in Nehemiah, and the *surplus* of Nehemiah to the *number* in Ezra, the numbers will be equal.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 3—29.

The Register, in the book of Nehemiah, answers to this here given in so many particulars, that there can be no doubt that the same is meant in both places. In general, the names and the numbers of each family are nearly the same; and the sum total is computed in both exactly alike. Yet there are several considerable variations, in names and numbers, which cannot be readily and satisfactorily accounted for. The most material of these are marked in the margin.—It is probable, Ezra, when he wrote his history, many years after the return of the Jews to Babylon, copied this register from the public records without alteration.—The word *children* is sometimes used for the descendants from the several heads of families; at other times for those, whose ancestors belonged to the cities mentioned in connection with them. [Note, 1 Chr. 1:1.]

SCOTT.

Verse 30.

The children of Magbish are not named in Nehemiah.

ID.

CHAP. II. V. 1—35. We may observe here, 1. An account was kept in writing of the families that came up out of captivity, and the numbers of each family, (1.) For their honor, as part of their recompense for their faith, courage, confidence in God, and affection to their own land, and to stir up others to follow their good example. Those that honor God, He will thus honor. The names of all those Israelites indeed, that accept the offer of deliverance by Christ, shall be found, to their honor, in a more sacred record than this, even in *the Lamb's book of life.* (2.) For the benefit of posterity, that they might know from whom they descended, and to whom they were allied.

2. The leaders are first mentioned; (*v.* 2.) Zerubbabel and Jeshua were their Moses and Aaron, the former their chief prince, the latter their chief priest. Nehemiah and Mordecai are mentioned here; some think not the same with the famous men we afterward meet with of those names [so Scott]: probably, they were the same; but afterward returned to court for the service of their country.

3. Some families are named from their ancestors, others from the places in which they had formerly resided; as with us many surnames are the proper names of persons, others of places.

4. Some little difference there is between the numbers of some of the families here, and in Neh. 7. where this catalogue is repeated; which might arise from this, that some who had given in their names, at first, to come, afterward drew back; others that declined, at first, *afterward repented and went.*

5. Anathoth had been famous in Benjamin, yet here it numbered but 128, (*v.* 23.) which is to be imputed to the divine curse the men of Anathoth brought on themselves by persecuting Jeremiah who was of their city, Jer. 11: 23. *There shall be*

Ono, seven hundred twenty and five.

34 The children of [o] Jericho, three hundred forty and five.

35 The children of [p] Senaah, three thousand and six hundred and thirty.

36 ¶ The priests: the children of [q] Jedaiah, of the house of [r] Jeshua, nine hundred seventy and three.

37 The children of [s] Immer, a thousand fifty and two.

38 The children of [t] Pashur, a thousand two hundred forty and seven.

39 The children of [u] Harim, a thousand and seventeen.

40 ¶ The Levites: the children of Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the children of [x] Hodaviah, seventy and four.

41 The singers: the children of [y] Asaph, an hundred twenty and eight:

42 The children of [z] the porters: the children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, *in* all an hundred thirty and nine.

43 ¶ The [a] Nethinims: the children of Ziha, the children of [b] Hasupha, the children of Tabbaoth,

44 The children of Keros, the children of [c] Siaha, the children of Padon,

45 The children of [d] Lebanah, the children of Hagabah, the children of Akkub,

46 The children of Hagab, the children of [*] Shalmai, the children of Hanan,

47 The children of Giddel, the children of Gahar, the children of Reaiah,

48 The children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, the children of Gazzam,

49 The children of Uzza, the children of [e] Paseah, the children of Besai,

50 The children of Asnah, the children of [f] Mehunim, the children of Nephusim,

51 The children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur,

52 The children of [g] Bazluth, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha,

53 The children of Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of [h] Thamah,

54 The children of Neziah, the children of Hatipha.

55 ¶ The children of [i] Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of [k] Peruda,

56 The children of [l] Jaalah, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel,

57 The children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the children of [m] Pocherith of Zebaim, the children of [n] Ami.

58 All the [o] Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants, *were* three hundred ninety and two.

59 And these *were* they which went up from Tel-melah, [p] Tel-harsa, Cherub, Addan, *and* Immer; but they could not show their father's house, and their † seed, whether they *were* of Israel:

60 The children [q] of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred fifty and two.

61 ¶ And of [r] the children of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai: which took a wife of the daughters of [s] Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their name:

62 These sought their register *among* those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: [t] therefore ‡ were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood.

63 And the § Tirshatha said unto them, that they [u] should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with [x] Urim and with Thummim

o 1 K. 16:34. Neh. 7:36.
p Neh. 7:38. 3930.
q 1 Chr. 9:10. 24:7.
r 3:9. Neh. 7:39.
s 10:20. 1 Chr. 24:14. Neh. 7:40.
t 10:22. 1 Chr. 9:12. Neh. 7:41.
u 10:21. 1 Chr. 24:8. Neh. 7:42.
x 3:9. *Judah.* Neh. 7:43. *Hodevah.*
y 1 Chr. 6:39. 15:17. 25:1,2. Neh. 7:44. 148.
z 1 Chr. 26:1,&c. Neh. 7:45. 138.
a 1 Chr. 9:2. Neh. 7:46—56. 10:28.
b Neh. 7:46. *Hashupha.*
c Neh. 7:47. *Sia.*
d Neh. 7:48. *Lebana. Hagaba.*
* Or, *Shamlai.*
e Neh. 7:51. *Phaseah.*
f Neh. 7:52. *Meunim. Nephisheshim.*
g Neh. 7:54. *Bazlith.*
h Neh. 7:55. *Tamah.*
i 1 K. 9:21.
k Neh. 7:57. *Perida.*
l Neh. 7:58. *Jaala.*
m Neh. 7:59. *Pocereth.*
n Neh. 7:59. *Amon.*
o 7:7. Josh. 9:23,27. 1 Chr. 9:2. Neh. 7:60.
p Neh. 7:61. *Tel-haresha. Addon.*
† Or, *pedigree.*
q Neh. 7:62. 642.
r Neh. 7:63,64.
s 2 Sam. 17:27. 19:31—39. 1 K. 2:7.
t Lev. 21:21—23. Num. 3:10. 16:40. 18:7.
‡ Heb. *they were polluted from the priesthood.* Ez. 44:10—14.
§ Or, *governor.* Neh. 7:65. 8:9. 10:1.
u Lev. 2:3,10. 6:17,29. 7:16. 10:17, 18. 22:2,10,15,16. Num. 18:9—11, 19,32.
x Ex. 28:30. Lev. 8:8. Num. 27:21. Deut. 33:8. 1 Sam. 28:6.

58. It is an honor to belong to God's house, though in the meanest office there.

IV. Of some looked upon as Israelites by birth, and others as priests, who yet could not make out a clear title to the honor. In one case their ancestor married a daughter of Barzillai, that great man we read of in David's time; and would have his children called after Barzillai's family, and their pedigree preserved in the registers of that house, not of the house of Aaron, so they lost it. In Babylon, there was nothing to be got by the priesthood, therefore they cared not for being akin to it. Those who think their ministry, or their relation to ministers, a diminution or disparagement to them, forget who it was, that said, *I magnify my office.* They had sold their birth-right for the honor of being gentlemen, therefore were justly degraded, and forbidden to *eat of the most holy things.* Note, Christ will be ashamed of those that are ashamed of Him and his service.

It was the Tirshatha, or governor, that put them under this sequestration, which some understand of Zerubbabel the present governor, others of Nehemiah, who is so called, (Neh. 8: 9. 10: 1.) and gave this order when he came some years after. But the prohibition was not absolute, it was only a suspension, till there should be a High Priest *with Urim and Thummim,* by whom they might know God's mind in this matter. This, it seems, was expected and desired, but it does not appear they were ever blessed with it under the second temple. They had the canon of the O. T.

Verse 35.

It is uncertain, whether Senaah be the name of a person, or a place; but the greatest number of persons stated in the whole register are called the children of Senaah. SCOTT.

Verses 36—39.

Above 4000 priests went up to Jerusalem on this occasion; which was a very great number, in proportion to the rest of the company: yet only 4, out of the 24 courses instituted by David, seem to have returned: at least only 4 of the persons, after whom the courses were first named, as here mentioned; namely, Jedaiah, Immer, Harim, and Pashur, who was the son of Malchijah: (1 *Chr.* 9.12. 24:7—9, 14.) and his name appears to have stood in the public records, as head of his course, instead of his father's. The priests, however, were afterwards divided into 24 courses, under the ancient names, in order to preserve regularity in their ministrations. SCOTT.

Verses 55—58.

These were persons descended from the remains of the devoted Canaanites, brought into bondage by Solomon; (1 *K.* 9:20—22.) and so their posterity were employed in menial services, perhaps about the sanctuary, along with the Nethinim: and though both the Nethinim and 'the children of Solomon's servants,' were of Gentile extraction, and not admitted to the privileges of Israelites; yet they seem to have been more ready to return to Jerusalem, than the Levites. ID.

Verses 61—63.

(*M. R.—Note, Ex* 28:30.) 'The Jews generally acknowledge, that there was no Urim and Thummim under the second temple; and even

64 The whole congregation together *was* [y] forty and two thousand three hundred *and* threescore,

65 Beside their [z] servants and their maids, of whom *there were* seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven: and *there were* among them [a] two hundred singing men and singing women.

66 Their horses *were* seven hundred thirty and six; their mules, two hundred forty and five;

67 Their camels, four hundred thirty and five; *their* asses, six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

68 ¶ And *some* of the chief of the fathers, when they came to the house of the LORD which *is* at Jerusalem, [b] offered freely for the house of God to set it up [c] in his place:

69 They gave after their ability, unto [d] the treasure of the work, threescore and one thousand drams of gold, and five thousand pounds of silver, and one hundred priests' garments.

70 So [e] the priests, and the Levites, and *some* of the people, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, dwelt in their cities, and all Israel in their cities.

y 9:8. Neh. 7:66—69. Is. 10:20—22. Jer. 23:3.

complete, which was better than Urim; and by the want of that oracle, were taught to expect the Messiah, the great Oracle, of which the Urim and Thummim were but a type. Nor does it appear that the second temple had the ark in it, either the old one or a new one; those shadows, by degrees, vanished, as the substance approached; and God, by the prophet, intimates to his people, that they should sustain no damage by the want of the ark, Jer. 3: 16.

V. 64—70. Here is,

I. The sum total that returned, and their feeble retinue. The particular sums before mentioned amount not quite to 30,000, (29,818,) so there were above 12,00 that come not into any of those accounts, who, it is probable, were of the rest of the tribes of Israel, beside Judah and Benjamin, that could not tell of what particular family or city they were, but that they were Israelites, and of what tribe. Now, 1. This was more than double the number carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar, so that, as in Egypt, the time of their affliction was the time of their increase. 2. These were but few to begin a nation with, yet, by virtue of the old promise to their fathers, they multiplied so as, before their last destruction by the Romans, about 500 years after, to be a very populous country. When God says, 'Increase and multiply,' *a little one shall become a thousand.* Themselves little better than servants, no wonder their servants were comparatively but few, (*v.* 65.) and their beasts of burden about as many, *v.* 66, 67. It was not with them now, as in days past. But notice is taken of 200 *singing-men and women* among them, who, we will suppose, intended, as those, 2 Chr. 35: 25. to excite *their mourning*, for it was foretold, they should, on this occasion, *go weeping*, (Jer. 50: 4.) with ditties of lamentation.

II. Their oblations. It is said, (*v.* 68, 69.) 1. They *came to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem;* like Abraham when the altar was gone, they came with devotion to the *place of the altar;* it is the character of the genuine sons of Zion, that they favor even *the dust thereof.* 2. They offered freely toward the *setting of it up in its place.* Though they came off a journey, and were beginning the world, yet they offered, and offered freely, toward the building of the temple. Let none complain of the necessary expenses of their religion, but believe that when they come to balance the account, they will find it clears the cost. The 61,000 drams of gold amount, (so Cumberland,) to so many pounds, and groats. Every maneh, or pound of silver, he reckons to be 60 shekels, namely, 30 ounces, which we may reckon £7 10 s. of our money; so that this 5,000 pounds of silver will be above 37,000 of our money. It seems, God had blessed them with the increase of wealth, as well as numbers, in Babylon; and, as God had prospered them, they gave cheerfully to the service of his house. 3. They *dwelt in their*

z Is. 14:1,2.
a Ex. 15:20,21. 2 Sam. 19:35. Neh 7:67. Ps. 68:25. 148:12,13. Ec. 2. 8. Jer. 9:17,18. Matt. 9:23.
b Ex. 35:5,&c.29. 36:3. Num. 7:3,&c. 1 Chr. 29:5—17. Neh. 7:70. Ps. 110: 3. Luke 21:1—4. 2 Cor. 8:3,12. 9:7.
c 3:3. 1 Chr. 21:18. 22:1. 2 Chr. 3:1.
d 8:25—34. 1 K. 7:51. 1 Chr. 22:14. 26:26—28. Neh. 7:71,72.
e 6:16,17. 1 Chr. 11:2. Neh. 7:73. 11: 3,&c.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Those who are ashamed of religion, or undervalue their external relation to God, in times of reproach, persecution, or distress; will have no benefit from it, when it becomes honorable and profitable: and they who have no evidence, that they are, by regeneration and adoption, spiritual priests unto God through Jesus Christ, have no right to the peculiar comforts and privileges of Christians. But there are many cases, of which we cannot judge, but must leave them to be determined at the second coming of our High Priest, whose illuminations and perfections are unchangeable and eternal.—They, who, at the call of the Gospel, renounce sin, and return unto the Lord, shall be guarded and guided through all the perils of the way; and arrive safe at those mansions, prepared for them in the holy city of our God.

SCOTT.

they that say there was, (because it was necessary the high priest should have his garments complete,) yet say, there was no answer from God given by it.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

Verse 64.

The number of the several families amounts only to 29,818: and those in Nehemiah to 31,089: yet the sum total is in both said to be 42,360, besides their servants. (*Neh.* 7:66, 67.) The surplus are supposed to have been priests and Levites who could not produce their genealogy, and Israelites from the other tribes, who accompanied their brethren of Judah and Benjamin. 'It is remarkable, that the two accounts' (of Ezra and Nehemiah) 'agree in the total amount; and the sum of the numbers, as separately detailed, will correspond, if to the 29,818, specified by Ezra, we add the 1765 persons reckoned by Nehemiah, which Ezra has omitted: and on the other hand, to the 31,089 enumerated by Nehemiah, add the 494, which is an overplus in Ezra, not noticed by Nehemiah: both writers including in the sum total 10,777 of the mixed multitude, not particularized in the individual detail. . . . Prideaux attributes the difference to alterations made by Nehemiah, in compliance with changes, that had happened since the departure from Babylon. . . . The accounts unquestionably agreed, when they were received into the canon, except where there might be some cause for variation; and probably the differences that now exist have originated in the carelessness of the copyists.' *Gray's Key.* ID.

Verse 65.

Among the servants were '200 singing men and singing women,' (or 245, according to Nehemiah) who probably were employed in families, to assist their mournings, or their thanksgivings. (*M. R.*) ID.

Verses 66, 67.

How exceedingly reduced and impoverished does Israel appear in this narrative, compared with the condition of the nation in the days of David and Solomon!—The number of asses, compared with that of the horses, shows in how general use asses were at that time: but horses, as belonging to the patriarchs or their descendants, are not mentioned, till the time of David. ID.

Verses 68—70.

Under the divine protection, this company arrived safe at Jerusalem, without any memorable occurrence. They found the city and all around it in ruins, and, it seems, the neighboring cities totally unoccupied. These they rebuilt as well as they could, and dwelt in them for the present. (1 *Chr.* 9:2. *Neh.* 7:73.) But the house of God chiefly occupied their thoughts; and it seems that their oblations to it were made, before they separated to seek habitations or subsistence. The whole amounted to nearly £80,000 stg. besides the priests' garments. which was a considerable sum for them to contribute in their present poverty: (*Note, Neh.* 7:70—72.) but probably their brethren who staid behind, contributed part of it; as the sacrifices and the burning of incense at the temple, were for the benefit of those, who worshipped *at*, or *towards*, that typical residence of the God of Israel. (1 *K.* 8:28—30. *Dan.* 6:10, 11.) 'By this it appears, that the Jews were not made such poor slaves in Babylon as wrought for their . . . masters, but had liberty to trade, and get riches for themselves; some of them being advanced to considerable offices in the king's court.' *Patrick.*—The whole history shows, that they were not reduced to personal slavery.—Every thing seems to have been conducted with much harmony and regularity. 'The foundation of this poor commonwealth was laid in a marvellous concord. . . . They had one heart and soul like the first Christians, *without which unity no people can be preserved.* And that it may be cherished, they must avoid those things that destroy it, which are (as Joseph Wolphius here observes) principally . . . *self love*, and *meddling in other men's matters.*' PATRICK. SCOTT.

(68.) *Of silver.*] 'These drams were a Median coin, struck by one of the elder Dariuses, and named, after him, "Daricks." The gold then consisted of golden Daricks, obtained from Persia by commerce.'

Scrip. Ill. A cut is given from *Hyde* of a silver Darick, (probably of a Persian king,) in the Museum of Mr. *Duane.* ED.

(69.) *Drams.*] Heb. *Drkmonym*, 'drakmons, or darics, a Persian coin always of gold, and worth about 1*l.* 5*s.*' Dr. *A. Clarke.* '*Brerewood* values the '*dram*' at 15*s.* (amt. 45,750*l.*); *Cumberland* at 1*l.* 0*s.* 4*d.* (amt. 61,000*l.*); *Brerewood* values the Heb. *manim* (mina) or pound at 7*l.* 10*s.* The *Univ. Hist.* at 9*l.* amt. 75,500*l.*' *Cond. Comm.* ID.

CHAP. III.

The Jews re-assemble at Jerusalem, build an altar, offer sacrifices, keep the feast of tabernacles, and prepare to rebuild the temple, 1—7. Under the direction of Zerubbabel and Jeshua the foundation is laid, amidst the rejoicing of some, and the weeping of others, 8—13.

AND when [a] the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel *were* in the cities, the people gathered themselves together, [b] as one man to Jerusalem.

2 Then stood up [c] Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and [d] Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt-offerings thereon, [e] as *it is* written in the law of Moses the man of God.

3 And they set [f] the altar upon his bases; [g] for fear *was* upon them, because of the people of those countries: and they offered burnt-offerings thereon unto the LORD, *even* [h] burnt-offerings morning and evening.

4 They kept also [i] the feast of tabernacles, as *it is* written, and *offered* [k] the daily burnt-offerings by number, according to the custom, [*] as the duty of every day required;

5 And afterward *offered* [l] the continual burnt-offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the LORD *that were* consecrated, and of every one that [m] willingly offered a free-will-offering unto the LORD.

6 From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt-offerings unto the LORD. But [†] the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not *yet* laid.

cities, *v.* 70. Though out of repair, yet, because they were their cities, such as God had assigned them, they were content to dwell in them; and thankful for liberty and property, though they had little of pomp, plenty, or power. Their poverty was a bad cause, but their unity and unanimity were a good effect of it; a blessed presage of their settlement, as their discords, in the latter times of that state, were of their ruin.

CHAP. III. V. 1—7. Here is, I. a general assembly of the returned Israelites at Jerusalem in the *7th month*, *v.* 1. We may suppose they came from Babylon, in the spring, and must allow at least 4 months for the journey, *ch.* 7: 9. The 7th month therefore soon came, in which many of the feasts of the Lord were to be solemnized; then they gathered themselves together, by agreement among themselves, rather than by the command of authority, to Jerusalem. Though newly come to their cities, and full of business to provide necessaries for themselves and families, yet such was their zeal for religion, that they left all their business in the country to attend God's altar; and (which is strange) in this were all of a mind, they came *as one man*. Let worldly business be postponed to the business of religion, and it will prosper the better.

II. The care their leading men took to have an altar ready for them, *v.* 2. in the same place, it is likely, where it had stood; on the same bases, *v.* 3. Patrick, observing that before the temple was built, there seems to have been a tabernacle, as in David's time, not on mt. Moriah, but on mt. Sion, supposes this altar was erected there, to be used while the temple was in building. Let us learn hence, 1. To *begin with God*. The more difficult and necessitous our case is, the more concerned we are to take Him with us in all our ways. If we expect to be directed by his oracles, let Him be honored by our offerings. 2. To *do what we can* in the worship of God, when *we cannot do what we would*. Abraham, wherever he came, *built an altar;* and, wherever we come, if we bring not the sacrifices of prayer and praise, we are wanting in duty, for we have an altar that sanctifies the gift, ever ready.

III. The reason given why they hastened to set up the altar, *v.* 3. is, *they* were in the midst of enemies to them and their religion, for whom they were an unequal match. *Though* they were so, yet they built the altar, so some; they would not be frightened from their religion by the opposition they were likely to meet with in it. *Because* they were so, therefore they set it up. Apprehension of danger should stir us up to duty. Have we many enemies? Then it is good to have God our Friend, and to keep up our correspondence with Him. This good use we should make of our fears. Even Saul thinks himself undone, if the enemy come on him before he make his supplication, 1 Sam. 12: 13.

1. They began *on the 1st day of the 7th month*, *v.* 6. not, as appears, with fire from heaven, as Moses and Solomon, but with common fire, as the patriarchs.

2. Having begun, they kept up the *continual burnt-offering*, (*v.* 5.) *morning* and *evening*, *v.* 3. They had known by sad experience what it was to want the comfort of the daily sacrifice, to plead in their daily prayers, and, now it was revived, they resolved not to let it fall again. The daily lamb typified the Lamb of God, whose righteousness must be our confidence in all our prayers.

3. They observed all the *set feasts of the Lord*, and offered the sacrifices appointed for each, particularly *the feast of tabernacles*, *v.* 4, 5. Now they had received such great mercy from God, and were beginning to settle in their cities, it might serve well to remind them of their fathers dwelling in tents in the wilderness. That feast also, which had a peculiar reference to gospel-times, (as appears, Zech. 14: 18.) was brought, in a special manner, into reputation, now that those times drew on. Of the services of this feast, it is said they did *as the duty of every day required*. See Num. 29: 13, 17, &c. So the original, *The word, or matter, of the day in its day:* a phrase that has become proverbial with those that have used themselves to scripture-language. If the feast of tabernacles was a figure of gospel conversation, in respect of continual weanedness from the world, and joy in God; we may infer that it concerns us all to do the *work of the day in its day, according as the duty of the day requires;* that is, we must improve time, by finding some business to do every day, that will turn to a good account; and improve opportunity, by accommodating ourselves to the proper business of the present day. Every thing is beautiful in its season. The 10th day of this month was the day of atonement, a solemn day, and very seasonable now: it is very probable they observed it, yet it is not mentioned, nor indeed in all the O. T. do I remember the least mention of the observance of that day; as if it were enough, that we have the law of it, (Lev. 16:) and the gospel of it, which was its chief intention in the N. T.

4. They offered *every man's free-will offering*, *v.* 5. The law required much, but they brought more; they had little wealth; and, we may suppose, spared at their own tables, that they might plentifully supply God's altar. Happy they that bring with them out of the furnace of affliction such a holy heat as this!

IV. The preparation they made for building the temple, *v.* 7. This they applied themselves immediately to; while we do what we can, we must still be aiming to do more and better. Tyre and Sidon must now, as of old, furnish workmen, and Lebanon timber, orders for both which they had

7 They [n] gave money also unto the masons, and to the [‡] carpenters: and [o] meat, and drink, and oil unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar-trees from Lebanon to the sea of [p] Joppa, [q] according to the grant that they had of Cyrus king of Persia.

a Ex. 23:14—17. Lev. 16:29. 23:24, 27,&c. Num. 29:1,&c. Neh. 8:2,14.
b Judg. 20:1. Neh. 8:1. Zeph. 3:9. Acts 2:46. 4:32. 1 Cor. 1:10.
c Hag. 1:1,12,14. 2:2—4. Zech. 3:1,8 6:11. *Joshua the son of Josedech.*
d 2:2. 1 Chr. 3:17,19. Hag. 2:21,23 Zech. 4:6—10. Matt. 1:12,13. *Zorobabel. Salathiel.*
e Ex. 20:24,25. Deut. 12:5—7. 2 Chr 6:6. Ps. 78:68.
f 2 Chr. 4:1.
g 4:11—16. 8:21,22. Ps. 27:1,2. 56: 2—4.
h Ex. 29:38—42. Num. 28:2—8.
i Ex. 23:16. Lev. 23:34—38. Neh. 8: 14—17. Zech. 14:16—19. John 7: 2,37.
k Num. 29:12—38.
* Heb. *the matter of the day in his day.* Ex. 5:13. Jer. 52:34. *marg.*
l Ex. 29:38—42. Num. 28:3—10,11,19, 27. 29:2,8,13.
m Lev. 1:3. Deut. 12:6,17. 2 Chr. 29: 31,32.
† Heb. *the temple of the LORD was not yet founded.*
n 2 K. 12:11,12. 22:5,6. 2 Chr. 24:12 13.
‡ Or, *workmen.*
o 1 K. 5:6,9—11. 2 Chr. 2:10—15. Ez 27:17. Acts 12:20.
p 2 Chr. 2:16. Jon. 1:3. Acts 10:5,6.
q 6:3—5.

NOTES.

CHAP. III. V. 1. (*M. R.—Notes, Lev.* 23:24—43.) SCOTT.

Verses 2, 3.

(*M. R.—Notes*, 1:7—11. 2:2.) The Jews built the altar on the same foundation, and therefore of the same size, with that of Solomon. Probably it was formed of rough stones, with a large hearth of brass on the top. (*Ex.* 20:21—25, *vv.* 24, 25.) So large an altar, built all of brass, would have cost a sum far beyond their present circumstances. (2 *Chr.* 4:1.)—The fear of the tribes or nations around them, whom the people knew to be their enemies, did not induce them to take arms, or to erect fortifications, but to prepare an altar and to offer sacrifices; by which they put themselves under the immediate protection of the Almighty God. (*Josh.* 5:2—10.) The daily burnt-offerings, morning and evening, constituted the principal part of the stated worship required by the law. (*Ex.* 29:38—41.) ID.

Verses 5, 6.

(*M. R.*) Until the temple was completed, it is likely they had erected a tabernacle near the altar, in which the sacred vessels and treasures were deposited and guarded. (1 *Chr.* 9: 19:21.) SCOTT.

Verse 7.

It seems, the Jews were authorized by Cyrus to cut as much timber in Lebanon, as they wanted: but the Zidonians and Tyrians would expect to be paid for their labor; and they would prefer corn, wine, and oil, to money.—[Sidon had been conquered by the king of Egypt, Vaphres, (Apries, Psamatik III. Pharaoh Hophra, perhaps, of the SS.) says *Wilkinson*, in 595. It had now probably yielded to the arms of Persia, which in 525 had extended its conquests over all Egypt.] 'According to the grant that they had of Cyrus;' who commanded, I suppose, those of Tyre and Zidon to assist them.' *Patrick.* (*M. R.*—4: 4—6. 6:4.) ID. *Joppa.*] 'Called *Japho* in Joshua, and now Jaffa or

8 ¶ Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began [r] Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from [s] twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD.

9 Then stood Jeshua *with* his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of [t] Judah, * together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, *with* their sons and their brethren the Levites.

10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they [u] set the priests in their apparel with [x] trumpets, and the Levites [y] the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, [z] after the ordinance of David king of Israel.

11 And [a] they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; [b] Because *he is* good, for his mercy *endureth* for ever toward Israel. And all the people * shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, [d] because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

12 But * many of the priests and Levites, and chief of the fathers, *who were* ancient men, that had seen the first house, [f] when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy:

13 So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people; for the people * shouted with a loud shout, and [h] the noise was heard afar off.

r See on 2.
s Num. 4:3. 1 Chr. 23:24—32.
t 2:40. *Hodaviah.* Neh. 7:43. *Hodevah.*

from Cyrus: what God calls us to, we may depend on his providence to furnish us with.

V. 8—13. There was no dispute, whether they should build the temple or no, that was immediately resolved on, and that it should be done with all speed. Observe,

I. That good work was begun as soon as the season of the year would permit, (*v.* 8.) and when they had ended the passover solemnities. They took little more than half a year to prepare the ground and materials; so much were their hearts upon it. When a good work is to be done, it will be wisdom to set about it quickly, and not lose time; yea, though we foresee difficulty and opposition. Thus we engage ourselves to it, and engage God for us. Well begun, (we say,) is half ended. Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and their brethren began it. Then the work of God is likely to go on well, when magistrates, ministers, and people, are hearty for it, and agree in their places to promote it. God gave them one heart for this service, and it boded well. They appointed the *Levites to set forward the work*, (*v.* 8.) who did it by *setting forward the workmen*, (*v.* 9.) and strengthening their hands with good and comfortable words. They that work not themselves, may yet do good service by quickening and encouraging those that do.

II. How God was praised at the laying of the foundation; (*v.* 10, 11.) the priests with the trumpets appointed by MOSES, and the Levites with the cymbals appointed by David, made up a concert of music. Whatever our condition is, how many soever our griefs and fears, let it be owned that God is good; and, whatever fails, that his mercy fails not. Ps. 73: 1. Let the reviving of the church's interests, when they seemed dead, be ascribed to the continuance of God's mercy for ever, for therefore the church continues.

III. How differently the people were affected. A remarkable mixture of various affections there was, and each expressed himself according to his sentiments, yet there was no disagreement, their minds were not alienated from each other, nor the common concern retarded by it. 1. Those that only knew the misery of having no temple, when they saw but the foundation of one laid, praised the Lord with shouts of joy, *v.* 11. We ought to be thankful for the beginnings of mercy. 2. Those that remembered the glory of the first temple, and considered how far this was likely to be inferior, *wept with a loud voice*, *v.* 12. If we date the captivity with the first, from the 4th of Jehoiakim, it was about 52 years since the temple was burnt, if from Jeconiah's captivity, it was but 59. So that many now alive might remember it standing. These lamented, and if they turned their tears into the right channel, and bewailed the sin that caused this melancholy change, they did well. Sin sullies the glory of any church or people, and when they are diminished and brought low, must bear the blame. Yet it was their infirmity to mingle those tears with the common joys, and so damp them. In the harmony of public joys, let not us be jarring strings. Priests and Levites should know and teach others how to be duly affected under various providences, and not let the remembrance of former afflictions drown the sense of present mercies.

This mixture of sorrow and joy is a representation of this world; some are bathing in rivers of joy, while others are drowned in floods of tears. In heaven all are singing, and none sighing; in hell all wailing, and none rejoicing; but on earth we can scarcely *discern the shouts of joy from the noise of the weeping*. Let us learn to *rejoice with them that rejoice*, and *weep with them that weep;* and ourselves to rejoice as though we rejoiced not, and weep as though we wept not.

* Heb. *as one.*
u Ex. 28:40—42. 1 Sam. 22:18. 1 Chr. 15:27.
x Num. 10:1—10. 1 Chr. 15:24. 16:5,6.
y 1 Chr. 6:39. 16:37. 25:1—7. 2 Chr. 35:15.
z 1 Chr. 6:31. 16:4—7. 23:5. 2 Chr. 29:25,26.
a Ex. 15:21. Neh. 12:24,40. Ps. 24:7—10. Is. 6:3.
b 1 Chr. 16:34,41. 2 Chr. 7:3. Ps. 103: 17. 106:1. 107:1. 135:3. 136:1,&c. Jer. 33:11. Luke 1:50.
c Josh. 6:5,10,16. Ps. 47:1,5. Is. 12:6. 44:23. Zech. 9:9.
d Is. 102:13,14.
e Hag. 2:3.
f Job 8:7. Is. 41:14. 60:22. Dan. 2: 34,35. Zech. 4:10. Matt. 13:31,32.
g Neh. 12:43. Ps. 5:11. Jer. 33:11. Zech. 4:7. Luke 19:37—40.
h Ex. 32:17,18. 1 Sam. 4:5. 1 K. 1: 40,45. Ps. 100:1,2.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is true wisdom to prefer the service of God to our most urgent temporal concerns.—Those, who rule over others, should go before them in every good work: and we should worship the Lord in respect of outward things, according to what our circumstances will permit, though we cannot attain to all that is desirable. That, which is expended in obedience to his commandment, will never impoverish us or our families: we should therefore rather save in any thing, than grudge the expense of works of piety and charity, which is like sowing the seed of a future harvest. (*Prov.* 11: 24, 25. *Ec.* 11: 1,2. *Luke* 6: 37,38. *Acts* 11: 27—30. *P. O.* 19—30. 2 *Cor.* 9: 6—15. *P. O.* 8—15.)—Every day brings its peculiar duties: these will not be grievous, but pleasant, to the true and consistent servant of the Lord; and when zeal and love prevail, he will be looking out for opportunities of usefulness, and cheerfully bringing his free-will offerings.—We are too prone to bemoan lost comforts, disappointments, and scanty possessions; to give way to discontent, impatience, and distrust; and thus to mar our own enjoyment of present mercies, interrupt the joy of others, and refuse our God the praise and thanksgiving due unto his name. Against this tendency we should continually watch and pray. SCOTT.

Yaffa, one of the most ancient sea ports in the world. It is situated in a fine plain on the shore of the Mediterranean, between Jamnia, S. and Cæsarea of Palestine, N. 150 stadia from Antipatris (*Jos.*) 30 miles S. of Cæsarea, 12 N. of Ashdod, 9 W. of Ramla, and 40 W. of Jerusalem, according to modern authorities; in lat. 32° 50', long. 65° 40', according to *Ptolemy*. It is still a considerable town, containing about 4000 or 5000 souls, and occupying a circular eminence, close to the sea-side, with a citadel on the summit, the hill being surrounded by a wall 12 or 14 ft. high, and 2 or 3 thick. The environs are occupied by extensive gardens.' [See the engraving.] GREENFIELD.

Verses 8—11.

The people did all they could, during the winter, in making preparations for building the temple; for immense labor must have been requisite, in clearing the ground for the foundation, as well as in providing materials. In the 2d month, however, of the 2d year, or in a little more than a year after they left Babylon, Zerubbabel and Jeshua, having appointed the priests and Levites to attend in their courses, laid the foundation. SCOTT.

Jeshua, &c. (9) 'Not the high priest before mentioned, but another Jeshua, a Levite, mentioned 2:40.—'The sons of Judah,' called there Hodaviah.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

Verses 12, 13.

(*M. R.—Zech.* 4:8—10.)—The temple is supposed to have been rebuilt of the same dimensions as before: but probably it was formed chiefly with the old stones dug out of the ruins, and with inferior workmanship; and it was not overlaid with gold, as Solomon's temple had been: neither was it, for a long time at least, surrounded with such magnificent out-buildings. Moreover, the ark, the tables, and the mercy-seat, were irrecoverably lost; and it is uncertain whether any thing was substituted in their stead: no visible glory, it is said, now appeared in the most holy place; there were no answers by Urim and Thummim; and no fire from heaven. (*M. R.*) These and other circumstances *seemed* to indicate, that the Lord was not with them as in times past: but they *really* showed, that the types were waxing old, and ready to vanish away, by the coming of the great Antitype. (*Jer* 3:16—18. *Heb.* 8:7—13.) ID.

CHAP. IV.

The adversaries of the Jews offer to join in building the temple; and, being rejected, they endeavor to hinder the work, 1—6. They write to Artaxerxes, king of Persia, 7—10. A copy of their letter, 11—16. The answer of Artaxerxes, who decrees that the work shall be stopped, 17—22. The Jews are compelled to cease from building, 23, 24.

NOW when [a] the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the * children of the captivity builded the temple unto the LORD God of Israel;

2 Then they came to [b] Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, [c] Let us build with you: for we seek your God as ye *do;* and [d] we do sacrifice unto him, since the days of * Esar-haddon king of [f] Assur, which brought us up hither.

3 But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, [g] Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as [h] king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.

4 Then the people of the land [i] weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and [k] troubled them in building;

B. C. 534.

5 And [l] hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of [m] Darius king of Persia.

6 And in the reign of † Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, [n] wrote they *unto him* an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

[*Practical Observations.*]

a 7—9. 1 K. 5:4,5. 1 Chr. 22:9,10. Neh. 4:1—11. Dan. 9:25. 1 Cor. 16:9.
* Heb. *sons of the transportation.* I:

CHAP. IV. The good work of rebuilding the temple was no sooner begun, than it met with opposition; the Samaritans were enemies to the Jews and their religion, and set themselves to obstruct it.

V. 1—5. Here is an instance of the old enmity put between the seed of the woman and that of the serpent. The gospel-kingdom was, in like manner, to be set up with much struggle and contention. But, in removing and conquering this great opposition to the second temple, the wisdom, power, and goodness of God were much glorified, and the church encouraged to trust in Him.

I. The name *children of the captivity*, (*v.* 1.) makes the undertakers look very little. Born in captivity, newly come out, they had still the marks of their captivity on them; though not now captives, they were under the control of their captors. By their iniquity God's first-born sold and enslaved themselves, and so became children of captivity; but it should seem, the thought of their being so, quickened them to this work, for by their neglect of the temple they lost their freedom.

II. The opposers of the undertaking are here said to be *adversaries of Judah and Benjamin*, not the Chaldeans or Persians, but the relics of the ten tribes, [note, end of 1 Sam.] and the foreigners that had joined them, and patched up that mongrel religion, 2 K. 17: 33. *They feared the Lord, and served their own gods* too. They are called *the people of the land*, *v.* 4. The worst enemies Judah and Benjamin had, were these that *said they were Jews, and were not*, Rev. 3: 9.

III. Their opposition had in it much of the subtilty of the old serpent.

1. They offered to build with them, only thereby to retard the work, while pretending to further it.

Now, (1.) Their offer was plausible enough, and looked kind, *v.* 2. But what they said was false, for though they sought the same God, they did not seek Him only, nor in the way He appointed, and therefore not as the returned captives did. Thus are the *kisses of an enemy deceitful;* his words *smoother than butter*, when *war is in his heart.*

But, (2.) The refusal of it was very just, *v.* 3. *The chief of the fathers of Israel* were soon aware they meant them no kindness, whatever they pretended, but really designed mischief; therefore they told them plainly, '*You have nothing to do with us*, have no part nor lot in this matter, are not true-born Israelites, nor faithful worshippers of God, *you worship you know not what*, John 4: 22. You are none of those with whom we dare hold communion, therefore *we ourselves will build;*' they plead not to them the law of their God, which forbade them to mingle with strangers, (though that especially they had an eye to,) but what they would notice more, the king's commission, which was directed to them only. In doing good, there is need of the *wisdom of the serpent*, as well as the *innocency of the dove*, and we have need, as it follows there, to *beware of men*, Matt. 10: 16, 17. While we trust God with a pious confidence, we must trust men with a prudent [but not bitter] jealousy and caution.

2. When this plot failed, they did what they could to divert them from the work, and discourage them in it; and by these artifices the cool and indifferent were drawn off from the work, *v.* 4. And because, what they themselves said the Jews would suspect to be ill meant, and not to be influenced by it, they, under-hand, *hired counsellors against them*, who, pretending to advise them for the best, should dissuade them from proceeding, and so *frustrate their purpose;* (*v.* 5.) or dissuade the men of Tyre and Sidon from furnishing the timber bargained for; (*ch.* 3: 7.) or, whatever business they had at the Persian court, to solicit for any particular grants or favors, pursuant to the general edict for their liberty, there were those hired, and ready, to appear of counsel against them. Wonder not at the restlessness of the church's enemies: he whose work they are doing, is *unwearied* in *walking the earth* to do mischief. And let those who discourage a good work, see whose pattern they follow.

V. 6—16. Cyrus steadfastly adhered to the Jews' interest, and supported his own grant; but though his reign, in all, was 30 years, yet, after the conquest of Babylon, and his decree for the release of the Jews, some think he reigned but 3 years, others 7, and then either died, or gave up that part of his government, in which his successor was Ahasuerus, (*v.* 6.) called also *Artaxerxes*, (*v* 7.) supposed to be the *Cambyses* of heathen authors, who had never concerned himself for Jews, nor had that knowledge of the God of Israel his predecessor had; to him these Samaritans applied in the beginning of his reign, by letter, for an order to stop the building of the temple; being resolved to lose no time, when they thought they had a king for their purpose. See how watchful the church's enemies are to take the first opportunity of doing it a mischief; let not its friends be less careful to do it a kindness. Here is,

I. The general purport of their letter, called, (*v.* 6.) *an accusation.* The devil is the *accuser of the brethren*, Rev. 12: 10. and carries on his malicious designs against them, not only by accusing them himself before our God, as he did Job, but by acting as a lying spirit in the mouths of his instruments, whom he employs to accuse them before magistrates and kings, and to make them odious to the many, and obnoxious to the mighty. Marvel not, if the same arts be still used to run down serious godliness.

II. The persons concerned in it. The contrivers are named, (*v.* 7.) the writers, (*v.* 8.) and the

b 1:5. 2:2. 3:2,12.
c Prov. 26:23—26. 2 Cor. 11:13—15. Gal. 2:4. 2 Tim. 3:8. 2 Pet. 2:1,2.
d 2 K. 17:24,27—33,41.
e 10. *Asnapper.* 2 K. 19:37.
f Gen. 10:11. Ps. 73:8. Is. 37:37. *Assyria.* Hos 14:3. *Asshur.*
g Neh. 2:20. John 4:22,23. Acts 8:21. Rom. 9:4,5.
h 1:1—3. 6:3—5. 2 Chr. 36:22,23. Is. 44:28. 45:1,4. Matt. 10:16.
i 3:3. Neh. 6:9. Is. 35:3,4. Jer. 38:4.
k Neh. 4:7,8,11.
l Ps. 2:1,2. Neh. 1:11. Acts 24:1.
m 24. 5:5,&c. 6:1,&c.
† Heb. *Ahashveroth.*
n Matt. 27:37. Acts 24:5—9,13. 25:7. Rev. 12:10.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—6. Every vigorous and successful attempt, to revive or promote true religion, will excite the opposition of Satan, and of 'the children of disobedience' in whom he works. In fact all ungodly men despise or hate holiness. Sometimes indeed, they seem desirous of being admitted to the fellowship of believers; and avow themselves to be of the same sentiments, and to be minding the same things. But they only want to insinuate themselves, that they may gain pre-eminence, and manage every thing for their own purposes. Let then all the friends of truth and holiness beware of such characters, and let them withdraw from them: 'by their fruits ye shall know them:' and let no plausible pretences, or hopes of support from their superior rank or wealth, bribe Christians to admit them 'to build with them,' unless they mean to build a Babel, instead of a temple. It is true, if you will not have their friendship, you must expect their imbittered resentment, which is more dreaded, but far less dangerous. From age to age the same part is acted over, and the less we are aware of it the greater is our danger. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV. V. 1. (2, 10.) The Cutheans, or Samaritans, who had been planted in the land of Israel by Esar-haddon, had perhaps encroached on the countries belonging to the Jews; and doubtless they were envious of the favor shown them by the king of Persia. (2 *K.* 17:24—28, 41. *Neh.* 13:23—30.) SCOTT.

Verses 2, 3.

'This people, no doubt, were desirous to partake of the privileges, granted to the Jews by the king of Persia.' *Patrick.*—The religion of the Samaritans was a mixture of idolatry, superstition, and ignorance; far worse at this time than it was when our Lord Himself declared, that 'they knew not what they worshipped.' (*John* 4:19—27.) The Samaritans were neither Israelites by birth, nor yet true proselytes. SCOTT.

Verses 4—6.

This opposition is supposed to have begun, soon after the foundation was laid. During the remainder of the reign of Cyrus, for almost 5 years, however, they did not openly oppose a work he had commanded: but discouraged the people, and perhaps intercepted their materials for building; and by bribing counsellors to oppose their application to

7 ¶ And in the days of Artaxerxes wrote * B. C. 522.] Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their † companions, unto Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the writing of the letter *was* written in ° the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue.

8 Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the ‡ scribe, wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king, in this sort:

9 Then *wrote* Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their § companions; ᵖ the Dinaites, the ᵠ Apharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the Apharsites, the Archevites, the Babylonians, ʳ the Susanchites, the Dahavites, *and* the ˢ Elamites,

10 And ᵗ the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Asnapper brought over, and set in the cities of Samaria, and the rest *that are* on this side the river,ᵘ and ‖ at such a time.

11 ¶ This *is* the copy of the letter that they sent unto him, *even* unto Artaxerxes the king: Thy servants, the men on this side the river, and at such a time.

12 Be it known unto the king, that the Jews which came up from thee to us, are come unto Jerusalem, building ᵛ the rebellious and the ˣ bad city, and have ¶ set up the walls *thereof*, and ** joined the foundations.

13 Be it known now unto the king, that ʸ if this city be builded, and the walls set up *again*, *then* will they not †† pay ᶻ toll, tribute, and custom, and *so* thou shalt endamage the ‡‡ revenue of the kings.

14 Now because we §§ have maintenance from *the king's* palace, ᵃ and it was not meet for us to see the king's dishonor, therefore have we sent and certified the king;

15 That search may be made in the book of the records of thy fathers: so shalt thou find in the book of the records, and know, that ᵇ this city *is* a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that they have ‖‖ moved sedition ¶¶ within the same of old time: ᶜ for which cause was this city destroyed.

16 We certify the king, that if this city be builded *again*, and by this means the pass by the river, thou hast no portion on this side the river.

17 Then sent the king an answer unto Rehum the chancellor, and to Shimshai the scribe, and to the rest of their companions that dwell in Samaria, and unto the rest beyond the river, Peace, and at such a time.

18 The letter which ye sent unto us hath been plainly read before me.

19 And I commanded, and search hath been made, and it is found that this city of old time hath made insurrection against kings, and that rebellion and sedition have been made therein.

20 There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, which have ruled over all countries beyond the river; and toll, tribute, and custom, was paid unto them.

21 Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease, and that this city be not builded, until another commandment shall be given from me.

22 Take heed now that ye fail not to do this: why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings?

23 Now when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, and went in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power.

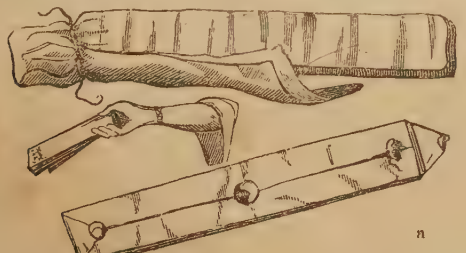
24 Then ceased the work of the house of God which *is* at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

* Or, *in peace.*
† Heb. *societies.* 9, 17. 5:6.
° 2 K. 18:26. Is. 36:11. Dan. 2:4.
‡ Or, *secretary.* 9. 2 Sam. 8:17. 20. 25. 2 K. 18:18.
§ Chal. *societies.*
ᵖ 2 K. 17:24,30,31.
ᵠ 5:6. 6:6. *Apharsachites.*
ʳ Esth. 1:2. 2:3. Dan. 8:2.
ˢ Gen. 10:22. Is. 21:2. Jer. 25:25. 49. 34. Ez. 32:24. Acts 2:9.
ᵗ 1. 2 K. 17:24,&c.
ᵘ 11,17. 7:12.
‖ Chal. *Cheeneth.*
ᵛ 15,19. 2 K. 18:20. 24:1. 2 Chr. 36:13. Jer. 52:3. Ez. 17:13—19. Luke 23:2—5. Acts 24:5. 1 Thes. 5:22. 1 Pet. 2:13—15.
ˣ Ps. 48:1,2. Is. 1:21—23. Luke 13:34.
¶ Or, *finished.* Neh. 1:3. Dan. 9:25.
** Chal. *sowed together.*
ʸ Neh. 5:4. Ps. 52:2. 119:69.
†† Chal. *give.*
ᶻ 7:24. Matt. 9:9. 17:25. Rom. 13 6,7.
‡‡ Or, *strength.*
§§ Chal. *are salted with the salt of the palace.* 1 Tim. 6:10.
ᵃ Ez. 33:31. John 12:5,6. 19:12—15.
ᵇ 12. Neh. 2:19. 6:6. Esth. 3:3—8 Dan. 6:4—13. Acts 17:6,7.
‖‖ Chal. *made.*
¶¶ Chal. *in the midst thereof.*
ᶜ Jer. 52:3,&c.

the ministers of Cyrus, for supplies or protection, they greatly obstructed the design. This would be more easily done, as it is probable that Daniel, the powerful friend of the Jews, died about this time. (*Dan.* 6 25—28.)—Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, called here (as it is probably supposed,) Ahasuerus, reigned above 7 years; and was a very impolitic and wicked prince: but regard to his father's memory, it may be supposed, prevented his attending to the accusations brought by the Samaritans against the Jews. *Darius.* (*b*) *Notes*, 5: 6: SCOTT.

(6, 7.) *Jennings* makes Ahasuerus to signify 'great chief' or 'prince,' and to be rather a title of several kings of Media and Persia, than a proper name; *Jarchi* makes this person to have been the husband of Esther. *Gill* makes him Cambyses, son and successor of Cyrus: and says, Artaxerxes is the same person; and that this was a common name to the kings of Persia; generally believed, as well as the name of Xerxes, to have been assumed, says Dr. *A. Clarke*, by the Persian kings, from the time of Cyrus the Great. *Prid.* and *Univ. Hist.* make him to have been Smerdis. *Cond. Comm.* See Hist. note, end of Esther. ED.

(7, 8.) *Letter.*] Letters were of several kinds. Those now sent in the E. are done up in folds, and enclosed in a pasted paper case, like



(a) now in possession of the editor; in a roll, and afterwards put into a morocco case richly gilt, as the one sent in 1835 by the Sultan of Turkey to the king of the French; or inserted in a silk-purse, as in the cut from *Calmet*; whom see. ID.

Verses 7—9.

On the death of Cambyses, Smerdis the Magian usurped the throne; and as no other king reigned in Persia, after Cambyses, and before Darius Hystaspis, under whom the temple was finished, he must be the Artaxerxes here mentioned: (*Note*, 6:13—15.) unless, as some think, Artaxerxes is only another name for Ahasuerus. (*M. R.* o.) Perh ps this letter was entered into the records in Persian; so that Ezra, when he extracted it, again translated it into Syriac: therefore it stands in the original Scriptures in that language, as does all that follows to the end of ch. 6.—Bishlam, Mithredath, and Tabeel seem to have been the principal persons, who counselled the people to send this letter; and Rehum and Shimshai, it is probable, drew it up. SCOTT.

Verse 10.

Asnapper, &c.] Probably Asnapper was the name by which Esarhaddon was known, in the eastern parts of the Assyrian empire: (2 *K.* 19:37.) or, as some think, he was a great captain, employed by Esar-haddon in this transaction. ID.

At such a time.] The date seems to have followed in the records; but was omitted by the transcriber, as it were with an *et cætera*. SCOTT. Probably, because connected with that tedious list of titles eastern kings especially affect, and which occupy so much space in oriental diplomacy. ED.

Verse 12.

The rebellious, &c.] (*M. R.* v, x.) After God, in his righteous judgments, had reduced Judah to subjection under the kings of Babylon, the Jews certainly showed a very obstinate and treacherous spirit of rebellion; they created their new masters a great deal of trouble, and they provoked them to their own destruction. But in so doing, they transgressed the commandments of their law, by violating their own solemn oaths and engagements. (13—16. 2 *K.* 24:1, 20 25:6, 7. 2 *Chr* 36:13. *Ez.* 17:15—21.) SCOTT.

Verses 13—16.

David and Solomon had reigned over all the countries from the river Euphrates, to the river of Egypt: but this was long before the commencement of the Babylonish, or Persian, monarchies. And after the death of Solomon, their successors had been confined within much narrower limits. The Samaritans, however, aimed to insinuate a jealousy into the mind of the king of Persia, that the Jews intended to claim and seize on all those regions, and hold the whole, as independent on the kings of Persia; than which nothing could be more groundless and absurd. All their offence seems to have been, that they had prepared to defend themselves against their enemies, whilst acting under the authority of Cyrus. ID.

(13.) '*Toll*—, perhaps the part paid out of an estate. *Tribute*—a poll tax. *Custom*—a tax on merchandise.' WITSIUS.

the walls thereof set up, by this means [d] thou shalt have no portion on this side the river.

17 *Then* sent the king an answer unto Rehum the chancellor, and *to* Shimshai the scribe, and *to* the rest of their * companions that dwell in Samaria, and *unto* the rest beyond the river, [e] Peace, and [f] at such a time.

18 The letter which ye sent unto us hath been plainly read before me.

19 And † I commanded, and [g] search hath been made, [h] and it is found that this city of old time hath ‡ made insurrection against kings, and *that* rebellion and sedition have been made therein.

20 There have been [i] mighty kings also over Jerusalem, which have ruled over all *countries* [k] beyond the river; [l] and toll, tribute, and custom, was paid unto them.

21 § Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease, and that this city be not builded, until *another* commandment shall be given from me.

22 Take heed now that ye fail not to do this: [m] why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings?

23 Now when the copy of king Artaxerxes's letter *was* read before [n] Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, [o] they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made them to cease by ‖ force and power.

24 Then ceased the work of the house of B. C. 520. God, which *is* at Jerusalem. [p] So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of [q] Darius king of Persia.

we thus to argue ourselves into a pious concern for God's honor; *we have our maintenance from the God of heaven*, and are *salted with his salt*, live on his bounty, and are the care of his providence; therefore it is not *meet for us to see his dishonor*, without doing what we can to prevent it.

2. They represent the Jews as disloyal, and dangerous to the government, *v.* 12, 15. See how Jerusalem, *the joy of the whole earth*, (Ps. 48: 2.) is here reproached as the scandal of the whole earth. The enemies of the church could not do the bad things they design against it, if they did not first give it a bad name. Jerusalem had been a loyal city to its rightful princes, and its present inhabitants were as well affected to the king and his government, as any of his provinces whatsoever. Daniel had lately approved himself so faithful, his worst enemies could find no fault in his management, Dan. 6: 4. But thus was Elijah most unjustly charged with troubling Israel, the apostles with *turning the world upside down*, and Christ Himself with *perverting the nation*, and *forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar*; and we must not think it strange, if the same game be still played. Now here,

(1.) The history is invidious; that *within this city, sedition had been moved of old time*, and, for *that cause it was destroyed*, *v.* 15. It cannot be denied but there was some color given for this suggestion, by the attempts of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah to shake off the yoke of Babylon. But it must be considered, [1.] They were themselves, and their ancestors, sovereign princes, and their efforts to recover their rights, had there not been in them the violation of an oath, for aught I know, had been justifiable, and successful too, had they taken the right method, and made their peace with God first. [2.] It was unjust therefore to fasten this as an indelible brand on this city, as if it must, ever after, go under the name of *the rebellious and bad city*. The Jews, in captivity, had given such specimens of good behavior, as were sufficient, with reasonable men, to roll away that one reproach; for we have reason to hope they observed their instructions, to *seek the peace of the city where* they were *captives*, and *pray to the Lord for it*, Jer. 29: 7. It was therefore very unfair, yet not uncommon, to impute the iniquity of the fathers to the children.

(2.) Their information was grossly false, in matter of fact, *v.* 12. They had only begun to build the temple, which Cyrus commanded them to do; but as for the walls, there was nothing done, nor designed, toward the repair of them, as appears by the condition they were in, many years after, (Neh. 1: 3.) all in ruins. If they had not been perfectly lost to all virtue and honor, they would not, and if they had not been very secure of the king's countenance, they durst not have written that to the king which all their neighbors knew to be a notorious lie. See Prov. 29: 12.

(3.) Their prognostics of the consequences were altogether groundless and absurd. They would have the king believe on their word, that if this city be built, not only the Jews would *pay no toll, tribute, or custom*, (*v.* 13.) but (since a great lie is as soon spoken as a little one) that the king would have no portion at all on this side the river, *v.* 16. i. e. the Euphrates. See how every line of this letter breathes both the subtilty and malice of the old serpent.

V. 17—24. Here we have,

I. The orders of the king of Persia, in answer. He suffered himself to be imposed on by their fraud and falsehood, and was very willing to gratify them with an order of council to stay proceedings. See the hard fate of princes, who must see and hear with other men's eyes and ears, and give judgment. *Therefore* God's judgment is alway just, because He sees things as they are.

d 20. 2 Sam. 8:3. 1 K. 4:24.
* Chal. *sociates.* 7,9.
e 5:7. 7:12. Luke 10:5. Acts 23:26. Rom. 1:7.
f 10,11.
† Chal. *by me a decree is set.*
g 15. 5:17. 6:1,2. Deut. 13:14. Prov. 25:2.
h 2 K. 18:7. 24:20. Ez. 17:13—19.
‡ Chal. *lifted up itself.*
i 1 K. 4:21. 1 Chr. 18:3. Ps. 72:8.
k 16. Gen. 15:18. Josh. 1:4.
l 1 Chr. 18:6,13. 19:19. 2 Chr. 9:14. 23,24. 17:11. 26:7,8.
§ Chal. *Make a decree.* 19.
m 13. Esth. 3:8,9. 7:3,4.
n 8,9,17.
o Prov. 4:16. Mic. 2:1. Rom. 3:15.
‖ Chal. *arm and power.*
p Neh. 6:3,9. Job 20:5. 1 Thes. 2:18.
q 5:5. 6:1. Hag. 1:15.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 7—24. The gates of hell, in directly assaulting the church of Christ, often labor to excite rulers to suppress his truths and ordinances, by statutes and penal sanctions. To this end ungodly men bestow great pains to obtain the ear of princes.—It is an old slander, that 'Jerusalem is a rebellious and bad city,' and that the prosperity of the church would be injurious to kings and provinces: for 'the Accuser of the brethren' knows how prevalent such considerations are with the princes of this world. Yet nothing can be more false: for true godliness teaches us to honor and obey the king; to 'submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake;' to pay tribute, and 'to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's;' to be upright, peaceable, and blameless; and even to fulfil the oath or engagement which we have entered into to our own hurt: it admits of only a single exception; namely, where the command of God requires one thing, and the law of the land another, we must 'obey God rather than man,' and patiently submit to the consequences.—But it must be allowed, that ambitious and turbulent men have often disgraced the cause of God, by their usurpations, seditions, rebellions, treacheries, and perjuries: real Christians have also been seduced into inconsistent practices; and 'oppression,' which 'maketh a wise man mad,' has sometimes excited them to use unwarranted weapons. A few instances of this kind, *standing on record*, while the blameless lives and patient sufferings of thousands are unnoticed and forgotten, serve through revolving ages as a pretext, by which malignant enmity misleads worldly policy. All who love the Gospel, should therefore walk circumspectly, avoiding all appearance of evil, especially in this particular, lest the church of God and posterity should suffer through their misconduct: for the whole body will be condemned without a hearing, if only a few individuals act improperly. (*Rom.* 13: 1, 2.)—Indeed we cannot behave so quietly, and endeavor to serve God and to promote religion so unexceptionably, but our endeavors will be ascribed to ambition or avarice, and we shall be suspected of harboring the basest intentions. For kings and princes are seldom able to discover the truth, in such causes, even when disposed to inquire after it. These considerations should teach us to count our cost; that we may be prepared for all events, and not be too easily discouraged or made remiss, as we are apt to be, on every appearance of opposition; they should excite our gratitude for our peculiar privileges in this favored land, and teach us to place our dependence on that God, who has all hearts in his hands, and not on the mutable decrees of magistrates and senates. SCOTT.

(14.) '*Chardin* describes a modern Persian monarch, as punishing an officer with the words, "I have then such ungrateful servants and traitors as thou to *eat my salt*." *Parkhurst* mentions the expression, "I eat such an one's salt," as common in the E. Indies, to signify "I am fed by him." *Mede* observes that in his time the Emp. of Russia, when he wished to show favor, sent bread and *salt* from his table, and invited Ferdinand's ambassador in this form, "You shall eat your bread and salt with us." Tamerlane, in his Institutes, says of one who had quitted his service and joined the enemy, "At length my *salt* which he had eaten, overwhelmed him with remorse; he again threw himself on my mercy, and humbled himself before me."' HARMER.

Fathers. (15) So they called the kings, who had reigned before Artaxerxes, over those countries. ID.

Verses 17—24.

The king of Persia found by the records, that Jerusalem had been the seat of government for powerful princes, many ages before; and

CHAP. V.

Zerubbabel and Jeshua, excited by Haggai and Zechariah, begin again to build the temple, 1, 2. Tatnai and Shethar-boznai are not able to hinder them, 3–5. A copy of their letter to Darius, 6—17.

THEN the prophets, [a] Haggai the prophet, and [b] Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that *were* in Judah and Jerusalem, [c] in the name of the God of Israel, *even* unto them.

2 Then [d] rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and [e] Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which *is* at Jerusalem: and with them *were* [f] the prophets of God, helping them.

3 At the same time came to them [g] Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shethar-boznai, and their companions, and said thus unto them, [h] Who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall?

4 Then said we unto them after this manner, What are the names of the men that [*] make this building?

5 But [k] the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius: and [l] then they returned answer by letter concerning this *matter*.

6 ¶ The [m] copy of the letter that Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shethar-

a Hag. 1:1,&c.
b Zech. 1:1,&c.
c Mic. 3:4. Hag. 1:2—8. Zech. 1:3,4. 4:6—10.
d Hag. 1:12—15.
e Zech. 6:11. *Joshua—Jozedech.* 6:14. Hag. 2:4—9,20—23. Zech. 3:; 4: 2 Chr. 1:24.
f 6. 6:6,13. 7:21. Neh. 2:7—9.
g 9. 1:3. Matt. 21:23. Acts 4:7.
i 10.
* Chal. *build.*
k 7:5,28. 8:22. 2 Chr. 16:9. Ps. 33: 18. 34:15. Phil. 1:28. 1 Pet. 3:12.
l 6:6—12.
m 4.11,23.

He appointed these Samaritans to stop the building immediately, till further orders, *v.* 21, 22. Neither their letter, nor his order, mentions the *temple*, because both they and he knew they had not only a permission, but a command, from Cyrus to rebuild that, for the repeal of which even these Samaritans had not the confidence to move; they spake only of the *city*, 'Let not *that* be built,' i. e. 'as a city with walls and gates, *lest damage grow to the kings:*' he would not have the crown lose by his wearing it.

II. The use the Jews' enemies made of these orders, *v.* 23. They were impatient to serve this prohibition, as their warrant to *make them cease by force and power*. As they abused the king in obtaining it, by their mis-informations, so they abused him in executing it: the order was only to prevent the walling of the *city;* but they construed it as relating to the *temple*, for that was it they had an ill will to, and only wanted some color to hinder. See what need we have to pray, not only for kings, but for all in authority under them, and *the governors sent by them*, because the *quietness* and *peaceableness* of our lives, *in all godliness and honesty*, depend very much on the integrity and wisdom of inferior magistrates, as well as the supreme.

The consequence was, *the work of the house of God ceased*, for a time, till the 2d year of Darius Hystaspes, for to me it seems clear, it was that Darius, *v.* 24. Yet, soon after, they might have gone on by connivance, had they had a due affection to the work, for before they had that express warrant, (*ch.* 6.) they were reproved by the prophets for not doing it, *ch.* 5: 1. comp. with Hag. 1: 2, &c. If they had taken due care to inform the king of the truth of this case, perhaps he had recalled his order; but, for aught I know, some of the builders were almost as willing it should cease, as the adversaries themselves. At some periods, the church has suffered more by the coldness of its friends than by the heat of its enemies; but both together commonly make church-work slow work.

CHAP. V. We left the temple-work at a full stop; but, being God's work, it shall be revived. It was hindered by might and power, but now set a-going again *by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts*. Here we are told how that blessed Spirit warmed its cool-hearted friends, and excited them to build, cooled its hot-headed enemies, and brought them to better tempers, for though they secretly disliked the work, as much as those in the foregoing ch. yet, they were more mild towards the builders, and more fair in their representation to the king.

V. 1, 2. Some reckon that the building was suspended for only 9 years; I believe 15 were the utmost; during which they had an altar, and a tabernacle, which, no doubt, they used. But the counsellors hired to hinder the work, (*ch.* 4: 5.) told them, perhaps, with a pretence to inspiration, that the time was not come for building the temple, Hag. 1: 2. Thus the people were made easy in their own *ceiled houses*, while *God's house lay waste*. Here we are told how the cause was revived.

1. Two good ministers in God's name earnestly persuaded them to put the business in motion again; Haggai and Zechariah, who both began to prophesy in the 2d year of Darius, as appears, Hag. 1: 1. Zech. 1: 1. Observe, Ministers of the Gospel are the master builders in the temple of God. It is their business to stir up God's people to what is good, and to help them in it; to strengthen their hands, and, by suitable considerations from God's Word, quicken them to duty, and encourage them in it. They prophesied unto the *Jews*, even *upon them*, so the original, as Ezekiel prophesied *upon the dry bones*, that they might live. *Against* them, so Patrick, for they reproved them because they did not build the temple. The Word of God, if it be not received now as a testimony to us, will be received another day as a testimony against us, and will judge us. They prophesied in the name, or, as some read it, *in the cause*, or, for the sake *of the God of Israel;* spake by commission from Him, and argued from his authority over, his interest in, and the concern of his glory among them.

2. Two good magistrates were forward and active; Zerubbabel their chief prince, and Jeshua their chief priest, *v.* 2. These great men thought it no disparagement, but a happiness, to be taught and prescribed to by the prophets of the Lord; and were glad of their help in reviving this good work. Read here Hag. 1: (the best comment on these two vs.) and see what great things God does by his Word, which He magnifies above all his name, and by his Spirit working with it.

V. 3—17. I. While the people built and ceiled their own houses, their enemies gave them no molestation, (Hag. 1: 4.) though the king's order was to stop the building of the city, *ch.* 4: 21. But when they began to work again at the temple, the alarm is taken, and all heads are at work to hinder it, *v.* 3, 4. The adversaries are here named; the governors we read of, (*ch.* 4.) were, probably, displaced at the beginning of this reign, as is usual; it is the policy of princes often to change their deputies, proconsuls, and rulers of provinces. These, though real enemies to the building of the temple, were men of better temper than the other, and made some conscience of telling truth. The church's enemies are not all alike wicked and unreasonable. The historian begins to relate what passed between the builders and those inquisitors, (*v.* 3, 4.) but breaks off his account, referring himself to the ensuing copy of their letter to the king, where the same appears more fully and at large, which he began to abridge, (*v.* 4.) or make an extract out of, though, on second thoughts, he inserted the whole.

II. Divine Providence took care of this good work, *v.* 5. *The elders of the Jews* were active in it, so that their enemies could not cause them to cease, even till the matter came to Darius. They would not so much as yield them that, for *the eye of God was upon them*, even their God: which baffled, infatuated, and enfeebled their enemies, and protected the builders from their malicious designs. While employed in God's work, we are taken under his special protection; his eye is on us for good, seven eyes on one stone in his temple; see Zech. 3: 9. 4: 10. The elders of the Jews saw *God's eye upon them*, and then had courage to face their enemies, and go on vigorously, notwithstanding all opposition. Our eye on God, observing his eye on us, will keep us to duty and encourage us in it, when difficulties are ever so discouraging.

III. The account sent to the king. Observe,

1. How fully the elders of the Jews gave to the Samaritans an account of their proceedings. They told them they had sufficient warrant; for, 1. '*We are servants of the God of heaven and earth:*

that afterwards rebellion and sedition had been made in it: and, as thus much was true in the letter of the Samaritans, full credit was given them for all that they advanced, concerning the progress and intentions of the Jews, and the consequences of their proceedings; though nothing could be more improbable, false, and malicious!—The usurpation of Smerdis did not continue a whole year; so that if he be intended, their commission was soon vacated: but the Jews, being greatly intimidated, and not so zealous as they had been, the work ceased till the 2d year of Darius, who, having assisted in killing the usurper, was advanced to the throne in his stead. (5:1, 2.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. V. V. 1, 2. A great part of Haggai, and the former part of Zech. refer to these events, and the reader will find it worth while to compare them.—The Jews resumed their work about 14 years after the first opposition, by the Samaritans; but within 2 or 3 years after they had been compelled to desist entirely from it. They were persuaded it was not yet time to build the temple. For this neglect the Lord corrected them, and reproved them by the prophets, who came to 'prophesy even *unto* them,' or rather '*against* them.' Their remonstrances excited rulers and people to resume the work; and their subsequent encouraging prophecies greatly helped them in accomplishing it. (*Hag.* 1: *Zech.* 3:1—7. 4:4—10.) SCOTT.

Verse 3.

Probably, the governors had been changed, on the accession of Darius, for men of greater temper and impartiality. The 'companions' seem to have been some of the chief persons of the nation, who formed the council.—*This wall.*] The *wall* about the temple seems to be meant. (*Neh.* 1:3. 2:12—16. 4:1—3. *Dan.* 9:25—27.) SCOTT.

Verse 4.

Then, &c.] It is uncertain whether these are the words of the gov-

boznai, and his companions the [n] Apharsachites, which *were* on this side the river, sent unto Darius the king:

7 They sent a letter unto him, * wherein was written thus, Unto Darius the king, [o] all peace.

8 Be it known unto the king, that we went into [p] the province of Judea, to the house of [q] the great God, which is builded with † great stones, and timber is laid in the walls, and this work goeth fast on, and prospereth in their hands.

9 Then asked we those elders, *and* said unto them thus, [r] Who commanded you to build this house, and to make up these walls?

10 We [s] asked their names also, to certify thee, that we might write the names of the men that *were* the chief of them.

11 And thus they returned us answer, saying, [t] We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build the house that was builded these many years ago, [u] which a great king of Israel builded and set up.

12 But [x] after that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath, [y] he gave them [z] into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon.

13 But [a] in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon, *the same* king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God.

14 And [b] the vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that *was* in Jerusalem, and brought them into the temple of Babylon, those did Cyrus [c] the king take out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered unto *one*, whose name *was* [d] Sheshbazzar, [e] whom he had made ‡ governor;

15 And said unto him, Take these vessels; go, carry them into the temple that *is* in Jerusalem, and [f] let the house of God be builded in his place.

16 Then came the same [g] Sheshbazzar, *and* [h] laid the foundation of the house of God which *is* in Jerusalem: and since that time even until now, hath it been in building, and *yet* [i] it is not finished.

17 Now therefore, if *it seem* good to the king, [k] let there be search made in the king's treasure house, which *is* there at Babylon, whether it be *so*, that [l] a decree was made of Cyrus the king, to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter.

CHAP. VI.

Darius finds the decree of Cyrus, confirms it, allows out of his revenues the expenses of building the temple, and denounces penalties on all opposers, 1—12. The temple is finished and dedicated, and the passover is celebrated with great joy, 13—22.

THEN Darius the king made a decree, [a] and search was made in the house of the § rolls, where the trea-

n 4:9. *Apharsathchites.* 6:6.
* Chal. *in the midst whereof.*
o 4:17. Dan. 3:9. 4:1. 6:21. John 14:27. 2 Thes. 3:16.
p 2:1. Neh. 7:6. 11:3. Esth. 1:1,22.
q 1:2,3. 6:10. 7:23. Deut. 10:17. 32: 31. Ps. 145:3. Dan. 2:47. 3:26. 4: 2,34.—37. 6:26.
† Chal. *stones of rolling.* Mark 13: 1,2.
r 5,4.
s 4.
t Josh. 24:15. Ps. 119:46. Jon. 1:9. Matt. 10:32. Luke 12:8. Acts 27:23. Rom. 1:16. Gal. 6:14.
u 1 K. 6: 7: 2 Chr. 3: 4: 5:
x 2 K. 21:12—15. 2 Chr. 34:24,25. 36: 16,17. Neh. 9:26,27. Is. 59:1,2. Jer. 5:29. Dan. 9:5.
y Deut. 28:15,&c. 29:24—28. 31:17. 32: 30. Judg. 2:14. 4:2. 6:1. 1 K. 9: 6—9. 2 Chr. 7:19—22. Ps. 106:40.
z 2 K. 24:10,&c. 25:1,&c. 2 Chr. 36: 6,&c. Jer. 39:1,&c. 52:1,&c. Dan. 1:1,2.
a 1:1—4. 6:3—5. Is. 44:28. 45:1.
b 1:7—10. 6:5. 2 Chr. 36:7,18. Dan. 5:2,3.
c 7:27. Prov. 21:1.
d 16. 1:11.
e Hag. 1:1,14. 2:2,21.
‡ Or, *deputy.* Acts 13:7,8,12.
f 1:2. 3:3. 6:3.
g 14.
h 2. 3:8,10. Hag. 1:12—14. 2:18. Zech. 4:10.
i 6:15.
k 4:15,19. 6:1,2. Prov. 25:2.
l 6:3—5.
a 4:15,19. 5:17. Job 29:16. Prov. 25:2.
§ Chal. *books.* Ps. 40:7. Jer. 36:2—4, 20—23,29,32. Ez. 2:9. 3:1. Rev. 5:1.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The enemies of the church are active, powerful, and malicious, and alas, its friends too often dispirited and negligent: yet the Lord will not suffer his cause to be run down.—It especially belongs to the office of the ministers of God to warn, exhort, encourage, and direct all orders in society to attend to their several duties: when this is properly performed, it will be found the most effectual mean of forwarding reformation, and the power of godliness: and humble and pious men, in the most exalted stations, will think themselves *helped*, by the faithful labors and animated remonstrances of those, who really declare to them the Word of God.—While professed Christians are satisfied with forms, and attentive *mainly* to their secular interests and accommodations, opposition may seem to be slain: but when they bestir themselves to do the work and seek the glory of God, it will soon be found that it was not dead, but merely asleep. Nothing, however, can cause the work of those to cease whom God employs. He finds other employment for some opposers, He restrains others by the moderation of their superiors: some are removed by death, or by revolutions in governments; and others are softened or changed; as it seems good to Him, 'who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.'—There are men who have no true religion, yet are possessed of equity, candor, and generosity: and these qualities entitle them to our respect, though they will not justify them in the sight of God.—A fair statement of facts forms the honest man's best method of pleading a good cause.—While we continue in this world, we shall always have to confess, that our sins have provoked the God of heaven unto wrath; and that all our sufferings spring from this source, and all our comforts from his unmerited mercy.—We ought fully to acknowledge the favors we have received from man; but should generally be silent as to the ill-treatment we have met with. Even when exposed to censure, whilst the blame belongs to others; except the honor of God and the Gospel requires it, it is seldom useful to vindicate ourselves. SCOTT.

ernors of Samaria, inquiring of the Jews the names of their rulers, who presided over the work; (10) or those of the workmen, referring the inquirers to Zerubbabel and Jeshua, for information.—Ezra may fairly be supposed to have inserted the words of the record without alteration: so that the first person plural neither proves that he was then at Jerusalem; nor yet that he was not the writer of the history, as some learned men have argued. SCOTT.

Verses 6—17.

The ingenuous account the Jews gave of their nation, and the cause of the calamities that had befallen them, (which Tatnai and his associates faithfully stated to Darius,) is worthy of observation and of imitation. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI. V. 1. *House of rolls.*] *Beyth Sphrya.* Sept. *Bibliothe-*

sures were * laid up in Babylon.

2 And there was found † at Achmetha, in the palace that *is* in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein *was* a record thus written:

3 In [b] the first year of Cyrus the king, *the same* Cyrus the king made a decree *concerning* the house of God at Jerusalem; Let the house be builded, [c] the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; [d] the height thereof threescore cubits, *and* the breadth thereof threescore cubits;

4 *With* [e] three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber: and let [f] the expenses be given out of the king's house:

5 And also let [g] the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, [h] which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which *is* at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and ‡ brought again unto the temple which *is* at Jerusalem, *every one* to his place, and place *them* in the house of God.

6 Now *therefore*, [i] Tatnai, governor beyond the river, Shethar-boznai, and § your companions the Apharsachites, which *are* beyond the river, [k] be ye far from thence:

7 Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews, and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place.

8 Moreover ‖ I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews, for the building of this house of God; that of [l] the king's goods, *even* of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not [¶] hindered.

9 And that which they have need of, both [m] young bullocks, and rams, and [n] lambs, for the burnt-offerings of the God of heaven, [o] wheat, [p] salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests which *are* at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail:

10 That they may offer sacrifices of ** sweet savors unto the God of heaven, and [q] pray for the life of the king, and of his sons.

11 Also I have made a decree, that [r] whosoever shall alter this word, let [s] timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be †† hanged thereon; and let [t] his house be made a dung-hill for this.

12 And the God, that hath [u] caused his name to dwell there, [x] destroy all kings and people that shall put to their hand, to alter *and* to destroy this house of God which *is* at Jerusalem. [y] I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with [z] speed.

13 ¶ Then [a] Tatnai, governor on this side the river, Shethar-boznai, and their compan-

* Chal. *made to descend.*
† Or, *at Ecbatana*, or, *in a coffer.*
b 1:1—4. 5:13—15. 2 Chr. 36:22,23.
c Deut. 12:5,6,11—14. 2 Chr. 2:6.
d 1 K. 6:2,3. 2 Chr. 3:3,4. Ez. 41:13—15. Rev. 21:16.
e 1 K. 6:36.
f 7:20—23. Ps. 68:29. 72:10. Is. 49:23. 60:6—10. Rev. 12:15.
g 1:7,8. 5:14. Jer. 27:16,18—22. Dan. 1:2. 5:2.
h 2 K. 24:13. 25:14,15. 2 Chr. 36:6,7, 10,18. Jer. 52:19.
‡ Chal. *go.*
i 5:3.
§ Chal. *their societies.* 5:6.
k Gen. 32:28. 43:14. Neh. 1:11. Ps. 76:10. Prov. 21:1,30. Is. 27:8. Acts 4:26—28. Rom. 8:31.
‖ Chal. *by me a decree is made.*
l 4. 4:16,20. 7:15—22. Ps. 68:29—31. Hag. 2:8.
¶ Chal. *made to cease.* 4:21,23. 5:5.
m Lev. 1:3—5,10. 9:2. Ps. 50:9—13.
n Ex. 29:38—42. Num. 28:29:
o Lev. 2:1,&c. Num. 15:4,&c. 1 Chr 9:29.
p Lev. 2:13. Mark 9.49.
** Chal. *rest.* Gen. 8:21. Lev. 1:9,13, 17. Eph. 5:2.
q 7:23. Jer. 29:7. 1 Tim. 2:1,2.
r 7:26.
s Esth. 5:14. 7:10.
†† Chal. *destroyed.*
t 2 K. 9:37. 10:27. Dan. 2:5. 3:29.
u Ex. 20:24. Deut. 12:5,11. 16:2. 1 K. 9:3. 2 Chr. 7:16. Ps. 132:13,14.
x Ps. 5:10. 21:8—10. Is. 60:12. Zech. 12:2—4. Acts 5:38,39. 9:5. Rev. 19:14—21.
y Esth. 3:14,15. 8:14.
z 13. Ez. 9:10.
a 4:9,23. 5:6.

kai. Library. *Gill.* Such were very ancient; note, Ex. 7:11. and see

Spineto. A cut is given of a roll and book, (*Sphr.*) and writing implements, from *Calm.* Comp. note and cut, Luke 4:17. ED.

Verse 3.

(*M. R.*) Some suppose Cyrus did not allow the Jews to build the porch of the temple more than 60 cubits high, lest they should fortify it as a citadel; and that the 60 cubits in *breadth* included the chambers on each side the temple. Perhaps he permitted them to build the temple itself 60 cubits high and 60 wide, as well as 60 long; but they chose to build it of the same dimensions as their former temple: for it is generally agreed, that thus it was at last builded; and it is clearly proved, that the porch was raised to the same height. (1 *K.* 6:3, 4. 2 *Chr.* 3:3, 4.) SCOTT.

Verse 4.

Expenses, &c.] It is likely the Jews had been deprived of this advantage, by the counsellors who were hired against them. (*Notes*, 3:7. 4:4—6.) SCOTT.

Verse 5.

M. R.—*Notes*, 1:1—4, 7—11. ID.

Verses 6—12.

Darius, in order to ingratiate himself with his subjects, showed respect to the memory of Cyrus in every thing; and this might induce him to be more favorable to the Jews, when the decree of Cyrus was produced. But he seems to have been deeply convinced, that the God of the Jews was the God of heaven, who ought to be worshipped according to the law of Moses. His steady intention that sacrifices should be offered, at his expense, at Jerusalem, 'of sweet savors to the God of heaven;' that the people of God 'might pray for him and his sons;' and the expression, 'the God, that hath caused his name to dwell there,' (12) show, that he had been instructed in several important truths of genuine religion, and had a conviction of his dependence on God, and entertained high and honorable thoughts of Him, and that he regarded the prayers of his worshippers, as efficacious. [But see note on the ancient Religion of the Persians, 1:3.] (*M. R.*) Probably some pious Jews had access to the king, who had so explained the matter, as to give him these favorable sentiments, and to dispose him to the service assigned him by Providence. He thought the continuance of his life and the prosperity of his family, might be secured by the prayers of the Jews: but he seems not to have considered his future and unspeakably more important interests; and it does not appear, that his convictions had any abiding effect on his own mind or conduct. (*M. R.* x.—*Zech.* 14:1—3.) ID.

Verses 13—15.

If we allow a year for the message of Tatnai to the court of Darius, the search made among the records, and all delays and obstructions,

ions, according to that which Darius the king had sent, [b] so they did speedily.

14 And [c] the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered [d] through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo: and they builded, and [e] finished *it*, [f] according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the [*] commandment of [g] Cyrus, and Darius, and [h] Artaxerxes king of Persia.

15 And this house was finished on the B. C. 515. third day of the month [i] Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

16 And [k] the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the [†] children of the captivity, kept [l] the dedication of this house of God [m] with joy,

17 And [n] offered at the dedication of this house of God, an hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a [o] sin-offering for all Israel, twelve he-goats, [p] according to the number of the tribes of Israel.

18 And they set [q] the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God which *is* at Jerusalem; [‡] as it is written in the book of Moses.

19 And [r] the children of the captivity [s] kept the passover, upon the fourteenth *day* of the first month.

20 For the priests and the Levites were [t] purified together, all of them *were* pure, and [u] killed the passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves.

21 And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and [x] all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the LORD God of Israel, [y] did eat,

22 And kept [z] the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy; for the LORD had made them joyful, and [a] turned the heart of [b] the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

formerly, Darius now, and Artaxerxes some time after: and encouraged in it by the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah, who, it is likely, represented to them (as Patrick suggests) the wonderful goodness of God in thus inclining the heart of the king of Persia to them. And now the work went on so prosperously, that in four years' time it was brought to perfection. The gospel-church, that spiritual temple, is long in the building, but will be finished at last, when the mystical body is completed. Every believer is a *living temple, building up himself in his most holy faith;* much opposition is given to this work by Satan and our own corruptions; but He that has *begun the good work*, will see it performed, and will *bring forth judgment unto victory. Spirits of just men will be made perfect.*

III. The dedication. *They showed by an example how it should be used*, which (says Patrick) is the proper sense of *dedicate*. 1. The persons employed were not only *priests and Levites* who officiated, but *children of Israel*, some of each of the 12 *tribes*, though Judah and Benjamin were the chief, and *the rest of the children of the captivity* or *transportation;* which intimates that many of other nations, transported themselves with them, and became proselytes; unless we read it, *even the remnant* of the *children of the captivity*, and then, we may suppose, it betokens their mean and afflicted condition, because that helped to make them devout and serious. A sad change! The *children of Israel* are become *children of the captivity*, and there appears but a remnant of *them*, according to that prediction, (Isa. 7: 3.) *Shear-jashub, The remnant shall return.* 2. The sacrifices offered, (*v.* 17.) 2 Cor. 8: 2. The 12 he-goats were for sin-offerings, to make atonement, in order to their acceptance. Thus, they would free themselves from what had been the sting of their late troubles, and if not removed, would be a worm at the root of their present comforts. 3. Their joy. Let us welcome holy ordinances with joy, and serve the Lord with gladness. Whatever we dedicate to God, let it be done with joy, that He will please to accept of it. 4. Small comfort could they have in the temple, without the temple-service, *v* 18. and though it could not now be performed with so much pomp and plenty as formerly, yet, perhaps, it was performed with as much purity as ever, which was the true glory of it. No beauty like the beauty of holiness.

IV. The celebration of the passover in the newly-erected temple. Now they were newly delivered out of their bondage, it was seasonable to

b Esth. 6:11. Job 5:12,13. Prov. 29:26.

c 3:8. 4:3.
d 5:1,2. Hag. 1:12—14. 2:2,&c. Zech. 2: 3: 4: 6:
e Zech. 4:9.
f Is. 44:28. Hag. 1:8.
* Chal. *decree.*
g 3. 1:1—4. 4:24. 5:13.
h 7:1.
i Esth. 3:7,13. 8:12. 9:1,15,17,19,21.
k 1 Chr. 9:2. Neh. 7:73.
† Chal. *sons of the transportation.* See on 4:1.
l 1 K. 8:63. 2 Chr. 7:9. John 10:22.
m 3:11,12. Deut. 12:7. 1 Chr. 15:28. 2 Chr. 7:10. 30:23,26. Phil. 4:4.
n 8:35. Num. 7:2,&c. 1 K. 8:63,64. 1 Chr. 16:1—3. 2 Chr. 7:5. 29:31—35.
o Lev. 4:3,13,14,22,23,28. 2 Chr. 29: 21—23.
p 1 K. 18:31. Luke 22:30. Rev. 7:4—8. 21:12.
q 1 Chr. 23:—26: 2 Chr. 35:4,5.
‡ Chal. *according to the writing.* Num. 3:6. 8:9,&c.
r 16.
s Ex. 12:6,&c. Josh. 5:10. 2 Chr. 30: 35:
t 2 Chr. 29:34. 30:15—17.
u Ex. 12:21. 2 Chr. 35:11. Heb. 7:27.
x 9:11. Num. 9:6,7,10—14. Is. 52:11. Ez. 36:25. 2 Cor. 6:17. 7:1.
y Ex. 12:47—49. Ps. 93:5.
z Ex. 12:15—20. 13:6,7. 2 Chr. 30: 21. 35:17. Matt. 26:17. 1 Cor. 5: 7,8.
a 7:27. Prov. 16:7. 21:1. John 19:11.
b 2 K. 23:29. 2 Chr. 33:11. Zech. 10: 10,11.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Nothing but impartial and diligent investigation can give truth and innocence a decided advantage against lies, malice, and perjury: and much injustice may be committed merely through the indolence and inattention of magistrates.—Enmity or rapacity often intercepts the favors, which were intended for the people of God: but when his plan requires the interposition of princes, He can easily dispose them to use all diligence, to exert their authority, and to expend their treasures, in supporting his cause; and, for a time, these things have often been done by those, who would not give Him their hearts, and never became his true worshippers! (2 *Cor.* 8: 1—5.) We ought indeed to 'pray for kings, and all in authority,' whatever be their character and conduct; yet we are very apt to be remiss and formal in this service, till encouragement enlivens our desires and expectations: but when princes decidedly favor the cause of truth and righteousness, the hearts of pious Christians are enlarged with hopes, and they pray for them with greater earnestness. Such as interrupt and injure the worshippers of God, when protected by the civil government, are desperate rebels both against God and the king: and even tolerating laws will be insufficient for the protection of the harmless servants of God, if the executive power do not vigorously interpose, to punish such as *illegally* assault them. But the protection of God can alone be entirely depended on; and He will at length awfully destroy those persecutors who attempt to destroy his people, however powerful or numerous they may be. The revival of public ordinances, where they had been obstructed, should excite our rejoicing, because honor is thus ascribed to the Lord, and benefit accrues to the souls of men.—As nothing contributes more to the conversion of sinners, and to the purity and prosperity of the church, than the holiness and faithfulness of ministers; let us all unite in daily prayers to the Giver of every good and perfect gift, that all those who bear that sacred character may live and preach 'according to his holy Word, and rightly and duly administer his holy sacraments' SCOTT.

for the granting of the decree, and its publication in Judea; it will appear, that it was published just 70 years after the destruction of the temple by the Chaldeans.—Zechariah, who prophesied at this time, mentions, that the people had kept annual fasts for the ruin of the city and temple, during 70 years; (*Notes, Zech.* 7:1—7.) and this absolutely fixes these events to the time of Darius Hystaspes; for no other Darius reigned in Persia till many years afterwards.—The historian inserts the name of Artaxerxes with those of Cyrus and Darius, as concurring in this work: (14) for though the temple was built before Artaxerxes came to the throne, yet probably it received great accessions of splendor and convenience, under the government of Ezra and Nehemiah, whom he patronised. (*Notes*, 7:1—5. *Neh.* 1:1.)—The temple was finished in rather more than 4 years after the Jews returned to the work, when excited to it by Haggai and Zechariah; (*Note*, 5:1, 2.) in something more than 2 years after the decree of Darius had been published; and in about 20 years after the Jews returned from captivity. Cyrus reigned 7 years; Cambyses, or Ahasuerus, 7; Artaxerxes, or Smerdis, 1; and it was finished in the 6th of Darius. (*Notes*, 3:8—11. 4:4—6, 17—24.) SCOTT.

Verse 18.

(*M. R.—Note*, 3:8—11.) ID.

Verse 22.

Of Assyria, &c.] Darius, reigning over the country of Assyria, is here called 'the king of Assyria;' though the Persian monarchy had succeeded to the monarchies both of Assyria and Babylon. [See *Hist. note*, end of Esth. and *Geogr.* note, end of 2 Chr.]—The pious acknowledgment of God in all these transactions, as influencing the king to be kind to the Jews, and as thus making them joyful, is highly rational; though it has now almost sunk into disuse, even among professed Christians! (7:27, 28. 2 *K.* 5:1. *Prov.* 21:1.) ID.

CHAP. VII.

Ezra's genealogy from Aaron, 1—5. He goes up to Jerusalem, 6—10. A copy of Artaxerxes' favorable commission to him, 11—26. He blesses God for putting this into the king's heart, 27, 28.

NOW after these things, in the reign of [a] Artaxerxes king of Persia, [b] Ezra the son of [c] Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of [d] Hilkiah,

2 The son of Shallum, the son of [e] Zadok, the son of Ahitub,

3 The son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth,

4 The son of Zerahiah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki,

5 The son of Abishua, the son of [f] Phinehas, the son of [g] Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the [h] chief priest:

6 This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he *was* [i] a ready [k] scribe in [l] the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king [m] granted him all his request, [n] according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him.

7 And there went up *some* of [o] the children of Israel, and of the priests, and [p] the Levites, and the [q] singers, and [r] the porters, and the [s] Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of [t] Artaxerxes the king.

8 And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which *was* in the seventh year of the king.

9 For upon the first *day* of the first month [*] began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first *day* of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, [u] according to the good hand of his God upon him.

10 For Ezra had [x] prepared his heart to seek [y] the law of the LORD, and [z] to do *it*, [a] and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

[*Practical Observations.*]

commemorate their deliverance out of Egypt. Fresh mercies should put us in mind of former mercies. The priests and Levites that *killed the passover*, v. 20. *were purified together, as one man*, so the word is; they were unanimous both in their resolutions, and in their endeavors, to make and keep themselves ceremonially clean for this solemnity, they were pure, to a man. The purity of ministers adds much to the beauty of their ministration; so does their unity. See how the proselytes are described; they separate themselves from the filthiness of sin, and fellowship with sinners, join themselves to the Israel of God, in conformity and communion, and set themselves to seek the God of Israel; and are welcome to the gospel-feast, as *fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.*

CHAP. VII. Zerubbabel and Jeshua we will suppose, by this time, to be grown old, if not gone; nor do we hear more of Haggai and Zechariah; they have finished their testimony. What shall become of the cause of God and Israel, when these useful instruments are laid aside? Trust God to raise up others. Ezra here, and Nehemiah in the next book, are as serviceable in their days, as those in theirs.

V. 1—10. I. Ezra's pedigree. He was one of the sons of Aaron, a priest; said to be *the son of Seraiah*, that Seraiah, as is supposed, whom the king of Babylon put to death, when he sacked Jerusalem, 2 K. 25: 18, 21. If we take the shortest computation, it was 75 years since Seraiah died; many reckon it much longer, and, because they suppose Ezra called out, in the prime of his time, to public service, think Seraiah was not his immediate parent, but his grand-father, or great-grand-father; yet that he was the first eminent person that occurred in his genealogy upward, which is carried up here as high as Aaron, still leaving out many, for brevity-sake, which may be supplied from 1 Chr. 6: 4, &c. He was a younger brother, or his father was Jozadak, the father of Jeshua; so he was not high priest, but nearly allied to him.

II. His character, 1. He was of great learning, v. 6. very much conversant with the Scriptures, especially the writings of Moses, had the words ready, and was well acquainted with their meaning. It is to be feared learning ran low among the Jews in Babylon; but Ezra was instrumental to revive it. The Jews say he collected and collated all the copies of the law he could find out, and published an accurate edition of it, with all the prophetical books, historical and poetical, that were given by divine inspiration, and so made up the canon of the O. T. with the addition of the prophecies and histories of his own time. God sent the Jews *prophets and scribes*, Matt. 23: 34. Ezra went under the latter denomination; now that prophecy was about to cease, it was time to promote scripture knowledge, pursuant to the counsel of God by the last of the prophets, Mal. 4: 4. *Remember the law of Moses.* Gospel-ministers are called *scribes instructed to the kingdom of heaven*, (Mat. 13: 52.) New Testament scribes. Pity, such a worthy name should be worn in the degenerate ages of the Jewish church, by professed enemies to Christ and his Gospel, *Scribes and Pharisees*, learned in the letter of the law, but strangers to the spirit of it.

2. He was of great piety and holy zeal v. 10. (1.) The Chaldeans, among whom he was born and bred, were famed for literature, especially the study of the stars, to which, being a studious man, we may suppose Ezra was tempted to apply himself; but *the law* of his God was more to him than all the writings of the magicians and astrologers, of which he knew enough to despise them. (2.) He searched the Scriptures, for God's mind and will, which is to be found there, but not without seeking. (3.) He made conscience of doing it; set it before him as his rule, formed his sentiments and temper by it, and managed his whole conversation according to it. This use we must make of the Scriptures; for happy are we, if we do what we know of the will of God. (4.) He set himself to teach Israel the statutes and judgments of that law: *the ministration of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.* But observe the method; he first learned, and then taught. He also first did, and then taught; thus his example confirmed his doctrine. (5.) He prepared his heart to all this; or, fixed his heart. He took pains in his studies, and thoroughly furnished himself for what he designed, and then put on resolution to persevere in them, and thus became a ready scribe. Moses in Egypt, [and Midian,] Ezra in Babylon, and both in captivity, were wonderfully fitted for eminent services to the church.

III. His expedition to Jerusalem, for the good of his country, v. 6, 8. Strange, such a man as he staid so long in Babylon, after his brethren were gone up; but God sent him not thither, till He had work for him there; and none went, but those *whose spirits God raised* to go up. Some think

[a] 12,21. 6:14. Neh. 2:1.
[b] 10. 8:9; 10: Neh. 8:2—9.
[c] 2 K. 25:18. 1 Chr. 6:4—14. 9:11. Neh. 11:11. Jer. 52:24—27.
[d] 2 K. 22:4,8. 2 Chr. 34:9,15.
[e] 2 Sam. 8:17. 1 K. 2:35.
[f] Ex. 6:25. Num. 25:7—13. 31:6. Josh. 22:13,31. Judg. 20:28. 1 Chr. 6:4, 50—52. Ps. 106:30,31.
[g] Lev. 10:6,12,16. Num. 3:32. 20: 25—28. 27:2. 31:31,51. Josh. 14:1. 24:33. 1 Chr. 24:1—6.
[h] 2 Chr. 19:11. 26:20.
[i] 11,12,21. Ps. 45:1. Matt. 13:52.
[k] Neh. 8:4,9,13. 12:26,36. Jer. 8:8. 1 Cor. 1:20.
[l] Deut. 4:5. 28:1. Matt. 28:20. 1 Cor. 15:1. 1 Thes. 4:1,2.
[m] 11—26.
[n] 9,28. 6:22. 8:18,22,31. Gen. 32:28. Neh. 1:10,11. 2:8,12,18. 4:15. Is. 50:2. 59:1.
[o] 8:1—14.
[p] 2:40,41. 8:15—20.
[q] 1 Chr. 5:31,&c. 25:1—8.
[r] 2:42. 1 Chr. 9:17,&c. Neh. 7:45.
[s] 24. 2:43,&c. 8:20. Neh. 7:46,&c 10:28.
[t] 11,12. 6:14. 8:1. Neh. 2:1.
[*] Heb. *was the foundation of the going up.*
[u] 6. Neh. 2:8,18.
[x] 1 Sam. 7:3. 1 Chr. 29:18. 2 Chr. 12:14. 19:3. Job. 11:13. Ps. 10:17. 57:7.
[y] 6. Ps. 1:2. 19:7. 119:96—100.
[z] Matt. 5:19. 7:24. John 13:17. Rev. 22:14.
[a] Deut. 33:10. 2 Chr. 17:8,9. 30:22. Neh. 8:1—9. Mal. 2:7. Acts 1:1. 1 Tim. 3:2. 2 Tim. 4:2.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—10. When the Lord removes some useful instruments, He raises up others to fill their places.—Those, who desire to be 'scribes well instructed for the kingdom of God,' must lay aside all inconsistent pursuits and studies, and have their hearts purified from sinful passions, weaned from earthly affections, and filled with zeal for the glory of God, and love to the souls of men. In these sacred studies they should be diligent and unwearied; and meditation, prayer, and a spiritual mind will render them delightful. Thus they will become 'able ministers of the N. T.' 'men of God, thoroughly furnished for every good work,' ready scribes, apt to teach, bringing forth out of their treasures things new and old: and, beginning with faithfulness and diligence in a narrow circle, they may in due time expect, 'according to the good hand of God upon them,' to be favored with more extensive opportunities of usefulness.—But knowledge, even of the sacred Scriptures, except it be reduced to practice, and communicated to others, will become useless and worthless. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII. V. 1—5. Artaxerxes, here mentioned, was evidently a different person from Darius. (6:14.) Xerxes, the son and successor of Darius, cannot be intended: for he reigned only 21 years; but Nehemiah, who was contemporary with Ezra, mentions the 32nd year of Artaxerxes. (*Neh.* 5:14.) Artaxerxes Longimanus, the son and successor of Xerxes, must therefore be meant: and the 7th year of his reign was no less than 79 years after the proclamation of Cyrus. The temple had been finished, and its worship restored, within about 20 years: and nothing very memorable occurred during the subsequent 59 or 60 years. [See Hist. note, end of Esth.]—The Jews remained very unsettled, until this commission was granted to Ezra. (*Dan.* 9:25—27.) Seraiah had been dead above 130 years. (2 *K.* 25:18, 21.) SCOTT.

Verses 6—10.

The language here is well deserving of our most serious attention. Every thing is ascribed to God, for his is 'the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever:' yet the agency of instruments and second

11 ¶ Now this *is* [b] the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, *even* [c] a scribe of the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of his statutes to Israel.

12 Artaxerxes, [d] king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, [*] a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect *peace*, [e] and at such a time.

13 [f] I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and *of* his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are [g] minded of their own free-will to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee.

14 Forasmuch as thou art sent [†] of the king, and of his [h] seven counsellors, to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, [i] according to the law of [k] thy God which *is* in thine hand;

15 And to carry [l] the silver and gold, which the king and his counsellors have freely offered unto the God of Israel, [m] whose habitation *is* in Jerusalem,

16 And [n] all the silver and gold that thou canst find in all the province of Babylon, with the free-will-offering of the people, and of the priests, [o] offering willingly for the house of their God which *is* in Jerusalem:

17 That thou mayest [p] buy speedily with this money, bullocks, rams, lambs, with [q] their meat-offerings, and their drink-offerings, and [r] offer them upon the altar of the house of your God which *is* in Jerusalem.

18 And [s] whatsoever shall seem good to thee, and to thy brethren, to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, that do [t] after the will of your God.

19 [u] The vessels also that are given thee for the service of the house of thy God, *those* deliver thou before [x] the God of Jerusalem.

20 And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God, which thou shalt have occasion to bestow, [y] bestow *it* out of the king's treasure-house.

21 And I, *even* [z] Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers which *are* [a] beyond the river, that whatsoever [b] Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, it be done speedily.

22 Unto an hundred talents of silver, and to an hundred § measures of wheat, and to an hundred [c] baths of wine, and to an hundred baths of oil, and [d] salt without prescribing *how much*.

23 ‖ Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven: for [e] why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?

24 Also we certify you, that [f] touching any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinims, or ministers of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them.

25 And thou Ezra, after [g] the wisdom of thy God that *is* in thine hand, [h] set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that *are* [i] beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and [k] teach ye them that know *them* not.

26 And [l] whosoever will not do [m] the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let

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I. This commission gives him, 1. Leave to go to Jerusalem, and as many of his countrymen as pleased, with him, *v.* 13. Being as captives, they could not quit this dominion without royal license. 2. Authority to inquire into and amend the affairs of Judah and Jerusalem, *v.* 14. by the rule of *God's law, which was in his hands.* Thus is God's law magnified, and the Jews restored [by a 'chartered right'] to their ancient privilege of governing themselves by that law, from under *the statutes* of oppressors, Ezek. 20: 25. 3. As a man of known integrity, it intrusts him with the money freely given by the king and his counsellors, and collected among his subjects, for the house of God, *v.* 15, 16. Even those that worshipped other gods, were so convinced of the sovereignty of the God of Israel, that they were willing to incur expenses, for his favor. See Ps. 45: 12. 68: 29. We find Paul going to Jerusalem on such an errand, as Ezra, Acts 24: 17.

II. He draws him a bill, or warrant rather, on the *treasurers on that side the river*, for what he had occasion for, *v.* 20—22. This was considerate; for Ezra, being yet to inquire into the state of things, knew not what he should need, and was modest in his demands; it was also kind, and evinced a very great affection to the temple, and confidence in Ezra. It is the interest of princes and great men to use their wealth and power for the support and encouragement of religion. What else are great revenues good for?

III. He charges him that nothing requisite be

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b 4:11. 5:6.
c 6. Matt. 23:2,13. Mark 7:1—13.
d 1 K. 4:24. 20:1. Is. 10:8. Ez. 26: 7. Dan. 2:37,47. 1 Tim. 6:15. Rev. 17:14. 19:16.
* Or, *a perfect scribe of the law of the God of heaven*, peace, &c.
e 4:10,11,17.
f 5:13. 6:1. 2 Chr. 30:5. Esth. 3:15. 9:14. Ps. 148:6. Rev. 22:17.
g 1:3. Ps. 110:3. Phil. 2:13.
† Chal. *from before.*
h Esth. 1:14.
i 25,26. Deut. 17:18,19. Is. 8:20.
k 1:3. 5:5. 6:12. Dan. 2:47. 6:20,26.
l 6:4,8—10. Ps. 68:29,30. 72:10. Is. 60:6—9. Rev. 21:24—26.
m 6:12. 2 Chr. 2:6. 6:2,6. Ps. 76:2. 132:2f.
n 8:25—28.
o 1:4,6. 1 Chr. 29:6,9,17. 2 Cor. 8:12. 9:7.
p See on 6:9,10.—Deut. 14:24—26. Matt. 21:12,13. John 2:14.
q Num. 15:4—13.
r Deut. 12:5—11.
s 2 K. 12:15. 22:7.
t 23.
u 8:27—30,33,34.
x 2 Chr. 32:19. Jer. 3:17.
y 6:4,8, &c.
z 12,13.
a 4:16,20. 6:6.
b 6,10,11.
§ Chal. *cors.* Luke 16:7. *marg.*
c Ez. 45:14. Luke 16:6. *marg.*
d Lev. 2:13.
‖ Chal. *Whatsoever* is *of the decree.* 13.
e 6:10—12. Zech. 12:3.
f 7. 2:36—55.
g 14. 1 K. 3:28. 1 Chr. 22:12. Ps. 19: 7. 119:98—100. Prov. 2:6. 6:23. Jam. 1:5. 3:17,18.
h Ex. 18:21—25. Deut. 16:18. 1 Chr. 23:4. 2 Chr. 19:8—10.
i 6:6.
k 10. 2 Chr. 17:7—9. Neh. 8:1—3,7,8. 9:3. 13:1—3. Mal. 2:7. Matt. 13: 52. Mark 6:34.
l 6:11. Dan. 3:28,29. 6:26.
m 2 Chr. 30:12.

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causes is properly noticed.—The word *scribe* here used, does not merely signify *one who wrote out copies of the law*, but rather *an interpreter of the law.* Many learned men are of opinion, and indeed with good reason, that Artaxerxes was the Ahasuerus, who soon after this married Esther; and that this commission, as well as that of Nehemiah, was obtained through her influence. (*Neh.* 2:5, 6.)—*Of the priests*, &c. (7) 8:1—20.—*He came to Jerusalem*, &c. (8) 8:21—23. SCOTT.

(6.) *Scribe.*] 'Sophr, one skilled and learned, from *Sphr*, a *book*; and as no book was comparable to the law, the name became one of great dignity.' HEWLETT.

Verses 11, 12.

The original letter is here inserted in the Chaldee language. SCOTT.

Verse 14.

Seven, &c.] As 7 princes of Persia had conspired against and slain the usurper Smerdis, and thus made way for the family of Darius which afterwards filled the throne; the Persian kings ever after had 7 chief princes as their counsellors, who possessed peculiar privileges, and joined with them in all public transactions. (*Esth.* 1:13, 14.) ED.

Verses 15, 16.

Canst find, &c. (16) I. e. all the money, which Ezra could obtain by the voluntary contributions of the people, whether Jews or Babylonians. (1:4—6.) SCOTT.

Verses 17, 18.

(*M. R.*) It is remarkable, that a heathen prince [but see note, 1:3. ED.] should lay no other restriction on Ezra and his brethren, in disposing of the treasures which they collected, except that they should be employed, 'after the will of their God.' ID.

Verse 22.

Salt.] As salt was offered with every sacrifice, Artaxerxes did not limit the quantity, lest any stated sacrifice should be omitted. ID.

Verse 23.

'Here Cappellus cries out in a kind of rapture, "O! words to be written on the palaces of kings in golden letters, and engraven on the minds of all the faithful with a pen of adamant! For they express an exceeding great sense of God, and of his supreme authority, and the regard due from the greatest kings and potentates, to his most sacred commands." The like is not easy to be found any where.' *Patrick.* ID.

Verse 26.

Speedily.] It was the Persian custom to punish malefactors, even capitally, at once, and before the king's tent, or palace door. See *Fraser*, &c. ED.

judgment be executed speedily upon him, [n] whether *it be* unto death, or to * banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.

27 ¶ [o] Blessed *be* the LORD God of our fathers, which hath [p] put *such a thing* as this [q] in the king's heart, [r] to beautify the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem;

28 And hath [s] extended mercy unto me, before the king and [t] his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes. And I was strengthened [u] as the hand of the LORD my God *was* upon me; and I gathered together out of Israel, chief men to go up with me.

CHAP. VIII.

The names of those who joined Ezra, when he was about to go up to Jerusalem, 1—14. Finding no Levites, he sends to Iddo, at Casiphia, and obtains some, 15—20. They observe a solemn fast, to seek of God a prosperous journey, 21—23. Ezra intrusts the sacred treasures to the priests, 24—30. They arrive in safety at Jerusalem, 31, 32. The treasures, by weight, are delivered up; and sacrifices offered, 33—35. The king's commission is produced, 36.

THESE *are* now [a] the chief of their fathers, and *this is* the [b] genealogy of [c] them that went up with me from Babylon, in the reign of Artaxerxes the king.

2 Of the sons of [d] Phinehas, Gershom; of the sons of Ithamar, Daniel; of the sons of * David, Hattush;

3 Of the sons of Shechaniah, of the sons of [f] Pharosh, Zechariah; and with him were reckoned by genealogy, of the males, an hundred and fifty.

4 Of the sons of [g] Pahath-moab, Elihoenai the son of Zerahiah, and with him two hundred males.

5 Of the sons of Shechaniah; the son of Jahaziel, and with him three hundred males.

6 Of the sons also of [h] Adin; Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty males.

7 And of the sons of [i] Elam; Jeshaiah the son of Athaliah, and with him seventy males.

8 And of the sons of [k] Shephatiah; Zebadiah the son of Michael, and with him fourscore males.

9 Of the sons of [l] Joab; Obadiah the son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred and eighteen males.

10 And of the sons of

n Ex. 21: 22: Lev. 20: Deut. 13:
* Chal. *rooting out.* Ps. 52:5.
o 6:22. 1 Chr. 29:10,&c. Phil. 4:10.
p 6:22. Neh. 2:12. 7:5. 2 Cor. 8:16. Heb. 8:10. 10:16. Jam. 1:17. Rev. 17:17.
q Neh. 2:8. Prov. 21:1.
r Is. 60:13.
s 9:9. Gen. 32:28. 43:14. Neh. 1:11.
t 14. Jon. 3:7.
u 6,9. 5:5. 9:18. Neh. 2:8. 2 Tim. 4:17,18.
a 1:5. 1 Chr. 9:34. 24:31. 26:32. 2 Chr. 26:12. Neh. 7:70,71.
b 2:62. 1 Chr. 4:33. c 1. c 7:7,13.
d 1 Chr. 6:3,4,&c. 24:1—6.
e 1 Chr. 3:1,22.
f 2:3. Neh. 7:8. 10:14 *Parosh.*
g 2:6. Neh. 7:11. 10:14.
h 2:15. Neh. 7:20. 10:16.
i 2:7,31. Neh. 7:12,34.
k 2:4. Neh. 7:9. 11:4.
l 2:6. Neh. 7:11.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 11—28. The servants of God cannot vary from their rules at the instance of the greatest princes, or 'teach for doctrines the commandments of men:' but they may want the countenance and external assistance of rulers, in order that they may employ their gifts, and perform their duty, without molestation and to greater advantage. And when kings will grant them protection, intrust them with authority, and bear the expenses of their useful designs; and then leave them to conduct every thing by the rule of the Word of God, and according to his will, as it appears to them and their brethren; they may without hesitation avail themselves of such assistance: nay, they may properly petition for it, when there appears a prospect of success. (2 *Chr.* 30: 12.) But in whatever way great and effectual doors are opened to them, they should regard men only as instruments; and ascribe it to the power and goodness of God, if princes grant their requests; bless his name for putting such a thing in their hearts; and receive a commission from man merely as an external opportunity of executing a higher commission from God, according to his instructions, and under his protection.—The liberality of heathen kings, in beautifying the house of God, and supporting the expense of his worship, reproached the conduct of many kings of Judah, and of all that reigned in Israel; and it will rise up in judgment, and condemn the avarice of many nominal Christians, who refuse to employ their superfluous treasures in supporting the worship of God, and propagating the Gospel in the world.—Unconverted men may perceive, that 'whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven,' should be diligently done; and that the neglect of his worship will bring wrath on kingdoms, and on the persons and families of princes. But divine faith alone, as working by love and gratitude, is capable of producing unreserved, persevering, and delightful obedience.—The exorbitant and pernicious exemptions, which ambitious ecclesiastics once *claimed*, have rendered magistrates reasonably jealous in this matter: but when ministers are poor and diligent, there would be a great propriety in *favoring* them with such exemptions, as consist with the welfare of society, and leave them to attend on their work without embarrassing cares and distresses.—But the weapons of our warfare, as Christian ministers, are not carnal: faithful preaching, holy lives, fervent prayers, and patient suffering, are the means we must use, to teach the ways of God to those who know them not, and to bring increasing numbers into subjection to the obedience of Jesus Christ. (2 *Cor.* 10: 1—6.)

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII. V. 1—14. (*M. R.* o.) The males only are mentioned; so that the number, including the women, was double, at least, what is here mentioned.

SCOTT.

Shelomith; the sons of Josiphiah, and with him an hundred and threescore males.

11 And of the sons of [m] Bebai; Zechariah the son of Bebai, and with him twenty and eight males.

12 And of the sons of [n] Azgad; Johanan * the son of Hakkatan, and with him an hundred and ten males.

13 And of the last sons of [o] Adonikam, whose names *are* these, Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah, and with them three score males.

14 Of the sons also of [p] Bigvai; Uthai, and † Zabbud, and with them seventy males.

15 ¶ And I gathered them together to [q] the river that runneth to [r] Ahava; and there ‡ abode we in tents three days: and I viewed the people and the priests, [s] and found there none of the sons of Levi.

16 Then sent I for Eliezer, for Ariel, for [t] Shemaiah, and for Elnathan, and for Jarib, and for Elnathan, and for [u] Nathan, and for [x] Zechariah, and for Meshullam, [y] chief men; also for Joiarib and for Elnathan, [z] men of understanding.

17 And I sent them with commandment unto Iddo the chief at the place Casiphia, and § I told them what they should say unto Iddo, *and* to his brethren [a] the Nethinims, at the place Casiphia, that they should bring unto us [b] ministers for the house of our God.

18 And [c] by the good hand of our God upon us, they brought us [d] a man of understanding, of the sons of [e] Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel; and [f] Sherebiah, with his sons and his brethren, eighteen;

19 And [g] Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiah of the sons of [h] Merari, his brethren and their sons, twenty;

20 Also of the [i] Nethinims, whom David and the princes had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Nethinims: all of them were expressed by name.

21 ¶ Then [k] I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might [l] afflict ourselves before our God, [m] to seek of him a right way for us, and [n] for our little ones, and for all our substance.

22 For [o] I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto

† Or, *pitched.*
s 2. 7:7,24.
t 13. 10:21.
u 10:39.
x 11.
y 1.
z 18. 1 K. 3:11. 1 Chr. 12:32. 26:14. 2 Chr. 2:12. Prov. 2:6. Dan. 2:21. 2 Tim. 2:7. 1 John 5:20.
§ Heb. *I put words in their mouth.* Ex. 4:15. Deut. 18:18. 2 Sam. 14:3,19. Jer. 1:9. 15:19.
a 2:43,58. 7:7.
b Num. 8:22—26. 18:6. 1 Chr. 23: 3—6,26—32.
c 22. 7:28. Neh. 2:8. Prov. 3:6.
d See on 16.—Prov. 24:3. Jer. 3:15. Dan. 1:20. 1 Cor. 14:20.
e Num. 3:20. 1 Chr. 6:19.
f 24. Neh. 8:7. 9:4,5. 10:12. 12:24.
g Neh. 3:17. 10:11.
h 1 Chr. 6:1,16,19.
i 17. 2:43. 7:7. 1 Chr. 9:2.
k Judg. 20:26. 1 Sam. 7:6. 2 Chr. 20:3. Joel 1:14. 2:12—18. Jon. 3: 5—10.
l Lev. 16:29,31. 23:29. Is. 58:5. Jer. 31:8,9. 50:4,5.
m Ps. 5:8. 107:2—8. 143:8—10. Prov. 3:6. Is. 30:21. 35:8. 42:16. 49:10. Jer. 10:23.
n Num. 14:3,31. Mark 10:13—16. Acts 2:39.
o 1 Cor. 9:15. 2 Cor. 7:14.

m 2:11. 10:28. Neh. 7:16
n 2:12. Neh. 7:17.
* Or, *the youngest son.*
o 2:15. Neh. 7:18.
p 2:14. Neh. 7:19.
† Or, *Zaccur*, as some read. (Neh. 10:12.)
q Ps. 137:1. Ez. 1:1. 3:15. Acts 16: 13.
r 21,31.

Verse 15.

Ahava seems to have been the name both of a town, and of a rivulet which ran into the Euphrates, near the town. The whole company must have lodged in tents, during the journey, as well as before they entered on it.—No Levites, who were not also priests, were found among them: for Ezra himself was a priest. SCOTT.

Verses 16, 17.

(*M. R.*) It is uncertain where Casiphia lay, or who Iddo the chief was. The Nethinim are called his brethren: and, if he were one of that company, no doubt he had been advanced, on account of his extraordinary qualifications or services. Some, however, suppose the word rendered 'his brethren' to be a proper name; and that, translated *Nethinims*, to signify *appointed*. They therefore render the passage thus; 'I told them what they should say to Iddo *and* Achio, who were constituted in the place Casiphia.' ID.

Verse 18.

Sherebiah, no doubt, was 'the man of understanding' here meant; and the passage should be read, 'A man of understanding . . . even Sherebiah.' (*M. R.*) ID.

Verse 20.

The Gibeonites were appointed to the service of the Levites, in the time of Joshua: (*Josh.* 9:27.) and some think, that others, (perhaps a remnant of the devoted Canaanites, or of those who were vowed to the Lord, by themselves or their parents, (*Lev.* 27:2—8.) were added to them, or placed in rather a superior station, by David and his princes, and afterwards by Solomon; and that these were, strictly speaking, *the Nethinim*. SCOTT

Verses 21—23.

Their journey lay chiefly through the desert: and, as they were encumbered with families and possessions, they could make but slow progress, and a feeble defence in case of an assault. They carried large treasures with them, which would invite the attempts of the Arabian free-booters, and others who infested that neighborhood. (26, 27.) In ordinary cases it would have been very proper, to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen for their defence, which no doubt would have been readily granted: but Ezra, wishing to impress Artaxerxes with a proper sense of the power and perfections of JEHOVAH, and being afraid lest the king should not at once understand the

have been wanting, the vacancies are well supplied, let God have the glory, and his good hand (as here by Ezra) be acknowledged, as qualifying for the service, inclining them to it, and then opening a door of opportunity for them.

V. 21—23. Ezra has procured Levites, but his chief care is to have God with him. In all our ways, we must acknowledge God; and in those particularly, wherein we are endeavoring to serve the interest of his kingdom among men Ezra does so here. Observe,

1. His steadfast confidence in God, and in his gracious protection; he told the king, what principle he went upon, *v.* 22. God's servants have his power engaged for them, his enemies have it engaged against them. This, Ezra believed, and confessed it before the king; therefore he was ashamed to ask a convoy, lest thereby he should give occasion to the king, and those about him, to suspect either God's power to help his people, or Ezra's confidence in it. Not but that those who depend on God, must use proper means for their preservation, and need not be ashamed to do it; but when the honor of God is concerned, one would rather expose one's-self than do any thing to the prejudice of that, which ought to be dearer than life.

2. His solemn application to God in that confidence; he proclaimed a fast, *v.* 21. for public mercies, public prayers must be made; that all who are to share in the comfort, may join in the request. Their fasting was, (1.) To express their humiliation; this he declares to be the intent and meaning of it, *v.* 21. When entering on any new condition of life, our care should be to bring none of the guilt of the sins of our former condition into it. When in any imminent peril, let us be sure to make our peace with God, and then we are safe, nothing can do us any real hurt. (2.) To excite their supplications; prayer was always joined with religious fasting: their errand to the throne of grace was, to *seek of God the right way*, i. e. to commit themselves to the guidance and protection of the Divine Providence. Note, All our concerns about ourselves and families, and our estates, it is

the king, saying, [p] The hand of our God *is* upon all them for good that seek him; but [q] his power and his wrath *is* against all them that forsake him.

23 So [r] we fasted, and [s] besought our God for this: [t] and he was entreated of us.

[*Practical Observations.*]

24 ¶ Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests, [u] Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them;

25 And [x] weighed unto them [y] the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, *even* the offering of the house of our God, which the king, and his counsellors, and his lords, and all Israel *there* present, had offered:

26 I even weighed unto their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels an hundred talents, *and* of gold an hundred talents;

27 Also twenty basins of gold, of a thousand drams; and two vessels of * fine copper, † precious as gold.

28 And I said unto them, [z] Ye *are* holy unto the LORD; [a] the vessels *are* holy also; and the silver and the gold *are* a free-will offering unto the LORD God of your fathers.

29 [b] Watch ye, and keep *them*, [c] until ye weigh *them* before the chief of the priests and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the LORD.

30 So took the priests and the Levites the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, to bring *them* to Jerusalem unto [d] the house of our God.

31 ¶ Then we departed from [e] the river of Ahava, on the twelfth *day* of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and [f] the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way.

p 7:6,9,28. 1 Chr. 28:9. 2 Chr. 16:9. Ps. 33:18,19. 34:15,22. Is. 3:10,11. Rom. 8:28. 1 Pet. 3:12.
q Josh. 23:16. 2 Chr. 15:2. Ps. 21:8,9. 90:11. Zeph. 1:2—6. 1 Pet. 3:12.
r Neh. 9:1. Esth. 4:16. Dan. 9:3. Luke 2:37. Acts 10:30.
s Jer. 29:12,13. 33:3. 50:4,5.
t 31. Deut. 4:29. 1 Chr. 5:20. 2 Chr. 33:12,13. Jer. 29:12,13. Matt. 7:7,8.
u 18,19.
x 33,34. 1:3. 2 Cor. 8:20,21. *Phil. 4:8.
y 7:15,16.
* Heb. *yellow*, or *shining brass*.
† Heb. *desirable*. Lam. 4:2.
z Lev. 21:6—8. Deut. 33:8. Is. 52:11.
a 1:7—11. Num. 4:4—15,19,20. 7:13, 84—88. 1 K. 7:48—51. 1 Chr. 23:28. 2 Chr. 24:14.
b 1 Chr. 26:20—26. Mark 13:34,35. Acts 20:31. 2 Tim. 4:5.
c 33,34.
d 1 Chr. 29:2,3. Ps. 122:9. Is. 60:13.
e 15,21.
f 22. 7:9,28. Job 5:19—24. Ps. 91:9—14. Is. 41:10—14. Acts 25:3. 26:22

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—23. While love of the world, and fear of the cross, induce most men to neglect the salvation of the Gospel; they, who obey the gracious call, stand recorded in the Book of Life, and will be honored by God Himself.—When some of a family embrace the Gospel, those who linger behind may probably follow; till sometimes, in answer to fervent prayers, and by means of zealous, affectionate, persevering endeavors, the very last are brought in.—Alas! that professed ministers of religion, who ought to take the lead in every good work, are generally so backward to labor, or venture, or suffer in the cause of God; and need to be stirred up by the example and exhortations even of their laybrethren! But such as address them on these occasions should be chief men, or men of understanding and established character; lest they should be irritated, instead of being persuaded.—It is an invariable rule, that 'the hand of our God is upon all them for good, that seek Him; but his power and wrath is against all them that forsake Him:' and we ought to live in the habitual, firm belief of this, and should not be ashamed, if called to it, to avow our confidence before the greatest monarchs on earth: but we should be ashamed to act inconsistently with these professions, or even to appear distrustful of the Lord in the path of duty. On some occasions we ought to omit these precautions for personal safety, and refuse to make that provision for our families, which in other circumstances are very lawful; lest our weaker brethren, or inquirers, should be stumbled, and so our God should be dishonored. We have therefore great need to ask wisdom from Him, that we may know how to use, or to refuse, lawful things, as expedient, or otherwise: and we shall be no losers by venturing, renouncing, or suffering for his sake; as 'it is better to trust in the LORD, than to put confidence in princes,' or in armed hosts —Indeed, few enterprises, *good in themselves*, begun and conducted in this way, finally fail of success. SCOTT.

distinctions between *using* means, and *confiding in* them; determined to travel without a guard, except that of the Almighty. Accordingly, beseeching Him to be the Guide and Guard of them, their families, their substance, and also of their consecrated treasures, He was entreated of them, their enemies were restrained or disabled, and they arrived unmolested at Jerusalem. SCOTT.

Verse 24.

Sherebiah and Hashabiah, before-mentioned, (18, 19.) were descendants of Merari, the son of Levi, and not of Kohath, Aaron's progenitor; and consequently they were not priests. Either, therefore, the persons specified in this verse were priests who bore the same names; or they were the above-mentioned eminent Levites, who on this occasion were joined in trust with ten priests, in the care of the sacred treasures. (30) ID.

Verses 26, 27.

These treasures are computed to have been at least worth £100,000 stg. besides the sacred vessels, which were very valuable. The far greater part of this was offered by a pagan king, with his princes and nobles! SCOTT. But see note, 1:3. ED.

(26.) *Fine copper, precious as gold.*] 'Syr. *nechosho Corinthio toba, best Corinthian brass*; so called from the brass found after the burning of Corinth, which was brass, copper, gold, and silver, all melted together, as is generally supposed. But it was probably some *factitious* metal, made there, that took the polish, and assumed the brightness of *gold*, and because of its *hardness* was more durable. The Asiatics have still a *factitious* metal of this kind [perhaps a very early triumph in the arts. *Ed.*]. I have seen it often made; it is as bright and fine as gold, takes a most exquisite polish, and will scarcely tarnish. I have kept this exposed to every variation of the air, even among old iron, brass, copper, &c. for 20 yrs. together, without being scarcely at all *oxidized*. It requires much art in the making, but the ingredients are of small value. Vessels of it, because of their lustre, and durability, for domestic and ornamental uses, are in many respects more valuable than gold itself. The only difficulty is to get at first the *true color*, which depends on the *degree of heat*, and the *time* employed in *fusion*: but there are proper rules to ascertain these. It widely differs from *or moulu*, is less expensive, and much more valuable.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 31.

As Ezra departed from Babylon, on the 1st day of the 1st month, (7:9.) and, having sent to Casiphia to procure Levites and Nethinim, the company set off from Ahava on the 12th day of the same month;

32 And [g] we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days.

33 Now on the fourth day was the silver, and the gold, and the vessels [h] weighed in the house of our God, by the hand of [i] Meremoth the son of [k] Uriah the priest; and with him *was* Eleazar the son of Phinehas; and with them *was* [l] Jozabad the son of Jeshua, and Noadiah the son of [m] Binnui, Levites;

34 By number *and* by weight of every one: and all the weight was written at that time.

35 *Also* the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity, [n] offered burnt-offerings unto the God of Israel, [o] twelve bullocks for all Israel, ninety and six rams, seventy and seven lambs, twelve he goats *for* a sin-offering: all *this was* a burnt-offering unto the LORD.

36 And they delivered [p] the king's commissions unto the king's [q] lieutenants, and to the governors on this side the river; and [r] they furthered the people, and the house of God.

CHAP. IX.

Ezra, learning that many of the priests and people had married heathen wives, expresses great sorrow and consternation, 1—4. He prays, and makes confession of sin unto God, 5—15.

NOW when these things were done, [a] the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, [b] have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, [c] *doing* according to their abominations, *even* [d] of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, [e] the Ammonites, the [f] Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.

2 For they have [g] taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that [h] the holy seed have [i] mingled themselves with the people of *those* lands: yea, [k] the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass.

3 And when I heard this thing, I [l] rent my garment and my mantle, and [m] plucked off the hair of my head and of

g 7:8,9. Neh. 2:11.
h 26,30. 1 Chr. 28:14—18. 2 Cor. 8: 20,21.
i Neh. 10:5.
k Neh. 3:4. *Urijah.*
l Neh. 8:7.
m Neh. 10:9.
n Lev. 1,&c. 2 Chr. 29:31,32. Ps. 66: 10—15. 116:12—19. Luke 1:74,75.
o 6:17. Num. 7:27.
p 7:21—24.
q 4:7,&c. 5:6,&c.
r 6:13. Is. 56:6,7. Acts 18:27. Rev. 12:16.
a 10:8. Jer. 26:10,16.
b 6:22. 10:10,11. Ex. 33:16. Num. 23:9. Neh. 9:2. 13:3. Is. 52:11. 2 Cor. 6:14—18.
c Lev. 18:3,24—30. Deut. 12:31. 18: 9. 2 Chr. 33:2. Ps. 106:35.
d Gen. 15:16,19—21. Ex. 23:23. Deut. 20:17,18.
e Deut. 23:3—5. 1 K. 11:1,5—7. Neh. 4:3,7. 13:1—3.
f Num. 25:1—3.
g 10:18—44. Ex. 34:16. Deut. 7:1—4. Neh. 13:23,24. Mal. 2:11.
h Ex. 19:6. 22:31. Deut. 7:6. 14:2. Is. 6:13. Mal. 2:15. 1 Cor. 7:14.
i Gen. 6:2. Neh. 13:3,23,24.
k 10:18—44. Neh. 13:4,17,28.
l Josh. 7:6. 2 K. 18:37. 19:1. Job 1:20. Jer. 36:24.
m Lev. 21:5. Neh. 13:25. Is. 15:2. Jer. 7:29. 48:37,38. Ez. 7:18. Mic 1:16.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 24—36. They should be holy persons, who have the charge of holy things. Ministers are stewards of the most precious mysteries of God; and watch for the souls of men, every one of which is more valuable than all the world: and if any are wanting through their default, they will be required at their hands. The meanest of them, therefore, needs *at least* as much wisdom, vigilance, integrity, fidelity, and zeal, as the chief of those who carried the vessels of the Lord. A clear conscience, and an evidently upright conduct, are both comfortable and reputable: yet our whole dependence for the acceptance of our persons and of all our services, must be rested on the merits and sacrifice of our great Surety: through Him we must devote ourselves, and consecrate our services, to our reconciled God, and then walk before Him in his commandments and ordinances, as we have opportunity and ability.—'When our ways please the LORD, He maketh even our enemies to be at peace with us:' and if He disposes a few of the great ones of the earth to favor his cause; numbers will afford their external assistance, not to please God, but the prince.—If preservation in peace and safety during our journeys on earth demand our tribute of grateful praise: what acclamations of gratitude shall we raise, when the Lord has conducted us safe through the perilous and wearisome pilgrimage of life, and through the gloomy vale of death, out of the reach of all our enemies, into the regions of eternal felicity! SCOTT.

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then families, and joined themselves in affinity with strangers. Observe,

I. Their sin was, *mingling with the people of those lands,* (*v.* 2.) both in trade and conversation, making themselves familiar with them, and, to complete the affinity, taking *their daughters in marriage* to their sons. We are willing to hope they did not worship their gods, but that their captivity had cured them of their idolatry: it is said indeed they *did according to their abominations;* but that (says Patrick) signifies here only the imitation of the heathen in promiscuous marriages with any nation whatsoever; which, by degrees, would lead them to idolatry again. Herein, they disobeyed the express command of God, Deut. 7: 3. profaned the crown of their peculiarity, distrusted the power of God to protect and advance them, hoping by this carnal policy to strengthen themselves, and make an interest among their neighbors. A practical disbelief of God's all-sufficiency is at the bottom of all the sorry [vicious] shifts we make to help ourselves. They exposed themselves, and much more their children, to idolatry; the very sin, and introduced by this very way, that had once ruined their church and nation. But miserable is the case of that people, whose leaders (*v.* 2.) debauch them, and cause them to err.

II. The impression this made on Ezra, *v.* 3. Thus he expressed the deep sense he had, of the dishonor hereby done to God, of the mischief done to themselves, and of the danger of the wrath of God breaking out against them. Note, 1. Others' sins should be our sorrow, and the injury done by them to God's honor, and the souls of men, we should lay to heart. 2. Sorrow for sin must be great sorrow; such Ezra's was, *as for an only son or a first-born.* 3. The scandalous sins of professors we have reason to be astonished at. We may stand amazed to see men contradict, disparage, prejudice, ruin, themselves. Strange, men should act so inconsiderately, and so inconsistently with themselves! *Upright men are astonished at it.*

III. The influence of Ezra's grief for this, on others; we may suppose he *went up to the house*

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it is evident that Casiphia was not far from Ahava. SCOTT.

Verses 32—36.

M. R.—2:68—70. 6:6—12. *Jer.* 31:8, 9. 50:4—6. *Zech.* 2:6—9. *Acts* 11:27—30.—*Eleazar the son of Phinehas.* (33.) 'The names of Eleazar and Phinehas continued through many generations among the priests, because they were two very eminent persons in Aaron's family.' *Patrick.*—*The children,* &c. (35) The company that came up with Ezra, offered these sacrifices, as expressing humiliation for sin, faith in the mercy of God through the typical atonement, and gratitude for his late mercies: this they did, not only for themselves, but for their brethren of all the 12 tribes. ID.

NOTES

CHAP. IX. V. 1, 2. It seems there was still a remnant of the old inhabitants dwelling in the borders of the land. (*M. R.*) They had not indeed yet proceeded to direct idolatry; but were in the direct way to it, and already chargeable with doing in some respects 'according to the abomination of the Gentiles.' SCOTT.

Verse 3.

Plucked, &c.] An ancient expression of passionate grief, still common to the 'climes of the sun,' and strange to us, of a more frigid and disciplined temperament. So *Homer* speaks of mourners, who 'sitting down, howled and plucked off their hair.' So the Hindoos, says

my beard, and [n]sat down astonied.

4 Then were assembled unto me every one that [o]trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat astonied [p]until the evening-sacrifice.

5 ¶ And at the evening-sacrifice I arose up from my [*]heaviness; and, having rent my garment and my mantle, [q]I fell upon my knees, and [r]spread out my hands unto the LORD my God,

[*Practical Observations.*]

6 And said, O my God, [*]I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for [t] our iniquities are increased over *our* head, and our †trespass is [u]grown up unto the heavens.

7 [x]Since the days of our fathers *have* we *been* in a great trespass unto this day; and [y]for our iniquities have we, our kings, *and* our priests, been delivered [z]into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and [*]to confusion of face, [b]as *it is* this day.

8 And now for a ‡little space [c]grace hath been *showed* from the LORD our God, to leave us [d]a remnant to escape, and to give us §a nail [*]in his holy place, that our God may [f]lighten our eyes, and give us a little [g]reviving in our bondage.

9 For [h]we *were* bondmen; [i]yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath ex-

of the Lord, there to humble himself, because he had an eye to God in his grief, and that was the proper place to deprecate his displeasure: public notice was soon taken of it, and all the devout, serious people at hand assembled to him, it should seem, of their own accord, for nothing is said of their being sent to, *v.* 4. Note, 1. It is the character of good people, that they *tremble at God's Word;* they stand in awe of the authority of its precepts, and the severity and justice of its threatenings, and to them that do so *will God look*, Isa. 66: 2. 2. They that tremble *at the Word of God*, cannot but tremble *at the sins of men*, by which the law of God is broken, and his wrath and curse incurred. 3. The pious zeal of one against sin, may perhaps provoke very many to the like, as the apostle speaks in another case, 2 Cor. 9: 2. Many will follow, who have not consideration, conduct, and courage enough to lead in a good work. 4. All good people ought to own those, that appear and act in the cause of God against vice and profaneness, to stand by them, and do what they can to strengthen their hands.

V. 5—15. What the meditations of Ezra's heart were, while, for some hours, he sat down astonished, we may guess by these words; and a most pathetic address he here makes to Heaven. Observe,

I. The time; *at the evening-sacrifice*, *v.* 5. Then (it is likely) devout people used to come into the courts of the temple, to grace the solemnity of the sacrifice, and offer their own prayers in concurrence with it. In their hearing, Ezra chose to make this confession, that they might be made duly sensible of the sins of their people, which, hitherto, they had either not noticed, or made light of. Prayer may preach. The sacrifice, and especially the evening-sacrifice, was a type of the great Propitiation, that *blessed Lamb of God*, who, *in the evening* of the world, was to *take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*, to which we may suppose Ezra had an eye of faith in this penitential address. Certainly Ezra was no stranger to the message the angel Gabriel had, some years ago, delivered to Daniel, at the time of the evening-sacrifice, and, as it were, in explication of it, concerning Messiah the Prince; (Dan. 9: 24.) perhaps he had regard to that in choosing this time.

II. The address itself. It is not properly *a prayer*, for there is not a word of petition in it; but if we give prayer its full latitude, it is offering pious and devout affections to God; and very devout, very pious, are the affections Ezra here expresses: a lively picture of ingenuous repentance. Observe,

1. His confession of the sin, and its aggravations, which he insists on, to affect his own heart, and theirs that joined him, with holy sorrow, shame and fear, in the consideration of it, that they might be deeply humbled for it. And it is observable, that though wholly clear from this guilt, yet he puts himself into the number of the sinners, because he was a member of the same community, *our sins, and our trespass*. Perhaps he now remembered it against himself, that he had staid so long after his brethren in Babylon, and had not separ-

n Neh. 1:4. Job 2:12,13. Ps. 143:4. Ez. 3:15. Dan. 4:19. 8:27.
o 10:3. 2 Chr. 34:27. Is. 66:2. *Ez.* 9:4.
p Ex. 29:39. Dan. 9:21. Acts 3:1.
* Or, *affliction.*
q 2 Chr. 6:13. Ps. 95:6. Luke 22:41. Acts 21:5. Eph. 3:14.
r Ex. 9:29,33. 1 K. 8:22,38,54. Ps. 141:2. 143:6. Is. 4:15.
s Job 40:4. 42:6. Jer. 3:3,24,25. 6: 15. 8:12. 31:19. *Ez.* 16:63. Dan. 9:7,8. Rom. 6:21.
t Gen. 13:13. Ps. 38:4. Is. 1:18. 59: 12.
† Or, *guiltiness.*
u 2 Chr. 28:9. Rev. 18:5.
x Num. 32:14. 2 Chr. 29:6. 30:7. Neh. 9:32—34. Ps. 106:6,7. Lam. 5:7. Dan. 9:5—8. Zech. 1:4,5. Matt. 23:30—33. Acts 7:51,52.
y Lev. 26:14,&c. Deut. 4:25—28. 28: 15,&c. 29:22—28. 30:17—19. 31: 20—22. 32:15—28. 1 Sam. 12:15. 1 K. 9:6—9. Neh. 9:30.
z 2 K. 17:5—8. 18:9—12. 24:1—4. 2 Chr. 36:16—19. Neh. 9:36,37. Dan. 9:11—14.
a Dan. 9:7,8.
b Neh. 9:32. Jer. 25:18. 44:22.
‡ Heb. *moment.*
c 9. Neh. 1:11. 9:31. Hab. 3:2.
d 14. 2 K. 19:4,30,31. Is. 1:9. Jer. 42:2. 44:14. Ez. 6:8,9. 14:22. Zech. 8:6,12. Rom. 9:27. 11:5,6.
§ Or, *a pin*, i. e. *a constant and sure abode.* Ez. 12:11. Is. 22:23—25. Zech. 10:4.
e Is. 56:5. Rev. 3:12.
f 1 Sam. 14:27,29. Job 33:30. Ps. 13: 3. 34:5.
g Ps. 85:6. 138:7. Is. 57:15. Ez. 37: 11—14. Hos. 6:2.
h Neh. 9:36,37. Ps. 106:45,46. 136:23,24.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—5. Those who deal in frivolous, slanderous, and malicious informations, are justly the objects of public execration: but when a pious regard for the honor of God, and a disinterested concern for the benefit of the community, induce men to give information of gross and flagrant abuses, to persons authorized to repress them; they perform a most useful and honorable service: and even princes may glory in such an employment, though the criminals will generally hate and revile them for it. (*Gen.* 37: 2.)—Intermarriages between God's people and ungodly persons, have in all ages been a successful device of Satan, to prevail against the cause of truth and righteousness, and to produce apostasies, superstitions, idolatry, or impiety. Formalists, of every description, make light of alliances or intimacies with those who are ungodly, and explain away the exhortation to 'come out from among them, and be separate:' but those who are best acquainted with the Word of God, with the human heart, and with the history of the church, and who have the most affectionate regard for the souls of men, view the subject in another manner. But alas! the evils, which are allowed and pleaded for, by many who profess to be 'the holy seed,' may well excite our astonishment as well as deep regret: and we ought to show our abhorrence of their abominations in the most earnest and decided manner. When this is done by those who are had in reputation for piety or wisdom, it will excite the attention of others, and cause them to tremble at the words of God, because of the transgression of the people: and this will produce greater watchfulness, lead to self-examination and humiliation, and subserve the purposes of reformation. SCOTT.

Roberts, 'in great distress, tear out their long hair.' Comp. notes, Gen. 50:10, &c. ED.

Verses 6—9.

Increased over our head . . . grown up unto the heavens.] Similar expressions are noted by *Roberts*, as still in use in India; he observes also that to 'lighten the eyes' (*v.* 8.) signifies to give comfort, to strengthen, to refresh. ID.

(6.) Ezra was not personally guilty in this matter: but he spake and acted, as the representative and the mouth of the whole people; being a member, and in some respects the head, of that body which had thus violated the covenant of God. (*Dan.* 9:3—20.) He came to establish the civil and ecclesiastical state of the nation, 'according to the good hand of his God upon him;' and he was ashamed and blushed, when he considered the rebellious and ungrateful conduct of that people, whose cause he had to plead continually before the Lord. The people, it may be supposed, persuaded themselves, that as they were free from idolatry, and adhered to the worship at the temple, all was very well and commendable among them; that their deviations as to these marriages were excusable, if not justifiable by necessity or policy; and that on the whole they might expect the favor and protection of God. (*Rom.* 7:9—12.) But the vehement language of this eminent man was well suited to give them a very different view of the case; and to convince them that they were abominable in the sight of God, and in danger of his severest vengeance: and it loudly called on them all, especially the criminals, to humble themselves before God in deep repentance.—*Grown up unto the heavens.*] 'This signifies . . . the high presumption and insolence of their wickedness.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

(8.) A remnant of the Jews had now occupied Jerusalem and Judea for nearly 80 years; having thus had a *revival*, for a comparatively little space from the state of national *death*, as it were, which had continued during the captivity. (*Ez.* 37:11—14.) 'A nail given them in the LORD's holy place,' seems to signify, that the rebuilding of the temple formed a sure ground of confidence in the Lord, whilst they adhered to his service, and rested all their hopes and dependence on Him. (*M. R.*) ID.

Nail.] 'They do not drive with a hammer the nails or pegs that are placed in eastern walls, but they fix them with the brick work as they are building. They are usually large, with square heads, like dice, well made, the ends being bent so as to make them cramp-irons.' [See note on Isa. 22: 23—25.] CHARDIN.

(9.) *A wall*, &c.] The temple, being the pledge of God's presence among them, was as a wall, by which the Jews were effectually secured from their enemies; unless they provoked Him to desert them. Jerusalem was not at this time surrounded with a wall. (*Neh.* 1:3. 2.12—16. 3: 4:1—3 *Dan.* 9:24—27.) 'The Heb. (*gader*) doth not properly signify a *wall*, but a *hedge* or *fence*, such as were made for the folds of sheep. Whereby Ezra expresses (as Huetius well notes,) the singular care of God of them; who being "the Shepherd of Israel,"

tended mercy unto us [k] in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, [l] to set up the house of our God, and to [*] repair the desolations thereof, and to give us [m] a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem.

10 And now, O our God, [n] what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments,

11 Which thou hast commanded [†] by thy servants the prophets, saying, [o] The land unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with [p] the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from [‡] one end to another with their uncleanness.

12 Now therefore [q] give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, [r] nor seek their peace, or their wealth for ever; [s] that ye may be strong, [t] and eat the good of the land, [u] and leave *it* for an inheritance to your children for ever.

13 And [x] after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God § hast punished us [y] less than our iniquities *deserve*, and [z] hast given us *such* deliverance as this;

14 Should [a] we again break thy commandments, and [b] join in affinity with the people of these abominations, [c] wouldest not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed *us*, so that *there should be* [d] no remnant nor escaping?

15 O LORD God of Israel, [e] thou *art* righteous; for we remain yet escaped, as *it is* this day: behold, we *are* before thee [f] in our trespasses; for [g] we cannot stand before thee because of this.

CHAP. X.

The people weep with Ezra, 1. Shechaniah proposes that the people should divorce their heathen wives, and encourages Ezra to attempt this; who requires the priests, and others, to engage by oath so to do, 2—5. By proclamation he assembles the people, who promise to comply, 6—14. The measure is regularly carried into execution, 15—17. The names of those who put away their strange wives, 18—44.

NOW [a] when Ezra had prayed, and [b] when he had confessed,

k 1:1—4,7—11. 6:1—12. 7:6,11—28.
l 6:14,15. Hag. 1:9. Zech. 4:6—10.
* Heb. *set up.*
m Is. 5:5. Dan. 9:25. Zech. 2:5.
n Gen. 44:16. Josh. 7:8. Lam. 3:22. Dan. 9:4—16. Rom. 3:19.
† Heb. *by the hand of.*
o 1. Lev. 18:24—30. Deut. 12:31. 18: 12. 2 Chr. 33:2.
p 6:21. Ez. 35:25—27. 2 Cor. 7:1.
‡ Heb. *mouth to mouth. marg.*
q Ex. 34:16. Deut. 7:3. Josh. 23:12,13.
r Deut. 23:6. 2 Chr. 19:2. 2 Jc 10:11.
s Deut. 6:1,2. Josh. 1:6—9.
t Is. 1:19.
u Gen. 13:18,19. Ps. 112:1,2. Prov. 13:22. 20:7.
x Neh. 9:32. Ez. 24:13,14. Gal. 3:4.
§ Heb. *hast withheld beneath our iniquities.*
y Ps. 103:10. Lam. 3:22,39,40. Hab. 3:2.
z Ps. 106:45,46.
a John 5:14. Rom. 6:1. 2 Pet. 2:20,21.
b Ex. 23:32,33. Judg. 2:2. Neh. 13: 23—27.
c Ex. 32:10. Num. 16:21,45. Deut. 9: 8:14.
d 8. Deut. 32:26,27. Is. 1:9. Jer. 46: 28. Ez. 6:8.
e Neh. 9:33,34. Dan. 9:7—11. Rom. 10:3.
f Is. 64:6,7. Ez. 33:10. Zech. 3:3,4. 1 Cor. 15:17.
g Job 9:2,3. Ps. 130:3. 143:2. Rom. 3:19—22.
a Dan. 9:3,4,20. Acts 10:30.
b Lev. 26:40,41. Ps. 32:5. Hos. 14:2. 1 John 1:8—10.

3. He speaks as one much assured of the righteousness of God, and resolved to acquiesce in that, and to leave the matter with Him, whose judgment is *according to the truth* v. 1 5. We have nothing to say, nothing to do, but to *make supplication to our Judge*, Job 9: 15. Thus does this good man lay his grief before God, and then leave it with Him.

CHAP. X. V. 1—5. In this ch. we have the grievance redressed, which was complained of,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 6—15. Whatever may afflict our hearts, we must not yield to inactive despondency, but arise from our heaviness, to spread our sorrows before the Lord, with humble and reverent devotion. —In confessing the sins of churches, or nations, all who form a part of them should bear a share: for every individual has, one way or other, added his transgressions to the aggregate of guilt: and all are interested in the event, and stand related to such as have committed those crimes, from which they have been preserved.—We should endeavor to affect ourselves and others with the greatness and heinousness of our sins: for often, when we think little of our transgressions, they have grown up even to the heavens, and are ready to overwhelm us with the vengeance of the Almighty.—National guilt accumulates from age to age, whilst children copy the iniquities of their fathers. Hence spring all our miseries: yet the Lord 'punishes us less than our iniquities deserve;' and no past or present sufferings will exempt us from greater in future, unless 'we repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance:' casting ourselves wholly upon the mercy of God, through the atoning blood of the Redeemer. SCOTT.

had . . . brought them back into their ancient folds, wherein He preserved them safe, even when they had no wall to defend them, under the powerful protection of the king of Persia.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

Verses 10—12.

(*M. R.*) *Nor seek their peace*, &c. (12) The Israelites might seek the conversion of the heathen, or do them acts of common humanity: but they must not unite interests with them, nor seek their peace or prosperity in the land of Canaan, whilst they continued idolaters. (*Josh.* 23:11—13, *v.* 13.) ID.

Verse 15.

Though the Jews had endured many and heavy sufferings, yet they had been punished less than they deserved; for they had broken their covenant, and merited utter ruin. (13. *Lam.* 3:21—23.) Whatever therefore should hereafter befall them, the Lord would be *righteous* in his dealing with them: and if they were yet spared, it would be entirely the effect of his *mercy*.—Thus Ezra closed his address, without adding one petition to his humble confessions. He knew not what to say, to ask, or to do. He could say nothing to excuse his people; he was sure they could not stand in judgment before God. He dreaded the consequences; yet he had not given up all hopes. His own mind was affected, and his manner could scarcely fail to affect others: and by this abrupt conclusion, as one who was assured that the righteous Lord would do what was right, he referred the whole matter to Him, to do what was good in his sight. (10:1. 2. *Josh.* 7:6—9. 2 *Sam.* 24: 12—14.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. X. V. 1. *Casting himself down.*] 'So the Hindoos, even of the highest rank, do not hesitate thus to prostrate themselves in

[c] weeping and casting himself down [d] before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel [e] a very great congregation of men, and women, and children: for the people wept * very sore.

2 And [f] Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, *one* of the sons of [g] Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, [h] We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: [i] yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.

3 Now therefore [k] let us make a covenant with our God to † put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, [l] according to the counsel of my lord, and [m] of those that tremble [n] at the commandment of our God; and [o] let it be done according to the law.

4 [p] Arise; [q] for *this* matter *belongeth* unto thee: [r] we also *will be* with thee: [s] be of good courage, and do *it*.

5 Then [t] arose Ezra, and [u] made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that they should do according to this word. And they sware.

6 ¶ Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went into [x] the chamber of [y] Johanan the son of Eliashib: and *when* he came thither, [z] he did eat no bread, nor drink water: for [a] he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away.

7 And [b] they made proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem unto all the children of the captivity, that they should gather themselves together unto Jerusalem;

8 And [c] that whosoever would not come within three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders, all his substance should be forfeited, and himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away.

9 Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days. It *was* the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month; and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of this matter, and for the great rain.

10 And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel.

11 Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.

12 Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do.

13 But the people *are* many, and it is a time of much rain, and we are not able to stand without, neither *is this a work* of one day or two: for we are many that have transgressed in this thing.

14 Let now our rulers of all the congregation stand, and let all them which have taken strange wives in our cities come at appointed times, and with them the elders of every city, and the judges thereof, until the fierce wrath of our God for this matter be turned from us.

15 Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah were employed about this matter: and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite helped them.

16 And the children of the captivity did so. And Ezra the priest, with certain chief of the fathers, after the house of their fathers, and all of them by their names, were separated, and sat down in the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter.

17 And they made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives by the first day of the first month.

18 And among the sons of the priests there were found *that* had taken strange wives: namely, of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren; Maaseiah, and Eliezer, and Jarib, and Gedaliah.

19 And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives; and *being* guilty, *they offered* a ram of the flock for their trespass.

20 And of the sons of Immer; Hanani, and Zebadiah.

21 And of the sons of Harim; Maaseiah, and Elijah, and Shemaiah, and Jehiel, and Uzziah.

22 And of the sons of Pashur; Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethaneel, Jozabad, and Elasah.

23 Also of the Levites; Jozabad, and Shimei, and Kelaiah, (the same *is* Kelita,) Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.

24 Of the singers also; Eliashib: and of the porters; Shallum, and Telem, and Uri.

25 Moreover of Israel: of the sons of Parosh; Ramiah, and Jeziah, and Malchiah, and Miamin, and Eleazar, and Malchijah, and Benaiah.

26 And of the sons of Elam; Mattaniah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, and Abdi, and Jerimoth, and Elijah.

27 And of the sons of Zattu; Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, and Jerimoth, and Zabad, and Aziza.

28 Of the sons also of Bebai; Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, *and* Athlai.

29 And of the sons of Bani; Meshullam, Malluch, and Adaiah, Jashub, and Sheal, and Jerimoth.

30 And of the sons of Pahath-moab; Adna, and Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezaleel, and Binnui, and Manasseh.

31 And of the sons of Harim; Eliezer, Ishijah, Malchiah, Shemaiah, Shimeon,

32 Benjamin, Malluch, Shemariah.

33 Of the sons of Hashum; Mattenai, Mattathah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, Shimei.

34 Of the sons of Bani; Maadai, Amram, and Uel,

35 Benaiah, Bedeiah, Chelluh,

36 Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib,

37 Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasau,

38 And Bani, and Binnui, Shimei,

39 And Shelemiah, and Nathan, and Adaiah,

40 Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai,

41 Azareel, and Shelemiah, Shemariah,

42 Shallum, Amariah, Joseph.

43 Of the sons of Nebo; Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jadau, and Joel, Benaiah.

44 All these had taken strange wives: and *some* of them had wives by whom they had children.

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[c] Ps. 119:136. Jer. 9:1. 13:17. Zech. 12:10. Luke 19:41. Rom. 9:2.
[d] 1 K. 8:30. 9:3. 2 Chr. 20:9.
[e] Deut. 31:12. 2 Chr. 20:13. Neh. 10: 28. Joel 2:16—18. Acts 21:5.
* Heb. *a great weeping.* Judg. 2:4,5 Neh. 8:9.
[f] 26. Neh. 3:29.
[g] 2:7,31. Neh. 7:12,34.
[h] Ex. 34:12. Neh. 13:27.
[i] Ex. 34:6,7. Is. 55:6,7. Jer. 3:12,13. 1 John 1:7—9.
[k] 2 K. 11:17. 2 Chr. 29:10. 34:31,32. Neh. 9:38. 10:29,&c.
[l] Heb. *bring forth.*
[m] 2 Chr. 30:12.
[n] 9:4. 2 Chr. 34:21,27. Ps. 119:59, 120. Is. 66:2. Ez. 9:4.
[o] Deut. 7:2,3. Josh. 23:12,13. Neh. 8:14. 13:1—3. Is. 8:20.
[p] Josh. 7:10,&c. 1 Chr. 22:16,19. Ez. 9:10.
[q] Mark 13:34.
[r] Josh. 1:13—18. 1 Chr. 28:10,21.
[s] Is. 35:3,4. Heb. 10:4. 12:12,13.
[t] Prov. 1:5. 9:9. 15:22a. 25:11,12. 27:9.
[u] 3. Neh. 5:12. 10:29. 13:25. Matt. 26:63.
[x] Neh. 13:5.
[y] Neh. 3:1,20. 12:10,22. 13:28.
[z] Deut. 9:18. Job 23:12. John 4:31—34.
[a] 9:4. Is. 22:12. Dan. 9:3.
[b] 1:1. 2 Chr. 30:5.
[c] 7:26. Judg. 21:5. 1 Sam. 11:7.

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the dust.' [Note 9:3.] 'How often do you see a man with his face *in* the dust, pouring out his complaint, or making his request to the gods, heedless of any about him.' ROBERTS.

Verse 3.

(*M. R.—To put away*, &c.] This is not any where expressly commanded in the law; yet the spirit of the precept seemed to require it. (9:1—4. *Ex.* 34:11—17. *Josh.* 23:11—13, *v.* 13. *Neh.* 13:23—30.) The prohibition of marriages with idolaters was given to prevent temptations to idolatry: and retaining an idolatrous wife formed a continual temptation. Divorces were permitted to the Israelites, *by the judicial law*, to prevent worse consequences: but the seducing of a man to idolatry was the worst consequence imaginable. This measure would also tend to prevent the contracting of such marriages in future. 'That which was done contrary to the law of God, was looked upon as null, and therefore these were accounted no marriages; and their children . . . were not to be a part of the family, but to be put away with their mothers. . . . Being educated in superstition, they might corrupt other children.' *Patrick.* It is probable, however, that none were put away, but such as continued idolaters; and that they were provided for out of the estates of those who divorced them. It does not appear, whether the children were generally *sent away* with their mothers, or not: but doubtless such were provided for, as were not admitted into the congregation of the Lord. (*Note*, 10, 11.) Under the N. T. the marriages of believers with ungodly persons are evidently sinful, and of very bad consequence: yet when contracted they must not be dissolved. The partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles is broken down; such matters are determined by the municipal laws of every country; and divorces, except for adultery, are expressly disallowed (*Matt.* 5:31, 32. 19 3—9. *Mark* 10 2—12. 1 *Cor.* 7:10—16.) SCOTT.

Verses 7, 8.

M. R.—All his substance, &c. (8) (*M. Notes, Lev.* 27:28, 29. *Josh.* 6:17—19.) 'In Heb. *devoted*, which signifies, that his goods were to be so forfeited, as to become sacred to God; and so incapable to be restored to the former owner, being put into the treasury of God's house.' *Patrick.*—Doubtless, reasonable excuses would be admitted: and the punishment was only inflicted on the refractory, and those who showed a determination to oppose the measure. Ezra was authorized to punish such persons more severely; (7:26.) but he was not

cording to the counsel of the princes and the elders, all his substance should be *forfeited, and [d] himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away.

[*Practical Observations.*]

9 ¶ Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days. It *was* [e] the ninth month, and the twentieth *day* of the month: and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, [f] trembling because of *this* matter, and for the † great rain.

10 And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have ‡ taken strange wives, [g] to increase the trespass of Israel.

11 Now therefore [h] make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and [i] do his pleasure; and [k] separate yourselves from the people of the land, [l] and from the strange wives.

12 Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, [m] so must we do.

13 But [n] the people are many, and *it is* a time of much rain, and we are not able to stand without; neither *is this* a work of one day or two: for § we are many that have transgressed in this thing.

14 Let now [o] our rulers of all the congregation stand, and let all them which have taken strange wives in our cities come at appointed times, and with them the elders of every city, and the judges thereof, until [p] the fierce wrath of our God ‖ for this matter be turned from us.

15 Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah were employed about this *matter*: and [q] Meshullam and [r] Shabbethai the Levite helped them.

16 And the children of the captivity did so. And Ezra the priest, *with* certain chief of the fathers, after the house of their fathers, and all of them by *their* names, were separated, and sat down in the first day of the tenth month [s] to examine the matter.

17 And they made an end with all the men B. C. 458. that had taken strange wives, by the first day of the first month.

18 ¶ And among [t] the sons of the priests there were found that had taken strange wives; *namely*, of the sons of [u] Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and his brethren; [x] Maaseiah, and Eliezer, and Jarib, and Gedaliah.

19 And they [y] gave their hands that they would put away their wives; and *being* guilty, *they offered* [z] a ram of the flock for their trespass.

20 And of the sons of [b] Immer, Hanani, and Zebadiah.

21 And of the sons of [c] Harim; Maaseiah, and Elijah, and Shemaiah, and Jehiel, and Uzziah.

22 And of the sons of [d] Pashur; Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nathaneel, Jozabad, and Elasah.

23 Also of the Levites; [e] Jozabad and Shemei, and Kelaiah, (the same *is* [f] Kelita,) Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.

24 Of the singers also; Eliashib: and of the porters; Shallum, and Telem, and Uri.

25 Moreover of Israel: of the sons of [g] Parosh; Ramiah, and Jeziah, and Malchiah, and Miamin, and Eleazar, and Malchijah, and Benaiah.

26 And of the sons of [h] Elam; Mattaniah, Zechariah, and [i] Jehiel, and Abdi, and Jeremoth, and Eliah.

27 And of the sons of

* Heb. *devoted.* Lev. 27:28. Josh. 6:19.
d Neh. 13:3. Matt. 18:17. John 9: 22,34. 16:2. 1 Cor. 5:13.
e 7:8,9. Esth. 2:16.
f 1 Sam. 12:17,18. Jer. 10:10,13.
† Heb. *showers.*
‡ Heb. *caused to dwell,* or *brought back.*
g 9:6. Num. 32:14. Josh. 22:17,18. 2 Chr. 28:13. Matt. 23:32.
h Lev. 26:40—42. Josh. 7:19. Ps. 32: 5. Prov. 28:13. Jer. 3:13. 1 John 1:7—9.
i Is. 1:16—18. 55:4. Rom. 12:2. Col. 1:10. Heb. 13:21.
k 9:1. Neh. 13:3. 2 Cor. 6:17.
l Deut. 7:3,4. 1 Cor. 2:12—14.
m 3,4. Neh. 13:23. Ps. 78:37,57.
n 18—44. Matt. 7:13,14.
§ Or, *we have greatly offended.*
o Deut. 17:9,18,19. 2 Chr. 19:5—7.
p Num. 25:4. Deut. 13:17. Josh. 7: 26. 2 Chr. 29:10. Ps. 78:38. Is. 12:1.
‖ Or, *be turned from us, till this matter* be despatched.
¶ Heb. *stood.*
q Neh. 3:6. 10:20. 12:33.
r Neh. 11:16.
s Deut. 13:14. Job 29:16.
t 9:1. Lev. 21:7,13—15. 1 Sam. 2:22 —24. Neh. 13:28. Jer. 23:11,14. Ez. 44:22. Mal. 2:8,9. 1 Tim. 3:11.
u See on 2:2. 3:2.—5:2. 1 Chr. 6:14, 15. Neh. 12:10. Hag. 1:1. Zech. 3:1. *Joshua.*
x Neh. 8:4,7.
y 2 K. 10:15. 1 Chr. 29:24. 2 Chr. 30: 8. *Marg.* Lam. 5:6. Gal. 2:9.
z Lev. 5:16. 6:6.
b 2:37. 1 Chr. 24:14. Neh. 7:40.
c 2:39. 1 Chr. 24:8. Neh. 7:42.
d 2:38. 1 Chr. 9:12. Neh. 7:41.
e 8:33. Neh. 11:16.
f Neh. 10:10.
g 2:3. Neh. 7:8.
h 2. 2:7,31. 8:7. Neh. 7:12,34.
i 2.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—8. Genuine humiliation before God, and sorrow for sin, always produce 'works meet for repentance.' In order to affect others with godly sorrow and hatred of sin, or holy love and gratitude, we must ourselves be greatly affected.—We cannot too solemnly engage ourselves and each other, to renounce all interests, connections, or indulgences, *which are contrary to the law of God.* And when leading men set the example, and then propose the same things to others, many may be prevailed on by conviction, fear, or shame: and thus opposition will be prevented, or rendered ineffectual.—Excessive sorrow, terror, and self-abasement; and a great engagement of heart about the things of God and the eternal world, indispose us to animal recreation: so that fasting then becomes a natural expression of our feelings, as well as a suitable concomitant of our prayers and supplications.—Fervent affections should not be allowed to subside, till our most beloved sins have been renounced; and we should 'know no man after the flesh,' when a revival of pure religion is attempted. (2 *Cor.* 5: 16.) SCOTT.

disposed to put any one to death, if it could be avoided. SCOTT.

Verse 9.

For the great rain.] The periodical rains, common at that season, seem to have been more abundant than usual. (*Jer.* 3.2, 3.) ID.

Trembling.] 'On court days, in Hindostan, during a wet monsoon, the half-naked people sit huddled together under the nearest tree, *trembling* [shivering] for the great rain.' ROBERTS. 'The 9th month answered to our December; this is the coldest and most rainy part of the year in Palestine.' [Note, Ex. 12:2] Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 16, 17.

The cases, brought before the council, were either so many, or so complicated; that, though they separated themselves from other employments, to attend on this exclusively, they were 3 months in finishing it. This took place just a year after Ezra left Babylon. SCOTT.

Verses 18, 19.

No doubt Jeshua died many years before this transaction: (*Note*, 7: 1—5.) but his descendants had set a very pernicious example to the people. They, however, were the first to confess and forsake their sin, and also to present a trespass-offering on that account; 'which some think, all the rest made, after their example.' *Patrick.* (*M. R.*) ID.

[k] Zattu; Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, and Jeremoth, and Zabad, and Aziza.

28 Of the sons also of [l] Bebai; Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, *and* Athlai.

29 And of the sons of [m] Bani; Meshullam, [n] Malluch, and Adaiah, Jashub, and Sheal, and Ramoth.

30 And of the sons of [o] Pahath-Moab; Adna, and Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezaleel, and Binnui, and Manasseh.

31 And *of* the sons of [p] Harim; Eliezer, Ishijah, [q] Malchiah, Shemaiah, Shimeon,

32 Benjamin, Maluch, *and* Shemariah.

33 Of the sons of [r] Hashum; Mattenai, Mattathah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, *and* Shimei.

34 Of the sons of [s] Bani; Maadai, Amram, and Uel,

35 Benaiah, Bedeiah, Chelluh,

36 Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib,

37 Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasau,

38 And Bani, and Binnui, Shimei,

39 And Shelemiah, and Nathan, and Adaiah,

40 * Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai,

41 Azareel, and Shelemiah, Shemariah,

42 Shallum, Amariah, *and* Joseph.

43 Of the sons of [t] Nebo; Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jadau, and Joel, Benaiah.

44 All these had taken [u] strange wives: and *some* of them had wives by whom they had children.

each in his respective place might gain and give intelligence, to facilitate the matter; we see here,

1. Who undertook to manage the matter, and bring the cause regularly before the commissioners; *Jonathan* and *Jahaziah*, probably, the men that made that proposal; (*v.* 13, 14.) two honest Levites were joined with, and *helped them*, *v.* 15. Lightfoot gives a contrary sense of this; *Only* (or *nevertheless*) they *stood against this matter*, (which reading, the original will very well bear,) and these two *Levites helped them*, in opposing it, either the thing itself, or this method of proceeding. It was strange, if a work of this kind was carried on, and met with no opposition.

2. Who sat as commissioners; Ezra the president, and *certain chiefs of the fathers* qualified with wisdom and zeal, above others, *v.* 16.

3. How long they were; they began, *the* 1*st day of the* 10*th month*, (*v.* 16.) but 10 days after this method was proposed, (*v.* 9.) and finished in 3 months, *v.* 17. They sat close, and minded their business, otherwise they could not have despatched so many causes, in so little time. If we may judge by other cases, provided the wife were proselyted, she was not to be put away; the trial of which would require great care.

4. The guilty are here recorded to their perpetual reproach, *v.* 18—44. They promised *under their hand* to put away their strange wives; sware it with their *hands lifted up*, so some. They took the appointed way of obtaining pardon, Lev. 6: 6.

About 113 in all are here named, who had married strange wives, and some, it is said, (*v.* 44.) had children by them, which implies that not many had, God not crowning those marriages with the blessing of increase. Whether the children were turned off with the mothers, as Shechaniah proposed, does not appear: it should seem not. it is, however, probable the wives put away were well provided for, [as was but just,] according to their rank. One would think this grievance was now thoroughly redressed, yet we meet with it again, Neh. 13: 22. and Mal. 2: 11. for such corruptions are easily and insensibly brought in, but not without great difficulty purged out again. The best reformers can but do their endeavor; but when the Redeemer Himself shall *come to Sion*, He shall effectually *turn away ungodliness from Jacob*.

k 2:8. Neh. 7:13.
l 2:11. 8:11. Neh. 7:16.
m 2:10. Neh. 7:15. *Binnui.*
n Neh. 10:4.
o 2:6. 8:4. Neh. 7:11.
p 2:32. Neh. 7:35.
q Neh. 3:11. *Malchijah.*
r 2:19. Neh. 7:22.
s 29.
* Or, *Mahnadebai*, according to some copies.
t 2:29. Neh. 7:33.
u Prov. 2:16. 5:3,20.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 9—44. The most effectual divorce from lucrative or beloved sins, is generally preceded by examination and deliberation: for that which is hastily resolved, seldom proves durable.—When sin is repented of and forsaken, God will mercifully forgive: but the blood of Christ, our Sin-offering, is the only atonement which takes away the guilt of it: and all the names written in the Book of Life, are those of penitent, believing sinners; not of the self-righteous who think they have no need of repentance. SCOTT.

V. 44. Perhaps these were the principal persons, who were criminal; for all circumstances combine to induce an opinion, that a far greater number were concerned, than those here expressed by name.—Ezra continued nearly twelve years after this in authority at Jerusalem, no doubt zealously laboring to promote a revival of true religion. And in many ways, he established the *ecclesiastical* state of the Jews: though he seems not to have been so well qualified, as his successor Nehemiah, to attend to the *civil* government, to defend the city and state against enemies and invaders, and to effect outward reformation by the authority of the magistrate. So he is introduced in Nehemiah, as well employed in his proper line, though superseded by Nehemiah in his civil authority. (I *Sam.* 12:23. *Neh.* 8: 1—8.) SCOTT.

CONCLUDING NOTES. 'Ezra is said to have lived to the age of 120 yrs. the precise age of Moses (Deut. 34:7.); and his memory is held in almost equal reverence, by his grateful countrymen. [Indeed they call this great patriot, 'the second Moses.'] He, in fact, rendered them the most lasting services: for, beside conducting them back to their beloved country, and superintending the building of the temple, 1. He corrected, says *Calmet*, the errors which had crept into the sacred writings, from the negligence, or misapprehension, of transcribers. 2. He carefully collected all the books of which the Holy Scripture then consisted. 3. He occasionally added what appeared to him necessary to illustrate, connect, or complete them. 4. He changed the former names of some places, which were in his time become obsolete, and substituted the modern; and 5. He is said to have transcribed the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures in the Chaldee character, to render them more intelligible to the people at large. See also *Prideaux*, Part 1. Book 5. [Dr. *Alexander*, Canon of SS. and note on Canon of SS. at end of Mal.]' HEWLETT.

From the labors of *Champollion*, *Grotefend*, and *Saint-Martin*, we are now enabled to give in the cut below, several of the names of Persian kings mentioned in the SS. (if not all,) in the language of the Medes, the ancient Zend. This, *Grotefend* makes to have 3 *wedge-shaped alphabets*, (of the Zend, Pehlvi, and Babylonian dialects, respectively; *Heeren*,) all found at Persepolis, see below.—In the cut, the inscriptions, 1, 2, 3, 4, are in the 1st, most simple, and probably most ancient alphabet; this *Heeren* thinks to have 'originated in Media, where the Zend language, and Zoroastrism flourished; but, as the Babylon bricks, themselves of remote antiquity, have these wedge-shaped inscriptions, [cut, Gen. xi. 3.] we feel equally disposed to attribute to them an Aramæan origin. In all probability, too, the writing the Greeks and Persians termed Assyrian, was no other than the wedge-shaped.'... 'The orientalists of Germany and France,' says *Heeren*, (1833) 'have received *Grotefend's* method [i. e. his alphabet of the character, given in part in the cut] with approbation.' The inscription numbered (1) in the cut, is part of one, found on a pillar, near Murghab, whose ruins *Grotefend* considers, with *Morier*, to be the site of Pasargada. It runs thus, Edo (Lord) KUSRUESH (Cyrus, Heb. *Kurs*, *Koresh*, Sept. Kuros, Kyros) KSHEHION (king) AKHEOTSHOSHOH (Ruler of the world.) Their ignorance of geography, led such nomade conquerors as Cyrus, Jenghis Khan, &c. aspiring to universal conquest, to use this title. No. 2, is from a monument at Persepolis; the whole inscription runs thus; DARHEUSH (Darius, Heb. *Drush*, *Dariavesh*, Sept. Dareios,) K——H (king) EGHRE (powerful, &c.) GOSHTASHPAHE (of Hystaspes) BUN (stirps, progeny) AKHEOTSHOS HOH. 'King Darius, son of Hystaspes, Ruler of the world.' No. 4, is the name of Xerxes in the 1st alphabet; No. 7, his name in the 2d alphabet; No. 8, his name in a Persepolitan alphabet thought to be still more modern. *Grotefend* thus reads an inscription from Persepolis, given by *Niebuhr*; KSCHERSCHE * (cut, 4,) Xerxes, (*Champ.* found the inscriptions 5, and 6, on an Egyptian alabaster vase; he reads them KHSCHEARSCHA. and this seems to have been the key to the deciphering of the Persepolitan alphabets.) KHSCHEHION (king) EGHRE (powerful, valiant) KHSCHEHION KHSCHEHIOTCH, (cut, 3, king of kings. (Ezra, vii. 12. &c.) *Shah in shah*, the modern title also of the Persian kings) A. O. (filius ?) DARHEAUSCH KHSCHEHIOHAHE (of king Darius) BUN (successor) AKHEOTCHOSCHOH (of the sovereign of the world.) ED.

* If the third character in the name of Xerxes, (*Ksher-she*,) and the 4th in that of Darius (Da-re-ush) be a sign to determine the pronunciation; one might imagine the aspirate to be changed, after certain consonants, into *w* or *y*, so that the two names would read *Kshwereshe* and Daryeush or Daryeoesh: a supposition which may serve to explain how the Hebrews, like the Egyptians, by placing an *a* before each word commencing with two silent consonants, in order to facilitate the pronunciation, as the French would employ an *e* for the same purpose, might easily change the name of Xerxes into *Ahshvresh*, *Ahhashveresh*, and Darius into *Dryush*, *Daryavesh*. In all probability, the Persian name of Xerxes might contain the sound of *w*, omitted by the Greeks for want of a corresponding sign, as in the case of *Araxes* for *Worokeshe* or *Warakshe*; such at least might be gathered from the different ways of spelling this name, i. e. if we admit the Gr. words Assoueros, Axuares, Oxuartes, and Axares (in Kuaxares) to be nothing more than different modifications of (Gr.) Xerxes, just as (Gr.) Artoxares, Artaxares, and Artaxastes, are of (Gr.) Artoxerxes, or Artaxerxes, (in Zend, *Artakhshethr*, in Pehlvi, *Artaxshir*, Pers. Ardeshir, Arab. Azdeshir, [Heb. Artachsastha, Arthachshashtha, Egyptian (so Wilkinson) Artkheshes,]), with the initial *Art* or *Ard*, (strenuus, magnus, fortitudine polleus, *Herod.*)' *Grotefend.*

AN EXPOSITION,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, AND NOTES,

UPON THE BOOK OF

NEHEMIAH.

THIS book continues the history of the *children of the captivity;* the poor Jews lately returned to their own land. At this time, not only the Persian monarchy flourished, in great pomp and power, but Greece and Rome began to be very great, and make a figure. Of the affairs of those high and mighty states, we have authentic accounts extant, but the sacred and inspired history takes cognizance only of the state of the Jews, and makes no mention of other nations, but as the Israel of God had dealings with them; for the Lord's portion is his people, his peculiar treasure. In my esteem, Ezra the scribe, and Nehemiah the Tirshatha, though neither ever wore a crown, commanded an army, conquered any country, or were famed for philosophy or oratory, yet both being pious, praying men, and very serviceable in their day to the church of God and the interests of religion, were really greater men, and more honorable, not only than any of the Roman consuls or dictators, but than Xenophon, or Demosthenes, or Plato himself, who lived at the same time, the bright ornaments of Greece. Nehemiah's agency for advancing the settlement of Israel we have a full account of in this book of his own commentaries, or memoirs, wherein he records not only the works of his hands, but the workings of his heart, in the management of public affairs; inserting in the story many devout reflections and ejaculations, which discover in his mind a very deep tincture of serious piety, and are peculiar to his writings. Twelve yrs. he was governor of Judea, under Artaxerxes, from his 20th year, (*ch.* 1: 1.) to his 32d, *ch.* 13: 6. Lightfoot supposes this to be Artaxerxes from whom Ezra had his commission. Some call this *the 2d book of Ezra*, not because he was its penman, but because it is a continuation of the history of the foregoing book, with which it is connected, *v.* 1. This was the last *historical* book written, as Malachi the last *prophetical* book, of the O. T. HENRY.

This book resumes the history of the Jews, about 12 years after the close of the book of Ezra; and contains the latest canonical records of the nation till the days of Christ; reaching down to about 110 years after the captivity. It was evidently written by Nehemiah himself, who throughout speaks in the first person: and probably it was received among the canonical scriptures by Ezra and his assistants or successors.—Hearing of the distressed state of his countrymen, he, in great affliction, petitions Artaxerxes, king of Persia, for leave to go up to Jerusalem, as governor, with a commission to rebuild the walls, and to provide for the security and the prosperity of his people. Having obtained his request, he executes his commission for twelve years with great success. After this he returns to Artaxerxes, but at length comes back to Jerusalem; and employs various measures to promote the prosperity of the Jews, and the reformation of abuses.—His zeal, activity, and disinterestedness are well worthy of imitation; especially by such as are employed in arduous undertakings, for the good of the church or the community.—This book has many internal proofs of divine inspiration, and always has been considered by the Jews as a part of their sacred scriptures, and indeed as a continuation of the book of Ezra: it does not, however, seem to contain any prophecies, nor is it explicitly referred to in the N. T. SCOTT.

B. C. 446.

CHAP. I.

Nehemiah, being informed of the afflicted state of the Jews, mourns, fasts, and prays, 1—4. His prayer, 5—11.

THE words of [a] Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass [b] in the month Chisleu, [c] in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace,

2 That [d] Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and *certain* men of Judah; and [f] I asked them concerning the Jews [g] that had escaped,

a 10:1.
b Ezra 10:9. Zech. 7:1.
c Ezra 7:7.
d Esth. 1:2. 3:15. Dan. 8:2.
e 7:2.
f Ps. 122:6—9. 137:5,6.
g Ezra 9:8,9,14. Jer. 44:14. Ez. 6:9. 7:16. 24:26,27.

CHAP. I. V. 1—4. Here we first meet with Nehemiah at the Persian court. What tribe he was of, does not appear; but if it be true, (so 2 Mac. 1: 18.) that he offered sacrifice, we must conclude him a priest. We are here told he was in Shushan, the palace, or royal city, of the king of Persia, where the court was ordinarily kept, (*v.* 1, 11.) that he was the king's cup-bearer, a place of great trust, as well as of honor and profit. Kings and great men, probably, looked upon it as a piece of state to be attended by those of other nations. By being thus at court, 1. He would be the better qualified to serve his country, in that post for which God had designed him; as Moses was the fitter to govern, for being bred up in Pharaoh's court, and David in Saul's. 2. He would have the fairer opportunity to serve his country, by his interest in the king and those about him. Observe, he is not forward to tell of his preferment, and mentions it not till the end of the ch. when he could not avoid it, because of the following story; at first, he only says, *I was in Shushan the palace;* whence we may learn to be humble and modest, and slow to speak of our own advancements. But in the providences of God concerning him, we may observe, to our comfort, 1. That when God has work to do, He will never want instruments to do it with. 2. That those whom God designs to employ in his service, He will find out proper ways both to fit for it, and to call to it. 3. That God has his remnant in all places; we read of Obadiah in the house of Ahab, saints in Cæsar's household, and a devout Nehemiah in Shushan the palace. 4. That God can make the courts of princes sometimes nurseries, and sometimes sanctuaries, to the friends and patrons of the church's cause.

Now here we have,

I. Nehemiah's tender and compassionate inquiry concerning the state of the Jews in their own land, *v.* 2. It happened that a friend and relation of his came to the court with some other company, by whom he had an opportunity of informing himself fully how it went with the children of the captivity, and what posture Jerusalem, the beloved city, was in. Nehemiah lived at ease, in honor and fulness, but cannot forget he is an Israelite, nor shake off the thoughts of his brethren in distress, but, in spirit, (like Moses, Acts 7: 23.) *visits them*, and *looks upon their burdens.* Neither distance of place, nor dignity of station,

NOTES.

CHAP. I. V. 1. This book is here called, 'The *words*' (or, as it may be rendered, 'The *actions*') of 'Nehemiah,' i. e. the history of the services he performed to the Jewish church and state.—Tradition records, that he was of the tribe of Judah.—His father Hachaliah seems to have obtained a settlement in the city of Shushan, or Susa, [Map, vol. I. p. 64.] the capital of Persia, where the kings had a royal palace; and thus his son Nehemiah became cup-bearer to Artaxerxes: an office peculiarly desired by those who sought preferment, because it gave access to the king at those seasons of hilarity, when men are most disposed to grant favors.—It was the same Artaxerxes, who before commissioned Ezra. His station had hitherto prevented his going to Jerusalem. (*Ezra* 7:1—5.)—The month Chisleu coincides with part of our Nov. and part of Dec. [Note Ex. 12:2.]—*20th year.*] 2:1. *Ezra* 7:8. SCOTT.

Shushan.] In the province of Susiana, now Khusistan, 'between the rivers Shut el Arab and Tigris on the S. E. and S. the mountains of Louristan on the N. the Buchtiaree mts. on the N. E. and E. and the province of Fars on the S. E. The best part of it might become the granary of Persia: but oppression now makes it little better than a forsaken waste. Shuster, the capital, boasts of many magnificent remains, and has 15,000 inhabitants. Col. *M. Kinneir* rather rejects the opinion of some, that this was Shushan of the SS. and conceives that the remains of Shushan are found at *Shus*, a mass of ruins on the banks of the Kerah, or Karasu, which occupy an immense space between that river and the Abzal. These consist of heaps of rubbish, like those of Babylon, the whole being now a howling wilderness, the haunt of lions, hyenas, and other beasts of prey. Such is the condition of Elam and its stately capital." See *Hist.* of *Pers.* Edinb. Cab. Lib. ED.

which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity, there in [h] the province, *are* [i] in great affliction and [k] reproach: [l] the wall of Jerusalem also *is* broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

4 And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that [m] I sat down and wept, and mourned *certain* days, and fasted, and prayed before [n] the God of heaven,

5 And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, [o] the great and terrible God, that [p] keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him, and observe his commandments;

6 Let [q] thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, [r] day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and [s] confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: [t] both I and my father's house have sinned.

7 We have [u] dealt very [x] corruptly against thee, and have not [y] kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which [z] thou commandedst [a] thy servant Moses.

8 [a] Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, [b] *If* ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations:

9 But [c] *if* ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, *yet* [d] will I gather them from thence, and [e] will bring them unto [f] the place that I have chosen to set my name there.

10 Now [g] these *are* thy servants and thy people, [h] whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy [i] strong hand.

11 O LORD, I beseech thee, [k] let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, [l] who desire to fear thy name; and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and [m] grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For [n] I was the king's cup-bearer.

could alienate his affections from them. We should inquire, as he did, especially concerning the state of the church and religion; and the design of our inquiry must be, not, that, like the Athenians, we may have something to talk of, but that we may know how to direct our prayers, praises, and exertions.

II. The melancholy account of the Jews at Jerusalem, *v.* 3. Hanani has this character, (*ch.* 7: 2.) that he *feared God above many*, and therefore would not only speak truly, but, (when he spake of the desolations of Jerusalem,) tenderly. Probably his errand to court, at this time, was, to solicit some favor, or other, that they stood in need of. The account he gives, is, that the holy seed was miserably trampled on and abused, in great affliction and reproach, insulted on all occasions by their neighbors, and *filled with the scorning of them that were at ease:* that the holy city was exposed, and in ruins, the wall still broken down, and the gates, as the Chaldeans left them, in ruins. This made their condition both very despicable, under the abiding marks of poverty and slavery, and very dangerous, for their enemies might, when they pleased, make an easy prey of them. Every Jerusalem, this side the heavenly one, will have some defect or other in it, the making up of which will require the help and service of its friends.

III. The great affliction this gave Nehemiah, and the deep concern it put him into, *v.* 4. Note, The desolations and distresses of the church ought to be the matter of our grief, how much soever we live at ease. By his fasting and praying, he both consecrated his sorrows, and directed his tears aright; he eased his sorrows, and unburdened his spirit, by pouring out his complaint before God, and leaving it with Him: he took the right method of fetching in relief for his people, and direction for himself in what way to serve them. Let those who are forming any good designs for the service of the public, take God along with them, from the first conception of them, and utter all their projects before Him; that is the way to prosper in them.

V. 5—11. Nehemiah's prayer here has reference to all the prayers he had, for some time before, been putting up day and night, while he continued his sorrows for Jerusalem; and withal to the petition he was now intending to present to the king for his favor to Jerusalem. Observe in it,

I. His humble, reverent and dutiful address to God, *v.* 5. and general request, *v.* 6. It is much the same with Daniel's, *ch.* 9: 4. It teaches us to draw near to God, 1. With a holy awe of his majesty and glory; remembering that He is the God of heaven, infinitely above us, and sovereign Lord over us, whose powerful wrath all his enemies have reason to be afraid of: even the terrors of the Lord are improvable, for the comfort and encouragement of those that trust in Him. 2. With a holy confidence in his grace and truth, for He *keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love Him;* not only the mercy promised, but even more: nothing shall be thought too much to be done for them that *love Him, and keep his commandments.*

II. His penitent confession of sin; not only Israel, (it was no great mortification to him to own that,) but *I and my father's house have sinned, v.* 6. Thus does he humble, and take shame to, himself, *v.* 7. In confessing sin, let these two things be owned as its malignity, that it is a corruption of ourselves, and an affront to God; it is *dealing corruptly against God;* setting up the corruptions of our own hearts in opposition to the commands of God.

III. The pleas he urges for Israel.

1. What God had of old said to them, the rule He had settled of his proceedings toward them,

h 7:6. 11:3. Ezra 2:1. 5:3. Esth. 1:1.
i 9:36,37. Ps. 44:11—14. Is. 32:9—14.
k 1 K. 9:7. Ps. 79:4. Is. 43:28. Jer. 24:9. 29:18. 42:18. 44:8—12.
l 2:17. 2 K. 25:10. Is. 5:5. Jer. 5:10. 39:8. 52:14.
m 1 Sam. 4:17—22. Ezra 10:1. Ps. 69: 9,10. 102:13,14. 137:1. Dan. 9:3. Zeph. 3:18. Rom. 12:15.
n 2:4. Ezra 5:11,12. Dan. 2:18. Jon. 1:9.
o 4:14. Deut. 7:21. 1 Chr. 17:21. Ps. 47:2. Dan. 9:4.
p Ex. 20:6. Deut. 7:9. 1 K. 8:23. Heb. 4:13—18.
q 1 K. 8:29,52. 2 Chr. 6:40. Ps. 34:15. 130:2. Dan. 9:17,18.
r 1 Sam. 15:11. Ps. 55:17. 88:1. Luke 2:37. 18:7. 1 Tim. 5:5. 2 Tim. 1:3.
s Ezra 9:6,7. 10:1. Is. 64:6,7. Lam. 3:39—42. Dan. 9:4,20.
t 2 Chr. 28:10. 29:6. Ps. 106:6. Is. 6:5. Lam. 5:7. Eph. 2:3.
u 60:29—35. Dan. 9:5,6.
x 2 Chr. 27:2. Hos. 9:9. Zeph. 3:7. Rev. 19:2.
y Lev. 27:34. Deut. 4:1. 5:1. 6:1. 1 K. 2:3. Ps. 19:8,9. 119:5—8.
z Deut. 4:5. 2 Chr. 25:4. Ezra 7:6. Dan. 9:11,13. Mal. 4:4.
a Ps. 119:49. Luke 1:72.
b Lev. 26:33. Deut. 4:25—27. 28:64. 32:26—28. 1 K. 9:6,7.
c Lev. 26:40—42. Deut. 4:29—31. 30: 2—5. Jer. 29:11—14.
d 1 Chr. 16:35. Ps. 106:47. Jer. 31: 10. 32:37. Matt. 24:31.
e Jer. 3:14. Ez. 36:24.
f Deut. 12:5,21. 1 K. 9:3. Ezra 6:12.
g Ex. 32:11. Deut. 9:29. Is. 63:16—19. 64:9.
h Ex. 15:13. Deut. 15:15. Ps. 74:2.
i Ex. 6:1. 13:9. Ps. 136:12. Dan. 9: 15.
k See on 6.—Ps. 130:2.
l Prov. 1:29. Is. 26:8,9. Heb. 13:18.
m 2:8. Gen. 32:11,28. 43:14. Ezra 1: 1. 7:6,27,28. Prov. 21:1.
n 2:1. Gen. 40:2,9—13,21,23. 41:9.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Eminent men of God may sometimes be found in situations, where they might be least expected: his grace will be sufficient for them, wherever his providence hast cast their lot: and it is seldom advisable to leave the place, where He has blessed us, without an evident call, or a substantial reason; even though we might remove into situations, apparently more favorable to our growth in grace.—The church militant is like the bush, which burned, but was not consumed, because the Lord was there: (*Ex.* 3: 2. *P. O.* 7—12.) afflictions and reproaches are its portion in this evil world: its enemies often presumptuously expect finally to prevail, and its friends, through unbelief, are sometimes ready to fear that they will. But, in the crisis, some unexpected help is afforded, and again it revives and flourishes. —If the believer have no more in his power, he may lift up his prayer without ceasing for the remnant that is left: and fasting joined with supplication may well express the believer's penitent sorrow for sin, sympathy with his afflicted brethren, distress to see the cause of God run down, and earnestness in seeking help from Him; so that he has no relish for common comforts and enjoyments. Such fervent, humble prayers have always been honored with signal prevalence and success.—In all our addresses, we must still come before God as sinners, pleading his gracious promises, and craving to be gathered into his church, and finally into heaven, the place where He displays those glories, which here, by faith, we feebly apprehend, love and adore. —May we endeavor to improve every talent, as those who are waiting for his coming; and never tarnish or defeat the success of our endeavors, by pride and self-confidence. May God grant us a spirit of simple dependence on his mercy and grace, united with zeal for his glory, and affection to his people. SCOTT.

Verse 3.

Ezra's commission, and his attention, had chiefly respected the state of religion, and the re-establishment of the Jewish church: and he was not empowered or enabled to fortify the city, or to repel hostile attempts: and probably the king never heard a full account of their injuries. SCOTT.

CHAP. II.

Artaxerxes, observing Nehemiah sad before him, asks the cause, 1, 2. Nehemiah is afraid, assigns the reason, prays, petitions the king, and obtains authority to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, 3—8. He delivers the king's letters to the governors beyond the river; the enemies of the Jews are much grieved; and he arrives at Jerusalem, 9—11. He examines the state of the walls secretly by night, 12—16. He encourages the Jews to build, 17, 18. The scorn and menaces of their enemies, and his answer, 19, 20.

AND it came to pass, in the month [a] Nisan, and in [b] the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, *that* wine *was* before him: and [c] I took up the wine, and gave *it* unto the king. Now I had not been *beforetime* sad in his presence.

2 Wherefore the king said unto me, [d] Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this *is* nothing *else* but [e] sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid,

3 And said unto the king, [f] Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when [g] the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, *lieth* waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?

4 Then the king said unto me, [h] For what dost thou make request? [i] So I prayed to the God of heaven.

5 And I said unto the king, [k] If it please the king, and [l] if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.

6 And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.

7 Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah;

8 And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

9 Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave unto them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me.

10 When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard *of it*, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.

11 So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days.

12 And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither *was* there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon.

13 And I went out by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire.

14 Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool: but *there was* no place for the beast that was under me to pass.

15 Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned.

16 And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told *it* to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work.

17 Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.

18 Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for *this* good *work*.

19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard *it*, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What *is* this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?

20 Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.

a Esth. 3:7.
b 1:1. Ezra 7:7.
c 1:11. Gen. 40:11,21.
d Gen. 40:7.
e Prov. 15:13.
f 1 K. 1:31. Dan. 2:4. 3:9. 5:10. 6:21.
g 1:3. Ps. 102:14. 137:6. Lam. 2:9.
h 1 K. 3:5. Esth. 5:3,6. 7:2. Mark 10:51.
i 1:4,11. 2 Sam. 15:31. Prov. 3:6.
k Ezra 5:17. Esth. 1:19. 5:8. 7:3. 8:5. Ruth 2:13. 2 Sam. 14:22. Prov. 3:4.

which might be the rule of their expectations from Him, *v.* 8, 9. He had said indeed that, if they brake covenant with Him, He would *scatter them among the nations*, and that threatening was fulfilled in their captivity: never was people so widely dispersed as Israel was at this time, though at first so closely incorporated; but he had said withal, that if they *turned to Him*, (as now they began to do, having renounced idolatry and kept to the temple-service,) He would *gather them again*. This he quotes from Deut. 30: 1—5. and begs leave to put God in mind of it, as that which he guided his desires by, and grounded his faith and hope upon, in praying this prayer, *v.* 8. The covenant is often said to be commanded. If God were not more mindful of his promises, than we of his precepts, we were undone. Our best pleas therefore, in prayer, are taken from his promises, the *Word on which He has caused us to hope*, Ps. 119: 49.

2. He pleads the relation wherein of old they stood to God, *v.* 10. 'Wilt Thou suffer thy sworn enemies to trample on and oppress thy sworn servants? If Thou wilt not appear for thy people, whom wilt Thou appear for?' See Isa. 63: 19. As an evidence of their being God's servants, he gives them this character, (*v.* 11.) '*They desire to fear thy name:* this they have a desire to do;' which denotes, (1.) Their good-will to it; 'It is their constant care and endeavor to be found in the way of their duty, though in many instances they come short.' (2.) Their complacency in it: 'They take pleasure to fear thy name:' so it may be read; 'They not only do their duty, but do it with delight.' Those shall graciously be accepted of God, that truly desire to fear his name; for those desires are his own work.

3. He pleads the great things God had formerly done for them, *v.* 10. 'Let not *them* be overpowered by the enemy, that have a God of infinite power on their side.'

Lastly, He concludes with a particular petition, that God would prosper him in his undertaking, and give him favor with the king: *This man*, he calls him, for the greatest of men are but men before God; they must know themselves to be so, (Ps. 9: 20.) and others must know them to be so; *Who art thou that thou shouldest be afraid of a man? Mercy in the sight* of this man, is what he prays for, meaning not the king's mercy, but mercy from God in his address to the king. Favor with men is then comfortable, when we can see it springing from the mercy of God.

CHAP. II. How Nehemiah prevailed with God, we read in the foregoing ch.; here we are told how, like Jacob, he prevailed with *men* also, and so found his prayers were heard and answered.

V. 1—8. When Nehemiah had prayed for the relief of his countrymen, and perhaps in David's words,(Ps. 51: 18.) *Build Thou the walls of Jerusalem*, he did not sit still, and say, 'Let God now do his own work, for I have no more to do;' but set himself to forecast what he could do towards it. Our prayers must be seconded with our serious endeavors, else we mock God. Near 4 months passed from Chisleu to Nisan, (November to March,) before he made his application to the king for leave to go to Jerusalem; either because the winter was not a proper time for such a journey, and he would not make the motion till he could pursue it, or because it was so long before his month of waiting came, and there was no coming into the king's presence uncalled, Esth. 4: 11. We are not thus limited in our addresses to the King of kings, but have liberty of access to Him at all times; to the throne of grace we never come unseasonably.

I. He gave the king occasion to inquire into his cares and griefs, by appearing sad. Those that speak to such, must not fall abruptly on their business, but fetch a compass. Nehemiah would try whether he was in a good humor, and took this method. He had not used to be sad in the king's presence, but conformed to the rules of the court, (as courtiers must do,) which would admit no sorrows, Esth. 4: 2. Good men should do what they can by their cheerfulness to convince the world of the pleasantness of religion, and to roll away the reproach cast on them as melancholy; but there is a time for all things, Eccl. 3: 4. Nehemiah now saw cause both to *be* sad, and to *appear* so.

II. The kind notice and inquiry of the king, *v.* 2. 1. We ought, from a principle of Christian sympathy, to concern ourselves in the sorrows and sadness of others, even of our inferiors, and not say, *What is it to us?* Let not masters despise their servants' griefs, but desire to make them easy God is not pleased with the dejections and disquietness of his people, but would have them both *serve Him with gladness*, and *eat their bread with joy*. 2. A good man, even in sickness, may be of good cheer, if he knows his sins are forgiven. 3. Freedom from sickness is so great a mercy, that we ought not to be inordinately dejected under any outward burden; yet sorrow for our own sins, the sins of others, and the calamities of God's church, may well sadden the countenance without sickness.

III. The account Nehemiah gave of the cause, with meekness and fear. Though a man of courage, as appears by the following story, *he was* now *sore afraid*, perhaps of the king's wrath, (those eastern monarchs assumed an absolute power of life and death, Dan. 2: 12, 13. 5: 19.) or of misplacing a word, and losing his request by the mismanagement of it: though a wise man, he was jealous of himself, lest he should say any thing imprudently; it becomes us to be so. A good assurance is indeed a good accomplishment, yet a humble self-diffidence is no man's dispraise. He speaks with meekness; without reflection on any man, and with all the respect, deference, and goodwill imaginable, to the king his master. Many are melancholy, fearful, and sad, but can give no good reason for it; such should chide themselves for it, and out of it; but Nehemiah could give so good a reason for his sadness, as to appeal to the king himself concerning it. Observe, 1. He calls

NOTES.

CHAP. II. V. 1, 2. The words rendered 'sad,' and 'sorrow of heart,' might be rendered *evil*, and *wickedness of heart*. This excited great alarm in Nehemiah: and in fact these arbitrary monarchs were generally suspicious, in proportion to their tyranny. Lest poison should be mixed with their wine, they required the cup-bearers to drink before them out of the same cup: [Xenophon says, the Persian kings required them to pour some of the drink into the hand, and thence drink it:] and some conjecture that Nehemiah, being oppressed with grief, had forgotten to observe this custom. Had the least suspicion, however, been excited of criminal designs, the immediate torture or execution of Nehemiah might have been the consequence: for the Persian monarchs frequently, with little ceremony, thus treated those who had before been their chief favorites. He might also fear that he should fail of his purpose, as the king seemed displeased, and no favorable opportunity for his request was yet afforded. SCOTT.

(2.) *Sad.*] *Roberts* says, a Hindoo, having a request to make, will walk about sad, and not speak but when spoken to, to induce inquiry into the cause. ED.

Verse 3.

Nehemiah, in answering the king, testified his cordial and loyal affection, by wishing the long continuance of his life and prosperity, in the customary manner. He perhaps meant the words likewise as a prayer for his salvation: but they were not generally understood in that sense. Thus, 'God save the king,' as generally used, means no more than, 'Let the king live and prosper:' but the words, when duly attended to, contain a solemn prayer to God, for his temporal preservation, and his eternal salvation. (*M. R.*)—Nehemiah said nothing to Artaxerxes concerning the *religion* of the Jews: perhaps, he saw that he was more regardless in that respect than formerly; (*Ezra* 7.6—28.) or he might suppose that the king would not attend to that subject so candidly, from a young courtier, as he had done from an aged priest and learned scribe of the law of God: and some think he was induced to wave it, because the company present were unfavorable. He therefore represented the afflicted, defenceless state of that city, where his ancestors lay interred; and how could he but be grieved that their sepulchres should be so disgraced, or how avoid sympathizing with his distressed countrymen?—Arguments of this kind the men of the world well understand: but alas! they little feel the force of those which are infinitely more important. Some infer from the expression 'my fathers' sepulchres,' that Nehemiah was of Judah; but his ancestors might have been buried in Jerusalem, if he were of Benjamin, or of Simeon. SCOTT.

Verse 4.

'The God of heaven' seems to have become the usual style, so to speak, in addressing the Lord, among the returned captives; perhaps as contrasting Him with the idols of the regions, in which they had sojourned. (20. 1:4, 5. *Ezra* 5:11, 12. *Jer.* 10:11.) SCOTT. This is the *style* Cyrus uses, (2 Chr. 36:2, &c.) It may have been the name by which God was worshipped by the Medes and Persians: note, Ezra 1:3. See also *Hyde*, de Rel. Vet. Pers. ED.

Verses 5, 6.

It is probable, that Esther was the queen who was present at this time, and that she seconded Nehemiah's request. Perhaps he had

vant have found favor in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.

6 And the king said unto me, (the [*] queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? [m] So it pleased the king to send me; and [n] I set him a time.

7 Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, [o] let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, [p] that they may convey me over till I come into Judah;

8 And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber, to make beams for the gates of the palace which *appertained* to the house, and [q] for the wall of the city, and [r] for the house that I shall enter into. And [s] the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

9 ¶ Then I came [t] to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. Now [u] the king had sent captains of the army, and horsemen with me.

10 When [x] Sanballat the [y] Horonite, and Tobiah [z] the servant, [a] the Ammonite, heard *of it*, [b] it grieved them exceedingly, that [c] there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.

11 So [d] I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days.

12 ¶ And [e] I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; [f] neither told I *any* man what [g] my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither *was there any* beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon.

13 And I went out by night, by [h] the gate of the valley, even before the dragon-well, and to [i] the dung-port, and viewed [k] the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire.

14 Then I went on

Jerusalem the *place of his fathers' sepulchres:* it is good for us to think often of our fathers' sepulchres; we are apt to dwell on their honors, titles, houses, and estates, but let us also think of their sepulchres, and consider that they who have gone before us in the world, have also gone before us out of the world, and their monuments are mementos to us; there is a great respect owing to the memory of our fathers, that that be not injured. All nations, even those that have had no expectation of the resurrection of the dead, have looked upon the sepulchres of their ancestors as in some degree sacred, and not to be violated. 2. He justifies his grief. There is a time even for pious and prosperous men to be sad, and to show it. The best men must not think to antedate heaven by banishing all sorrowful thoughts; it is a vale of tears we pass through, and we must submit to the temper of the climate. 3. He assigns the ruins of Jerusalem as the true cause of his grief. Note, All the grievances of the church, but especially its desolations, are, and ought to be, matter of grief and sadness to all good people, to all that have a concern for God's honor, and that are living members of Christ's mystical body, and are of a public spirit; they favor even Zion's dust, Ps. 102: 14.

IV. The encouragement the king gave him to tell his mind, and the application he, thereupon, made in his heart to God, *v.* 4. The king had an affection for him, and was not pleased to see him melancholy; it is also probable he had a kindness for the Jews' religion; he had discovered it before in his commission to Ezra. Nehemiah was afraid to speak, (*v.* 2.) but the king's interrogation gave him boldness; much more may the invitation Christ has given us to pray, and the promise that we shall speed, enable us to come boldly to the throne of grace. Nehemiah immediately *prayed to God* that He would give him wisdom to act properly, and incline the king's heart to his request. They that would find favor with kings, must secure the favor of the King of kings. It was not an audible prayer, (he had no opportunity for that,) but a secret, sudden ejaculation, to that God who understands the language of the heart; *Lord, give me a mouth and wisdom; Lord, give me favor in the sight of this man.* Note, it is good to be much in pious ejaculations, especially on particular occasions: wherever we are, we have a way open heavenward; this will hinder no business, but further it rather, therefore let no business hinder this, but give rise to it rather. Nehemiah had prayed very solemnly with reference to this very occasion; (*ch.* 1: 12.) yet, when it comes to the push, he prays again. Ejaculations and solemn prayers must not justle out one another, but each have its place.

V. His humble petition to the king; he presents it very modestly, and with submission to the king's wisdom, *v.* 5. But he is very particular, *v.* 7. Either his commission was renewed, or he went back, and was sent again, so that he presided there 12 years at least, *ch.* 5: 14.

VI. The king's great favor to him, in asking him *when he would return*, *v.* 6. It intimated he would not lose him, nor be long without him; yet that, to gratify him, and do a kindness to his people, he would spare him awhile, and let him have what clauses he pleased inserted in his commission, *v.* 8. Here was an immediate answer to his prayer. In the account he gives of it, he notices, 1. The presence of the queen; she sat by; (*v.* 6.) which (they say) was not usual in the Persian court. (Esth. 1: 11.) Whether she was his adversary, that would have hindered him, and he observes it, to the praise of God's powerful providence, that though she was by, yet he succeeded; or his true friend, and he observes it to the praise of God's kind providence, that she was present to help forward his request, is not certain. 2. The power and grace of God; he gained his point, not according to his merit, his interest in the king, or his good management, but *according to the good hand of his God upon him.* Gracious souls notice of God's hand, his good hand, in all events which turn in favor of them; *This is the Lord's doing*, therefore doubly acceptable.

V. 9—20. Nehemiah is dismissed with *captains and horsemen*, (*v.* 9.) both for his guard, and honor. Whom the King of kings sends, He thus protects, thus dignifies with a host of angels to attend them.

1. The Jews and their friends, while he con-

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[*] Heb. *wife.*

m 4. 1:11. Is. 58:12. 61:4. 65:24.
n 5:14. 13:6.
o 9. Ezra 6:6. 7:21.
p Ezra 8:22.
q 17. 3:1,&c.
r 3:7. 7:2.
s 18. Gen. 32:28. Ezra 5:5. 6:22. 7: 6,9,27,28. Prov. 21:1. Is. 66:14. Dan. 1:9. Acts 7:10. 26:22. 2 Cor. 8:16.
t 7.
u Ezra 8:22.
x 19. 4:1—3,7. 6:1.
y Is. 15:5. Jer. 48:5,34.
z Prov. 30:22. Ec. 10:7.
a 13:1.
b Num. 22:3,4. Ps. 112:10. 122:6—9. Prov. 27:4. Ez. 25:6—8. Mic. 7:9, 10,16,17. Acts 4:2. 5:24. 19:26,27.
c Ezra 4:4,&c.
d Ezra 8:32.
e Gen. 32:22—24. Josh. 10:9. Judg. 6:27. 9:32. Matt. 2:14.
f Ec. 3:7. Am. 5:13. Mic. 7:5. Matt. 10:16.
g Ezra 7:27. Jer. 31:33. 32:40. 2 Cor. 8:16. Jam. 1:16,17. Rev. 17:17.
h 15. 3:13. 2 Chr. 26:9.
i 3:13,14. 12:31.
k 3,17. 1:3. Jer. 5:10.

been preferred through her interest, and that of Mordecai: and her presence seems to be mentioned, as a favorable and not a common circumstance, and as an answer to his prayers.—For Mordecai's advancement preceded the commission granted to Nehemiah several years. (1:1. *Esth.* 1:3. 10:3.) [But see next note.] SCOTT.

(6.) *Queen.*] '*Shegel*, rather, *concubine*, she who was chief favorite. This was not Esther, nor was this Artaxerxes her husband. The Sept. properly translate *pallake, harlot.*' DR. A. CLARKE.

Verse 7.

(*Note, Ezra* 8:21—23.) Ezra went as a priest and a scribe, though armed with civil authority; and, in consistency with his character and professions, he would not require a guard. But Nehemiah went to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, and to defend the Jews against their enemies: and it was very consistent with his avowed design, to petition the king, that the governors should be ordered to escort him with proper military attendants, which would afford him protection, and add dignity to his undertaking.—The king likewise ordered him a guard, till he had crossed the Euphrates. (9) SCOTT.

Roberts says, 'Persons of any rank (in India) always take *letters* with them in travelling, a duplicate of which is forwarded to the different chiefs of the district through which they have to pass. Without these, much inconvenience is sustained in obtaining supplies.' It is also quite customary, and often necessary now, for the same reason, to have a government Janizary, or guard, (*v.* 9.) when travelling through the same region Nehemiah passed through, and other parts of the ill-governed east. ED.

Verse 8.

The Heb. *pardes*, *forest*, is used only here and in *Ec.* 2: 5. *Cant.* 4: 13. where it is rendered *orchard*, and the word *paradise* seems derived from it; [and it is still, as in the time of Xenophon, the Persian name (*ferdoos*) for a park or garden, indeed, any 'place of pleasure' (*Clarke,*): hunting parks were common to both Egyptian and Persian kings;] yet here it must signify a forest of timber trees. The 'palace' seems to mean the temple, or some of those buildings which surrounded it, or 'the gates of the temple;' for though the temple was rebuilt, much might be wanting in respect of the surrounding walls and gates. Nehemiah proposed to build a house also for the governor, and to do all other things, which might place his people in a more secure and respectable situation. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verse 10.

(*M. R.*) Moab and Ammon were subjugated and carried captive by the kings of Babylon: but it appears they had been restored, according to the predictions of Jeremiah. (*Jer.* 48:47. 49:6.) And it is likely Sanballat and Tobiah (as well as Geshem the Arabian, *v.* 19.) were placed by the king of Persia in authority over their own people, and over the Samaritans, or other tribes in that neighborhood, who were generally enemies to the Jews. ID.

Verses 12—16.

This account is well suited to show us the ruinous and defenceless state of the city, nearly 100 years after the Jews return: and Nehemiah's personal survey formed a suitable preparation to his address to the people, and would enable him to obviate any objections, and pre-

to [l] the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool: but *there was* no place for the beast *that was* under me to pass.

15 Then went I up in the night by [m] the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by [n] the gate of the valley, and *so* returned.

16 And [o] the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told *it* to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work.

17 Then said I unto them, [p] Ye see the distress that we *are* in, how Jerusalem *lieth* waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: [q] come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more [r] a reproach.

18 Then I told them of [s] the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. [t] So they strengthened their hands for this good *work*.

19 But when [u] Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and [x] Geshem the Arabian, heard *it*, [y] they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What *is* this thing that ye do? [z] will ye rebel against the king?

20 Then answered I them, and said unto them, [a] The God of heaven he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but [b] ye have no portion, nor right, nor [c] memorial, in Jerusalem.

cealed his errand, took little notice of him, (*v.* 11.) none of the great men of the city waited on him to congratulate him on his arrival, but he remained unknown: the king sent horsemen to attend him, but the Jews none to meet him; he had no beast with him, but that which he himself rode, *v.* 12. Wise men, and those who are worthy of double honor, yet covet not to make a show, or a noise, though coming with the greatest blessings. They that shortly are to have *the dominion in the morning*, the world now knows not, but they lie hid, 1 John 3: 1.

He took great notice of their state, *v.* 13. They that would know how to amend, must inquire what is amiss; well consider what needs reformation, and what may serve as it is.

2. When he discovered his design to the rulers and people, they cheerfully concurred. He produced the king's commission, told them how readily it was granted, and how forward the king was to favor his design, in which he saw the hand of his God *good upon him*. It would encourage both him and them to proceed in an undertaking which God had so remarkably smiled upon. Note, Many a good work would find hands enough, if there were but *one good head* to *lead in it*. It is pity that a good motion should be lost, purely for want of one to move it. By *stirring up ourselves and one another* to what is good, we *strengthen ourselves and one another* for it; the great reason why we are weak in our duty, is, that we are cold to it, indifferent and unresolved.

3. Let us now see how Nehemiah was received by those that wished ill to the Jews.

(1.) When he did but show his face, it vexed them, *v.* 10. Nothing is a greater vexation to the enemies of good people, who have misrepresented them to princes as turbulent, factious, and not fit to live, than to see them stand right in their rulers' opinion, their innocency cleared, and their reproach rolled away, and they trusted.

(2.) When he began to act, they set themselves to *discourage* and hinder him; but in vain, *v.* 19, 20. They represented the undertaking as a silly thing, and a wicked thing, no better than treason. It was the old invidious charge. They bear up themselves with this, that they were the *servants of God*, Ps. 2: 1. They consider also that the reason these enemies did so malign them, was, because they had no right in Jerusalem, but envied them their right in it. Thus may the impotent menaces of the church's enemies be easily despised by the church's friends.

CHAP. III. V. 1—32. Many are ready to say, *Let us rise up and build*, who sit still and do nothing; not so these builders, but they at once set about it, we find in this ch. Let not to-day's good work be left till to-morrow. The best way to know how to divide this chapter, is, to observe how the work was divided among the undertakers.

Several things are observable.

1. Eliashib, the high priest, with his brethren the priests, led the van, *v.* 1. Ministers should be first and foremost in every good work; their office obliges them to teach and quicken by example, as well as doctrine. The dignity of the high priest was very great, and obliged him to signalize himself in this service. The priests repaired the *sheep-gate*, so called, because through it the sheep to be sacrificed were brought; for their *inheritance* was *the offerings*. And of this gate

CHAP. III.

The names and order of those who built the walls of Jerusalem, 1—32.

THEN [a] Eliashib the high priest rose up, with his brethren the priests, and they builded [b] the sheep-gate; they [c] sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the [d] tower of Meah

l 3:15. 2 K. 13:17. 20:20. 2 Chr. 32: 30.
m 2 Sam. 15:23. Jer. 31:40. John 18:1.
n 13.
o 12.
p Lam. 3:51.
q Ezra 5:1,2. 10:2—4. Is. 35:3,4.
r 1:3. 1 Sam. 11:2. Ps. 44:13. 79:4. 89:50,51. Lam. 3:45,46. Ez. 5:14,15. 22:4,5.
s See on 8.
t 2 Sam. 2:7. 1 Chr. 11:10. 19:13. 2 Chr. 32:5. Hag. 1:13,14. Eph. 6:10. Phil. 2:13.
u 10. 6:1,2.
x 6:6. *Gashmu.*
y Job 30:1. Ps. 44:13,14. Jer. 20:8. Mark 5:40. Heb. 11:36.
z 5:6. Ezra 4:15,16. Luke 23:2. John 19:12. Acts 24:5.
a 4. 2 Chr. 26:5. Ps. 20:5. 35:27. 122:6.
b Ezra 4:3. Acts 8:21.
c Ex. 28:29. Lev. 2:2. 24:7. Num. 10:10. Zech. 6:14. Acts 10:4,31.
a 12:10. 13:28.
b 12:39. John 5:2.
c 12:30. Deut. 20:5. Ps. 30: title. Prov. 3:6,9.
d 12:39. Jer. 31:38. Zech. 14:10.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Unavoidable delays, when employed in fervent, persevering prayer, often forward the success of pious undertakings.—Cheerfulness is in general an ornament to religion. 'The children of this world' understand the propriety of our grieving, when we are sick and in pain; when impoverished, bereaved, or disappointed in our temporal pursuits: but they cannot conceive, why the heart should be heavy, or the countenance sad, if no outward calamity has befallen us. Yet conscious guilt, the fear or sense of the divine displeasure, the afflictions of God's people, the prevalence of impiety, and the decays of religion, are far more reasonable and important causes of grief; under which no confluence of earthly delights can afford comfort. We must, however, expect that worldly men will ascribe such sorrows to melancholy, discontent, moroseness, or even some more criminal cause: and those, who are strangers to the believer's consolations, are apt to infer from his complaints, that religion is uncomfortable, and unfits men for social life. We should therefore in general conceal our grief, or disclose it only to the Lord and to his people.—Inconstancy is connected with all the partialities and affections of absolute princes; and suspicions are multiplied in proportion as power is abused. Hence often the speedy ruin or disgrace of those, on whom honors and emoluments have been most lavished, without any cause, but caprice or groundless jealousy. 'It is therefore better to trust in the LORD, than to put any confidence in princes.' (*Ps.* 118: 8, 9.)—A meek and modest explanation best tends to banish groundless suspicions.—We must not speak falsehood: but we are not bound always to speak all we think, when a part will best answer every useful purpose.—Ejaculatory petitions should be intermixed with every transaction of a Christian. They neither supersede, nor are rendered unnecessary by stated devotions: and the habit of thus keeping up an intercourse with Heaven, is of peculiar importance and advantage. Indeed we ought never to engage in any pursuit, in which it would be improper thus to expect and seek the divine direction, assistance, and blessing.—The enemies of the Lord must grieve, in proportion as his servants rejoice, when those in authority, and endowed with suitable qualifications, are raised up to promote the cause of truth and holiness, and the welfare of his church: for the enmity of the serpent's seed against the cause of Christ is confined to no age or nation; it springs from hatred of God Himself, and is irritated in proportion as He is glorified. However, we should always be ready to give a meek and reasonable answer to objectors: and, blessed be God, even despisers and revilers, while they are warned of their danger, may be invited to cease from their opposition, and to be reconciled to God: that, after all, they may have their lot among his people, and not among his enemies.

SCOTT.

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vent any misrepresentations, which might be made.—Nothing more is known of the several places mentioned, than what may be collected from the M. R. SCOTT.

(13.) *Dragon.*] Note and cut, Job 30:29. This *ain*, well or fountain, doubtless had the figures of *Tannin*, dragons, serpents, or some amphibious monster, through whose mouth or mouths fell the water, as is common still in the east; hence the name. ED.

Verses 17, 18.

The reader will note the piety of the language, used by Nehemiah on this as well as on every other occasion, which resembled that of Ezra. (*M. R.* s. in *v.* 8.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. III. V. 1. Eliashib was the grandson of Jeshua. (12:10.) *Brethren.*] Either his near relations, or the chief priests, the heads of their

they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel.

2 And * next unto him builded [o] the men of Jericho. And next to them builded [f] Zaccur the son of Imri.

3 But [g] the fish-gate did the sons of Hassenaah build, who *also* laid [h] the beams thereof, and set up [i] the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

4 And next unto them repaired [k] Meremoth the son of [l] Urijah, the son of Koz. And next unto them repaired [m] Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabeel. And next unto them repaired Zadok the son of Baana.

5 And next unto them [n] the Tekoites repaired; but [o] their nobles [p] put not their necks to the work of their lord.

6 Moreover [q] the old gate repaired Jehoiada the son of Paseah, and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah; they laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, and the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

7 And next unto them repaired Melatiah [r] the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon, and of [s] Mizpah, unto [t] the throne of the governor on this side the river.

8 Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of [u] the goldsmiths. Next unto him also repaired Hananiah, the son of *one* [x] *of* the apothecaries, and they † fortified Jerusalem unto the [y] broad wall.

9 And next unto them repaired Rephaiah the son of Hur, [z] the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem.

10 And next unto them repaired Jedaiah the son of Harumaph, even [a] over against his house. And next unto him repaired [b] Hattush the son of Hashabniah.

11 Malchijah the son of [c] Harim, and Hashub the son of [d] Pahath-moab, repaired the ‡ other piece, and [e] the tower of the furnaces.

12 And next unto him repaired Shallum the son of Halohesh, [f] the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, [g] he and his daughters.

13 [h] The valley-gate repaired Hanun, and the inhabitants of [i] Zanoah; they built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and a thousand cubits on the wall unto the dung-gate.

14 But [k] the dung-gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab, [l] the ruler of part of [m] Beth-haccerem; he built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

15 But [n] the gate of the fountain repaired Shallum the son of Col-hozeh, [o] the ruler of part of [p] Mizpah; he built it, and covered it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and the wall of the pool of [q] Siloah by the king's garden, and unto [r] the stairs that go down from the city of David.

16 After him repaired Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, [s] the ruler of the half part of [t] Beth-zur, unto *the place* over against [u] the sepulchres of David, and to [x] the pool that was made, and unto [y] the house of the mighty.

17 After him repaired the Levites, Rehum the son of Bani. Next unto him repaired Hashabiah, [z] the ruler of the half part of [a] Keilah, in his part.

18 After him repaired their brethren, Bavai the son of Henadad, the ruler of the half part of Keilah.

19 And next to him repaired Ezer the son of [b] Jeshua, the ruler of [c] Mizpah, another piece over against the going up to the armory, at [d] the turning *of the wall*.

20 After him Baruch the son of § Zabbai [e] earnestly repaired the other piece from the turning *of the wall* unto the door of the house of [f] Eliashib the high priest.

21 After him repaired [g] Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of [h] Koz, another piece, from the door of the house of Eliashib, even to the end of the house of Eliashib.

22 And after him repaired the priests, [i] the men of the plain.

23 After him repaired Benjamin and Hashub [k] over against their house. After him repaired [l] Azariah the son of [m] Maaseiah, the son

* Heb. *at his hand.*
e 7:36. Ezra 2:34.
f 10:12.
g 12:39. 2 Chr. 33:14. Zeph. 1:10.
h 6. 2:8.
i 6:1. 7:1.
k 21. 10:5.
l Ezra 8:33. *Uriah.*
m 10:7.
n 27. 2 Sam. 14:2. Am. 1:1.
o Judg. 5:23. Jer. 5:5. 1 Cor. 1:26.
p Jer. 27:2,8,12. 30:8,9. Matt. 11:29 Acts 15:10.
q 12:39.
r Josh. 9:3,&c. 2 Sam. 21:2.
s 19. 2 Chr. 16:6.
t 2:8.
u 31,32. Is. 46:6.
x Gen. 50:2. Ex. 30:25. Ec. 10:1.
† Or, *left.*
y 12:38.
z 12,17.
a 23,28—30.
b 10:4.
c 10:5.
d 7:11. 10:14. Ezra 2:6. 8:4.
‡ Heb. *second measure.*
e 12:38.
f 9,14,15,16,17,18.
g Ex. 35:25. Acts 21:8,9. Phil. 4:3.
h 2:13.
i 11:30. Josh. 15:34.
k 2:13. 12:31.
l 9,12,15,16,17,18.
m Jer. 6:1.
n 2:14. 12:37. 2 Chr. 32:30.
o 9,12,14.
p 7. Judg. 20:1,3. *Mizpeh.* Jer. 40:6
q Is. 8:6. *Shiloah.* Luke 13:4. Joht 9:7. *Siloam.*
r 2 Sam. 5:6,7.
s 9,12,14.
t Josh. 15:58. 2 Chr. 11:7.
u 2 Chr. 16:14. Acts 2:29.
x 2 K. 20:20. Is. 22:11.
y 1 K. 14:27,28. 2 Chr. 12:10,11. Cant. 8:7.
z 16. 1 Chr. 23:4.
a Josh. 15:44. 1 Sam. 23:1,2.
b 10:9. 12:8.
c 15.
d 2 Chr. 26:9.
§ Or, *Zaccai.*
e Ec. 9:10. Rom. 12:11.
f 1,21. 12:22,23. 13:4,28.
g 4.
h 7:63. Ezra 2:61.
i 6:2. 12:28.
k 10,29,30.
l 10:2.
m 8:4,7.

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several courses. Along with the gate, they builded a part of the wall on each side. (*M. R.* d.) This was the case, it may be supposed, in other instances where the gates alone are mentioned. SCOTT.

Verses 2—4.

(*M. R.* and Map.) After all the pains some learned men have bestowed on the subject, which is indeed not very interesting to us, little satisfactory information can be obtained on the situation of the places mentioned in this ch. beyond what may be collected from the M. R. [See the map of Jerusalem in vol. III.] ED.

Verse 5.

Their nobles, &c.] Disregarding the authority of God Himself, whose work it was, no wonder they would not submit to the commands of Nehemiah, their governor, who seems to be meant by the expression 'their lord:' and for this they are branded with disgrace in the Word of God. (1 *Sam.* 8:6—9.)—The expression, 'put not their necks,' renders it probable, that those who were earnest in the cause, of whatever rank, assisted by their personal labors. 'Well-disposed persons, though ever so great, "put their necks," i. e. labored hard, not refusing to carry burdens, &c.' *Patrick.* SCOTT. On the Egyptian monuments are still to be seen pictures representing that ancient and still common custom of carrying burdens hung on each end of a beam passed across the shoulder, or fitted to both shoulders and passing across the neck behind. See also pictures from Persepolis, in *Niebuhr.* GILL refers the expression, to 'refractory oxen, refusing the yoke.' ED.

Verse 7.

The throne, &c.] This seems to have been some judgment-hall, to which the governors of the kings of Persia, over the country W. of the Euphrates, came, from time to time, to administer justice. Probably, Nehemiah now occupied it; for his particular commission superseded their more general authority. SCOTT.

Throne.] 'Heb. *Kisse*, the name of the governor. So *Aben Ezra* & IL.

Verses 8—10.

(*M. R.*) Perhaps, where any part of the old wall remained, the persons mentioned 'repaired;' where none, they 'built.' SCOTT.

(8.) *Goldsmiths . . apothecaries.*] Note, 11:35. ED.

Verse 12.

(*M. R.* f.) Probably two superior magistrates were placed over the principal cities, with equal authority, to reside in different parts of them.—Shallum seems to have had no sons; and his daughters, as heiresses, contributed with him to the expense of the work. Perhaps they were widows. SCOTT.

Verse 15.

Stairs.] Probably, these formed a communication between the city of David, and the other parts of Jerusalem. (2 *Sam.* 5:6, 7.) ID.

Verse 16.

(*M. R.*) 'The house of the mighty' is thought to have been a guard-chamber, where the most valiant soldiers kept guard, to defend the palace of the kings of Judah. ID.

Verses 21—25.

(*M. R.*) 'The king's high house' (25) was, perhaps, some lofty building, from which the watchmen might make their observations. ID.

of Ananiah, by his house.

24 After him repaired [n] Binnui the son of Henadad [o] another piece, from the house of Azariah unto [p] the turning *of the wall*, even unto the corner.

25 Palal the son of Uzai, over against the turning *of the wall*, and the tower which lieth out from [q] the king's high house, that *was* [r] by the court of the prison. After him [s] Pedaiah the son of [t] Parosh.

26 Moreover the [u] Nethinims *dwelt in † Ophel, unto *the place* over against [x] the water-gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out.

27 After them [y] the Tekoites repaired another piece, over against the great tower that lieth out, even unto [z] the wall of Ophel.

28 From above [a] the horse-gate repaired the priests, [b] every one over against his house.

29 After them repaired Zadok [c] the son of Immer over against his house. After him repaired also Shemaiah the son of [d] Shechaniah the keeper of [e] the east gate.

30 After him repaired Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, [f] another piece. After him repaired [g] Meshullam the son of Berechiah over against his chamber.

31 After him repaired Malchiah, [h] the goldsmith's son, unto the place of the Nethinims, and of the merchants, over against the gate Miphkad, and to the ‡ going up of the corner.

32 And between the going up of the corner unto [i] the sheep-gate repaired [k] the goldsmiths and the merchants.

n 10:9.
o 11,19,27.
p 20.
q Jer. 22:14. 39:8.
r 12:39. Jer. 32:2. 33:1. 37:21. 39:15.
s 8:4.
t 7:8. Ezra 2:3.
u 7:46—56. 10:28. 1 Chr. 9:2. Ezra 2:43—58.
* Or, which *dwelt in Ophel*, repaired *unto*.
† Or, *the tower*. 27. 11:21. 2 Chr. 27:3. 33:14.
x 8:1,3. 12:37.
y 5.
z 26.
a 2 K. 11:16. 2 Chr. 23:15. Jer. 31:40.
b 10,23.
c 7:40. Ezra 2:37.
d Ezra 10:2.
e Jer. 19:2.
f 21.
g 4.
h 8,32.
‡ Or, *corner-chamber*.
i 1. 12:39. John 5:2.
k 8,31.

Him all their performances, and to do even their common actions *after a godly sort*.

2 Undertakers were very many, who each took their share, according to their ability. What is to be done for the public good, every one should further to the utmost of his place and power. United force will conquer that which no individual dares venture on. Many hands (we say) make light work.

3 Many were active in this work, who were not themselves inhabitants of Jerusalem, and therefore consulted purely the public welfare, and not any private interest or advantage of their own; as the men of Jericho, (*v.* 2.) of Gibeon and Mizpah, (*v.* 7.) and of Zanoah, *v.* 13. Every Israelite should lend a hand toward building up Jerusalem.

4 Several rulers, both of Jerusalem and of other cities, were active, thinking themselves bound in honor to do the utmost their wealth and power enabled them to do, for the furtherance of it. But it is observable they are called rulers of *part*, or the *half part*, of their respective cities, *v.* 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. Perhaps the Persian government would not intrust any one with a strong city, but appointed two to be a watch on each other. Rome had two consuls.

5. Here is a just reproach fastened on the nobles of Tekoa, (*v.* 5.) that they would not come under obligation to this service; as if the dignity and liberty of their peerage were their discharge from serving God and doing good, which are indeed the highest honor and the truest freedom.

6. Two persons joined in repairing *the old gate*, (*v.* 6.) and so were co-founders, and shared the honor of it between them. The good work we cannot compass ourselves, we must be thankful to those that will go partners with us in. Some think this is called the *old gate*, because it belonged to the ancient Salem, which was said to be built by Melchizedek.

7. Several good, honest tradesmen, as well as priests and rulers, were active in this work, *goldsmiths, apothecaries, merchants*, *v.* 8, 32. They did not think their callings excused them, nor plead that they could not leave their shops to attend the public business; knowing that what they lost, would certainly be made up to them by the blessing of God on their callings.

8. Some ladies are spoken of as helping forward this work, *Shallum and his daughters*, (*v.* 12.) who, though not capable of personal service, yet, having their portions in their own hands, or being rich widows, contributed money for buying materials and paying workmen. Paul speaks of some good women that *labored with him in the Gospel*, Phil. 4: 3.

9 Of some it is said, they repaired *over against their houses*, (*v.* 10, 23, 28, 29.) and of one who, it is likely, was only a lodger, that he repaired *over against his chamber*, *v.* 30. When a general good work is to be done, each should apply himself to that part of it, that falls nearest him, and is within his reach. If every one will sweep before his own door, the street will be clean; if every one will mend one, we shall be all mended.

10. Of one it is said, he *earnestly* repaired what fell to his share, (*v.* 20.) not that others were cold and indifferent, but he was most vigorous of any of them, and made himself remarkable for it. It is good to be thus *zealously affected in a good thing;* and it is probable this good man's zeal provoked very many to take the more pains, and make the more haste.

11. Of one it is observed, he was *the sixth son* of his father, *v.* 30. His five elder brethren, it seems, laid not their hand to this work, but he did. In doing what is good, we need not stay for our elders to go before us; if they decline it, it does not therefore follow we must. The younger brother, if he be the better man, is indeed the better gentleman; those are most honorable, that are most useful

12. Some of them that had *first done, helped their fellows*, and undertook another share, where they saw there was most need. Meremoth repaired, *v.* 4. and again, *v.* 21. And the Tekoites, *v.* 5. and *v* 27. which is the more remarkable, because their nobles set them a bad example by withdrawing from the service; but perhaps this made them the more forward to double work, that by their zeal they might either shame, or atone for, the covetousness and carelessness of their nobles.

Lastly. Here is no mention of any particular share Nehemiah himself had in this work. A namesake of his is mentioned, *v.* 16. but Nehemiah undertook not any particular piece of the wall; yet he did more than any of them, for he had the oversight of them all; half of his servants worked where there was most need, and the other half stood sentinel, as we find after; (*ch.* 4: 16.) while he himself in his own person walked the rounds, directed and encouraged the builders, set his hand to the work where he saw occasion, and kept a watchful eye on the motions of the enemy, as we shall find in the next ch. The pilot needs not hale at a rope, it is enough for him to steer.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The security and prosperity of the church, in every part of the world, is the common cause of all Christians, wherever they reside: and all orders of men should assist in promoting them. Every age, sex, and station can, in some way or other, contribute towards it. But, alas! the rich and *noble* generally count it their privilege to be *idle*, or *useless;* which they cannot be, without setting an example, mischievous in proportion to their influence: and no wonder they disregard the proclamations of the prince, which call them to attend the service of God, when they disdain the yoke of the almighty Lord Himself. But before Him they are on a level with the meanest of their inferiors; except that a more dreadful punishment, and deeper disgrace, await their impenitent and ungrateful rebellion.—If, in times of prevalent ungodliness, numbers, in different stations, would agree, first to look to themselves, and to reform their families as far as they could; and then to use all their influence to promote the general work of reformation, we might expect that much good would speedily be done: and though most men still neglect this duty; let those who lament the triumphs of iniquity and the desolations of piety, every one 'repair opposite to his own house' or 'chamber;' and let all endeavor to do what they can, by their prayers, their example, the education of their children, and pious conversation, to promote and recommend that cause which they have espoused.—May the Lord stir up the hearts of all his people, to lay aside their disputes, and to disregard their worldly interests, in comparison of 'building the walls of Jerusalem,' and defending the cause of evangelical truth, and vital godliness, against the assaults of avowed enemies. SCOTT.

Verses 26—31.

M. R.—The Nethinims, &c. (26) 'The Nethinim, *which* dwelt in Ophel, *repaired* unto the place over against the water-gate, &c.' *M.* 'The water-gate, it is likely, was that at which these lower ministers brought in water for the use of the temple.' *Bp. Patrick.—Miphkad* (31) signifies *judgment, visitation*, or *correction;* and it is thought a prison was situated near this gate. SCOTT.

Verse 32.

Sheep-gate.] Thus the whole city was walled: for Eliashib began at the sheep-gate. (1) ID

CHAP. IV.

Sanballat and his company are very wroth, and mock the Jews: but Nehemiah prays, and builds the wall, 1—6. He discovers that they secretly are plotting against him, and sets a watch, 7—12. He arms the builders, and gives them suitable orders and directions, 13—23.

BUT it came to pass, that when [a] Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and [b] mocked the Jews.

2 And he spake before his brethren, and [c] the army of Samaria, and said, What do these [d] feeble Jews? will they * fortify themselves? [e] will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they [f] revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?

3 Now [g] Tobiah the Ammonite *was* by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone-wall.

4 [h] Hear, O our God; for we are † despised: and [i] turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity:

5 And [k] cover not their iniquity, and let not [l] their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked *thee* to anger [m] before the builders.

6 So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof; for the people [n] had a mind to work.

7 ¶ But it came to pass, *that* when [o] Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and [p] the Ammonites, and [q] the Ashdodites, [r] heard that the walls of Jerusalem ‡ were made up, *and* that the breaches began to be stopped, [s] then they were very wroth,

CHAP. IV. We left all hands at work, building the wall. But such good work is not wont to be carried on without opposition. Their enemies reproached and ridiculed their undertaking, but their scoffs they answered with prayers, they heeded them not, but went on with their work. They formed a bloody design to hinder them by force of arms. To guard against this, Nehemiah prayed, set guards, and encouraged them to fight; by which the design was broken, and so the work was carried on with all needful precaution against a surprise. In all this, Nehemiah approved himself a man of great conduct and courage, as well as piety.

V. 1—6. Here is, I. The spiteful, scornful reflection of Sanballat and Tobiah. The country rang of their attempt presently, intelligence was brought to Samaria, that nest of their enemies, who had hitherto pleased themselves with the thought, that while Jerusalem was unwalled, they could master it when they pleased; but if walled, it will not only be fenced against them, but, by degrees, become formidable. The strength and safety of the church are the grief and vexation of its enemies. They despised it, and their ridicule sufficiently displayed their venom; but good was brought out of it; for, looking upon it as a foolish undertaking, that would sink under its own weight, they did not go about to obstruct it till it was too late. See their pride and malice:

(1.) Sanballat scorns the workmen, '*These feeble Jews*,' (*v.* 2.) 'what will they do for materials? *Will they revive the stones out of the rubbish?* And what means their haste? Do they think to wall a city in a day? And keep the feast of dedication with sacrifice the next day? Poor, silly people! See how ridiculous they make themselves!'

(2.) Tobiah speaks with no less scorn of the work. He has his jest too, and must show his wit, *v.* 3. Profane scoffers sharpen one another. 'Sorry work,' says he, 'they are like to make of it; they themselves will be ashamed of it; *if a fox go up*, not with his subtilty, but with his weight, he *will break down their stone-wall*.' Many a good work has been thus looked upon with contempt by the *proud and haughty scorners*.

II. Nehemiah's humble and devout address to God, when he heard of these reflections. Probably they sent him a message to this purport; but he did not answer these fools according to their folly; but looked to God by prayer. 1. He begs of God to notice the indignities done them, (*v.* 4.) and in this we are apt to imitate him, Ps. 38: 13, 14. 2. He begs God to avenge their cause, and turn the reproach upon the enemies themselves; (*v.* 4, 5.) this was spoken rather by a spirit of prophecy than of prayer, and is not to be imitated by us, who are taught of Christ to *pray for* them that *despitefully use and persecute us;* Christ Himself prayed for those that reproached Him, *Father, forgive them.* Nehemiah here prays, *Cover not their iniquity.* They that cast contempt on God's people, do but prepare everlasting shame for themselves. It is a sin from which sinners are seldom recovered. Doubtless, Nehemiah had reason to think the hearts of those sinners were so desperately hardened, they would never repent, else he would not have prayed it might *never be blotted out*. His reason is, not *They have abused* us, but *They have provoked Thee*, and that *before the builders*, to whom, it is likely, they sent a spiteful message. Note, We should be angry at the malice of persecutors, not as abusive to us, but as offensive to God [and derogatory to Him]; and on that we may ground an expectation that God will appear against it, Ps. 74: 18, 22.

III. The vigor of the builders, notwithstanding this, *v.* 6. so that in a little time they had run up the wall to half its height, for *the people had a mind to work*, their hearts were on it, and they would have it forwarded. Then good work goes on well, when people have a mind to it. Reproaches of enemies should rather quicken us to duty, than drive us from it.

V. 7—15. We have here,

I. The conspiracy the Jews' enemies formed, to stay the building by slaying the builders. The conspirators were not only Sanballat and Tobiah, but other neighboring people. They fancied the work would soon stand still of itself; but when they heard it prospered, they were angry at the Jews for hastening it, and at themselves for being so slow in opposing it, *v.* 7. Nothing would serve *their cruel wrath* but they would *fight against Jerusalem*, *v.* 8. It was merely envy and malice; because they hated the Jews' piety. Observe, 1. How unanimous they were; though of different interests, yet they were one in opposition to the Word of God. 2. How close; they took crafty counsel, and promised themselves security and success from their secrecy. 3. How cruel; if nothing less will stop the work, they will not stick at the murder of the workmen; nay, their blood they thirst for, and are glad of any pretence to glut themselves with it. 4. Their design, and confidence of success, *v.* 11. Hindering good work is what bad men aim at and promise themselves; but good work is God's, and shall prosper.

II. The discouragements of the builders. At the very time the adversaries said, Let us *cause the work to cease; Judah said*, 'Let us even let it fall, for we are not able to go forward with it,' (*v.* 10.) representing the laborers as tired, and the remaining difficulties, even of that first part of the work, the removing of the rubbish, as insuperable. Can Judah, that warlike, valiant tribe, sneak thus? Active, leading men have many times as much ado to grapple with the fears of their friends, as with the terrors of their enemies

III. The information brought to Nehemiah of the enemies' designs, *v.* 12. Some *Jews that dwelt by them*, in the country, though they had not zeal enough to help in building, yet, having by their situation opportunity to discover the enemies' motions, had so much honesty and affection to the cause, as to give intelligence; nay, that it might be the more credited, they came themselves, and repeated it as men in earnest, and under a concern, and the report was confirmed by many witnesses; their intelligence is expressed abruptly, and finds

a 2:10,19. Ezra 4:1—5. Acts 5:17.
b Ps. 35:15,16. 44:13,14. Matt. 27:29. Heb. 11:36.
c Ezra 4:9,10.
d 1 Sam. 14:11,12. 17:43,44. Zech. 12:8. 1 Cor. 1:27.
* Heb. *leave to themselves.*
e 12:27,43.
f 10. Ez. 37:3—13. Hab. 3:2.
g 2:10,19. 6:1. 1 K. 20:10,18. 2 K. 18:23.
h Ps. 123:3,4.
† Heb. *despite.*
i 1 Sam. 17:26. Ps. 79:12. Prov. 3:34. Hos. 12:14.
k Ps. 59:5—13. 69:27,28. 109:14,15. Jer. 18:23. 2 Tim. 4:14.
l Ps. 51:1,9. Is. 43:25. 44:22.
m Is. 36:11,12.
n 6:15. 1 Chr. 29:3,14,17,18. 2 Chr. 29:36. Ps. 110:3. 2 Cor. 8:16,17. Phil. 2:13. Heb. 13:21.
o 1. 2:10,19.
p Judg. 10:7, &c. 11:12, &c. 1 Sam. 11:2. 2 Sam. 10:1—5. 2 K. 24:2 2 Chr. 20:1. Ez. 25:3—7. Am. 1:13.
q 13:23,24. 1 Sam. 5:1,2. 2 Chr. 26: 6—8. Jer. 25:20. Am. 1:8. 3:9. Zech. 9:5,6.
r Ezra 4:4—16. 5:8.
‡ Heb. *ascended.*
s Gen. 3:15. Acts 4:17,18. 5:33. Rev. 12:12,13,17.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV. V. 4, 5. The Jews were at this time the church of God: they were actually employed in his service: their enemies, without the smallest ground of complaint against them, despised and hated them for his sake: if they succeeded in their designs, they would subvert true religion; and their condign punishment would form a salutary example to all other adversaries, and be subservient to the cause of truth and righteousness. So that, zeal for the honor of God, and love to his people, induced Nehemiah to pray, that these scorners might be exposed to that reproach which they cast on the Jews, and become 'a prey to their enemies in the land of captivity;' and that their sins might not be covered, or blotted out, by the merciful forgiveness of God: seeing they had endeavored to discourage the builders, and render them disaffected to their work; (*M. R.* i—1. —Such scriptural requests are prophetical, or declaratory of the judgments of God against persecutors: and the subsequent doom of these nations was an answer to this prayer. (*Ps.* 69:21—28. 109:6—20.) 'This prayer . . . was confirmed by the destruction of these nations, by the Maccabees and their successors.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

Turn, &c.] 'A prayer of this kind, understood literally, is not lawful for any *Christian*. Such sayings are excusable in the mouth of a Jew, under severe irritation. Probably we should understand these most terrible imprecations, as *declaratory*; for the same form of the verb, in the Heb. is used as *precative* and *imperative*. Their reproach *shall be turned*. They shall be given for a prey, &c. All who know the genius of the Heb. know that the *future* tense is used to express all these senses. These declarations of God's judgments respected their bodies, and life; not their *souls*. And then they amount to no more than this, "What a man soweth that he shall reap."' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 7, 8.

All these nations, (except perhaps the Arabians,) were subjects of

8 And [t] conspired all of them together, to come *and* to fight against Jerusalem, and to * hinder it.

9 Nevertheless [u] we made our prayer unto our God, and [x] set a watch against them day and night, because of them.

10 And Judah said, [y] The strength of the [z] bearers of burdens is decayed, and *there is* much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall.

11 And our adversaries said, [a] They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease.

12 And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us [b] ten times, † From all places whence ye shall return unto us, *they will be upon you.*

13 Therefore [c] set I in ‡ the lower places behind the wall, *and* on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with [d] their swords, their spears, and their bows.

14 And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, [e] Be not ye afraid of them: [f] remember the LORD, *which is* [g] great and terrible, and [h] fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.

15 And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and [i] God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, [k] every one unto his work.

16 And it came to pass from that time forth, *that* the half of [l] my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers *were* behind all the house of Judah.

17 They which builded on the wall, and they that [m] bare burdens, with those that laded, *every one* [n] with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other *hand* held a weapon.

18 For the builders, every one had his sword girded § by his side, and *so* builded: and [o] he that sounded the trumpet *was* by me.

work for the critics; which perhaps is designed to intimate, that they gave it as men out of breath, and in confusion, whose very looks would make up the deficiencies of their words. I think it may be read, without supplying any thing, '*Whatever place ye turn to, they are against us*, so you have need to be on your guard on all sides.' God has many ways of bringing to light, and so bringing to nought, the devices and designs of his and his church's enemies.

IV. The pious and prudent methods Nehemiah, hereupon, took to baffle them, and cure his work and workmen; it is said, (*v.* 14.) he *looked.* 1. He looked up, put himself and his cause under the divine protection, *v.* 9. That was this good man's way, and should be ours. This he did first before using any means, for with God we must always begin. 2. He looked about him. Having prayed, he *set* a *watch.* The instructions Christ gives for our spiritual warfare, agree with this, Matt. 26: 41. *Watch, and pray.* If we think to secure ourselves by prayer only, without watchfulness, we are slothful, and tempt God: and if by watchfulness, without prayer, we are proud, and slight God; either way, we forfeit his protection.

Observe, (1.) How he posted the guard, *v.* 13. In the lower places, he set them behind the wall, that they might annoy the enemy over it, as a breastwork; but in the higher places, where the wall was raised to its full height, he set them on it, that from its top they might throw down stones or darts on the heads of the assailants: he set them after their families, that mutual relation might engage to mutual assistance. (2.) How he animated and encouraged them, *v.* 14. He observed even the nobles and rulers, as well as the people, to be in great consternation on the intelligence brought, and ready to conclude they were all undone, by which their hands were weakened both for work and war, therefore he endeavors to silence their fears. Those that with an eye of faith see the church's God to be great and terrible, will see the church's enemies to be mean and despicable. The reigning fear of God is the best antidote against the ensnaring fear of man. He that is afraid of *a man that shall die*, forgets *the Lord his Maker*, Isa. 51: 12, 13.

V. The disappointment this happily gave the enemy, *v.* 15. They knew they could not gain their point but by surprise, and if their plot was known, it was quashed. The Jews, hereupon, *returned every one to his work*, with so much the more cheerfulness, because they saw plainly that God owned it, and owned them in doing it. God's care of our safety should engage and encourage us to go on with vigor in our duty. As soon as a danger is over, let us *return to our work*, and trust God another time.

V. 16—23. When the builders had so far reason to think the design of the enemies broken, *as to return to their work*, yet they were not so secure as to lay down their arms, knowing how restless and unwearied they were in their attempts, and that, if one design failed, they would be hatching another. Thus must we watch always against our spiritual enemies, and not expect our warfare to be accomplished till our work is.

1. While one half was at work, the other half was under their arms, holding *spears, and shields, and bows*, not only for themselves but for the laborers too, who would immediately quit their work, and betake themselves to their weapons, on the first alarm, *v.* 16. Probably they changed services at such and such hours, which would relieve the fatigue of both, and particularly ease the *bearer of burdens*, whose *strength was decayed;* (*v.* 10.) while they held the weapons, they were eased yet not idle. They thus dividing their time between the trowels and the spears, are said to *work with one hand*, and hold their weapons *with the other*, (*v.* 17.) which cannot be understood literally, for the work would require both hands, but it intimates they were equally employed in both. Thus must we work out our salvation with the *weapons of our warfare* in our hand, *still fighting the good fight of faith.*

2. Every builder had a sword by his side, (*v.* 18.) which he could carry without hindering his labor. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit, which we ought, as Christians, to have always at hand, both in our labors, and conflicts.

t Ps. 2:1—3. 83:4—11. Is. 8:9,10. Acts 23:12,13.
* Heb. *make an error to it.*
u 1:11. Gen. 32:9—12,28. 2 K. 19:14—19. Ps. 50:15. 55:16—18. Luke 6: 11,12. Acts 4:24—30.
x Matt. 26:41. Luke 21:36. 1 Pet. 5:8.
y Num. 13:31. 32:9. Ps. 11:1,2. Hag. 1:2.
z 2 Chr. 2:18. Ez. 29:18.
a Judg. 20:29,&c. Ps. 56:6. Is. 47:11. 1 Thes. 5:2.
b Gen. 31:7,41. Num. 14:22. Job 19:3.
† Or, *That from all places ye must return to us.*
c Gen. 32:13—20. 2 Chr. 32:2—8. Ps. 112:5. Matt. 10:16. 1 Cor. 14:20.
‡ Heb. *From the lower parts of the place.*
d 17,18. Cant. 3:7,8. Eph. 6:11—20.
e Num. 14:9. Deut. 1:21. 20:3,4. Josh. 1:9. 2 Chr. 20:15—17. 32:7. Ps. 27: 1. 46:11. Is. 41:10—14. Heb. 13:6.
f 1-a. 20:7. 77:10—20. 143:5. Is. 51: 12,13. 63:11—13.
g 1:5. Deut. 10:17. Job 37:22. Ps. 65:5. 66:3. Is. 64:1—3. Nah. 1:2—7. Heb. 12:20,21,28,29.
h 2 Sam. 10:12.
i 2 Sam. 15:31. 17:14. Job 5:12,13. Ps. 33:10,11. Prov. 21:30. Is. 8:10. 44:25. Lam. 3:37. 1 Cor. 3:19,20.
k Mark 13:34. Rom. 12:11. 1 Thes. 4:11.
l 23. 5:15,16. Ps. 101:6.
m 10.
n Dan. 9:25. 1 Cor. 9:26. 16:13. 2 Cor. 6:7. Eph. 6:11,&c. 2 Tim. 2:3. 4:7.
§ Heb. *on his loins.*
o Num. 10:9. 2 Chr. 13:12—17.

Persia; and were induced by Sanballat to unite against Nehemiah and the Jews, when acting by the king's commission; so their attempt was a *conspiracy* in the most criminal sense. Dreading either the resentment of the king, or the valor of the Jews, they had not hitherto dared to attack them openly, notwithstanding the greatness of their malice. (*Matt.* 26:3—5. *Acts* 23:12—22.) 'The last words in the Heb. are *to make an error in it;* i. e. to put them by the work, or to make them not know which way to turn themselves.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

Verse 9.

The connection, here marked, between the greatest simplicity and piety, in trusting God alone and seeking help from Him by prayer, and the most vigilant and diligent activity in the use of all proper means, is well worthy of notice. ID.

'The strongest confidence in the protection and favor of God, does not preclude the use of *all* or any of the *means of self-preservation and defence*, which his providence has put in our power. While God works in us to *will and to do*; we should proceed to *willing*, through the *power* He has given us to *will:* and to *action*, through the power He has given us to *act.* We cannot will, but through God's *power;* we cannot *act*, but through God's *strength.* The *power*, and the *use* of it, are two distinct things. We may *have the power* to *will*, and *not will:* and we may have the *power* to *do*, and *not act:* therefore, says the apostle, seeing God has wrought in you these powers, see that *you work out your own* salvation with fear and trembling.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 11.

Some think, certain of the princes reported these sayings of the adversaries, in order to intimidate the builders: being themselves weary of the labor, and not cordially affected to the cause. It was not however likely, Sanballat could introduce into the city so large a number of soldiers, as would suffice to overpower and destroy all the Jews, and stop the work, without being discovered, till he and his troops were in the midst of the builders. [Yet such terrifying rumors, exaggerated by their own fears, are effectual to melt the hearts of the wonder-loving mass, and so are dangerous and often fatal to the great public designs of patriotism in critical times.] Indeed the conduct of those, who reported such a plan of the enemy, was more suited to intimidate the inconsiderate, than to convince wise men that they really expected it would be carried into execution. SCOTT.

Verses 16—18.

Wrought with one of his hands, &c.] The expression is figurative, implying that every man was both a builder, and a soldier. ID.

19 And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work *is* great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another.

20 In what place *therefore* ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: [p] our God shall fight for us.

21 So [q] we labored in the work: and half of them held the spears, from the rising of the morning, till the stars appeared.

22 Likewise at the same time said I unto the people, Let [r] every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a guard to us, and labor on the day.

23 So neither [s] I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, * *saving that* every one put them off for washing.

CHAP. V.

The poor Jews complain of the debts which they had unavoidably contracted, and which compelled them to mortgage their lands, and even sell their children, 1—5. Nehemiah rebukes the rich usurers, who oppress their brethren; and obliges them to engage by oath to make full restitution, 6—13. He refuses the governor's customary allowances, and maintains great hospitality at his own charge, 14—19.

AND there was [a] a great cry of the people, and of their wives, against [b] their brethren the Jews.

2 For there were that said, [c] We, our sons and our daughters, *are* many: therefore [d] we take up corn *for them*, that we may eat and live.

3 *Some* also there were that said, [e] We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn, [f] because of the dearth.

3. Care was taken both to get, and give, early notice, in case the enemy should endeavor to surprise them. The work was large, and the builders dispersed; for in all parts of the wall, they were laboring at the same time. Nehemiah kept a trumpeter always by him, and continually walked round to oversee the work, and encourage the workmen, and so would have speedy intelligence of an attack, of which, by sound of trumpet, he would soon notify all, and they must immediately repair to him, with full assurance that *God* would *fight for them*, *v.* 18—20. When they acted as workmen, they should be dispersed wherever there was work to do; but when, as soldiers, they must come into close order, and be found in a body. Thus should the laborers in Christ's building be ready to unite against the common foe.

4. The inhabitants of the villages were ordered to lodge within Jerusalem, with their servants, not only that they might be nearer their work in the morning, but be ready to help in case of an attack in the night, *v.* 22. The strength of a city lies more in its hands than in its walls; secure them, and God's blessing on them, and be secure.

5. Nehemiah himself, and all his men, kept close to business, *v.* 21. Thus ought we always to be on our guard against our spiritual enemies, not only (as here) while *it is light*, but when *it is dark*, for they are the *rulers of the darkness of this world*. Nay, so very intent was Nehemiah on his work, and so fast did he hold his servants to it, that while the heat of the business lasted, neither he himself, nor his attendants, went to bed, but every night slept in their clothes, (*v.* 23.) only shifting them now and then, either for cleanliness, or in case of ceremonial pollution. Then good work is likely to go on successfully, when those that labor in it, thus make a business of it.

CHAP. V. How bravely Nehemiah, as a wise and faithful governor, stood on his guard against the attacks of enemies abroad, we read in the foregoing ch. Here we have him no less bold and active to redress grievances at home, and, having kept them from being destroyed by their enemies, to keep them from destroying one another.

V. 1—5. We have here the tears of the oppressed. Hard times and hard hearts made the poor miserable.

I. The times were hard. There was a dearth of corn, (*v.* 3.) probably, for want of rain, with which God had chastised their neglect of his house, (Hag. 1: 9—11.) and the non-payment of their church-dues, Mal. 3: 9, 10. Thus, foolish, sinful men bring God's judgments on themselves, and then fret and complain of them. When the markets are high, and provisions scarce and dear, the poor soon feel it. Blessed be God for the mercy, and God deliver us from the sin, of *fulness of bread*, Ezek. 16: 49. What made the scarcity more grievous, was, their *sons and daughters were many*, *v.* 2. The families most necessitous, were most numerous. Some have estates and no children; others children and no estates; those who have both, have reason to be thankful, those who have neither, may the more easily be content.—Those who have great families and little substance, must learn to live by faith in God's providence and promise; and those who have little families and great substance, must *make their abundance a supply for the wants of others*. But this was not all; as corn was dear, so the taxes were high: the king's tribute must be paid, *v.* 4. This mark of their captivity still remained on them. Perhaps it was a poll money required, and then, their sons and their daughters being many, it rose the higher. The more they had to maintain, (a hard case!) the more they had to pay. Their families came poor out of Babylon, they had been at great expense in building them houses, and had not yet got up their strength when these new burdens came. The straits of poor housekeepers who make hard shift to get an honest livelihood, and sometimes want what is fitting for them and their families, are well worthy the compassionate consideration of those, who either with their wealth, power, [patronage, sympathy, or friendly counsel,] are in a capacity to help them.

II. Money must be had, but it must be borrowed, and they that lent, taking advantage of their necessity, were very hard, and made a prey of them. 1. Exacting interest at 12 *per cent.* the hundredth part every month, *v.* 11. If men borrow large

p Ex. 14:14,25. Deut. 1:30. 3:22. 20: 4. Josh. 23:10.
q 1 Cor. 15:10,58. Gal. 6:9. Col. 1:29.
r 11:1,2.
s 5:16,17. 7:2. Judg. 9:48.
* Or, *every one* went *with his weapon* for *water*. Judg. 5:11.
a Ex. 3:7. 22:25—27. Job 31:38,39. 34:28. Is. 5:7. Luke 18:7. Jam. 5:4.
b Lev. 25:35—37. Deut. 15:7—11. Acts 7:26. 1 Cor. 6:6—8.
c Ps. 127:3—5. 128:2—4. Mal. 2:2.
d Gen. 41:57. 42:2. 43:8.
e Gen. 47:15—25. f Mal. 3:8—11.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The pious labors of those, who endeavor to promote true religion, must always excite the indignation of such as are 'haters of God,' and of his truth and holiness: nay, in this case, the wisest and most excellent behavior will be reproached and derided, as madness and folly.—The most sacred things may easily be represented in so ridiculous a light, as to excite profane laughter: a small measure of wit, united with competent malice, impiety, and impudence, will suffice.—Contempt and derision frequently prove the Christian's protection, and give him leisure to effect his designs, without more formidable opposition. The means he uses appear feeble to proud despisers; but, by the power and blessing of God, they produce durable and extensive effects: and all the efforts of man, seconded by the power and policy of hell, have failed, and ever will fail, to subvert the cause, which infidels have dreamed would fall of itself, or on the first assault.—When insulted or injured, let us then give up ourselves to prayer: and the supplications of believers, throughout the world, for the prosperity of the church, and the success of the Gospel, will eventually be answered, [if not in the conversion of such sinners,] in the reproach and merited punishment of all impenitent opposers.—Those, who disagree in almost every other thing, will often unite in persecution: (*Matt.* 22: 15—22.) and that enmity, which at one time dictates contempt and derision, will at another suggest more violent and cruel measures; especially when the servants of God are active, united, and successful. So that proud scorners are not fit to be trusted with power; whatever professions of candor they may make, or however they may plead for toleration.—In important and useful undertakings, we should expect discouragement from every quarter: for we shall be tried, not only by the anger, contempt, treachery and cruelty of enemies, but also by the inconstancy and lukewarmness of friends and helpers. But if we be led thereby to a more simple confidence in God, and to the more diligent use of proper means, and if our enemies cannot fright us from duty, or deceive us into sin, or find us unwatchful, they cannot hurt or hinder us. When ministers of religion, or other active instruments, add the example of diligence, courage, self-denial, and patience, to their exhortations; others will be stirred up, who were before drawn or driven from their work.—Every true Christian is both a laborer and a soldier, working with one hand and fighting with the other, and called, by the sound of the Gospel, alternately to his work and to the conflict.

SCOTT.

(16.) *Habergeons*, &c.] Cuts, 1 Sam. 17:5—7. 2 Sam. 1:9. 1 *K.* 22:34, Ezra 1:69. *Ex.* 17:20, &c. ED.

Verses 19, 20.

The priests were directed to blow the sacred trumpets; (*Num.* 10: 2—10.) and no doubt some constantly attended, one at least, in the different stations selected, to sound the alarm when needful: and this was a token that the Lord would fight for his people. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. V. V. 1—5. It seems, the attention of Nehemiah was interrupted, before the wall was completed, by the affair recorded in this ch. (6:15, 16.) Amidst the depredations to which the Jews were exposed, and their attention to self-defence, it is likely tillage was in some degree neglected, and a scarcity of corn ensued. It is also *supposed* by learned men, that these events occurred in the sabbatical year; which, if indeed it were so, would increase the difficulties of the

4 There were also that said, We have borrowed money for [e] the king's tribute, *and that upon* our lands and vineyards.

5 Yet now [h] our flesh *is* as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and, lo, [i] we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and *some* of our daughters are brought unto bondage *already*: neither *is it* in our power *to redeem them*; for other men have our lands and vineyards.

6 And [k] I was very angry when I heard their cry, and these words.

7 Then * I consulted with myself, and [l] I rebuked the nobles and the rulers, and said unto them, [m] Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And [n] I set a great assembly against them;

8 And I said unto them, We, [o] after our ability, have [p] redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even [q] sell your brethren? or [r] shall they be sold unto us? Then [s] held they their peace, and found nothing *to answer*.

9 Also I said, [t] It *is* not good that ye do: ought ye not [u] to walk in the fear of our God, because of [x] the reproach of the heathen our enemies?

10 [y] I likewise, *and* my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn: [z] I pray you let us [a] leave off this usury.

11 [b] Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, [c] their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth *part* of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them.

12 Then said they, [d] We will restore *them*, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest. Then [e] I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise.

13 Also [f] I shook my lap, and said, [g] So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labor, that performeth not this promise, even thus be

sums, to trade with, to increase their stocks, or to purchase land, there is no reason but the lender should share with the borrower in his profit; or if to spend on their lusts, or repair what they have so spent, why should they not pay for their extravagances? But if the poor borrow, to maintain their families, and we be able to help them, certainly we ought either to lend freely what they need, or (if they be not likely to repay it) to give freely. Nay, 2. They forced them to mortgage their lands and houses to secure the money (*v.* 3.) and not only so, but took the profits of them for interest, (*v.* 5. compare *v.* 11.) that by degrees they might make themselves masters of all they had. Yet this was not the worst. 3. They took their children for bond-servants, to be enslaved or sold at pleasure, *v.* 5. This they complain of most sensibly, and make an humble remonstrance of to Nehemiah, not only because they saw he was a great man that *could* relieve them, but a good man that *would*. Whither should the injured poor flee for succor, but *to the shields of the earth?* to the chancery, to the charity, in the royal breast, and those deputed by it, for relief against the *summum jus—the extremity of the law?*

We may leave Nehemiah hearing the complaint, and inquiring into the truth of the complainants' allegations, but let us lament the hardships many groan under, and remember them in our prayers and succors, while we abhor *their* pride and cruelty, who drink the tears, the blood, of those they have under their feet. But let those who show no mercy, expect *judgment without mercy*. It was an aggravation of their sin, that they were themselves so lately delivered out of bondage, which obliged them in gratitude to *undo the heavy burden*, Isa. 58: 6.

V. 6—13. It should seem, the foregoing complaint was made to Nehemiah, when he was as full as possible of public business; yet, perceiving it to be just, he did not reject it because unseasonable; nor chide the petitioners, nor fall into a passion with them, for disturbing him, when they saw how much he had to do, (a fault men of business are too often guilty of,) nor did he so much as adjourn the hearing till he had more leisure: knowing that, let him build Jerusalem's walls ever so high, so thick, so strong, the city could not be safe while such abuses were tolerated.

I. He *was very angry*, *v.* 6. It well becomes rulers to show themselves angry at sin, that by it they may be excited to duty, and others by the expressions of it, deterred from evil.

II. He *consulted with himself*, *v.* 7. So his anger was not excessive, but kept within bounds, for he did not say or do any thing unadvisedly: he consulted with himself what to say, and when, and how. Note, Reproofs must be given with great consideration, that what is well-meant, may not come short of its end, for want of being well managed. It is the *reproof of instruction*, that *giveth life*.

III. He *rebuked the nobles and rulers*, who were the moneyed men, and whose power perhaps made them more bold to oppress. Let no man imagine his dignity sets him above reproof.

IV. He *set a great assembly against them;* called the people together to witness what he said, and bear their testimony (which they will generally be forward to do) against the oppressions and extortions of their rulers. Ezra and Nehemiah were both very wise, good, useful men, yet, in cases not unlike, there was a great difference between their management: Ezra, when told of the sin of the rulers in marrying strange wives, rent his clothes, and wept, and prayed, and was hardly persuaded to attempt a reformation, fearing it to be impracticable, for he was a man of a mild, tender spirit; Nehemiah, when told of as bad a thing, kindled immediately, reproached the delinquents, incensed the people against them, and never rested till, by all the rough methods he could use, he forced them to reform; for he was a man of a hot and eager spirit. Note, 1. Very holy men may differ much from each other in their natural temper, and in other things that result from it. 2. God's work may be done well and successfully, and yet different methods taken in doing it; which is a good reason why we should neither arraign the management of others, nor make our own a standard. There are diversities of operation, but the same Spirit.

V. He fairly reasoned the case with them, and showed them the evil of what they did: the regular way of reforming men's lives, is, to endeavor, in the first place, to convince their consciences. Several things he offered to their consideration, so pertinent and just, that it appeared he had consulted with himself. 1. Those whom they oppressed, were their brethren, from whom the divine law did not allow them to *take any usury*, Deut. 23: 19, 20. 2. They were but lately redeemed *out of the hand of the heathen;* the body of the people was so by the wonderful providence of God, and some particular persons were so, at the charge of Nehemiah, and other pious and well disposed persons. 'Now,' says he, 'What an absurd thing is this! Must we be at the same trouble and expense to redeem them from you, as we were to redeem them from Babylon?' *v.* 8. Those whom

g 9:37. Deut. 28:47,48. Josh. 16:10. 1 K. 9:21. Ezra 4:13,20.
h Gen. 37:27. Is. 58:7. Jam. 2:5,6.
i Ex. 21:1—11. Lev. 25:39—43. 2 K. 4:1. Matt. 18:25.
k 13:8,25. Ex. 11:8. Num. 16:15. Mark 3:5. Eph. 4:26.
* Heb. *my heart consulted in me.* Ps. 4:4. 27:3.
l Lev. 19:15. 2 Chr. 19:6,7. Ps. 82: 1—4. Prov. 27:5. 2 Cor. 5:16. Gal. 2:11. 1 Tim. 5:20. Tit. 2:15.
m Ex. 22:25. Lev. 25:36. Deut. 15:2, 3. 23:19,20. 24:10—13. Ez. 22:12. 45:9.
n 2 Chr. 28:9—13. Matt. 18:17.
o Matt. 25:15,29. 2 Cor 8:12. Gal. 6:10.
p Lev. 25:47—49.
q Ex. 21:16. Deut. 24:7.
r Rom. 14:15. 1 Cor. 8:11.
s Job 29:10. 32:15,16. Matt. 22:12. Rom. 3:19.
t 1 Sam. 2:24. Prov. 16:29. 17:26. 18: 5. 19:2. 24:23.
u 15. Gen. 20:11. 42:18. Acts 9:31.
x Gen. 13:7,8. 2 Sam. 12:14. Ez. 36: 20. Rom. 2:24. 1 Tim. 5:14. Tit. 2:5. 1 Pet. 2:12.
y Mic. 2:1. Luke 3:13,14. 1 Cor. 9. 12—18.
z 2 Cor. 5:11,20. 6:1. Philemon 8,9.
a 7. Ex. 22:25—27. Ps. 15:5. Ez. 18: 8,13.
b Lev. 6:4,5. 1 Sam. 12:3. 2 Sam. 12:6. Is. 58:6. Luke 8:8.
c 3,4.
d 2 Chr. 28:14,15. Ezra 10:12. Matt. 19:21,22. Luke 19:8.
e 10:29. 13:25. 2 Chr. 6:22,23. 15:13, 14. Ezra 10:5. Jer. 34:8—10. Matt. 26:63.
f Matt. 10:14. Acts 13:51. 18:6.
g 1 Sam. 15:28. 1 K. 11:29—31. Zech. 5:3,4.

poor, as well as aggravate the guilt of those, who thence took occasion to oppress their brethren. The nation seems also to have been visited with scarcity, for their sins. SCOTT.

Verse 8.

It was indeed impossible to reply to this animated and reasonable expostulation. (*M. R.*) ID.

Verse 9.

When Nehemiah said, 'It is not good that ye do,' his words imply that they had acted very wickedly. 'A soft form of speech, used when they mean it is very bad. *Prov.* 16:29.' *Patrick.* (*M. R.* t.) The exposed and distressed condition to which sin had reduced the nation, and the recent mercies which they had received, combined to enforce it on them, to 'walk in the fear of God,' lest He should give them up as a *reproach* to their enemies: or rather, lest the heathen, who were full of malice, should reproach them, as they justly might, for their avarice and cruelty; and thence take occasion to revile their religion, and blaspheme the name of God Himself. (*M. R.* u, x.) SCOTT.

Verses 10—13.

Nehemiah urged them *voluntarily* to leave off their usury, and to restore the lands of their poor brethren, and the increase of money and provisions, which they had exacted from them; to lend them *without pledge or usury*, in this time of distress; and to wait for payment till better times. This seems the immediate purport of his proposal: though probably he required the free remission of former debts, and the liberating of the children which were in bondage, as in the year of release.—(*Jer.* 34: 8—22.)—Thus this matter was in one assembly amicably settled, by motives and arguments taken from true religion, and the law of God; yet one of a similar kind distracted the Roman state

he shaken out and *emptied. And all the congregation said, [h] Amen, and [i] praised the LORD. And [k] the people did according to this promise.

[*Practical Observations.*]

B. C. 434. 14 ¶ Moreover, [l] from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, [l] from the twentieth year, even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, *that is*, twelve years, [m] I and my brethren have not eaten [n] the bread of the governor.

15 But the former governors, that *had been* before me, were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver; yea, [o] even their servants bare rule over the people: but [p] so did not I, [q] because of the fear of God.

16 Yea, also [r] I continued in the work of this wall, [s] neither bought we any land: and [t] all my servants *were* gathered thither unto the work.

17 Moreover *there* *were* [u] at my table [x] an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, beside those that came unto us from among the heathen that *are* about us.

18 Now *that* [y] which was prepared *for me* daily *was* one ox, *and* six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for

* Heb. *emptied*, or *void*.

h Num. 5:22. Deut. 27:14—26.
i 1 Chr. 16:36.
k 2 K. 23:3. Ps. 50:14. 76:11. 119: 106. Ec. 5:5.
l 2:1.
m 1 Cor. 9:4—15,18. 2 Thes. 3:8,9.
n Ezra 4:13,14. Rom. 13:6,7.
o 1 Sam. 2:15—17. 8:15 Prov. 29:12.
p Matt. 5:47. 2 Cor. 11:9. 12:13.
q 9. Job 31:23. Ps. 112:1. 147:11. Prov. 16:6. Ec. 12:13,14. Is. 50:10. Luke 18:2—4.
r Luke 8:15. Rom. 2:7. 1 Cor. 15:58. Gal. 6:9.
s Num. 16:15. Acts 20:33—35. 1 Thes. 2:5,6.
t 2 Cor. 12:16—18. Phil. 2:20,21.
u 2 Sam. 9:7,13. 1 K. 18:19.
x Is. 32:8. Rom. 12:13. 1 Pet. 4:9,10.
y 1 K. 4:22,23.

God by his grace has made free, ought not to be again brought under *a yoke of bondage*, Gal. 5: 1. 1 Cor. 7: 23. 3. That it was a great sin thus to oppress the poor; *v.* 9. though you get money by it, you contract guilt by it; and *ought ye not to walk in the fear of God?* But if you walk in the fear of God, you will not be either covetous of worldly gain, or cruel toward your brethren.'—They that walk in the fear of God, will not dare to do a wicked thing, Job 31: 13, 14, 23. 4. That it was a great scandal, and a reproach to their profession. 'It will give *the heathen, our enemies*, great occasion to speak against us; they will say, These Jews that profess so much devotion to God, see how barbarous they are one to another.' Note, (1.) All that profess religion, should be very careful not to expose themselves to reproach, lest religion be wounded through them. (2.) Nothing exposes religion more to the reproach of its enemies, than the worldliness and hard-heartedness of its professors. 5. He himself had set them a better example, (*v.* 10.) which he enlarges on afterward, *v.* 14, &c. They that rigorously insist on their right themselves, will with a very ill grace persuade others to recede from theirs.

VI. He earnestly pressed them not only not to make their poor neighbors any more such hard bargains, but to restore what they had got, *v.* 11. See how familiarly he speaks to them, putting himself in, as becomes reprovers, though far from being any way guilty of the crime. See how earnestly, and yet humbly, he persuaded them; though he had authority to command, yet, *for love's sake, he rather beseeches.* See how particularly he presses them to be kind to the poor; to give them up their mortgages, put them again in possession of their estates, remit the interest, and give them time to pay the principal. He urged them to their loss, yet, urging them to their duty, it would be, at length, to their advantage. What we charitably *forgive* will be remembered and recompensed, as well as what we charitably *give*.

VII. He laid them under all the obligations possible to do what he pressed them to. 1. He got a promise from them, (*v.* 12.) sent for the priests to give them their oath, that they would perform it, and bound them by a solemn curse or execration, hoping that would awe them, *v* 13. And so far were they from promising with regret, that they promised with all possible expressions of joy and thankfulness; as David, when he took God's vows upon him, *sang and gave praises*, Ps. 56: 12. This was well, but what follows, was better: they *did according to this promise*, and adhered to what they had done, not as their ancestors in a like case, who re-enslaved those whom, a little before, they had released, Jer. 34: 10, 11, 18. Good promises are good things, but good performances are all in all.

V. 14—19. Nehemiah had mentioned his own practice, as an inducement to the nobles not to burden the poor, no not with just demands; here he relates more particularly what his practice was, not in pride or vain-glory, or to pass a compliment on himself, but as an inducement both to his successors, and to the inferior magistrates, to be as tender as might be of the people's ease.

I. He intimates what had been the way of his predecessors, *v*, 15. He does not name them, because what he had to say of them, was not to their honor, and, in such a case, it is good to spare names; but the people knew how chargeable

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—13. Every domestic or relative comfort may become an occasion of increasing anguish: we should not then be discontented in the want of children, or anxious about temporal things; but seek our happiness from God.—But alas! too many take advantage of the necessities, to which others are reduced, in order to exact on them; that they may increase their own useless abundance, or support their luxurious and extravagant expenses! They wilfully forget, that the poor are of the same nature with themselves; and that they have the same wants, inclinations, natural affections, and feelings of pain and suffering. Instead of 'doing to others, as they would that others should do to them;' they grow careless of the welfare, and callous to the miseries, of their fellow creatures; and usurp authority over them, as bond-slaves, in proportion as wealth, power, and prosperity increase. Every gratification is deemed requisite for the lordly oppressors; but the meanest morsel is good enough for the poor and enslaved, though far better characters than themselves. Thus men prey on their species, and, by 'despising the poor, reproach their Maker;' and aggravate, instead of relieving, those distresses, which are always entitled to compassion and assistance; and especially, when they are not the effect of extravagance, or sloth; but of hard times, heavy taxes, large families, and debts contracted for bare necessaries. (*Prov.* 14: 31. 17: 5. *P. O.* 1—15, *latter part.*) Such conduct disgraces even *human nature;* but who can express sufficient abhorrence of it when adopted by *professed Christians?* It exposes our holy religion to the reproach, scorn, and abomination of heathens, and gives occasion to our enemies to blaspheme that worthy name, by which these selfish wretches are improperly distinguished. Thus, in all the four quarters of the globe, millions of Mohammedans and Pagans abhor Christianity, through the avarice, treachery, and cruelty of men called Christians!—Well then may the report of such crimes, and the cry of the oppressed, kindle an honest indignation in the breast of every friend of mankind, of his country, and of the Gospel.—In expostulating with selfish people, it is good to contrast their conduct with that of others, who are remarkably liberal and benevolent: but it is best to point out to them the example of Him, who, 'though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.' When this is compared with the conduct of those, who do not care how many they reduce to the most abject penury or slavery, to enrich themselves; the contrast, between the Master and his professed disciples, is so striking, that it implies an argument, which is silencing, and unanswerable on any scriptural principles. (*Jam.* 2: 9—13, *v.* 13.)—If our oppressors [who pay the poor whom they hire when and how they will, and as little as possible,] and our slave-dealers were not, by habits long persisted in, more callous than these Jews, we might be encouraged to entreat and beseech them to leave off their extortion, to make restitution to the injured, and to show mercy to the poor. But alas! these methods are seldom successful! and more conclusive reasons alone prevail. This remains for the magistrate; and here the preacher must leave them. If arguments, expostulations, warnings, and persuasions will not induce them 'to repent, and to do works meet for repentance:' we must 'shake off the dust of our feet, as a testimony against them;' assuring them that God will soon shake them out from their ill-gotten treasures, and cast them down into destruction; (*Jam.* 5: 1—6.) if they continue to neglect the salvation of Christ, or refuse to imitate his example of loving-kindness and mercy: and when the righteous Judge shall denounce this tremendous sentence against them, all the multitudes of the redeemed will cry, 'Amen, and will praise the LORD.' SCOTT.

for ages, and the oppression was never effectually prevented! (2 *Chr.* 28:9—15. 1 *Tim.* 6:1—5.) SCOTT.

(11.) 'It is worthy of remark, that on like occasions money is now borrowed in Syria in the same way, at an interest of 12, 20, and even 30 per cent. So *Volney.*' COND. COMM.

(13.) *Shook my lap.*] This custom in cursing still remains in the E. see *Roberts;* it was common with the ancients; the Romans used it. See *Burder.* ED.

Verses 14—18.

This passage must have been added by Nehemiah several years after the date of the transaction before recorded: for that occurred soon after he came to Jerusalem.—The former governors had received from the people an income of about 5 pounds a day, (as it is generally interpreted;) besides a proportion of bread and wine for their households: while their attendants, (as it is too commonly the case,) lorded it over the people, and increased their burdens. It is not said who

me, and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine: yet for all this [z] required not I the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon this people.

19 [a] Think upon me, my God, for good, [b] *according* to all that I have done for this people.

CHAP. VI.

Sanballat and his party practise against Nehemiah, by insidious attempts, false rumors, and the hired counsel of pretended prophets, 1—14. The wall is finished, and the enemies are disheartened, 15, 16. The nobles of Judah traitorously correspond with Tobiah, 17—19.

NOW it came to pass, [a] when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and [b] Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and *that* there was [c] no breach left therein; (though [d] at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;)

2 That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, [e] Come, let us meet together in *some one of* the villages in the plain of [f] Ono. But [g] they thought to do me mischief.

3 And [h] I sent messengers unto them, saying, I [i] *am* doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work

z 14,15
a 13:14,22,31. Gen. 40:14. Ps. 25:6, 7. 106:4. Jer. 29:11.
b Ps. 18:23—25. Matt. 10:42. 25:34—40.
a 2:10,19. 4:1,7.
b 6. *Gashmu.*
c 4:6,7. Dan. 9:25.
d 3:3,6.
e 2 Sam. 3:27. 20:9. Ps. 37:12. Prov. 26:24—26. Ec. 4:4.
f 11:35. 1 Chr. 8:12.
g Ps. 12:2. 37:12,32. Jer. 12:2. Ez. 33:31. Mic. 7:4,5. Luke 20:19—21.
h Prov. 14:15. Matt. 10:16.
i Ec. 9:10. Luke 14:30. John 9:4. 1 Tim. 4:15,16.

they had been, and how dear the country paid for all the benefit of their government. The government allows them forty shekels of silver, which was near five pounds, (so much a day, it is probable,) but beside that, they obliged the people to furnish them with bread, and wine, insisting on it as perquisites of their office, and not only so, but they suffered their servants to squeeze the people, and to get all they could out of them. Note, 1. It is no new thing for those who are in public places, to seek themselves more than the public welfare, nay, and to serve themselves by the public loss. 2. Masters must be accountable for all the acts of fraud and injustice, violence and oppression, which they connive at in their servants.

II. He tells us what had been his way. In general, he had not done as the former governors did; he would not, he durst not, *because of the fear of God:* those that truly fear God, will not dare to do any thing cruel or unjust. And it was purely that which restrained him; he was thus generous, for conscience-sake, because of the fear of God. What a good hand his predecessors made of their place, appeared by the estates they raised; but Nehemiah, for his part, got nothing, except the satisfaction of doing good, *v.* 16.

Let us *remember the words of the Lord*, how He said, *It is more blessed to give than to receive*, Acts 20: 35. And observe here, 1. How little Nehemiah received of what he might have required; he did the work of the governor, but he did not *eat the bread of the governor*, (*v.* 14.) did not require it, *v.* 18. but lived on what he had got in the king of Persia's court, and his own estate in Judea: the reason he gives, is, *Because the bondage was heavy on the people;* while they groaned under so much hardship, he could not find in his heart to add to their burden, but would rather lessen his own estate than ruin them. Note, In our demands, we must consider not only the justice of them, but the ability of those on whom we make them; where there is nothing to be had, we know who loses his right. 2. How much he gave, which he might have withheld. (1.) His *servants' work*, *v.* 16. The servants of princes think themselves excused from labor; but Nehemiah's, by his order, no doubt, were *all gathered to the work.* Those that have many servants, should contrive how they may do good with them, and keep them well employed. (2.) His *own meat*, *v.* 17, 18. He kept a very good table, not on certain days, but constantly; he had many honorable guests, at least, 150 of his own countrymen, persons of the first rank, beside strangers that came to him on business; and he had plentiful provisions for his guests, *v.* 19. Let those in public places remember that they were preferred to do good, not to enrich themselves; and let less people learn to *use hospitality one to another without grudging*, 1 Pet. 4: 9.

Lastly, He concludes with a prayer, *v.* 19. 1. Nehemiah here mentions what he had *done for his people*, not in pride, as boasting of himself, nor in passion, as upbraiding them; nor had he occasion to do it in his own vindication, as Paul in relation to the Corinthians, but to shame the rulers out of their oppressions. 2. He mentions it to God, in prayer, not as if he thought he had hereby merited any favor from God, as a debt, but to show that he looked not for any recompense of his generosity from men, but depended on God only to make up to him what he had lost and laid out for his honor; and he reckoned the favor of God reward enough; 'If God do but *think upon me for good*, I have enough.' His thoughts to usward are our happiness, Ps. 40: 5. He refers himself to God, to recompense him in such a manner as He pleased; 'If men forget me, let my God think on me, and I desire no more.'

CHAP. VI. The cries of oppressed poverty being stilled, we are now to inquire how the wall goes forward, and, in this ch. we find it carried on with vigor, and finished with joy, notwithstanding the restless attempts of the gates of hell.—How the Jews' enemies were baffled in their design to stop it by force, we read before, ch. 4. Here we find how their endeavors to drive Nehemiah from it, were frustrated. When they courted him to an interview, with design to do him a mischief, he would not stir: when they would have made him believe his undertaking was represented as seditious and treasonable, he regarded not the insinuation; when they hired pretended prophets to advise him to retire into the temple for his own safety, still he kept his ground; and notwithstanding the secret correspondence kept up between them and some false and treacherous Jews, the work was finished in a short time. Such were the struggles between the church and its enemies; but great is God's cause, and will be prosperous and victorious. We have here,

V. 1—9. I. A plot to trepan Nehemiah into a snare. The enemies knowing the good forwardness of the work, (*v.* 1.) must now or never, by one bold stroke, take off Nehemiah; they heard how well guarded he was, so there was no attacking him on the spot; they will therefore try all the arts of wheedling to get him among them. Observe, How they courted him to meet them, not in any city, lest that should have given cause to suspect they intended to secure him, but in a village in Benjamin, as if to consult about common interests, or as if they coveted his friendship, and would be glad to be better acquainted. But he had such secret intelligence, or he knew them so well, he concluded they aimed at his life; therefore, when they *spake fair, he believed them not*, *v.* 3. He says nothing of his jealousies, nor reproaches their treacherous design, but gives a good reason, and one of the true reasons, why he would not come. Compliment must always give way to business. Let those that are tempted to idle, merry meetings by vain companions, thus answer, 'We have work to do, and must not neglect it.' Four times he returned the same answer, which, we may suppose, much vexed them; for really it was the ceasing of the work they aimed at, and it would make them despair of breaking the undertaking, to see the undertaker so intent on it. *I answered them* (says he) *after the same manner*, *v.* 4. Note, We must

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 14—19. We must not do our works to be seen of men, and it is seldom expedient to speak of them ourselves. Yet we should 'let our light shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify God:' (*Matt.* 5:14—16. 6:1—4.) and sometimes a good man may be called on, as in his presence, and with an appeal to the consciences of many witnesses, to declare his own disinterested and upright conduct, and the motives of it, for a reproof, an instruction, and an example, to mankind. But it is *always* necessary for those to set a decidedly good example, who are bold reprovers and active reformers of others, and who speak and act with decision and sharpness against their crimes. In this case a man should give up his right, neglect opportunities of gain, be willing to labor and endure hardship without recompense, and to expend his substance in the support of a good cause. These are proper evidences and expressions of living faith; and our reconciled God will look, for good, on such as abound in these fruits of righteousness, according to all that they have done to his people. SCOTT.

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these governors were. It is probable, however, the Persian governors W. of the Euphrates were meant: for they seem to have had authority over the Jews in all civil concerns, until Nehemiah's commission was granted.—In reading this account which he gave of himself, we should remember, that he wrote under the guidance of the Holy Spirit: and it was proper that his magnanimous, disinterested, and liberal conduct should stand on record, for an example to all others, what use to make of great riches; how to render authority a public blessing; and how to induce mankind to acts of justice and every good work, by taking the lead in them. (1 *Cor.* 9:13—18. 2 *Cor.* 11:7—12, 16—20. 12:11—15.)—'He loved religion better than riches, and took not his own due, that the people might serve God more cheerfully.... They (his servants) were constantly employed also in the same work, and received no pay for their labor, though it could not be done without neglect of his private business.' *Patrick* SCOTT.

Verse 19.

Nehemiah had shown great kindness to his brethren, to which they had not, in strict justice, any claim; and he lifted up his heart to God, when recording it, entreating him to show like kindness to him, and to *remember* him for good. His conduct in these circumstances evidenced that he was a true believer; he desired no recompense from man, but confidently expected one from a merciful God: he evidently spoke and acted as one that knew himself to be a sinner; and he did not expect a recompense as of debt; but in the manner, the Lord rewards a cup of cold water given to a disciple for his sake. (13:14. *Matt.* 10:40—42. *Heb.* 6:9, 10.) ID.

cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?

4 Yet they sent unto me [k] four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner.

5 ¶ Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner, the fifth time, with [l] an open letter in his hand;

6 Wherein *was* written, [m] It is reported among the heathen, and [n] Gashmu saith *it*, [o] *that* thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, [p] that thou mayest be their king, according to these words.

7 And thou hast also [q] appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, *There is* [r] a king in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the king, according to these words. [s] Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together.

8 Then I sent unto him, saying, [t] There are no such things done as thou sayest, but [u] thou feignest them out of thine own heart.

9 For [x] they all made us afraid, saying, [y] Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. [z] Now therefore, *O God*, strengthen my hands.

{*Practical Observations.*}

10 Afterward I came unto the house of [a] Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabeel, who *was* [b] shut up; and he said, [c] Let us meet together in [d] the house of God, within the temple; and [e] let us shut the doors of the temple: for they will come to slay thee; yea, [f] in the night will they come to slay thee.

11 And I said, [g] Should such a man as I flee? and who *is there*, that, *being* as I *am*, [h] would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in.

12 And, lo, [i] I perceived that [k] God had not sent him; but that he pronounced this prophecy against me: for Tobiah and Sanballat had [l] hired him.

13 Therefore *was* he hired, [m] that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and [n] *that* they might have *matter* for an evil report, [o] that

never suffer ourselves to be overcome by the greatest importunity to do any thing sinful or imprudent; but, when attacked with the same temptation, must still resist it with the same reason and resolution.

II. A plot to terrify him from his work. Sanballat endeavors to make him think his undertaking was generally represented as factious and seditious, and would be resented accordingly at court, *v.* 5—7. The best men, even in their most innocent and excellent performances, have lain under this imputation. Note, It is common for that which is the sense only of the malicious, to be falsely represented by them as the sense of the many. Now Sanballat pretends to inform Nehemiah of this as a friend, that he might hasten to court to clear himself, or stay his proceedings for fear they should be thus misconstrued; at least, on this surmise, he urges him to meet him; hoping by this mean either to take him off, or, at least, to take him off from his business. Thus were his words *softer than oil*, yet *war was in his heart*, and he hoped, like Judas, to kiss and kill. But Nehemiah was soon aware what they aimed at, to *weaken their hands from the work*, (*v.* 9.) therefore he not only denied that such things were true, but that they were reported; he was better known than to be thus suspected. Thus he escaped the snare, and kept his ground. We must never omit known duty merely for fear it should be misconstrued, but, while we keep a good conscience, trust God with our good name. But indeed it was not thus reported. God's people, though sufficiently loaded with reproach, yet are not really fallen so low in reputation as some would have them thought.

In the midst of his complaint of their malice, in endeavoring to frighten him, and so weaken his hands, he lifts up his heart to Heaven in this short prayer, *Now, therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.* It is the great support and relief of good people, that in all their straits and difficulties they have a good God to go to. When, in our Christian work and warfare, we are entering on any particular services or conflicts, this is a good prayer for us, 'I have such a duty to do, such a temptation to grapple with; *now, therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.*' Some read it, not as a prayer, but as a holy resolution, (for *O God* is supplied in our translation,) *Now therefore I will strengthen my hands.* Note, Christian fortitude will be sharpened by opposition. Every temptation to draw us from our duty, should quicken us so much the more to duty.

V. 10—14. They leave no way untried, to take Nehemiah off from building; let him be any where but at his work.

I. Observing him to be cautious, they endeavor to gain their point by making him cowardly.

1. They basely design, to bring him to do a foolish thing, that they may laugh at, and insult over him for it, and so lessen his interest and influence, *v.* 13. This was indeed doing the devil's work, who is men's tempter, that he may be their accuser, draws men to sin, that he may glory in their shame. The greatest mischief our enemies can do us, is, to frighten us from duty, and bring us to do sin.

2. Their tools, were a pretended prophet and propheteess, whom they hired to persuade him to quit his work, and retire for his own safety. The prophet was Shemaiah, of whom it was said, he was shut up in his own house, either under pretence of retirement for meditation, and to consult the mind of God, or to give Nehemiah a sign in like manner to make himself a recluse. It should seem, Nehemiah had a value for him, for he went to his house to consult with him, *v.* 10. Other prophets there were, and one propheteess, Noadiah, (*v.* 14.) pensioners to the Jews' enemies, and traitors to their country. Whether they pretended to inspiration, does not appear; they do not say, *Thus saith the Lord*, as the false prophets of old did; if not so, yet they would be thought to excel in divine knowledge, and human prudence, and to have uncommon measures of insight and foresight, and were therefore consulted in difficult cases, as prophets had been. Let us hence lament, (1.) The wickedness of such bad men: that ever any should be so perfidious as to betray the cause of God and their country, even under the pretence of communion with God, and concern for their country. (2.) The unhappiness of such good men as Nehemiah, who are in danger of being imposed on by such cheats, and to whom no temptation comes

k Judg. 16:6,10,15—20. Prov. 7:21. Luke 18:5. 1 Cor. 15:58. Gal. 2:5.
l 2 K. 18:26—28. 2 Cor. 2:11. 11:13—15. Eph. 6:11. 2 Thes. 2:10.
m Jer. 9:3—6. 20:10. Matt. 5:11. Rom. 3:8. 2 Cor. 6:8. 1 Pet. 2:12,13. 3: 16.
n 4,2. *Geshem.*
o 2:19. Ezra 4:12,15.
p Luke 23:2. John 19:13.
q 12,13.
r 2 Sam. 15:10—12. 1 K. 1:7,18,25,34.
s Prov. 26:24—26. Acts 23:15.
t Acts 24:12,13. 25:7,10.
u Job 13:4. Ps. 36:3. 38:12. 52:2. Is. 59:4. Dan. 11:27. Matt. 12:34. John 8:44.
x 14. 4:10—14. 2 Chr. 32:18.
y 2 Chr. 15:7. Ezra 4:1—24. Is. 35:3, 4. Jer. 38:4. Heb. 12:12.
z Ps. 56:3. 68:35. 138:3. Is. 41:10
a 10. 3:29. 1 Chr. 25:3. Jer. 36:5.
b Jer. 36:5.
c Ps. 12:2. 37:12. 140:2,3.
d 1 K. 6:5. 2 K. 11:3.
e 2 Chr. 28:24. 29:3,7. Mal. 1:10. Acts 21:30.
f Job 24:13—17. John 3:20.
g 3. 1 Sam. 19:5. Job 4:3—6. Ps. 11: 1,2. Prov. 28:1. Is. 10:18. Luke 13:31—33. Acts 8:1. 20:24. 21:13. Heb. 11:27.
h 9. Num. 32:7—9. Ec. 10:1. Phil. 2:17,30.
i Ez. 13:22. 1 Cor. 2:15. 12:10.
k Jer. 14:14. 23:16,25. 28:15. Ez. 13: 7. 1 John 4:1.
l Is. 56:11. Ez. 13:19. Mic. 3:11. Acts 20:33. 1 Tim. 3:3. Tit. 1:7. 1 Pet. 5:2. 2 Pet. 2:3. Rev. 18:13.
m rev. 29:5. Is. 51:7,12,13. 57:11. Jer. 1:17. Ez. 2:6 Matt. 10:28. 2 Tim. 1:7. Rev. 21:8.
n 6. Prov. 22:1. Ec. 7:1.
o Jer. 18:18. 20:10. Dan. 6:4,5. Matt. 22:15. 26:59. Acts 6:13. 2 Cor. 11: 12. 1 Tim. 5:14. Tit. 2:8.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V 1—9. The rage of persecutors, though terrible, is not so dangerous as the professed friendship of concealed enemies: so that except there is good evidence that men, who have opposed the cause of God, have truly repented, and been reconciled to Him, they cannot safely be trusted, when they court the favor of his people, but should rather be suspected of some mischievous design. (*Ezra* 4: 1—6. *Acts* 9: 10—16, 23—30.)—It is desirable to be constantly engaged in some useful employ; among other reasons, that we may have an answer ready for those invitations and proposals, which we cannot profitably accept, and scarcely know how to refuse.—The deceitful smiles of the world frequently form our first temptation in the path of duty. But if we steadfastly withstand them, and will not be diverted from our work; we must prepare for reproaches, slanders, and menaces, from the same quarter. Our *firmness* will be called *obstinacy;* our *zeal*, *rashness;* and our *activity*, *ambition:* nay, we shall be warned, that we are about to affront all our friends, and turn them into enemies; and to bring ourselves into dangers and difficulties, from which we cannot extricate ourselves, unless we follow other counsels, and act more circumspectly. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI. V. 5. 'Eastern letters are carefully rolled up, sealed, and put into a bag or purse, [note and cut, Ezra 4:7, 8.] so that this was intended as an insult, "*open letters*" being sent only to inferiors. So NIEBUHR, *Hanway*, Lady *W. Montague*, *Pococke*, *Chardin*.'
COND. COMM.

Verse 9.

The words, 'now therefore,' &c. seem an ejaculation; and the omission of the address (*O God*) implies the holy, yet reverend familiarity, with which this pious man communed with his condescending Father and Friend, and shows that his heart was habitually employed in thinking of his God. (*John* 20:11—17.) SCOTT.

they might reproach me.

14 [p]My God, [q]think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these their works, and [r]on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear.

15 ¶ So [s]the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth *day* of *the month* Elul, [t]in fifty and two days.

16 And it came to pass, that [u]when all our enemies heard *thereof*, and all the heathen that *were* about us saw *these things*, they were much cast down in their own eyes: [x]for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.

17 ¶ Moreover in those days [y]the nobles of Judah [*]sent many letters unto Tobiah, and *the letters* of Tobiah came unto them.

18 For *there were* many in Judah sworn unto him, because he *was* the son-in-law of Shechaniah the son of [z]Arah; and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of [a]Meshullam the son of Berechiah.

19 Also [b]they reported his good deeds before me, and uttered my † words to him. *And* Tobiah sent letters [c]to put me in fear.

p 5:19. Ps. 22:1. 63:1.
q 4:4,5. 13:29. Ps. 140:5—11. Jer. 11:20—23. 18:20—23. 2 Tim. 4:14, 15. 1 John 5:16.
r 1 K. 22:22—24. Is. 9:14,15. Jer. 14: 15,16. 28:1,10,15. Ez. 13:16,17. Matt. 7:15. 24:11,24. 2 Tim. 3:8. Rev. 19:20.
s Ezra 6:15. Ps. 1:3. Dan. 9:25.
t 4:1,2.
u 2:10. 4:1,7. 6:1,2.
x Ex. 14:25. Num. 23:23. Josh. 5:1. Ps. 125:2.
y 3:5. 5:7. 13:28. Mic. 7:3—6. Matt. 24:10—12.
* Heb. *multiplied their letters passing to Tobiah.*
z 7:10. Ezra 2:5.
a 3:4,30.
b Prov. 28:4. John 7:7. 15:19. 1 John 4:5.
† Or, *matters.*
c 9,13. Is. 37:10—14. Acts 4:18—21.

With more force, than that which comes under the color of religion, of revelation and devotion, and is brought by the hand of prophets.

3. These prophets plausibly pretended, the enemies would come and slay him in the night, which he had reason enough to believe true; they would, if they could, if they durst. Pretending much concern for his safety, they very gravely advised him to hide himself in the temple till the danger was over; that was a strong and sacred place, where he would be under the special protection of Heaven, Ps. 27: 5. Had Nehemiah been prevailed with to do this, immediately the people would both have left off their work, and thrown down their arms, and every one would have shifted for his own safety; then the enemies might easily, and without opposition, have demolished the works, broken down the wall again, and so gained their point. Self-preservation is a fundamental principle of the law of nature, yet that is not always the best and wisest counsel, which pretends to go on that principle.

II. He immediately resolved not to yield to this temptation, *v.* 11. Note, When tempted to sin, we should remember who, and what, we are, that we may not do any thing unbecoming us, and the profession we make. *It is not for kings, O Lemuel,* Prov. 31: 4. And the result of his reasonings was, he is at a point; 'I will not go in, I will rather die at my work, than live in an inglorious retreat from it.' Note, Holy courage and magnanimity will engage us, whatever it cost, never to *decline a good work,* or *do a bad one.*

I. He was immediately aware of what was the rise of it, *v.* 12. The wickedness of such mercenary wretches will, sooner or later, be brought to light. Two things Nehemiah says he dreaded in what he was advised to. (1.) Offending God; *that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin.* Sin is that which, above any thing, we should dread; and a good preservative it is against sin, to be afraid of nothing but sin. (2.) Shaming himself; *that they might reproach me.* Next to the sinfulness of sin, we should dread the scandal of it.

2. He humbly begs of God to reckon with them for their base designs on him, *v.* 14. As, when he had mentioned his own good services, he did not covetously or ambitiously prescribe to God what reward He should give him, but modestly prayed, *Think on me, my God; (ch.* 5: 19.) so here he does not revengefully imprecate any particular judgment on his enemies, but refers the matter to God. We must not avenge ourselves, but commit our cause to Him that judgeth righteously.

V. 15—19. Nehemiah is here finishing the wall, yet still is troubled by his enemies.

1. Tobiah, and the other adversaries of the Jews, had the mortification to see the wall built up, notwithstanding all their attempts to hinder it, and yet we have reason to believe the builders rested on the sabbaths, *v.* 15. Many were employed; what they did, they did cheerfully, and minded their business, because they loved it. The threats of their enemies, though intended to weaken them, it is likely, quickened them, that they might get their work done before the enemy came. See how much work may be done in a little time, if we set about it in earnest, and keep close to it.

When the enemies heard the wall was finished, before they thought it well begun, and when they doubted not but to have put a stop to it, they were *much cast down in their own eyes, v.* 16. and ashamed of their own confidence, that they should *cause the work to cease.* They envied the prosperity and success of the Jews; perhaps, the kings of Persia had not permitted them thus to fortify their own cities of Samaria. When Cain envied his brother, his *countenance fell,* Gen. 4: 5. They despaired also of ever doing the Jews the mischief they designed them; and well they might, for they perceived, by the wonderful success, *that the work was wrought of God.* Even these heathens had so much sense, as to see a special providence of God conversant about the affairs of the church, when they did remarkably prosper, Ps. 126: 2. God fighteth for Israel, and worketh with them.

2. Nehemiah had the vexation, notwithstanding this, to see some of his own people treacherously correspond with Tobiah, and serve his interest; and a great grief and discouragement, no doubt, it was to him, *v.* 17. They wrote with all the freedom and familiarity of friends to him, and welcomed his letters to them. Many in Judah were in a strict but secret confederacy with him, to advance the interest of his country, because he and his son had married daughters of Israel, *v.* 18. See the mischief of marrying with strangers; for one heathen converted by it, ten Jews were perverted. When once they became akin to Tobiah, they soon became sworn to him. A sinful love leads to a sinful league. They had the impudence to court Nehemiah himself into a friendship with him; *reporting his good deeds before him;* and representing him as an ingenuous person, well worthy his ac-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 10—19. A thousand slanders will die away, one after another; while the malice of their authors will be exposed: but one real crime sometimes leaves an indelible stain on a man's character, and obstructs his future usefulness: let us then fear the least sin far more than any calumny. But those temptations are the most dangerous, which come from professed servants of God, and our own friends. Our appeal, however, in these cases, must be to the Word of God. (1 *K.* 22: 13, 14. *Matt.* 16: 21—23.) That cannot be from Him, let who will speak it, which contradicts his plain precept or truth; or which would induce us to neglect our duty, or prefer our own ease, emolument, credit, liberty, or life, to his glory and the welfare of his church; or which would persuade us to shrink from the cross, or refuse self-denial.—We need not always judge the *adviser;* but we ought in all cases, to try and prove the *advice,* and without scruple to reject all that is contrary to the Word of God. Every man should also study consistency with his profession, former character, station, and engagements. That which is allowable in one man, may be very improper in another: and we ought to venture any thing in a good cause, trusting in the Lord, and committing ourselves to his protection. Thus, all that God has done for us, or by us, may become an argument for watchfulness, diligence, self-denial, and perseverance.—It is also peculiarly instructive to consider, how others in similar circumstances would act. 'Would Peter or Paul have done so, to save their money, to indulge their sloth or pride, to escape a cross, a prison, or death? Do even the men of the world suffer themselves so easily to be diverted from their object, by every appearance of difficulty or peril.'—In all cases indeed they, who would lead others in arduous services, must share the danger and the hardship: and this is the reason, why the enemy of souls employs so many instruments, and forms so many projects, to discourage, or bring a reproach on, the active servants of God. If the shepherd can be frighted away, the flock will be scattered.—Every success of the Gospel discourages the enemies of God: and they sometimes perceive that it is his work, and yet hate it the more on that very account: but false brethren are the severest trial to the faithful servants of God. Yet under every discouragement, we should 'consider Jesus, who endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest we be weary, and faint in our mind;' and who 'laid down his life for his sheep;' that after his example we may persevere in our duty, amidst every danger and opposition, not being overcome by the treachery, ingratitude, or perverseness of those around us, but still endeavoring to 'overcome evil with good:' and 'in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.' SCOTT.

Verse 15.

Elul.] Answering to part of Aug. and part of Sept. as it is supposed: for it is not elsewhere mentioned. SCOTT. Note, Ex. 12:2. ED.

Fifty-two days.] 'The work here, where the old materials were at hand, was little, compared with what Cæsar did in Gaul, &c. and Titus at Jerusalem, who built a wall round Jerusalem, of 5000 *paces* in 3 days, besides 13 *towers* of 10 *stadia* in circuit. Alexander, (so *Arrian* and *Q. Curt.*) built the walls of Alexandria, on the Tanais, nearly 8 *miles* in compass, in between 20 and 30 *days.* See *Calmet.*'

Dr. A CLARKE.

CHAP. VII.

Nehemiah, having finished the wall, and regulated the attendance of the Levites, commits the charge of the city to Hanani and Hananiah, 1—4. He finds a register of those who first came from Babylon, 5—7. The register is inserted, 8—69. The oblations made to the temple, 70—73.

NOW it came to pass, when [a] the wall was built, and [b] I had set up the doors, and [c] the porters, and the singers, and the Levites were appointed,

2 That I gave [d] my brother Hanani, and [e] Hananiah [f] the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he *was* [g] a faithful man, and [h] feared God above many.

3 And I said unto them, [i] Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened, until the sun be hot: and while they stand by, let them shut the doors, and bar *them*: and appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, every one in his watch, and every one *to be* over against his house.

4 Now the city *was* [*] large and great: but the people *were* few therein, and [k] the houses *were* not builded.

5 And [l] my God [m] put into my heart to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, [n] that they might be reckoned by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first, and found written therein;

B. C. 556. 6 These *are* [o] the children of the province, that went up out of the captivity, of those that had been carried away, [p] whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away, and came again to Jerusalem and to Judah, every one unto his city;

7 Who came with [q] Zerubbabel, [r] Jeshua, Nehemiah, [s] Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, [t] Mispereth, Bigvai, [u] Nehum, Baanah: the number, *I say*, of the men of the people of Israel, *was this;*

8 The children of [x] Parosh, two thousand an hundred seventy and two.

9 The children of [y] Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two.

10 The children of [z] Arah, six hundred fifty and two.

11 The children of [a] Pahath-moab, of the children of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand and eight hundred *and* eighteen.

12 The children of [b] Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.

13 The children of [c] Zattu, eight hundred forty and five.

14 The children of [d] Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore.

15 The children of [e] Binnui, six hundred forty and eight.

16 The children of [f] Bebai, six hundred twenty and eight.

17 The children of [g] Azgad, two thousand three hundred twenty and two.

18 The children of [h] Adonikam, six hundred threescore and seven.

19 The children of [i] Bigvai, two thousand threescore and seven.

20 The children of [k] Adin, six hundred fifty and five.

21 The children of [l] Ater of Hezekiah, ninety and eight.

a 3:1,&c. 6:15.

CHAP. VII. V. 1—4. God saith concerning his church, (Isa. 62: 6.) *I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem;* that is Nehemiah's care here; for dead walls, without living watchmen, are but a poor defence.

The porters', singers', and Levites' work, in general, was to attend the temple-service, which had been neglected in some degree, but now was revived. God's worship is the defence of a place, and his ministers, when they mind their duty, are watchmen on the walls. Or, in particular, Nehemiah ordered them to be ready against the wall was to be dedicated, that they might perform that service in an orderly and solemn manner; and its dedication was its strength. That is likely to be beneficial to us, which is devoted to God.

1. He appointed two governors or consuls, to whom he committed the care of the city, and gave them in charge to provide for the public peace and safety; Hanani, his brother, who came to him with the tidings of the desolations of Jerusalem, a man of approved integrity, and affection to his country; and Hananiah, that had been ruler of the palace, of whom it is said, he *feared God above many*, v. 2. Some do fear Him greatly, and excel others in the expressions and instances of that fear; and, while those that fear God must evidence it by their being faithful to all men, and universally conscientious, God's Jerusalem is then likely to flourish, when those rule in it, and have charge of it, who are eminent for godliness and honesty. Some suppose, Nehemiah was now about to return to the Persian court, to have his commission renewed, and that he left these two worthy men in charge of the city in his absence. Good governors, when and where they cannot act themselves, must be very careful whom they depute.

2. He gave orders about the shutting of the gates, and the guarding of the walls, v. 3, 4. In vain had they a wall, if they were careless of their gates. They should not be opened in the morning, till they could see all was clear and quiet; and sentinels on the walls, or elsewhere, at convenient distances, should, in case of the approach of the enemy, give timely notice to the city of the danger; they must post themselves *over against their own houses*, because of them, it might be presumed, they would be in a particular manner careful. The public safety depends on every one's particular care to guard himself and his own family against sin, that common enemy. It is every one's interest to watch, but many understand not their own interest; it is therefore incumbent on magistrates to appoint watches. And as this people had lately found God with them in their building, (else they had built in vain,) so now that the wall was built, no doubt, they were made sensible that *except the Lord kept the city, the watchmen waked but in vain*, Ps. 127: 1, 2.

V. 5—73. We have here another good project of Nehemiah's; for wise and zealous men will be always contriving something or other for the glory of God, and the edification of his church. He knew very well the safety of a city, under God, depends more on the number and valor of the inhabitants, than on the height or strength of its walls; therefore, observing the people were few that dwelt in it, he thought fit to take an account of them, that he might find what families had formerly had their settlement in Jerusalem, but were now removed into the country, that he might bring them back; and what families could any other way be influenced by their religion, or business, to come and rebuild the houses in Jerusalem, and dwell in them. So little reason have we to wish we may be placed alone in the earth, or in Jerusalem itself, that much of our safety and comfort depends on our neighbors and friends. It is the

b 3:3. 6:1.
c 10:39. 11:3. 12:24. 1 Chr. 23: 25: 26: 2 Chr. 31:2. Ezra 3:8.
d 1:2.
e 10:23.
f 2:8.
g Num. 12:7. Ps. 101:6. Dan. 6:4. Matt. 24:45. 25:21. Luke 16:10—12. 1 Cor. 4:2. 2 Tim. 2:2.
h 5:15. Gen. 42:18. Ex. 18:21. 2 Sam. 23:3. 1 K. 18:3,12. Job 1:1. Is. 33 5,6.
i 13:19. Ps. 127:1. Matt. 10:16.
j 3:23,28—30.
* Heb. *broad in spaces.*
k Is. 58:12. Hag. 1:4—6. Matt. 6:33
l 5:19. 6:14.
m Ezra 7:27. 1 Cor. 15:10. 2 Cor. 3:5 8:16. Phil. 2:12,13. Col. 1:29. Jam 1:16,17.
n 64. 1 Chr. 9:1. Ezra 2:62.
o Ezra 2:1,&c. 5:8. 6:2.
p 2 K. 24:14—16. 25:... 2 Chr. 36: Jer. 39: 52:
q 12:1,7,10. Ez. 1:11. *Sheshbazzar.* 2:2. Hag. 1:1. Matt. 1:12,13. *Zorobabel.*
r Ezra 3:8,9. 5:2. Zech. 3:1 3. *Joshua.*
s Ezra 2:2. *Seraiah, Reelaiah.*
t Ezra 2:2. *Mizpar.*
u 12:3. Ezra 2:2. *Rehum.*
x 10:14. Ezra 2:3. 8:3. *Pharosh.* 10.25.
y Ezra 2:4. 8:8.
z 6:18. Ezra 2:5. 775.
a 10:14. Ezra 2:6. 2812. 8:4.
b Ezra 2:7. 8:7. 10:26.
c Ezra 2:8. 945.
d Ezra 2:9.
e Ezra 2:10. *Bani.* 642.
f Ezra 2:11. 6:3.
g Ezra 2:12. 1222.
h Ezra 2:13. 666.
i Ezra 2:14. 2056.
k Ezra 2:15. 454.
l Ezra 2:16.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII. V. 2, 3. The charge here given, and the service required, would be necessary even when Nehemiah resided at Jerusalem: for he could not superintend the gates and the watchmen, without being taken off from other important and numerous engagements.—*Ruler of the palace.* (2) 'So the house, where Nehemiah dwelt is called, because he was governor for the king, and a kind of Viceroy, who did all the king's business, and here, gave audience to the people, as the king was wont to do in his palace.' *Patrick.* (2:8.) SCOTT.

Until, &c.] (3.) 'So now in the E. city-gates are shut from *sunset* till *sunrise*. Travellers arriving after sunset must pass the night *under the walls*.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 4. *Was large.*] Fifty furlongs, 6 miles. *Hecatæus*, see *Eusebius*. Thirty three furlongs. *Josephus*. COND. COMM.

Verses 5, 6.

This account was taken of the people, in order to bring the tenth part of them to reside in Jerusalem; (11:1, 2.) and as it proved an useful measure, Nehemiah piously and reasonably ascribed the first thought of it to God, who 'put it into his heart.' (*M. R.—Jam.* 1.16—18.)—As the greatest part of the families consist of exactly the same number in both places; and the sum total in each, with several other particulars, entirely coincides; it can hardly be conceived, that almost 100 years should have made no greater changes.—Should any, however, conjecture, that some ancient copyist had inserted the wrong register, and that his mistake had been generally followed; the very conclusion would show, that such alterations are almost always liable to detection; and no reasonable man would think it the least objection to the divine inspiration of the sacred Scriptures. SCOTT.

22 The children of [m] Hashum, three hundred twenty and eight.

23 The children of [n] Bezai, three hundred twenty and four.

24 The children of [o] Hariph, an hundred and twelve.

25 The children of [p] Gibeon, ninety and five.

26 The men of [q] Bethlehem and Netophah, an hundred fourscore and eight.

27 The men of [r] Anathoth, an hundred twenty and eight.

28 The men of [s] Beth-azmaveth, forty and two.

29 The men of [t] Kirjath-jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred forty and three.

30 The men of [u] Ramah and Gaba, six hundred twenty and one.

31 The men of [x] Michmas, an hundred twenty and two.

32 The men of [y] Beth-el and Ai, an hundred twenty and three.

33 The men of the other [z] Nebo, fifty and two.

34 The children of [a] the other Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.

35 The children of [b] Harim, three hundred and twenty.

36 The children of [c] Jericho, three hundred forty and five.

37 The children of [d] Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred twenty and one.

38 The children of [e] Senaah, three thousand nine hundred and thirty.

39 ¶ The priests: the children of [f] Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred seventy and three.

40 The children of [g] Immer, a thousand fifty and two.

41 The children of [h] Pashur, a thousand two hundred forty and seven.

42 The children of [i] Harim, a thousand and seventeen.

43 ¶ The Levites: the children of Jeshua, of Kadmiel, *and* of the children of [k] Hodevah, seventy and four.

44 [l] The singers: the children of Asaph, an hundred forty and eight.

45 [m] The porters: the children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, an hundred thirty and eight.

46 ¶ The [n] Nethinims: the children of Ziha, the children of [o] Hashupha, the children of Tabbaoth,

47 The children of Keros, the children of [p] Sia, the children of Padon,

48 The children of Lebana, the children of [q] Hagaba, the children of [r] Shalmai,

49 The children of Hanan, the children of Giddel, the children of Gahar,

50 The children of Reaiah, the children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda,

51 The children of Gazzam, the children of Uzza, the children of [s] Phaseah,

52 The children of Besai, the children of Meunim, the children of [t] Nephishesim,

53 The children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur,

54 The children of [u] Bazlith, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha,

55 The children of Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of [v] Tamah,

56 The children of Neziah, the children of Hatipha.

57 ¶ The children of [x] Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of [y] Perida,

58 The children of [z] Jaala, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel,

59 The children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the children of Pochereth of Zebaim, the children of [a] Amon.

60 All [b] the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants, *were* three hundred ninety and two.

61 And these *were* they which went up *also* from Tel-melah, [c] Tel-haresha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer: but they could not shew their father's house, nor their * seed, whether they *were* of Israel.

62 The children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, [d] six hundred forty and two.

63 ¶ And [e] of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai, which took *one* of the daughters of [f] Barzillai the Gileadite to wife, and was called after their name.

64 These sought their register *among* [g] those that were reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood.

65 And † the Tirshatha said unto them, [h] that they should not eat of the most holy things, [i] till there stood *up* a priest with Urim and Thummim.

66 ¶ The [k] whole congregation together *was* forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore;

67 Besides [l] their man-servants and their maid-servants, of whom *thre were* seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven: and they had [m] two hundred forty and five singing men and singing women.

68 [n] Their horses, seven hundred thirty and six: their mules, two hundred forty and five:

69 *Their* camels, four hundred thirty and five: six thousand seven hundred and twenty asses.

70 ¶ And ‡ some of [o] the chief of the fathers gave unto the work. [p] The Tirshatha gave to the treasure a thousand drams of gold, fifty [q] basins, five hundred

wisdom of a nation, to keep the balance even between city and country; that the metropolis be not so extravagantly large as to drain and impoverish the country, nor yet so weak as to be unable to protect it. Now observe,

I. Whence this good design came, *v.* 5. Every good gift and work are from above; all is of God therefore all must be to Him. What is done by human prudence, must be ascribed to the direction of Divine Providence; He that teaches the husbandman his discretion, (Isa. 28: 26.) teaches the statesman his.

II. What method he took. 1. He called the rulers together, and the people, that he might have an account of their families, which, it is likely, he ordered them to bring with them out of their several districts.

2. He compared the old *register*, Ezra 2. with the present accounts. The title is the same here, *v.* 6, 7. as there, *v.* 1, 2. also the repetition of

m Ezra 2:19. 223.
n Ezra 2:17. 323.
o Ezra 2:18. *Jorah.*
p Ezra 2:20. *Gibbar.*
q Ezra 2:21,22. 179.
r Ezra 2:23. Is. 10:30. Jer. 1.1. 11:21.
s Ezra 2:24. *Azmaveth.*
t Josh. 9:17. Ezra 2:25. *Kirjatharim.*
u Josh. 18:24,25. Ezra 2:26.
x 1 Sam. 13:5,23. Ezra 2:27. Is. 10:28. *Michmash.*
y Josh. 8:9,17. Ezra 2:28. 223.
z Ezra 2:29.
a 12. Ezra 2:31.
b Ezra 2:32. 10:31.
c Ezra 2:34.
d 6:2. 11:34,35. 1 Chr. 8:12. Ezra 2:33. 725.
e Ezra 2:35. 3630.
f 1 Chr. 24:7. Ezra 2:36.
g 1 Chr. 24:14. Ezra 2:37.
h 1 Chr. 9:12. 24:9. Ezra 2:38. 10:22.
i 1 Chr. 24:8. Ezra 2:39. 10:31.
k Ezra 2:40. *Hodaviah.* 3:9. *Judah.*
l 1 Chr. 25:2. Ezra 2:41. 128.
m 1 Chr. 26: Ezra 2:42. 139.
n Lev. 27:2—8. Josh. 9:23—27. 1 Chr. 9:2.
o Ezra 2:43. *Hasupha.*
p Ezra 2:44. *Siaha.*
q Ezra 2:45,46. *Hagabah*, or, *Hagab.*
r Ezra 2:46. *Shamlai.*
s Ezra 2:49. *Paseah.*
t Ezra 2:50. *Nephusim.*
u Ezra 2:52. *Bazluth.*
v Ezra 2:53. *Thamah.*
x 11:3.
y Ezra 2:55. *Peruda.*
z Ezra 2:56. *Jaalah.*
a Ezra 2:57. *Ami.*
b Ezra 2:58.
c Ezra 2:59. *Telharsa. Addan.*
* Or, *pedigree.*
d Ezra 2:60. 652.
e Ezra 2:61—63.
f 2 Sam. 17:27. 19:31—39. 1 K. 2:7.
g 5. 1 Chr. 9:1.
† Or, *the governor.* 8:9. 10:1. Ezra 2:63.
h Lev. 2:3,10. 6:17. 10:17,18. 21:21—23.
i Ex. 28:30. Num. 27:21. Deut. 33:8.
k Ezra 2:64.
l Is. 45:1,2. Jer. 27:7.
m Ezra 2:65. 200.
n Ezra 2:66,67.
‡ Heb. *part.* Ezra 2:68—70.
o Num. 7:2—88. 1 Chr. 29:3—9.
p 8:9. 10:1.
q Ex. 12:22. 24:6. 1 K. 7:45. 1 Chr. 28:17. 2 Chr. 4:8,11. Jer. 52:19.

Verses 70—72.
This seems a distinct oblation from that recorded in Ezra: (2:68—70.) and was probably made, after the people were registered by Nehemiah, who was the Tirshatha, or governor, at this time, as Zerubbabel had

and thirty priests' garments.

71 And *some* of the [r] chief of the fathers gave to the treasure of the work twenty thousand drams of gold, and two thousand and two hundred pound of silver.

72 And *that* which the rest of the people gave, *was* twenty thousand drams of gold, and two thousand pound of silver, and threescore and seven priests' garments.

73 So the priests, and the Levites, and the porters, and the singers, and *some* of the people, and the Nethinims, and all Israel, dwelt in their cities; and [s] when the seventh month came, the children of Israel *were* in their cities.

CHAP. VIII.

The people being assembled, Ezra, with solemn worship, reads and expounds the law, 1—8. The people are greatly affected: but Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites, exhort them to joy in God, to cheerful feasting, and to liberality towards the poor, 9—12. Being instructed from the law concerning the feast of tabernacles, they keep it with great solemnity, 13—18.

AND [a] all the people gathered themselves together [b] as one man into the street that *was* [c] before the water-gate; and they spake unto [d] Ezra the scribe to [e] bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.

2 And Ezra [f] the priest brought the law before [g] the congregation, both of men and women, and all that [*] could hear with understanding, upon [h] the first day of the seventh month.

3 And [i] he read therein before the street that *was* before the water-gate, from the [†] morning until mid-day, before the men and the women, and those that could understand: and [k] the ears of all the people *were attentive* unto the book of the law.

4 And Ezra the scribe stood upon a [‡] pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose: and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and

these accounts may intimate to us the delight God is pleased to take in the persons, families, and services, of his spiritual Israel, and the particular notice He takes of them. He knows them that are his, knows them all, knows them by name, has his eye on the register of those children of the captivity, and does all according to the ancient counsel of his will concerning them.

(1.) As to the numbers in this catalogue and that in Ezra, most of them indeed are exactly the same, and some others within a very few under or over; therefore I cannot think as some, that that was the number of these families at their first coming, this as they were now, which was at least 40 years after, (some make it much more,) for we cannot suppose so many families to be not at all, or but little, altered in their numbers in all that time; therefore what differences there are, we may suppose to arise either from the mistakes of transcribers, which easily happen in numbers, or from the diversity of the copies from which they were taken, or perhaps one was the account of them when they set out from Babylon with Zerubbabel, the other when they came to Jerusalem. The sums total are all just the same there and here, except of the singing-men and singing-women, which there are 200, here 245. Those were not of such importance, as that they should keep any strict account of them.

(2.) The account of their offerings, *v.* 70, &c. differs much from that, Ezra 2: 68, 69. and it may be questioned whether it refers to the same contribution; here, the Tirshatha, or chief governor, begins the offering, who there was not mentioned. And the single sum mentioned there, exceeds all those here put together; yet it is probable that it was the same, but that followed one copy of the lists, this another; for the last verse is the same here that it was in Ezra 2 : 70. adding *ch.* 3: 1. Blessed be God, that our faith and hope are not built on the niceties of names and numbers, genealogy and chronology, but on the great things of the law and gospel. Whatever is given to the work of God, He is not unrighteous to forget it; nor shall even a cup of cold water, wherewith He is honored, go without its reward.

CHAP. VIII. V. 1—8. Ezra came up out of Babylon 13 years before Nehemiah, who, though not such a scholar, nor divine, as Ezra, nor such a *scribe in the law*, yet was a man of a more lively, active spirit. His zeal set Ezra's learning on work, and then great things were done; as we find here, where we have,

I. An account of a solemn, religious assembly.

1. The time, *v.* 2. the day of the *feast of trumpets*, called a *sabbath*, and on which they were to have a *holy convocation*, Lev. 23: 24. Num. 29: 1. the day the altar was set up, and they began to offer their burnt-offerings after their return, a late mercy in the memory of many then living; in a thankful remembrance of that, it is likely, they had kept this feast, ever since, with more than ordinary solemnity. Divine favors fresh in mind, and which ourselves have witnessed, should be, and usually are, most affecting.

2. The place, *v.* 1. a spacious, broad street, able to contain so great a multitude, which the court of the temple was not; for, probably, it was not now built near so large as in Solomon's time.

3. The persons, *v.* 1, 2. Masters of families should bring their families with them to public worship. Little ones, as they come to the exercise of reason, must be trained up in the exercises of religion.

4. The master of this assembly, Ezra the priest. None so fit to expound and preach, as such a ready scribe in the law of his God. God gave him ability and authority, and then the people gave him opportunity and invitation. Knowledge is spiritual alms, which they that are able should give to every one that needs, to every one that asks. Some think he appointed his assistants, *v.* 4. to read when he was weary; at least, this honored them before the people, in order to their being employed in the same service another time. Others mentioned, *v.* 7. seem to have been employed at the same time in other places near, to

[r] Job 34:19. Luke 21:1—4. 2 Cor. 8: 12.
[s] Ezra 2:70. 3:1.
[a] Ezra 3:1.
[b] Judg. 20:1,8.
[c] 16. 3:26. 12:37.
[d] 4—9. Ezra 7:6,11. Jer. 8:8,9. Matt. 13:52. 23:2,13,34.
[e] 2 Chr. 34:15. Is. 8:20. Mal. 4:4.
[f] Deut. 17:18. 31:9,10. Mal. 2:7.
[g] Deut. 31:11—13. 2 Chr. 17:7—9.
[*] Heb. *understood in hearing.* Is. 28:9.
[h] Lev. 23:24. Num. 29:1—6.
[i] Luke 4:16—20. Acts 13:15,27. 15:21.
[†] Heb. *light.* Acts 20:7,11. 28:23.
[k] Matt. 7:28,29. Mark 12:37. Luke 8: 18. 19:48. Acts 16:14. 17:11. 1 Thes. 2:13. Heb. 2:1—3. Rev. 2:29. 3:22.
[‡] Heb. *tower.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The active servants of God, and of his church, will never want employment; for the completion of one design will make way for the commencement of another.—The fear of God, powerfully possessing the heart, produces proportionable fidelity and conscientiousness, in a man's whole character and conduct: and it is happy for the community, when men of this character have the charge of public affairs.—Magistrates and ministers have more extensive charges than others: but every man ought to watch over his own heart, and his own house, that sin, the worst enemy, may be kept at a distance, as much as possible.—Provision is made in the Gospel, and in the city of our God, for immensely greater numbers than have yet been enrolled citizens: we should therefore be devising means for replenishing it with inhabitants, as well as for building its walls.—'All holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works are from God:' to Him belongs the praise: when good thoughts are suggested, we should be careful not to 'quench the Spirit,' by rejecting them; (1 *Thes.* 5: 16—22, *v.* 19.) and we ought continually to pray, that our God would put more and more of them into our hearts, and enable us to bring them to good effect; and that He would do the same for increasing numbers.—Happy they, who willingly come to dedicate themselves, and consecrate their substance, to his service and glory! SCOTT.

been at the first return of the Jews from captivity. The principal persons also concurred with him liberally, according to their ability. SCOTT.

Verse 73.

This v. so accords with Ezra 2:70. and 3:1. that it is doubtful whether it should be understood of the Jews, who returned under Zerubbabel, or of what followed after Nehemiah had registered them. If it be taken in the latter sense; and if the events next recorded took place in the same year with the building of the wall, as probably they did; there could be no time for Nehemiah to go to Babylon: (*Note*, 2, 3.) for the wall was not finished till the 25th day of Elul, or the 6th month. (6:15.) ID.

ADDITIONAL NOTE.

'Nehemiah is supposed to have returned twice to the Persian court: the first time, as soon as the walls were completed. He came back to Jerusalem in a few months, and continued there as governor 12 years. After this he went again to the court, and resided there several years: during that interval the abuses occurred which he reformed on his subsequent return to Jerusalem, ch. 13.' HENRY abr.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII. V. 1, 2. (*Lev.* 23:24, 25.)—Probably, Nehemiah, having formed a plan for their instruction from the law, called on them by this early attendance to concur in it. Doubtless the appointed sacrifices were offered. (*Num.* 29:1—6.) It does not appear that the measure originated with Ezra, yet he most cordially concurred in it. (*Ezra* 7:6—10.) Some conjecture that Ezra had been at Babylon, during the preceding events, in which he is not mentioned; and that he had lately returned: but perhaps he had been privately occupied in his own line for the good of the people, and was well satisfied to leave public affairs entirely to Nehemiah. (1 *Sam.* 12:23.) SCOTT.

Verse 4.

Pulpit.] '*Migdol âts*, a "tower of wood." MONTANUS. 'It held 14 men, for beside him stood Mattithiah and 12 others.' And so *Patrick*. GILL.

[l] Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and [m] Malchiah, and [n] Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, *and* [o] Meshullam.

5 And Ezra [p] opened the book in the * sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people [q] stood up:

6 And Ezra [r] blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, [s] Amen, amen, [t] with lifting up their hands; and they [u] bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD [x] with *their* faces to the ground.

7 Also [y] Jeshua, and [z] Bani, and [a] Sherebiah, Jamin, [b] Akkub, Shabbethai, [c] Hodijah, [d] Maaseiah, [e] Kelita, [f] Azariah, [g] Jozabad, [h] Hanan, [i] Pelaiah, and the Levites, [k] caused the people to understand the law: and the people *stood* in their place.

8 So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, [l] and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.

[*Practical Observations.*]

9 And [m] Nehemiah, which *is* the † Tirshatha, and [n] Ezra the priest the scribe, and [o] the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, [p] This day *is* holy unto the LORD your God; [q] mourn not nor weep. For [r] all

l 10:25. 11:5.
m 10:3.
n 10:18. Ezra 10:33.
o 10:7,20. 11:7. 12:13. Ezra 10:29.
p Luke 4:17.
* Heb. *eyes.*

q Judg. 3:20. 1 K. 8:14.
r 1 Chr. 29:20. 2 Chr. 6:4. Ps. 41:13. 72:18,19. Eph. 1:3. 1 Pet. 1:3.
s 5:13. Jer. 28:6. Matt. 6:13. 1 Cor. 14:16.
t Gen. 14:22. Ps. 28:2. 63:4. 134:2. 141:2. Lam. 3:41. 1 Tim. 2:8.
u Gen. 24:26. Ex. 4:31. 12:27. 2 Chr. 20:18. 29:30.
x Lev. 9:24. Matt. 26:39. Rev. 7:11.
y 3:19. 9:4. 10:9. 12:24.
z 3:17. 9:4. 10:13.
a 9:4. 10:12. 12:24. Ezra 8:18.
b 11:16,19. 12:25.
c 10:10,18.
d 4. 3:23. 12:41,42. Ezra 10:22.
e 10:10. Ezra 10:23.
f 3:23. 10:2. 12:33.
g Ezra 10:22,23.
h 10:10.
i 10:10.
k Lev. 10:11.
l Hab. 2:2. Matt. 5:21,22,27,28. Luke 24:27,32. Acts 8:30—35. 17:2,3. 28:23. m 7:65,70. 10:1.
† Or, *governor*
n Ezra 7:11.
o 7,8. 2 Chr. 15:3. 30:22. 35:3. Hos. 4:6.
p 2. Lev. 23:24. Num. 29:1—6.
q Deut. 12:7,12. 16:11,14,15. 26:14. Ec. 3:4. Mal. 2:13.
r 2 K. 22:11,19. Rom. 3:20. 2 Cor. 7:9—11.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—8. Pious men of different dispositions may serve the church in their several ways. The studious may, as it were, prepare materials with which the active may work: and the active may make way for the studious, to bring forth their treasures for public use. They ought therefore reciprocally to assist each other; and to welcome such assistance, without envy, competition, or prejudice.—The public reading, expounding, and preaching of God's Word has, in all ages, been the grand method of promoting true religion: they, therefore, who are eminently capable of this service, should be called forth from obscurity and retirement, and excited and encouraged to abound in it; all, of every age, sex, or rank, who are capable of understanding, should assemble to attend, and all ought to 'give earnest heed to the things they hear.' (*2 Chr.* 17: 7—9. *P. O.* 7—19.) Those who are in reputation should set an example of diligence in this respect, and even teachers should be 'swift to hear' other ministers, especially younger ministers their approved seniors, as they have opportunity, that they may become more competent for the service.—When the value of the Scriptures, and of the immortal soul, is properly understood; and when we are earnestly engaged, and in a spiritual frame of mind; we shall not soon be weary of divine ordinances. Short sermons, therefore, or tired hearers, prove a very low state of religion: for facts demonstrate, that where the Word of God is precious, even inconvenient situations and uneasy postures will be patiently endured: and when ministers, who are themselves in earnest, perceive the people thirsting for instruction, and drinking it in, they will be encouraged to proceed, and to preach as much and as often as required, so long as God [through the use of the knowledge of his laws] gives them health for the work. SCOTT.

Verse 5, 6.

This was an excellent preparation for a due regard to the sacred Scriptures; and the example should be imitated by those who preach and expound, or read and hear the Word of God. SCOTT.

Verse 7.

The persons, mentioned in this verse, must not be confounded with those who stood by Ezra, in his pulpit, or tower: for only one of the same name occurs in both places; and, no doubt, in that instance, different men of the same name were meant. The persons here mentioned were most of them, if not all, priests and Levites. (*M. R.*) (*Acts* 2:14—21. *v.* 14.)—Perhaps, different orders and descriptions of persons formed separate circles: and therefore it is added, that 'the people stood in their place,' as it had been appointed to each of them. 'The people stood in their place,' 'listening both to what was read, and what was delivered as the explication of it.' *Patrick.* ID.

Verse 8.

It is here said, 'So *they* read, &c.' which confirms the preceding supposition, there being evidently more than one reader.—The persons engaged in this service read the text distinctly, and then gave the interpretation: thus the meaning was declared to the people, with all plainness, and application to their present circumstances and conduct, for their conviction and instruction. This seems the obvious meaning of the passage. Some learned men, however, suppose, that the Jews had forgotten the Hebrew, during the captivity; and that the expositors merely rendered what was read, into Chaldee. 'But if this were true, why did the prophets write in Hebrew after their return from captivity? And this very book shows the contrary, (13:23, 24.) where the Jews' language appears to have been spoken by the people.' *Patrick.* The opinion indeed is grounded chiefly on Jewish traditions, and customs introduced in later ages, and has no support in the Scriptures themselves. SCOTT.

Dr. *A. Clarke* thinks, the people had lost their Heb. [and so *Poole. &c.*] so the Levites *gave the sense* in the Chaldee: also, that 'this was not only the origin of the Chaldee *Targums*, or translations of the law and prophets into that tongue: but likewise, probably, the origin of *preaching from a text;* a custom the most excellent and beneficial ever introduced among men.' ED.

the people wept when they heard the words of the law.

10 Then he said unto them, [s] Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and [t] send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared; for *this* day *is* holy unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry; for [u] the joy of the LORD is your strength.

11 So the Levites [x] stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day *is* holy; neither be ye grieved.

12 And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, [y] because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

13 ¶ And on [z] the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even * to understand the words of the law.

14 And they found written in the law, which the LORD had commanded † by Moses, that the children of Israel should [a] dwell in [b] booths, in the feast of the seventh month:

15 And [c] that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and [d] in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto [e] the mount, and [f] fetch [g] olive-branches, and pine-branches, and myrtle-branches, and [h] palm-branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as *it is* written.

16 So the people went forth, and brought *them*, and made themselves booths, every one upon [i] the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in [k] the courts of the house of God, and in [l] the street of the water-gate, and [m] in the street of the gate of Ephraim.

17 And all the congregation of them, that were come again out of the captivity, made booths, and [n] sat under the booths: for since the days of [o] Jeshua the son of Nun, unto that day, [p] had not the children of Israel [q] done so. And [r] there was very great gladness.

18 Also [s] day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in

ror, shows men their sins, and misery and danger because of sin, and thunders a curse against every one that continues not in every part of his duty. Therefore they *all wept*, (*v.* 9.) like Josiah, when they heard; for their hearts were tender, thinking how they had offended God, and exposed themselves, by their many violations of the law; all wept, for all saw themselves guilty.

II. How they were healed and comforted with words of peace. Even sorrow for sin must not hinder joy in God, but rather lead to it, and prepare us for it.

1. The masters of the assembly endeavored to pacify, and encourage them. Nehemiah is not brought in before in this ch. Now he notices the people's weeping; Ezra was pleased to see them so affected with the Word, but Nehemiah observed to him, and Ezra concurred, that it was now unseasonable; this day was holy, it is called *a sabbath*, (Lev. 23: 24.) therefore was to be celebrated with joy and praise, not as *a day to afflict the souls*. They forbade the people to *mourn and weep*, (*v.* 9—11.) and commanded them to testify their joy, to feast themselves, to eat and drink better than on other days, *to eat the fat, and drink the sweet:* but then it must be, (1.) With charity to the poor. Christ directs those that make feasts, to invite their poor neighbors, Luke 14: 13. And it is especially the duty of a religious feast, as well as of a religious fast, to *draw out the soul to the hungry*, Isa. 58: 7, 10. God's bounty should make us bountiful. Many will eat the fat, and drink the sweet themselves, even to excess, that will never allow portions, nor scarcely crumbs, to the poor, who may read their own doom in the parable of the rich man, Luke 16: 19, &c. But such know not, or consider not, what God gave them their estates for. Observe, We must not only give to those that offer themselves, but send to those that are out of sight. *The liberal devises liberal things*, and seeks objects of charity. (2.) It must be with piety and devotion; *the joy of the Lord is your strength.* Let it not be a sensual joy, but holy and spiritual, the *joy of the Lord*, joy in the goodness of God, under the conduct and government of the grace of God; joy arising from our interest in the love and favor of God, and the tokens of his favor. This joy will be your strength, therefore encourage it; it will be your strength, for the performance of the other duties of the feast; for all you have to do, in conformity to the law of God which has been read to you; and for the resisting of your enemies that are plotting against you. The joy of the Lord will arm us against the assaults of our spiritual enemies, and put our mouths out of taste for those pleasures with which the tempter baits his hooks.

2. The assembly complied. Their weeping was *stilled*, (*v.* 11.) and they *made great mirth*, *v.* 12. We ought always to have such a command of every passion, as that, however it may break out, it may soon be restrained and called in again, when we are convinced it is either unreasonable or unseasonable. *He that has such a rule over his own spirit, is better than the mighty.* Holy mourning makes way for holy mirth; they that *sow in tears, shall reap in joy;* they that tremble at the convictions of the Word, may triumph in its consolations. The ground of their joy was very good; not that they had the fat and sweet, and a deal of good company, but that they had *understood the words declared.* Note, To have the Scriptures with us, and helps to understand them, is a very great mercy, which we have abundant reason to rejoice in. Bibles and good ministers are the joy of God's Israel. The better we understand the Word of God, the more comfort we shall find in it. When the words were first declared, they wept, but when they understood them, they rejoiced, finding, at length, precious promises to those who repented and reformed, therefore there was hope in Israel.

V. 13—18. We have here,

I. The people's renewed attendance on the Word. They had spent the greatest part of one day in praying and hearing, yet were so far from being weary, that, the next day after, though no festival, the chief of them came together again to hear Ezra expound, *v.* 13. The more we converse with God's Word, if we rightly understand it, and be affected with it, the more we shall covet to converse with it, and to increase in our acquaintance with it, saying, *How sweet are thy words unto my mouth!* They that understand the Scriptures well, will still be desirous to understand them better. Now the priests and the Levites themselves came, *to understand*, or, (as the marg.) *that they might instruct in, the words of the law;* they came to be taught themselves, that they might be qualified to teach others. Though, on the first day, Ezra's humility had set them *on his right hand, and on his left, as teachers with him*, (*v.* 4, 7.) yet now, they being by trial made more sensible than ever of their own deficiencies, and his excellences, on the second day, their humility set them at Ezra's feet, as learners of him. Those that would teach others, must themselves receive instruction. [May those instructers be few, who cannot teach, and will not learn!]

II. The people's ready obedience to the Word in

* Or, *that they might instruct in.* 7,8. Luke 24:32. 2 Tim. 2:24,25.
† Heb. *by the hand of.*

a Lev. 23:34,40—43. Deut. 16:13—15. Zech. 14:16—19. John 7:2.
b Gen. 33:17.
c Lev. 23:4.
d Deut. 16:16.
e Judg. 9:48,49. Matt. 21:1.
f Lev. 23:40.
g Gen. 8:11.
h John 12:13. Rev. 7:9.
i Deut. 22:8. 2 Sam. 11:2. Jer. 19:13. 32:29.
k 2 Chr. 20:5. 33:5.
l 3. 3:26. 12:37.
m 12:39. 2 K. 14:13.
n John 1:14. Heb. 11:9,13.
o Josh. 1:1. *Joshua.* Heb. 4:8. *Jesus.*
p 2 Chr. 7:8—10. 8:13. Ezra 3:4.
q 2 Chr. 30:26. 35:18.
r 1 Chr. 29:22. 2 Chr. 7:10. 30:21—23.
s Deut. 31:10—13.

12:1. Mark 6:33,34. Luke 19:47,48. Acts 4:1. 13:42.

Verses 10, 11.

Sending portions to those for whom nothing had been prepared; to the poor, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, (*Deut.* 12:12, 18, 19. *P. O.*) would distinguish their religious feasting from the [wholly] sensual indulgence of carnal men, and complete the due solemnization of the holy day. SCOTT.

Verse 12.

Ps. 126. 5, 6.) 'This was an extraordinary reason for their mirth, that they were illuminated in divine knowledge, and understood the will of God better than before.' *Patrick.* ID.

Verse 13.

This was no festival; but, having profited from the Word the day before, the people were desirous to be further instructed: and the chief of the fathers, priests, and Levites, were the most forward to request Ezra, to favor them with an exposition of some other part of the law, being convinced of his superior knowledge in it. Hence it appears that he instructed even those, who assisted in teaching the people. SCOTT.

Verses 14—16.

(*Lev.* 23:34—43. *Num.* 29:12—38. *Zech.* 14:16—19. *John* 7:2, 14—17, 37—39.) It may be supposed, Ezra selected those portions of the law, which prescribed solemnities to be observed in the 7th month; especially the feast of tabernacles, as it had not in general been duly observed, and the season was approaching for it. (*Jam.* 1:22—25.) ID.

Verse 17.

It is evident, this and the other solemn feasts were *totally* neglected, at some times, and for a long while together: yet a few instances occur of the feast of tabernacles being kept; and these words must therefore be understood, of the exactness, unanimity, and joyfulness, with which it was at this time celebrated. (1 *K.* 8:63—65. *Ezra* 3:4.) ID.

the book of the law of God: and they kept the feast seven days, and on the eighth day *was* * a solemn assembly, ‡ according unto the manner.

CHAP. IX.

' solemn fast is observed, 1—3. The Levites, as leading the worship of the people, piously acknowledge the manifold goodness of God to Israel, and humbly confess the sins of the nation, as the cause of their miseries, 4—37. The people solemnly covenant with God, 38.

NOW in the [a] twenty and fourth day [b] of this month, the [c] children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackclothes, and [d] earth upon them.

2 And [e] the seed of Israel separated themselves from all † strangers, and stood and [f] confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.

3 And [g] they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God, [h] *one* fourth part of the day; and *another* fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the LORD their God.

4 Then stood up upon the ‡ stairs, of the Levites, [i] Jeshua, and Bani, Kadmiel,

* Heb. *a restraint.*
† Lev. 23:36. Num. 29:35. John 7:37.
‡ Lev. 23:34,39. 2 Chr. 7:10.
a 8:2.
b Judg. 20:26. 2 Chr. 20:3. Ezra 8:23. Esth. 4:3,16. Is. 22:12. Joel 1:13,14. 2:15—17. Jon. 3:5—8. Acts 13:2,3.

one particular instance, as soon as they were made sensible of their duty therein. Probably Ezra, *after the wisdom of his God that was in his hand,* (Ezra 7: 25.) when they applied for instruction on the 2d day of the 7th month, read to them those laws which concerned the feasts of that month, and, among the rest, that of the feast of tabernacles, Lev. 23: 34. Deut. 16: 13. Ministers should preach not only what is true and good, but what is seasonable, directing to the *work of the day in its day.*

This feast had usually been observed, (2 Chr. 5: 3. Ezra 3: 4.) but never with such solemnity as now, since Joshua's time, when they were newly settled, as they were now newly re-settled in Canaan. That man loves his house too well, that cannot find in his heart to quit it, awhile, in compliance either with an ordinance or with a providence of God.

They attended the reading and expounding of the Word of God, during all the days of the feast, *v.* 18. Spare hours cannot be better spent than in studying the Scriptures, and conversing with them. At this feast, God appointed the law to be read, each 7th year: whether this was that year of release, (Deut. 31: 10, 11.) does not appear: however, they spent all the days of the feast in that good work; and, on the 8th day, was a solemn assembly, as God had appointed, in which they finished the solemnity, the 22d day of the month; yet did not scatter, for the 24th was appointed to be spent in fasting and prayer. Holy joy must not indispose us for godly sorrow, any more than godly sorrow for holy joy.

CHAP. IX. The 10th of the 7th month, between the feast of Trumpets (ch. 8: 2.) and of Tabernacles, (*v.* 14.) was appointed to be the day of atonement; which, though not mentioned, we have no reason to think but was religiously observed. But here we have an account of an occasional fast, kept a fortnight after, with reference to the present posture of their affairs, and it was, as that, a day of humiliation. There is a time to weep as well as a time to laugh.

V. 1—3. The fast was kept, probably, by order from Nehemiah, by and with the advice and consent of the chief of the fathers. It was a fast that men appointed, but such *as God had chosen;* for,

1. It was a day *to afflict the soul,* Isa. 58: 5. Probably they assembled in the courts of the temple, in sackcloth, and in the posture of mourners, with earth on their heads, *v.* 1. By these outward expressions of sorrow and humiliation, they gave glory to God, took shame to themselves, and stirred up one another to repentance.

2. It was a day to *loose the bands of wickedness,* and that is the fast God has chosen, Isa. 58: 6. Without this, spreading sackcloth and ashes under us, is but a jest. Israel, because a holy seed, appropriated to God, and more excellent than their neighbors, *separated themselves from all strangers,* with whom they had mingled themselves, and joined affinity, *v.* 2. Now they separated from the strange children, as well as wives. They that intend by prayers and covenants to join themselves to God, must separate themselves from sin and sinners; for *what communion hath light with darkness?*

3. It was a day of communion with God; they *fasted to Him, even to Him,* Zech. 7: 5. They spake to Him in prayer, offered their pious and devout affections to Him, in the confession of sin, and the adoration of Him, as the Lord, and their God. They heard Him speaking to them by his Word; for they read in the book of the law, which is very proper on fasting days, that, in the glass of the law, we may see our deformities and defilements, and know what to acknowledge, and what to amend. The Word will direct and quicken prayer, for by it the Spirit helps our praying infirmities. Observe how the time was equally divided between these two. Three hours (the 4th part of a day) in reading, expounding, and applying the Scriptures; and 3 hours in confessing sin, and praying; 6 hours in all, in solemn acts of religion, without saying, *Behold what a weariness is it!* Varying the exercises made it less tedious. Patrick thinks they spent the whole 12 hours of the day in devotion, reading from 6 o'clock till 9, and from 12 till 3; and praying from 9 o'clock till 12, and from 3 till 6. The work of a fast-day, is a good work, therefore we should endeavor to make a day's work, a good day's work of it.

V. 4—38. Here is an account of the fast-day work.

I. The names of the ministers employed are twice given, (*v.* 4, 5.) only with some variation. Either they prayed successively, according to 1 Cor. 14: 31. or, as some think, there were 8

c Josh. 7:3. 1 Sam. 4:12. 2 Sam. 1:2. Job 2:12.
d 13:3,30. Ezra 9:2. 10:11.
† Heb. *strange children.* Ps. 144:7,11. Is. 2:6. Hos. 5:7.
e 1:6. Lev. 26:39,40. Ezra 9:6,7,15. Ps. 106:6,7. Dan. 9:3—10,20. 1 John 1:7—9.
g 8:4,7,8.
h 8:3.
‡ Or, *scaffold.*
i 5. See on 8:7. 10:9—13. 12:8.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 9—18. The divine law, when faithfully unfolded, in its extensive demands and righteous sanction, is generally made successful by the Holy Spirit, in bringing the stout, hard, and proud hearts of sinners to tremble, to melt into godly sorrow, and to become abased before God.—Joy in God, if genuine, adds strength and courage to the soul for every duty and for every trial; it inspires resolution for service, and vigor in resisting temptation; it satisfies, and sanctifies, and enlarges the heart in cheerful obedience, and in love to our brethren. Indeed, that joy is a mere counterfeit, which has not these effects: and they are enemies to their own sanctification, who always indulge sorrow, even for sin, and put from them those consolations, which are tendered to them by the Word and Spirit of God.—Those, who have profited by the Word of God, will be glad of an opportunity of hearing it on any day, as far as consistent with other duties: and when the people are so disposed, the minister is called to be 'instant in season and out of season.'—Some portions of Scripture are more suitable to the circumstances of our congregations than others would be, especially when they remind them of present duty. For even true Christians neglect many things, through ignorance and forgetfulness, and for want of *particular* instructions. But it is admirable, when they no sooner hear the command of God, than they prepare for obedience; when attending on the Word excites an increasing appetite for it; and when the ordinances afford great gladness to their souls.—Yet, alas, how little have the commandments and institutions of our God been hitherto observed, even among his professed worshippers! So that when individuals, or collective bodies, come near the standard of his Word, in the power of godliness, they become 'men wondered at.' But though none, from age to age, or through whole nations of professed Christians, have ever served God, as some small company may aim to do; yet if these be evidently obeying the plain meaning of Scripture, they ought not to be censured as singular, precise, or affected; but to be commended and imitated.—True religion will make us strangers and pilgrims on earth: and those who refuse conformity to the world, and have their conversation in heaven, and their joy in the Lord, must appear strange and uncouth in the eyes of the servants of that other master, who 'worketh in all the children of disobedience.' SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX. V. 3. Perhaps the 3 hours previous to the offering of the morning-sacrifice, were assigned for the people to prepare themselves and their families for the public solemnity; and the 3 hours after the evening-sacrifice, for their consenting to the covenant and sealing it, and the improvement of what they had heard, by meditation, pious converse, and devotion: for on solemn fasts it was customary for the Jews to take no food till after sunset. The *public* services of the day, however, continued *at least* 6 hours without intermission. SCOTT.

Verse 4.

Stairs.] *Boothr.* tr 'Platform.' The temple probably was built on a platform of mason-work, like that of the temple of Baalbek, and the ruins of Persepolis; and the last, according to *Saint-Martin,* are of this age of Darius and Xerxes. This terrace, built of white marble, is an irregular parallelogram, (cut, Esth. 1:2—6.) 25 to 50 ft. high, according to the inequalities of the ground, 1425 ft. on the W. front, 926 on the N. and 802 on the S. The only ascent is on the W. side, by a magnificent *staircase,* formed of 2 double flights of *steps.* Of these the lowest, consisting each of 55, 22 ft. long and 3½ in. in depth, meet in a landing place of 37 ft. by 44. From this point springs a second double flight of 48 steps of similar dimensions, which terminate on the level of the platform in a second landing place of 64 ft. long. *Niebuhr* says he saw holes in the large stones of the landing place, as if for gates;

Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, *and* Chenani, and [k] cried with a loud voice unto the LORD their God.

5 Then the Levites, Jeshua, and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, *and* Pethahiah, said, [l] Stand up *and* [m] bless the LORD your God for ever and ever; and blessed be [n] thy glorious name, which is [o] exalted above all blessing and praise.

6 Thou, [p] *even* thou, art LORD alone; [q] thou hast made heaven, [r] the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all *things* that *are* therein, the seas, and all that *is* therein, and thou [s] preservest them all; and the [t] host of heaven worshippeth thee.

7 Thou *art* the LORD the God, who didst [u] choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of [x] Ur of the Chaldees, and [y] gavest him the name of Abraham;

8 And [z] foundest his heart faithful before thee, and [a] madest a covenant with him, to give the land of [b] the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give *it*, *I say*, to his seed, [c] and hast performed thy words; for thou *art* [d] righteous:

9 And [e] didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and [f] heardest their cry by the Red Sea;

10 And [g] shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land: for thou knewest that [h] they dealt proudly against them. So [i] didst thou get thee a name, as *it is* this day.

11 And thou didst [k] divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; and [l] their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, [m] as a stone into the mighty waters.

12 Moreover [n] thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar, and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light [o] in the way wherein they should go.

13 Thou [p] camest down also upon mount Sinai, and [q] spakest with them from heaven, and [r] gavest them right judgments and * true laws, good statutes, and commandments;

14 And [s] madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and [t] commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of [u] Moses thy servant;

15 And [x] gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and [y] broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them that they should [z] go in to possess the land which thou hadst † sworn to give them.

16 But they and our fathers [a] dealt proudly, and [b] hardened their necks, and [c] hearkened not to thy commandments,

17 And [d] refused to obey, neither were [e] mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion [f] appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou *art* [g] a God ‡ ready to pardon, [h] gracious and merciful, slow to anger,

several congregations at some distance from each other, and each had a presiding Levite.

II. The work itself. They prayed to God, for pardon and favor, cried aloud, (*v.* 4.) that the people might the better hear, and to excite their fervency. They praised God; which is not unseasonable on a fast-day: in all acts of devotion, we must aim at this, *to give unto God the glory due.* The summary of their prayers we have here; whether drawn up before, as a directory to the Levites what to enlarge on, or recollected after, as the heads of what they had in prayer enlarged on, is uncertain. Much more, no doubt, was said; else confessing and worshipping God had not taken up 1-4th of the day, much less 2-4ths. In this solemn address, we have,

1. An awful adoration of God, as a perfect and glorious Being, one and self-existent, and the Fountain of all beings, and Creator of all things. *v.* 5, 6. The congregation is called on to signify their concurrence herewith, by standing up; God's name is not only exalted above *our* blessing, but above *all* blessing. Put all the praises of heaven and earth together; and the thousandth part is not said of what might and should be said of the glory of God.

2. A thankful acknowledgment of God's favors to Israel, many of which are here reckoned up in order before Him, and very much to the purpose. They multiply and magnify the instances of God's goodness to Israel, and we should do so, that the goodness of God, duly considered, may lead us to

k 2 Chr. 20:19. Ps. 77:1. 130:1. Lam. 3:8. John 11:43. Acts 7:60.
l 1 K. 8:14,22. 2 Chr. 20:13,19. Ps. 134: 135:2,3.
m 1 Chr. 29:20. Ezra 3:11. Ps. 103:1, 2. 117: 145:2. 146:2. Jer. 33:10,11. Matt. 11:25. Eph. 3:20,21. 1 Pet. 1:3.
n Ex. 15:6,11. Deut. 28:58. 1 Chr. 29: 13. Ps. 72:18,19. 145:5,11,12. 2 Cor. 4:6.
o 1 K. 8:27. 1 Chr. 29:11. Ps. 106:2.
p Deut. 6:4. 2 K. 19:15,19. Ps. 86:10. Is. 43:10. 44:6,8. Mark 12:29,30. John 10:30.
q Gen. 1:1. 2:1. Ex. 20:11. Ps. 33:6. 136:5—9. 146:6. Jer. 10:11,12. Col. 1:15,16. Rev. 4:11. 14:7.
r Deut. 10:14. 1 K. 8:27.
s Ps. 36:6. Col. 1:17. Heb. 1:3.
t Gen. 2:1. 32:2. 1 K. 22:19. Ps. 103: 21. 148:2—4. Is. 6:2,3. Heb. 1:6. Rev. 5:13.
u Gen. 12:1,2. Deut. 10:15. Josh. 24: 2,3. Is. 41:8,9. 51:2.
x Gen. 11:31. 15:7. Acts 7:2—4.
y Gen. 17:5.
z Gen. 12:1—3. 15:6. 22:12. Acts 13:22. 1 Tim. 1:12,13. Heb. 11:17. Jam. 2:21—23.
a Gen. 12:7. 17:7,8. 22:16—18. Deut. 7:8,9. 9:5. Ps. 105:8,9. Luke 1:72,73.
b Gen. 15:18—21. Ex. 3:8,17. Deut. 7:1. Josh. 9:1. 11:3.
c Deut. 26:3. Josh. 11:23. 21:43—45. 23:14. Is. 105:43,44.
d Num. 23:19. Ps. 92:14,15. Tit. 1:2. Heb. 6:18. 1 John 1:9.
e Ex. 2:25. 3:7,9,16. Acts 7:34.
f Ex. 14:10—12.
g Ex. 7—10: 12:29,30. 14:15—31. Deut. 4:34. 11:3,4. Ps. 78:12,13,43—53. 105:27—37. 106:7—11. 135:8,9. 136:10—15. Acts 7.36.
h Ex. 5:2,7,8. 9:17. 10:3. 18:11. Job 40:11,12. Dan. 4:37. 5:23. 1 Pet. 5:5.
i Ex. 9:16. Josh. 2:10,11. Ps. 83:18. Is. 63:12,14. Jer. 32:20. Ez. 20:9. Dan. 9:15. Rom. 9:17.
k Ex. 14:21,22,27,28. Ps. 66:6. 78:13. 114:3—5. 136:13—15. Is. 63:11—13.
l Ex. 15:1—21. Ps. 106:9—11. Heb. 11:29.
m Ex. 15:10. Rev. 18:21.
n 19. Ex. 13:21,22. 14:19,20. Ps. 78: 14. 105:39.
o Ps. 107:7. 143:8.
p Ex. 19:11,16—20. Deut. 33:2. Is. 64:1,3. Hab. 3:3.
q Ex. 20:1,22. Deut. 4:10—13,33. 5:4, 22—26. Heb. 12:18—26.
r Deut. 4:8. 10:12,13. Ps. 19:7—11. 119:127,128. Ez. 20:11—13. Rom. 7: 12—14,16.
* Heb. *laws of truth.* Ps. 119:160.
s Gen. 2:3. Ex. 16:29. 20:8—11. Ez. 20:12,20.
t Ex. 21:—23: Lev. 27:34. Deut. 4: 5,45. 5:31.
u 1:8. John 1:17.
x Ex. 16:4,14,15. Deut. 8:3,16. Ps. 78:24,25. 105:40. John 6:31—33. 1 Cor. 10:3.
y 20. Ex. 17:6. Num. 20:9—11. Deut. 8:15. Ps. 77:15—20. 105:41. 114:8. 1 Cor. 10:4.
z Deut 1:8. Josh. 1:2—4.
† Heb. *lift up thine hand.* Gen. 14:22. Num. 14:30. Ez. 20:15.
a See on 10,29. Ex. 32:9. Deut. 9:6, 13,23,24,27. 32:15. Ps. 78:8. 106: 6. Is. 63:10. Jer. 2:31. Acts 7:51.
b Deut. 31:27. 2 K. 17:14. 2 Chr. 30: 8. 36:13. Ps. 95:8—10. Prov. 29:1. Is. 48:4. Jer. 19:15. Rom. 2:5. Heb. 3:13,15.
c Ex. 15:26. Deut. 5:29. Ps. 81:8,11—14. Is. 48:18.
d Num. 14:3,4,11,41. 16:14. Ps. 106: 24,25. Prov. 1:24. Heb. 12:25.
e Ps. 78:11,42,43. 106:7,13. Matt. 16. 9—11. 2 Pet. 1:12—15.
f Num. 14 4. Acts 7:39.
g Num. 14:18,19. Ps. 86:5,15. 130:4. Mic. 7:18,19.
‡ Heb. *of pardons.*
h Ex. 34:6,7. Ps. 78:38. 103:8—18. 145:8,9. Is. 55:7—9. Joel 2:13. Rom. 9:15. Eph. 1:6,7.

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and conceives that the whole platform might have been under lock and key. The ascent is so gradual, that travellers usually ride up on horseback; and the blocks of marble are so large, that from 10 to 14 steps are cut out of each. A magnificent colonnade, of columns 60 ft. high and 16 in circumference occupies the terrace,' [&c. See *Hist.* of *Pers.* Edinb. Cab. Lib.] *Fraser.* See note, Esth. 1: 2—6. ED.

Verse 5.

Perhaps the people were prostrate on the ground, or kneeling, while they humbly confessed their sins, and craved mercy from God, each for himself, and for his people: but they were called on to 'stand up,' when the public adorations began; and to bless and 'praise the LORD their God for ever and ever;' or as long as they had any being; or, to bless Him, as 'their God, for ever and ever.' SCOTT.

Verse 7.

'Here follows a compendious history of the affairs of the Hebrew nation, in this confession of God's benefits and their ingratitude; which Nehemiah and Ezra, it is likely, composed in the form of a prayer, and delivered it to the Levites, whom they ordered to speak it distinctly before the whole congregation, from their several scaffolds, which were conveniently placed in several parts of the assembly, that they might be heard.' *Patrick.* . . . It seems to have been a kind of compendium, or directory, to those who officiated, that all might be evidently of one mind; on the several parts of which, it is probable, each of them enlarged according to his ability. SCOTT.

Verse 13.

God spake the law of ten commandments 'from heaven,' in respect of its original, as distinguished from the statutes of earthly lawgivers. Or the word *heaven* may mean the higher regions of the air.—The moral law is right, true, and good: grounded on eternal *truth*, resuing from the nature of God and man, and our relations to Him and to each other; and forming the standard of excellency and the rule of felicity. (*Ex.* 20:1. *Deut.* 4:6—8. 32:2—4. *Ex.* 20:11. *Rom.* 7:7—12.) The *judgments* (or judicial law, the rule of the magistrate) given to Israel, were more consistent with the true difference between right and wrong, and the relative proportion of crimes and punishments, than the municipal laws of any other country in any age hitherto have been: (*Ex.* 21:1.) and the *ritual* law prefigured the true way of a sinner's justification, sanctification, and obtaining eternal life. (*M. R.*—*Ex.* 21:—24:) ID.

Verse 17.

The order of the Heb. is, *to their bondage in their rebellion:* (*bemarim*) this Dr. A. Clarke thinks a mistake for *bemitsraym, in Egypt:* which 'is the reading of 7 of K. and De R's MSS. of the Neapolitan ed. of the Hagiographa, and of the Sept. It is also so in Num. 14:4.' ED.

and of great kindness, and [i] forsookest them not.

18 Yea, [k] when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This *is* thy god that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations;

19 Yet thou, [l] in thy manifold mercies, forsookest them not in the wilderness: [m] the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way, neither the pillar of fire by night, to show them light, and the way wherein they should go.

20 Thou [n] gavest also thy [o] good Spirit to instruct them, and [p] withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and [q] gavest them water for their thirst.

21 Yea, [r] forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, *so that* they lacked nothing; [s] their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not.

22 Moreover [t] thou gavest them kingdoms and nations, and didst [u] divide them into corners: so they possessed [x] the land of Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon, and the land of Og king of Bashan.

23 Their children also [y] multipliedst thou, as the stars of heaven, and [z] broughtest them into the land, concerning which [a] thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess *it*.

24 So the children went in and possessed the land, and [b] thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gavest them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that they might do with them [*] as they would.

25 And they took [c] strong cities, and [d] a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, [†] wells digged, vineyards, and olive-yards, and [‡] fruit-trees in abundance: so they [e] did eat, and were filled, and became fat, and [f] delighted themselves in thy great goodness.

26 Nevertheless [g] they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and [h] cast thy law behind their backs, and [i] slew thy prophets, which testified against them to turn them to thee, and [k] they wrought great provocations.

27 Therefore [l] thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them: and [m] in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest *them* from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies, thou gavest them [n] saviors, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies.

28 But after they had rest, they [§] did evil again before thee: therefore leftest thou them in the hand of their enemies, so that they had the dominion over them; yet when they returned, and cried unto thee, thou [o] heardest *them* from heaven, and [p] many times didst thou deliver them, according to thy mercies;

29 And [q] testifiedst against them that thou mightest bring them again unto thy law: [r] yet they dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgments, ([s] which if a man do, he shall live in them,) and [‖] withdrew the shoulder, and [t] hardened their neck, and would not hear.

30 Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet *would* they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands.

31 Nevertheless for thy great mercies' sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou *art* a gracious and merciful God.

32 Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before thee, that hath come upon us, on our kings, and on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day.

33 Howbeit thou *art* just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly:

34 Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers, kept thy law, nor hearkened unto thy commandments and thy testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against them.

35 For they have not served thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness that thou gavest them, and in the large and fat land which thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works.

36 Behold, we *are* servants this day, and *for* the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat of the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we *are* servants in it:

37 And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress.

38 And because of all this we make a sure *covenant*, and write *it*; and our princes, Levites, *and* priests, seal unto it.

k Ex. 32:4—8,31,32. Deut. 9:12—16. Ps. 106:19—23. Ez. 20:7,&c.
l Ps. 106:7,8,45. Lam. 3:22. Ez. 20:14,22. Dan. 9:9,18. Mal. 3:6.
m See on 12.—Ex. 40:38. Num. 9:15—22. Is. 4:5,6. 1 Cor. 10:1,2.
n 30. Neh. 11:17,25—29. Is. 63:11,14.
o Ps. 143:10. Rom. 15:30. Gal. 5:22, 23. Eph. 5:9. 2 Pet. 1:21.
p Ex. 16:35. Josh. 5:12.
q Ps. 105:41. Is. 41:17,18. 48:21. 49: 10. John 4:10,14. 7:37—39.
r Ex. 16:35. Num. 14:33,34. Deut. 2:7. 8:2. Am. 5:25. Acts 13:18.
s Deut. 8:4. 29:5. Ps. 34:10.
t Josh. 10: 11. Ps. 78:55. 105:44.
u Deut. 32:26. Josh. 11:23.
x Num. 21:21—35. Deut. 2:26—36. 3: 1—17. Ps. 135:10—12. 136:17—22.
y Gen. 15:5. 22:17. 1 Chr. 27:23.
z Josh. 1: 3. &c.
a Gen. 12:7. 13:15—17. 15:18. 17:8. 26:3.
b Josh. 18:1. 1 Chr. 22:18. Ps. 44:2,3.
* Heb. *according to their will.* 2 Tim. 2:26.
c Num. 13:27,28. Deut. 3:5. 6:10—12. 9:1—3.
d 35. Deut. 8:7—10. 32:13. Ez. 20:6.
† Or, *cisterns.*
‡ Heb. *tree of food.*
e Deut. 32:15. Ps. 65:11. Is. 6:10. Jer. 5:27,28. Hos. 13:6.
f 1 K. 8:66. Jer. 31:14. Hos. 3:5. Rom. 2:4.
g Judg. 2:11,12. 3:6,7. 10:6,13,14. Ps. 78:56,57. 106:34—40. Ez. 16:15,&c. 20:21. 23:4,&c.
h 1 K. 14:9. Ps. 50:17. Ez. 23:3—5.
i 1 K. 18:4,13. 19:10. 2 Chr. 24:20, 21. 36:16. Jer. 26:20—23. Matt. 21:35. 23:34—37. Acts 7:52.
k 18. 2 K. 21:11. Ez. 22:25—31.
l Deut. 31:16—18. Judg. 2:14,15. 3:8, &c. 2 Chr. 36:17. Ps. 106:41,42. Dan. 9:10—14.
m Deut. 4:29—31. Judg. 3:15. 6:6—10. 10:15,16. Ps. 106:43—45.
n Judg. 2:18. 3:9,15. 1 Sam. 12:10,11. 2 K. 13:5. 14:27. Ob. 21.
§ Heb. *returned to do evil.* Judg. 3:11, 12,30. 4:1. 5:31. 6:1.
o 1 K. 8:33,34,39. Is. 63:15.
p Ps. 106:43—45.
q 26. Deut. 4:26. 31:21. 2 K. 17:13. 2 Chr. 24:19. 36:15. Jer. 25:3—7. Hos. 6:5.
r 10,16. Ex. 10:3. Jer. 13:15—17. 43: 2. 44:10,16,17. Dan. 5:20. Jam. 4: 6—10.
s Lev. 18:5. Ez. 20:11. Luke 10:28. Rom. 10:5. Gal. 3:12.
‖ Heb. *gave a withdrawing shoulder.* Zech. 7:11,12.
t See on Jer. 7:26. 17:23. 19:15.
1 1 K. 6:13. 8:57. Ps. 106:43—46.

Verses 18, 19.

M. R.—Notes, Ex. 32:—34: *Ps.* 106:19—23, 40—45. *Is.* 63:7—14. *Ez.* 20:11—26. SCOTT.

Verse 20.

The Spirit of prophecy, in Moses, Joshua, the seventy elders, and the subsequent prophets, both instructed the Israelites by their ministry, and testified against them when rebellious. (30) The example, conversation, and exertions of those who partook of his sanctifying influences, tended to reform the nation: and, no doubt, the Spirit of God, by his convictions, powerfully excited in the consciences of the unconverted, a sense of guilt and dread of punishment; and in other ways strove with them. But in all these respects 'they resisted the Holy Ghost.' (*M. R.* n, o. *Notes, Is.* 63:10. *Acts* 7:51—53. 1 *Thes.* 5:16—22, *v.* 19. *Heb.* 10:28—31, *v.* 29.)—The unspeakable condescension and compassion of the blessed Spirit of God, in his operations on the polluted souls of sinful men, as well as the beneficent tendency of those operations, are strongly marked in the words 'thy good Spirit.' (*Ps.* 143:10.) ID.

Verse 22.

Into corners.] I. e. into all the corners of the promised land, from which the old inhabitants had been driven. Some expositors think, the situation of Canaan, as favorable to Israel's separation from other nations, being divided by seas, mountains, and deserts, from the most flourishing kingdoms in the world, was denoted by this expression. And indeed it is observable, that Jerusalem, which God chose for the metropolis of his people, was situated [in a rugged country,] at a distance from the sea, and from all navigable rivers.—Others, however, suppose, that the dispossessed nations are meant, who were driven into corners.—Heshbon being the city of Sihon, the word should be rendered, '*even* the land of the king of Heshbon.' ID.

Corners.] 'Alluding probably to the division of Canaan, according to the number of the tribes, the districts running into many angles.' HEWLETT.

Verse 25.

Became fat, &c.] 'We have an old, nervous saying, "War begets poverty; poverty, peace; peace affluence; affluence begets luxury and corruption of manners: and hence civil broils, foreign wars, and desolations." A sensible Roman historian has said the same:—"Imperium facile iis artibus retinetur, quibus initio partum est: verum ubi pro labore, desidia; pro continentia et æquitate, libido atque superbia invasere; fortuna simul cum moribus immutatur."' Dr. A. CLARKE. In which of these stages is our beloved country? May simplicity of manners, and of living, a spirit of subordination, in domestic, social, and civil life, sound education, pure morality, and a deep sense of religious obligations, and of the inestimable privileges of liberty and prosperity, save us from that idolatry of mammon and of self, and forgetfulness of our infinitely kind God, to which prosperity gives a lamentable tendency! ED.

Verse 27.

Saviors, &c.] The deliverers, which God immediately raised up for his people, as the Judges, and king David, by whom they were rescued from the miseries into which their sins had plunged them, were all types of the great Savior, who delivers us from wrath, and from our enemies, that we may become the servants of that God whom we have offended.' SCOTT.

Verse 29.

Testifiedst against them, that thou mightest bring them again to thy law.] The end of our ministry is, to bring people to God, by bringing them to his law; not to bring them to ourselves, by bringing them

ened their neck, and would not hear.

30 Yet [u] many years didst thou * forbear them and testifiedst against them [x] by thy Spirit in † thy prophets; yet would they not give ear: [y] therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands.

31 Nevertheless, [z] for thy great mercies' sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou *art* a [a] gracious and merciful God.

32 Now therefore, [b] our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who [c] keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the ‡ trouble seem [d] little before thee that hath § come upon us, [e] on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, [f] since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day.

33 Howbeit [g] thou *art* just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but [h] we have done wickedly:

34 Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers kept thy law, nor hearkened unto thy commandments, and [i] thy testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against them.

35 For [k] they have not served thee in their kingdom, and in [l] thy great goodness that thou gavest them, and in the large and [m] fat land which thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works.

36 Behold, [n] we *are* servants this day; and *for* the land that thou gavest unto our fathers, to eat the fruit thereof, and the good thereof, behold, we *are* servants in it.

37 And [o] it yieldeth much increase unto the kings, whom thou hast set over us, because of our sins: also they have [p] dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we *are* in great distress.

38 And because of all this, [q] we make a sure *covenant*, and write *it;* and our princes, Levites, *and* priests, ‖ seal *unto it.*

specified; meditating a return, first, to Egyptian slavery, [which deprived their owner, for another's profit, of every physical energy;] and second, to Egyptian idolatry, [a *slavery of the mind*, an utter prostration of every manly attribute to spiritual tyranny, infinitely more debasing and pernicious. Note, Ez. 8: 10.]

(2.) They next bewail the provocations of their fathers after they were put in possession of Canaan; *v.* 26—28. not being wrought upon, either by their troubles, or their deliverances out of trouble. Neither fear nor love would hold them to their duty.

(3.) They, at length, come nearer to their own

u Ps. 86:15. Rom. 2:4. 2 Pet. 3:9.
* Heb. *protract over them.*
x 20. Is. 63:10. Acts 7:51. 28:25. 1 Pet. 1:11. 2 Pet. 1:21.
† Heb. *the hand of thy prophets.*
y Is. 5:5,6. 42:24. Jer. 40:2,3. 44:22 Lam. 2:17. Zech. 7:13
z Jer. 4:27. 5:10,18. Lam. 3:22. Ez 14:22,23. Dan. 9:9.
a See on 17.—Ex. 34:6,7. 2 K. 13:23 2 Chr. 30:9. Ps. 103:8,9. 145:8,9.
b 15. Deut. 7:21. Ps. 47:2. 66:3,5.
c Deut. 7:9. 1 K. 8:23. Dan. 9:4. Mic. 7:18—20. ‡ Heb. *weariness.*
d Lev. 26:18,21,24,28. Ezra 9:13.
§ Heb. *found us.*
e 2 K. 23:29,33,34. 25:7,18—21,25,26 2 Chr. 36: Jer. 8:1—3. 22:18 9. 34. 19—22. 39: 52: Dan. 9:6,8.
f 2 K. 15:19,29. 17:3. Is. 7:17,18. 8: 7,8. 10:5—7. 36: 37:
g Gen. 18:25. Job 34:23. Ps. 119:137. Jer. 12:1. Lam. 1:18. Dan. 9:7,14.
h Lev. 26:40,41. Job 33:27. Ps. 106:6 Dan. 9:5—10.
i 30. 2 K. 17:15.
k Deut. 28:47. Jer. 5:19. Rom. 3:4,5.
l 25.
m Deut. 8:7—10. 32:12—15.
n Deut. 28:48. 2 Chr. 12:8. Ezra 9:9
o Deut. 28:30,51. Ezra 4:13. 6:8. 7:24
p 5:8. Lev. 26:17. Deut. 28:48. John 8:33.
q 10:29. 2 K. 23:3. 2 Chr. 15:12,13 23:16. 29:10. 34:31. Ezra 10:3.
‖ Heb. *are at the sealing*, or, *sealed* 10:1.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The diligent study of God's Word will more and more show us both our own sinfulness, and the plenteousness of his salvation; and thus alternately call us to mourn for sin, and to rejoice in Him.—Seasons of comfort should remind us of his condescending goodness, and so lead us to deeper self-abasement on account of our crimes against Him: and thus joyful feasts and solemn fasts may properly succeed, and prepare our hearts for each other.—Alas, we are most of us sooner weary in the courts of the Lord, than the trifler is at his diversions, or even the laborer at his work!—Those who address God in public, should speak audibly and with animation; that the people may hear and be affected: and if, on some occasions, 'they cry with a loud voice unto the LORD their God,' or be more copious than usual, they cannot be censured, without involving those who are commended in the sacred Scriptures.—In reviewing this abstract of the Lord's conduct toward Israel, as a people, from the choice and call of Abraham to the days of Nehemiah: we perceive a continued display of his power, wisdom, truth, and love, requited by persevering ingratitude, and perverse disobedience. And is not their conduct a specimen of human nature? Our land, for instance, has long been favored with deliverances, opportunities, and benefits, little, if at all, inferior to those vouchsafed to Israel: and have we not copied Israel's ingratitude, rebellion, and iniquity? Oh, may a general reformation, while yet we are spared, prevent our being given up into the hands of foreign conquerors, or domestic oppressors! (*P. O. Deut.* 32: 15—35. *Ps.* 78: 12—54. 106: 28—48. *Ez.* 16: 20: 10—19.) But especially we should each of us study our own history. Let us look back to the time, when we received our being, as rational creatures, from the goodness and power of the Lord; let us recollect the distinguishing advantages of our infancy and childhood: then let us ask ourselves, what were our first returns to our kind Friend and Benefactor? what were our first thoughts, words, and works?—As our faculties began to unfold, revolving years brought with them recent comforts and advantages: and did they not witness increasing perverseness, ingratitude, and ungodliness? Let us divide our lives past into distinct periods, and carefully investigate the mercies and the transgressions of each, until we have brought down the inquiry to the present hour: praying all the while, that the Holy Spirit may assist our recollection, and enable us to form a proper estimate of the Lord's dealings with us, and our behavior towards Him; and to deduce proper conclusions from the whole, with suitable affections. And if prejudice, ignorance, or self-flattery do not blind our minds, we shall certainly see abundant cause for deep humiliation and for admiring gratitude; and to acknowledge, that all our sufferings have been justly merited, all our comforts mercifully bestowed.—Besides the temporal provision which we have from the Lord's bounty, (though not by miracle;) we are favored with means and opportunities of becoming wise unto salvation, even beyond what Israel enjoyed in their most favored times. We have the sacred oracles, now completed and ever at hand, to give us light, and to show us the way in which we should go. We have the gospel preached among us, and the holy sabbaths and ordinances of our God: but have we never neglected, profaned, and despised them? We have not been without salutary chastisements, and merciful deliverances, perhaps, in answer to prayer: but have we not requited them by returning unto sin? We have had, not only the testimony of God's servants, but the strivings of his good Spirit: but have we never hated or despised the one, and quenched the other? nay, we are especially 'under the ministration of the Spirit:' yet perhaps have neglected to pray for his gracious influences, and derided those who did! And have not we proudly cast off the authority of God's law; and as proudly endeavored to justify ourselves before Him? This, I say, was the case with us once, perhaps is so still with some who read these observations. Yet, whilst others have been cut off, we are spared! May this review of the Lord's mercies, and of our sins, bring us to true repentance, and induce us to condemn ourselves, as having imitated and vindicated all the transgressors who have gone before us: may it bring us to submit to the Lord's righteousness, to accept of his salvation, and to set our seal to his new covenant of mercy and grace: that 'being delivered from all our enemies, we may serve Him in righteousness before Him' the remainder of our days. (*P. O. Deut.* 9: 32: 1—14. *Ps.* 106: 1—27. *Ez.* 20: 1—9.)

Even, if, by the Lord's choice of us, and his grace given to us,

under any law of ours. HENRY.

Verse 32.

Dr. A. *Clarke* thinks, Nehemiah mentions here, in the 'natural order, the whole of *civil society* in its *officers*, as they stand related to each other in dignity. 1. Kings. 2. Princes. 3. Priests. 4. Prophets. 5. Fathers, heads or chiefs of tribes and families. 6. The common People.' ED.

Verses 36, 37.

The situation of Israel was very different, at this time, from what it had been under their own kings, and in the days of their prosperity. (*John* 8:30—36.) It was very distressing for the worshippers of God, to be in slavery to the worshippers of dumb idols:* and though they had no intention of revolting from the kings of Persia, who allowed them to live according to their own laws, and in many respects showed them much favor; yet they hoped, that, on their deep repentance, and more entire return to God, He would more effectually deliver them from captivity and bondage, and restore them in due season to their former liberty, independence, and prosperity. (5:1—5. *Ps.* 85:1—8. 106:46—48.) SCOTT.

* Scripture nowhere, it is believed, calls the Persians idolaters. The case of the Babylonians or Chaldeans was far different. See Isa. 46: Jer. 50: &c. *Ed.*

CHAP. X.

The names of those who sealed the covenant, 1—27. The rest of the people bind themselves to observe it, 28, 29. Some particulars to which they bound themselves, 30—39.

NOW * those that sealed *were* [a] Nehemiah the † Tirshatha, the [b] son of Hachaliah, and Zidkijah,

2 [c] Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah,

3 [d] Pashur, [e] Amariah, [f] Malchijah,

4 [g] Hattush, [h] Shebaniah, [i] Malluch,

5 [k] Harim, [l] Meremoth, Obadiah,

6 Daniel, [m] Ginnethon, [n] Baruch,

7 [o] Meshullam, [p] Abijah, [q] Mijamin,

8 Maaziah, [r] Bilgai, [s] Shemaiah: these *were* the priests.

9 And the Levites: both [t] Jeshua the son of Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of [u] Henadad, Kadmiel;

10 And their brethren, [x] Shebaniah, Hodijah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan,

11 Micha, Rehob, [y] Hashabiah,

12 Zaccur, [z] Sherebiah, Shebaniah,

13 Hodijah, Bani, Beninu.

14 The chief of the people; [a] Parosh, Pahath-moab, Elam, Zatthu, [b] Bani,

15 Bunni, [c] Azgad, Bebai,

16 Adonijah, [d] Bigvai, Adin,

17 Ater, Hizkijah, Azzur,

18 Hodijah, [e] Hashum, Bezai,

19 Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai,

20 Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir,

* Heb. *at the sealings.* 9:38.

a 8:9.

day, and lament the sins which had brought those judgments they had long been groaning under, and were now but in part delivered from, *v.* 33, 34. Two things they charge on themselves, and their fathers, as the cause of their troubles. A contempt of the good law, and the good land God had given them. They *sinned against thy judgments*, the dictates of divine wisdom, and the demands of divine sovereignty: *they gave a withdrawing shoulder*, so the marg. pretended to lay their shoulders under the burden of God's law, but when it came, as we say, to the setting to, they shrunk back, and would not hear; they had a backsliding heart. And though God by his prophets called them to return, they *would not give ear*, *v.* 30. 'our people have not served Thee in the use of the gifts of thy great goodness, in that large and fat land Thou gavest them.' It is a pity that a good land should have bad inhabitants, but so it was with Sodom; fatness and fulness often make men proud and sensual. [Note, 2 Chr. 20: 3.]

4. A humble representation of the judgments they had been, and were now, under. Former judgments are remembered as aggravations of their sins, that they had not taken warning, *v.* 27. and their present calamitous state is laid before the Lord, *v.* 36, 37. Free-born Israelites are enslaved, and the land they had long held by a grant from the crown of heaven to them, as a peculiar people above all people of the earth, they now held by as base a tenure as villanage itself, by, from, and under, the kings of Persia, whose vassals they were. A sad change! But see what work sin makes! They were bound to personal service; they have *dominion over our bodies;* they held all they had, precariously, were tenants at will, and the land-tax that they paid, was so great, that it amounted even to a rack-rent; so that all the rents, issues, and profits of their land, did, in effect, accrue to the king; and it was as much as they could do to get a bare subsistence for themselves and their families out of it: this, they honestly own, was for their sins; poverty and slavery are the fruits of sin; it is sin that brings all our distresses.

5. Their address to God under these calamities, *v.* 32. It is the only petition in all this prayer. They do not prescribe to God what He shall do for them, but leave it to Him only, desiring He would please to take cognizance of their trouble. They acknowledge, notwithstanding, that really it was less than they deserved, *v.* 33. Note, It becomes us, when under the rebukes of Divine Providence, though ever so sharp, and ever so long, to justify God, and to judge ourselves, Ps. 61: 4.

6. After this long presentation of their case, they came, at last, to this resolution, that they would return to God and duty, and oblige themselves never to forsake God, but always to continue in their duty. Observe, This covenant was made with serious consideration; it is the result of a chain of suitable thoughts, and so is a reasonable service: with great solemnity; it was written, *that it might remain a memorial for all ages;* it was sealed, and left on record, that it might be a witness against them if they dealt deceitfully: with joint-consent; 'We make it, we do it unanimously, to strengthen the hands one of another:' with fixed resolution; 'It is a sure covenant, without reserving a power of revocation. It is what we live and die by, and never go back from.' A certain number of the princes, priests, and Levites, were chosen as the representatives of the congregation, to subscribe and seal it, for and in the name of the rest. Now was fulfilled that promise, that when they were returned out of captivity, they should *join themselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant*, (Jer. 50: 5.) and that (Is. 44: 5.) they should *subscribe with their hand unto the Lord;* he that bears an honest mind, will not startle at assurances; nor will those that know the deceitfulness of their own hearts, think them needless.

CHAP. X. V. 1—31. We have, in this ch. a particular account of the covenant resolved on in the close of the foregoing; they immediately put that good resolve in execution, when in a good frame, lest, if delayed, it had been dropped. Israel was first brought into covenant with God, by sacrifice, and the sprinkling of blood, Ex. 24. but here, by the more natural and common way of sealing and subscribing the written articles of the

† Or, *governor.* 7:70. Ezra 2:63.

b 11:1.
c 3:23. 11:11. 12:1,33,34.
d 11:12. e 12:2,13.
f 3:11. 8:4. *Malchiah.*
g 3:10.
h 12:14.
i 12:2.
k 3:11.
l 3:4,21. 12:3.
m 12:4. *Ginnetho*
n 3:20.
o 3:6. 8:4. 11:11. 12:13,25—33.
p 12:4.
q 12:5. *Miamin.* 17,41. *Miniamin.*
r 12:5. *Bilgah.*
s 3:29. 12:6,18,42. Ezra 10:21.
t 3:19. 7:43. 8:7. 9:4.
u 3:18,24. 12:8,24.
x 8:7. 9:4,5. Ezra 10:23.
y 11:15,22. 12:24. Ezra 8:19,24.
z 8:7. 9:4. 12:8.
a 3:11. 7:8,11—13. *Zattu.*
b 7:15. *Binnui.* Ezra 2:10.
c 7:16,17. Ezra 2:11,12. 8:11,12. 10:28.
d 7:19—21. Ezra 2:14—16. 8:14.
e 7:22,&c. Ezra 2:17,&c.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

we have on the whole been *made* and found *faithful* to Him; and if his covenant have been ratified to us with all its precious promises; we shall not only have cause to adore Him for these inestimable mercies, and for his Son Jesus Christ, and redemption by his atoning blood, as the Foundation of them all; but we shall, on every review, see cause to admire his present patience and gentleness, and to lament our ingratitude and disobedience. We have been delivered from a far worse oppression, than that of the Egyptian tyrant, and by a far more wonderful exertion of almighty power and love. We are guided by a superior light, sheltered by a more glorious protection, and favored with stronger consolations, than Israel of old. We feed on 'the Bread of Life, which came down from heaven, to give life unto the world:' we drink the waters which flow from 'the Rock of Ages' who was smitten for us; we are clothed with the robe of righteousness and salvation; our 'feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;' and the good Spirit of God is not only our condescending Instructer and Sanctifier, but our Comforter also, who deigns to make our hearts his temple! and we possess the hope and earnests of everlasting glory. But, while we rejoice in the Lord's great goodness to us, what requital do we make? We are, perhaps, kept from habitual and gross disobedience: but we are conscious how often we are setting up our idols, and in heart returning to our bondage; how often we forget Him, 'grieve his Holy Spirit,' and neglect his service; and how often we are kept from sti greater revolts by no higher motives than the terror of his judgments, and the anguish of his salutary chastisements, which yet we soon forget, when He has mercifully removed them. Were He not slow to anger, and ready to pardon, He would have cast us off long ago. But our Heavenly Advocate still pleads, and we are spared; and his mercies and our privileges are continued to us! SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. X. V. 1. This is the only instance met with of a covenant drawn up in writing, and ratified by the names and seals of the persons who consented to it. (29. *Ex.* 24:3—11. *Deut.* 26:17—19. 29:10—15. *Josh.* 8:30—35. 24:14—27. 2 *Kings* 11:17—20. 23:3. 2 *Chr.* 15: 12—15. *Is.* 44:3—5. *P. O.* 1—5.) The same uses may be made of those professions, and of that consent to the new covenant, which are virtually made in baptism, whether personal, or that of our children; and in the Lord's supper; when those ordinances are duly explained and understood, administered and attended on. (*Matt.* 19:13—15. 26: 26—28. *P. O.* 26—35.)—Perhaps Zidkijah was one of the princes; but no other *name* is explicitly mentioned of that order. SCOTT.

Verses 2—8.

All the persons named in these vs. were priests, and no doubt chief persons of that order.—It is observable that Eliashib, the high priest, is not found among those who sealed the covenant. And it is probable, that neither he nor his sons favored the measure. (13:4, 23—30.) SCOTT.

Verses 9—17.

Most, if not all, of the Levites, who led the public devotions, set their seal to the covenant; which may be admitted as a probable indication, that they were earnestly and zealously engaged in that service. (*M. R.*—9:4, 5.) ID.

Verses 18—27.

(*M. R.*) Many of the names, here mentioned, are found among those who returned with Zerubbabel, about 90 years before: so that, ei her the same names were preserved in the several families; or the principal descendants of these persons, when in general favorable to the

21 Meshezabeel, Zadok, Jaddua,
22 Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah,
23 Hoshea, Hananiah, Hashub,
24 Hallohesh, Pileha, Shobek,
25 [f] Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah,
26 And Ahijah, Hanan, Anan,
27 Malluch, Harim, Baanah.

28 ¶ And [g] the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinims, and [h] all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands, unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, [i] every one having knowledge, and having understanding;

29 They [j] clave to their brethren, their nobles, and [k] entered into a curse, and into an oath, [l] to walk in God's law, which was [m] given [*] by Moses the servant of God, and [n] to observe and do all the commandments of [o] the LORD our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes;

[*Practical Observations.*]

30 And [p] that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons:

31 And *if* [q] the people of the land bring ware, or any victuals, on the sabbath day to sell, *that* we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or [r] on the holy day; [s] and *that* we would leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every † debt.

32 Also we made ordinances for us, [u] to charge ourselves yearly with [x] the third part of a shekel, for the service of the house of our God;

33 For [y] the shewbread, and for the continual meat-offering, and for [z] the continual burnt-offering, of the sabbaths, of the new moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy *things*, and for the sin-offerings, to make an atonement for Israel, and *for* [a] all the work of the house of our God.

34 And we [b] cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people,

[f] 3:17, &c.
[g] 7:72,73. Ezra 2:70.
[h] 9:2. 13:3. Ezra 9:1,2. 10:11—17. 2 Cor. 6:14—17.

covenant,—which bound them to no more than was already their duty. Here we have,

I. The names of those public persons who, as the representatives and heads of the congregation, set their hands and seals to this covenant, because it would have been endless for every particular person to do it. Observe, 1. Nehemiah, who was the governor, signed first, to show his forwardness in it, and to set a good example, *v.* 1. Those that are above others in dignity and power, should exert a good influence on the people, and go before them in the way of God. 2. Next subscribed 22 priests, among whom I wonder we do not find Ezra, who was active in the solemnity (*ch.* 8: 2.); but he, perhaps, having before done his part as a scribe, now left it to others to do theirs. 3. Next to the priests, 17 Levites subscribed, among whom we find all or most of those who were the mouth of the congregation in prayer, *ch.* 9: 4, 5. This showed they would not bind those burdens on others, which they themselves declined to touch. They that lead in prayer, should lead in every other good work. Next, 44 of the chief of the people gave it under their hands for themselves and all the rest, chiefly those whom they had influence upon, that they would keep God's commandments. Their names are left on record here, to their honor, as men forward and active in reviving, and endeavoring to perpetuate, religion in their country: the memory of such shall be blessed. Most of those mentioned, *ch.* 7: 8, &c. as heads of houses or clans, are here mentioned among the first of the chief of the people that subscribed; whoever was the present head bearing the name of him that was head when they came out of Babylon, and these were fittest to subscribe for all those of their father's house.

II. The concurrence of the rest of the people, priests and Levites, every one that had knowledge and understanding, must covenant with God. As soon as young people grow up to be capable of distinguishing between good and evil, and of acting intelligently, they ought to make it their own act and deed, to *join themselves to the Lord*. The proselytes of other nations also joined, all that had separated themselves from the people of the lands, their gods and their worship, under the law of God, and the observance of that law. Conversion is separating ourselves from the course and custom of this world, and devoting ourselves to the conduct of the Word of God.

Observe how this concurrence is expressed, *v.* 29. 1. They clave to their brethren; one and all. Here, whom the court blessed, the country blessed too! The commonalty agreed with their nobles, called their *brethren*, for, in the things of God, rich and poor, high and low, meet together. Great men never look so great, as when they encourage reli-

[i] 8:2. Ec. 5:2. Jer. 4:2.
[j] Is. 14:1. Acts 11:23. 17:34. Rom. 12:9.
[k] 5:12,13. 13:25. Deut. 27:15,&c. 29: 12—14. 2 Chr. 15:13,14. Ps. 119: 106. Acts 23:12—15,21.
[l] 2 K. 10:31. 23:3. 2 Chr. 6:16. 34: 31. Jer. 26:4.
[m] Deut. 33:4. Mal. 4:4. John 1:17. 7:19.
[*] Heb. *by the hand of.*
[n] Deut. 5:1,32. Ps. 105:45. Ez. 36:27. John 15:14. Tit. 2:11—14.
[o] Is. 9:1,9.
[p] Ex. 34:16. Deut. 7:3. Ezra 9:1—3, 12—14. 10:10—12.
[q] 13:15—22. Ex. 20:10. Lev. 23:3. Deut. 5:12—14. Jer. 17:21,22.
[r] Ex. 12:16. Lev. 16:29. 23:21,35,36. Col. 2:16.
[s] Ex. 23:10,11. Lev. 25:4—7. 2 Chr. 36:21.
[t] 5:7,12. Deut. 15:1—3,7—9. Matt. 6:12. 18:27—35. Jam. 2:13.
† Heb. *band.* Is. 58:6.
[u] Gen. 28:22. Prov. 3:9,10.
[x] Ex. 30:11—16. Matt. 17:24—27. 2 Cor. 8:12.
[y] Lev. 24:5—9. 2 Chr. 2:4.
[z] Num. 28: 29:
[a] 2 Chr. 24:5—14.
[b] 1 Chr. 24:5,7. 25:8,9. Prov. 18:18.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—29. As the creatures and subjects of the Lord, we are bound by his authority to obey all his commandments, and are exposed to a tremendous curse for violating them. But our offended Sovereign, in his infinite mercy, has provided a better covenant, according to which believers are delivered from this curse, and are taught and enabled to perform a new, sincere, and acceptable obedience through Jesus Christ. The Word of God calls us to consent to this covenant, and to partake of its inestimable benefits. And when we humble ourselves in godly sorrow and penitent confessions of sin; when we receive the atonement and reconciliation, which the Mediator of this covenant has made by his precious blood, and seek for mercy through his intercession by fervent prayers; and when in our purposes of renewed obedience, we rely on his gracious assistance:—when these transactions have indeed taken place in secret, between God and our souls; our public sealing and ratifying the covenant at the Lord's table, or in any other solemn way, will be honorable to God, edifying to his people, and encouraging to ourselves; and we may trust in Him to enable us to fulfil the engagements with acceptance. But where this preparation of heart is wanting, such public engagements are mere hypocrisy. (*P. O. Deut.* 29: 1—17. 2 *Chr.* 30: 13—27.) This detestable evil will intrude in all great revivals of religion, after every possible precaution; and the hypocrites must be left to the judgment of a heart-searching God. But men should be warned, that those, who in baptism, or at the Lord's table, or when admitted into the ministry, or in any other way, engage for what they do not intend, or afterwards do not take care to perform, bring themselves under an additional and most awful curse: as do all, who trifle with solemn oaths, vows, or sacramental engagements of any kind; and all, who despise, oppose, or pervert the salvation of the Gospel. SCOTT.

measure, subscribed their family-name; i. e. the name of that ancestor, by relation to whom they were commonly distinguished. (*Luke* 1:61.) SCOTT.

Verse 29.

By the nobles, in this place, the superior persons, priests, or Levites, are evidently meant. The body of the people, who were old enough to be capable of knowing what was intended, assembled together, and signified, by some appointed token, their consent to the covenant, as in the presence of God, and under the solemn obligations of an oath; and to an awful curse, which was denounced against such as violated these obligations. (5:10—13. *Deut.* 27:15—26.) They engaged in general to obey the whole law of Moses: and some instances were specified, in which they had been remarkably guilty, or which were peculiarly ensnaring. ID.

Verses 30, 31.

(*Ezra* 9: 10:)—It seems, that Nehemiah would not venture, in the present unsettled state of the Jews, to exercise his authority, to prevent their heathen neighbors from vending provisions at Jerusalem, or in the cities of Judah, on the Sabbath: and he supposed, that by engaging the people, in this solemn manner, not to buy of them, they would be discouraged from coming. But he soon found that many evaded or violated the engagement, without regard to consequences; and he was afterwards constrained to employ coercive measures. (13:15—22.)—It may be concluded from this narrative, that no Jew attempted to carry on trade on the Sabbath; though some would buy of the Gentiles. This gave the latter an undue advantage, and proportionably injured the Jews. And certainly, carrying on trade is as contrary to the law of hallowing the Sabbath, as any kind of labor whatever. SCOTT.

Verses 32, 33.

A half shekel apiece had been collected for erecting the tabernacle in the wilderness; and that sum is supposed to have been paid from time to time, for the purchase of sacrifices, and other expenses of the stated worship. (*Ex.* 30:11—16. 2 *K.* 12:4, 5. *Matt.* 17:24—27.) But it was now computed, that one third of a shekel apiece, or something less than a shilling of our money, annually, would suffice for these expenses. ID.

Verse 34.

Wood-offering.] 'Maimonides says, there was a time fixed for families to go into the forests and bring in wood for the altar and on the day of their turn, they offered free-will burnt offerings, which were

for [c] the wood-offering; to bring *it* into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed, year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our God, [d] as *it is* written in the law:

35 And to bring [e] the first fruits of our ground, and the first fruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the LORD:

36 Also [f] the first-born of our sons, and of our cattle, as *it is* written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds, and of our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, [g] unto the priests that minister in the house of our God:

37 And *that* we should bring [h] the first fruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine, and of oil, unto the priests, [i] to the chambers of the house of our God; and [k] the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes, in all the cities of our tillage.

38 And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, [l] when the Levites take tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into [m] the treasure-house.

39 For [n] the children of Israel and [o] the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the corn, of the new wine, and the oil, unto the chambers, where *are* the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers: and [p] we will not forsake

gion, and are examples of it; and they would by that, as much as any thing, secure an interest in the most valuable of their inferiors. 2. They entered *into a curse and an oath;* solemnly appealing to God concerning their sincerity, and imprecating his just vengeance if they dealt deceitfully. Every oath has in it a conditional curse on the soul, which makes it a strong bond upon the soul; for our own tongues, if false and lying, will fall, and fall heavy, on ourselves.

III. The general purport of this covenant. They laid on themselves no other necessary burden, than this they were already obliged to by all other engagements of duty, interest, and gratitude—to *walk in God's law, and do all his commandments*, *v.* 29. Thus David swore, Ps. 119: 106. Our own covenant binds us to this, if not more strongly, yet more sensibly, than we were before bound, therefore we must not think it needless thus to bind ourselves. When we bind ourselves to do the commandments of God, we bind ourselves to do *all* his commandments, and therein to have an eye to Him as the Lord, and our Lord.

IV. Some particular articles, adapted to their present temptations. 1. That they would not intermarry with the heathen, *v.* 30. Many had been thus guilty, Ezra 9: 1. In our covenant with God, we should engage particularly against those sins we have been most frequently overtaken in, and damaged by. They that resolve to *keep the commandments of God, must say to evil-doers, Depart*, Ps. 119: 115. 2. That they would keep no market on the Sabbath, or any other day of which the law had said, *Ye shall do no work therein.* They would even buy their provisions for their families the day before, *v.* 31. Those that covenant to keep all God's commandments, must particularly covenant to keep sabbaths well; the profanation of them is an inlet to other instances of profaneness. The Sabbath is a market-day for our souls, but not for our bodies. 3. That they would not be severe in exacting their debts, but would observe the 7th year as a year of release, according to the law, *v.* 31. In this they had been faulty, (*ch.* 5.) here therefore they promise to reform. This was the acceptable fast, to *undo the heavy burden*, and to *let the oppressed go free*, Isa. 58: 6. It was in the close of the day of expiation, that the jubilee trumpet sounded. It was for the neglect of observing the 7th year as a year of rest for the land, that God had made it enjoy its sabbaths 70 years; (Lev. 26: 35.) therefore they covenanted to observe that law. Those are stubborn children indeed, that will not amend the fault they have been particularly corrected for.

V. 32—39. Having covenanted against the sins they had been guilty of, they oblige themselves to revive and observe the duties they had neglected. We must not only *cease to do evil*, but *learn to do well*. It was resolved,

I. In general, that the temple-service should be carefully kept up, *v.* 33. Let not any people expect the blessing of God, unless they make conscience of observing his ordinances, and keeping up public worship; then it is likely to go well with them. It was likewise resolved, they would never *forsake the house of their God*, (*v.* 39.) as they and their fathers had done; for the house of any other god, or for the high places, as idolaters did; nor for their farms and merchandises, as did the atheistical, and profane. They that forsake God's worship, forsake God.

II. That, in pursuance of this, they would liberally maintain, and not starve it. The priests were ready to do their part in all the work of God's house, if the people would do theirs, which was, to find them with materials to work upon.

1. A stock shall be raised to furnish God's table and altar plentifully. Formerly, there were treasures in the house of the Lord for this, but those were gone, and there was no settled fund to supply them. It was a constant charge to provide shew-bread for the table, 2 lambs for the daily offerings, 4 for the sabbaths, and more, and more costly sacrifices for other festivals, occasional sin-offerings, and meat-offerings, and drink-offerings for them all. They had no rich king to provide these, as Hezekiah did: the priests could not afford it, their maintenance was so small; the people therefore agreed to contribute for it yearly, each the 3d part of a shekel, about 10*d.* a-piece. When every one will act, and give, though but little, to a good work, the amount will be considerable. The Tirshatha did not impose this tax, but the people charged themselves with it, *v.* 32, 33.

2. Particular care shall be taken to provide wood for the altar, to keep the fire always burning on it, and wherewith to boil the peace-offerings. Each of them, priests and Levites as well as people, agreed to bring in his quota, and cast lots in what order he should bring it in, which family first, and which next, that there might be a constant supply, and not a scarcity at one time, and an overplus at another, *v.* 34.

3. That all those things, which the divine law had appointed for the maintenance of the priests and Levites, should be duly paid in, for their encouragement to mind their business, and that they might not be under any temptation to neglect it to make necessary provision for their families Then the work of the house of God is likely to go on, when those that serve at the altar, live comfortably on the altar. First-fruits and tenths were then the principal branches of the minister's revenues; and they here resolve, (1.) To bring in their first-fruits justly, of their ground and trees, Ex. 23: 19, Lev. 19: 24. The first-born of their children, even the money wherewith they were to be redeemed; and of their cattle, Ex. 13: 2, 11, 12. This was given to the priests, Num. 18: 15, 16. Also the first-fruits of their dough, (Num. 15: 21.) concerning which, there is a particular order given in the prophecy concerning the second temple, Ezek. 44: 30. (2.) To bring in their tenths likewise, which were due to the Levites, (*v.* 37.) and a tenth out of those tenths to the priests, *v.* 38. This was the law; (Num. 18:

the house of our God.

c 13:31. Lev. 6:12. Josh. 9:27. Is. 40:16.
d Lev. 6:12,13.
e Ex. 23:19. 34:26. Lev. 19:23—26. Num. 18:12. Deut. 26:2. 2 Chr. 31: 5—10. Prov. 3:9,10. Mal. 3:8—12.
f Ex. 13:2,12—15. 34:19. Lev. 27:26, 27. Num. 18:15,16. Deut. 12:6.
g Num. 18:8—19. 1 Cor. 9:6—14. Gal. 6:6.
h Lev. 23:17. Num. 15:19—21. 18:12, 13. Deut. 18:4. 26:2.
i 13:5,9. 1 K. 6:5—10. 2 Chr. 31:11,12.
k Lev. 27:30—33. Num. 18:21,24—32. 2 Chr. 31:6.
l Num. 18:26—28.
m 13:12,13. 1 Chr. 9:26. 2 Chr. 31:11, 12.
n Deut. 12:6—11,17. 14:23—27. 2 Chr. 31:12.
o Num. 18:30.
p 13:10,11. Ps. 122:9. Heb. 10:25.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 30—39. We are not sincere in covenanting with God, except we aim to obey all his commandments: for if we allow ourselves in violating one of them habitually, it is evident that we have not truly repented of our former transgressions *in that particular;* that we have never sought forgiveness of them in a due manner; that we do not desire the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, to mortify that peculiar [sinning] propensity: and consequently that we are not born of God, nor interested in the righteousness and atonement of Christ. But real believers, at least all, who by a consistent conduct give satisfactory evidence that they are such, place the strongest guard where there is the greatest danger; and use every mean of avoiding and subduing those sins, which have the most foiled and ensnared them. Separation from intimate connections with ungodly persons, and the conscientious hallowing of the Lord's-day, are peculiarly attended to by them. Though they be poor or burdened, they will find a little to spare for pious or charitable uses; that little will be accepted; and, coming from great numbers, will form large funds for useful purposes.—As the ordinances of God are the appointed means of sustenance to our souls, the believer should not grudge the expense of them. Even the poor will part with their money for bread: yet most men leave their souls to starve! SCOTT.

called a *wood offering*.' GILL. 'The bringing of the wood, (perhaps *once a year* by one district, the next year by another, and so on,) at last became a great day; and was constituted into a *feast*, called by *Jos.* Xylophoria, the "carrying of the wood."' Dr. A. CLARKE.

CHAP. XI.

The rulers, with every tenth man taken by lot, and those who offered voluntarily, dwell at Jerusalem, 1, 2. Their names, 3—19. The rest dwell in the other cities, 20—36.

AND [a] the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem: the rest of the people also [b] cast lots, to bring [c] one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem [d] the holy city, and nine parts *to dwell* in *other* cities.

2 And the people [e] blessed all the men, that [f] willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.

3 Now these *are* [g] the chief of the province that dwelt in Jerusalem: but in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities, *to wit*, [h] Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the Nethinims, and [i] the children of Solomon's servants.

4 And at Jerusalem, [k] dwelt *certain* of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin. Of the children of Judah; Athaiah the son of Uzziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalaleel, of the children of [l] Perez;

5 And Maaseiah the son of Baruch, the son of [m] Col-hozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joiarib, the son of Zechariah, the son of [n] Shiloni.

6 All the sons of Perez that dwelt at Jerusalem, *were* four hundred threescore and eight valiant men.

7 ¶ And these *are* [o] the sons of Benjamin; Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jesaiah.

8 And after him Gabbai, Sallai, nine hundred twenty and eight.

9 And Joel the son of Zichri *was* their overseer: and [p] Judah the son of Senuah *was* second over the city.

10 ¶ Of the priests: [q] Jedaiah the son of [r] Joiarib, Jachin.

11 [s] Seraiah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, *was* [t] the ruler of the house of God.

12 And their brethren that did the work of the house, *were* eight hundred twenty and two: and [u] Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchiah,

13 And his brethren, chief of the fathers, two hundred forty and two: and Amashai the son of Azareel, the son of Ahasai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer,

14 And their brethren, mighty men of valor, an hundred twenty and eight: and their overseer *was* Zabdiel, the son * of *one of* the great men.

15 ¶ Also of the Le-

21—28.) but these dues had been withheld, for which God, by the prophet charges them with *robbing Him*, (Mal. 3: 8, 9.) at the same time encouraging them to be more just to Him and his receivers, with a promise, that, if they brought the *tithes into the store-house*, He would *pour out blessings on them*, *v.* 10. This therefore they resolve to do, that there might be meat in God's house, and plenty in the store-chambers of the temple, where the vessels of the sanctuary were, *v.* 39. We will do it (say they) *in all the cities of our tillage*, *v.* 37. *In all the cities of our servitude*, so the LXX. for they were servants in their own land, *ch.* 9: 36 But (as Poole well observes) though they paid great taxes to the kings of Persia, and had much hardship put on them, they would not make that an excuse for not paying tithes, but would render to God the things that were his, as well as to Cæsar the things that were his. We must do what we can in the works of piety and charity, notwithstanding the taxes we pay the government; and cheerfully perform our duty to God in our servitude, which will be the surest way to ease and liberty in God's due time.

CHAP. XI. Jerusalem was walled round, but not yet fully inhabited, therefore Nehemiah's next care is to bring people into it: of that we have here an account.

V. 1—19. Jerusalem is called here the *holy city*, (*v.* 1.) as it was the place of the temple, and where God had chosen to put his name; on this account, one would think, the holy seed should have all chosen to dwell there, but, on the contrary, it seems they declined it; either, 1. Because a greater strictness of conversation was expected from the inhabitants of Jerusalem than from others, which they were not willing to come up to: Or, 2. Because Jerusalem, of all places, was most hated by the heathen, their neighbors, which made that the post of danger, (as the post of honor usually is,) therefore they were not willing to expose themselves there. Or, 3. Because it was more for their worldly advantage to dwell in the country. Jerusalem was no trading city, therefore there was no money to be got there by merchandises, as in the country by corn and cattle. Note, All seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's, Phil. 2: 21. It is a general and just complaint, that most people prefer their own wealth, credit, pleasure, ease, and safety, before the glory of God and the public good.

People being thus backward, we are here told, I. How Jerusalem was replenished, 1. By the rulers, *v.* 1. It was their proper residence, which would invite and encourage others. When great men choose the holy city for their habitation, it brings holiness into reputation, and their zeal will provoke very many. 2. Some willingly offered, bravely postponing their own secular interest to the public welfare, *v.* 2. It is on record, to their honor, that when others were shy of venturing on difficulty, loss, and danger, they *sought the good of Jerusalem, because of the house of their God. They shall prosper, that thus love Zion*, Ps. 122: 6, 9. 3. Finding *there yet was room*, they concluded to bring in one in ten, by lot, the disposal whereof, all knew, was of the Lord; who would thus appoint the bounds of their habitation. They observed this proportion, as we may suppose, to bring the balance between the city and country to a just and equal poise; so it seems to refer to the ancient rule of giving the tenth to God; and what is given to the holy city, He reckons given to Himself.

II. A general account is here given of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, because the *governors of Judah* looked on them as *their strength in the Lord of hosts their God*, and valued them accordingly, Zech. 12: 5.

1. Many of Judah and Benjamin dwelt there; originally, part of the city lay in one of those tribes, and part in the other; but the greater part in the lot of Benjamin, therefore here we find of the children of Judah only 468 families in Jerusalem, (*v.* 6.) but of Benjamin, 928; *v.* 7, 8. Afterward, before our Savior's time, it grew much more populous. Those of Judah all descended from Perez, or, Pharez, that son of Judah, of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came. The Benjamites were more in number, yet of the men of Judah it is said, (*v.* 6.) they were valiant men, fit for service, and able to defend the city. Judah has not lost its ancient character, of a lion's whelp, bold and daring. Of these Benjamites, we are told who was overseer, and who was second, *v.* 9. Good magistrates are as necessary to safety, as good soldiers.

2. Many priests and Levites settled there; where else should men, holy to God, dwell, but in the holy city? (1.) Most of the priests, we suppose, dwelt there, for their business lay there. Of them

a 7:4,5. Deut. 17:8,9. Ps. 122:5.
b 10:34. Josh. 18:10. 1 Chr. 26:13. Prov. 16:33. Acts 1:24.
c Judg. 20:9,10.
d 18. Is. 48:2. 52:1. Matt. 4:5. 27:53.
e Deut. 24:13. Job 29:13. 31:20.
f Judg. 5:9. 2 Cor. 8:16,17.
g 7:6. Ezra 2:1.
h 7:73. 1 Chr. 9:1,2. Ezra 2:70.
i 7:57—60. Ezra 2:55—58.
k 1 Chr. 9:3,4.
l Gen. 38:29. Ruth 4:18. *Pharez.* Matt. 1:3. Luke 3:33. *Phares.*
m 3:15.
n Gen. 38:5. *Shelah.* Num. 26:20. *Shelanites.* 1 Chr. 4:21. 9:5.
o 1 Chr. 9:7—9.
p 1 Chr. 9:7. *Hodaviah—Hasenuah.*
q 7:39. 12:19. 1 Chr. 9:10. *and Jehoiarib.* Ezra 2:36. 8:16.
r 12:6.
s 1 Chr. 6:7—14. 9:11. *Azariah.* Ezra 7:1—5.
t Num. 3:32. 1 Chr. 9:1. 2 Chr. 19:11. 31:13. Acts 5:24.
u 1 Chr. 9:12,13.
* Or, *of Haggedolim.*

NOTES.

CHAP. XI. V. 3. *Israel*, in this v. seems to mean those of the ten tribes, who went up with the Jews. These were not required to dwell at Jerusalem, but inhabited the cities and villages allotted to them. The priests, Levites, Nethinim, and the children of Solomon's servants likewise, were left at liberty when not attending at the temple. (1 *Chr.* 9:2. *Ezra* 2:55—58. 7:24—26.) SCOTT.

Verses 4—6.

'Shiloni' (6) is supposed by some to mean *Shelah*, Judah's youngest, but only surviving son, by Shuah, the Canaanitess. (*M. R.* n.) If this supposition be well grounded, his descendants seem to have been included in the 468 valiant men of Perez, or Pharez; that being the principal branch of the tribe of Judah.—In Chr. a larger number is stated: but it may be supposed, that the descendants of Zerah, (Judah's other son,) are also included, of whom no more than one is mentioned in this ch. (24. 1 *Chr.* 9:3—9.) SCOTT.

Verses 7—9.

The greatest part of Jerusalem was situated within the lot of Benjamin; and, it is probable, the men of that tribe were most desirous of having it fully replenished.—Nearly twice as many of this tribe, (we may suppose, with their families,) dwelt there, as of Judah. (*Note*, 4—6.) The number does not exactly agree with that in 1 Chr. 9: though there can be no reasonable doubt that the same events are intended: but at this distance of time it cannot be supposed that such trivial variations can in all cases be accounted for; though the reason of them might be very evident to contemporaries.—From this time Jerusalem was progressively repeopled; so that it soon became very populous, and continued to be so, till destroyed by the Romans. ID.

vites: [v] Shemaiah the son of Hashub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni.

16 And [x] Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chief of the Levites, [*] *had* the oversight of the outward business of the house of God.

17 And Mattaniah the son of Micha, the son of [y] Zabdi, the son of Asaph, *was* the principal, [z] to begin the [a] thanksgiving in prayer; and [b] Bakbukiah the second among his brethren, and Abda, the son of Shammua, the son Galal, the son of Jeduthun.

18 All the Levites in [c] the holy city *were* two hundred fourscore and four.

19 Moreover the porters, [d] Akkub, Talmon, and their brethren that kept † the gates, *were* an hundred seventy and two.

20 ¶ And the residue of Israel, of the priests, *and* the Levites, *were* in all the cities of Judah, every one in his inheritance.

21 But [e] the Nethinims dwelt in ‡ Ophel: and Ziha and Gispa *were* over the Nethinims.

22 The [f] overseer also of the Levites at Jerusalem *was* [g] Uzzi, the son of [h] Bani, the son of [i] Hashabiah, the son of [k] Mattaniah, the son of Micha. [l] Of the sons of Asaph, the singers [m] *were* over the business of the house of God.

23 For *it was* [n] the king's commandment concerning them, that § a certain portion should be for the singers, due for every day.

24 And Pethahiah the son of [o] Meshezabeel, of the children of [p] Zerah the son of Judah, *was* [q] at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people.

25 And for the villages, with their fields, *some* of the children of Judah dwelt at [r] Kirjath-arba, and *in* the villages thereof, and at [s] Dibon, and *in* the villages thereof, and at [t] Jekabzeel, and *in* the villages thereof,

26 And at Jeshua, and at [u] Moladah, and at [x] Beth-phelet,

27 And at [y] Hazar-shual, and at [z] Beer-sheba, and *in* the villages thereof.

28 And at [a] Ziklag, and at Mekonah, and in the villages thereof.

29 And at [b] En-rimmon, and at [c] Zareah, and at [d] Jarmuth,

30 [e] Zanoah, [f] Adullam, and *in* their villages, at [g] Lachish, and the fields thereof, at [h] Azekah, and *in* the villages thereof. And they dwelt from Beer-sheba unto [i] the valley of Hinnom.

31 The children also of Benjamin ‖ from [k] Geba *dwelt* at [l] Michmash, and [m] Aija, and [n] Beth-el, and *in* their villages,

32 *And* at [o] Anathoth, [p] Nob, Ananiah,

33 Hazor, [q] Ramah, [r] Gittaim,

34 Hadid, [s] Zeboim, Neballat,

35 [t] Lod, and Ono, [u] the valley of craftsmen.

v 1 Chr. 9:14—19.
x 8:7.
* Heb. were *over*. 1 Chr. 26:20.
y 1 Chr. 9:15. *Zichri.*

necessary in their place, as those who take care of its *inward concerns*, who give themselves to the word and prayer. [2.] It is said of another, that he was *the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer*. Probably, he had a good ear and a good voice, and was a scientific singer, therefore was chosen to lead the psalm. Observe, Thanksgiving is necessary in prayer; they should go together; giving thanks for former mercies is a becoming way of begging further mercies. And care should be taken in public service, that every thing be done in the best manner, *decently and in good order;* in prayer, that one speak, and the rest join; in singing, that one begin and the rest follow.

V. 20—36. Having given an account of the principal persons that dwelt in Jerusalem, (a larger account of whom we had before, 1 Chr. 9: 2, &c.) Nehemiah, in these vs. gives some account of the other cities, in which dwelt *the residue of Israel*, *v.* 20.

1. The Nethinim dwelt in Ophel, on the wall of Jerusalem; (*ch.* 3: 26.) as they were to do the

z 12:8,31. 1 Chr. 16:4,41. 25:1—6.
a Phil. 4:6. 1 Thes. 5:17,18.
b 12:9,25.
c 1. 1 K. 11:13. Dan. 9:24. Matt. 24:15. 27:53. Rev. 11:2. 21:2.
d 7:45. 12:25. 1 Chr. 9:17—22.
† Heb. *at the gates.*
e 3:26,31. 2 Chr. 27:3.
‡ Or, *the tower.*
f 9:14. 12:42. Acts 20:28.
g 12:42.
h 3:17. 8:7. 9:4,5. 10:13.
i 10:11. 12:24. Ezra 8:19.
k 17. 12:25,35. 13:13. 1 Chr. 9:15.
l 17. 12:46. 1 Chr. 25:1—6.
m 11,16. 1 Chr. 9:26—32.
n 1 Chr. 9:33. Ezra 6:8,9. 7:20—24.
§ Or, *a sure ordinance.*
o 10:21.
p Gen. 38:30. *Zarah.* Num. 26:20. Matt. 1:3. *Zara.*
q 1 Chr. 18:17. 23:28. *margine.*
r Josh. 14:15.
s Josh. 15:22. *Dimonah.*
t Josh. 15:21. *Kabzeel.*
u Josh. 15:26. 19:2.
x Josh. 15:27. *Beth-palet.*
y Josh. 15:28. 19:3.
z Gen. 21:31. 26:33. Judg. 20:1.
a Josh. 15:31. 1 Sam. 27:6.
b Josh. 15:32 *Rimmon.*
c Josh. 15:33. *Zoreah.* 19:41. Judg. 13:25. *Zorah.*
d Josh. 15:35.
e 3:13. Josh. 15:34.
f Josh. 12:15. Mic. 1:15.
g Josh. 10:3. 15:39. Is. 37:8.
h Josh. 15:35.
i Josh. 18:16. Jer. 7:31,32. 19:2,6.
‖ Or, *of.*
k 7:30. *Gaba.* Josh. 18:24.
¶ Or, *to.*
l 7:31. *Michmas.* 1 Sam. 13:11,23. Is. 10:28.
m 7:32. *Ai.* Gen. 12:8. *Hai.* Josh. 8:9. *Ai.*
n Gen. 28:19. Josh. 18:13.
o 7:27. Is. 10:30. Jer. 1:1.
p 1 Sam. 21:1. 22:19. Is. 10:32.
q Josh. 18:25. 1 Sam. 7:17. Matt. 2: 18. *Rama.*
r 2 Sam. 4:3.
s 1 Sam. 13:18.
t 7:37. 1 Chr. 9:12.
u 1 Chr. 4:14.

Verse 17.

The times of the morning and evening-sacrifices were the principal hours of prayer to the Jews, who then resorted to the courts of the temple for their devotions.—These were, it seems, preceded by the solemn praises and thanksgivings, which the Levites rendered to the Lord with music and singing. Over this sacred service, Mattaniah, as precentor, statedly presided; while the others acted under his direction. Mattaniah was descended from Asaph, and the others were descendants of Jeduthun; chief singers in David's time. (22, 23. 1 *Chr.* 16:37—43. 25:1—7. 2 *Chr.* 5:12, 13. 29:25—30.) SCOTT.

Verse 35.

Craftsmen.] Comp. 2:8, 32. and 1 Chr. 4:14, 23. In these texts is a slight allusion, perhaps, to that very ancient oriental institution of *castes:* with which was connected the regulation, that no family should practise any other trade or art than the ancestors of that family practised. This institution, so powerful and permanent in its effects, procuring manual skill at the expense of mental imbecility, was not adopted by Moses, to fetter the free spirit of his tribes, although it must have been a powerful political engine before his time in Egypt and India. It seems however from the above texts, that the custom prevailed to a certain extent among the Israelites. *Wilkinson* thus describes it. 'The 1st, or *sacerdotal class*, in Egypt, was composed of pontiffs of various grades; prophets, judges, hierogrammats, taricheutes or embalmers, doctors, (in short, all who followed any learned profession. The only [?] Jewish medical men were the priests. Lev. 13:3.) hierophants, (an office belonging to the mysteries,) hieraphori, (of whom probably were the standard-bearers of the sacred animals, who travelled through Egypt to collect charitable donations for the support of their deities, a custom still used by the Mohammedans, with the sacred banners of their saints,) pastophori, hierolaotomi, or *masons* of the priestly order, and several inferior functionaries of this class. The 2d class was composed of the military, husbandmen, *gardeners*, huntsmen, boatmen, &c. who may be comprehended under the general denomination of peasants. In the 3d class may be reckoned the artificers, tradesmen, musicians, builders, and carpenters; and in the 4th, the pastors, poulterers, fishermen, laborers, servants, (many of these were in the service of the grandees; but they appear also to have had a great number of white and black slaves of both sexes,) &c. Several of these classes were again subdivided,—as for instance, pastors, into oxherds, shepherds, goatherds, and swineherds. But, considering them under general heads, they may be called the 4 castes of priests, peasants, townsmen, and pastors or common people. The above account reconciles *Diodorus*, *Plato*, *Herodotus*, and *Strabo*.'

'The Indian castes were,—1. The priests and philosophers; 2. Magistrates and soldiers; 3. Husbandmen and merchants; and 4. Artisans, laborers and servants. I have placed the soldiers with the peasants, on the authority of *Diodorus*.'

'Every Egyptian was not only required to follow the profession of his father, (as were the Indians, by the law of their country,) but was obliged to give an account to the magistrates of his mode of life, and the employment by which he gained his livelihood,—a false statement, or the discovery of an unjust action, subjecting him to severe punishment: so *Diod.* and see the tombs; they evidently did not spare offenders. The peasants appear to have been divided into *hundreds*, each with their peculiar banner, which they followed when presenting themselves for this census. Scribes noted down their names, and after a proper inquiry had been made, they were either acquitted before this tribunal, or for minor delinquences punished (without regard to sex) with the stick.' [Comp. Ex. 21:20, 21, &c.] WILKINSON. ED.

36 And [x] of the Levites *were* [y] divisions *in* Judah, *and* in Benjamin.

CHAP. XII.

The priests and Levites who came up with Zerubbabel, 1—9. The succession of high priests after the captivity, 10, 11. The names of some chief priests, 12—21; and of some eminent Levites, 22—26. The solemnity of dedicating the wall, 27—43. The offices and portions of the priests and Levites, 44—47.

NOW these *are* [a] the priests and the Levites that went up with [b] Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and [c] Jeshua: [d] Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra,

2 Amariah, [e] Malluch, Hattush,

3 [f] Shechaniah, [g] Rehum, [h] Meremoth,

4 Iddo, [i] Ginnetho, Abijah,

5 [k] Miamin, [l] Maadiah, Bilgah,

6 Shemaiah, and [m] Joiarib, Jedaiah,

7 [n] Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, Jedaiah. These *were* the chief of the priests, and of their brethren, in the days [o] of Jeshua.

8 Moreover the Levites; [p] Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, *and* [q] Mattaniah, *which was* over [*] the thanksgiving, he and his brethren.

9 Also Bakbukiah and Unni, their brethren, *were* [r] over against them in the watches.

10 ¶ And [s] Jeshua begat Joiakim, Joiakim also begat Eliashib, and

11 [t] Eliashib begat Joiada,

And Joiada begat Jonathan, and Jonathan begat Jaddua.

B. C. 350.] 12 And in the days of Joiakim were priests, [u] the chief of the fathers: of [x] Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah;

13 Of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan;

14 Of [y] Melicu, Jonathan; of [z] Shebaniah, Joseph;

15 Of [a] Harim, Adna; of [b] Meraioth, Helkai;

16 Of [c] Iddo, Zechariah; of [d] Ginnethon, Meshullam;

17 Of Abijah, Zichri; of [e] Miniamin; of [f] Moadiah, Piltai;

18 Of Bilgah, Shammua; of [g] Shemaiah, Jehonathan:

19 And of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi;

20 Of [h] Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber;

21 Of Hilkiah, Hash-

x Josh. 21: 1 Chr. 6:54—81.
y Gen. 49:7.
a 7:7. Ezra 2:1.
b 1 Chr. 3:17—19. Ezra 3:8. 4:2. 5: 2. Hag. 1:1,12,14. 2:2,21—23. Zech. 4:6—10. Matt. 1:12,13. *Zorobabel. Salathiel.*
c 10. Zech. 3:1—9. 6:11. *Joshua.*
d 12—21. 10:2. Ezra 2:2.
e 14. *Melicu.*
f 14. *Shebaniah.*
g 15. *Harim.*
h 15. *Meraioth.*
i 16. *Ginnethon.*
k 17. *Miniamin.*
l 17. *Moadiah.*
m 14:10. 1 Chr. 9:10. *Jehoiarib.*
n 20. *Sallai.*
o 1. Ezra 3:2. Zech. 3:1.
p 7:43. 9:4. 10:9—13.
q 11:17,22.
* That is, *the psalms of thanksgiving.*
24. 1 Chr. 9:33.
r Ps. 134:1—3.
s 26. 1 Chr. 6:3—15.
t 3:1. 13:4,7,28.
u 22. 1 Chr. 9:33,34. 15:12. 24:6—31.
x 1.
y 2. *Malluch.*
z 3. *Shechaniah.*
a 3. *Rehum.*
b 3. *Meremoth.*
c 4.
d 4. *Ginnetho.*
e 5. *Miamin.*
f 5. *Maaziah.*
g 6:
h 7. *Sallu.*

suppose them safe and easy, though few and poor. Indeed, by God's blessing, they were likely to increase in wealth and power; and they would have been more likely, had there not been that general profaneness, and lukewarmness, with which (in God's name) Malachi charges them, who, it is supposed, prophesied about this time, and in whom prophecy ceased for some ages, till it revived in the Great Prophet and his forerunner.

servile work of the temple, they must be posted near it, *v.* 21.

2. The Levites were dispersed through the cities of Judah, yet had an overseer who resided in Jerusalem, to whom they applied for direction, who took care of their affairs, and cognizance of their conduct, whether they did their duty, *v.* 22.

3. Some of the singers were appointed to look after the necessary repairs of the temple, being ingenious men, and having leisure betwixt their hours of service; they were *over the business of the house of God*, *v.* 22. And it seems the king of Persia had such a kindness for their office, that he allotted a particular maintenance for them, beside what belonged to them as Levites, *v.* 23.

4. One was the king's commissioner at Jerusalem; a descendant of Zerah, *v.* 24. Of *that* family of Judah, some were now settled in Jerusalem, and not all of Pharez, as appears by that other catalogue, 1 Chr. 9: 6. He is said to be *at the king's hand*, or, *on the king's part*, in *all matters concerning the people*, to determine controversies between the king's officers and his subjects; to see that what was due to the king from the people, was duly paid in, and that what was allowed by the king for the temple-service, was duly paid out; it was happy for the Jews, that one of themselves was in this post.

5. Here is an account of the villages, or country-towns, inhabited by the residue of Israel. The towns in which Judah dwelt, *v.* 25—30. Those inhabited by Benjamin, *v.* 31—35. And divisions for the Levites among both, *v.* 36. We will now

CHAP. XII. V. 1—26. We have here the names, and little more, of a great many priests and Levites, eminent in their day, among the returned Jews. Why this register should be here inserted, does not appear; perhaps to keep in remembrance those good men, that posterity might know to whom they were beholden, under God, for the happy revival and re-establishment of their religion among them. Thus must we contribute to the performance of that promise, (Ps. 112: 6.) that *the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.* Let the memory of the just be blessed, be perpetuated. It is a debt we still owe to faithful ministers, to *remember our guides*, who have *spoken to us the word of God*, Heb. 13: 7. Perhaps it was intended to stir up those who succeeded them in the priest's office, to imitate their courage and fidelity. It is good to know what our godly ancestors and predecessors were, that we may learn thereby what we should be. We have here,

1. The names of the priests and Levites that came up with the first out of Babylon, when Jeshua was high priest. Jeremiah and Ezra, though

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It has in all ages been justly lamented, that men prefer their own ease and emolument to the public good; that even professed Christians too commonly 'seek their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ;' and that but few have such an attachment to holy places and holy things, as to renounce their secular pleasures or advantages for the sake of them. Yet surely, where opportunities of spiritual improvement most abound, and where Jesus, the Ruler of our holy city, especially resides, there we should delight to dwell; in preference to all interests and connections, and notwithstanding persecutions, tribulations, perils, and losses. Otherwise, where is our 'meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light?' and how shall we be willing to depart hence, and be 'absent from the body, that we may be present with the Lord?' For, to the carnally-minded, the perfect holiness of heaven, of its inhabitants, its employments, and its pleasures, and especially of that God who there unveils his glory, would be proportionably more intolerable, than the feeble beginnings of holiness in his church on earth, which excite their disgust, their weariness, and aversion.—The remnant who now willingly offer themselves to self-denying and perilous services, from love to the church, and zeal for the glory of God, shall in the event be distinguished with peculiar honor, and are now entitled to it from their brethren: indeed many will commend and wish them well, who, alas! have not courage to imitate them.—Our habitations are allotted us by the Lord Himself; and we should not be hasty in changing them, though they be in some respects incommodious, especially if convenient for attendance on divine ordinances, and giving us opportunities of doing good.—In every station in life we should 'study to be quiet, and to do our own business' with diligence; and, at all times, to cast our cares on God, and make our requests known unto Him, by prayer with thanksgiving. We cannot be so afflicted, as not to have cause for gratitude; nor so prosperous, as to have no need of prayer: these duties should therefore be always united. (*Phil.* 4:5—7. 1 *Thes.* 5:16—22, *v.* 17,18.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII. V. 7. 'The chief of the priests' seem to have been the heads of the courses established by David, with the next in succession to the high priesthood, and the ruler or captain of the temple. Perhaps the 24 courses were not yet fully re-established. (1 *Chr.* 24:6—10. *Ezra* 2:36—39.) SCOTT.

Verses 8, 9.

11:17.—*Jeshua.* (8) *M. R.* p.—*In the watches.* (9) It is probable, some of the Levites, in succession, sang the praises of God in the sanctuary, during the watches of the night. (*Ps.* 134:) ID.

Verses 10, 11.

Jaddua is, by most expositors, supposed to have been high priest in the time of Alexander the Great, and to have met that haughty conqueror in his pontifical habit; in consequence of which Alexander greatly favored the Jews. (*Note, Dan.* 8:5—7.) It is, however, evident, that he was high priest long after the events, which are mentioned at the close of this book; for Joiada then filled that office: (13:28.) and as 'Darius the Persian,' (22) is supposed to mean the last king of Persia, who was subdued by Alexander about 100 years after the principal transactions recorded in this book; this v. and v. 22. must have been added by another hand, after the death of Nehemiah. (26) SCOTT.

Verses 12—21.

These vs. contain a catalogue of the next race of chief priests, as descended from those who came up from Babylon with Zerubbabel. ID.

abiah; of Jedaiah, Nethaneel.

22 ¶ The Levites, in the days of [i] Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua, *were* [k] recorded chief of the fathers: also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian.

23 The sons of Levi, the chief of the fathers, *were* written in [l] the book of the chronicles, even until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib.

24 And the chief of the Levites: [m] Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their brethren over against them, to praise *and* to give thanks, [n] according to the commandment of David [o] the man of God, [p] ward over against ward.

25 [q] Mattaniah, and Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, Akkub, *were* porters, [r] keeping the ward at the [*] thresholds of the gates.

26 These *were* in the days of [s] Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak; and in the days of [t] Nehemiah the governor, and of Ezra the priest, the scribe.

27 ¶ And at [a] the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, they sought the Levites [x] out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication [y] with gladness, both with [z] thanksgivings, and with singing, *with* cymbals, psalteries, and with harps.

28 And the sons of the singers gathered themselves together, both out of [a] the plain country round about Jerusalem, and from the villages of [b] Netophathi;

29 Also from [c] the house of Gilgal, and out of the fields of [d] Geba, and [e] Azmaveth: for the singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem.

30 And the priests and the Levites [f] purified themselves, and purified the people, and the gates, and the wall.

31 Then I brought up [g] the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed [h] two great companies of them that gave thanks, *whereof one* went on the right hand upon the wall toward the [i] dung-gate;

32 And after them went Hoshaiah, and half of the princes of Judah,

33 And [k] Azariah, Ezra, and Meshullam,

34 Judah, and Benjamin, and Shemaiah, and Jeremiah,

[B. C. 444.]

both priests, are mentioned with the first, (*v.* 1.) but, it is supposed, not Jeremiah the prophet, or Ezra the scribe; the fame of the one was diffused long before, and the other some time after. Of one of the Levites it is said, (*v.* 8.) he was *over the thanksgiving*, i. e. he was intrusted to see that the psalms, the thanksgiving psalms, were constantly sung in the temple in due time and manner. The Levites kept their turns in their watches, relieving one another as becomes brethren, fellow laborers, and fellow soldiers.

2. The succession of high priests during the Persian monarchy, from Jeshua (or Jesus) who was high priest at the time of the restoration, to Jaddua (or Jaddus) who was high priest when Alexander the Great, after the conquest of Tyre, came to Jerusalem, and paid great respect to this Jaddus, who met him in his pontifical habit, and showed him the prophecy of Daniel, which foretold his conquests.

3. The next generation of priests, chief men, and active in the days of Joiakim, sons of the first set. Note, We have reason to acknowledge God's favor to his church, and care of it, in that, as one generation of ministers passes away, another comes. All these who are mentioned, (*v.* 1, &c.) as eminent in their generation, are again mentioned, though with some variation in several of the names, (*v.* 12, &c.) except two, as having sons that were likewise eminent in their generation; a rare instance that 20 good fathers should leave 20 good sons, (so many here are,) to fill up their places.

4. The next generation of Levites, or rather, a later; for those priests mentioned, flourished in the days of Joiakim the high priest, these Levites in the days of Eliashib, *v.* 22. Perhaps *then* the forementioned families of the priests began to degenerate, and the third generation came short of the first two; but the work of God shall never fail for want of instruments. Then a generation of Levites was *raised up*, (*v.* 22.) eminently serviceable to the interests of the church, and their service not the less acceptable either to God or his people, for their being Levites only of the lower rank of ministers. Eliashib the high priest being allied to Tobiah, (*ch.* 13: 4.) the other priests grew remiss; but then the Levites appeared the more zealous, as is seen by this, that those who were now employed in expounding, (*ch.* 8: 7.) and in praying, (*ch.* 9: 4, 5.) were all Levites, not priests, regard being had to their personal qualifications more than to their order. These Levites were some of them singers, (*v.* 24.) *to praise and give thanks*, others of them porters, (*v.* 25.) *keeping the wards at the thresholds of the gate; and both according to the command of David.*

V. 27—43. After the building of the wall, in great fear and trembling, and replenishing the city, we come now to read of their dedication, with great joy and triumph. They that *sow in tears shall* thus *reap*. I. This act was, 1. A solemn thanksgiving for success, after so many difficulties. 2. They hereby devoted the city in a peculiar manner to God and to his honor, and took possession of it for Him and in his name. All our cities, all our houses, must have holiness to the Lord written on them, but this city was (as never any other was) a *holy city*, the *city of the great King;* (Ps. 48: 2. and Matt. 5. 35.) it had been so ever since God chose it to put his name there, and, as such, it being now refitted, it was afresh dedicated to God by the builders and inhabitants, in acknowledgment that they were his tenants, and desired it might still be his, and the property of it never be altered. Whatever is done for their safety, ease, and comfort, must be designed for God's honor and glory. 3. They hereby put the city and its walls under the divine protection, owning that, *unless the Lord kept the city*, the walls were *built in vain*. When this city was in possession of the Jebusites, they committed the guardianship of it to their gods, though blind and lame, 2 Sam. 5: 6. With much more reason do the people of God commit it to his keeping, who is All-wise and Almighty. The superstitious founders of cities had an eye to the lucky position of the heavens; (see Mr. Gregory's Works, *p.* 29, &c.) but these pious founders to God only, to his providence, and not to fortune.

II. Observe the solemnity.

1. The Levites from all parts were summoned; the surrender of the city to God must pass through their hands. They *purified themselves*, *v.* 30. We are concerned to *cleanse our hands*, and *purify our hearts*, when any work of God is to pass through them. They that would be instrumental to sanctify others, must sanctify themselves, and set themselves apart for God, with purity of mind and sincerity of intention. Then they purified *the gates and the wall*. Then may we expect comfort, when prepared to receive it. *To the pure all things are pure;* and to them who are sanctified, houses and tables, and all their creature-comforts and enjoyments, are sanctified, 1 Tim. 4: 4, 5. This purification was performed, probably, by sprinkling the *water of purifying*, or of *separation*, (as it is called, Num. 19: 9.) on *themselves* and the *people*, the walls and the gates; a type of the blood of Christ, with which our consciences being *purged from dead works*, we became fit to *serve the living God*, and to be his care.

2. The princes, priests, and Levites, walked round, singing psalms, it is likely, on the wall, in two companies, with musical instruments, to signify the dedication of the whole circuit of it to God, *v.* 36. This procession had a rendezvous at one certain place, where they divided. Half went on the right hand, Ezra leading their van, *v.* 36. the other half on the left hand, Nehemiah bringing up the rear, *v.* 38. At length both companies met in the temple, where they joined their thanks-

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[i] 10,11.
[k] 12,13.
[l] 1 Chr. 9:14,&c.
[m] 8. 8:7. 9:4. 10:9—13.
[n] 1 Chr. 23: 5,5: 26:
[o] Deut. 33:1. Josh. 14:6. 1 K. 17:24. 2 Chr. 8:14. 1 Tim. 6:11. 2 Tim. 3:17.
[p] 9. Ezra 3:10,11.
[q] 8,9. 11:17—19. 1 Chr. 9:14—17.
[r] 1 Chr. 23:32. 26:12. Is. 21:8.

[*] Or, *treasuries*, or, *assemblies*.
[s] 10.
[t] 8:9. Ezra 7:6,11.
[u] Deut. 20:5. Ps. 30: *title*.
[x] 11:20. 1 Chr. 15:4,12,13. 26:31,32. 2 Chr. 29:4—11,30. Ezra 8:15—20.
[y] 8:17. Deut. 16:11. 2 Sam. 6:12. 2 Chr. 29:22. Ezra 6:16. Ps. 98:4—6. 100:1,2. Phil. 4:4.
[z] 1 Chr. 13:8. 15:16,28. 16:5,42. 23: 5. 25:1—6. Ezra 3:10,11. Ps. 81:1 —4. 92:1—3. 149:3. 150:2—5. Rev. 5:8.
[a] 6:2.
[b] 1 Chr. 2:54. 9:16.
[c] Deut. 11:30. Josh. 5:9. 10:43.
[d] 11:31. Josh. 21:17. 1 Chr. 6:60.
[e] Ezra 2:24.
[f] Gen. 35:2. Ex. 19:10,15. Num. 19: 2—20. 2 Chr. 29:5,34. Ezra 6:21. Job 1:5.
[g] 1 Chr. 13:1. 28:1. 2 Chr. 5:2.
[h] 38.
[i] 2:13. 3:13,14.
[k] 10:2—7.

Verses 22—26.

It is not easy or perhaps possible, to determine, why these few names of the Levites were here inserted: but probably they were persons who greatly distinguished themselves, and were highly honored and trusted by their contemporaries. (*M. R.*)—*Darius the Persian.* (22) 'This is thought to be that Darius, whom Alexander conquered.' *Patrick.*—*Ward over against ward.*] 8, 9. 1 *Chr.* 25:9.—'In their turns, one coming on, when another went out, to attend in their courses, which are called *wards*.' *Patrick.* (13:30. 1 *Chr.* 9:23. 26:6—12, *v.* 12, 13.) —*These*, &c. (26) *Note*, 10, 11. SCOTT.

Verse 29.

Builded, &c.] The singers had builded villages for their residence about Jerusalem; that they might be near at hand, when wanted; and attend more conveniently and regularly at the temple. ID.

35 And *certain* of the priests' sons [l] with trumpets; *namely*, [m] Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph;

36 And his brethren, Shemaiah, and Azarael, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethaneel, and Judah, Hanani, with the [n] musical instruments of David the man of God, and [o] Ezra the scribe before them.

37 And at [p] the fountain-gate, which was over against them, they went up by [q] the stairs of the city of David, at the going up of the wall, above the house of David, even unto the [r] water-gate eastward.

38 And [s] the other *company of them that gave* thanks went over against *them*, and I after them, and the half of the people upon the wall, from beyond [t] the tower of the furnaces, even unto [u] the broad wall:

39 And from above [x] the gate of Ephraim, and above [y] the old gate, and above [z] the fish-gate, and [a] the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto [b] the sheep-gate: and they stood still in [c] the prison-gate.

40 So stood [d] the two *companies of them that gave* thanks in the house of God, and I, and the half of the rulers with me:

41 And the priests; Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, *and* Hananiah, [e] with trumpets;

42 And Maaseiah, and Shemaiah, and Eleazar, and Uzzi, and Jehohanan, and Malchijah, and Elam, and Ezer. And the singers * sang loud with Jezrahiah *their* [f] overseer.

43 Also that day they [g] offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced; for [h] God had made them rejoice with great joy: [i] the wives also and the children rejoiced; so that [k] the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.

44 ¶ And at that time were [l] some appointed over [m] the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them, out of the fields of the cities, the portions † of the law for the priests and Levites: for ‡ Judah rejoiced for the priests and for [n] the Levites that § waited.

45 And both [o] the singers and the porters kept the ward of their God, and [p] the ward of the purification, according to the commandment of David, *and* of Solomon his son.

46 For in the days of David [q] and Asaph, of old, *there were* chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God.

47 And all Israel, in the days of [r] Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, [s] gave the portions of the singers and the porters, every day his portion: and [t] they ‖ sanctified *holy things* unto the Levites, and the Levites sanctified *them* unto the children of Aaron.

l Num. 10:2—10. Josh. 6:4. 2 Chr. 5:12. 13:12.
m 11:17. 1 Chr. 6:39—43. 25:2. 26: 10,11.
n 24. 1 Chr. 23:5. 2 Chr. 8:14. Amos 6:5.
o Ezra 7:1. 8:1.
p 2:14. 3:15.
q 3:15. 2 Sam. 5:7—9.
r 3:26. 8:1,3,16.
s 31.
t 3:11.
u 3:8.
x 8:16. 2 K. 14:13.
y 3:6.
z 3:3. Zeph. 1:10.
a 3:1. Jer. 31:38.
b 3:32. John 5:2.
c 3:25,31. *Heb.* Jer. 32:2.
d 31,32. Ps. 42:4. 47:6—9. 134:
e 35.
* Heb. *made* their voice *to be heard.* Ps. 81:1. 95:1. 98:4—9. 100:1,2. Is. 12:5,6.
f 11:14.
g Num. 10:10. Deut. 12:11,12. 1 Chr. 29:21,22. 2 Chr. 7:5—7,10. 29:35,36. Ps. 27:6.
h 2 Chr. 20:27. Job 34:29. Ps. 28:7. 30:11,12. 92:4. Is. 61:3. 66:10—14. Jer. 33:11. John 16:22.
i Ez. 15:20,21. 2 Chr. 20:13. Ps. 148: 11—13. Jer. 31:13. Matt. 21:9,15. Eph. 5:19. Jam. 5:13.
k 1 Sam. 4:5. Ezra 3:13.
l 10:37—39. 13:5,12,13. 2 Chr. 31:11 —13.
m 1 Chr. 9:26. 26:21—26.
† That is, *appointed by the law.*
‡ Heb. *the joy of Judah rejoiced.*
n Num. 3:10. 8:24,25. 1 Chr. 23:28. 2 Chr. 5:11,12. Prov. 8:34. Is. 40:31. Rom. 12:7.
§ Heb. *stood.*
o 1 Chr. 25: 26:
p 1 Chr. 23:28. 2 Chr. 23:6.
q 1 Chr. 25:1,&c. 2 Chr. 29:30. Ps. 73:—83: *titles.*
r 1,12,26.
s 10:35—39. 13:10—12. 2 Chr. 31:5,6 Mal. 3:8—10. Gal. 6:6.
t Num. 18:21—29.
‖ That is, *set apart.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The believer should undertake nothing, which he cannot, and does not, dedicate to God, by seeking his direction and assistance in it, and his blessing on it; by designing his glory, and by giving praise for success in all things: and whatever he possesses he should commit to the Lord's keeping and disposal, and use it according to his will. (*Ps.* 30: *title.* *P. O.—Col.* 3: 16, 17, *v.* 17.) If our families be trained up to join in the solemn worship of God, and in attendance on his Word, we may hope they will share our joys and privileges; and the prosperity of the church gladdens the hearts of all true believers: and in all cases, where the ministers of religion generally come forward in support of pious and benevolent measures, with zeal and alacrity, to the satisfaction of all concerned, they take the most effectual method, not only of doing much good, but of securing the liberal and cheerful payment or contribution for the supply of themselves and families. This they may receive with songs of praise and thanksgiving, and need not fear sanctifying a portion even of their portion, to the more immediate service of God, and the support of his cause. SCOTT.

Verse 35.

Zechariah, being descended from Asaph, of the line of Gershom, was no priest; and the word '*namely*' is improperly added. (*M. R.* m.) SCOTT.

Verses 44—47.

Thus matters were settled, as they had been in the days of David and Solomon. (*M. R.*) Similar regulations had been made in the days of Zerubbabel; but they were completed, and put on a durable footing, in the time of Nehemiah. (13:5—14. 2 *Chr.* 31:5—19. *Mal.* 3:7—12.) —The tithes were paid to the Levites, as sanctified to their use; and the tithe of them was, by the Levites, sanctified to the use of the priests. (10 35—39. *Num.* 18:25—32.) SCOTT.

CHAP. XIII.

On reading the law, Israel separates from the mixed multitude, 1—3. Eliashib having, during Nehemiah's absence, prepared a chamber at the temple for Tobiah, Nehemiah on his return, being grieved and indignant, causes the chambers to be cleansed, 4—9. He reforms abuses concerning tithes and offerings, 10—14. He prevents the profanation of the sabbath, 15—22. He opposes those who had married strange wives, and drives away the grandson of Eliashib, 23—28. His other services and prayers, 29—31.

ON that day * they read in the book of Moses in the † audience of the people; and therein was found written, that [a] the Ammonite and the [b] Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever;

2 Because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but [c] hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them: howbeit [d] our God turned the curse into a blessing.

3 Now it came to pass, [e] when they had heard the law, [f] that they separated from Israel all [g] the mixed multitude.

4 And before this, [h] Eliashib the priest, ‡ having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God, *was* [i] allied unto Tobiah;

5 And he had prepared for him [k] a great chamber, where aforetime they laid the meat-offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, § which was commanded *to be given* to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests.

6 But [l] in all this *time* was not I at Jerusalem: for in [m] the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon, came I unto the king, and ‖ after certain days ¶ obtained I leave of the king.

7 And I came to Jerusalem, and [n] understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, [o] in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God.

8 And [p] it grieved me sore: therefore [q] I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber.

9 Then I command-

B. C. 433.

* Heb. *there was read.* 8:3—8. 9:3. Deut. 31:11,12. 2 K. 23:2. Is. 34:16. Luke 4:16—19. 10:26. Acts 13:15,27. 15:21.

† Heb. *ears.*

a 23. Deut. 23:3—5. Is. 15: 16: Jer. 48: Ez. 25:1—11. Am. 2:1—3.

b 2:10,19. 4:3. Ps. 83:7—9. Jer. 49: 1—6. Am. 1:13—15.

Num. 22:3—6. Josh. 24:9,10.

d Num. 23:8—11,18—24. 24:5—9. Ps. 109:28. Mic. 6:5.

e Ps. 19:7—11. 119:9,11. Prov. 6:23. Rom. 3:20.

f 9:2. 10:28. Ezra 10:11. Jam. 1:27.

g Ex. 12:38. Num. 11:4.

h 7. 12:10.

‡ Heb. *being set over.* 12:44.

i 28. 6:17,18.

k 10:38,39. 12:44.

§ Heb. *the commandment of the Levites.* Num. 18:21—24.

l Ex. 32:1. 2 Chr. 24:17,18. Matt. 13: 25.

m 2:1. 5:14.

‖ Heb. *at the end of days.* 2:5,6.

¶ Or, *I earnestly requested.*

n Ezra 9:1. 1 Cor. 1:11.

o 1,5. Lam. 1:10. Matt. 21:12,13. Acts 21:28,29.

p Ezra 9:3,4. 10:1. Ps. 69:9.

q Mark 11:15—17. John 2:13—17.

CHAP. XIII. Nehemiah, having finished what he undertook for the fencing and filling of the holy city, returned to the king his master, [when he made those appointments, 7: 2. some think,] who could not long be without him, as appears, *v.* 6. But, after some time, he obtained leave to come back, to redress grievances, and purge out some corruptions which had crept in in his absence; and very active he was in reforming several abuses here.

V. 1—9. It was the honor of Israel, and the greatest preservation of their holiness, that they were a peculiar people, and were so to keep themselves, and not to mingle with the nations, nor suffer any to incorporate with them. Here we have,

I. The law to this purport, (Deut. 23: 3—5.) which happened to be read *on that day*, i. e. (*v.* 1.) of the dedication of the wall, as should seem; and though it was long after, that ther grievances, here mentioned, were red by Nehemiah's power, yet this of the mix ltitude, might be redressed then by the people wn act, for so it seems to be, *v.* 3. Or, perhaps, it was on the anniversary commemoration of that day, some years after, and therefore said to be *on that day.*

II. The people's ready compliance, *v.* 3. See the benefit of the public reading of the Word of God. Then we profit by it, when wrought upon to separate from all that evil to which we had addicted ourselves. *The mixed multitude* had, of old, been a snare to them, for they *fell a lusting*, Num. 11: 14.

III. The particular case of Tobiah, an Ammonite, to whom, it is likely, the historian had an eye in the recital of that law, (*v.* 1.) and the reason of it, *v.* 2. For he had the same enmity to Israel, as his ancestors, the spirit of an Ammonite, witness his indignation at Nehemiah, (*ch.* 2: 10.) and opposition to his undertakings, *ch.* 4: 7 Observe,

1. Eliashib, the chief priest, became allied to Tobiah, (*v.* 4.) by marriage first, then by friendship: his grandson had married Sanballat's daughter, *v.* 28. Probably, some other of his family had married Tobiah's. By the law, the high priest should marry *one of his own people*, else he *profanes his seed*, Lev. 21: 14. And for Eliashib to contract an alliance with an Ammonite, a *servant*, (so he is called,) and to value himself on it, probably, because he was a wit, and a beau, and cried up for a fine gentleman, (*ch.* 6: 19.) was such a contempt of the crown of his consecration, as one would not wish should be told in Gath, or published in the streets of Askelon. Now, Tobiah, being a man of business, has often occasion to be at Jerusalem, I doubt, on no good design. Eliashib, fond of his new kinsman, pleased with his company, must have him as near him as he can; he has not a room for him stately enough in his own apartment, in the courts of the temple: therefore out of several little store-chambers, by taking down the partitions, he contrived to make one great chamber, a state-room for Tobiah, *v.* 5. A wretched thing it was, (1.) That the Ammonite should be entertained with respect in Israel, and have a magnificent reception. (2.) That the high priest, who should have taught the people the law, and set them a good example, should, contrary to the law, basely give him entertainment, and make use of his power, as overseer, for that purpose. (3.) That he should basely lodge him, who must not even *come into the congregation*, in the very court of God's house itself, as if to confront God Himself! This was next to setting up an idol there, like the wicked kings of old. (4.) That he should throw out the stores [and vessels] of the temple, to make room for him, and so expose them to be lost, wasted, and embezzled, though [the provisions were] the *portions of the priests*, merely to

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII V. 1—3. The introductory language seems to imply, that the events recorded in these vs. occurred immediately: though the words 'on that day' may be understood with some latitude, and may mean, *about that time.* Indeed, it can hardly be supposed, that when the gross abuses stated in the sequel of the ch. prevailed, the public reading of the law at the temple was regularly kept up, and the people zealous to reduce it to practice. It is therefore more probable, that, before Nehemiah left Jerusalem, or when he was first gone, the law was publicly read and expounded to the congregation. (8:1—8, 13—18. 9:3, 4.) At that time, the passage here referred to, coming in course, excited peculiar attention. Whether intermarriages with any of those nations, even when fully proselyted, or with their descendants, was, or was not, intended in the law, many instances would doubtless occur, in which a separation would be required; for probably few, in comparison of those with whom alliances had been formed, were fully proselyted.—It is supposed, that from the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, synagogues were built in every part of the land, where God was publicly worshipped, and his Word read, expounded, or preached; which produced very salutary effects. (2 *K.* 4:23. 2 *Chr.* 17:7—9.) A copy of the Scriptures then extant, was placed in every synagogue; and the whole was divided into portions or lessons, for the several days when they were accustomed to assemble for that purpose; and probably the same became the general usage in the court of the temple. (*Luke* 4: 16—22. *Acts* 13:13—15. 15:21.) SCOTT.

Verse 4.

Eliashib had *before this* formed an alliance with Tobiah the Ammonite, but perhaps *secretly*, to escape censure. (2:9, 10, 19, 20. 4:6: 17—19.) It does not appear, that the high priest was, or that his sons were, married to any of Tobiah's family: but he was confederated with him, and related to those who were.—The word rendered 'chamber,' seems to mean the out-buildings of the temple in general. SCOTT.

Verses 5, 6.

Nehemiah was first commissioned by Artaxerxes in the 20th year of his reign; and this journey to court took place in his 32d year, so that 12 years had elapsed, concerning which we have little account: and the following events occurred after the end of those years.—When Nehemiah was gone from Jerusalem, Eliashib seems to have invited Tobiah thither.—*King of Babylon.* (6) The kings of Persia reigned over Babylon, and all the regions, which had been before subject to the kings of Babylon: but their general residence was at Shushan, or Susa. (1:1.) This was much more distant from Jerusalem than Babylon: but Nehemiah, most probably, journeyed thither on this occasion. ID.

Verses 7—9

Nehemiah is generally supposed to have been absent from Jerusalem only one year: but the great abuses, which prevailed at his return, favor the opinion of those who think that about five years intervened; and there is nothing in the text that militates against it: for the words rendered 'after certain days,' or, *at the end of days*, (6. *marg.*) do not

ed, and [r] they cleansed the chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat-offering and the frankincense.

10 ¶ And I perceived that [s] the portions of the Levites had not been given *them*: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one [t] to his field.

11 Then [u] contended I with the rulers, and said, [x] Why is the house of God, forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their * place.

12 Then [y] brought all Judah the tithe of the corn, and the new wine, and the oil unto the † treasuries.

13 And [z] I made treasurers over the treasuries, [a] Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, [b] Pedaiah: and ‡ next to them *was* Hanan the son of [c] Zaccur, the son of [d] Mattaniah: for they were [e] counted faithful, and § their office *was* [f] to distribute unto their brethren.

[*Practical Observations.*]

14 [g] Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my ‖ good deeds that I have done [h] for the house of my God, and for the ¶ offices thereof.

15 ¶ In those days saw I in Judah *some* [i] treading wine-presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all *manner of* [k] burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath-day: and [l] I testified *against them*, in the day wherein they sold victuals.

16 There dwelt [m] men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.

17 Then [n] I contend-

gratify Tobiah. Thus did he *corrupt the covenant of Levi*, as Malachi complained at this time, *ch.* 2: 8. Well might Nehemiah add, (*v.* 6.) *But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem.* The envious one, who sows tares in God's field, knows how to take his opportunity when the *servants sleep*, or are absent, Matt. 13: 25. The calf was made when Moses was in the mount.

2. It *grieved* Nehemiah *sore*, (*v.* 7, 8.) that God's house should be so profaned, his enemies so caressed and trusted, and his cause betrayed by him that should be its protector and patron. Nothing grieves a good man, a good magistrate, more than to see the ministers of God's house do any wicked thing. Nehemiah has power, and will use it for God. (1.) Tobiah shall be expelled; he fears not disobliging him, fears not his resentments, or Eliashib's, nor excuses himself from interposing in an affair that lay within the jurisdiction of the high priest, but, like one zealously affected in a good thing, bravely expelled the intruder, by casting forth all his household-stuff. Our Savior thus *cleansed the temple*, that the *house of prayer* might not be a *den of thieves*. And so they that would expel sin out of their hearts, those living temples, must throw out its household stuff, and put away all those things [and thoughts] that are the food and fuel of lust; this is, in effect, to mortify it. (2.) The temple-stores shall be brought in again, and the *vessels of the house of God put in their places;* but the chambers must first be sprinkled with the water of purification, and so cleansed, because they had been profaned. Thus when sin is cast out of the heart by repentance, let the blood of Christ be applied to it by faith, and then let it be furnished with the graces of God's Spirit for every good work.

V. 10—14. Here is another grievance redressed by Nehemiah.

1. Perhaps Tobiah, when he took possession of the store-chambers, seized the stores too, and, by Eliashib's connivance, converted them to his own use. The complaint is not that they were not collected from the people, but that they were not given to the Levites, (*v.* 10.) who were so modest as not to sue for them; *for they and the singers were fled every one to his field.* This comes in as a reason, either, (1.) Why their payments were withheld; the Levites were non-residents: when they should have been doing their work about the temple, they were at their farms, therefore the people were little inclined to give them their maintenance. If ministers have not the encouragement they should have, let them consider, whether they themselves be not accessary to this contempt, by neglect of their business. Or rather, (2.) It is the reason why Nehemiah soon perceived their dues had been denied them, because he missed them from their posts. Truly they were gone every one to his country-seat, to get a livelihood for themselves and families out of their grounds, for their profession would not maintain them. A scandalous maintenance makes a scandalous ministry. The work is neglected, because the workmen are. It was not long since the payment of the singers' salaries was put into a very good method; (*ch.* 12: 47.) yet how soon did it fail, for want of being looked after!

2. Nehemiah laid the fault on the rulers, (*v.* 11.) who should have taken care that the Levites minded their business, and had all due encouragement therein. Christian magistrates are required to use the power [given them by law] to oblige ministers to do their duty, and people to do theirs. 'Why are the Levites starved out? Why did not you notice this, and prevent it?' The people *forsook the Levites*, which was expressly forbidden; (Deut. 12: 19. 14: 27.) and then the Levites for-

[r] Heb. *at their hand.*
[c] 10:12.
[d] 11:22. 12:35.
[e] 7:2. 2 K. 12:15. 22:7. Luke 12:42. 16:10—12. Acts 6:3. 1 Cor. 4:2. 1 Tim. 1:12.
§ Heb. it was *upon them.*
[f] Acts 4:35. 6:1.
[g] 22,31. 5:19. Heb. 6:10. Rev. 3:5.
‖ Heb. *kindnesses.*
[h] 1 Chr. 29:3. 2 Chr. 24:16. 31:20,21. Ezra 7:20,24,27. Ps. 122:6—9.
¶ Or, *observations.*
[i] Ex. 20:8—11. 34:21. 35:2. Is. 58: 13. Ez. 20:13.
[k] 10:31. Num. 15:32—36. Jer. 17:21, 22,24,27.
[l] 21. 9:29. Deut. 8:19. 2 Chr. 24:19. Ps. 50:7. Jer. 42:19. Mic. 6:3. Acts 2:40. 20:21. Gal. 5:3. Eph. 4:1*. 1 Thes. 4:6. Rev. 22:18,19.
[m] Ex. 23:12. Deut. 5:14.
[n] 11,25. 5:7. Ps. 82:1,2. Is. 1:10. Jer. 5:5. 13:18. 22:2,&c. Mic. 3: 1,9.
[r] 10:12.
[s] 11:22. 12:35.
[t] 7:2. 2 K. 12:15. 22:7. Luke 12:42. 16:10—12. Acts 6:3. 1 Cor. 4:2. 1 Tim. 1:12.
§ Heb. it was *upon them.*
[u] Acts 4:35. 6:1.
[x] 22,31. 5:19. Heb. 6:10. Rev. 3:5.
‖ Heb. *kindnesses.*
[y] 1 Chr. 29:3. 2 Chr. 24:16. 31:20,21. Ezra 7:20,24,27. Ps. 122:6—9.
¶ Or, *observations.*
[z] Ex. 20:8—11. 34:21. 35:2. Is. 58: 13. Ez. 20:13.
[a] 10:31. Num. 15:32—36. Jer. 17:21, 22,24,27.
[b] 21. 9:29. Deut. 8:19. 2 Chr. 24:19. Ps. 50:7. Jer. 42:19. Mic. 6:3. Acts 2:40. 20:21. Gal. 5:3. Eph. 4:1*. 1 Thes. 4:6. Rev. 22:18,19.
[c] Ex. 23:12. Deut. 5:14.
[d] 11,25. 5:7. Ps. 82:1,2. Is. 1:10. Jer. 5:5. 13:18. 22:2,&c. Mic. 3: 1,9.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—14. The public reading of the whole Word of God, as far as it relates to our faith and practice, is of immense advantage to true religion. Though we have heard many sermons, and have the Bible in our hands, few of us are acquainted with every part of it; and many live in violation of its injunctions, through ignorance or inattention.—Alas, how prone is human nature to evil! When the restraints of influence or authority are withdrawn, men break out into those excesses of which they seemed incapable; whilst the eye and authority of God are treated with almost atheistical disregard.—They who have enjoyed the highest dignities in the visible church, by *divine right*, have sometimes been equally distinguished by sacrilegious impiety; and have openly committed those crimes, which the most profane of the laity would not have ventured on without hesitation and dismay! But if sacredness of character will not restrain men from setting a pernicious example, it should not shelter them from censure, or condign punishment by the magistrate. (1 *K.* 2: 26, 27.)—As nobles have too generally, in every age and country, deemed themselves privileged to disregard the divine law, and many human institutions obligatory on others; magistrates and reformers need courage and resolution, as well as impartiality and integrity.—Our grief for the sins which we witness, should stimulate us to oppose them strenuously, according to the duty of our station, and not induce us to yield to unmanly despondency.—Few ministers are willing, during any length of time, to labor in their ministry, under the pressure or the prospect of indigence; but most of them will turn to more profitable occupations: so that depriving the clergy of a suitable maintenance forms one of Satan's projects, for causing the house and ordinances of God to be forsaken. SCOTT.

necessarily signify *after one year*, but may denote a longer time. (*Dan.* 12:13. Heb.)—It is probable, Eliashib was dead before Nehemiah returned; and that Tobiah did not choose to appear at Jerusalem to see after his furniture. SCOTT.

Verses 10—13.

The rulers, who had been left in trust, ought to have exerted their authority to prevent such mismanagement; but probably they had concurred in it, out of regard to their secular interests; therefore Nehemiah called them to account for this misconduct. Malachi seems repeatedly to refer to these abuses. (*Mal.* 1:9—14 3.7—12.) 'It is a great artifice of the devil, by his instruments, to defraud the ministers of religion of their necessary maintenance, that he may thereby abolish religion itself.' *Wolphius, in Patrick.* (*Notes*, 1 *Cor.* 9.7—18.) ID.

Verse 14.

(*M.* and *M. R.*) There have been times, when enriching the clergy beyond all bounds, and without requiring them to attend on their ministry, was thought the height of piety: but it may be questioned whether rulers may not at present, as well as for some past ages, have run into the contrary extreme; and Nehemiah's firm and prudent conduct in this respect, might be imitated with good effect by Christian princes and rulers. (2 *Chr.* 31:5—7. *P. O.* 1—10.) SCOTT.

Verses 15—18.

It can hardly be supposed, that in the course of *one year* of Nehemiah's absence, such gross and open profanation of the Sabbath should have been introduced and become general. (Note, 7—9.) The magistrates must have been shamefully negligent, in conniving at these abuses, till they were become so notorious: and the nation seemed to

ed with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing *is* this that ye do, and profane the sabbath-day?

18 [o] Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet [p] ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.

19 And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem [q] began to be dark before the sabbath, [r] I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and *some* of my servants set I at the gates, *that* there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath-day.

20 So the merchants, and sellers of all kind of ware, lodged without Jerusalem once or twice.

21 Then [s] I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye * about the wall? if ye do *so* again, [t] I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no *more* on the sabbath.

22 And [u] I commanded the Levites, that they should [x] cleanse themselves, and *that* they should come *and* keep the gates, to [y] sanctify the sabbath-day. [z] Remember me, O my God, *concerning* this also, and [a] spare me according to the † greatness of thy mercy.

23 ¶ In those days also saw I Jews [b] *that* took their post. Both ministers and people, who forsake religion and its services, and magistrates too, who do not what they can to keep them to it, will have a great deal to answer for.

3. He delayed not to bring the dispersed Levites to *their places* again, and set them in *their stations*, as the word is, *v.* 11. Many that are careless, would do much better, if but called upon. *Say to Archippus, Take heed to thy ministry.*

4. He obliged the people to bring in their tithes, *v.* 12. His zeal provoked theirs; and when they saw the Levites at their work, they could not, for shame, longer withhold their wages.

5. He provided that just and prompt payment should be made of the Levites' stipends; commissioners were appointed to see to this, (*v.* 13.) and they were such as *were counted faithful*, i. e. had approved themselves so in other trusts, and so *purchased this good degree*. Let men be tried first, and then trusted; tried in the less, and then trusted with more.

6. Having no recompense (it is a question if he had thanks) from those for whom he did these good services, he looks to God as his Pay-Master, *v.* 14. Nehemiah was a man much in pious ejaculations; on every occasion, he looked up to God, and committed himself and his affairs to Him.—(1.) It pleased him to think he had been any way instrumental to revive and support religion in his country, and to reform what was amiss. What kindness any show to God's ministers, thus shall it be returned into their own bosoms, in the secret joy they shall have there, not only in having done well, but in having done good, good to many, good to souls. (2.) He here refers himself to God to consider him for it, not in pride, or boasting, much less depending on it as his righteousness, or as if he thought he had made God his debtor, but in a humble appeal to Him concerning his integrity and honest intention in what he had done, and a believing expectation, that He would not be unrighteous to *forget his work and labor of love*, Heb. 6: 10. Observe how modest is his request; he only prays, *Remember me*, not *Reward me; Wipe not out my good deeds*, not *Publish them, Record them*. Yet he was rewarded, and his good deeds recorded; for God does more than we ask. In deeds done *for the house of God and its offices*, for the support of religion, and its encouragement, there is goodness, righteousness and godliness, and God will certainly remember them, and not wipe them out; they shall in nowise lose their reward.

V. 15—22. Here is another instance of that blessed reformation in which Nehemiah was so active; he revived sabbath-sanctification, and maintained the 4th commandment; a very good deed this for the house of God and its offices; for where holy time is made nothing of, it is not strange if all holy duties be neglected. Here is,

I. A remonstrance. The law of the Sabbath was very strict, and much insisted on; and with good reason, for religion is never in the throne, while the Sabbath is trodden under foot. But Nehemiah, to his great grief, found there was a general profanation of that holy day, even in that holy city, so lately dedicated to God. 1. The husbandmen trod their wine-presses, and brought home their corn, on that day, (*v.* 15.) though there was an express command, that *in ploughing and harvest-time, they should rest* on the sabbaths, (Ex. 34: 21.) because then they might be tempted to take a greater liberty, and to fancy God would indulge them in it. 2. The carriers *loaded their asses with all manner of burdens*, and made no scruple of it, though there was a particular proviso for the cattle resting, (Deut. 5: 14.) and that they should *bear no burden on the sabbath-day*, Jer. 17: 21. 3. The hawkers, and pedlers, and petty chapmen, from Tyre, that famous trading city, *sold all manner of ware* on the sabbath-day; (*v.* 16.) and the children of Judah and Jerusalem had so little grace as to buy of them. No wonder there was a general decay of religion, and corruption of manners, when they *forsook the sanctuary*, and *profaned the Sabbath*.

II. The reformation. They that are jealous for the honor of God, cannot bear to see his Sabbath profaned. Observe,

1. *He testified against them* who profaned it, *v.* 15, 21. He not only expressed his own dislike of it, but endeavored to convince them it was a great sin, and showed them the testimony of the Word of God against it. He would not punish it, till he had laid open the evil of it.

2. He reasoned with the rulers concerning it, took the nobles of Judah to task, and contended with them, *v.* 17. They did not carry corn nor sell fish themselves, but connived at them that did; and not using their power to restrain them, made themselves guilty, as those magistrates do, who bear the sword in vain. They set a bad example in other things; if the nobles allowed themselves in sports and recreations, in idle visits, and idle talk, on the sabbath-day, the men of business, both in city and country, would profane it by their worldly employments, as more justifiable. We must be responsible for sins others commit by our example. He shows them, (*v.* 18.) that sabbath-breaking was one sin for which God had brought judgments on them, and if they did not take warn-

22. Ez. 23:8,26. Zech. 1:4—6.
p Lev. 26:18,28. Num. 32:14. Josh. 22:17,18.
q Lev. 23:32.
r 7:3. Ex. 31:14—17. Jer. 17:19—22.
s See on 15.
* Heb. *before*.
t Ezra 7:26. Rom. 13:3,4. 1 Pet. 2:14.
u 7:64,65. 2 K. 23:4. 1 Chr. 15:12—14. 2 Chr. 29:4,5,24,27,30. Is. 49: 23. x 12:10.
y Deut. 5:12.
z 14,31. 5:19. Ps. 132:1—5. Is. 38:3. 2 Cor. 1:12. 2 Tim. 4:7,8.
a Ps. 25:6,7. 51:1. 130:3,4,7. 143:1,2
† Or, *multitude*. Ps. 5:7. Is. 55:7.
b 10:30. Ezra 9:2,11,12. 10:10,44. 2 Cor. 6:14.
o Ezra 9:13—15. Jer. 17:23,27. 44:9.

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be proceeding, in many respects, as their fathers had done, in provoking the wrath of God against them.—*Fish.* (16) How far the concessions made by [English] laws, in respect of the selling some fish on the Lord's-day, agree with this, or consist with hallowing the Sabbath, may fairly be questioned. SCOTT.

(15.) *Wine-presses.*] The most common method of making and using

these, is thought to be described in the note, Matt. 21:33. now in use in Persia; they also were used in Egypt, and we give a cut of another curious and more cleanly process, from the ancient tombs to the E. of the 2d pyramid of Memphis. The Egyptians preserved the wine in amphoræ, ranged along the walls, in cellars; as at Pompeii, and in ancient Greek houses. The Heb. here, for *treaders of wine-presses*, is *dorekym-gittoth*, Vulg. *Calcantes torcularia*; Sept. *patountas lenous*; Syr. and Arab. *treaders of the ways*. ED.

Verses 20—22.

Probably, his other regulations were at last equally effectual; but we have no more canonical history concerning them. SCOTT.

Verses 23—30.

Some time must have elapsed after Nehemiah's departure from Jerusalem, before the children of these marriages could betray their origin by their speech: for though the Ashdodites lived near the Jews, their language was, it seems, materially different from theirs: yet probably they were not contracted before that event, and the reform seems to have been made very soon after his return. This separation also evidently was diverse from that recorded before: (*Note*, 1—3.) for that was the effect of reading the law, and by voluntary consent; this by more vehement and coercive measures. The authority, which Nehemiah exercised over the priests, even the chief of them, and in requiring the ministers of religion to attend to their several duties; as well as over the people, requiring them to render the priests and Levites their dues; is nowhere expressly enjoined on governors, or kings, in the Mosaic law: yet as this exercise of authority was entirely limited to the things which God had commanded; he performed a good and acceptable service, and properly improved his talents. (2 *Chr.* 29:3—5. 30:12.) ID.

had * married wives of [e] Ashdod, of [d] Ammon, *and* of Moab:

24 And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and † could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of ‡ each people.

25 And [e] I contended with them, [f] and § cursed them, and [g] smote certain of them, and [h] plucked off their hair, and [i] made them swear by God, *saying*, [k] Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.

26 [l] Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? [m] yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin.

27 [n] Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God, in marrying strange wives?

28 And *one* of the sons of [o] Joiada, the son of [p] Eliashib, the high priest, *was* [q] son-in-law to [r] Sanballat the Horonite: therefore [s] I chased him from me.

29 [t] Remember them, O my God, ‖ because they have defiled the priesthood, and [u] the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites.

* Heb. *made to dwell* with them.
[e] 1 Sam. 5:1.
[d] See on 1—3.
† Heb. *they discerned not to speak.*
‡ Heb. *people and people.* Zeph. 3:9.
[e] 11,17. Prov. 28:4.
[f] 5:13. Deut. 27:14—26.
§ Or, *reviled.* Luke 11:45,46.
[g] Deut. 25:2,3. Ezra 7:26.
[h] Is 50:6.
[i] 10:29,30. Deut. 6:13. 2 Chr. 15:12—15. Ezra 10:5.
[k] Ex. 34:16. Deut. 7:3.
[l] 1 K. 11:1—3. Ec. 7:26.
[m] 2 Sam. 12:24,25. 1 K. 3:13. 2 Chr. 1:12.
[n] 1 Sam. 30:24.
[o] 12:10,22.
[p] 3:1.
[q] 4,5. 6:17—19.
[r] 2:19.
[s] 25. Ps. 101:8. Prov. 20:8,26. Rom. 13:3,4.
[t] 6:14. Ps. 59:5—13. 2 Tim. 4:14.
‖ Heb. *for the defilings of.* Lev. 21:1—7.
[u] Num. 16:9,10. 25:12,13. 1 Sam. 2:30. Mal. 2:4—8,11,12.

ing, they had reason to expect further judgments. Thus Ezra concluded, Ezra 9: 14.

3. He took care to prevent the profanation of the Sabbath, as one that aimed only at reformation; if he could reform, he would not punish them, and if he should punish, it was but that he might reform them. This is an example to magistrates to be *heirs of restraint*, and prudently to use the bit and bridle, that there may be no occasion for the lash.

(1.) He ordered the gates to be kept shut from the evening before the Sabbath to the morning after, and set his own servants ([his body-guard, perhaps,] whom he could confide in) to watch them, that no burdens should be brought in on the sabbath-day, nor late the night before, nor early in the morning after, lest sabbath-time should be trenched on, *v.* 19. Those that came in to worship in the courts of the temple, were, no doubt, admitted to pass and repass, but none that came to sell goods, *they* were forced to *lodge without the city*, (*v.* 20.) where, no doubt, they wished the Sabbath were gone, that they might sell grain.

(2.) He threatened those who came with goods to the gates, who pressed hard for entrance, telling them that if they came again, he would certainly lay hands on them, *v.* 21. This deterred them. Note, If reformers will but put on resolution, more may be done to break bad customs than they can imagine. Vice connived at, is indeed daring, and will bid defiance to counsel and reproof; but it may be made cowardly, and will be so, when magistrates make themselves a terror to it. *The king that sits on the throne of judgment, scatters away all evil with his eyes.*

(3.) He charged the Levites carefully and duly to sanctify the Sabbath, to cleanse themselves in the first place, and so give a good example to the people, and *that they should* some of them *come and keep the gates*, *v.* 22. because he and his servants must shortly return to court. *Then* reform is likely, when magistrates and ministers join their forces. This courage, zeal, and prudence, of Nehemiah, are recorded for imitation; and we have reason to think the cure he wrought, was lasting; for, in our Savior's time, we find the Jews in the other extreme, over-scrupulous in the ceremonial part of sabbath-sanctification.

4. He concludes with a prayer, *v.* 22. The petition is, *Remember me*, (as the thief on the cross,) that is enough; God's thoughts to usward are very precious, Ps. 40: 5. He adds, *Spare me;* so far from thinking that what he had done, did properly merit a reward in strict justice, he cries earnestly to God *to spare him*, as Jeremiah, (*ch.* 15: 15.) *Take me not away in thy long-suffering*, (*ch.* 10: 24.) *Correct me not in anger, and* (*ch.* 17: 17.) *Be not a terror to me.* The best saints, even when they do the best actions, stand in need of *sparing mercy*, for *there is not a just man that doeth good, and sinneth not.* The plea; *According to the greatness* (or multitude) *of thy mercies.* God's mercy, not our merit, is our dependence before God.

V. 23—31. We have here one instance more of Nehemiah's pious zeal to purify his countrymen, a peculiar people to God; *that*, he aimed at in the use of his power, not the enriching of himself.

I. The corruption of marrying strange wives. This was complained of in Ezra's time, and much done towards a reform, (Ezra 9: and 10:) yet others would not take warning; *We still lean toward what is forbidden.* Nehemiah, like a good governor, inquired into the state of the families under his charge, that he might reform what was amiss in them, and so *heal the streams*, by *healing the springs.*

1. He found, on inquiry, that many had *married wives of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab;* (*v.* 23.) either because fond of what was far-fetched, or hoping by these alliances to strengthen and enrich themselves. See how God by the prophet reproves this, (Mal. 2: 11.) *Judah has dealt treacherously*, and broken covenant with God, that in Ezra's time, as to this very thing; he has *profaned the holiness of the Lord*, by *marrying the daughter*, (worshipper,) *of a strange god.*

2. He talked with children, and found they were *children of strangers*, for their speech *betrayed them.* Bred up with their mothers, they learned of them and their nurses and servants to speak, so that they could not speak the Jews' language, either at all, or not readily, or not purely, but half in the speech of Ashdod, or Ammon, or Moab, according to the country of the mother. Observe, (1.) Children, in their childhood, learn much of their mothers, *They are prone to imitate them.* (2.) If either side be bad, the corrupt nature will incline the children to take after that, which is a good reason why Christians should not be unequally yoked. (3.) In the education of children, great care should be taken of their tongues; that they learn not the language of Ashdod, any impious or impure talk, any corrupt communication.

II. Nehemiah's course to purge out this corruption, when he discovered how much it had prevailed.

1. He showed the evil, and his obligation to witness against it. He did not seek an occasion against them, but this was an iniquity to be punished by the judge, and which he must by no means connive at, *v.* 27. 'There is no remedy but divorce, to clear us from the guilt of this great evil, and prevent the infection.' He quotes, (1.) A precept, to prove it a great sin; and makes them swear to that precept, from Deut. 7: 3. When we would reclaim from sin, we must show its sinfulness in the glass of the commandment. (2.) A precedent, to show its pernicious consequences, *v.* 26. The falls of great and good men are *therefore* recorded, that we may take warning by them, to shun the temptations they were overcome by. When Solomon married strange wives, even his wisdom could not secure him from the snares. He was *beloved of God*, but that threw him out of God's favor, and went near utterly to extinguish the holy fire of grace in his soul: it lost him 10 of his 12 tribes. Let him that *thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall*, when he runs on such a precipice.

2. He showed himself highly displeased at it, to awaken them to a due sense of the evil. They offered to justify themselves, but he showed them how frivolous their excuses were, and argued it warmly with them, *v.* 25. When he had silenced them, he *cursed them*, i. e. denounced the judgments of God against them, and showed them what their sins deserved. He then picked out some of the more obstinate, and fit to be made examples, and *smote them*, i. e. ordered them to be beaten by the proper officers according to the law, Deut. 25: 2, 3. To which he added this further mark of infamy, he *plucked off their hair*, or cut or shaved it off; for it may be so understood. Perhaps they had prided themselves in their hair, therefore he took it off, to deform and humble them, and put them to shame; it was, in effect, to stigmatize them, at least, for a time. Ezra, in this case, had plucked off his own hair, in holy sorrow for the sin; Nehemiah plucked of their hair, in a holy indignation at the sinners. See the different tempers of wise, and good, and useful men, and the divers graces, as well as divers gifts, of the same Spirit!

3. He obliged them not to take any more such wives, and separated those they had taken. He *cleansed them from all strangers*, both men and women, (*v.* 30.) and made them promise with an oath never to do so again, *v.* 25. Thus did he try all ways and means.

4. He took particular care that the priests' families might not lie under this guilty stain. He found, on inquiry, that a branch of the high priest's

Remember them, &c. (29) By visiting with some evident token of his holy indignation, the principal offenders in these things, the Lord would both display his own glory, and give a salutary warning to others, tending to repress such gross violations of his law; and even to bring the offenders to repentance. (*Lev.* 10:1—3. 21:7—15. *Num.* 25: 11—13. 1 *Cor.* 5:1—5, *v.* 5.) SCOTT.

V. 25. *Plucked.*] 'Had them shaved as a mark of ignominy. Dr. *A. Clarke.* It made them look like vile slaves. *Patric'.* The Heb. properly signifies tearing off the hair with violence; a punishment common in Persia. *Calmet.' Cond. Comm.* See *Poole* also, for the summary and violent method of administering justice, or punishing persons under the ruler's displeasure, in that still despotic country. ED.

CONCLUDING NOTE. 'For disinterestedness, philanthropy, patriotism, prudence, courage, zeal, humanity, and every virtue that consti-

30 Thus [x] cleansed I them from all strangers, and [y] appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business;

31 And for [z] the wood-offering, at times appointed, and for the first-fruits. [a] Remember me, O my God, for good.

x 10:30.
y 12:2—26. 1 Chr. 23:—26:
z 10:34.
a 14,22. Ps. 25:7. 106:4. Luke 23:42.

own family, one of his grandsons, had married a daughter of Sanballat, that notorious enemy of the Jews, (*ch.* 2: 10. 4: 1.) and so had, in effect, twisted interests with the Samaritans, *v.* 28. How little love had that man either to God or his country, who could make himself, in duty and interest, a friend to a sworn enemy to both. It seems, this young priest would not put away his wife, therefore Nehemiah *chased him from him*, deprived him, degraded him. Josephus says, this expelled priest was Manasseh, and that, when driven away, he went to his father-in-law Sanballat, who built him a temple on mt. Gerizzim, like that of Jerusalem, and promised he should be high priest in it, and that then was laid the foundation of the Samaritans' pretensions, which continued warm, to our Savior's time, *John* 4: 20.

Lastly, are Nehemiah's prayers on this, 1. *Remember them*, *v.* 29. 'Lord, convince and convert them, put them in mind of what they should be and do, that they may come to themselves.' Or, 'Remember them, to reckon with them for it; remember it against them.' If so, this is a prophecy, that God would remember it against them. They that defile the priesthood, despise God, and shall be lightly esteemed. Perhaps they were too many and too great for him to deal with; 'Lord' (says he) 'deal Thou with them, take the work into thine own hands.' 2. *Remember me*, *v.* 31. The best services to the public have sometimes been forgotten by those for whom they were done; (Eccl. 9: 15.) therefore Nehemiah refers himself to God, to recompense him, and doubts not he shall be well paid. This may well be the summary of our petitions: we need no more to make us happy than this; *Remember me, O my God, for good.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 15—31. The Christian magistrate ought to take proper measures, to prevent the Lord's-day from being profaned by labor, merchandise, or those occupations which subserve the luxury and pride of life.—Persons in the higher orders of society, in general, little consider the extensive effects of their misconduct: if they violate the holy day of God, others will assuredly imitate their impiety; and thus the flood-gates of ungodliness and wickedness will be thrown open, which must bring the wrath of God on guilty nations. Indeed the present state of unprincipled profligacy in these kingdoms, may be shown in great measure to originate from the relaxed sentiments, which some time after the reformation began to prevail concerning the spending of the Sabbath. And as these have gained ground, that holy day has gradually become more and more the time, when the lower orders are let loose to corrupt one another.—Children [inheriting, perhaps, a degenerated constitution] readily imbibe the principles of an infidel or ungodly parent, and soon forget the very language and appearance of piety; or substitute a corrupt religion, in the stead of that which comes from God, and leads to Him.—Mothers likewise have a very important [we might almost say all-important, Ed.] part allotted them, in forming the manners of mankind; as the care of children in their tender years is almost wholly committed to them. It is therefore of great consequence to society, that females should be educated with a view to this most momentous employment, and qualified for the discharge of their duty in it. Every wise man, in contracting marriage, should consider whether the object of his choice would be a proper person to intrust with his children's tuition: and every mother should consider, that this is her most important charge, and most calls for assiduity, prudence, and circumspection. (2 *Tim.* 1: 3—5. Scott.

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tutes a great mind, and proves a soul in deep communion with God, Nehemiah will ever stand conspicuous among the greatest men of the Jewish nation: and an *exemplar* worthy to be copied by the first patriots in every nation under heaven.' Dr. A. Clarke. 'Many highly distinguished men were contemporary with Nehemiah: as Æschylus, Aristophanes, Cincinnatus, Democritus, Euripides, Herodotus, Hippocrates, Phidias, Pindar, Plato, Socrates, Sophocles, Thucydides, Xenophon, and Zeuxis.' Cond Comm.

We now (in Ezra, Neh. and Esth.) find the true religion brought to the palaces and hovels of another of the most powerful, and widely extended empires of antiquity, and Jews placed in eminent stations in it. What effect this intercourse had, in advancing the human race in the path of improvement, is a very obscure but interesting inquiry to the Christian philosopher. Of the much disputed subject of the chronology and history of ancient Persia, *Fraser* gives a short but clear account, and a more extended view is taken by *Heeren*.—The identity of the several Persian kings mentioned in Scripture, with those of the Greek and Persian historians, is also a fruitful subject of discussion: see *Prideaux*, *Eichhorn*, *Hales*, and the *Univ. Hist.* To show the hopelessness of reconciling the Greek and Persian lists of the early kings, *Fraser* gives both; see note, end of Esther. Ed.

Epitome of the History of the Jews, and surrounding nations, (as connected,) from the close of the Old, to the times of the New Test.

Soon after the events, recorded by Nehemiah, and in Esther, or perhaps before their close, Artaxerxes Longimanus died, and was succeeded by Darius Nothus. (B. C. 423.) He, dying, was succeeded by Artaxerxes Mnemon; (405;) in whose time, Johanan, the high priest, murdered his brother Joshua in the temple, and the nation was fined by the Persians. After some other successions, Darius Codomannus, the last king of the Medo-Persian empire, ascended the throne. (336.) During all these years the Jews were entirely a province of that empire.

Xerxes (father of Artaxerxes Longimanus) had before this unsuccessfully attempted to subjugate them. (*Dan.* 11: 2—4.) This so exasperated the Greeks, that they long meditated to subvert the Persian empire.—Various events made way for Alexander the great, king of Macedon, to be appointed commander of a Grecian army, raised, to invade the Persian dominions. With about 30,000 select troops, he passed over into Asia; (B. C. 334;) and, with a celerity, unexampled in history, having vanquished the immense armies of Darius, in 3 pitched battles, the last followed by the murder of Darius by his own servants, he terminated the Medo-Persian empire, and assumed dominion over all its nations. (330.) (*Dan.* 2: 39. 7: 6. 8: 5—7. 11: 2—4.) In a short time, Alexander, having still more enlarged his dominions, died at Babylon; and after many severe and bloody contests, his empire was divided into 4 kingdoms, Macedonia, Thrace, Syria, and Egypt. (323.) (*Dan.* 7: 6. 8: 8.)—The Jews, however, had little concern, for some ages, with either, except the kings of Syria, and of Egypt, called by Daniel, the king of the N. and the king of the S. (*Dan.* 11: 2—6.) Judea lay between the dominions of the successive rulers of these kingdoms; and was long under the power of one or the other, (*Dan.* 11: 5—20.) and exposed to the ravages of armies, which marched through the land. At first they formed part of the kingdom of Egypt, under Ptolemy Soter: after his death, Ptolemy Philadelphus, his son and successor, showed them much favor; and during his reign, the Hebrew SS. began to be translated into Greek, for the benefit of Jews, in Egypt and other places, where the Greek was known.—This translation is called the Septuagint; and by means of it, many of the learned Gentiles became acquainted with the Old Testament.

The Jews, having been cruelly oppressed by Ptolemy Philopater, (who, attempting to enter into the holy of holies, was opposed and hindered by the priests and rulers, which he indignantly resented,) revolted from him, and submitted to Antiochus the Great, king of Syria. But Antiochus, having rashly engaged in war with the Romans, was vanquished, and reduced to make an inglorious peace; which gave the Romans the first entrance into the Grecian empire, or the 3d kingdom. (*Dan.* 2: 39—43. 7: 7, 8,11: 17—19, 31.) After the death of Antiochus the great, and the inglorious reign of his son, Seleucus Philopater, (*Dan.* 11: 20.) Antiochus Epiphanes, called by Daniel 'a vile person,' succeeded, and most cruelly oppressed and persecuted the Jews, causing all the worship at the temple to cease, and even dedicating it to his own idol. (*Dan.* 8: 9—18. 12. 11: 21—30.) But Mattathias, a priest, and his sons called the Maccabees, opposed him; and being wonderfully assisted and prospered, in many bloody contests, under Judas Maccabæus, the power of Antiochus was overthrown, his persecution terminated, the temple was recovered, and its service restored; and Antiochus soon came to a miserable end. These events are recorded in the books of Maccabees, the first of which especially is allowed to contain authentic history. (*Dan.* 11: 31—35.) From about this time, (153,) the Jews, taking advantage of the enfeebled state of the contending kingdoms, (Syria and Egypt,) became independent under the Maccabees, who united in general the high priesthood with the sovereign authority; but without the name of king, till the time of Aristobulus, son of Hyrcanus. (B. C. 107.) This epitome must exclude the notice of the intestine contests of the different parties, among the Jews; which were many, fierce, and often bloody.

At length, however, the Romans greatly extending their conquests, the kingdom of Syria was reduced to the form of a Roman province, by Pompey the great. He not long after besieged Jerusalem; and having taken it, he entered into the holy of holies: (B. C. 63;) but after that, he never prospered. (*Notes Dan.* 11: 31. *conclusion.*)—From this time, the Jews became dependent on the Romans.—At length Antipater, the father of Herod the great, an Edomite, by the favor of Julius Cæsar, (who had prevailed against Pompey, and obtained dominion at Rome,) was made ruler in Judea. (B. C. 47.) After Antipater's death, Herod his son, called by Matthew, 'Herod the king,' by the favor of the Romans, and by force of arms, obtained possession of Jerusalem, and was established in regal authority; being by birth an Edomite, but proselyted to Judaism; which authority was at length confirmed by Augustus Cæsar. (B. C. 30.) This dignity he maintained with great ability, but most atrocious cruelties, in his own family, as well as among others, till the birth of Christ. In this interim, he had built many cities, and almost rebuilt the temple. (*Notes, Hag.* 2: 6—9. *Mat.* 16: 18—16. *John* 2: 18—22. *Acts* 23: 35.) His atrociously cruel attempt to murder the infant Savior, is recorded by the evangelist; and soon after he died most miserably. (*Notes, Matt.* 2.) After some years, in which the dominions of Herod were divided into four Tetrarchies under the sons of Herod, (*Notes, Matt.* 14: 1, 2.) Judea became a Roman province; the sceptre departed from Judah, for *Shiloh* was come. (*Note, Gen*, 49: 9, 10.) And under Pontius Pilate, the Roman procurator, in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, the successor of Augustus, the Lord Jesus was crucified.—Galilee, however, still remained under the government of Herod the Tetrarch, son of Herod the king, who beheaded John Baptist: but after some other changes, at length the whole Jewish state was subverted under Titus, the son of Vespasian. (A. D. 79.) Scott.

AN EXPOSITION,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS AND NOTES,

UPON THE BOOK OF

ESTHER.

How God watched over the returned Jews, and what great and kind things were done for them, we read in the two foregoing books; but many stayed behind, having not zeal enough for God's house, and the holy land and city, to carry them through the difficulties of a removal thither; these, one would think, should have been excluded the specia protection of Providence, as unworthy the name of Israelites; but our God deals not with us according to our folly and weakness. Who drew up this story is uncertain; Mordecai was as able as any to relate, on his own knowledge, its several passages, for he bore a conspicuous part in it; and that he wrote such an account as was necessary to inform his people of the grounds of the feast of Purim, we are told, *ch.* 9: 20. therefore we think he penned the whole book. It is the narrative of a plot against the Jews, scattered in the provinces of the heathen, to cut them all off, and wonderfully disappointed, by a concurrence of providences. The most compendious exposition of it will be to read it deliberately all together at one time, for the latter events expound the former, and show what Providence intended in them. The name of God is not found in this book; but the apocryphal addition to it (which is not in the Heb. nor was ever received by the Jews into the canon, containing six chs.) begins thus, *Then Mordecai said, God has done these things.* But though the name of God be not in it, the finger of God is, directing many minute events, to bring about his people's deliverance. The particulars are not only surprising and very entertaining, but edifying, and very encouraging to the faith and hope of God's people, in the most difficult and dangerous times: we cannot now expect such miracles as brought Israel out of Egypt, but we may expect that in such ways as God here took, He will still protect his people. We are told, I. How Esther came to be queen, and Mordecai to be great, the instruments of the intended deliverance, *ch.* 1, 2. II. On what provocation, and by what arts, Haman the Amalekite obtained an order for the destruction of all the Jews, *ch.* 3. III. The great distress of the Jews, their patriots especially, thereupon, *ch.* 4. IV. The defeat of Haman's particular plot against Mordecai's life, *ch.* 5, 6, 7. V. The defeat of his general plot against the Jews, *ch.* 8. VI. The care taken to perpetuate the remembrance of this, *ch.* 9, 10. The whole story confirms the Psalmist's observation, Ps. 37: 12, 13. *The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth on him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him, He sees that his day is coming.* HENRY.

There are various opinions among learned men as to who was the author of this book. The Jews have always held it in [the greatest] veneration; and as the feast of Purim (9:26—32.) is observed by them to this day, no reasonable doubt can be entertained concerning the authenticity of the narrative. It contains no prophecies, and it is not referred to in the N. T.—It is also very remarkable, that there is no clear mention in it of any of the names, by which the God of Israel is distinguished in the sacred oracles: yet it is most evidently intended, as well as admirably calculated, to illustrate the doctrine of Providence; and the methods and instruments by which the great Ruler of the world accomplishes his purposes, both of mercy and of judgment. Perhaps this omission of the names of God was *designed.* Facts, well known, concerning the worshippers of JEHOVAH, the plot formed for their extirpation, and the wonderful deliverance vouchsafed them, were thus simply stated; in order that every reader might judge for himself, whether these facts did not demonstrate, that the God of the Jews was the great Ruler of the universe. Had this conclusion been urged on the Gentiles by a despised Jew, their prejudices might have been excited: let the simple narrative then speak for itself.—Several additional chs. are found in the Apocrypha; but they never were in the Heb. text, and the Jews never received them: they principally contain repetitions, or additions, intended to decorate the history; but which in fact destroy its simple unity and beauty: and some things in them cannot be reconciled with the times to which the history must relate.—SCOTT. Copies of this book, widely differing from each other, exist in Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, Greek and Latin. DR. A. CLARKE. Esther contains a true picture of the manners of the Persian court. HEEREN.

B. C. 460.

CHAP. I.

Ahasuerus, king of Persia, makes a royal feast, 1—9. He sends for Vashti his queen, who refuses to come, 10—12. By the advice of his counsellors, he divorces her, and asserts, by a public decree, the authority of men over their wives, 13—22.

NOW it came to pass in the days of [a] Ahasuerus, (this *is* Ahasuerus which reigned [b] from India even unto Ethiopia, *over* [c] an hundred and seven and twenty provinces;)

2 *That* in those days, when the king Ahasu-

a Ezra 4.6. Dan. 9:1.
b 8:9. Is. 18:1. 37:9.
c Dan. 6:1.

CHAP. I. V. 1—9. Several things in this ch. are very instructive, and of great use; but its design is, to show how way was made for Esther, to the crown, to defeat Haman's plot, and this, long before the plot was laid, that we may observe and admire the foresight, and vast reaches of Providence. Which king of Persia this Ahasuerus was, the learned are not agreed. Mordecai is said to have been *carried* captive from *Jerusalem,* (*ch.* 2: 6.) whence it should seem, it was one of the first kings of that empire: Lightfoot thinks, Artaxerxes, who hindered the building of the temple, called also *Ahasuerus,* (Ezra 4: 6, 7.) after his great-grandfather of the Medes, Dan. 9: 1. [Notes, 10:2. end of Neh. Esth. and Ezr.] Here is an account,

1. Of the vast extent of his dominion. In the time of Darius and Cyrus, there were but 120 provinces, Dan. 6: 1. Now, there were 127, *from India to Ethiopia, v.* 1. [note, Ezra, 1: 2.] a vast power, in a bad hand, is able to do so much the more mischief; but, in a good hand, able to do so much the more good.

2. Of the great pomp of his court. When fixed in his throne, the pride of his heart rising with the grandeur of his kingdom, he made a most extravagant feast, *v.* 4. all in vain glory, an affectation of pomp to no purpose; for none questioned his riches, nor offered to vie with him for honor. Had he showed the riches of his kingdom, and his majesty, as some of his successors did, (Ezra 6: 8. 7: 22.) it would have turned to much better account. Two feasts he made: (1.) One for his nobles and princes, which lasted 180 days, *v.* 3, 4. perhaps the nobles and princes of one province one day, of another province another. The Chaldee paraphrast (who is very bold in his additions to this book) says, there had been a rebellion, and this feast was kept for joy of the quashing of it. (2.) Another for all the people, *great and small,* which lasted seven days; some one day, and some another; and because no house would hold them, they were entertained *in the court of the garden, v.* 5. The [awnings above, and] hangings dividing the several apartments, or the tents for the com-

NOTES.

CHAP. I. V. 1, 2. It is evident, that these events took place, after the complete establishment of the Persian empire; for Shushan was the royal city of Persia. (*Neh.* 1:1. *Dan.* 8:2.) But various have been the opinions of learned men, concerning the king here called Ahasuerus. I am, however, fully satisfied with the arguments of Dean Prideaux: that he was Artaxerxes Longimanus, who commissioned both Ezra and Nehemiah. The extent of his dominions, his liberality, and his kindness to the Jews, favor the supposition. (*Ezra* 7:1—5, 11—26. *Neh.* 1:1. 2:5, 6, *v.* 6.) The Sept. calls him Artaxerxes, and Josephus, Artaxerxes Longimanus. See *Prideaux's Connection.* SCOTT.

(2.) Xerxes, the father of Ahasuerus, was assassinated by Arta-

erus [d] sat on the throne of his kingdom, which *was* in [e] Shushan the palace,

3 In the third year of his reign, [f] he made a feast unto all his princes, and his servants; the power [g] of Persia and Media, [h] the nobles and princes of the provinces, *being* before him:

4 When [i] he showed [j] the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honor of his [k] excellent majesty, many days, *even* an hundred and fourscore days.

5 And when these days were expired, the king made a feast unto all the people that were [*] present in Shushan the palace, both unto great and small, [l] seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace;

6 *Where were* [m] white, green, and † blue *hangings*, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings, and pillars of marble: [n] the beds *were of* gold and silver, upon a pavement of ‡ red, and blue, and white, and black marble.

pany, were very fine and rich; so the beds or benches on which they sat, and the pavement under their feet, *v.* 6. Better is a dinner of herbs with quietness, and the enjoyment of one's self and a friend, than this banquet, with all its noise and tumult.

3. [*] Of the good order, kept there, in some respects, notwithstanding. It was not profane, like Belshazzar's, Dan. 5: 3, 4; nor murderous, like Herod's, but two things in it are laudable. (1.) There was no *forcing*, nor urging *of healths*. The drinking was *according to the law*, probably, some law lately made; *none did compel*, (by continual proposing, so Josephus,) but every man drank as he pleased, (*v.* 8.) so that if any drank to excess, it was their own fault; a fault few would commit, when the king's order put an honor on sobriety. This caution of a heathen prince, even then when he would show his generosity, may shame many called *Christians*, who think they do not sufficiently show their good housekeeping, nor bid their friends welcome, unless they make them drunk, and, under pretence of sending the health round, send the sin round, and death with it. There is a wo to them that do so; let them read it and tremble, Hab. 2: 15, 16. It is robbing men of their reason, their richest jewel, and making them fools: [besides the lawless lusts, and countless miseries, the habit engenders.] (2.) There was no mixed dancing; in Belshazzar's feast, his wives and concubines drank with him; (Dan. 5: 2.) in Herod's, his daughter *danced before him*. Here Vashti feasted the women, not openly in the garden-court, but in her own apartment, *in the royal house*, *v.* 9. Thus, while the king showed the *honor of his majesty*, she and her ladies showed the honor of their modesty, which is truly the majesty of the sex.

V. 10—22. Here is a damp to all their mirth, through Ahasuerus's own folly, which broke off the feast abruptly, and sent the guests away silent and ashamed.

I. It was the king's weakness, to send for Vashti, when he was drunk, and in company with abundance of gentlemen, many of whom, it is likely, were in the same condition, *v.* 10, 11.—Hereby, 1. He dishonored himself as a husband; who ought to protect, but by no means to expose, the modesty of his wife, to be to her *a covering of the eyes*, (Gen. 20: 16.) not to uncover them. 2. He diminished himself as a king, in commanding from his wife, what she might refuse, much to the honor of her virtue. It was against the custom of the Persians for the women to appear in public, and he put a great hardship on her, when he did not court, but command, her to do so uncouth a thing, and make her a show. If he had not been out of possession of himself by drinking, he would not have done such a thing, but have been angry at any that should have mentioned it. When the wine is in, the wit is out.

II. However, perhaps it was not her wisdom to deny him. Coming, evidently in pure obedience, had been no reflection on her modesty, nor a bad example. The thing was not in itself sinful, therefore to obey had been more her honor than to be so precise. Perhaps she refused in a haughty manner, and then it was certainly evil; she scorned to come at the king's commandment. What a mortification to him! While showing the glory of his kingdom, he showed the reproach of his family, that he had a wife that would do as she pleased. Strifes between yoke-fellows are bad enough at any time, but before company they are very scandalous.

III. The king, thereupon, grew outrageous. He that had rule over 127 provinces, had no rule over his own spirit, *v.* 12. He had consulted his own comfort and credit more, had he stifled his resentments, passed by the affront, and turned it off with a jest.

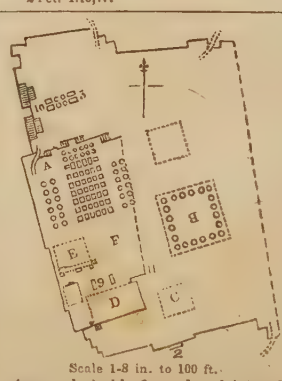
IV. Yet he would do nothing in this matter, till he advised with his privy-counsellors. The greater the power, the greater need of advice, that it may not be abused. These counsellors were learned, for they *knew law and judgment;* wise men, for they *knew the times;* and the king greatly confided in and honored them, for they *saw the king's face, and sat first in the kingdom*, *v.* 13, 14. In the

d 2 Sam. 7:1. 1 K. 1:46. Dan. 4:4.
e 2:3. 3:15. 4:16. 9:12—15. Neh. 1:1. Dan. 8:2.
f 2:19. Gen. 40:20. 1 K. 3:15. Dan. 5:1. Mark 6:21.
g 14. Ezra 1:2. Is. 21:2. Jer. 51:11. Dan. 5:28. 8:20.
h Dan. 3:2,3. 6:1,6,7.
i Is. 39:2. Ez. 28:5. Dan. 4:30.
j Ps. 76:1—4. 145:5,12,13. Dan. 2:37—44. 7:9—14. Matt. 4:8. 6:13. Rom. 9:23. Eph. 1:18. Col. 1:27. Rev. 4:11.
k 1 Chr. 29:11,12,25. Job 40:10. Ps. 21:5. 45:3. 93:1. Dan. 4:36. 5:18. 2 Pet. 1:16,17.
* Heb. *found.*
l 2 Chr. 7:8,9. 30:21—25.
m Ex. 26:1,31,32,36,37.
† Or, *violet.*
n 7:9. Ez. 23:41. Am. 2:8. 6:4.
‡ Or, *of porphyre, and marble, and alabaster, and stone of blue color.*

banes, captain of his guard, who repaired to Ahasuerus, the 3d son of Xerxes, and pretended that Darius, his eldest brother, had committed this parricide to make his way to the throne, intending also to cut off him, to secure it. Ahasuerus then slew his brother. Artabanes aimed at the regal power, but placed Ahasuerus on the throne for the present. But Megabyzus, who had married a sister of Ahasuerus, discovered to him the whole plot, on which he cut off Artabanes, and his whole party, and probably appointed the extraordinary feast mentioned in the following vs. to celebrate his deliverance.' HEWLETT.

Verses 2—6.

We cannot give a better illustration of the Persian magnificence here described, than in the cut and description of Persian ruins still extant (though at another place) attributed by very learned men to an age quite contemporary: (note, Neh. 9:4.) 'Imagination cannot picture a sight more imposing, than the vast, solitary, mutilated pillars, . . . of the magnificent colonnades, which occupy this platform [note, as above.] Sir R. K. *Porter* says of the exterior double rows [at the left side of the cut] "The total height of the columns is 60 ft. circumf. of shaft, 16, and length from tor to capital, 44 ft. The shaft is finely fluted in 52 divisions; the capitals which remain, though much injured, suffice to show that they were also surmounted with the double demi-bull" (or unicorn,) [note, and cut Num. 23:22.] "and I think there can be no doubt that the wide hollow between the niches, received a beam, meant to support and connect an entablature, over which has been placed the roof . . . The dimensions, and general particulars of the centre group are similar, but they are only 55 ft. high; the shafts 35 ft. the capitals are different: its two lower divisions, are evidently constructed of the hallowed lotus; the upper compartment has only two volutes; the middle compartment (which is only one division of the lotus) appears to have had some extraneous body introduced into the opening between it and the lower part; and the angular and unfinished state of the lower side of the capital seems to testify the same: here then the connecting line must have run, whence the roof could spring."*



Scale 1-8 in. to 100 ft.

Door-ways and window-frames of gigantic proportions and exquisite workmanship, are still in their places, [on parts of the terrace.] '. . The materials seem to have been taken mostly from the mountain behind, of a compact, grey limestone, susceptible of a good polish. . . One of the most striking considerations which arises from examining these splendid monuments, is the great mechanical skill and exquisite taste evinced in their construction, and which indicate an era of high cultivation and considerable scientific knowledge. We see here, as in Egypt, blocks of some 40 or 50 ft. long, and of enormous weight, placed one above another with a precision, which renders the points of union almost invisible; columns 60 ft. high, of huge pieces admirably formed and jointed with invariable accuracy; and a detail of sculpture (numerous cuneiform inscriptions, and 1800 and more figures), which, if it cannot boast the exact anatomical proportions and flowing outline of the Greek models, displays at least chiselling as delicate as any work of art on the banks of the Nile.' FRASER. ED.

The palace.] '*Ha birah.* Rather, *the city:* and so the Sept. The luxury and ostentation of the Persians was a proverb in Horace's time. *Shaw* and others remark, that on such occasions as that, *v.* 6. not only was the place hung about with elegant curtains of these colors, but a *canopy* of rich stuffs was suspended from side to side. And the paved work of tiles or marble, gave origin to the *Musive* or *Mosaic work*, well known among the Asiatics, and borrowed from them by the Greeks and Romans. The *beds of gold and silver* were the couches covered with gold and silver cloth.' [*Hewlett* supposes them over laid, or studded, with gold and silver. Note, 3: 9.] Dr. A. CLARKE.

(4.) 'Dr. *Fryer*, who resided in Persia, mentions a feast of 180 days, and Cheus, a Chinese emperor, used frequently to make a feast of 120 days.' BURDER.

(6.) *M.* and *M. R.—The beds.*] On these they sat, or reclined, at table. [*Heeren* thinks they were *stationary* 'divans.'] SCOTT.

* [*Heeren*, (from the sculptures,) makes A 'the audience and festival hall;' and B the 'reception hall:' C the 'sanctuary;' D the king's, and E the queen's houses; F the 'banqueting house,' Alexander burnt; probably roofed with cedar.] 'It is doubtful if the hall *ever had a roof*. The inter-columnar distances, the absence of all appropriate materials for it among the ruins, and the scantiness of the rubbish, are thought to prove it never was covered unless *occasionally by an awning*.' [Comp. v. 5, 6. A modern royal garden pavillion at Ispahan has rooms of columns, covered with a flat roof, and entirely open at the sides, which have rich curtains.] 'But those who agree with *Porter* above, think the distance of the columns not too great for beams, (long since decayed,) or if a more permanent connection was used, this has been removed to assist in constructing modern towns.' *Fraser.* Ed.

7 And they gave *them* drink in [o] vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from another,) and [*] royal wine in abundance, according to the [†] state of the king:

8 And the drinking *was* according to the law; [p] none did compel: for so the king had appointed to all [q] the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure.

9 Also Vashti [r] the queen made a feast for the women, *in* the royal house which *belonged* to king Ahasuerus.

10 ¶ On the seventh day, when [s] the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, [t] Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven [‡] chamberlains, that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king,

11 To bring [u] Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to show the people and the princes her beauty: for she *was* [§] fair to look on.

12 But the queen Vashti [x] refused to come at the king's commandment [‖] by *his* chamberlains: therefore [y] was the king very wroth, and his anger [z] burned in him.

13 Then the king said to [a] the wise men, which [b] knew the times, (for so *was* the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment:

14 And the next unto him *was* Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, *and* Memucan, [c] the seven princes of Persia and Media, which [d] saw the king's face, *and* which sat the first in the kingdom;)

15 ¶ What shall we do unto the queen Vashti, according to law, because she hath not performed the commandment of the king Ahasuerus, by the chamberlains?

16 And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not [e] done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people, that *are* in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus.

17 For *this* deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall [f] despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not.

18 *Likewise* shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen. Thus *shall there arise* too much contempt and wrath.

19 If [**] it please the king, let there go a royal commandment [††] from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that [‡‡] it be not altered, that Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto [§§] another [g] that is better than she.

20 And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published [h] throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) [i] all the wives shall give to their husbands honor, both to great and small.

21 And the saying [‖‖] pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memucan:

o 1 K. 10:21. 2 Chr. 9:20. Dan. 5.2—4.
* Heb. *wine of the kingdom.*
† Heb. *hand.*
p Jer. 35:8. 51:7. Hab. 2:15,16.
q John 2:8.
r 5:4,8.
s Gen. 43:34. Judg. 16:25. 1 Sam. 25: 36,37. 2 Sam. 13:28. Prov. 20:1. Ec. 7:2—4. 10:19. Eph. 5:18,19.
t 7:9. *Harbonah.*
‡ Or, *eunuchs.* Dan. 1:3—5,18,19.
u Prov. 16:9. 23:29—33. Mark 6:21,22.
§ Heb. *good of countenance.* 2 Sam. 14:25. Prov. 31:30.
x Gen. 3:16. Eph. 5:22,24. 1 Pet. 3:1.
‖ Heb. *which was by the hand of* his *eunuchs.*
y Prov. 19:12. 20:2. Dan. 2:12. 3: 13,19. Nah. 1:6. Rev. 6:16,17.
z Ex. 32:19,22. Deut. 29:20. Ps. 74:1. 79:5.
a Jer. 10:7. Dan. 2:2,12,27. 4:6,7. 5:7.
b 1 Chr. 12:32. Matt. 16:3.
c Ezra 7:14.
d 2 K. 25:19. Matt. 18:10. Rev. 22:4.
¶ Heb. *What to do?* 6:6.
e Acts 18:14. 25:10. 1 Cor. 6:7,8.
f 2 Sam. 6:16. Eph. 5:33.
** Heb. *it be good with the king.* 21 3:9. 8:5.
†† Heb. *from before him.*
‡‡ Heb. *it pass not away.* 8:8. Dan 6:8,12,15,17.
§§ Heb. *her companion.*
g 1 Sam. 15:28. 1 K. 2:32.
h Deut. 17:18. 21:21.
i Eph. 5:33. Col. 3:18. 1 Pet. 3:1—7.
‖‖ Heb. *was good in the eyes of the king.* 19. 2:4. Gen. 41:37.

Verses 7, 8.

(*M. R. o.*) The absurd practice of urging people to drink more strong liquor, than they are of themselves inclined to, has prevailed in all ages; though it is a most gross violation of common sense, freedom, and civility, as well as of morality and religion. SCOTT.

(8.) 'Among the Greeks, each guest was obliged to *keep the round*, or leave the company: hence their proverb, "*Drink or begone.*" The Romans had their *arbiter bibendi*, whose rules were to be obeyed.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 9.

It seems, the women were kept separate from the men by express appointment; which made the subsequent order of the king appear the more unreasonable. (10—12.) SCOTT.

Verse 11.

To bring Vashti.] 'The Targum adds, *naked.*' Dr. A. CLARKE. 'That such exhibitions were not unusual, the history of those times leaves us little reason to doubt.' HEWLETT. See *Herod.* &c. ED.

Verses 13, 14.

These wise men, being acquainted with the records of the kingdom, might be able to bring precedents, how former kings had acted under circumstances in any respect similar, according to the laws and customs of the kingdom; as well as to understand in general what was proper to be done in the present emergency. (1 *Chr.* 12:32.) And it was the king's manner, in all such matters, to confer with those who knew law and judgment.—The seven counsellors here mentioned had free access to the king, and were the first subjects in the kingdom. (*Note, Ezra* 7:14.) SCOTT.

Verses 16—18.

Memucan, it is supposed, was the youngest, or last in order on some account; and that he was required to give his opinion first, that he might not previously be biassed by the sentiments of his seniors or superiors. It is uncertain, whether he really deemed the queen's disobedience a dangerous precedent, while it remained unpunished or whether he paid court to the king, by counselling him to follow his own humor, and by suggesting a plausible reason for so doing. (2 *Sam.* 14:6—22.—*P. O.* 1—20.)—If husbands had been careful not to act *contemptibly*, or to give foolish and improper commands, they might have ruled by reason and affection, without either such fatal consequences, or violent measures. But despotism in civil government leads to despotism in domestic life [and *vice versa*]: men imagine, there is no way to rule, but by force and terror; and thus the superior relations become tyrants, and the inferior, slaves, submitting by constraint, without conviction or affection. SCOTT. The very idea of a contest for power between husband and wife, is revolting to a well regulated mind, for as Dr. WAYLAND remarks, 'Such is the nature of human affections, that we derive a higher pleasure from rendering happy those whom we love, than from [simple] self-gratification. Thus a parent prefers self-denial for the sake of a child, to self-indulgence. The same principle is illustrated in every case of pure, disinterested benevolence. *This is the essential element* on which depends the happiness *of the married state.* To be in the highest degree happy, we must each prefer the happiness of another to our own. The marriage contract binds each party, whenever individual gratification is concerned, to prefer the happiness of the other party to its own.' See *Elts. Mor. Sci.* How effectually would this principle prevent every species of matrimonial discord! And how offensive must that selfish state of mind, which seeks gratification in *domineering* over a husband or a wife be, in the eyes of a God of Love! ED.

Verses 19—22.

By this irrevocable edict, which was published in the various languages, spoken through the immense empire of the Persians, that all might understand it, Ahasuerus's example was virtually proposed for general imitation: so that every husband was allowed to divorce his wife, if she disobeyed his command, even when evidently foolish and unreasonable! SCOTT.

22 For he sent letters into all the king's provinces, [j] into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, [k] that every man should bear rule in his own house, and that * *it* should be published [l] according to the language of every people.

CHAP. II.

By advice of his servants, Ahasuerus causes fair virgins to be sought out in every province of his kingdom, that he may choose a queen, 1—4. Esther had been brought up by Mordecai, 5—7. She obtains favor with the keeper of the women; pleases the king; and is made queen, having observed Mordecai's directions, 8—20. Mordecai discovers a plot against the king; the criminals are punished; and his service is registered in the chronicles of the kingdom, 21—23.

AFTER these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased, [a] he remembered Vashti, and [b] what she had done, and what was decreed against her.

2 Then said the [c] king's servants, that ministered unto him, [d] Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king:

3 And let the king appoint officers * in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace, to the house of the women, unto † the custody of [f] Hege the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let [g] their things for purification be given *them:*

4 And let the maiden which pleaseth the king, be queen instead of Vashti. And [h] the thing pleased the king; and he did so.

5 ¶ *Now* in [i] Shushan the palace there was a [j] certain Jew, whose name *was* Mordecai, the son of Jair, [k] the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite;

6 Who had been carried away from Jerusalem, with the cap-

[j] 3:12. 8:9. Dan. 3:29. 4:1.
[k] 1 Tim. 2:12. Tit. 2:4,5.
* Heb. *one should publish* it *according to the language of his people.* 3:12.
[l] Luke 16:8. Acts 2:5—11. 1 Cor. 14: 19,20.
[a] Dan. 6:14—18.
[b] 1:12—21.
[c] 1:10,14. 6:14.
[d] Gen. 12:14,15. 1 K. 1:2,3.
[e] 1:1,2.
† Heb. *the hand.*
[f] 8. *Hegai.*
[g] 12—14. Is. 3:18—23.
[h] 1:21. 3:9,10. 2 Sam. 13:4—6. 16: 21—23. 17:4. Matt. 14:6.
[i] 3. 1:2. 5:1.
[j] 3:2—6. 10:3.
[k] 1 Sam. 9:1. 2 Sam. 16:5.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

No extent of possessions or dominion can satisfy the human heart, and give contentment or felicity even in this present life. But 'to whom much is given, of him will much be required' by the great Proprietor, who is continually saying to monarchs, as to subjects, 'Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayst be no longer steward.'—Ostentatious generosity and magnificence, for a man's own honor and glory, that his wealth, bounty, and taste may be admired and applauded, is a common idolatry of the great and 'noble:' and, except grace prevail in the heart, self-exaltation and self-indulgence, in some form or other, will be the ruling principles. But indeed the honor of every endowment, possession, or achievement, of created beings, belongs solely to the underived, unchangeable Creator: his glory, in our own true felicity and that of our fellow creatures, should be our great end in every action; and all other considerations ought to be subordinated to it, and regulated by it.—In all other feasts, but the marriage-supper of the Lamb! the pleasure is greatly alloyed, and soon palls; and seldom do any frequent them, without being led into some degree of excess, injurious to their strength of body and vigor of mind. They are scenes of temptation, suited to [over-excite] man's various propensities. The enemy of souls will be sure to avail himself of the unguarded moments, especially of such as are in reputation for wisdom and piety; and *real* Christians must not only shun such scenes, and separate from those who frequent them; but likewise, by warnings and exhortations, endeavor to preserve their brethren from sin: and if, by this conduct at their own tables, they incur the censure of being penurious; 'the poor, whom they always have with them,' afford them a fair occasion of refuting the slander. Indeed, that will go very far in hospitality to the indigent, which is quickly wasted by pampering the luxury of the affluent. (*Luke* 14: 12—14. *P. O.* 12—24.) —Seasons of peculiar festivity often terminate in vexation. Wine and jovial company elate the mind, add strength to the passions, and stun the voice of reason and conscience. On such occasions caprice generally dictates the conduct; propriety and decorum are often disregarded; unreasonable claims are started, or projects formed; and the eagerness of men's spirits ill brooks contradiction or affront, while it disposes to give them. Thus anger [and lust are] excited and exasperated; and discords, revenge, duels, and murders, are the frequent consequences!—Let it also be specially noted, that superiors, in all cases and circumstances, should be careful not to command what may *reasonably* be disobeyed; for this must weaken their authority, and prove a temptation to inferiors; yet these ought never to persist in a refusal, except when it is really a point of conscience towards God. (*Rom.* 13: 1—7.) Surely, proper domestic subordination may be effected by other means, beside severe laws, divorces, and measures more pernicious than the evil they are intended to remedy!—Let us be on our guard against every incentive to our passions; watching and praying against wrath, pride, and self-will, as well as sensuality. SCOTT

NOTES.

CHAP. II. V. 1. Under color of ascribing infallibility to the sovereign, and thus flattering his pride; this restriction [of not revoking an edict] perpetually exposed him, in his unguarded hours, to be deluded into the most pernicious measures; and would not so much as allow him to remedy the injustice, or impolicy, into which he had been betrayed, when reflection and experience had made him sensible of error. (3:3—13. 9:1—16. *Dan.* 6:12—17.) And this was the more absurd and dangerous in its nature and effects, if they may be depended on, who inform us, that the Persian monarchs, and their counsellors, commonly framed their edicts at feasts, and when they were drinking. (3:12—15.) SCOTT.

Verses 2—4.

It is uncertain, whether this was the project of the seven counsellors before mentioned. If he had been greatly desirous of Vashti's company, the law of the Medes and Persians would scarcely have prevented him from recalling her. This will appear by the following instance:—Cambyses, king of Persia, having conceived a violent passion for his own sister, inquired of his counsellors whether it was lawful for him to marry her? And they, dreading the effects of his resentment if they opposed his will, answered, that there was no law in Persia, by which a man was allowed to marry his sister, but that it was lawful for the king of Persia to do what he pleased.—It must also be noted, that though the king could not legally reverse the decree he had signed and sealed; yet he might put to death the counsellors, who induced him to ratify it. (7:7—10. 8:8. *Dan.* 6:24.) SCOTT.

Verses 5—7.

Mordecai, though a Benjamite, is repeatedly called *the Jew:* for the whole nation was now called after *Judah.*—Some of Mordecai's ancestors, (probably Kish,) had been carried to Babylon with Jeconiah; (2 *K.* 24:8—16.) and the family afterwards settled at Shushan. But it seems they were diminished in number, or impoverished: so that Mordecai's own cousin had been left an orphan.—The conjectures of several learned men concerning her, taken from rather a slight similarity of names between her and the wives of some of the Persian kings, mentioned in pagan historians, seem entirely groundless; as the dissimilarity of character, and indeed all other circumstances, vastly preponderate against them. ID.

(7.) *Hadassah.*] 'A myrtle, in *Chal.* This was probably her first or Babylonish name. When she came to the Persian court, she was called *Esther, aster,* or *sitara,* which signifies a *star* in Persian: the name is undoubtedly Persian.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

tivity which had been carried away with [l] Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.

7 And he [*] brought up [n] Hadassah, that *is* Esther, [o] his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid *was* [†] fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, [p] took for his own daughter.

8 ¶ So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of [q] Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women.

9 And the maiden pleased him, and [r] she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her [s] her things for purification, with [‡] such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens *which were* meet to be given her, out of the king's house: and he [§] preferred her and her maids unto the best *place* of the house of the women.

10 Esther [t] had not showed her people nor her kindred: [u] for Mordecai had charged her that she should not show *it*.

11 And Mordecai [x] walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know [‖] how Esther did, and what should become of her.

12 ¶ Now when every maid's turn was come [y] to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, *to wit*, [z] six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odors, and with *other* things for the purifying of the women;)

13 Then thus came *every* maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her, to go with her out of the house of the women, unto the king's house.

14 In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king [a] delighted in her, and that [b] she were called by name.

15 ¶ Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, [c] who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And [d] Esther obtained favor in the sight of all them that looked upon her.

16 So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in [e] the tenth month, which *is* the month Tebeth, in [f] the seventh year of his reign.

17 And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favor [¶] [**] in his sight more than all the virgins; [g] so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.

18 Then the king [h] made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, *even* Esther's feast; and he made a [††] release to the provinces, and [i] gave gifts according to the state of the king.

19 And when [k] the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai [l] sat in the king's gate.

20 Esther [m] had not *yet* showed her kindred, nor her people; as Mordecai had charged her: for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai,

to that pious instance of charity, that many who have taken care of the education of orphans, have lived to see the good fruit of their care and pains, abundantly to their comfort. Lightfoot thinks this is that Mordecai, Ezra 2: 2. who went to Jerusalem with the first, and helped forward the settlement of his people, until the building of the temple was stopped, and then went back to court, to see what service he could do them there. How tender Mordecai was of her, as of an own child, *v.* 11. Let those whose relations are thus cast on them by Providence, be thus kindly affectioned and solicitous. How respectful she was to him; though in relation his equal, yet in age and dependence being his inferior, she honored him as her father, *did his commandment*, *v.* 20. This is an example to orphans; if they fall into the hands of those who love them and take care of them, let them make suitable returns of duty and affection. Mordecai did not bid her deny her country, nor tell a lie to conceal her parentage; but she must not proclaim it: all truths are not to be spoken at all times, though an untruth is not to be spoken at any time.

dignity, do not consider the custom of those times and countries. Every one the king took to his bed, was married to him, and was his wife of a lower rank, as Hagar was Abraham's; so that if Esther had not been made queen, the sons of Jacob need not say he *dealt with their sister as with a harlot*. Concerning Esther, observe,

1. Her original and character, *v.* 7. When those whose unhappiness it is to be thus deprived of their parents, in their childhood, yet afterwards come to be eminently pious and prosperous, we ought to notice it to the glory of that God, his grace and providence, who has taken it among the titles of his honor, to be a *Father of the fatherless*. Her wisdom and virtue were her greatest beauty, but it is an advantage to a diamond to be well set, *v.* 7. Mordecai, her cousin-german, was her guardian, *brought her up, and took her for his own daughter*. The LXX say, he designed to make her his wife; if so, he was to be praised that he opposed not her better preferment. Let God be acknowledged in raising up friends for the fatherless and motherless; let it be an encouragement

l 2 K. 24:14,15. 2 Chr. 36:9,10. *Jehoiachin.* Jer. 22:24,28. *Coniah.* 24:1.
* Heb. *nourished.* Eph. 6:4.
n Dan. 1:6,7.
o 15. Jer. 32:7—12.
† Heb. *fair of form and good of countenance.* 1:11.
p Gen. 48:5. 2 Cor. 6:18. 1 John 3:1.
q 3. *Hege.*
r Gen. 39:21. 1 K. 8:50. Ezra 7:6. Neh. 2:8. Ps. 106:46. Prov. 16:7. Dan. 1:9. Acts 7:10.
s 3,12.
‡ Heb. *her portions.*
§ Heb. *changed her.*
t 3:8. 4:13,14. 7:4. Matt. 10:16.
u 7,20. Eph. 6:1.
x 13,14.
‖ Heb. *the peace of Esther.* Gen. 37: 14. 1 Sam. 17:18. Acts 15:36.
y 1 Thes. 4:4,5.
z Prov. 7:17. Cant. 3:6. Is. 57:9. Luke 7:37,38.
a 4:11. Gen. 34:19. Is. 62:4,5.
b Is. 45:4.
c 7.
d Cant. 6:9. Acts 7:10.
e 3:9.
f 1:3. Ezra 7:8.
¶ Or, *kindness.*
** Heb. *before him.*
g 4:14. 1 Sam. 2:8. Ps. 75:6,7. 113: 7,8. Ez. 17:24. Luke 1:48—52.
h 1:3—5. Gen. 29:22. Judg. 14:10—17. Cant. 3:11. 5:1. Matt. 22:2. Luke 14:8. Rev. 19:9.
†† Heb. *rest.*
i 9:22. 1 Sam. 25:8. Neh. 8:12. Rev. 11:10.
k 3,4.
l 21. 3:2,3. 5:13.
m 10.

Verses 8—10.

As Mordecai was so scrupulous in respect of Haman, (3:2—5.) it has been wondered, how he could consent to Esther's becoming the wife, or concubine, of a heathen prince, contrary to the law of Moses. But it does not seem to have been left to the choice, either of Mordecai or of Esther. 'The word we translate "was brought," may be rendered *was taken*; and that by force, as the word sometimes signifies; and as the former Targum here explains it, *She was brought by violence.*' *Patrick.*—If Esther had made known her nation, it might have interfered with her advancement to the rank of queen, as the Jews were generally despised; but she could not have avoided becoming one of Ahasuerus's concubines. Polygamy was connived at, by the Mosaic law; so that the situation of a concubine was not deemed dishonorable, or unlawful: and in her peculiar circumstances, the *ritual* law of not *giving their daughters to those* of another nation, might not be thought obligatory.—The conduct of Providence, however, should be chiefly noticed; though it does not appear that either Mordecai or Esther could have acted otherwise, had they been inclined. Scott. How few too, dare now brave the 'public opinion,' of their family, order, town, state, country! Ed.

Verses 15—17.

Ezra obtained his commission in the former part of this same year, if Artaxerxes were the same as Ahasuerus (*Note, Ezra* 7.8—10.) and they who think, that Artaxerxes granted the desire of Ezra, through Esther's influence, suppose that Esther had been the favored concubine of the king, residing in his palace a considerable time before she was publicly made and crowned queen, which was in the 10th month of the 7th year of his reign. Scott.

Verse 18.

'The Persian kings gave their queens such a city to buy them *clothes*, another for their *hair*, a third for their *necklaces*, a fourth for their *pearls*, &c. Probably, at Esther's request, such cities were released from this *queen-gold*, as it were.' Dr. A. Clarke.

Verses 19, 20.

Probably virgins had also been collected before Vashti was made queen; and to this the phrase '*second time*' refers. Scott.

(19.) *King's gate.*] 'The vassals of our ancient feudal lords met in the court of the castle: hence the expression, courts of princes. In the east, affairs are transacted at the gate of the seraglio.' *Fleury.* 'Hence the Turkish expression for their government, '*Baba humayoon*,' '*the lofty gate*,' which we translate 'Sublime Porte,' and use in the same sense as the Turks. 'The master of every family in the east even transacts his business and receives visits at his gate, not even the nearest relations advancing further, except on extraordinary occasions. Hence, at all the principal houses are porches or gateways, provided with seats.' *Shaw.* See 2 Sam. 11:9, &c. Ed.

like as when she was brought up with him.

21 ¶ In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, [n] Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the [*] door, were wroth, [o] and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.

22 And [p] the thing was known to Mordecai, who told *it* unto Esther the queen; and [q] Esther certified the king *thereof* in [r] Mordecai's name.

23 And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out: therefore they were both [s] hanged on a tree: and it was written in [t] the book of the chronicles before the king.

CHAP. III.

Haman is advanced by the king, who commands his servants to bow down to him; but Mordecai refuses to do it, 1, 2. Haman, being informed, in revenge, purposes to destroy the whole Jewish nation, 3—6. He chooses a day, by casting lots, for executing his purpose, 7. By calumniating the Jews, he obtains a decree from the king to extirpate the nation, and publishes it through all the provinces, 8—15.

AFTER these things did king Ahasuerus [a] promote Haman, the son of Hammedatha the [b] Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat [c] above all the princes that *were* with him.

2 And all [d] the king's servants, that *were* in the king's gate, [e] bowed, and reverenced Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai [f] bowed not, nor did *him* reverence.

n 6:2. *Bigthana.* * Heb. *threshold.*
o 2 Sam. 4:5,6. 16:11. 1 K. 15:25—27. 16:9. 2 K. 9:22—24. 12:20. 21:23. Ps. 144:10.
p Ec. 10:20. Acts 23:12—22.
q 6:2. Rom. 11:33.
r Phil. 2:4.
s 5:14. 7:10. Gen. 40:19,22. Deut. 21: 22,23. Josh. 8:29.
t 6:1,2. Mal. 3:16.
a 7:6. Ps. 12:8. Prov. 29:2.
b Num. 24:7. 1 Sam. 15:8.
c 1:14. Gen. 41:40,55. Ezra 7:14. Dan. 6:2.
d 2:19,21.
e Gen. 41:43. Phil. 2:10.
f 1. Ex. 17:14,16. Deut. 25:19. 1 Sam. 15:3. Ps. 15:4.

2. Her preferment, *v.* 17. This was done in the king's 7th year; (*v.* 16.) Vashti was divorced in his 3d, (*ch.* 1: 3.) so he was 4 years without a queen. He graced the solemnity of her coronation with *a royal feast*, (*v.* 18.) He also granted a *release to the provinces*, either a remittance of the taxes in arrear, or an act of grace for criminals; as Pilate, at the feast, released a prisoner. This was to add to the joy. Esther still *did the commandment of Mordecai, as when she was brought up with him*, *v.* 20. He sat *in the king's gate*, the height of his preferment, he was a porter, or door-keeper, of the court; whether he had this place before, or Esther obtained it for him, we are not told; but there he sat contentedly, and aimed no higher. Esther's observance of him evinced an humble and grateful disposition; it is a great ornament and praise to those that are advanced, to remember their benefactors, to retain the impressions of their good education, to be diffident of themselves, willing to take advice, and thankful for it.

V. 21—23. This good service of Mordecai, in discovering a plot against the king's life, is here recorded, because the mention of it will again occur to his advantage. No step is yet taken toward Haman's design of the Jews' destruction, but several steps are taken toward God's design of their deliverance, and this for one. Probably, the servants, *v.* 21. resented some affront they thought he had given them, or some injury he had done them. Who would be great, to be so much the object of envy? Who arbitrary, to be so much the object of ill-will? Princes, above any mortals, have their souls continually in their hands, and often go down *slain to the pit*, especially those who *caused terror in the land of the living*. Mordecai got notice of their treason, how, does not appear, and, by Esther's means discovered it to the king, hereby confirming her in, and recommending himself to, the king's favor. This ought to warn all traitors against all seditious practices, though they presume on secrecy, *a bird of the air shall carry the voice*. It ought also to be an instruction and example to good subjects, not to conceal any bad design they know of against the prince or the public pence, for it is confederating with public enemies. The traitors were hanged, as they deserved, but not till it was, on search, fully proved against them, (*v.* 23.) and the whole matter was recorded in the king's journals, with a particular remark, that Mordecai was the man who discovered the treason.

CHAP. III. V. 1—6. I. Here is Haman advanced by the prince, and adored, thereupon, by the people. He was an Amalekite, says Josephus, probably descended of Agag, a common name of the princes of Amalek, Num. 24: 7.

II. Mordecai adheres to principle with a bold and daring resolution, and therefore refuses to reverence Haman, as the rest of the king's servants did, *v.* 2. He was urged to it, for his life, by his friends, especially considering Haman's insolence, *v.* 3. but in vain; he told them plainly, a Jew could not, in conscience, do it: doubtless, his refusal was commonly attributed to pride, envy, or a seditious spirit. Those that would make the best of it, looked upon it as his weakness, or want of breeding, called it a humor, and a piece of affected singularity; none scrupled it, except Mordecai; yet his refusal was pious, conscientious, and pleasing to God, for a Jew's religion forbade him, 1. To give such extravagant honors as were required, to any mortal, [comp. note, Ezra 1: 3.] especially so wicked a man as Haman. In the apocryphal chs. of this book, (*ch.* 13: 12—14.) Mordecai, thus appeals to God; *Thou knowest, Lord, that it was neither in contempt nor pride, nor for any desire of glory, that I did not bow down to proud Haman, for I could have been content with good will, for the salvation of Israel, to kiss the soles of his feet; but I did this, that I might not prefer the glory of man above the glory of God, neither will I worship any but Thee.* 2. He especially thought it an injustice to his nation, to give such honor to

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Resolutions formed in anger, and executed without deliberation, make work for bitter recollection and repentance. A wise man therefore will not proceed even to punish the guilty, till passion has subsided, and reason resumed her sway.—The depravity of our nature, and the fallibility of our judgment, render it indispensable to our interest and happiness, that we should be allowed to change our sentiments and conduct, and correct our mistakes. God has mercifully placed us under a dispensation, which admits of this: and though many painful effects must follow from transgression, we shall not be ruined by it, if we avail ourselves of this provision. (*Ez.* 18: 30.)—No one should be too proud, to confess that he has been mistaken: and as this would preclude the absurdity of human laws which must never be repealed or reversed; so it would strike at the root of that self-justifying, pertinacious temper, which induces sinners to neglect the Gospel, and go on in sin.—The servants of mighty monarchs, though themselves princes and nobles, have often stooped to be pimps and parasites, to support their present authority, purchase impunity for past crimes, or procure future and still greater preferment! But how degrading! Even reason, (not to say religion,) could her voice be heard, would command men to moderate and restrain their passions, and to teach them submission by habituating them to brook denial.—How low is our nature sunk, when the gratifications of [the lower propensities of our nature] are the leading pursuits, and the highest felicity, of many millions of rational creatures! when every consideration of decency, equity, and conscience; when domestic comfort, relative duties, and the natural rights of mankind; when even reputation, interest, and health; when life, and the immortal soul itself, are habitually sacrificed to such base and hateful idols! Yet after a prostituted ingenuity has done its utmost, disappointment, vexation, and loathing must ensue: and that man most wisely consults even the enjoyment of this present life, who most exactly obeys the precepts of the divine law.—It is peculiarly useful to consider the providential conduct of God fulfilling his wise, faithful, righteous, and merciful purposes, in the midst of the extravagances occasioned by the mad passions of wicked men. Orphans are often peculiarly favored, to encourage us to entrust our children to his care while we live, and when about to die and leave them. If wealth or kingdoms were good for God's people, they would certainly have them; but prosperity too generally feeds the distempers of corrupt nature, and poverty and obscurity are more advantageous. Even those high stations, which some few believers occupy for the good of their brethren, will be their *cross*, if not their *snare;* and their comforts must flow from the same source, and be of the same nature, with those of the poorest Christian; and are generally in more scanty measure.—We ought, however, to be passive in the Lord's hands; and only be careful to avoid sin, and to perform our duty, in whatever station.—Our *profession* of religion, and many things relating to it, must often be regulated and timed according to circumstances; so that we not only need to regard the advice of wise and experienced Christians, but daily to ask for that wisdom which is from above, or we shall be liable to perpetual mistakes. SCOTT.

Verses 21—23.

Many conjectures have been formed of the cause of this conspiracy, and the manner of its discovery; but curiosity alone is concerned in such inquiries, which after all end in uncertainty. The transaction itself was nowise uncommon; but the event showed the hand of God in it, in a most remarkable manner, and for the most important purposes. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. III. V. 2. As Mordecai evidently acted conscientiously, and was accepted by the Lord, we must not ascribe his behavior to pride, moroseness resentment, or envy. It is well known, that the Persian monarchs required an obeisance, which even the Greeks often refused or evaded, as express adoration: and it is not at all unlikely, that Ahasuerus required a similar act of adoration to be offered to his favorite.

3 Then the king's servants, which *were* in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, [g] Why transgressest thou the king's commandment?

4 Now it came to pass, [h] when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, [i] that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for [k] he had told them that he *was* a Jew.

5 And when Haman saw [l] that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman [m] full of wrath.

6 And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had showed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman [n] sought to destroy all the Jews, that *were* throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, *even* the people of Mordecai.

7 ¶ In [o] the first month, that *is*, the month Nisan, [p] in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, [q] they cast Pur, that *is*, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, *to* the twelfth *month*, that *is*, the month [r] Adar.

8 And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people [s] scattered abroad, and dispersed among the people, in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and [t] their laws *are* diverse from all people, neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it *is* not * for the king's profit to suffer them.

9 If it please the king, let it be written † that they may be destroyed; and I will ‡ pay [u] ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring *it* into the king's treasuries.

g Ex. 1:17. Matt. 15:2,3.
h Gen. 39:10.
i Dan. 3:8,9. 6:13.
k Ezra 1:3. Dan. 3:12,16—18,23—30.

an Amalekite, one of that devoted nation with whom God had sworn He would have perpetual war, (Ex. 17:16.) and concerning which He had given that solemn charge, (Deut. 25:17.) *Remember what Amalek did.* Though religion does by no means destroy good manners, but teaches us to render *honor to whom honor* is due, yet it is the character of a citizen of Zion, that not only in his heart, but *in his eyes*, such a *vile person as Haman, is contemned*, Ps. 15:4. Let those who are governed by principles of conscience, be steady and resolute, however censured or threatened, as Mordecai was.

III. Haman meditates revenge. Some, who hoped thereby to curry favor with Haman, noticed Mordecai's rudeness, waiting to see whether he would bend or break, *v.* 4. Haman then observed it himself, and was *full of wrath*, *v.* 5. it makes his proud spirit rage, and fret, and boil, within him, [note 5:9.] Mordecai must die; it is as penal, in this court, not to worship Haman, as it was in Nebuchadnezzar's, not to worship the golden image; but his single life is nothing towards a satisfaction; thousands of innocent and valuable lives must be sacrificed too; all Mordecai's people for his sake, because his being a Jew, was the reason he did not reverence Haman. Herein appear Haman's intolerable pride, insatiable cruelty, and the ancient antipathy of an Amalekite to the Israel of God. I suppose, he includes those that were returned to their own land, for that was now a province of the kingdom, Ps. 83:4. Nero's barbarous wish is his, that they had all but one neck.

V. 7—15. Here we are told how Haman obtained leave and commission to cut off all the Jews.

1. He makes a false and malicious representation of the Jews, and their character, to the king, *v.* 8. He would have him believe the Jews were a despicable, dangerous people, and that it was not for his credit nor safety to harbor them. *A certain people*, he says, as if nobody knew whence they came, and what they were; not incorporated, *but scattered and dispersed* as fugitives and vagabonds, inmates in all countries, the burden and scandal of the places where they live; 'having laws and usages of their own, and conforming not to the statutes of the kingdom, and the customs of the country; who therefore may be looked upon as disaffected to the government, and likely to infect others with their singularities, which may end in a rebellion.' It is no new thing for the best of men to have such invidious characters given of them; if it be no sin to kill, it is no sin to belie them.

2. He bids high for leave to *destroy them all*, *v.* 9. He knew there were many that hated them, and would willingly fall upon them, if they might but have a commission; and, as for the rest, he will make the king a present of 10,000 *talents*, which, he thought, would obviate the strongest objection, that the government must needs sustain loss in its revenues, by the destruction of so many subjects. Proud and malicious men will not mind expense to gratify their revenge; yet, no doubt, Haman knew how to reimburse himself, out of their spoil his janizaries were to seize for him, (*v.* 13.)

6:30—23,26—28. Jon. 1:9.
l 2. 5:9.
m 1:12. Job 5:2. Prov. 12:16. 19:19. 21:24. 27:3,4. Dan. 3:19.
n Ps. 83:4. Rev. 12:12—17.
o Neh. 2:1.
p 1:3. 2:16.
q 9:24—26. Prov. 16:33. Ex. 21:21,32. Matt. 27:35.
r 9:1,5,17—19,21. Ezra 6:15.
s Lev. 26:33. Deut. 4:27. 30:3. 32: 26. Neh. 1:8. Jer. 50:17. Ez. 6:8. 11:16. Zech. 7:14. John 7:35. Jam. 1:1. 1 Pet. 1:1.
t Ezra 4:12—15. Acts 16:20,21. 17:6, 7. 24:5. 28:22.
* Heb. *meet*, or, *equal, for the king to*, &c.
† Heb. *to destroy them.*
‡ Heb. *weigh.* Gen. 23:16.
u Matt. 18:24.

'To bow the knee or the body, to all great persons, was a common respect; for which there needed not a particular command, . . . with respect of Haman. . . . There was therefore some kind of divine honor intended, such as was paid to the Persian kings themselves, to whom the Greeks would not pay this sort of respect, because it was accounted divine. And the word *reverence* imports something beyond *bowing*; which was falling flat on their faces to the ground.' [Comp. note, 2 Chr. 33:7.] *Patrick.*—The original words may be rendered, 'They *kneeled down and fell prostrate* before Haman,' or, they *worshipped him*: and perhaps the two expressions are never united, except when *adoration* is expressly meant, and they are in this narrative uniformly united. (*Matt.* 4:9. *Acts* 10:25, 26. *Rev.* 22:8, 9.)—Most probably the homage required by Haman was idolatrous: and we may reasonably conclude, that the king himself dispensed with the customary ceremonies, out of regard to the conscientious scruples of those few Jews, who were admitted into his presence, and whom he peculiarly favored; but that Haman, despising Mordecai and hating his people, was not so condescending. It does not appear that Mordecai was blamed by any of the Jews, even amidst the most imminent danger to which the whole nation was exposed. (*Dan.* 3:1—7.) SCOTT.

Reverenced Haman.] '"*Gave* him *divine honors*," as to a deity, for such were given to the kings of Persia, and might be to their favorites.' *Gill. Clarke. Nor did him reverence*, either from the nature of the homage required, or because he was an Amalekite. So *Boothr.* and many others. See Ex. 17:14. 1 Sam. 15:1, 2. Notes, Matt. 2:9. 2 Chr. 33:7, &c. ED.

Verse 3—5.

These servants first remonstrated with Mordecai for his disobedience to the king: but when he disregarded them, they desired to know whether 'his matters would stand; for he had told them he was a Jew.' This proves, that he vindicated himself on the ground of his religion: and it implies, that he expected Ahasuerus would admit this plea; which favors the supposition, that Persian kings used to excuse their Jewish servants from such obeisance, as they could not conscientiously render. SCOTT.

(4.) *Whether Mordecai's matters would stand.*] 'Whether he and the Jews would be allowed to observe, with impunity, their singular customs.' LAWSON.

Verse 6.

Haman was a man of a weak and vain-glorious mind, and intoxicated with prosperity, as the whole history shows. It may fairly be concluded that his device was not his own; but was suggested by that ambitious spirit, who aspires to be 'the god of this world,' who has been 'a murderer from the beginning,' and whose enmity to the 'Seed of the woman,' to Christ and his church, is communicated to all his children. In this view, it was a plan worthy of the vast capacity, enmity, malice, ambition, and desperation of that arch rebel against his Maker. SCOTT. Human life is ever of little account with despots and conquerors. ED.

Verse 7.

The event of the lot showed the vanity of Haman's oracles or auguries, and illustrated the doctrine of a particular Providence over all the affairs of men, and the care of God over his church. SCOTT.

Verse 8.

Diverse.] 'One great purpose of many of their peculiar rites and customs was, to keep the Jews separate from the heathen. These frequently drew reproaches upon them. *Tacitus* describes them as a people whose religious rites were contrary to all the world beside.' COLLYER.

Verse 9.

10,000 *talents.*] As a despotism paralyses the true sources of national wealth, its tyrants are still obliged to support their extravagant ostentation by selling justice, power, or aught else that ambition, passion, or revenge covets, to the highest bidder: and he calculates in his turn to pay the price and enrich himself by every method of extortion or injustice. Compare the present state and system of Turkey, Persia, Egypt, &c. Can we wonder that this system should desolate the fairest portions of those countries; and make a barren wilderness where the gifts of nature have been most lavishly bestowed? 'The sum is 3,750,000*l.* *Brerewood.* 3,415,000*l.* *Sutcliffe.* 2,100,000*l.* *Prideaux.* 2,119,000*l.* DR. *A. Clarke.*' COND. COMM. 'We cannot avoid being struck by the prodigious abundance, in Central Asia, of the precious metals, particularly gold, whether in ancient or modern times. The thrones of their princes, [cuts, 1 K. 10:18, 19. Esth. 1:2.] the furniture of their palaces, &c. especially of the table, [1:7.] &c. from Solomon down, have been fashioned of massive gold: weapons are thus decorated, and dresses or carpets embroidered with gold. [1:6.] The descriptions given both by *Xenophon* in ancient, and *Chardin* in modern times, of the riches and splendor of the Persian kings, so closely resemble each other, that they would seem to have proceeded from the pens of contemporaries. This splendor was not a prerogative confined to the monarchs alone, the satraps were comparatively as wealthy as their masters, and their inferior officers again in the like proportion. (*Herod.*) We meet also with occasional instances of private individuals pos-

10 And the king [x] took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' [*] enemy.

11 And the king said unto Haman, The silver *is* given to thee, the people also, [y] to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.

12 Then were the king's [†] scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded, unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that *were* over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province, [z] according to the writing thereof, and *to* every people after their language; [a] in the name of king Ahasuerus was it writ[t]en, and [b] sealed with the king's ring.

13 And the letters were sent [c] by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, [d] both young and old, little children and women, [e] in one day, *even* upon the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which *is* the month Adar, and *to take* [f] the spoil of them for a prey.

14 The [g] copy of the writing, for a commandment to be given in every province, was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day.

15 The posts went out, being [h] hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman [i] sat down to drink; but [k] the city Shushan was perplexed.

CHAP. IV.

Mordecai and the Jews fast, and mourn exceedingly, 1—3. Esther, sending to inquire of Mordecai the reason, is informed of the decree, and required to petition the king for her people, 4—9. She excuses herself by alleging the peril of the attempt: but being shown the consequences, she appoints a fast of three days, and consents to approach the king, though at the hazard of her life, 10—17.

WHEN Mordecai perceived [a] all that was done, Mordecai [b] rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth [c] with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and [d] cried with a loud and a bitter cry;

and hoped to be not only a saver, but a gainer by the bargain.

3. He obtains what he desired, *v.* 10, 11. The king took no time to examine; but, as willingly as Haman could wish, gave the Jews into his hands, as lambs to the lion, *v.* 11. And so little did he consider the loss in his tribute, and Haman's gain in the spoil, that he gave him withal the 10,000 talents. Such implicit confidence likewise had he in Haman, and so perfectly had he abandoned all care of his kingdom, that he gave him his ring, his privy-seal, or sign-manual, [note and cut, Gen. 38: 18.] wherewith to confirm whatever edict he pleased to draw up. Miserable is a kingdom at the disposal of such a head as this, which has one ear only, and a nose to be led by, but neither eyes nor brains, nor scarcely a tongue of its own.

4. He then consults his soothsayers, to find a lucky day for the massacre, *v.* 7. Esther had been queen about 5 years; and, as if he doubted not but Heaven would favor his design, and further it, he refers it to the lot, i. e. to the Divine Providence, to choose the day for him; but that, in the decision, proved a better friend to the Jews; for the lot fell on the 12th month, so that Mordecai and Esther had 11 months to turn them in, to defeat the design; or, if they could not, space would be left for the Jews to escape. Haman, perhaps fearing the enterprise as hazardous, submits to the laws of his superstition, and will not anticipate the supposed fortunate day, no, not even to gratify his impatient revenge. This may shame us, who often acquiesce not in the directions and disposals of Providence, when they cross our desires and intentions. He that believeth the lot, much more the promise, will not make haste. But God's wisdom serves its own purposes by men's folly.

5. The bloody edict is, hereupon, drawn up, signed, and published, *v.* 12—14. No crime is laid to the Jews' charge; it is not pretended they were obnoxious to public justice, nor is any condition offered, upon which they might have their lives spared, but die they must, without mercy Thus have the church's enemies thirsted for the *blood of the saints and the martyrs of* Jesus, and drunk of it till they have been perfectly intoxicated, (Rev. 17: 6.) yet still they cry, *Give, give.* This cruel order is ratified with the king's seal, directed to the king's lieutenants, and drawn up in the king's name, yet he knows not what he does. Posts are sent out, with all expedition, to carry copies to the respective provinces, *v.* 15. How restless the malice of the church's enemies! it will spare no pains, lose no time.

6. The different temper of the court and city, hereupon. The court was very merry; the *king and Haman sat down to drink*, perhaps to drink confusion to all the Jews. Haman was afraid, lest the king's conscience should smite him; to prevent which, he engrossed him to himself, and kept him drinking: this cursed method many take to drown their convictions, and harden their own and others' hearts in sin. The city was very sad; (and the other cities of the kingdom, no doubt, when they heard it;) *Shushan was perplexed;* not only the Jews, but all their neighbors that had any justice or compassion, grieved to see their king so abused, and *wickedness in the place of judgment*, (Eccl. 3: 16.) to see men that lived peaceably, treated so barbarously; and the consequences to themselves, they knew not. But the king and Haman cared for none of these things. It is absurd and impious to indulge in mirth and pleasure, when the church is in distress, and the public perplexed.

CHAP. IV. V. 1—4. We left God's Isaac bound upon the altar, ready to be sacrificed; and the enemy in triumph; here we have the general sorrow among the Jews, on the publishing of Haman's bloody edict.

1. Mordecai cried bitterly, *rent his clothes, and*

x 8:2,8. Gen. 41:42.

* Or, *oppressor.* 7:6.
y Ps. 73:7. Jer. 26:14. 40:4. Luke 23:25.
† Or, *secretaries.*
z 1:22. 8:9. 9:27.
a 1 K. 21:8. Dan. 6:8,12,15.
b 8:2,8.
c 8:10,14. 2 Chr. 30:6. Job 9:25. Jer. 51:31. Rom. 3:15.
d 1 Sam. 15:3. 22:19.
e 8:12—14. Jam. 2:13.
f 8:11. 9:10. Is. 10:6.
g 8:13,14.
h Prov. 1:15. 4:16.
i Hos. 7:5. Am. 6:6. John 16:20. Rev. 11:10.
k 4:16. 8:15. Prov. 29:2.
a 3:8—13.
b 2 Sam. 1:11. Job 1:20. Jon. 3:4—9. Acts 14:14.
c 3. Josh. 7:6. 2 Sam. 13:19. Job 2:8. 42:6. Is. 58:5. Ez. 27:30. Dan. 9:3. Matt. 11:21.
d Gen. 27:34. Is. 15:4. 22:4. Ez. 21:6. 27:31. Mic. 1:8. Zeph. 1:14. Rev. 18:17—19.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The vanity and comparative worthlessness of earthly dignities and possessions are shown, by their being so commonly lavished on the basest of the human species; 'God having provided better things' for the objects of his special love.—The poison of the old serpent, infused by his first temptation, 'Ye shall be as gods,' still rankles in the human heart; and when the pride of man is emboldened by great prosperity, it is capable of openly affecting the honor and worship, which belong to God alone! (*Gen.* 3: 4, 5. *Ez.* 28: 2—5. *P. O.* 1—10. *Dan.* 6: 6—9. *Acts* 12: 20—23.) We are all by nature idolatrous, and *self* is the most favorite of our idols: and whilst we admire and glory in our own supposed excellences, we delight that others should join the incense of their adulation. And when this vast ambition occupies a narrow mind, and the possessor climbs the pinnacle of earthly grandeur, he forgets he is a man! What cause have we to be thankful for external restraints to our headstrong passions; and how ought we to watch and pray against pride, anger, malice, and every propensity! for if left under the power of them, we cannot conceive how far they would hurry us.—Let us also remember to be thankful for a limited, mild, and equitable government; and to beg of God to extend the same blessing to all other nations; with all the blessings of our holy religion, and that liberty with which Christ makes his people free.—The world, as lying in wickedness, must hate the people of God, who bear his image and do his will: but they will be peculiarly obnoxious to tyrants; as they must refuse unreserved compliance with their mandates and humors; being the subjects of another kingdom, and governed by laws diverse from, nay opposite to, their favorite maxims and pursuits. Whatever mere professors may be, true Christians are the best subjects under every government: not only because they are more peaceable, honest, and industrious than their neighbors; and conscientiously pay tribute, and render obedience in all things lawful; but because their examples and conversation edify many, and their prayers bring down a blessing on the land in which they live in peace. No acquisitions of wealth therefore could compensate the loss of them, even in a political view; and without bringing into the account the enormous load of national guilt, which persecution rapidly accumulates.

SCOTT.

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sessed of immense wealth; (*Herod.*) and even a pastoral nation of E. Asia, (the Massagetæ.) had most of its utensils in gold. (*Herod.*) . . . The best of every country was considered as the property of the king, and was delivered to him by the rulers of the provinces; and as by these means provisions of all sorts were accumulated at the royal residence from every quarter of the empire, there necessarily reigned there an abundance and luxury which corrupted the morals of the court, and introduced those habits of waste and sensuality [v. 15.] for which the Persians were notorious.' *Researches, &c. Persians.* HEEREN. ED.

Verse 13.

Posts.] 'Cyrus originally established couriers, places for post-horses on all the high roads, and offices where they might deliver their packets to each other. This they did, night and day, faster than cranes can fly.' XENOPHON.

2 And came even before the king's gate: for none *might* enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.

3 And [a] in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, *there was* [f] great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and [g] weeping, and wailing; and [*] many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

4 So Esther's maids and her [†] chamberlains came and told *it* her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him; [h] but he received *it* not.

5 Then called Esther for Hatach, *one* of the king's chamberlains, whom he had [‡] appointed to attend upon her, and gave him a commandment to Mordecai, [i] to know what it *was*, and why it *was*.

6 So Hatach went forth to Mordecai unto the street of the city, which *was* before the king's gate.

7 And Mordecai told him of [j] all that had happened unto him, and of the sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them.

8 Also he gave him [k] the copy of the writing of the decree, that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to show *it* unto Esther, and to declare *it* unto her, and [l] to charge her that she should go in unto the king, [m] to make supplication unto him, and [n] to make request before him for her people.

9 And Hatach came, and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

10 Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai;

11 All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into [o] the inner court, who is not called, *there is* [p] one law of his to put *him* to death, except such to whom [q] the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: [r] but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.

12 And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.

13 Then Mordecai commanded to answer

put on sackcloth, v. 1, 2. laying the danger to heart more than any, because he knew Haman's spite was against him primarily, and for his sake the Jews were struck at; therefore, though he did not repent of what some would call *his obstinacy*, for he persisted in it, (*ch.* 5: 9.) yet it troubled him greatly, that his people should suffer for his scruples, which perhaps occasioned some of them to reflect on him as too precise. But, being able to appeal to God, that what he did, he did from a principle of conscience, he could with comfort *commit his own cause*, and that of his people, *to Him that judgeth righteously*. God will keep those that are exposed by the tenderness of their consciences. The law, [or ridiculous custom still prevalent in the east,] that *none might enter into the king's gate in sackcloth*, allowed Mordecai to come only before the gate, not to take his place in the gate.

2. All the Jews laid it much to heart, v. 3. denied themselves the comfort of their tables, and of their beds at night. They who, for want of confidence in God, and affection to their own land, had staid in the land of their captivity, when Cyrus gave them liberty to be gone, now perhaps repented their folly, and wished, too late, they had complied with the call of God.

Esther, on a general intimation of Mordecai's trouble, *was exceedingly grieved*, v. 4. His grief was hers, such a respect did she still retain for him; and the Jews' danger was her distress; for, though a queen, she forgat not her relation to them. Let not the greatest think it below them to *grieve for the affliction of Joseph*, though themselves *anointed with the chief ointments*, Am. 6: 6. Esther sent change of raiment to Mordecai, the *oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness;* but, to make her sensible of the greatness of his grief, and consequently of its cause, *he received it not*, as one that refused to be comforted.

V. 5—17. So strictly did the laws of Persia confine wives, especially the king's wives, that it was not possible for Mordecai to confer with Esther, but divers messages are here carried between them, by Hatach, appointed to attend her, one, it seems, she could confide in.

I. On Esther's sending to inquire more particularly into Mordecai's grief, he sent her an authentic account of the whole matter, with a charge to intercede, if she had any respect for him, or kindness for the Jewish nation, rectify the misinformations with which the king was imposed on, and set the matter in a true light, not doubting but he would then vacate the decree, v. 7, 8.

II. She sent her case to Mordecai, v. 11. complaining that he put a great hardship on her, in urging her to address the king; gladly would she do the Jews a kindness, but if she must run the hazard of death as a malefactor, she might well say, *I pray thee, have me excused*, and find some other intercessor.

1. The law was express, all knew it; and it was extremely doubtful whether she should find the king in a good humor, v. 11. This law was made, not so much in prudence, for the greater safety of the king's person, as in pride, that, being seldom seen, and not without great difficulty, he might be adored as a little god. This foolish law made the royal palace little better than a royal prison; the kings themselves could not but become morose, and perhaps melancholy, and so a terror to others, and a burden to themselves. Many have their lives made miserable by their own haughtiness and ill-nature. It was bad for their subjects; what good had they of a king they might never apply to for redress, or appeal to from inferior judges? It is not thus in the court of the King of kings; to the footstool of his throne of grace we may, at any time, *come boldly*, and be sure of an answer of peace to the prayer of faith. We are welcome, not only into the inner court, but even into the holiest, through the blood of Jesus. It was particularly very uncomfortable for their wives, that there was no proviso in the law to except them, who were *bone of their bone*, and *flesh of their flesh*. But perhaps it was wickedly intended as much against them as any other, that the kings might the more freely enjoy their concubines, and Esther knew it. Miserable the kingdom, when the princes framed their laws to serve their lusts.

2. Her case was, at present, very discouraging: Providence so ordered it, that she was under a cloud, the king's affections cooled toward her, she had not been *in his presence for thirty days;* this was, that her faith and courage might be the more tried, and God's goodness, in the favor she now found with the king notwithstanding, shine the brighter. Probably Haman endeavored by women, as well as wine, to divert the king from thinking of what he had done, and then Esther was neglected, from whom, no doubt, he did what he could to alienate the king, knowing her to be averse to him.

III. Mordecai still insisted; for,

1. The cause was her own, the decree did not except her; and it was certainly her wisdom rather to expose herself to a conditional death from her husband, than to a certain death from her enemy.

2. The cause, one way or other, would certainly be carried, therefore she might safely venture, v. 14. This was the language of a strong faith, when the danger was most threatening. Instruments may fail, but God's covenant will not.

3. If she deserted her friends now, through cowardice and unbelief, she would have reason to fear some judgment from heaven would be the ruin of her and her family, while the rest of the Jews would be preserved. He that by sinful shifts will save his life, and cannot find in his heart to trust God with it in the way of duty, shall lose it in the way of sin.

4. Divine Providence had an eye to this, in bringing her to be queen, '*Who knows whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?*' Therefore, (1.) 'Thou art bound in gratitude to do this service for God and his church, else thou dost not answer the end of thine elevation.' (2.) 'Thou

[a] 1:1. 3:12.
[f] 1 Sam. 4:13,14. 11:4. Is. 22:4,5,12. 27:1,3.
[g] Matt. 13:42. 22:13. 25:30.
[*] Heb. *sackcloth and ashes were laid under many.* Is. 58:5. Dan. 9:3.
[†] Heb. *eunuchs.* 1:12. 1 Sam. 8:15. *Marg.* 2 K. 9:32. Is. 56:3. Acts 8: 27.
[h] Gen. 37:35. Ps. 77:2. Jer. 31:15.
[‡] Heb. *set before her.* 1:10,12.
[i] Rom. 12:15. 1 Cor. 12:26. Phil. 2:4. Heb. 4:15.
[j] 3:2—15.
[k] 3:14,15.
[l] 2:20. 1 Tim. 6:13,17.
[m] Job 9:15. Prov. 18:14,15. Ec. 10:4. Acts 12:20.
[n] 7:3,4. 8:6. Neh. 2:3—5. Prov. 21:1.
[o] 5:1.
[p] Dan. 2:9.
[q] 5:2. 8:4.
[r] 1:19. 2:14. 1 Pet. 3:7.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV. V. 11. It may be supposed, that this law was framed, under the *pretext* of securing the person of the king from the assaults of conspirators, and of maintaining his dignity; but it would serve also to protect his ministers and favorites from detection, in their oppressions or pernicious measures. For, in general, the king must see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and receive *their* reports: and if any one would venture to present to him a complaint, petition, appeal, or information, he must do it at the hazard of his life; as the king would seldom call for any person, in opposition to the advice of his counsellors and ministers. SCOTT.

Whosoever, &c.] 'This was the law ever since the reign of Dejoces, king of Media, for the security of the king's person, as *Herod.* states, and possibly a contrivance of the king's officers to engross him to themselves, all his affairs being transacted through his ministers.' LE CLERC

Verse 13.

Think not—thou shalt escape.] 'The counsellors who ruined V

Esther, [s] Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

14 For, if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, [t] *then* shall there [u] enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but [v] thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth [x] whether thou art come to the kingdom [y] for *such* a time as this?

15 ¶ Then Esther bade *them* return Mordecai *this answer*,

16 Go, gather together all the Jews that are † present in Shushan, and [z] fast ye for me, and neither [a] eat nor drink, three days, night or day: [b] I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which *is* not according to the law: and [c] if I perish, I perish.

17 So Mordecai ‡ went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

CHAP. V.

Esther, venturing uncalled before the king, is graciously received; and, being encouraged to make her request, she invites the king and Haman to a banquet, 1—5. Being again asked what was her request, she invites them to another banquet the next day, 6—8. Haman, proud of this distinction, and elated by prosperity, is yet disquieted by Mordecai's neglect, and amidst his vain-glorying, complains of it to his friends and his wife, 9—13. By their advice he erects a gallows for Mordecai's execution the next morning, 14.

NOW it came to pass [a] on the third day, that Esther put on *her* [b] royal *apparel*, and stood [c] in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king [d] sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house.

2 And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, *that* [e] she obtained favor in his sight: and the king held out to Esther [f] the golden sceptre that *was* in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

[s] Prov. 24:10—12. Matt. 16:24,25. John 12:25. Phil. 2:30. Heb. 12:3.
[t] Gen. 22:14. Num. 23:22—24. Deut. 32:26,27,36. 1 Sam. 12:22. Is. 54: 17. Jer. 30:11. 33:24—26. 46:28. Am. 9:8,9. Matt. 16:18. 24:22.
[u] Heb. respiration. Esra 9:8. Job 9: 18.
[v] 2:7,15. Judg. 14:15—18. 15:6.
[x] Gen. 45:4—8. Is. 45:1—6. 49:23. Acts 7:20—36.
[y] 1 Sam. 17:29. 2 K. 19:3. Neh. 6:11.
† Heb. *found*.
[z] 2 Chr. 20:3. Is. 22:12. Joel 1:14,15. 2:12—17. Jon. 3:4—8.
[a] 5:1. Matt. 12:40. Acts 9:9. 27:33.
[b] Gen. 18:19. Josh. 24:15. Acts 10:7.
[c] Gen. 43:14. 1 Sam. 19:5. 2 Sam. 10:12. Luke 9:24. Acts 20:24. 21: 13. Rom. 16:4. Phil. 2:30
‡ Heb. *passed*.
[a] 4:16. Matt. 27:64.
[b] 1:11. 8:15. Matt. 10:16. 11:8. 1 Pet. 3:3—5.
[c] 4:11. 6:4.
[d] 1 K. 10:18—20. Luke 22:30. Rev. 3:21.
[e] Gen. 32:28. Neh. 1:11. Ps. 116:1. Prov. 21:1. Acts 7:10. 10:4.
[f] 4:11. 8:4.

Chap. V. Our last news of Haman, left him in his cups; of Esther, left her in tears, fasting and praying. Now this ch. brings in Esther in her joys; smiled on by the king, and honored with his company at her banquet of wine; and Haman on the fret, because he had not Mordecai's reverent salutation, and with great indignation setting up a gallows for him. Thus they that sow in tears, shall reap in joy, but the triumphing of the wicked is short.

V. 1—8. Here is,

I. Esther's bold approach to the king, *v.* 1. When the fast was finished, she lost no time; but, while the impressions of her devotions were fresh on her spirit, addressed the king. When the heart is enlarged in communion with God, it will be emboldened in doing and suffering for Him. Some think the 3 days' fast was only one whole day, and 2 whole nights, and that this is called 3 *days*, as Christ's lying in the grave so long is. This exposition is favored by the consideration, that on the 3d day she appeared at court. Resolutions which have difficulties and dangers to break through, should be pursued without delay, lest they cool and slacken. *What thou doest*, which must be done boldly, *do it quickly*. She put on her fine clothes, not to please herself, but her husband—so her prayer, in the Apocrypha. Let those whose rank obliges them to wear rich clothes, learn hence to be dead to them, and not make them their adorning.

II. Her favorable reception.

1. The king protected her from the law, assur-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Public calamities, especially those which oppress the church of God, should more affect our hearts than any private affliction.—Vain is the attempt of man to banish misery from his heart, by any of those varied devices he tries for that purpose. A refuge from the wrath to come is indeed provided; and an effectual support under temporal afflictions, and victory over death itself: but most men content themselves with striving to forget their misery, instead of seeking and securing happiness. Yet the approach of death, as well as its consequences, must be formidable, in proportion as it is unexpected and unprepared for.—We never have any good reason to complain of the Lord's dispensations; though we have frequently cause to bemoan our afflictions, to deprecate the miseries to which we are exposed, and to appeal to Him against our oppressors, persecutors, and tempters: and we are *charged* to present our daily petitions at his throne of grace, for the whole church of God and all the members of it, according to their several difficulties, trials, and services; as well as for the conversion and salvation of our fellow sinners. As the enemies of the church are instigated by malice to be unwearied in mischief, surely we should be constrained by love to be as unwearied in doing good. But we are prone to shrink from perilous and self-denying services: and to think ourselves sufficiently excused for neglecting an opportunity of important usefulness, if we can truly say, that it would have been embraced at the hazard of liberty or life. Yet, as the disciples of Him who laid down his life for us, we ought also, if properly called to it, 'to lay down our lives for the brethren:' and no labor, loss, or suffering in the way, will justify us in neglecting the duty of our station. Those who are called to stand forth boldly in perilous services, have a right to demand the united prayers of all their brethren. And, in great emergencies and adversities especially, solemn seasons of fasting, humiliation, and prayer are peculiarly useful, to prepare the mind for expecting and receiving deliverance from the mercy of God, in a proper manner. The trembling sinner is often as much afraid of casting himself, without reserve, on the Lord's free mercy, as Esther was of coming before the king. But let him venture, as she did, with earnest prayers and supplications, saying, 'If I perish, I perish,' and he shall certainly succeed. Scott.

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ti, would not spare an obnoxious alien.' *Sutcliffe*, in Cond. Comm.

NOTES.

Chap. V. V. 2. *Golden sceptre.*] 'Xenophon also states that the

3 Then said the king unto her, [s] What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what *is* thy request? it shall be even given thee [h] to the half of the kingdom.

4 And Esther answered, [i] If *it seem* good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto [k] the banquet, that I have prepared for him.

5 Then the king said, [l] Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said. So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

6 And [m] the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What *is* thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what *is* thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed.

7 Then answered Esther, and said, My petition and my request *is;*

8 If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to * perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do [n] to-morrow as the king hath said.

9 ¶ Then went Haman forth that day, [o] joyful, and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that [p] he stood not up, nor moved for him, [q] he was full of indignation against Mordecai.

10 Nevertheless Haman [r] refrained himself: and when he came home, he sent and † called for his friends, and [s] Zeresh his wife.

11 And Haman told them of [t] the glory of his riches, and [u] the multitude of his children, and all *the things* wherein the king had promoted him, and [x] how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king.

12 Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared, but myself; and [y] to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the king.

13 Yet [z] all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.

g 6. 7:2. 9:12. 1 K. 2:20. 3:5. Matt. 20:20—22. Luke 18:41.
h 6. Mark 6:23.

ed her of safety, and encouraged her address, *v.* 2, 3. He that had divorced one wife for not coming when sent for, would not kill another for coming when not sent for. God can turn the hearts of the most powerful, the most arbitrary, as He pleases, toward us. Esther feared she should perish, but is promised *half a kingdom.* God, in his providence, often prevents the fears, and outdoes the hopes, of his people, especially when they venture in his cause. Let us hence infer, as our Savior does from the parable of the unjust judge, an encouragement to *pray always, and not faint.* Esther came to a proud, imperious man, we come to the God of love and grace; she was not called, we are; the Spirit and the Bride say, *Come.* She had a law against her, we have a promise, many a promise, in our favor. She had no friend to introduce her, or intercede for her; on the contrary, he that was then the king's favorite, was her enemy: but we have an Advocate with the Father, in whom He is well pleased.

2. All her request at this time, was, that he would come to her banquet, and bring Haman, *v.* 4, 5. Hereby she would, 1. Intimate how much she valued his favor and company. Whatever she had to ask, that she desired above any thing, and would purchase at any rate. 2. Try how he stood affected to her; for if he should refuse this, it would be to no purpose, as yet, to present her other request. 3. Endeavor to bring him into a pleasant humor, and soften his spirit, to receive with more tenderness the impressions of her complaint. 4. Please him, by making court to Haman his favorite, whose company she knew he loved, and whom she desired to have present when she made her complaint, for she would say nothing of him, but what she durst say to his face. 5. She hoped, at the banquet, to have a more favorable opportunity of presenting her petition. Wisdom is profitable to direct how to manage some men that are hard to deal with.

3. He readily came, and ordered Haman to come, (*v.* 5.) an indication of the kindness he still retained for her; if he really designed the destruction of her and her people, he would not have accepted. There he renewed his kind inquiry, and his generous promise. The expression, *even to the half of the kingdom,* is proverbial; by this he assured her, he would deny her nothing in reason. Herod used it, Mark 6: 23.

4. Then Esther thought fit to ask no more than a promise to accept of another treat, the next day, *v.* 7, 8. intimating that then she would let him know the business. This adjourning of the main petition may be attributed, 1. To Esther's prudence; thus she hoped yet further to ingratiate herself with him. What is hastily asked, is often hastily denied; but what is asked with a pause, deserves to be considered. 2. To God's providence, putting it into Esther's heart to delay her petition a day longer, she knew not why, but God did, that what was to happen that night, might further her design; that Haman might arrive at the highest pitch of malice against Mordecai, and begin to *fall before him.*

V. 9—14. This account of Haman, is a comment on Prov. 21: 24. *Proud and haughty scorner is his name, that deals in proud wrath;* never any more answered that name than he, in whom pride and wrath have so much the ascendant. See him,

1. Puffed up with the honor of being invited to Esther's feast, *v.* 9. Observe with what a high gust he speaks of it, *v.* 12. Self-admirers and self-flatterers are really self-deceivers. He fancies that the queen, by this repeated invitation, designed his honor, whereas her calling him to the banquet, did but call him to the bar. What magnifying glasses do proud men look at their faces in! And how does the *pride of their heart deceive them!* Obad. 3.

2. Vexing and fretting at Mordecai's slight, and thereby made uneasy to himself, and all about him. 1. What Mordecai did, (*v.* 9.) was from a principle of conscience, [note, Ezra, 1: 3.] therefore he persevered in it, and would not cringe to Haman, no not when Esther herself complimented him. He knew God could and would deliver him and his people from Haman's rage, without any such mean and sneaking expedients to mollify him. They that walk in holy sincerity, may walk in holy security, go on in their work, not fearing man. *He that walks uprightly, walks surely.* 2. Haman can as ill bear this little affront as ever; nay, the higher he is lifted up, the more impatient

i 8. Prov. 29:11.
k 8. 3:15. Gen. 27:25. 32:20. Ps. 119:5. 1 Cor. 14:20.
l 6:14.
m 3. 7:2. 9:12. * Heb. *do.*
n 6:1, &c. Prov. 16:9.
o Job 20:5. Am. 6:12, 13. Luke 6:25. John 16:20. Jam. 4:9.
p 3:2. Ps. 15:4. Matt. 10:28.
q 3:5. 1 K. 21:4. Job 31:31. Ps 27:3. Dan. 3:13, 19. Matt. 2:16 Acts 7:54.
r Gen. 43:30, 31. 45:1. 2 Sam. 13:22, 28. Ec. 7:9.
† Heb. *caused his friends to come.*
s 6:13.
t 1:4. Gen. 31:1. Job 31:24, 25. Ps. 49:6, 16, 17. Is. 10:8. Jer. 9:23, 24. Dan. 4:30. Mark 10:24. Luke 12:15, 20. 1 Tim. 6:17.
u 9:7—10. Job 27:14, 15. Hos. 9:13, 14.
x 3:1.
y Job 8:12, 13. 20:5—8. Ps. 37:35, 36. Prov. 7:22, 23. 27:1. Luke 21:34, 35. 1 Thes. 5:3.
z 1 K. 21:4—6. Job 18:4. Ec. 1:2, 14. Phil. 4:11, 12.

kings of Persia wore a golden sceptre.' BURDER. The cut (of a Medo-Persian king) is from a huge doorway of the square columned building, on the right of the platform; cut, 1:2—6. (*Niebuhr.*) The throne, foot-stool, sceptre, and sacred lotus-cup, 'havan,' (indicating a worshipper of the 'Good Principle,' see *Zendavesta,*) are doubtless of massive gold; note, 3:9. The attendant eunuch holds the fly-flap or fan, and has his mouth covered, that, according to court etiquette, he may not breathe upon the king: elsewhere an ambassador stands before the king, and also holds his hand upon his mouth.

See *Heeren, Porter,* &c. ED.

V. 9, 10. Mordecai *now* 'stood not up nor moved,' even in *common respect,* to one of such prodigious wickedness; and would thus show that he fearlessly trusted in God. SCOTT. Lest Haman's malice seem incredible to those who do not feel all the force of such vile passions, a modern parallel is given; 'This v.' says *Roberts,* 'is indeed a graphic sketch of eastern manners. The colors are so lively, so fresh, that they might have been but the work of yesterday. See the native gentleman at the head of his courtly train: he moves along in pompous guise, and all who see him arise from their seats, take off their sandals, and humbly move in reverence to him. To some he gives a graceful wave of the hand; to others not a word or look. Should there be one who neither stands up nor moves to him, his name and abode will be inquired after, and the first opportunity eagerly embraced to glut his revenge.—A Moorman of high bearing, influence, and wealth, rented the pearl fishery of Ondāchy: Muttoo-Chadde-Appa, the proud modeliar of the Dutch governor Van de Graaff's gate, was one day passing along, where the Moorman was seated on his carpet. He arose not, moved not to him; the Modeliar's soul was fired with indignation. He forthwith resolved on his ruin, and, by deeply formed intrigues, too well succeeded. The rent was taken from the Moorman; the money he had advanced to the headman, the officers, the boatmen, the pearl-divers, and others, was lost; his estates were sold; and, to make up the deficiency, he himself was disposed of by auction for 425 rix dollars, and the Modeliar became the purchaser.' ED.

14 Then [a] said Zeresh his wife, and all his friends unto him, [b] Let a * gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to-morrow [c] speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then [d] go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And [e] the thing pleased Haman; and [f] he caused the gallows to be made.

CHAP. VI.

The king, unable to sleep, orders the records of the kingdom to be read, 1; and discovering that Mordecai's service had not been rewarded, he considers how to honor him, 2, 3. Haman, coming early to request that Mordecai might be hanged, is himself appointed to confer the highest honors upon him, 4—11. He is extremely cast down, and distressed; his friends and wife predict his ruin; and in this state of mind he is called to attend Esther's banquet, 12—14.

ON [a] that night † could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring [b] the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king.

2 And it was found written that Mordecai had told of [c] Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the ‡ door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.

3 And the king said, [d] What honor and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, [e] There is nothing done for him.

a 2 Sam. 13:3—5. 1 K. 21:7,25. 2 Chr. 22. 3,4. Mark 6:19—24.
b 7:9.
* Heb. *tree.*
c 3:8, &c. 6:4.
d 3:15. 1 K. 21:7. Am. 6:4—6. Rev. 11:10.
e 2 Sam. 16:21—23. 17:1—4. Mark 14: 10,11. Acts 23:14,15. Rom. 1:32.
f 7:10. Ps. 7:13—16. 9:15. Prov. 1: 18. 4:16. Rom. 3:15.
a 5:3. Gen. 22:14. 1 Sam. 23:26,27. Is. 41:17. Rom. 11:33.
† Heb. *the king's sleep fled away.* Dan. 2:1. 6:18.
b 2:23. Mal. 3:16.
c 2:21. *Bigthan.*
‡ Heb. *threshold.*
d Judg. 1:12,13. 1 Sam. 17:25,26. 1 Chr. 11:6. Dan. 5:7,16,29. Acts 28: 8—10. Gen. 40:23. Ps. 118:8,9. Ec. 9:15.

is he of contempt, and the more enraged at it; yet he *refrained himself*, *v.* 10. hoping shortly to see him fall with all the Jews; with much ado, he prevailed with himself to forbear stabbing him. What a struggle had he! Thus *thorns and snares are in the way of the froward.* It made all his enjoyments sapless; this dead fly spoiled all his precious ointment; he owned it himself, in the presence of his wife and friends, to the everlasting reproach of a proud and discontented mind, that he had no comfort in his estate, preferment, and family, as long as Mordecai lived, and had a place *in the king's gate*, *v.* 10—13. Those that are disposed to be uneasy, will never want something or other to be uneasy at. Such are proud men, that though they have *much* to their mind, if they have not *all* to their mind, it is as nothing to them. The thousandth part of what Haman had, would serve to make a humble, modest man, as much of happiness as he expects from this world; yet Haman complains as passionately, as if he had been sunk into the lowest degree of poverty and disgrace.

3. Meditating revenge, assisted by his wife and friends, *v.* 14. Now he will have the speedy execution of Mordecai, to please him at the moment: and, having, as he thinks, made sure the destruction of all the Jews, at the time appointed, he will not think scorn, for the present, to lay hands on Mordecai alone. 1. To please his fancy, they advise him to get *a gallows ready*, that, the warrant signed, there might be no delay of the execution, so much as to make the gallows. It must be 50 cubits high, as near as might be, for greater disgrace, and to make Mordecai a spectacle to every passer by; it must be before Haman's door, that all might notice it was to the idol of *his* revenge Mordecai was sacrificed, and to feed his eyes with the sight. 2. To gain his point, they advise him to go early to the king, and get an order to hang Mordecai, which, they doubted not, would be readily granted to one so much the king's favorite, and who had so easily obtained an edict for the destruction of the whole Jewish nation; there needed no feigned suggestion, it was enough to let the king know that Mordecai, in contempt of the king's command, refused to reverence him. Now we leave Haman to go to bed, pleased with the thoughts of seeing Mordecai hanged the next day, and then going merrily to the banquet, not dreaming of handselling his own gallows.

CHAP. VI. V. 1—3. It is a very surprising scene that opens in this ch. [How Haman wilfully gave the reins to his propensities, and how Satan thence] put it into his heart to contrive Mordecai's death, we read in the foregoing ch.; how God put it into the heart of the king to contrive Mordecai's honor, we are here told. It is to no purpose for Haman to oppose it, when both God and the king will have Mordecai honored, and in this juncture too, when his preferment, and Haman's disappointment, would ripen the great affair of the Jewish deliverance, for the effort Esther was to make toward it the next day. Sometimes, delay may prove to have been good conduct. Stay a while, and we may have done the sooner! *He conquered by delay.* Let us trace the steps of Providence in Mordecai's advancement.

1. *On that night the king's sleep fled away*, so the word is; sometimes we cannot sleep because we fain would. Even after a banquet of wine, he could not sleep, when Providence had a design to serve in keeping him waking. We read of no bodily indisposition that broke his sleep, but God, *whose gift sleep is*, withheld it from him. He that commanded 127 provinces, could not command one hour's sleep. Perhaps the charms of Esther's conversation the day before, occasioned his heart to reproach him for neglecting her, and that might keep him waking. An offended conscience can find a time to speak, when it will be heard.

2. Then he called to have the Book of Records, the Journals of his reign, read to him, *v.* 1. Surely he did not design that that should lull him to sleep, it would rather fill his head with cares; but God put it into his heart to call for them, rather than for music or songs, which their kings used to be attended with, (Dan. 6: 18.) more likely to compose him to rest. When men do what is unaccountable, we know not what God intends by it. David would have found some other entertainment for his thoughts; when he could not sleep, he would have remembered God, and meditated on Him; (Ps. 63: 6.) and if he would have any book read to him, it would have been his Bible; for *in that law did he meditate day and night.*

3. The servant read, among other things, that Mordecai had discovered a plot against the king's life, which prevented it's execution, *v.* 2. Mordecai was not in such favor at court, that the reader should designedly pitch on that place, but Providence directed him to it. How Mordecai's good service was recorded, we read, *ch.* 2: 23. and here it is found on record. [Note, 10: 2.]

4. The king inquired *what honor had been done to Mordecai* for this; suspecting he had gone unrewarded, and, like Pharaoh's butler, remembering it as *his fault this day.* Note, The law of gratitude is a law of nature. We ought particularly to be grateful to inferiors, not thinking their services such debts to us, but that they make us indebted to them. Two rules of gratitude are here. 1. If we cannot, or need not recompense those who have been kind to us, yet let us honor them, by acknowledging their kindnesses, and owning our obligations. 2. If we have long neglected to make grateful returns for good offices, let us, at length, bethink ourselves of our debts.

5. They informed him, that nothing had been done to Mordecai for it; in the king's gate he sat before, and there he still sat. Note, 1. It is common for great men to take little notice of their inferiors. High spirits take a pride in being careless about those below them, and ignorant of their state. The great God takes cognizance of the meanest of his servants, knows what dignity is done them, and what disgrace. 2. Humility, modesty, and self-denial, though, in God's account, of great price, yet commonly hinder men's preferment in the world: but though the aspiring rise fast, the humble stand fast, Prov. 29: 23. 3. Honor and dignity are rated high in the king's books. He does not ask, What reward? But only, What honor? A poor thing, and but a burden, if he had not wherewith to support it. 4. The greatest merits, and best services, are often overlooked, and unrewarded, among men: little honor is done to those who best deserve it, are fittest for it, and would do most good with it. See Eccl. 9: 14—16. The acquisition of wealth and honor are [often] a perfect lottery, in which they that venture

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is a most deplorable evil, that inferior persons will ape the fashions, and emulate the expense, of their superiors: and thus they often injure their families and creditors, or lavish what belongs to the poor; and at the same time expose their own weakness and folly.—Vain-glorious men delight in boasting of the commendations, honors, and favors conferred on them; each new distinction gives a momentary gratification to their vanity; and they receive every attention, as a tribute to their merit, or as homage paid to their superior talents. They *invite*, and even *hire* men, to listen to their praises; and often glory most in those things, which tend to their immediate disgrace and ruin For 'vanity and vexation' are at last the inventory of all sublunary things. Prosperity increases insolence and arrogance, which stir up envy and enmity, and provoke affronts and opposition; and thus the most envenomed resentments and tormenting passions are excited, and the fair edifice of fancied felicity vanishes, like the enchanted castles of romance. May we then seek happiness in the favor of God, in peace of conscience, and dominion over our own spirits; and in cultivating that love, which 'suffereth long and is kind, . . . envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; and which never faileth,' but shall be perfected in the eternal felicity of heaven! SCOTT.

4 And the king said, [f] Who *is* in the court? Now Haman was come into [g] the outward court of the king's house, [h] to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

5 And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in.

6 So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man, * whom the king delighteth to honor? Now Haman thought in his heart, [i] To whom would the king delight to do honor more than to myself?

7 And Haman answered the king, For the man † whom the king delighteth to honor,

8 ‡ Let the royal apparel be brought which the king *useth* to wear, and [k] the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown-royal which is set upon his head;

9 And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man *withal* whom the king delighteth to honor, and § bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and [l] proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor.

10 Then the king said to Haman, [m] Make haste, *and* take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: ‡ let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken.

11 Then [n] took Haman the apparel and the horse, [o] and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor.

12 ¶ And Mordecai [p] came again to the king's gate: but Haman [q] hasted to his house mourning, and [r] having his head covered.

13 And Haman told

least, carry off the best prize. Nay, 5. Good services, sometimes, so far from being a man's preferment, will not be his protection; Mordecai is, at this time, by the king's edict, doomed to destruction, with all the Jews, though it is owned he deserved dignity. Those that faithfully serve God, need not fear being thus ill paid.

V. 4—11. It is now morning, and people begin to stir.

1. Haman is so impatient to get Mordecai hanged, that he comes early to court, to be ready at the king's levee, before any other business was brought before him, to get a warrant for his execution, (*v.* 4.) which he makes sure to have at the first word. And he could tell the king, that he was so confident of the justice of his request, and the king's favor, that he had got the gallows ready; one word from the king would complete his satisfaction.

2. The king is so impatient to have Mordecai honored, that he sends to know who was in the court that was fit to be employed in it. Word is brought him, that Haman is in the court, *v.* 5. *Let him come in*, says the king; the fittest man to be made use of, both in directing and in dispensing the king's favor; the king knew nothing of any quarrel he had with Mordecai. Haman is brought in immediately, proud of the honor of being admitted into the king's bed-chamber, as it should seem, *before he was up;* let the king but give orders for dignifying Mordecai, and he will be easy in his mind, and try to sleep. Now Haman thinks he has the fairest opportunity; but the king's heart is as full as his, and it is fit he should speak first.

3. The king asks Haman, how he should express his favor to one whom he had marked for a favorite, *v.* 6. It is good in kings, and other superiors, to delight in bestowing rewards, and not in punishing. Parents and masters should take a pleasure in commending and encouraging.

4. Haman concludes, he himself was the favorite intended, (none so worthy,) therefore he prescribes the highest expressions of honor that could, for once, be bestowed on a subject. The deceitfulness of our own hearts appears in nothing so much, as in the good conceit we have of ourselves and our own performances, against which we should therefore constantly watch and pray. Haman had too great an opinion of his interest, thinking the king loved and valued no one but himself. We should suspect that the esteem others profess for us, is not so great as it seems, or we are sometimes willing to believe it; that we may not think too well of ourselves, nor place too much confidence in others.

Now Haman thinks he is carving out honor for himself, and therefore does it very liberally, *v.* 8, 9. nay, presumptuously prescribes honors too great for any subject; he must appear in all the pomp and grandeur of the king himself, only he must not carry the sceptre, the emblem of power; [the Jews think he aimed at the crown;] all the people must be made to notice him, and do him reverence; every good subject will honor those whom the king delights to honor. And shall not every good Christian then honor those whom the King of kings delights to honor, and call the *saints which are on the earth, the excellent ones?*

5. The king confounds him with a positive order, immediately to go himself, and put all this honor on Mordecai the Jew, *v.* 10. How is he thunder-struck—the very man he hated above all men, whose ruin he was now designing!

6. Haman dares not dispute, nor so much as seem to dislike, the king's order, but obeys, *v.* 11. It is hard to say which of the two put a greater force on himself; proud Haman, in putting this honor upon Mordecai, or humble Mordecai, in accepting it: the king would have it so, and both must submit. It was agreeable to Mordecai, at least, as an indication of the king's favor, and of hope that Esther would prevail to reverse the edict against the Jews.

V. 12—14. I. How little is Mordecai puffed up with his advancement. He *came again to the king's gate;* (*v.* 12.) returned to his place, and

* Heb. *in whose honor the king delighteth.* [i] Is. 35:27. Is. 42:1. 62:4, 5. Jer. 32:41. Matt. 3:17. John 5: 23.
† Heb. *in whose honor the king delighteth.*
‡ Heb. *Let them bring the royal apparel, wherewith the king clotheth* himself. [t] Sam. 18:4. Luke 15:22.
§ Heb. *cause him to ride.*
‖ Heb. *suffer not a whit to fall.* 2 K. 10:10.
[f] Prov. 3:27,28. Ec. 9:10.
[g] 4:11. 5:1.
[h] 3:8—11. 5:14. 7:9. Job 5:13. Ps. 2:4. 33:10.
[i] 3:2,3. 5:11. Prov. 1:32. 16:18. 18: 12. 30:13. Ob. 3.
[k] 1 K. 1:33.
[l] Gen. 41:43. Zech. 9:9.
[m] Dan. 4:37. Luke 14:11. Rev. 18:7.
[n] Ezra 6:13. Is. 60:14. Luke 1:52. Rev. 3:9.
[o] 8:15. 9:3.
[p] 2:19. 1 Sam. 3:15 Ps. 131:1,2.
[q] 2 Sam. 17:23. 1 K. 20:43. 21:4. 2 Chr. 26:20. Job 20:5.
[r] 7:8. 2 Sam. 15:30. Job 9:24. Jer. 14:3,4.

NOTES.

Chap. VI. V. 4—11. Even Haman might not enter the inner court till called for. (4:11.)—His excessive vanity, ambition, presumption, and ostentation, as well as the emptiness of his worthless mind, are fully illustrated by the honors he chose, supposing them intended for himself. Perhaps Ahasuerus understood his meaning, was [jealous of ulterior aims, and] disgusted at his exorbitant pretensions: and while he peremptorily commanded him to do all this to 'Mordecai *the Jew*,' he could scarcely help remembering the edict Haman had obtained against that people. Imagination itself cannot devise a more painful mortification. Scott.

(8—11.) '*Xenophon* states, that the robe of Cyrus was half purple and half white, and no other person might wear such a one, for it was a capital crime. [But see 8:15.] *Herodotus* informs us, the Persian kings rode Nisean horses, brought from Armenia, as *Strabo* says, of peculiar beauty; and if the same law obtained in Persia as in Judea, no man might ride the king's horse. The *crown royal* [comp. cut Ezra 2:69.] was wont to be put on the head of a horse led in state; and this we are assured, was a custom in Persia, as it is with the Ethiopians to this day.' *Gill*, so *Aben Ezra*, &c. 'The Heb. *kthr*, signifies any ornament about the head or neck, and the head of a horse is meant.' *Patrick.* A cut is given of a drawing by *Morier*, from the contemporary ruins at Persepolis, of a royal personage on horseback, which may illustrate the text. Ed.

Apparel.] 'The Medish dresses (of silk we are led to conclude) formed a peculiar description of clothing, distinguished above all other articles of dress with which the Greeks were acquainted, by the beauty, the variety, and as it were the play and splendor of their colors. (*Xenoph.*) Their use was confined to the great. A Medish robe and cimeter, a chain of gold, and a richly caparisoned horse, were the customary marks of distinction bestowed on their favorites by the kings of Persia; just as at present is the caftan, which also is always of

silk. *Xenoph.* Comp. the accurate description of the Persian *Khilat*

[s] Zeresh his wife, and all his friends, every *thing* that had befallen him. Then [t] said his wise men, and Zeresh his wife, unto him, [u] If Mordecai *be* of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, [x] but shalt surely fall before him.

14 And while they *were* yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains, and [y] hasted to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared.

CHAP. VII.

Esther, at the banquet, petitions the king for her own life, and the lives of her people, and accuses Haman as their enemy, 1—6. The king, in wrath and jealousy, condemns Haman, who is hanged on the gallows prepared for Mordecai, 7—10.

SO the king and Haman came to * banquet with Esther the queen.

2 And [a] the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What *is* thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what *is* thy request? and it shall be performed, *even* to the half of the kingdom.

3 Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favor in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, [b] let my life be given me at my petition, and [c] my people at my request:

4 For [d] we are sold, I and my † people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. [e] But if we had been sold for bond-men and bond-women, I had held my tongue, although [f] the enemy could not countervail the king's damage.

5 Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, [g] Who is he, and where is he, ‡ that durst presume in his heart to do so?

6 And Esther said, § The adversary and enemy *is* [h] this wicked Haman. Then Haman [i] was afraid ‖ before the king and the queen.

minded his business as close as before. Honor is well bestowed on those that are not made proud and idle by it, and will not think themselves above their business.

II. How much is Haman cast down with his disappointment. To wait as a page on any man, especially Mordecai, and at this time, when he hoped to hang him, was enough to break so proud a heart. Was he ever the worse for thus stooping? Was it not what he himself proposed to be done by *one of the king's most noble princes?* Why then grudge to do it himself? But that will break a proud man's heart, which would not break a humble man's sleep. Observe,

III. How his doom was, out of this event, read him by his wife and his friends, *v.* 13. Miserable comforters are they all; they did not advise him to [curb his passions, and] repent, asking Mordecai's pardon for his bad design, but foretell his destiny as fatal, unavoidable, hopeless. It has been observed of great court-favorites, that when once they have been frowned on, they have fallen utterly, as fast as they rose; it is true of the church's enemies, that when God begins with them, He will make an end.

IV. How seasonably he was now sent for to the banquet, *v.* 14. He thought it seasonable, in hopes it would revive his drooping spirits, and save his sinking honor. But, really, it was seasonable, because his spirits being thus broken, he might the more easily be run down by Esther's complaints. God's wisdom is seen, in timing the means of his church's deliverance, to manifest his own glory.

CHAP. VII. 1—6. We are now to attend the second banquet to which the king and Haman were invited. The king in humor, and Haman out of humor, meet at Esther's table. Now here,

1. The king urges Esther, a *third time*, to tell her request, and repeats his promise, *v.* 2. now he was bound with the threefold cord of a promise thrice made to favor her.

2. Esther, at length, surprises the king with her petition, not for wealth or honor, or the preferment of her friends, but for life! *v.* 3, 4. Two things bespeak the urgent importance of the petition. *Majesty.* A crowned head is struck at; 'If thou hast any affection for the wife of thy bosom, now is the time to show it, for that life lies at stake.' *Multitude.* 'A whole nation, a nation dear to me.'

To move the king the more, she suggests, 1. That she and her people were bought and sold: not by any offence against the government, but to gratify the pride and revenge of one man. 2. Not their liberty only, but their lives, were sold. 'Had we been sold' (says she) 'into slavery, I had not complained, for, in time, we might recover liberty, though the king would have made but a bad bargain, and *not have increased his wealth by our price.*' (Whatever had been paid for us, the loss of so many industrious hands, would have been more damage to the treasury than the price would countervail.) To persecute good people is as impolitic as it is impious, and a manifest wrong to princes and states; they are weakened and impoverished by it. But, '*We are sold*' (says she) '*to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish;*' and then it is time to speak. She refers to the words of the decree, *ch.* 3: 13. this would touch a tender part, if there were any such in the king's heart, and bring him to relent.

3. The king stands amazed at the remonstrance, *v.* 5. 'What!' says he, 'contrive the murder of the queen and all her friends? Is there such a *man*, such a *monster* rather, in nature? *Who is he, and where is he, whose heart has filled him to do so?*' It is hard to imagine, there should be such horrid wickedness committed in the world, as there really is. Who, where is he, that dares, presumes, to question the being of God and his providence, to banter his oracles, profane his name, persecute his people, and yet bid defiance to his wrath? Such there are, to think of whom is enough to make *horror take hold of us*, Ps. 119: 53. We sometimes startle at the mention of that evil, which yet we ourselves are chargeable with. Ahasuerus himself was guilty; for he consented to that bloody edict.

4. Esther plainly charges Haman with it before his face: 'Here he is, let him speak for himself, for therefore he is invited.' He has designed our murder, and, which is worse, basely drawn the king in to be *a partaker of his crime.*

5. Haman is soon apprehensive of his danger; and it was time to fear, when the queen was his prosecutor, the king his judge, and his own conscience a witness; the surprising operations of Providence against him, too, that same morning,

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[s] 5:10—14.
[t] Gen. 41:8. Dan. 2:12.
[u] Gen. 40:19. 1 Sam. 28:19,20. Dan. 5:26—28. Zech. 12:2,3.
[x] Job 16:2.
[y] 5:14. Deut. 32:35,36.
* Heb. *drink.* 3:15. 5:8.
[a] See on 5:6. John 16:24.
[b] 7. 1 K. 20:31. 2 K. 1:13. Job 2:4. Jer. 38:26.
[c] 4:8. Ps. 122:6—9.
[d] 3:9. 4:7,8. Deut. 28:68. 1 Sam. 22: 23.
† Heb. *that they should destroy, and kill, and cause to perish.* 3:13. 8: 11. Ps. 44:22,23.
[e] Gen. 37:26—28. Deut. 28:68. Josh. 9:23. Neh. 5:5. Joel 3:6. Am. 2:6.
[f] 6. 3:9.
[g] Gen. 27:33. Job 9:24.
‡ Heb. *whose heart hath filled him.* Acts 5:3.
§ Heb. *The man adversary.*
[h] 1 Sam. 24:13. Ps. 27:2. 139:19—22. Prov. 24:24,25. Ec. 5:8. 1 Cor. 5:13. 2 Thes. 2:8.
[i] Neh. 6:16. Job 15:21,22. 18:5—12. Ps. 73:5—9,17—20. Is. 21:4. Dan. 5:5,6.
‖ Or, *at the presence of.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are in every thing entirely dependent on God; nor can the whole world purchase an hour's refreshing sleep, if He see good to withhold it: from Him therefore we should seek this solace to our cares, and thank Him for it when we have enjoyed it. His providence superintends the most minute concerns of men. Those actions which are the result of caprice, and appear unaccountable, fall in with his wise and gracious purposes, and 'not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him.'—Gratitude even to man, though commended by all, is practised by very few indeed; and commonly *least* by those who have *most* in their power. Yet thus they not only become guilty of the odious sin of ingratitude; but actually yield the superiority to the very man whom they affect to despise: for he that *confers*, is always superior to him who *receives*, an unmerited and unrequited favor.—And if any reader should recollect, that nothing has been done to requite some benefactor who aided him many years ago, let him not think that the obligation is out of date; but rather let him study how he may, effectually, and without further delay, do that which should have been done long since; and delight to honor his benefactors, if he can render them no other recompense.—Pride, envy, and ambition are insatiable; and every sinful passion grows more exorbitant by indulgence. But 'before honor is humility, and a haughty spirit before a fall:' both God and man delight in rendering the mortification of proud worms proportioned to their ambition: and men of this character meet with many presages on earth of that everlasting contempt and misery which await them in another world, if not rescued from this diabolical vice. (*Dan.* 4: 34—37. 5: 18—28.) SCOTT.

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in *Morier*, and the immutability of Asiatic customs will very strikingly appear.' [See the cut, and on 8:15.] HEEREN.

Verse 14.

Haman, in the anguish of his heart, seems to have neglected his appointment. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII. V. 2—4. *Sold.* (1) Alluding to the money Haman had offered to pay into the treasury for their destruction.—Some interpret the last clause to mean, that if the sufferings of the enslaved Jews, though extreme and undeserved, had not been likewise detrimental to the king's interest, Esther would have held her peace. The whole speech, however, was replete with natural eloquence, and suited to affect and persuade the king. SCOTT.

7 ¶ And the king, arising from the banquet of wine [j] in his wrath, *went* into the palace-garden: and [k] Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen; [l] for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king.

8 Then the king returned out of the palace-garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman was fallen upon [m] the bed whereon Esther *was*. Then said the king, Will he force the queen also * before me in the house? As the word went out of the king's mouth, they [n] covered Haman's face.

9 And [o] Harbonah, [p] one of the chamberlains, said before the king, [q] Behold also, the † gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, [r] who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, [s] Hang him thereon.

10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. [t] Then was the king's wrath pacified.

CHAP. VIII.

Haman's estate is given to Esther; and Mordecai, as her near relation, is preferred in Haman's stead, 1, 2. Esther, with tears, entreats the king to reverse the decree against the Jews, 3—6. The king authorizes the Jews to defend themselves, and sends letters to that effect, throughout the provinces, 7—14. The honors conferred on Mordecai, and the joy of the Jews, 15—17.

ON that day did the king Ahasuerus [a] give the house of Haman the Jews' enemy, unto Esther the queen. And Mordecai [b] came before the king; for Esther had told what he *was* unto her.

2 And the king took off [c] his ring which he could not but increase his fear. When he thought himself *in the fulness of his sufficiency, he is cast into a net by his own feet.*

V. 7—10. 1. The king, in a great passion, retires to cool himself, and consider what was to be done, *v.* 7. Ashamed to send for his *seven wise counsellors*, to consult them about undoing what he had rashly done without their knowledge; he went to walk in the garden awhile, to compare in his thoughts what Esther had now informed him of, with what had formerly passed between him and Haman. And we may suppose him, 1. Vexed at himself; for they that do things with self-will, are likely to reflect on them afterward with self-reproach. 2. Vexed at Haman whom he had laid in his bosom, that he should be such a villain as to abuse his interest in him, to draw him to consent to so wicked a measure. Seeing himself betrayed by one he had caressed, he was full of indignation; yet would say nothing, till he had taken time for second thoughts. When angry, we should pause awhile, before we come to any resolution, as those that have a *rule over our own spirits*, and are governed by reason.

2. Haman becomes a humble petitioner to the queen for his life. He might now easily perceive his danger: for *the wrath of a king*, [so despotic a king,] *is as the roaring of a lion*, and as *messengers* of death. 1. How mean Haman looks, he falls at Esther's feet. They that are most haughty, insolent, and imperious, when in power and prosperity, are commonly the most abject and poor spirited, when the wheel turns upon them. Cowards, they say, are most cruel, and then consciousness of their cruelty makes them the more cowardly. 2. How great Esther looks; now her sworn enemy owns he lies at her mercy, and begs his life at her hand. Thus did God *regard the low estate of his handmaiden*, and *scatter the proud in the imagination of their hearts*, Luke 1: 48, 51. Compare that promise to the Philadelphian church, Rev. 3: 9. *Give us of your oil; Father Abraham, send Lazarus; The upright shall have dominion in the morning.*

3. The king returns yet more exasperated against Haman. The more he thinks of him, the worse he thinks of him, and of what he had done. It was but lately, every thing Haman said and did, even that which was most criminal, was taken well, and construed to his advantage; now, on the contrary, what he did, that was not only innocent, but a sign of repentance, is ill taken, and without color of reason, construed to his disadvantage. Not that the king thought he had any real intention of *forcing the queen*, but, having been musing on Haman's design to slay her, and finding him in this posture, he takes occasion from it thus to vent his passion against him, as a man that would not scruple at the greatest and most impudent wickedness.

4. Those about him were ready to be the instruments of his wrath, though lately they adored Haman: so little sure can proud men be of the interest they think they have. (1.) As soon as the king spake an angry word, they covered Haman's face, as a condemned man, not worthy any more either to see the king, or to be seen by him; they marked him for execution. Those that are hanged, commonly have their faces covered. *Turba odit damnatos—The populace oppress the fallen.* If Haman be going down, they all cry, 'Down with him.' (2.) One of those lately sent to Haman's house, to fetch him to the banquet, informed the king of the gallows Haman had prepared for Mordecai, *v.* 9. Now Mordecai is the favorite, the chamberlain applauds him; he *spake good for the king*, and, Haman being in disgrace, every thing is noticed that might make against him.

5. The sentence is short, *Hang him thereon;* and the execution speedy. *So they hanged Haman, v.* 10. [Comp. note, Ezra 7: 23.] See here, (1.) Pride brought down. He who expected every one to reverence him, is now to all a spectacle of ignominy! He who disdained that less than a nation should be sacrificed to his revenge, is now a sacrifice to justice! God resists the proud; and those whom He resists, will find Him irresistible. (2.) Persecution punished. Haman was, on many accounts, a wicked man, but his enmity to God's church was his most provoking crime. Ps. 28: 4. (3.) Mischief returned on the person that contrived it; the *wicked* is *snared in the work of his own hands*, Ps. 7: 15, 16. 9: 15, 16. Haman is justly hanged on the very gallows he had unjustly prepared for Mordecai. *The Lord is known by such judgments.* See Prov. 11: 8. 21: 18.

CHAP. VIII. V. 1—2. We left the plotter hanging, and are now to see what becomes of his plot. But lately we had Esther and Mordecai in tears and fears, but fasting and praying; let us see how to them arose light in darkness.

1. Esther is enriched with the traitor Haman's forfeited estate, in recompense for the fright and vexation he had created her, *v.* 1. Prov. 13: 22. Job 27: 17, 18. What Haman would have done mischief with, Esther will do good with; and estates are to be valued as they are used.

2. Mordecai is advanced, and (1.) Owned as the queen's cousin, which, till now, though Esther had been four years queen, for ought that appears, the king did not know; so humble, so modest was

j 1:12.
k Prov. 14:19. Is. 60:14. Rev. 3:9.
l 1 Sam. 20:7,9. 25:17. Ps. 112:10. Prov. 19:12. Dan. 3:19.
m 1:6. Is. 49:23.
* Heb. *with me.*
n 6:12. Job 9:24. Is. 22:17.
o 1:10. *Harbona.*
p 6:14. 2 K. 9:32,33.
q 5:14. Job 27:20—23.
† Heb. *tree.*
r 2:21—23. 6:2.
s 9:25. 1 Sam. 17:51. Ps. 7:15,16. 9: 15,16. 35:8. 37:35,36. 73:19. Prov. 11:5,6. Dan. 6:7,24.
t Judg. 15:7. Ez. 5:13. Zech. 6:8.
a Job 27:16,17. Ps. 39:6. 49:6—13. Prov. 13:22. 28:8. Ec. 2:18,19. Luke 12:20.
b 1:14. 2:7,15.
c 3:10. Gen. 41:42. Is. 22:19—22. Luke 15:22.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The repeated promises, even of weak, mutable, and selfish men, encourage us to make our requests to them with great expectation of success: much more then should the exceedingly great and precious promises of the unchangeable God, embolden us to present many and large petitions to Him, in behalf of ourselves and others, and with the full assurance of receiving far more than we ask.—If the love of life inspire such earnest and pathetic pleadings, with those 'who can only kill the body;' how fervent and importunate should our continual prayers be to 'Him, who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell!' And how affectionately should we pray for the eternal salvation of our relatives, friends, and neighbors, and all around us! Men often commit crimes without remorse, which, when described in their nature and consequences by proper language, or pointed out to them in the conduct of others, appear most horrible and atrocious: and when they find, on reflection, the nature and effects of their own heedless conduct, they are filled with anguish and remorse. (2 *Sam.* 12: 1—14. *Ps.* 51: 1—6.) Yet alas! their indignation frequently falls exclusively on their tempters or accomplices, instead of producing unreserved self-condemnation and abhorrence.

SCOTT.

Verses 9, 10.

Hang . . . So they hanged.] *Xenophon* states, that execution was immediate in Persia; note, Ezra, 7:26. *Then was the king's wrath pacified.*] This intimates, that the spirit of that age considered punishments too much in the light of a gratification of revenge; a feeling which seems to have been rather stronger than the sense of justice, and it probably is so now in the east. ED.

(9.) Haman had doubtless been greatly envied for his prosperity, and hated for his insolence, in the midst of all the homage which was paid him. But now that the king's mind was evidently alienated from him, the courtiers were glad to please him and the queen, by concurring in Haman's downfal. SCOTT.

(10.) 'In this wonderful deliverance, the contrivance, or suiting of those ordinary agents appointed by God, is more admirable, than if the same end had been effected by means truly miraculous.' Dr. *Jackson* in *Patrick*. ID.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII. V. 1, 2. Some of Esther's attendants were acquainted with Mordecai's relation to her; (*Note*, 4:4.) and the king knew that he was of Jewish extraction. (6:10.) The ring, with the royal sig-

had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai. And [d] Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

3 ¶ And Esther spake yet again before the king, and [e] fell down at his feet, and * besought him with tears, to put away [f] the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews.

4 Then the king [g] held out the golden sceptre towards Esther. So Esther arose, and stood before the king,

5 And said, If it please the king, [h] and if I have found favor in his sight, and the thing *seem* right before the king, and [i] I *be* pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the † letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, ‡ which he wrote to destroy the Jews, which *are* in all the king's provinces.

6 For [k] how can I § endure to see [l] the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?

7 Then the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen, and to Mordecai the Jew, [m] Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and [n] him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews.

8 Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, [o] in the king's name, and seal *it* with the king's ring: for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, [p] may no man reverse.

9 Then were [q] the king's scribes called at that time in the third month, (that *is*, the month Sivan,) on the three and twentieth *day* thereof; and it was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded, unto the Jews, [r] and to the lieutenants, and the deputies and rulers of the provinces, which *are* from India unto Ethiopia, an hundred twenty and seven provinces, unto every province according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language, and to the Jews according to their writing, * and according to their language.

10 And he wrote [t] in the king Ahasuerus's name, and sealed *it* with the king's ring; and sent letters [u] by posts on horseback, *and* riders on mules, camels, *and* [x] young dromedaries;

11 Wherein the king granted the Jews which *were* in every city [y] to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, *both* little ones and women, [z] and *to take* the spoil of them for a prey;

12 Upon [a] one day, in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, *name-*

d 2 Sam. 9:7—10. Ec. 2:18,19—26. 5: 13,14.
e 1 Sam. 25:24. 2 K. 4:27.
* Heb. *she wept and besought him.* Is. 38:3. Hos. 12:4. Heb. 5:7.
f 3:8—15. 7:4.
g 4:11. 5:2.
h 7:3. Ex. 33:13,16. 1 Sam. 20:29.
i 2:4,17.
† Heb. *device.* 3:12,13.
‡ Or, *who wrote.*
k Gen. 44:34. Jer. 4:19. 9:1. Luke 19:41,42. Rom. 9:2,3. 10:1.
§ Heb. *be able that I may see.*
l 7:4. Neh. 2:3.
m 1. Prov. 13:22.
n 7:10. Gal. 3:13.
o 3:12. 1 K. 21:8.
p 5. 1:19. Dan. 6:8,12—15. 2 Tim. 2:19. Heb. 6:17,18.
q 3:12.
r 1:1,22. 3:12,13. Dan. 6:1.
s 1:22. 3:12. 2 K. 18:26. Dan. 4:1. 1 Cor. 14:9—11.
t 1 K. 21:8. Ec. 8:4. Dan. 4:1.
u 3:13,15. 2 Chr. 30:6. Job 9:25. Jer. 51:21.
x Is. 66:6. 66:20. Jer. 2:23.
y 9:2—16.
z 5:2:13. 9:10,15,16. Is. 10:6.
a 9:1. Ex. 15:9,10. Judg. 1:6,7.

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ter, seems to have continued with Haman, as denoting the high offices he bore under the king, till he was deposed and condemned. (*Notes*, 3:10, 11. *Gen.* 41:41—43. *Is.* 22:20—25. *Jer.* 22:24—27.) *Set Mordecai over.* (2) (*Notes*, *Job* 27:13—23, *vv.* 16, 17. *Prov.* 13:22. 28:8. *Ec.* 2:24—26.) SCOTT.

Verses 3—6.

It may be supposed, that Ahasuerus hesitated in this perplexing case; as not knowing how to extricate himself with credit from so great a difficulty, and as reluctant to proclaim to all the world the folly, into which he had been seduced. But Esther, with great discretion, avoided every intimation that the king himself had issued the decree, and expressed herself as if it had been not only Haman's device, but altogether his work, even as if the edict had been forged by him. Her plea, and the expressions used in urging it, are peculiarly pathetic and emphatical, and suited to excite the deepest and most tender sympathy; as well as to show her fervent affection for her people, as the people of God. ID.

Verse 8.

While the king had *legal* authority to put the evil counsellor to death, to confiscate his estate, and to prefer his most hated enemy to his high offices, so that no objection seems to have been advanced by his nobles and counsellors; he had not the legal power to reverse the obnoxious decree! (2:1. 3:10, 11.)—'Thus he chose to fill his realm with blood, rather than revoke a rash decree.' *Patrick.* ID.

Verse 9.

(1, 2. 3:12—15.) Probably Ethiopia, or the S. of Egypt, is intended. SCOTT.

Verse 10.

These letters were sent by *runners*, (2 *Chr.* 30:6—9, *v.* 6.) and by horsemen. The words for the other animals, on which some of the messengers rode, are unusual, and learned men are by no means agreed about the meaning of them. Probably they were derived from the Persian language, or from that of some of the eastern nations. SCOTT.

The equine race are peculiarly hardy in Persia, especially the *mules*, which, however, spite of their incredible power of endurance, often fall a sacrifice to their miserable roads. *Camels, Dromedaries.*] 'The native country of the genus, camel, is said to extend from Mauritania to China, within a zone of 900 or 1000 miles in breadth. The common camel with two humps is found only in the N. part of this region, and exclusively, from the ancient Bactria (Turkestan) to China. The dromedary, or single-hump camel, is found throughout the entire length of this zone, on its southern side as far as Africa and India; it cannot, like the camel, support all vicissitudes of climate. Camels used for speed alone, can travel 60 to 90 miles a day.' *Encyc. Am.* Some have been known, it is said, to travel 150 to 400 miles in 24 hours. They can travel, say *Buffon*, &c. 9 or 10 days, with one hour's rest daily, and be fed with one ball of paste, carrying their own and their riders' food and water. ED.

ly, [b] upon the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which *is* the month Adar.

13 The copy of the writing, for a commandment to be given in every province, *was* * published unto all people, and that the Jews should be ready against that day, to [c] avenge themselves on their enemies.

14 *So* the posts that rode upon mules *and* camels went out, [d] being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment. And the decree was given at [e] Shushan the palace.

15 ¶ And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in [f] royal apparel of † blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and [g] the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.

16 The [h] Jews had [i] light, and gladness, and joy, and honor.

17 And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, [k] a feast and a good day. And [l] many of the people of the land became Jews; [m] for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.

CHAP. IX.

On the day appointed, the Jews, aided by the rulers, slay their enemies; and among the rest five hundred men in Shushan, and Haman's ten sons, 1—10. The king hearing this, at Esther's request, allows the Jews in Shushan to stand against their enemies on the day following, when three hundred more are slain; and he causes Haman's sons to be hanged on the gallows erected by Haman, 11—15. The Jews throughout the provinces slay seventy-five thousand men, 15. They rejoice with feasting on the two following days, 17—19. These days are appointed by Esther and Mordecai as an annual festival, in commemoration of this deliverance, and called the feast of Purim, 20—32.

NOW [a] in the twelfth month, that *is*, the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews [b] hoped to have power over them;

b 3:13—15.
* Heb. *revealed*.
c Judg. 16:28. Ps. 37:14,15. 68:23. 92: 10,11. 149:6—9. Luke 18:7. Rev. 6:10. 19:2.
d 1 Sam. 21:8. Ec. 9:10.
e 1:2. 2:3. 3:15. Neh. 1:1. Dan. 8:2.
f 5:1. 6:8,11. Gen. 41:42. Matt. 6: 29. 11:8. Luke 16:19.
† Or, *violet*. 1:6.
g 3:15. Prov. 29:2.
h 4:1—3,10. Ps. 30:5—11.
i 9:17. Ps. 18:28. 97:11. Prov. 4:18, 19. Is. 30:29. 35:10.
k 9:17,19,22. 1 Sam. 25:8. Neh. 8:10.
l Ps. 18:43. Zech. 8:20—23.
m Gen. 35:5. Ex. 15:16. Deut. 2:25. 11:25.
a 3:7,13. 8:12.
b Acts 12:11.

V. 15—17. But a few days ago, we had Mordecai in sackcloth, and all the Jews in sorrow; here is a blessed change, Mordecai in purple, the Jews in joy. See Ps. 30: 5, 11, 12.

1. Mordecai in purple, *v.* 15. The royal apparel either belonged to his place, or the king appointed it him as a favorite. His robes were rich, his coronet was of gold. These are things not worth noticing, but as marks of the king's favor, and *that* the fruit of God's favor to his church. It is well with a land, when the ensigns of dignity are made the ornaments of serious piety. Shushan was sensible of its advantage in his preferment, and therefore *rejoiced and was glad*, promising itself better times now so good a man was in power. *When the wicked perish, there is shouting: when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice.*

2. The Jews in joy, *v.* 16, 17. if they had not been threatened and in distress, they had not had occasion for this extraordinary joy. *Therefore* are God's people sometimes made *to sow in tears*, that they may *reap in* so much the more *joy*.

One good effect of this deliverance, was, that *many of the people of the land* were proselyted to the Jewish religion, renounced idolatry, and worshipped the true God only. The holy cheerfulness of those that profess religion, is a great ornament to their profession, and will invite and encourage others to be religious. The reason here given why so many became Jews, is, for *fear of the Jews*. Haman's fate warned them of the Jews' power, and when they observed how wonderfully Divine Providence had owned them, and wrought for them in this critical juncture, they thought them great, and those happy that were among them; therefore they came over to them, as was foretold, Zech. 8: 23. Comp. Deut. 33: 29. When the church prospers, many will come in to it, that will be shy of it when it is in trouble.

CHAP. IX. V. 1—19. We left two royal edicts in force, one appointing, that all the Jews should be killed; another empowering them, on the day appointed for it, to draw the sword in defence. Their enemies resolved not to lose their advantages by the first edict, in hopes to overpower them by numbers; the Jews relied on the goodness of their God, and justice of their cause, and resolved to make their utmost efforts against their enemies. The day comes, at length; and here we are told, what a glorious day it was to the Jews, and the two days following; and what a memorable day it was made to posterity, by an annual feast, in commemoration. In the decisive battle here fought, neither side was surprised, for both had notice of

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Many, who most prosper in the world, would have little alacrity in their pursuits, or joy in their possessions, if they could foresee to whom their riches would devolve, and what use would be made of them. [Note, Ex. 20: 17. latter part.]—If we would affect others, we should study to get our own hearts suitably impressed; and, in many cases, we may be more importunate in asking favors for our friends and brethren, and for the poor, than we ought to be for ourselves.—Every regulation in society, however apparently reasonable and beneficial, which does not advert to the fallen nature of man, will, on trial, be found unsuitable to his real condition, and inconsistent with his best interests.—External decorations are insignificant in the judgment of the wise and pious: yet they may properly distinguish those in authority; and, while they procure the [necessary respect for government and its officers] from the multitudes, who look no further, they should remind them of the duties to which their dignities call them. SCOTT.

Verse 15.

A great crown, &c.] 'Not like that of the kings, but such a coronet as was worn by the peers of the realm.' *Patrick.* [Comp. cuts, Ezra, 2:69. and Esth. 6:4—11.] Perhaps it was one of the *insignia* of the chief minister under the king. SCOTT.

In royal, &c.] Heb. *belebosh malekoih tekeleth vahur veâtereth zahâb gedolah vethakerik buts veargaman* In veste regni hyacinthi et candoris, [Chal. *melotina*, sheepskin,] et diademate auri magno et amictu byssi et purpuræ. *Walton's Polyglott.* Fulgebat vestibus regiis, hyacinthinis videlicet et aëreis, coronam auream portans in capite, et amictus *serico patrio* atque purpureo. *Vulg.* Basilikn stolēn, kai stephanon echōn chrysoun, kai diadema byssinon porphyroun. *Sept.* The Heb. for purple is *tekeleth*; is this the origin of the *Khilat* of the note, 6:8—11? The *Vulg.* above speaks of *silk* as well as *byss*; *Procopius* satisfies Heeren that the Greeks denominated Median, the dresses now called *seric* (or silken), of China silk. *Luther's* transl. speaks of the silken cords and curtains of the tabernacle, and the silk garments of Tyre. Authors speak also of ancient dresses, half silk only, perhaps these are here alluded to. See note and cut, 6:8—11. The *purple byssine diadem*,' of the Sept. perhaps alludes to the headdresses of this cut, and that, Ezra 2:69. ED.

(c though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them;)

2 The Jews[d] gathered themselves together in their cities, throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such [e] as sought their hurt: and no man could withstand them; for [f] the fear of them fell upon all people.

3 And all [g] the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and * officers of the king, helped the Jews; because [h] the fear of Mordecai fell upon them.

4 For Mordecai *was* great in the king's house, and [i] his fame went out throughout all the provinces: for this man Mordecai [k] waxed greater and greater.

5 Thus the Jews [l] smote all their enemies with [m] the stroke of the sword, and slaughter, and destruction, and did † what they would unto those that hated them.

6 And in [n] Shushan the palace, the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men.

7 And Parshandatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha,

8 And Poratha, and Adalia, and Aridatha,

9 And Parmashta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Vajezatha,

10 The [o] ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the [p] enemy of the Jews, slew they; but [q] on the spoil laid they not their hand.

11 ¶ On that day, the number of those that were slain in Shushan the palace ‡ was brought before the king.

12 And the king said unto Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and the ten sons of Haman; what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? now [r] what *is* thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: or what *is* thy request further? and it shall be done.

13 Then said Esther, If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews which *are* in Shushan to do to-morrow also * according unto this day's decree, and § let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows.

14 And the king commanded it so to be done: and the decree was given at Shushan; and they hanged Haman's ten sons.

15 For the Jews that *were* in Shushan, [t] gathered themselves together, on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar, and slew three hundred men at Shushan; [u] but on the prey they laid not their hand.

16 But the other Jews, that *were* in the king's provinces, gathered themselves together, and [x] stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of their foes seventy and five thousand; but they laid not their hands on the prey,

17 On the thirteenth day of the month Adar; and on the fourteenth day ‖ of the same rested they, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

18 But the Jews that *were* at Shushan assembled together [y] on the thirteenth *day* thereof, and on the fourteenth thereof; and on the fifteenth *day* of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

19 Therefore the Jews of the villages, that dwelt in the unwalled towns, made the fourteenth day of the month Adar *a day of* [z] gladness and feasting,

c Deut. 32:36. 2 Sam. 22:41. Ps. 30: 11. Is. 14:1,2. 60:14—16. Rev. 11:18.
d 19. 8:11.
e Deut. 2:30. Josh. 11:20. Is. 8:9.
f 8:17. Ex. 23:27. Josh. 2:9.
g 3:12. 8:9. Ezra 8:36. Dan. 3:2, 3. 6: 1,2.
* Heb. *those which did the business that* belonged *to the king.*
h 3:2—6. 8:15.
i Josh. 6:27. 1 Sam. 2:30. 1 Chr. 14: 17. Zeph. 3:19. Matt. 4:24.
k 2 Sam. 3:1. 1 Chr. 11:9. Is. 1:3. Prov. 4:18. Is. 9:7.
l Ps. 18:34—40.47,48. 20:7,8. 149:6—9. 2 Thes. 1:8.
m Jer. 18:21.
† Heb. *according to their will.*
n See on 3:15.
o 5:11. Ex. 20:5 Job 18:18,19. 27: 13—15. Ps. 21:10. 109:1-,13.
p 3:1. 7:4,6. Ex. 17:16.
q 15,16. 8:11. Gen. 14:23. Rom. 12: 17. 1 Phil. 4:8.
‡ Heb. *came.*
r 5:6. 7:2.
s 8:11.
§ Heb. *let men hang Haman's ten sons.* 2 Sam. 21:6,9. Gal. 3:13.
t 2. 8:11. Ps. 118:7—12.
u 10,16. 1 Thes. 5:22. Heb. 13:5.
x 8:11. Lev. 26:7,8.
‖ Heb. *in it.*
y 1,11,13.
z 22. 8:17. Deut. 16:11,14. Neh. 8: 10—12. Ps. 118:11—16. Luke 11:41. Rev. 11:10.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX. V. 3, 4. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verses 5—13.

There is no intimation, that the Jews injured any individual, who was not found in arms against them. (3:12—15. 8:11—13.) It is probable, Esther had learned from Mordecai, that Haman's retainers still formed a faction, not only dangerous to the Jews, but to the state; and were prepared to renew the attack on the next day. ID.

Verse 15.

(*Notes*, 3:1. *Ex.* 17:14—16.) SCOTT.

Verse 16.

75,000, &c.] All this large number lost their lives, *through* the pride and revenge of one wicked man, but *by* their own malice and enmity to the worshippers of JEHOVAH. It was one of the most necessary defensive wars, that ever any people or nation engaged in. ID.

and a good day, and of sending portions one to another.

20 And Mordecai [a] wrote these things; and sent letters unto all the Jews that *were* [b] in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, *both* nigh and far;

21 To establish *this* among them, that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly;

22 As [c] the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them [d] from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of [e] sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.

23 And the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written unto them:

24 Because Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, [f] the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast [g] Pur, that *is*, the lot, to [*] consume them, and to destroy them;

25 But † when *Esther* came before the king, he commanded by letters, that his wicked device which he devised against the Jews, should [h] return upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

26 Wherefore [i] they called these days Purim, after the name of ‡ Pur. Therefore for all the words of this [j] letter, and *of that* which they had seen concerning this matter, and which had come unto them,

27 The Jews ordained, and took upon them, [k] and upon their seed, and upon [l] all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not § fail, that they would keep these two days, according to their writing, and according to their *appointed* time every year;

28 And *that* these days *should be* [m] remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and *that* these days of Purim should not ‖ fail from among the Jews, nor [n] the memorial of them ¶ perish from their seed.

29 Then Esther the queen, [o] the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all [**] authority, to [p] confirm this second letter of Purim.

30 And he sent the letters unto all the Jews, to [q] the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, *with* [r] words of peace and truth,

a Ex. 17:14. Deut. 31:19—22. 1 Chr. 16:12. Ps. 124:1—3. 145:4—12. 2 Cor. 1:10,11.
b 1:1,22. 3:12. 8:9.
c 3:12,13. Ex. 13:3—8. Ps. 103:2. Is. 12:1,2. 14:3.
d Is. 30:11. Matt. 5:4. John 16:20—22.
e 19. Neh. 8:10,12. Luke 11:41. Acts 2:44—46. Gal. 2:10.
f 10. 5:5—15.
g 3:7.
* Heb. *crush.*
† Heb. *when she came.* 13,14. 7:5—10. 8:1—14.
h Ps. 7:16. 109:17,18. 140:9. 141:10. Matt. 21:44.
i Num. 16:40. Ez. 39:11.
j That is, *Lot.*
‡ 20.
k Deut. 5:3. 29:14,15. Josh. 9:15. 1 Sam. 30:25. 2 Sam. 21:1,2.
l 8:17. Is. 56:3,6. Zech. 2:11. 8:22.
§ Heb. *pass.*
m Ex. 12:17. Ps. 78:5—7. 103:2.
‖ Heb. *pass.*
n Ex. 13:8,9. Josh. 4:7. Zech. 6:14.
¶ Heb. *be ended.*
o 2:15.
** Heb. *strength.*
p 20. 8:10.
q 1:1. 8:9.
r Is. 39:8. Zech. 8:19.

cleared themselves of their enemies on the 13th of the month, and rested on the 14th, (*v.* 17.) making that a thanksgiving-day; *v.* 19. the Jews in Shushan, the royal city, took two days for their military execution, so they rested on the 15th, and made that their thanksgiving-day, *v.* 18. Both celebrated their festival the very day after they had gained their point. When we have received signal mercies, we ought to be quick in thankful returns to God, while the mercy is fresh, and its impressions most sensible.

V. 20—32. We have here Esther's and Mordecai's course, to spread the knowledge of this triumph among their people, and perpetuate the remembrance of it to posterity, for the honor of God, and the encouragement of his people to trust in Him at all times.

I. The history was written, and copies were dispersed among all the Jews in all the provinces, *both nigh and far*, *v.* 20. They all knew something of the story, (being by the first edict made sensible of their danger, and by the second of their deliverance,) but not how this amazing turn was given; Mordecai therefore *wrote these things*. And if this book be the same he wrote, as many think, I cannot but observe the difference between Mordecai's style and Nehemiah's; Nehemiah, at every turn, notices Divine Providence and the *good hand of his God* upon him; but Mordecai never so much as mentions the name of God in the whole story. Nehemiah wrote his book at Jerusalem, where religion was in fashion, and an air of it appeared in men's common conversation; Mordecai wrote his at Shushan the palace, where policy reigned more than piety, and he wrote according to the genius of the place. Even those that have the root of the matter in them, are apt to lose the savor of religion, and let their leaf wither, when they converse wholly with those that have little religion. Commend me to Nehemiah's way of writing, *that* I would imitate; and yet learn from Mordecai's, that men may be truly devout, though they do not abound in the shows and expressions of devotion, and therefore that we must not judge or despise our brethren. But because there is so little of the language of Canaan in this book, many think it was not written by Mordecai, but was an extract out of the journals of the kings of Persia, giving an account of the matter of fact, which the Jews themselves knew how to comment upon.

II. A yearly festival was instituted, that *the children which should be born*, might know this wonderful work God wrought for them, and *declare it to their children, that they might set their hope in God*, Ps. 78: 6, 7. It would honor God as the Protector of his people, and Israel as the care of Heaven, confirm the fidelity of God's covenant, be an invitation to strangers to come into the bonds of it, and encourage God's own people cheerfully to depend on Him, his wisdom, power, and goodness, in the greatest straits. Posterity would reap the benefit, and therefore ought to celebrate the memorial of this deliverance. This festival,

1. Was observed, every year, *the 14th and 15th of the 12th month*, just a month before the passover, *v.* 21. Thus the first and last month of the year kept in remembrance *the days when God preserved them*. They kept two days together as thanksgiving-days. Let us not be niggardly in returns of praise to Him, who bestows so liberally. The modern Jews observe the 13th day, the day appointed for their destruction, as a fasting-day, grounding it on *v.* 31. *the matters of the fastings and their cry*. But that refers to what was in the day of their distress, (*ch.* 4: 3, 16) which was not to be continued, when God had turned their fasts into *joy and gladness*, Zech. 8: 19. 2. It was called, *The feast of Purim*, (*v.* 26.) from *Pur*, a Persian word, which signifies *a lot*, because Haman had by lot determined this to be the time of the Jews' destruction, while the Lord, at whose disposal the lot is, had determined it to be the time of their triumph, Isa. 44: 25, 26. 3. It was not a divine institution, therefore it is not called a *holy day*, but a human appointment, by which it was made a *good day*, *v.* 19, 22. The Jews ordained it, and took it on themselves; (*v.* 27.) voluntarily *undertook to do as they had begun*, *v.* 23. Mordecai and Esther confirmed their resolve, that it might be the more binding to posterity, and come well recommended. They wrote *With all authority*; (*v.* 29.) as well they might, Esther being queen, and Mordecai prime minister. It is well, when those in authority use it to authorize what is good. Though they wrote with authority, they wrote also *words of peace and truth*, with tenderness; not imperious, not imposing, but in such language as the council at Jerusalem, (Acts 15: 29.) Such was the style of these letters, or such their salutation or valediction, *Peace and truth be with you*. 4. It was to be observed, by *all the Jews* and *their seed*, and by all such proselytes as *joined them*, *v.* 27. A concurrence in joys and praises is one branch of the communion of saints. 5. Why; that the memorial of the great things God had done for his church, might never *perish from their seed*, *v.* 28. Eccl. 3: 14. They would remember Haman's bad practices, *v.* 24. God's people may never be secure, while they have such malicious enemies, on whom they ought to have a jealous eye—Esther's good services, *v.* 25. Good deeds for God's Israel ought to be remembered, to encourage others. God will not forget them, therefore we must not.—Their own prayers, and the answers to them, *v.* 31. *Call upon Me in time of trouble*, and then *offer to God thanksgiving*. 6. How; as a day of cheerfulness, *of feasting and joy*, *v.* 22. Eccl. 10: 19. When God gives us cause to rejoice, why should we not express our joy? As a day of generosity; *sending portions one to another* in token of pleasantness and mutual respect; friends have their goods in common: and as a day of charity; sending *gifts to the poor*, Luke 14: 12, 13. They that have received mercy, must, in token of gratitude, show mercy; and there never wants occasion, the poor we have always. Thanksgiving and almsgiving should go together, that when we are rejoicing and blessing God, the heart of the poor may rejoice with us, and their loins bless us.

Verse 20.

'Mordecai wrote these things,' or the history contained in this book, as the words most obviously imply; and not merely the letters afterwards mentioned, as many understand it. SCOTT.

Verses 21—32.

It seems they afterwards grew negligent: and therefore *a second letter* was written, with all authority, by Esther and Mordecai, enjoining the observance—yet under the direction and according to the mind

31 To confirm these days of Purim in their times *appointed*, according as Mordecai the Jew, and Esther the queen, had enjoined them, and as they had decreed for * themselves, * and for their seed; the matters of the fastings and their cry.

32 And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.

CHAP. X.

The greatness of Ahasuerus, and the advancement and usefulness of Mordecai, 1—3.

AND the king Ahasuerus [a] laid a tribute upon the land, and *upon* [b] the isles of the sea.

2 And [c] all the acts of his power, and of his might, and the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the king † advanced him, *are* they not written [d] in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?

3 For Mordecai the Jew *was* [e] next unto king Ahasuerus, and great

* Heb. *their souls.*
a 27.
t 4:3,16. Jon. 3:2—9.
a 1:1. 8:9. Luke 2:1.

b Gen. 10:5. Ps. 72:10. Is. 24:15. Dan. 11:18.
c 1 K. 11:41. 22:39.
† Heb. *made him great.* 8:15. 9:4. Ps. 18:35.
d 2:23. 6:1. 1 K. 14:19.
e Gen. 41:40. 1 Sam. 23:17. 2 Chr. 28:7.

CHAP. X. V. 1—3. This is but a part of a ch., the rest of it, beginning at v. 4. with 6 chs.

What was added to this, was much better. They always, at the feast, read the whole story over in the synagogue, each day, and put up three prayers to God; in which, (1.) they praise God respectively, for counting them worthy to attend this divine service; (2.) for the miraculous preservation of their ancestors; (3.) that they have lived to observe another festival in memory of it. So Patrick.

What it is since degenerated to, is much worse. Their own writers own, that this feast is commonly celebrated among them with gluttony, drunkenness, and excess of riot. Their Talmud says expressly, that, in the feast of Purim, a man should drink till he knows not the difference between, *Cursed be Haman*, and, *Blessed be Mordecai*. See what the corrupt and wicked nature of man often brings that to, which was at first well intended; here is a religious feast turned into a carnival, a perfect revel. Nothing more purifies the heart, and adorns religion, than holy joy; nothing more pollutes the heart, and reproaches religion, than carnal mirth and sensual pleasure. [Note, 2 Chr. 20: 3,4.] *What is best becomes, when corrupted, the worst.*

more, being found only in the Greek, is rejected as apocryphal. We are here told,

1. How great and powerful Ahasuerus was. Beside the usual customs the kings of Persia exacted, (Ezra 4: 13.) he laid an additional tribute, *v.* 1. Happy our land, that pays no tribute but what is laid upon it by its representatives, and those of its own choosing, and is not oppressed by an arbitrary power. Beside this instance of the grandeur of Ahasuerus, many more might be given, *v.* 2. but they are not thought fit to be recorded here in the sacred story, which is confined to the Jews, and relates the affairs of other nations only as they fell in with theirs, but they are *written in the Persian chronicles*, (*v.* 2.) long since lost or buried in oblivion, while the sacred writings will live till time shall be no more. Dan. 2: 44.

2. How great and good Mordecai was: it does one good to see virtue and piety thus in honor. Men of merit, often, by some means or other, are discovered and preferred at last. The declaration of the greatness to which the king advanced Mordecai, was *written in the chronicles of the kingdom*, as very memorable, and contributing to the great achievements of the king. But Mordecai was *great* too *among the Jews* (*v.* 3.) not only *above* them, more honorable, but *with* them, dear to, familiar with, and much respected by them. He

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The obstinate enemies and persecutors of the church are often left to act in the most infatuated manner; being urged on by malice, in opposition to the most evident dictates of prudence. (*Ex.* 14: 5—9, 21—23.) For the records of history show, that when the enemies of God's people have 'hoped to have power over them,' it has generally been 'turned to the contrary,' and they have gained the advantage 'over them that hated them.' Yet, neither observation, nor experience, nor demonstration, can subdue the enmity of the carnal mind, which seizes every opportunity of exerting itself: and even the protection of the ruling powers, if not very decisive, has generally been found insufficient to repress the spirit of persecution; though men commonly fear the displeasure of a king, or of powerful courtiers, far more than the wrath of Almighty God.—The aggressor is answerable for all the blood shed in unjust war; provided the advantages gained by those, who stand in their own defence in a good cause, be not pushed on with revenge and cruelty: and when *whole nations* are attacked on account of religion, they have as good a right to defend themselves, as when the assault is made on any other unrighteous pretext.—Prosperous sinners often bequeath their vices and enmities to their posterity; the effects of which remain, when their ill-gotten or abused affluence is dissipated: but children will never be *ruined* by the crimes of their parents, unless they imitate them. (*Ex.* 20: 5. *Ez.* 18: 2—4, 14—17.)—What dire effects to thousands may result from one malicious, or even incautious action! (3: 8—11.)—Alas! the best institutions are liable to be perverted by human depravity; and to degenerate, not only into a form, but into an occasion of sin. Holy joy in God is supplanted by sensual indulgence and carnal mirth: under pretence of celebrating great deliverances, [thanksgivings,] or even of commemorating the mysteries of redemption, professed Christians often behave, as if they were the devotees of Bacchus or of Momus; and, instead of 'a good day' and a feast unto the Lord, they, like the worshippers of the golden calf, 'sit down to eat and drink, and rise up to play!' (*Ex.* 32: 1. *P. O.* 1—14.) Nothing more deeply disgraces religion, or stupifies the conscience, than such abuses. May the Lord teach us to rejoice with that holy joy, which anticipates and prepares for the felicity of heaven! SCOTT.

of the Spirit of God. It was evidently proper to perpetuate the memory of so extraordinary a deliverance. Some think it was intended, that the 13th day should be observed as a day of fasting and prayer, as an introduction to the festival; and the Jews at present profess to observe it as such: but the decree does not admit of this construction. Finally, the decree was added to this history, that the institution might never be forgotten. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. X. V. 1—3. These vs. close the narrative, as it stands in the original Heb.; and are very improperly detached from the preceding ch.—This book is placed in our Bibles the last of the historical records of the Jews; though the events recorded by Nehemiah seem to have occurred subsequent to most, if not all, in this book. (*Note, Neh.* 2: 6.)—However, for above 400 years, i. e. till the coming of the Messiah, the scriptural narrative of that favored nation is suspended.—A compendious view of the most material events, as transmitted to us by other writers, is added, at the close of this book, in order to connect the Old Testament with the New.—It has been observed, that no pagan writer mentions any of the events of the book of Esther: but, in fact, little comparatively is known concerning the Persian kings, or the Medo-Persian empire except as connected with the history of Greece, and as recorded by Grecian historians: and it cannot be supposed, that the concerns of the Jews, as dispersed through the vast empire of Persia, would at all attract the attention of that proud people, who considered all nations, except themselves, as barbarians; and who peculiarly despised the Jews, as a bigoted and narrow-minded race; because they would not conform to any of their varied idolatries, or embrace any of their systems of philosophy. ID.

(1, 2.) *Isles.*] 'In the Ægean Sea, conquered by Darius Hystaspes.' USHER. *Chronicles.*] 'The Persians have ever taken more pains than almost any nation, to preserve their records in writing; yet their fate has been to be indebted for the stability of their fame to foreign historians; [Ezra, Nehemiah, the author of Esther, some of the later prophets, and *Herodot. Ctesias*, *Xen.* and *Arrian.*] The perplexity, occasioned by the difference in the names or titles of certain kings, has been removed by the labors of the learned; see EICHHORN, Rep. B. 15. their names, indeed, were only titles or surnames, of which *Herod.* gives a translation. Darius signified *the mighty*, Xerxes, the *warlike*, Artaxerxes, *the great warrior*. [Darius and Xerxes appear to be compound words [note and cut, end of Ezra], the first abbreviated from *Dara* (Lord) and *Kshah* (King): whence *Æl. Lampr.* calls Artaxerxes, 'a most powerful king, as well in fact, as *in name*.' GROTEFEND.] The sort of history the Persians possessed was closely connected with their polity, and a fruit of their despotic government, and of the *almost idolatrous* respect in which their kings were held. [Note, 3: 2.] Whatever their monarchs said or did was of course worthy of being recorded; and to this intent his person was usually surrounded (in public, at festivals, reviews, in battles) by scribes or secretaries, whose office it was to register all his words and actions. They wrote down from his mouth (according to the eastern custom) his commands and ordinances, which, being sealed with his signet, were immediately despatched. So the Mongol conquerors. Hyder Ali usually appeared in public surrounded by 40 such secretaries. Such was the origin of the Chronicles or Diaries of the Persians; styled by CTESIAS, *diphtherai basilikai*; and apparently written on leather or parchment. Such records would be rather a history of the court than of the empire; an idea confirmed by the fragments of *Ctesias*, and Esth. 6: 1, 2.' HEEREN.

To show the hopelessness of reconciling the Greek and Persian lists of the early kings of Persia, *Fraser* thus gives both. ED.

'Persian authorities.		'Greek authorities	
1. Kei Kobad, founder of Kayanians,	120	1. Dejoces, [710, B. C.] reigned	53 yrs.
No corresponding prince in Pers. hist.		2. Phraortes,	22
2. Kei Kaoos,	150	3. Cyaxares,	40
No corresponding prince.		4. Astyages,	35
3. Kei Khoosroo,	60	5. Cyrus,	30
4. Lohrasp,	120	6. Cambyses,	7 5 m.
		7. Smerdis the Magian,	7 m.
5. Gushtasp,	60	8. Darius Hystaspes,	36
		9. Xerxes,	21
6. Ardeshir Diraz-dusht, (long handed)	112	10. Artaxerxes Longimanus,	49
7. Queen Homai,	32	No corresponding prince.	
8. Darab I.		11. Darius Nothus,	19
		12. Artaxerxes Mnemon,	46
No corresponding prince,		13. Ochus,	21
Darab II.	9	14. Arses,	2
		15. Darius Codomanus,	6
	663		337

among the Jews, and [f] accepted of the multitude of his brethren, [g] seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.

[f] 3:2. Rom. 14:18.
[g] Neh. 2:10. Ps. 122:8,9. Rom. 9:2,3. 10:1.

was good, very good, for he did good; that made him truly great, and then his greatness gave him an opportunity of doing so much the more good. Doing good works is the best and chief thing expected from those that have wealth and power; but giving good words is also commendable, and makes the good deed the more acceptable. He did not side with any one party of his people against another, but was a common father to them all, recommended himself to the *multitude of his brethren*, not despising the crowd, and spake peace *to all their seed*, without distinction. Thus he made himself acceptable by humility and beneficence. Thanks be to God, such a government as this we are blessed with, *seeks the welfare of our people, speaking peace to all their seed.* God continue it long, very long! And grant us, under its happy protection and influence, to *live quiet and peaceable lives, in godliness, honesty*, and charity.

Comparative Chronology for a period of 1000 years B. C., principally after Hales.

EGYPT.	Hales.	Wilkinson.	The *Heb. Monarchy* extends fm. Egypt to Euphrates, under *Solomon* in the yr. 1000 B. C.	Hales	Usher
			Rehoboam succeeds Solomon in - - -	990	975
			Judah.		
Sheshonk I. (Shishak) ascends throne.	988	978	Invasion of Shishak - - - - - - -		971
			Abijah succeeds his father - - - - -	973	958
			His victory over Jeroboam - - - - -		957
Osorkon I. (Zerah)		945	*Asa* succeeds his father - - - - - -	970	955
Battle with Asa		941	His covenant - - - - - - - - -		941
			War with Baasha - - - - - - - -		930
Takelothe		925			
			Asa diseased in his feet - - - - - -		917
			Jehoshaphat succeeds his father - - -	925	914
Osorkon II.		908	He expels superstitious worship - - -		912
			Expedition against Ramoth Gilead - -		897
			A fleet equipped for Ophir - - - - -		896
			Elisha procures water for the armies - -		895
Sheshonk II.		890	*Jehoram* (assoc. with his father, 892) succ.	904	889
			Introduces idolatry; is smitten with disease		887
Other kings (?		to	*Ahaziah* succeeds his father - - - -	896	885
Tnephactus (?)		abt.	Slain by Jehu. *Athaliah* usurps the throne	895	884
			Joash anointed king and Athaliah slain	889	878
		880	He orders the temple to be repaired -		856
			Jehoiada dies, 842. Zechariah stoned -		840
			Amaziah succeeds his father - - - -	849	839
			Challenges Jehoash and is overcome -		826
Pehor-Bakhor (Bocchoris)	815	812	Slain; and an interregnum follows - -	820	810
			Azariah (*Uzziah*) succeeds his father -	809	810
Sabakoftep (So, of SS.)	769	773	Smitten with leprosy - - - - - - -		765
			Jotham succeeds his father - - - -	757	758
			Ahaz succeeds his father - - - - -	741	742
			Judah oppressed by Rezin and Pekah -		741
			Ahaz pays tribute to the king of Assyria		740
Shebek(?)	715	728	*Hezekiah* succeeds his father - - - -	725	727
			Diligently promotes reformation - - -		727
Tehrak (Tirhakah of SS.)					
Sethos (of Herodotus) contemporary at Memphis.	713	714	Sennacherib, (son of Salm.) inv. Judah	715	713
			Hezekiah's sickness - - - - - - -		713
			Receives ambassadors from Babylon -		712
		to	Sennacherib besieges Jerusalem: his army destroyed - - - - - - - -	712	710
Stephinathis					
Nechepsus					
Necho I.					
12 Nomarchs	673	690			
Psamatik I.	658	664			
Neco (Nechao II) *Necho* of SS.	619	610	2d Inv. of Judea and cap. of Manasseh	674	
			3d Inv. by Holofernes (Assyrian)	640	
Psamatik II.		604	Josiah defeated and slain by Necho	610	
Psamatik III. (Hophra, SS.)	597	595	Kingdom of Judah continues till Nabokolassar, Boktanser or *Nebuchadnezzar* destroys Jerusalem - - - -	588	588
Ames Neitse (Amasis)	568	570			
20,000 cities in Egypt					
			Ilverodam (*Evil-Merodach*) r. 561. Nitocris		
			the Mede succ. Belshazzar at Babylon,		
			in Persia 8 yrs. (from 559) in Media 15		
MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE (which comm. 551).					
Cambyses conquers all Egypt	525	525	*Cyrus* proclaims liberty to the Jews - -	536	
Egypt revolts	487	521	The temple finished - - - - - - -	515	
Xerxes reconquers Egypt.	484	485	*Ahasuerus* (Artax. Long.) Stops the building of Jerusalem - - - - - -	163	
			Esther made qn. 458 *Ezra* sent to Judea	457	
Eg. conq. by Grks.	332		*Haman's* plot 450 *Nehemiah* reb. Jeru	445	
Ptolemaic dyn. be.	323		About this time *Ezra* is supposed to have	444	
Ends at Cleopatra's d. when Eg. bec. Rom. prov.	30		*Nehemiah* sent back to Jeru. ref. abuses	424	
			Malachi flourished (420) or as some - -	397	
Darab II. Darius Codomannus, (335) being conquered by Alexander, or Ascander, the *Medo-Persian* empire ends in the *Macedo-Grecian* - - - - -					

Jeroboam revolts in - - - - - - - -	990	975
Israel.		
The prophet of Bethel - - - - - -		974
Jeroboam overcome by Abijah - - - -		957
Nadab succeeds his father - - - -	968	954
Baasha succeeds his father, who is slain	966	953
Builds Ramah. *Elah* succeeds - - -	943	930
Murd'd by *Zimri*, whom *Omri* dethrones	942	929
Omri reigns jointly with *Tibni* till - -		925
Omri builds Samaria - - - - - - -		924
Ahab succeeds his father - - - - -	931	918
Elijah foretells famine, 910. His sacrifice		906
Syrians defeated - - - - - - - -		901
Ahaziah (assoc. with his father 898) succ.	909	897
Hurt by a fall and dies - - - - - -		896
Jehoram succeeds his brother - - - -	907	896
Elijah taken up to heaven - - - - -		896
Benhadad besieges Samaria - - - -		892
Jehoram wounded at Ramoth-Gilead -		884
Jehu slays him and reigns - - - - -	895	884
Jonah preaches at Nineveh (abt.) - -	800	962
Jehoahaz succeeds his father - - - -	867	856
Jehoash or *Joash* succeeds his father -	850	839
Jeroboam II. succeeds his father - - -	834	825
Dies, and an interregnum follows - -	793	784
Zachariah, his son, enth'd, then murd. by	771	773
Shallum killed in 1 m. by *Menahem* who r.	770	772
Pekahiah succeeds his father - - - -	760	761
Pekah murders and succeeds him - -	758	759
Part of Israel carried captive - - - -	740	740
Pekah slain by Hoshea, anarchy ensues	739	738
Hoshea begins to reign - - - - - -	728	730
Israel tributary to Salmanezer - - - -		728
Hoshea refuses the tribute, & Salmanezer besieges Samaria - - - - -	725	724
Samaria is taken, the 10 tribes carried cap., the kingdom of Is. exting'd while that of Judah remains 130 yrs. longer.	719	721
Sennacherib - - - 714 Invades Judah - -		
Esarhaddon Asaradin (or Sardanapalus I.) Revolt of Babylonians and Medes - - - -		
1st Interregnum 704.		
Aphronadius - 699.		
Missesimordak - 692.		
Babylon reduced by		
Esarhaddon regains Babylon - - - - -	680	
Ninus III. (succeeds to Assyrian empire) - -	667	
Nabuchodonosor - - - - - - - -	658	
Def. of Arphaxad (Phraortes the Mede.) - -	641	
Sarac or Sardanapalus II. - - - - -	636	
Nabopolassar (Babylonian) takes Assyrian capi-	606	
sisted by the Medes, and destroys it, 17 or 19 cent. af-		
zar succeeds Nabopolassar and reigns over the *Babylonian Empire* -		604
Subdues Elam or Persia (proper) - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -		596
ricassolassar, Neriglissar or Belshazzar 559. Cyaxares II. or Fraiborz, or *Darius* and appoints Nabonadius prefect there 553. Kai Chosru or *Cyrus the Persian* r. ... (from 551) in Babylon 7 yrs. (from his taking it in 536) thus founding the -		551
Conquers Egypt 535, (which first revolts 525.) Cambyses or Lohorasp - - - -		529
Smerdis Magus 521 r. 7 mos. Darius son of Hystaspes or Gushtasp - - - -		521
Xerxes 495. Artaxerxes Longimanus, (Ardshir diraz dest or Bahaman) - - -		464
Xerxes his son succ. and reigns 45 days; assass. by Sogdianus who reigns about 6 months killed by Ochus in 424 who takes the name of Darius Nothus		
Darius Nothus succ. 423. Artaxerxes Mnemon - - - - - - - - - -		404
Ochus or Darab I., Arogus, or Arses succ. - - - - - - -		358

ASSYRIA and BABYLON.	Hales	Hales.
It is uncert. whether Herod'd Dayolon Semiramis reigned 42 yrs.	985	Pertiades
The Dynasty of Mithraeus or Ninus II. ends in - - 821.	956	Ophratæus
	935	Epecheres, or Ofratanes
		Acroganes or Acrazapes
	883	
	841	Thonus Concolerus
	821	King of Nineveh
	790	Pul, or Belus II.
	770	1st inv. of Israel
	747	Tiglathpileser
	740	2d inv. of Israel.
	733	
	726	Shalmanasser
	722	3d inv. of Israel.
	721	
Mardok revolts from Assyria and writes to Hezekiah 710	711	
	710	
Arcianus - -	709	
Belibus - -	702	
Regibelus - -	693	
2d Interregnum	688	
the Assyrians	680	
& resides there	680	
Saosduchin, vry.	667	
Chiniladon	647	
Nabopolassar	625	
tal Nineveh, as-	606	
ter its found'n.	604	

MACEDON, early more civilized than the Greeks, was a limited monarchy, or varying extent, the history commences with the Heraclidæ, K. of Argos, son of Amyntas (Ch. who reigned Grecce, destroyed by national dissensions, at the end of Cheronea in 338, and left his throne to his son Alexander the Great. 336 (Hales 356)

MEDES AND PERSIANS. Medes revolt from Assyria, (Interregnum,) 710. Dejoces or Arbaces 708. Phraortes or Artynes or Arphaxad 663. Cyaxares I. or Cyaxares II. or Kaikobad, or Ahasuerus, or Astyages, or Kaikous 634. Cyaxares II. 601. Cyaxares II. 596. Darius Hystaspes or Gushtasp 521. Xerxes 485. Artaxerxes Longimanus 464. Darius Nothus 423. Artaxerxes Mnemon 404. Darius Codomannus 336. Alexander the Great 331.

ROME founded by Romulus in 753. A limited monarchy, under 7 successive kings. The last, Tarquinius Superbus, expelled, Rome became a Republic in 510. Kings fully obtained 340. Gr. & Macedonian empire 146.

MACEDO-GRECIAN EMPIRE. Alexander the Grt. 331. Philip Aridæus 323. 1st Partition of provinces 323. Alexander Ægus 317. Seleucus Nicator. Era of Seleucidæ 312. 2d Div. of prov. 310. Final partit. of Emp. 301. of which Seleucus obt. all but Egypt. Lybia, Arabia, Cele Syria and Palestine, which 246 were Ptolemy's. Antiochus Soter, succ. 280. Antiochus Theos 261. Parthian revolt 251. Seleucus Callinicus 246. Ends (in more E. prov.) with the *Parthian Empire*, commencing with Arsaces 229, founder of a dyn. of Aschkanian kings, who end in Ardevan III. A. D. 225. Orodes k. B. C. 4. Seleucus Keraunus succ. his fath. 2:5. Antiochus the Gr. (his bro.) succ. 223. obt. poss. of Syr. & Pal. 198. Worsted by the Romans 190. Killed in Persia - - - - 188

ROMAN EMPIRE. Syria red. to Rom. prov. by Pompey the Grt. & Jews depend't on Rom. 63 Antipater r. in Jud. 47. Herod's access. 37. k. at Christ's birth 4

See for the period of Jewish History between the close of the sacred canon and the Christian era, the note at the end of Nehemiah.

THE PREFACE
TO THE POETICAL BOOKS.

THE five books, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Solomon's Song, though of the same divine origin, design, and authority, yet, on some accounts, are very different from the rest of the sacred writings: such variety of methods has Infinite Wisdom seen fit to take, in conveying the light of divine revelation to men, that this heavenly food might have (as the Jews say of the manna) something in it agreeable to every palate, and suited to every constitution. If every eye be not thus opened, every mouth will be stopped, and such as perish in their ignorance will be left without excuse. Matt. 11:17.

I. The books of Scripture have hitherto been, mostly, very plain and easy narratives of matter of fact, which he that runs may read and understand; but here we are advanced to a higher form in God's school, and have books put into our hands, the study whereof requires a more close application of mind, greater intenseness of thought, and a diligent search, which yet the treasure hid in them, when found, will abundantly recompense. The same method is observable in the N. T. where we find the plain history of Christ and his gospel placed first in the Evangelists, and the Acts of the Apostles; then the mystery of both in the Epistles, which are more difficult to be understood; and, lastly, the prophecies of things to come, in the Apocalyptic visions.

This method, so exactly observed in both the Testaments, directs us in what order to proceed, both in studying the things of God, and in teaching them; and where can we expect a better method of divinity, and of preaching? Our Lord spake the word to the people *as they were able to hear it*, (Mark 4:33.) and had many things to say to his disciples which He did not, because as yet they *could not bear them*, John 16: 12, 13. And those whom Paul *could not speak to as unto spiritual*—though he blamed their backwardness, yet he accommodated himself to their weakness, and spake to them *as unto babes in Christ*, 1 Cor. 3:1, 2. Yet though we must never think to learn above our Bible, as long as we are in this world, we must still be getting forward in it: and then shall we know, if thus, by regular steps (Hos. 6:3.) we *follow on to know, the Lord*, and what the mind of the Lord is.

II. The divine philosophy, (if I may so call it,) in these books, (an account of the notions, sentiments, thoughts, affections of those who went before us) is not less needful than their acts, than the sacred history (we have hitherto had) was. Blessed be God for both.

III. The Jews make these books to be given by a divine inspiration somewhat different from that both of Moses and the prophets. They divided the books of the O. T. into the Law, the Prophets, and *the Writings*, which Epiphanius emphatically translates *Things written*, and these books are more commonly called among the Greeks *Hagiographa*, *Holy Writings*: the Jews attribute them to that distinct kind of inspiration which they call *ruhhakodesh*, *The Holy Spirit*. Moses they supposed to write by the Spirit, in a way above all the other prophets, for *with him* God spake *mouth to mouth, even apparently; knew him*, (Num. 12:8.) i. e. conversed with him *face to face*, Deut. 34:10. He was made partaker of divine revelation, (as Maimonides distinguishes, *De Fund. Legis*, c. 7.) *per vigiliam—while awake*,* whereas God manifested Himself to all the other prophets in a dream or vision: and he adds, that Moses understood the words of prophecy without any perturbation or astonishment of mind, whereas the other prophets commonly fainted and were troubled. But the writers of the Hagiographa, they suppose, to be inspired in a degree somewhat below that of the other prophets, and to receive divine revelation, not as they did, by dreams, and visions, and voices, but (as Maimonides describes it, *More Nevochim—part* 2. *ch.* 45.) they perceived some power to rise within them, and rest on them, which urged and enabled them to write or speak far above their own natural ability, in psalms or hymns, or in history, or in rules of good living, still enjoying the ordinary vigor and use of their senses. Let David himself describe it. *The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue: the God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me*, 2 Sam. 23:2, 3. This gives such a magnificent account of the inspiration by which David wrote, that I see not why it should be made inferior to that of the other prophets, for David is expressly called *a prophet*, Acts 2:30.

But, since our hand is in with the Jewish masters, let us see what books they account Hagiographa. These five now before us come, without dispute, into this rank, and the book of the Lamentations is not unfitly added. Indeed, the Jews, when they would speak critically, reckon all the songs in the O. T. among the Hagiographa; for, though penned by prophets, and under the direction of the Holy Ghost, yet, because not the proper result of a *prophetic vision*, they were not strictly prophecy. As to the Historical Books, they distinguish (I think without a difference;) some they assign to the prophets, calling them *the former prophets*, namely, Josh. Judg. and the two books of Kings; but others they rank among the Hagiographa, as, Ruth, (which yet is but an appendix to Judg.) the two books of Chr. with Ezra, Neh. and Esth. which last the Rabbins greatly value, and think is to be had in equal esteem with the law of Moses itself, that it shall last as long as *it* lasts, and shall survive the writings of the prophets. And, *lastly*, they reckon the book of Daniel among the Hagiographa,† for which no reason can be given, since he was not inferior to any of the prophets in the gift of prophecy: and, therefore, the learned Mr. Smith thinks their placing it there was fortuitous, and by mistake.‡

Mr. Smith, in his Discourse, before quoted, though he supposes this kind of divine inspiration to be more *placate* and *serene* than that which was strictly called *prophecy*, not acting so much upon the imagination, but seating itself in the higher and purer faculties of the soul, yet shows that it manifested itself to be of a divine nature, not only as it always acted pious souls into strains of devotion, or moved them strangely to dictate matters of true piety and goodness, but as it came in abruptly on the minds of those holy men, and transported them from the temper of mind they were in before; so that they perceived themselves captivated by the power of some higher light than that which their own understanding commonly poured out upon them; and this, says he, was a kind of vital form to that light of divine and sanctified reason which they were perpetually possessed of, and that constant frame of holiness and goodness which dwelt in their hallowed minds.' We have reason to *glorify that God of Israel who gave such power unto men*, and has here transmitted to us the blessed products of that power.

IV. The style and composition of these books are different from those that go before, and those that follow. Our Savior divides the books of the O. T. into *the Law*, *the Prophets*, and *the Psalms*, (Luke 24:44.) and thereby teaches us to distinguish those books that are poetical, or metrical, from the Law and the Prophets; and such are all these that are now before us, except Ecclesiastes, which yet, having something restrained in its style, may well enough be reckoned among them. They are books in verse, according to the ancient rules of versifying, though not according to the Greek and Latin *prosodies*.

'The principal, and indeed the only characteristic of Hebrew poetry, which can now be traced, is *parallelism*, or such an arrangement of parts of a sentence, that things shall answer to things, and words to words, as if fitted by a kind of rule or measure. Such is the general strain of the Hebrew poetry, instances of which are found in almost every part of the O. T. particularly in Ps. and Prov. This explains why the English version, though in prose, retains in many parts so much of a poetical cast. For, being almost word for word after the original, the form and order of the sentences are preserved, and we plainly perceive a departure from the common style of prose.'

'This subject has been very fully examined by *Lowth* and *Jebb*, and a general view of it is given by *T. H. Horne*, from whom many of the preceding and following remarks are taken. [See also *Boys's* Key to Ps.] In this place only a brief outline can be stated. The *poetical parallelism* has been found reducible to the following species. (1.) Parallel lines *gradational*: see Ps. 1:1. 21:1, 2. 24:3, 4. (2.) *Antithetic*: Ps. 20:7, 8. 30:5. 37:10, 11. Prov. 10:1, 7. 11:24. 16:33. 29:26. (3.) *Constructive*: Ps. 19:7—17. 148:7, 13. Job 12:13—16. Each of the above species admits of many combinations. (4.) Parallel lines *introverted*: Prov. 25:15, 16. Ps. 135:15—18. The latter passage may be given as an illustrative specimen.

1. The idols of the heathen are silver and gold,
2. The work of men's hands;
3. They have mouths, but they speak not;
4. They have eyes, but they see not;
5. They have ears, but they hear not,
6. Neither is there any breath in their mouths.
7. They who make them are like unto them:
8. So are all they who put their trust in them.

'The reader will perceive the manner in which lines 1 and 8, 2 and 7, 3 and 6, 4 and 5, answer, or are parallel to each other.' HENRY abr

Sir W. Temple, in his Essay on Poetry, thinks it is generally agreed to have been the first sort of writing used in the world: [notes, Gen. 4:23, 24. Ex. 7:11. 1 Chr. 15:16, &c. *latter part*.] nay, that, in several nations, poetical compositions preceded the very invention or usage of letters. The Spaniards (he says) found in America many strains of poetry, and such as seemed to flow from a true poetic vein, before any letters were known in those regions. The same (says he) is probable of the Scythians and Grecians: the oracles of Apollo were delivered in verse; so were those of the sibyls. [The most ancient Hindoo and Persian books are rhythmical: so the Chinese, &c.] And Tacitus says, that the ancient Germans had no annals or records but what were in verse. Homer and Hesiod wrote their poems (the very Alcoran of the Pagan Dæmonology) many ages before the appearing of any of the Greek philosophers or historians; and, long before them, (if we may give credit to the antiquities of Greece,) even before the days of David, Orpheus and Linus were celebrated poets and musicians in Greece; and, at the same time, Carmenta, the mother of Evander, who was the first that introduced letters among the natives of Greece, was so called *a carmine—from a song*, because she delivered herself in verse. And in such veneration was this way of writing among the ancients, that their poets were called *Vates—Prophets*, and their muses were deified.

But, which is more certain and considerable, the most ancient composition [perhaps?] we meet with in Scripture, was the song of Moses at the Red Sea, (Ex. 15.) which we find before the very first mention of writing, for that occurs not until Ex. 17:14. when God bade Moses write a memorial of the war with Amalek. The first, and indeed the true and general end of writing, is, the help of memory; and poetry does in some measure answer that end, and even in the want of writing, much more with writing, helps to preserve the remembrance of ancient things. The book of *the wars of the Lord*, (Num. 21:14.) and the book of Jasher, (Josh. 10:13. 2 Sam. 1:18.) seem to have been both written in poetic measures.

Many sacred songs we meet with in the O. T. scattered both in the historical and prophetical books, penned on particular occasions, which, in the opinion of very competent judges, 'have in them as true and noble strains of poetry and picture as are met with in any other language whatsoever, in spite of all the disadvantages from translations into so different tongues and common prose;* nay, [from the superiority of a *true* religion,] are nobler examples of the true sublime style of poetry than any that can be found in the Pagan writers; the images are so strong, the thoughts so great, the expressions so divine, and the figures so admirably bold and moving, that the wonderful manner of these writers is quite inimitable.'† It is fit, that what is employed in the service of the sanctuary should be the best in its kind.

The books here put together are poetical. Job is an heroic poem;

* See Dis. on Proph. *ch.* II. † Hil. Megil. c. 2. § 11.

‡ Vid. Hottinger. Thesaur. Philol. lib. 2. cap. 1. § 3.

* Sir W. Temple, p. 329. ‡ Sir R. Blackmore's pref. to Job.

the book of Psalms, a collection of divine odes or lyrics; Solomon's Song, a pastoral and an epithalamium: they are poetical, and yet sacred and serious, grave and full of majesty. They have a poetic force and flame, without poetic fury and fiction, and strangely command and move the affections, without corrupting the imagination, or putting a cheat on it; and while they gratify the ear, they edify the mind, and profit the more by pleasing. It is, therefore, much to be lamented that so powerful an art, which was at first consecrated to the honor of God, and has been so often employed in his service, should be debauched, as it has been, and is at this day, into the service of his enemies; that his *corn, and wine, and oil*, should be *prepared for Baal*.

'When reading or interpreting Heb. poetry, we should especially remember the manners of the people, and the idioms of the language. As the sacred poets lived in the east, their ideas and manners are different from ours, and are not to be considered according to our modes of thinking. Without attending to these circumstances, the Heb. poetry cannot be correctly understood, nor its beauties duly felt and appreciated.' [See *Bush's* 'Illustrations of Scripture,' now publishing.] HENRY abr.

V. These books have in them the very sum and substance of religion, and what they contain is more fitted to our hand, and made ready for use, than any part of the O. T. [There is greater depth and apparent difficulty in them than in those which precede: but the instruction is in general more immediately prepared for use; and the real benefit of perusing the scriptural history, much depends on the degree of our previous acquaintance with the books before us. In like manner, we shall read the record of our Savior's miracles and discourses to edification, in proportion as we have understood the epistolary part of the N. T., which, though more difficult in many respects, conveys instruction in more direct and explicit terms. SCOTT.] The book of Job directs us what we are to believe concerning God; the book of Psalms, how we are to worship Him, pay our homage to Him, and maintain our communion with Him; and then the book of the Proverbs shows very particularly how we are to govern ourselves *in every turn of human life*: thus shall the man of God, by a due attendance to these lights, be perfect, thoroughly furnished for every good work. And these are placed according to their natural order, as well as the order of time; for very fitly are we first led into the knowledge of God, and then instructed how to worship Him, and to choose the things that please Him.

We have here much of natural religion, its principles, its precepts- much of God, his infinite perfections, his relations to man, and his government both of the world and of the church: here is much of Christ, who is the Spring, and Soul, and Centre, of revealed religion, and of whom both Job and David were eminent types, and had clear and happy prospects. We have here speculations to entertain the most contemplative, and discoveries to satisfy the most inquisitive, and increase the knowledge of the most knowing. Here is that also which, with a divine light, will bring into the soul the heat and influence of a divine fire, will kindle and inflame pious and devout affections, on which wings we may soar upward, until we enter into the holiest. We may here be in the mount with God, to behold his beauty; and when we come down from that mount, if we retain (as we ought) the impressions of our devotion on our spirits, and make conscience of doing that good which the *Lord our God here requires of us*, our faces shall shine before all with whom we converse, who shall take occasion thence to *glorify our Father which is in heaven*, Matt. 5:16.

Thus great, thus noble, thus truly excellent, is the subject, and thus capable of being improved, which gives me the more reason to be ashamed of the meanness of my performance, that the comment breathes so little of the life and spirit of the text. We often wonder at those that are not at all affected with the great things of God, and have no taste or relish of them, because they know little of them: but, perhaps, we have more reason to wonder at ourselves, that, conversing so frequently, so intimately, with them, we are not more affected with them, so as even to be wholly taken up with them, and in a continual transport of delight in their contemplation.

In the review of [my work,] I find many defects, and those who are critical, perhaps, will meet with some mistakes; but what is *from God*, I trust, shall be *to Him*, shall be graciously accepted by Him, *according to what a man has, and not according to what he has not*, and shall be of some use to his church; and what is from myself, (as said *Augustin*,) i. e. all the defects and errors, shall, I trust, be favorably passed by and pardoned. HENRY.

AN EXPOSITION,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, AND NOTES.

UPON THE BOOK OF

JOB.

MANY copies of the Hebrew Bible place Job after Psalms, and some after Proverbs; whence perhaps some imagine it to be written by Isaiah, or some of the later prophets. But, as the subject appears much more ancient, so we have no reason to think but that the composition was, and that therefore it is most fitly placed first in this collection of divine morals: also, being doctrinal, it is proper to precede, and introduce, the book of Psalms, which is devotional, and of Proverbs, which is practical; for how shall we worship or obey a God whom we know not? We are sure,

I. That *it is given by inspiration of God, though we are not certain who was the penman of it.* The Jews, though no friends to Job, because a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, yet always retained this book in their sacred canon. It is referred to by one apostle; (James, 5: 11.) and one passage (*ch.* 5: 13.) is quoted by another apostle, with the usual form of quoting Scripture, *It is written*, 1 Cor. 3: 19. [Comp. 1: 21. with 1 Tim. 6: 7. Job 2: 10. Ja. 5: 11. Job 5: 13. 1 Cor. 3: 19. Job 5: 17. Heb. 12: 5. Job 34: 19. Acts 10: 34.] Many of the ancients think this history was written by Moses in Midian, and delivered to his suffering brethren in Egypt, for their support and comfort under their burdens, and the encouragement of their hope that God would, in due time, deliver and enrich them, as He did this patient sufferer. [Some, perceiving a similarity between some parts of it, and passages in the Psalms and Proverbs, assign it a much later origin; but wise and pious persons will often, without copying each other, give the same instructions and opinions; and it is at least as probable that David and Solomon alluded to Job, as that the writer of that book alluded to their works. SCOTT.] Some conjecture it was written originally in Arabic, and afterwards translated into Hebrew, for the use of the Jewish church, by Solomon, (so M. Jurieu,) or some other inspired writer. [Perhaps Elihu wrote it in Arabic, and Moses rendered it into Heb. SCOTT.] It seems most probable to me, that Elihu was the penman of it, at least of the discourses, because (*ch.* 32: 15, 16.) he mingles the words of an historian with those of a disputant: but Moses perhaps wrote the first two chs. and the last, to give light to the discourses; for in *them* God is frequently called *Jehovah*, but not once in all the *discourses*, except *ch.* 12: 9. That name was but little known to the patriarchs before Moses, Ex. 6: 3. If Job wrote it himself, some of the Jewish writers themselves own him a *prophet among the Gentiles;* if Elihu, we find he had a spirit of prophecy which *filled him with matter, and constrained him, ch.* 32: 18.*

II. That *it is, for substance, a true history.* [Some have employed much pains, ingeniously but very unwarrantably, to interpret it as

* '*Patrick* takes it for granted, that the author was Job himself, and fixes the time before Israel came out of Egypt, which he infers from certain omissions: "though there be plain mention of the drowning of the old world, and the burning of Sodom, in this book, yet there is no allusion to the drowning of Pharaoh and other miraculous works which attended the deliverance from Egypt. Nor is there any notice taken of the revelation of God's will to Moses, when Elihu reckons up those ways whereby God was wont to discover Himself to man." *Magee* thinks the writer was Job, or some contemporary; so also do *Schultens, Peters, Lowth, Hales* and *Townsend*, [Note d. p. 11. vol. 1.] *Horne, Sutcliffe. Poole* favors the idea that the writer was Moses, [so *Kennicott*, and some of the Rabbinical writers,] the difference of style arguing nothing, as this book is poetical, and his other works merely historical; and for the Arabic words introduced, he pleads that Moses lived 40 years in Midian, a part of Arabia, where he must have learned the language. This opinion is defended by Dr. *Mason Good*, [see below,] favored by *Michaelis* and *Dathe*, and considered as the best supported by *Boothroyd*. *Grotius* ascribes the work to Solomon, from his extensive gifts and knowledge, and the occasional occurrence of Arabisms in the Proverbs that bear his name; [*Greg, Nazianzen, Spanheim* and *Harduin*, held this opinion; and Dr. *A. Clarke* thinks 'the arguments for it weightier than those in favor of Moses, but 'possibly neither wrote it, but rather some learned Idumean, well acquainted with the Jewish religion and writers:' see his pref. *Rosenm.* thinks it written by a Hebrew, referring to 40: 23. and many other passages, and remarks that *Richter* has disproved an Idumean author: and that *Bernstein* 'has proved that the language of the book does not approach so near to the nature and genius (naturam et indolem) of the Arabic, as to the Aramean or Chaldee; and shows that there is no ch. in which Chaldean forms of words, and meanings peculiar to the Chaldee *usus loquendi*, do not occur, so that a Chaldean color of the book readily presents itself to every eye.'] *Henry* thinks Elihu penned it, at least the discourses. [See above.] This opinion is evidently from *Lightfoot*. Among those who date it after the Egyptian bondage, and below the Mosaic age, are *Le Clerc, Wesley, Warburton, Stock*, [and *Rosenm.* who thinks we should 'not be far out of the way in placing it between Hezekiah's and Zedekiah's times.' 'The fact is,' says he, 'all those places, in which a concord is detected between Job, and the Psalms and Proverbs, are such as seem not to be express imitations copied from it, but rather argue a common speech, science, learning, education, mode of philosophising, in fine, the common opinions and notions of one and the same age.'] *Wesley* finds an allusion to the plagues of Egypt in 15: 20, &c.; *Stock*, in 34: 20. a reference to the destruction of Egypt's first-born; and *Warburton* [ascribes it to *Ezra*, and] conceives that 13: 24, 25. refers to Hezekiah's sickness and recovery.' *Cond. Comm.* *Ed.*

an allegory. There *is* no sufficient ground for questioning, whether the transactions relating to the world of spirits, actually, *for* substance, occurred; it is evident, that this could be known only by revelation: but, as the book records several supernatural visions, and a glorious appearance of God Himself; this creates no difficulty to those who consider it as true, and as a part of the sacred canon. SCOTT.] No doubt there was such a man as Job; the prophet Ezekiel (14: 14.) names him with Noah and Daniel. The narrative here of his prosperity and piety, his strange afflictions and exemplary patience, the substance of his conferences with his friends, and God's discourse with him out of the whirlwind, with his return, at length, to a very prosperous condition, no doubt, is exactly true, though the inspired penman is allowed the usual liberty of putting the matter of which Job and his friends discoursed, into his own words. [So Eds. Henry, abr., Scott, Rosenm. Dr. A. Clarke, Hewlett, Noyes, Good, &c.]

III. That *it is very ancient, though we cannot fix the precise time of Job, or the writing.* So many, so evident, are its hoary hairs, the marks of its antiquity, that we have reason to think it of equal date with the book of Genesis itself, and that holy Job was contemporary with Isaac and Jacob; though not co-heir with them of the promise of the earthly Canaan, yet a joint-expectant with them of the *better country*, i. e. *the heavenly*. [It is very likely that Job was, in his first prosperity, between the time when Joseph died, and the appearance of Moses in Pharaoh's court, as Israel's deliverer; and the language of God Himself, that 'there was none like him in all the earth,' seems to give probability to this opinion; for there is no other eminent character mentioned in Scripture as flourishing during that period. SCOTT.] Probably, he was of the posterity of Nahor, Abraham's brother, whose first-born was *Uz*, (Gen. 22: 21.) and in whose family religion was, for some ages, kept up, as appears, Gen. 31: 53. where God is called, not only *the God of Abraham*, but *the God of Nahor*. He lived before the age of man was shortened to 70 or 80, as it was in Moses' time; before sacrifices were confined to one altar; before the general apostasy of the nations from the knowledge and worship of the true God; and while yet there was no other idolatry known than the worship of the sun and moon, and that punished by the Judges, *ch.* 31: 26, 28. He lived while God was known by the name of *God Almighty*, more than by the name of *Jehovah;* for he is called *Shaddai—the Almighty*, above 30 times in this book: he lived while divine knowledge was conveyed, not by writing, but by tradition; for to that appeals are here made, *ch.* 8: 8. 21: 29. 15: 18. 5: 1. We have therefore reason to think he lived before Moses, because here is no mention at all of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, or the giving of the law. There is indeed one passage which might be made to allude to the drowning of Pharaoh, (*ch.* 26: 12.) *He divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through Rahab;* which name Egypt is very frequently called by, in Scripture, as Ps. 87: 4. 89: 10. Isa. 11: 9. But that may as well refer to the proud waves of the sea. [These reasons, with several peculiarities of style and composition, sanction the opinion that it is the most ancient work extant. SCOTT.] We conclude therefore, we are here got back to the patriarchal age, [note, d. p. 11. vol. I.] and, beside its authority, receive this book with veneration for its antiquity.

IV. We are sure that *it is of great use to every Christian, though many passages are hard to be understood.* We cannot perhaps be confident of the true meaning of every Arabic word and phrase in it. It finds much work for the critics; but enough is plain, to make the whole profitable. [The first two chs. are prose; their style is very plain; and they form an introduction to the poetical part, which is in many places peculiarly figurative and sublime, and consequently more difficult to be interpreted. The latter part of the last ch. is a historical conclusion.—It cannot be clearly shown, that this book contains prophecies, properly so called; because the passages which might be adduced as prophetical, may also be considered as a profession of faith in the promised Redeemer, and concerning a future resurrection: but few parts of the O. T. declare more explicitly the grand outlines of revealed truth, and even of evangelical doctrine; so that they who speak of it, as consisting chiefly of *natural religion*, seem to have entirely mistaken its scope.—It opens with Job's piety and prosperity, Satan's charge of hypocrisy and selfishness against him, and permission to reduce him to the deepest distress, as a trial of his integrity. It proceeds to relate how his former friends, witnessing his unprecedented sufferings, were led to condemn him. This gave rise to a warm controversy, whether heavy afflictions prove any person, apparently pious, a hypocrite. In it, the principles of true religion were argued from by all as undoubted truths, and many excellent things spoken; but the whole had a sad mixture of human infirmity. When they could by no means agree, Elihu, who had heard the debate, with great modesty and solemnity interfered; and, censuring the others for groundlessly condemning Job, proceeded to reprove him for improper eagerness in justifying himself, by which he had reflected on the justice of God. While he was discoursing, the Lord Himself spake out of a whirlwind, and, by a discovery of his incomprehensible majesty and glory, made Job sensible of his presumption, and brought him to humble himself before Him as a vile and polluted sinner. This effected, He justified Job from the charge of hypocrisy, and condemned the conduct and language of his friends; and, having decided the controversy in favor of Job, appointed him to sacrifice and intercede in their behalf, that they might be forgiven. The whole closes with Job's deliverance, and redoubled prosperity, honor, and comfort.—It is a book full of caution and encouragement to the tempted and afflicted, and of warning to those who hastily judge their brethren. It throws great light on the doctrine of Providence, and on the agency and influence of evil spirits under the control of God. We see in Job an eminent type of the suffering and glorified Savior; and a pattern of the believer's 'passing through much tribulation into the kingdom of God.' In short, the whole is replete with most important instruction; and, among the rest, we are reminded of the ill-effects of acrimonious, religious dispute. These four pious men argued together, till, becoming angry, they censured and condemned each other, and uttered many things irreverent about the divine character and government; and, having lost their temper, would have also lost their labor, and have been more at variance than ever, if another method had not been taken of deciding the controversy. SCOTT.]

This noble poem presents to us, in very clear and lively characters, these five things among others:—I. *A monument of primitive theology.* The first and great principles of the light of nature, on which natural religion is founded, are here, in a warm, long, and learned dispute, not only taken for granted on all sides, but by common consent plainly laid down as eternal truths; illustrated and urged as affecting, commanding truths. Were ever the being of God, his glorious attributes and perfections, his unsearchable wisdom, irresistible power, inconceivable glory, inflexible justice, and his incontestable sovereignty, discoursed of with more clearness, fulness, reverence, and divine eloquence, than in this book? The creation of the world, and the government of it, are here admirably described, not as matters of nice speculation, but as laying most powerful obligations on us to fear and serve, to submit to, and trust in, our Creator, Owner, Lord, and Ruler. Moral good and evil, virtue and vice, were never drawn more to the life, (the beauty of the one and the deformity of the other,) than in this book; nor the inviolable rule of God's judgment more plainly laid down, That happy are the righteous, it shall be well with them; and wo to the wicked, it shall be ill with them. These are not questions of the schools, to keep the learned world in action, nor engines of state, to keep the unlearned world in awe; no, it appears by this book, that they are sacred truths of undoubted certainty, and which all the wise and sober part of mankind have in every age subscribed and submitted to. II. *A specimen of Gentile piety.* This great saint descended, not from Abraham, but Nahor; or, if from Abraham, not from Isaac, but from one of the sons of the concubines sent into the east country; (Gen. 25: 6.) or, if from Isaac, yet not from Jacob, but Esau; so that he was out of the pale of the covenant of peculiarity, no Israelite, no proselyte, and yet none like him for religion, nor such a favorite of Heaven on earth. It was a truth, therefore, before Peter perceived it, that, *in every nation, he that fears God, and works righteousness, is accepted of Him*, (Acts 10: 35.) There were *children of God scattered abroad*, (John 11: 52.) beside the incorporated *children of the kingdom*, Matt. 8: 11, 12. III. *An exposition of the book of Providence*, and a clear and satisfactory solution of many of its difficult and obscure passages. The prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the righteous, have always been reckoned two as hard chapters as any in that book; but they are here expounded, and reconciled with the divine wisdom, purity, and goodness, by the *end of these things*. IV. *A great example of patience*, and close adherence to God, in the midst of the sorest calamities. Sir R. Blackmore's most ingenious pen, in his excellent preface to his paraphrase on this book, makes Job a hero proper for an epic poem; for, (says he,) 'He appears brave in distress, and valiant in affliction, maintains his virtue, and with that his character, under the most exasperating provocations that the malice of hell could invent, and thereby gives a most noble example of passive fortitude, a character no way inferior to that of the active hero,' &c. V. *An illustrious type of Christ*, the particulars of which we shall endeavor to notice as we go along. In general, Job was a great sufferer, was tempted and humbled, but in order to his greater glory. So Christ abased Himself, that we might be exalted. Patrick quotes Jerom more than once, speaking of Job as a type of Christ, who, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, who was persecuted for a time by men and devils, and seemed forsaken of God too, but was raised up to be an intercessor even for his friends that had added affliction to his misery. When the apostle speaks of the *patience of Job*, he immediately notices *the end of the Lord*, i. e. of the Lord Jesus, (as some understand it,) typified by Job, James 5: 11

In this book we have, 1. The history of Job's sufferings, and his patience under them, (*ch.* 1: 2.) not without a mixture of human

frailty, ch. 3. 2. A dispute between him and his friends on them, in which, the opponents were Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar. The respondent was Job. 3. The moderators were, (1.) Elihu, *ch.* 32—37. (2.) God Himself, *ch.* 38—41. 4. The issue of all, in Job's honor and prosperity, *ch.* 42. On the whole, we learn, that many are the afflictions of the righteous, but that when the Lord delivers them out of all, the trial of their faith will be found to praise, and honor, and glory. HENRY.

ROSENMUELLER gives the following *Synopsis :*

I. *Historical exordium*, in prose, 1. 2. II. *Triple dissertation*, in verse, 3—41. (1.) The triple series of disputation between Job and his three visitors, 3—31. The speech of *Job*, in which he curses the day of his birth, 3. is succeeded by, (A.) The 1st colloquy, 4—14. [1.] with Eliphaz, 4—7. (a.) Speech of Eliphaz, 4. 5. (b.) Answer of Job, 6. 7. [2.] with Bildad, 8—10. (a.) Speech of Bildad, 8. (b.) Answer of Job, 9. 10. [3.] with Zophar, 11—14. (a.) Speech of Zophar, 11. (b.) Answer of Job, 12—14. (B.) The 2d colloquy, 15—21. [1.] with Eliphaz, 15—17. (a.) Speech of Eliphaz, 15. (b.) Answer of Job, 16. 17. [2.] with Bildad, 18. 19. (a.) Speech of Bildad, 18. (b.) Answer of Job, 19. [3.] with Zophar, 20. 21. (a.) Speech of Zophar, 20. (b.) Answer of Job, 21. (C.) The 3d colloquy, 22—31. [1.] with Eliphaz, 22—24. (a.) Speech of Eliphaz, 22. (b.) Speech of Job, 23—24. [2.] with Bildad, 25—31. (a.) Speech of Bildad, 25. (b.) Answer of Job, 26—31. (2.) The judgment of Elihu respecting the disputation, in a continuous speech, resumed at three intervals, 32—37. (3.) The speech of the Deity, which settles the controversy, 38—41. III. *Historical conclusion*, in prose, 42. ED.

"The ensuing poem is, in various respects, the most extraordinary composition of any age or country; and has an equal claim to the attention of the theologian, the scholar, the antiquary, and the zoologist,—to the man of taste, of genius, and of religion. Amidst the books of the Bible it stands alone (*Lowth, Henry*): and though its sacred character is sufficiently attested both by the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, it is isolated in its language, in its manner, and in its matter. Nothing can be purer than its morality, nothing sublimer than its philosophy; nothing simpler than its ritual, nothing more majestic than its creed. Its style is the most figurative imaginable; yet its plan is as regular, its argument as consecutive, as the most finished compositions of Greece or Rome: and its opening and its close are altogether unrivalled in magnificence. ['Its subject is, not the sanguinary exploits of half-civilized heroes, and the fierce contentions of rival deities, but, the providence of the one true God, and the duty of man. Its language is the natural effusion of a soul full of . . . true sympathy with all that is great, and amiable, and affecting, in the character and condition of man.'] It is full of elevation and grandeur; daring in its conceptions; splendid and forcible in its images; abrupt in its transitions; and, at the same time, occasionally interspersed with touches of the most exquisite and overwhelming tenderness. And, to sum up the whole, if the train of reasoning throughout this Dissertation be correct, it is the most ancient of all human records; the only book in existence from which we can derive anything like a systematic knowledge of *pure, patriarchal* religion;—and hence, that very book which gives completion to the Bible, by adding the dispensation of the earliest ages to those of the law and of the gospel, by which it was successively superseded.'

'*Scene of the poem.* Ishmael, or Ismael, (son of Hagar by Abraham,) according to the Arabs, (so accurate in their genealogies,) came into Arabia when it was possessed by two classes; an elder, of whose origin they know nothing certain, but suppose them to be descendants of Ham, few and of little consequence; and a later, much more powerful and numerous, descended from Kahtan, or Joktan, (Bible,) son of Heber, and 4th from Shem. He gave Yaman, or Happy Arabia, to his son Yaarab, and Hajaz, or Stony Arabia, to his son Joram. The Joramites became most powerful, and possessed themselves of Ismael's territory, about Hagar's well, while he was absent, probably, to bury his father. (Gen. 25: 9.) Ismael returned, and settled the dispute by marrying Valla, the daughter of Modad, chief of the Joramites; receiving the large territory as her dowry. By her he had the 'twelve princes,' Gen. 15: 12—18. His success induced all Abraham's sons, except Isaac, to follow him; hence we find their six names in the S. E. countries of Arabia, now constituting the province of Najd; as Midian, Shuah, Sheba, Seba or Saba, and Dedan. Hitherwards came also the two sons of Lot, Moab and Ammon; and Esau, Abraham's grandson, called also Edom, who, marrying a daughter of Ismael, at this time head of the entire country, fixed himself S. of the Dead Sea, driving away or extirpating the Horim, and giving the tract his own name, whence the Greek Idumea. Such is a very brief sketch of the history of the country which forms the scene of the present poem; a country, whose religion must now have been that of Abraham to a very considerable extent; and whose language, from the first not widely differing from that of Abrahaim, must have made a considerable approximation towards it from the successive tides of the Abrahamic race, which, either directly or collaterally, were perpetually pouring into different parts. The present state of Arabia, as well as its first establishment, is well-worthy attention. It offers a most extraordinary intermixture of barren sands, and fruitful and flowery landscape, whose sweet, exhilarating odors not unfrequently spread their fragrance along the whole line of the Arabian Gulf, from Babelmandel to Suez. It was perhaps earliest in possession of the most important arts and sciences, and especially those which relate to manufactures and commerce. It first cultivated poetry and eloquence with critical attention, and taught these refinements to Persia, as Persia afterwards taught them to other parts of Asia. The general habits, [rich and elegant] language, and even political forms of government which it possessed in the time of Ismael, it possesses, with little variation, in the present day. The natives even to the present hour are peculiarly sagacious, intelligent, and courageous: [of a more versatile and improvable genius than the Turks, from them alone, perhaps, are we to expect the regeneration of Western Asia, through European civilization.]'

'*Bochart* leads in the opinion that Uz was in Sandy Arabia; it is powerfully supported by *Spanheim* and the *Univ. Hist.* The general argument is as follows: Ptolemy has described a region, "Æsitæ," as situated in this very province, bounded by the Cauchabeni, who inhabited the S. bank of the Euphrates, on the N. and by the mountains of Chaldea on the E.; and the *Sept.* and the Greek writers generally, translate Uz by *Ausitis.* We find also, Ptolemy places in this same province, three districts, Sabe, Thema, an: Busitis, corresponding to the Sabæa, Teman and Buz of Job. Ch. 1. tells us too that the country was often infested by hordes of Chaldean bandits, whose mountains form the boundary line of Æsitæ and Chaldea. Whence it is conjectured that Æsitæ and Busitis were respectively peopled and named from Uz and Buz, two sons of Nahor, and consequently nephews of Abraham, the residence of whose father, Terah, was at Haran, or Charræ, on the opposite bank of the Euphrates, and necessarily therefore in the neighborhood of Æsitæ. Yet, this hypothesis can by no means be reconciled with the geography of the O. T. which is uniform in placing Uz, or the Ausitis of the Sept. in Stony Arabia, on the S. W. coast of the Dead Sea, in a line between Egypt and Philistia, surrounded by Kedar, Teman, and Midian, districts of Stony Arabia; and, as though to set every remaining doubt completely at rest, situated in Idumea, or the land of Edom or Esau, (of whose position there can be no question,) and comprising so large a part of it, that Idumea and Ausitis, or the land of Uz, and the land of Edom, were convertible terms, and equally employed to import the same region. Lam. 4: 21. *Lowth* thinks, the Chaldean hordes infested the whole region from Euphrates to Egypt. The characters of the poem were all Edomitic Arabs: as Job, of Uz, Eliphaz, of Teman, a district of as much repute as Uz; and, upon the joint testimony of Jeremiah, (49: 7, 20.) Ezekiel, (25: 13.) Amos, (1: 11, 12.) and Obadiah, (5: 8, 9.) a part, and principal part, of Idumea; Bildad of Shua, always mentioned with Sheba and Dedan, the first named from Joktan's brother, the last two from his sons, and all uniformly placed near Idumea; Zophar of Naama ("pleasantness") also stated by Joshua (15: 21, 41.) to have been in Idumea, and to have lain in a S. direction towards the coast of the Red Sea; and Elihu of Buz, occurring only once in the SS. (Jer. 25: 23.) but there named with Teman and Dedan, and hence, necessarily, like them, a border city upon Ausitis, Uz, or Idumea. . . .

'In few words, the country which forms the scenery of our poem, was almost as richly endowed with names as ancient Greece, and, in many respects, from causes not dissimilar. It was first called Horitis, as possessed and peopled by a leader named Hor, among whose descendants, the most distinguished was Seir, from whose era it was better known as "the land of Seir." He had many sons and grandsons; the most signalized of whom was Uz or Utz; and from him, and not from Uz the son of Nahor, it seems to have been called Ausitis or Uz. The family of Hor, Seir, or Uz, were at length, however, dispossessed by Esau, or Edom; who, already powerful on his entering Arabia, rendered himself still more so by a marriage with a daughter of Ismael: and the conquered territory was now called Idumea, or the land of Edom.'

'*Scope and arrangement.* The subject is, the trial and triumph of the integrity of Job, who was son of Zarah, and 5th in descent from Abraham by Esau, according to a brief chronological account at the end of the Gr. Arab. and Vulg. tr. supposed to be taken from an old Syrian version, and accredited by Aristeas, Philo, Polyhistor, and several ancient fathers, both of the Greek and Latin churches. If this be correct, he was nearly contemporary with Moses, who was 5th in descent from Abraham by Isaac. (See *Calmet.*) The general scope and moral, viz. that the troubles and afflictions of the good man are, for the most part, designed as tests of his virtue and integrity, out of which he will, at length, emerge with additional splendor and happiness, are common to eastern poets, and not uncommon to those of Greece. The Odyssey is such. But in various respects the poem of Job stands alone and unrivalled. In addition to every corporal suffering and privation possible for man to endure, it carries forward the trial, in a manner and to an extent never elsewhere attempted, into the keenest faculties and sensations of the mind; and mixes the bitterest taunts and accusations with the agonies of [abject poverty and destitution,] family bereavement and despair. The body of other poems consists chiefly of incidents; that of the present poem of colloquy or argument, [somewhat like the dialogues of Plato, &c. *Hewlett.*] in which the general train of reasoning is so well sustained, its matter so important, its language so ornamented, the doctrines it develops so sublime, its transitions from passion to passion, so varied and abrupt, that the want of incidents is not felt, and the attention is still riveted, as by enchantment. In other poems the supernatural agency is fictitious, and often incongruous: here the whole is solid reality, supported, in its grand outline, by the concurrent testimony of every other part of the Scriptures; an agency not obtrusively introduced, but demanded by the magnitude of the occasion; and as much more exalted and magnificent than every other kind of similar interference, as it is more veritable and solemn. The suffering hero is sublimely called forth to the performance of his part, in the presence of men and angels: [Heb 12:1. 1 Cor.4:9.] each becomes interested, and equally interested, in his conduct: the Almighty assents to the trial, and for a period withdraws his divine aid;—the malice of Satan is in its full career of activity: hell hopes, earth trembles, and every good spirit is suspended with awful anxiety. The wreck of his substance is in vain; the wreck of his family is in vain; the scalding sores of a corroding leprosy, [bathing him with their purulent issue,] are in vain; the artillery of insults, reproaches and railing, poured forth from the mouth of bosom friends, is in vain. Though at times put in some degree off his guard, the holy sufferer is never completely overpowered. He sustains the shock without yielding: he still holds fast his integrity. Thus terminates the trial of faith:—Satan is confounded;

fidelity triumphs; and the Almighty, with a magnificence well worthy of the occasion, unveils his resplendent tribunal, and crowns the afflicted champion with his applause.'

'In the writer's present view of the subject, it is a *regular Hebrew epic.* [But Dr. *A. Clarke* will not allow the far superior genius of its author to be cramped and coldly measured by the formal rules of *Aristotle;* and *Rosenm.* remarks, 'it is not properly a *drama*, as *Lowth* observes, nor can we, with *Ilgen*, term it with more propriety an *Epic*, as *Eichhorn* has shown: but this need not detract from its merit, if judged unjustly by rules adapted to entirely different compositions, for truly in its kind it is most beautiful, accurate, regular, and perfect.'] Its present common division into chs. is most unfortunate. The natural division, and that of its author, was into *six parts* or books, viz. An opening or exordium, containing the introductory history and the decree concerning Job;—three distinct series of arguments, in each of which the speakers are regularly allotted their respective turns;—the summing up of the controversy; and the close or catastrophe; with its impressive corollary;—that God is supreme and must be bowed to and adored: his wisdom is incomprehensible, how vain then to arraign it: his power omnipotent, how absurd then to resist it: [his will of infinite obligation, how insane then to adopt any other rule of duty:] his goodness universal, how blind then to deny it.'

'*Difficulty of a translation.* The most perplexing Heb. compositions to be rendered into a foreign tongue, are the books of Job, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Hosea. All are highly figurative, fervid, and magnificent, and full of abrupt transitions; and it is not always easy to catch hold of their images, at first sight. The language of Job and Isaiah is more polished—that of Ezekiel and Hosea, more harsh, and elliptical. But there are, besides, words and even idioms peculiar to Job, and met with nowhere else in SS. Hence the real meaning has been found in many instances of very perplexed and doubtful interpretation; and its versions, sometimes given by mere guess, in a variety of places, are widely discordant. The Arabic has afforded the best key. The original text is unquestionably a mixture of Hebrew and Arabic, (and so *Schultens.*) Nor was the variegated tissue hence produced of inelegant appearance. Throughout almost the whole of Heb. history, Uz or Idumea was regarded by the Jews in the same light of elegance and accomplishment, as Greece was by the Romans; and Teman, the native city of Eliphaz, as the Athens of Arabia Petrea. (Jer. 49: 7. Obad. 9.)'

'*Author* and *Era.* [See above.] To *Moses*, in truth, more than to any one, it has been generally ascribed, in all nations, and perhaps in all ages: and if we apply to him the tests advanced above, [see Good's' Introd. Diss. Ed.], and which are fatal to all the preceding characters, we shall find that there is not a single one to which his history will not adapt itself. I have ventured to assert, that the writer must, in his style, have been equally master of the simple and of the sublime; (a complete master of style and language; a mastery unknown to every other kind of oriental composition. It is characteristic of him, that he uniformly suits his ornaments to the occasion; that, as though influenced by the rules of the best Greek critics, he seldom employs a figurative style, where the incident or the passion is capable of supporting itself, and reserves his boldest images and illustrations for cases that seem most to require them.*) That the author must also have been minutely and elaborately acquainted with the astronomy, natural history, and general science of his age; that he must have been a Hebrew by birth and native language, and an Arabian by long residence and local study; and finally, that he must have flourished, and composed the work, before the Egyptian Exody. Now it is obvious, that every one of these features is consummated in *Moses*, and in Moses alone; and that the whole of them gives us *his* complete lineaments and portraiture.—Instructed in all the learning of Egypt, it appears little doubtful that he composed it during some part of his 40 years' residence in Midian, a district of Idumea. As to perhaps the only plausible objection to this, that it abounds with the word Jehovah; it is highly probable, that he, Moses, was in possession of this name long before the promulgation of his poem; and the novelty as well as honor of the communication might have induced him at once to exchange whatever term he had antecedently employed for this new and consecrated term. The name is thus prophetically used 30 times in Gen.'

'*Creed, doctrines* and *ritual.* If Moses then is the author, and the date be thus fixed as before the exodus, this book immediately becomes a DEPOSITORY OF PATRIARCHAL RELIGION, the best and fullest depository in the world, and drawn up by that very pen most competent to do it justice. It will then appear, that the chief doctrines of the patriarchal religion, as collected from different parts of the poem, were as follows:—(1.) The creation of the world by one supreme and eternal Intelligence, 38—41. (2.) Its regulation by his perpetual and superintending providence, 1: 9, 21. 2: 10. 5: 8—27. 9: 4—13. and almost every ensuing ch. (3.) The intentions of his providence carried into effect by the ministration of a heavenly hierarchy. 1: 6, 7. 3: 18, 19. 5: 1. 33: 22, 23. A doctrine much abused at various times and in various modes. (4.) The heavenly hierarchy, composed of various ranks and orders, [Coloss. 1: 16. Dan. 4: 17, &c.] possessing different names, dignities and offices: as *obedim*, servants; *malakim*, angels; *melizim*, intercessors; *memitim*, destinies or destroyers; *alep*, the chiliad or thousand; *kedosim*, sancti, the heavenly saints or hosts generally. 4: 18. 33: 22, 23. 5: 2. 15: 15. (5.) An apostasy, or defection, in some rank or order of these powers, (4: 18. 15: 15.) of which Satan seems to have been one, and perhaps chief. 1: 6—12. 2: 2—7. (6.) The good and evil powers or principles, equally formed by the Creator, and hence equally denominated "sons of God;" both employed by Him, in the administration of his providence; and both amenable to Him at stated courts, held for the purpose of receiving an account of their respective missions. 1: 6, 7. 2: 1. (7.) A day of future resurrection, judgment, and retribution, to all mankind. 14: 13, 14, 15. 19: 25—29. 21: 30. 31: 14. (8.) The propitiation of [or at-one-ment, reconcilement to] the Creator, in the case of human transgressions, by sacrifices, (1: 5. 42: 8.) and the mediation and intercession of a righteous person, 42: 8, 9.' J. M. Good.

* 'Yet, for want of attending to this distinction, *Schultens*, *Lowth*, *Grey*, [*Rosenm.*] and a few others have regarded the first part of this transcendent poem, as a mere prosaic preface to the rest, meant to be detached from it, and utterly destitute of metrical arrangement; an error from which *Stock* is altogether free.' *Good.*

B. C. 1550.

CHAP. I.

The uprightness, piety, prosperity, and numerous family of Job, and his religious concern for his children, 1—5. Satan, appearing before God, accuses Job, and obtains leave to try him, 6—12. Job, receiving successive accounts of calamities, which deprived him of all his substance, and all his children, mourns with humble resignation, and worships God, 13—22.

THERE was a man in the land of [a] Uz, whose name *was* [b] Job; and that man was [c] perfect and upright, and [d] one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

2 And there were born unto him [e] seven sons and three daughters.

3 His [*] substance also

a Gen. 10:23. 22:21. *Huz.* 36:28. 1 Chr. 1:17. 42. Jer. 25:20. Lam. 4:21.
b Ez. 14:14, 20. Jam. 5:11.
c 8. 2:3. 23 11, 12. 31:1, &c. Gen. 6: 9. 17:1. 2 K. 20:3. 2 Chr. 31:20, 21. Luke 1:6.
d Gen. 22:12. Prov. 8:13. 16:6. 1 Pet. 3:11.
e 42:13. Esth. 5:11. Ps. 107:38. 127: 3—5. 128:3.
* Or, *cattle.* Gen. 12:5. 13:6. 34:23. 2 Chr. 32:29.

CHAP. I. V. 1—3. Here begins the history of Job; of him we are here told,

I. He was *Ish*, (so the Heb.) a worthy man, [not a king, *Scott.*] a man of note and eminency, a magistrate, a man in authority. [The Sept. has *Eugenes*, *noble*—'much like a modern *Emir* of Arabia.'] Uz, where he resided, was in the E. of Arabia, toward Chaldea, near Euphrates, probably not far from Ur of the Chaldees. [But see Pref.] His name Job, or Jiob, [Arab. Ayoob,] some say, signifies *one hated*, as an enemy; others, one that grieves, or groans. Dr. Cave derives it from *Jaab*, to love, or desire, intimating his parents' joy in his birth.

II. He was a very good man, even in the judgment of God. He feared God, i. e. worshipped Him according to his will, and governed himself by the rules of the divine law He was sincere; perfect, not sinless; so he himself owns, *ch.* 9: 20. But, aiming at perfection, he was really as good as he seemed; his heart was sound, and his eye single. Sincerity is gospel-perfection; I know no religion without it. He was upright in his dealings both with God and man; faithful to his promises, steady in his counsels, true to every trust, and made conscience of all he said and did. See Isa. 33: 15. Though he was not *of* Israel, he was indeed an *Israelite without guile.* The fear of God reigning in his heart was the principle that governed his whole conversation, Neh. 5: 15. *The fear of the Lord is to hate evil;* (Prov. 8: 13.) and then, *by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil*, Prov. 16: 6.

III. He was very prosperous in the world, and made a considerable figure in his country: prosperous, yet pious. Though hard and rare, it is not impossible, for *a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven:* by the grace of God, the temptations of worldly wealth are not insuperable. His piety was a friend to his prosperity; and his prosperity put a lustre on his piety, and gave him, who was so good, so much greater opportunity of doing good. The acts of his piety were grateful returns to God, for the instances of his prosperity; and in the abundance of the good things God gave him, he served God the more cheerfully.

1. He had a numerous family; was eminent for religion, yet not a recluse, but the father and master of a family. Children must be looked upon as blessings, for so they are, especially to good people, that will give them good instructions, and set them good examples, and put up good prayers for them. Job had many children, yet was neither oppressive nor uncharitable, but very liberal to the poor, *ch.* 31: 17, &c. Those that have great families to provide for ought to consider, that what is prudently given in [proper] alms is set out to the best interest, and put into the best fund for their children's benefit.

2. He had a good estate, *v.* 3. Riches are called *substance*, in conformity to the common form of speaking; otherwise, to the soul and another world, they are but shadows, Prov. 23: 5. Only in heavenly wisdom we *inherit substance*, Prov. 8: 21. In those days, when the earth was not fully peopled, (as now, in some of the plantations,) men

NOTES.

CHAP. I. V. 1. Uz seems to have been a district of Arabia, to the S. E. of Canaan; though some suppose, it was situated in Idumea, and that Job was descended from Esau. (*M. R.* a. [and Pref.]) Others think he descended from Abraham by Keturah; yet it seems more probable he was of the posterity of *Huz*, the son of Nahor. (Gen. 22:11.) He is supposed to have lived before any part of the Scriptures was written: but he was acquainted with the truths and will of God, by tradition and immediate revelation; and so he was not *a stranger to revealed truth*, as many seem to suppose. The religion of Job and his friends was evidently the same as that of the patriarchs. SCOTT.

was [f] seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great * household; so that this man was the [g] greatest of all the † men [h] of the east.

4 And his sons went and feasted *in their* houses, every one his day; and [i] sent and called for their three sisters, to eat and to drink with them.

5 And it was so, when the days of *their* feasting were gone about, that Job sent and [k] sanctified them, and [l] rose up early in the morning, and [m] offered burnt-offerings, [n] *according* to the number of them all: for Job said, [o] It may be that my sons have sinned, and [p] cursed God [q] in their hearts. [r] Thus did Job ‡ continually.

6 ¶ Now [s] there was a day when [t] the sons of God [u] came to pre-

f 42:12. Gen. 12:16. Num. 31:32—34. Judg. 6:5. 1 Sam. 25:2. 2 K. 3:4. Prov. 10:22.
* Or, *husbandry.* 2 Chr. 26:10.
g 29:9,10,25.
† Heb. *sons of the east.* Judg. 6:3, 7: 12. 8:10. 1 K. 4:30.
h Gen. 25:6. 29:1. Num. 23:7.
i Ps. 133:1. Heb. 13:1. [2 Sam.13:24,25.]
k 41:25. Gen. 35:2,3. Ex. 19:10,14. 1 Sam. 16:5. Neh. 12:30. John 11:55.
l Gen. 22:3. Ps. 5:3. Ec. 9:10.
m 42:8. Gen. 8:20. Ex. 18:12. 24:5. Lev. 1:3—6.
n 1 K. 18:31. Acts 21:26.
o 2 Cor. 11:2.
p 11. 2:9. Lev. 24:10—16. 1 K. 21: 10,13.
q Gen. 6:5. Jer. 4:14. 17:9,10. Mark 7:21—23. Acts 8:22. 1 Cor. 4:5.
r 27:10.
‡ Heb. *all the days.* Luke 1:75. 13:7. Eph. 6:18.
s 2:1.
t 38:7. Dan. 3:25. Luke 3:38.
u Ps. 103:20. Matt. 18:10.

might have land enough on easy terms, if they had but wherewithal to stock it; therefore Job's substance is described, not by acres of land, but by live stock and servants. His *very great household* involved great care and charge. See the vanity of this world; as goods are increased, they must be increased that tend, occupy, and *eat them; and what good hast heir owner, save the beholding of them with his eyes?* Eccl. 5: 11.

The men of the east were the richest in the world: those were rich indeed who were *replenished more than the east*, Isa. 2: 6. marg. Job was upright and honest, yet grew rich, nay, *therefore* grew rich; for honesty is the best policy, and piety and charity are ordinarily the surest ways of thriving. The account of Job's piety and prosperity comes before that of his great afflictions, to show that neither will secure from the common, or uncommon, calamities of human life. Piety will not secure us, as Job's mistaken friends thought, for all things come alike to all; prosperity will not, as a careless world thinks; (Isa. 47: 8.) I sit *as a queen*, and therefore shall *see no sorrow.*

V. 4—5. Here is a further account of Job's prosperity and piety.

I. His great comfort in his children is noticed, as an instance of his prosperity; our temporal comforts are borrowed, depend on others, and are as those about us are. Job himself mentions it as one of the greatest joys of his prosperous estate, that his *children* were *about him*, ch. 29: 5. They kept a circular feast at certain times, *v.* 4. It was a comfort to see his children grown up and settled in the world; probably married; to see them thriving, able to feast one another; in health; and especially to see them live in love and unity; with as much freedom, as if they had all in common; no shyness, no strait-handedness, no family-jars. *Behold, how good and how pleasant this is!* Ps. 133: 1. 5. How kind they were to their sisters, (*v.* 4.) who were so modest, they would not go to their feasts had they not been *sent for.* Those brothers that slight their sisters, care not for their company, and have no concern for their comfort, are ill-bred, ill-natured, and very unlike Job's sons. It seems by this, their feast was sober and decent; in their own houses, not in public houses, where they would be more exposed to temptations.

Job himself was, doubtless, invited, and would have been the most welcome guest at any of their tables; nor was it from any moroseness of temper, or want of natural affection, that he kept away, but he was old and dead to those things, like Barzillai, (2 Sam. 19: 35.) and considered that the young people would be more free and pleasant, if there were none but themselves. Yet he would not restrain his children from the diversion which he denied himself. Young people may be allowed a youthful liberty, provided they flee youthful lusts.

II. His great care about his children is noticed, as an instance of his piety: for that we are really, which we are relatively. Those are good, that especially do what they can for the good of their childrens' souls. Observe, (*v.* 5.)

1. He was jealous over them with a godly jealousy: so we ought to be over ourselves and such as are dear to us, as far as is necessary to our care and endeavor for their good. Job had given his children a good education, had comfort in them, and good hope concerning them; yet he said, '*It may be my sons have sinned* in the days of their feasting, more than at other times; have been too merry, have taken too great a liberty in eating and drinking, and have *cursed God in their hearts*,' i. e. 'have entertained atheistical, profane thoughts in their minds, unworthy notions of God and his providence, and the exercises of religion.' When they were *full*, they were ready to *deny God, and to say, Who is the Lord?* ready (Prov. 30: 9.) to *forget* God, and to say, The *power of our hand* has *gotten us this wealth*, Deut. 8: 12, &c. Nothing alienates the mind more from God than the indulgence of the flesh.

2. As soon as the feasting was over, he *sent and sanctified them;* ordered them to examine their consciences, repent of what they had done amiss in their feasting; lay aside their vanity, and compose themselves for religious exercises. Parents cannot give grace to their children, (it is God that sanctifies,) but they ought, by seasonable admonitions and counsels, to further their sanctification. In baptism they were sanctified *to* God; let it be our desire and endeavor that they may be sanctified *for* Him.

3. He *offered sacrifice* for them, both to atone for the sins he feared, in their feasting days, and to implore mercy to pardon, and grace to prevent, the debauching of their minds, and corrupting of their manners, by that liberty, and to preserve their piety and purity.

Job, like Abraham, had a family-altar, on which, it is likely, he offered sacrifice daily; but, on this extraordinary occasion, he offered more sacrifices than usual, and with more solemnity, one for each child: the sight might humble them, and lead them to a Mediator. Parents should be particular in their addresses to God for the several branches of their family; 'For this child I prayed, according to its particular temper, genius, and condition;' to which the prayers, as well as endeavors, must be accommodated.

Lastly, Thus he did continually; (John 13: 10.) acts of repentance and faith must be often renewed, because we often repeat our transgressions. He that serves God uprightly will serve Him continually.

V. 6—12. Job was not only so rich and great, but withal so wise and good, with such an interest both in heaven and earth, that one would think the

Verse 3.

'The principal riches of the Bedoween Arabs continue to be estimated from their cattle. They rarely kill them, living chiefly on their milk and butter.' SHAW. *Men of the E.*] 'A general appellation for that mingled race who dwelt between Egypt and the Euphrates: called east, in respect to Egypt, where the Israelites learned the phrase.' [Inhabitants of Arabia Deserta. *Rosenm.*] MEDE.

Verse 4.

His day.] 'His "birth day," as was usual among those nations, (Gen. 40:20.) *Grotius*, so *Schultens.* Of all days, the Persians show the highest regard to their birthday. *Herod.*' COND. COMM.

Verse 5.

As Job had, no doubt, piously educated his children, and set them an excellent example and offered many prayers for and with them; we may suppose they were well affected to religion. Indeed, nothing is intimated to the disadvantage of their characters, and no feasting could be more inoffensive than theirs seems to have been. Yet while their pious father could not but behold their harmony and comfort with satisfaction; his knowledge of the human heart suggested a jealous fear, lest their cheerfulness should betray them into some levity or excess, some vain conversation, or some injurious thoughts of God, either tending to infidelity, to dislike of his holy worship and service, or to idolatrous love of worldly enjoyments. Thus he taught them, that even the secret unbelief, ingratitude, and rebellion of the heart, merited condemnation, and could only be expiated by the shedding of blood, and the offering of sacrifice, in repentance and humble faith. As he did this continually, we may thence understand his unremitting care of his family, the tenderness of his conscience, his knowledge of the fallen state of man, and the depravity of human nature; his entire dependence on the mercy of God in the way which He had appointed, and his believing regard to the promised Redeemer. *Cursed.*] '*Barak*, as the Latin *sacrare* and *imprecari*, denotes what a man wishes or calls for, with an ardent mind, whether it be salvation or perdition.' *Selden.* SCOTT. 'So *devote*, or *devoted*, admits either a good or a bad sense.' GOOD. So among the vulgar, this very word *bless* is sometimes used for cursing, or rather reviling. ED. No mention is made in Job, of any other god, or gods, except the true God; or any other idolatry, but the worship of the sun and moon. The original has not the article, and must be rendered either GOD, or *gods*, not *the* gods; and the clause is exactly the same as is used of the true God, in the next ch. (2:9.) SCOTT.

And cursed.] '*Nor blessed.*' GOOD. 'Though they blessed.' BOOTHR 'And renounced.' ROSENM.

Verse 6.

The holy angels no doubt are here meant by 'the sons of God;' because they love Him, and are beloved of Him, as his children. (*M. R.* t.—38:4—7.) Without determining any thing about the place or way, in which the evil spirit appeared before God, or associated with his angels; or whether the transactions of the invisible world be not described in language, adapted rather to our conceptions than to their real nature; we hence learn, that Job's extraordinary afflictions originated from the malice and agency of Satan, by divine permission for wise and holy purposes: and many truths, respecting the character and influence of the devil and his angels, are thus emphatically proposed to our attentive consideration. These apostate spirits are continually intruding into the company of the children of God on earth, especially when they meet in his ordinances, or approach his mercy-seat. And they would dare to intrude even into heaven, the habitation of God's holiness, if access were allowed them, to join the company of his holy angels: yet this would not in the least degree change their evil nature; for wherever they go, they are instigated by malice, and seeking to do mischief. But, as God is every where present, (though in heaven his glory is especially displayed,) all that is spoken on these subjects may be *literally* understood, without supposing that they are ever admitted into that holy place. (1 *K.* 22:19—23.)—'The sons of perdition came to set themselves against JEHOVAH, and the

sent themselves before the LORD, and * Satan x came also † among them.

7 And the LORD said unto Satan, y Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, z From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou ‡ considered a my servant Job, that *there is* b none like him in the earth, c a perfect and an d upright man, e one that feareth God, and f escheweth evil?

9 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, g Doth Job fear God for nought?

10 Hast not thou made h an hedge about him, and about his house, and i about all that he hath on every side? k Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his § substance is increased in the land:

11 But l put forth thine hand now, and m touch all that he hath, ‖ and he will n curse thee to thy face.

12 And the LORD said unto Satan, o Behold, all that he hath *is* in thy

* Heb. *the adversary.* 1 K. 22:19—23. 1 Chr. 21:1. Zech. 3:1. Rev. 12:9,10.
x John 6:70.
† Heb. *in the midst of them.*
y 2:2. 2 K. 5:25.
z Zech. 1:10,11. 6:7. Matt. 12:43. 1 Pet. 5:8. Rev. 12:9,12—17. 20:8.
‡ Heb. *set thy heart on.* 2:3. 34:14. Ez. 40:4.
a Num. 12:7,8. Ps. 89:20. Is. 42:1.
b Num. 12:3. 1 K. 4:30,31. 2 K. 23:25.
c t. 8:20. 9:22,23. Ps. 18:23. John 1:47.
d 12:4. 17:8,9. 23:11,12. Ps. 84:11.
e Neh. 5:15. Ps. 36:1. Prov. 8:13. Luke 23:39,40.
f Ps. 34:14. 37:27. Is. 1:16.
g 21. 2:10. 21:14,15. Mal. 1:10. Matt. 16:26. 1 Tim. 4:8. 6:6.
h Gen. 13:1. Deut. 33:27—29. 1 Sam. 25:16. Ps. 5:12. 80:12. Is. 5:2,5. Zech. 2:5,8. 1 Pet. 1:5.
i Gen. 39:5. Deut. 28:2—6. Ps. 71:21. Prov. 1—4.
k 42:12. Gen. 26:12. 30:30. 49:25. Deut. 7:13,14. 33:11. Ps. 90:17. 107:38. Prov. 10:22.
§ Or, *cattle.* Gen. 30:43.
l 12. 2:5. Is. 5:25.
m 4:5. 19:21. Gen. 26:11. Ps. 105:15. Zech. 2:8.
‖ Heb. *if he curse thee not.* 21.
n 5 Note on 2:9.—Is 8:21. Mal. 3:13, 14. Rev. 16:9,11,21.
o 1 K. 22:22. Luke 8:32. 22:31,32. John 19:11. 2 Cor. 12:7.

mountain of his prosperity stood so strong, it could not be moved; but here we have a thick cloud gathering over his head, pregnant with a horrible tempest. We must never think ourselves secure from storms, while in this lower region.

Before we are told how his troubles surprised and seized him here in this visible world, we are here told how they were concerted in the world of spirits; that the devil having a great enmity to Job for his eminent piety, begged and obtained leave to torment him. It does not at all derogate from the credibility of Job's story in general, to allow that this discourse between God and Satan is parabolical, like that of Micaiah, (1 K. 22: 19, &c.) and an allegory designed to represent the malice of the devil against good men, and the divine restraint that malice is under. Only thus much further is intimated, that the affairs of this earth are very much the subject of the counsels of the unseen world. That world is dark to us, but we lie very open to it. Here is,

I. Satan among the sons of God, (*v.* 6.) an *adversary* (so *Satan* signifies) to God, to men, to all good. He thrust himself into an assembly of the *sons of God*, that came to *present themselves before the Lord.* This means, either, 1. A meeting of the saints on earth. Professors of religion, in the patriarchal age, were called *sons of God;* (Gen. 6: 2.) they had then their religious assemblies, and stated times for them. Or, 2. A meeting of the angels in heaven; they are *the sons of God, ch.* 38: 7. They came to give an account of their negotiations on earth, and to receive new instructions. Satan is here represented as coming among them, either summoned as a criminal, or connived at, for the present, though an intruder.

II. His examination, *v.* 7. The Lord knew very well whence he came, and with what design he came thither; but by calling him to an account, He would show him he was under check and control. It is possible a man may be a child of the devil, and yet be found in the assemblies of the sons of God in this world; may pass undiscovered by men, yet be challenged by the all-seeing God; *Friend, how camest thou in hither?* Comp. 2 Cor. 11: 13, 14. Or, The same question was perhaps put to the rest that presented themselves. We are accountable to God for all our haunts and ways.

III. His account of himself, and his tour. He could not pretend he had been doing any good, as the *sons of God* could, who *presented themselves before the Lord;* and he would not own he had been doing any hurt; but intimates he had kept himself within the bounds allotted him; for he *is cast out into the earth,* (Rev. 12: 9.) and not yet confined to his place of torment. While on earth, we are within his reach; and with so much subtlety, swiftness, and industry, does he penetrate all its corners, that we cannot be in any place secure from his temptations. Perhaps it is spoken proudly, as if he were indeed *prince of this world,* (Luke 4: 6.) and had now been in circuit through his own territories: or, fretfully; he could find no rest, but was a vagabond as Cain: or, carefully; 'I have been hard at work, going to and fro,' 'searching about in the earth;' (so some) really in quest of mischief. [The Heb. denotes intensity, busy employment, being in the *hithpael* conjugation.] He walks about, seeking whom he may devour. It concerns us therefore to be sober and vigilant.

IV. God's question to him concerning Job, *v.* 8. As when we meet one from a distant place, where we have a friend we dearly love, we are ready to ask, 'You have been in such a place; pray, did you see my friend there?' Observe, How honorably God speaks of Job; he is *my servant.* Good men are God's servants, and He is pleased [in infinite condescension] to reckon Himself honored in their services, and that they are to Him for *a name and a praise,* (Jer. 13: 11.) *and a crown of glory,* Isa. 62: 3. There is *none,* of all the princes and potentates of the earth, singly or together, of equal worth; *none like him* for uprightness and serious piety. Thus Christ, long after, held up the centurion and the woman of Canaan, both, like Job, strangers to that commonwealth. The saints glory in God. And He is pleased (as here) to glory in them. *Who is like Israel among the people?* 'How unlike Job art thou, Satan!' The holiness, and happiness of the saints are the shame and torment of the devil, and the devil's children. To answer the devil's seeming boast of the interest he had in this earth, (Zech. 1: 10, 11.) and to anticipate his accusations, perhaps, God says, '*Hast thou considered him?* God knows all the malice of the devil and his instruments against his servants; and we have an Advocate ready to appear for us, even before we are accused.

V. The devil's base insinuation against Job; that he was mercenary in his religion, and therefore a hypocrite, *v.* 9. Those are like the devil, who cannot endure any body should be praised but themselves, but grudge at the just share of reputation others have, as Saul, (1 Sam. 18: 5, &c.) and the Pharisees, Matt. 21: 15. He could not accuse him of any thing bad, therefore charges him with by-ends in doing good. Had the half been true, that his angry friends, in the heat of dispute, charged Job with, (*ch.* 15: 4. 22: 5.) Satan would, no doubt, have brought it against him now; but he slily censures him as a hypocrite; not asserting it, but only asking, 'Is he not so?' This is the common way of slanderers, to suggest that, by way of query, which yet they have no reason to think is true; whisperers, backbiters! Note, It is not strange if those that are approved and accepted of God, be unjustly censured by the devil and his instruments; if they are otherwise unexceptionable, it is easy to charge them with hypocrisy, as Satan charged Job, and they have no way to clear themselves, but patiently to wait for the judgment of God. It was a great truth, Job did not fear God for nought; he got well by it, for godliness is great gain: but it was a falsehood that he would not have feared God, if he had not got this by it, as the event proved. Job's friends charged him with hypocrisy, because he was greatly afflicted; Satan, because he greatly prospered. It is no hard matter for those to calumniate that seek an occasion. It is not mercenary to look at the eternal recompense, in our obedience [Heb. 12: 2. 11: 26.]; but to aim at temporal advantages in our religion, and to make it subservient to that, is spiritual idolatry, worshipping the creature more than the Creator, and is likely to end in a fatal apostasy; men cannot long *serve God and mammon.*

VI. Satan's complaint of Job's prosperity, *v.* 10. God's peculiar people are taken under his special protection, they and all that belong to them; divine grace makes a hedge about their spiritual life, and divine providence about their natural life, so they are safe and easy. He had prospered him, not in idleness or injustice, (the devil could not accuse him of them,) but in the way of honest diligence; *Thou hast blessed the work of his hands;* without that blessing, be the hands ever so strong, ever so skilful, the work will not prosper; but with that, *his substance is wonderfully increased in the*

Satan (enemy) also came among them.' Miss *E. Smith.* This most adventurous alteration, made on untenable grounds, even by the confession of Dr. Randolph the editor, contrary to the concurrent opinion of all preceding versions, critics, and expositors, shows the dangerous extent to which the sacred oracles may be altered, by an attachment to new notions, and a slight consideration of the subject.—The LXX read, 'The angels of God.' SCOTT.

Verse 8.

Satan seemed to advance a claim to the earth as if it had been all his own. The express attestation of God to Job's integrity and piety, as the most faithful servant He had at that time on earth, is sufficient to demonstrate, that he was not a self-righteous Pharisee before his afflictions; as some, from undue regard to system, have ventured to speak of him. SCOTT.

Verse 10.

An hedge, &c.] 'The same expression still implies protection, among the Hindoos.' ROBERTS. 'The Heb. *skth* implies "to fence with sharp spikes, palisades, or thorns."' GOOD.

Verse 11.

He will curse.] 'Will he indeed bless.' BOOTHR. ID.

Verse 12.

This permission was granted, not because Job had any special need of chastisement; but that his integrity, and the power of divine grace in him, might be manifested to Satan's confusion the real benefit of

[o] power; [p] only upon himself put not forth thine hand. [q] So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.
[*Practical Observations.*]

13 ¶ And there was a day, [r] when his sons and his daughters *were* eating, and drinking wine, in their eldest brother's house:

14 And there came a [s] messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were ploughing, and the asses feeding beside them;

15 And the [t] Sabeans fell *upon them*, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; [u] and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

16 While he was yet speaking, [v] there came also another, and said, † The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burnt up the sheep, and the servants, and

[o] Heb. *hand.* Gen. 16:6. *Jer.* 38:5. John 3:35,36.
[p] 2:4—6. Is. 76:10. Is. 27:8. 1 Cor. 10:13.
[q] 2:7. Luke 8:33.
[r] 4. Prov. 27:1. Ec. 9:12. Luke 12: 19,20. 17:27—29. 21:34.
[s] 1 Sam. 4:17. 2 Sam. 15:13. Jer. 51: 31.
[t] Gen. 10:7,28. 25:3. Ps. 72:10. Is. 45:14. Ez. 23:42. Joel 3:8.
[u] 16,17,19. 1 Sam. 22:20,21.
[v] Gen. 19:24. Lev. 9:24. 1 K. 18:38. 2 K. 1:10,12,14. Amos 7:4. Rev. 13: 13.
† Or, *A great fire.* Ex. 9:23. 1 Sam. 14:15. *Marg.*

land: the blessing of the Lord makes rich; Satan himself owns it. He speaks of it with vexation; I see thou hast *made a hedge about him, round about;* as if he had walked it round, to see if he could spy ever a gap in it, for him to enter in at, to do him a mischief; but he was disappointed; it was a complete hedge.

VII. The proof Satan undertakes to give of the hypocrisy and mercenariness of Job's religion, 'Let it be put to this issue,' *v.* 11. 'Touch what he has, and it will appear what he is.' 'Let me perish, if he curse thee not.' So some supply the imprecation, which the devil himself modestly concealed; but the profane swearers of our age impudently and daringly speak out. Observe, 1. How slightly he speaks of the affliction, how spitefully of the impression it would make. The word translated *curse* is *barac*, ordinarily and originally signifying to *bless;* but cursing God is so impious, that the holy language would not admit the name: but that, where the sense requires it, it must be so understood, is plain from 1 K. 21: 10—13. where the word is used concerning the crime charged on Naboth, that he did blaspheme God and the king.

Now, If Job would renounce his religion, Satan had made out his own universal empire among men. God declared Job the best man then living: now, if Satan can prove him a hypocrite, it will follow that God had not one faithful servant among men, and that there was no such thing as true piety in the world. But it appeared, that *the Lord knows them that are his,* and is not deceived in any. If Job should retain his religion, Satan would have the satisfaction to see him sorely afflicted: he hates good men.

VIII. The permission to Satan to try Job. It is matter of wonder, God should give Satan such a permission to do his worst, as this; but He did it for his own glory, the honor of Job, [and perfecting of his moral character,] the explanation of Providence, and the encouragement of his afflicted people in all ages; to make a case, which, being adjudged, might be a useful precedent. See Luke 22: 34. and 1 Pet. 1: 7. But, it is matter of comfort that God has the devil *in a chain,* Rev. 20: 1. He could not afflict Job, without leave from God first asked and obtained, and then no further than he had leave; '*Only upon himself put not forth thine hand;*' The devil has no power to debauch men, but what they give him themselves, nor power to afflict men, but what is *given him from above.*

Lastly, Satan departs, with a direct course, to fall on poor Job, who is carefully going on the way of his duty, and knows nothing of the matter. What passes between good and bad spirits concerning us, we are not aware.

V. 13—19. Here is a particular account of Job's troubles:

1. Satan brought them upon him the very day his children began their course of feasting, at their *eldest brother's house,* (*v.* 13.) that the trouble, coming now, might be the more grievous; *The night of my pleasure has He turned into fear,* Isa. 21: 4. They all come on him at once: that there might appear a more than ordinary displeasure of God against him in his troubles, and by that he might be exasperated against Divine Providence, as if it were resolved, right or wrong, to ruin him, and not give him time to speak for himself. That he might not have leisure to consider and recollect himself, and reason himself into a gracious submission, but might be overwhelmed and overpowered by a complication of calamities. If he have not room to pause a little, he will be apt to speak in haste, and then, if ever, he will curse his God. Note, The children of God are often in heaviness, through manifold temptations: deep calls to deep, waves and billows one upon the neck of another. Let one affliction therefore quicken and help us to prepare for another; for how deep soever we have drunk of the bitter cup, as long as we are in this world, we cannot be sure that we have drunk our share, and that it will finally pass from us. The detail of Job's losses answers to the foregoing inventory of his possessions, the numbers, probably, not being intended to be *exact.* [Though neglect is culpable, yet] all our prudence, care, and diligence, cannot secure us from afflictions, no not from those commonly owing to imprudence and negligence: yet it is some comfort under a trouble, if it found us in the way of our duty, and not in any by-path. The Sabeans were a sort of robbers, perhaps, that lived by spoil and plunder, [like many tribes of those countries now.] We have no reason to suspect that either Job or his servants had given them any provocation, but Satan put it into their hearts to make this inroad; to do it now, and so gained a double point, for he made both Job to suffer, and them to sin. When Satan has God's permission to do mischief, he will not want for mischievous men as instruments, for he is a *spirit that works in the children of disobedience.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12. 'In every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of Him.' (*Acts* 10: 34, 35.)—When the heart is upright and devoted to God, the general conduct will be holy, and He will be served with the whole man; for the genuine fear of his name will produce habitual hatred of sin, and watchfulness against it.—It is not evil in itself to rejoice in the bounty of Providence, yet every [abused] indulgence disposes us to unwatchfulness, and forgetfulness of God: and we seldom feast together in the most friendly and decent manner, without having cause to repent of some part of our conduct and conversation; or at least of the thoughts and temper of our hearts. All that of which we are thus conscious must be washed away in the atoning blood of Christ, or it will rise up against us in judgment at the last day.—Alas! how few nobles and rulers imitate Job, in this open profession of godliness, and this strict attention to religion in his family!—We should inquire, not only whither we go, and what company we keep; but also, what our intentions and dispositions are.—Those who are disposed to represent the most blameless professors of godliness, as hypocritical or mercenary; to put a bad construction on harmless or even good actions; and to insinuate some suspicion or objection, in order to detract from the commendations bestowed on pious and useful men; may easily know whose children they are, whose example they follow, and whose work they do.—Every believer serves God from love, gratitude, and zeal, and delights in his holy commandments. When called to it, he will part with every temporal possession for his sake: and it is impossible that he, who loves God above all things, should fail of being eternally happy in the enjoyment of Him. But *untried* faith is not much to be depended on; therefore Satan is often allowed to sift and prove the people of God, (23: 8—12. *Luke* 22: 31—34. *Jam.* 1: 2—4, 12. 1 *Pet.* 1: 6, 7. 4: 12—16.) He means to destroy, defile, or distress them: but the Lord intends to demonstrate the reality and power of his grace in them, for his own glory and their important good.—We bolt and bar, to keep out a few ruffians of our own species, who might come to plunder or murder us while we sleep; but there are legions of infernal spirits, whom we can by no means * exclude, and who are able in a moment to distract, torment, or destroy us. Blessed be the Lord, his power limits the operations of these malicious foes; and the protection He affords to ungodly men against their destructive rage, is a most wonderful instance of his patience and loving-kindness. Yet, as they generally disbelieve or disregard the being and agency of evil spirits, they are 'taken captive by them at their will,' and are hurried on in rebellion against God. But they who love the Lord are assured of protection.
SCOTT.

* Taken *absolutely,* this doctrine would be very pernicious, for it would throw the *blame* of evil thoughts entirely upon evil spirits; but *Scott* would doubtless agree with *Henry,* that a man's will may reject, retain, or expose him to, these bad suggestions, whencesoever arising, so that his choice herein determines his sinfulness. *Ed.*

Job, the edification of the church in future ages, and the glory of God in all these respects. SCOTT. In fine, for the happiness of the universe.
ED.

Verse 16.

We cannot determine, in what manner this and other effects were produced by Satan, who is 'the prince of the power of the air;' (*Eph.* 2:1, 2.) and, no doubt, able, when permitted, to cause any such *phenomena.* (*Deut.* 13:1—5.) It is generally agreed, that the tremendous appearances on Sinai were produced by the ministration of holy angels: and though fallen angels have lost their holy dispositions and moral powers, they retain their natural capacities; and doubtless could, if allowed, produce similar effects: at least, it is impossible to prove the contrary, seeing we cannot explain the manner, or ascertain the boundaries, of their operations. But they are absolutely in the Lord's hands, and can exercise their powers only by his permission; and this alone is the security of our bodies, minds, relatives, friends, and possessions.
SCOTT.

consumed then; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

17 While he *was* yet speaking, there came also another, and said, [x] The Chaldeans made out three bands, and [*] fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and [y] I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

18 While he *was* yet speaking, [z] there came also another, and said, [a] Thy sons and thy daughters *were* [b] eating, and drinking wine, in their eldest brother's house:

19 And, behold, there came [c] a great wind † from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and [d] it fell upon the young men, and [e] they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

20 Then Job arose, and [f] rent his ‡ mantle, and shaved his head, and [g] fell down upon the ground, and worshipped;

21 And said, [h] Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: [i] the LORD gave, and [k] the LORD hath taken

x Gen. 11:28. Is. 23:13. Hab. 1:6.
* Heb. *rushed.*
y 15. 2 Sam. 1:3.
z 6:2,3. 16:14. 19:9,10. 23:2. Is. 28:19. Jer. 51:31. Lam. 1:12. Amos 4:6—11.
a 8:4. 27:14. Ps. 34:19. Ec. 9:2.
b 2 Sam. 13:28.
c Jer. 4:11,12. Eph. 2:2.
† Heb. *from aside*, &c.
d Judg. 16:30. 1 K. 20:30. Matt. 7: 27. Luke 13:1—5. Acts 28:4.
e Gen. 37:32,33. 42:36. 2 Sam. 18:33.
f Gen. 37:29,34. Ezra 9:3.
‡ Or, *robe*.
g Deut. 9:18. 2 Sam. 12:16—20. 2 Chr. 7:3. Matt. 26:39. 1 Pet. 5:5.
h Gen. 3:19. Ps. 49:17. Ec. 5:15. 12: 7. 1 Tim. 6:7.
i 2:10. Gen. 30:2. Ec. 5:19. Jam. 1: 17.
k Gen. 45:5. 2 Sam. 16:10. 1 K. 12:15. Ps. 39:9. Is. 42:24. 45:7. Amos 3: 6. Matt. 20:15. Acts 4:28.

2. Job was perhaps ready to reproach the Sabeans for their injustice and cruelty, when the next news he had was, that an extraordinary lightning, levelled directly against him, had cut off all his sheep and shepherds; not only killed but consumed them, at once, one shepherd only being left alive to bring him the news, *v.* 16. The devil, aiming to make him curse God and renounce his religion, managed this part very artfully. Having misrepresented Job to God as a false servant, in pursuance of his old design to set heaven and earth at variance, he here misrepresented God to Job as a hard Master, who would not protect those flocks out of which He had so many burnt-offerings: this would tempt Job to say, *It is in vain to serve God.* The messenger called the lightning the *fire of God*, (and innocently enough,) Job himself owns, (*ch.* 31: 23.) that *destruction from God was a terror to him.* How terrible then were the tidings of this destruction, immediately from the hand of God! There had not been the like since Sodom was burned.

3. The loss of the *camels*, and *servants* tending them, was by the Chaldeans, *v.* 17. If the fire of God which fell on Job's honest servants, had fallen on the Sabean and Chaldean robbers, God's judgments therein would have been, like the great mountains, evident and conspicuous; but when the way of the wicked prospers, and they carry off their booty, when just and good men are suddenly cut off, God's righteousness is like the great deep, the bottom of which we cannot find, Ps. 36: 6.

4. His dearest and most valuable possessions were his ten children; Their loss could not but go nearest him; therefore the devil reserved it for the last, that, if the other provocations failed, this might make him curse God. All died together, not one was left alive. David, though a wise and good man, was very much discomposed by the death of one son; how hard then did it bear on poor Job, who in one moment, was written childless! They died suddenly: without any warning: feasting and making merry: had they died praying, he might better have borne it; hoping death found them in a good frame. See how all things came alike to all. Job's children were constantly prayed for by their father, and lived in love one with another, and yet came to this untimely end. They were taken away when he had most need of them to comfort him under all his other losses. Such miserable comforters are all creatures; in God only we have a present help at all times.

V. 20—22. The devil had now done all he desired leave to do, to provoke Job to curse God; he had *touched* all he had, *touched* it with a witness; he whom the rising sun saw the richest of all the men in the east, before night was poor to a proverb. His pious deportment under his affliction, sufficiently proved the devil a liar, and Job an honest man.—He conducted himself,

I. Like a man; not stupid and senseless, like a stock or stone, not unnatural and unaffected at the death of his children and servants; no, (*v.* 20.) he *arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head*, the usual expressions of great sorrow, to show he was sensible of the hand of the Lord; yet he did not break out into any indecencies, nor discover any extravagant passion; he did not faint away, but arose, as a champion to the combat; very gravely, in conformity to the custom of the country, rent his mantle, his cloke, or outer garment; he did not passionately tear his hair, but deliberately shaved his head; by all which it appeared that he kept his temper, and bravely maintained the possession and repose of his own soul. The time when he began to show his feelings is observable; it was not till he heard of the death of his children, and then he arose, then he rent his mantle. A worldly, unbelieving heart would have said, 'Now the meat is gone, it is well the mouths are gone too; now there are no portions, it is well there are no children;' but Job knew better, for *Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide.* Some expositors, remembering it was usual with the Jews to rend their clothes when they heard blasphemy, conjecture that Job rent his in holy indignation at the blasphemous thoughts Satan now cast into his mind, tempting him to curse God.

II. Like a wise and good man, a *perfect and upright man*, that *feared God*, and *eschewed* the *evil* of sin more than that of outward trouble: humbling himself under the hand of God, as one that knew how to want as well as to abound. *Hypocrites cry not when God binds them*, Job 36: 13. Hereby he prepared himself to get good by the affliction; for how can we improve the grief we will not feel?

1. He composed himself with quieting considerations; he reasons from the common state of human life, which he describes with application to himself, *v.* 21. Paul refers to this of Job, 1 Tim. 6: 7. We come into the world naked; not only unarmed, but unclothed, helpless, shiftless, not so well covered and fenced as other creatures. The sin we are born in, makes us naked to our shame, in the eyes of the holy God. The body goes out of the world naked, though the sanctified soul goes clothed, 2 Cor. 5: 3. Death strips us of all our enjoyments; clothing can neither warm nor adorn a dead body. This consideration silenced Job, under all his losses. He was still his own man, but reduced to his first condition. *No one can be so poor as he was when born.—Min. Felix.* If we are impoverished, we are not wronged, nor much hurt, for we are but as we were born. He is but where he must have been at last, and is only unclothed, or unloaded rather, a little sooner than he expected.

2. He gave glory to God, and expressed himself on this occasion with a great veneration for the Divine Providence, and an awful submission to its disposals; we may well rejoice to find Job in this good frame, because this was the very thing on which the trial of his integrity was put, though he did not know it.

(1.) *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.* We must own the Divine Providence, in all our comforts—and in all our crosses. May not God do what He will with his own? See how he looks above instruments, to the First Cause; he does not say, 'The Lord gave, and the Sabeans and Chaldeans have taken away; God made me rich, and the devil has made me poor.' Seneca could argue thus, *Abstulit, sed et dedit—He took*

Verse 17.

The Chaldeans seem at this time an inconsiderable roving tribe; but afterwards became a powerful nation. (*Is.* 23:13. *Hab.* 1:5—7.) SCOTT.

'They inhabited each side of the Euphrates, near Babylon, their capital; and were also mixed with the wandering Arabs.' Dr. *A. Clarke. Gesenius* seeks their original seat in the mountains of Kurdistan, whose inhabitants, the Kurds, are robbers still. *Xenophon* says of the later Chaldeans, 'that they lived upon plunder, and not knowing agriculture, got their bread by force of arms.' GILL. Babylon, perhaps, was but an immense walled camp of robber nomades. See note on Nineveh, in Jon. ED.

Verses 18, 19.

When we have endeavored to conceive aright of Job's circumstances, comforts, and prospects, on the morning of this eventful day, and of the dreadful change which took place before evening; and when we realize, from experience and observation, the feelings of the human heart under trials comparatively trivial; we shall be able to form some faint idea of the immense load, at once laid on this eminent servant of God: and the strength of his faith and grace appears, in the manner he supported it. And though, afterwards, the still accumulating weight extorted some impatient expressions, which many have *inconsiderately* objected to the scriptural commendation of his patience; yet probably, no mere man ever suffered so much and so long, with equal resignation and constancy. SCOTT.

(19.) *Great wind.*] *Bruce* (in his Trav.) mentions such a sudden and powerful whirlwind. ED. 'So many calamities at once, seem to some fictitious, but there is nothing unlikely in a band of Sabeans attacking Job's property in one part, while Chaldeans attacked it in another, and a thunder-storm and wind combined, might, at the same time do the other mischief.' [The *experience* of some families too will corroborate the probability.] *Young men.*] Young folk, including the daughters. *Broughton*, in *Cond. Comm.* 'Young people.' BOOTHR.

Verse 20.

Shaved his head.] 'So the Jews and neighboring nations, Jer. 41: 5.' (HEWLETT,) and the Persians when Alexander died. *Curtius.* Thus the Egyptians lamented at the funeral of their Apis, and the Syrians mourned the death of Adonis. PARKHURST.

Verse 21.

The origin of all things from the earth, introduced, at a very early period of the world, the superstitious worship of the earth. *Lucretius.* The idea [of 'mother-earth,'] seems to have been common to all the east. BURDER.

away; [l] blessed be the name of the LORD.

22 [m] In all this Job sinned not, nor * charged God foolishly.

CHAP. II.

Satan again appears before God, and obtains permission still further to try Job, 1—8. He smites him with sore boils from head to foot, 7, 8. His wife moves him to curse God and die; but he rebukes her, 9, 10. Three of his friends visit him; and, overwhelmed with surprise and grief, they keep silence seven days, 11—13.

AGAIN [a] there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them, to present himself before the LORD.

2 And the LORD said unto Satan, [b] From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, [c] From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

3 And the LORD said unto Satan, [d] Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and [e] an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he [f] holdeth fast his integrity, although [g] thou movedst me against him, to † destroy him, [h] without cause.

4 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin; yea, [i] all that a man hath will he give for his life:

5 But [j] put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and [k] he will curse thee to thy face.

6 And the LORD said unto Satan, [l] Behold, he *is* in thy hand; ‡ but [m] save his life.

away, but He also gave; and Epictetus excellently, (cap. 15.) 'When deprived of any comfort, suppose a child, or a part of thy estate, say not, *I have lost it;* but, *I have restored it to the right owner.* But thou wilt object, (says he) *He is a bad man, that has robbed me;* to which he answers, *What is it to thee, by what hand He that gives remands what He gave?*

(2.) He adores God in both. Afflictions must not divert us from, but quicken us to, the exercise of religion. He has still the same great and good thoughts of God as ever, and is as forward to speak them forth to his praise. Thus must we *sing both of mercy and judgment,* Ps. 101: 1. When comforts are removed, we must thank God, like Job here, that ever we had them, and had them so much longer than we deserved. Nay, he gave God thanks too, for good designed him by his afflictions, for gracious supports under them, and his believing hopes of a happy issue.

Lastly, Here is the honorable testimony the Holy Ghost gives to Job's constancy and good conduct under his afflictions, *v.* 22. Job did not attribute folly to God, nor in the least reflect on his wisdom. Discontent and impatience do, in effect, charge God with folly. They who not only keep their temper under crosses and provocations, but keep up good thoughts of God and sweet communion with Him, whether their praise be of men or no, it will be of God.

CHAP. II. V. 1—6. They that calumniate good people, will have their saying, though the evidence to the contrary be ever so plain and full. So Satan will have Job's cause called over again. The malicious, unreasonable importunity of that great persecutor is represented, (Rev. 12: 10.) by his accusing the saints before our God day and night, still repeating and urging what has been many a time answered: so did Satan here accuse Job day after day. Here is,

1. The court set, and the prosecutor, or accuser, making his appearance, (*v.* 1, 2.) as before, *ch.* 1: 6, 7. and to the question, *Whence comest thou?* he answers as before, *From going to and fro;* as if he had been doing no harm, though abusing that good man.

2. The Judge Himself as counsel for the accused, and pleading for him, *v.* 3. *Holding fast his integrity* is now added as a further achievement; instead of letting go his religion, and cursing God, he holds it faster than ever, as having now more than ordinary occasion for it; he is the same in adversity as in prosperity, and rather better, more hearty and lively in blessing God than ever, and takes root the faster for being thus shaken. Satan is condemned for his allegations; *Thou,* as an accuser, *movedst Me against him.* Or, 'Thou in vain movedst Me to destroy him, for I will never do that.'

1 Ii. 1 Sam. 3:18. 2 K. 20:19. Ps. 34:1. Is. 24:15. Eph. 5:20 1 Thes. 5:18.
m 2:10. Jam. 1:4,12. 1 Pet. 1:7.
* Or, *attributed folly to God.* 34:10, 18,19. 40:4—8. Rom. 9:20.
a See on 1:6.—Is. 6:1,2. Luke 1:19. Heb. 1:14.
b Gen. 16:8.
c 1:7. John 14:30. 2 Cor. 4:4. 1 Pet. 5:8.
d See on 1:1,8.—9:20. Gen. 6:9. Ps. 37:37. Phil. 3:12. 1 Pet. 5:10.
e Prov. 11:3. 13:6. 14:2. 15:8. 16:17.
f 1:21,22. 13:15. 27:5,6. Jam. 1:12. 1 Pet. 1:7.
g 1:11.
† Heb. *swallow him up.* 2 Sam. 20:20.
h 9:17. John 9:3.
i Esth. 7:3,4. Is. 2:20,21. Jer. 41:3. Matt. 16:26. Acts 27:18,19. Phil. 3: 8—10.
j 1:11. 19:21. 1 Chr. 21:17. Ps. 32: 3,4. 38:2—7. 39:10.
k 9. 1:5,11. Lev. 24:15. Is. 8:21.
l See on 1:12.
‡ Or, *only.*
m 38:10,11. Ps. 65:7. Luke 8:29—33 22:31,32. 1 Cor. 10:13. Rev. 2:10 20:1,2,7.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 13—22. It is the delight of Satan and of all his servants to do mischief: and we see in the example before us, to what an extent they may be successful; and, though they are seldom allowed to proceed so far, we should be thankful they can go no farther, and should prepare for the worst. If, in all our troubles, we look to our gracious God, He will repress our murmurs, and support us under our afflictions.—May we, after the example of Job, learn, under our *lighter* trials, to repress every rebellious passion; to humble ourselves before God; to adore his wise and righteous sovereignty, and to praise Him for remaining mercies and prospects; and, by all our troubles, to get nearer to his mercy-seat; in communion with Him. And may the malice and power of these our enemies render more precious to us that gracious and condescending Savior, 'who came to destroy the works of the devil,' and who, in order to effect our salvation, was willing *to suffer* from that enemy, far more than Job suffered, or than we can possibly conceive. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. II. V. 4, 5. Satan construed Job's holy resignation into an evidence of his insensibility. Nothing could be more unreasonable and malignant: it illustrates the subtlety of that enemy, who was able plausibly to put a bad construction on Job's most unexceptionable conduct, and to impute to the basest principles, what sprang from the noblest, of which the human heart is susceptible. SCOTT.

(4.) *Skin for skin.*] 'Skin after skin.' *Parkhurst.* 'In plain English, "property for person." *Good.* 'Skins obtained by hunting were an early and valuable article of barter. The traffickers, however, would give many as a tribute [notes, 1 K. 10:22, 23, &c.] to one party of men to defend them from the attacks of another. Hence, skin after skin, as might be demanded, would a man give, or even all, in an extreme case, to preserve his life.' *Good. Bib. Research. Cond. Comm.* ED.

Verse 6.

' *Life,*] Heb. *nfsh:* note, Gen. 2:7, *latter part.* It also means 'soul,' but 'life' is preferable here. *Gill. Good.* Dr. *A. Clarke.* ID.

7 So [n] went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with [o] sore boils, [p] from the sole of his foot to his crown.

8 And he [q] took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal: and [r] he sat down among the ashes.

[*Practical Observations.*]

9 ¶ Then said [s] his wife unto him, Dost thou still [t] retain thine integrity? [u] curse God, and die.

10 But he said unto her, [x] Thou speakest [y] as one of the foolish

n 1 K. 22:22.
o 30:17,—19,30. Ex. 9:9—11. Deut. 28: 27,35. Rev. 16:11.
p Is. 1:6. 3:17.
q 19:14—17. Ps. 38:5,7. Luke 16:20,21.
r 42:6. 2 Sam. 13:19. Is. 61:3. Ez. 27:30. Jon. 3:6. Matt. 11:21.
s Gen. 3:6,12. 1 K. 11:4.
t 3. 21:14,15. 2 K. 6:33. Mark 3:14.
u 5. 1:11.
x Gen. 3:17. 2 Sam. 19:22. Matt. 16: 23.
y 2 Sam. 6:20,21. 13:13. 24:10. 2 Chr. 16:9. Prov. 9:6,13. Matt. 25:2.

put Christ into his agony in the garden. He had permission to touch his bone and his flesh, without exception of his life, because by dying He was to do what Job could not do; *destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil.*

V. 7—10. His own children, the devil first tempts and draws to sin, and afterwards torments; but this child of God he first tormented, and then tempted. He aimed to make Job curse God; here is the artful course he took, to give him both the provocation and the suggestion; the old serpent is here playing the same game against Job, that he played against our first parents; (Gen. 3.) aiming to seduce him from his allegiance, and rob him of his integrity.

I. He provokes him with sore boils, making him a burden to himself, *v.* 7, 8. an *evil inflammation*, so some; an erysipelas, perhaps, in a higher degree. One boil, when gathering, is torment enough, and gives abundance of pain and uneasiness: what a condition was Job then in, that had boils all over him, and those of as raging a heat as the devil could make them, as it were, *set on fire of hell!* The small-pox is very grievous and painful, and would be much more terrible, but that the extremity of it ordinarily lasts but a few days; how grievous then was Job's disease, with ulcers all over, making him sick at heart, putting him to exquisite torture, and spreading over him so, that he could lay himself no way for any ease. If exercised with sore and grievous distempers, let us think that God has sometimes dealt thus with the best of his saints and servants. We know not how much Satan may have a hand (by divine permission) in the diseases of the children of men, and especially the children of God; what infections that prince of the air may spread, what inflammations may come from that fiery serpent. We read of one whom Satan had bound many years, Luke 13: 16. Should God suffer that roaring lion to have his will, how miserable would he soon make us!

His strange management of himself, in this distemper, *v.* 8. Instead of healing salves, he took a piece of a broken pitcher, *to scrape himself withal:* a very sad pass. When sick and sore, a man may bear it the better, if well tended: even Lazarus had some ease from the tongues of the dogs; but poor Job has no help. Nothing is done to his sores but what he does with his own hands. His children and servants are all dead, his wife unkind, *ch.* 19: 17. He has not wherewithal to fee a physician, or surgeon; and, most sad of all, none of those he had formerly been kind to had so much sense of honor and gratitude as to minister to him in his distress; either because the disease was loathsome and noisome, or because they apprehended it to be infectious. Thus it was in the former days, as it will be in the last days; men were *lovers of their own selves, unthankful, and without natural affection.* There are no soft rags, no ointment, no keeping clean, no healing plasters, no opiates; all that *he* does to remove the fetid matter, or allay the irritation, is to *scrape* his sores; a remedy one would think as bad as the disease: and he has nothing to do this with but an instrument that would rather

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—8. Holy angels are not more unwearied in serving God and doing good, than evil spirits are in rebellion and mischief.—As Satan persists in accusing God's people, notwithstanding the evidences they give of piety and integrity: so will his servants on earth persist in slandering them, in defiance of demonstration itself. (*John* 3: 37—47.) The piety of believers is called hypocrisy; their self-denial, affectation; their liberality, ostentation; their resignation, want of natural affection; their meekness, want of spirit; and their contempt of worldly pleasure, and dislike to trifling and profane company, are ascribed to want of taste, and to a morose, unsociable disposition. But the Lord will vindicate the character of his servants; and He delights in their constancy and submission amidst trials and temptations, because they glorify the power of his grace. He will therefore, at some times, without any other peculiar cause, give their enemies permission to prove them in various ways. (*Gen.* 50: 20. *Is.* 10: 7. *Hab.* 1: 12—17. *Rom.* 8: 35—39. 1 *Pet.* 4: 12—16.)—Men are indeed naturally selfish, and prone to disregard all others in comparison of themselves, their own ease, interest, or indulgence. Hence it is evident we all need an inward and gracious change, that we may learn to love God [with our whole hearts] and our neighbor as we ought. And as men will give all they have to save their lives; we should argue, that it is true wisdom to part with our property, liberty, country, nay, our very lives, to secure our souls. But to infer, that all are alike mercenary, and that the most excellent actions of pious persons spring from the same carnal and selfish principles, as the most atrocious crimes of the profane; manifests the malice of Satan himself, tends to render the vilest characters contented in their wickedness, subserves the cause of infidelity, and insinuates that all religion is pretence and imposture. To confute such accusations by stubborn facts, the Lord is pleased to give leave to malice, to exert her utmost power, in putting this matter to the trial; in the midst of afflictions and persecutions, He enables the believer to retain his integrity; and, while the men of the world give up honor, conscience, and their souls, to save their lives, the servant of God renounces all, and even lays down his life, rather than disobey and dishonor his Lord. Thus, in innumerable instances, have the patient and constant sufferings of godly men confounded persecutors; and *demonstrated* an essential difference between those, who are *only* 'born of the flesh,' and those who 'are born again of the Spirit.' —When most healthy and vigorous, we should remember to what loathsome diseases and decay our bodies are liable; and instead of being vain of them, or bestowing pains in decorating or pampering them; let us seek for the incorruptible ornaments and unfading beauties of holiness.—When in great pain and sickness, deserted, insulted, destitute of necessaries or convenient attendance, or laboring under a complication of every distress; we should meditate on the sufferings of Job, his patience, the love of God to him, and his happy deliverance: and also look to the suffering Savior, comparing our light afflictions with his *unknown* sufferings, 'lest we be wearied and faint in our minds.' (*Heb.* 12: 2, 3. *Jam.* 5: 7—11.) SCOTT.

Verses 7, 8.

No doubt the disease Satan inflicted on Job, was as painful and loathsome as it could be made.—Perhaps, when any of the boils began to die away, the itching became as intolerable.—By this improper treatment, his disease was probably increased and prolonged, and one kind of misery alternately exchanged for another. SCOTT.

(7.) *Sore boils.*] 'Ulcerous sores.' *Boothr.* Supposed to be the elephantiasis, or black leprosy of the Arabs; (*Good. Boothr.*) rendering the skin like that of the elephant, uneven and wrinkled, with many furrows. *Hales.* 'In the beginning of elephantiasis, an intolerable itching is felt throughout, so that a person cannot possibly keep his hands and nails from scratching. See *Aretæus.*' When it attains a certain height it is incurable. *Michaelis.* [Note, Dent. 28:34.] *Clarke* queries, if, from its symptoms, it was not the small-pox. Respectable people in the east have the greatest dread of boils and cutaneous diseases. *Roberts.* COND. COMM.

(8.) *Potsherd.*] 'Or, earthern vessel.' *Rosenm.* When all vessels were of the potter's forming, [and the Egyptians had an immense variety in this kind,] and before metal vessels were much in use, the dust heaps must have abounded with potsherds. *Good.* Any one who has rambled over the ruins of ancient cities will recollect how often fragments of pottery, and that in great abundance, are mixed with the soil. *Ashes.*] *Gill* remarks, that ashes are a drier and an abstersive of ulcers. 'Job sat among the ashes of the hearth, deemed a sacred place among the ancients.' *Hewlett.* Homer makes the shipwrecked Ulysses to sit "upon the hearth in the midst of the ashes." In transl. "dunghill" the *Sept.* intended a rubbish pile, an ignoble and unclean spot, as Job rendered the place where he sat such, by the loathsome products of his putrid disease.' *Rosenm.* ED.

Verse 9.

When Satan deprived Job of his children, he reserved his wife to be his tempter; perhaps knowing her to be a woman of an impatient spirit, who had great influence with her husband. She had shared the same afflictions with him; yet it is probable that she was full of hard and rebellious thoughts, though she did not openly give vent to them. But when this additional calamity oppressed Job, she was driven to despair of help, and to upbraid him as preposterous in adhering to his religion, seeing God rewarded his fidelity and resignation, with nothing but one dire calamity after another. The meaning of his wife's advice has been much disputed, for the Hebrew word signifies both *to bless* and *to curse.* (1:5.) But her counsel was evidently suggested by Satan, who spake by her, as he had spoken by the serpent to Eve, and by Eve to Adam: and it was therefore coincident with his temptation: (*Notes* and *P. O. Gen.* 3:1—6.) and both her preface and Job's answer prove, that it was desperate, and not pious, advice she gave. It is probable, therefore, that our translation gives the true sense: and that Job's wife, being herself driven desperate, instigated him to despair and blasphemy, to 'curse God,' though he should die for so doing; or even in order to provoke the Lord thus to terminate his sufferings; or as an introduction to suicide, to which Satan no doubt would tempt him.—It is well known, that the Gentiles, under great calamities, frequently vented their rage by curses against the gods, whom at other times they worshipped. SCOTT. 'So now in the east.' ROBERTS.

Verse 10.

Considering Job's situation, nothing can be more admirable than this reply. He reproved his wife with firmness, yet with temper; and nei-

ish women speaketh. What? [z] shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? [a] In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

11 ¶ Now when Job's three [b] friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the [c] Temanite, and Bildad the [d] Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come [e] to mourn with him, and to [f] comfort him.

12 And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and [g] knew him not, [h] they lifted up their voice and wept; and [i] they rent every one his mantle, and [k] sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.

13 So [l] they sat down with him upon the ground [m] seven days

z 1:1—3,10,21. 2 Sam. 1—23. Lam. 3:33—41. John 18:11. Rom. 12:12. Heb. 12:9—11. Jam. 5:10,11.
a 1:22. Ps. 39:1. 59:12. Matt. 12:34—37. Jam. 3:2.
b 6:14. 16:20. 19:19,21. 42:7. Prov. 17:17. 18:24. 27:10.
c 2:11. 15:1. Gen. 36:11,15. Jer. 49:7.
d 8:1. 18:1. Gen. 25:2. 1 Chr. 1:32.
e 42:11. Gen. 37:35. Is. 51:19. John 11:19. Rom. 12:15. 1 Cor. 12:26. Heb. 13:3.
f 13:4. 13:2.
g 19:14. Ruth 1:19—21. Lam. 4:7,8.
n Gen. 27:34. Judg. 2:4. 1 Sam. 11:4. 30:4. 2 Sam. 13:36. Esth. 4:1.
i 1:20.
k Neh. 9:1. Lam. 2:10. Ez. 27:30. Rev. 18:19.
l Ezra 9:3. Neh. 1:4. Is. 3:26. 47:1.
m Gen. 1:5,8.

rake into his wounds, and add to his pain, than give him any ease. People that are sick and sore, have need to be under the discipline and direction of others, for they are often but bad managers of themselves.

Instead of reposing in a bed, he *sat down among the ashes*. Probably he had a bed left him; for we do not find his house was burnt or plundered; but he chose to sit in the ashes, either as weary of his bed, or he would put himself into the place and posture of a penitent, *ch.* 42: 6. Isa. 58: 5. Jon. 3: 6. Thus did he humble himself under the mighty hand of God, and bring his mind to his condition. If God lay him among the ashes, there he will contentedly sit down: a humble spirit becomes low circumstances, and will help to reconcile us to them. The Sept. reads, He sat *down on a dunghill without the city;* (which is commonly said, in mentioning this story;) but the original says no more than that he sat *in the midst of the ashes*, which he might do in his own house.

II. Satan urges him, by the persuasions of his own wife, to curse God, *v.* 9. The Jews (who covet much to be wise above what is written) say Job's wife was Dinah, Jacob's daughter: so the Chaldee paraphrase. It is not likely she was; however, she was to him like Michal to David, a scoffer at his piety. She was spared to him, when the rest of his comforts were taken away, for this purpose, to be a troubler and tempter to him. If Satan leaves any thing he has permission to take away, it is with a design of mischief. It is policy to send his temptations by the hand of those that are dear to us, as he tempted Adam by Eve, and Christ by Peter. We must therefore carefully watch, that we be not drawn to say or do a wrong thing by the influence, interest, or entreaty, of any, no not those for whose opinion and favor we have ever so great a value. Observe how strong this temptation was:

1. She banters Job for his constancy in his religion, *v.* 9. Art thou so tame and sheepish, as thus to truckle to a God, who seems to take a pleasure in making thee miserable?

'Dost thou not see that thy devotion 's vain? Incorrigibly pious! Can't thy God Reform thy stupid virtue with his rod?'—(*Blackmore.*) Thus Satan still endeavors to draw men from God, as he did our first parents, by suggesting hard thoughts of Him, as one that envies the happiness, and delights in the misery, of his creatures, than which nothing is more false. Another artifice he uses, is, to drive men from their religion, by scoffs and reproaches for adherence to it: with much more reason may we retort it upon the scoffers, 'Are you such fools as still to retain your impiety, when you might *bless God, and live?*'

2. She urges him to renounce his religion, to blaspheme God, set Him at defiance, and dare Him to do his worst: 'End thy troubles by ending thy life; better *die* once than be always dying thus; thou mayest now despair of help from thy God, even curse Him, and hang thyself.' These are two of the blackest and most horrid of all Satan's temptations, yet such as good men have sometimes been violently assaulted with: nothing is more contrary to natural conscience than blaspheming God, nor to natural sense than self-murder; therefore the suggestion of either of these may well be suspected to come immediately from Satan. Lord, lead us not into such, not into any, temptation, but *deliver us from the evil one.*

III. He bravely resists and overcomes the temptation, *v.* 10. He soon gave her an answer, (for Satan spared him the use of his tongue, in hopes he would curse God with it,) which showed his constant resolution to cleave to God, to keep his good thoughts of Him, and not to let go his integrity.

1. In other cases, Job reasoned with his wife with great mildness, even when she was unkind, *ch.* 19: 17. But when she persuaded him to curse God, he was much displeased. He does not call her *a fool*, and *an atheist*, nor break out into any indecent expressions of his displeasure, as the sick and sore are apt to do, and think they may be excused; but he shows her the evil of what she said, that she spake the language of the infidels and idolaters, who, when *hardly bestead, fret themselves, and curse their king and their God*, Isa. 8: 21. We have reason to suppose, in such a pious household, Job's wife had been well-affected to religion, but now all their estate and comfort were gone, she could not bear the loss with Job's temper; but that she should go about to infect his mind with her wretched distemper, was a great provocation, and he could not forbear resentment. Note, (1.) Those are angry and sin not, who are angry only at sin, taking a temptation as the greatest affront; who *cannot bear the evil*, Rev. 2: 2. When Peter was a Satan to Christ, He told him plainly, *Thou art an offence to Me.* (2.) If those whom we think wise and good, at any time speak what is foolish and bad, we ought to reprove them faithfully, and show them the evil of what they say, that we suffer not sin upon them. (3.) Temptations to curse God ought to be rejected with the greatest abhorrence, and not so much as parleyed with: whoever persuades us to that, must be looked upon as our enemy. Job did not curse God, and then think to come off with Adam's excuse, *The woman Thou gavest, persuaded me*, (Gen. 3: 12.) a tacit reflection on God, his ordinance, and providence; no, if thou scornest, cursest, thou alone shalt bear it.

2. How he reasoned against the temptation; *Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil also?* Those whom we reprove, we must endeavor to convince; no hard matter; [for it is *a reason* why we should still hold fast our integrity, that we are stripped of every thing else.] He considers, that though good and evil are contraries, yet they do not come from contrary causes, but both from the hand of God; (Is. 45: 7. Lam. 3: 38.) and therefore that in both we must have our eye to Him, with thankfulness for the good He sends, and without fretfulness at the [seeming] evil. Observe the force of his argument:

(1.) What he argues *for;* not only the bearing, but the receiving, of evil aright. *Shall we not receive evil?* i. e. expect to receive it? and set ourselves to receive it aright? The word signifies to receive as a gift, and denotes a pious affection and disposition of soul under our afflictions, neither despising them nor fainting under them, accounting them gifts; (Phil. 1: 29.) accepting them as punishments of our iniquity; (Lev. 26: 41.) acquiescing in the will of God in them; and accommodating ourselves to them, as those that know how to want as well as how to abound, Phil. 4: 12 When the heart is humbled, and weaned, by humbling, weaning providences, then we *receive correction*, (Zech. 3: 2.) and take up our cross.

(2.) What he argues *from;* the reception of so much good from God. Note, The consideration of the mercies we receive from God, both past and present, should make us receive our afflictions with a suitable disposition of spirit. If we have so much that pleases us, why not be content with what pleases God? Afflictions [give play to the higher, better, un-selfish sympathies, and sentiments,] serve as foils to our comforts, to make them the more valued, and as allays to make them the less dangerous, to keep the balance even, and to prevent our being *lifted up* [in self-dependence, contempt of others, and forgetfulness of our dependence on God] *above measure;* 2 Cor. 12: 7. If we receive so much good for the body, shall we not receive some good for the soul? i. e. some afflictions, by which we partake of God's holiness; (Heb. 12: 10.) something which, by saddening the countenance, makes the heart better? Let murmuring, therefore, as well as boasting, be for ever excluded.

IV. Thus, in a good measure, Job still held fast his integrity; and Satan's design against him was defeated: in the midst of all these grievances, he did not speak a word amiss; and we have no reason to think but he also preserved a good temper of mind, so that though there might be some stir-

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ther the anguish of his mind, nor the baseness of her suggestion, dictated any opprobrious language.—Thus far he most honorably stood the trial, and appeared the brightest in the furnace of affliction: and the testimony here borne to his conduct, shows that he did not speak the language of passion, as many seem to think; but that of soberness and piety.—It is not said, what reception his reply met with: but the temptation was repulsed, and the tempter baffled; and we read little more of his wife. (19:17.) SCOTT.

(10.) 'In all parts of the east, women are spoken of as "foolish."' ROBERTS.

Verse 11.

These friends the Sept. calls kings, but no evidence can be adduced that they were so. Their intentions were humane, friendly, and pious; yet, by their mistake of his case, they not only greatly increased his anguish; but unintentionally concurred with Satan, in tempting him to despair, and to blasphemy, as its never failing effect. SCOTT.

Verses 12, 13.

Job seems to have been at this time in the open air; it should not, however, be concluded from the language here used, that he and his friends remained together in the same place, all the time preceding

and seven nights, and [n] none spake a word unto him: for they saw that *his* grief was very great.

CHAP. III.

Job vehemently curses the day of his birth, 1—10. He complains, because he died not from the womb; and expatiates on the quietness of the grave, 11—19. He longs for present death, and bemoans his misery, 20—26.

[a] AFTER this [b] opened Job his mouth, and [c] cursed his day.

n 4:2. Ps. 77:4.
a 1:22. 2:10.
b 35:16. Ps. 39:2,3. 106:33.
c 3. 1:11. 2:5,9. Jer. 20:14,15.

perhaps made ballads on him: but his friends endeavored to comfort him; *a friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.* Three are here named, *v.* 11. We shall meet with a fourth after, who, it should seem, was present at the whole conference, whether as a friend of Job, or only as an auditor, does not appear: these three are said to be his *friends*, his intimate acquaintances, as David and Solomon each had one in their court, called *the king's friend.* They were eminently wise and good, as appears by their discourses; very old, of great reputation for knowledge, and much deference was paid to their judgment, *ch.* 32: 6. Probably they were men of figure in their country—princes, or heads of houses. Now observe,

I. Job, in his prosperity, had contracted a friendship with them: if his equals, yet he had not that jealousy of them, or, if his inferiors, yet not that disdain, which was any hinderance to an intimate converse and correspondence. Much of the comfort of this life lies in acquaintance and friendship with the prudent and virtuous; and he that has a few such friends, ought to value them highly. Job's three friends are all supposed to be of the posterity of Abraham, which, for some descents, even in the families shut out from the covenant of peculiarity, retained some good fruits of that pious education the father of the faithful gave those under his charge. Eliphaz descended from Teman, the grandson of Esau; (Gen. 36: 11.) Bildad (it is probable) from Shuah, Abraham's son by Keturah; Gen. 25: 2. Zophar is thought by some to be the same with Zepho, a descendant from Esau, Gen. 36: 11. The preserving of so much wisdom and piety among strangers to the covenants of promise, was a happy presage of God's grace to the Gentiles, when the partition wall should, in the latter days, be taken down. Esau was rejected; yet many that came from him inherited some of the best blessings.

II. They continued their friendship with Job in his adversity, when most of his friends had forsaken him, *ch.* 19: 14. Two ways they showed it. 1. By their kind visit in his affliction, to mourn with him, and to comfort him, *v.* 11. Visiting the afflicted, in their sorrow, is made a branch of *pure religion and undefiled;* (Jam. 1: 27.) and, if done from a good principle, will be abundantly recompensed shortly, Matt. 25: 36. It contributes to the improvement, (1.) Of our own graces; many a good lesson is to be learned from the troubles of others. (2.) Of their comforts; by respecting, we encourage them, and some good word may be spoken, which may help to make them easy. Job's friends came, not to satisfy their curiosity with an account of his troubles, and the strangeness of the circumstances of them; much less, as David's false friends, to make invidious remarks on him, (Ps. 41: 6—8.) but to mourn with him, to mingle their tears with his, and so to comfort him. It is much more pleasant to visit those in affliction, to whom comfort belongs, than those to whom we must first speak conviction.

V. 11—13. Here is the kind visit Job's three friends made him in his affliction. The news of it spread into all parts; he being an eminent man, both for greatness and goodness, and the circumstances of his troubles being very uncommon. Some, who were his enemies, triumphed in his calamities; (*ch.* 16: 10.—19: 18.—30: 1, &c.) rings and risings of corruption in his heart, yet grace got the upper hand; the *abundance of his heart* was for God, produced good things, and suppressed the evil; if he thought any evil, yet he *laid his hand on his mouth,* (Prov. 30: 32.) stifled the evil thought, and let it go no further; by which it appeared, not only that he had true grace, but that it was strong, and victorious; in short, that he had not forfeited the character of a *perfect and upright man;* for so *he* appears to be, who, in the midst of such temptation, *offends not in word,* Jam. 3: 2. Ps. 17: 3.

Concerning these visitants, observe, [1.] They were not sent for, (*ch.* 6: 22.) whence Mr. Caryl observes, that *it is good manners to be an unbidden guest at the house of mourning,* and, in comforting our friends, to prevent their invitations. [2.] They made an appointment to come. Good people should make appointments among themselves for doing good, so exciting and obliging, assisting and encouraging one another in it. For the carrying on of any pious design, let hand join in hand. [3.] They came with a design (we have reason to think sincere) to comfort him, yet proved miserable comforters, through unskilful management of his case. Many that aim well, by mistake, come short of their aim.

2. By tender sympathy with and concern for him; when they saw him at some distance, he was so disfigured and deformed, that *they knew him not,* *v.* 12. His face was *foul with weeping,* (*ch.* 16: 16.) like Jerusalem's Nazarites, once *ruddy as the rubies,* but now *blacker than a coal,* Lam. 4: 7, 8. What a change will a sore disease, or, without that, oppressing care and grief, make in the countenance, in a little time! *Is this Naomi?* So, *Is this Job?* God fit us for such changes!

Observing him thus miserably altered, they did not leave him, in fright or loathing, but expressed so much the more tenderness.

(1.) Coming to mourn with him, they vented their undissembled grief in all the then usual expressions of that passion; they wept aloud; the sight of them, (as is usual,) revived Job's grief, and he wept afresh, which fetched floods of tears from their eyes. They rent their clothes, and sprinkled dust on their heads, as men that would strip themselves, and abase themselves, with their friend that was stripped and abased.

(2.) Coming to comfort him, they sat down with him on the ground, for so he received visits; and they, not in compliment to him, but in true compassion, put themselves into the same humble and uneasy place and posture. They had many a time, it is likely, sitten with him on his couches, and at his table, in his prosperity, and were therefore willing to share in his grief and poverty, because they had shared his joy and plenty. It was not a modish, short visit they made him, just to look on him and be gone; but, as those that could have no enjoyment of themselves, if they had returned to their place, while their friend was in so much misery, they resolved to stay with him till they saw him mend or end, and therefore took lodgings near him, though he was not now able to entertain them as he had done, and they must therefore bear their own charges. Every day, for seven days together, at the hours he admitted company, they came and sat with him, as his companions in tribulation.

They sat with him, but none spake a word to him, only all attended to his particular narratives

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 9—13. The temporal comforts reserved to us, when others are removed, often prove sources of severest anguish. The enemy knows how to suit his temptations to our circumstances; we should consider, not *who* proposes, but *what* is proposed to us. (*Matt.* 16: 21—23. *P. O.* 21—28.)—No temptation is so dangerous to the afflicted, as that to despair. When induced to regard God as an irreconcilable enemy, the heart naturally rises in enmity, and vents this in blasphemy; every mean of grace is neglected, any crime ventured on with eagerness, and suicide may close the horrid career. Let us then 'watch and pray.' (1 *Sam.* 28: 12—25. 31: 3—6. *Matt.* 27: 3—5. 2 *Cor.* 2: 5—11.)—We ought not to judge of the Lord's love to us, by outward events or present feelings, but should rest our hopes on his holy Word; and consider every hard thought of God, as a 'fiery dart' of the enemy, which must be 'quenched' without a moment's delay, by whatever means excited. If one who has appeared to be a pious Christian, should *once,* under urgent distresses, drop a hint which tends to despair; we should remind him, whose work he is doing, and whose language he speaks.—Did we duly remember our sins, we should not wonder, that, amidst many blessings, we had also heavy afflictions: but rather say, 'It is of the LORD's mercies we are not consumed;' and receive the severest of them with thankfulness as well as patience: and thus they would become our richest gain.—Those friends who crush the afflicted believer with hard censures and suspicions are as *real tempters,* as those who persuade him to blasphemy and apostasy.—It is an indispensable duty of the Christian, to visit and comfort his afflicted brethren, as he has opportunity; for it is equally useful *to him,* as *to them:* and the greatest as well as the meanest should attend on it, without shrinking from inconveniences, or disagreeables. But alas! we often prove miserable comforters of each other, augmenting instead of alleviating grief. So that our whole *dependence* for consolation, must be placed on God. SCOTT.

their debate, and during its continuance. At proper seasons they came, and sat by him. Probably, they suspected his unprecedented calamities were judgments for some enormous crimes, he had veiled under a hypocritical profession of religion: but they did not choose to augment his grief, by abruptly making this charge; yet could not use the ordinary topics of consolation. Perhaps they conferred on the subject, and agreed to observe his conduct, and take an opportunity of speaking, as circumstances might appear. Perhaps also Job suspected the cause of their silence; and his anguish on that account, might give Satan an occasion of tempting him to use the passionate language recorded in the ensuing ch. which confirmed his friends in their harsh suspicions, and gave rise to the subsequent debate. SCOTT.

(13.) '*Seven days* was the usual time of mourning. Gen. 1:10. 1 Sam. 13. Ezek. 3:15.' GILL. 'Mourners are *silent*, for hours together, during the same length of time, except when obliged to speak.' ROBERTS.

NOTES.

CHAP. III. V. 1. Here the style of the book is changed to poetry,

2 And Job * spake, and said,

3 [d] Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night *in which* it was said, There is a man-child conceived.

4 Let that day be * darkness; let not [r] God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it.

5 Let darkness and [s] the shadow of death † stain it; [h] let a cloud dwell upon it; ‡ let the blackness of the day terrify it.

6 *As for* that night, let darkness seize upon it: § let it not be joined unto the days of the year; let it not come into the number of the months.

7 Lo, let that night be [i] solitary; let no joyful voice come therein.

8 Let them curse it that curse the day, [k] who are ready to raise up ‖ their mourning.

9 Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look [l] for light, but *have* none; neither let it see ¶ the dawning of the day:

10 Because [m] it shut

* Heb. *answered.*
d 10:18,19. Jer. 15:10. 20:14,15.
e Ex. 10:22,23. Joel 2:2. Am. 5:18. Matt. 27:45 Acts 27:20. Rev. 16:10.
† Deut. 11:12.
g 10:21,22. 18:18. 24:17. 28:3. 38: 17. Ps. 23:4. 44:19. 107:10,14. Is. 9:2. Jer. 2:6. 13:16. Am. 5:8. Matt. 4:16. Luke 1:79. † Or, *challenge.*
h Deut. 4:11. Ex. 30:3. 34:12. Joel 2:2. Heb. 12:18
‡ Or, *let them terrify it, as those* who have *a bitter day.* Jer. 4:28. Am. 8:10.
§ Or, *let it not rejoice among the days.*
i Is. 13:20—22. 24:8. Jer. 7:34. Rev. 18:22,23
k 2 Chr. 35:25. Jer. 9:17,18. Am. 5: 16. Matt. 11:17. Mark 5:38.
‖ Or, *a leviathan.* 41:1,10.
l 30:26. Jer. 8:15. 13:16.
¶ Heb. *the eye-lids of the morning.* 41: 18.
m 10:18,19. Gen. 20:18. 29:31,32. 1 Sam. 1:5. Ec. 6:3—5. Jer. 20:17,18.

of his troubles. They were silent, as men astonished and amazed. *Our lighter griefs have a voice; the more oppressive, are mute;* or, according to Sir R. Blackmore, 'to show a reverence due to such prodigious wo.' They spake not a word to him, whatever they said one to another, by way of instruction, for the improvement of the present providence. They said nothing to that purport to which afterward they said much—nothing to grieve him; (*ch.* 4: 2.) because they saw his grief was very great already. There is a *time to keep silence,* when either *the wicked is before us,* and by speaking we may harden them, (Ps. 39: 1.) or when by speaking we may *offend the generation of God's children,* Ps. 73: 15. Their not entering on the following solemn discourses till the seventh day, may perhaps intimate it was the sabbath, which, doubtless, was observed in the patriarchal age, and to that day they adjourned the intended conference, because, probably, then company resorted, as usual, to Job's house, to join him in his devotions, who might be edified by the discourse. Or rather, by their silence so long, they would intimate, that what they afterwards said was well considered and digested, and the result of many thoughts. *The heart of the wise studies to answer.* We should think twice before we speak once, especially in such a case as this; think long, and we shall be the better able to speak short, and to the purpose.

CHAP. III. *Ye have heard of the patience of Job,* says the apostle James. So we have, and of his impatience too. We wondered a man should be so patient as he was, ch. 1. and 2. but we wonder also, a good man should be so impatient as he is here in this ch. where we find him cursing his day, and in passion complaining that he was born, that he did not die as soon as he was born, that his life was now continued in misery. In this, it must be owned Job sinned with his lips, and it is written, not for our imitation, but our admonition, that he who thinks he stands, may take heed lest he fall.

V. 1—10. Long was Job's heart hot within him; at length, he spake, but not such a good word as David after a long pause, *Lord, make me to know my end,* Ps. 39: 3, 4. So long (like Ezekiel, 3: 15, 16.) Job and his friends sat thinking, but said nothing; *they* were afraid of speaking what they thought, lest they should grieve him, and *he* durst not vent his thoughts, lest he should offend them. They came to comfort him, but, finding his afflictions very extraordinary, they began to think comfort did not belong to him, suspecting him to be a hypocrite, therefore they said nothing. But losers think they may have leave to speak, therefore Job gives vent first to his thoughts. Unless they had been better, it had been well if he had kept them to himself.

In short, he cursed his day, the day of his birth, and could not think or speak of his own birth without regret and vexation. Whereas men usually observe the annual return of their birth-day with rejoicing, [note, 1: 4.] he looked upon it as the unhappiest day of the year, because the unhappiest of his life, being the inlet to all his wo. Now,

I. This was bad enough. The extremity of his trouble and the discomposure of spirits may excuse, in part, but can by no means justify him. Now he has forgotten the good he was born to, the lean kine have eaten up the fat ones, and he is filled with thoughts of the evil only. Jeremiah himself expressed his [perception] of his calamities, in language not much unlike, Jer. 15: 10, 20: 14. Job, in prosperity, had doubtless many a time blessed God for the day of his birth, reckoning it happy; yet now he brands it with all possible marks of infamy. When we consider the iniquity in which we were conceived and born, we have reason enough to reflect with sorrow and shame on the day of our birth, and to say that the *day of our death,* by which we are *freed from sin,* (Rom. 6: 7.) is far *better,* Eccl. 7: 1. But to curse the day of our birth, because then we entered on the calamitous scene of life, is to quarrel with the God of nature, to despise the dignity of our being, [with its inconceivable privileges,] and to indulge a passion which our own calm, sober thoughts will make us ashamed of. Certainly there is no condition of life a man can be in in this world, but he may, in it, (if it be not his own fault,) so honor God, and work out his own salvation, and make sure a happiness for himself in a better world, that he will have no reason at all to wish he had never been born, but great reason to say he had his being to good purpose. Yet it must be owned, if there were not another life after this, and divine consolations to support us in the prospects of it, so many are the sorrows and troubles of this, we might sometimes be tempted to say, we were *made in vain,* (Ps. 89: 47.) and to wish we had never been. There are those in hell, who, with good reason, wish they had never been born, as Judas, Matt. 26: 24. But, on this side hell, there can be no reason for so vain and ungrateful a wish: [and few there are but find in life quite as much happiness as misery; but the diseased mind looks only on the dark side.] It was Job's folly and weakness to curse his day; but good men have sometimes failed in the exercise of those graces they have been most eminent for, that we may understand, when they are said to be *perfect,* it is meant that they were upright, not sinless. *Lastly,* Let us observe it, to the honor of the spiritual life above the natural, that, though many have cursed the day of their first birth, never any cursed the day of their new birth, nor wished they never had had grace, and the Spirit of grace given them; those are the most excellent gifts, above life and being itself, and which will never be a burden.

II. Yet it was not so bad as Satan promised himself: Job cursed his day, but not his God; was weary of his life, but not of his religion; he will

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which is adorned by bold figures, according to the genius of the east. For seven days Job's friends had come, and sat by him, without either speaking consolation to him, or mentioning their suspicions: but doubtless their distant and reserved behavior increased his inward anguish. At the same time, we may suppose, Satan assaulted his mind with all possible temptations, to fill him with hard thoughts of God, as if He were severe, unjust, and his enemy; to shake his confidence and hope; and, by filling him with horror and dismay, to urge him to 'curse God to his face.' His permission seems to have extended to this, as well as to the torturing of his body; provided he did not kill him, or deprive him of reason.—In this, Job was an especial type of Christ, whose inward sufferings, both in the garden and on the cross, are generally allowed to have been far the most dreadful, and in a great degree occasioned by the assaults of the devil in that hour of darkness: (*Matt.* 26:36—39. *Luke* 22:39—53.) and when Job's trial was come to its extremity, we may conclude, that he was deprived of all comfortable sense of God's favor, and filled with dread of his wrath. Unless we bring these inward trials into the account, we shall not readily comprehend the change which took place in his conduct, from the entire resignation of the preceding chs. to the impatience which appears here, and in the subsequent part of the book. But this consideration solves the difficulty: Job's inward conflict and anguish, added to all his outward sufferings, caused in-dwelling sin to work powerfully, and at length it burst forth in many improper expressions. He had long repressed the thoughts of his heart: but at last 'he opened his mouth;' not, (as that expression generally imports,) to utter wise instructions, deliberately and gravely, but bitter execrations on the day of his birth. For he vainly hoped to ease his mind, by giving vent to the fire which burned within.—The experienced believer, however, knows that a few drops of this bitter cup are more dreadful than the sharpest afflictions, under which he is preserved from inward temptation, and favored with the sweet sense of the love and presence of God. He will not therefore be much surprised, to find that Job proved himself 'a man of like passions' with others, and prone to folly and impatience; but will rejoice that Satan was disappointed, and could not prove him a hypocrite: for though he cursed the day of his birth, he did not curse his God. (1:9—11.) SCOTT.

Verses 2—10.

The wildness, absurdity, and impossibility of these wishes, denote the tempest of his soul: but such exclamations, being the language of passion, cannot be measured by the standard of reason. During inward darkness and temptation, Satan so stirs up the corruption of the heart, that the plainest truths and promises are forgotten; former and present mercies are disregarded; future prospects are clouded; and the soul verges to despondency and blasphemy. Yet it is held back by the counteracting efficacy of divine grace, which subsists and operates, though it does not decidedly prevail; and thus the more dreadful effects are prevented, and in time the soul recovers its composure. [The man tempted, and helped, is *accountable* for the conscious *choice* he wills in either case. ED.] (*Gal.* 5:16—18.)—Doubtless, Job was afterwards heartily ashamed of this: now, in the full enjoyment of unchangeable felicity, does he wish he had never been born? ID.

(3.) *A man child born!*] 'This event is proclaimed three times by the midwife, in the public street among the Hindoos.' ROBERTS. 'Conceived in this v. should be taken in the sense of *born.*' Dr. A. CLARKE. 'The night which shouted.' *Good:* this, joined with Roberts's illustration, is very striking, the night being poetically personified as performing the proclamation of the midwife. *Cond. Comm.*' ED.

not up the doors of my *mother's* womb, nor [n] hid sorrow from mine eyes.

11 ¶ Why [o] died I not from the womb? *why* did I *not* give up the ghost [p] when I came out of the belly?

12 Why did [q] the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?

13 For now should I have lain still, and been quiet: I should have slept; [r] then had I been at rest,

14 With [s] kings and counsellors of the earth, which [t] built desolate places for themselves;

15 Or with princes that had gold, who [u] filled their houses with silver:

16 Or as [x] an hidden untimely birth, I had not been; as infants *which* never saw light.

17 There [y] the wicked cease *from* troubling; and there * the weary be [z] at rest.

18 *There* the prisoners rest together; [a] they hear not the voice of the oppressor.

19 [b] The small and great are there; [c] and the servant *is* free from his master.

n 6:2,3. 10:1. 23:2. Ec. 11:10.
o Ps. 58:3. Jer. 15:10. Hos. 9:14.
p Ps. 22:9,10. 71:6. 139:13—16. Is. 46 3.
q Gen. 30:3. 50:23. Is. 66:12. Ez. 16: 4,5.
r Ec. 6:3—5. 9:10.
s 30:23. 1 K. 2:10. 11:43. Pa. 49:6—10,14. 89:48. Ec. 8:8. Is. 14:10—16. Ez. 27:18—32.
t 15:28. Is. 5:8. Ez. 26:20.
u 22:25. 27:16. Num. 22:18. 1 K. 10: 27. Is. 2:7. Zeph. 1:18. Zech. 9:3.
x Ps. 58:8. 1 Cor. 15:8.
y 14:13. Ps. 55:5—8. Matt. 10:28. Luke 12:4. 2 Thes. 1:6,7. 2 Pet. 2:8.
* Heb. *wearied* in *strength.*
z Is. 57:1,2. Heb. 4:9,11. Rev. 14:13.
a Ex. 5:6—8,15—19. Judg. 4:3. Is. 14:3,4.
b 30:2,3. Ps. 49:2,6—10. Ec. 8:8. 41: 5,7. Luke 16:22,23. Heb. 9:27.
c Ps. 49:14—20.

never let that go. The dispute was not, whether Job had his infirmities; was subject to like passions as we; (that was granted;) but whether he was a hypocrite, and secretly hated God, and, if provoked, would show it: the trial proved he was no such man. Nay, all this may consist with his being a pattern of patience; for though he did thus speak unadvisedly with his lips, yet, both before and after, he expressed great submission and resignation to the holy will of God, and repented of his impatience; he condemned himself for it, and therefore God did not condemn him; nor must we, but watch the more carefully over ourselves, lest we thus sin.

The particular expressions Job used, in cursing his day, are full of poetical fancy, flame, and rapture; and create as much difficulty to the critics as the thing itself does to the divines: we need not be particular on them.

1. He wished earth might *forget*, heaven *frown upon*, that day. The Father and Fountain of light appointed the greater light to rule the day, and less lights the night; but let that want the benefit of both. Let the gloominess of the day represent Job's condition, whose sun went down at noon. Let it be a melancholy night, solitary, and not merry with music or dancing; (*v.* 7.) 'let it be a long night, and not *see the eye-lids of the morning,*' (*v.* 9.) 'which bring joy with them.'

2. That all curses might *follow it, v.* 8. 'Whatever day any curse, let them bestow one curse on my birth-day; particularly those that make it their trade to *raise up mourning* at funerals, with their ditties of lamentation. Let them that curse the day of others' death, in the same breath curse the day of my birth.' Or, those who are so fierce and daring as to raise up the *Leviathan*, the word here; who, being about to strike the whale or crocodile, curse it with the bitterest curse they can invent, to weaken, and so master it. Probably some such custom might there be used, to which our divine poet alludes. Let it be as odious as *the day wherein men bewail the greatest misfortune,* or the time *wherein they see the most dreadful apparitions:* so Patrick, I suppose, taking the Leviathan here to signify the devil, as others do, who understand it of the curses used by conjurers in raising the devil, or when they have raised a devil that they cannot lay.

But why Job's quarrel with this day and night? *Because it shut not up his mother's womb, v.* 10. See the folly and madness of a passionate discontent, and how absurdly and extravagantly it talks, when the reins are laid on the neck of it. Is this Job, so much admired for wisdom, that *unto him men gave ear, and kept silence at his counsel, and after his words spake not again? ch.* 29: 21, 22. Surely his wisdom failed him. How vain to wish he had never been born, when it is impossible to make what has been, not to have been. And why so liberal of his curses on a day and a night, that could not be hurt, or made ever the worse, for his curses; why so very barbarous to his own mother, as to wish what would have caused her a miserable death? And how he despised the goodness of God, in giving him a being, such a being, so far above any other creatures in the world! How foolish it was to wish his eyes had never seen the light, that so they might not have seen sorrow, which yet he might hope to see through, and beyond which he might see joy! Did Job believe and hope *in his flesh* to *see God at the latter day;* (*ch.* 19: 26.) and yet would he wish he never had had a being capable of such a bliss, only because, for the present, he had sorrow in the flesh? God, by his grace, arm us against this foolish and hurtful lust of impatience!

V. 11—19. Job, perhaps reflecting on himself for his folly in wishing he had never been born, thinks to mend it, with another, little better, that he had died as soon as born, which he enlarges on in these vs. When our Savior would set forth a very calamitous state of things, he seems to allow such a saying, *Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bare;* (Luke 23: 29.) but blessing the barren womb is one thing, and cursing the fruitful womb is another! It is good to make the best of afflictions, but not good to make the worst of mercies. Our rule is, *Bless, and curse not.*

Life is often put for all good, and death for all evil; yet Job here very absurdly complains of life and its supports, and covets death and the grave. Surely Satan was deceived in Job, when he applied that maxim to him, *All that a man hath will he give for his life;* for never any man valued life at a lower rate.

I. He is ungratefully angry it was not taken from him as soon as given, *v.* 11, 12. See how weak and helpless man is when he comes into the world. Natural affection is put into parents' hearts by the God of nature; hence the blessings of the breast attended those of the womb.

See the evil of impatience, fretfulness, and discontent; they are unreasonable, absurd, impious, ungrateful; a slighting and undervaluing of God's favor. How much soever life is imbittered, we must say, 'It was of the Lord's mercies we died not from the womb.' Hatred of life contradicts the common sense and sentiments of mankind, and our own at another time. Let discontented people declaim ever so much against life, they will be loath to part with it when it comes to the point. When the old man in the fable, tired with his burden, threw it down with discontent, and called for death, and death came, and asked what he would have, he answered, 'Nothing, but help me up with my burden.'

II. He passionately applauds death and the grave, and seems quite in love with them. To desire to die, to be with Christ, free from sin, and *clothed upon with our house from heaven,* is the effect and evidence of grace; but to desire to die, only to be quiet in the grave, and delivered from the troubles of life, savors of corruption. Job's considerations here may be of good use to reconcile us to death when it comes, but they ought not to be used as a pretence to quarrel with life while it is continued, or to make us uneasy under its burdens. It is wisdom and duty to make the best of that which is, be it living or dying, and so to *live to the Lord,* and *die to the Lord,* and to be his in both, Rom. 14: 8.

Job here frets himself with thinking, that, had he but died as soon as born,

1. His condition would have been as good as that of the best: (*v.* 14.) *kings and counsellors of the earth,* whose pomp, power, and policy, cannot secure from the grave, nor distinguish theirs from common dust. Some, by *desolate places,* understand the sepulchres or monuments kings prepared for

(4, 5.) *Regard.*] 'Unclose is the primary sense of the Heb. *Terrify.*] Let thunder clouds make it frightful.' *Boothr.* 'Let the blasts o' noon-tide terrify it.' *Good.* 'Let pestilential vapors,' &c. *Coccejus. Blackness.*] 'Lit. "black blasts," or "witherings" of the severest kinds of the pestilential simoom [which creates strange darkness, the rarefied air refusing perhaps to refract light,], which sweeps, at noonday, over the deserts of Arabia, producing, on the bodies it destroys, a most extraordinary blackness of corruption.' GOOD.

(7, 8.) *Solitary.*] 'The Arabs met to converse at night, and among the easterns it was a season of festivity. It was an ancient custom to mark days as lucky or unlucky, according to their events. Mournful dirges were composed and rehearsed, with loud lamentations, (by persons employed for this,) on such unlucky days. To rouse Leviathan is represented, 12:8—10, as inevitable destruction, and it was natural to lament those who so miserably perished on a disastrous day Mr. SCOTT. The crocodile, in Upper Egypt, often devours women fetching water from the river, and children playing, or swimming near. So *Hasselquist.*' COND. COMM.

Verses 11—19.

The event to himself, and to the church, through successive ages, fully resolves his questions, and shows for what important purposes he was preserved. But, for the moment, he thought of nothing but relief from anguish; though, in more lucid intervals, he expressed a faith and hope concerning the eternal world. (14:7—12. 19.25—27.) SCOTT.

(12.) *Prevent,* or *anticipate* (so *prevent* formerly meant.) 'The longing, anxious desire of the yearning mother to nurse her unborn darling, has never been so happily expressed elsewhere.' *Good.* ED.

(14, 15.) There were desolate cities, of the new world, and perhaps of the old, even in the time of Job. If costly tombs are meant, many are still seen scattered in the solitudes of India, Persia, &c. As to the ancient magnificence of such tombs, long before the time of Job, see *Wilkinson's* 'Thebes, &c.' 'Cyrus's tomb had a gold coffin, and near it a couch, with gold-covered feet; on this were Babylonian carpets, costly Median and Bab. garments; chains, cimeters, gold ear-rings, and precious stones. [Comp. note, Is. 22: 23—25. The pyramids too were doubtless already built.] The treatment of the dead accords with a nation's ideas of the state after death. Zoroastrism taught a resurrection, and universal restoration, and the final triumph of the Good over the Evil principle. The intermediate state of the soul was a prolongation of the present life; so the dead were preserved, as destined to rise in glory; and the monarch's grave was a *residence:* each had his *sepulchral treasury.*' HEEREN. ED.

20 [d] Wherefore is [e] light given to him that is in misery, and life unto [f] the bitter *in* soul?

21 [g] Which * long for death, but it *cometh* not; and [h] dig for it more than for hid treasures:

22 Which rejoice exceedingly, *and* are glad when they can find the grave?

23 *Why is light given* to a man [i] whose way is hid, and whom God hath [k] hedged in?

24 For [l] my sighing cometh before † I eat, and [m] my roarings are poured out like the waters.

25 For ‡ the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and [n] that which I was afraid of is come unto me.

26 I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; [o] yet trouble came.

d 6:9. 7:15,16.
e 16. 33:28,30.
f 7:15,16. 1 Sam. 1:10. 2 K. 4:27. Prov. 31:6.
g Num. 11:15. 1 K. 19:4. Jon. 4:3,8. Rev. 9:6.
* Heb. *wait.*
h Prov. 2:4. Is. 49:24.
i 13:14. 19:8. Is. 31:8. Lam. 3:7,9. Hos. 2:6.
k 7:19. Ps. 80:5. 102:9.
† Heb. *my meat.*
l Ps. 22:1,2. 32:3. 38:8. Is. 59:11. Lam. 3:8.
‡ Heb. *I feared a fear and it came upon me.*
n 1:5. 31:23.
o 7:9. Ps. 143:11.

themselves in their life-time; as Shebna (Isa. 22: 16.) *hewed him out a sepulchre;* and by the gold and the silver they understand the treasures which, they say, it was usual to deposit in the graves of great men. Such arts have been used to preserve their dignity, but death is, and will be, an irresistible leveller; it *mingles sceptres with spades.* In the grave, a *hidden untimely birth,* (*v.* 16. a child that either never saw light, or but just opened its eyes, peeped into the world, and, not liking it, closed them again, and hastened out,) lies as soft and easy, as high and safe, as kings, and counsellors, and princes that had gold.

2. His condition would have been much better, *v.* 13. 'Now sleep departeth from mine eyes, and I am restless.' Good Christians can now give a better account of the gain of death; 'Then should I have been present with the Lord, have seen his glory face to face, and no longer through a glass darkly;' but all poor Job dreamed of, was rest and quietness, out of the fear of evil tidings, out of the feeling of sore boils. Had he kept his temper, as in the two chs. foregoing, entirely resigned to God's holy will, his soul, at least, might have dwelt at ease, Ps. 25: 13.

Observe how finely he describes the repose of the grave; which (provided the soul be at rest in God) may aid our triumph over it. 1. Those who are now troubled, will there be out of the reach of trouble, *v.* 17. Herod vexed the church, but ceased when he became a prey for worms. Had Job been at rest in his grave, he had had no disturbance from Sabeans, Chaldeans, or enemies. 2. Those that now toil, will there see the period of their toils; *the weary rest:* heaven is more than a rest to the souls of the saints, but the grave is a rest to their bodies; theirs is a weary pilgrimage; they are weary with sin and the world, their services, sufferings, and expectations; but in the grave they *rest from all their labors,* Rev. 14:13. Isa. 57:2. There, believers sleep in Jesus. 3. Those who are here enslaved, are there at liberty: death is their discharge, *v.* 18. No more insulted and trampled on, menaced and terrified, by cruel task-masters, *they hear not the voice of the oppressor.* Here doomed to perpetual servitude, able to call nothing their own, no not their own bodies, there no longer under command or control; a good reason why those that have power should use it moderately, and those in subjection bear it patiently, yet a little while. 4. Those that were at a vast distance from all others, there are on a level, *v.* 19. The small and great are there the same, all one, alike free among the dead. The tedious pomp and state, which attend the great, are at an end there; all the inconveniences of a poor and low condition are likewise over; death and the grave know no difference.

V. 20—26. When men are set on quarrelling, there is no end of it; the corrupt heart will carry on the humor: Job having cursed the day of his birth, here courts the day of his death.

1. He thinks it hard, in general, that miserable lives should be prolonged, *v.* 20—22. *Why doth He give light?* So the original: he means *God,* yet does not name Him, though the devil had said, 'He will curse Thee to thy face;' but he tacitly reflects on the Divine Providence as unjust and unkind, in continuing life, when its comforts are removed. Life is called *light,* because pleasant and serviceable for walking and working. It is said to be *given;* for if not daily renewed by a fresh gift, it would be lost. Such is the vanity of human life, that it sometimes becomes a vexation of spirit; and so alterable is the property of death, that, though dreadful to nature, it may become even desirable to nature itself. He speaks of those here, who have outlived their comforts and usefulness, are burdened with age and infirmities, with pain or sickness, poverty or disgrace. The continuance and period of life must be according to God's will, not according to ours. It seems supposed here, that *then* the thought of men's being their own executioners was not so much as entertained or suggested, else those who longed for it needed not *dig* for it, but might soon come at it, as Seneca tells them. If the miseries of this life can prevail, contrary to nature, to make death itself desirable, shall not much more the hopes and prospects of a better life, to which death is our passage, make it so, and set us quite above the fear of it? It may be a sin to long for death, but I am sure it is no sin to long for heaven.

2. He thinks himself, in particular, hardly dealt with, not to be eased of his pain and misery by death, when he could not get ease any other way. But let it be our great and constant care to get ready for another world, and then let us leave it to God to order the circumstances of our removal thither; and this with such an indifferency, that if He should refer it to us, we would refer it to Him again. Grace teaches us, in the midst of life's

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

There is an essential difference between the true believer, and every hypocrite; and the former will not finally apostatize or despair: yet under urgent troubles and temptations, the evil of the heart frequently bursts forth in very culpable words and actions. None but the Savior ever endured the extremity of anguish and temptation, without any abatement of his love, mixture of sin, or indications of impatience.—The pious reader will doubtless recollect seasons when, under afflictions comparatively light, his heart has risen into the same kind of peevishness, ingratitude, rebellion, and despondency, which Job discovered.—The habit of *wishing* is altogether foolish and sinful. Wishes which respect the past, can only express our impatience: and, if the object of our desires at the present, or for the future, be lawful, we should make it the subject of our *prayers;* if not, we should silence ourselves and the tempter, by saying, 'It is written, Thou shalt not covet.'—When our passions overpower reason, the soul becomes as a ship in a violent storm, without compass, rudder, or pilot; and, if it be possible, we ought to cast anchor till the storm subsides. Profound silence, interrupted only by ejaculations, should be observed: as we can in such a case do no good, but must get harm, by either speaking or acting; though we shall naturally be very earnest in both.—This present life may be made very tolerable, if we accommodate ourselves to our circumstances, and attend to our duty: and we are under a dispensation of mercy, and may hope for the favor of God and eternal felicity, whatever our former lives have been, if *now* willing to accept of Christ, as our Savior from wrath and sin. By 'diligence to make our calling and election sure,' we may obtain good evidence that we are 'born of God:' and his children are heirs of everlasting glory.—But what a *day,* or rather what an *eternal night,* will that be which awaits impenitent sinners! 'From this destruction, good Lord, deliver us!'—If, in this accepted time and day of salvation, we in good earnest seek and serve God, we may regard the formation of our bodies, the gift of our immortal souls, the care of our infancy and childhood, and all the Lord's protection and long-suffering ever since, as in order to our everlasting happiness. Nay, as far as we trust and obey the Lord Jesus, we here find rest to our souls; though 'in the world we have tribulation.' It is indeed far 'better to depart, and to be with Him:' but we must not undervalue life, though spent in sufferings; seeing they will work our good at last, and some way or other subserve his glory, and the good of our brethren. Let us then learn to keep the eternal world more constantly in view; that we may not be much disconcerted about temporal things.—And should any take up these pages, who are longing for death, and tempted to suicide; let them compare their present sufferings, *not with the quiet of the grave,* but with the scriptural declarations of *the state of the damned;* which must be the lot of all, who die in rebellion and despair, by deliberate murder. (*Note, Ex.* 20:13, *conclusion.*) Let them remember that this desperation is the suggestion of the 'old liar' and 'murderer from the beginning:' the very object aimed at, in respect of Job. Let them stop their ears to his suggestions, and hearken to the Savior's inviting voice: let them come to Him with their burdens and sorrows; and they shall find rest, and learn to bless God for temporal life, as the mean of eternal salvation. SCOTT.

Verses 20—23.

The tempter seems to have kept the thought of the eternal world from his mind. SCOTT.

Verses 24—26.

His former expectation of trials, and preparation for them, should have comforted his sufferings: but, through the power of Satan and the prevalence of corruption, this seemed an aggravation of his misery. (27:7—10.) *I was not,* &c. (26) Rendered by some interrogatively; 'Was I not in safety? had I not rest? was I not quiet? yet trouble came.'—This is very pathetic. SCOTT.

CHAP. IV.

Eliphaz reproves Job for impatience, and want of confidence in God, 1—6. He states that divine judgments come not on the righteous, but on the wicked, 7—11. He relates his vision, confirming this doctrine, 12—21.

THEN [a] Eliphaz the Temanite [b] answered and said,

2 *If* we assay * to commune with thee, [c] wilt thou be grieved? but who can † withhold himself from speaking?

3 Behold, [d] thou hast instructed many, and [e] thou hast strengthened the weak hands.

4 Thy words have [f] upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the ‡ feeble knees.

5 But now [g] it is come upon thee, and [h] thou faintest; [i] it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.

6 *Is* not *this* [j] thy fear, [k] thy confidence, [l] thy hope, and [m] the uprightness of thy ways?

a 2:11. 15:1. 22:1. 42:9.
b 3:1,2. 6:1. 8:1.
* Heb. *a word*
c 2 Cor. 2:4—6. 7:8—10.
† Heb. *refrain from words.* 32:18—20. Jer. 6:11. 20:9. Acts 4:20.
d Gen. 18:19. Prov. 10:21. 15:7. 16: 21. Is. 50:4. Eph. 4:29. Col. 4:6.
e Is. 35:3. Deut. 3:28. Ezra 6:22. Ez. 13:22. Luke 22:32,43.
f Ps. 145:14. Prov. 12:18. 16:23,24. 2 Cor. 1:7. 7:6. 1 Thes 5:14.
‡ Heb. *bowing knees.* Is. 35:3,4. Dan. 5:6. Heb. 12:12.
g 3:5,26.
h Prov. 24:10. 2 Cor. 4:1,16. Heb. 12: 3,5.
i 1:11. 2:5. 19:21.
j 1:1,9,10. 2 K. 20:3.
k 13:15. Prov. 3:6. 14:26.
l 17:15. 1 Pet. 1:13,17.
m 1:8. 16:17. 23:11,12. 27:5,6. 29: 14—17. 31:1, &c.

7 Remember, I pray thee, [n] who ever perished, being innocent? or [o] where were the righteous cut off?

8 Even as I have seen, [p] they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

9 By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.

10 The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions, are broken.

11 The old lion perisheth for lack of prey, and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad.

12 Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof.

13 In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men,

14 Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.

15 Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up:

16 It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying,

17 Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker?

18 Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly:

19 How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth?

20 They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish [q] forever without any regarding it.

21 Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die, even without wisdom.

n 8:20. 22:5. Ps. 37:25. Prov. 10:30. Is. 33:15,16. Matt. 25:34—46.
o Ps. 37:35,36. 73:18—20.
p Ps. 7:14—16. 9:15,16. 10:2. 35:8. 57:6. Prov. 22:8. Hos. 8:7. 10:12,13. Gal. 6:7,8.
q Ps. 49:7—9. Is. 40:23,24.

greatest comforts, to be willing to die, and, in the midst of its greatest crosses, to be willing to live.

Job, to excuse himself, pleads the little satisfaction he had in life, (*v.* 24.) and no prospect of bettering his condition, *v.* 23. Our Master was acquainted with grief, and we must expect to be so too. What made his grief now the more grievous, was, he was not conscious of any great negligence or security in his prosperity, (*then* he was never easy, *v.* 25, 26.) which might provoke God thus to chastise him. He had not been negligent of his affairs, but kept up such a fear of trouble as was necessary to maintain his guard: he was afraid for his children, when feasting, lest they should offend God; (*ch.* 1: 5.) afraid for his servants, lest they should offend his neighbours; he took all care of his own health, managed himself and his affairs with all possible precaution; yet all would not do. He had not been secure, nor indulged in ease and softness, trusted in his wealth, or flattered himself with hopes of the perpetuity of his mirth; yet trouble came, to convince and remind him of the vanity of the world, which yet he had not forgotten when at ease. Thus his way was hid, for he knew not wherefore God contended with him. Now this consideration, instead of aggravating his grief, might rather serve to alleviate it: nothing will make trouble easy so much as the testimony of our consciences, that, in some measure, we did our duty in prosperity: and an expectation of trouble will make it sit the lighter when it comes. The less it is a surprise, the less it is a terror.

CHAP. IV. V. 1—6. Job having warmly vented his passion, and so broken the ice, his friends come gravely to give their judgment on his case; which perhaps they had communicated to one another apart, and found they were all agreed, that Job's afflictions certainly proved him to have been a hypocrite; but they did not attack Job with this high charge, till by the expressions of his discontent and impatience, in which they thought he reflected on God Himself, he had confirmed them in the bad opinion they had before conceived of his character. The dispute begins, and soon becomes fierce. The question is, whether Job was an honest man or no?—the same as was in dispute between God and Satan in the first two chs. Satan had yielded it, and durst not pretend his cursing his day was a constructive cursing of his God; but Job's friends will needs have it, that, if honest, he would not have been thus afflicted, therefore urge him to confess himself a hypocrite in his profession of religion: 'No,' says Job, 'that I will never do; I have offended God, but my heart, notwithstanding, has been upright with Him.' Eliphaz, the senior, it is likely, or of the best quality, begins with him in this chapter. In these verses,

I. Eliphaz excuses the trouble his discourse is about to give Job, *v.* 2. Observe, how he speaks, 1. With modesty of himself and his own attempt. He will not undertake the management of the cause alone, but very humbly joins his friends with him; he will not promise much, but begs leave to try if he can propose any thing that may be pertinent, and suit Job's case. In difficult matters, it becomes us to pretend no further. Many excellent discourses have gone under the modest title of *Essays.* 2. With what tenderness of Job, and his present condition; 'Wilt thou be grieved? Wilt thou take it ill? lay it to heart as thine affliction, or to our charge as our fault, if we deal plainly and faithfully? We ought to be afraid of grieving any, especially those that are already in grief, lest we add affliction to the afflicted, as David's enemies, Ps. 69: 26. We should show ourselves backward to say what we foresee will be grievous, though ever so necessary. God Himself afflicts, though justly, yet not willingly, Lam. 3: 33. 3. With what assurance of the truth and pertinency of what he was about to say. Surely a pious zeal for God and Job, laid him under this necessity: 'Who can forbear speaking in vindication of God's honor, in love to thy soul?' It is foolish pity not to reprove our friends, even in affliction, for what they say or do amiss, only for fear of offending. Whether men take it well or ill, we must with wisdom and meekness do our duty, and discharge a good conscience.

II. He charges Job, 1. With weakness and faint-heartedness: for this charge there was too much ground, *v.* 3—5. And here,

(1.) He notices Job's former serviceableness to the comfort of others. He owns Job had instructed many, not only his own children and servants, but many others, his neighbors and friends, as many as fell within the sphere of his activity: though a great man, he did not think it below him. Oh that his example were imitated by our great men! It is our duty to strengthen others, as there is occasion, by saying *to the fearful of heart, Be strong,* Isa. 35: 3, 4. The expressions seem borrowed thence. They who have abundance of spiritual riches, should abound in spiritual charity. A good word, well and wisely spoken, may do more good than perhaps we think of.

But why mention this here? 1. Perhaps that the intended reproof might be the more passable. Just commendation is a good preface to a just reprehension, will help to remove prejudices, and show the reproof comes not from ill-will. Paul praised the Corinthians before he chid them, 1 Cor. 11: 2. 2. As a reason why Job might justly expect to be comforted; and yet, if conviction was necessary to comfort, they must be excused if they applied to that first: the *Comforter shall reprove,* John 16: 8. 3. Perhaps, in pity, lamenting, that, through the extremity of his affliction, he could not apply to himself those comforts he had formerly administered to others. It is easier to give good counsel than to take it; to preach meekness and patience than to practice them. 4. Most think he mentions it as an aggravation of his present discontent, as if he had said, why, 'Is not this an evidence of thine hypocrisy, that thou hast prescribed that medicine to others, which thou wilt not now take thyself.' Rom. 2: 21. 'Physician, heal thyself.' They who have rebuked others, must expect to hear of it, if they themselves become obnoxious to rebuke.

(2.) He upbraids his present low-spiritedness, *v* 5. Here, 1. He makes too light of Job's afflictions; 'It *touches* thee.' The very word Satan himself had used, *ch.* 1: 11.—2: 5. Had Eliphaz felt but the one half of Job's afflictions, he would have said, 'It smites me, it wounds me;' but he makes them a mere trifle. 2. He makes too much of Job's feelings, and aggravates them; 'Thou faintest, or art beside thyself; thou ravest, and knowest not what thou sayest.' Men in deep distress must have grains of allowance, and a favorable construction put on what they say: when we make the worst of every word, we do not as we would be done by.

2. As to his general character before this affliction, he charges him with wickedness and false-heartedness; a charge utterly groundless and unjust. How unkindly he banters, and upbraids him with the great profession of religion he had made, as if it were all now proved a sham, *v.* 6. 'Hadst thou been sincere, God would not thus have afflicted thee, nor wouldest thou have behaved thus under the affliction.' This was the very thing Satan aimed at, to prove Job a hypocrite, and disprove the character God had given of him: when he could not himself do this, then he endeavored, by Job's friends, to do it, and to persuade Job himself to confess himself a hypocrite: thus would he have triumphed. But, by God's grace, Job was enabled to hold fast his integrity, and would not bear false witness against himself. Note, Those that pass rash and uncharitable censures on their brethren, and condemn them for hypocrites, do Satan's work, and serve his interest, more than they are aware. I know not how it comes to pass

NOTES.

CHAP. IV. V. 1. Satan undertook to prove Job a hypocrite by afflicting him; and his friends concluded him one, because he was afflicted, and showed impatience. This we must keep continually in mind, to understand clearly the ensuing debate. (*Luke* 13:1—5.) SCOTT.

Verses 3—6.

It seems Job had possessed a singular talent of giving seasonable counsel and encouragement, as circumstances required: and he had assiduously improved his talent; thus becoming a blessing to many. (29:7—17. *Prov.* 10:20, 21. 15:4. 7. 23. 25:11. 12. *Is.* 35:3, 4.) This Eliphaz allowed: and, along with due commendation, he might very properly have given Job a plain, but gentle reproof, for his present impatience, and for seeming to abandon all hope. But his application of it was too harsh; and more suited to dishearten, and even exasperate, one in Job's situation, than to convince and humble him. And in the question Eliphaz proposes: 'Is not this thy fear, &c.?' he appears to give Job the idea, that he considered his former reputation as unmerited: seeing he had now cast off all reverence of God, and hope in his mercy.—Some indeed think, Eliphaz only meant to expostulate with him on the inconsistency of his conduct; and to exhort him to reduce to practice the counsel, he had given others, &c.: but the language employed, and the subsequent speeches of him and his friends, by no means favor this interpretation. SCOTT.

7 Remember, I pray thee, [n] who *ever* perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?

8 Even as I have seen [o] they that plough iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

9 By [p] the blast of God they perish, and * by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.

10 The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and [q] the t eth of the young lions are broken.

11 The [r] old lion [s] perisheth for lack of prey, and [t] the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad.

[*Practical Observations.*]

12 ¶ Now [u] a thing was † secretly brought to me, and mine ear received [x] a little thereof.

13 In [y] thoughts from the visions of the night, when [z] deep sleep falleth on men,

14 [a] Fear ‡ came upon me, and trembling, which made § all my ones to shake.

15 Then [b] a spirit passed before my face: [c] the hair of my flesh stood up:

n 9:22,23. Ps. 37:25. Ec. 7:15. 9:1,2. Acts 28:4. 2 Pet. 2:9.
o Ps. 7:14—16. Prov. 22:8. Jer. 4:18. Hos. 8:7. 10:12,13. 2 Cor. 9:6. Gal. 6:7,8.
p Ex. 15:8,10. 2 K. 19:7. Ps. 18:15.
* That is, *by his anger.* 15:30. Is. 11: 4. 30:33. 2 Thes. 2:8. Rev. 2:16.
q 29:17. Ps. 3:7. 57:4. 58:6. Prov. 30:14.
r 38:39. Gen. 49:9. Num. 23:24. 24: 9. Ps. 7:2. Jer. 4:7. Hos. 11:10. 2 Tim. 4:17.
s Ps. 34:10.
t 1.19. 8:3,4. 27:14,15.
u Ps. 62:11.
† Heb. *by stealth.*
x 1 Cor. 13:12.
y 33:14—16. Gen. 20:3. 28:12. 31:24. 46:2. Num. 12:6. 22:19,20. Dan. 2:19,28,29. 4:5.
z Gen. 2:21. 15:12. Dan. 8:18. 10:9.
a 7:14. Ps. 119:120. Is. 6:5. Dan. 10:11. Hab. 3:16. Luke 1:12,29. Rev. 1:17.
‡ Heb. *met me.*
§ Heb. *the multitude of.* 33:19.
b Ps. 104:4. Matt. 14:26. Luke 24:37—39. Heb. 1:7,14.
c 14. 13:3. 21:3,4. Dan. 5:6.

that this v. is differently read in several editions of our common Eng. Bibles; the original, and all the ancient versions, put *thy hope* before *the uprightness of thy ways.* So the Geneva, and most editions of the last translation; but I find one of the first, in 1612, has it, *Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, the uprightness of thy ways, and thy hope?* Both the Assembly's Annotations, and Mr. Poole's, have that reading; and an edition in 1660 reads it, '*Is not thy fear thy confidence, and the uprightness of thy ways thy hope?* Does it not appear now, that all thy religion was only in hope and confidence that thou shouldest grow rich by it? Was it not all mercenary?' The very thing Satan suggested. *Is not thy religion thy hope, and thy right ways thy confidence?* So Mr. Broughton. Or, 'Was it not? Didst thou not think that would have been thy protection? But thou art deceived.' Or, 'Would it not have been so? If it had been sincere, would it not have kept thee from this despair?' True, *if thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength,* thy grace, *is small;* (Prov. 24: 10.) but it does not therefore follow thou hast no grace, no strength at all. A man's character is not to be taken from a single act.

V. 6—12. Eliphaz here advances another argument to prove Job a hypocrite, not only his impatience under his afflictions, but even his afflictions themselves, being so very great and extraordinary, and no prospect of his deliverance. To strengthen this argument, he lays down two principles, plausible enough:

I. That *good men were never thus ruined:* for proof, he appeals to Job's own observation, *v.* 7. If we understand it of a final and eternal destruction, his principle is true; but if of any temporal calamity, it is not. *The righteous perish;* (Isa. 57: 1.) *There is one event both to the righteous and to the wicked,* (Eccl. 9: 2.) both in life and death; the great and certain difference is after death. Even before Job's time, did not righteous *Abel perish being innocent;* and was not he cut off in the beginning of his days? Was not righteous Lot burnt out of house and harbor, and forced to retire to a melancholy cave? Was not righteous Jacob, a Syrian, *ready to perish?* Deut. 26: 5. Similar instances, no doubt, there were, not on record.

II. That *wicked men were often thus ruined:* for the proof of this, he vouches his own observation; *v.* 8, 9. 'We have daily instances; therefore, since thou dost thus perish, we have reason to think that, whatever thy profession of religion, thou hast but *ploughed iniquity,* and *sown wickedness.*

1. He speaks of sinners in general, politic, busy sinners, they plough iniquity; they that plough, plough in hope; but what is the issue? The harvest will be *a heap in the day of grief and desperate sorrow,* Isa. 17: 11. Some, by iniquity and wickedness, understand wrong and injury to others; they who plough and sow them, shall reap the same, i. e. be paid in their own coin. They who are troublesome, shall be troubled, 2 Thess. 1: 6. Josh. 7: 25.—&c.

He further describes their destruction; *v.* 9. The projects they take so much pains in, are defeated, Ps. 129: 3, 4. They themselves are destroyed, the just punishment of their iniquity. They perish, i. e. are destroyed utterly; they are consumed, i. e. destroyed gradually; and this, by the blast and breath of God, i. e. (1.) By his *wrath:* sinners are called *vessels of wrath,* and his breath is said *to kindle Tophet,* Isa. 30: 33. *Who knows the power of his anger?* Ps. 90: 11. (2.) By his *Word;* He speaks, and it is done, easily and effectually. The Spirit of God, in the Word, consumes sinners; with that He slays them, Hos. 6: 5. Saying and doing are not two things with God. The man of sin is said to be consumed with the *breath of Christ's mouth,* 2 Thess. 2: 8. Comp. Isa. 11: 4. Rev. 19: 21. Some think, he refers to the wind which blew the house down on Job's children, as if they were therefore *sinners above all men, because they suffered such things,* Luke 13: 2

2. He speaks particularly of tyrants and cruel oppressors, under the similitude of lions, *v.* 10, 11 The Heb. has five several names for lions, and they are all here used to set forth the terrible, tearing power, fierceness, and cruelty, of proud oppressors. Perhaps Eliphaz intended to reflect on Job, as if he, being the *greatest of all the men of the east,* had got his estate by spoil, and used his power in oppressing his neighbors; but now, his power and estate were gone, and his family scattered: if so, it was pity that a man whom God praised, should be thus abused.

V. 12—21. Eliphaz here relates a vision for Job's conviction. Some think, Eliphaz had it since he came to Job; others, that he had it *formerly.* God in this way often communicated Himself to men, in those first ages of the world, *ch.* 33: 15. Probably, God sent Eliphaz this messenger and message, when in an unquiet, discontented frame, to calm him. Note, As we should comfort others with that wherewith we have been comforted, (2 Cor. 1: 4.) so we should endeavor to convince others with that which has been powerful to convince us.

I. God's people had not then any written Word to quote, therefore God sometimes notified to them even common truths, by the extraordinary ways of revelation. We have (thanks be to God) a more sure Word than even visions and voices, 2 Pet. 1: 19.

1. The message was brought secretly; some of the sweetest communion gracious souls have with God, is in secret. God has ways of bringing conviction, counsel, and comfort, to his people, unobserved by the world, by private whispers, as powerfully and effectually as by the public ministry. *His secret is with them,* Ps. 25: 14. 2. *He received a little thereof, v.* 12. We know little, in comparison with what is to be known, and with what we shall know in heaven, 1 Cor. 13: 12. See his humility and modesty. He pretends not to have understood it fully, but something of it he perceived. 3. When we are *communing with our own hearts, and are still,* (Ps. 4: 4.) is a proper time for the Holy Spirit to commune with us. Eliphaz was ready to receive this vision, and probably, like David, was *meditating on God in the night-watches.* We should hear more from God, if we thought more of Him; yet some are surprised with convictions in the night, *ch.* 33: 14, 15. 4. It was prefaced with terrors, *v.* 14. It should seem, before he either heard or saw any thing, he was seized with this trembling; a holy awe and reverence of God and his majesty being on his spirit, he was thereby prepared for a divine visit.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—11. We ought not needlessly to grieve the afflicted; yet, if we wisely love them, we cannot refrain from speaking what we judge conducive to the good of their souls. In attempting this, however, we should aim to unite tenderness with faithfulness. It requires much heavenly wisdom, to instruct, encourage, and reprove those, who are tempted and perplexed, who have fallen into sins or sufferings, and who are ready to faint, or turn aside, or yield to despondency, through disappointments and discouraging trials. It behooves us therefore to watch and pray, that we may not by our conduct defeat the effect of our instructions, and expose ourselves and the truths of God to reproach and contempt.—Our most dangerous mistakes are occasioned by our deducing false inferences from undeniable truth. It is certain that none ever perished being innocent; but equally true that many righteous men are heavily afflicted, and suddenly cut off. It is therefore as absurd to judge of a man's character by his outward circumstances, as to decide on it from one single action, contrary to the general tenor of his life. SCOTT.

Verses 7—11.

Most expositors suppose, Eliphaz intended, in this passage, to bring a direct charge of hypocrisy and iniquity against Job; which he had only insinuated in the preceding vs. Some however think, he did not mean to decide on his character, though his language was harsh, and implied strong suspicions; but to show him, that, if he was not wicked, he had no occasion to despond, as the innocent and righteous were never left to perish; and indeed the counsel he afterwards gives, favors this interpretation. (5:8, 17, 18.)—By 'innocent,' and 'righteous,' Eliphaz meant believers, godly men, in opposition to the profane or hypocritical.—It is indeed often seen 'that they who plough iniquity and sow wickedness,' (i. e. who labor to be rich and great by fraud, oppression, and iniquity,) meet a recompense in this world. But it is not *always* so; nor are they the only persons who meet with grievous calamities in this life. SCOTT.

16 It stood still, but
I could not discern the
form thereof: an image
was before mine eyes;
* *there was* silence, and
I heard a voice, *saying*,

17 [d] Shall mortal man
be more just than God?
[e] shall a man be more
pure than his Maker?

18 Behold, [f] he put
no trust in his servants;
† and his angels he
charged with folly:

19 How much less
in them that [g] dwell in
houses of clay, whose
foundation *is* in the
dust, *which* are [h] crushed
before the moth!

20 They are ‡ destroyed [i] from morning
to evening: [k] they perish for ever [l] without
any regarding *it*.

21 Doth not their
[m] excellency, *which is*
in them, go away? they
[n] die, even without wisdom.

* Or, *I heard a still voice.* 1 K. 19:12.
d 8:3. 9:2. 35:2. 40:8. Gen. 18:25. Ps. 143:2. 145:17. Ec. 7:20. Jer. 12:1. Rom. 2:5. 3:4—7. 9:20. 11: 33.
e 9:30,31. 14:4. 15:14. 25:4. Jer. 17: 9. Mark 7:20—23. Rev. 4:8.
f 15:15,16. 25:5,6. Ps. 103:20,21. 104: 4. Is. 6:2,3.
† Or, *nor in his angels* in whom *he put light.* 2 Pet. 2:4. Jude 6.
g 10:9. 13:12. 33:6. Gen. 2:7. 3:19. 18:27. Ec. 12:7. 2 Cor. 5:1.
h 13:28. 14:2. Ps. 39:11. 90:5—7. 103:15,16. 146:4. 1 Pet. 1:24.
‡ Heb. *beaten in pieces.* 2 Chr. 15:8, *marg.*
i Is. 38:12,13.
k 14:14. 15:22. Ps. 39:13. 92:7.
l 18:17. 20:7. 2 Chr. 21:20. Ps. 37: 36. Prov. 10:7.
m Ps. 39:5,11. 49:14. Is. 14:16. Luke 16:22,23. Jam. 1:11.
n 36:12. Ps. 49:20. Luke 12:20.

Whom God intends to honor, He first humbles, and will have us all to serve Him with holy fear, and to rejoice with trembling. Consider,

II. The messenger; one of the good angels, employed not only as ministers of God's providence, but sometimes of his word. Of this apparition, we are here told, (*v.* 15, 16.) 1. It was real, and not a dream, not a fancy. If some have been so knavish as to impose false visions on others, and some so foolish as to be themselves imposed on, it does not, therefore, follow that there have been no apparitions of spirits, both good and bad. 2. It was indistinct, and somewhat confused. His conscience was to be awakened and informed, not his curiosity gratified. We are not capable of knowing much of spirits, nor is it fit we should; all in good time; we must shortly remove to their world, and shall then be better acquainted with them. 3. It put him into great consternation. Ever since man sinned, it has been terrible to him to receive an express from Heaven, as conscious he can expect no good tidings thence; apparitions, therefore, even of good spirits, have always made deep impressions of fear, even on good men. Well is it for us, that God sends us his messages, not by spirits, but by men like ourselves, whose terror shall not make us afraid! See Dan. 7: 28.—10: 8, 9.

III. The message itself; before it was delivered, there was profound silence, *v.* 16. When we are to speak either *from* God, or *to* Him, it becomes us to address ourselves to it with a solemn pause. It was in a still small voice, and this was it, (*v.* 17.) '*Shall mortal man be more just than God*, the immortal God? Shall a man be thought to be, or pretend to be, *more pure than his Maker?* Away with such a thought!' 1. Some think Eliphaz aims hereby to prove Job's great afflictions a certain evidence of his being a wicked man; a man would be thought unjust and very impure, if he should thus punish a servant, unless he had been guilty of some very great crime. 2. I rather think it only a reproof of Job's murmuring; 'Shall a man pretend to be more just and pure than God? More truly to understand, and more strictly to observe, the rules of equity? Shall *Enosh*, mortal, miserable, man, be so insolent; nay, shall *Geber*, the strongest and most eminent man—man at his best estate, pretend to compare with God, or stand in competition with Him?" It is most impious and absurd to think so. Those that quarrel and find fault with the directions of the divine law, the dispensations of the divine grace, [the constitution of nature,] or the disposals of the Divine Providence, make themselves more just and pure than God; and they who thus *reprove God, let them answer it.* Shall the clay contend with the potter? See Ps. 94: 9, 10.

IV. The comment Eliphaz makes on this, for so it seems to be; yet some take all the following vs. to be spoken in vision. It comes all to one.

1. He shows how little the angels themselves are in comparison with God, *v.* 18. Some give this sense, 'So mutable is even their nature, that God would not trust angels with their own integrity; else they would all, as some did, have left their first estate; but He saw it necessary to give them supernatural grace to confirm them.' If the world were left to their government, every thing would not be done for the best, as now. They are intelligences, but finite. Though not chargeable with iniquity, yet with imprudence. This last clause is variously rendered. I think it would bear this reading, repeating the negation, which is very common. He will put no trust in his saints. *Nor will He glory in his angels, or make his boast* of them, as if their praises or services added any thing to Him: it is his glory, that He is infinitely happy without them.

2. Thence he infers how much less man is, less to be trusted, or gloried in!

(1.) *In his life*, man is *very mean*, *v.* 19. True, angels are spirits, and the souls of men are spirits; but angels are pure and free, the souls of men housed; the body is a cloud, a clog to the soul, its cage, its prison; a house of clay, mean and mouldering; an earthen vessel, soon broken; not a house of cedar, or of ivory, but of clay—soon in ruins, if not kept in constant repair. Angels are fixed; but the very foundation of man's house of clay, is in the dust. Man was made, so he is maintained out of the earth. We stand but on the dust; some have a higher heap of dust to stand on than others, but still it is the earth that stays us up, and will shortly swallow us up. Angels are immortal, but man is soon crushed, crushed like a moth between one's fingers, as easily, as quickly. A little thing will do it; he is *crushed before the face of the moth*, so the word is. Any lingering distemper, which consumes like a moth, he can no more resist than an acute distemper, which comes roaring upon him like a lion. See Hos. 5: 12, 14. Is such a creature to be trusted in, or can any service be expected from him, by that God who puts no trust in angels themselves?

(2.) *In his death*, he appears yet more despicable, and unfit to be trusted, *v.* 20, 21. dying daily, continually wasting; *from morning to evening*, death is still working in us, *like a mole digging our grave at each remove*, and we so continually lie exposed, that we are killed all the day long: life lasts perhaps but from morning to evening. In death, all men's excellency passes away; beauty, strength, learning, their wisdom cannot save them; they die without

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 12—21. The knowledge of divine truth is of such vast importance, that no terror could counterbalance the advantage of it; and they who lay aside their Bibles, or forsake the preaching of the Gospel, because these make them tremble at the prospect of their guilt and danger, seem to think it better to *feel*, than to *fear*, the wrath of God.—Retirement is favorable to our intercourse with Heaven: and though we must now judge of every thing by the Scriptures; yet if a dream suggest a profitable hint, we should receive it with gratitude. Assuredly, were our hearts more holy, both our waking and sleeping thoughts would be more pure and heavenly.—Revelation from God is not intended to satisfy curiosity, but to excite our attention to those truths and duties, which before we knew not, or neglected. Among other important lessons, we are peculiarly concerned to understand the scriptural declarations of the infinite majesty, wisdom, justice, and goodness of God; of the comparative ignorance, meanness, and weakness of the most exalted creatures; and of the guilt, pollution, folly, and frailty of fallen man; the shortness of his continuance here, and the future consequences of his conduct in this world. But for want of this knowledge, how daringly do men impeach the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God! How do they object, murmur, justify themselves, quarrel with Providence, and reject, or explain away, the truths and precepts of revelation; as if they were more wise, righteous, and holy than their Maker! Yet it would be presumption in an arch-angel, to deem himself competent to decide on the propriety of God's unfathomable counsels, or to comprehend his vast designs; much more to find fault with his dispensations, and to dictate what it is right for Him to do. How awful then is the pride and presumption of man! How great the patience of God!—But let us leave the infidel and the proud reasoner to dispute against their Maker, and the men of the world to heap up their treasures; and let *us* consider, what we are, where we are, and whither we are going; and let us act accordingly. SCOTT.

Verses 17—21.

These vs. seem to contain the precise words of the spirit, who appeared to Eliphaz.—Some render it, 'just *before* God:' but that idea is differently expressed in the original. (9:2. 25:4. Heb.—32:2—5.)—And, as this supposition would be blasphemy, it must be allowed, even when we cannot perceive it, that every one deserves all that he does or shall suffer, on earth or in hell. It is therefore evidently very wrong to complain under afflictions, as if we were unjustly dealt with; or to justify our whole conduct before God, who has condemned us as sinners: and on this ground Eliphaz might fairly have reproved Job's impatience; and exhorted him to submit to the justice of God, and to hope in his mercy, under his sufferings.—The vision was full of instruction; but the use Eliphaz seemed disposed to make of it was contrary to its leading design. Instead of condemning Job because of his sufferings, he should have inferred, that he and his friends were incompetent to decide on the case, or to understand the deep designs of God in this mysterious dispensation. SCOTT.

He put no trust, &c. (18) '*If* not in his servants He will confide, and *not even* to his angels He will ascribe praise: how much less, &c.' *Ev. Mag. Dec.* 1809, p. 498. As the word rendered folly, differently pointed, is generally translated *praise*, perhaps this might be supported. ID.

(19.) *Of clay.*] 'In the E. many houses are built of mud dried in the sun.' *Parkh.* Note, 24:16. ED.

(21.) *Their excellency*, &c. 'Their fluttering round is over with them.' GOOD.

CHAP. V.

Eliphaz proceeds to show the close connection between wickedness and misery, and that man is born to trouble, 1—7. He recommends seeking to God in affliction, by declaring his power and wonderful works, 8—16. He speaks of the benefit of correction; and the privileges of those who duly improve it, 17—27.

CALL now, if there be any that will answer thee; [a] and to which of [b] the saints wilt thou * turn?

2 For [c] wrath killeth [d] the foolish man, [e] and † envy slayeth the [f] silly one.

3 I have seen the foolish [g] taking root: but suddenly I [h] cursed his habitation.

4 His [i] children are far from safety, and [k] they are crushed in the gate, [l] neither *is* *there* any to deliver *them*.

5 Whose [m] harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of [n] the thorns, and [o] the robber [p] swalloweth up their substance.

6 Although ‡ afflic-

a 15:8—10,15. Is. 41:1,21—23. Heb. 12:1.
b 4:18. 15:15. Deut. 33:2,3. Ps. 16:3. 103:16. Eph. 1:1.
* Or, *look.*
c 18:4. Jon. 4:9.
d Ps. 14:1. 75:4. 92:6. 94:8. 107:17. Prov. 1:22,23. 8:5. Ec. 7:9.
e Gen. 30:1. 1 Sam. 18:8,9.
† Or, *indignation.* Rom. 2:8.
f Hos. 7:11. 2 Tim. 3:6.
g 27:8. Ps. 37:35,36. 73:3—9,18—20. 92:7. Jer. 12:1—3.
h Deut. 27:15,&c. Ps. 69:25. Acts 1: 20.
i 4:10,11. 8:4. 18:16—19. 27:14. Ex. 20:5. Ps. 103:9—15. 119:155.
k 1:19. Luke 13:4,5.
l 19:7. Ps. 7:2. 50:22.
m Deut. 28:33,51. Judg. 6:3—6. Is. 62:8.
n Judg. 6:11. 2 Chr. 33:11.
o 1:15,17. 12:6. 18:9. Hos. 8:7.
p 2:3. *marg.* 20:15. Jer. 51:34,44. Lam. 2:5,16.
‡ Or, *iniquity.*

it, or for want of it. It is so common, no body heeds, or notices it. The deaths of others are much the subject of common talk, but little the subject of serious thought.

Some think the eternal damnation of sinners is here spoken of, as well as their temporal death. *They are destroyed, or broken to pieces, by death, from morning to evening; and if they repent not, they perish for ever,* so some read it, *v.* 20. They die the second death, for want of wisdom to lay hold on eternal life. Shall such a mean, weak, foolish, sinful, dying, creature as this, pretend to be *more just than God, and more pure than his Maker?* No, instead of quarrelling with his afflictions, let him wonder that he is out of hell.

CHAP. V. V. 1—5. Eliphaz, in the foregoing ch. for making good his charge against Job, had vouched a word from Heaven, sent him in a vision. In this, he appeals to those that bear record on earth, to the saints, the faithful witnesses of God's truths, in all ages; and he concludes in somewhat a better humor than he began.

So well assured is Eliphaz of the goodness of his own cause, that he moves Job himself to choose the arbitrators, *v.* 1. i. e. If there be any that suffer as thou sufferest, any real saint reduced to such extremity as thou art. 'Any that say as thou sayest: curses his day as thou dost?' Or, will any of the saints justify thee in these heats or passions, or say these are the spots of God's children? Observe, 1. Good people are called *saints*, even in the O. T. therefore I know not why we should, in common speaking, appropriate the title to those only of the N. T. Aaron is expressly called *the saint of the Lord.* 2. All saints will choose saints for their friends, and converse with them; for their judges, and consult with them. See Ps. 119: 79. The saints shall *judge the world*, 1 Cor. 6: 1, 2. Every one chooses some sort of people or other to whom he studies to recommend himself, and whose sentiments are to him the test of honor and dishonor. 3. Some truths are so plain, and so universally known and believed, that one may venture to appeal to any of the saints concerning them. However there are some things, about which they unhappily differ, there are many more, and more considerable, in which they are agreed; as the evil of sin, the vanity of the world, the worth of the soul, the necessity of a holy life, and the like. Though they do not all live up, as they should, to their belief of these truths, yet they are all ready to bear their testimony to them. Eliphaz maintains, and doubts not that the saints concur with him,

I. That the sin of sinners directly tends to their own ruin, *v.* 2. 'So it is with thee.' Or, it may mean: 'If men are ruined and undone, it is always of their own folly.' Many understand it of God's wrath.

II. Their prosperity is short, their destruction certain, *v.* 3—5. He seems here to parallel Job's case with the common case of the wicked. He foresaw their ruin with an eye of faith. They who believe God's Word, can see a *curse in the house of the wicked*, (Prov. 3: 33.) though ever so finely and firmly built, and ever so full of all good things, Zech. 5: 4. In these particulars, (*v.* 4.) he very invidiously reflects on Job's calamities. This is commonly understood of the destruction of the families of wicked men, by the execution of justice on them to oblige them to restore what they have ill-gotten. The hungry robbers, the Sabeans and Chaldeans, ran away with, and swallowed Job's estate; and this, says he, I have often observed in others.

V. 6—16. Eliphaz, having touched Job in a very tender part, in mentioning both the loss of his estate and children, as the just punishment of his sin, not to drive him to despair, begins to encourage him, and accosts him gently, (Gal. 6: 20.) as if to atone for his hard words.

1. He reminds him, that no affliction comes by chance, nor second causes, *v.* 6. out of the ground as grass, or, of course, at certain seasons, as natural productions, by a chain of second causes. Some read it, *Sin comes not forth of the dust, nor iniquity out of the ground.* If men be bad, they must not lay the blame on the soil, the climate, or the stars, but on themselves. We must not attribute our afflictions to fortune, for they are from God, nor our sins to fate, for they are from ourselves; so that, whatever trouble we are in, we must own God sends it on us, and we procure it to ourselves; the former is a reason why we should be very patient, the latter why we should be very penitent, when afflicted.

2. He reminds him, that trouble and affliction we have all reason to expect. *Man is born to trouble;* (*v.* 7.) not as man, (had he kept his innocency, he had been born to pleasure,) but as sinful man, as *born of a woman*, (*ch.* 14: 1.) who was in the transgression; in sin, and therefore to trouble. In our fallen state, it is become natural to sin, and the natural consequence of that, is affliction, Rom. 5: 12. Such is the frailty of our bodies, the vanity of all our enjoyments, that our troubles also thence arise as naturally as the sparks fly upward; so many are they, so thick and so fast does one follow another. Man is born to *labor*, so the marg. sentenced to eat his bread in the sweat of his face, which should inure him to hardness, and make him bear his afflictions the better.

NOTES.

CHAP. V. V. 1. *Call now*, &c.] Eliphaz here challenges Job to refute his arguments, or the doctrine of his vision, by the example or opinion of any of the saints and servants of God.—'Nay, if an angel should appear to thee, (says Eliphaz,) as one did to me, thou wouldst have no other information but this.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

Verse 2.

The wrath and jealousy, or *indignation* of God, bring destruction on foolish and wicked men, and not on the righteous. (*Prov.* 27: 4. *Jam.* 3: 13—16.) Or perhaps Eliphaz, perceiving Job to be greatly agitated by his discourse, intimated that his *wrath, envy*, and fretfulness, would only increase his torment and shorten his days; as they often produced these effects on foolish and wicked men. ID.

Envy.] (*Qeneah*), *Indignation.* (*marg.*) This word is rendered *jealousy; Num.* 5:14, &c. 25:11. *Prov.* 6:34. and in most other places:—*envy; Prov.* 14:30. 27:4. *Ec.* 4 4. *marg.* &c. and *zeal; Num.* 25:11. *marg.* 2 *Kings* 19:31. *Is.* 59:17,&c.—The LXX usually render it by *zelos*, tr. in the N. T. by various words; and among the rest by *indignation; Acts* 5:17. *m. Heb.* 10:27. and *jealousy; 2 Cor.* 11:2. ID.

Verses 3—5.

In these vs. an allusion was evidently made to Job's former prosperity. But the most notorious wickedness does not prove, that temporal calamities will befall the perpetrator: and the application certainly was unfair and severe. (12:6—10. 24:2—20.) ID.

(4.) *The gate.*] 'Where was held the court of judicature, (Deut. 25:7. Ruth 4:1,9. 2 Sam. 15:2, &c.) *Taylor.* In the place of judgment, justice took hold of them. *Wilson.* This insinuates that his children had been culprits. *Wil.' Cond. Comm.* When we consider the reckless disregard of life in the populous kingdoms of oriental despots, the tumultuous crowds that attend these, like swarms of insignificant insects, either when returning to their cities in triumph, or on ordinary occasions; may not this be understood as if he had said, 'His children become of the vilest of the people, exposed to every ill, and of such little account that they are crushed to death in the crowded gate, [2 K. 7:11.] and no one is interested for them. They become friendless outcasts, reckless paupers!' ED.

(5.) *The hungry.*] 'The wild starveling.' *Good.* 'A manifest allusion to the [lean] half-starved Arabs, always ready for plunder.' *Parkhurst.* COND. COMM. *Even the thorns.*] 'Grains, weeds, thistles and all, in their rapacity.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* Thus it depicts equally the slothfulness of the owner, and the hurry of the Bedouin. Such instances of plucking up roots and grain together, and separating them at leisure, when out of the reach of pursuit, it is believed, still occur. Others, as *Henry, Scott*, &c. think it refers to robbery, in spite of all care to fence in their crops. *Robber.*] '*Tsammim*, Rather, *the thirsty*, as is plain from their *gulping down*, or *swallowing up*; opposed to the *hungry*, or *half-starved*, in the preceding clause. These shall *drink down* their wine and oil, here termed *cheylam* [substance], their *strength* or *power*, for obvious reasons. Of the Ishmaelites here alluded to, who have thus lived for thousands of years, *Volney* gives this striking account. "These men are smaller, (about 5 ft. or 5 ft. 2 in. high,) leaner, and blacker than any of the Bedoweens yet discovered. Their wasted legs had only tendons without calves. Their belly was shrunk to their back. They are in general small, lean, and swarthy; and more so in the bosom of the desert, than on the borders of the more cultivated country. They seldom have more than 6 oz. of food for the whole day; 6 or 7 dates, soaked in melted butter, and a little milk or curd, serve a man for 24 hours: and he seems happy when he can add a small portion of coarse flour or a little rice. Their *camels*, also, their chief support, are remarkably meagre, living on the scantiest fare. *Nature* has given this animal a small head without ears, at the end of a long neck without flesh. She has taken from its legs and thighs every muscle not immediately requisite for motion; and in short has bestowed on its withered body only the vessels necessary to connect its frame together. She has furnished it with a strong jaw to grind the hardest aliments; and, lest it should consume too much, has straitened its stomach, and obliged it to chew the cud." Such is the description of the Bedouin and his camel by M. Volney, who, while he denies the true God, finds out a deity which he calls *Nature*, whose works evince the highest providence, wisdom, and design!' DR. A. CLARKE.

Verses 6, 7.

These vs. may be rendered, '*For* affliction cometh not forth of the

tion cometh not forth of the dust, neither [q] doth trouble [r] spring out of the ground;

7 Yet [s] man is born unto * trouble, as † the sparks fly upward.

8 I would [t] seek unto God, and [u] unto God would I commit my cause:

9 Which [x] doeth great things and ‡ unsearchable; [y] marvellous things § without number:

10 Who [z] giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the ‖ fields:

11 To [a] set up on high those that be low; that [b] those which mourn may be [c] exalted to safety.

12 He [d] disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that [e] their hands cannot perform ¶ *their* enterprise.

13 He [f] taketh the wise in their own craftiness; and the counsel [g] of the froward is carried headlong.

14 They ** meet [h] with darkness in the daytime, and grope in the noon-day as in the night.

15 But [i] he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty.

16 So [k] the poor hath hope, and [l] iniquity stoppeth her mouth.

17 Behold, [m] happy *is* the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:

3. He directs him how to behave himself; (*v.* 8.) *I would seek unto God; surely I would:* so the original. He gives a tacit reproof to Job for not seeking to God, but quarrelling with Him. It is easy to say what we would do, but perhaps it will be found not so easy to do as we say. We should give to others no counsel that we would not take ourselves, if in their case. We must by prayer fetch in mercy and grace from God; seek to Him as a Father and Friend, though He contend with us, as one who alone is able to support and succor. They that would seek so as to speed, must refer themselves to God.

4. He encourages him thus to seek God; as a God of almighty power and sovereign dominion. By this consideration, Eliphaz intends, also, to convince Job of his fault and folly in quarrelling with God. We must not pretend to pass a judgment on his works, for they are above our inquiries; nor strive with our Maker, for He is able to crush us in a moment.

He gives some instances of God's dominion and power: speaks of his giving rain, which, because a common, we are apt to look upon as a little thing; but not if we duly consider both how it is produced, and what is produced by it. He *frustrates* the *proud* and *politic*, *v.* 12—14. A supreme Power manages and overrules men who think themselves free and absolute, and fulfils its own purposes in despite of their projects. How were the plots of Ahithophel, Sanballat, and Haman, baffled! The confederates of Syria and Ephraim against Judah, of Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek, against God's Israel, the kings of the earth, and the princes, against the Lord and against his anointed, broken! What enemies, too, have designed for the Church's ruin, has often turned to their own, *v.* 13. Ps. 7: 15, 16. 9: 15, 16. This is quoted (1 Cor. 3: 16.) to show how the learned men of the heathen were befooled by their own vain philosophy. God exalts the humble, *v.* 11. (Ps. 12: 5. Is. 33: 16. Ezek. 9. 4.) He delivers the oppressed, *v.* 15. Tongue, hand, sword, and all of the crafty are at work to ruin the poor; but God takes under his especial protection those who, being poor, and unable to help themselves, being his poor, and devoted to his praise, have committed themselves to Him: for He can tie the tongue, and wither the hand, that are against them.

The effect of this is, (*v.* 16.) 1. That weak and timorous saints are comforted: for it is God's glory to send help to the helpless, and hope to the hopeless. 2. Daring, threatening sinners are confounded; iniquity stops her mouth, surprised at the strangeness of the deliverance, ashamed of its enmity against the evident favorites of Heaven, mortified at the disappointment, and compelled to acknowledge the justice of God's proceedings, having nothing to object. Those that domineered over God's poor, frightened, menaced, and falsely accused them, will not have a word to say against them when God appears for them. See Ps. 76: 8, 9. Is. 26: 11. Mic. 7: 16.

V. 17—27. Here, Eliphaz, in concluding, gives Job (what he himself knew not how to take) a comfortable prospect of the issue of his afflictions, would he but recover his temper, and accommodate himself to them. Observe,

I. His seasonable caution and exhortation, (*v.* 17.) Call it a *chastening* from the father's love, for the child's good: from the Almighty, (to contend with or resist whom, is madness, to submit to whom, is duty,) from the All-sufficient (*Shaddai*, so the Heb.) to those who trust in Him. *Despise* not; a copious word in the Heb. 1. 'Be not averse. Let grace conquer nature's antipathy to suffering, and reconcile thyself to God's will in it.' We need, and deserve, therefore ought not to think it strange, or hard, if we feel, the rod. 2. 'Think not ill of it, put it not from thee, (as hurtful, or, at least, not useful,) because not now joyous but grievous.' Never must we scorn to stoop to God, but reckon that He really magnifies man, when He thus *visits and tries him*, *ch.* 8: 17, 18. 3. 'Disregard it not, as a chance, or from second causes, but greatly notice it as God's voice, and a messenger from Heaven.' More is implied than is expressed. '*Revcrence his chastening;* have an humble, awful regard to his correcting hand, Am. 3: 8. Submit to the chastening, and study to answer the call, the end of it, then thou reverencest it.' When God, by an affliction, draws upon us for some of the effects He has entrusted to us, we must honor his bill by accepting it, endorsing it, resigning Him his own when He calls for it.

II. His encouragement; to accommodate himself to, and receive evil from God, and not despise it, as a gift not worth accepting. Of affliction thus borne,

q 34:29. Deut. 32:27. 1 Sam. 6:9. Ps. 90:7,8. Is. 45:7. Lam. 3:38,39. Am. 3:6.
r Hos. 10:4. Heb. 12:15.
s 14:1. Gen. 3:17—19. Ps. 90:8,9. 1 Cor. 10:13.
* Or, *labor*. Ec. 1:3. 2:22. 5:15—17.
† Heb. *the sons of the burning coal lift up to fly*.
t 8:5. 22:21,27. Gen. 32:7—12. 2 Chr. 33:12,13. Ps. 50:15. 77:1,2. 116:3, 4. Jon. 2:1—7.
u Ps. 37:5. 2 Tim. 1:12. 1 Pet. 2:23. 4:19.
x 9:10. 11:7—9. 37:5. Ps. 72:18. 86: 10. 145:3. Rom. 11:33.
‡ Heb. *and there is no search*. Is. 40: 28. Eph. 3:8.
§ Heb. *till there be no number*. Ps. 40:5. 139:18.
y 26:5—14.
z 28:26. Ps. 65:9—11. 147:8. Jer. 5: 24. 10:13. 14:22. 51:16. Am. 4:7. Acts 14:17.
‖ Heb. *out places*. 33:26—28.
a 1 Sam. 2:7,8. Ps. 91:14. 107:41. 113: 7,8. Ez. 17:24. Luke 1:52,53.
b Luke 6:21. Jam. 1:9. 4:6—10. 1 Pet. 5:10.
c Deut. 33:27—29. 1 Pet. 1:3—5.
d 12:16,17. Neh. 4:15. Ps. 33:10,11. Prov. 21:30. Is. 8:10. 19:3,11—14.
e Ps. 21:11. 76:5. Is. 37:36. Acts 12: 11. 23:12,&c.
¶ Or, *any thing*.
f 2 Sam. 15:31,34. 17:23. Esth. 6:4—11. 7:10. 9:25. Ps. 7:15,16. 9:15, 16. 35:7,8. 141:10. Luke 1:51. 1 Cor. 1:19,20,27. 3:19,20.
g Ps. 18:26. Prov. 3:34. 8:13.
** Or, *run into*.
h 12:25. Deut. 28:29. Prov. 4:19. Is. 59:10. Am. 8:9.
i Ps. 10:14,17,18. 35:10. 72:4,12,13. 107:41. 109:31. 140:12.
k 1 Sam. 2:8. Ps. 9:18. Is. 14:32. Zech. 9:12. Luke 4:18.
l Ex. 11:7. Ps. 63:11. 107:42. Rom. 3:19.
m Ps. 94:12. Prov. 3:11,12. Jer. 31:18 —20. Heb. 12:5—11. Jam. 1:12. 5: 11. Rev. 3:19.

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dust; . . . *Although* man be born to trouble.'—Man is born to labor and sorrow, as certainly, and from as natural a cause, as the sparks of fire mount upward; [by the 'laws of gravity;'] yet the measure and duration of them result neither from chance, nor necessity, nor second causes; but from the wise and righteous appointment of God. This is a certain truth: but it does not follow that heavy afflictions are a proof of great wickedness: for the future world is the state of retributions; and afflictions in this world in general are merciful corrections, and not the effects of vindictive wrath. (17. 2 *Pet.* 2:4—9.) SCOTT.

This dispute is still rife. Job's friends seem, in general, to contend that *all* evil, or suffering, is (like the pain of a burn, for not avoiding contact with fire, &c.) a natural and necessary consequence of disobedience to natural or revealed laws; and, as such, is *only* the punishment of sin, or disobedience to them. Job seems to think that, (if not objectless, or their purpose undiscernible,) afflictions are *all* but a discipline directly inflicted without man's agency, by God, to bring into exercise the higher sentiments of man's nature. The truth seems to be, that all afflictions may be classed under one of these two divisions: and we are cautioned, by the result of the dispute, not to *judge the afflicted;* for that belongs to God. Let us rather see to it that *all* afflictions better us. ED.

(7.) *Sons of the burning coal lift up to fly*, marg.] How full of life, truth, and picturesque beauty is this phrase! The sparks *leap* straight up from the *live* coal, like birds or insects from their nest, and like them, having gained the air, put forth their wings, as it were, and mount upward in devious flights. But most, as the *Syr. Arab. Gr.* vers. *Good, Mich. Rosenm.* &c. understand 'sons of the eagle.' ID.

Verses 8—11.

The manner, in which the water is conveyed, *originally* from the briny ocean, and distilled in small drops fit for use all over the earth, and the effects thus produced, are worthy of our highest admiration and most ardent gratitude. (36:22—33. 37:1—13. *Gen.* 1:9. *Ps.* 65: 9—13.) SCOTT. From how much delight do those shut themselves out, who choose to remain ignorant of the wonders of God in nature! ED.

(10.) *Fields.*] 'The Heb. generally signifies streets, and may here mean regular *plantations* laid out in *ridges* or *plots*. [See the pictures of eastern tillage.] Thus the verse would refer both to cultivated and uncultivated grounds.' Dr. A. CLARKE. *Good* tr. 'valleys,' perhaps the 'wadys,' or beds of summer torrents, which form in that region quite regular furrowings, in the bottoms of which they run. The effect of showers in the E. is, suddenly to restore vegetation, and with it plenty, (11.) as the poor feed chiefly on succulent vegetables. ID.

Verses 12—16.

(*M. R.—Notes, Esth.* 5:13,14. 6: 7: 1 *Cor.* 3:18—23.) As such interpositions accorded to the ordinary method of Providence, Job might with confidence expect deliverance, if he ceased his rebellious murmurs, and humbled himself before God. SCOTT.

(13.) 'Taking by a toil or snaring net.' *Good.* Like a sly, prowling beast, entrapped as he steals upon his prey. *Carried headlong.*] 'Dashed to pieces, as a criminal is thrown down a precipice.' GILL. Note, 2 Chr. 25:12. Both underhand and highhanded wickedness are punished, secretly or openly, quietly or terribly. ED.

Verse 17.

To *take vengeance on a criminal, for a warning to others*, and to *correct an offender for his own good*, are very distinct things, which Eliphaz had not before expressly distinguished. Job's extraordinary calamities had led Eliphaz to speak, as if he had been visited in judg-

18 For [n] he maketh sore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.

19 He shall [o] deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall [p] no evil touch thee.

20 In [q] famine he shall [r] redeem thee from death: and [s] in war from the * power of the sword.

21 Thou shalt [t] be hid † from the scourge of the tongue: [u] neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.

22 At destruction and famine thou shalt [x] laugh: neither shalt thou be [y] afraid of the beasts of the earth.

23 For [z] thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field; and [a] the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.

24 And [b] thou shalt know that ‡ thy tabernacle *shall be* in peace; and [c] thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not § sin.

25 Thou shalt know also that [d] thy seed *shall be* ‖ great, and thine offspring [e] as the grass of the earth.

26 Thou shalt come to *thy* grave [f] in a full age, like as a shock of corn ¶ cometh in in his season.

27 Lo this, [g] we have searched it, so it *is;* hear it, and know thou *it* ** for thy good.

CHAP. VI.

Job shows that his sufferings were very great, and his complaint natural, 1—7. He prays for death, as the only comfort which he could hope for, 8—13. He reproves his friends, as unkind and unfaithful, 14—30.

BUT Job [a] answered and said,

2 Oh, that my grief

n Deut. 32:39. 1 Sam. 2:6,7. Ps. 147:3. Is. 30:26. Hos. 6:1.
o Ps. 34:19. 91:3—7. Prov. 24:16. 2 Cor. 1:8—10. 2 Pet. 2:9.
p Ps. 91:7—10.
q Gen. 45:7—11. 1 K. 17:6,9,14,15. Ps. 33:19. 34:9,10. 37:19. Prov. 10:3. Is. 33:16. Hab. 3:17,18.
r Ps. 49:7,15. 103:4. Hos. 13:14.
s Ps. 27:3. 91:5. 144:10. Matt. 24:6.
* Heb. *hands.*
t Ps. 31:20. 53:1. 57:4. Prov. 12:18. Is. 54:17. Jer. 18:18. Jam. 3:5—8.
† Or, *when the tongue scourgeth.*
u Ps. 91:5—7.
x 2 K. 19:21.
y Is. 35:9. Ez. 34:25.
z Ps. 91:12,13. Hos. 2:18. Rom. 8: 38,39.
a Lev. 26:6. Ez. 14:15,16. Dan. 6:22.
b 18:6,15,21. 21:7—9. 1 Sam. 30:3. Is. 4:5,6.
‡ Or, *peace is thy tabernacle.* Ps. 25: 13. *marg.*
c Deut. 28:6. Ps. 91:10. 121:7,8.
§ Or, *err.* Ps. 107:4,40.
d 42:13—16. Gen. 15:5. Lev. 26:9. Deut. 28:4. Is. 112:2. 127:3—5. 128: 3—6.
‖ Or, *much.*
e Ps. 72:16.
f 42:16,17. Gen. 15:15. 25:8. Ps. 91: 16. Prov. 9:11. 10:27.
¶ Heb. *ascendeth.*
g 8:8—10. 13:2. 15:9,10,17. 32:11,12.
** Heb. *for thyself.* 22:2. Deut. 10:13.
a 4:1.

1. Its nature would be altered: though looking like misery, it would really be bliss. *Happy he whom God correcteth,* if he duly improve it. A good man is happy though he be afflicted; for whatever he has lost, he has not lost his enjoyment of God, nor title to heaven; nay, he is happy, *because* afflicted; correction is an evidence of his sonship, a mean of his sanctification; it mortifies his corruptions, weans his heart from the world, draws him nearer to God, brings him to his Bible, to his knees, works him for, and so is working for him, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. [Note, 7:1.] *Happy therefore is the man whom God correcteth,* Jam. 1:12.

2. Its issue and consequence would be very good, *v.* 18. The skilful, tender surgeon binds up the wounds he had occasion to make. When God makes sore by the rebukes of his providence, He binds up by the consolations of his Spirit. He never (as Mr. Caryl observes) makes a wound too great, too deep, for his own cure. The wicked go unhealed, (Hos. 5:14.) not so the humble and penitent, Hos. 6:1.

This is general, but in the following vs. he directly applies to Job many precious promises, would he but humble himself. Though they had no Bibles, that we know of, yet Eliphaz had sufficient warrant to give Job these assurances, from the general discoveries God had made of his good will to his people. And though, in every thing Job's friends said, they were not directed by the Spirit of God, (for they spake both of God and Job, some things that were not right,) yet the general doctrines they laid down spake the pious sense of the patriarchal age; and as Paul quoted *v.* 13. for canonical scripture, and as the command, *v.* 17. is, no doubt, binding on us, so these promises here may and must be received and applied as divine. Let us therefore give diligence to make sure our interest in these promises, and then view their particulars, and take the comfort of them.

(1.) Deliverances shall be repeated as troubles recur, for the *sixth,* yea for the *seventh* time, [i. e. an indefinite number of times,] 2 Tim. 3:11. Ps 34:19. Former deliverances are earnests of, not, as among men, excuses from, further deliverances; Prov. 19:19. (2.) Being kept from sin, God's children are kept from the evil of every trouble; (Ps. 91:10. 1 John, 5:18.) *v.* 20, 21, 22. (3.) Our covenant with God, too, is a covenant with all the creatures, that they shall do us no hurt, but be ready to serve us and do us good, *v.* 23. Comp Hos. 2:18. (4.) Peace and family piety shall make their houses, whether *tent, cottage,* or palace, (i. e. every kind of habitation,) comfortable, fixed, quiet, and discreetly governed. (5.) Grace is promised, to manage the concerns of peaceful, numerous, and prosperous families, after a godly sort, so as not to sin. They shall call their servants to account without passion, pride, covetousness, worldliness, or the like; shall look into their affairs without discontent at what is, or distrust of what shall be. Family piety crowns family peace and prosperity. The greatest blessing, both in our employments, and in our enjoyments, is, to be kept from sin in them. *Their death shall be seasonable.* It is well our times are in God's hand, for He will take care that those who are his die in the best time: however their death may seem untimely.

In the last v. he recommends those promises to Job, as faithful sayings, of the truth of which he might be confident. *Know it for thyself,* so the word is; with application to thyself, and thy own case; what we thus hear and know is for our good, as we are nourished by the meat which we digest.

CHAP. VI. V. 1—7. Eliphaz concluded his discourse with an air of assurance; very confident nothing could be objected to it. But Job is not convinced; still he justifies himself in his complaints, and condemns him for the weakness of his arguing. It must be owned, Job spake much that was reasonable, but with a mixture of passion and human infirmity. And in this, as indeed in most contests, there was fault on both sides. Eliphaz, in beginning his discourse, had been very sharp on Job,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is generally dangerous to deviate from the sentiments and practices of the saints of God, and it is very discouraging to be constrained to act contrary to their judgment. But at last the Word of God is our all-sufficient rule, and not the sentiments of any number of fallible men: so that, in fact, they have sometimes been found right, who seemed not only to have all the world, but almost all the church, against them.—We must not rashly represent every gust of passion or agitation of spirit under trials, reproaches, and temptations, as an evidence of a malevolent disposition: for we should not choose to have our own infirmities treated with such severity; and we might reasonably expect that others would not.—We may predict the final ruin of wicked men, as exposed to the awful curse of God, even in the zenith of their prosperity, when all around are congratulating and envying them. Yet a man's wickedness must be very notorious, to authorize us to interpret his afflictions, or those of his posterity, into divine judgments upon him. Too often the great Author of all our comforts, and the manner in which they are conveyed to us, are alike unnoticed, because they are received as things of course.—Those who are perverse and ungodly, proud of their abilities and sagacity, are generally made to feel, or to expose, their own folly and impotency. Idolaters and atheistical philosophers of old, skeptics, infidels, and materialists of modern days, are awful proofs of these truths: and so are politic persecutors and oppressors of the church, in every age. SCOTT.

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ment: but here he indulged a hope, that he was corrected of God for his good; and if so, he was a happy man, and ought not to despond under his afflictions. SCOTT.

Verses 18, 19.

Eliphaz next showed the benefits, which would result from a proper behavior under afflictions, and mentioned the happiness of God's people, in language similar to that used in other parts of the O. T. (*M. R.—Note, Lev.* 26: 1—2.) *Six* troubles, and *seven,* denote many, one succeeding another. (*Prov.* 6:16. *Ec.* 11:2.) ID.

Verse 23.

Stones.] 'Tribes': all noxious animals. GOOD. Others refer it to being protected in travelling with their thin sandals, in the stony ways and wildernesses of those parts, Deut. 8.4. or from the serpents which infest them. ED.

Verse 24.

The word rendered 'sin,' may mean *wander,* or *be disappointed:* and perhaps the v. may imply, that when the believer goes from home, [as was usual with the banded caravans of merchants in those countries of violence,] he may commit himself and family to the care of God, assured that no tempests, fires, or robbers shall come near his habitation; and that he shall be brought back in peace, without losing his way, or being disappointed at his return, by finding his family ruined, or murdered, or fallen into calamity. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verses 25—27.

These principles are indeed good general rules, but they admit of many exceptions. [Note, *v.* 6, 7.] Job's friends spoke general truths according to the light of that dispensation; but they erred in their application of them. The Holy Spirit has recorded that debate, as infallibly true in point of matter of fact: but we must decide from the general tenor of the Scripture, whether they maintained right principles, and deduced legitimate consequences; and whether their arguments were or were not conclusive. (42:7—9.) ID.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI. V. 1—4. (*M. R.*)—Doubtless, this was the effect of Satan's temptations, who endeavored, by every horrible impression on Job's imagination, to drive him to curse God, or blaspheme, as he had

were [b] thoroughly weighed, and my calamity * laid in the balances together!

3 For now it would be [c] heavier than the sand of the sea; therefore † my words [d] are swallowed up.

4 For [e] the arrows of the Almighty *are* within me, the poison whereof [f] drinketh up my spirit: [g] the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.

5 Doth the wild ass bray ‡ when he hath grass? or [h] loweth the ox over his fodder?

6 Can [i] that which is unsavory be eaten without salt? or is there *any* [k] taste in the white of an egg?

7 The things *that* my soul refused to touch *are* [l] as my sorrowful meat.

8 Oh, that I might have my request, and that God would grant *me* § the thing that I long for!

9 Even [m] that it would please God to destroy me: [n] that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!

10 Then [o] should I yet have comfort; yea, [p] I would harden myself in sorrow: [q] let him not spare me; for I

b 4:5. 23:2.
* Heb. *lifted up.*
c Prov. 27:3. Matt. 11:28.
† That is, *I want words to express my grief.* Ps. 77:4.
d 37:19,20. Ps. 40:5.
e 16:12—14. Deut. 32:23,42. Ps. 7:13. 18:14. 21:12. 38:2. 45:5. Lam. 3: 12,13.
f Deut. 32:24. Ps. 143:7. Prov. 18:14. Mark 14:33,34. 15:34.
g 9:17. 30:15. 31:23. Ps. 88:15,16. 2 Cor. 5:11.
‡ Heb. *at grass.* Ps. 104:14.
h Ps. 42:1. Jer. 14:6. Joel 1:18—20.
i 25. 16:2. Lev. 2:13. Luke 14:34. Col. 4:6.
k 30. 12:11. 34:3. Ps. 119:103. Heb. 6:4,5.
l 1 K. 17:12. 22:27. Ps. 102:9. Ez. 4:14,16. 12:18,19. Dan. 10:3.
§ Heb. *my expectation.* 11—13. 17:14 —16. Ps. 119:81.
m 3:20—22. 7:15,16. 14:13. Num. 11: 14,15. 1 K. 19:4. Jon. 4:3,8. Rev. 9:6
n 19:21. Ps. 32:4. Is. 38:10—13.
o 3:22. 21:33.
p 9:4.
q Deut. 29:20. Rom. 8:32. 2 Pet. 2:4,5.

yet Job gave him no interruption, but heard him through patiently: they that would impartially judge of a discourse, must hear it out, and take it entire. His reply, speaks very feelingly.

I. He represents his calamity, in general, as much heavier than either he had expressed, or they apprehended it, *v.* 2, 3. He could not fully describe it, they would not fully apprehend it, or, at least, not own that they did; therefore he would gladly appeal to a third person, who had just weights and just balances with which to weigh his grief and calamity, with an impartial hand; for, whatever his grief was, his calamity was *heavier than the sand of the sea;* it was complicated, aggravated, every grievance weighty, and altogether numerous as the sand: Therefore, (says he) *my words are swallowed up;* i. e. my expressions are broken and bitter; my speech not eloquent; but, in these circumstances, my words are, as I am, quite swallowed up. Now, 1. He hereby complains, that his friends undertook to administer spiritual physic to him, before they thoroughly understood his case. Those who are at ease themselves, seldom rightly weigh the afflictions of the afflicted; every one feels most from his own burden, few, from other people's. 2. He excuses the passionate expressions he had used when he cursed his day. He could not himself justify all he had said, yet his friends should not thus violently condemn it, for really the case was extraordinary; and that might be connived at in such a man of sorrows, which would be not in any common grief. 3. He bespeaks their charitable and compassionate sympathy, and hopes, by representing the greatness of his calamity, to bring them to a better temper toward him. To those that are pained, it is some ease to be pitied.

II. He complains of the trouble and terror of mind he was in, as the sorest part of his calamity, *v.* 4. Herein he was a type of Christ, who, in his sufferings, complained most of the sufferings of his soul, John 12: 27. Matt. 26: 37, 38. Matt. 27: 46. It was not so much his troubles themselves, his poverty, disgrace, and bodily pain; but, what cut Job to the heart, was, to think the God he loved, and served, had brought all this upon him, and laid him under these marks of his displeasure. Note, Trouble of mind is the sorest trouble: *a wounded spirit who can bear?* We may well submit to any affliction God may lay upon us, as long as He continues us the use of reason, and peace of conscience; but if, in either, we be disturbed, our case is indeed very pitiable. The way to prevent God's fiery darts of trouble, is, with the shield of faith, to quench Satan's fiery darts of temptation. Observe, he calls them the *arrows of the Almighty;* He [alone] can with his arrows reach the soul. The poison or heat of them is said to drink up his spirit, because it disturbed his reason, shook his resolution, exhausted his vigor, and threatened his life; therefore his passionate expressions, though they could not be justified, yet might be excused. He that used to be encouraged with the consolations of God, not only wanted those, but was amazed with the terrors of God.

III. He reflects on his friends for their severe censures, and unskilful management. 1. Their reproofs were causeless. He complained, now, but never used to complain when in prosperity, as fretful, unquiet spirits do: he did not *bray when he had grass,* nor *low over his fodder, v.* 5. But now, deprived of all his comforts, he must not have the sense of an ox or a wild ass, not to give some vent to his grief: forced to eat unsavory meats; so poor, he had not a grain of salt to relish them, nor to give a little taste to the white of an egg, now his choicest dish, *v.* 6. Even what once he would have scorned to touch, now he was glad of, and it was his sorrowful meat, *v.* 7. Note, It is wisdom not to use ourselves or our children to be nice and dainty about meat and drink, because we know not how we or they may be reduced, nor how that which we now disdain may be made acceptable by necessity. 2. Their comforting was sapless and insipid; (so some;) in itself, tasteless as the white of an egg, and, when applied to him, loathsome and burdensome as the most sorrowful meat. I am sorry he should say thus of what Eliphaz had excellently well said, *ch.* 5: 8, &c. But peevish spirits are too apt thus to abuse their comforters.

V. 8—13. Ungoverned passion often grows more violent when it meets with some rebuke and check. Job had been courting death, as the happy period of his miseries, *ch.* 3. For this, Eliphaz had gravely reproved him: but he, instead of unsaying it, says it here again with more vehemence than before; it is as ill said as almost any thing in all his discourses, and is recorded for our admonition, not our imitation.

1. He still more passionately desires to die, as if it were not possible he should ever see good days again in this world, or, by the exercise of grace and devotion, make even these days of affliction good days: he could see no end of his trouble but death, and had not patience to wait the time appointed for that, *v.* 8. 9. Observe, Job did not offer to destroy himself, nor to take away his own life; only he begged it would *please God to destroy him.* Seneca's Morals, which recommend self-murder as the lawful redress of insupportable grievances, were not then known, nor will ever be entertained by any that have the least regard to the law of God and nature. What looked ill in Job's wish, looked worse in his prayer; for we ought not to ask any thing of God but what we can ask in faith, and we cannot ask any thing in faith, but what is agreeable to his will. Passionate prayers are the worst of passionate expressions; for we should lift up pure hands without wrath. See, (1.) The vanity of human life. Let grace make us willing to part with it, whenever God calls; for it may so happen, that even sense may make us desirous to part with it before He calls. (2.) The hope the righteous have in their death. If Job had not had a good conscience, he could not have spoken with this assurance of comfort on the other side death.

2. He passionately challenges death to do its worst. In prospect of dying at last, he would make nothing of dying pangs. '*I would harden myself in sorrow.*' We should soften ourselves in sorrow, that we may receive its good impressions, and, by sadness, our hearts, being made tender, may be made better; but, if we harden ourselves, we provoke God to proceed in his controversy; *for when He judgeth, He will overcome.* What presumption, too, thus to dare the Almighty! *v.* 10. It is *bad indeed* with us when we are weary of sparing mercy. Let us rather say, with David, *O spare me a little.*

3. He grounds his comfort on the testimony of his conscience, that he had been faithful and firm to his profession of religion, and in some degrees useful and serviceable to the glory of God in his

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declared that he would, if fully tried; while the Lord was pleased to favor the trial, by withholding from him all sensible comfort, and leaving him in darkness and dismay. SCOTT.

(4.) *Arrows.*] 'The art of poisoning arrows was very ancient in Arabia.' *Burder.* 'They appear to have had the power of producing thirst.' *Script. Illustr.* They are said to drink, by a bold figure, as the sword is said to eat, or devour. 'This is terribly sublime. The arrows of the Almighty are represented as loaded with fiery, unquenchable poison, and a thirst for the vital spirit. They have pierced the bowels of the wretched sufferer, and, incapable of being drawn out, remain within him.' *Good.* ED.

Verses 5—7.

In these vs. Job intimated, that his friends, being free from trouble and temptation, did nothing more, in being contented, than the wild ass or the ox does, when at ease and plentifully fed; and he was no more to be censured for his groans and complaints, than the wild ass for his braying, or the ox for lowing, when destitute of food. And indeed the discourse of Eliphaz had so little of the savor of wisdom and kindness, and was so unsuitable for the occasion, that it was impossible he should relish it: yet this, as 'sorrowful meat' was all he had to feed his soul upon, under his affliction and depression; though at any time he should have entirely disregarded it.—Some think he meant, that it was as natural to expect encouraging words under heavy trials, as it is to ask for salt to eat with the white of an egg; whereas the discourse of Eliphaz tended to render his trials more burdensome than they were before. It is plain, however, that he rejected and undervalued his good advice; because of the injurious reflections on his character, with which it was introduced. (5:2—7.) SCOTT.

(6.) 'Doth what hath nothing of seasoning, of an irritating power, produce pungency or irritation? I too should be quiet, if I had nothing provocative or acrimonious.' *Good.* Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 8—13.

Alas! Job knew not what he said; for who, during a single hour, could endure the wrath of the Almighty, if He spared not, but let loose his hand against him?—Relief from lingering misery was Job's great object; yet he evidently thought of a future world, when he declared

[p] have not concealed the words of [q] the Holy One.

11 [t] What *is* my strength, that I should hope? and what *is* mine end, that I should prolong my life?

12 *Is* my strength the strength of stones? or *is* my flesh * of brass?

13 [u] *Is* not my help in me? [x] and is wisdom driven quite from me?

14 To [y] him that † is afflicted pity *should be showed* from his friend; but [z] he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.

15 ¶ [a] My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, *and* [b] as the stream of brooks they pass away;

16 Which are blackish by reason of the ice, *and* wherein the snow is hid:

17 What time they wax warm, they ‡ vanish; § when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place.

18 The paths of their way are turned aside; they go to nothing, and perish.

19 The troops of [c] Tema looked, the companies of [d] Sheba waited for them.

20 They * were confounded, because they had hoped: they came thither, and were ashamed.

21 For now ‖ ye [f] are ¶ nothing; [g] ye see *my* casting down, and are afraid.

22 Did I say, [h] Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance?

r 23:12. Ps. 37:30. 40:9,10. 71:17,18. 119:13. Acts 20:20,27.
s Lev. 19:2. 1 Sam. 2:2. Is. 30:11,12. 57:15. Hos. 11:9. Hab. 1:12. 3:3. Rev. 3:7. 4:8.
t 7:5—7. 10:20. 13:25,28. 17:1,14—16. Ps. 39:5. 90:5—10. 102:23. 103: 14—16.
* Heb. *brazen.* 40:18. 41:24.
u 19:28. 2 Cor. 1:12. Gal. 6:4.
x 12:2,3. 13:2.
y 4:3,4. 16:5. 19:21. Prov. 17:17. Rom. 12:15. 1 Cor. 12:26. 2 Cor. 11:29. Gal. 6:2. Heb. 13:3.
† Heb. *melteth.*
z Gen. 20:11. Ps. 36:1—3. Luke 23:40.
a 19:19. Ps. 38:11. 41:9. 55:12—14. 88:18. Jer. 9:4,5. 30:14. Mic. 7:5,6. John 13:18. 16:32.
b Jer. 15:18. Jude 12.
‡ Heb. *are cut off.*
§ Heb. *in the heat thereof they are extinguished.* 1 K. 17:7.

generation, *v.* 10. Observe, 1. Job had the *words of the Holy One* committed to him. The people of God were, at that time, blessed with divine revelation. 2. It was his comfort, he had *not concealed* them, not from himself, no, nor from others, but had been ready, on all occasions, to communicate his knowledge for their good. Those, and those only, may promise themselves comfort in death, who are good, and do good, while they live.

4. He justifies this extreme desire of death, from his deplorable condition, *v.* 11, 12. Eliphaz, in the close of his discourse, had put him in hopes he should yet see a good issue of his troubles; but poor Job puts these cordials away from him, abandons himself to despair, and very ingenuously, yet perversely, argues against these encouragements. Disconsolate spirits will reason strangely against themselves. All things considered, we have no reason to count on the long continuance of life. Those who, through grace, are ready for another world, cannot see much to invite their stay in this, or to make them fond of it. We may wish to prolong life, in subserviency to our chief end; but, otherwise, why desire to tarry here? The longer life is, the more grievous its burdens, (Eccl. 12: 1.) and the less pleasant its delights, 2 Sam. 19: 34, 35. We have already seen the best, but are not sure we have seen the worst of this world.

5. He obviates the suspicion of his being delirious, *v.* 13. *Is not my help in me?* i. e. 'Have I not the use of my reason, with which, I thank God, I can help myself, though you do not help me? No, I am not mad, most noble Eliphaz, but *speak the words of truth and soberness.*' Those who have grace, the evidence of it, and have it in exercise, have wisdom in them, which will be their help in the worst times.

V. 14—21. Eliphaz had been very severe, and his companions had intimated their concurrence: their unkindness therein poor Job here complains of, as an aggravation of his calamity, and a further excuse of his desire to die; for what satisfaction could he ever expect in this world, when those that should be his comforters, thus proved his tormentors?

I. His expectation was grounded on the common principles of humanity, *v.* 14. Note, 1. Compassion is a debt owing to those in affliction. The least those at ease can do for those in anguish, is, to pity them, and sympathize with and comfort them; and do all they can to help and relieve them: this well becomes the members of the same body, who should feel for the grievances of their fellow members, not knowing how soon the same may be their own. 2. Inhumanity is impiety and irreligion. *He that withholds compassion from his friend, forsakes the fear of the Almighty.* So the Chal. *How dwells the love of God in that man?* 1 John 3: 17. Surely those have no fear of God's rod, who have no compassion for those that feel it. See Jam. 1: 27. 3. Troubles are the trials of friendship. A man afflicted, will see who are his friends indeed, and who but pretenders; for a brother is born for adversity, Prov. 12: 17.—18: 24.

II. He shows how wretchedly his expectations from them, were disappointed, *v.* 15. They came by appointment, with great ceremony, to mourn with, and comfort him; (*ch.* 3: 11.) but, instead, they most barbarously fall on him with their reproaches and censures, condemn him as a hypocrite, insult over his calamities, and pour vinegar, instead of oil, into his wounds; thus they dealt deceitfully with him. Note, 1. It is fraud and deceit not only to violate engagements to friends, but to frustrate their just expectations from us, especially those we have raised. 2. It is our wisdom to cease from man; we cannot expect too little from the creature, nor too much from the Creator. It is no new thing even for brethren to *deal deceitfully;* (Jer. 9: 4, 5. Mic. 7: 5.) let us therefore put our confidence in the Rock of ages, not in broken reeds; in the Fountain of Life, not in broken cisterns. God will outdo our hopes as much as men come short of them.

The failing of brooks in summer is a very elegant similitude, *v.* 15—20. They make a great show, when swelled by the melting of the ice and snow, which makes them blackish or muddy, but in summer they are dry, *v.* 16. and weary, thirsty travellers look for them in vain, *v.* 19. as the caravans of the merchants of those countries, whose road lay through the deserts of Arabia. Where we have met with relief and comfort, we are apt to expect it again; and yet it does not follow: but they who make God their confidence have help *in the time of need,* Heb. 4: 16. *Now ye are nothing.*

It were well for us, if we had always such convictions of the vanity of the creature, and its insufficiency to make us happy, as we have sometimes had, or shall have, on a sick-bed, a death-bed, or in trouble of conscience. You are *nothing*, not what you have been, what you should be, what you pretend to be, what I thought you would have been. When you saw me in my elevation, you caressed me; but, now you see me in my dejection, you are shy of me, *afraid* of showing yourselves kind, lest I should take boldness thence, to beg something of you, or to borrow;' (comp. *v.* 22.) Perhaps they were afraid of catching his distemper, or of coming within smell of its noisomeness. It is not good, either out of pride or niceness, for love of our [feelings,] purses, or bodies, to be shy of those in distress.

V. 22—30. Poor Job goes on here to upbraid his friends with their unkindness, and hard usage. If they would but think impartially, and speak as they thought, they could not but own,

I. That though necessitous, yet he was not craving, nor burdensome to his friends. Those whose troubles serve them to beg by, are commonly less pitied than the silent poor. Job would be glad to see his friends, but he did not say, *Bring unto me,* (*v.* 22.) or, *Deliver me, v.* 23. Note, A good man, when troubled himself, is afraid of being troublesome to his friends. Paul worked with his hands, that he might not be burdensome to any. Job's not asking their help, did not excuse them from offering it when needed, and in their power to give; but it much aggravated their unkindness, when he desired no more from them than a good look, and a good word, and yet could not obtain them. It often happens that from man, even when we expect little, we have less, but from God, even when we expect much, we have more, Eph. 3: 20.

II. That though he differed in opinion from them, yet he was not obstinate, but ready to yield to conviction, *v.* 24, 25. Note, 1. Fair reasoning has a commanding power, and it is a wonder if men are not conquered by it; but railing and foul language is impotent and foolish, and no wonder men are exasperated and hardened by it. 2. It is the undoubted character of every honest man, that he is truly desirous to have his mistakes rectified, and to be made to understand wherein he has erred: and that right words, when they appear so to him, though contrary to his former sentiments, are both forcible and acceptable.

III. That though he had been indeed in a fault, yet they ought not to have given him such hard usage, *v.* 26, 27. '*Do you imagine*, or contrive

c Gen. 25:15. Is. 21:14. Jer. 25:23.
d Gen. 10:7. 25:3. 1 K. 10:1. Ps. 72: 10. Ez. 27:22,23.
e Jer. 14:3,4. 17:13. Rom. 5:5. 9:33.
‖ Or, *ye are* like *to them.* Heb. *to it.* 15. 13:4.
f Ps. 62:9. Is. 2:22. Jer. 17:5,6.
¶ Heb. *not.*
g 2:11—13. Ps. 38:11. Prov. 19:7. Jer. 51:9. Matt. 26:31,56. 2 Tim. 4:16. Rev. 18:9,10,17,18.
h 42:11. 1 Sam. 12:3. Acts 20:33.

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that 'he had not concealed the words of the Holy One.' He meant, that he was no hypocrite; but as he had professed the words of the Holy God, so he had believed and obeyed them, as the avowed and real rule of his conduct. He seems, however, to have spoken too much in a way of self-justification, and despondency; and not simply, as stating the ground of his desire to leave this world, and go to a better. SCOTT.

(10.) *I have not,* &c.] 'I dispute not the decrees.' *Heath.* 'I would not resist the commands.' *Good.* COND. COMM.

Verse 14.

Some understand the v. as Job's representation of his friends' behavior to him; in which sense it may be rendered, '*They say* of him that is afflicted more than his neighbor, He hath forsaken mercy, and the fear of the Almighty.' (*Note,* 4:3—6.) SCOTT.

Verse 18.

'The paths of their course are diminished; They ascend into vapor and perish.' BOOTHR.

23 Or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, [i] Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?

24 [k] Teach me, and [l] I will hold my tongue: and [m] cause me to understand wherein I have erred.

25 How [n] forcible are right words! but [o] what doth your arguing reprove?

26 Do ye imagine to [p] reprove words, and the speeches of [q] one that is desperate, which *are* [r] as wind?

27 Yea, ye * overwhelm [s] the fatherless, and [t] ye dig *a pit* for your friend.

28 Now therefore, be content: look upon me: for *it is* † evident unto you, [u] if I lie.

29 [x] Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity; yea, return again, [y] my righteousness *is* ‡ in it.

30 Is there [z] iniquity in my tongue? [a] cannot my § taste discern perverse things?

CHAP. VII.

Job excuses his desire of death, by representing the vanity, misery, and uselessness of his life, 1—6. He expostulates with God, in a mixture of complaints and petitions; and concludes with confessing that he had sinned, and asking forgiveness before his death, 7—21.

IS [a] *there* not ‖ an appointed time to man upon earth? *are not* his days also [b] like the days of an hireling?

2 As a servant ¶ earnestly desireth [c] the shadow, and as [d] an hireling looketh for *the reward of* his work:

3 So am I made to possess [e] months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me.

4 When I lie down, I say, [f] When shall I arise, and ** the night be gone? and I am full of [g] tossings to and fro, unto the dawning of the day.

with a great deal of art,' (so the word signifies,) '*to reprove words*, some passionate expressions of mine in this desperate condition, as if they were certain indications of reigning impiety and atheism? A little candor and charity would excuse them, and put a better construction on them. Shall a man's spiritual state be judged of by some rash and hasty words, a surprising trouble extorts from him?' Two things aggravated their unkind treatment. 1. They took advantage of his weakness, and helpless condition; *Ye overwhelm the fatherless*, a proverbial expression, bespeaking that which is most barbarous and inhuman. Job, being a childless father, thought himself as much exposed to injury as a fatherless child, Ps. 127: 5. Let those who overwhelm and overpower them that on any account may be looked upon as fatherless, know that therein they not only put off the compassions of man, but fight against the compassions of God, who is, and will be, a Father of the fatherless, and a Helper of the helpless. 2. '*You dig a pit for your friend;* not only are unkind to your friend, but, under color of friendship, insnare me.' When they came to see and sit with him, he thought he might speak his mind freely, and that the more bitter his complaints, the more they would endeavor to comfort him. This made him take greater liberty than otherwise he would. David, though he smothered his resentments when the wicked were before him, it is likely, would have vented them, had none been by but friends, Ps. 39: 1. But this freedom of speech, which their professions of concern made him use, had exposed him to their censures, so they might be said to dig a pit for him, [alluding to the method of slightly covering a pit, and placing a bait upon it to entrap beasts, whose weight the covering will not bear; and so they fall in, are disabled, and thus buried in destruction.] Thus, when our hearts are hot within us, what is ill done we are apt to misrepresent, as if done designedly.

IV. That in the main, he was in the right, and his afflictions, though very extraordinary, did not prove him a hypocrite, or a wicked man. 'What do you see in me, that bespeaks me either a mad man, or a wicked man? Nay, look in my face, and you may discern there the indications of a patient and submissive spirit, for all this: that though I have cursed my day, I do not curse my God.' Or rather, 'Look on my ulcers and sore boils, and by them it will be evident to you that I do not lie;' i. e. 'that I do not complain without cause.' 'You hear what I have to say; *Is there iniquity in my tongue?* That iniquity you charge me with? Have I blasphemed God, or renounced Him? Are not my present arguings right? Do not you perceive, by what I say, that I can discern perverse things? I can discover your fallacies and mistakes, and if I were myself in an error, I could perceive it. Whatever you think of me, I know what I say.' '*Return, I pray you*, (*v.* 29.) consider the thing over again, without prejudice and partiality, and let not the result be iniquity, let it not be an unrighteous sentence; and you will find *my righteousness is in it*,' i. e. 'I am in the right in this matter; and though I cannot keep my temper as I should, I keep my integrity, and have not said, or done, or suffered, any thing which will prove me other than an honest man.'

CHAP. VII. V. 1—6. Job, in this ch. goes on to express the bitter sense he had of his calamities, and to justify himself in his desire of death. Why should he not wish for the period of life, which would be the period of his miseries? To enforce this reason, he argues,

I. From the general condition of man, *v.* 1. 'Every man must die shortly, and every man has some reason (more or less) to desire to die shortly; therefore, why impute it to me as so heinous a crime, that *I* wish to die shortly?' Or thus: 'Pray mistake not my desires of death, as if I thought the time appointed of God could be anticipated; no, but in such language as this, I take the liberty to express my present uneasiness.' We are not to think we are governed by the blind fate of the Stoics, or blind fortune of the Epicureans, but by the wise, holy, and sovereign counsel of God.

1. Man's life is a *warfare*, and *as the days of a hireling*. We are in this world, (1.) As soldiers, exposed to hardship, and in the midst of enemies, we must serve and be under command; and, when our warfare is accomplished, we must be disbanded, dismissed with either shame or honor, according to what we have done in the body. (2.) As day-laborers, that have the work of the day to do in its day, and must make up their account at night.

i 5:20. Lev. 25:48. Neh. 5:8. Ps. 49: 7,8,15. 107:2. Jer. 15:21.
k 5:27. 32:11,15,16. 33:1,31—33. 34: 32. Ps. 32:8. Prov. 9:9. 25:12. Jam. 1:19.
l Ps. 39:1,2. Jam. 3:2.
m 10:2. Ps. 19:12.
n 4:4. 16:5. Prov. 12:18. 16:21—24. 18:21. 25:11. Ec. 12:10,11.
o 13:5. 15:3,4. 21:34. 24:25. 32:3.
p 2:10. 3:3,&c. 4:3,4. 34:3—9. 38: 2. 40:5,8. 42:3,7. Matt. 12:37.
q 4:9. 10:1.
r 8:2. Hos. 12:1. Eph. 4:14.
* Heb. *cause to fall upon.*
s 22:9. 24:3,9. 23:12. 31:17,21. Ex. 22:22—24. Ps. 82:3. Prov. 23:10,11. Ez. 22:7. Mal. 3:5. Jam. 1:27.
t Ps. 7:15. 57:6. Jer. 18:20,22.
† Heb. *before your face.*
u 11:3. 13:4.
x 17:10. Mal. 3:18.
y 27:4—6.
‡ That is, *in this matter.*
z 33:8—12. 42:3—6.
a 6. 12:11. 34:3. Heb. 5:14.
§ Heb. *palate.*
a 14:5,13,14. Ps. 39:4. Is. 38:5. John 11:9,10.
‖ Or, *a warfare.* Ec. 8:8.
b 14:6. Lev. 25:50. Deut. 15:18. Is. 21:16. Matt. 26:1—15.
¶ Heb. *gapeth after.* Ps. 119:131. 143: 6.
c Jer. 6:4.
d Lev. 19:13. Deut. 24:15. Mal. 3:5. Jam. 5:4.
e 29:2. Ps. 39:5. Ec. 1:14.
f 13,14. 30:17. Deut. 28:67. Ps. 6:6. 77:4. 130:6.
** Heb. *the evening be measured.*
g Ps. 109:23. Is. 54:11.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In deciding on the conduct of those who seem impatient, we should carefully consider the number and aggravations of their distresses, which often appear to the sufferer even greater than his heaviest complaints, and beyond the power of words to express. A heart, wounded with the fear or sense of the wrath of God, assaulted with grievous temptations, filled with horror, and verging to despair, is far more dreadful and intolerable, than any external afflictions: yet, these 'pains of hell' have often taken hold of the most beloved servants of God. (2 *Sam.* 22: 5, 6. *Ps.* 116: 3.) Mere spectators cannot estimate trials of this kind; and few pious men have sufficient wisdom, experience, and tenderness, to deal properly with those, who are thus deserted, oppressed, and overwhelmed.—What then did the Savior endure in the garden and on the cross! and what will sinners, who neglect so great salvation, for ever endure in the regions of darkness and despair!—Furious passions are peculiarly culpable when they dictate *prayers;* for men seldom wish or pray for death, except when they are in a rebellious frame of spirit. Surely we may find something more excellent to request of God, than to be delivered from present suffering.—Most of us are apt to be too impatient, when we hear men argue inconclusively, especially when their discourse bears hard on our sentiments and conduct. It is, however, still more unbecoming to retaliate on reprovers, and to charge them with malice, when perhaps they spoke from genuine love. SCOTT.

NOTES.

Verse 23.

Redeem.] 'Ransom or take back by force my cattle.' GILL.

Verse 26.

'Do ye imagine to reprove mere words, [have ye no facts, *Gill.*]? the speeches of one desperate (like me) are as wind, i. e. quite uncontrollable.' HEWLETT.

Verse 28.

'"Look in my face, and you will soon see I am innocent," says a Hindoo.' ROBERTS.

CHAP. VII. V. 1—6. *Spent*, &c. (6) 'Finished for want of thread.' *E. Smith.*—The original will admit this translation, and several critics have adopted it as keeping up the simile. SCOTT.

(1.) *Warfare:* marg.] God has so constituted us with relation to the universe, that our happiness consists in the activity of certain desires and impulses He has endowed us with; which are brought into play by the 'scene of things' into which our mortal birth introduces us. How aptly is this constant call to exertion, which thus disciplines

5 My [h] flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become [i] loathsome.

6 My days are [k] swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent [l] without hope.

7 Oh, [m] remember that [n] my life *is* wind: mine eye shall * no more see good.

8 The [o] eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no *more:* [p] thine eyes *are* upon me, and † I *am* not.

9 *As* [q] the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away; so [r] he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no *more.*

10 He [s] shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more.

11 Therefore [t] I will not refrain my mouth: I will speak in [u] the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in [x] the bitterness of my soul.

12 *Am* [y] I a sea, or [z] a whale, that thou settest a watch over me?

13 When I say, [a] My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint;

14 Then [b] thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions:

15 So that my soul chooseth strangling, *and* death rather than my ‡ life.

16 [d] I loath *it;* I would not live alway: [e] let me alone; for [f] my days *are* vanity.

h 2:7,8. 17:14. 19:26. 24:20. 30:18, 19. Ps. 38:5—7. Is. 1:6. 14:11. Acts 12:23.
i 9:31. Is. 66:24. Ez. 20:43.
k 9:25. 16:22. 17:11. Ps. 90:5,6. 102: 11. 103:15,16. 144:4. Is. 38:12,13. 40:6,7. Jam. 1:11. 4:14. 1 Pet. 1:24.
l 6:11. 17:15. Prov. 14:32. Jer. 2: 25. Eph. 2:12. 1 Pet. 1:13.
m 10:9. Neh. 1:8. Ps. 74:18,22. 89:47, 50. Jer. 15:15.
n Ps. 78:39. Jam. 4:14.
* Heb. *not return to see*, that is, *to enjoy.* 10:21,22.
o 20:9. Ps. 37:36.
p 13:27. 14:3. Ps. 39:11. 90:8,9.
† That is, *I can live no longer.* 21.
q 37:11.
r 10:21. 14:10—14. 16:22. 2 Sam. 12:23. 14:14. Ps. 39:13. Is. 38:11.
s 8:18. 20:9. Ps. 103:16.
t 6:26. 10:1. 13:13. 16:6. 21:3. Ps. 39:3. 40:9.
u Gen. 42:21. 2 K. 4:27,28. Matt. 26: 37,38. Luke 22:44. 2 Cor. 2:4.
x 21:25. 1 Sam. 1:10. Is. 38:15,17.
y 17. 38:6—11. Lam. 3:7.
z 41:1,&c.
a 3,4. 9:27,28. Ps. 6:6. 77:4.
b Gen. 40:5—7. 41:8. Judg. 7:13,14. Dan. 2:1. Matt. 27:19.
c 2 Sam. 17:23. Matt. 27:5.
‡ Heb. *bones.*
d 3:6—22. 6:9. 10:1. Gen. 27:46.
e 1 K. 19:4. Jon. 4:3,8.
e 10:20. 14:6. Ps. 39:10,13.
f Ps. 78:39. 144:4. Ec. 6:11,12.

II. From his own condition. He had as much reason, he thought, to wish for death, as a poor servant or hireling, tired with his work, has to wish for the shadows of the evening, when he shall receive his penny, and go to rest, *v.* 2. No pleasure more grateful, more relishing, to the luxurious, than rest to the laborers; Eccl. 5: 12. nor can any rich man take so much satisfaction in the return of his rent-days, as the hireling in his day's wages. Hear his complaint:

1. His days were useless, and had been so a great while; he was wholly taken off from business, and utterly unfit for it. He was in no capacity of doing good, or of spending his day to any purpose; this he calls *possessing months of vanity, v.* 3. It very much increases the affliction of sickness and age, to a good man, that he is thereby forced from his usefulness. But when we are disabled to work for God, if we will but sit still quietly for Him, it is all one; we shall be accepted.

2. His nights were restless, *v.* 3, 4. Be the toil, or trouble what it will, sleep is the parenthesis of our sorrows: but poor Job could not gain this relief. His nights were wearisome; (*v.* 4.) it is but a resemblance of a fretful, discontented spirit, that is ever shifting, but never easy. This made him dread the night, and desire the dawn, as much as the servant desires the night. But these were *appointed, v.* 3. Whatever is, at any time, grievous to us, it is good to see it appointed for us, that we may acquiesce in the event, not only as unavoidable, because appointed, but as, therefore, designed for some holy end.

3. His body was noisome, *v.* 5. See what vile bodies we have, and what little reason we have to pamper them, or be proud of them.

4. His life was hastening apace towards a period, *v.* 6. He found himself declining fast, *v.* 6. It is applicable to man's life in general; our days are like a weaver's shuttle, thrown from one side of the web to the other, in the twinkling of an eye, until, at length, it is quite exhausted of the thread it carried; and then we *cut off, like a weaver, our life,* Isa. 38: 12. Time hastens on apace, its motion cannot be stopped; when past, it cannot be recalled. While living, we are sowing, (Gal. 6: 8.) so we are weaving; every day, like the shuttle, leaves a thread behind it; many weave the spider's web, which will fail them, *ch.* 8: 14. If we are weaving to ourselves holy garments and robes of righteousness, we shall have the benefit of them when our work comes to be reviewed; and every man shall reap as he sowed, and wear as he wove.

V. 7—16. Job, observing, perhaps, that his friends, though they would not interrupt him, yet began to grow weary, and not to heed much what he said, here turns to God, and speaks to Him. If men will not hear us, God will; if men cannot help us, He can; *his arm is not shortened,* nor *his ear heavy.* Yet there is a great mixture of passion and corruption in what Job here says: but if God be not extreme to mark what his people say amiss, let us also make the best of it. Job is here begging of God either to ease or end him. He represents himself to God,

I. As a dying man. He recommends himself to God as an object of his pity and compassion, with this consideration, that he was a very weak, frail creature, his abode in this world short and uncertain, his removal out of it sure and speedy, and his return to it again impossible, and never to be expected; that his life was wind, as the lives of all men are, noisy perhaps, and blustering, like the wind, but vain and empty, soon gone, and, when gone, past recall. God had compassion on Israel, *remembering that they were but flesh, a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again,* Ps. 78: 38, 39. Observe,

1. Dying is here illustrated by the blotting out and scattering of a cloud. It is consumed, and vanisheth away, is resolved into air, and never knits again: other clouds arise, but the same cloud never returns: so a new generation of the children of men is raised up, but the former generation is quite consumed, and vanishes away. Glorified saints shall return no more to the cares, and burdens, and sorrows, of their house; nor damned sinners to the gaieties and pleasures of theirs. It concerns us to secure a better place when we die, for this will no more own us.

2. His passionate inference. From these premises he might have drawn a better conclusion than this, *v.* 11. Holy David, when he had been meditating on the frailty of human life, made a contrary use of it; *I was dumb, and opened not my mouth:* but Job seems as if he could not die in peace, till he had vented his passion. When we have but a few breaths to draw, we should rather spend them in the holy, gracious breathings of faith and prayer, than die complaining and quarrelling.

II. As a distempered man, sorely and grievously distempered, both in body and mind. In this, he is very peevish, as if God dealt hardly with him, and laid on him more than was meet. '*Am I a raging sea,* that must be kept within bounds, or an unruly *whale,* that must be restrained by force? Am I so strong, so boisterous, that there needs no less than all these mighty bonds of affliction to tame me, and keep me within compass?' *v.* 12. We are very apt, when in affliction, to complain of God and his providence, as if He laid more restraint on us than there is occasion for; whereas we are never in heaviness but when there is need, or beyond the just measure.

1. He could not rest. Note, God can, when He pleases, meet us with terror there, where we promise ourselves ease and repose; nay, He can make us a terror to ourselves, and, as we have often contracted guilt, by the rovings of an unsanctified fancy, He can likewise, by the power of our own imagination, create as much grief, and so make that our punishment which has often been our sin. In Job's dreams, though they might

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and developes our powers, called a *warfare!* How great is the wisdom of God, which has so aptly adjusted the universe to us, and us to the universe! How great the goodness of God, which has opened before us this path to endless happiness, in an endless progress towards that perfection with which *He is perfect!* ED.

(2.) 'The easterns measure time very correctly by the length of their shadow. Thus the laborer desires *the* shadow which indicates the time for leaving work.' ROBERTS.

(4.) '*Aretæus* and *Celsus*, two medical writers of antiquity, mention disturbing dreams as attendant on the elephantiasis.' ROSENM.

Clothed, &c.] 'Probably, literally true, insects having deposited their eggs in his ulcers, from his being exposed to the open air.' Dr. *A. Clarke. Loathsome.*] 'The elephantiasis is so noisome, that it might well pass for the corruption of the human body on this side the grave.' MAUNDRELL.

Verses 7—11.

In the middle of this discourse with his friends, Job seems to have lifted up his thoughts to God, and mingled some actings of faith and hope with his fretfulness and despondency.—This (10) does not by any means imply a denial of a future state, or the resurrection of the dead; but it merely describes the condition of mankind respecting this present life. (*Ec.* 1:4—11.) [It does not deny a resurrection to life, but to the same life. *Caryl.*]—If he had poured out his soul before God, that indeed would have abated the anguish of his spirit; but his expostulations only increased his vexation, and seemed to reflect on the divine justice and goodness. SCOTT.

Verse 12.

Sea.] '*Yam:* originally tempest, tumult, violence; hence it applies to the sea, or any ferocious or powerful monster, [and the Egyptians personified the sea under the monster Typhon.] *Reiske,* with great propriety, renders *wild buffaloes.* I render "a savage beast," for it is clear, *yam* implies it from Gen. 36:24. A "watch," or "keeper," is only spoken as to *wild beasts.*' GOOD. But Ramses the Great diked out the sea from many hundred towns of Egypt, and doubtless there was a superintendant of the dikes, lest the sea should break in. The Nile is still called '*El Bahr,*' '*the ocean.*' 'In almost every instance, except the present, *tanim* (whale) is rendered dragon in our established version, (Job 30:29, &c.) which is the common name for a spiral, voluminous monster of any kind, and so *Reiske* tr.' GOOD. Perhaps this text may receive illustration from the note, 41:7. the hunters *watching* for the hippopotamus, (as whalemen do for the whale after he is struck,) till he rises to the surface of the water, to spear him. ED.

17 [g] What *is* man, that thou shouldest [h] magnify him? and that thou shouldest [i] set thine heart upon him?

18 And *that* thou shouldest [k] visit him every morning, *and* [l] try him every moment?

19 [m] How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone, till I swallow down my spittle?

20 I [n] have sinned: what shall I do unto thee, [o] O thou Preserver of men? [p] why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that [q] I am a burden to myself?

21 And [r] why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and [s] take away mine iniquity? for now shall I [t] sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me [u] in the morning, [x] but I *shall* not *be*.

CHAP. VIII.

Bildad blames Job for reflecting on the justice of God, 1—3. He intimates that his children had been cast off for their sins; yet encourages Job to seek unto God, 4—7. He appeals to the ancients, to prove the certain doom of hypocrites, 8—19. He applies the argument to the case of Job, 20—22.

THEN answered [a] Bildad the Shuhite, and said,

g Ps. 8:4. 144:3. Heb. 2:6.
h 12. 1 Sam. 24:14.
i 34:14,15.
k Ex. 20:5. 32:34. Is. 26:14. 33:12,13.
l Gen. 22:1. Deut. 8:16. Jer. 9:7. Dan. 12:10. Zech. 13:9. 1 Pet. 1:7.
m 9:18. Ps. 6:3. 13:1—3. 94:3. Rev. 6:10.
n 9:29—31. 13:26. 14:16,17. 22:5. 31: 33. 33:9,27.
o Neh. 9:6. Ps. 36:6.
p 12. 6:4. 16:12—14. Ps. 21:12. Lam. 3:12.
q 11. 3:24.
r 10:14. 13:23,24. Is. 64:9. Lam. 3: 42—44. 5:20—22.
s 2 Sam. 24:10. Hos. 14:2. John 1:29. Tit. 2:14. 1 John 3:5.
t 3:13. 17:14. 21:32,33. Ec. 12:7. Is. 26:19. Dan. 12:2.
u 18.
x Ps. 37:36.
a 2:11.

partly arise from his distemper, [see note, v. 4.] yet we have reason to think Satan had a hand in them; but Job looked up to God, who permitted Satan to do this, and mistook Satan's representations for the *terrors of God setting themselves in array against him.* We have reason to pray to God, that our dreams may neither defile nor disquiet us, neither tempt us to sin, nor torment us with fear; that He who keeps Israel, and neither slumbers nor sleeps, may keep us when we slumber and sleep; that the devil may not then do us a mischief, either as an insinuating serpent, or as a roaring lion; and to bless God if we lie down and our sleep is sweet.

2. He covets to rest in his grave, *v.* 15, 16. (1.) Sick of life, he hated the thoughts of it. Note, A good man would not (if he might) live always in this world, no, not though it smile on him, because it is a world of sin and temptation, and he has a better world in prospect. (2.) He was fond of death, and pleased himself with the thoughts of it: his soul (his judgment, he thought, but really it was his passion) chose strangling and death rather; any death rather than such a life. This was Job's infirmity; for life is our opportunity of glorifying God, and getting ready for heaven. [Note, *v.* 1.]

V. 17—21. Job here reasons with God concerning his dealings,

I. With man in general, *v.* 17, 18. This was either, 1. As a passionate reflection on the divine justice; as if the great God did diminish and disparage Himself, in contending with man. But we mistake God, and the nature of his providence, if we think it any lessening to Him, to notice the meanest of his creatures. Or, 2. As a pious admiration of the condescensions of divine grace, like that, Ps. 8: 4.—144: 3. That such a worm of the earth as man is, should be the darling and favorite of Heaven, is what we have reason for ever to admire.

II. With him in particular. Observe, 1. The complaint of his afflictions, which he here aggravates, and (as we are all too apt to do) makes the worst of, in three expressions; that he was the butt to God's arrows, a burden to himself, and had no intermission of his griefs. How much delight soever we take in ourselves, God can, when He pleases, make us burdens to ourselves. What comfort can we take in ourselves, if God appear against us as an enemy, and we have not comfort in Him? It should seem, Job's distemper lay much in his throat, and almost choked him, *v.* 19. He complains, (*ch.* 30: 18.) that it *bound him about like the collar of his coat.* 'Lord,' says he, 'wilt not thou give some respite, some breathing time?' *ch.* 9: 18.

2. The concern he is in about his sins. (1.) The best men have sin to complain of, and the better they are, the more they will complain of it. God had said of him, that he was a *perfect and an upright man;* yet he says of himself, *I have sinned.* Those may be upright who yet are not sinless; and those who are sincerely penitent are accepted, through a Mediator, as evangelically perfect. Job maintained, against his friends, that he was not a hypocrite, not a wicked man; and yet owns to his God, that he had sinned. If kept from gross acts of sin, it does not follow that we are innocent. His calling God the Observer, or Preserver, of men, may be looked upon as designed for an aggravation of his sin; 'Though God has had his eye on me, on me for good, yet I have sinned against Him.' When in affliction, it is seasonable to confess sin, as its procuring cause. Penitent confessions would drown and silence passionate complaints.

(2.) He seriously inquires how he might make his peace with God; '*What shall I do unto Thee,* having done so much against Thee?' Convinced of sin, we cannot but conclude something must be done, to prevent the fatal consequences of it. And, if truly sensible of the danger we have run ourselves into, we shall be willing to do any thing; to take a pardon on any terms; and therefore shall be *inquisitive as to what we shall do* (Mic. 6: 6, 7.) to God, not to satisfy the demands of his justice, (that is done only by the Mediator,) but to qualify ourselves for the tokens of his favor, according to the tenor of the gospel covenant. 'Thou art the Savior of men; be my Savior, for I cast myself on thy mercy.'

(3.) He earnestly begs for the forgiveness of his sins, *v.* 21. The heat of his spirit, as, on the one hand, it made his complaints the more bitter, so, on the other hand, it made his prayers the more lively and importunate. Surely he means more than barely the removing of his outward trouble, and is herein earnest for the return of God's favor, which he complained of the want of, *ch.* 6: 4. 'Lord, pardon my sins, and give me the comfort of that pardon, and then I can easily bear my afflictions,' Matt. 9: 2. Isa. 33: 24. When the mercy of God pardons the transgression that is committed by us, the grace of God takes away the iniquity that reigns in us. Wherever God removes the guilt of sin, He breaks the power of sin.

(4.) To enforce his prayer for pardon, he pleads the prospect he had of dying quickly; '*For now shall I sleep in the dust:* when it will be too late. If my sins be not pardoned while I live, I am lost and undone for ever.' Note, The consideration of this, that we must shortly die, and perhaps may die suddenly, should make us all very solicitous to get our sins pardoned, and our iniquity taken away.

CHAP. VIII. Job's friends are like Job's messengers; those followed one another close with evil tidings, these with harsh censures: both, unawares, served Satan's design; those to drive him from his integrity, these to drive him from the comfort of it. Eliphaz did not reply to what Job had said in answer to him, but left it to Bildad, whom he knew to be of the same mind with himself in this affair. Those are not the wisest

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The appointed term of our lives is known to God, but *uncertain* to us: while it continues, we have a warfare to accomplish, and a work to do; and our eternal state will be decided accordingly as we acquit ourselves. The believer, by the grace of God, 'fights the good fight of faith,' and performs his appointed service; then rests from his labors, and receives the conqueror's crown, as a gracious recompense from the hand of his merciful Savior.—When conflicting with sore temptations, and burdened with weighty afflictions, we may properly long after the promised rest, and welcome the shadows of the evening, the assaults of sickness, the inroads of old age, and the prospects of dissolution: yet, like valiant soldiers, or patient laborers, we should be willing to endure fatigue and hardship a little longer, and not impatiently desire release from suffering.—But how wretched is sinful man without the knowledge of a Savior! Accumulated miseries may render life intolerable, and fears of future vengeance make the thought of death unspeakably tremendous; or, being hardened in infidelity or despair, a poor sinner may be tempted to plunge himself from temporal into eternal misery. God's condescension and compassion to such worthless worms are infinite: He could crush us in a moment, and we all deserve it; but He visits and chastens us for our good, to exercise and prove our graces, to subdue our iniquities, and to restrain us from sin: and his mercies are far more numerous than the stripes of his correcting rod. —The Lord is our constant *Observer;* but He is also the gracious Savior of all who trust in Him. SCOTT.

Verses 17—19.

It is difficult to expound the language of one, who spoke the dictates of passion, rather than of reason, and whose soul was engaged in a continued conflict between temptation and divine grace; which alternately prevailed, and reciprocally defeated the effects of each other. (*Gal.* 5:16—18.) SCOTT.

(19.) *Swallow my spittle.*] 'Still an Arab proverb, (*Durell,*) and the Spaniards have the same, probably from the Moors. *Poole.*' *Cond: Comm.* 'It imports "I have not time to breathe."' BOOTHR.

Verses 20, 21.

These concluding verses contain a very singular intermixture of faith and unbelief; and this renders it the more difficult to explain them. SCOTT.

(20.) 'Here are exquisite breaks. The afflicted subject of the poem can scarcely refrain from expostulating with the Almighty, and occasionally in a strain too bold and familiar. In v. 17. he suddenly becomes sensible of it, and abruptly breaks off with a rushing conviction of his own insignificance. He again relapses, in v. 19. to the same train of unbecoming expostulation; and here he checks himself with a sudden sense of impropriety.' GOOD.

Preserver.] Rather, *Observer,* as the connection requires. So *Rosenm. Hewlett,* and *Good.* ED.

2 [b] How long wilt thou speak these *things?* and *how long shall* [c] the words of thy mouth *be like* a strong wind?

3 [d] Doth God pervert judgment? or doth [e] the Almighty pervert justice?

4 If thy children have sinned against him, and [f] he have cast them away * for their transgressions;

5 If [g] thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty;

6 If [h] thou *wert* pure and upright; surely now [i] he would awake for thee, and [k] make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.

7 Though [l] thy beginning was small, yet [m] thy latter end should greatly increase.

8 For [n] inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers:

9 (For [o] we *are but of* yesterday, and know † nothing, because our days upon earth *are* a shadow:)

10 [p] Shall not they teach thee, *and* tell thee, and [q] utter words out of their heart?

11 Can the rush grow up without mire? [r] can the flag grow without water?

12 Whilst it *is* * yet

b 11:2,3. 16:3. 18:2. 19:2,3. Ex. 10:3,7. Prov. 1:22.
c 6:9,26. 7:11. 15:2. 1 K. 19:11.
d 4:17. 9:2. 10:3. 19:7. 34:5,17—19. 40:8. Gen. 18:25. Deut. 32:4. 2 Chr. 19:7. Ez. 18:25. 33:17,20. Dan. 9:14. Rom. 2:5. 3:4—6.
e 21:15,20. 34:10—12. 35:13. 40:2. Ps. 99:4. Rev. 15:3. 16:7.
f 1:5,18,19. 5:4. 18:16—19. Gen. 13:13. 19:13—25.
* Heb. *in the hand of.*
g 5:8. 11:13. 22:21—23. 2 Chr. 33:12,13. Is. 55:6,7. Matt. 7:7,8. Heb. 3:7,8. Jam. 4:7—10.
h 1:8. 4:6,7. 11:14,15. 16:17. Ps. 25:8. Prov. 15:8. Is. 1:15—19. 1 Tim. 2:8. 1 John 3:19,22.
i Ps. 44:23. 59:4,5. Is. 51:9.
k 22:23—30. Is. 3:10.
l 42:12,13. Prov. 4:18. Zech. 4:10. Matt. 13:12,31,32.
m Deut. 8:16. Prov. 19:20. Zech. 14:7. 2 Pet. 2:20.
n 12:12. 15:10,18. 32:6,7. Deut. 4:32. 32:7. Ps. 44:1. 78:3,4. Is. 38:19. Rom. 15:4. 1 Cor. 10:11.
o 7:6. Gen. 47:9. 1 Chr. 29:15. Ps. 39:5. 90:4. 102:11. 144:4.
† Heb. *not.*
p 12:7,8. 32:7. Deut. 6:7. 11:19. Ps. 145:4. Hab. 1:4. 12:1.
q Prov. 15:23. 18:15. Matt. 12:35.
r Is. 19:5—7.
s Ps. 129:6,7. Jer. 17:6. Jam. 1:10,11. 1 Pet. 1:24.

of the company, but the weakest rather, who covet to have all the talk. 1 Cor. 14: 30, 31. Eliphaz had undertaken to show, that, because Job was sorely afflicted, he was certainly a wicked man; Bildad is much of the same mind, and will conclude Job a wicked man, unless God do speedily appear for his relief. Here,

V. 1—7. I. Bildad reproves Job for what he had said; (*v.* 2.) checks his passion, but perhaps, (as is too common,) with greater passion. We thought Job spake a great deal of good sense, and much to the purpose, and that he had reason and right on his side; but Bildad, like an eager, angry disputant, turns it all off with this, *How long wilt thou speak these things?* taking it for granted Eliphaz had said enough to silence him, and that therefore all he said was impertinent. Thus (as Caryl observes) reproofs are often grounded on mistakes. Men's meaning is not taken aright, and then they are gravely rebuked, as if they were evil-doers.

II. He justifies God in what He had done. This he had no occasion to do at this time, for Job did not condemn God, as he would have it thought he did: and this he might have done, without reflecting on Job's children, as he does here. Could not he be an advocate for God, but he must be an accuser of his brethren?

1. He is right in general, that *God doth not pervert judgment*, nor ever go contrary to any settled rule of justice, *v.* 3. Far be it from Him that He should, and from us that we should suspect Him. He is God, the Judge; and *shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* Men pervert justice, sometimes, for fear of others; but the Almighty stands in awe of none. Men have respect to the favor of others; but the All-sufficient cannot be benefited by the favor of any. It is man's weakness and impotency, that he often is unjust; it is God's omnipotence, that He cannot be so.

2. Yet he is not fair and candid in the application, *v.* 4. Job readily owned God did not pervert judgment; yet it did not therefore follow, either that his children were cast-aways, or that they died for some great transgression. It is true, we and our children have sinned against God, and we ought to justify Him in all He brings on us and ours; but extraordinary afflictions are not always the punishment of extraordinary sins, but sometimes the trial of extraordinary graces; and, in our judgment of another's case, (unless the contrary appears,) we ought to take the more favorable side, as our Savior directs, Luke 13: 2, 4. Here Bildad missed it.

III. He puts Job in hope, that, if indeed upright, as he said, he should yet see a good issue of his troubles, *v.* 5—7. This may be taken as designed, either,

1. To prove Job a hypocrite, and wicked man, though not by the greatness, yet by the continuance, of his afflictions; in which Bildad was not in the right; for a good man may be afflicted for his trial, not only very sorely, but very long, and yet, if for life, it is, in comparison with eternity, but for a moment. But, since Bildad put it to this issue, God was pleased to join issue with him, and proved his servant Job an honest man, by Bildad's own argument; for, soon after, He blessed his latter end more than his beginning. Or,

2. To direct and encourage Job, that he might not thus despair; yet there might be hope, if he would take the right course. I am apt to think, Bildad here intended to condemn Job, yet would be thought to counsel and comfort him. (1.) He gives him good counsel, yet perhaps not expecting he would take it; the same Eliphaz had given him, (*ch.* 5: 8.) to seek unto God, and that betimes, that is, speedily and seriously, and not to be dilatory and trifling in his return and repentance. He advises him not to complain, but to petition, and to make his supplication to the Almighty with humility and faith; and to see that there was (what he feared had hitherto been wanting) sincerity in his heart, and honesty in his house. Ps. 66: 18. It is only the prayer of the upright, that is the acceptable and prevailing prayer, Prov. 15: 8. (2.) He gives him good hopes, he should yet again see good days, secretly suspecting, however, he was not qualified to see them.

V. 8—19. Bildad here discourses well of the sad catastrophe of hypocrites and evil-doers, and the fatal period of all their hopes and joys. He will not be so bold as to say, with Eliphaz, that none that were righteous were ever cut off thus; (*ch.* 4: 7.) yet he takes it for granted, God, in the course of his providence, does ordinarily bring wicked men, who seemed pious, and were prosperous, to shame and ruin in this world; and that, by making their prosperity short, He discovers their piety to be counterfeit. Whether this will certainly prove, that all who are thus ruined must be concluded to have been hypocrites, he will not say, but rather suspects and thinks the application is easy.

I. He proves this truth, of the certain destruction of all the hopes and joys of hypocrites, by an appeal to antiquity, and the concurring sentiment and observation of all wise and good men. It is an undoubted truth, if we take in the other world. Blessed be God, now that we have the Word of God in writing, and are directed to search that, we need not *inquire of the former age*, nor prepare ourselves to the *search of their fathers;* for, though we ourselves are but of yesterday, the word of God in the Scripture is as nigh us as them; (Rom. 10: 8.) and it is the most sure word of prophecy, to which we must take heed. If we study and keep God's precepts, we may by them *understand more than the ancients*, Ps. 119: 99, 100. though we do not live so long as they of the former age, to make observations on the methods of Providence. Note, 1. For the right understanding of Divine Providence, and the difficulties of it, it will be of use to compare the observations and experiences of former ages with the events of our own day; and, in order thereunto, to consult history, especially the sacred history, which is the most ancient, infallibly true, and written designedly for our learning. 2. They that would fetch knowledge from the former ages, must search diligently, prepare for the search, and take pains in the search. 3. Those words are most likely to reach the hearts of learners, that come from the hearts of teachers, *v.* 10. They shall teach thee best, that utter words *out of their heart*, that speak by experience, and not by rote, of spiritual and divine things.

Patrick suggests, that Bildad has a particular respect to the rewards which the blessings of God secured to the posterity of faithful Abraham, his ancestor, who hitherto, and long after, continued in his religion; he refers also to the judicial extirpation of those eastern people, neighbors to Job, (in whose country they were settled,) for their wickedness: whence he infers, that it is God's usual way to prosper the just, and root out the wicked, though for awhile they flourish.

II. He illustrates this truth by similitudes. The hopes and joys of hypocrites are here compared,

1. To a rush or flag, *v.* 11—13. The hypocrite cannot gain his hope without some false, rotten ground or other, out of which to raise it, and with which to support it and keep it alive, any more than the rush can grow without mire, *v.* 11—15. He grounds it on his worldly prosperity, the plausible profession he makes of religion, the good opinion of his neighbors, and his own good conceit of himself, which are no solid foundation on which to build his confidence. It is all but

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII. V. 4—7. Perhaps Bildad intended to distinguish between the case of Job, and that of his children, in order to show there was yet hope for him, though not for them: but many think he designed to warn him, by the example of sudden vengeance thus set before him. (*Notes*, 1:5, 13, 18, 19. 4:7—11. 5:3—5.)—(*Notes*, 5:8—16. 22:21—30.) SCOTT.

(4.) *For.*] Heb. *In the hand of*, marg. 'In the very act or practice of.' GOOD.

Verses 8—10.

It has been observed, that Job and his friends actually possessed all that superiority of knowledge on every useful subject, especially on things relating to true religion, which has been groundlessly ascribed to the Egyptians, and others: and that they traced this knowledge back to the tradition of the fathers, or patriarchs; i. e. to traditional revelation. SCOTT.

Verses 11, 19.

It seems to have been Bildad's design, in this passage, to represent,

in his greenness, *and* not cut down, it withereth before any *other* herb.

13 So *are* the paths of all [t] that forget God; and [u] the hypocrite's hope shall perish:

14 Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust *shall be* a spider's [*] web.

15 He shall lean upon his house, but [x] it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.

16 He *is* [y] green before the sun, and [z] his branch shooteth forth in his garden.

17 His [a] roots are wrapped about the heap, *and* seeth the place of stones.

18 If [b] he destroy him from his place, then *it* shall deny him, *saying*, I have not seen thee.

19 Behold, [c] this *is* the joy of his way, and [d] out of the earth shall others grow.

20 Behold, [e] God will not cast away a perfect *man*, neither will he † help the evil doers:

21 Till [f] he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with ‡ rejoicing.

22 They that hate thee shall be [g] clothed with shame; and the dwelling place of the wicked shall § come to nought.

t Deut. 6:12. 8:11,14,19. Ps. 9:17. 10: 4. 50:22. Is. 51:13.

u 11:20. 13:16. 15:34. 20:5. 27:8—10. 36:13. Prov. 12:7. Is. 33:14. Lam. 3:18. Matt. 24:51. Luke 12: 1,2.

* Heb. *house.* Is. 59:5,6.

x 18:14. 27:18. Ps. 52:5—7. 112:10. Prov. 10:28. Matt. 7:24—27. Luke 6:47—49.

mire and water; and the hope that grows out of it, is but rush and flag. It may look green and gay for a while, (the rush out-grows the grass,) but it is light, and hollow, and empty, and good for nothing. It is green for show, but of no use. It withers presently, *before any other herb*, *v.* 12. even while in its greenness. The best state of hypocrites and evil-doers borders on withering; even when it is green, it is going. *So are the paths of all that forget God*, *v.* 13. Note, Forgetfulness of God is at the bottom of men's hypocrisy, and of the vain hopes they flatter and deceive themselves with in their hypocrisy. Men would not be hypocrites, if they did not *forget* that the God with whom they have to do searches the heart, and requires truth there; that He is a Spirit, and has his eye on our spirits. Hypocrites could have no hope, if they did not *forget* that God is righteous, and will not be mocked with the torn and the lame.

2. To a spider's web, or a spider's *house*, marg. a cob-web, *v.* 14, 15. The hope of the hypocrite is woven out of his own bowels, it is the creature of his own fancy, and arises merely from a conceit of his own merit and sufficiency. There is a great difference between the work of the bee and that of the spider; a diligent Christian, like the laborious bee, fetches in all his comfort from the heavenly dews of God's Word; but the hypocrite, like the subtle spider, weaves his out of a false hypothesis of his own, concerning God, as if He were altogether such a one as himself. He is very fond of it, as the spider of her web; pleases himself with it, wraps himself in it, calls it his house, *leans upon it*, and *holds it fast*. It is said of the spider, that *she takes hold with her hands, and is in king's palaces*, Prov. 30: 28. So does a carnal worldling hug himself in the fulness and firmness of his outward prosperity; he prides himself in that house as his palace, and fortifies himself in it as his castle, and makes use of it as the spider of her web, to insnare those he has a mind to prey upon. So does a formal professor; he flatters himself in his own eyes, doubts not of his salvation, is secure of heaven, and cheats the world with his vain confidences. But his hope will easily and certainly be swept away, as the cob-web with the besom, when God shall come to purge his house. Thus his hope will be cut off, his web, that refuge of lies, swept away, and he crushed in it.

3. To a flourishing and well-rooted tree. The secure and prosperous sinner may think himself wronged when compared to a rush and a flag, he thinks he has a better root; 'We will allow him his conceit,' (says Bildad,) 'give him all advantage, yet bring him in suddenly cut off.' See the tree fixed, and taking deep root, in a garden-soil, protected by a garden wall, never likely to be overthrown by stormy winds, for his roots are interwoven with the stones, *v.* 17. it grows in firm ground, not as the rush, in mire and water. But see this tree felled and forgotten notwithstanding; *destroyed from his place*, (*v.* 18.) and so entirely extirpated, that there shall remain no sign or token where it grew; the very place shall say, *I have not seen thee;* and the standers-by shall say the same, *I sought him, but he could not be found*, Ps. 37: 36. Mal. 4: 1. *This is the joy*, i. e. the end and conclusion, *of the wicked man's way*, (*v.* 19.) this is that which all his joy comes to—*The way of the ungodly shall perish.* But shall he not leave a family behind him to enjoy what he has? No, *out of the earth*, (not out of his roots,) *shall others grow*, that are nothing akin to him, and shall fill up his place, and rule over that for which he labored. Others, namely, of the same spirit and disposition, shall grow up in his place, and be quite as secure, not warned by his fall. The way of worldlings is their folly, yet there is a race of those that *approve their sayings*, Ps. 49: 13.

V. 20—22. Bildad here, in the close of his discourse, sums up what he had to say, in a few words, setting before Job life and death, the blessing and the curse; assuring him, that as he was, so he should fare, and therefore they might conclude, that as he fared, so he was.

1. On the one hand, if he were a perfect, upright man, God would not *cast him away*, *v.* 20. Though the sun of the righteous set under a cloud, yet it shall rise again clear, never more to be clouded. It is true, also, that the enemies of the saints will be clothed with shame, when they see them crowned with honor. But it does not therefore follow, that, if Job were not perfectly restored to his former prosperity, he forfeited the character of a perfect man.

2. On the other hand, if a wicked man, and an evil doer, God would not help him, but leave him to

y 21:7—15. Ps. 37:35,36. 73:3—12.

z 5:3.

a 18:16. 29:19. Is. 5:24. 40:24. Jer. 12:1,2. Mark 11:20. Jude 12.

b 7:10. 20:9. Ps. 37:10,36. 73:18,19. 92:7.

c 20:5. Matt. 13:20,21.

d 1 Sam. 2:8. Ps. 75:7. 113:7. Ez. 17:24.

e 4:7. 9:22. Ps. 37:24,37.

† Heb. *take the ungodly by the hand.* Is. 45:1.

f Gen. 21:6. Ps. 126:2,6. Luke 6:21.

‡ Heb. *shouting for joy.* Ezra 3:11—13. Neh. 12:43. Ps. 32:11. 98:4. 100: 1. Is. 65:13,14.

g Ps. 35:26. 109:29. 132:18. 1 Pet. 5:5.

§ Heb. *not be.* 18. 7:21.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Even in *religious* controversies, it is common for men to treat each other with acrimony, and their opponents with contempt; to overlook what is evidently good; to make the worst of what is apparently faulty; and to charge horrible consequences on very inoffensive tenets.—There is a way, which some have, of bringing odium on the sentiments of those who oppose them, by attempting to show that they impute injustice, cruelty, or tyranny to the Almighty, which is calculated to shock every pious mind. Truth needs not, and error ought not, to be thus defended. We are not competent to judge in most cases, what it becomes the universal and everlasting Sovereign to do. We should believe assuredly that He is just, wise, and good, in those dispensations which exceed our comprehension; and wait for the 'day of the revelation of his righteous judgment' to the assembled world. Nay, even when doctrines may evidently be *proved* inconsistent with the divine perfections, as well as with Scripture, it becomes us to treat such subjects with great reverence, modesty, and caution. On every occasion, waving all topics foreign to the subject, we should exhort the afflicted to 'seek the LORD,' without delay, by earnest prayer; and we should encourage them with the prospect of returning comfort from his power and mercy.—We should, indeed, diligently inquire into the sentiments of wise men in other ages; but all human authority, whether of ancient fathers or modern reasoners, must be submitted to the decision of the sacred oracles. SCOTT.

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by various similitudes, the apparent piety, and the fading prosperity, of the hypocrite; and to insinuate, that this was applicable to the case of Job. In general, the hypocrite's religion, and the ungodly man's prosperity, having no firm support, are precarious and of short duration: yet, as to this present world, every general rule admits of many exceptions; and the illustrations adduced were wholly inapplicable to the case of Job. SCOTT.

(11.) *Rush.*] *Gama.* 'The Egyptian flag *papyrus*.' [Note and cut, Ex. 2:3.] Dr. A. *Clarke.* 'The paper reed.' *Good. Boothr. Sept. Flag.*] *Achu.* 'A species of reed growing near the Nile.' *Parkhurst.* COND. COMM.

(17.) *Wrapped.*] 'A metaphor of a flourishing tree, the root firmly twined in the stones.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* 'With a bed of stones (a stony soil) shall he grapple, Utterly shall it drink him up from his place.' *Good.* Others, differently; but all unsatisfactorily. Perhaps it refers to encircling a tree with a *heap* (*gal*) of stones, to support the earth about it, or defend it, or to a mode of planting like ours, with stones about the roots, either large ones, at the surface of the soil, to shade the roots and steady the young tree; or small stones just below the surface, and above the roots, to let the moisture down upon them, and prevent its stay in the upper layer of the soil, to be evaporated: these stones also keep the soil open. Some trees, as the olive, grow best in a rocky soil. The phrase needs illustration. *Rosenm.* refers it to a prosperity soon checked; as a tree, that, penetrating through good earth in which it flourished, on extending its roots, for the greater nourishment its rapid growth requires, strikes upon a stony soil and starves quickly. ED.

Verses 20—22.

(1:1. *John* 1:47—51.) Bildad seems to have formed in his mind a fixed rule of Providence concerning this. Yet there was a fallacy in his reasoning, and that of his friends, arising from their not distinguishing between *the present state of trial* and discipline, and *the future state of retributions*. Hence they concluded, that Job denied the justice of God and the advantages of piety; because he maintained that, in this world, wicked men often prospered, and godly men were afflicted. SCOTT.

CHAP. IX.

Job acknowledges and celebrates God's justice, wisdom, power, and wonderful works, 1—13. He disclaims all attempts to justify himself, 14—21; but insists, that a man's innocency should not be judged of, by what befalls him in this world, 22—24. He alleges his sufferings, but will not presume to dispute with the Author of them, 25—35.

THEN Job answered and said,

2 I know *it is* so of a truth: but [a] how should man be just * with God?

3 If [b] he will contend with him, [c] he cannot answer him one of a thousand.

4 *He is* [d] wise in heart, and mighty in strength: [e] who hath hardened *himself* against him, and hath prospered?

5 Which [f] removeth the mountains, and they know not; [g] which overturneth them in his anger;

6 Which [h] shaketh the earth out of her place, and [i] the pillars thereof tremble;

7 Which [k] commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and [l] sealeth up the stars;

8 Which [m] alone spreadeth out the heavens, and [n] treadeth upon the † waves of the sea:

9 Which [o] maketh ‡ Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and [p] the chambers of the south;

10 Which doeth [q] great things past finding out; yea, and [r] wonders without number.

11 Lo, [s] he goeth by me, and I see *him* not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.

12 Behold [t] he taketh away, who can § hinder him? who will say unto him, [u] What doest thou?

13 *If* God will not withdraw his anger, [x] the ‖ proud helpers do stoop under him.

perish in his present distresses, *v.* 20, 22. Here, also, it is true God *will not help the evil-doers;* they throw themselves out of his protection, and forfeit his favor; He will *not take the ungodly by the hand,* (so the marg.) have fellowship and communion with them: lend them his hand to pull them out of the miseries, the eternal miseries, into which they have plunged themselves; they will then stretch out their hand to Him for help, but it is too late. Sin brings ruin on persons and families. Yet to argue, (as Bildad, I doubt, slily does,) that because Job's family was sunk, and he himself, at present, seemed helpless, therefore he certainly was an ungodly, wicked man, was neither just nor charitable, as long as there appeared no other evidence of his wickedness and ungodliness. Let us judge nothing before the time, but wait till the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest; and the present difficulties of Providence be solved, to universal and everlasting satisfaction, when the *mystery of God shall be finished.*

CHAP. IX. V. 1—13. In this, and the following chapter, we have Job's answer to Bildad's discourse, wherein he speaks honorably of God, humbly of himself, and feelingly of his troubles; but not one word by way of reflection on his friends, or their unkindness to him, nor in direct reply to what Bildad had said. He wisely keeps to the merits of the cause, and makes no remarks on the person that managed it, nor seeks occasion against him. Job makes no answer to Bildad's rebuke to him for talking so much, though it had been easy to retort it on himself; but his principle, that God never perverts judgment, Job agrees to, *v.* 2. Note, We should not slight, much less resist, a truth, though produced by an adversary, and urged against us, but receive it in the light and love of it, though it have been misapplied. Some understand this as a passionate complaint of God's strictness and severity; and it cannot be denied there are in this ch. some peevish expressions, which seem to speak such language as that. But I take this rather as a pious confession of man's sinfulness, and his own in particular, that if God should deal with any of us according to the desert of our iniquities, we were certainly undone.

I. He lays this down for a truth, that man is an infinitely unequal match for his Maker, either in dispute or combat: yet wicked men harden themselves against God, dispute his wisdom, disobey his laws, are impenitent for their sins, and incorrigible under their afflictions; they reject the offers of his grace, and resist the strivings of his Spirit; they make nothing of his threatenings, and make head against his interest in the world; but they are only *treasuring up for themselves wrath.* They that roll this stone, will find it return on them.

II. The devil promised himself that Job, in the day of his affliction, would curse God, and speak ill of Him, but, instead of that, he sets himself to honor God, and to speak highly of Him As much pained as he is, and as much taken up with his own miseries, when he has occasion to mention the wisdom and power of God, he forgets his complaints, dwells with delight, and expatiates with a flood of eloquence, on that noble, useful subject.

Evidences of the wisdom and power of God he fetches,

1. From the kingdom of nature. (1.) It is sufficient to say, Job here speaks of what God can do, in the kingdom of nature; but if we must understand it of what He has done in fact, all these vs. may perhaps be applied to Noah's flood, when the mountains of the earth were shaken, and the sun and stars were darkened. The world that now is, we believe to be reserved for that fire which will consume the mountains, and melt the earth with its fervent heat, and which will turn the sun into darkness. As long as God pleases, He preserves the settled course and order of nature; and this is a continued creation. He Himself, alone, *spreads out the heaven, v.* 8. i. e. keeps them spread out; otherwise they would roll together like a scroll of parchment. *He treads upon the waves of the sea;* i. e. suppresses them and keeps them under, that they return not to deluge the earth; (Ps. 104:9.) which is given as a reason why we should all fear God, and stand in awe of Him, Jer. 5:22. Ps. 93:4.—65:7. He makes the constellations; three are named for all the rest, *v.* 9. i. e. not only those stars which we see and give names to, but those also in the other hemisphere, about the antarctic pole, which never come in our sight, called here *the chambers of the south,* are under the divine

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a 4:17. 14:3,4. 25:4. 32:2. 33:9. 34:5. 1 K. 8:46. Ps. 130:3. 143:2. Rom. 3:20.
* Or, *before.*
b 20,32,33. 10:2. 23:3—7. 31:35—37. 33:13. 34:14,15. 40:2. Is. 57:15,16. Rom. 9:20.
c Ps. 19:12. 40:12. 1 John 1:8. 3:20.
d 19. 36:5. Ps. 104:24. 136:5. Dan. 2:20. 4:34—37. Rom. 11:33. Eph. 1:8,19. 3:10,20. Jude 24,25.
e 8:10. 15:23—27. 40:9. Ex. 9:14—17. 14:17,18. Prov. 28:14. 29:1. Dan. 5:20—30. 1 Cor. 10:22.
f 28:9. Ps. 46:2. 68:8. 114:6. Is. 40:12. Hab. 3:6,10. Zech. 4:7. Matt. 21:21. 1 Cor. 13:2. Rev. 6:14. 11:13.
g Nah. 1:5,6. Zech. 14:4,5. Matt. 27:51. Luke 21:11. Rev. 16:18—20.
h Is. 2:19,21. 13:13,14. 24:1,19,20. Hag. 2:6,21. Heb. 12:26. Rev. 20:11.
i 26:11. 38:4—7. 1 Sam. 2:8. Ps. 75:3. 114:7. Jer. 4:24. Joel 2:10.
k Ex. 10:21,22. Dan. 4:35. Am. 4:13. 8:9. Matt. 24:29.
l 37:7. 38:12—15,19,20. Is. 13:10. Ez. 32:7. Luke 21:25,26.
m 37:18. Gen. 1:6,7. Ps. 33:6. 104:2,3. Is. 40:22. 42:5. 44:24. Jer. 10:11. Zech. 12:1.
n 38:11. Ps. 93:3,4. Matt. 14:25—30. John 6:19.
† Heb. *heights.*
o 38:31,32. Gen. 1:16. Ps. 147:4. Am 5:8.
‡ Heb. *Ash, Cecil, and Cimah.*
p Ps. 104:3,13. Acts 28:13.
q 5:9. 26:12—14. 37:23. Ps. 71:15 72:18. Ec. 3:11. Is. 40:26—28. Rom. 11:33. Eph. 3:20.
r Ex. 15:11. Ps. 136:4. Dan. 4:2,3.
s 23:8,9. 35:14. Ps. 77:19. 1 Tim. 6:16.
t 23:13. 54:29. Dan. 4:35. Eph. 1:11.
§ Heb. *turn him away?* 11:10.
u 33:13. Is. 45:9. Jer. 18:6. Matt. 11:26. 20:15. Rom. 9:18—20. 11:34.
x 26:12. 40:9—11. Is. 30:7. 31:2,3. Jam. 4:6,7.
‖ Heb. *helpers of pride,* or, *strength.*

NOTES.

CHAP. IX. V. 4—13. No allusion appears to be made, in this passage, to the miraculous displays of the divine power recorded in Scripture, except it be to the convulsions of the deluge.—'The chambers of the south,' may mean those stars, seen in the S. hemisphere, but not in the N. or those which only appear in the S. at certain seasons of the year. (38:31—41. *Am.* 5:7—9.) SCOTT.

(9.) *Arcturus, Orion, Pleiades.*] *Ash, Kesyl, Kymah.* Sept. *pleiades, hesperos, arktouros:* but in 38:31. they render *Kymah* by *pleiades, Kesyl* by *orion,* and *Aysh* by *hesperos.* Thus they had no exact ideas of the Heb. words. Vulg. *Arcturus, Orion, Hyades.* ASIL.] 'The constellation of "the Great bear." [And so *Mich.*] Niebuhr remarks, that not only the Sanaensian Jews, and those of Bagdad, but also the Arabs of the Persian Gulf, call the great bear *asch.*' ROSENM. *Ash* in Arabic means a bier, or sarcophagus, and the 4 stars in the 'bear' are resembled, by the Arabs, to a bier, and the 3 of the tail of the bear are figured as the children of the deceased following the funeral. Arcturus rises in the beginning of Sept. at which time the year commenced with all ancient nations. *Bochart, Mich. Rosenm.* KESYL.] The Heb. may denote the unsettled state of the weather, and the great changes which, in all climates, were supposed to attend this constellation. *Hewlett.* KYMAH, (the Pleiades, the 7 stars.) The Heb. is supposed to convey the idea of the genial heat which warms and ripens the fruits of the earth, and hence is rendered Pleiades. These constellations introduced autumn, winter, and spring, appearing then above the horizon. *Gill, Hewlett, Cond. Comm.* 'Homer mentions as famous, Pleiades, Hyades, Orion, and Arktos; and *Virgil,* Arcturus, Hyades, Triones and Orion.' *Rosenm. Hales* makes 'Chimah and Chesil, (Taurus and Scorpio) to be the cardinal constellations of spring and autumn, in Job's time. Their principal stars are Aldebaran, the bull's eye, and Antares, the scorpion's heart.' From their place he calculates the time of Job. 'The earth's equatorial diam. is 37 miles larger than its polar diam. or axis. As more matter is accumulated all round the equatorial parts of the earth than elsewhere, the sun and moon, when on either side of the equator, by attracting this redundant matter, which forms, as it were, a ring or belt round the earth, *bring the equator sooner under them, in every* return towards it, than if there was no such accumulation; and produce a retrogression of its intersections with the plane of the ecliptic (of 1° in 71½ yrs.) similar to, but much slower than, the retrogression of the moon's nodes. See *Newton,* and *Hutton's* Dict. From this "*Precession of the Equinoxes,*" or shifting of the equinoctial points backwards, and with these all the signs of the ecliptic, it follows, that those stars, which, in the infancy of *Grecian* astronomy, were in *Aries* are now found in *Taurus,* in Gemini, &c. In consequence of which, the stars that rose or set at particular seasons of the year, in the times of *Job, Hesiod,* &c. no longer correspond to those particular seasons at present. The difference of ancient and modern longitudes, if known, will easily give the difference of times. [By this Hales thinks to confirm his calculations, that] Job lived B. C. 2337; or, 818 yrs. after the deluge; 184 years before the birth of Abraham; 474 yrs. before Jacob settled in Egypt; and 689 yrs. before the exodus.' *Hales.* See more, Introd. p. 11. vol. I. *Chambers of the S.*] 'As the stars of the S. hemisphere never appear to our sight, Job speaks of *chaderey teman,* penetralia Austri, (inmost recesses of the S.) as if those stars withdrew from sight, to their chambers or secret recesses.' ROSENM. ED.

14 [y] How much less [z] shall I answer him, *and* [a] choose out my words *to reason* with him?

15 Whom, [b] though I were righteous, *yet* would I not answer, *but* [c] I would make supplication to [d] my Judge.

16 If [e] I had called, and he had answered me; *yet* [f] would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice.

17 For [g] he breaketh me with a tempest, and [h] multiplieth my wounds [i] without cause.

18 He [k] will not suffer me to take my breath, but [l] filleth me with bitterness.

19 If *I speak* of strength, lo, [m] *he is* strong: and if of judgment, [n] who shall set me a time *to plead*?

20 If I [o] justify myself, [p] mine own mouth shall condemn me: if *I say*, [q] I *am* perfect, [r] it shall also prove me perverse.

21 *Though* I *were* perfect, *yet* [s] would I not know my soul: [t] I would despise my life.

22 This *is* one *thing*, therefore I said *it*, [u] He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.

23 If [x] the scourge

y 4:19. 25:6. 1 K. 8:27.
z 11:4,5.
a 23:4,7. 33:5.
b 10:15. 1 Cor. 4:4.
c 5:8. 8:5. 10:2. 22:27. 34:31,32. 1 K. 8:38,39. 2 Chr. 33:13. Jer. 31:9. Dan. 9:3,18.
d 23:7. 1 Pet. 2:23.
e Ps. 18:6. 66:18—20. 116:1,2.
f 29:24. Ex. 6:9. Judg. 6:13. Ps. 126: 1. Luke 24:41. Acts 12:14—16.
g 18:14. Ps. 29:5. 42:7. 83:15. Is. 28:17. Jer. 23:19. Ez. 13:13. Matt. 7:27. 12:20.
h 1:14—19. 2:7,13.
i 2:3. 16:17. 34:6. Ps. 25:3. John 9:3. 15:25.
k 7:19. Ps. 39:13. 88:7,15—18. Lam. 3:3,8.
l 3:20. Lam. 3:15,19. Heb. 12:11.
m See on 4—36:17—19. 40:9,10. Ps. 62:11. Matt. 6:13. 1 Cor. 1:25. 1:22.
n 32,33. 31:35. 33:5—7.
o 2. 4:17. 32:1,2. Ps. 130:3. 143:2. Luke 10:29. 16:15.
p 15:5,6. 34:35. 35:16. Prov. 1:19. Is. 6:5. Matt. 12:36,37. Jam. 3:2.
q 1:1. Phil. 3:12—15.
r 33:3—13. Prov. 17:20. 1 Tim. 6:5.
s Ps. 139:23,24. Prov. 28:26. Jer. 17: 9,10. 1 Cor. 4:4. 1 John 2:20.
t 7,15,16,21.
u Ec. 9:1,2. Ez. 21:3,4. Luke 13:2—4.
x 1.13—19. 2.7.

direction and dominion. How wise is He then, and how mighty!

2. Consider what God does in the kingdom of providence, that special providence which is conversant about the affairs of men; the government of the world; and you will say, He is *wise in heart*, and *mighty in strength*. Job here says *v.* 10. the same Eliphaz had said; (*ch.* 5: 9.) in the original, the very same words, not declining to speak after him, though now his antagonist.

3. He acts invisibly and undiscerned, (*v.* 11.) with an incontestable sovereignty, (*v.* 12.) and an irresistible power, *v.* 13. The operations of second causes [*God's natural laws*, as Doddridge calls them, Ed.] are commonly obvious to sense, but God doeth all about us, and yet *we see Him not*, Acts 17: 23. Our finite understandings cannot comprehend the measures He takes. We are incompetent judges of God's proceedings. Their meaning we know not now; it will be time enough to know hereafter; when it will appear, that what seemed now to be done by prerogative, was done in infinite wisdom, and for the best.

V. 14—21. What Job had said of man's utter inability to contend with God, he here applies to himself, and, in effect, despairs of gaining his favor; which (some think) arises from the hard thoughts he had of God, as One who, having set Himself against him, right or wrong, would be too hard for him. I rather think it arises from his sense of the imperfection of his own righteousness; and his dark and cloudy apprehensions, at present, of God's displeasure against him.

1. He dares not dispute with God, *v.* 14. If the potter make the clay into a vessel of dishonor, or break in pieces the vessel he has made, shall the clay or the broken vessel reason with him?

2. He dares not insist on his own justification before God. Though he vindicated his own integrity to his friends, and would not yield that he was a hypocrite and a wicked man, as they suggested, yet he would never plead it as his righteousness before God. I will never venture on the covenant of innocency, nor think to come off by virtue of that. He will, therefore, only *make supplication to his Judge*, i. e. cast himself on *God's mercy*. He had no reason to think there was any thing in his prayers to recommend them to the divine acceptance, or to fetch in an answer of peace; but it must be attributed purely to the grace and compassion of God, who answers *before* we call, and not *because* we call, and gives gracious answers *to* our prayers, but not *for* our prayers, *v.* 16. He did it purely for his own name's sake. Patrick expounds it; 'If I had made supplication, and He had granted my desire, I would not think my prayer had done the business.' *Not for your sakes, be it known to you.*

His present miseries, which God had brought him into, notwithstanding his integrity, gave him too sensible a conviction, that, in the ordering and disposing of men's outward condition in this world, God acts by sovereignty; and though He never doeth wrong to any, yet the best do not always fare best, nor the worst, worst, in this life, because He reserves the full and exact distribution of rewards and punishments for the future state. Job was not conscious of any extraordinary guilt, and yet fell under extraordinary afflictions, *v.* 17, 18. Every man must expect a cross daily, and to taste sometimes of the bitter cup; but poor Job's troubles came so thick upon him, that he had no breathing time; and he presumes to say, that all this was without cause, without any great provocation given. We have made the best of what Job said hitherto, though contrary to the judgment of many good interpreters; but here, no doubt, he *spake unadvisedly*; he reflected on God's goodness, in saying he was not suffered to take his breath, while yet he had such good use of his reason and speech to be able to talk thus; and on his justice, in saying that it was without cause. Yet it is true, that, as, on the one hand, there are many who are chargeable with more sin than the common infirmities of the human nature, and yet feel no more sorrow than that of the common calamities of human life; so, on the other hand, there are many who feel more than the common calamities of human life, and yet are conscious of no more than the common infirmities of human nature.

He was in no capacity at all to make his part good by arms, or arguments (*v.* 19.); and he knew so much of himself, he durst not stand a trial, *v.* 20, 21. A good man, who knows the deceitfulness of his own heart, and is jealous over it with a godly jealousy, and has often discovered that amiss there, which had long lain undiscovered, is suspicious of more evil in himself than he is really conscious of, and therefore will by no means think of justifying himself before God. If we say, 'We have no sin,' we not only deceive ourselves, but we affront God, for we sin in saying so, and give the lie to the Scripture, which has concluded all under sin. In short, it is folly to contend with God; and our wisdom, as well as duty, to submit to Him, and throw ourselves at his feet.

V. 22—24. Here Job touches briefly on the main point now in dispute between him and his friends. They maintained, that those who are righteous and good always prosper in this world, and none but the wicked are in misery and distress; he asserted, on the contrary, that it is a common thing for the wicked to prosper, and the righteous to be greatly afflicted: this is the one thing, the chief thing, wherein he and his friends differed; and they had not proved their assertion; therefore he abides by his; 'I said it, and say it again, that all things come alike to all.' * Now it must be owned,

1. That there is very much truth in what Job here means; that temporal judgments fall both on good and bad, and the destroying angel seldom distinguishes. In the judgment of Sodom, indeed, (called *the vengeance of eternal fire*, Jude 7:) far be it from God to *slay the righteous with the wicked, and that the righteous should be as the wicked;* but in judgments merely temporal, the righteous have their share, and sometimes the greatest share. The sword devours one as well as another, Josiah as well as Ahab. Thus God *destroys the perfect and the wicked*, involves them both in the same common ruin; good and bad were sent together into Babylon, Jer. 24: 5, 9. If the scourge slay suddenly, and sweep down all before it, God will be well pleased to see how the same scourge, which is the perdition of the wicked, is the trial of the innocent, and of their faith, which *will be found unto praise, and honor, and glory*, 1 Pet. 1: 7. Ps. 66: 10. To show their constant and their God-like mind, Not by afflictions broken, but refined. (*Blackmore.*) Let this reconcile God's children to their

* Here let it be again remarked, that there is impropriety, on the one hand, in denying a disciplining, special Providence, and supposing *every thing* to be left to take place according to natural laws, fixed by God, and this 'nature,' or these laws to be left to itself, or themselves; and, on the other hand, in superstitiously expecting a miraculous delivery from the influence of God's physical or organic laws, when a pious person chooses to neglect to discover, or attend to, such laws of his constitution. God is all in all, yet in mercy to us He has constituted us with faculties which can discover our relations to the universe; and as our every action, and our existence itself, depends on that conviction of reason, that 'like causes produce like effects,' God does not break his established order of our experience, lest our reason become useless, and we bewildered in ignorance, superstition, misery and despair. Miracles are the exception, but perhaps only to our finite experience and comprehension. Notes, Ex. 4: 11. Lev. 26: 1, 2.—&c. *Ed.*

Verses 14—21.

Job did not *know his own soul*, as his heart-searching Judge did: therefore he would despise his own life; and submit to any sentence, rather than contend with the Majesty of heaven. (1 *Cor.* 4:3—5.)—There is in this passage a great deal of truth, as well as sound reasoning, and honorable thoughts of God; yet there is also a considerable tincture of unbelief and despondency.—Some hope in the divine mercy seems implied; but that attribute is not mentioned, and Job was only just supported from sinking into despair. Those who know something of Satan's dark temptations, when the soul is filled with horrible thoughts of God, which tend to subvert the foundations of hope, will, from their own distressing experience, better understand Job's meaning, than from any unexperienced commentator. Had they at such times been urged to speak, their discourse would have contained a similar conflict between hard and honorable thoughts of God; between gloomy despondency and feeble hope; rebellious murmurs and a desire to submit, conscious that it was their duty so to do. (*Jer.* 20:10—18.)—*Without cause.* (17) *Notes*, 1—3. *Ps.* 25:2, 3. Scott.

(16.) *If I called*, &c.] '"Should I summon and He make answer?" The terms in this and the two preceding vs. are forensic, referring to processes at the *gate* or court of justice.' *Good.* Note, p. 662. vol. I. on Jewish *judicial procedure.* Ed.

Verses 22—24.

Job may be understood to speak figuratively of the *scourge*, as *laughing* at distinctions in the characters of the sufferers.—Who can maintain, that this is a state of exact retribution? (12:6—10. 21:7—

slay suddenly, [y] he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.

24 The [z] earth is given into the hand of the wicked: [a] he covereth the faces of the judges thereof; [b] if not, where, *and* who *is* he?

25 ¶ Now my days are [c] swifter than a post: [d] they flee away, they see no good.

26 They are passed away as the * swift ships: [e] as the eagle *that* hasteth to the prey.

27 If I say, [f] I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort *myself;*

28 I am [g] afraid of all my sorrows, [h] I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.

29 *If* I [i] be wicked, why then labor I in vain?

30 If [k] I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean;

31 Yet [l] shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and [m] mine own clothes shall † abhor me.

32 For *he is* [n] not a man, as I *am, that* I should answer him, *and*

y 4:7. 8:20. 2 Sam. 24:15,17. Ps. 44: 22. Ez. 14:19—21. 21:13. Heb. 11: 36,37.
z 12:6—10. 21:7—15. Ps. 17:14. 73: 3—7. Jer. 12:1,2. Dan. 4:17. 5:18—21. 7:7,&c. Hab. 1:14—17.
a 2 Sam. 15:30. 19:4. Esth. 6:12. 7: 8. Jer. 14:4.
b 24:25. 32:2.
c 7:6,7. Esth. 8:14.
d Ps. 39:5,11. 89:47. 90:9,10. Jam. 4:14.
* Heb. *ships of desire*, or, *ships of Ebeh.*
e 39:27—30. 2 Sam. 1:23. Prov. 23:5. Jer. 4:13. Lam. 4:19. Hab. 1:8.
f 7:13. Ps. 77:2,3. Jer. 8:18.
g 21:6. Ps. 88:15,16. 119:120.
h 2,20,21. 14:16,17. Ex. 20:7. Ps. 130: 3.
i 22. 10:7,14—17. 21:16,17,27. 22:5, &c. Ps. 73:13. Jer. 2:35.
k Ps. 26:6. Prov. 28:13. Is. 1:16—18. Jer. 2:22. 4:14. Rom. 10:3. 1 John 1:8.
l 20. 15:6.
m Is. 59:6. 64:6. Phil. 3:8,9.
† Or, *make me to be abhorred.*
n 33:12. 35:5—7. Num. 23:19. 1 Sam. 16 7. Ec. 6:10. Is. 45:9. Jer. 49:19. Rom. 9:20. 1 John 3:20.

troubles; they are but trials, designed for their honor and benefit; and, if God be pleased with them, let not them be displeased; if He laugh at the trial of the innocent, knowing how glorious the issue of it will be, at destruction and famine let them also laugh, (*ch.* 5: 22.) and triumph over them, saying, *O death, where is thy sting!*

On the other hand, the wicked are so far from being made the marks of God's judgments, that *the earth is given into their hand, v.* 24. in the original, it is singular; the devil, that wicked one, is called *the god of this world*, and boasts that *into his hands it is delivered*, Luke 4: 6. Or, *into the hand of a wicked man*, meaning (so Patrick and the Assemb. Ann.) some noted tyrant then living in those parts, whose great wickedness and great prosperity were well known both to Job and his friends. [See notes, end of Gen. and Ezra, the phrases of the Egyptian monuments, and cuts, Gen. 47: 1, &c. and note, * p. 747, vol. 1.] The wicked have the earth given them, but the righteous have heaven given them. God, in his providence, advances wicked men, while He covers the faces of those who are fit to be judges, wise, good, and qualified for government, and buries them alive in obscurity; perhaps suffers them to be run down, condemned, and their faces covered as criminals, by those wicked ones into whose hand the earth is given. We daily see this is done; if it be not God that doeth it, where and who is he that doeth it? To whom can it be ascribed but to Him that rules in the kingdoms of men, and gives them to whom He will? Dan. 4: 32.

2. Yet there is too much passion here. The manner of expression is peevish: when he meant that God afflicts, he ought not to have said, *He destroys* both the perfect and the wicked: when he meant that God pleases Himself with the trial of the innocent, he ought not to have said, *He laughs at it*, for He doth not afflict willingly. When the spirit is heated, either with dispute or with discontent, we have need to set a watch before the door of our lips, that we may observe decorum in speaking of divine things.

V. 25—35. Job here grows more and more querulous; and they that indulge a complaining humor, know not to what indecencies, nay, to what impieties, it will hurry them. When in trouble, we are allowed to complain *to* God, as the Psalmist, often, but must by no means complain *of* God, as Job here.

I. His complaint here of the passing away of the days of his prosperity is proper, *v.* 25, 26. See here, 1. The swift motion of time, it stays for no man. What little need have we of pastimes, * and what great need to redeem time, when time runs out, runs on so fast towards eternity, which comes as the time goes! 2. How vain the enjoyments of time, which we may be quite deprived of while yet time continues! Our days may be longer than the sun-shine of our prosperity; and when that is gone, it is as if it had not been. The remembrance of having done our duty will be pleasing afterward; so will not the remembrance of our having got great worldly wealth, when it is all lost and gone. They flee away, past recall; they see no good, and leave none behind them.

* Except to recreate us for renewed activity in duty. *Ed.*

II. His complaint of his present uneasiness is excusable, *v.* 27, 28. 1. It should seem, he did his endeavor to quiet and compose himself, as his friends advised him. But, 2. He found he could not do it. It is easier, in such a case, to know what we should do than to do it; to know what temper we should be in than to get into that temper, and keep in it. It is easy to preach patience to those that are in trouble, and to tell them they must forget their complaints, and comfort themselves; but it is not so soon done as said. Fear and sorrow are tyrannizing things, not easily brought into the subjection they ought to be kept in to religion and right reason.

III. But his complaint of God, as implacable and inexorable, was by no means to be excused. It was the language of his corruption. He knew better; and, at another time, would have been far from harboring any such hard thoughts of God. Good men do not always speak like themselves; but God considers their frame, and the strength of their temptations; gives them leave afterward to unsay it by repentance, and will not lay it to their charge. Job seems to speak here,

1. As if he despaired of obtaining from God any relief or redress of his grievances, though he should produce ever so good proofs of his integrity. '*I know Thou wilt not hold me innocent;* why then do I labor in vain to clear myself, and maintain my own integrity?' *v.* 29. It is to no purpose to speak in a cause that is already pre-judged. The most innocent in such a case must be adjudged guilty, though the evidence be ever so plain for them: but it is not so in our dealings with God, who is the Patron of oppressed innocency, and to whom it was never in vain to commit a righteous cause.

Nay, he not only despairs of relief, but expects that his endeavor to clear himself would render him yet more obnoxious, *v.* 30, 31. He saw his afflictions coming from God; those were the things that blackened him in the eye of his friends, and, on that score, he complained of them, and of the continuance of them, as the ruin, not only of his comfort, but of his reputation. Yet these words are capable of a good construction. If we be ever so industrious to justify ourselves before men, and to preserve our credit with them, if we keep our hands ever so clean from the pollutions of gross sin, which fall under the eye of the world; yet God, who knows our hearts, can charge us with so much secret sin as will for ever take off all our pretensions to purity and innocency, and make us see ourselves odious in the sight of the holy God. Paul, while a Pharisee, made his hands very clean; but when the commandment came, and discovered to him his heart-sins, made him know lust, that *plunged him in the ditch.*

2. As if he despaired of so much as a fair hearing with God. (1.) He complains he was not on even terms with God, *v.* 32. The consideration of this should keep us very low, and very silent, before God. Let us always eye Him as infinitely above us. (2.) There was no arbitrator or umpire between him and God, *v.* 33. This complaint that there was not, is, in effect, a wish that there were, and so the LXX read it; *O that there were a mediator between us!* Job would gladly refer the matter, but no creature was capable of

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22. *Ps.* 17:13—15. 73:1—14. *Jer.* 12:1—4. *Mal.* 3:13—18.) SCOTT.

(24.) *Covereth the face*, &c.] 'Gives up to judicial blindness. Is. 29·10. *Gill. Scott.* The "judges" being here in contrast with the wicked, i. e. a tyrannical ruler, must mean *good governors*, who administer justice impartially. Of these good rulers, he says, God "covereth their faces," i. e. treats them as condemned malefactors, overwhelming them in calamities, disgrace, and ruin; Job himself being one example. (See 2 Sam. 15:30. Esth. 7:8. Jer. 14:3. Is. 22:17. Mic. 3:7. Mark 14:65.) *Mr. Scott.*' COND. COMM.

Verses 25—35.

Here Job again renewed his complaints, with the same incoherency and conflict of contending passions as before. He regarded his life, as having suddenly come to a wretched end. All his efforts to rise superior to the tumult of his passions were unavailing. If indeed he were a *wicked* man, it would be labor in vain to vindicate his character: for when he had done all in his power for that purpose, God would detect his secret iniquities; and thus thrust him as it were into the mire, till his very garments rendered him abhorred. Nay, though he were not a wicked man, yet the discovery of all his former sins, and of the defects of his present obedience, would show him to be 'as an unclean thing, and his righteousness as filthy rags.' (Is. 64:6—8.) SCOTT.

(26.) *Swift ships.*] '"Ships of desire," that are earnestly looked for and crowd all sail for their destined port. *Peters.* "Pirate ships," or, "ships of enmity" which are not loaded, and so move swiftly *Broughton.* [The ancient ships of war had their bows armed with a spear-shaped cut-water, as it were, and endeavored by hard rowing to bear down swiftly upon the opposing ship, strike through its planks, and thus cause it to sink, or bear it under by superior weight. Piracy from the earliest ages, was common to the Mediterranean, and the Persian and Arabic Gulfs, as it is now.] "Ships of Ebeh," a river in Arabia, whose rapid streams hurried the ships along. *Pag. Mont. Vat.* "Ships of reeds," which being light are very swift. So *Mich Schultens, Parkh.* Mr. *Scott, Stock.* "Ships with spread sails;" ships of papyrus may, however, be meant. *Good.* 'Inflated ships." Dr. A. *Clarke.*' COND. COMM. The *proas* of Polynesia are rowed with exceeding swiftness; and the Indians of Lake Superior will out-paddle a steamboat, in their canoes. The present light and very *swift* Turkish or Greek *caïques*, are still built on the model seen in some of the oldest monuments of the world. All these illustrations confirm the rendering of our version, '*swift ships.*' ED.

(33,34.) *Day's-man.*] *Beyneyno mokiach.* 'A reprover, arguer, or umpire.' Dr. A. CLARKE. [Comp. note, v. 16. and p. 662. vol. 1. on *Jewish*

[o] we should come together in judgment.

33 Neither [p] is there any * day's-man betwixt us, *that* [q] might lay his hand upon us both.

34 Let him take his rod away from me, and [r] let not his fear terrify me:

35 *Then* would I speak, and not fear him; † but *it is* not so with me.

CHAP. X.

Job entreats God to show on what account he contended with him; and pleads for compassion as from his Creator, 1—13. He states that his sins were strictly marked and rigorously punished, 14—17. He repines, that he had ever been born, or had not died immediately after; and craves respite from pain to prepare for death, 18—22.

MY [s] soul ‡ is weary of my life; [b] I will leave my complaint upon myself; [c] I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.

2 I will say unto God, [d] Do not condemn me: show me wherefore thou contendest with me.

3 *Is it* [f] good unto thee that thou shouldest

13:18—23. 23:3—7. Ps. 143:2.
p 19. 1 Sam. 2:25. 1 John 2:1,2.
* Heb. *one that should argue*, or, *umpire.*
q 1 K. 3:16, &c.
r 13:11,20—22. 23:15. 31:23. 33:7. 37:1. Ps. 39:10. 90:11.
† Heb. *but I am not so with myself.* 29:2, &c.
s 3:20—23. 6:8,9. 7:15,16,20. 9:21. 14:13. Num. 11:15. 1 K. 19:4. Jon. 4:3,8.
‡ Or, *cut off while I live.*
b 7:11. 19:4. 21:2—4.
c 15,16. 6:2—4,26. 7:11. 16:6—16. Ps. 32:3—5. Is. 38:15,17.
d Ps. 6:1—4. 25:7. 38:1—8. 109:21. 143:2.
e 8:5,6. 34:31,32. Ps. 139:23,24. Lam. 3:40—42. 1 Cor. 11:31,32.
f 34:5—7,18,19. 35:7—9,17,18. 40:2,8. Lam. 3:2—18.

being a referee, therefore he must even refer it still to God Himself, and resolve to acquiesce in his judgment. Our Lord Jesus is the blessed Days-man, who has mediated between Heaven and earth, has laid his hand on us both; to Him the Father has committed all judgment, and we must: but this matter was not then brought to so clear a light as it is now by the Gospel, which leaves no room for such a complaint as this. (3.) The terrors of God, which set themselves in array against him, put him into such confusion, that he knew not how to address himself to God with the confidence he was formerly wont to approach Him with, *v.* 34, 35. He means, not so much his outward afflictions, as the load which lay on his spirit from the apprehensions of God's wrath.

From all this let us take occasion, 1. To stand in awe of God, and to fear the power of his wrath. If good men have been put into such consternation by it, *where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* 2. To pity those that are wounded in spirit, and pray earnestly for them, because in that condition they know not how to pray for themselves. 3. Carefully to keep up good thoughts of God in our minds, for hard thoughts of Him are the inlets of much mischief. 4. To bless God we are not in such a disconsolate condition as poor Job was here in, but that we walk in the light of the Lord; let us rejoice therein, but *with trembling.*

CHAP. X. V. 1—7. Job owns here, that he was full of confusion; (5: 15.) and as *he* was, so was his *discourse:* he knew not what to say, and sometimes, perhaps, scarcely what he said. Here is,

I. A passionate resolution to persist in his complaint, *v.* 1. Being daunted with the dread of God's majesty, so that he could not plead his cause with Him, he resolves to give himself some ease by giving vent to his feelings. Through the weakness of grace, he went contrary to the dictates even of nature itself. We should act more like men, did we act more like saints: faith and patience would keep us from being weary of our lives, (and *cruel to them*, as some read it,) even then when Providence has made them most wearisome to us; for that is to be weary of God's correction. Job, being weary of his life, and having ease no other way, resolves to complain. Job's corruption speaks here, yet grace puts in a word: 1. He will complain, but he will leave his complaint on himself: he would not impeach God; and though he knew not particularly the ground of God's controversy with him, and the cause of action, yet, in the general, he would suppose it to be in himself, and willingly bear all the blame. 2. He will speak, but it shall be the *bitterness of his soul*, not his settled judgment. If I speak amiss, it is *not I, but sin that dwells in me*, not my soul, but *its bitterness.*

II. A humble petition to God. He will speak, but the first word shall be a prayer, and, as I am willing to understand it, a good prayer, *v.* 2. 1: That he might be delivered from the sting of his afflictions, which is sin. It is the comfort of those who are in Christ Jesus, that, though afflicted, they are not condemned; nay, they are *chastened of the Lord, that they may not be condemned with the world.* This, therefore, we should deprecate above any thing, when in affliction. 2. That he might be made acquainted with the true cause of his afflictions, and that is sin too; Lord, *show me wherefore Thou contendest with me.* When God afflicts us, He contends with us; when He contends with us, there is always a reason. He is never angry without a cause, though we are; and it is desirable to know what the reason is, that we may repent of, mortify, and forsake, the sin for which God has a controversy with us: in inquiring it out, let conscience do its office, and deal faithfully with us, as Gen. 42: 21.

III. A peevish expostulation with God. Now he speaks in the bitterness of his soul indeed, not without some ill-natured reflections on the righteousness of his God.

1. He thinks it unbecoming the goodness of God, and the mercifulness of his nature, to deal so hardly with his creature, as to lay on him more than he can bear, *v.* 3. No, certainly not; what He approves not in men, (Lam. 3: 34—36.) He will not do Himself. 'Lord, what is the meaning of this? Such is thy nature, this cannot be a pleasure to Thee; and such thy name, it cannot be an honor to Thee; why then dealest Thou thus with me? *What profit is there in my blood?*' Far be it from Job to think God did him wrong, but he is quite at a loss how to reconcile his providences with his justice, as good men have often been, and must wait until the day shall declare it. Let us, therefore, now harbor no hard thoughts of God, because we shall then see there was no cause for them.

2. He thinks it unbecoming the infinite knowledge of God, to put a prisoner thus on the rack, as it were, by torture, to extort a confession from him, *v.* 4—6. (1.) He is sure God does not discover things, nor judge of them, as men do; He *has not eyes of flesh*, (*v.* 4.) for He is a Spirit. Nor is He short-sighted, like man, so He is not short-lived, *v.* 5. '*Are thy days as the days of man*, few and evil?' Men grow wiser by experience, and more knowing by daily observation; but it is not so with God. (2.) He therefore thinks

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The justice, wisdom, truth, and goodness of God, must be taken for granted, whatever sentiments we defend or oppose.—But how can those, who despise the favor and defy the vengeance of the Almighty, expect to prosper, or to escape final misery? Yet they are no less infatuated, who proudly attempt to justify themselves before that God, who possesses infinite purity and justice, and who knows us far better than we know ourselves.—We should be very careful not to be offended, either by the tribulations with which we meet, or the prosperity of the wicked: they have their short-lived pleasures, we our transient sorrows.—When, through Satan's influence on the mind, the Lord appears as an enemy; when his power and justice are more distinguishable than his mercy; and when a sense of his displeasure, and slavish fears of condemnation preponderate; the soul, even of a believer, is filled with inexpressible confusion, and verges to melancholy and despair. We may be thankful, if we have not known these waves and billows of dire temptations; yet, [if we have not,] we shall scarcely know how to sympathize with those that are conflicting with them, or to make proper allowances for them. But, poor tempest-tossed soul, consider Job, and notice that others have passed this dreadful gulf before thee: and though they could not believe that God would hear or deliver them any more; yet He rebuked the storm, and brought them to the desired haven. And look to Jesus, who, though free from sin, once 'suffered being tempted, that He might be able to succor those who are tempted.' 'Resist then the devil, steadfast in the faith;' give not place to hard thoughts of God, or desperate conclusions about thyself; repress as much as possible every passionate wish or expression, which arises in thy mind. Come to Him, who invites 'the weary and heavy laden;' and has promised 'in nowise to cast out those who come,' but 'to give rest to their souls:' plead guilty; cast thyself on unmerited mercy, as if this were thy first approach to a forgiving God, without deciding any thing about thy former experience or character: acknowledge that thy sufferings are less than thy sins have deserved: cry for repentance, for faith, for patience, for inward support; and wait thus at mercy's gate. There can indeed be no superior, who as umpire, can lay his hand on both parties: yet remember that there is an appointed Mediator, 'an Advocate with the Father,' who 'is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him; seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.' SCOTT.

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judicial procedure.] *Lay his hand.*] 'His control.' *Rod.*] *Shebet.* Supremacy.' GOOD. 'Job might mean the appalling sight of God's majesty on his judgment seat.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* See notes, as above. ED.

NOTES.

CHAP. X. V. 1, 2. The vehemence of Job's passions, excited by his exquisite sufferings, here again broke through his better purposes; perhaps, 'his soul being weary of life,' he wished to bring some sudden judgment on himself, which might at once end his days. SCOTT.

Verse 3.

It may be supposed, Job was at a loss, what to think of the divine dispensations towards him. He could not conceive God would oppress his creatures, by punishing them without cause; yet he was not able to understand, how these things could consist with the goodness and mercy of God; and he supposed, that his remarkable afflictions would tend to encourage the counsels and practices of wicked men, who often argue that there is no advantage in religion, and therefore seek [the shallow] happiness of an ungodly life. (21:7—16.) SCOTT.

oppress, that thou shouldest [g] despise [h] the * work of thine hands, and [i] shine upon the counsel of the wicked?

4 Hast thou eyes of flesh? or [k] seest thou as man seeth?

5 *Are* [l] thy days as the days of man? *are* thy years as man's days,

6 That [m] thou inquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin?

7 † Thou [n] knowest that I am not wicked; [o] and *there is* none that can deliver out of thine hand.

8 Thine [p] hands ‡ have made me and fashioned me together round about: [q] yet thou dost destroy me.

9 [r] Remember, I beseech thee, that [s] thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me [t] into dust again?

10 Hast thou not [u] poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese?

11 Thou hast [x] clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast § fenced me with bones and sinews.

12 Thou hast granted me [y] life and favor, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.

13 And these *things* hast thou [z] hid in thine heart: [*] I know that this *is* with thee.

14 If I sin, [b] then thou markest me, and [c] thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.

15 If [d] I be wicked, wo unto me; and [e] *if* I be righteous, *yet* will I not lift up my head. [f] *I am* full of confusion; therefore [g] see thou mine affliction;

16 For it increaseth: [h] thou huntest me as a fierce lion; and again thou showest thyself [i] marvellous upon me.

17 Thou renewest thy ‖ witnesses against me, and increasest thy indignation upon me; [k] changes and [l] war *are* against me.

it strange, God should thus prolong his torture, neither bring him to a trial, nor grant him a release: as if He must take time to *inquire after his iniquity*, and use means to *search after his sin*, *v.* 6. Not as if Job thought God did thus torment him, to find occasion against him; but his dealings with him had such an aspect, which was dishonorable to God, and would tempt men to think Him a hard master. 'Now, Lord, if Thou wilt not consult my comfort, consult thine own honor; do something *for thy great name*, and *do not disgrace the throne of thy glory*,' Jer. 14: 21.

3. He thinks it looked like an abuse of his omnipotence, to keep a poor prisoner in custody, whom He knew to be innocent, only because there was *none that could deliver him out of his hand*, *v.* 7. *Thou knowest that I am not wicked.* He had already owned himself a sinner, and guilty before God, but he here stands to it, that he was not wicked, not devoted to sin, not an enemy to God, not a dissembler in his religion, that *he had not wickedly departed from his God*, Ps. 18: 21. Here see, (1.) What ought to quiet us under our troubles; that it is to no purpose to contend with Omnipotence. (2.) What will abundantly comfort us, if we are able to appeal to God, as Job here, 'Lord, *thou knowest that I am not wicked.* I cannot say I am not wanting, or weak; but, through grace, I can say, *I am not wicked:* thou knowest I am not, for *Thou knowest I love Thee.*'

V. 8—13. In these vs. we may observe,

1. How Job eyes God as his Creator and Preserver, and describes his dependence on Him as the Author and Upholder of his being. This is one of the first things we are all concerned to know and consider:

(1.) That God made us: He, and not our parents, who were only the instruments of his power and providence in our production, *v.* 8. The soul also, which animates the body, is his gift. He notices both here. [1.] The body is made *as the clay*, *v.* 9. according to the skill and will of the potter. We must not be proud of our bodies, because the matter is from the earth, yet not dishonor our bodies, because the mould and shape are from the Divine Wisdom. The formation of human bodies in the womb is described by an elegant similitude, *v.* 10. The admirable structure of human bodies is an illustrious instance of the wisdom, power, and goodness, of the Creator. [See the 'Bridgewater Treatises.'] What pity is it, that these bodies should be instruments of unrighteousness, which are capable of being temples of the Holy Ghost! [2.] The soul is the life, the man, the gift of God; *Thou hast granted me life.* The Father of spirits made us living souls, and endued us with reason; gave us life, a great favor. Now Job was in a better mind than when he quarrelled with life as a burden, asking, *Why died I not from the womb?* Or, by life and favor, may be meant life and all its comforts.

(2.) That God maintains us in being. '*Thy visitation has preserved my spirit*, kept me alive, [continued and upheld the laws of my being,] and blessed me with all the necessary supports of life, and the daily supplies it needs and craves.'

2. He pleads this with God, *v.* 9. *Remember, Thou hast made me.* 'Therefore Thou hast a perfect knowledge of me, (Ps. 139: 1—13.) needest not to examine me by scourging, nor put me on the rack to discover what is in me.' 'Thou hast made me, as the clay, by an act of sovereignty; and wilt Thou, by a like act of sovereignty, unmake me again?' It is a plea the saints have often used in prayer, Isa. 64: 8. Ps. 119: 73. So here, *v.* 8, 9. If we plead this with ourselves as an inducement to duty, we may plead it with God as an argument for mercy, *Thou hast made me*, new make me; *I am thine, save me.* Job knew not how to reconcile God's former favors and his present frowns, but concludes, (*v.* 13.) 'both are according to the counsel of his own will, and, therefore, undoubtedly consistent, however they seem.' When God thus strangely changes his way, it is not with us, or in our reach, to assign the cause, but I *know that this is with Thee.*

V. 14—22. I. Here are Job's passionate complaints, in which, though he cannot be justified, he may be excused. If we think it looks ill in him, let it be a warning to us to keep our temper better.

1. He complains, that God took all advantages against him; (*v.* 14.) 'If I do but take one false step, misplace a word, or cast a look awry, I shall be sure to hear of it.' If God should thus mark iniquities, we are undone; but He does not, though we sin, God does not deal in extremity with us; nor as Job asserts, prosecute those advantages to the utmost; '*Thou wilt not acquit me.*' '*If I be wicked, wo to me;* though prosperous, and living in pleasure, yet wo to me.' Some especially have reason to dread double woes if wicked; 'I that have knowledge, have made a great profession of religion, been so often under strong convictions, and made so many fair promises; I that was born of such good parents, blessed with a good education, have lived in good families, and long enjoyed the means of grace, *If I be wicked*, a thousand woes *to me.*' If he be *righteous*, yet he dares not *lift up his head;* dares not answer as before, *ch.* 9: 15. he is full of confusion: almost distracted, Ps. 88: 15.

2. He complains, that God did not only punish him for every failure, but *in a high degree*, *v.* 16, 17. His affliction was, (1.) Grievous, very grievous, marvellous, exceeding marvellous. God was not only strange to him, but showed Himself marvellous upon him, by bringing him into uncommon troubles, and so making him a prodigy, a wonder unto many. What made his afflictions most griev-

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g Ps. 69:33.
h 14:15. 34:19. Ps. 138:8. Is. 64:8. 1 Pet. 4:19.
* Heb. *labor.*
i 8:20. Jer. 12:1—3.
k 9:32. 1 Sam. 16:7. Luke 16:15. Rev. 1:14.
l Ps. 90:2—4. 102:12,24—27. Heb. 1:12. 2 Pet. 3:8.
m 14—17. Ps. 44:21. Jer. 2:34. Zeph. 1:12. 1 Cor. 4:5.
† Heb. It is *upon thy knowledge.*
n 23:10. 31:6,14,35. 42:7. Ps. 1:6. 7: 3,8,9. 17:3. 26:1—5. 139:1,2,21—24. John 21:17. 2 Cor. 1:12. 1 Thes. 2:10.
o 23:13,14. Deut. 32:39. Ps. 50:22. Dan. 3:15. Hos. 2:10. John 10:28—30.
p Ps. 119:73. Is. 43:7.
‡ Heb. *took pains about me.*
q 3. Gen. 6:6,7. Jer. 18:3—10.
r 7:7. Ps. 25:6,7,18. 89:47. 106:4.
s Gen. 2:7. 3:19. Is. 45:9. 64:8.
t 17:14. Ps. 22:15. 90:3. Ec. 12:7.
u Ps. 139:14—16.
x 2 Cor. 5:2,3.
§ Heb. *hedged.* 40:17,18. Ez. 37:4—8. Eph. 4:16.
y Gen. 19:19. Matt. 6:25. Acts 17:25, 28.
z 23:9. Ec. 8:6,7. Is. 45:15. Rom. 11: 33.
a 23:13. Deut. 32:39. Is. 45:7. 46:9—11. Lam. 3:37. Eph. 3:11.
b 13:26,27. 14:16,17. Ps. 130:3. 139:1.
c 7:21. Ex. 34:7. Num. 14:18.
d 7. 9:29. 27:7. Ps. 9:17. Is. 3:11. Mal. 3:18. Rom. 2:8,9.
e 9:15,20,21. Is. 64:5,6. Luke 17:10.
f 21:6. 23:15.
g Ex. 3:7. Ps. 25:18. 119:153. Lam. 1:20. 5:1,&c.
h Is. 38:13. Lam. 3:10. Hos. 13:7,8. Am. 3:8.
i Num. 16:29,30. Deut. 28:59.
‖ That is, *plagues.* 16:8. Ruth 1:21.
k Ps. 55:19. Jer. 48:11. Zeph. 1:12.
l 15:11—16. 19:6—11.

Verses 8—13.

In these vs. Job expostulates with God, as if He had created him only for misery. SCOTT.

(10.) '*Roberts* gives an entirely new view of this text; he observes, that the Hindoos pour milk on their heads after performing funeral obsequies, and that, in allusion to this, if a father rejects a profligate son, he says, "I have poured milk on my head, I have done with him." This may, then, strongly and simply signify, "hast thou not finally abandoned me?" Commentators had far better have suppressed their censurable remarks on this passage, of which *Roberts* seems to have the most natural meaning, than to have printed them, even wrapped up in Latin. With respect to the allusion to curdled cheese, [note, 1 Sam. 17: 18.] he informs us, this is also used on funeral occasions.' COND. COMM.

Verses 14—17.

The gloom, unbelief, and hard thoughts of God, which are here discernible, ought to be ascribed as much to Satan's temptations, and Job's inward anguish of soul, as to his outward trials and remaining depravity.—The words rendered, 'I am full of confusion,' (15) may be translated, 'Oh, be satisfied with my confusion,' or 'disgrace.' SCOTT.

(16, 17.) *Thou hurtest*, &c.] 'For, up-rousing, as a ravenous lion, dost Thou spring upon me.' *Good.* Lions were used by the Egyptians to hunt with. See the sculptures on their monuments. Note, 41:7. *Good* thinks v. 17. an allusion to the chase of wild beasts, the hunters enclosing them in a ring, and attacking them with spears, javelins, and arrows, and thinks the word for 'witnesses' may be rendered 'weapons.' ED.

18 Wherefore then [m] hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh, that I had [n] given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me!

19 I should have been [o] as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.

20 *Are* not [p] my days few? [q] cease *then, and* let me alone, that I may take comfort a little,

21 Before [r] I go *whence* I shall not return, *even* to [s] the land of darkness and [t] the shadow of death;

22 A land of darkness, as darkness *itself; and* of the shadow of death, without any order, and *where* the light *is* as darkness.

CHAP. XI.

Zophar sharply rebukes Job for justifying himself, and earnestly desires that God would answer him, 1—6. He shows that God is unsearchable, and man ignorant and presumptuous, 7—12. He reminds Job that repentance is the only way of recovering comfort and prosperity, 13—20.

THEN answered [a] Zophar the Naamathite, and said,

2 Should not [b] the multitude of words be answered? and should a man * full of talk be justified?

3 Should [c] thy † lies make men hold their peace? and, when thou

m 3:10,11. Jer. 15:10. 20:14—18. Matt. 26:24.
n 11:20. 14:10.
o Ps. 88:8.
p 7:6,7,16. 8:9. 9:25,26. 14:1. Ps. 39:5. 103:15,16.
q 7:17—21. 13:21. Ps. 39:13.
r 7:8—10. 14:10—14. 2 Sam. 12:23. 14:14. Is. 38:11.
s 3:5. Ps. 88:6,11,12.
t See on 3:5.—Ps. 23:4. Jer. 2:6.
a See on 2:11. 20:1.
b 16:3. 18:2. Ps. 140:11. Prov. 10: 19. Acts 17:18. Jam. 1:19.
* Heb. *of lips.*
c 13:4. 15:2,3. 24:25.
† Or, *devices.*

ous, was, he felt God's indignation in them. They were God's witnesses against him, tokens of his displeasure. (2.) It was growing still worse and worse. This he insists much on. As long as we are in this world, we must expect that perhaps the sorest and sharpest trials may be reserved for the last. God usually shows Himself kind to his people; if at any time otherwise, it is his strange work, and in it He shows Himself marvellous.

3. He complains, that ever he was born to all this misery, *v.* 18, 19. 'We may charitably suppose,' (says Mr. Caryl,) 'that what troubled Job was, he was in a condition which (as he conceived) hindered the main end of life, to glorify God. He was quite out of tune for praising God. Nay, he feared lest his troubles should give occasion to his enemies to blaspheme. A godly man thinks he lives to no purpose, if he do not live to the praise and glory of God.' But, if that were his meaning, it was grounded on a mistake, for we may *glorify the Lord in the fires.* But this use we may make of it, not to be over-fond of life, since the case has been sometimes, even with wise and good men, that they have complained of it. Why dread giving up the ghost? Why inordinately lament the death of our children in infancy, when perhaps we ourselves may sometimes wish it had been our own lot?

II. Job's humble requests,

1. That God would *see his affliction,* (*v.* 15.) and take it into his compassionate consideration. Thus David, Ps. 25: 18. Thus we should, in our troubles, refer ourselves to God, and may comfort ourselves with this, that He knows our souls in adversity.

2. That God would grant him some ease. Those that are not duly thankful for constant ease, should think how welcome one hour's ease would be, if they were in constant pain. His plea fastens on the goodness of God's nature, the consideration of which is very comfortable to an afflicted spirit. And if we would use this as a plea with God for mercy, we should use it as a plea with ourselves. '*Are not my days few?*' should quicken us to duty, that we be ready for the days of eternity, which shall be many. *Death and its darkness* were very near, and would be very long, *v.* 21, 22. Thus David pleads, (Ps. 13: 3.) '*Lest I sleep the sleep of death,* and then it will be too late to expect relief; for, *Wilt thou show wonders to the dead?* (Ps. 88: 10.) Let me have a little comfort before I die, that I may take leave of this world calmly, and not in such confusion as I am now in.' Thus earnest should we be for grace; Lord, renew me in the inward man; Lord, sanctify me before I die, for then it will never be done.' In speaking of the state of the dead, he heaps up expressions here of the same import, to show that he has as dreadful apprehensions of death and the grave as other men naturally have, so that it was only his extreme misery, that made him wish for it. Come and let us look a little into the grave. There is no order there; it is perpetual night, and no succession of day. All there lie on the same level, prince and peasant, *the servant* is there *free from his master, ch.* 3: 19. No order is observed in bringing people to the grave, not the eldest first, not the richest, not the poorest, yet every one in the order appointed by the God of life. There is no light there, no knowledge, no comfort, no joy, no praising God, no working out our salvation, and therefore no light: therefore, let us walk and work while we have the light with us. The grave being a land of darkness, our friends that are gone thither, we reckon removed into darkness, Ps. 88: 18. But the dust of the bodies of the saints, though scattered, and mingled with other dust, will none of it be lost, for God's eye is upon every particle of it, and it shall be forthcoming in the great day.

CHAP. XI. V. 1—6. Poor Job's wounds were yet bleeding, but none of his friends bring him any oil, any balm; Zophar, the third, pours into them as much vinegar as the two former. It is sad to see what intemperate passions even wise and good men are sometimes betrayed into by the heat of disputation; of which Zophar here is an instance. Eliphaz began with a very modest preface, *ch.* 4: 2. Bildad was a little more rough upon Job, *ch.* 8: 2. But Zophar falls on him without mercy, and gives him very bad language. Is this the way to comfort Job? No, nor to convince him neither. Does this become one that appears as an advocate for God and his justice? They that engage in controversy will find it very hard to keep their temper; all their wisdom, caution, and resolution, will be little enough to keep them from such indecencies as Zophar's. We have read and considered Job's discourses in the foregoing chs. and have found them full of good sense, and much to the purpose; that his principles are right, his reasonings strong, many of his expressions weighty and very considerable, and that what there is in them of heat and passion, a little candor and charity will excuse and overlook; yet Zophar here,

1. Invidiously represents him as otherwise than he was, *v.* 2, 3. only that he might, with apparent justice, chastise him. He represents him, (1.) As a man that never considered what he said, but uttered what came uppermost, only to make a noise, hoping by that mean to carry his cause, and run down his reprovers. *Should not the multitude of words be answered?* Truly, sometimes it is no great matter whether it be or no; silence perhaps is the best confutation of impertinence, and puts the greatest contempt upon it: *Answer not a fool according to his folly.* But, if it be answered, let reason and grace answer it, not pride and passion. *Should a man full of talk,* Marg. *a man of lips,* i. e. all tongue, *be justified?* as, in effect, he is, if he be not reproved. No, for *in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin.* No, he shall not be accepted with God, or any wise men, *for much speaking,* Matt. 6: 7. (2.) As a man that made no conscience of what he said, *a liar,* that hoped, by the impudence of lies, to silence his adversaries; *a mocker,* one that bantered all mankind, knew how to put false colors on any thing, and was not ashamed to impose

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In every affliction we should examine, 'wherefore God contendeth with us;' assured, that He has good and wise reasons for his conduct: and when we do not readily perceive his meaning, we ought most earnestly to entreat Him to show it to us; that we may repent of our sins, fall in with the designs of his corrections, reap the benefit of them, and escape final condemnation.—We ought not for a moment to suppose that He punishes without cause, or that his sovereignty resembles the arbitrary will of selfish and wicked men. Such thoughts originate from Satan, brooding on the enmity of our carnal hearts; and they commonly mingle with our discontent and impatience. Yet all the miseries of man arise from his own voluntary wickedness: and, whatever may be hid in the decrees and counsels of God, most certain it is, that none shall eventually perish, but the finally impenitent: and our Creator (being in Christ become our Redeemer also) will 'not destroy the work of his own hands' in any humble believer; but will renew him unto holiness, that he may enjoy eternal life. But Satan plunges the tempted soul into one abyss after another. Yet if true grace possesses the heart, it will glimmer forth a little in their darkest hours; some feeble actings of faith and hope will be discernible; and they will be restrained from the desperate language and behavior of an ungodly man, in similar circumstances. —But if anguish of mind on earth may render the gloomy grave a desirable refuge; what will be the condition of those who shall be condemned to the blackness of darkness for ever! There, unrestrained enmity, unmingled wrath, and absolute despair, eternally reign: light only serves to show their misery, and knowledge to augment their anguish. SCOTT.

Verses 18—22.

Job here, more directly than before, expostulated with God for giving him his being, and for not cutting him off by death in the womb, or as soon as born. (*Notes,* 3:) The description that follows, seems to be only intended for the grave, and not to relate to the invisible world.—Coherency, or exactness, in the discourse of one who spoke 'in the bitterness of his spirit,' was not to be expected; yet it is evident, Job believed that there would be a future state, and had some hope of happiness in it, though now exceedingly clouded and discouraged. But he here described the state of dead bodies in the grave, as darkness and disorder: and he used many repetitions; meaning in general that they know nothing of the vicissitudes of day and night, or of the orders established among the living; and that men are cited thither, and arranged there, without respect to age, rank, or character. SCOTT.

[d] mockest, shall no man [e] make thee ashamed?

4 For thou hast said, [f] My doctrine *is* pure, and [g] I am clean in thine eyes.

5 But, [h] Oh, that God would speak, and open his lips against thee;

6 And that he would [i] show thee the secrets of wisdom, that *they* are double to that which is! Know therefore that [k] God exacteth of thee *less* than thine iniquity *deserveth*.

7 Canst [l] thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?

8 *It is* * as [m] high as heaven; what canst thou do? [n] deeper than hell; what canst thou know?

9 The measure thereof *is* [o] longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.

10 If [p] he † cut off, and [q] shut up, or gather together, then who can ‡ hinder him?

11 For [r] he knoweth vain men: [s] he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider *it*?

12 [t] For § vain man [u] would be wise, though [x] man be born *like* [y] a wild ass's colt.

13 If thou [z] prepare thine heart, and [a] stretch out thine hands toward him:

14 If [b] iniquity *be* in thine hand, [c] put it far away, and [d] let no wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.

15 For then shalt thou [e] lift up thy face without spot; yea, [f] thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear:

16 Because [g] thou shalt forget *thy* misery, *and* remember *it* [h] as on every one that talked with him. Eliphaz and Bildad had answered him, and said what they could to make him ashamed; this was, therefore, no instance of Zophar's generosity: here were three matched against one.

2. He charges Job with saying what he had not said, *v.* 4. Job had expressed himself unwarily, yet it did not therefore follow but that his *doctrine* was *true;* but he charges him with saying, *I am clean in thine eyes.* Job had, indeed, said, *Thou knowest that I am not wicked;* (*ch.* 10: 7.) but he had also said, *I have sinned*, and never pretended to a spotless perfection. He maintained he was not a hypocrite, as they charged him; but to infer thence that he would not own himself a sinner, was unfair. We ought to put the best construction on words and actions that they will bear; but contenders are tempted to put the worst.

3. So very confident is he that Job is in the wrong, that nothing will serve him but that God must immediately appear, to silence and condemn him. We are commonly ready with too much assurance to interest God in our quarrels, and to conclude that if He would but speak, He would take our part, and speak for us, as Zophar here; whereas, when God did speak, it was for Job against his friends. We ought indeed to leave all controversies to be determined by the judgment of God, which we are sure *is according to truth;* but they are not always in the right, who are most forward to appeal to that judgment, and prejudge it against their antagonists.

Zophar despairs to convince Job himself, therefore desires God would convince him of two things, which it is good for every one of us duly to consider, and under all our afflictions, cheerfully to confess. (1.) The unsearchable depth of God's counsels. What we know of God, is nothing to what we cannot know, Eph. 3: 9. God knows a great deal more evil of us than we do of ourselves; so some understand it. When God gave David a sight and sense of sin, he said, that He had *in the hidden part made him to know wisdom*, Ps. 51: 6. (2.) The unexceptionable justice of his proceedings. When the debt of duty is not paid, it is justice to insist on the debt of punishment. Whatever punishment is inflicted on us in this world, we must own it is less than our iniquities deserve; and therefore, instead of complaining of our troubles, be thankful we are out of hell, Lam. 3: 39. Ps. 103: 10.

V. 7—12. Zophar here speaks very good things concerning God, his greatness and glory, and concerning man, his vanity and folly: these two compared together, and duly considered, will have a powerful influence on our submission to all the dispensations of the Divine Providence.

I. See here that God is an incomprehensible Being, infinite and immense, whose nature and perfection, our finite understandings cannot possibly form any adequate conceptions of, and whose counsels and actings we cannot, therefore, without the greatest presumption, pass a judgment upon. We may by searching *find God*, (Acts 17:27.) but we cannot *find Him out*, in aught He is pleased to conceal. The ages of his eternity cannot be numbered, nor the spaces of his immensity measured: the depths of his wisdom cannot be fathomed, nor the reaches of his power bounded: the brightness of his glory can never be described, nor an inventory be made of the treasures of his goodness.

God is a sovereign Lord; (*v.* 10.) a strict and just Observer of men, *v.* 11. If He cut off by death, (Marg. *If He make a change*, for death is a change; if He make a change in nations, in families, in the posture of our affairs,) if He shut up in prison, or in the net of affliction; (Ps. 66: 11.) if He seize any creature, as a hunter his prey, He will gather it, (so Patrick,) and who shall force Him to restore? Or, if He gather together, as tares for the fire, or, *if He gather to Himself man's spirit and breath*, (*ch.* 34: 14.) *who can hinder?*

II. See here what man is; and let him be humbled, *v.* 12. God sees this concerning vain man, that he would be thought wise, though *born like a wild ass's colt*, so sottish and foolish, unteachable and untameable; a wilful, ungovernable creature. An ass's colt may be made good for something, but the wild ass's colt will never be reclaimed, nor regards the crying of the driver. See Job 39: 5—7. Man thinks himself as much at liberty, and his own master, as the wild ass's colt does, that is *used to the wilderness*, (Jer. 2. 24.) eager to gratify his own [blind] appetites and passions. Yet he is a proud creature, and self-conceited. He would be wise, values himself on the honor of wisdom, though he will not submit himself to the laws of wisdom; [nor learn, nor wisely govern himself by those laws, whose operations upon him he knows he cannot resist.] He reaches after forbidden wisdom, and, like his first parents, aiming to be wise above what is written, loses the tree of life for the tree of [vain] knowledge. Now, is such a creature fit to contend with God, or call Him to an account? Did we but better know God and ourselves, we should better know how to conduct ourselves toward God.

V. 13—20. Zophar, as the others, here en-

d 12:4. 13:9. 17:2. 34:7. Ps. 35:16. Jer. 15:17. Jude 18.
e Ps. 83:18. 2 Thes. 3:14. Tit. 2:8.
f 1 Pet. 3:15.
g 6:29,30. 7:20. 9:2,3. 10:7. 14:4. 34:5,6. 35:2.
h 23:3—7. 31:35. 33:6—13. 38:1,2. 40:1—5,8. 42:7.
i 15:8,11. 28:28. Deut. 29:29. Ps. 25:14. Dan. 2:28,47. Matt. 13:35. Rom. 16:25,26. 1 Cor. 2:9—11. Eph. 3:5.
k Ezra 9:13. Ps. 103:10. 106:43—46. Lam. 3:22.
l 5:9. 26:14. 37:23. Ps. 77:19. 145: 3. Ec. 3:11. Is. 40:28. Matt. 11: 27. Rom. 11:33. 1 Cor. 2:10,16. Eph. 3:8.
* Heb. *the heights of heaven.*
m 22:12. 35:5. 2 Chr. 6:18. Ps. 103: 11. 148:13. Prov. 25:2,3. Is. 55:9.
n 26:6. Ps. 139:6—8. Am. 9:2. Eph. 3:18,19.
o 28:24,25. Ps. 65:5—8. 139:9,10.
p 5:18. 9:4,12,13. 12:14. 34:29. Is. 14:27. Dan. 4:35.
† Or, *make a change.*
q 33:8. Deut. 32:30. Ps. 31:8. Rev. 3:7.
† Heb. *turn him away?*
r Ps. 94:11. Jer. 17:9,10. John 2:24, 25. Heb. 4:13. Rev. 2:23.
s 22:13,14. Ps. 10:11,14. 35:22. Ec. 5:8. Hos. 7:2. Hab. 1:13. Heb. 4: 13.
t Ps. 62:9,10. 73:22. 92:6. Ec. 3:18. Rom. 1:22. Jam. 2:20.
§ Heb. *empty.*
u 5:13. 12:2,3. 28:28. Prov. 30:2—4. Rom. 12:16. 1 Cor. 3:18—20. Jam. 3:13—17.
x 15:14. Ps. 51:5. Eph. 2:3.
y 6:5. 39:5—8. Jer. 2:24.
z 5:8. 8:5,6. 22:21,22. 1 Sam. 7:3. 2 Chr. 12:14. 19:3. Ps. 78:8. Luke 12:47.
a Ps. 68:31. 88:9. 143:6.
b 4:7,8. 22:5. Is. 1:15.
c 22:23. 34:32. Ez. 18:30,31. Jam. 4:8.
d Ps. 101:2,3. Zech. 5:3,4.
e 10:15. 22:26. Gen. 4:5,6. Ps. 119: 6,7. 2 Cor. 1:12. 1 Tim. 2:8. 1 John 2:28. 3:19—22.
f Ps. 27:1,2. 46:1,2. 112:6—8. Prov. 14:26. 28:1.
g Gen. 41:51. Prov. 31:7. Ec. 5:20. Is. 54:4. 65:16. John 16:21. Rev. 7. 14—17.
h 6:15. Gen. 9:11. Is. 12:1,2. 54:9.

NOTES.

Chap. XI. V. 4. *Doctrine.*] 'Here used for 'discourse.' *Rosenm.*

Verses 7—12.

This important truth, [that the nature of God is unsearchable,] instead of militating against Job's doctrine, condemned the rashness of his friends, who inferred his guilt from his calamities, as if *they* had found out the secrets of the divine wisdom to perfection, whereas they had not the least conception of the real reason of his unprecedented sufferings! (4:17—21.) The closing v. is variously interpreted, and does not necessarily imply all that is suggested by our version of it; but may literally be rendered, 'That empty man may become considerate: though man be born as the colt of a wild ass.' 'But a vain man (a fool) will become wise, when the wild ass's colt is born a man.' *E. Smith.* Scott.

(8.) *Hell.*] 'The secret or unseen world.' *Parkhurst.* Job's ideas of the world of the dead have a strong Egyptian cast. See *Champollion.* The ideas of the ancients on this mysterious subject, present a striking similarity. Notes *v.* 14, and 3:14. 11:10. 'If He seize, and bind one in chains, and bring to judgment, who then can reply to Him?' Boothr. Ed.

(12.) 'Will He then accept the hollow-hearted person? Or shall the wild ass colt assume the man? A proverbial expression, denoting extreme contumacy and ferocity.' [Note, 39:5—8.] Good.

Verses 13—20.

Here Zophar, after the example of Eliphaz and Bildad, exhorted Job to repentance, and gave him great encouragement, yet mixed with irritating insinuations. (5:17—27. 8:20—22.) There was, however, no certain ground on which to conclude, that Job's deepest repentance and the Lord's most gracious forgiveness, must be followed by outward prosperity; nor any reason to regard him as a hypocrite, if he died in his present calamitous condition. Scott.

(14.) *Tabernacles.*] 'Tabernacles, or tents, were the earliest dwellings, but houses were still so called after the erecting of those more durable habitations. It is certain Job lived in a city, (29:7.)' Mr. *Scott*, in *Cond. Comm.* 'The inhabitants of Egypt,' says *Diodorus*, 'little value the short time of this present life; but put a high esteem on the name and reputation of a virtuous life after death; and they call the houses of the living, *Inns*; because they stay in them but a little while; but the sepulchres of the dead they call *Everlasting habitations*, because they abide in the graves to infinite generations. [Comp.

waters *that* pass away:

17 And *thine* [i] age shall * be clearer than the noon-day; [k] thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.

18 And thou shalt be secure, [l] because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig *about thee, and* [m] thou shalt take thy rest in safety.

19 Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make *thee* afraid; yea, [n] many shall † make suit unto thee.

20 But [o] the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and ‡ they shall not escape, and [p] their hope *shall be as* § the giving up of the ghost.

CHAP. XII.

Job retorts on his friends, censures their pretensions to superior knowledge, and complains of their unkindness, 1—5. He shows that God often permits the wicked to prosper in this world, 6—11. He discourses on the perfections and works of God, 12—25.

AND Job answered and said,

2 No doubt but [q] ye *are* the people, and wisdom shall die with you.

3 But [b] I have ‖ understanding as well as you: ¶ I *am* not inferior

i 42:11—17. Ps. 37:6. 92:14. 112:4. Prov. 4:18. Is. 58:8—10. Mic. 7:8, 9. Zech. 14:6, 7. Mal. 4:2. Luke 2:26—32.

* Heb. *arise above the noon-day.*

k 1 Chr. 29:10, &c. Hos. 6:3.

l 6:11. 7:8. 22:27—29. Is. 43:5. Prov. 14:32. Rom. 5:3—5. Col. 1:27.

m Lev. 26:6. Ps. 3:5. 4:8. Prov. 3:24—26.

n 42:8, 9. Gen. 26:26—31. Ps. 45:12. Prov. 19:6. Is. 60:14. Rev. 3:9.

† Heb. *entreat thy face.*

o 31:16. Lev. 26:16. Deut. 28:65. Ps. 69:3. Lam. 4:17.

‡ Heb. *flight shall perish from them.*

p Am. 2:14. 5:19, 20. 9:1—3. Heb. 2:3.

q 8:13, 14. 27:8. Prov. 10:24. 20:20. Luke 16:23—26.

§ Or, *a puff of breath.*

a 6:24, 25. 8:8—10. 11:2, 3, 6, 12. 15:2, 10. 17:4. 20:3. 32:7—13. Prov. 28:11. Is. 5:21. 1 Cor. 4:10. 6:5.

b 13:2—5. Prov. 26:4. 2 Cor. 11:5, 21—23.

‖ Heb. *an heart.*

¶ Heb. *I fall not lower than you.*

courages Job to hope for better times, if he would but come to a better temper.

I. He gives him good counsel, (*v.* 13, 14.) as Eliphaz did, (*ch.* 5: 8.) and Bildad, (*ch.* 8: 5.) would have him repent, and return to God. Observe the steps of that return; 1. He must get his mind changed; prepare (*establish*, so the word is) his heart; there the work of conversion and reformation must begin. The heart is then prepared to seek God, when fully resolved to make a business of, and go through with it. 2. He must *stretch out his hand to God*, pray to Him with earnestness and importunity, striving in prayer, and with expectation to receive mercy and grace. To *give the hand to the Lord*, signifies to yield ourselves to Him, and to covenant with Him, 2 Chr. 30: 8. Job had prayed, but Zophar would have him pray in a better manner, not as an appellant, but as a humble supplicant. 3. 'If there be any sin, thou dost yet live in the practice of, *v.* 14. forsake it with detestation and a holy indignation, steadfastly resolving never to return to it, nor have any thing to do with it,' Ezek. 18: 31. Hos. 14: 9. Isa. 20: 22. Luke 19: 8. Is. 33: 15. The guilt of sin is not removed, if the gain of sin be not restored. 4. He must do his utmost to reform his family too, *v.* 14. He suspected Job's great household had been ill governed, and that the ruin of his family was the punishment of its wickedness.

II. He assures him of comfort, if he took this counsel, *v.* 15, &c. Perhaps Zophar insinuates that, unless God did speedily make this change in his condition, he and his friends would be confirmed in their opinion of him as a hypocrite and a dissembler with God: a great truth, however, is conveyed, That *the work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever*, Is. 32: 17.

Those that sincerely turn to God, may expect,

1. A holy confidence toward God: if our hearts condemn us not for hypocrisy and impenitency, 1 John 3: 21. We may *draw near in full assurance of faith*, when, through the blood of Christ, we are *sprinkled from an evil conscience*, Heb. 10: 22. Some understand this of the clearing up of his credit before men, Ps. 37: 6. If we make our peace with God, we may with cheerfulness look our friends in the face. 2. A holy composedness in themselves, Ps. 112: 7. 3. A comfortable reflection on their past troubles, *v.* 16. Job had endeavored to forget his complaint, (*ch.* 9: 27.) but found he could not; but here Zophar puts him in a way to forget it: let him by faith and prayer bring his griefs and cares to God, and leave them with Him, and then he shall forget them. Where sin sits heavy, affliction sits light, Isa. 33: 24. 4. A comfortable prospect of their future peace. *Lastly*, Zophar concludes with a brief account of the doom of wicked people, *v.* 20. It should seem, he suspected Job would not take his counsel, and here tells him what would then come of it, setting death as well as life before him.

CHAP. XII. V. 1—5. In this and the two following chs. we have Job's answer to Zophar's discourse. In which, as before, he first reasons with his friends, (see ch. 13: 19.) and then turns and directs his expostulations to God, from thence to the end of his discourse. In this ch. he addresses himself to his friends. The reproofs he here gives them, whether just or no, were very sharp, and may serve for a rebuke to all the proud and scornful, and an exposing of their folly.

I. He upbraids their conceitedness of their own wisdom, in comparison with him; than which nothing is more weak and unbecoming, nor better deserves ridicule, as here.

1. He represents them as claiming the monopoly of wisdom, *v.* 2. He speaks ironically, '*No doubt, you are the people, &c.* fit to dictate to all mankind; as if nobody could discern between truth and falsehood, good and evil, but you only; and you three must be the people, the majority, to have the vote.' It is a very foolish, sinful thing for any to think themselves wiser than all mankind besides, or to speak and act confidently and imperiously, as *if* they thought so. 'You not only think there *are* none, but that there *will be* none, as wise as you, and therefore all the world must be fools when you are gone.' It is folly to think there will be any irreparable loss when we are gone, or that we can be ill-spared, since God has the residue of the Spirit, and can raise up others more fit to do his work. When wise and good men die, it is a comfort to think that wisdom and goodness shall not die with them. Some think Job here reflects on Zophar's comparing him (as he thought) and others to the wild ass's colt, *ch.* 11: 12. 'Yes,' says he, 'we must be asses, you are the only men.'

2. He does himself the justice to put in his claim as a sharer in the gifts of wisdom, *v.* 3. He says not this, to magnify himself. You have but said plain truths; these are common themes, of which many can talk as excellently as either you or I. This consideration may justly keep us from being proud of our knowledge, and when tempted to be harsh in censuring those we differ from and dispute with, we ought to consider that they also have a capacity of, and a right of judging, for themselves; nay, that they may be in the right, and we in the wrong; and therefore we ought not to judge or despise them, (Rom. 14: 3.) nor pretend to be masters, (Jam. 3: 1.) while *all we are brethren*, Matt. 23: 8. It is a very reasonable allowance to be made to all we converse with, all we contend with, that they are rational creatures as well as we.

II. He complains of the great contempt with which they had treated him, *v.* 4. I cannot say there was cause for this charge; we are apt to call reproofs *reproaches*, and to think ourselves mocked when but advised and admonished; this peevishness is our folly, and a great wrong to ourselves and to our friends. Yet there was a color for this charge; they came to comfort, but vexed him; gave him counsels and encouragements, but with

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Nothing is more unbecoming, or more common, than acrimony and reviling in religious controversy. Opposition stirs up pride and resentment in the hearts even of godly men, [especially with persons accustomed to speak without contradiction:] the credit of the victory insensibly becomes the object; and an opponent must be represented as a dangerous and wicked man, that he may without censure be exposed to ridicule or hatred. Those who accuse others of falsehood and deceit, are commonly the first to transgress: and men often *shame* themselves, by their invectives and misrepresentations, in attempting to put others to *shame;* or they manifest their own pride, when they would represent the sentiments of others as mockery of the truth. Such as maintain error are often most ready to appeal to God, and to express a high confidence that they are pleading his cause: and in the eagerness of dispute, the most important truths will be adduced in support of those very principles of which they are subversive. Yet we should endeavor to profit by truth, though we disapprove of the spirit with which it is maintained.—We ought often to meditate on the incomprehensible perfections and works of God, that we may be made sensible of our own meanness, ignorance, and vileness: but the secrets of his wisdom infinitely exceed our narrow capacities. (26:14. 28:23—28. *Deut.* 29:29.) In this abyss our thoughts and reasonings are swallowed up: the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of all his attributes pass knowledge: and our province is to believe, adore, and love. SCOTT.

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note, 3:14.] Therefore they are not very curious in the building of their houses; but in beautifying their sepulchres, they leave nothing undone [that the excess of magnificence can suggest.' *Booth*, in] YOUNG. Hierog. Lit. ED.

(18.) *Dig.*] 'Where thou diggest in safety, thou shalt rest.' *Boothr. Henry* refers the phrase to security from intrenchments. 'The allusion is to the digging of wells or springs.' *Heath. Boothr.* 'Dig a fountain for thy habitation. *Wil.* Thou shalt dig thy sepulchre, and calmly lie down. *Mich.*' *Cond. Comm.* Possibly there is allusion to habitations dug in the calcareous, sandy rock, which were very common among the Horites, &c. of those regions, and other *troglodytes*, of Egypt, &c. ED.

(19.) *Make suit.*] 'Court thy friendship. (as Gen. 21:22. 26:28.) *Grotius.* This, with the preceding v. beautifully alludes to a peaceable encampment. The flocks resting on a verdant pasture, the shepherds having pitched their tents around them, and near springing wells. Here all repose, secure from wild beasts and thievish Arabs. Mr. *Scott.*' COND. COMM.

to you: yea, * who knoweth not such things as these?

4 I am *as* [c] one mocked of his neighbor, [d] who calleth upon God, and he answereth him; [e] the just upright *man is* laughed to scorn.

5 He that is [f] ready to slip with *his* feet, *is as* [g] a lamp despised in the thought [h] of him that is at ease.

6 ¶ The [i] tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth *abundantly*.

7 But [k] ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee:

8 Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.

9 [l] Who knoweth not in all these, that [m] the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?

10 In [n] whose hand *is* the † soul of every living thing, and [o] the breath of all ‡ mankind.

[*Practical Observations.*]

11 Doth [p] not the ear

* Heb. *with whom* are *not such as these.* 6:6,7. 28:2,3.

c 11:3. 15:10. 17:2,6. 21:3. 30:1. Ps. 22:7,8. 35:16. Matt. 27:29,30,41,42. Heb. 11:36.

d 13:20. Ps. 91:15. Jer. 33:3. Mic. 7:7.

e Prov. 14:2. Mark 5:40. Luke 16:14. Acts 17:32.

f Deut. 32:35. Ps. 17:5. 94:18. Jer. 13:16.

g 18:5. Prov. 13:9. 20:20. Matt. 25:8.

h 6:5. 16:4. Ps. 123:3,4. Am. 6:1—6. Luke 12:19. 16:19,20.

i 9:24. 21:7—15. Ps. 17:14. 37:1,35. 73:11,12. 92:7. Jer. 5:27,28.

k 21:29,30. Prov. 6:6. Is. 1:3. Jer. 8:7. Rom. 8:20—22.

l 3. Acts 19:35.

m 22:18. Deut. 8:17,18. 1 Sam. 2:7. Jer. 27:5,6. Dan. 4:17. 5:18. Rom. 11:36. Jam. 2:5—7.

n Num. 16:22. Dan. 5:23. Acts 17:25, 28.

† Or, *life.*

o 27:3. 34:14,15. Gen. 2:7. 6:17. Ps. 104:29. 146:3,4.

‡ Heb. *flesh of man.* John 3:6.

p 34:3. 1 Cor. 10:15. Phil. 1:10. *Marg.* Heb. 5:14. 1 Pet. 2:3.

no great opinion that either would take effect. Nothing is more grievous to those in adversity, than to be trodden on, and insulted over; and on this head they are too apt to be suspicious.

Observe, 1. What aggravated this grievance, was, they were his neighbors, friends, companions, so the word signifies; and professors of religion, such as called upon God, and said, *He answered them;* for some understand that of the persons mocking. Comp. Jam. 3: 9.

2. What supported him under it. (1.) He had a God to appeal to; for some unders and those words of the person mocked, that he *calls upon God, and He answers him;* so it agrees with *ch.* 16: 20. *My friends scorn me, but mine eye poureth out tears to God.* (2.) His case was not singular, but very common: *The just, upright man is laughed to scorn;* his justice and piety are derided as foolish things, with which silly people needlessly hamper themselves. By most he is laughed at for any little weakness, without any consideration of his justice and uprightness, which is so much his honor. Note, This was of old the lot of honest, good people; we are not therefore to think it strange, (1 Pet. 4: 12.) no, nor hard, if it be our lot; so persecuted they not only the prophets, but even the saints of the patriarchal age, Matt. 5: 12. And can we expect to fare better?

3. He suspected the cause to be this; they were themselves rich and at ease, therefore they despised him who was fallen into poverty, *v.* 5. It is the way of the world, we see it daily; they that prosper are praised, but of them that are going down it is said, 'Down with them.' Even the just, upright man, that is as a burning and a shining light, if he enter into temptation, (Ps. 73: 2.) or come under a cloud, is looked upon with contempt. See here, (1.) The common fault of those in prosperity; being full and easy and merry themselves, they look scornfully on those in want, pain, and sorrow; overlook them, take no notice of them, and study to forget them. See Ps. 123: 4. The chief butler drinks wine in bowls, but makes nothing of the afflictions of Joseph. Wealth without grace often makes men [thus selfish,] thus haughty, thus careless of their poor neighbors. (2.) The common fate of those that fall into adversity. Poverty eclipses all their lustre; though they are lamps, yet, if taken out of golden candlesticks, and put, like Gideon's, into earthen pitchers, nobody values them as formerly, but they that live at ease despise them, [so far are men unlike God!]

V. 6—11. Job's friends all went on this principle, that wicked people cannot prosper long in this world, but some remarkable judgment or other will suddenly light on them. Zophar had concluded with it, that *the eyes of the wicked shall fail, ch.* 11: 20. This principle Job here opposes, and maintains, that God, in disposing men's outward affairs, acts as a Sovereign, reserving the exact distribution of rewards and punishments for the future state.

I. He asserts it as an undoubted truth, that wicked people may, and often do, prosper long in this world, *v.* 6. Perhaps he refers to the Sabeans and Chaldeans: one observation built on matter of fact is worth twenty notions framed by an hypothesis. Or, more generally, he refers to all proud oppressors and robbers and pirates God brings plentifully to them; we cannot therefore judge of men's piety by their plenty, nor of what they have in their heart by what they have in their hand.

II. He appeals even to the inferior creatures for proof; (*v.* 7, 8.) many a good lesson we may learn from them; but what are they here to teach us?

1. That the tabernacles of robbers prosper; so some. For, (1.) Even among the brute creatures, the greater devour the less, and the stronger prey on the weaker, and men are as the fishes of the sea, Hab. 1: 14. Had sin not entered, we may suppose there had been no such disorder among the creatures. (2.) These creatures are serviceable to wicked men, and so declare their prosperity: the whole creation groans under the burden of their tyranny, Rom. 8: 20, 22. Note, All the creatures wicked men abuse, by making them the food and fuel of their lusts, will witness against them, another day, Jam. 5: 3, 4.

2. We may from them learn the wisdom, power, and goodness, of God, and that sovereign dominion of his, into which plain and self-evident truth all these difficult dispensations must be resolved. Zophar had made a vast mystery of it, *ch.* 11: 7. 'So far from that,' (says Job,) 'what we are concerned to know, we may learn even from the inferior creatures; for who knows not from all these, (*v.* 9.) that there is a wise providence which guides and governs all these things by rules we are neither acquainted with, nor competent judges of?'

III. He resolves all into the absolute propriety which God has in all creatures, *v.* 10. All derive their being from Him, owe their being to Him, depend on Him for its support, lie at his mercy, are under his direction and dominion, and entirely at his disposal, and at his summons must resign their lives. All souls are his; and may He not do what He will with his own? The name *Jehovah* is used here, (*v.* 9.) and it is the only time that we meet with it in all the discourses between Job and his friends; for God was, in that age, more known by the name of *Shaddai, the Almighty.*

V. 11. may be taken either as the conclusion to the foregoing discourse, or the preface to what follows. The mind of man has as good a faculty of discerning between truth and error, when duly stated, as the palate has of discerning between what is sweet and what is bitter. He therefore demands from his friends a liberty to judge for himself of what they had said; and desires them to use the same liberty in judging of what he had said; nay, he seems to appeal to any man's impartial judgment in this controversy.

V. 12—25. This is a noble discourse of Job's concerning the wisdom, power, and sovereignty, of God, in ordering and disposing of all the affairs of the children of men, according to the counsel of his own will, which none dares gainsay, or can resist. Out of their controversy, both he and his friends spake admirably well; but in *that*, we sometimes scarcely know what to make of them. It were well if wise and good men, that differ in their apprehensions about less things, would see it to be for their honor and comfort, and the edi-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—10. Reviling, raillery, and boasting, commonly prove infectious: and when we over-rate ourselves, and court admiration, others will be disposed to undervalue us, and treat us with contempt.—We have all a right to judge for ourselves, being endued with understanding as well as others: and we should neither claim superiority over them, nor *in this respect* yield it to them; for we are cautioned by our Lord on both sides, when he says, 'Call no man father upon earth; . . . neither be ye called masters:' but in other matters our rule is, 'in honor to prefer others,' and to 'sit down in the lowest place;' and it is seldom wise or becoming to deviate from it. (*Matt.* 23:8—10. *Luke* 14:7—11.)—The most pious and conscientious men have generally been treated with contempt by worldly persons, and sometimes by their brethren.—Worldly prosperity is of small value in the sight of God. He has superior blessings for his children. Every creature preaches the goodness of God, and the ungrateful abuse of man; and testifies that this is a state of probation, and not of retribution.

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII. V. 6—10. The animal tribes generally subserve the pride, luxury, and indulgence of ungodly men. (*Rom.* 8:18—23.) Yet this is not to be ascribed to fortune, or chance: but the Lord orders these things as He pleases; seeing the life and breath of man, and of every creature, are entirely at his disposal. SCOTT.

(7.) 'With the Hindoos, he who refuses instruction, and will not be convinced, is told to ask the cattle.' ROBERTS.

Verses 11, 12.

Job probably thought, that the distinguishing faculty of his friends must be obtuse, or vitiated by prejudice; otherwise they could never reject truths so obvious as those which he had stated to them. Indeed, aged men, who have had long opportunity of observation, are supposed to be wiser than others. SCOTT.

(12.) *With the ancient is wisdom.*] 'Men who have lived in those primitive times, when the great facts of nature were recent, the crea-

try words? and the * mouth taste his meat?

12 With [q] the ancient *is* wisdom; and in length of days, understanding.

13 With † him *is* [r] wisdom and strength, he hath [s] counsel and understanding.

14 Behold, [t] he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: [u] he shutteth ‡ up a man, and there can be no opening.

15 Behold, [x] he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up: also [y] he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth.

16 With [z] him *is* strength and wisdom: [a] the deceived and the deceiver *are* his.

17 He [b] leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools.

18 He [c] looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle.

19 He [d] leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty.

20 He removeth away § the speech of the trusty, and [e] taketh away the understanding of the aged.

21 He [f] poureth contempt upon princes, and ‖ weakeneth the strength of the mighty.

22 He [g] discovereth deep things out of darkness, and [h] bringeth out to light the shadow of death.

23 He [i] increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and ¶ straiteneth them *again*.

24 He [k] taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, [l] and causeth them to wander in a wilderness *where there is* no way.

25 They [m] grope in the dark without light, and he [n] maketh them to ** stagger like *a* drunken *man*.

* Heb. *palate*. 6:30.
q 8:8. 15:10.
† That is, *God*. 32:6—9.
r 16. 9:4. 28:20—28. 36:5. Ps. 147:5. Prov. 2:6,7. Jer. 10:12. Dan. 2:20. Luke 21:15. 1 Cor. 1:24. Col. 2:3. Jam. 1:5.
s Prov. 8:14. Is. 40:13,14. 46:10. Rom. 11:34. Eph. 1:8,11.
t 9:12,13. 11:10. Is. 14:23. Jer. 51:58,64. Mal. 1:4.
u 16:11. 1 Sam. 17:46. 24:18. 26:8. *Marg.* Is. 22:22. Rom. 11:32. *Marg.*
‡ Heb. *upon*.
x 10. Gen. 8:1,2. 1 K. 8:35,36. 17:1. Jer. 14:22. Nah. 1:4. Luke 4:25. Jam. 5:17,18. Rev. 11:6.
y Gen. 6:13,17. 7:23. Ps. 104:7—9. Am. 5:8.
z 13. Matt. 6:13.
a 1 K. 22:22,23. Ez. 14:9.
b 2 Sam. 15:31. Is. 19:12—14. 1 Cor. 1:19,20.
c 2 Chr. 33:11—14. Jer. 52:31—34. Dan. 2:21. Rev. 19:16.
d Josh. 10:24,42. 1 Sam. 17:45,46. Is. 37:36—38. 45:1. Rev. 17:14. 19:19—21.
§ Heb. *the lip of the faithful*. Prov. 10:21. 12:19,22.
e 24. 17:4. 32:9. 39:17.
f Ex. 8:2,16,24. 1 K. 21:23,24. 2 K. 9:26,34—37. Ps. 107:40. Is. 23:9. 24:21,22. 37:38. Dan. 4:32,33. Matt. 2:12,13. Acts 12:23.
‖ Or, *looseth the girdle of the strong*. Is. 5:27. 11:5. 22:21. Eph. 6:10,14.
g 11:6. 28:20—23. 2 K. 6:12. Ps. 44:21. 139:12. Dan. 2:22. Matt. 10:26. 1 Cor. 2:10. 4:5.
h 3:5. 24:17. 34:22. Am. 5:8. Luke 1:79.
i Ex. 1:7,20. Is. 9:3. 26:15. 27:6. 51:2. 60:22. Jer. 30:19. 33:22. Zech. 10:8.
¶ Heb. *leadeth in*.
k 20. 17:4. Is. 6:9,10. 19:1. Hos. 7:11.
l Ps. 107:4,40.
m 5:14. Gen. 19:11. Is. 59:10. Acts 13:11. 1 John 2:11.
n Ps. 107:27. Is. 19:14. 24:20.
** Heb. *wander*.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 11—25. The faculties of our souls were originally formed, as capable of discerning truth and falsehood, as our bodily senses are of discriminating their objects.*—Observation and experience should teach us wisdom. But, through the effects produced on the powers of the mind by the fall of man, [and the consequent degeneracy of the race,] connected with our prejudices, and the influence of our passions [and propensities], we draw wrong conclusions, make a perverse choice, and often wander farther from God, and true wisdom, as our years increase. Yet when, being renewed by the Holy Spirit, we begin to use our faculties aright [so that those may have rule which ought; *Ed.*]; we receive wisdom from the Fountain-head by faith and prayer; we learn useful lessons from all we see and experience; and acquire a spiritual taste, which savors truth and holiness, and is of use every hour of our lives. (*Heb.* 5: 11—14.) May we seek more and more to have 'the eyes of our understanding thus enlightened,' and 'our senses exercised, by reason of use, to discern both good and evil!' and it is a main point of wisdom to set God always before us, to observe his working in every thing, and to feel our own absolute dependence on Him. May this be our choice, our conduct, and our felicity! SCOTT.

* The innate impulses of our nature, as the sense of ought, and ought not, the impulse to reverence, believe, benefit, love, oppose, &c. are and doubtless ever were, *blind*. The phrase 'faculties of our souls,' used by Dr. Scott, is obscure, if his remark be not erroneous. Our perceptive faculties know, our reflective faculties compare and reason. These properly used give us truth; absolute truth as far as we are concerned, for they are constituted, in reference to the universe, by the same God who constituted the universe. And, farther, in view of Henry's and Scott's exposition of this ch. it may be remarked, that the ground of our accountability to God, is, our endowment from Him with a sense of right and wrong, an impulse which asks, 'ought I?' Were creation (and not the manner of creation) the sole ground of moral accountability, trees and all created things would be morally accountable. See, also, *Wayland*. *Ed.*

tion, fall, flood, confusion of tongues, migration of families, and consequent settlement of nations, had much knowledge from these facts; and their length of days, the many hundreds of years to which they lived, gave them such an opportunity of accumulating wisdom by *experience*, that they are deservedly considered as oracles.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 13—25.

The transition from the foregoing v. to this subsequent discourse seems as follows. The consideration, that 'length of days' among men, was supposed to increase wisdom and understanding, led Job to think of the *everlasting* GOD, whose wisdom and knowledge are infinite: and thus, without mentioning Him, he proceeded to expatiate on his perfections and dispensations; showing that he believed the same general truths as his friends did, and could discourse on them with [vastly more] cogency and fluency. (5:8—16. 11:7—12.) These important truths were suited to convince the over-confident disputants, that they had gone out of their depth, in attempting to assign the Lord's reason for afflicting Job, when "his judgments are unsearchable." (*Rom.* 11:33—36.) SCOTT.

(16.) *With Him is strength and wisdom.*] '*Strength and sufficiency*. Strength or power springing from an exhaustless and infinite source of *potency*. In v. 13. the expression for wisdom and strength is *chocmeh u-geburah*, intelligence and fortitude, or strength in action; the wisdom ever guiding the exertions of *power;* but here is *strength* or *power* in *essence;* and an eternal *potentiality*. With Him is every excellence, in *potentiâ* and in *esse*. He borrows nothing, He derives nothing. As He is self-sufficient, so He is self-existent.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(18.) *Looseth the bond.*] 'That with which they bind their subjects.' *Gill.* 'Dissolves their authority.' *Stock. A girdle.*] 'A *cord* or *chain* tied about the waist of captives, Ps. 49:8. Mr. *Scott.*' *Cond. Comm.* Comp. cuts, 2 K. 17:6. 1 K. 10:18, 19. *Diodorus* remarks, that the ancient Egyptians wore a girdle in their mourning: note, Ex. 12 30. ED.

(13—22.) 'The entire passage has a reference to the machinery of a regular and political government; and that its general drift is to imprint on the mind of the hearer the important doctrine, that the whole of the constituent principles of such a government, its officers and institutions; its monarchs and princes; its privy counsellors, judges, and ministers of state, [its priests,] chieftains, public orators, and assembly of elders: its nobles, or men of hereditary rank; and its stout, robust peasantry, (as we should now express it;) nay, the deep, designing, [selfish] villains, that plot in secret its destruction; that the nations themselves, and the heads or sovereigns of the nations; are all and equally in the hands of the Almighty; that with Him human pomp is poverty, human excellence turpitude, human judgment error, human wisdom folly, human dignities contempt, human strength weakness.' *Good.* O God of wisdom, impress this truth, of our nation's dependence on Thee, deeply upon the heart of every one in authority in these United States! ED.

(23.) *He increaseth the nations.*] '*Good.* tr. "He letteth the nations grow licentious." Pride, fulness of bread, with extensive trade and commerce, produce luxury; and this is ever accompanied with profligacy of manners. When, then, the cup of this iniquity is full, God destroys the nation, by bringing, or permitting to come, against it, a nation less pampered, more necessitous, and inured to toil.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

(24.) Dr. *A. Clarke* considers this as a plain allusion to the wanderings of Israel in the deserts of Arabia, and to nothing else. But in the frequent wonder-seeking enterprises of warlike despots, utterly ignorant of geography, such as a Nimrod, a Semiramis, a Ramses, a Chedorlaomer, &c. in those early ages, instances might occur of a self-styled 'conqueror of the world' perishing, with his starving myriads, in the trackless wastes of Asia and Africa. Leaders of powerful colonies, in those colonizing ages, might thus have perished more than once: and a tradition, or recollection of some such instance might be present to the patriarch Job. ED.

CHAP. XIII.

Job, confident of his knowledge, appeals to God; disdainfully and peevishly reproves his friends, for pleading against him, with false reasonings and partiality; and warns them to fear the judgment of God, 1—12. In extreme suffering, and expecting death, he professes confidence that God would justify him, 13—19. He craves respite, and desires to know his sins, and why God dealt so rigorously with him, 20—28.

LO, [a] mine eye hath seen all *this*, [b] mine ear hath heard and understood it.

2 What [c] ye know, *the same* do I know also: I *am* not inferior unto you.

3 Surely [d] I would speak to the Almighty, and [e] I desire to reason with God.

4 But [f] ye *are* forgers of lies, ye *are* all [g] physicians of no value.

5 Oh, [h] that ye would altogether hold your peace! [i] and it should be your wisdom.

6 Hear [k] now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleadings of my lips.

7 Will ye [l] speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him?

8 Will ye [m] accept his person? will ye contend for God?

9 Is it good that he should [n] search you out? or [o] as one man mocketh another, do ye *so* mock him?

10 He will surely [p] reprove you, if ye do secretly accept persons.

11 Shall [q] not his excellency make you afraid? and [r] his dread fall upon you?

12 Your [s] remembrances *are* like unto [t] ashes, your bodies [u] to bodies of clay.

13 * Hold your peace, [x] let me alone, that I may speak, [y] and let come on me what *will*.

14 Wherefore do [z] I take my flesh in my teeth, [a] and put my life in mine hand?

a 5:9—11. 12:9,&c. 42:3—6.
b 4:12. 5:27. 8:8—10. 15:17,18. Ps. 78:3,4. 1 John 1:3.
c 12:3. 15:8,9. 34:35. 35:16. 37:2. 40:4,5. 42:7. 1 Cor. 8:1,2. 2 Cor. 11:4,5,16—18. 12:11.
d 22. 9:34,35. 11:5. 23:3—7. 31:35.
e 9:3,14,15. Is. 1:18—20. 41:21. Jer. 12:1,2. *marg.*
f 4:7—11. 5:1—5. 8:3,4. 18:5,&c. 21: 27—34. 22:6,&c. Ex. 20:16. Ps. 119:69.
g 16:2. Jer. 6:14. 8:22. 30:13. 46:11. Ez. 34:4. Hos. 5:13. Mark 2:17. 5: 26.
h 13. 11:3. 16:3. 18:2. 19:2. 21:2, 3. 32:1.
i Prov. 17:28. Ec. 5:3. Am. 5:13. Jam. 1:19.
k 21:2,3. 33:1—3. 34:2. Judg. 9:7. Prov. 8:6,7.
l 4:7. 11:2—4. 17:5. 36:4. John 16: 2. Rom. 3:5—8.
m 32:21. 34:19. Ex. 23:2,3. Prov. 24: 23. Mal. 2:9. *Marg.*
n 34:35. Ps. 44:21. 139:23. Jer. 17:10.
o 17:2. Is. 28:22. Gal. 6:7,8.
p 42:7,8. Ps. 50:21,22. 82:2. Jam. 2:9.
q Ps. 119:120. Jer. 5:22. 10:10. Matt. 10:28. Rev. 15:3,4.
r 21. Ex. 15:16. Is. 8:13.
s 18:17. Ex. 17:14. Ps. 34:16. 109: 12. 109:15. Prov. 10:7. Is. 26:14.
t Gen. 17:27.
u 4:19. Gen. 2:7. 2 Cor. 5:1.
* Heb. *Be silent from me.*
x See on 5. 7:11. 10:1. 21:3.
y 6:9,10. 7:15,16.
z 18:4. Ec. 4:5. Is. 9:20. 49:26.
a Judg. 12:3. 1 Sam. 19:5. 28:21. Ps 119:109.

justice was served; and in both *the deceived and the deceiver* were at his disposal. See Ezek. 14: 9. God would not suffer the sin of the deceiver, nor the misery of the deceived, if He knew not how to set bounds to both, and bring glory to Himself out of both. *Hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent* thus reigns; and it is well He does, for otherwise there is so little wisdom, and so little honesty, in the world, that it had all been in confusion and ruin long ago.

II. He next descends to the particular instances of the wisdom and power of God in the revolutions of states and kingdoms. Some think he refers to the extirpation of those powerful nations, the Rephaim, the Zuzim, the Emim, and the Horites, (mentioned Gen. 14: 5, 6. Deut. ii. 10. 20.) in which, perhaps, it was particularly noticed, how strangely they were infatuated and enfeebled; if so, it is designed to show, that, whenever the like is done in the affairs of nations, it is God that doeth it, and we must therein observe his sovereign dominion, even over those that think themselves most powerful, politic, and absolute. Let all therefore avoid pride, and humbly depend on God for the continuance of their abilities. Comp. that of Eliphaz, *ch.* 5: 12, &c.

Thus are the revolutions of kingdoms wonderfully brought about by an overruling Providence. Heaven and earth are shaken, but the Lord sits King for ever, and with Him we look for a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

CHAP. XIII. V. 1—12. Job now applies what he had said in the foregoing ch. and now we have him not in so good a temper as then: he here warmly expresses his feelings under the unkindness of his friends.

1. They compelled him, as the Corinthians did Paul, to commend himself and his own knowledge, yet not in a way of self-applause, but of self-justification, *v.* 1, 2. All he had said before, his eye had seen confirmed by many instances, and his ear had heard seconded by many authorities, and he well understood it, and what use to make of it. Happy they, who do not only see and hear, but understand, the greatness, glory, and sovereignty of God. This, he thought, would justify what he had said before, (*ch.* 12: 3.) which he repeats here, *v.* 2. Those who enter into disputation, enter into temptation to magnify themselves, and vilify their brethren, more than is fit, and therefore ought to watch and pray against the workings of pride.

2. He turns from them to God, *v.* 3. The prince himself will perhaps give audience to a poor petitioner with more mildness, patience, and condescension, than the servants. See here, What confidence *they* have toward God, whose hearts condemn them not of reigning hypocrisy: they can, with humble boldness, appear before Him and appeal to Him. What comfort *they* have in God, whose neighbors unjustly condemn them: if they may not speak to them with any hopes of a fair hearing, yet they may speak to the Almighty, they have easy access to Him, and shall find acceptance with Him.

3. He condemns them for their unjust and uncharitable treatment of him, *v.* 4. They falsely accused, basely deceived him; undertook his cure, and knew not how to prescribe. Thus, to broken hearts and wounded consciences, all creatures, without Christ, are physicians of no value, on which one may spend all, and be never the better, but rather grow worse, Mark 5: 26.

4. He begs they would be silent, and give him a patient hearing, *v.* 5, 6. They pleaded they could not forbear speaking; (*ch.* 4: 2.—11: 2, 3.) but he tells them, they had more consulted their own reputation, had they enjoined themselves silence. Silence is an evidence of wisdom, and a mean of it, as it gives time to think and hear. Perhaps, though they did not interrupt his discourse, they seemed careless, and did not much heed what he said; he therefore begs they would not only *hear*, but *hearken*, *v.* 6. Note, We should be very willing and glad to hear what those have to say for themselves, of whom, on any account, we are tempted to have hard thoughts. Many a man, if he could but be fairly heard, would be fairly acquitted, even in the consciences of those that run him down.

5. He endeavors to convince them of the wrong they did to God's honor, while they pretended to plead for Him, *v.* 7, 8. 'He is a God, and can plead for Himself; (Judg. 6: 31.) and if you were for ever silent, the heavens would declare his righteousness. Your principles are false, and your arguings fallacious; and will it excuse you, to say, *It is for God?*' No, a good intention will not justify, much less sanctify, a bad word or action. God's truth needs not our lie, nor God's cause either our sinful policies, or our sinful passions. The wrath of man works not the righteousness of God, nor may we *do evil, that good may come*, Rom. 3: 7, 8. Pious frauds (as they call them) are impious cheats; and devout persecutions horrid profanations of the name of God, as theirs who *hated their brethren*, and *cast them out, saying, Let the Lord be glorified*, Is. 66: 5. John 16: 2.

6. He endeavors to possess them with a fear of God's judgment, and so to bring them to a better temper. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked.* That they might not think thus to jest with God, and affront Him, he would have them consider both God and themselves, and then they would find themselves unable to enter into judgment with Him, *v.* 9—12. And these considerations should also be a reason, why we should not despise and trample on our brethren. Patrick gives another sense of v. 12. 'Your remonstrances on God's behalf are no better than dust, and the arguments you accumulate, but like so many heaps of dirt.'

V. 13—22. Job here takes fast hold of his integrity, as one resolved not to let it be wrested from him: his firmness in this is commendable, and his warmness excusable.

1. He entreats his friends, and all the company, to let him alone, and not interrupt him in what he was about to say, (*v.* 13.) but diligently to hearken to it, *v.* 17. He would have his own protestation to be decisive, for none but God and himself knew his heart.

2. He resolves to adhere to the testimony of his own conscience; and though his friends called it obstinacy, that should not shake his constancy, *v.* 13. Note, Those that have the assurance of their uprightness, may cheerfully welcome every event. He resolves (*v.* 15.) he will maintain his own ways; he will never part with the satisfaction he had in having walked uprightly with God; he

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII. V. 1, 2. With manifest self-preference, Job here declared, that the discoveries of God's providential dealings with men, which he had stated, were the result of his own exact and careful observation; and that he understood these matters at least as well as his friends did, and therefore he did not want their instructions. (12:2, 3.) SCOTT.

Verses 3—6.

An improper boldness is discernible in the discourses of Job, for which Elihu afterward justly reproved him: (33:8—13. 34:5—9. yet he did not mean to justify himself before God, but only to obtain from Him a verdict in his favor against his friends, who treated him as a hypocrite; accusing him of crimes which he had never committed, and arguing from false principles, respecting the divine government of the world. SCOTT.

(7.) 'Cannot God be righteous, unless I be wicked?' PATRICK.

Verses 13, 14.

Perhaps Job's friends seemed about to interrupt him; or showed apprehensions, that divine judgment would come on him for so pertinaciously attesting his innocence. 'Well,' says he, 'keep silence, let

15 Though [b] he slay me, yet will I trust in him: [c] but I will * maintain mine own ways before him.

16 He also *shall be* [d] my Salvation: [e] for an hypocrite shall not come before him.

17 Hear [f] diligently my speech and my declaration with your ears.

18 Behold now, [g] I have ordered *my* cause; [h] I know that I shall be justified.

19 Who *is* he [i] *that* will plead with me? for now, [k] if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost.

20 Only [l] do not two *things* unto me: then will I not [m] hide myself from thee.

21 [n] Withdraw thine hand far from me: and [o] let not thy dread make me afraid.

22 Then [p] call thou, and I will answer: or let me speak, and answer thou me.

23 How [q] many *are* mine iniquities and sins? [r] make me to know my transgression and my sin.

24 Wherefore [s] hidest thou thy face, and [t] holdest me for thine enemy?

25 Wilt thou [u] break

b 18. 19:25—28. 23:10. Ps. 23:4. Prov. 14:32. Rom. 8:38,39.
c 10:7. 16:17,21. 23:4—7. 31:35—37. 40:2,4,5,8. 1 John 3:20.
* Heb. *prove*, or *argue*.
d Ex. 15:2. Ps. 27:1. 62:6,7. 118:14, 21. Is. 12:2. Jer. 3:23. Acts 13:47.
e 8:13. 27:8—10. 36:13. Is. 33:14.
f 6. 33:1.
g 10:21. 23:4. 40:7.
h 9:2,3,20. 40:7,8. Is. 43:26. Rom. 8:33,34. 2 Cor. 1:12.
i 19:5. 33:5—7,32. Is. 50:7,8.
k 13. 7:11. Jer. 20.9.
l 9:34,35.
m Gen. 3:8—10. Ps. 139:12. Rev. 6: 15,16.
n 10:20. 22:15—17.
o 11. See on 33:7. Ps. 119:120.
p 9:32. 33:3. 40:4,5. 42:3—6.
q 22:5. Ps. 44:20,21.
r 35:8,9. Ps. 139:23,24.
s 10:2. 29:2,3. Deut. 32:20. Ps. 10: 1. 13:1. 44:24. 77:6—9. 88:14.
t 19:9. 19:11. 30:21. 31:35. 33:10. 1 Sam. 28:16. Lam. 2:5. 2 Thes. 3: 15.
u 14:3. 1 Sam. 24:14. Is. 17:13. Matt. 12:20.

could not justify every word he had spoken, yet, in the general, his ways were good, and he would maintain it; and why not, since that was his great support under his present exercises, as it was Hezekiah's, *Remember how I have walked before Thee!*

3. He complains he was ready, not only to rend his clothes, but even to tear his flesh, through the greatness of his affliction, *v.* 14. and he not wicked; no marvel then he was in such confusion. 'Why do I stifle and smother the protestations of my innocency?' When a man with great difficulty keeps in what he would say, he bites his lips: 'Now,' says he, 'why may not I take liberty to speak, since I do but vex myself, add to my torment, and endanger my life, by refraining?' Note, It would vex the most patient man, when he has lost every thing else, to be denied the comfort (if he deserves it) of a good conscience and a good name.

4. He comforts himself in God, and still keeps hold of his confidence in Him. Observe, he depends on God for the same we hope through Christ. (1.) Justification; (*v.* 18.) *I have ordered my cause*, and, on the whole matter, *I know I shall be justified*. They whose hearts are upright with God, in walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, may be sure that through Christ there shall be no condemnation to them, but that, whoever lays any thing to their charge, they shall be justified. (2.) Salvation, *v.* 16. He means it not of temporal salvation, he had little expectation of that, but, of his eternal salvation, he was very confident. And the reason why he depended on God for salvation, is, Because *a hypocrite shall not come before Him*. He knew himself not to be a hypocrite, and that none but hypocrites are rejected of God, therefore he concluded he should not be rejected. Sincerity is our evangelical perfection, nothing will ruin us but the want of that.

His is a high expression of faith, *v.* 15. and what we should all labor to come up to; to *trust in* God, *though He slay* us. That is, we must be well pleased with God as a Friend, even then when He seems to come forth against us as an Enemy, *ch.* 23: 8—10. We must believe that all shall work for good to us, even then when all seems to make against us, Jer. 24: 5. We must persevere in the way of duty, though it cost all that is dear, even life itself, Heb. 11: 35. We must depend on the performance of the promise, when all the ways leading to it are shut up, Rom. 4: 18. We must rejoice in God, when we have nothing else to rejoice in, and cleave to Him, yea, though we cannot for the present find comfort in Him. In a dying hour, we must derive from Him living comforts; and this is to trust in Him, though He slay us.

5. He wishes to argue the case even with God Himself, if he might but settle the preliminaries of the treaty, *v.* 20—22. nor will he dread the issue, but under two provisos, I. That his body might not be tortured with this exquisite pain, *v.* 21. When we are to converse with God, we have need to be as free as possible from every thing that may make us uneasy. 2. That his mind might not be terrified with the tremendous majesty of God. Moses himself trembled before God, so did Isaiah and Habakkuk: *O God, Thou art terrible even in thy holy places*. If put into such a consternation of spirit, together with his bodily affliction, Job must drop the cause, and can make nothing of it. See what a folly it is, for men to put off their repentance and conversion to a sick-bed, and a death-bed! How can even a good man, much less a bad man, reason with God, so as to be justified before Him, when on the rack of pain, and under the terror of death? At such a time, it is very bad to have the great work to do, but very comfortable to have it done, as Job, who, if he might but have a little breathing time, was ready either, To hear God speaking to Him by his word, and answer; *Call Thou, and I will answer;* or, To speak to Him by prayer, and expect an answer; *Let me speak, and answer Thou me*, *v.* 22. Comp. this with *ch.* 9: 34, 35. where he speaks to the same purport. In short, the badness of his case was at present such a damp on him, as he could not get over; otherwise he was well assured of the goodness of his cause, and doubted not to have the comfort of it at last, when the present cloud was over. With such holy boldness may the upright come to the throne of grace, not doubting but to find mercy there.

V. 23—28. Here,

I. Job inquires after his sins. This may be taken, either, 1. As a passionate complaint, that he was punished, and yet not told his faults. Or, 2. As a prudent appeal to God from the censures of his friends; as knowing his sins would then appear not so many, nor so mighty, as his friends suspected. Or, 3. As a pious request, like that Elihu directed him to; *ch.* 34: 32. *That which I see not, teach Thou me.* Note, A true penitent is willing to know the worst of himself; and we should all desire to know our transgressions, that we may be particular in confessing them, and on our guard against them for the future.

II. He bitterly complains of God's withdrawings from him, *v.* 24. This must be meant of something more than his outward afflictions; as that the favors of the Almighty were suspended; and his terrors inflicted and impressed upon him; God hid his face; held him for his enemy; shot his arrows at him, (*ch.* 6: 4.) and set him as a mark, *ch.* 7: 20. Note, The holy God sometimes denies his favors, and discovers his terrors, to the best and dearest of his saints and servants in this world. This case occurs, not only in the production, but sometimes in the progress, of the divine life; evidences for heaven are eclipsed, sensible communions interrupted, dread of divine wrath impressed, and the returns of comfort, for the present, despaired of, Ps. 77: 7—9. 88: 7, 15, 16. These are grievous burdens to a gracious soul, that values God's loving-kindness as better than life, Prov. 18: 14. *A wounded spirit who can bear?* Job, by asking here, *Why hidest Thou thy face?* teaches us, that when, at any time, we are under the sense of God's withdrawings, we are concerned to inquire into the reason of them; what is the sin for which He corrects us; and what the good He designs us. Job's sufferings were typical of the sufferings of Christ, from whom not only men hid their faces, (Is. 53: 3.) but God hid his. Witness the darkness which surrounded Him on the cross, when He cried out, *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* If this were done to these green trees, what shall be done to the dry? They will for ever be forsaken.

III. He humbly pleads with God his own utter

me speak, and I will risk all consequences; for my anguish is so excessive, that I could even gnaw my own flesh: and, as I am not conscious of any great crime for which I am thus punished, I would even venture my life to have this matter cleared up.' (6:8—13. 7:7—11.) SCOTT.

Verse 15.

Though he slay, &c.] 'The identical expression is used by an affectionate Hindoo servant when his master beats him; or wife, when beaten by her husband.' ROBERTS.

Verses 15—19.

The first clause in this passage may be properly rendered as an interrogation, 'Lo, He will slay me, shall not I trust?' or, 'though He should slay me, shall not I trust?' Our version is formed from a change in the text, on the authority of the Jewish writers, which in this case seems not at all necessary. Job's friends had intimated, that the return of his prosperity would evince his former integrity, and his present repentance: (5:18—27. 8:20—22. 11:13—20.) but he, conscious that he had walked uprightly before God, and having an assured belief of his faithfulness and mercy, would confide in Him as his Salvation, even though He slew him; and would maintain before Him, that he had not been a wicked dissembler, though he well knew that no hypocrite could escape. From the charge of hypocrisy he knew that God would justify him, and he challenged their proofs. He had lost all, except his character, the testimony of his conscience, and his hope in God, which they endeavored to rend from him; and it would be death to him, not to vindicate himself from their cruel aspersions. —'For now, I shall be silent, and expire.' SCOTT.

(19.) *With me.*] 'Lit. "at my side," i. e. as an opponent "plead against me."' GOOD.

Verses 20, 23.

Probably Job intended this merely as an appeal to God, that it was not hypocrisy, or gross oppression which had brought his present calamities upon him; yet the address was querulous and passionate, and when the Lord actually spake, Job found he could not answer Him. (40:1—5. 42:1—6.)—'O God, I cannot accuse myself of wilful wickedness against Thee: but if there be any secret iniquity that I am not privy to, do Thou make it known to me, and convince me of it.' *Bp. Hall.*—10:1, 2. *Ps.* 139:23, 24.) SCOTT.

Verses 24—28.

(2:7, 8. 30:15—31. *Num.* 12:11—13.)—In these complaints we discern the effects of strong temptations, and remaining depravity: yet

a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?

26 For thou [x] writest bitter things against me, and [y] makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.

27 Thou [z] puttest my feet also in the stocks, [a] and [*] lookest narrowly unto all my paths; thou [b] settest a print upon the [†] heels of my feet.

28 And [c] he, as a rotten thing, consumeth, [d] as a garment that is moth-eaten.

CHAP. XIV.

Job pleads with God for relief, because of the shortness and misery of life, and the sinfulness of human nature, 1—6. Viewing death as destructive to all earthly hopes, he yet desires to be hid in the grave, and determines to wait the time appointed for his change, 7—15. He complains that God dealt severely with him; and shows that all things on earth, and men especially, are subject to corruption, 16—22.

MAN *that is* [a] born of a woman *is* [‡] of [b] few days, and [c] full of trouble.

2 He cometh forth [d] like a flower, and is cut down: he [e] fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

3 And [f] dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and [g] bringest me into judgment with thee?

4 § Who [h] can bring [i] a clean *thing* out of an unclean? not one.

x 33:11. 2 Chr. 16:10—12. Prov. 7:22. Acts 16:24.
y 20:11. Ps. 25:7. Prov. 5:11—13. Jer. 31:19. John 5:5,14.
z 13:27. Job 33:11. 2 Chr. 16:10—12. Prov. 7:22. Acts 16:24.
a 10:6. 14:16,17. 16:9.
* Heb. *observest.*
b 2:7.
† Heb. *roots.*
c 30:17—19,29,30. Num. 12:12.
d 4:19. Ps. 39:11. Hos. 5:12.
a 15:14. 25:4. Ps. 51:5. Matt. 11:11.
‡ Heb. *short of days.*
b 7:1,6. 9:25. Gen. 47:9. Ps. 39:5.
c 5:7. See on Ec. 2:17,23.
d Ps. 90:5—7. 92:7,12. 103:15,16. Is. 40:6—8. Jam. 1:10,11. 1 Pet. 1:24.
e 8:9. 9:25,26. 1 Chr. 29:15. Ps. 102: 11. 144:4. Ec. 8:13.
f 7:17,18. 13:25. Ps. 144:3.
g 9:19,20,32. 13:27. Ps. 143:2. Rom. 3:19.
h Heb. *Who will give?*
i 15:14—16. 25:4—6. Gen. 5:3. Ps. 51:5. John 3:6. Rom. 5:12. 8:3,8. Eph. 2:3.
i Luke 1:35.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is very difficult for man to possess superior talents, without some appearance of ostentation and self-preference: yet to be 'clothed with humility' confers a peculiar gracefulness on wisdom, knowledge, and every shining quality.—When the conscience is wounded, and the heart dismayed with the fear of wrath, the prevalence of sin, the force of temptation, or the weight of affliction, we should apply to the Physician of our souls; whose knowledge, power, and love are infinite, who never rejects any sincere application, and who never leaves any case uncured. Though sinners, yet, 'if our heart condemn us not' of hypocrisy, we may have humble confidence before Him. (1 *John* 3: 18—24.)—Sometimes the greatest comfort we can afford the afflicted, consists in patiently attending to their complaints.—God will surely reprove hypocritical offenders: and a due attention to his holy excellency would fill with terror of his vergeance, all who ignorantly hope for his favor in any unhallowed attempts to serve Him.—Old age often possesses the iniquities of youth, by bodily diseases, ruined circumstances, bad habits, a guilty conscience, or rebellious children: and it is a mercy, if final condemnation be escaped.—Seeking first eternal salvation, let us bear our present trials without a murmur; let us often humble ourselves anew for sins long since committed and repented of, and look forward to death as the period of all our sorrows. And let young persons beware of indulging themselves in sin; for even in this world they may so possess the iniquities of their youth, as to have months of sorrow for moments of pleasure. (*John* 5:10—14. *P. O.* 1—14.) Their wisdom and duty therefore consist in remembering their Creator in their early days, that they may have assured hope and sweet peace of conscience, as the solace of their declining years. (*Ec.* 12:1.) SCOTT.

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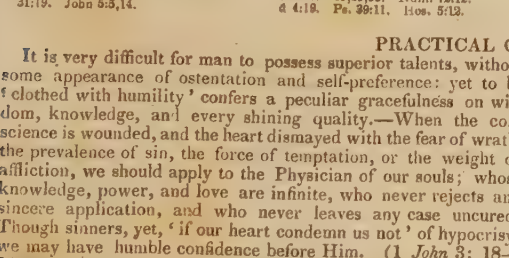
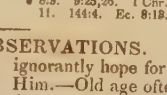
in this ch. Job expresses a regard to God in every thing; shows lively exercises of faith, hope, and confidence in Him; and gives many evidences of a sound judgment and a tender conscience. SCOTT.

(27.) *Stocks.*] *Bsd.* 'Clogs.' *Good.* 'Clog.' *Boothr.* *Roberts* give



the cut of stocks now used in the E. The Egyptians used stocks like



a the cut (a); the two halves were locked together; see *Wilkinson.* ED. *Settest a print.*] 'A brand of ownership, perhaps.' *Good.* 'The fetters upon me leave their marks.' *Caryl.* The allusion may be to the bastinado, a very ancient punishment, on the soles of the feet. *Parkhurst. Gill.* Job may refer to tumors in the feet, common in the elephantiasis. *Mich.*' [*Hewlett* suggests 'a brand, of the letters of his crime.'] COND. COMM.

(28.) *Good* unites this v. with the next ch. 'Well may he dissolve as corruption, The moth-worm feeding upon him as a garment, Man, the produce of woman, Few of days, and full of trouble.' ED.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV. V. 4. In the whole course of nature, the progeny partakes of the propensities and qualities of the creature, from which it sprang. For 'who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.' Or, how could it be possible for his conduct to be sinless, when his heart was by nature polluted and unclean? In either sense, this

5 Seeing [j] his days *are* determined, [k] the number of his months *are* with thee, [l] thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;

6 [m] Turn from him, that he may [*] rest, till he shall accomplish, [n] as an hireling, his day.

7 For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, [o] that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.

8 Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof [p] die in the ground;

9 *Yet* through the scent of water it will bud, [q] and bring forth boughs like a plant.

10 But man dieth, and [†] wasteth away: yea, [r] man giveth up the ghost, and [s] where is he?

11 *As* the waters fail from the sea, and [t] the flood decayeth and drieth up:

12 So [u] man lieth down, and riseth not: [v] till the heavens *be* no more, they shall not [x] awake, nor be raised out of their sleep

13 Oh, that thou wouldest [y] hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me se-

j 14. 7:1. 12:10. Ps. 39:4. Dan. 5: 26,30. 9:24. 11:36. Luke 12:20. Acts 17:26. Heb. 9:27.
k 21:21.
l 22:13,14. Ps. 104:9,29. Dan. 4:35. Rev. 1:18. 3:7.
m 7:16,19. 10:20. Ps. 39:13.
* Heb. *cease.*
n 7:1,2. Matt. 20:1—8.
o 14. 19:10. Is. 11:1. 27:6. Dan. 4: 15,23—25.
p Is. 26:19. John 12:24. 1 Cor. 15:36.
q Ez. 17:3—10,22—24. 19:10,11. Rom. 11:17—24.
† Heb. *is weakened*, or, *cut off.*
r 3:11. 10:18. 11:20. 17:13—16. Gen. 49:33. Matt. 27:50. Acts 5:10.
s 12. 7:7—10. 19:26. Prov. 14:32. Luke 16:22,23.
t 6:15—18. Jer. 15:18.
u 10:21,22. 30:23. Ec. 3:19—21. 12:5.
v 19:25—27. Ps. 102:26. Is. 51:6. 65: 17. 66:22. Matt. 24:35. Acts 3:21. 2 Pet. 3:7,10—13. Rev. 20:11. 21:1.
x 3:13. 7:21. Is. 26:19. Dan. 12:2. John 11:11—13. Eph. 5:14. 1 Thes. 4:14,15
y 3:17—19. Is. 57:1,2.

life. it is computed, not by months or years, but by days, for we cannot be sure of any day but that it may be our last, 1 Cor. 7: 31.

4. Of the calamitous state of human life; during its few days, man is not only troubled, but full of trouble, either toiling or fretting, grieving or fearing; no day passes without some vexation, some hurry, some disorder or other. Yet since man's days are so full of trouble, it is well they are few, that the soul's imprisonment in the body, and banishment from the Lord, are not perpetual, are not long. When we come to heaven, our days will be many, and perfectly free from trouble, and, in the meantime, faith, hope, and love, balance the present grievances.

5. Of the sinfulness of human life, arising from the sinfulness of the human nature. So some understand that question, *v.* 4. A clean performance from an unclean principle? Note, Actual transgressions are the natural product of habitual corruption; which is *therefore* called *original* sin, because it is the original of all our sins. This, holy Job here laments, as all that are sanctified do, running up the streams to the fountain; (Ps. 51: 5.) and some think he intends it as a plea with God for compassion; 'Lord, be not extreme to mark my sins of human frailty and infirmity, for Thou knowest my weakness; *O remember that I am flesh.*' The Chaldee paraphrase has an observable reading of this v. *Who can make a man clean, that is polluted with sin? Cannot one? that is, God. Or who but God, Who is one, and will spare him?*

6. Of the settled period of human life, *v.* 5. It is certain, God's providence has the ordering of the period of our lives, the laws of nature depend on Him; in Him we live and move, diseases are his servants, He kills and makes alive, nothing comes to pass by chance, no not the execution done by a bow drawn at a venture; it is therefore certain, God's prescience has determined it before, for known unto God are all his works. Whatever He does, He determined, yet with a regard partly to the settled course of nature, (the end and the means are determined together,) and to the settled rules of moral government, punishing evil, and rewarding good, in this life; we are no more governed by the Stoic's blind fate, than by the Epicurean's blind fortune. The bounds God has fixed, we cannot pass, for his counsels are unalterable, his foresight being infallible.

These considerations Job here urges as reasons, why God should not be so strict in taking cognizance of him, and of his slips, and failings, *v.* 8. and why He should not be so severe in his dealings with him, *v.* 6. 'Turn from afflicting a poor creature thus, and let him rest awhile. Let it suffice that my life, at best, is *as the day of a hireling*, a day of toil and labor; I am content to accomplish that, and will make the best of the common hardships of human life; but let me not feel those uncommon tortures, let not my life be as the day of a malefactor, all execution-day.'

V. 7—15. We have seen what Job has to say concerning life, let us now see what he has to say concerning death, which his thoughts were now very much conversant with. It is not unseasonable, when in health, to think of dying; but it is an inexcusable incogitancy, if, when already taken into the custody of death's messengers, we look upon it as a thing at a distance. Here Job shows,

I. That death is a removal for ever out of this world. This he had spoken of before, (*ch.* 7: 9, 10.) now he mentions it again: though it be a truth that needs not be proved, yet it needs to be much considered, that it may be duly improved.

1. A man cut down by death, will not revive again, as a tree cut down. What hope there is of a tree, he shows very elegantly, *v.* 7—9. The vegetable life is a cheap and easy thing, the scent of water will recover it; the animal life, in some insects and fowls, is so, the heat of the sun retrieves it; but the rational soul, when once retired, is too great, too noble, a thing to be recalled by any of the powers of nature; it is out of the reach of sun or rain, and cannot be restored but by the immediate operations of Omnipotence itself, *v.* 10. Two words are here used for man. *Geber, a mighty man*, though mighty, dies; *Adam, a man of the earth*, because earthy, gives up the ghost. He is not where he was; but, Is he nowhere? So some read it. Yes, he is somewhere; and it is a very awful consideration to think where they are that have given up the ghost, and where we shall be, when we give it up. It is gone to return no more to this world.

2. A man laid down in the grave will not rise up again, *v.* 11, 12. like the waters of a land-flood, which spread far, and make a great show, but are shallow, and, when cut off from the sea or river, whose overflowing caused them, soon dry up. The waters of life soon exhale, and disappear; the body, like some of those waters, is buried in the earth; the soul, like others of them, is drawn upward, to mingle with the waters above the firmament. Sir R. Blackmore makes this also to be a dissimilitude; if the waters decay and be dried up in the summer, yet they will return again in the winter; but it is not so with the life of man.

II. That yet man will return to life in another world, at the end of time, when *the heavens* are *no more*. The *resurrection of the dead* was, doubtless, an article of Job's creed, as appears, *ch.* 19: 26. and to that, it should seem, he has an eye here; where, in the belief of that, we have three things.

1. An humble petition for a hiding-place in the grave, *v.* 13. It was not only in a passionate weariness of this life, that he wished to die, but in a pious assurance of a better life, to which, at length, he should arise. God *hides men in the grave*, as we hide our treasure in a place of secrecy and safety. Yet, as long as the bodies of the saints lie in the grave, so long there are some remains of that wrath which they were by nature children of; it will be wholly past only when the body is raised; then death, the last enemy, will be totally destroyed. The bodies of the saints shall not be forgotten in the grave. How we may get through the darkness of this world, we cannot tell; but if we can but get well to the grave, we may with an eye of faith look through the darkness of that, as Job here, and see better days on the other side it, in a better world.

2. A holy resolution patiently to attend the will of God both in his death and in his resurrection, *v.* 14. Job's friends proving miserable comforters, he set himself to be the more his own comforter. I think it cannot be meant of his return to a prosperous condition in this world. His friends indeed flattered him with the hopes of that, but he himself all along despaired of it. Comforts founded on uncertainties, at best, must needs be uncertain comforts; therefore, no doubt, something more

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forms a decisive testimony, that Job understood and believed the doctrine of *original sin:* and though he did not apply it, in so humble and pious a manner, as David afterwards did; (*Ps.* 51:5, 6.) yet he seems to have intended it as a plea, why the Lord should not deal with him according to his own works, but according to his promised mercy and grace. SCOTT.

Verses 7—12.

All these expressions imply Job's belief of that great doctrine [the resurrection of the dead]; though both ancient and modern Sadducees have contrived to misunderstand him. Why else should he speak of death as '*sleep*,' and mention a *period* to it when he shall *awake*, even 'when the heavens are no more?' (*M. R.* u—x.)—Either Job meant by these considerations to comfort himself with the hope of having soon and for ever done with this wretched world; or he used them as a plea, why God should grant him respite from trouble to prepare for death, the consequences of which are irreversible ID.

(9.) *Scent.*] 'A fine metaphor: the water acts on the perishing tree, as strong odors, musk, attar of roses, ammonia, &c. act on a fainting or swooning person.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* The effect of simple moisture in the E. in at once reviving vegetation, however parched up, has been before alluded to: (note 1 K.18:5.) and *irrigation* has ever been and still is the most important agricultural labor of W. Asia; and its countries are flourishing or desolate, almost according to the attention war allows to be paid to this. It may be further remarked, that physiologists can discover no other nourishment to be taken from the earth by the roots of plants, than simple *water.* ED.

Verses 13—15.

Job here earnestly prayed, that God would speedily terminate his sorrows, and set a time when He would release him; or at present dismiss him, till the appointed period of the resurrection, and the general judgment, and then remember him in mercy.—The *change*, or *renovation*, which shall take place, at the resurrection, seems principally intended. (*Phil.* 3.20, 21.)—*Wait till*, &c. (14) 'I will wait, till I shall exist again.' *Sept.* SCOTT.

(14.) *Appointed time.*] 'Warfare, *Mont. Mich. Schultens. Boothr.* [note, 7:1.] The Heb. words are expressive of the time a soldier remains

cret, [z] until thy wrath be passed, that thou wouldest [a] appoint me a set time, and [b] remember me!

14 If a man die, [c] shall he live *again?* [d] all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till [e] my change come.

15 Thou [f] shalt call, and I will answer thee: [g] thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.

16 For now [h] thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin?

17 My transgression *is* [i] sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity.

18 And surely [k] the mountain falling * cometh to nought, and [l] the rock is removed out of his place.

19 The waters wear the stones: thou † washest away the things which grow *out* of the dust of the earth; and thou [m] destroyest the hope of man.

20 Thou [n] prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth: thou [o] changest his countenance, and sendest him away.

21 His sons come to honor, and [p] he knoweth *it* not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth *it* not of them.

22 But [q] his flesh upon him shall have pain, and [r] his soul within him shall mourn.

CHAP. XV.

Eliphaz sharply reproves Job, as arrogant and impious, 1—13. He declares God's holiness and man's sinfulness, 14—16. He appeals to observation and tradition, in proof that the wicked are miserable in this world, 17—35.

THEN answered [s] Eliphaz the Temanite, and said,

z Is. 12:1. 26:20,21.
a Mark 13:32. Acts 1:7. 17:31.
b Gen. 8:1. Ps. 106:4. Luke 23:42.
c 19:25,26. Ez. 37:1—14. Matt. 22: 29—32. John 5:28,29. Acts 26:8. 1 Cor. 15:42—44. Rev. 20:13.
d 5. 7:1. 42:16. Ps. 27:14. 40:1,2. Lam. 3:25,26. Jam. 5:7,8.
e 1 Cor. 15:51,52. Phil. 3:21.
f 13:22. Ps. 50:4,5. 1 Thes. 4:17. 1 John 2:28.
g 7:21. 10:3,8. Ps. 138:8. 1 Pet. 4:19.
h 10:6,14. 13:27. 31:4. 33:11. 34:21. Ps. 56:8. 139:1—4. Prov. 5:21. Jer. 32:19.
i 21:19. Deut. 32:34. Hos. 13:12.
k Ps. 102:25,26. Is. 40:12. 41:15,16. 54:10. 64:1. Jer. 4:24. Rev. 6:14. 8:8. 20:11.
* Heb. *fadeth.*
l 18:4. Matt. 27:51.
† Heb. *overflowest.* Gen. 6:17. 7:21—23.
m 19:10. 27:8. Ps. 30:6,7. Ez. 37:11. Luke 12:19,20.
n Ec. 8:8.
o 14. 2:12. Lam. 4:8.
p 1 Sam. 4:20. Ps. 39:6. Ec. 2:18,19. 9:5. Is. 39:7,8. 63:16.
q 19:20,22,26. 33:19—21.
r Prov. 14:32. Luke 16:23,24.
s 2:11. 4:1. 22:1. 42:7,9.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is very useful, seriously to reflect on the shortness and uncertainty of human life; on the vanity and vexation of all human enjoyments; and on the fading nature of all worldly splendor, which has neither substance nor continuance: that we may cease to expect happiness from earthly objects, and learn to 'lay up our treasure in heaven.' But it is still more interesting to advert properly to the *cause* and the *remedy* of these evils. 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men.' We receive our nature through this corrupted channel, and all the powers of our soul are contaminated by it: for who can produce a holy offspring from an unholy stock? The almighty power of God, indeed, once formed the holy, human nature of the Savior, in the womb of a sinful woman; but that was above, and contrary to, the established order of nature, that He might appear 'in the likeness of sinful flesh,' and yet be without sin. All else are conceived and shapen in iniquity; and we all early manifest an aversion to God and his holy service, and our actual transgressions soon be come numerous. So that, unless we be 'born of the Spirit,' no spiritually good thing dwell sin us, or can proceed from us: and even the little good of the regenerate is greatly defiled. We should therefore learn to abase ourselves before God, as abominable and polluted creatures: we should cease from all dependence on our own works; deprecate the strictness and severity of the divine judgment; and cast ourselves wholly on the mercy of our God, according to the new covenant of grace, through the mediation of our Divine Surety: and we should daily seek the renewing of the Holy Spirit, and look forward to heaven as the only place of perfect holiness and felicity. —As the number of our days and months is appointed, whatever then we find to do, let us do it heartily and immediately. (*Ec.* 9:10.) SCOTT.

on duty, and his dismission from it. *Heath. Till my change*, &c.] Till my time to be relieved. *Boothr.*' COND. COMM.

(17.) *Sealed up in a bag.*] 'An allusion to the custom [extant in England in 1820,] of collecting evidence of state transgressions, *sealing them up in a bag*, and presenting them to judges and officers of state to be examined, in order to trials and judgment. Some suppose the allusion is to *money sealed up in bags*; which is common in the E.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* So pearls, money, and perhaps other things are observed, on the ancient monuments of Egypt, done up in bags *sealed* doubtless. ED.

Verses 18, 19.

The mountain falling cometh to nought, &c.] An allusion to the vast operations of God's 'laws of nature.' Mountains were once evidently more precipitous than now, and the constant efforts (as it were) of gravitation, assisted by the atmosphere &c. overcome the cohesion of their hardest rocks, which fall upon the plain; thus, in the lapse of ages, abrading them to pyramidal shapes, or smoothing them to gently rounded hills, soon clothed with grass and wood; water rolls these disjointed stones together and reduces them to sand, with which it fills the valleys. Successive tribes of vegetation, rising and decaying, at length fit the soil for the sustenance of man: whose abodes may be suddenly swept away by the same waters; when the river rises with irresistible power far above its accustomed banks. Or, Job may allude to 'the flood.' *Good, Boothr. Tindal*, &c. understand, 'as their overflowings sweep the soil from the land.' The alluvion brought down by the stream, and deposited on one side of the river, is again washed away to be dropped elsewhere. ED.

Verse 22.

'*Stock* tr. thus, both to the spirit and letter: "But over him his flesh shall grieve, and over him his breath shall mourn," and adds, "In the daring spirit of oriental poetry, the *flesh*, or body, and the *breath*, are made conscious beings; the former lamenting its putrefaction in the grave, the latter mourning over the mouldering clay, which it once enlivened."' Dr. A. CLARKE.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV. V. 1—13. 'Truly thou makest void fear,' (i. e. the *fear of God;*) and diminishest meditation (or, *worship*) 'before Him.' SCOTT.

(2.) *Belly.*] '*Beten*: any part of the cavity of the body, whether

CHAP. XV. Perhaps Job thought, if he had not convinced, he had, at least, silenced, his friends;

2 Should [b] a wise man utter * vain knowledge, and [c] fill his belly with the east wind?

3 Should [d] he reason with unprofitable talk? or with speeches wherewith he can do no good?

4 Yea, [e] thou † castest off fear, and [f] restrainest ‡ prayer before God.

5 For thy mouth § uttereth thine iniquity, and [g] thou choosest the tongue of the crafty.

6 Thine [h] own mouth condemneth thee, and not I: yea, [i] thine own lips testify against thee.

7 *Art* thou [j] the first man *that* was born? [k] or wast thou made before the hills?

8 Hast thou heard [l] the secret of God? and dost [m] thou restrain wisdom to thyself?

9 What [n] knowest thou, that we know not? *what* understandest thou, which *is* not in us?

10 With us *are* both [o] the grey-headed, and very aged men, much elder than thy father.

11 *Are* [p] the consolations of God small with thee? [q] is there any secret thing with thee?

12 Why doth [r] thine heart carry thee away? and what do [s] thy eyes wink at,

13 That thou [t] turn-

b 11:2,3. 13:2. Jam. 3:13.
* Heb. *knowledge of wind.* 6:26. 8:2.
c Hos. 12:1.
d 13:4,5. 16:2,3. 26:1—3. Mal. 3:13—15. Matt. 12:36,37. Col. 4:6. 1 Tim. 6:4,5.
e 4:5,6. 6:14. Ps. 36:1—3. Zeph. 1:6.
† Heb. *makest void.* Ps. 119:126. Rom. 3:31. Gal. 2:21.
f 5:8. 27:10 1 Chr. 10:13,14. Hos. 7:14. Am. 6:10. Luke 18:1.
‡ Or, *speech.*
§ Heb. *teacheth.* 9:22—24. 12:6. Mark 7:21,22. Luke 6:45. Jam. 1:26.
g Ps. 50:19,20. 52:2—4. 64:3. 120:2, 3. Jer. 9:3—5,8. Jam. 3:5—8.
h 9:20. Ps. 64:8. Matt. 12:37. 26:65. Luke 19:22. 33:8—12. 34:5—9. 35:2,3. 40:8. 42:3.
i 10. 12:12. Gen. 4:1.
k 34:3,&c. Ps. 90:2. Prov. 8:22—25.
l 11:6. Deut. 29:29. Ps. 25:14. Prov. 3:32. Jer. 23:18. Am. 3:7. Matt. 11:25 13:11,35. John 15:15. Rom. 11:34. 16:25,26. 1 Cor. 2:9—11,16.
m 12:2. 13:5,6.
n 13:2. 26:3,4. 2 Cor. 10:7. 11:5,21—30.
o 8:8—10. 12:20. 32:6,7. Deut. 32:7. Prov. 16:31.
p 5:8—26. 11 13—19. 2 Cor. 1:3—5. 7:6.
q 8. 13:2. 1 K. 22:24.
r Ec. 11:9. Mark 7:21,22. Acts 5:3,4. 8:22. Jam. 1:14,15.
s 17:2 Ps. 35:19. Prov. 6:13.
t 25—27. 9:4. Rom. 8:7,8.

but, in this ch. they begin a second attack, each charging him afresh, with as much vehemence as before.

V. 1—14. Several great crimes Eliphaz here charges Job with, only because he would not own himself a hypocrite.

I. He charges him with folly and absurdity, *v.* 2, 3. Bildad began thus, (*ch.* 8: 2.) and Zophar, *ch.* 11: 2, 3. It is common for angry disputants thus to represent one another's reasonings as impertinent and ridiculous, more than there is cause, forgetting the doom of him that calls his brother *Raca*, and *Thou fool*. It is true, unprofitable talk is evil talk: we must give an account, in the great day, not only for *wicked*, but for *idle* words. Speeches, therefore, which do no good, were better unspoken. Vain knowledge and unprofitable talk ought to be reproved and checked, especially in a wise man, whom it worst becomes, and who does most hurt by the bad example.

II. With impiety and irreligion, *v.* 4. See what religion is summed up in—fearing God, and praying to Him; the former the most needful principle, the latter the most needful practice. Surely those have no reverence of God's majesty, no dread of his wrath, no care about their souls and eternity, who make no applications to God for his grace. Those who are prayerless, are fearless and graceless. When the fear of God is cast off, all sin is let in, and a door open to all manner of profaneness. It is especially bad with those who have had some fear of God, but have now cast it off; have been frequent in prayer, but now restrain it. How are they fallen! How is their first love lost! It denotes a kind of force put on themselves. The fear of God would cleave to them, but they throw it off; prayer would be uttered, but they restrain it, and, in both, baffle their convictions. Those who either omit prayer, or straiten and abridge themselves in it, quenching the spirit of adoption, and denying themselves the liberty they might take in the duty, restrain prayer: this is bad enough, but it is worse to restrain others from prayer, to prohibit and discourage prayer, as Darius, Dan. 6: 7.

Now Eliphaz charges this on Job, either, 1. As his own practice. He thought Job talked of God with such liberty, as if he had been his equal, and charged Him so vehemently with hard usage, and challenged Him so often to a fair trial, that he had quite thrown off all religious regard to Him. This charge was utterly false, yet wanted not some color. We ought not only to take care to keep up prayer and the fear of God, but never to drop any unwary expressions, which may give occasion to those who seek to question our sincerity and constancy in religion. Or, 2. As what others would infer from his doctrine. 'If this be true,' (thinks Eliphaz,) 'that a man may be thus sorely afflicted, and yet be a good man, then farewell all religion, farewell prayer and the fear of God. Who will be honest, if the tabernacles of robbers prosper? (*ch.* 12: 6.) If there be no forgiveness with God, (*ch.* 7: 21.) who will fear Him? If He *laugh at the trial of the innocent*, (*ch.* 9: 23.) if He be so difficult of access, (*ch.* 9: 32.) who will pray to Him?' Note, It is an injustice, which even wise and good men are too often guilty of, in the heat of disputation, to charge on their adversaries those consequences of their opinions, which are not fairly drawn from them, and which really they abhor. This is not doing as we would be done by.

Upon this strained inuendo, Eliphaz grounds that high charge of impiety, *v.* 5. 'Thou *teachest*, so the word is, others the same hard thoughts of God and religion.' It is bad to *break even the least commandment*, but worse to *teach men so*, Matt. 5: 19. If we ever thought evil, let us suppress the evil thought, (Prov. 30: 32.) and by no means utter it, that is publishing it with allowance, to the dishonor of God, and the damage of others. Observe, When men have cast off fear and prayer, their mouths utter iniquity. They that cease to do good, soon learn to do evil. But, *thou choosest the tongue of the crafty*, i. e. 'Thou utterest thine iniquity with some show of piety, mixing some good with the bad, as tradesmen, to help off their wares.' The mouth of iniquity could not do so much mischief as it does, without the tongue of the crafty. Rom. 16: 18. The tongue of the crafty speaks with design and deliberation; therefore they that use it may be said to *choose* it, as that which will serve their purpose better than the tongue of the upright: but it will be found, at last, that honesty is the best policy.

Eliphaz, in his first discourse, had proceeded against Job on mere surmise; (*ch.* 4: 6, 7.) but now he has got proof against him from his own discourses, *v.* 6. But he should have considered that he and his fellows had provoked him to say that which now they took advantage off; and that was not fair. Those are most effectually condemned, that are condemned by themselves, Tit. 3: 11. Luke 19: 22. Many a man needs no more to sink him, than for his own tongue to fall on him.

III. With intolerable arrogancy and self-conceitedness. Job's demand (*ch.* 12: 3.) was just, and reasonable, and modest; but see how they seek occasion against him, as if he pretended to be wiser than any man. Because he will not grant to them, they will have it thought he claims to himself, the monopoly of wisdom, *v.* 7—9. *What knowest thou that we know not?* How natural such replies in the heat of argument! But how simple they look afterward, on the review! As opposing the stream of antiquity, *v.* 10. We have the fathers on our side; all the ancient doctors of the church. A thing soon said, but not so soon proved; and, when proved, truth is not so soon discovered and proved by it, as most people imagine. David preferred right scripture-knowledge before that of antiquity, Ps. 119: 100.

IV. With a contempt of the counsels and comforts of his friends, *v.* 11. It is true, they had said some very good things, but, in their application to Job, they were miserable comforters. We are apt to think that great and considerable, which we ourselves say, when others perhaps, with good reason, think it small and trifling. Paul found that those who *seemed to be somewhat, yet, in conference, added nothing to him.* He represents this as a slight put on divine consolations in general. It is a great affront to God, and an evidence of a degenerate, depraved mind, to disesteem and undervalue spiritual delights. 'What!' (says Eliphaz,) 'is there any secret thing with thee? Hast thou some cordial to support thyself with, that nobody else knows any thing of?' Or, 'Is there some secret sin harbored and indulged in thy bosom, which hinders the operation of divine comforts?' None disesteem divine comforts but those that secretly affect the world and the flesh.

V. With opposition to God Himself, and to religion, *v.* 12, 13. '*Why doth thine heart carry thee away* into such indecent, irreligious, expressions?' Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust. There is a violence, an ungovernable impetus, in the turnings of the soul; the corrupt heart carries men away, as it were, by force, against their convictions. 'What is it that thine eyes wink at? What have we said, that deserves to be thus slighted? Nay, *that thou turnest thy spirit against God?*' But, They that forsake God will soon break out in open enmity to Him. It is the character of the wicked, that they *set their mouth against the heavens*, (Ps. 73: 9.) which is a certain indication, that the spirit is turned against God. Eliphaz wanted candor and

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the region of the *thorax* or *abdomen*.' Dr. *A. Clarke*. 'The E. wind, *qadim*, is not only vehement, but also deadly to fruits and herbs; see Am. 4: 9. Is. 27: 8.' Rosenm. 'It is a very stormy wind in the Levant (or E. Mediterranean), supposed to be the same as that called by the Greeks *euroclydon*, the *east* storm; Acts 27: 14.' Dr. A. Clarke.

Verse 11.

This verse is variously rendered: 'the *sense* as expressed in the Vulg. or in our own version, or Coverdale's, is plain enough. Hast thou been so unfaithful to God, that He has withdrawn his consolations? And is there any bosom sin thou wilt not give up, that has thus provoked thy Maker.' Dr. *A. Clarke*, whom see. 'He inveighs against Job, because he had made so little of his friends' consolations, which he arrogantly calls *consolations of God*, referring specially to that oracle, 4: 17—21. whose words he presently (*v.* 14, 15, 16.) repeats.' *Rosenm.* who tr. the last clause, '*et verbum lenissime tecum habitum*, sc. facisne parvi?' Ed.

est thy spirit against God, [u] and lettest *such* words go out of thy mouth?

14 What [x] *is* man, that he should be clean? and *he which is* born of a woman, that he should be righteous?

15 Behold, [y] he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.

16 How much more [z] abominable and filthy *is* man, which [a] drinketh iniquity like water.

[*Practical Observations.*]

17 ¶ I will show thee, [b] hear me; and that *which* I have seen I will declare;

18 Which wise men have told [c] from their fathers, and have not hid *it:*

19 Unto [d] whom alone the earth was given, and no stranger passed among them.

20 The wicked man [e] travaileth with pain all *his* days, and [f] the number of years is hidden to the oppressor.

21 A [g] dreadful sound *is* in his ears: [h] in prosperity [h] the destroyer shall come upon him.

22 He [i] believeth not that he shall return out

u 10:3. 12:6. Ps. 34:13. Jam. 1:23. 3:2—5.
x 9:2. 14:4. 25:4—6. 1 K. 8:46. 2 Chr. 6:36. Ps. 51:5. Prov. 20:9. Ec. 7:20,29. John 3:6 Rom. 7:18. Gal. 3:22. Eph. 2:2,3. 1 John 1:8—10.
y See on 4:18.—25:5 Is. 6:2—5.
z 4:19. 42:5. Ps. 14:1—3. Rom. 1:28—30. 3:9—19. Tit. 3:3.
a 34:7. Prov. 19:28.
b 5:27. 13:5,6. 33:1. 34:2. 36:2.
c 12. 8:8. Ps. 71:18. 78:3—6. Is. 38:19.
d Gen. 10:25,32. Joel 3:17.
e Rom 8:22.
f Ps. 90:3,4. Luke 12:19—21. Jam. 5:1—5.
g Heb. *sound of fears.* 18:11. Gen. 3:9,10. Lev. 26:36. 2 K. 7:6. Prov. 1:25,27.
h 18:5—19. 20:5—7,22—24. 1 Sam. 25:38—33. Ps. 73:18—20. 92:7. Acts 12:21—23. 1 Thes. 5:3.
i 1 Cor. 10:10. Rev. 9:11.
i 5:11. 9:13. 2 K. 6:33. Is. 8:21,22. Matt. 27:5.

charity, else he would not have put such a harsh construction on the speeches of one of such a settled reputation for piety, and now in temptation. This was, in effect, to give the cause on Satan's side

VI. With justifying himself so far, as even to deny his share in the common corruption of the human nature, *v.* 14. *What is man, that he should be clean?* i. e. pretend to be so, or that any should expect to find him so. Man, in his fallen state, cannot pretend to be clean and righteous before God, either to acquit himself to God's justice, or recommend himself to his favor. He is *therefore* to be adjudged unclean and unrighteous, because born of a woman, from whom he derives a corrupt nature, which is both his guilt and his pollution.* With these plain truths Eliphaz thinks to convince Job, whereas he had just now said the same, *ch.* 14: 4. But does it therefore follow, that Job is a hypocrite, and a wicked man, which is all that he denied? By no means. Though man, as born of a woman, is not clean, yet, as born again of the Spirit, he is. Further to evince this, he here shows,

That the brightest creatures are imperfect and impure before God, *v.* 15. Man much more so, *v.* 16. If saints are not to be trusted, much less sinners. If the heavens are not pure, which are as God made them, much less man, who is degenerated. Nay, he is abominable and filthy in the sight of God, and, if ever he repent, he is so in his own sight, and therefore abhors himself. Sin is an abominable thing; such is the filthiness of man, that he drinks iniquity as greedily, and with as much pleasure, as a man drinks water when thirsty. It is his constant drink; it is natural to sinners to commit iniquity. It gratifies, but does not satisfy, the appetites of the old man. It is like water to a man in a dropsy. The more men sin, the more they would sin.

V. 17—35. Eliphaz, having reproved Job for his answers, here comes to maintain his own thesis, on which he built his censure of Job. His opinion is, That those who are wicked are certainly miserable; whence he would infer, that those who are miserable are certainly wicked, and that therefore Job was so. Observe,

I. His solemn preface to this discourse, in which he bespeaks Job's attention; which he had little reason to expect, he having given so little heed to, and put so little value on, what Job had said, *v.* 17. 'I will show thee what is worth hearing, and not reason, as thou, with unprofitable talk.' Thus apt are men, when they condemn the reasonings of others, to commend their own. He promises to teach him, 1. From his own experience and observation. It is good to notice the providences of God, from which many a good lesson may be learned. Good observations which we have found benefit by ourselves, we should be ready to communicate for the benefit of others: and we may then speak boldly, when we declare what we have seen. 2. From the wisdom of the ancients, *v.* 18. Note, Mode n wisdom and learning are very much derived from ancient: what we have learned from our ancestors, we must transmit to our posterity. See Ps. 78: 3—6. If the thread of the knowledge of many ages be cut off by the carelessness of one, and nothing be done to preserve it pure and entire, all that succeed, fare the worse. The authorities Eliphaz vouched, were authorities indeed, men of rank and figure, *v.* 19. The dictates of wisdom come with advantage from persons in places of dignity and power, as Solomon; yet there is a wisdom *which none of the princes of this world knew.*

II. The discourse itself. He here aims to show,

1. That those who are wise and good, do ordinarily prosper in this world. This he only hints at, *v.* 19. That those of whose mind he was, were such as had the earth given to them, and them only; they enjoyed it entirely and peaceably, and no stranger passed among them, either to share with them, or to give disturbance to them. Job had said, *The earth is given into the hand of the wicked, ch* 9: 24. 'No,' says Eliphaz, 'it is given into the hands of the saints, and runs along with their faith: they are not robbed and plundered by strangers and enemies, as thou by the Sabeans and Chaldeans.' But because many of God's people have remarkably prospered in this world, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it does not therefore follow, that those who are crossed and impoverished, as Job, are not God's people.

2. That wicked people, and particularly oppressors, and tyrannizing rulers, are subject to continual terrors, live very uncomfortably, and perish very miserably. On this head he enlarges, showing that even they who impiously dare God's judgments, yet cannot but dread them, and will feel them at last. He speaks in the singular number, the wicked man, meaning, as some think, Nimrod, or perhaps Chedorlaomer, or some such mighty hunter before the Lord. I fear he meant Job himself, whom he expressly charges both with the tyranny, and with the timorousness, here described, *ch.* 22: 9, 10. Here he thinks the application easy, and that Job might, in this description, as in a glass, see his own face. Now,

(1.) It is the prodigious madness of presumptuous sinners, that they enter the lists with Omnipotence, *v.* 25. That is generally taken for a further description of the sinner's daring presumption, *v.* 26. *He runs upon Him,* upon God Himself, in a direct opposition to Him, to his precepts and providences, even on his neck, as a desperate combatant, when he finds himself an unequal match for his adversary, flies in his face, though, at the same time, he falls on his sword's point, or the sharp spike of his buckler.

* Man's *liability* to sin, (arising through the operation, after Adam's transgression, of the physical laws of God, from the degeneracy of his natural parentage,) is not *his guilt.* The circumstances of a man's birth may be the cause or reason of guilt, according to the *choice* he himself wills between good and evil presented to him. Further, this corrupt liability, the consequence, (in God's course of nature,) of Adamic descent, may, in a certain sense, be called 'imputation of Adam's sin:' but to speak of the '*guilt* of being born of a woman,' is not proper, as to speak of the 'sin or guilt' of being born on the western instead of the eastern continent. Modern divines therefore use the term 'constituted sinners.' 'They [our first parents] being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation.' *Conf. of Faith,* of U. S. Presb. Ch. It is a lamentable fact, that the human race are born with greater tendency to evil than to good: but blessed be the God of justice and goodness, that He has provided for our fallen nature another covenant than that of innocency, whereby all may return to Him, through Christ, the second Adam. 'See Essay on Native Depravity,' by Dr. *Woods.* *Ed.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—16. It is easier to answer, than to convince, an opponent: yet when arguments fail, contempt and railing generally most abound; for far more are capable of slander and declamation, than of reasoning with cogency and temper.—'The wisdom which is from above,' teaches us to consider the tendency and effect of our knowledge, and renders us careful not to satisfy ourselves, or amuse others, with unprofitable notions, empty words, or delusive arguments.—Men's own mouths often proclaim their iniquity; and even betray the secret hypocrisy of their hearts: yet we should carefully distinguish between the language of infirmity and temptation, and that of deliberate impiety.—We should watch and pray against an indecent and self-sufficient spirit; and that we may not misrepresent men's words, nor accuse them without evidence. In the worst estate of man on earth, he has many unmerited comforts from God.—But, alas! 'what is man that he should be clean,' or righteous! Indeed, pious men in every age, and nation, who have differed and engaged in controversy in other things, have unanimously agreed, that our fallen nature is abominable and polluted, delighting in iniquity, and drinking it down with greediness. SCOTT.

Verses 14—16.

(4:17—21. 9:1—3, 14—21. 14:1—6.)—It is evident, *man* naturally craves sinful indulgences with a greedy appetite.—This text forms a conclusive proof, that these disputants were deeply convinced of the doctrine of original sin, and the total depravity of human nature, as far as man is left to his own *innate propensities.* But that doctrine could not fairly be made to bear on the point at issue; because Job did not attempt to justify himself from the charge of sinfulness, but merely from that of hypocrisy, or gross wickedness. SCOTT.

Verses 17—35.

Eliphaz here again labored to confirm his position, that the righteous prosper, and the wicked are miserable, in this world. He stated, that this was not merely his own opinion, but a tradition received from their fathers: and one which wise men had always approved and

of darkness, [k] and he is waited for of the sword.

23 He [l] wandereth abroad for bread, *saying*, Where *is it?* he knoweth that [m] the day of darkness is ready at his hand.

24 Trouble and [n] anguish shall make him afraid; they shall prevail against him, [o] as a king ready to the battle.

25 For [p] he stretcheth out his hand against God, and [q] strengtheneth himself against the Almighty.

26 He [r] runneth upon him, [s] *even* on *his* neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers:

27 Because he covereth his face with his fatness, and maketh collops of fat on *his* flanks.

28 And he dwelleth in [u] desolate cities, *and* in houses which no man inhabiteth, [x] which are ready to become heaps.

29 He shall not be rich, [y] neither shall his substance continue, neither shall he prolong the perfection thereof upon the earth.

30 He shall not [z] de-

k 20:21,25.
l 3:3,4. Gen. 4:12. Ps. 59:15. 109:10. Lam. 5:6,9. Heb. 11:37,38.
m 18:5,6,18. Ec. 11:8. Joel 2:2. Am. 5:20. Zeph. 1:15. Heb. 10:27.
n 5:2—4. Ps. 119:143. Prov. 1:27. Is 13:8. Matt. 26:37,38. Rom. 2:9.
o Prov. 6:11. 24:34.
p Lev. 26:23. Ps. 73:9,11. Dan. 5:23. Mal. 3:13. Acts 9:5. 12:1,23.
q 9:4. 40:9—11. Ex. 5:2,3. 9:17. 1 Sam. 4:7—9. 6:6. Is. 52:7. Is. 8:9,10. 10:12—14. 41:4—7.
r 2 Chr. 28:22. 33:13—17.
s 16:12. Gen. 49:8. Ps. 18:40.
t Deut. 32:15. Is. 17:10. 73:7. 78:31. Is. 6:10. Jer. 5:28
u 3:14 13:15. Is. 5:8—10. Mic. 7:13.
x Jer. 9:11. 25:18. 51:37. Mic. 3:12.
y 20:22—28. 21:7—20. 27:16,17. Is. 43:16,17. Luke 12:19—21. 16:2,19—24. Jam. 1:11. 5:1—3.
z 22. 18:21,22. 18:5 5,18. Matt. 8:12 22:13. 2 Pet. 2:17. Jude 13.

(2.) He wraps himself in security and sensuality, *v.* 27. This signifies both the pampering of his flesh, and hardening his heart thereby against the the judgments of God. Note, To gratify the appetites to the full, turns to the damage of the soul and its interests. They that fill themselves with wine and strong drink, abandon all that is serious, and flatter themselves with hopes that *to-morrow shall be as this day. Wo to them that are thus at ease in Zion*, Luke 12: 19.

(3.) He enriches himself with the spoils of all about him, *v.* 28. dwells in cities he himself desolated, Isa. 5: 8. Proud and cruel men take a strange pleasure in ruins, when they are of their own making, Ps. 9: 6. Those that aim to engross the world to themselves, and grasp at all, lose the comfort of all, and make themselves miserable in the midst of all. This tyrant, we are told, *v.* 35. gains his point, and makes himself master of cities that have all the marks of antiquity upon them, by malice and falsehood, the two chief ingredients of *his* wickedness, who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning.

(4.) Let us see now what is the miserable condition of this wicked man, both in spiritual and temporal judgments. His inward peace is continually disturbed. He who knows what is in men, tells us, that a wicked man has so little comfort and satisfaction in his own breast, that he is rather to be pitied than envied. His own conscience accuses him, *v.* 20. He is continually uneasy at the thought of the cruelties he has been guilty of, and the blood in which he has imbued his hands; his sins stare him in the face at every turn. He is vexed at the uncertainty of the continuance of his wealth and power; *the number of years is hidden to the oppressor.* He is under a *certain fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation*, which keeps him in continual terror and consternation, so that he dwells with Cain in the land of Nod, or commotion, and is made like *Pashur, Magor-missabib—A terror round about*, Jer. 20: 3, 4. *A dreadful sound is in his ears*, *v.* 21. He knows that God is angry with him, and that all the world hates him; he has done nothing to make his peace with either, therefore he thinks that every one who *meets him will slay him.* Fear came in, at first, with sin, (Gen. 3: 10.) and still attends it. Even in prosperity, he is apprehensive the destroyer will come upon him, Ezek. 32: 25. This is further set forth, *v.* 22. that he is, in his own apprehension, *waited for of the sword*, Rev. 13: 10. Again, (*v.* 23.) *He knows, the day of darkness* (or the *night* of darkness rather) *is ready at his hand*, and cannot be put off. This day of darkness is something beyond death; it is that day of the Lord which, to all wicked people, will be darkness and not light, and in which they will be doomed to utter, endless darkness. Some wicked people, though they seem secure, have already received the sentence of death, eternal death, within themselves, and plainly see hell gaping for them. No marvel that it follows, (*v.* 24.) *Trouble and anguish* (that inward tribulation and anguish of soul spoken of, Rom. 2: 8, 9. which is the effect of God's *indignation and wrath* fastening on the conscience) *shall make him afraid* of worse to come. What is the hell *before* him, if this be the hell *within* him? And though he would fain shake off his fears, drink, and jest them away, *they shall* overpower him, *as a king ready to the battle*, with forces too strong to be resisted. He that would keep his peace, let him keep a good conscience.

If in trouble, he despairs of getting out, *v.* 22. It is the misery of damned sinners, that they know they shall never return out of that utter darkness, nor pass the gulf there fixed.

He perplexes himself with continual care, especially if Providence ever so little frown on him, *v.* 23. Such a dread has he of poverty, and such a waste does he discern on his estate, that he is already, in his own imagination, *wandering abroad for bread*, going a-begging for a meal's meat, and *saying, Where is it?* Luke 12: 17. Perhaps he pretends fear of wanting, as an excuse of his covetous practices; justly may he be brought to this extremity at last. How should they find mercy, who never showed mercy?

(5.) His outward prosperity will soon come to an end, and all his confidence, and comfort, with it. How can he prosper, when God runs upon him? So some understand *v.* 26. See how God's judgments cross this worldly, wicked man, in all his cares, desires, and projects, and so complete his misery. He is in care, [1.] To get, but *he shall not be rich*, *v.* 29. His own covetous mind keeps him from being truly rich. He is not rich, that has not enough; and he has not enough, that does not think he has. It is contentment only that is great gain. Providence remarkably keeps some from being rich, defeating their enterprises, breaking their measures, and keeping them always behind-hand. Many that get much by fraud and injustice, yet do not grow rich; it goes as it comes, it is got by one sin, and spent on another. [2.] To keep what he has got, but in vain, *his substance shall not continue.* God blasts it. Some have themselves lived to see the ruin of those estates which have been raised by oppression; it goes, however, with a curse to those who succeed. *Ill-gotten property will scarcely be enjoyed by the third generation.* [3.] To leave what he has got and kept, to his children after him; but the branches of his family shall perish, in whom he hoped to have lived and flourished, and to have had the reputation of making them all great men, *v.* 32, 33. They shall die in the beginning of their days, and never come to maturity. Many a man's family is ruined by his iniquity. [4.] To enjoy it a great while himself; but in that also he is crossed. 1. He may perhaps be taken from it, *v.* 30. *By the breath of God's mouth;* Isa. 30: 33. or, by his word; He speaks, and it is done immediately—he shall go away, and leave his wealth

taught; and they especially, whose exclusive authority and prosperity were the reward of their singular piety.—Many important truths were contained in this discourse: but, as far as it related *to temporal prosperity or adversity*, it admitted of numerous exceptions; and it implied an invidious application to the case of Job.—Thus Eliphaz inadvertently took the part of Satan. (1:9—11. 4:1.) Scott.

(17—30.) 'Bildad had quoted half a dozen lines of the ancient poetry, that were in the proverbial style. Eliphaz is going to cite a much larger number of the descriptive kind, and in a sublimer strain. He prefaces the citation with observing, 1st. that the facts alleged in these vs. were verified by his own experience; "that which I have seen I will declare." 2dly. that these vs. contain the observations of the wise in very ancient ages; and had been carefully conveyed down by oral tradition to the present times; "which wise men have told from their fathers and have not hid it:" and 3dly. that these traditional vs. had been preserved pure and perfect, by means of the peculiar circumstances of the persons, through whose hands they had passed: for no foreign colony had intermixed with them; "unto whom alone the land was given." Neither had their land ever been conquered; "and no stranger came upon them;" characters, which determine the country spoken of to be Arabia Felix; and consequently the cited poem to be an Arabian poem. We have then the pleasure of reading a piece of poetry, (v. 20—30.) that was the production of Arabia Felix; more ancient perhaps than the old Canaanitish song quoted by Moses, and no less admirable for its sublimity than venerable for its age.'

Scott, in *Hewlett.*

(26.) *Runneth upon, &c.*] *Vulg.* and *Arab.* 'erecto collo, et pingui cervice.' Alluding to the rushing of bulls, rams, or cocks together in fighting, when the nerves and muscles of the neck are swelled and strengthened in the excitement of rage. Some nations of Africa are said thus to rush upon an enemy, with their heads down. *Bosses.*] *Gabbey. Mont.* 'Thickness of the umbones or bosses.' *Chal.* 'Hardness of the umbo or boss.' *Sept.* 'Thickness of the back (nōtou).' *Wilkinson* describes shields 'covered with bulls, hides, and bound with metal borders, and *studded with pins*,' as seen on the ancient Egyptian monuments. Note, 2 Chr. 33.7. Shields with the *umbo, centron*, or *spike*, are given in *Vegetius*, as in use among the Romans. Dr. *A. Clarke* speaks of the highland target as such: and a cut is here given (from *Raffles*) of the Javanese round shield; like some in Vegetius. One of brass, with studs, pins and a 5 in. iron spike was dug up in Wales. Ed.

Rosenm. renders this v. '*runs upon him with his neck.* (sciliget, *erect*, i. e. proudly,) with the greatest insolence. Ps. 75:6. For he who enters a combat with his neck erect, vaunts himself strong and fearless, with infatuated confidence, as one who makes nothing of his adversary. *Cicero* has 'tantis cervicibus,' ('so great necks.') *With the thickness of the backs of his shields*, with his thick shields, rushes with great impetus upon God; as if he thought he could conquer Him by the strength of his arms. "The backs of shields" are the prominences in their centre, thicker than the other parts. *Schultens* quotes an Arabic proverb, similar; "he turns to him the back of the shield," i. e. bears himself as a most obstinate adversary. By "arms" here is signified, wealth, power, and all the supports, by which the impious are borne up, as if, relying on and sustained by these, they could never be overthrown.' Rosenm. Id.

(28.) *Dwelleth, &c.*] As an exile amid ruins, perhaps, such as he

part out of darkness; [a] the flame shall dry up his branches, and [b] by the breath of his mouth shall he go away.

31 Let [c] not him that is deceived [d] trust in vanity: for [e] vanity shall be his recompense.

32 It shall be [#] accomplished before his time, [f] and his branch shall not be green.

33 He shall [g] shake off his unripe grape as the vine, [h] and shall cast off his flower as the olive.

34 For [i] the congregation of hypocrites *shall be* desolate, and fire shall consume [k] the tabernacles of bribery.

35 They [l] conceive mischief and bring forth † vanity, and their belly prepareth deceit.

CHAP. XVI.

Job reproves his friends, for their conduct towards him; and shows how he would have acted, if they had been afflicted as he was, 1—5 He pathetically describes his heavy and varied sorrows, 6—16. As a dying man, he appeals to God to attest his integrity, 17—22.

THEN Job answered and said,

2 I have [a] heard many such things: ‡ miserable comforters *are* ye all.

3 Shall § vain words have an end? or [b] what emboldeneth thee that thou answerest?

4 I also could speak as ye *do;* [c] if your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap [d] up words against you, and [e] shake mine head at you.

5 *But* [f] I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage *your grief.*

6 ¶ Though I speak, [g] my grief is not assuaged: and *though* I forbear, ‖ what am I eased?

7 But now [h] he hath made me weary: thou [i] hast made desolate all my company.

8 And thou hast filled me with wrinkles, *which* [k] is a witness *against me:* and [l] my leanness rising up in me beareth witness to my face.

9 He [m] teareth *me* in his wrath, who hateth me: [n] he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; [o] mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me.

10 They have [p] gaped

a 20:26. Is. 30:33. Ez. 15:4—7. 20; 47,48. Matt. 25:41. Mark 9:43—49. 2 Thes. 1:8,9.
b 4:9. Is. 11:4. Rev. 19:15.
c 12:16. Is. 44:20. Gal. 6:3,7. Eph. 5:6.
d Ps. 62:10. Is. 59:4. Jon. 2:8.
e 4:8. Prov. 22:8. Is. 17:10,11. Hos. 8:7. Gal. 6:8.
* Or, *cut off.* 22:16. Ps. 55:23. Ec. 7:17.
f 8:16—19. 14:7—9. 18:16,17. Ps. 52: 5—8. Is. 27:11. Ez. 17:8—10. Hos. 9:16. 14:5—7. John 15:6.
g Is. 33:9. Rev. 6:13.
h Deut. 28:39,40.
i 8:13. 20:5. 27:8. 36:13. Is. 33:14, 15. Matt. 24:51.
k 11:14. 12:6. 22:5—9. 29:12—17. 1 Sam. 3:3. 12:3. Mic. 7:3.
l Ps. 7:14. Is. 59:4,5. Jam. 1:15.
† Or, *iniquity.*
a 6:6,25. 11:2,3. 13:5. 19:2,3. 26:2, 3. Jam. 1:19.
‡ Or, *troublesome.* 13:4 Is. 65:5,6. 1 Sil. 1:16.
§ Heb. *words of wind.* 6:26. 8:2. 15: 2.
b 20:3. 32:3—6. Matt. 22:46 Tit. 1: 11. 2:8.
c 6:2—5,14. Matt. 7:12. Rom 12:15. 1 Cor. 12:26.
d 11:2. 35:16. Prov. 10:19. Ec. 10:14.
e 2 K. 19:21. Ps. 22:7. 44:14 109:25 Jer. 18:16. Lam. 2:15. Matt. 27:39, 40.
f 4:3,4. 6:14. 29:25. Ps. 27:13. Prov 27:9,17. Is. 35:3,4. 1 Thes. 5:14.
g 10:1. Ps. 77:1—9. 88:15—18.
‖ Heb. *what goeth from me?*
h 3:17. 7:3,16. 10:1. Ps. 6:6,7. Prov 3:11,12. Is. 50:4. Mic. 6:3.
i 1:15—19. 29:5,&c.
k 10:17. Ruth 1:21.
l Ps. 106:15. Is. 10:16. 24:16.
m 10:16,17. 18:4. Ps. 50:22. Lam 3: 10. Hos. 5:14.
n Ps. 35:16. 37:12. Lam 2:16.
o 13:24,27. 19:11. Mic. 7:8.
p Ps. 22:13,16,17. 35:21. Luke 23:35, 36.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 17—35. We should not despise the wisdom and experience of pious persons in former ages, or the result of their observation: but neither authority, reputation, antiquity, nor greatness, renders men infallible.—The Word of God evinces, that sinners are and will be miserable, in proportion to their crimes, unless they repent and obtain forgiveness. Yet the most wicked may sometimes live long in outward prosperity, and die without any remarkable catastrophe. (*Ps.* 73:4—9.) On the other hand, the righteous may be destitute, afflicted, and tormented, even until death: yet they shall be supported, comforted, and delivered; and the perfection of their felicity shall be prolonged for ever. But let us apply these truths to our own hearts and consciences, examine our own state and character by them, and cease uncandidly to judge and condemn our brethren. SCOTT.

himself had caused. Comp. the case of *Marius*, amid the ruins of Carthage. 'Ancient and modern history afford abundance of examples to illustrate this fate of tyrants.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI. V. 1—3. If we consider the speech of Eliphaz *abstractedly*, Job undervalued it: but as it related to the matter in debate, he must be allowed to have had some reason for what he said. SCOTT.

CHAP. XVI. V. 1—5. This ch. begins Job's reply to the discourse of Eliphaz in the foregoing ch. who had represented Job's discourses as idle, unprofitable, and nothing to the purpose; and Job here gives his the same character. Those who are free in passing such censures, must expect to have them retorted; yet, it will only stir up men's passions, and will never convince their judgments, nor set truth in a clear light.

Job here reproves Eliphaz, for needless repetitions, *v.* 2. unskilful applications—endless impertinence, *v.* 3.—causeless obstinacy, and the violation of the sacred laws of friendship; this is a cutting reproof, and very affecting, *v.* 4, 5. It is natural to sufferers to think what they would do, if the tables were turned; but perhaps our hearts may deceive us. We find it easier to discern the reasonableness and importance of a command, when we have occasion to claim the benefit, than when we have occasion to do the duty of it. See the duty we owe our brethren in affliction. 1. We should say and do all we can to encourage their confidence in God, and to support their sinking spirits. Faith and patience are the strength of the afflicted. 2. To assuage their grief, the causes of their grief, if possible, or, however, their sensibility to those causes. Good words cost nothing, but may be of good service to those in sorrow, not only as it is some comfort to see their friends concerned for them, but as they may be so reminded of what, through the prevalency of grief, was forgotten.

V. 6—16. Job's complaint is here as bitter as any where in all his discourses, and he is at a stand whether to smother it or to give it vent. Sometimes the one, and sometimes the other, is a relief to the afflicted, according as the temper or the circumstances are; but Job found help by neither, *v.* 6. If he complained, he was censured as passionate; if not, as sullen. If he maintained his integrity, that was his crime; if he made no answer to their accusations, his silence was taken for a confession of his guilt. Here is a doleful representation of Job's grievances. O what reason have we to bless God, that we are not making such complaints! He complains,

1. That his family was scattered, *v.* 7. '*He hath made me weary*, of speaking, of forbearing, of my friends, of life itself:' his company was his children and servants, and the good people, that used to meet at his house for religious worship, now they were scattered, and he spent his sabbaths in silence and solitude. He had company indeed, but would rather have been without, for they seemed to triumph in his desolation.

2. That his body was worn away, with diseases and pains, to a perfect skeleton, *v.* 8. His *wrinkles* and his leanness were *witnesses against him*, witnesses of God's displeasure, and such as his friends produced against him to prove him a wicked man. Or, 'They are witnesses *for* me, that my com-

Verses 4, 5.

A very pathetic turn is here given to the discourse. (4:8—6.) SCOTT.

Verses 6—16.

These vs. contain most grievous complaints, and many harsh expressions, which may easily be accounted for, but cannot be justified. —It is not certain, whether he intended this (9) of the severity, with

upon me with their mouth; [q] they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; [r] they have gathered themselves together against me.

11 God hath * delivered me [s] to the ungodly, and [t] turned me over into the hands of the wicked.

12 I was [u] at ease, but he hath [x] broken me asunder: he hath also taken *me* [y] by my neck, and [z] shaken me to pieces, and [a] set me up for his mark.

13 His [b] archers compass me round about; [c] he cleaveth my reins asunder, and [d] doth not spare; he [e] poureth out my gall upon the ground.

14 He [f] breaketh me with breach upon breach, [g] he runneth upon me like a giant.

15 I have [h] sowed sackcloth upon my skin, and [i] defiled my horn in the dust.

16 My [j] face is foul with weeping, and [k] on mine eye-lids *is* the shadow of death.

17 Not [l] for *any* injustice in mine hands:

q 1 K. 22:24. 2 Chr. 18:23. Is. 50:6. Lam. 3:30. Mic. 5:1. Matt. 26:67. John 18:22. Acts 23:2. 2 Cor. 11:20.
r Ps. 35:15. 94:21. Acts 4: 27.
* Heb. *shut me up.* 1 Sam. 24:18. *marg.* Ps. 31:8. Rom. 11:32. *marg.*
s 1:13—19. 2:7. Ps. 7:14. John 19: 16. 2 Cor. 12:7.
t Ps. 27:12.
u 12:3. 3:26. 29:3,18,19.
x 4:10. Ps. 44:19. Lam. 3:4. Matt. 21:44.
y 15:26. Rom. 16:4.
z Lam. 3:11. Ez. 29:7.
a 7:12,20. Lam. 3:12.
b 6:4. Gen. 49:23. Ps. 7:12,13.
c 19:27. Lam. 3:13.
d 6:10. Deut. 29:20. Ez. 5:11. Rom. 8:32. 2 Pet. 2:5.
e 20:25. Lam. 2:11.
f Lam. 3:3—5.
g Judg. 15 8.
h 1 K. 21:27. Is. 22:12.
i 30:19. 1 Sam 2:10. Ps. 7:5. 75:5,10.
j Ps. 6:6,7. 31:9. 32:3. 69:3. 102: 3—5,9. Is. 52:14. Lam. 1:16.
k 17:7. Ps. 116:3. Jon. 2: Mark 14: 34.
l 11:14. 15:20,34. 21:27,28. 22:5—9. 27:6,7. 29:12—17. 31:1,&c. Ps. 7: 3—5. 44:17—21.

plaint is not causeless,' or, 'witnesses *to* me, that I must die shortly.'

3. That his enemy was a terror, threatened, frightened him, looked stern upon him, and gave all the indications of rage against him, *v.* 9. This enemy is either, (1.) *Eliphaz;* who showed himself very much exasperated, and perhaps had expressed himself with these marks of indignation here; and very barbarously both he and the rest used him. Or, (2.) *Satan;* who perhaps, by divine permission, terrified him with apparitions, as (some think) he terrified our Savior, which put Him into his agonies in the garden; and thus he aimed to make him curse God. It is not improbable he means this enemy. Or, (3.) *God* Himself: if we understand it of Him, the expressions are indeed as rash as any Job used. God hates none of his creatures; but Job's melancholy did thus represent to him the terrors of the Almighty: and nothing can be more grievous to a good man, than to apprehend God to be his enemy!

4. That all about him were abusive, *v.* 10. They came upon him as if to swallow him alive, so terrible were their threats, and so scornful their conduct. They offered him all the indignities they could invent, and even smote him on the cheek; and herein many were confederate, they *gathered themselves together against him,* even the abjects. Herein Job was a type of Christ, as many of the ancients make him: these very expressions are used in the predictions of his sufferings, Ps. 22: 13. *They gaped upon me with their mouths;* and, Mic. 5: 1. *They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek,* which was literally fulfilled, Matt. 25: 67.

5. That God delivered him into their hands, *v.* 11. They could have had no power, if it had not been given them from above; he therefore looks beyond them to God, who gave them their commission, as David did when Shimei cursed him; but he thinks it strange, and almost thinks it hard, that those should have power against him who were God's enemies as much as his. God sometimes makes use of wicked men as his sword to one another, Ps. 17: 13. and his rod to his own children, Isa. 10: 5. Herein also Job was a type of Christ, who was delivered into wicked hands, to be crucified and slain, by the *determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God,* Acts 2: 23.

6. That God further took him into his own hands too, into which it is a fearful thing to fall, *v.* 12. 'I was at ease, not fretting and uneasy, as some in the midst of prosperity, who thereby provoke God to strip them; yet He has broken me asunder, put me on the rack of pain, and torn me limb from limb.' God, in afflicting him, had seemed as if He were furious, partial, and cruel; his wrath as relentless as his power was resistless; as if He were unreasonable and insatiable in his executions, *v.* 13, 14. Note, Even good men, when in great and extraordinary troubles, have much ado not to entertain hard thoughts of God.

7. Some can lessen their troubles by concealing them, holding their heads as high, and putting as good a face on, as ever; but not so Job; he received their impressions, and, as one truly penitent, and patient, humbled himself under the mighty hand of God, *v.* 15, 16. Sackcloth he thought good enough for such a defiled, distempered body. Those are fond indeed of gay clothing, that will not be weaned from it by sickness and old age, and, as Job was, *v.* 8. by *wrinkles and leanness.* He *sewed on* the sackcloth, as one that resolved to continue his humiliation as long as the affliction continued. He insisted not on any points of honor, but humbled himself under humbling providences; *defiled his horn in the dust,* and refused the respect that used to be paid to his dignity, power, and eminency. Note, When God brings down our condition, that should bring down our spirits. Better lay the horn in the dust, than lift it up in contradiction to the designs of Providence, and have it broken at last. Eliphaz had represented Job as high, haughty, unhumbled under his affliction; 'No,' says Job, 'I know better things; the dust is now the fittest place for me.' He banished mirth as utterly unseasonable, *v.* 16. He had not only wept away all his beauty, but almost wept his eyes out. In this also, he was a type of Christ, who was a man of sorrows, and much in tears, and pronounced those blessed that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

V. 17—22. Job's condition was very deplorable; but he here tells us what he had to comfort him.

1. The testimony of his conscience, that he had never allowed himself in any gross sin, *v.* 17. He had kept a conscience void of offence, (1.) Toward men. '*Not for any injustice in my hands,* any wealth I have unjustly got or kept.' Eliphaz had represented him as a tyrant and an oppressor; 'No,' says he, 'I never did any wrong to any man, but always despised the gain of oppression.' (2.) Toward God. *Also my prayer is pure,* Isa. 1: 15. Eliphaz had charged him with hypocrisy in religion, but he specifies prayer, the great act of religion, and professes that in that he was pure, though not from all infirmity, yet from reigning and allowed guile.

This assertion of his own integrity he backs with a solemn imprecation of shame and confusion to himself, if it were not true, *v.* 18. If there were any impurity in his prayers, he wishes they might not be accepted. *Let my cry have no place.* He was willing to be judged by that rule, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear me.* There is another probable sense of these words, that he, as it were, lays his death on his friends, whose harsh censures broke his heart, and charges his blood on them, begging God that its cry might have no place to lie hid, but might come up and be heard by Him that makes inquisition for blood.

2. He could appeal to God's omniscience, *v.* 19. The witness in our own bosoms will stand us in little stead, if we have not a witness in heaven for us too, for *God is greater than our hearts,* and we are not to be our own judges; this, therefore, is Job's triumph, *My Witness is in heaven.* It is an unspeakable comfort to a good man, when under the censure of his brethren, that there is a God, who knows his integrity, and will clear it up sooner or later. See John 5: 31, 37.

3. He might unbosom himself to God, *v.* 20, 21. Even tears, when sanctified to God, give ease to troubled spirits; and, if men slight our grief, this may comfort us, that God regards them.

m 1 K. 21:27. Is. 22:12.
n 30:19. 1 Sam 2:10. Ps. 7:5. 75:5,10.
o Ps. 6:6,7. 31:9. 32:3. 69:3. 102: 3—5,9. Is. 52:14. Lam. 1:16.
p 17:7. Ps. 116:3. Jon. 2: Mark 14: 34.

which Eliphaz had treated him; or whether he meant Satan, who doubtless assaulted him with every horrid and terrifying temptation to drive him to despair; or whether he thus spoke of God, as become his enemy. (*M. R.* m—o.) (*Notes,* 1:16—22. 2:7—13. 6:1—4. 10:14—17. 13:24—28.) SCOTT.

(8.) *Wrinkles.*] Note, Deut. 28:34. (35.) *Jerome* and others, tr. the word for *assembly,* by '*joints.*' ED.

(10.) 'Here is another living picture of eastern manners. See the exasperated man; he opens his mouth like a wild beast, shows his teeth, then suddenly snaps them together. Again, he pretends to make another snatch, and growls like a tiger. Should he not dare to come near, he moves his hand, as if striking you on the cheek, and says, "I will beat thy *kannan,* i. e. cheek, thou low-caste fellow."' *Roberts,* who also notes the expressions, *v.* 3, 9. 15:7, 16, &c. ID.

(12.) *He hath also,* &c.] 'This is a favorite way of showing contempt or superiority in the E. and is finished by thrusting the face on the ground.' ROBERTS.

(13.) *Gall.*] 'I. e. destroying with grievous tortures. As when men have taken and killed a wild beast, they open it, take out the gall and pour it with loathing on the ground.' *Henry.* The *Iliad* contains a similar figure. ED.

(14.) The metaphor is from the siege of a city: Note, 2 Chr. 26: 10. ID.

(15.) *Horn.*] The emblem of power, dignity, and other excellences

ered, or defiled my *head* with dust.' Egyptian monuments, as seizing a vanquished enemy, by a horn-like ornament on the cap, (cut, 1 K. 10: 18, 19,) to slay him. ED.

Verses 17—22.

My friends scorn me. (20) The word (*mlts*) is rendered *an inter*

notes, and cuts, Ex. 34:29. 17:10. 1 Sam. 2:1. and Ps. 92:10. Job here connects it with prosperity. The cut is from '3 weeks in Palestine.' It is observed to be still in use among the Druses' women of Mt. Lebanon, and is called a *tantour. Good,* unacquainted with the above illustrations, understands *rolled my turban,* and supposes turbans were high turbinated caps, (cut, 2 K. 17:6.) of muslin, wound in a spiral wreath: and that these were afterwards reduced to their present shape, i.e. a spiral, truncated cone. The Sept. has, *strength;* Chal. *glory.* Syr. and Arab. 'cov-

also [m] my prayer *is* pure.

18 [n] O earth, [o] cover not thou my blood, and [p] let my cry have no place.

19 Also now, behold, [q] my witness *is* in heaven, and my record *is* [*] on high.

20 My friends [†] scorn me; *but* mine eye [r] poureth out *tears* unto God.

21 Oh, that one might [s] plead for a man with God, as a man *pleadeth* for his [‡] neighbor!

22 When § a few years are come, then I shall go the way [t] *whence* I shall not return.

CHAP. XVII.

Job continues his complaints: and shows that his sufferings would astonish the righteous, but not discourage them, 1—10. His hope is not in life, but in death, 11—16.

MY [‖] breath is [a] corrupt, [b] my days are extinct, [c] the graves *are ready* for me.

2 *Are there* not [d] mockers with me? and doth not mine eye [¶] continue in their [e] provocation?

3 Lay down now, [f] put me in a surety with thee: who *is* he *that* will [g] strike hands with me?

4 For [h] thou hast hid their heart from understanding; therefore shalt thou not exalt *them.*

If he could but now have the same freedom at God's bar, that men commonly have at the bar of the civil magistrate, he doubted not but to carry his cause, for the Judge Himself was a witness to his integrity. The language of this wish is, that (Isa. 50: 7, 8.) *I know that I shall not be ashamed, for He is near that justifies me.* Some give a gospel-sense of this v. and the original will very well bear it: *and He will plead* (i. e. there is one that will plead) *for man with God, even the Son of Man, with his friend, or neighbor:* and on this we must bottom all our hopes of acceptance with God.

4. Such confidence had he toward God, that he could take pleasure in thinking of the approach of death, when he should be determined to his everlasting state; as one that doubted not but it would be well with him then, *v.* 22.

CHAP. XVII. V. 1—9. Job's discourse here is somewhat broken, and he passes suddenly from one thing to another, as is usual with men in trouble: but we may reduce what is said to three heads.

I. His deplorable condition, which he describes, to aggravate the great unkindness of his friends, and justify his complaints. He was,

1. A *dying man, v.* 1. He had said, (*ch.* 16: 22.) '*When a few years are come.*' But 'Why do I talk of years to come? Alas! I am just now ready.' By *graves*, he means the *sepulchres of his fathers*, to which he must be gathered: Wherever we go, there is but a step between us and the grave. Whatever is unready, that is ready; it is a bed soon made. If the graves be ready for us, it concerns us to be ready for the graves. *The graves for me*, so it runs; denoting not only his expectation, but his desire of death.

2. *Despised, v.* 6. '*He,*' (Eliphaz, so some, or rather God, whom he all along acknowledges to be the Author of his calamities) '*has made me a by-word of the people;* aforetime, or, to men's faces, publicly, I was as a tabret, that whoever chose might play on;' now they made ballads of him; his name became a proverb; it is so still, *As poor as Job.* It is common for those who are honored in wealth, to be despised in poverty.

3. A *man of sorrows, v.* 7. He wept so much, he had almost lost his sight; vexed so much, he had fretted all his flesh away, and was become nothing but skin and bones, 'the *shadow of a man.*'

II. The ill use his friends made of his miseries; they trampled on him, insulted over, and condemned him as a hypocrite. Hard usage!

1. With their foul censures, and fair promises, as flattery, designed to vex him the more. All this he calls their *provocation, v.* 2. They did what they could to provoke him, and then condemned him for his resentment of it; but he thinks himself excusable when his eye *continued* thus *in their provocation;* it never ceased, and he could never look off it.

2. This was a sign *God had hid their heart from understanding, v.* 4. Wisdom is a gift God grants to some, and withholds from others, grants at some times, and withholds at others. Those who are void of compassion, are so far void of understanding. It would be a lasting reproach and diminution to them; *Therefore shalt Thou not exalt them.* Those are certainly kept back from honor, whose hearts are hid from understanding. When God infatuates, He will abase. Surely they who discover so little acquaintance with the methods of Providence, shall not have the honor of deciding this controversy! That is reserved for a man of better sense, and temper, as Elihu afterward appeared to be. It would entail a curse on their families, *v.* 5. He that thus violates the sacred laws of

5 He [i] that speaketh flattery to *his* friends, even [j] the eyes of his children shall fail.

6 He hath made me also [k] a by-word of the people, and [**] aforetime I was [l] as a tabret.

m 8:5,6. Prov. 15:8. 1 Tim. 2:8.
n Jer. 22:29.
o Gen. 4:11. Neh. 4:5. Is. 26:21. Ez. 24:7.
p 27:9. Ps. 66:18,19. Is. 1:15. 58:9, 10. Jam. 4:3,4.
q 1 Sam. 12:5. Rom. 1:9. 9:1. 2 Cor. 1:23. 11:31. 1 Thes. 2:10.
* Heb. *in the high places.* 25:2. Ps. 113:5.
† Heb. are *my scorners.* 4. 12:4,5. 17: 2.
r Ps. 109:4. 142:2. Hos. 12:4,5. Luke 6:11,12. Heb. 5:7.
s 9:34,35. 13:3,22. 23:3—7. 31:35. 40: 1—5. Ec. 6:10. Is. 45:9.
‡ Or, *friend.*
§ Heb. *years of number.* 14:5,14.
t 7:9,10. 14:10.
‖ Or, *spirit is spent.*
a 19:17.
b 6:11. 42:16. Is. 57:16.
c 13,14. Ps. 88:3—5. Is. 38:10—14
d 12:4. 13:9. 16:20. 21:3. Ps. 35 14—16. Matt. 27:39—44.
¶ Heb. *lodge.* Ps. 25:13. 91:1. *marg.*
e 1 Sam. 1:6,7.
f 9:33. Gen. 43:9. 44:32. Prov. 11: 15. 20:16. Heb. 7:22.
g Prov. 6:1. 11:15. *marg.* 17:18. 22: 26.
h 2 Sam. 15.31. 17:14. 2 Chr. 25:16. Is. 19:14. Matt. 11:25. 13:11. Rom. 11:8. 1 Cor. 1:20.
i 32:21,22. Ps. 12:2,3. Prov. 20:19. 29:5. 1 Thes. 2:5.
j Ex. 20:5. Deut. 28:65. 1 K. 11:12. Lam. 4:17.
k 30.9. 1 K. 9:7. Ps. 44:14.
** Or, *before them.*
l Gen. 31:27. Is. 5.12.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are all very incompetent judges of our own performances; while the speaker is partial, the hearer is often prejudiced; and both parties should watch over themselves, if they would amicably settle controversies, profitably conduct conversation, or even preach and hear the Word of God in a becoming manner.—We are not suitably affected with the sufferings of others, because we 'do not love our neighbor as ourselves.'—The prosperous are commonly troublesome comforters of the afflicted; sympathy and tenderness of spirit are seldom learned, except in the school of tribulation; and the experienced believer, who can make allowances for the anguish of disease, and the force of temptation, and recollects what topics have proved consolatory to himself, best 'knows how to speak a word in season to the weary,' which may strengthen his faith and hope, and assuage his grief.—In great distress, when we can get no relief, we are apt to yield to repining: and, as the believer may then be tempted even to think hardly of God's dealings with him; he may well be borne with, if he speak peevishly and harshly of his fellow creatures.—The consideration of the variety of complicated miseries that a godly man may endure, from the frown and correction of God, the rage and malice of Satan, and the ingratitude and cruelty of men, in his conscience, reputation, connections, soul, and body, should teach us to prepare for trials, and excite our gratitude for our many mercies; while it should warn the sinner to 'flee from the wrath to come.'—How weary and desolate will the wicked be in the eternal world! There they will be the mark of all the arrows of divine vengeance, and incessant weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, will be their dreadful employment!—But should not the same reflection lead the believer to Gethsemane and Golgotha? SCOTT.

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preter; Gen 42:23. *Job* 33:23. And the plural is translated *ambassadors; 2 Chr.* 32:31. and *interpreters; Is.* 43:27. *marg.* and it occurs nowhere else, except in this place. Hence many think it may signify *a mediator.*—Thus the passage may be rendered, 'My Mediator is my Friend; my eye poureth out *tears* unto God. And one is pleading for man to God; and the Son of Man for his neighbor.' By a trivial change of the vowel points, the singular number may be admitted; and thus the sentiment expressed may be considered as an additional proof of Job's faith in a Redeemer. (*Notes,* 19:23—27. 33:19—26.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII. V. 1, 2. The nature and violence of Job's disease rendered it painful to him, and offensive to others, when he drew his breath. (*M.*) ID.

Verses 3—7.

Again Job entreated the Lord, to give him some assurance, that He would soon try his cause, or appoint some impartial judge, to whom he could confidently refer the decision; (16:17—22. 23:3—7. 33:1—7.) for his friends, being *judicially* infatuated, would never be honored in such a service. He supposed that their former professions of affection for him were mere flattery; or that their doctrine flattered the prosperous, as if they were the favorites of Heaven: or, he assured them, that though he desired fair treatment from them, he did not wish them to flatter him; being sensible that God abhorred flattery, and that those who aimed to advance themselves by it, would heap up disappointment and misery for their children. (29:18—25. 30:1—14. *Ez.* 33:30—33.) SCOTT.

(3.) '*Lay down,* (a pledge, "arrabon," understood,) *pledge Thyself* to me, i. e. a pledge being deposited, promise for thyself that Thou wilt abide by those things which shall be adjudged or decided in this suit, pending between me and Thee, that Thou wilt not conduct Thyself as a judge, using thy majesty, but as a litigator. But *who* is there, who *will clap hands together with me,* to wit, *will oblige himself by placing his hand in mine,* i. e. who will stipulate with me, and, covenanting by striking hands together, promise for Thee? be surety or answer for Thee? In stipulations and agreements, the striking together of hands was very common, whence that phrase is used for striking a bargain, covenanting, promising, pledging, &c. in Prov. 6:1. 11:15. 17:18. 22:26. Job here treats with God with too great boldness.' ROSENM. *Put me,* &c.] '*Stake me against Thyself.*' GOOD. 'These are law terms, and allude to the custom of a person's giving bail, for his appearance at court on the day of trial.' *Scott.* in *Hewlett.* ED.

(6.) *And aforetime,* &c.] '"And I am become a thing to be spit upon

7 Mine [m] eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, and all my [*] members *are* [n] as a shadow.

8 Upright *men* shall be [o] astonied at this, and the innocent shall [p] stir up himself against the hypocrite

9 The righteous also shall [q] hold on his way, and he that hath [r] clean hands shall [†] be stronger and stronger.

10 But as for you all, [s] do ye return, and come now: [t] for I cannot find *one* wise *man* among you.

11 ¶ My [u] days are past, [x] my purposes are broken off, *even* the [‡] thoughts of my heart.

12 They [y] change the night into day: the light *is* [§] short because of darkness.

13 [z] If I wait, [a] the grave *is* mine house: [b] I have made my bed in the darkness.

14 I have [‖] said to [c] corruption, Thou *art* my father: [d] to the worm, *Thou art* my mother, and my sister.

15 And where *is* now [e] my hope? as for my

m 16:16. Ps. 6:7. 31:9,10. Lam. 5:17.
* Or, *thoughts*. 11.
n Ps. 109:23,24. Ec. 6:12.
o Is. 73:12—15. Ec. 5:8. Hab. 1:13. Rom. 11:33.
p 34:30. Acts 13:46.
q Prov. 4:18. Is. 35:8—10. 1 Pet. 1:5. 1 John 2:19.
r Gen. 20:5. Ps. 24:4. 26:6. 73:13. Is. 1:15,16. Mark 7:2.
† Heb. *add strength*. Is. 40:29—31. 2 Cor. 12:9,10.
s 6:29. Mal. 3:18.
t 4. 15:9. 32:9. 42:7. 1 Cor. 1:20. 6:5.
u 7:6. 9:25,26. Is. 38:10.
x Ec. 9:10. Is. 8:10. Lam. 3:37. Rom. 1:13. 2 Cor. 1:15—17. Jam. 4:13—15.
‡ Heb. *possessions*.
y 7:3,4,13,14. 24:14—16. Deut. 28:67.
§ Heb. *near*.
z 14:14. Ps. 27:14. Lam. 3:25,26.
a See on 1.—10:21,22. 30:23.
b Ps. 139:8. Is. 57:2.
‖ Heb. *cried, or, called*.
c 21:32,33. Ps. 16:10. 49:9. Acts 2:27—31. 13:34—37. 1 Cor. 15:42,53,54.
d 19:26. 24:20. Is. 14:11.
e 4:6. 6:11. 13:15. 19:10.

friendship, forfeits the benefit of it, not only for himself, but for his posterity. They shall, like me, look in vain. Those that wrong their neighbors, may, in the end, wrong their own children more than they are aware of.

3. He appeals from them to God, *v.* 3. *Lay down now, put me in a surety with Thee*, i. e. 'Let me be assured God will take the hearing and determining of the cause into his own hands, and I desire no more.' Thus they whose hearts condemn them not, have confidence toward God. Some make Job here to glance at the mediation of Christ, for he speaks of a Surety with God, without whom he durst not appear before God, nor try his cause at his bar. Our English annotations give this reading of the verse: '*Appoint, I pray Thee, my Surety with Thee*, namely, Christ, who is with Thee in heaven, and has undertaken to be my Surety: and *who is he then that will strike upon mine hand?*' i. e. 'Who dares then contend with me? Who shall lay any thing to my charge?' Rom. 8: 32, 33. Christ is the Surety of the better testament, (Heb. 7: 22.) a Surety of God's appointing; and if He undertake for us, we need not fear what can be done against us.

III. The good use the righteous should make of Job's afflictions from God, from his enemies, and from his friends, *v.* 8, 9. Observe here,

1. How the saints are described, as men, honest, and sincere, that act from a steady principle, with a single eye; innocent, not perfectly so; but innocence is what they aim at, and press toward: sincerity is evangelical innocency, and the *upright* are said to be *innocent from the great transgression*, Ps. 19: 13. They are the righteous, who walk in the way of righteousness; clean from the gross pollutions of sin, and, when spotted with infirmities, *washed with innocency*.

2. How they should be affected: every one would speak of him and his case; and what use will good people make of it? (1.) They will wonder that such a remarkable saint should be such a remarkable sufferer, so useful a man laid aside in the midst of his usefulness. Upright men, though satisfied, that God is wise and holy in all He does, cannot but be astonished at such dispensations; paradoxes not to be unfolded till the mystery of God shall be finished. (2.) What was Paul's care, (1 Thess. 3: 3.) was Job's, that no good man should be moved either from his holiness, or his comfort, by these afflictions, that none should, for the sake hereof, think the worse of the ways or work of God. And what was Paul's comfort, was his too, that *the brethren of the Lord would wax confident by his bonds*. They would hereby be animated,

[1.] To oppose sin, and to confront the pernicious inferences of evil men, as, That God has forsaken the earth, That it is in vain to serve Him; and the like. Note, The boldness of the attacks of profane people on religion, should sharpen the courage and resolution of its friends and advocates. It is time to stir, when proclamation is made in the gate of the camp, *Who is on the Lord's side?* When vice is daring, it is no time for virtue, through fear, to hide itself.

[2.] To persevere. The righteous, instead of drawing back, or so much as starting back, at this frightful spectacle, or standing still to deliberate whether he should proceed or no, (allude to 2 Sam. 2: 23.) shall, with so much the more constancy and resolution, hold on his way, and press forward. Acts 20: 24. Those who keep their eye on heaven as their end, will keep their feet in the paths of religion as their way, whatever its difficulties and discouragements.

[3.] In order thereunto, to grow in grace. [Note, 7: 1.] He will also grow stronger and stronger, and, by the sight of other good men's trials, and the experience of his own, he will be made more vigorous and lively in duty, more warm and affectionate, resolute and undaunted: the worse others are, the better he will be. The blustering wind makes the traveller gather his cloak the closer about him, and gird it the faster. The truly wise and good, will be continually growing wiser and better. Proficiency in religion is a good sign of sincerity in it.

V. 10—16. Job's friends had pretended to comfort him with the hopes of his return to a prosperous estate again; now he here shows,

I. That it was their folly to talk so, *v.* 10. '*Return, and come now*, be convinced that you are in an error, and let me persuade you to be of my mind; for *I cannot find any wise man among you*, that knows how to explain the difficulties of God's providence, or how to apply the consolations of his promises.' Those do not wisely attempt to comfort the afflicted, who draw their comforts from the possibility of their recovery and enlargement in this world; for, though not to be despaired of, it is, at the best, uncertain, and if it should fail, as perhaps it may, the comfort built upon it will fail too. It is therefore our wisdom to comfort ourselves, and others, in distress, with that which will not fail, the promise of God, his love and grace, and a well-grounded hope of eternal life.

II. That it would be much more his folly to heed them; for,

1. All his measures were already broken, and he was full of confusion, *v.* 11, 12. He owns he had, in his prosperity, often pleased himself both with projects of what he should *do*, and prospects of what he should *enjoy;* but now that he looked upon his days as past, and drawing towards a period, all those purposes were broken off, and those expectations dashed. Note, The period of our days will be the period of all our contrivances and hopes for this world; but if, with full purpose of heart, we cleave to the Lord, death will not break off that purpose.

Job, being thus put upon new counsels, was under a constant uneasiness, *v.* 12. Some, in their vanity and riot, turn night into day and day into night; but Job did so, through trouble and anguish of spirit, which was a hinderance both to the repose of the night, and to the entertainments of the day. Deut. 28: 67. See what reason we have to be thankful, for the health and ease which enable us to welcome both the shadows of the evening and the light of the morning.

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in the face." The word *tophet* [tr. tabret in our vers.] is from the Arab. *taphapha*, he is detested in spitting upon, and saying, "*tuffa*." i. e. *phy!* For the Arabs are wont, when they see or hear any thing base from another, to spit, pronouncing as it were this word *tuffa*, i. e. *phy!* and contracting their brows to curse the person. Thus the Heb. and Arab. phrase agrees with that Aramaic phrase *Raca*, Matt. 5:22. which comes from the verb *rqq*, *to spit*, and means *sputatilicum*, a thing to be spit upon. Some render *tophet*, a drum, or tabret, and explain it by the French phrase, "Je suis mené au tambourin," used to express that one is a laughing-stock. But the word *lepanim* (in the face) never means *openly*, *publicly*.' ROSENM.

Verses 8, 9.

Upright believers, in different parts and ages of the world, would hear how this conscientious servant of God had been afflicted, and how his friends had treated him; at which they would be greatly astonished. But this would excite them to distinguish themselves from hypocrites, and set themselves against them; especially against such as condemned others merely because they were afflicted. And when God should make known Job's real character, and the reason of his extraordinary trials; his example would be an adjudged case, that no adversity could prove a man to be wicked, or an object of divine wrath. This would be a great encouragement to the righteous, to hold on their way, in the midst of difficulties, reproaches, and suspicions; nay, to grow stronger in faith under those very trials, which detected and turned aside the hypocrite. Some explain the passage, as a wish, 'Let the upright, &c.' but, in fact, these have been the effects of Job's sufferings in numberless instances: and this was one grand design for which they were permitted. 'Ye have heard of the patience of Job; and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.' (*Jam.* 5:11.)—Here a glimpse of divine light, and a lively exercise of faith and hope, broke forth in the midst of the despondency of Job's discourse. (19:23—27. 23:8—12.) SCOTT.

Verses 11, 12.

The old translation seems here to be both more literal and intelligible. 'My days are past, my enterprises are broken, *and* the thoughts of my heart have changed the night for the day, and the light that approached, for darkness.'—All the purposes which Job had formed, however wise, pious, or benevolent, were, as he supposed, finally come to nothing, as his days were past. (*Ps.* 146:3,4. *Ec.* 9:10.) And now the thoughts which possessed his heart turned the night into day, by preventing his rest. Yet when the light approached, it was turned into darkness by the gloom of his disquieted mind.—'My thoughts will not let me sleep in the night, nor enjoy pleasure in the day.' *Patrick.* (*Notes*, 7:1—6, 13, 14.) ID.

Verses 13—16.

Whenever Job thought of waiting, in hope of his sufferings being terminated, that thought was associated with the idea of lodging in the dark and silent grave. His disease, and his daily reflections, familiarized his mind to corruption and the worms; and he was induced to claim kindred with them, through the present loathsomeness of his

hope, who shall see it?
16 They shall go down to [f] the bars of the pit, when *our* [g] rest together *is* in the dust.

CHAP. XVIII.

Bildad sharply reproves Job for presumption and impatience, 1—4. He enlarges on the miseries of the wicked, 5—21.

THEN answered [a] Bildad the Shuhite, and said,
2 How [b] long *will it be ere* ye make an end of words? [c] mark, and afterwards we will speak.
3 Wherefore [d] are we counted as beasts, *and* reputed vile in your sight?
4 He [e] teareth [*] himself in his anger: [f] shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall [g] the rock be removed out of his place?
5 Yea, [h] the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the [i] spark of his fire shall not shine.
6 The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his [†] candle shall be put out with him.

f 18:13,14. 33:18—28. Ps. 88:4—6. 143: 7. Is. 38:17,18. Jon. 2:6.
g 3:17—19. Ez. 37:11. 2 Cor. 1:9.
a 2:11. 8:1. 25:1. 42:7—9.
b 8:2. 11:2. 13:5,6. 16:2,3.
c 13:5,6,17. 21:2. 33:1. Prov. 18:13. Jam. 1:19.
d 12:7,8. 17:4,10. Ps. 73:22. Ec. 3: 18. Rom. 12:16.
e 5:2. 13:14. 16:9. Jon. 4:9. Mark 9:18. Luke 9:39.
* Heb. *his soul.*
f 4:18. Ez. 9:9.
g 14:18. Is. 54:10. Matt. 24:35.
h 20:5. Prov. 4:19. 13:9. 20:20. 24:20.
i Is. 50:11.
† Or, *lamp.* 21:17. *marg.* Ps. 18:28. Rev. 18:23.

2. All his expectations from this world would very shortly be buried in the grave with him; so that it was a jest for him to think of such mighty things as they had flattered him with the hopes of; (*ch.* 5: 19.—8: 21.—11: 17.) 'Alas, you do but make a fool of me.'

(1.) He saw himself just dropping into the grave. A convenient house, an easy bed, and agreeable relations, are some of those things which we take satisfaction in in this world: Job expected not any of these above ground; all he felt, and all he had in view, was unpleasing and disagreeable, but under ground he expected them, *v.* 13, 14. Note, In all our prosperity, it is good to keep death in prospect. The grave is a house; to the wicked a prison-house; (*ch.* 24: 19, 20.) to the godly *Bethabara, a passage-house* in their way home. We must every one of us shortly remove to this house, and it is our wisdom to provide accordingly. We are all of us near akin to corruption and worms. It is, therefore, good to make ourselves familiar with them, by conversing much with them in our thoughts and meditations, which would very much help us [to rise] above the inordinate love of life and fear of death.

(2.) He saw all his hopes from this world dropping into the grave with him, *v.* 15, 16. He is not hopeless, but his hope is not there where they would have it be. What is his hope, he will tell us, *ch.* 19: 25. 'But as for the hopes you would buoy me up with, they shall go down with me to the bars of the pit; you are dying men, and cannot make good your promises, I am a dying man, and cannot enjoy the good you promise. Since, therefore, our rest will be together in the dust, let us all lay aside the thoughts of this world, and set our hearts upon another.' Job and his friends could not agree now, but they will both be quiet in the grave; the dust of that will shortly stop their mouths, and put an end to the controversy. Let the foresight of this cool the heat of all disputers.

CHAP. XVIII. In this ch. Bildad makes a second assault on Job. In his first discourse, (ch. 8.) he had given him encouragement to hope that all should yet be well with him. But here, there is not a word of that; he is grown more peevish, and so far from being convinced by Job's reasonings, he is but more exasperated: he seems, all along, to have an eye to Job's complaints of the miserable condition he was in, that he was in the dark, bewildered, ensnared, terrified, and hastening out of the world. 'This,' says Bildad, 'is the condition of a wicked man; therefore, thou art one.'

1. V. 1—4. He charges him with idle, endless talk, as Eliphaz had done, *v.* 2. Here he reflects, not only on Job himself, but either on all the managers of the conference, or on some present, who, possibly, took part with Job, and put in a word now and then in his favor, though it be not recorded. Bildad was weary of hearing others speak, and impatient till it came to his turn; which cannot be observed to any man's praise, for we ought to be swift to hear, and slow to speak. It is common for contenders to monopolize the reputation of wisdom, and then to insist on it as their privilege to be dictators. How unbecoming that is in others, every one can see; but few that are guilty of it can see it in themselves. Time was, when Job had the last word in all debates, *ch.* 29: 22. Then he was in power and prosperity; but now that he was impoverished and brought low, he could scarcely be allowed to speak at all, and every thing he said was as much vilified, as formerly it had been magnified: *Wisdom*, therefore, (as the world goes) *is good with an inheritance;* (Eccl. 8: 11.) for *the poor man's wisdom is despised*, and, because he is poor, *his words are not heard*, Eccl. 9: 16.

2. With a regardlessness of what was said to him, intimated in that, *Mark, and afterwards we will speak:* it is to no purpose to speak, though what is said be ever so much to the purpose, if those to whom it is spoken will not mark and observe it. It is an encouragement to those that speak of the things of God, to see the hearers attentive.

3. With a haughty contempt and disdain of his friends, and of that which they offered, *v.* 3. This was invidious: Job had indeed called them *mockers*, had represented them both as unwise and as unkind, but he did not count them *beasts;* his high spirit resented what Job had said, as the greatest affront. Proud men are apt to think themselves slighted more than really they are; and his hot spirit was willing to find a pretence to be hard on Job. Those that incline to be severe on others, will have it thought that they have first been so on them.

4. With outrageous passion, *v.* 4. Herein he seems to reflect on what Job had said, *ch.* 13: 14. 'It is thine own fault,' says Bildad; or he reflected on what he said, (*ch.* 16: 9.) where he seemed to charge it on God; or, as some think, on Eliphaz; *He teareth me in his wrath.* 'No,' says Bildad, 'thou alone shalt bear it.' Note,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If constrained to dwell with mockers and revilers, we should endeavor to withdraw our attention from them, by meditating on the blessed society in heaven, that our tempers may not be ruffled by [*] continuing in their provocation.'—Through our divine Surety, the believer shall not only be justified from his sins against God, but from all the false accusations of man.—To be so *judicially* blinded, that the Lord hides the heart from understanding, forms a most dreadful case, and forebodes everlasting shame and misery: but this never befalls those who humbly trust and serve Him; nor should we rashly conclude it to be the case of any, merely because they mistake in some things, which appear to us of great importance.—The Lord abhors the flattering of the prosperous, and the contemning of the afflicted: we should therefore study godly simplicity, and candid compassion.—Vain is the praise of men: they extol a person one day, and insult him the next; they idolize and then execrate, perhaps without any other cause, than a change in a man's outward circumstances. Let us then be indifferent about human applause, and 'seek the honor which cometh from God.'—As we, at this distance of time, may derive encouragement and instruction from the sufferings of Job, so may others from our lighter afflictions; and this may serve to reconcile us to them. Indeed, the upright believer will extract benefit from every event. The falls of those, who once seemed to run well, will teach him humble watchfulness and jealous fear; and stir him up to guard against hypocrisy, and protest against hypocrites; the afflictions of the godly will teach him the nature of his warfare, and warn him to prepare for the conflict: and the heaviest affliction which is laid on him, will *eventually* tend to strengthen his faith, increase his patience, and encourage his hope, while he is walking in the ways of God and doing his work.

SCOTT.

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[*] Heb. *his soul.*

disease; and to expect more relief from them, than from his friends and nearest relations.—He had indeed no hopes of temporal good; nor would they, who flattered him with these expectations, ever witness such a change in his circumstances. (6:8—13, 15—23. 9:14—21.

SCOTT.

(16.) *Bars.*] *Baddey.* 'It also signifies *branches;* and probably here refers to the sepulchral cells branching off from the main subterraneous grot. [Cut, Gen. 23:9.]' GREENF. *Rosenm.* tr. baddey sheol, by solitudines orci, {the solitudes, and so *Boothr.* of the shades, or orcus, the place of the dead,} and understands *my hopes shall descend.* Others refer *baddey* to the bearing barrow, or gate posts of the tombs. *Good* tr. *limbs*, and renders *to the grasp.* ED.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII. V. 2—4. It must be allowed, that Job had spoken contemptuously enough concerning the discourses of his friends, declaring that 'God had hid their hearts from understanding,' and that 'he could not find one wise man among them;' for he had been too much moved by their unjust suspicions and erroneous principles. Bildad, however, seems to have been much more angry; as if Job had counted him and his friends senseless as beasts.—And because he had said, that he 'took his flesh in his teeth,' (13:13, 14.) alluding to his exquisite pain; Bildad ascribed it to his furious anger, which prompted him to do himself a mischief: and as he would not allow himself to be a wicked man, Bildad concluded that he wished to alter the fixed laws of God's righteous government, in order that he might be exempted from punishment. SCOTT.

Verses 5—21.

The remainder of this ch. is a rhetorical declamation on the miseries of the wicked. There is indeed a great deal of truth and animation in the description; but it does not contain a single proof of the doctrine maintained by Bildad, namely, that the wicked are uniformly exposed to peculiar calamity in this world; or one evidence of the wickedness of Job.—Yet if we include the state of retribution, as well as that of probation, we may deduce from this passage much useful instruction.

7 The [j] steps of his strength shall be straitened, and [k] his own counsel shall cast him down.

8 For [l] he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare.

9 The [m] gin shall take *him* by the heel, *and* [n] the robber shall prevail against him.

10 The [o] snare *is* [*] laid for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way.

11 [p] Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall [†] drive him [q] to his feet.

12 His strength shall be [r] hunger-bitten, and [s] destruction *shall be* ready at his side.

13 It shall devour the [‡] strength of his skin: *even* [t] the first-born of death shall devour his strength.

14 His [u] confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to [x] the king of terrors.

15 It shall [y] dwell in his tabernacle, [z] because *it is* none of his: [a] brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation.

16 His [b] roots shall be

[j] 20:22. 36:16. Ps. 18:36. Prov. 4:12.
[k] 5:12,13. 2 Sam. 15:31. 17:14. Ps. 33:10. Hos. 10:6. 1 Cor. 3:19.
[l] 22:10. Esth. 3:9. 6:13. 7:5,10. Ps. 9:15. 35:8. Prov. 5:22. 29:6. Ez. 32:3. 1 Tim. 3:7. 6:9. 2 Tim. 2:26.
[m] Is. 8:14,15.
[n] 1:15,17. 5:5.
[o] Ps. 11:6. Ez. 12:13. Rom. 11:9.
[*] Heb. *hidden.*
[p] 6:4. 15:21. Ps. 73:19. Jer. 6:25. 20:3,4. 46:5. 49:29. 2 Cor. 5:11. Rev. 6:15,16
[†] Heb. *scatter*
[q] Lev. 26:36 2 K. 7:6,7. Ps. 53:5. Prov. 28:1.
[r] 15:23,24. 1 Sam. 2:5,36. Ps. 34:10. 109:10.
[s] Ps. 7:12—14. 1 Thes. 5:3. 2 Pet. 2:3.
[‡] Heb. *bars.* 17:16. Jon. 2:6.
[t] Gen. 49:3. Is. 14:30. Rev. 6:8.
[u] 8:14. 11:20. Ps. 112:10. Prov. 10:28. Matt. 7:26,27.
[x] 24:17. 41:34. Ps. 55:4. Prov. 14:32. 1 Cor. 15:55,56. Heb. 2:15.
[y] 12,13. Zech. 5:4.
[z] 20:18—21. 31:38,39. Jer. 22:13. Hab. 2:6—11.
[a] Gen. 19:24. Deut. 29:23. Ps. 11:6. Is. 34:9,10. Rev. 19:20. 21:8.
[b] 29:19. Is. 5:24. Hos. 9:16. Am. 2:9. Mal. 4:1.

Anger is a sin that is its own punishment. Fretful, passionate people tear and torment themselves. *He teareth his soul*, so the word is; every sin wounds the soul, tears, wrongs that, (Prov. 8: 36.) unbridled passions particularly.

5. With a proud and arrogant expectation to give law even to Providence itself; '*Shall the earth be forsaken for thee?* Dost thou think the world cannot stand without thee; but that, if thou art ruined, all the world is ruined and forsaken with thee?' Some make it a reproof of Job's justification of himself, falsely insinuating, that either Job was a wicked man, or we must deny a Providence, and suppose that God has forsaken the earth, and the Rock of ages is removed. It is rather a just reproof of his passionate complaints; when we quarrel with the events of Providence, we forget, that, whatever befalls us, it is according, (1.) to the eternal purpose and counsel of God. (2.) To the written Word. in the *world* we must *have tribulation;* since we sin daily, we must expect to smart for it; and, (3.) To the usual way and custom of Providence, nothing but what is common to men: and to expect that God's counsels should change, his method alter, and his word fail, to please us, is as absurd and unreasonable, as to think that *the earth should be forsaken for us, and the rock removed out of its place.*

V. 5—10. The rest of Bildad's discourse is entirely taken up in an elegant description of the miserable condition of a wicked man, in which there is much truth, which will be of excellent use, if duly considered. But, it is not true that all wicked people are visibly and openly made thus miserable in this world; nor, that all who are brought into great distress and trouble in this world, are *therefore* to be deemed and adjudged wicked men, though no other proof appears against them; therefore, though Bildad thought the application of it to Job easy, yet it was not safe nor just. In these verses,

1. The destruction of the wicked is foreseen and foretold, under the similitude of darkness, *v.* 5, 6.

2. The preparatives for that destruction are represented under the similitude of a beast or bird caught in a snare, or a malefactor arrested and taken into custody, in order to his punishment, *v.* 7—10. (1.) Satan is *the robber; v.* 9. as he was a murderer, so he was a robber, from the beginning. He *hunts for the precious life.* (2.) The wicked is himself preparing for it, *v.*7. *In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare.* (3.) God is preparing for it. The sinner by his sin is preparing the fuel, and then God by his wrath is preparing the fire. See here how the sinner is infatuated, embarrassed, entangled, and so secured and kept from outrunning the judgments of God, 2 Pet. 2: 9.

V. 11—21. Bildad here describes the destruction itself which wicked people are reserved for in the other world, and which, in some degree, often seizes them in this. Come, and see what a miserable condition the sinner is in, when his day comes to fall.

1. See him disheartened and weakened by continual terrors, arising from the sense of his own guilt and the dread of God's wrath, *v.* 11, 12. *Terror shall make him afraid on every side:* the terrors of his own conscience shall haunt him, so that he shall never be easy. It will make him tremble, to see himself fought against by the whole creation, to see Heaven frowning on him, hell gaping for him, and earth sick of him. He that carries his own accuser, and his own tormentors, always in his bosom, cannot but be afraid on every side.

No marvel the sinner is dispirited, and distracted with fear. He sees his ruin approaching, and feels he can neither grapple with it, nor escape it, nor bear up under it. His strength, (his wealth, power, pomp, friends, and the hardiness of his own spirit,) shall do him no more service than a famished man, pining away for hunger, would do in work or war. Note, The way of sin is a way of fear, and leads to everlasting confusion, of which the present terrors of an impure and unpacified conscience are earnests, as they were to Cain and Judas.

2. See him devoured and swallowed up by a miserable death; miserable indeed a wicked man's death is, how secure and jovial soever his life was.

(1.) See him dying, arrested by *the first born of death*, some disease, or stroke that has in it a more than ordinary resemblance of death itself; *so great a death*, as it is called, (2 Cor. 1: 10.) a messenger of death, that has in it an uncommon strength and terror. *Thy soul shall be required of thee.*

(2.) See him dead, and see his case then with an eye of faith. He is then brought to *the king of terrors.* Death is terrible to nature; our Savior Himself prayed, *Father, save Me from this hour;* but to the wicked it is, in a special manner, *the king of terrors,* [the chief of those fears, *v.* 11.] both as it is a period to that life in which they placed their happiness, and a passage to that life where they will find their endless misery. How happy then are the saints, and how much indebted to the Lord Jesus, by whom death is so far abolished, and the property of it altered, that this king of terrors is become a friend and servant! He is then *driven from light into darkness, v.* 18. from the light of this world, and his prosperous condition in it, into the darkness of the grave, the darkness of hell, into utter darkness, never to see light, (Ps. 49: 19.) not the least gleam, nor any hopes of it. He is then *chased out of the world*, hurried and dragged away by the messengers of death, sore against his will; chased as Adam out of paradise, for the world is his paradise. It intimates, he would fain stay here, but go he must. This is death to a wicked man.

3. See his family sunk and cut off, *v.* 15. The wrath and curse of God light and lie, not only upon his head and heart, but upon his house too, Zech. 5: 4. Death itself shall dwell in his tabernacle, and, having expelled him, take possession of his house; even the dwelling shall be ruined for the sake of its owner, as Sodom, to the destruction of which this seems to have reference. Some think he here upbraids Job with the burning of his sheep and servants with fire from heaven. The reason is here given why his tabernacle is thus marked for ruin, *because it is none of his;* i. e. it was unjustly got, and kept from the rightful owner.

His children shall perish, either with him or after him, *v.* 16. Thus the houses of Jeroboam, Baasha, and Ahab were cut off; none that descended from them were left alive. Sin entails a curse on posterity, and the iniquity of the fathers is often

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No doubt, he meant this application for Job; as the whole description is full of evident references to his varied calamities, and his desponding complaints. (*M. R.*)—But how different was the event of his troubles, and the sentiments of posterity respecting him, from what Bildad supposed they would be! SCOTT.

(8, 9, 10.) *Net, snare, gin, snare, trap.*] *Resheth, sebakah, pach, chabel, malkudoth.* Here are 5 words denoting modes of taking animals; we may guess that these were *nets*, or *nooses*, thrown over the head, *crocodile traps, lassos*, (used for taking the ostrich, by entangling his legs,) *gins*, or *slip-nooses* for the feet, *pitfalls*, &c. *Trammim* (robbers) is rendered by *Mont.* sitibundos, 'the thirsty,' so the *Sept.* and by the *Chal.* 'the diggers.' The easterns have still many contrivances for taking the rhinoceros, tiger, hippopotamus, foxes, and game in general: comp. the note on ancient Egyptian hunting, 41:7. 'From the beginning of verse 7. to the end of ver. 13, there is an allusion to the various arts and methods practised in hunting. 1. Persons extend themselves in a forest, and drive the game before them, still straitening the space from a broad base to a narrow point in form of a triangle, so that the farther they go the less room have they on the right and left, the hunters lining each side, while the drovers with their dogs are coming up behind. *v.* 7. [Sometimes the chase is driven over a precipice.] 2. *Nets, gins*, and *pitfalls*, are laid or formed, so that many are taken before they come to the point where the two lines close. *v.* 8, 9, 10. [*Spence* says, the Polynesians surround a large tract with a circle of nets, and, contracting this circle by degrees, drive the beasts into a narrow compass, where they are slaughtered; which was also practised,' says he, 'in Italy and the E. from the remotest times. *Statius* alludes to it.' *Good.*] 3. The *howling of the dogs*, with the shouts of the huntsman, [rouse the chase from his lair,] fill him with dismay, and cause him to run himself beyond his strength, and out of breath, *v.* 11. 4. While spent with hunger and fatigue, he is entangled in the spread nets; and the huntsman either pierces him with an arrow or a spear, or cuts the sinews of his legs, so that he is easily captured and destroyed; *v.* 9, 12. "Strength of skin," (*v.* 13.) may refer to the elephant, rhinoceros, [crocodile, or hippopotamus]; taken in a pitfall, the *first born of death*, a sudden and *overwhelming stroke*, deprives him of life. See accounts of elephant hunts.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(14.) *King of terrors.*] Osiris is sometimes represented on the ancient Egyptian monuments, as the king of the regions of darkness, seated on a throne, and receiving to the gloomy realms of death, those who have passed a favorable judgment: note, Ps. 62:9. or else directing the condemned to be driven away. Thus the Dis and Pluto of the

dried up beneath, and above [c] shall his branch be cut off.

17 His [d] remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street.

18 * He shall be [e] driven from light into darkness, and [f] chased out of the world.

19 He shall [g] neither have son nor nephew among his people, [h] nor any remaining in his dwellings.

20 They that come after *him* shall be [i] astonied at [k] his day, as they that † went before ‡ were affrighted.

21 Surely [l] such *are* the dwellings of the wicked, and this *is* the place *of him that* [m] knoweth not God.

CHAP. XIX.

Job complains of the persevering cruelty, with which his friends distressed him; and shows the greatness and variety of his sufferings, 1—20. He entreats their pity, 21, 22. He professes his faith in a divine Redeemer, and a future resurrection, 23—27. He warns his friends not to persecute him, 28, 29.

THEN Job answered and said,

2 [a] How long will ye [b] vex my soul, and [c] break me in pieces with words?

3 These [d] ten times have [e] ye reproached

c 5:3,4. 15:30.
d 13:12. Ps. 34:16. 83:4. Prov. 2:22. 10:7.
* Heb. *They shall drive him.* 11,14.
e 3:20. 10:22. Is. 8:21,22. Jude 13.
f 20:8. Prov. 14:32. Is. 17:13,14. Dan. 4:33. 5:21.
g 1:19. 8:4. 42:13—16. Ps. 109:13. Is. 14:21,22. Jer. 22:30.
h 20:26—28. Is. 5:8,9.
i Deut. 29:23,24. 1 K. 9:8. Jer. 18:16.
k Ps. 37:13. 137:7. Ez. 21:25. Ob. 11—15. Luke 19:42,44.
† Or, *lived with him.*
‡ Heb *laid hold on horror.* 2:12,13. 18:13—19.
l 14—16.
m 21:14. Ex. 5:2. Judg. 2:10. 1 Sam. 2:12. 1 Chr. 28:9. Ps. 79:6. Jer. 9:3. 10:25. Rom. 1:28. 1 Thes. 4: 5. 2 Thes. 1:8. Tit. 1:16.
a 8:2. 18:2. Ps. 13:1. Rev. 6:10.
b 27:2. Judg. 16:16. Ps. 6:2,3. 42:10. 2 Pet. 2:7,8.
c Ps. 55:21. 59:7. 64:3. Prov. 12:18. 18:21. Jam. 3:6—8.
d Gen. 31:7. Lev. 26:26. Num. 14:22. Neh. 4:12. Dan. 1:20.
e 4:6—11. 5:3,4. 8:4—6. 11:3,14. 15: 4—6,11,12. 18:4,&c.

visited on the children. Herein, also, it is probable Bildad reflects on the death of Job's children and servants, as a further proof of his being a wicked man; whereas all that are written childless, are not thereby written graceless; there is a name better than that of sons and daughters.

4. See his memory buried with him, or made odious; he shall either be forgotten or spoken of with dishonor, *v.* 17. Thus the judgments of God follow him, after death, in this world, as an indication of the misery his soul is in after death, and an earnest of that everlasting shame and contempt to which he shall rise in the great day. *The memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot*, Prov. 10: 7.

5. See a universal amazement at his fall, *v.* 20. They that see it are affrighted, so sudden is the change, so dreadful the execution, so threatening to all about him; and they that come after, and hear the report of it, are astonished at it; their ears are made to tingle, and their hearts to tremble, and they cry out, *Lord, how terrible art Thou in thy judgments!* A place or person, utterly ruined, is said to be *made an astonishment*, Deut. 28: 37. 2 Chr. 7: 21. Jer. 25: 9, 18. Horrible sins bring strange punishments.

Lastly, See all this averred as the unanimous sense of the patriarchal age, grounded on their knowledge of God, and their many observations of his providence, *v.* 21. See here what is the beginning, and what is the end, of the wickedness of this wicked world; ignorance of God, wilful ignorance; and the end of it, utter destruction. Such, so miserable, are the dwellings of the wicked. Vengeance will be taken of those that *know not God*. For, those whom He has not honor from, He will get Him honor on. Let us therefore stand in awe and not sin, for it will certainly be bitterness in the latter end.

CHAP. XIX. This ch. is Job's answer to Bildad's discourse in the foregoing ch. Though his spirit was grieved and much heated, and Bildad was very peevish, yet he gave him leave to say all he designed to say; but, when he had done, he gave him a fair answer. If the remonstrance Job here makes of his grievances may sometimes justify our complaints, yet his cheerful views of the future state, at the same time, may shame us Christians, and silence our complaints, or, at least, balance them.

V. 1—7. 1. Job's friends *vexed his soul*, *v.* 2.—*brake him in pieces with words*, surely hard and very cruel words to *break a man to pieces:—reproached him, made themselves strange to him.* Those are governed by the spirit of the world, and not by any principles of true honor or love, who make themselves strange to their friends, or God's friends, when in trouble: *a friend loves at all times.* They *magnified themselves against him*, *v.* 5. It is mean and base thus to trample on those that are down. *They pleaded against him his reproach*, i. e. made use of his affliction as an argument against him to prove him a wicked man. They should have pleaded for him his integrity, and helped him to take the comfort of that under his affliction, and so have pleaded that against his reproach, as Paul; (2 Cor. 1: 12.) but, instead of that, they pleaded his reproach against his integrity, which was not only unkind, but very unjust; for where shall we find an honest man, if reproach may be admitted for a plea against him?

2. He aggravates their unkindness. They had thus abused him often, *v.* 3. *These ten times*, i. e. very often, as Gen. 31: 7. Num. 14: 22. Five times they had spoken, and every speech was a double reproach. He spake as if he had kept a particular account of their reproaches, and could tell just how many they were: it is but a peevish and unfriendly thing to do so, and looks like a design of retaliation and revenge: we better befriend our own peace by forgetting injuries and unkindnesses, than by remembering them and scoring them up. They continued still to do it, and seemed resolved to persist in it; 'How long will ye do it?' *v.* 2, 5. Those that speak too much, seldom think they have said enough; and, when the mouth is opened in passion, the ear is shut to reason. They had reason to be ashamed of their hard-heartedness, uncharitableness, and deceitfulness; but though told again and again, yet they could not blush, *v.* 3.

3. He answers their harsh censures, by showing them, that what they condemned was capable of excuse, which they ought to have considered.

(1.) The errors of his judgment were excusable, *v.* 4. 'Be it indeed that I have erred, through ignorance or mistake,' it is nothing strange for any man, even a good man. *Error cleaves to humanity*; and it is folly to think ourselves infallible. 'But be it so,' said Job, '*mine error remaineth with myself*,' i. e. 'I speak according to the best of my judgment, with all sincerity, and not from a spirit of contradiction.' Or, 'If I be in an error, I keep it to myself, and do not impose it on others as you do. I only prove myself and my own work by it, I meddle not with other people, either to teach them or to judge them.' Men's errors are the more excusable, if they keep them to themselves, and do not disturb others with them. Some give this sense of these words, 'If I be in an error, it is I that must smart for it; therefore you need not concern yourselves; nay, it is I that smart, and you need not add to my misery by your reproaches.'

(2.) The breakings out of his passion, though not justifiable, yet were excusable, considering the vastness of his grief, and the extremity of his misery. 'If you will go on to cavil at every complaining word I speak, yet take the cause of the complaint along with you, and weigh that, before you pass a judgment on the complaint, and turn it to *my reproach: know then that God has overcome me.*' *v.* 6. It is barbarous to *persecute him whom God hath smitten, and to talk to the grief of one whom He hath wounded.* He could not hope, *v.* 7. He complained of his pain, but got no ease; begged to know the cause of his afflictions, but could not discover it; appealed to God's tribunal for the clearing of his innocency, but could not obtain a hearing, much less a judgment, on his appeal; *I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard.* God, for a time, may seem to turn away his ear from his people, to be angry at their prayers, and overlook their appeals to Him, and they must be excused if, in that case, they complain bitterly. Wo unto us if God be against us!

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The eagerness and asperity, even of good men, when heated in controversy, are often very indecent. They are slow to hear, swift to speak, and swift to wrath; (*Jam.* 1:19—21.) and ready to give affronts, but unable to bear them: sometimes they are led even to boast, and revile, as well as to misunderstand and misinterpret each other; to overlook all the wise and pious sentiments of their opponents; and to make the worst of every apparent error, or sally of passion. We all perceive the folly of such violence in others, and many are *afterwards* ashamed of it in themselves; but few are able to avoid it at the time. It is therefore generally our wisdom, especially if our spirits be eager, to shun controversy: and it is always our duty to watch and pray against pride; for if we duly considered how mean, guilty, polluted, and ignorant we really are, we should not be so much offended, even if we were 'counted as stupid as beasts,' and reputed vile in the sight of all others.—In this world there is no exact *external* discrimination betwixt the righteous and the wicked. Yet even on earth, which is as *the wicked man's heaven*, he meets with continual anxiety, terror, and vexation; with pain and sickness; with bitter disappointments to his pride, avarice, or ambition; and with galling affronts and injuries: he experiences stings of conscience, and the dread of the wrath of God; and death is to him emphatically 'the king of terrors,' which threatens to tear him from all he loves, and plunge him into all he fears. SCOTT.

Greeks and Romans are kings. 'Virgil speaks of "*the gates of the king of hell*;" Ovid, of the "*direful king of hell*," the "*tyrant*" of "*his gloomy court*;" and Sophocles, of "*Pluto, king of shades.*"' See Dr. *A. Clarke.* But *Schultens* tr. 'terrors shall invade him like a king.' So, nearly, *Jerome, Rosenm. Stock, Good*, Dr. *A. Clarke, Parkhurst*, &c. The *Chal.* has 'angel of death consume his sons.' ED.

(16, 17.) *Above shall his branch be cut off.*] Perhaps this alludes to an eastern 'practice (in dry weather when the grass is burned up) of climbing the trees to lop off the branches and leaves, for the use of the flocks and cattle.' See *Roberts*, who remarks that the phrase, his name is in every street (*v.* 17.) still means in the E. he is a person of great fame.' ED.

me: ye are not ashamed *that* ye * make yourselves [f]strange to me.

4 And be it indeed *that* [g]I have erred, [h]mine error remaineth with myself.

5 If indeed ye will [i]magnify *yourselves* against me, and [k]plead against me my reproach:

6 Know now that [l]God hath overthrown me, and hath [m]compassed me with his net.

7 Behold, [n]I cry out of † wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but *there is* [o]no judgment.

8 He hath [p]fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and [q]he hath set darkness in my paths.

9 He hath [r]stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown *from* my head.

10 He hath [s]destroyed me on every side, and [t]I am gone: and [u]mine hope hath he removed like a tree.

11 He hath also [x]kindled his wrath against me, and [y]he counteth me unto him as *one of* his enemies.

12 [z]His troops come together, and [a]raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my tabernacle.

13 He hath [b]put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily [c]estranged from me.

14 My [d]kinsfolk have failed, and my [e]familiar friends have forgotten me.

15 They that [f]dwell in mine house, and my maids, [g]count me for a stranger: I am an alien in their sight.

16 [h]I called [h]my servant, and he gave *me* no answer; I entreated him with my mouth.

17 My [i]breath is strange to my wife, though I entreated for the children's *sake* of mine own ‡ body.

18 [j]Yea, § young children despised me; I arose, and they spake against me.

19 All ‖ my inward friends abhorred me: and [k]they whom I loved are turned against me.

20 My [l]bone cleaveth to my skin ¶ and to my flesh, [m]and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.

21 Have pity upon me, [n]have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for [o]the hand of God hath touched me.

22 Why do ye [p]persecute me as God, [q]and are not satisfied with my flesh?

V. 8—22. Bildad had very disingenuously perverted Job's complaints, by making them the description of the miserable condition of a wicked man; yet he repeats them here, to move their pity, and to work on their good nature, if they had any left.

I. How doleful are the accents of his complaints of God's displeasure, *v.* 11. It is a gross mistake, but a very common one, to think that whom God afflicts, He treats as his enemies; whereas, on the contrary, *as many as He loves, He rebukes and chastens;* it is the discipline of his sons.

Which way soever Job looked, backward, (*v.* 9.) on his present troubles, (*v.* 12.) or forward, (*v.* 8.) he thought he saw the tokens of God's displeasure against him, *v.* 10. He concludes, *v.* 10. *My hope hath He removed.* Hope in this life is a perishing thing, but the hope of good men, when cut off from this world, is but removed like a tree, transplanted from this nursery to the garden of the Lord. We shall have no reason to complain, if God thus remove our hopes from the sand to the rock, from things temporal to things eternal.

II. In his complaints of the unkindness of his relations, and acquaintance, also, he owns God's hand, *v.* 13. As it was their sin, God was not the Author of it; it is Satan that alienates men's minds from their brethren in affliction; but as it was Job's trouble, God ordered it for the completing of his trial. Every creature is that to us, which God makes it: yet this does not excuse them from the guilt of horrid ingratitude and injustice to Job; and few could have borne it so well as he.

1. His kindred and acquaintance, his neighbors, kinsfolk, and familiar friends; nay, his *inward friends*, the men of his secret, whom he was most intimate with, and laid in his bosom, not only forgot, but abhorred him, kept as far off him as they could, because he was poor, and could not entertain them as he used to do, and because he was sore, and a loathsome spectacle, *v.* 19. So uncertain is the friendship of men; but, if God be our Friend, He will not fail us in a time of need. But let none that pretend either to humanity or Christianity, ever use their friends as Job's friends used him: adversity is the proof of friendship.

2. The master of a family expects to be attended, and taken care of, by those of his family, even then when, through weakness of body or mind, he is become despicable to others: but Job's own servants slighted him: his maids did not attend him in his illness, but *counted him for a stranger and an alien*, *v.* 15. His other servants never heeded him, *v.* 16. though he had been a good master to them, *ch.* 31: 13. Though now sickly, he was not cross, and imperious, as is too common: but entreated his servants with his mouth, when he had authority to command: yet they would not be civil to him, neither kind nor just. Note, Those that are sick and in sorrow are apt to take things ill, be jealous of a slight, and lay to heart the least unkindness: when Job was in affliction, even his servants' neglect troubled him.

3. But, one would think, when all forsook him, the wife of his bosom should have been tender of him: no, because he would not curse God and die, as she persuaded him, she cared not for coming near him, nor took any notice of what he said, *v.* 17. Though he entreated her, by that conjugal love of which their children were the pledges, yet she regarded him not. Some read it, 'Though I lamented, or bemoaned myself, for the children,' i. e. 'for the death of the children of my own body;' an affliction in which she was equally concerned with him. Now, it appeared, the devil spared her to him, not only to be his tempter, but to be his tormentor. By what she said to him at first, *Curse God and die*, it appeared that she had little religion; and what can one expect, that is kind and good, from those that have not the fear of God before their eyes, and are not governed by conscience?

4. Even the little children born in his house, the children of his own servants, his servants by birth, despised him, and spake against him; (*v.* 18.) though he arose in civility to speak friendly to them, or with authority to check them, they let him know, that they neither feared him, nor loved him.

III. He complains of the decay of his body; he could take as little pleasure in himself as others took in him, *v.* 20. *ch.* 16: 8. He was nothing but skin and bones. Nay, his skin too was almost gone, little remained unbroken but the skin of his teeth, his gums, and perhaps his lips, all the rest was fetched off by his sore boils. See what little reason we have to indulge the body.

Lastly, On all these accounts, he recommends himself to the compassion of his friends, and justly blames their harshness with him. God may do what He pleases with me; but do you think you may do so too? *v.* 22. If they delighted in his calamity, let them be satisfied with his flesh, which was wasted and gone, but let them not, as if that were too little, wound his spirit, and ruin his good name. Great tenderness is owing to the afflicted, especially to those that are troubled in mind.

V. 23—29. In all the conferences between Job and his friends, we do not find any more weighty and considerable lines than these; would one have expected it? Here is much both of Christ and heaven, and he that said such things, *declared plainly that he sought the better country, that is, the heavenly;* as the patriarchs of that age did, Heb.

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* Or, *harden yourselves against me.*

f 17. Gen. 42:7. Ps. 69:8.
g 11:3—6.
h 2 Sam. 24:17. Prov. 9:12. Ez. 18:4. 2 Cor. 5:10. Gal. 6:5.
i Ps. 35:26. 38:16. 41:11. 55:12. Mic. 7:8 Zeph. 2:10. Zech. 12:7.
k 1 Sam. 1:6. Neh. 1:3. Is. 4:1. Luke 1:25. 13:2—4. John 9:2,34.
l 7:20. 16:11—14. Ps. 44:9—14. 66: 10—12.
m 18:8—10. Lam. 1:12,13. Ez. 12:13. 32:3. Hos. 7:12.
n 10:3,15—17. 16:17—19. 21:27. Ps. 22:2. Jer. 20:8. Lam. 3:8. Hab. 1: 2,3.

† Or, *violence.*

o 9:32. 13:15—23. 16:21. 23:3—7. 31: 35,36. 34:5. 40:8.
p 3:23. Ps. 88:8. Lam. 3:7,9. Hos. 2:6.
q Josh. 24:7. Prov. 4:19. Is. 50:10. Jer. 13:16. 23:12. John 8:12.
r 29:7—14,20,21. 30:1. Ps. 49:16,17. 89:44. Is. 61:6. Hos. 9:11,12.
s 1:13—19. 2:7. Ps. 88:13—18. 2 Cor. 4:8,9.
t 17:11. Ps. 102:11.
u 6:11. 8:13—18. 17:15. 24:20. Ps. 37:35,36.
x Deut. 32:22. Ps. 89:46. 90:7.
y 13:24. 16:9. 33:10. Lam. 2:5.
z 16:11. Is. 10:5,6. 51:23.
a 30:12.
b Ps. 31:11. 38:11. 69:8,20. 88:8,18. Matt. 26:56. 2 Tim. 4:16.
c 6:21—23.
d Prov. 13:24. Mic. 7:5,6. Matt. 10: 21.
e 2 Sam. 16:23. Ps. 55:12—14. Jer. 20:10. John 13:18.
f 16—19.
g 31:31,32. Ps. 123:3,4.
h 1:15,16,17,19.
i 2:9,10. 17:1.

‡ Heb. *belly.*

j 30:1,12. 2 K. 2:23. Is. 3:5.

§ Or, *the wicked.*

‖ Heb. *the men of my secret.* Ps. 41:9. 55:12—14,20.
k 6:14,15. s. 109:4,5. Luke 22:48.
l 30:30. 33:19—22. Ps. 22:14—17. 32: 3,4. 38:3. 102:3,5. Lam. 4:8.

¶ Or, *as.*

m 2:4—6. 7:5. Lam. 3:4. 5:10.
n 6:14. Rom. 12:15. 1 Cor. 12:26. Heb. 13:3.
o 1:11. 2:5,10. 5:4. Ps. 38:2.
p 1:16. 16:13,14. Ps. 69:26.
q 2:5. 31:31. Is. 51:23. Mic. 3:3

NOTES.

Chap. XIX. V. 12. *Raise up their way*, &c.] Note, 2 Chr. 26: 14, 15. Ed.

Verse 20.

Skin of my teeth.] 'Meaning his gums: "lips about my teeth." *Jerome.*' Rosenm. It was formerly a custom among heathen kings, to knock out the teeth of prisoners, leaving only the gums. Those thus treated, said; "We have escaped with the gums of our teeth." When a man is angry with another, he says, "Take care; I will knock thy teeth out. Thou shalt only have thy gums left." "What," asks the person thus threatened, "am I thy slave, to have my teeth knocked out?" "See the miserable man; the sickness has left him his gums only."' Roberts. Some refer this to the *enamel* of the teeth, as most incorruptible. Ed.

23 ¶ * Oh, that [r] my words were now written! oh, that they were printed in a book!

24 That they were [s] graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock for ever!

25 For [t] I know *that* my Redeemer liveth, and *that* [u] he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth:

26 † And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet [x] in my flesh shall I see God:

27 Whom [y] I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not ‡ another; § *though* my reins be consumed ‖ within me.

28 But ye should say, [z] Why persecute we him? ¶ seeing [a] the root of the matter is found in me.

29 Be [b] ye afraid of

* Heb. *Who will give*, &c.
r 31:35. Is. 8:1. 30:8.
s Ex. 28:11,12,21. 32:16. Deut. 27:2, 8. Jer. 17:1.
t 33:23,24. Ps. 19:14. Is. 54:5. 59:20, 21. Eph. 1:7.
u Gen. 3:15. 22:18. John 5:22—29. Jude 14,15.
† Or, *After I shall awake, though this* body *be destroyed, yet out of my flesh shall I see God.* Ps. 17:15.
x Ps. 16:9,11. Matt. 5:8. 1 Cor. 13: 12. Phil. 3:21. 1 John 3:2. Rev. 1:7.
y Num. 24:17. Is. 26:19.
‡ Heb. *a stranger.*
§ Or, *my reins within me are consumed with earnest desire* [for that day.] Ps. 119:81. Phil. 1:23.
‖ Heb. *in my bosom.*
z 22. Ps. 69:26.
¶ Or, *and* what *root of matter is found in me?*
a 1 K. 14:13.
b 13:7—11. Rom. 13:1—4.

11:14. We have here Job's creed, or confession of faith: the principles of natural religion, he had often professed; but here we find him no stranger to revealed religion. The revelation of the Promised Seed, and the promised inheritance, was then discerned only like the dawning of the day, yet Job was taught of God to believe in a living Redeemer, and to *look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come*, for of these, doubtless, he must be understood to speak. For, beside that the expressions he here uses, of the Redeemer's *standing at the latter day upon the earth*, of his seeing God, and *seeing Him for himself* are wretchedly forced, if they be understood of any temporal deliverance, it is very plain he had no expectation of return to a prosperous condition in this world. He had just now said, that *his way was fenced up*, *v.* 8. and his *hope removed like a tree*, *v.* 10. Nay, and after this, he expressed his despair of any comfort in this life, *ch.* 23: 8, 9.—30: 23. So that we must necessarily understand him of the redemption of his soul from the power of the grave, and his reception to glory, which is spoken of, Ps. 49: 15. We have reason to think Job was just now under an extraordinary impulse of the blessed Spirit, which raised him above himself, gave him light, and utterance, even to his own surprise. And some observe, that, after this, we do not find him passionate and peevish, as before: this hope quieted his spirit, stilled the storm, and, having here cast an anchor within the veil, his mind was kept steady from this time forward.

I. Never did any thing come in more pertinently, or to better purpose, than Job's confession of faith, here. His friends reproached him as a hypocrite, and condemned him as a wicked man; but he appeals to his creed, to his faith, to his hope, and to his own conscience; which not only acquitted him from reigning sin, but comforted him with the expectation of a blessed resurrection: *these are not the words of him that has a devil. He appeals to the coming of the Redeemer*, even to Him to whom all judgment is committed, who, he knew, would right him. The consideration of God's day coming, will make it a *very small thing with us to be judged of man's judgment*. This was Job's cordial.

II. With what a solemn preface he introduces it, *v.* 23, 24. He breaks off his complaints abruptly, to triumph in his comforts; which he does, not only for his own satisfaction, but for the edification of others. Those now about him, he feared, would little regard what he said, and so it proved; he therefore wished it might be recorded for the generations to come. As if he had said, 'I own I have spoken many unadvised words, which I could wish might be forgotten, for they will neither do me credit, nor do others good. But I am now going to speak deliberately, and what I desire may be published to all the world, and preserved for the generations to come;' what Job here somewhat passionately wished for, God graciously granted him; his words are written, they are printed in God's book; so that wherever that book is read, there shall this be told for a memorial concerning Job; he believed, therefore he spake.

III. His confession itself; the words he would have written, *v.* 25—27.

1. He believes *the glory of the Redeemer*, and his own interest in Him; (*v.* 25.) *I know that my Redeemer liveth;* is in being, is my Life; shall stand at last, or the last, or at the latter day, on (or above) the earth; be raised up, or, be (at the latter day, i. e. in the fulness of time; the gospel-day is called *the last time*, because the last dispensation) on the earth: so it points at his incarnation; or, He shall be lifted up from the earth; (so it points at his crucifixion;) or, raised up out of the earth; so it is applicable to his resurrection; or, as we commonly understand it, At the end of time, He shall appear over the earth, for *He shall come in the clouds, and every eye shall see Him*, so close shall He come to this earth. He shall stand *upon the dust*, so the Word is; upon all his enemies, which shall be put as dust under his feet; and He shall triumph over them.

Observe, (1.) There is a Redeemer provided for fallen man, and Jesus Christ is that Redeemer. (2.) He is a living Redeemer, both almighty and eternal, and therefore able to save to the uttermost. *Of Him it is witnessed that He liveth*, Heb. 7: 8. Rev. 1: 18. We are dying, but He liveth, and hath assured us, that *because He lives, we shall live also*, John 14: 19. (3.) There are those that, through grace, have an interest in this Redeemer, and can, on good grounds, call Him theirs. When Job had lost all his wealth, and all his friends, yet he was not separated from Christ, nor cut off from his relation to Him. 'Still He is my Redeemer.' That next Kinsman adhered to him when all his

Verses 23—27.

The Spirit of God seems, at this time, to have powerfully operated on the mind of Job. The gloom and tempest of his soul were dispersed; and he afterwards discoursed with more serenity and resignation. At some times he had appeared ready to despair: but here he 'witnessed a good confession,' declared the soundness of his faith, and the assurance of his hope; and seemed to emerge from his temptations, in the extremity of his afflictions, even as the expiring Jesus, when the depth of his inward sufferings was over, exclaimed, 'It is finished,' and, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' (6:8—13. 9:14—21. 10:13—22. *Matt.* 26:36—39. 27:50.)—The word translated 'Redeemer,' signifies *a kinsman*, or *near relation*, to whom the redemption of captives, or of alienated estates, belonged by custom, even before the giving of the law. (*Lev.* 25:25—28. *Ruth* 4:1—8.) The promised Seed of the woman, who was to assume the nature of man, and be his Redeemer, was evidently intended. Job was assured that this Redeemer of sinners, who ransoms and restores to them their forfeited inheritance, was *his* Redeemer; he was conscious that he embraced the promise of his coming, and expected salvation through Him. He had no doubt that He was even at that time a *living* Redeemer: which accords to the words of Jesus, 'Before Abraham was, I AM.'—He believed also that 'He would stand at the latter day upon the earth;' that 'in the fulness of time,' He would appear as 'the Seed of the woman, to bruise the serpent's head,' while his 'own heel would be crushed;' that after his resurrection He would stand up as the 'First-fruits of them that sleep' in the dust of the earth; and that, at the last day, He would appear as the Judge of the world, to raise the dead, to destroy this earth, and to complete the redemption of his people.—As to Job himself, he should be raised again from the dead, and behold his God and Savior. Him he should certainly behold 'for himself,' as his Portion and Felicity; not only as the Object of mental contemplation, but with his own eyes, in his own body raised from the dead, and not in another. All this he firmly believed and assuredly hoped for, though at present his reins, or vitals, were consumed within him by disease, and he despaired of recovery in this world.—Other interpretations have been given of this extraordinary testimony; but none that will bear comparison with this most obvious explanation of the original.—The old translation of two vs. is very literal, and worthy of notice: 'For I am sure that my Redeemer liveth, and he shall stand at last upon the earth: and though after my skin, *worms* shall destroy this *body:* yet shall I see God in my flesh.' The last clause indeed may either refer to the Redeemer's incarnation, or to his own future resurrection, or to both. SCOTT.

(24.) An evident allusion to the carving on stone, so ancient in Egypt. 'Some render "with a pen of iron or lead," but lead is too soft to carve with.' ROSENM. But the sculptures in Egypt show that the figures to be drawn, were first designed and sketched out with red lead, by the artist, these outlines were then painted by the sculptor, who submitted his lines to the correction of the artist, after which the sculptor cut them in the rock. See *Wilkinson*. May not Job allude to this? Iron was known from the earliest times in Egypt, and steel, too, says *Wilkinson*, and the temper of their instruments enabled them to cut the hardest rocks. *Lead* is generally understood of leaves or tablets of lead, which were of very ancient use. See *Pliny*. '*Pausanias* states that, near Helicon, in Bœotia, "they showed him lead, near a fountain, on which were written the works of Hesiod, in great part destroyed by time." But understand rather *melted lead*, [poured into the chisellings,] by which the letters engraved in marble or other rock were rendered distinct. So *Castell:* "He who writes on stone first marks the stone with his style, and hollows out a cavity, then fills it, that it may last for ever."' ROSENM. ED.

(25.) *Redeemer.*] *Goel.* 'Vindex. 16:6.' See Num. 35:12, 19, 21. Deut. 19: 6, 12. &c. *Rosenm.* 'Redemptor.' *Jerome.* 'Vindicator.' *Peters, Stock.* 'The Everlasting.' *Sept.* 'Redeemer.' *Good. Boothr. Clarke*, &c. referring it to Christ. *Warburton, Kennicott*, &c. refer it only to a temporal deliverance; and commentators seem divided into classes, according to their theological views. The editor is constrained to adopt those, mainly, which give the passage a reference to the general resurrection, and the glorious appearance of the Savior and Judge of men. ED

(26.) *In my flesh shall I see God.* The construction of *beshari* (*my flesh*) with the prep. *min*, appears to militate against the opinion, that Job expressed his expectation of seeing *God in human nature*. He says, '*From* my flesh, &c.' I. e. 'My soul, residing again in my body, shall, *out of it*, behold God.' And he then mentions the eyes, which are, as it were, the windows of the body, and through which the soul views objects. SCOTT.

Worms.] 'Disease.' *Good.* 'But the opinion of the orientals, as expressed in their ancient and modern writings, is, that worms exist in the skin and in all parts of the body, and that they principally cause its destruction. They say the *life* is first destroyed by them, and afterwards the body. A man very ill will exclaim, "Ah! my body is but a nest for worms." Have not medical men of late discovered some such animalcules?' ROBERTS.

Verses 28, 29.

After this confident declaration of his faith and hope, Job again

the sword: for wrath *bringeth* the punishments of the sword, [e] that ye may know *there is* a judgment.

CHAP. XX.

Zophar, with eagerness and warmth, enlarges on the certain ruin and manifold calamities of the wicked, 1—29.

THEN answered [a] Zophar the Naamathite, and said,

2 Therefore do [b] my thoughts cause me to answer, [c] and for *this* * I make haste.

3 I have heard [d] the check of my reproach, and [d] the spirit of my understandi g causeth me to answer.

4 Knowest [f] thou *not* this of old, since [g] man was placed upon earth,

5 That [h] the triumphing of the wicked *is* † short, and [i] the joy of the hypocrite *but* for a moment?

6 Though [j] his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the ‡ clouds;

7 *Yet* he shall [k] perish for ever like his own dung: they which have seen him [l] shall say, Where *is* he?

8 He shall [m] fly away as a dream, and shall not be found: yea, he shall be chased away, as a vision of the night.

9 The [n] eye also other kindred forsook him, and he had the comfort of it. (4.) Our interest in the Redeemer is a thing that may be known; and, where it is known, it may be triumphed in, as sufficient to balance all our griefs. Observe with what an air of assurance he speaks, as one confident; *I know that my Redeemer lives.* His friends had often charged him with ignorance, or vain knowledge; but he knows enough, and knows to good purpose, who knows Christ to be his Redeemer. (5.) There will be a latter day, a last day, a day when *time shall be no more*, Rev. 10: 6. That is a day we are concerned to think of every day. (6.) Our Redeemer will, at that day, stand on the earth, or over the earth, to summon the dead out of their graves, and determine them to an unchangeable state, for to Him all judgment is committed. He shall stand, at the last, on the dust to which this earth will be reduced by the conflagration.

2. He believes the happiness of the redeemed, and his own title to that happiness; that, at Christ's second coming, believers shall be raised up in glory, and so made perfectly blessed in the vision and fruition of God; and this he believes with application to himself.

(1.) He counts on the corrupting of his body in the grave, and speaks of it with a holy carelessness and unconcernedness, *v.* 26. Christ's body saw not corruption, but ours must! And Job mentions this, that the glory of the resurrection he believed and hoped for, might shine the more bright. Note, It is good for us often to think, not only of the approaching death of our bodies, but of their destruction and dissolution in the grave; yet let not that discourage our hope of their resurrection, for the same power that made man's body at first, out of common dust, can raise it out of its own dust. This body, which we now take such care about, and make such provision for, will, in a little time, be destroyed; Even *my reins* (says Job) *shall be consumed within me;* (*v.* 27.) the innermost part of the body, which perhaps putrifies first.

(2.) He comforts himself with the hopes of happiness on the other side death and the grave; *After I shall awake*, (so the marg.) *though this body be destroyed, yet out of my flesh shall I see God.*

[1.] Soul and body shall come together again. Job speaks of seeing God with eyes of flesh; the same body that died shall rise again, a true body, but a glorified body, fit for the employments and entertainments of that world; and therefore a *spiritual body*, 1 Cor. 15: 44. Let us *therefore* glorify God with our bodies, because there is such a glory designed for them.

[2.] Job and God shall come together again; *In my flesh shall I see God*, i. e. the glorified Redeemer, who is God. *I shall see God in my flesh*, so some read it; the Son of God clothed with a body which will be visible even to eyes of flesh. Job now complained, he could not get a sight of God, (*ch.* 23: 8, 9.) but hopes to see Him shortly, never more to lose the sight, and that sight the more welcome after the present darkness and distance. Note, It is the blessedness of the blessed that they shall see God, shall see Him as He is, see Him face to face, and no longer through a glass darkly. See with what pleasure holy Job enlarges on this, *v.* 27. '*Whom I shall see for myself*,' i. e. 'see and enjoy, see to my own unspeakable comfort and satisfaction. I shall see Him as mine, as mine with an appropriating sight,' Rev. 21: 3. *God Himself shall be with them, and be their God*, they shall be *like Him, for they shall see Him as He is*, i. e. seeing for themselves, 1 John 3: 2. Mine eyes shall behold Him, and not another: 'He, and not another for Him, not a type or figure of Him, but He Himself.' Glorified saints are perfectly sure they are not imposed on. 'I, and not another for me, shall see Him. Though my flesh and body be consumed, yet I shall not need a proxy, I shall see Him with my own eyes.' This was what Job hoped for, and what he earnestly desired; which, some think, is the meaning of the last clause, *My reins are spent in my bosom*, i. e. 'All my desires are summed up and concluded in this; this will crown and complete them all; let me have this, and I shall have nothing more to desire; it is enough, it is all.'

IV. The application of this to his friends. His creed spake comfort to himself, but warning and terror to them that set themselves against him.

1. It was a word of caution to them, not to proceed and persist in their unkind usage, *v.* 28. Let this direct us, (1.) In our care for ourselves. We are all concerned to see to it, that the *root of the matter* be found in us. A living, quickening, commanding principle of grace in the heart: love to God and our brethren, faith in Christ, hatred of sin—these are the root of the matter, other things are but leaves in comparison with this; serious godliness is the one thing needful. (2.) In our conduct toward our brethren. We are to believe that many have the root of the matter in them, who are not in every thing of our mind, who have their follies, and weaknesses, and mistakes: and, to conclude [illegible] is at our peril if we persecute any such. We [illegible]e to him, that offends one of those little ones! God will resent and avenge it. Job and his friends differed in some notions concerning the methods of Providence, but they agreed in the root of the matter, the belief of another world, and therefore should not persecute one another for these differences.

2. It was a word of terror to them. Christ's second coming will be very dreadful to those that are found *smiting their fellow servants*, Matt. 24: 49. therefore, *v.* 29. '*Be ye afraid of the sword*, the flaming sword of God's justice, lest you make yourselves obnoxious to it.' Good men need to be frightened from sin by the terrors of the Almighty, particularly from the sin of rashly judging their brethren, Matt. 7: 1. Jam. 3: 1. Those that are peevish and passionate with their brethren, censorious of them, and malicious toward them, should know, not only that their wrath, whatever it pretends, works not the righteousness of God, but, (1.) They may expect to smart for it in this world; *it brings the punishments of the sword:* wrath leads to such crimes as expose men to the sword of the magistrate; however, God often takes vengeance for it, and those that showed no mercy, shall find no mercy. (2.) If they repent not, that will be an earnest of worse. By these you may know there is a judgment, not only a present government, but a future judgment, in which hard speeches must be accounted for.

CHAP. XX. One would have thought, such an excellent confession of faith as Job made in the close of the foregoing ch. should have satisfied his friends, or, at least, have mollified them; but they do not seem to have taken any notice of it; therefore Zophar here takes his turn, enters the lists

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

No true believer will, in any possible case, be left entirely comfortless. (*John* 14:18—20.) 'There is a Friend, who loveth at all times, and a Brother, who is born for adversity.' The long-expected Redeemer once 'stood upon the earth' in human nature, as our Surety, to ransom our souls by his precious blood; we are assured, that in heaven 'He ever liveth to make intercession for us;' and at the last day He will again appear, in glory, to raise the dead and to judge the world. At that solemn period all his enemies shall weep and wail because of Him; but his people, raised up incorruptible, immortal, and glorious, shall see Him as their God and Savior, *for themselves*, in their own persons, and for their complete felicity; being made like Him, and admitted to be for ever with Him. Let us then give diligence, that we may be assured He is *our* Redeemer; and that we shall be 'numbered with his saints in glory everlasting.' SCOTT.

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c Ps. 58:10,11. Ec. 11:9. Matt. 7:1,2. Jam. 4:11,12.
a 2:11. 11:1. 42:9.
b 3. 4:2. 13:19. 32:13—20 Ps. 39: 2,3. Jer. 20:9. Rom. 10:2.
c Ps. 31:22. 116:11. Prov. 14:29. 29: 20. Ec. 7:9. Mark 6:25. Jam. 1:19.
* Heb. *my haste is in me.*
d 19:29
e 2. 27:11. 33:3. Ps. 49:3. 78:2—5.
f 8:8,9. 15:10. 32:7.
g Gen. 1:28. 9:1—3. Ps. 115:16.
h 5:3 15:29—34. 18:5,6. 27:13—23. Ec. 15:9,10. Judg. 16:21—30. Esth. 5:11,12. 7:10. Ps. 73:18—20. Acts 12:22,23.
† Heb. *from near.*
i 8:19. 27:8. Matt. 13:20,21. Gal. 6: 4. Jam. 4:16.
j Gen. 11:4. Is. 14:13,14. Dan. 4:11, 22. Am. 9:2. Ob. 3,4. Matt. 11:23.
‡ Heb. *cloud.*
k 1 K. 14:10. 2 K. 9:37. Ps. 83:10. Jer. 8:2.
l 14:10.
m Ps. 73:20. 90:5. Is. 29:7,8.
n 7. 7:8,10. 8:18. 27:23. Ps. 37:10. 103:15,16.

which saw him shall *see him* no more; neither shall his place any more behold him.

10 * His children shall [o] seek to please the poor, and [p] his hands shall restore their goods.

11 His [q] bones are full *of the sin* of his youth, [r] which shall lie down with him in the dust.

12 Though [s] wickedness be sweet in his mouth, *though* [t] he hide it under his tongue;

13 *Though* he [u] spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still † within his mouth:

14 *Yet* [v] his meat in his bowels is turned, *it is* [x] the gall of asps within him.

15 He hath [y] swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his belly.

16 He shall suck the poison of asps: [z] the viper's tongue shall slay him.

17 He [a] shall not see [b] the rivers, the ‡ floods, the brooks [c] of honey and butter.

18 That which he labored for [d] shall he restore, and shall not * swallow *it* down: according to § his substance *shall* the restitution *be*, [e] and he shall not rejoice *therein*.

19 Because [f] he hath ‖ oppressed *and* hath forsaken the poor; *because* [h] he hath violently taken away an house which he builded not;

20 Surely [i] he shall not ¶ feel quietness in his belly, he shall not save of that which he desired.

21 There shall ** none of his meat [k] be left; therefore shall no man look for his goods.

22 In [l] the fulness of his sufficiency he shall

with Job, and attacks him with as much vehemence as before. His preface is short, but hot; his discourse long, and all on one subject, the same Bildad was large upon, (ch. 18.) the certain misery and ruin of wicked people. He asserts it in general, and proves it by many instances—That he should have a diseased body, a troubled conscience, a ruined estate, a beggared family, an infamous name, and he himself perish under the weight of divine wrath. All this is most curiously described here in lofty expressions and lively similitudes; and it often proves true in this world, and always in another, without repentance. But the great mistake was, (and common to him with the rest,) he imagined God never varied from this method, and therefore Job was, without doubt, a very bad man, though it did not appear he was, any other way than by his infelicity.

V. 1—22. The instances here given of the miserable condition of the wicked man in this world, are expressed with great fulness and fluency of language, and the same thing returned to again, and repeated in other words. Let us reduce the particulars to their proper heads; and observe,

I. What his wickedness is.

1. The lusts of the flesh, here called *the sins of his youth*, *v.* 11. for those are the sins which, at that age, people are most tempted to. Forbidden pleasures of sense are said to be *sweet in his mouth*, *v.* 12. he keeps it still within his mouth, (*v.* 13.) he will never part with that for spiritual and divine pleasures, for which he has no relish, nor affection. It denotes both his obstinate persisting in his sin, (he spares when he should kill and mortify it, forsakes it not, but goes on frowardly in it,) and also his re-acting of his sin, by revolving it, and remembering it with pleasure, as that adulterous woman, Ezek. 23: 19. Or, it denotes his industrious concealment of his beloved lust: being a hypocrite, to save the credit of his profession, he has secret haunts of sin; but He who knows what is in the heart, knows what is under the tongue too, and will discover it shortly.

2. The love of the world and the wealth of it. See here, (1.) How greedy he is of it, *v.* 15. still crying, 'Give, give.' It is that he sets his heart upon, *v.* 20. (2.) What pains he takes for it; it is that he labored for, *v.* 18. *right or wrong*, to be rich. [Notes, Ex. 20: 17. *latter part.*] We must *labor*, not *to be rich*, (Prov. 23: 4.) but to be charitable, *that we may have to give*, (Eph. 4: 28.) not to spend. (3.) What great things he promises himself from it, *v.* 17. his being disappointed of them supposes he had flattered himself with the hopes of them: he expected rivers of sensual delights.

3. Violence, and oppression, and injustice, to his poor neighbors, *v.* 19. This was the sin of the giants of the old world, and a sin that, as much as any other, brings God's judgments on nations and families. It is charged on this wicked man, (1.) That he has forsaken the poor, taken no care of them, showed no kindness to them, nor made any provision for them; perhaps he gave alms like the Pharisees, to gain a reputation; but, when he had served his turn with it, he left it off: those who do good, but not from a good principle, though they may abound in it, will not abide in it. (2.) That he has oppressed them, crushed them, taken all advantages against them: to enrich himself, he has made the poor poorer. (3.) That he has violently taken away their houses, which he had no right to, as Ahab Naboth's vineyard.

II. His punishment.

1. Disappointed expectations, *v.* 17. The world is not that to those who love, court, and admire it, which they fancy it will be. The enjoyment sinks far below the raised expectation.

2. He shall be diseased and distempered in his body; and how little comfort a man has in riches, if he has not health! what real happiness can he enjoy, when *his bones are full of the sins of his youth*, (*v.* 11.) i. e. of the effects of those sins? But can he get no ease, no relief? No, he is likely to carry his pains and diseases with him to the grave, or rather, they are likely to carry him thither, and so the sins of his youth shall *lie down with him in the dust*. The sin of sinners follows them to the other side death.

3. He has not that ease in his own mind that people think he has, but is continually troubled, *v.* 20. Let none expect to enjoy that comfortably which they have gotten unjustly. The unquietness of his mind arises, (1.) From his conscience looking back, and filling him with the fear of the wrath of God against him, for his wickedness. Even that wickedness which was sweet in the commission, when it is reviewed, fills him with horror and vexation, *v.* 14. Such a thing is sin; it is turned into the gall of asps, than which nothing is more bitter, the poison of asps, (*v.* 16.) than which nothing more fatal, and so it will be to him; so will all unlawful gains be. The fawning tongue will prove the viper's tongue. All the charming graces thought to be in sin, when conscience is awakened, will turn into so many raging furies. (2.) From his cares looking forward, *v.* 22. When he thinks himself most happy, and most sure of the continuance of his happiness, he shall be in straits, i. e. shall think himself so, through the anxieties and perplexities of his own mind, as that rich man who, when his ground brought forth plentifully, cried out, *what shall I do?* Luke 12: 17.

4. He shall be dispossessed of his estate; that shall sink and dwindle away to nothing, so that he shall not rejoice therein, *v.* 18. He shall not only never rejoice truly, but not long rejoice at all.

(1.) What he has unjustly swallowed, he shall be compelled to disgorge, *v.* 15. Or, if he do not himself refund what he has violently taken away, God shall, by his providence, force him to it, and bring it about, one way or other, that ill-gotten goods shall return to the right owners, *v.* 10. *His children shall seek to please the poor*, while his own hands shall restore them their goods with shame, *v.* 18. To be made to restore what was unjustly gotten, by the sanctifying grace of God, as Zaccheus was, is a great mercy; he voluntarily and cheerfully restored four-fold, and yet had a great deal left to *give to the poor*. But to be forced to restore, as Judas was, merely by the horrors of a despairing conscience, has none of that benefit and comfort attending it; he *threw down the pieces of silver, and went and hanged himself*.

(2.) He shall be stripped of all he has, and become a beggar. But though the innocent, whom he has wronged, have forgiven him, and will make no reprisals, divine justice will, and often makes the wicked to avenge the quarrel of the righteous, and squeezes and crushes one bad man by the hand of another upon him. Thus when he is plucked on all sides, he shall not save of that which he desired, *v.* 20. There shall none of his meat be left, *v.* 21. All his neighbors and relations shall look upon him to be in such bad circumstances,

* Or, *The poor shall oppress his children.* Prov. 28:3.
o Ps. 109:10.
p 18. Ex. 12:36. 22:1,3,9. 2 Sam. 12:6. Prov. 6:31. Luke 19:8.
q 13:26. 19:20. Ps. 25:7. Prov. 5:11—13,22,23. Ez. 32:27.
r 21:26. Prov. 14:32. Ez. 24:13. John 8:21,24. Acts 1:25.
s 15:16. Gen. 3:6. Prov. 9:17,18. 20: 17. Ec. 11:9.
t Ps. 10:7. 109:17,18.
u Matt. 5:29,30. Mark 9:43—49. Rom. 8:13.
† Heb. *in the midst of his palate.*
v 2 Sam. 11:2—5. 12:10,11. Ps. 32:3, 4. 38:1—3. 51:8,9. Prov. 1:31. 23: 20,21,29—35. Jer. 2:19. Mal. 2:2.
x 16. Deut. 32:24. Rom. 3:13.
y Prov. 23:8. Matt. 27:3,4.
z Is. 30:6. Matt. 3:7. Acts 28:3—6.
a Num. 14:23. 2 K. 7:2. Jer. 17:6—8. Luke 16:24.
b Ps. 36:8,9. Is. 41:17. Rev. 22:1.
‡ Or, *streaming brooks.*
c Deut. 32:13,14. 2 Sam. 17:29. Ps. 81:16. Is. 7:15,22.
d See on 10,15.
e 5. Prov. 1:12. Jer. 51:34,44. Lam. 2:16. Hos. 8:7,8. Am. 8:4. Matt. 23:14,24.
§ Heb. *the substance of his exchange.*
f 31:25,29. Is. 24:7—11. Jer. 11:15,16. 22:13,17. Ez. 7:12. Hos. 9:1. Jam. 4:8,9.
g 21:27,28. 22:6. 24:2—12. 31:13—22,38,39. 35:9. 1 Sam. 12:3,4. Ps. 10:18. 12:5. Prov. 14:31. 22:22,23. Ec. 4:1. 5:8. Is. 22:29. Am. 4:1—3. Jam. 2:6,13. 5:4.
‖ Heb. *crushed.* Deut. 28:33. Lam. 3: 34.
h 18:15. 24:2. 1 K. 21:19. Is. 5:7,8. Mic. 2:2,9.
i Ec. 5:13,14. Is. 57:20,21.
¶ Heb. *know.*
** Or, *he none left for his meat.* 18:19.
k Jer. 17:11. Luke 16:24,25.
l 15:29. 18:7. Ps. 39:5. Ec. 2:18—20. Rev. 18:7.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX. V. 14. *Asps.*] 'The true asp of the ancients seems to be entirely unknown. It is frequently mentioned by ancient writers; but in such a careless manner, that it is impossible to ascertain what species of serpent it is, with precision. In the Eng. version the word is uniformly used for the Heb. *phtn*, the *coluber Raetaen* of *Forskal.*' Prof. ROBINSON.

be in straits: [m] every hand of the * wicked shall come upon him.

23 *When* [n] he is about to fill his belly, *God* shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall [o] rain *it* upon him while he is eating.

24 He shall [p] flee from the iron weapon, *and* [q] the bow of steel shall [r] strike him through.

25 It is [s] drawn, and cometh out of the body; yea, the glittering sword cometh out of his gall: [t] terrors *are* upon him.

26 All [u] darkness *shall be* hid in his secret places: [v] a fire not blown shall consume him, [x] it shall go ill with him that is left in his tabernacle.

27 The [y] heaven shall reveal his iniquity; and [z] the earth shall rise up against him.

28 The [a] increase of his house shall depart, [b] *and his goods* shall flow away in the day of his wrath.

29 This *is* [c] the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage † appointed unto him by God.

CHAP. XXI.

Job entreats a patient hearing, because of his singular calamities, 1—6. He shows that wicked men sometimes so prosper as to grow bold in presumption, 7—16. Yet that they at length fall into destruction, 17—22. And that the dealings of God with them in life and death are greatly varied, as their judgment is deferred to the day of wrath, 23—34.

BUT Job answered and said,

2 [a] Hear diligently my speech, and [b] let this be your consolations.

3 Suffer me [c] that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, [d] mock on

4 As for me, [e] *is* my complaint to man? and [f] if *it were so*, why that, when he is dead, no man shall look for his goods, none of his kindred shall expect to be a penny the better for him, nor be willing to take out letters of administration for what he leaves behind him. In all this Zophar reflects on Job, who had lost all, and was reduced to the last extremity.

V 23—29. Zophar, having described the many embarrassments and vexations which commonly attend the wicked practices of oppressors and cruel men, here comes to show their utter ruin at last.

1. Their ruin will take its rise from God's wrath and vengeance, *v.* 23. Every word here speaks terror. It is not only the *justice* of God, that is engaged against them, but his *wrath*, the deep resentment of provocations given to Himself: it is *the fury of his wrath*, incensed to the highest degree; it is cast upon him with force and fierceness; rained upon him in abundance; like the fire and brimstone on Sodom, to which the psalmist also refers, Ps. 11: 6. There is no fence against this, but in Christ, who is the only Covert from the storm and tempest, Isa. 32: 2. This wrath shall be cast on him, when he is just going to glut himself with what he has gotten, and promising himself abundant satisfaction in it; as the ruin of the old world and Sodom came, when they were in the depth of their security, and the height of their sensuality, as Christ observes, Luke 17: 26, &c. Perhaps Zophar here reflects on the death of Job's children, when they were eating and drinking.

2. Their ruin will be inevitable, and there will be no possibility of escaping it, *v.* 24. Flight argues guilt: he will not humble himself under the judgments of God, nor seek means to make his peace with Him; all his care is, to escape the vengeance that pursues him, but in vain: if he escape the sword, yet the bow of steel shall strike him through. God has weapons of all sorts, a sword for those that think to fight it out with Him by their strength, and a bow for those that think to avoid Him by their craft. See Isa. 24: 17, 18. Jer. 48: 43, 44. He that is marked for ruin, though he may escape one judgment, will find another ready for him.

3. It will be a total, terrible, ruin. When the dart that has struck him through, comes to be drawn out of his body, O what terrors are upon him! How strong are the convulsions, how violent are the dying agonies! How terrible are the arrests of death to a wicked man!

4. Sometimes it is a ruin that comes on him insensibly, *v.* 26. He is wrapped up in a hidden darkness: utter darkness hid in his secret place, whither he is retreated, and where he hopes to shelter himself; he never retires into his own conscience, but he finds himself in the dark, and utterly at a loss. The fire he is consumed by is a consumption every body sees the effect of, but nobody sees the cause of; the gourd is withered, but the worm at the root is out of sight. When the fuel is very combustible, the fire needs no blowing, and that is his case; he is ripe for ruin; *the proud, and they that do wickedly, shall be stubble*, Mal. 4: 1. An unquenchable fire shall consume him, so some read it; and that is certainly true of hell-fire.

5. It is a ruin, not only to himself, but to his family. The curse shall reach him *that is left in his tabernacle*, who shall be cut off perhaps by the same grievous disease; there is an entail of wrath on the family, which will destroy both his heirs and his inheritance, *v.* 28. Numerous and growing families, if wicked and vile, are soon reduced, dispersed, and extirpated, by the judgments of God.

6. It is a ruin which will manifestly appear to be just and righteous, and what he has brought on himself by his own wickedness, *v.* 27. The God of heaven, who sees all the secret wickedness of the wicked, will, by some means or other, let all the world know, what a base man he has been, that they may own the justice of God in all that is brought on him. The earth also shall rise up against him, both to discover his wickedness, and to avenge it. Isa. 26: 21. If the God of heaven and earth be his enemy, neither heaven nor earth will show him any kindness, but all the hosts of both are, and will be, at war with him.

Lastly, Zophar concludes like an orator, *v.* 29. *This is the portion of a wicked man from God;* it is allotted him, it is designed him as his portion. He will have it at last, as a child has his portion, and he will have it for a perpetuity, it is what he must abide by: *this is the heritage of his decree from God;* it is the settled rule of his judgment, and fair warning is given of it. *O wicked man, thou shalt surely die!* Though impenitent sinners do not always fall under such temporal judgments as are here described, (therein Zophar had mistaken,) yet the wrath of God abides on them, and they are made miserable by spiritual judgments, which are much worse, their consciences being either, on the one hand, a terror to them, and then they are in continual amazement, or, on the other hand, seared and silenced, and then they are given up to a reprobate sense, and bound over to eternal ruin. Never was any doctrine better explained, or worse applied, than this by Zophar, who intended by all this to prove Job a hypocrite. Let us receive the good explication, and make a better application, for warning to ourselves, to stand in awe, and not to sin.

CHAP. XXI. V. 1—6. Here Job, in his reply to Zophar's discourse, complains less of his own miseries, than he had done in his former dis-

m 1:15,17. 16:11. 2 K. 24:2. Is. 10:6.
* Or, *troublesome.* 3:17.
n Num. 11:33. Ps. 73:30,31. Mal. 2: 2. Luke 12:17—20.
o Gen. 19:24. Ex. 9:23. Ps. 11:6. Is. 21:4.
p 1 K. 20:30. Is. 24:18. Jer. 48:43,44. Am. 5:19. 9:1—3.
q 2 Sam. 22:35.
r Prov. 7:23.
s 16:13. Deut. 32:41. 2 Sam. 18:14. Ps. 7:12,13.
t 6:4. 15:21. 18:11. 27:20. Ps. 73: 19. 88:15. Jer. 20:3,4. 2 Cor. 5:11.
u 18:5,6. Is. 8:22. Matt. 8:12. Jude 13.
v Is. 21:9. 120:4. Is. 30:33. Matt. 3:12.
x 18:19. Ps. 109:9—15. Is. 14:20—22.
y Ps. 44:20,21. Jer. 29:23. Mal. 3:5. Luke 12:2,3. Rom. 2:16. 1 Cor. 4:5.
z 16:18. 18:18. Is. 26:21.
a 10,18—22. 5:5. 27:14—19. 2 K. 20: 17. Rev. 18:17.
b Prov. 11:4. Zeph. 1:18. Matt. 16: 26. Jam. 5:1—3.
c 18:21. 27:13. 31:3. Deut. 29:20—28. Ps. 11:5,6. Matt. 24:51.
† Heb. *of his decree from God.* Lam. 3:38.
a 13:3,4. 18:2. 33:1,31—33. 34:2. Judg. 9:7. Is. 55:2. Heb. 2:1.
b 15:11. 16:2.
c 13:13. 33:31—33.
d 12:4,5. 13:9. 16:10,20. 17:2.
e 7:11—21. 10:1,2. 1 Sam. 1:16. Ps. 22:1—3. 77:3—9. 102: *title.* 142:2, 3. Matt. 26:38,39.
f 2 K. 6:26,27. Ps. 42:11.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They are frequently the most forward to dispute, who are most evidently in the wrong. We are pleased with our own thoughts, as with our own children; and fancy that others will equally admire them. Thus we are led to make indecent haste to speak, lest we should lose the credit and gratification of our pertinent observations; and lest others should lose the benefit of them. In this eagerness we consider each 'check' as a *reproach*, and every *effusion of passion* is esteemed a *demonstration*. But others generally judge very differently: nay, we ourselves can seldom reflect afterwards on such debates, without shame and remorse. It is very difficult for men of warm passions entirely to repress this unbecoming tendency: but watchfulness and prayer will do great things, in a course of time: and we may profit by observing our own and others' errors, and by the rebukes and corrections of our Heavenly Father.—Some kinds of wickedness generally ruin men's constitutions, if they are not cut off before they entail pain and disease on their old age, which carries them down to the grave; and the pleasures and gains of sin, like drinking sweet poison, or like the lulling venom of the asp, terminate in remorse, in anguish, and in ruin. A curse from God often corrodes the oppressor's abundance: he hath no enjoyment of it, and suffers none of those connected with him to have any ease or pleasure; and very often it is torn from him in an awful and sudden manner. 'There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked.' (*Is.* 48:20—22. 57:20,21.)—But what are all weapons of iron and steel; yea, what is darkness or consuming fire, compared with the eternal vengeance of the Almighty, which is the heritage appointed unto the wicked in the world to come? SCOTT.

Verse 24.

Weapon.] *Gesheg.* Sept. *hand*, Syr. and Arab. cuspis, (*spear,*) Chal. *arma*, and so the Vulg. *Steel.*] *Nechoshath.* Note, and cuts, 2 Sam. 22:35. Ex. 17:10. All the ancient versions have *brazen* bow. But *steel, Wilkinson* concludes, from the *blue color* of the instruments on the monuments, was very early known to the Egyptians. ED.

should not my spirit be * troubled?

5 † Mark me, and [g] be astonished, and [h] lay *your* hand upon *your* mouth.

6 Even [i] when I remember, I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh.

7 ¶ [k] Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are [l] mighty in power?

8 Their [m] seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes.

9 Their houses *are* ‡ safe from fear, neither *is* [n] the rod of God upon them.

10 Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; [o] their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf.

11 They [p] send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance.

12 They [q] take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ.

13 They [r] spend their days in § wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.

14 Therefore [s] they say unto God, Depart from us; [t] for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.

15 What [u] *is* the Almighty, that we should serve him? and [x] what profit should we have, [y] if we pray unto him?

16 Lo [z] their good *is* not in their hand: [a] the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

17 How [b] oft is the ‖ candle of the wicked put out? and *how oft* cometh their destruction upon them? *God* [c] distributeth sorrows in his anger.

18 They are [d] as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm [e] carrieth away.

19 God [f] layeth up his ** iniquity [g] for his children: [h] he rewardeth courses, and comes closer to the general question betwixt him and his friends.

1. What he entreats is very fair, that they would not break in upon him, (*v.* 3.) as Zophar, in the midst of his discourse. He entreats they would hear (*v.* 2.) as persons willing to understand, and, if under a mistake, to have it rectified; and that they would *mark him;* (*v.* 5.) for we may as well not hear, as not heed what we hear.

2. They came to comfort him, (*v.* 2.) If you have no other comforts to administer to me, yet give me a patient hearing, and that shall pass for your consolations. Or, 'It will be a consolation to yourselves, in the reflection, to have dealt tenderly with your afflicted friend, and not harshly.' 'If you will but give me a fair hearing, mock on if you can, but I believe I shall say that which will change your note, and make you pity me, rather than mock me.' 'If my complaint were to men, my spirit would be troubled, for they would not regard me, nor rightly understand me; but my complaint is to God, who will suffer me to speak, though you will not.' 'I would be sad if God should deal as unkindly with us as our friends sometimes do.

3. There was that in his case, which was very surprising and astonishing, and therefore both needed and deserved their most serious consideration. It was not a common case, but a very extraordinary one. 'Instead of expounding my troubles, you should awfully adore the unsearchable mysteries of Providence, in afflicting one thus, of whom you know no evil; you should therefore silently wait the issue, and judge nothing before the time,' *ch.* 17: 8.

V. 7—16. I. All Job's three friends, in their last discourses, had been very large in describing the miserable condition of a wicked man in this world; 'It is true,' says Job, 'remarkable judgments are sometimes brought on notorious sinners, but not always; sometimes, though they are hardened in their wickedness by their prosperity, yet they are still suffered to prosper.' It is worth while to inquire into the reasons of the outward prosperity of wicked people. It is because the measure of their iniquities is not full: but the chief reason is, because God will make it to appear there is another world, which is the world of retribution, and not this.

1. Some observe, that v. 11. instances none of that care taken of their children, which Abraham took of his, to *teach them the way of the Lord*, Gen. 18: 19. Their children do not pray, or say their catechism, but dance, and sing, and *rejoice at the sound of the organ.* Sensual pleasures are all the delights of carnal people; and as men are themselves, so they breed their children.

2. *They spend their days*, all their days, in wealth, and never know want; (*v.* 13.) in mirth, and never know sadness; and at last, without any previous alarms to frighten them, without any anguish, or agony, *in a moment they go down to the grave*, and there are no bands in their death. If there were not another life after this, it were most desirable to die by the quickest, shortest strokes of death.

II. He shows how they abuse their prosperity, and are confirmed and hardened by it in their impiety, *v.* 14, 15. He mentions this, either, 1. To increase the difficulty. It is strange any wicked people should prosper thus, but especially that those should prosper, who are arrived at such a pitch of wickedness as openly to bid defiance to God Himself, and tell Him to his face they care not for Him; nay, use their very prosperity as a weapon to fight with Him, and yet are not disarmed. Or, 2. To lessen the difficulty, God suffers them to prosper; but let us not wonder at it, for *the prosperity of fools destroys them*, by hardening them in sin, Prov. 1: 32. Ps. 73: 7—9.

(1.) See how light these prospering sinners make of God and religion, as if, because they have so much of this world, they had no need to look after another.

(2.) See how ill affected they are to God and religion; they abandon them, and cast off the thoughts of them. The world is the portion they have chosen. Justly will God say to them, *Depart*, (Matt. 25: 41.) who have bid Him depart. They dread the knowledge of God, and of his will, and of their duty to Him. Observe how slightly they speak of God; *What is the Almighty?* As if He were a mere name, a mere cipher, or one they have nothing to do with, and that has nothing to do with them. How hardly they speak of religion! They call it a *service*, and mean a hard service. Observe also how highly they speak of themselves; '*That we should serve Him:* we, who are rich and mighty in power, shall we be subject and accountable to Him? No, we are lords,' Jer. 2: 31. All the world are for what they can get, *therefore* wisdom's merchandise is neglected, because they think there is nothing to be got by it; *It is vain to serve God*, Mal. 3: 13, 14. Praying will not pay debts, nor portion children; nay, perhaps serious godliness may hinder a man's preferment, and expose him to losses; and what then? But is nothing to be called gain but the wealth and honor of this world? If we obtain the favor of God, and spiritual and eternal blessings, we have no reason to complain of losing by our religion. But if we have not profit by prayer, it is our own fault, (Isa. 58: 3, 4.) it is because we ask amiss, Jam. 4: 3. Religion itself is not a vain thing; if it be so to us, we may thank ourselves for resting in the outside of it, Jam. 1: 26.

III. He shows their folly herein, and utterly disclaims all concurrence with them, *v.* 19. They did not get it without God, therefore they are very ungrateful to slight Him thus. Nor can they keep it without God, therefore they are very unwise to lose their interest in Him, and bid Him to depart from them. Some give this sense of it; 'Their good is in their barns and bags, hoarded up there; not in their hand, to do good to others with it; and then, what good does it do them?' 'Therefore,' says Job, '*the counsel of the wicked is far*

* Heb. *shortened.* Ex. 6:9. *marg.*
† Heb. *Look unto me.*
‡ 2:12. 17:8. 19:20,21.
§ 29:2. 40:4. Judg. 18:19. Ps. 39:9. Prov. 30:32. Am. 5:13. Mic. 7:16. Rom. 11:33.
‖ Ps. 77:3. 88:15. 119:120. Lam. 3: 19,20. Hab. 3:16.
** Heb. *peace from fear.* 15:21. 18: 11. Ps. 73:19. Is. 57:19—21.

a 9:34. Ps. 73:5.
b Ex. 23:26. Deut. 7:13,14. 28:11. Ps. 144:13,14. Ec. 2:1,2. Luke 12:16—21. 16:19.
c Ex. 20:5. Ps. 109:9, &c. Is. 14:21. Ex. 18:19,20. Matt. 23:31—35.
d Deut. 32:41. 2 Sam. 3:39. Ps. 54:5. Matt. 16:27. 2 Tim. 4:14. Rev. 18:6.
e Ex. 20:5. Deut. 5:9. Jer. 32:18. Lam. 5:7.
f Gen. 3:17. Ex. 9:16. Deut. 28:15—68. Josh. 7:24—26. 2 Sam. 12:10—14. Ps. 37:28. Prov. 13:22. Is. 14:20. Jer. 31:29,30. Ezek. 18:2—4.
g Ex. 20:5. Deut. 5:9. Jer. 32:18. Lam. 5:7.
h 18:5,6,18. Prov. 13:9. 20:20. 24: 20. Matt. 25:8.
‖ Or, *lamp.*
a 9:24. 12:6. Ps. 49:6,7. 52:5—7. Ec. 8:8. Luke 16:2,25.
b 18:5,6,18. Prov. 13:9. 20:20. 24: 20. Matt. 25:8.
c Ps. 32:10. 90:7—9. Luke 12:46. Rom. 2:8,9.
d 13:25. Ex. 15:7. Ps. 1:4. 35:5. 83: 13. Is. 5:24. 17:13. 29:5. 40:24. 41:15,16. Jer. 13:24. Hos. 13:3. Nah. 1:10. Matt. 3:12.
¶ Heb. *stealeth.*
e 22:24. Deut. 32:34. Matt. 6:19,20. Rom. 2:5.
** That is, *the punishment of his iniquity.* Gen. 4:7. Is. 53:4—8. 2 Cor. 5:21.
f Ex. 20:5. Ps. 109:9, &c. Is. 14:21. Ex. 18:19,20. Matt. 23:31—35.
g Deut. 32:41. 2 Sam. 3:39. Ps. 54:5. Matt. 16:27. 2 Tim. 4:14. Rev. 18:6.

NOTES.

Chap. XXI. V. 12. *Timbrel, harp, organ.*] Notes, Ps. 150:2—5. Ed.

Verse 15.

What profit, &c.] Perhaps this may allude to the contrast between the patriarchal worship, and surrounding idolatry. 'The heathen,' says *Roberts*, 'ask us sometimes, "When we go to our own temples, we have often fruit given to us; but when we come to yours, nothing is offered: give us something, and we will pray to Him." *Martin* states, doubtless in allusion to a heathen custom, that, when Rammohun Roy's monotheistic Hindoo chapel was dedicated to the pure primitive worship, 'about 500 Hindoos were present, and among them many Brahmins, who, after the prayers and singing of hymns had been concluded, *received gifts* in money to a considerable extent.' *Hist. of British Colonies.* Ed.

Verses 17—22.

All these verses may be read *interrogatively.*—It had been laid down as a general rule, that God almost uniformly visited wicked men, with

him, and [h] he shall know *it*.

20 His eyes shall [i] see his destruction, and he shall [k] drink the wrath of the Almighty.

21 For [l] what pleasure *hath* he in his house after him, when [m] the number of his months is cut off in the midst?

22 Shall *any* [n] teach God knowledge? seeing [o] he judgeth those that are high.

23 One dieth in his * full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet.

24 [p] His † breasts are full of milk, and his bones are [q] moistened with marrow.

25 And another dieth [r] in the bitterness of his soul, and [s] never eateth with pleasure.

26 They shall lie down [t] alike in the dust, and [u] the worms shall cover them.

27 Behold, [x] I know your thoughts, and the devices *which* [y] ye wrongfully imagine against me.

28 For ye say, [z] Where *is* the house of the prince? and where *are* the ‡ dwelling places of the wicked?

29 Have ye not asked them that [a] go by the way? and do ye not know their tokens?

30 That [b] the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to [c] the day of § wrath.

31 Who shall [d] declare his way to his face? and who shall [e] repay him *what* he hath done?

32 Yet shall [f] he be brought to the ‖ grave, and shall [g] remain in the tomb.

33 The clods of the valley shall be [s] sweet unto him, and [h] every man shall draw after him, as *there are* innumerable before him.

34 How then [i] comfort ye me in vain, [k] seeing in your answers there remaineth ** falsehood?

[h] Mal. 3:18.
[i] 27:19. Luke 16:23.
[k] Ps. 75:8. Is. 51:17. Jer. 25:15,16. 51:7. Rev. 14:10. 18:15.
[l] 14:21. Ec. 2:18,19. Luke 16:27,28.
[m] 14:5. Ps. 55:23. 102:24.
[n] 40:2. Is. 40:13,14. 45:9. Rom. 11: 34. 1 Cor. 2:16.
[o] 34:17—19. Ps. 113:5,6. Ec. 5:8. Is. 40:22,23. 1 Cor. 6:3. 2 Pet. 2:4. Jude 6. Rev. 20:1—3,12—15.
* Heb. *in his very perfection*, or, *the strength of his perfection*. 20:22,23. Ps. 49:17. 73:4,5. Luke 12:19—21.
[p] 15:27. Ps. 17:10.
† Or, *milk-pails*.
[q] Prov. 3:8.
[r] 3:20. 7:1. 9:18. 10:1. 2 Sam. 17: 8. *marg.* Prov. 14:10. Is. 38:15—17.
[s] 20:23. 1 K. 17:12. Ec. 6:2. Ez. 4: 16,17. 12:18.
[t] 3:18,19. 20:11. Ec. 9:2.
[u] 17:14. 19:26. Ps. 49:14. Is. 14:11.
[x] 4:8—11. 5:3—6. 8:3—6. 15:20,&c. 20:5,29. Luke 5:22.
[y] 32:3. 42:7. Ps. 59:4. 119:86. 1 Pet. 2:19.
[z] 20:7. Ps. 37:36. 52:5,6. Hab. 2:9—11. Zech. 5:4.
‡ Heb. *tent of the tabernacles*. Num. 16:26—34.
[a] Ps. 12:8.
[b] Prov. 10:4. Nah. 1:2. 2 Pet. 2:9,17. 3:7. Jude 13.
[c] 20:28. Ps. 110:5. Prov. 11:4. Zeph. 1:15. Rom. 2:5. Rev. 6:17.
§ Heb. *wraths*.
[d] 2 Sam. 12:7—12. 1 K. 21:19—24. Ps. 50:21. Jer. 2:33—35. Mark 6:18. Acts 24:25. Gal. 2:11.
[e] 19. 41:11. Deut. 7:10. Is. 59:18. Rom. 12:19. Jam. 2:13.
[f] Ps. 49:14. Ez. 32:21—32. Luke 16:22.
‖ Heb. *graves*.
[g] Heb. *watch in the heap*.
[s] 3:17,18.
[h] 30:23. Gen. 3:19. Ec. 1:4. 8:8. 12: 7. Heb. 9:27.
[i] 16:2.
[k] 13:4. 32:3. 42:7.
** Heb. *transgression*

1. Opposes this to what his friends had maintained concerning their certain ruin in this life. Perhaps there are as many instances of notorious sinners ending their days in pomp, as ending them in misery; which observation is sufficient to invalidate their arguments against Job, and to show that no certain judgment can be made of men's character by their outward condition.

2. He reconciles this to the holiness and justice of God; though wicked people prosper thus all their days, yet we are not therefore to think, that God will let their wickedness always go unpunished.

3. He resolves this difference, which Providence makes between one wicked man and another, into the wisdom and sovereignty of God, *v.* 22. Dare we arraign God's proceedings, or blame his conduct? He is the Judge of all the earth, therefore, no doubt, he shall do right, (Gen. 18: 25. Rom. 31: 6.) and those proceedings of his providence,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is not easy to obtain an attentive hearing from eager disputants. We might well yield to inward disquietude, if we had none to complain to in our distresses but man; or if the Lord were as severe against us, as our brethren sometimes are. But the true believer may speak to God at all times; and He will compassionately regard those complaints, and bear with those infirmities, which men disregard or condemn.—The afflictions of the faithful, compared with the prosperity of the wicked, have caused astonishment and discouragement to the servants of God in all ages. But we should adore the depths of those judgments which we cannot fathom: and the clear light of the Gospel, with the discoveries of the eternal world, will explain the difficulty, and show the wise designs of God in all these dispensations. Yet, under severe trials and temptations, the most established believer finds it as hard to apply his principles for immediate encouragement, as the most skilful mariner in a furious storm does to manage the vessel by the rules of navigation.—Prosperity adds strength to men's pride, and fuel to their lusts; and thus they grow hardened in presumptuous wickedness.—Alas, what numbers do we see in this land, where the light of the Gospel clearly shines, whose actions say unto God, 'Depart from us!' Their open and constant violation of his law, and their contempt of his gospel; their profanation of his day, and desertion of his ordinances; their families left without the least appearance of religion; their incessant course of riot or dissipation; their inordinate pursuit of wealth or power; their discourse, devoid of all reverence to the name, truths, or precepts of God, and full of levity and folly, if not of ribaldry and profaneness:—these things seem to 'say unto God, Depart from us; we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.' Such persons do not desire to think, hear, speak, or read about Him: they treat religion, as if it were beneath their rank, spirit, or genius: they do not deem the Almighty on any account entitled to their obedience or gratitude; and they suppose his service to be a mere drudgery, which can yield neither pleasure nor profit, and in neglecting which there can be no danger! Yet 'these prosper in the world, and have riches in possession.' And, though the Lord is sometimes 'known by the judgments that He executes;' yet they and their families are seldom visited by remarkable calamities. But as they have said to God, 'Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways:' they cannot reasonably expect any other event, than that He, the Fountain of felicity, and Judge of the world, should at last say to them, 'Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil, and his angels.' (*Matt.* 25:41—46.)

The wicked man *may* suffer many dreadful calamities on earth, and *must* have many peculiar terrors and vexations; he wants that peace of conscience, that confidence in God, and that hope of heaven, which the believer enjoys: prosperity increases his guilt, and strengthens his distempered passions: he has *all* his good things here, and nothing to look for hereafter, but unmixed and eternal misery, and may expect to be banished from the presence of God hereafter; while the righteous has *all* his evil here, and unmingled and eternal good in another world. SCOTT.

these and similar judgments: yet, in fact, instances in which they were clearly thus distinguished from others, but seldom occurred. And if they prospered till death, whether they lived till old age, or died in the vigor of life, the subsequent condition of their families would not affect them, either with pleasure or pain. Indeed, who shall presume to teach the Judge of the most exalted creatures, in what way He should administer his government? Or who shall presume to explain, or decide on, any of his dispensations, as if inconsistent with his justice or wisdom? SCOTT.

Verses 23—26.

The words translated, 'His breasts are full of milk,' (24) are differently interpreted. The word rendered *breasts* is not elsewhere used in the Hebrew; and some think it means *milk-pails*. But others, supposing it to coincide with the subsequent clause, thus translate the passage, 'His ribs, (sides, or intestines, *viscera*,) are full of fat.' Probably this is the true sense of the words. ID.

(24.) 'Of a man who is very rich, it is common to say, "His *chattues* (vessels) are full of milk." But of a good king or governor it is said, "He nourishes like the king, whose breasts are full of milk." "Yes, he so rules, that the breasts of the goddess of the earth are full of milk." ' *Roberts*. The act of nursing is often represented on the monuments of Egypt, as expressive of the maternity both of a queen and a goddess. See also coins with Diana's image, and Isa. 60:16. ED.

Verses 27—30.

Here Job brings the matter to an issue. (22:5—14. 24:1—20. 29: 12—17. 31:35—40. *Rom.* 2:4—6. 2 *Pet.* 2:4—9.) SCOTT.

(29.) *Those that go by the way.*] 'Transeuntes viam. Travellers; having, from wider observation, more knowledge and experience. The interrogation is here used for the imperative mood, as Ruth 2:8, &c. *Tokens.*] Their (that is, the travellers') evident examples and documents (observed by them) all over the earth, confirm the truth asserted.' ROSENM.

Verses 31—33.

None, except two, have been, or ever shall be, exempted from this common doom: so that it is evident, there is no exact discrimination between the righteous and the wicked, in the outward dispensations of Providence. (*Ec.* 4:1—3. 5:8. *Hab.* 1:2—4.) SCOTT. *Remain*, &c.] 'Think on providing his tomb.' ROSENM.

Verse 34.

Job concluded with inquiring, why his friends comforted him in vain, with the hopes of returning *worldly* prosperity, in case he repented and sought unto the Lord. For there was no truth in their system; nay, there was falsehood interwoven with all their answers, which rendered them inconclusive, and inapplicable to the subject. SCOTT.

CHAP. XXII.

Eliphaz shows that man's goodness cannot profit God, 1—4. He accuses Job of various crimes, which he supposes had brought on him his calamities, 5—14. He contrasts the doom of sinners visited by divine judgments, with the security of the righteous, 15—20. He exhorts Job to repent, and encourages him to hope for mercy, 21—30.

THEN Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

2 Can [a] a man be profitable unto God, * as [b] he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?

3 *Is it* [c] any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or *is it* gain *to him*, that [d] thou makest thy ways perfect?

4 Will he [e] reprove thee [f] for fear of thee? [g] will he enter with thee into judgment?

5 ¶ *Is* [h] not thy wickedness great? and [i] thine iniquities infinite?

6 For [k] thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, [l] and † stripped the naked of their clothing.

7 Thou hast [m] not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.

8 But [n] *as for* the ‡ mighty man, he had the earth; and the § honorable man dwelt in it.

9 Thou hast sent

a 35:6—8. Ps. 16:2. Luke 17:10.
* Or, *if he may be profitable*, doth his good *success* depend *thereon?*
b 21:15. Deut. 10:13. Prov. 3:13—18. 4:7—9. 9:12. Ec. 7:11,12. Matt. 5:29. Gal. 6:7,8.
c 1 Chr. 29:17. Ps. 147:10,11. Prov. 11:1,20. 12:22. 15:8. Mal. 2:17. Phil. 4:18.
d 23:10—12. Ps. 39:1. 119:3—6,59. Acts 24:16. 2 Cor. 7:1.
e Ps. 39:11. 76:6. 80:16. Rev. 3:19.
f 7:12.
g 9:19,32. 14:3. 16:21. 23:6,7. 34: 23. Ps. 130:3,4. 143:2. Ec. 12:14. Is. 3:14,15.
h 4:7—11. 11:14. 15:5,6,31—34. 21: 27. 32:3.
i Ps. 19:12. 40:12.
k 24:3,9,10. Ex. 22:26,27. Deut. 24: 10—13. Ez. 18:7,16. Am. 2:8.
l 24:10. 31:19,20.
† Heb. *stripped the clothes off the naked.*
m 31:17. Deut. 15:7—11. Ps. 112:9. Prov. 11:24,25. 19:17. Is. 58:7,10. Ez. 18:7,16. Matt. 25:42. Rom. 12: 20.
n 29:7—17. 31:34. 1 K. 21:11—15. Ps. 12:8. Mic. 7:3.
‡ Heb. *man of arm.*
§ Heb. *eminent*, or, *accepted for countenance.* 13:8.

which seemed to contradict one another, He can make, not only mutually to agree, but jointly to serve his own purposes.

The little difference there is between one wicked man's dying impenitent in peace and pomp, and another wicked man's dying so in pain and misery, when both will, at last, meet in hell, he illustrates by the little difference there is between one man's dying suddenly and another's dying slowly, when they will both meet shortly in the grave. So vast is the disproportion between time and eternity, that, if hell be the lot of every sinner at last, it makes little difference, if one goes singing thither, and another sighing.

V. 27—34. See, in these verses,

I. Job opposes the opinion of his friends, which he saw they still adhered to. 'I know your thoughts,' says Job, *v.* 27. 'I know you will not agree with me; for your judgments are tinctured and biassed by your piques and prejudices against me, and the devices you wrongfully imagine against my comfort and honor: and how can such men be convinced?'

Job's friends were ready to say, in answer to his discourse concerning the prosperity of the wicked, '*Where is the house of the prince?* (*v.* 28.) Where is Job's house, or the house of his eldest son, in which his children were feasting: inquire into the circumstances of Job's house and family, and then ask, *Where are the dwelling-places of the wicked?* and compare them together, and you will soon see, that Job's house is in the same predicament with the houses of tyrants and oppressors, and may therefore conclude that doubtless he was one.'

II. He lays down his own judgment to the contrary, and, for proof of it, appeals to the sentiments and observations of all mankind. So confident is he that he is in the right, that he is willing to refer the cause to the next man that comes by, *v.* 29. '*Have ye not asked them that go by the way*—any indifferent person? I say not, as Eliphaz, (*ch.* 5: 1.) To which of the *saints*—I ask, To which of *the children of men*, will you turn? Turn to which you will, you will find them all of my mind; that the punishment of sinners is designed more for the other world than for this, according to the prophecy of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, Jude 14. Do you not know the tokens of this truth, which all that have made any observations on the providences of God concerning mankind in this world, can furnish you with?' Ps. 92: 7. The sinner is here supposed,

1. To live in great power, so as to be not only *the terror of the mighty in the land of the living*, (Ez. 32: 27.) but the terror of the wise and good too, whom he keeps in such awe, that none dares declare his way to his face, *v.* 31.

2. To die, and be buried in great pomp and magnificence, *v.* 32, 33. He shall have a stately monument erected over him, he shall remain in the tomb. Perhaps it is meant of the embalming of his body, to preserve it, which was a piece of honor anciently done by the Egyptians to their great men. [Notes, 3: 14.—11: 14.] He shall *watch* in the tomb, so the word is, shall abide solitary and quiet there, as a watchman in his tower. *The clods of the valley shall be sweet to him;* there shall be as much done as can be with rich odors, to take off the noisomeness of the grave, as by lamps to set aside the darkness of it, which perhaps was referred to in the foregoing phrase of *watching in the tomb:* but it is all a jest; what is the light, or what the perfume, to a man that is dead? It shall be alleged, for the lessening of the disgrace of death, that it is the common lot; he has only yielded to fate, *v.* 33. as there is a plain track before, so there is a long train behind.

Lastly, From all this, Job infers the impertinency of their discourses, *v.* 34. Their foundation is rotten, and they went on a wrong hypothesis. Their building was therefore weak and tottering. 'You comfort me in vain.' Where there is not truth, there is little comfort to be expected.

CHAP. XXII. V. 1—4. Eliphaz here leads on a third attack upon Job, in which Bildad followed him, but Zophar drew back, and quitted the field. It was one of the unhappinesses of Job, as it is of many an honest man, to be misunderstood by his friends. He had spoken of the prosperity of wicked men in this world, as a mystery of Providence, but they took it for a reflection on Providence, as countenancing their wickedness; and reproached him accordingly. Eliphaz here insinuates that, because Job complained so much of his afflictions, he thought God was unjust in afflicting him; a strained *inuendo*, Job was far from thinking so. What Eliphaz says here, is therefore unjustly applied to Job, but in itself it is very true and good:

1. That when God does us good, it is not because He is indebted to us; if He were, there might be some color to say, when He afflicts us, 'He does not deal fairly with us:' but whoever pretends that he has by any meritorious action made God his debtor, let him prove this debt, and he shall be sure not to lose it, Rom. 11: 35. But Eliphaz here shows, that the righteousness and perfection of the best man in the world are no real benefit or advantage to God, and therefore cannot be thought to merit any thing from Him.

(1.) Man's piety is no *profit* to God, no gain, *v* 1, 2. If any thing could be so, it would be our piety. If that will not merit, surely nothing else will; as wit, learning, and worldly policy. Note, Our wisdom and piety are that by which we ourselves are, and are likely to be, great gainers. Eccl. 10: 10. 1 Tim. 4: 8. Prov. 9: 12. But can a man be thus profitable to God? No, for such is the perfection of God, that He cannot receive any benefit or advantage by men; and such the weakness and imperfection of man, that he cannot offer any benefit or advantage to God. We are undone, for ever undone, without God; but He is happy, for ever happy, without us. Is it any gain to Him, any real addition to his glory or wealth, if we make our way perfect? Suppose it were absolutely perfect, yet what is God the better? Much less when it is so far short of being perfect.

(2.) It is no *pleasure* to Him. God has indeed expressed Himself in his Word well pleased with the righteous; his countenance beholds them, and his delight is in them and their prayers; but all that adds nothing to the infinite satisfaction and complacency which the Eternal Mind has in itself. God can enjoy Himself without us, though we could have but little enjoyment of ourselves without our friends. This magnifies his condescension, in that, though our services be no real profit or pleasure to Him, yet He invites, encourages, and accepts, them.

2. That, when God restrains or rebukes us, it is not because He is in danger from us, or jealous of us, *v.* 4. '*Will He reprove thee for fear of thee?*'

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII. V. 1—4. Eliphaz still supposed Job to maintain that God favored the wicked; and therefore he addressed him the third time. He intended, in this introduction, to show that God, in all his appointments, acted out of pure love to justice, and was not influenced by interested or selfish affections. The Lord indeed approves and delights in holiness, because it is right in itself, and conducive to personal and social happiness; but not because He is any gainer by it. His justice therefore must be invariable and impartial; his rewards are the result of his love of good; and his punishments spring entirely from hatred of evil. (*Ps.* 16:2, 3. *Luke* 17:7—10.)—These are great truths, and were well understood by the disputants, though here rather incautiously stated: but Eliphaz and his associates, confounding this state of trial with that of future retribution, misapplied them to the case of Job; as if the justice of God could not be vindicated, unless he were proved to be a wicked man! SCOTT.

(2, 3.) No man considers that he *merits* any *reward* of God by the act of taking food, clothing himself, or obeying any natural law of his being; why then should he arrogate merit to himself for obeying any moral law of God, when the consequences will also be his own good simply? Each of these classes of effects on his own happiness may be called *rewards*, but it is simply in accommodation to man's way of talking of and with his fellows. ED.

Verses 5—14.

All have committed innumerable sins, in which there is an inconceivable degree of criminality: but Eliphaz did not mean such transgressions as were common to Job with other believers, or even with men in general; but flagrant iniquities and impieties, which he had cloaked with the mask of hypocrisy.—Some think, he meant that Job was blinded by his selfish prejudices, or judicially involved in mental darkness; or he would readily have perceived the reason of his calamities. SCOTT.

[illegible] widows away empty, and the [illegible] arms of the fatherless have been broken.

[illegible]

12 Is not God in the [illegible] of heaven? and, behold, the [illegible] height of the stars, how high they are!

13 And thou sayest, How doth God know? can he judge through the dark cloud?

14 Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of heaven.

15 Hast thou marked the old way, which wicked men have trodden?

16 Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflowed with a flood:

17 Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?

18 Yet he filled their houses with good things: but the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

19 The righteous see it, and are glad:

Satan indeed suggested to our first parents, that God forbade them the tree of knowledge, for fear of them, lest they should be as gods, and so become his rivals; but it was a base insinuation. God rebukes the good because He loves them, but He never rebukes the great because He fears them. He does not enter into judgment with men, i. e. pick a quarrel with them, and seek occasion against them, through fear they should eclipse his honor, or endanger his interest. Magistrates punish offenders for fear of them; Pharaoh oppressed Israel because he feared them; it was for fear that Herod slew the children of Bethlehem; that the Jews persecuted Christ and his apostles. But God does not, as they did, pervert justice for fear of any. See *ch.* 36: 5—8.

V. 5—14. Eliphaz and his companions had condemned Job, in general; but none of them had descended to particulars, until Eliphaz did it here, where he positively and expressly charges him with many high crimes, which if he had really been guilty of, they might well have justified themselves in their harsh censures of him. 'Come,' says Eliphaz, 'we have been too tender of Job; it is time to deal plainly with him; we have condemned him by parables, but that does not answer; he is not prevailed with to condemn himself; we must therefore plainly tell him, '*Thou art the man*, the tyrant, the oppressor, the atheist, we have been speaking of all this while. *Is not thy wickedness great?* Certainly it is, else thy troubles would not be so great. I appeal to thy own conscience; are not thine iniquities infinite, both in number and heinousness?' By infinite, he means his sins were more than could be counted, and more heinous than could be conceived. Sin, being committed against Infinite Majesty, has in it [infinite effects, as it were, and] a kind of infinite malignity. But when Eliphaz charges Job thus high, and ventures to descend to particulars too, laying to his charge that which he knew not, we may take occasion hence, 1. To be angry at those who unjustly censure and condemn their brethren. For aught I know, Eliphaz was here guilty of as great a sin, as the Sabeans and Chaldean robbers; for a man's good name is more precious than his wealth. It is against all the laws of justice, charity, and friendship, either to raise, or receive, calumnies, jealousies, and evil surmises, concerning others; and it is the more base and disingenuous, if we thus vex those that are in distress, and add to their affliction. Eliphaz could produce no instances of Job's guilt in any of the particulars that follow here, but seems resolved to calumniate boldly, and throw all the reproach he could on Job, not doubting but that some would cleave to him. 2. To pity those who are thus censured and condemned. Innocency itself will be no security against a false and foul tongue. Job, whom God Himself praised as the best man in the world, is here represented by one of his friends, and he a wise and good man too, as one of the greatest villains in nature. Let us not think it strange, if at any time we be thus blackened, but learn how to pass by evil report as well as good, and commit our cause, as Job did, to Him that judgeth righteously.

Let us see the particular articles of this charge.

I. He charges him with oppression and injustice; that, when he was in prosperity, he not only did no good with his wealth and power, but did a great deal of hurt with it. This was utterly false, as appears by the account Job gives of himself, *ch.* 29: 12. &c.) and the character God gave of him, *ch.* 1. And yet,

1. Eliphaz branches out this charge into divers particulars, with as much assurance as if he could call witnesses to prove on oath every article of it. He tells him, (1.) He had been cruel and unmerciful to the poor, *v.* 6, 7. contrary to the law of Moses. (Exod. 22: 26. Deut. 24: 13.) See Prov. 3: 27. 'Poor widows, who, while their husbands were living, troubled nobody, but now were forced to seek relief, thou hast sent away empty from thy doors with a sad heart, *v.* 9. and, worst of all, the arms of the fatherless have been broken; those that could help themselves but little, thou hast quite disabled to help themselves.' This is but insinuated; *The arms of the fatherless have been broken:* he does not say, '*Thou* hast broken them,' but he would have it understood so: and, if they be broken, and those who have power do not relieve them, they are chargeable with it. (2.) He had been partial to the rich and great, *v.* 8. '*As for the mighty man*, if he was guilty of any crime, he was never questioned for it; he had the earth, he dwelt in it: if he brought an action ever so unjustly, or if an action were ever so justly brought against him, yet he was sure to carry his cause in thy courts. The poor were not fed at thy door, while the rich were feasting at thy table.' Contrary to this is Christ's rule for hospitality; (Luke 14: 12—14.) and Solomon says, He *that gives to the rich shall come to poverty.*

2. He attributes all his present troubles to these supposed sins, *v.* 10, 11. Note, Those that have not showed mercy may justly be denied the comfortable hope of mercy; and then what can they expect but snares, and darkness, and continual fear?

II. He charges him with atheism, infidelity, and gross impiety; and thought this was at the bottom of his injustice and oppressiveness: he that did not fear God did not regard man. He would have it thought that Job was an Epicurean, who did indeed own the being of God, but denied his providence, and fancied that He confined Himself to the entertainments of the upper world, and never concerned Himself in the inhabitants and affairs of this. Bad men expel the fear of God out of their hearts, by banishing the eye of God out of the world; (Ezek. 8: 12.) and care not what they do, if they can but persuade themselves that God does not know. Eliphaz suspects Job had such a notion of God as this, because He is in the height of heaven, *v.* 12. But distance of place creates no difficulty to Him who is infinite, any more than distance of time to Him who is eternal. Or, That Job thinks it is therefore below Him, and a diminution to his glory, to take cognizance of this inferior part of the creation. This, too, is gross absurdity, as well as gross impiety, which Eliphaz here fathers on Job; for it supposes, that the administration of government is a burden and disparagement to the Supreme Governor; and that acts of justice and mercy were a toil to a mind infinitely wise, holy, and good.

V. 15—20. Eliphaz, having endeavored to convict Job, by setting his sins (as he thought) in order before him, here endeavors to awaken him to a sight and sense of his misery and danger, by reason of sin; and this he does, by comparing his case with that of the sinners of the old world, and the Sodomites, who, in comparison of the old world, were but a remnant, *v.* 16, 20. These two instances of the wrath of God against sin and sinners, are more than once put together, for warning to a careless world: as by our Savior, Luke 17: 26, &c. and the apostle, 2 Pet. 2: 5, 6. Note, There is an *old way which wicked men have trodden*, *v.* 15. Religion had but newly entered, when [illegible] immediately followed it: but though it is an [illegible]d

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(2.) *Iniquities infinite.*] What finite mind can conceive the consequences of a single sin, when committed not in time but for an eternity? Once committed it is done for ever! Is it too much then to call its guilt infinite? Iniquities which *crucified the Lord of glory!* See it explained. Ed.

[illegible] It is one of the 32 charities of the Hindoos, "to have water [illegible] for the weary traveller to drink." Hence, on the public roads, [illegible] of the houses in the principal streets, may be seen vessels of [illegible] for the use of all who pass. Water-s. A son of the editor, in [illegible] at Bengal, was ordered water, brought [illegible] a small vessel, by a Hindoo [illegible] from the path, and [illegible] a moment who stood at the well, to each of the [illegible] of their houses. This is only [illegible] of Mat. 10:42. Ed.

(12.) *Behold the height of the stars, how high they are!*] 'The distance of the fixed stars from us is literally immeasurable, entirely inconceivable. The most powerful telescopes cannot give them a sensible diameter; [i. e. they still appear through them but as a point of light!] Though we approach them by 40 (190?) millions of miles, (the diameter of the earth's orbit,), and recede from them as far, we can find no difference in them!' *Encyc. Am.* Though this was not known to the speaker, it *may help us* in forming our ideas of the Creator; so that they may be (so to speak) less infinitely inadequate. Ed.

Verses 15—20.

Eliphaz here evidently adverted to the general deluge. (*Gen.* 6:11, 12, 17. 7:10—23. *Matt.* 24:36—41.) This was well known; and, as

and [h] the innocent laugh them to scorn.

20 Whereas [i] our * substance is not cut down, but † the remnant of them [k] the fire consumeth.

21 ¶ [l] Acquaint now thyself with ‡ him, and [m] be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee.

22 [n] Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and [o] lay up his words in thine heart.

23 If thou [p] return to the Almighty, thou shalt be [q] built up, [r] thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.

24 Then shalt thou [s] lay up gold §as dust, and the *gold* of [t] Ophir as the stones of the brooks.

25 Yea, [u] the Almighty shall be thy ‖ Defence, and thou shalt have ¶ plenty of silver.

26 For then [x] shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt [y] lift up thy face unto God.

27 Thou shalt [z] make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt [a] pay thy vows.

28 Thou shalt also [b] decree a thing, and it shall be established unto

h 9:23. Ps. 52:6.
i 4:7. 8:3,4. 15:5,6. 20:18,19. 21:27, 28. Luke 13:1—5.
* Or, *estate.*
† Or, *their excellency.*
k 1:16. 20:26. Gen. 19:24. Luke 17: 29,30. 2 Pet. 2:6,7. 1 Chr. 28:9. John 17:3. 2 Cor. 4:6.
‡ That is, *God.*
m Is. 27:5. 57:19—21. Matt. 5:25. Acts 10:36. 2 Cor. 5:20. Eph. 2:14—17.
n Deut. 4:1,2. Prov. 2:1—9. 1 Thes. 4:1,2.
o 23:12. Deut. 6:6—9. Ps. 119:11. Prov. 4:4,21. Jer. 15:16. Matt. 12:35. 13: 52. Luke 2:19,51.
p 8:5,6. 11:13. Is. 55:6,7. Hos. 14:1, 2. Zech. 1:3. Acts 26:20.
q 12:14. Jer. 31:4. Col. 2:7. Jude 20.
r 11:14. 18:15. Josh. 7:13—16. Is. 33:15. Zech. 5:3,4.
s 1 K. 10:21. 2 Chr. 1:15. 9:10,27.
§ Or, *on the dust.*
t Gen. 10:29. 1 K. 9:28. 22:48. Ps. 45:9. Is. 13:12.
u Gen. 15:1. Ps. 18:2. 84:11. Is. 41: 10. Rom. 8:31.
‖ Or, *Gold.* Ps. 16:5,6. Is. 33:6. 2 Cor. 6:10. Jam. 2:5.
¶ Heb. *silver of strength.*
x 27:10. 34:9. Ps. 37:4. Cant. 2:3. Is. 58:14. Rom. 7:22.
y 11:15. Ps. 25:1. 86:4. 143:8. 1 John 3:20,21.
z Ps. 50:14,15. 66:18—20. 91:15. 116: 1. Is. 58:9. 1 John 5:14,15.
a Ps. 56:12,13. 66:13,14. 116:14. Ec. 5:4. Jon. 2:9.
b Ps. 20:4. 90:17. Lam. 3:37. Jam. 4:15.

way, a broad way, a tracked way, it is a dangerous way, and it leads to destruction; and it is good for us to *mark* it, that we may not dare to walk in it.

Eliphaz here puts Job in mind of it, perhaps in opposition to what he had said of the prosperity of the wicked; 'Thou canst find out here and there a single instance, it may be, of a wicked man ending his days in peace; but what is that to those two great instances of the final perdition of ungodly men—the drowning of the whole world, and the burning of Sodom?' In which he thinks Job may, as in a glass, see his own face.

Observe, 1. Their ruin, *v.* 16. *They were cut down out of time;* i. e. in the midst of their days, when, as man's time then went, many of them might, in the course of nature, have lived some hundreds of years longer, *out of time*, to be hurried into eternity; and their foundation, the earth on which they built themselves, and all their hopes, was *overflown with a flood.* Those who build on the sand, choose a foundation which will be *overflown*, when *the rains descend, and the floods come*, Matt. 7: 27.

2. Their sin, which brought that ruin, *v.* 17. Job had spoken of some who said, '*Depart from us*,' and yet prospered, *ch.* 21: 14. But these did not; (says Eliphaz;) they found, to their cost, what it was to set God at defiance. They said to God, *Depart from us;* and then, (so some,) *what could the Almighty do with them, but cut them off?* Those who will not submit to God's golden sceptre, must expect to be broken to pieces with his iron rod. Others make it to denote the injustice of their sin; But, *what hath the Almighty done against them?* What iniquity have they found in Him? or, Wherein has He wearied them? Mic. 6: 3. Jer. 2: 5. Others make it to denote the reason of their sin; They say unto God, *Depart*, asking *what the Almighty can do to them?* 'What has He done to oblige us? What can He do, in a way of wrath, to make us miserable, or, in a way of favor, to make us happy?' As they argue, Zeph. 1: 12. *The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil.* Eliphaz shows the absurdity of this in one word, and that is, calling God *The Almighty;* for, if He be so, what cannot He do? But it is not strange, if those cast off all religion, who neither dread God's wrath, nor desire his favor.

3. The aggravation of this sin; *Yet he had filled their houses with good things, v.* 18. Both those of the old world, and those of Sodom, had great plenty of all the delights of sense, Luke 17: 27. Many have their houses full of goods, but their hearts empty of grace, and thereby are marked for ruin.

4. The protestation Eliphaz makes against the principles and practices of those wicked people; *But the counsel of the wicked is far from me.* Job had said so, (*ch.* 21: 16.) and Eliphaz will not be behind. If they cannot agree in their own principles concerning God, yet they agree in renouncing the principles of those that live without God in the world. Note, Those that differ from each other in some matters of religion, and are engaged in disputes about them, yet ought unanimously and vigorously to appear against atheism and irreligion, and to take great care that their disputes do not hinder either their vigor or unanimity, in that common cause of God, that righteous cause.

5. The pleasure and satisfaction which the righteous shall have in this. (1.) In seeing the *wicked destroyed, v.* 19. They shall see it, i. e. observe, and notice it; (Hos. 14: 9.) and they shall be glad, not to see their fellow creatures miserable, or any secular turn of their own served, or point gained, but to see God glorified, the Word of God fulfilled, the power of oppressors broken, and thereby the oppressed relieved; to see sin shamed, atheists and infidels confounded, and fair warning given to all others to shun such wicked courses. Nay, they shall *laugh them to scorn*, i. e. they justly might do it; they shall do it, as God does it, in a holy manner, Ps. 2: 4. Prov. 1: 26. They shall take occasion thence to expose the folly of sinners, and show how ridiculous their principles are, though they call themselves *wits.* Ps. 52: 7. Some understand this of righteous Noah and his family, who beheld the destruction of the old world, and rejoiced in it, as he had grieved for their impiety. Lot, who saw the ruin of Sodom, had the same reason to rejoice, 2 Pet. 2: 7, 8. (2.) In seeing *themselves distinguished, v.* 20. The same rule that served him to condemn Job by, served him to magnify himself and his companions by. *His* substance is cut down, therefore he is a wicked man; *ours* is not, therefore we are righteous. But it is a deceitful rule to judge by; for none knows love or hatred by all that is before him. If others be consumed, if the very remnant of them be consumed, and we be not, instead of censuring them, and lifting up ourselves, as Eliphaz does here, we ought to be thankful to God, and take it for a warning to ourselves to prepare for the like calamities.

V. 21—30. Methinks I can almost forgive Eliphaz his hard censures of Job, which we had in the beginning of the ch., though very unjust and unkind, for this good counsel and encouragement in these vs. with which he closes his discourse, and than which nothing could be better said, or more to the purpose. Good men, though they may perhaps be put into a heat, yet sometimes will talk themselves into a better temper, and, it may be, sooner than another could talk them into it.

Eliphaz had laid before Job the miserable condition of a wicked man, that he might frighten him into repentance. Here, on the other hand, he shows him the happiness those may be sure of, who repent, that he might allure and encourage him to it. Ministers must try both ways in dealing with people, set before them both life and death, good and evil, the blessing and the curse. Observe,

I. The good counsel of Eliphaz.

1. *Acquaint now thyself with God. Acquiesce in God;* so some. It is our duty, at all times, especially when in affliction, to accommodate ourselves to, and quiet ourselves in, all the disposals of the Divine Providence. *Join thyself to Him;* so some; Fall in with his interests, and act no longer in opposition to Him. Our translators render it well; '*Acquaint thyself with Him;* be not such a stranger to Him, as thou hast made thyself, by casting off the fear of Him, and restraining prayer before Him.' This is the duty and interest of every one of us. We must get the knowledge of God, fix our affections on Him, join ourselves to Him in a covenant of friendship, and then set up, and keep up, a constant correspondence with Him in the ways He has appointed. It is our [highest] honor, that we are made capable of this acquaintance; our misery, that by sin we have lost it; our privilege, that through Christ we are invited to return to it; and it will be our unspeakable happiness to contract and cultivate it.

2. '*Be at peace;* at peace with thyself, not fretful, uneasy, and in confusion with thy God; be reconciled to Him. Do not carry on this unholy war. Thou complainest that God is thine Enemy; be thou his friend.' It is the great concern of every one of us to make our peace with God quickly, and it is necessary in order to our comfortable acquaintance with Him; for *can two walk*

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it was always matter of exultation and triumph to the righteous, when wicked oppressors were thus ruined; Job had no reason to wonder that they seemed to mock at *his* calamities and complaints, whom they considered to be such an one. Eliphaz's arguments and precedents by no means proved, that wicked men were *always* thus visited in this world. SCOTT.

Verses 21—30.

The former part of Eliphaz's answer must be condemned; but much of this conclusion merits great commendation, though it implied that Job had hitherto been a stranger to true religion, and that temporal prosperity would be the *sure* consequence of his sincere conversion. It contained excellent advice and suitable encouragements. (1 *Chr.* 28:9. *John* 17:1—3.) Eliphaz perhaps meant, that when the righteous were afflicted or cast down, Job would be honored as their helper and comforter.—The word rendered *island*, sometimes signifies *region*, or *country*. (*Jer.* 47:4. Heb.) SCOTT.

(27.) 'Thou shalt *unbosom* thyself, &c. and thy vows shall be accomplished.' *Good.* 'And thy vows shalt thou accomplish' *Boothr.* 'The *performing of vows* signifies, he would obtain that for which he had offered vows, because vows are wont to be paid when that is obtained, which caused them to be made.' *Rosenm. Make thy prayer.*] '*Unbosom thyself.* And, when the *heart* prays, God hears: and the

thee; and [c] the light shall shine upon thy ways.

29 When [d] *men* are cast down, then thou shalt say, *There is* lifting up; and [e] he shall save [*] the humble person.

30 † He shall deliver the island of the innocent: and it is delivered by the [f] pureness of thine hands.

c 29:3. Ps. 97:11. 112:4. Prov. 4:18. Is. 30:21. Mal. 4:2. John 8:12.
d 5:19, &c. Ps. 9:2,3. 91:14—16. 92: 9—11.
e Prov. 29:23. Is. 57:15. Luke 14:11. 18:9—14. Jam. 4:6. 1 Pet. 5:5.
* Heb. *him that hath low eyes.* Ps. 138:6. Is. 66:2. Ez. 21:26,27. Luke 1:52.
† Or, *The innocent shall deliver the Island.* 42:8. Gen. 18:26—32. Is. 53:12. Jer. 5:1. Acts 27:24.
f Is. 1:15. Mal. 1:9. Matt. 17:19,20. Acts 13:15,16. 1 Tim. 2:8. Jam. 5: 15,16.

to receive it, we must retain it, Prov. 3: 18. We must lay it up as a thing of great value, that it may be safe: and we must lay it up in our hearts, as a thing of great use, that it may be ready to us on occasion, and we may neither lose it wholly, nor be at a loss for it in a time of need.

5. *Return to the Almighty*, v. 23. 'Do not only turn from sin, but turn to God and thy duty. Do not only *turn toward* the Almighty in some good inclinations and good beginnings, but *return to Him;* return home to Him, quite to Him, so as to reach to the Almighty, by a universal reformation, an effectual, thorough change of thy heart and life, and a firm resolution to cleave to Him;' so Mr. Poole.

6. *Put away iniquity far from thy tabernacle.* This was the advice Zophar gave him, *ch.* 11: 14. 'Thou must not only not be wicked thyself, but reprove and restrain sin in those under thy charge.' Note, Family reformation is most needful reformation; we and our house must serve the Lord.

II. The good encouragement Eliphaz gives Job, that he should be very happy, if he would but take this good counsel. In general, '*Thereby good shall come unto thee,*' v. 21. the good that is now departed from thee; all the good thy heart can desire, temporal, spiritual, eternal. God shall come to thee, into covenant and communion with thee; and He brings all good *with* Him, all good *in* Him. The promises of Eliphaz are reducible to three heads;

1. His *estate* should prosper, and temporal blessings be abundantly bestowed; for godliness has the promise of the life that now is. *Silver of strength*, (so the word is,) which, being honestly got, will wear well; silver like steel. He should, by the grace of God, be kept from setting his heart so much on it, as Eliphaz thought he had done. Then wealth is a blessing indeed, when we are not insnared with the love of it. So little shalt thou value it or expect from it, that thou shalt lay it at thy feet, (Acts 4: 35.) not in thy bosom. Whereas men's riches usually expose them to danger, and he had owned that in his prosperity he *was not in safety*, (*ch.* 3: 26.) now he might be secure; for *the Almighty shall be thy Defender;* nay, *thy Defence*, ℣. 25. He *shall be thy gold;* (so the marg.) and it is the same word used, (*v.* 24.) for gold, but it signifies also a strong hold, because *money is a defence*, Eccl. 7: 12. Worldlings make gold their god, saints make God their gold; and they that are enriched with his favor and grace, may truly be said *to have abundance of the best gold*, and best laid up. We understand it, 'He shall be thy Defence against the incursions of neighboring spoilers: as Sabeans and Chaldeans;' which, some think, is the meaning of that, *Thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacle;* taking it as a promise. 'The iniquity or wrong designed against thee shall be put off, and not reach thee.' Ps. 91: 1—3.

2. His *soul* should prosper, and he should be enriched with spiritual blessings,—the best blessings. (1.) He should live a life of *complacency in God*, v. 26. The way to have our heart's desire, is to make God our heart's Delight, Ps. 37: 4. If God give us Himself to be our Joy, He will deny us nothing that is good for us. No delight is comparable to the delight which gracious souls have in the Almighty; and those that acquaint themselves with Him, and submit themselves entirely to Him, shall find his favor to be, not only their strength, but their song. [Note, Ex. 20: 3.]—(2.) He should have a humble, holy confidence toward God, (*v.* 26.) such as they are said to have, *whose hearts condemn them not.* (3.) He should maintain a constant communion with God; 'The correspondence, once settled, shall be kept up to thine unspeakable satisfaction,' *v.* 27. '*Thou shalt make thy prayer*' (the Word is, *Thou shalt multiply* thy prayers) 'unto Him, and He will not think thy letters troublesome, though many and long. The oftener we come to the throne of grace, the more welcome. Under all thy burdens, in all thy wants, cares, and fears, thou shalt send to heaven for guidance and strength, wisdom, comfort, and good success.' '*He shall hear thee*, and make it to appear so, by what He does for thee and in thee.' 'Then thou shalt, by thy praises, reply to the gracious answers which He sent thee: *thou shalt pay thy vows*, and that shall be acceptable to Him, and fetch in further mercy.' Note, When God performs that we prayed for in our distress, we must make conscience of performing what we then promised, else we deal not honestly. If nothing else, we promised to be thankful, and that is enough, for it includes all, Ps. 116: 14. (4.) He should have inward satisfaction in the management of all his outward affairs, *v.* 28. *Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee*, i. e. 'Thou shalt frame all thy projects and purposes with so much wisdom and grace, and resignation to the will of God, that the issue of them shall be to thy heart's content; nay, sometimes the providence of God shall give thee the very thing thou didst desire and pray for, and in thine own way, and manner, and time; *be it unto thee, even as thou wilt.*' When an affair succeeds just according to the scheme we laid, and our measures are in nothing broken, nor are we put on new counsels, then we must own the performance of this promise,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

True wisdom consists *with* seeking our own interest, yea, *in* seeking it, provided it be our true and everlasting interest, and we seek it in that way which God hath revealed: and godliness is always profitable to the possessor, having 'the promise both of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' (1 *Tim.* 4:6—10. 6:6—10.) But it is absurd to suppose, we can be profitable to God, or merit any thing at his hands. Even the perfect obedience of angels, in these respects, is entirely unavailing: how much more, then, the defective services of polluted sinners! All our comforts therefore flow from the unmerited mercy of our God; and under all our afflictions we should acknowledge, that we suffer less than we deserve. He indeed acts as a Sovereign; but his sovereignty is perfectly wise, righteous, faithful, good, and merciful. He approves of the image of his own holiness, and delights in the fruits of his own Spirit; and He graciously accepts the thankful services of the humble believer, while He rejects the proud claim of the self-confident Pharisee.—It is, however, grievous to reflect, that many who speak excellently on the perfections of God, so far from being 'imitators of Him, as beloved children,' behave towards others in direct contrariety to this perfect pattern; and even cloke their own injustice and severity, by expatiating on the divine mercy and justice! Let us then beware of this common offence. And if suffering under the cruel injury of slanderous tongues, let us examine ourselves, whether there be not some plausible ground for the reproach: that our minds may feel a deeper abhorrence of the crimes, of which we are accused, and that we may more watchfully avoid all appearance of them.

Blessed be the name of the LORD, we have immense advantages, which these ancient believers had not; we have both his precepts and his promises, his law and his gospel, in our hands: may we receive them as the words of his mouth, and treasure them up in our hearts: may we return unto Him by living faith, and cleave to Him in holy love; and show the reality of our conversion, by casting away our transgressions, renouncing all idols, obeying his commandments, and acquiescing in his will. SCOTT.

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person being blessed, vows fidelity, prays on, is supported, and enabled to pay his vows.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* ED.

(29.) *Humble.*] Marg. *That hath low eyes.* Turks sometimes strut, the head thrown back, with a sideling motion, the eyes rolling, and directed nearly perpendicularly upward. This strange and ridiculous picture of arrogance was observed at Marseilles. Ps. 101: 5. ED.

(30.) Lit. '*He* (i. e. God) *shall deliver* (even) *the not innocent.* Eliphaz promises, that not only should Job be delivered; but for him, on his account, others, even, less innocent. The negative particle [*alpha* with *yod*, tr. *island* in our Eng. vers.] is indeed rather rarely used in the O. T. but nothing is more common with the Ethiopians. The Rabbins too sometimes use it. The *Chal.* well tr. *liberabitur vir, qui non est innocens, justitia tua.*' ROSENM.

CHAP. XXIII.

Job longs to plead his cause before God, being assured of a favorable event, 1—7. He laments that he cannot perceive the presence of God: but is confident that God knows his way, and will bring him forth as gold, 8—10. He attests his own integrity, 11, 12; but is troubled by the immutable counsel of God, 13—17.

THEN Job answered and said,

2 Even to-day *is* [a] my complaint bitter: my * stroke is [b] heavier than my groaning.

3 [c] Oh, that I knew [d] where I might find him! *that* [e] I might come *even* to his seat!

4 I would [f] order *my* cause before him, and [g] fill my mouth with arguments.

5 I would [h] know the words *which* he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.

6 Will he [i] plead against me with *his* great power? No, [k] but he would put *strength* in me.

7 There [l] the righteous might dispute with him: [m] so should I be delivered for ever from my Judge.

8 Behold, [n] I go forward, but he *is* not *there;* and backward, but I cannot perceive him:

9 On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold *him:* [o] he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see *him:*

10 But [p] he knoweth † the way that I take: *when* [q] he hath tried me,

a 6:2. 10:1. Lam. 3:19,20.
* Heb. *hand.*
b 11:6.
c 13:3. 40:1—5.
d Is. 55:6,7. 2 Cor. 5:19,20. Heb. 4:16.
e 31:35—37.
f 13:18. 37:19. Ps. 43:1.
g Gen. 18:25—32. 32:12. Ex. 32:12,13. Num. 14:13—19. Josh. 7:8,9. Ps. 25:11. Dan. 9:18,19.
h 10:2. 13:22,23. 42:2—6. 1 Cor. 4:3,4.
i 9:19,33,34. 13:21. Is. 27:4,8. 57:16. Mic. 2:1.
k * s. 138:3. 2 Cor. 12:9,10.
l Is. 1:18. Jer. 3:5. 12:1.
m 9:15. Rom. 3:19—22. 8:1,33,34.
n 9:11. Ps. 10:1. 13:1—3. Is. 45:15. 1 Tim. 6:16.
o Ps. 89:46. Is. 8:17.
p Gen. 18:19. 2 K. 20:3. Ps. 1:6. 139:1—3. John 21:17. 2 Tim. 2:19.
† Heb. *the way* that is *with me.*
q 1:14,12. 2:5,6. Deut. 8:2. Ps. 17:3. 66:10. Prov. 17:3. Zech. 13:9. Mal. 3:2,3. Heb. 11:17. Jam. 1:2—4,12. 1 Pet. 1:7.

Thou shalt decree, and it shall be established, Ps. 90: 17. (5.) Even in times of common calamity and danger, he should have abundance of joy and hope, *v.* 29. Thou shalt find that in thyself, which will lift thee *above* thy troubles. When men's *hearts fail them for fear*, then shall Christ's disciples *lift up their heads for joy*, Luke 21: 26—28. Thus are they made to *ride upon the high places of the earth;* Isa. 58: 14. and that which will lift them up, is, the belief that God will save the humble person. They that humble themselves shall be exalted, not only in honor, but in comfort.

3. He should be a blessing to his country, and an instrument of good to many, *v.* 30. *God shall*, in answer to thy prayers, *deliver the island of the innocent*, and have a regard therein to *the pureness of thy hands*, which is necessary to the acceptableness of our prayers, 1 Tim. 2: 8. But, because we may suppose the innocent not to need deliverance, (it was guilty Sodom that wanted the benefit of Abraham's intercession,) I incline to the marginal reading, *The innocent shall deliver the island*, by their advice, (Eccl. 9: 14, 15.) and by their prayers, and their interest in heaven, Acts 27: 24. Or, *He shall deliver those that are not innocent, and they are delivered by the pureness of thy hands;* so it may be read, and most probably. Note, A good man is a public good. Sinners fare the better for saints, whether they are aware of it or no. If Eliphaz intended hereby, (as some think,) to insinuate that Job's prayers were not prevailing, nor his hands pure, he was afterward made to see his error, when it appeared that Job had a better interest in Heaven than he and his three friends, *ch.* 42: 8.

CHAP. XXIII. V. 1—7. This ch. begins Job's reply to Eliphaz; in which he takes no notice of his friends; either because he saw it was to no purpose, or because he liked the good counsel Eliphaz gave him in the close of his discourse so well, that he would make no answer to the peevish reflections he began with; but he appeals to God; begs to have his cause heard, and doubts not but to make it good, having the testimony of his own conscience concerning his integrity. Here seems to be a struggle between flesh and spirit, fear and faith, throughout this ch. Job is confident he has wrong done him by his friends, and therefore, ill as he is, he will not give up the cause, nor let them have the last word. Here,

I. He justifies his own resentments and representations of his trouble, *v.* 2. *Even to-day is my complaint* counted *rebellion;* so some. 'But,' says he, 'I do not complain more than there is cause, *for my stroke is heavier than my groaning.*' We wrong God, if our groaning be heavier than our stroke; like froward children, who, when they cry for nothing, have justly something given them to cry for; but we do not wrong ourselves, though our stroke be heavier than our groaning, for little said is soon amended.

II. He appeals from the censures of his friends to the just judgment of God; an evidence he thought that he was not a hypocrite, for then he durst not have made such an appeal as this. Paul comforts himself in this, that *He that judged him was the Lord*, therefore he valued not man's judgment, but was willing to wait till the appointed day of decision comes; whereas Job is impatient, and passionately wishes to have the judgment-day anticipated, and to have his cause tried quickly, as it were, by a special commission. The apostle found it necessary to press it much on suffering Christians, patiently to expect the Judge's coming, James 5: 7—9.

1. He is so sure of the equity of God's tribunal, that he longs to appear before it, *v.* 3. This may properly express the pious breathings of a soul convinced that it has, by sin, lost God, and is undone for ever if it recover not its interest in his favor. Mic. 6: 6, 7. It is the cry of a poor, deserted soul, '*Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth? Oh that I knew where I might find Him!* But Job here seems to speak it too boldly. A patient waiting for death and judgment is our wisdom and duty; and, if we duly consider things, that cannot be without a holy fear and trembling; but a passionate wishing for death or judgment, without any such fear and trembling, is our sin and folly, and ill becomes us. Do we know what death and judgment are, and are we so very ready for them, that we need not time to get readier? *Wo to them that*, thus in a heat, *desire the day of the Lord*, Amos 5: 18.

2. He is so sure of the goodness of his own cause, that he longs to be opening it at God's bar, *v.* 4.

3. He is so sure of a sentence in his favor, that he even longed to hear it, *v.* 5. Let the Word of God determine all controversies.

III. He comforts himself with the hope that God would deal favorably with him, and that the issue would be comfortable, *v.* 6, 7.

Now, even the upright are often *chastened of the Lord*, and cannot dispute against it; integrity itself is no fence either against calamity or calumny; but in that day, *they shall not be condemned with the world*, though here God may afflict by prerogative. Mal. 3: 18. Those that are delivered up to God as their Owner and Ruler, shall be for ever delivered from Him as their Judge and Avenger: and there is no flying from his justice, but by flying to his mercy.

V. 8—12. I. Job here complains, that he cannot understand the meaning of God's providences concerning him, but was quite at a loss, *v.* 8, 9. Job, no doubt, believed that God is everywhere present; but complains that he could not fix his thoughts, nor form any clear judgment of things in his own mind, so hurried and discomposed with his troubles; he was like a man in a fright, or at his wit's end, who runs this way, and that, but brings nothing to a head. He was quite at a loss to know the cause or end of his troubles, or what God designed to do with him; and whatever conjecture he advanced, still something or other appeared against it.

II. He satisfies himself with this, that God himself was a Witness to his integrity, and therefore did not doubt but the issue would be good. After Job had almost lost himself in the labyrinth of the divine counsels, how contentedly does he sit down, at length, with this thought, 'Though *I* know not the way He takes, yet *He knows the way I take,*' *v.* 10. Afflictions are to us, as we are; those that go gold into the furnace, will come out no worse.

What encouraged Job was, the testimony of his conscience, that God's way was the way he walked in, (*v.* 11.) and God's Word, the rule he walked by, *v.* 12. He could as well have lived without his daily bread, as without the Word of God. *I have laid it up;* so the word is, as those that lay up provision for a siege, or as Joseph laid up corn before the famine. Note, The Word of God is to our souls, as our necessary food is to our bodies; it sustains the spiritual life, and strengthens us for the actions of life; it is that which we cannot subsist without, and the want of which nothing else can make up: we ought therefore so to esteem it, to take pains for it, hunger after it, feed upon it with delight, and nourish our souls with it; and this will be our rejoicing in the day of evil, as it was Job's here.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII. V. 2. Job's complaints were *bitter*, and his friends thought them *rebellious;* (as the word properly signifies;) but he maintained, that the calamities with which he had been visited, and the anguish which he felt, exceeded all that he could express.—The v. may be read as an exclamation: 'Oh, that to-day my complaint should be accounted rebellion!' Or, as an interrogation: 'Is my complaint, even to-day, rebellion? *When* my stroke is heavier than my groaning!' SCOTT.

Verse 3—7.

From my judge. (7) Some think that he meant Eliphaz, who, as his self-constituted judge, had already most unjustly brought him in guilty of many atrocious crimes, and pronounced sentence against him.—Job's consciousness of his integrity, and his confidence that the Lord would graciously decide in his favor, were well grounded: but there was a great want of reverence, humility, and patience, in his vehement manner of stating his desires; and in fact, the Lord did at last silence Job, by showing him his presumption, in thus pleading against his almighty Sovereign. (38:1—3. 40:1—8. 42:1—6. 1 *Cor.* 4:3—5.) SCOTT.

Verses 8—12.

The powerful operations of God were discernible, but his gracious presence was hid in anger; and He seemed to stand at a distance, or

[r] I shall come forth as gold.

11 My [s] foot hath held his steps, [t] his way have I kept, and not declined.

12 Neither [u] have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; [x] I have * esteemed the words of his mouth more than my † necessary *food*.

13 But he *is* in one *mind*, and [y] who can turn him? [z] and *what* his soul desireth, even *that* he doeth.

14 For he performeth *the thing that is* [a] appointed for me: and [b] many such *things are* with him.

15 Therefore [c] am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him.

16 For God [d] maketh my heart soft, and [e] the Almighty troubleth me:

17 Because I was not [f] cut off before the darkness, *neither* hath he covered [g] the darkness from my face.

CHAP. XXIV.

Job inquires why the judgments of God on the wicked are not evident to his people, 1. He shows that the most atrocious offenders often go unpunished in this life, and die as all other men, 2—24. He challenges any man to confute him, 25.

WHY, [a] seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do [b] they that know him [c] not see his days?

2 *Some* remove the [d] landmarks; they [e] violently take away flocks, and feed *thereof*.

3 They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge.

4 They turn the needy out of the way: the poor of the earth hide themselves together.

5 Behold, as wild asses in the desert go they forth to their work; rising betimes for a prey: the wilderness *yieldeth* food for them *and* for *their* children.

6 They reap every one his corn in the field: and they gather the vintage of the wicked.

7 They cause the naked to lodge without clothing, that they have no covering in the cold.

8 They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rock for want of a shelter.

9 They pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor.

10 They cause him to go naked without clothing, and they take away the sheaf from the hungry;

11 Which make oil within their walls, and tread their winepresses, and suffer thirst.

12 Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out: yet God layeth not folly to them.

13 They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof.

14 The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief.

15 The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me: and disguiseth his face.

16 In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the day-time: they know not the light.

17 For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one know *them*, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death.

18 He is swift as the waters; their portion is cursed in the earth: he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards.

19 Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned.

20 The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree.

21 He evil entreateth the barren that beareth not: and doeth not good to the widow.

22 He [f] also [g] prolongeth his power by his [h] might: he riseth up, and no man is sure of life.

23 Though it be given him to be in safety, whereon he [i] resteth; yet his eyes are upon their ways.

24 They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low out of the way as all *other*, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.

25 And if not now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth?

CHAP. XXV.

Bildad proves the majesty and purity of God, 1—3. Man cannot be righteous before him, 4—6.

THEN answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,

2 Dominion and fear *are* with him, he maketh peace in his high places.

3 Is there any number of his armies? and upon whom doth not his light arise?

4 How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?

5 Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight.

6 How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?

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[r] 42:5—8.
[s] 1 Sam. 12:2—5. Ps. 18:20—24. 44: 18. Acts 20:18,19,33,34. 2 Cor. 1:12. 1 Thes. 2:10.
[t] 17:9. Ps. 36:3. 125:5. Zeph. 1:6. Luke 8:13—15. Rom. 2:7. 2 Pet. 2: 20—22.
[u] John 6:66—69. 8:31. Acts 14:22. Heb. 10:38,39. 1 John 2:19.
[x] 22:22. Ps. 19:10. 119:103,127. Jer. 15:16. John 4:34. 1 Pet. 2:2.
* Heb. *hid*, or *laid up*. 22:22. Ps. 119: 11.
† Or, *appointed portion*. Luke 12:42, 46.
[y] 9:12,13. 11:10. 12:14. 34:29. Num. 23:19,20. Ec. 1:15. 3:14. Rom. 9: 19. Jam. 1:17.
[z] Ps. 115:3. 135:6. Prov. 19:21. Is. 14:24—27. 46:10. Dan. 4:35. Eph. 1:9—11.
[a] 7:3. Mic. 6:9. 1 Thes. 3:3. 5:9. 1 Pet. 2:8.
[b] Ps. 77:19. 97:2. Is. 40:27,28. Rom. 11:33.
[c] 3. 19:15. 31:23. Ps. 77:3. 119:120. Hab. 3:16.
[d] Ps. 22:14. Is. 6:5. 57:16.
[e] 27:2. Ruth 1:20. Ps. 88:16. Joel 1: 15.
[f] 6:9. 2 K. 22:20. Is. 57:1.
[g] 15:22. 18:6,18. 19:8. 22:11.
[a] Ps. 31:15. Ec. 3:17. 8:6,7. 9:11,12. Is. 60:22. Dan. 2:21. Luke 21:22—24. Acts 1:7. 17:26. 1 Thes. 5:1. 1 Tim. 4:1. 6:15. 2 Pet. 2:3. 3:7,8.
[b] Ps. 9:10. 36:10. John 17:3.
[c] Gen. 7:4. 18:17,20,21. Ps. 73:16—19. Jer. 12:1—3. Matt. 24:38. Rom. 2:5.
[d] Deut. 19:14. 27:17. Prov. 22:28. 23: 10. Hos. 5:10.
[e] 1:15,17. 5:5.

V. 13—17. Some make Job to complain here, that God dealt unjustly and unfairly with him, in proceeding to punish him without the least relenting or relaxation, though he had such incontestable evidences to produce of his innocency. I am loath to think so; but he reasons himself into a sort of *patience per force;* the worst he says, is, that God deals unaccountably with him, according to his will, *v.* 14.

1. To consider, that, when God was appointing us to eternal life and glory as our end, He was appointing to this condition, this affliction, whatever it is, in our way, this may do more than silence us, it may satisfy us that it is all for the best [note, 7: 1.]; though what He does we know not now, we shall know hereafter.

2. He makes but a bad use of these good truths, *v.* 13, 14. or, had he duly considered them, he might have said, 'Therefore am I easy and pleased, and will rejoice in hope!' But he said, *Therefore am I troubled at his presence, v.* 15. his heart was made, not graciously, but fearfully, peevishly, *soft, v.* 16. and he quarrels with God, (*v.* 17.) instead of making the best of his lot. See what confusion poor Job was now in, for he contradicted himself: just now, he was troubled for God's absence; (*v.* 8, 9.) now he is troubled at his presence. What he now felt, made him fear worse: there is indeed that which, if we consider it, will show that we have cause to be afraid of God—his infinite justice and purity, compared with our own sinfulness and vileness; but if, withal, we consider his grace in a Redeemer, and our compliance with that grace, the fears will vanish, and we shall see cause to hope in Him.

CHAP. XXIV. Job having, by his complaints in the foregoing chapter, given vent to his passion, and thereby gained some ease, breaks them off abruptly and now applies himself to a further discussion of the doctrinal controversy between him and his friends, concerning the prosperity of wicked people. He lays down his general proposition, That the punishment of the wicked is not so visible and apparent as his friends supposed; and then proves it by an induction of particulars. So that, upon the whole, we cannot say, that all who are in trouble are wicked; for it is certain, that all who are in prosperity are not righteous.

V. 1—12. Job's friends had been very positive they should soon see the fall of wicked people, how much soever they might prosper for awhile. By no means, says Job, *though times are not hidden from the Almighty*, yet *they that know Him do not presently see his day, v.* 1. 1. He takes it for granted, times are not hid from the Almighty: past times are not hid from his judgment, (Eccl. 3: 15.) present times from his providence, (Matt 10: 29.) future times from his prescience, Acts 15: 18. God governs the world, therefore we may be sure He takes cognizance of it: bad times are not hid from Him, though the bad men, that make them, shy one to another, He has *forsaken the earth*, Ps. 94: 6, 7. Every man's times are in his hand and under his eye, therefore it is in his power to make the times of wicked men in this world miserable; He foresees the time of every man's death; therefore, if wicked men die before they are punished for their wickedness, we cannot say, 'They escaped Him by surprise;' He foresaw it, nay, He ordered it. Before Job will inquire into the reasons of the prosperity of wicked men, he asserts God's omniscience, as one prophet, in a like case, asserts his righteousness, (Jer. 12: 1.) another his holiness, (Hab. 1: 13.) another his goodness to his own people, Ps. 73: 1. General truths must be held fast, though we may find it difficult to reconcile them to particu-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They, and they alone, who have experienced the conflict between faith and unbelief, hope and despondency, the desire to submit, and the opposing power of self-will, during severe trials and sharp temptations, can clearly understand or account for the fluctuations observable in Job's language, and the state of his mind whence they arose: (9:14—21.) and the consideration, that so eminent a servant of God was harassed and perplexed, exactly as they are, cannot fail to afford them some relief. But our *bitter* complaints are very apt to savor of *rebellion;* and we should watch over ourselves in such circumstances, lest we provoke the Lord to increase his corrections.—When we meet with unkind treatment or unjust censures, we should seek help and comfort from Him: yet we ought to come in humble reverence, and wait his time with patience. He will answer our inquiries by his Word, and our prayers in his providence, and by his Spirit; and cause us to understand and approve his decisions. The Christian is conscious of having uprightly embraced the salvation of God, and set out in his ways, by repentance, faith, and true conversion; he has held his steps, and kept his path, without turning aside for the sake of worldly advantages, or for fear of the cross. Many false steps indeed he has made; but he has not been left to walk in the way of allowed sin: he obeys unreservedly, from love, and with the constancy of patient expectation. The Word of God has been the food of his soul: he has an appetite for it; he relishes and digests it, converts it into nourishment, and is strengthened by it for service and for conflict. In his habitual judgment, he would rather want animal recreation, and starve with hunger, than be deprived of the spiritual sustenance of his soul: and therefore he takes pleasure in searching the Scripture, [doing his duty,] and attending on the ordinances of God. Nothing can come upon such, but what is appointed by infinite wisdom and love, and in order to humble, soften, and sanctify them; nothing, but what shall terminate in their benefit, and that of their brethren, and redound to the glory of God: and, in their sober judgment, they would be willing to endure darkness and distress for a time, for these important purposes. May we then learn to obey and trust the Lord, even under tribulation; be willing to die when He pleases, for we know not from what evils we may thus be exempted; and to live as long as He sees good, as we are not aware for what good purposes our lives may be prolonged. SCOTT.

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to frown upon him.—In these and similar protestations, it is evident that Job continually referred to the charges brought against him, and the advice given him, by his friends. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verses 13—17.

At this time, Job seems to have felt that his vehement wishes and protestations were altogether vain, because he was aware that the purposes of God were irreversible, and his power irresistible; so that neither persuasion nor opposition could induce Him to deviate from his settled plan. It was God's decree and fixed purpose thus to afflict him, though he knew not on what account; but there were many such deep mysteries in Providence. ID.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV. V. 1. If God uniformly punished the wicked in this life, according to the opinion of Eliphaz and his friends; Job supposed, wise and godly men, who are acquainted with Him and his ways, would be able to give some account of the *times* of vengeance; to conclude how long the prosperity of the wicked would last; and to predict how it would terminate, and what degree of misery proportioned to their crimes would be inflicted: as persons acquainted with the mind of the prince, and the laws of the land, can foresee and expect the sentence, which will shortly be pronounced and executed on notorious malefactors. There are *days* appointed for their trial, and *penalties* annexed to their crimes, and we know what to expect, as to the murderer or traitor. Doubtless, the Governor of the world also has his appointed times of vengeance; but why are they not discovered to his people? Why are they not marked or evident? They certainly would be, if exact justice were awarded in this world; and as they are not, it is evident that the time of trial, and of executing vengeance, is not appointed in this life. (*Ec.* 9:1—3.) SCOTT.

Verses 2—12.

How absolutely necessary are the poor and the rich to each other! How detestable, how wicked that mischievous spirit, which would

lently take away flocks, and * feed *thereof.*

3 They [f] drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge.

4 They [g] turn the needy out of the way: the poor of the earth [h] hide themselves together.

5 Behold, *as* [i] wild asses in the desert go they forth to their work; [k] rising betimes for a prey: [l] the wilderness *yieldeth* food for them *and* for *their* children.

6 They [m] reap *every one* his † corn in the field: and ‡ they gather the vintage of the wicked.

7 They cause [n] the naked to lodge without clothing, that *they have* [o] no covering in the cold.

8 They are [p] wet with the showers of the mountains, and [q] embrace the rock for want of a shelter.

9 They [r] pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor.

10 They cause *him* to go naked without clothing, and [s] they take away the sheaf *from* the hungry;

11 *Which* [t] make oil within their walls, *and* tread *their* wine-presses, and suffer thirst.

12 Men [u] groan from out of the city, and the soul of the [x] wounded crieth out: [y] yet God layeth not folly *to them.*

13 They are of those that [z] rebel against the light; [a] they know not the ways thereof, [b] nor abide in the paths thereof.

14 The [c] murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and [d] in the night is as a thief.

15 The [e] eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, [f] No eye shall see me: and § disguiseth *his* face.

16 In [g] the dark they dig through houses, *which* they had marked for themselves in the day-time; [h] they know not the light.

17 For the morning *is* to them even as the

lar events. 2. He yet asserts, that they who know Him, that is, wise and good people who are acquainted with Him, and with whom his secret is, *do not see his days*, not the day of his judging for them; this was the thing he complained of in his own case, (*ch.* 23: 8.) That he could not see God appearing on his behalf to plead his cause; nor the day of his judging against open and notorious sinners; that is called *his day*, Ps. 37: 13. We believe that day will come, but we do not see it, because it is future, and its presages secret. 3. Though this is a mystery of Providence, yet there is a reason for it, and we shall shortly know why the judgment is deferred; even the wisest, and those who know God best, do not yet see it. God will exercise their faith and patience, and excite their prayers for the coming of his kingdom, for which they are to *cry day and night to Him*, Luke 18: 7.

For the proof of this, that wicked people prosper, he specifies two sorts of unrighteous ones, whom all the world saw thriving in their iniquity.

I. Tyrants, and those that do wrong under pretence of law and authority, Eccl. 3: 16. 1. They disseize their neighbors of their real estates, which came to them by descent from their ancestors, *v.* 2. Forging or destroying deeds is now a crime equivalent to this. 2. They dispossess them of their personal estates, under color of justice, pretending they are forfeited, *v.* 2, 3. as 2 Sam. 12: 4. 3. They take all occasions to offer personal abuses to them, *v.* 4. they love to banter people, and to make fools of them, and turn them out of the way of getting relief.

Some understand those barbarous actions, (*v.* 9, 10.) to be done by those oppressors that pretend law for what they do; as Pharoah and Herod; and we read of *children brought forth to the murderers*, Hos. 9: 13. *They take a pledge of the poor;* nay, they take the poor themselves for a pledge, as some read it, and, probably, it was under this pretence they *plucked the fatherless from the breast*, distraining them for slaves, as Neh. 5: 5. Cruelty to the poor is great wickedness, and cries aloud for vengeance.

Another instance of their barbarous treatment, is, their depriving the poor of even their necessary food and raiment, *v.* 10. while they themselves are fed to the full. They are also very oppressive to the laborers they employ; not only give them no wages, though the laborer is worthy of his hire; (and this is a crying sin, Jam. 5: 4.) but will not so much as give them meat and drink: *those that carry their sheaves are hungry;* so some read it, (*v.* 10.) and it agrees with *v.* 11. that those who *make oil within their walls*, and toil at the wine-presses, yet suffer thirst, which was worse than muzzling the mouth of the ox that treads out the corn. Those masters forget that they have a Master in heaven, who allow not the necessary supports of life to their servants and laborers, not caring whether they can live by their labor or no. Further, Not only among the poor country people, but in cities, we see the tears of the oppressed, (*v.* 12.) where rich merchants and traders are as cruel with their poor debtors, [or laborers,] as landlords in the country are with their poor tenants. In cities, such cruel actions are more observed, and the wronged have easier access to justice to right themselves; yet oppressors there fear neither the restraints of the law, nor the just censures of their neighbors, but the oppressed groan and cry out like wounded men, and can no more ease and help themselves, for the oppressors are inexorable, and deaf to their groans.

II. Robbers, that do wrong by downright force, as the lawless Bedouins of the desert, *v.* 5. [note, 5: 5.] Eliphaz had concluded, that Providence would not thus have stripped Job, if he had not first *stripped the naked of their clothing*, *ch.* 22: 6. Job here tells him, there were those really guilty of the crimes he was unjustly charged with, and yet prospered in their villanies; the curse they laid themselves under working invisibly: and Job thinks it more just to argue, as he did, from an open, notorious course of wickedness, to a secret and future punishment, than, as Eliphaz, from nothing but present trouble, to a course of past, secret iniquity.

The impunity of these oppressors and spoilers is expressed in one word; (*v.* 12.) *Yet God layeth not folly to them*, i. e. does not immediately prosecute them with his judgments for these crimes, nor make them examples, and so evince their folly to all the world. He that *gets riches, and not by right, at his end shall be a fool*, Jer. 17: 11. But while he prospers, he passes for a wise man, and God lays not folly to him until He saith, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee*, Luke 12: 20.

V. 13—17. These vs. describe another sort of sinners, who *therefore* go unpunished, because they go undiscovered, *v.* 13. Some understand it figuratively: they sin against the light of nature, the light of God's law, and that of their own consciences; they profess to know God, but rebel

* Or, *feed them.*

f 22:6—9. 31:16,17. Deut. 24:6,10—13,17—21. 1 Sam. 12:3.
g 14. 31:16. Ps. 109:16. Prov. 22:16. 30:14. Is. 10:2. Ez. 18:12,18. 22:29. Am. 2:7. 8:4—6. Mic. 2:1,2.
h Prov. 28:12,28. Jam. 5:4—6.
i 39:5—7. Jer. 2:24. Hos 8:9.
k 14. Prov. 4:16. Hos. 7:6. Mic. 2:1. Zeph. 3:3. John 18:28. Acts 23:12.
l 5:5. 12:6. Gen. 16:12. 27:40.
m Deut. 28:33,51. Judg. 6:3—6. Mic. 6:15.
† Heb. *mingled corn*, or *dredge.*
‡ Heb. *the wicked gather the vintage.*
n 10. 22:6. 31:19,20. Ex. 22:26,27. Deut. 24:11—13. Is. 58:7. Acts 9:39.
o Gen. 31:40. Prov. 31:21. *Marg.*
p Cant. 5:2.
q Lam. 4:5. Heb. 11:38.
r 2 K. 4:1. Neh. 5:5.
s Deut. 24:19. Acts 2:7,8. 5:11,12.
t Deut. 25:4. Jer. 22:13. Jam. 5:4.
u Ex. 1:13,14. 2:23,24. 22:27. Judg. 10:16. Ps. 12:5. Ec. 4:1. Is. 52:5
x Is. 69:26. 109:22.
y Ps. 50:21. Ec. 8:11,12. Mal. 2:17. 3:15. Rom 2:4,5. 2 Pet. 3:15.
z Luke 12:47,48. John 3:19,20. 9:39—41. 15:22—24. Rom. 1:32. 2:17—24. Jam. 4:17.
a Prov. 4:19. John 12:35,40. Rom. 3:11—17. 2 Thes. 2:10—12.
b 23:11,12. John 8:31,44. 15:5. 2 Pet. 2:20—22. 1 John 2:19. Jude 6.
c 2 Sam. 11:14—17. Ps. 10:8—10. Mic. 2:1,2. Eph. 5:7—11.
d Luke 12:39. 1 Thes. 5:2. Rev. 3:3.
e Ex. 20:14. 2 Sam. 11:4—13. 12:12. Ps. 50:18. Prov. 6:32—35. 7:9,10.
f 22:13,14. Ps. 10:11. 73:11. 94:7. Ez. 8:12. 9:9.
§ Heb. *setteth his face in secret.* Gen. 38:14,15.
g Ex. 22:2,3. Ez. 12:5—7,12. Matt. 24:43.
h 13. 38:12,13. John 3:20. Eph. 5:11—13.

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marshall them, or insist that they must be marshalled, one against the other! While there is such a diversity in God's endowments to men, there must ever be the very rich and the very poor. Let us bless God that the institutions of our own country do not necessarily perpetuate either condition to a family; for accumulated wealth and excessive poverty are both of a tendency destructive of the best affections. 'Moderate poverty is a talent to salvation:' but the consolations of religion are not divided according to this world's wealth. Job here draws a revolting picture of oppression in the matter of *wages;* and the enormous injustice practised herein in all nations, shows the picture is not exaggerated. Let us bless God that the condition of one who labors with his hands for his daily bread is so different, so incomparably better, in a great part of our country, than in most others—that one can here enjoy the benefits of his labor, intellectual or bodily, while there it is devoured by the craving selfishness of another. Let us watch with jealousy, that free institutions be not perverted, on the one hand, by the tyranny of an oppressor by law; or, on the other, by the tyranny of a lawless mob. Let us view with uncompromising detestation, and use every lawful mean to bring to justice, both him who, in the power of wealth, grinds the faces of the helpless poor, obliged in their distress to hire themselves to him; and him who, plotting in the darkness, calls envy, and every blind, bad passion of the unfortunate to his aid, in waging indiscriminate war against the rich, simply because they are rich: for such machinations, if unchecked, must shortly prove fatal alike to the rights, the happiness of all.

ED.

(9.) Similar expressions are still proverbial in the E. see *Roberts.*

ID.

(10.) The words translated 'they take away the sheaf from the hungry,' may be rendered, 'They are hungry that carry the sheaf:' i. e. *Their reapers starve.*

SCOTT.

Verses 13—17.

Job here followed up his argument, by bringing instances of criminals, who escaped detection, and *eluded* justice, as those before mentioned *out-braved* it.

ID.

(16.) *Dig through houses.*] 'Nearly all houses in the E. are made

shadow of death: if *one* know *them they are* [i] *in* the terrors of the shadow of death.

18 He *is* [k] swift as the waters; [l] their portion is cursed in the earth; he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards.

19 [m] Drought and heat [*] consume the snow-waters: [n] *so doth* the grave *those which* have sinned.

20 The womb shall forget him; [o] the worm shall feed sweetly on him; [p] he shall be no more remembered; and [q] wickedness shall be broken as a tree.

21 He [r] evil entreateth the barren *that* beareth not: and [s] doeth not good to the widow.

22 He [t] draweth also the mighty with his power: he riseth up, and † no *man* is sure of life.

23 *Though* [u] it be given him *to be* in safety, [x] whereon he resteth; [y] yet his eyes *are* upon their ways.

24 They [z] are exalted for a little while, but

i See on 3:5. Jer. 2:26. 2 Cor. 5:10, 11. Rev. 6:16,17.
k Ps. 58:7. 73:18—20. Is. 23:10.
l Deut. 28:16—20. Ps. 69:22. Prov. 3: 33. Mal. 2:2.
m 6:15—17.
* Heb. *violently take.*
n 21:23,32—34. Ps. 49:14. 58:8,9. 68: 2. Prov. 14:32. Ec. 9:4—6. Luke 12:20. 16:22.
o 17:14. 19:26.
p Prov. 10:6. Ec. 8:10.
q 14:7—10. 18:16,17. Dan. 4:14. Matt. 3:10.
r 1 Sam. 1:6,7.
s 3. 29:13. 31:16—18.
t Esth. 3:8—10. Dan. 6:4—9. John 19:12—16. Rev. 16:13,14. 17:2.
† Or, *he trusteth not* his own *life.*
u Ps. 73:3—12. Jer. 12:1—3.
x Ec. 8:11. Is. 10:3—11. 56:12. Luke 12:16—20,45. 1 Thes. 5:3.
y Ps. 10:13,14. 11:4,5. Prov. 5:21. 15: 3. Ec. 5:8. Am. 8:7. 9:3. Hab. 1: 13. Rev. 2:23.
z 20:5. Ps. 37:10,35,36. 73:19. 92:7. Jam. 1:11. 5:1—3.

against the knowledge they have of Him, and will not be guided and governed, commanded and controlled, by it. Others understand it literally: they have the day-light, and choose the night as the most advantageous season for their wickedness. Sinful works are *therefore* called *works of darkness*, (John 3: 20.) So that he here describes the worst of sinners, 1. That sin wilfully, and against the convictions of their own consciences, whereby they add rebellion to their sin. 2. That sin deliberately, and with a great deal of plot and contrivance, using a thousand arts to conceal their villanies, fondly imagining, that, if they can but hide them from the eye of men, they are safe; but forgetting that *there is no darkness, or shadow of death,* in which *the workers of iniquity can hide themselves* from God's eye, *ch.* 34: 22.

He specifies three sorts of sinners, that shun the light, murderers, (*v.* 14.) adulterers, (*v.* 15.) house-breakers, *v.* 16. See what care and pains wicked men take to compass their wicked designs, and let it shame us out of our negligence and slothfulness in doing good. See what pains those take that make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lust of it; pains to compass, and then to conceal, that provision, which, after all, will be death and hell at last! Less pains would serve to mortify and crucify the flesh, and would be life and heaven at last. Let the sinner change his heart, and then he needs not disguise his face, but may lift it up without spot.

And, *lastly,* Job observes, (and perhaps observes it as part of the present, though secret, punishment of such sinners,) that they are in a continual terror for fear of discovery, *v.* 17. Shame came in with sin, and everlasting shame is at the end of it. See the misery of sinners, they are exposed to continual frights; and yet see their folly, they are afraid of coming under the eye of men, but have no dread of God's eye, which is always on them: they are not afraid of doing that which yet they are so terribly afraid of being known to do.

V. 18—25. Job here, in the conclusion of his discourse,

I. Gives some further instances of the wickedness of these cruel, bloody men. 1. Some are pirates and robbers at sea. To this many learned interpreters apply those difficult expressions, *v.* 18. *He is swift upon the waters.* Privateers choose those ships that are the best sailers; with these they pick up prizes; and this brings them in so much wealth, that their *portion is cursed in the earth,* and they *behold not the way of the vineyards,* i. e. so Patrick—They despise the employment of those who till the ground, and plant vineyards, as poor and unprofitable. But others make this a further description of the conduct of those sinners that are afraid of the light: if they be discovered, they get away as fast as they can, and choose to look, not in the vineyards, for fear of being discovered, but in some cursed portion, a lonely, desolate place, which nobody looks after. 2. Some are abusive to those in trouble, and add affliction to the afflicted. Barrenness was looked upon as a great reproach, and those that fall under that affliction they upbraid with it, as Peninnah did Hannah, on purpose to vex them and make them to fret, which is a barbarous thing; this is *evil entreating the barren that beareth not,* (*v.* 21.) or those that are childless, and so want the arrows others have in their quiver, which enable them to deal with their enemy in the gate, Ps. 127: 5. He takes that advantage against, and is oppressive to, them: as the fatherless, so the childless, are in some degree helpless. For the same reason, it is a cruel thing to hurt the widow, to whom we ought to do good; and not doing good, when it is in our power, is doing hurt. There are those who, inuring themselves to cruelty, come, at last, to be so exceeding boisterous, that they are *the terror of the mighty in the land of the living,* *v.* 22. *He draws the mighty* into a snare with his power; even the greatest are not able to stand before him when he is in his mad fits: he rises up in his passion, and lays about him with so much fury, that no man is sure of his life; nor can he at the same time be sure of his own, for *his hand is against every man,* and *every man's hand against him.* One would wonder, how any man can take pleasure in making all about him afraid of him, yet there are those that do.

II. He shows, that these daring sinners prosper, and are at ease for a while, nay, and often end their days in peace, as Ishmael, who, though he was a man of such a character as is here given, yet both *lived and died in the presence of all his brethren,* as we are told, Gen. 16: 12.—25: 18. Of these sinners here it is said, 1. That it is *given them to be in safety,* *v.* 23. They seem to be under the special protection of the Divine Providence, and one would wonder how they escape with life through so many dangers as they run themselves into. 2. That they rest on this, that is, they rely on this, as sufficient to warrant all their violences: *because sentence against their evil works is not executed speedily,* they think there is no great evil in them, and that God is not displeased with them, nor will ever call them to an account. Their prosperity is their security. 3. That they are exalted for awhile; they seem to be the favorites of Heaven, and value themselves as making the best figure on earth. They are set up in honor, set up (as they think) out of the reach of danger, and lifted up in the pride of their own spirits. 4. That, at length, they are carried out of the world very silently and gently, and without any remarkable disgrace or terror. 'They go down to the grave as easily, as snow-water sinks into the dry ground, when it is melted by the sun.' So Patrick explains *v.* 19. To the same purport he paraphrases *v.* 20. *The womb shall forget him, &c.* 'God sets no such mark of his displeasure on him, but that his mother may soon forget him: the hand of justice does not hang him on a gibbet, for the birds to feed on; but he is carried to his grave like other men; there he lies quietly, and neither he nor

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of *unburnt bricks*; so that there is little difficulty in making a hole sufficiently large to admit the human body. No wonder, then, that this is the general way of robbing houses. Thus in the morning, when the inmates awake, they see daylight through a hole in the wall, and immediately know what has been done.' *Roberts.* The houses of Egypt at the present day are often but hovels of mud: either crude brick or mud houses might be dug through without noise. 'The houses of the ancient Egyptians were stuccoed within and without, and of crude brick, made in a mould, without pressure, and being a revenue to the government [a monopoly?] were stamped afterwards, previous to their drying, with the names of the king or high priest. The Hebrews were compelled to make these bricks for the kings during their whole reigns. Crude brick pyramids, with arches, are found at Thebes, built not later than the 3d Remeses (1230, B. C.) I have found bricks, as firm as when first made, bearing the name (a) of Thothmes III, [and his wife (b), see cut,] (the contemporary of Moses,) in this tomb, (No. 85, at Thebes,) also erected during his reign.' *Wilkinson.* Ed.

Verses 18—20.

These atrocious offenders, and many others, proceeded swiftly and silently, like the gliding stream, into every iniquity: they acquired a portion on earth by such *accursed* practices, without bestowing pains to cultivate the land; spending their time in deserts, and being seldom seen in the ways towards the vineyards, which were frequented by those who labored in them.—Yet, as dry weather and heat evaporate the waters, arising from the melted snows, or they sink into the earth imperceptibly and unnoticed: so numbers of these criminals went down unobserved into the grave. And, as no remarkable misery or disgrace attended their lives or deaths, even their mothers and nearest relations were soon comforted for them, and they were forgotten, as if no more criminal than other men: so that their wickedness came to an end, as a tree that grows undisturbed, and is not cut down, but decays and is broken through length of time. Scott.

Verses 21—25.

Job, having stated these undeniable facts, challenged his friends, or any other persons, to prove them false or inapplicable; or to refute his doctrine, 'that calamities are no proof of wickedness.' Id.

He evil entreateth, &c. (21) The Heb. sometimes means *to devour.* 'He devoureth the barren, that he should not bear.' Oppression discourages marriage, and prevents exceedingly the increase of the human species: as also does licentiousness, and the methods which the licentious take to prevent detection, which some think may be intimated. Id.

(21.) 'It is considered very disgraceful (in the E.) for a married woman not to have children; and the evil treatment they receive from

are * gone and brought low; they are † taken out of the way as all *other*, and [a] cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.

25 And if *it be* not *so* now, [b] who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth?

CHAP. XXV.

Bildad asserts the dominion and power of God, before whom man cannot be justified, 1—6.

THEN answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,

2 [a] Dominion and fear *are* with him, [b] he maketh peace in his high places.

3 Is [c] there any number of his armies? and [d] upon whom doth not his light arise?

4 [e] How then can man be justified with God? or [f] how can he be clean *that is* born of a woman?

5 Behold [g] even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight.

6 How [h] much less man, *that is* a worm? and the son of man, *which is* a worm?

CHAP. XXVI.

Job derides Bildad's speech, as little to the purpose, 1—4. He shows the works and perfections of God to be unsearchable, 5—14.

BUT Job answered and said,

2 [a] How hast thou [b] helped *him that is* without power? *how* savest thou the arm *that hath* no strength?

3 How hast thou [c] counselled *him that* his wickedness is any more remembered than a tree which is broken to shivers.' And, *v.* 24. *They are taken out of the way as all other*, i. e. 'They are shut up in their graves like all other men; nay, they die as easily (without those tedious pains which some endure) as an ear of corn is cropped with your hand.' Compare this with Solomon's observation, *I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten.*

III. He foresees their fall, however, and that their death, though they die in ease and honor, will be their ruin, *v.* 23. Though He keep silence, and seem to connive at them, yet God notices, and keeps account of, all their wickedness; and will make it to appear shortly, that their most secret sins, which they thought *no eye should see*, (*v.* 15.) were under his eye, and will be called over again. Here is no mention of the punishment of such a sinner in the other world, but it is intimated in the particular notice taken of the consequences of his death. They that durst not give him his due character while he lived, shall not spare him when he is dead; so that the womb that bare him, his own mother, shall forget him, i. e. shall avoid making mention of him, and shall think *that* the greatest kindness she can do him, since no good can be said of him. Honor got by sin will soon turn into shame. The wickedness they thought to establish in their families, shall be broken as a tree; all their wicked projects shall be blasted, and all their wicked hopes dashed and buried with them. Job owns that wicked people will be miserable at last, miserable on the other side death, but utterly denies what his friends asserted, that they are, usually, miserable in this life.

Lastly, He concludes with a bold challenge to all present, to disprove what he had said, if they could, *v.* 25. That, indeed, which is false, is nothing worth; where there is not truth, how can there be goodness? They that speak the words of truth and soberness, need not fear a fair examination.

CHAP. XXV. V. 1—6. Bildad here makes a very short reply to Job's last discourse, as one that began to be tired of the cause. He drops the main question concerning the prosperity of wicked men, as being unable to answer the proofs Job had produced in the foregoing chapter: but, because he thought Job had made too bold with the Divine Majesty in his appeals to the divine tribunal, (*ch.* 23:) he, in a few words, shows the infinite distance there is between God and man, teaching us to think highly and honorably of God, and humbly of ourselves; which, however misapplied to Job, are two good lessons for us all to learn.

1. Perhaps, indeed, he and the rest perceived Job and they did not differ so much as they thought: they owned wicked people might prosper awhile, and Job owned they would be destroyed at last; how little then the difference! If disputants would understand one another better, perhaps they would find themselves nearer one another than they imagined. If we would all get our hearts filled with awful thoughts of God, and humble thoughts of ourselves, we should not be so apt as we are to fall out about matters of doubtful disputation, which are trifling or intricate.

2. Man, by reason of his actual transgressions, is obnoxious to God's justice, and cannot in himself be justified before Him: he can neither plead *Not guilty*, nor plead any merit of his own to balance or extenuate his guilt. The Scripture has concluded all under sin. Man, by reason of his original corruption, as he is born of a woman, is odious to God's holiness, and cannot be clean in his sight. God sees his impurity, and it is certain that by it he is rendered utterly unfit for communion and fellowship with God in grace here, and for the vision and fruition of Him in glory hereafter. We have need, therefore, to be born again of water and of the Holy Ghost, and to be bathed again and again in the blood of Christ, that fountain opened.

3. Let us wonder at God's condescension, in taking such worms as we are into covenant and communion with Himself, especially at the condescension of the Son of God, in emptying Himself so far as to say, *I am a worm, and no man*, Ps. 22: 6.

CHAP. XXVI. This is Job's short reply to Bildad's short discourse. So far from contradicting him, he confirms what he had said, and outdoes him in magnifying God, and setting forth his power, to show what reason he had still to say as he did, (ch. 13: 2.) *What ye know, the same do I know also.*

V. 1—4. One would not have thought Job, now that he was in so much pain and misery, could have bantered his friend as he does here, and made himself merry with the impertinency of his discourse. Bildad thought he had made a fine speech, that the matter was so weighty, and the language so fine, that he had gained the reputation both of an oracle and of an orator; but Job, peevishly enough, shows that his performance was not so valuable.

* Heb. *not.* 8:22. *marg.*
† Heb. *closed up.*
[a] Is. 17:5,6. Rev. 14:14—20.
[b] 9:24. 11:2,3. 15:2.
[a] 9:2—10. 26:5—14. 40:9—14. 1 Chr. 29:11,12. Ps. 99:1—3. Jer. 10:6,7. Dan. 4:34—37. Matt. 6:13. 28:18. Eph. 1:20,21. Rev. 6:16.
[b] Is. 57:15,19. Matt. 5:9. 2 Cor. 5:18—21. Eph. 2:16,17. Col. 1:20.
[c] Ps. 103:20,21. 148:2—4. Is. 40:26. Dan. 7:10. Matt. 26:53. Rev. 5:11.
[d] 38:12,13. Gen. 1:3—5,14—16. Ps. 19:4—6. Matt. 5:45. John 1:4,9.
[e] 4:17—19. 9:2. 15:14—16. Ps. 130: 3. 143:2. Rom. 3:19,20.
[f] 14:3,4. Ps. 51:5. Eph. 2:3.
[g] Is. 24:23. 60:19,20. 2 Cor. 3:10.
[h] 4:19. Gen. 13:27. Ps. 22:6. Is. 41:14.
[a] 12:2. 1 K. 13:27.
[b] 4:3,4. 6:25. 16:4,5. Is. 35:3, 4. 41: 5—7.
[c] 6:13. 12:3. 13:5. 15:8—10. 17:10. 32:11—13.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

CH. XXIV. In prospect of the judgment, we should neither be stumbled and distressed at witnessing the prosperity of the wicked, nor discouraged if we share the troubles of the righteous.—The history of all ages and nations proclaims the desperate wickedness of the human heart. . . . But who can express the crimes that have been committed, or the miseries which have been occasioned, by this inordinate self-love! Yet the cries of the oppressed are not overlooked. They enter into 'the ears of the LORD of hosts,' who is their Patron; and who will at length show before the whole world, that it is *most* dangerous to injure those, who are *least* able to defend themselves. But, 'because sentence is not executed speedily,' they proceed, and encourage one another; and the earth continues full of violence and misery in multiplied and varied forms. SCOTT.

CH. XXV. It is better to avoid controversy, or to put an end to it, when we do not speedily come to an agreement; and to converse on such subjects, as all allow to be true and important.—The pious should be careful not to quarrel with each other, not to envy the wicked, and not to faint in tribulation.—If duly influenced by reverential fear of God, we should submit to his sovereignty, do his will, seek his glory, and rejoice in his favor, in peace and harmony, and without murmuring and disputing; even as the angels in heaven.—It is very important, that we should be convinced, that we are mean, guilty, and polluted: and the most important question which can possibly be asked, though often least attended to, is this, 'How can man be justified with God? or he be pure, who is born of a woman?' (9: 1—3. 15: 14—16.) But the most atrocious sinners, when humbled before God, and disposed to accept of his salvation, may be 'justified by faith,' made holy by divine grace, and exalted to glory in heaven.—Our vileness will thus commend his condescension and love; and the riches of his mercy, and the power of his grace, will be magnified in every redeemed inner, to all eternity. SCOTT.

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their own husbands and others is most shameful. Nothing is more common than to reproach such an one, who has offended, by the term *malady*, "Barren!" "*Chee!* she cannot have a child!"' ROBERTS.

(24.) The Egyptians (see their monuments) reaped their grain by cutting off the tops: which Roberts says is still usual in the E. leaving the stubble in the ground. ED.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXV. V. 1—6. Job's appeal to undeniable facts, seems to have reduced his opponents to great difficulties. They were not convinced of their error; but they could not answer his arguments. Bildad, therefore, spoke but few words in reply; Zophar did not answer the third time; and Eliphaz declined leading on another attack. Bildad, however, thought Job had spoken without a proper reverence of God, or a due sense of his own meanness and sinfulness. Perhaps Bildad intimated that his very birth, amidst the sorrows and pains of his mother, proved him born in sin, and a fallen creature. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVI. V. 1—4. Bildad had brought no argument tending

hath no wisdom? and *how* hast thou [d] plentifully declared the thing as it is?

4 To whom hast thou uttered words? and [e] whose spirit came from thee?

5 ¶ [f] Dead *things* are formed from under the waters, [*] and the inhabitants thereof.

6 [g] Hell *is* naked before him, and [h] destruction hath no covering.

7 He [i] stretcheth out the north over the empty place, *and* hangeth the earth upon nothing.

8 He [k] bindeth up the waters in his [l] thick clouds; [m] and the cloud is not rent under them.

9 He [n] holdeth back the face of *his* throne, *and* spreadeth his cloud upon it.

10 He hath [o] compassed the waters with bounds, [p] until the † day and night come to an end.

11 The [q] pillars of heaven tremble, and

d 33:3,33. 39:2. Ps. 49:1—4. 71:15—18. Prov. 8:6—9. Acts 20:20,27.
e 20:3. 32:18. 1 K. 22:23,24. 1 Cor. 1:3. 1 John 4:1—3. Rev. 16:13,14.
f 41:1, &c. Ps. 104:25,26. Ez. 29:3—5.
* Or, with.
g 11:8. Ps. 139:8. Prov. 15:11. Is. 14:9. Am. 9:2. Heb. 4:13.
h 28:22. Ps. 88:10—12.
i 9:8. Gen. 1:1,2. Ps. 24:2. 104:2—5. Prov. 8:23—27. Is. 40:22,26. 42:5.
k 36:29. 38:9,37. Ps. 135:7. Prov. 30:4. Jer. 10:13. 37:11—16. Ps. 18:10,11.
m Is. 5:6.
n Ex. 20:21. 33:20—23. 34:3. 1 K. 8:12. Ps. 97:2. Hab. 3:3—5. 1 Tim. 6:16
o 38:8—11. Ps. 33:7. 104:6—9. Prov. 8:29. Jer. 5:22.
p Gen. 8:22. Is. 54:9,10.
† Heb. *end of light with darkness.*
q 1 Sam. 2:8. Ps. 18:7. Hag. 2:21. Heb. 12:26,27. 2 Pet. 3:10. Rev. 20:11.

unable as he thought it, and ridicules him for it: showing,

1. That there was no great matter to be found in it, *v.* 3. This is spoken ironically. Bildad thought he had spoken very clearly, and *declared the thing as it is.* He was very fond (as we are all apt to be) of his own notions, and thought all other notions of the thing were false, mistaken, and confused; whereas, when we speak of the glory of God, we cannot declare the thing as it is; for we see it through a glass darkly, or but by reflection, and shall not see Him as He is, till we come to heaven. Here, as in *ch.* 37: 19. Job shows him, *we cannot order our speech concerning Him.* He thought he had spoken very fully, though in few words; but, alas! it was but poorly and scantily that he declared it, in comparison with the vast compass and copiousness of the subject.

2. That there was no great use to be made of it, *v.* 2. *How hast thou,* with all this mighty flourish, *helped him that is without power? How hast thou,* with thy grave dictates, *v.* 3. *counselled him that has no wisdom?* Job would convince him, (1.) That he had done God no service by it, nor made Him in the least beholden to him. It is indeed our duty, and will be our honor, to speak on God's behalf; but we must not think He needs our service, or is indebted to us for it; nor will He accept it, if it come from a spirit of contention and contradiction, and not from a sincere [love to God and] regard to his glory. (2.) That he had done his cause no service by it. He thought his friends mightily beholden to him, for helping them, at a dead lift, to make their part good against Job; even weak disputants, when warm, are apt to think truth more beholden to them than really it is. (3.) That he had done him no service by it. He pretended to convince, instruct, and comfort Job; but, alas! what he had said was so little to the purpose, that it would not avail to rectify any mistakes, nor to assist him either in bearing his afflictions, or in getting good by them, *v.* 4. 'Was it to me thou didst direct thy discourse? And dost thou take me for such a child as to need these instructions? Or dost thou think them proper for one in my condition?' Every thing that is true and good is not suitable and seasonable. To one humbled, broken, grieved in spirit, as Job was, he ought to have preached of the grace and mercy of God, rather than of his greatness and majesty; to have laid before him the consolations, rather than the terrors, of the Almighty. Christ knows how to speak what is proper for the weary; (Isa. 50: 4.) and his ministers should learn rightly to divide the Word of truth, and not make those sad, whom God would not have made sad; as Bildad did: therefore Job asks him, *Whose spirit came from thee?* i. e. 'What troubled soul would ever be revived, relieved, and brought to itself, by such discourses?' Thus are we often disappointed in our friends who should comfort us, but the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, never mistakes in his operations, nor misses of his end.

V. 5—14. The truth received great light from the dispute between Job and his friends, concerning those points about which they differed; but now how does truth triumph, and how bright it shines, when there appears no other strife between the contenders, than which shall speak most highly and honorably of God, and be most large in showing forth his praise! It were well if all disputes about matters of religion might end thus, in *glorifying God* as Lord of all, and our Lord, *with one mind and one mouth;* (Rom. 15: 6.) for to that we have all attained, in that we are all agreed. We shall see striking instances of omnipotence if,

1. We look about us, to the earth and waters here below. (1.) *He hangs the earth upon nothing, v.* 7. The art of man could not hang a feather on nothing, yet the Divine Wisdom hangs the whole earth so. It is *poised by its own weight,* so says the poet; it is *upheld by the word of God's power,* so says the apostle. (2.) He *sets bounds to the waters of the sea,* and compasses them in, (*v.* 10.) that they may not *return to cover the earth;* and these bounds shall continue unmoved, unshaken, unworn, till time shall be no more. The poor, sinful inhabitants of the earth, though obnoxious to his justice, and at his mercy, are thus preserved from being overwhelmed, as once, by a flood, and will continue to be so, because reserved unto fire. (3.) He *forms dead things under the waters. Rephaim, giants, are formed under the waters,* i. e. vast creatures, of prodigious bulk, as whales, giant-like creatures, among the innumerable inhabitants of the water. So Patrick. (4.) By mighty storms and tempests He shakes the mountains, here called *the pillars of heaven,* (*v.* 11.) and even *divides the sea, and smites through its proud waves, v.* 12. Those who think Job lived at, or after, the time of Moses, apply this to the dividing of the Red Sea before the children of Israel, and the drowning of the Egyptians in it. *By his understanding he smiteth through Rahab,* so the word is, and Rahab is often put for Egypt; as Ps. 87. 4 Isa. 51: 9.

2. If we consider hell beneath. By *hell and destruction,* (*v.* 6.) understand the grave, and those buried in it; they are under the eye of God, though out of our sight, which may strengthen our belief of the resurrection of the dead. God knows where to find, and whence to fetch, all the scattered atoms of the consumed body. We may also consider the

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to refute Job's doctrine; and therefore Job *ironically* admired the assistance, which Bildad had given to his friends in their extremity, and the instruction which he had afforded him in his perplexity. Surely, Bildad did not suppose his words to be the dictates of the Spirit of prophecy, or even the language of faith and grace; when it was evident, that he spake in his own spirit! SCOTT.

Plentifully declared, &c. (3) Or, 'Abundantly made known wisdom.' ID.

Verses 5—13.

The word *rephaim,* tr. 'dead things,' may be rendered *giants,* or *monsters.* As there is no other reference to those events, [the *dividing* of the Red Sea, and the *destruction of Egypt,*] as this is ambiguous, and as probably Job lived before that time; it probably refers to the general operations of the power of God.—Yea, the devil, who is subtle and poisonous, and of whom the serpent is the constant emblem, was originally the creature of God, and is still absolutely under his power. (*Gen.* 3:1. *Is.* 27:1. *Rev.* 12:7—12.) ID.

(4.) We can hardly venture to assert, that Job had seen or heard of fossil remains in the bottoms of drained seas, or the bowels of harrowing rocks: but are strongly reminded of the discoveries of modern geology; nor will the cut be much out of place beneath this text.

It is from *Cuvier,* and represents the *plesiosaurus,* (9½ to 20 ft. in length,) found in calcareous rock. Other giant fossils, indicating animals of species extinct, it is thought, before man existed, measure, as is estimated from the parts found, the ichthyosaurus 25 ft. the megalosaurus from 25 to, probably, even 60 ft. in length! See *Cuvier,* 'Ossemens Fossiles.' '*Xenophanes* (B. C. 400) was led to believe the eternity of the universe, by discovering the remains of *marine animals* imbedded in rocks, and under the surface of the earth.' *Encyc. Am.* An opinion anciently prevailed that the Titans (enormous giants) rebelled against the gods, and were buried by mountains cast upon them. 'This v. is thus rendered by the ancient versions. "Behold the giants, and those who dwell with them, groan from under the waters."' *Vulg.* "Can the trembling giants be regenerated, when they and their hosts are under the water?" *Sept.* "Behold the giants are slain, and are drawn out of the water." *Syr.* and *Arab.*' Dr. *A. Clarke.* Moses states, there were *nephalim* before the flood; this word has been translated *giants;* and Job, says Dr. *A. Clarke,* 'probably alludes to the deluge,' whose waters would, of course, carry off the dead and bury them, which may account for but few human fossils being found even in diluvial formations. Qu? Have not the fossil remains discovered of old, been (from ignorance of comparative anatomy) attributed to giants (as in modern times), and have they not given rise to the fabulous giants of the poets? 'I must refer the passage either to the *antediluvians* or to vast *sea monsters,* such as porpoises, sharks, whales, &c.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* 'The shades of the heroes of former times, the gigantic spectres, the mighty or enormous dead are meant.' *Good.* ROSENM. tr. '*Manes ipsi tremunt inferius, aquæ* sub terra pariter tremunt, *et incolæ earum.* "The inhabitants themselves of the shades tremble, below, the waters *under the earth likewise tremble,* and their inhabitants." Job here uses a poetical form of speech, and says, that the depths of Ocean and Tartarus (which the vulgar opinion places in the very marrow of the earth below Oceanus), the abode of the manes, and souls, are observed throughout by the eye of the Deity, and tremble at his presence. Comp. Ps. 35:6. Rev. 20:13. and *Virgil's* Georgics. That *rephaim* means *the dead,* the inhabitants of Orcus, the Manes, Ps. 88:11. Prov. 2:18. 9:18. Is. 14:9. do not permit us to doubt. The word tr. *formed,* often occurs in the Kal. and Hiphil conjug. in the sense of *tremble,* see Is. 23:5. Jer. 51:29. &c.' *Rosenm.* But when we see in this wonderful poem so much of the sublimity of truth, in natural philosophy, in morals, (note, 27:6.) in religion, in fine, a reach

[r] are astonished at his reproof.

12 He [s] divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding [t] he smiteth through [u] the proud.

13 By [u] his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed [x] the crooked serpent.

14 Lo, these *are* parts of his ways: but [y] how little a portion is heard of him? but [z] the thunder of his power who can understand?

CHAP. XXVII.

Job solemnly attests his integrity, and resolves to vindicate it as long as he lives, 1—6. He declares the character and doom of the hypocrite, 7—10. He shows that the prosperity of the wicked is soon changed into hopeless misery, 11—23.

MOREOVER [a] Job † continued his parable, and said,

2 *As* [b] God liveth, *who* hath [c] taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, *who* hath ‡ vexed my soul;

3 All the while my breath *is* in me, and § the spirit of God *is* in my nostrils;

r 15:15.
a Ex. 14:21,&c. Ps. 29:10. 74:13. 93: 3,4. 114:2—7. Is. 51:15. Jer. 31:35.
t 40:11,12. Is. 2:12. Dan. 4:37. Jam. 4:6.
Heb. *pride.* Ps. 89:9,10. Is. 51:9.
u Gen. 1:2. Ps. 33:6. 104:30.
x Ps. 74:13,14. Is. 27:1. Rev. 12:9.
y 11:7—9. Ps. 139:6. 145:3. Is. 40: 26—29. Rom. 11:33. 1 Cor. 13:9—12.
z 40:9. 1 Sam. 2:10. Ps. 29:3.
a Num. 23:7. 24:3,15. Ps. 49:4. 78: 2. Prov. 26:7.
† Heb. *added to take up.*
b Num. 14:21. Ruth 3:13. 1 Sam. 14: 39,45. 20:21. 25:26,34. 2 Sam. 2: 27. 1 K. 17:1. 18:15. Jer. 4:2. 5: 2. 12:16. Ez. 33:11.
c 10:3. 34:5. Is. 40:27.
‡ Heb. *made my soul bitter.* Ruth 1:20, 21. 2 K. 4:27.
§ That is, *the breath which God gave him.* Gen. 2:7. Is. 2:22. Acts 17: 25.

grave as the place of the damned, where the separate souls of the wicked are in misery and torment. That is hell and destruction, which are said to be *before the Lord*, (Prov. 15: 11.) and here to be *naked before Him;* to which it is probable there is an allusion, (Rev. 14: 10.) where sinners are said to be tormented *in the presence of the holy angels*, (who attended the Shechinah,) and *in the presence of the Lamb.* And this may give light to *v.* 5. which some ancient versions read thus; (and I think more agreeable to the signification of the word *Rephaim;*) *Behold, the giants groan under the waters, and those that dwell with them;* and then follows, *Hell is naked before Him*, typified by the drowning of the giants of the old world; so the learned J. Mede understands it, and with it illustrates Prov. 21: 16. where hell is called *the congregation of the dead;* the same word here used, and which he would there render *the congregation of the giants*, in allusion to the drowning of the sinners of the old world. And is there any thing in which the majesty of God appears more dreadful, than in the eternal ruin of the ungodly, and the groans of the inhabitants of the land of darkness? Those that will not with angels fear and worship, shall for ever with devils fear and tremble, and God therein will be glorified.

3. If we look up to heaven above. (1.) God *stretches out the north over the empty place, v.* 7. So at first, *He stretched out the heavens like a curtain*, (Ps. 104: 2.) and still continues to keep them stretched out, and will till the general conflagration, when they shall be *rolled together as a scroll*, Rev. 6: 14. He mentions the north, because his country (as ours) lay in the northern hemisphere; and the air is the empty place over which it is stretched out. See Ps. 89: 12. What an empty place is *this* world, in comparison with *the other!* (2.) He keeps the waters that are said to be *above the firmament* from pouring down on the earth, as once they did; (*v.* 8.) *He binds up the waters in his thick clouds*, as if they were tied close in a bag, till there is occasion to use them; and, notwithstanding the vast weight of water so raised and laid up, yet *the cloud is not rent under them*, for then they would burst, and pour out as a spout; but they do, as it were, distil through the cloud, and so come drop by drop, in mercy to the earth, in small rain, or great rain, as He pleases. (3.) He conceals the glory of the upper world, the dazzling lustre of which we poor mortals could not bear; (*v.* 9.) *He holds back the face of his throne*, that light in which He dwells, *and spreads a cloud upon it*, through which *He judges, ch.* 22: 13. God will have us to live by faith, not by sense; for this is agreeable to a state of probation. (4.) The bright ornaments of heaven are the work of his hands; (*v.* 13.) *By his Spirit*, the eternal Spirit that moved on the face of the waters, *the breath of his mouth*, (Ps. 33: 6.) *He has garnished the heavens*, not only made them, but beautified them, has curiously bespangled them with stars by night, and painted them with the light of the sun by day God, having made man to look upward, has *therefore* garnished the heavens, to invite him to look upward, that, by pleasing his eye with the dazzling light of the sun, and the sparkling light of the stars, their number, order, and various magnitudes, which, as so many golden studs, beautify the canopy drawn over our heads, he may be led to admire the great Creator, the Father and Fountain of lights, and to say, 'If the pavement be so richly inlaid, what must the palace be! If the visible heavens be so glorious, what are those that are out of sight!' What is meant here by the *crooked serpent* is not certain. The milky-way, say some; some particular constellation, so called, say others. It is the same word used for leviathan, (Isa. 27: 1.) and, probably, may be meant of the whale or crocodile, in which appears much of the power of the Creator; and why may not Job conclude with that inference, when God Himself does so? *ch.* 41.

He concludes, at last, with an awful *et cætera; v.* 14. Even *the thunder of his power*, i. e. his powerful thunder, one of the lowest of his ways here in our own region, we cannot understand: much less the utmost force and extent of his power. It is but a little portion that we hear and know of God in our present state. He is infinite and incomprehensible; our understandings and capacities are weak and shallow, and the full discoveries of the divine glory are reserved for the future state.

CHAP. XXVII. V. 1—6. Job's friends, either convinced he was right, or despairing of convincing him he was wrong, now gave up the cause. What Job had said (ch. 26.) was a sufficient answer to Bildad's discourse: and now he paused awhile to see whether Zophar would take his turn again; but he declining it, Job himself went on, and, without interruption or vexation, said all he desired. His discourse here is called a *parable*, (*mashal*,) the title of Solomon's proverbs, because grave, weighty, and very instructive; and he spake as one having authority. Its root signifies *to rule*, or *have dominion;* and some think it intimates, that Job now triumphed over his opponents We say of an excellent preacher, that he knows how *to command his hearers.* Job did so here, and, to *end* the *strife*, backs all he had said, in maintenance of his own integrity, with a solemn oath.

1. In his oath, *v.* 2. he first speaks highly of God, yet hardly, also, and unbecomingly, in saying He refused him justice in this controversy, and to appear in his defence; and that, by continuing his

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The most important truths may be introduced unseasonably; and be so misstated and misapplied, as to deceive instead of convincing, and to distress instead of encouraging.—But disputants are in great danger of aiming at victory more than improvement: this produces mutual contempt and reciprocal boastings and revilings; and what seems to one party pregnant with instruction, decisive, and 'fully declaring the thing as it is,' is often treated with ridicule by the other. It is well, however, when all parties agree to celebrate the praises of the LORD, and to extol his works: yet the effusions of passion, or ostentation, may be mistaken for the dictates of those holy affections, which come from the Spirit of God.—But wherever we turn our eyes, we may perceive the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God.—But in redemption all the other wonderful works of God are eclipsed: hither we may draw near, and hear of his glory without dismay; we may come and taste of his grace, and learn to love Him and walk with delight in his ways: here we may contemplate the divine character to advantage; and adore the depths which we cannot comprehend, with the joyful expectation of at length 'seeing Him as He is,' and [becoming] for ever like Him in purity and felicity. SCOTT.

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of thought far beyond that of heathen poets, why choose to confine Job here to current heathen ideas merely? ED.

(12.) *Smiteth through the proud.*] 'I. e. tames, subdues, restrains, the *ferocity* or *pride*, the swelling of the sea. The divine power is often illustrated by attributing to it the restraining of the sea, and smoothing its waves. Ps. 65:8, &c. Jer. 5:22.' *Rosenm.* The inexperience of navigators in the early world must have made the magnificent ocean even more a terror and a mystery than now. It is not strange that its restless waves, seemingly instinct with life, were and are still worshipped and propitiated as a god. Our poetry still exhausts its epithets of sublimity on this wonder of God's power. ED.

(13.) *Crooked.*] '*Fugacem, pr mobilem.* Others tr. *vectis* or *vectuosum*, as if like *a beam*, stretching across door posts. The allusion to the heavens before, leaves us in no doubt that it is the constellation *Draco*, between the two bears, which has plainly a tortuous figure like a serpent. It has 8 circular folds, and its tail like a *beam* separates the great and the little bear. The Arabs call this constellation *chayyal*, the serpent, and *tanim*, the dragon. Virgil speaks of it as 'the sinuous snake,' the 'resplendent snake.' *Rosenm.* The crooked serpent-worship extended over the whole world. Comp. the sculptures of Egypt, India, and Mexico, with the serpent-shaped temples (*dracontia*) at Abury, Carnac, &c. in W. Europe, in which sun-worship and serpent-worship were blended. Some suppose Job referred to the Sabian idolatry, as Moses did. Notes, (a) (b) Introd. p. 10, vol. I. Others suppose (but it seems forced) an allusion to *the ecliptic.* It is a natural supposition, that Job here speaks of the smallest as well as grandest objects in nature, as showing the power of Him, 'Who gives its lustre to the insect's wing, And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds!' The Heb. is *nachash barih;* may this then possibly mean the *fugitive worm*, who timidly hides himself from our sight, shrinking into the soil? ED.

Verse 14.

Job here declared his subject to be inexhaustible. SCOTT.

4 My [d] lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.

5 God forbid that I should [e] justify you: till I die [f] I will not remove my integrity from me.

6 My righteousness [g] I hold fast, and will not let it go: [h] my heart shall not reproach *me* [*] so long as I live.

7 ¶ Let [i] mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.

8 For [k] what *is* the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?

9 Will [l] God hear [m] his cry when trouble cometh upon him?

10 Will he [n] delight himself in the Almighty? [o] will he always call upon God?

11 ¶ I will [p] teach you † by the hand of God: [q] *that* which is with the Almighty will I not conceal.

12 Behold, all [r] ye yourselves have seen *it*; why then are ye thus [s] altogether vain?

13 This *is* [t] the portion of a wicked man with God, and [u] the heritage of oppressors, *which* they shall receive of the Almighty.

14 If his [x] children be multiplied, *it is* for the

d 13:7. 34:6. John 8:55. 2 Cor. 11:10.
e 32:3 4 :7. Deut. 25:1. Prov. 17:15. Gal. 2:11.
f 2:9. 13:15. 29:14. 2 Cor. 1:12.
g 2:3. Ps. 18:20—23. Prov. 4:13.
h Acts 24:16. 2 Cor. 12:11. 1 John 3: 20,21.
* Heb. *from my days.*
i 1 Sam. 25:26. 2 Sam. 18:32. Dan. 4:19.
k 11:20. 13:16. 15:34. 20:5. 31:3. Is. 33:14,15. Matt. 16:26. 23:14. Mark 8:36,37. Luke 9:25 12:20,21. 1 Tim. 6:9 10. Jam. 5:1—3.
l 35:12,13. Ps. 18:41. 66:18. 109:7. Prov. 1:28. 28:9. Is. 1:15. Jer. 11: 11. 14:12. Ez. 8:18. Mic. 3:4. Zech. 7:13. John 9:31. Jam. 4:3.
m Hos. 7:14. Luke 18:5.
n 22:26,27. Ps. 37:4. 43:4. Hab. 3:18.
o Ps. 73:34—36. Luke 18:1. Acts 10: 2. Eph. 6:18. 1 Thes. 5:17.
p 4:3,4. 6:10. Is. 8:11.
† Or, being *in the hand.*
q 32:8—10. Deut. 4:5. Ps. 71:17,18. Acts 20:20,27.
r 21:28—30. Ec. 8:14. 9:1—3.
s 6:25—29. 13:4—9. 16:3. 17:2. 19: 2,3. 21:3. 26:2—4.
t 20:29. 31:3. Ps. 11:6. Ec. 8:13. Is. 3:11. 2 Pet. 2:9.
u 15:20,&c. 20:19,&c. Ps. 12:5. Prov. 22:22,23. Mal. 3:5. Jam. 5:4—6.
x 21:11,12. Deut. 28:32,41. 2 K. 10: 6—10. Esth. 5:11. 9:5—10. Ps. 109: 13. Hos. 9:13,14. Luke 23:29.

troubles, on which his friends grounded their censures, He had taken away the opportunity he hoped ere now to have of clearing himself. Elihu reproved him for this word; (*ch.* 34: 5.) for God is righteous in all his ways, and takes away no man's judgment. But see how apt we are to despair of favor, if not showed us immediately; so poor spirited are we, and so soon weary of waiting God's time. He also charges it on God, that He had vexed his soul; not only not appeared for him, but had appeared against him, and, by such grievous afflictions, had quite imbittered his life. We, by impatience, vex our own souls, and then complain of God that He has vexed them. Yet see Job's confidence in the goodness both of his cause and God; that, though God seemed angry, and to act against him, for the present, he could cheerfully commit his cause to Him.

2. The matter of his oath, *v.* 3, 4. He resolved not to speak wickedness, nor utter deceit; and would adhere to this resolution as long as he lived, *v.* 3. Our resolutions against sin should be thus constant, resolutions for life: in things doubtful and indifferent, it is not safe to be thus peremptory; we know not what reason we may see to change our mind; but in so plain a thing as this, we cannot be too positive, that we will never speak wickedness. Something of a reason for his resolution is here implied—that our breath will not be always in us. Our breath is called *the spirit of God*, because He breathed it into us; and that is another reason, God gives us life and breath; therefore, while we have breath, we must praise Him.

3. The explication of his oath, *v.* 5, 6. Job here thinks of dying, and the best preparative for death, is, perseverance to death in our integrity. '*Until I die*,' i. e. 'though I die by this affliction.' It has often been the lot of upright men to be censured and condemned as hypocrites; but it well becomes them to bear up boldly against such censures, Heb. 13: 18. To resolve that our hearts *shall not reproach* us, when we give them cause to do so, is to affront God, whose deputy conscience is, and to wrong ourselves; for it is a good thing, when a man has sinned, to have a heart within him to smite him for it, 2 Sam. 24: 10. But to resolve that our hearts shall not reproach us, while we still hold fast our integrity, is to baffle the designs of the evil spirit, (who tempts good Christians to question their adoption, *If thou be the Son of God*,) and to concur with the operations of the good Spirit, who witnesses to their adoption.

V. 7—10. 1. Job, having solemnly protested the satisfaction he had in his integrity, for the further clearing of himself, here expresses the dread he had of being found a hypocrite, *v.* 7. *Let mine enemy be as the wicked;* a proverbial expression, like that, (Dan. 4: 19.) *The dream be to them that hate thee.* Job was so far from indulging himself in any wicked way, and flattering himself in it, that, if he might wish the greatest evil he could think of to the worst enemy he had in the world, he would wish him the portion of a wicked man, knowing that worse he could not wish him. Not that we may lawfully wish any man to be wicked, or that any man who is not wicked should be treated as wicked; but we should all choose to be in the condition of a beggar, an outlaw, a galley-slave, any thing, rather than in the condition of the wicked, though in ever so much pomp and outward prosperity.

2. He gives his reasons, *v.* 8, 9. Job here concurs with Bildad, (*ch.* 8: 13, 14.) and Zophar, (*ch.* 11: 20.) and reads the death of the hypocrite's hope with as much assurance. (1.) The hypocrite has gained, and he has hope; this is his bright side; it is allowed he has gained by his hypocrisy, gained praise, applause, and wealth. Jehu gained a kingdom by his hypocrisy, and the Pharisees many a widow's house. But the wealth of this world, he hoped in, he must leave behind him, Ps. 49: 17. The happiness of the other world, he hoped for, he will certainly miss of. So that, on the whole, it is certain, a formal hypocrite, with all his gains, and all his hopes, will be miserable in a dying hour. (2.) Troubles will come, and he will cry to God; and pray earnestly. But, God has told us He will not hear the prayers of those who regard iniquity in their hearts, (Ps. 66: 18.) and set up their idols there, (Ezek. 14: 4.) nor of those who turn away their ear from hearing the law, Prov. 28: 9. *Get you to the gods whom ye have served*, Judg. 10: 14. In the judgment to come, it is certain, God will not hear the cry of those who lived and died in their hypocrisy. Their doleful lamentations will all be unpitied; *I will laugh at your calamity.* Their importunate petitions will all be thrown out, and their pleas rejected. Inflexible justice cannot be biassed, nor the irreversible sentence revoked. See Matt. 7: 22, 23. Luke 13: 26. and the case of the foolish virgins, Matt. 25: 11. (3.) The hypocrite's religion is neither comfortable nor constant, *v.* 10. In prosperity he will not call upon God, but slight Him; in adversity, he will not call upon God, but curse Him; he is weary of his religion, when he gets nothing by it, or is in danger of losing. Note, Those are hypocrites, who, though they profess religion, neither take pleasure, nor persevere in it; who reckon their religion a task, a drudgery, a weariness; who make use of it only to serve a turn, and lay it aside when the turn is served; who will call upon God while it is in fashion, or while the pang of devotion lasts, but leave it off when they fall into other company, or when the fit is over. The more comfort we find in our religion, the more closely we shall cleave to it. Those who have no delight in God, are easily inveigled by the pleasures of sense, and so drawn away from their religion; easily run down by crosses, and so driven away, and will not always call upon God.

V. 11—23. Job's friends had seen a great deal of the misery and destruction that attend wicked people, especially oppressors; and Job, while the heat of disputation lasted, had said as much, and with as much assurance, of their prosperity; but now, that heat was nearly over, he was willing to own how far he agreed with them, and where the difference between his opinion and theirs lay. 1. He agreed, that wicked people are miserable; and one time or other, one way or other, God will surely reckon with them. This truth is abundantly confirmed by the entire concurrence even of these angry disputants. But, 2. In *this* they differed. They held that these deserved judgments are presently and visibly brought on wicked oppressors; so Eliphaz, (*ch.* 15: 20, 21, 29, 32.) so Bildad, (*ch.* 18: 7, 11.) so Zophar, *ch.* 20: 15, 22. Now Job held that, in many cases, judgments do not fall on them quickly, but are deferred for some time. That vengeance strikes slowly, he had already showed; (*chs.* 21 and 24.) now he comes to show that it strikes surely and severely, and that reprieves are no pardons.

I. Job here undertakes to set this matter in a true light, *v.* 11, 12. He would teach '*That which is with the Almighty*,' i. e. 'the counsels and purposes of God, and the usual methods of his providence concerning them:' This he would teach; *By the hand of God*, i. e. by his strength and assistance. Those who undertake to teach others, must look to the hand of God to direct them, to

NOTES.

Verses 11, 12.

By the powerful teaching of God, Job purposed to explain this subject to his friends; nor would he conceal any thing, which he looked upon as a part of the truth. He thought even they must acknowledge, that the wicked sometimes prosper, even to the end of life, of which they had all seen many instances. Why then did they answer so vainly? Did they take a pleasure in misinterpreting, contradicting, and condemning his discourse? SCOTT.

Verses 13—23.

Job may be thought in these vs. to have come over to the opinion of his opponents: but in fact he conceded all he could, to obviate mis-

CHAP. XXVII. V. 6. *My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.*] 'You cannot remember, in the course of your whole life, an instance in which you regret having obeyed conscience; nor a single instance in which you do not regret having disobeyed it. There can nothing happen to you so bad as to have done wrong; there can nothing be gained so valuable as to have done right. And remember, it is only by cultivating the practical *supremacy of conscience*, over every other impulse, that you can attain to that bold, simple, manly, elevated character, which is essential to true greatness.' [Acts 24:16.] WAYLAND.

sword; and [y] his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.

15 Those [z] that remain of him shall be buried in death: and [a] his widows shall not weep.

16 Though he [b] heap up silver as the dust, and [c] prepare raiment as the clay;

17 He may prepare *it*, [d] but the just shall put *it* on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.

18 He buildeth his house [e] as a moth, and [f] as a booth *that* the keeper maketh.

19 The rich man [g] shall lie down, but he shall not be [h] gathered: [i] he openeth his eyes, and [k] he *is* not.

20 [l] Terrors take hold on him as waters; [m] a tempest stealeth him away in the night.

21 The [n] east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth: and as [o] a storm hurleth him out of his place.

22 For [p] *God* shall cast upon him, and [q] not spare: [*] he would fain [r] flee out of his hand.

23 *Men* shall [s] clap their hands at him, and shall [t] hiss him out of place.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Job shows that man is industrious and ingenious, in searching out the treasures hid in the earth, 1—11. But the more valuable treasure, of the knowledge of God, lies beyond his reach, 12—22. God alone comprehends it; and man's wisdom is to fear God, and depart from evil, 23—28.

SURELY there is a [†] vein for [a] the silver, and a place for gold [b] *where* they fine *it*.

open their ear, (Isa. 50: 4.) and to open their lips. Those whom God teaches with a strong hand, are best able to teach others, Isa. 8: 11. They had reason to learn those things he was about to teach, *v.* 12. Truth, rightly understood and applied, would cure us of that vanity of mind which arises from our mistakes.

That particularly which he offers now to lay before them, is, *the portion of a wicked man with God*, particularly of *oppressors*, *v.* 13. Compare *ch.* 20: 29. In the world it may be wealth and preferment, but with God ruin and misery.

II. He does it, by showing that wicked people may, in some instances, prosper, but that ruin follows them in those very instances; and that is their portion, their heritage, that which they must abide by.

1. They may prosper in their children, but the more [ill-nurtured] children they leave, and the greater prosperity they leave them in, the more and the fairer marks do they leave for the arrows of God's judgments to be levelled at: his three sore judgments, *sword*, *famine*, *and pestilence*, 2 Sam. 24: 13. They brought them up to live by their sword, as Esau; and those that do so, commonly die by the sword, first or last: or they die by the sword of justice for their crimes, or of the murderer for their estates. Others of them shall be so needy, as not to have a competency of necessary food, *v.* 14. and so greedy, or discontented, that what they have they shall not be satisfied with, because not so much, or not so dainty, as they have been used to. Hag. 1: 6. Those that *remain shall be buried in death*, i. e. shall die of the plague, called *death*, (Rev. 6: 8.) and be buried privately and in haste, without solemnity; and even their *widows shall not weep;* shall not have wherewithal to put them in mourning. Or, these wicked men, as they live undesired, so they die unlamented, and even their widows will think themselves happily rid of them.

2. They may prosper in their estates, but ruin attends *them* too, *v.* 16—18. (1.) Suppose them to be rich in money, plate, clothing, and furniture; they have heaps of clothes, as plentiful as heaps of clay; or such abundance of clothes, that they are even a burden to them; *they lade themselves with thick clay*, Hab. 2: 6. See what is the care and business of worldly people—To heap up worldly wealth. Much would have more. But what comes of it? He shall never be the better for it himself. Nay, God will so order it, that the just shall wear his raiment, and the innocent divide his silver: some way or other, good men shall come honestly by that wealth the wicked man came dishonestly by. *The wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.* God disposes of men's estates as He pleases, and often makes their wills, against their will. The Egyptians' jewels were the Israelites' pay. Solomon observes, (Eccl. 2: 26.) God makes the sinners drudges to the righteous. When God enriches good men, they must remember they are but stewards, and must give an account. What bad men bring a curse on their families with the ill-getting of, good men bring a blessing on their families with the well-using of. *He that by unjust gain increaseth his substance, shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.* (2.) Suppose them to have built them strong and stately houses; but they are like the house which the moth makes for herself in an old garment, out of which she will soon be shaken, *v.* 18. He is very secure in it, as a moth, and has no apprehension of danger: but it will prove of as short continuance as a booth, quickly taken down and gone.

3. Destruction attends their persons, though they lived long in health, and at ease, *v.* 19. He does not sleep so contentedly as people think he does. He *lies down*, but *his abundance will not suffer him to sleep*, at least not so sweetly as the *laboring man*. He lies down, but his cares increase his fears, and both together make him uneasy.

[y] 1 Sam. 2:5.
[z] 1 K. 14:10,11. 16:3,4. 21:21—24.
[a] Ps. 78:64. Jer. 22:18.
[b] 22:24,25. 1 K. 10:27. Hab. 2:6. Zech. 9:3.
[c] Matt. 6:19. Jam. 5:2.
[d] Prov. 13:22. 28:8. Ec. 2:26.
[e] 8:14,15. Is. 51:8
[f] Is. 1:8. 38:12. Lam. 2:6.
[g] 14:13—15. 21:23—26,30. 30:23.
[h] Gen. 49:10. Jer. 8:2. Matt. 3:12. 13:47.
[i] 7:7—9. Ps. 58:9. 73:19,20.
[k] 8:22. 14:10,12. 24:24. *Marg.*
[l] 15:21. 18:11. 22:16. Ps. 18:4. 42:7. 69:14,15. Jon. 2:3.
[m] 20:23. 21:18. Ex. 12:29. 2 K. 19:35. Dan. 5:30.
[n] Jer. 18:17. Hos. 13:15.
[o] Ex. 9:23—25. Ps. 11:6. 58:9. 83:15. Nah. 1:3—8. Matt. 7:27.
[p] Ex. 9:14. Deut. 32:23. Josh. 10:11.
[q] Deut. 28:20. Ez. 5:5,6. Rom. 8:32. 2 Pet. 2:4,5.
[*] Heb. *in fleeing he would flee.*
[r] 20:24. Ex. 14:25—28. Judg. 4:17—21. Is. 10:3. Am. 2:14. 9:1—3.
[s] Esth. 9:22—25. Prov. 11:10. Lam. 2:15. Rev. 18:20.
[t] 1 K. 9:8. Jer. 19:8. Mic. 6:16. Zeph. 2:15.
[†] Or, *mine.*
[a] Gen. 2:11,12. 23:15. 24:22. 1 K. 7:48—50. 10:21. 1 Chr. 29:2—5.
[b] Ps. 12:6. Prov. 17:3. 27:21. Is. 48:10. Zech. 13:9. Mal. 3:2,3. 1 Pet. 1:7.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We may safely make our appeal to God, when we are conscious of integrity before Him, and are fairly called to it: but we are so apt to mix corrupt passions with our best services, to mistake delays for denials, and *corrections* for *vexations*, and to speak irreverently or impatiently when afflicted; that, without continual applications of the blood of sprinkling, we cannot possibly have any well grounded confidence before God.—As we ought not, without scriptural evidence, to conclude that we are in the way of salvation, so we should not be induced to condemn ourselves as hypocrites, if conscious that we trust in his mercy, and aim to do his will; nor should we justify those who censoriously condemn their brethren. A good conscience on evangelical principles, and a watchful opposition to sin, will prevent our own hearts from reproaching us, and inspire confidence in God, in the midst of afflictions and calumnies, and in the hour of death: and this we should hold fast as long as we live.—No greater misery can be imprecated, than the doom of the most prosperous sinner; no more dreadful case imagined, than that of the successful, specious hypocrite. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVIII. V. 1—11. Job had maintained, that the dispensations of Providence were not regulated on such principles as his friends contended for; but by a higher and incomprehensible wisdom: and to illustrate and confirm this, he here showed, that the sagacity of men was chiefly competent for *natural things*, and employed in them; it could not therefore be supposed they were acquainted with the deep counsels of God. This book is beyond all reasonable doubt, one of the most ancient in the world; yet the art of mining, and refining metals, and the use of precious stones, are spoken of as things well known in the east, where Job and his friends dwelt. [Note, end of 2 Chr.] But very many ages after, populous nations have been found, which were little acquainted with these things: the iron especially, (which is in fact the most *useful* of all metals,) seems to have been little known, or employed among the Greeks, in the very early ages of that nation; [though the ancient Egyptians, see *Wilkinson*, used it;] and it was totally unknown in America, when that continent was first discovered. So that the most ancient times appear to have been far more civilized, and acquainted with things useful, than subsequent ages: and barbarous ignorance seems to have prevailed gradually; as the knowledge possessed by the antediluvians, and doubtless communicated by Noah and his sons, was forgotten among their posterity. The Bible by no means favors the general notion, that the first ages of the world were the most rude and savage; nay, indeed, the accounts there given are totally inconsistent with it. SCOTT.

construction, and establish his own conclusions.—The chief difference between this passage, and the discourses of Job's friends on the same subject, is this:—they spoke of the misery of wicked men before and at their death, as uniformly proportioned to their crimes: Job intimated that it might be so; but if not, the consequence of their death would assuredly be dreadful. SCOTT.

(13.) *Kennicott* supposes, that some such phrase as 'then answered Zophar, the Naamathite, and said,' is omitted here: and that the last 11 vs. of this ch. are not the words of Job, but the 3d speech of Zophar in regular course. See *Noyes*. ED.

(16.) *Heap up silver.*] Note, Esth. 3:9. *Raiment.*] The desire of acquiring and laying up shows itself still, in this way, in the E. Very numerous wardrobes, consisting of hundreds of the same article of dress, are spoken of by eastern travellers. ID.

(18.) *The booth which the keeper buildeth.*] I. e. the keeper of a field. A cut is given (from *Niebuhr*) of one of these slight, temporary erections, still used in the E., in protecting, in the season of fruit, the vineyards, &c. from foxes or other beasts, birds, or thieves. &c. Niebuhr's drawing is of the booth used in Tehama, Arabia. ID.

(21.) *The E. wind.*] Note, 15:2. ID.

2 [c] Iron is taken out of the * earth, and brass *is* molten *out of* the stone.

3 He setteth an end to darkness, and [d] searcheth out all perfection: * the stones of darkness, and the shadow of death.

4 The flood breaketh out from the inhabitant; *even the waters* forgotten of the foot: they are dried up, they are gone away from men.

5 *As for* the earth, [f] out of it cometh bread: and under it is turned up as it were [g] fire.

6 The stones of it *are* the place of [h] sapphires: and it hath † dust of gold.

7 *There is* [i] a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen:

8 The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it.

c Gen. 4:22. Num. 31:22. Deut. 8:9. 1 Chr. 22:14.
* Or, *dust.*
d Prov. 2:4. Ec. 1:13. Hab. 2:13. Matt. 6:33. Luke 16:8.
e 10:21,22. 12:22. 38:16,17.
f Gen. 1:11,12,29. Ps. 104:14,15. Is. 28:25—29.
g Ez. 28:13,14.
h 16. Ex. 24:10. Cant. 5:14. Is. 54: 11. Rev. 21:19.
† Or, *gold ore.*
i 21—23. 39:19,24. Rom. 11:33.

But, in the close, we are called to attend his exit, and see how miserable he is *in* death, and *after* death, v. 20, 23.

While he lived, he had the benefit of sparing mercy; but now the day of God's patience is over, and He will not spare, but pour out on him the full vials of his wrath: and it will be in vain to call for the shelter of rocks and mountains. His memory falls under the *just indignation of all mankind, v.* 23. *Men shall clap their hands at him,* i. e. shall rejoice in the judgments of God, by which he is cut off, and be well pleased in his fall. *When the wicked perish, there is shouting:* leaving on his name perpetual marks of infamy.

CHAP. XXVIII. The strain of this ch. is very unlike the rest of this book. Job forgets his sores, and all his sorrows, and talks like a philosopher, or a virtuoso. Here is a great deal both of natural philosophy and moral in this discourse; but how does it come here? Doubtless, it was not merely for an amusement, or diversion from the controversy; though, if it had been only so, perhaps it had not been much amiss. When disputes grow hot, better lose the question than lose our temper. But this is pertinent, and to the business in hand. Job and his friends had been discoursing about the dispensations of Providence toward the wicked and the righteous. Job had showed that some wicked men live and die in prosperity, while others are presently and openly arrested by the judgments of God. But, if any ask the reason why some are punished in this world, and not others, they must be told it is a question that cannot be resolved. The knowledge of the reasons of state, in God's government of the world, is kept from us, and we must neither pretend to it, nor reach after it. Zophar had wished God would show Job the *secrets of wisdom, ch.* 11: 6. No, says Job, *secret things belong not to us, but things revealed,* Deut. 29: 29. Our inquiries into the former must be checked, into the latter must be quickened, for that is our concern.

V. 1—11. Here Job shows how far the wit of man may go, into the depths of nature, seizing the riches of it; what great knowledge and wealth men may, by ingenious and industrious searches, make themselves masters of. But does it therefore follow that men may, by their wit, comprehend the reasons why some wicked people prosper, and others are punished, why some good people prosper, and others are afflicted? By no means. The caverns of the earth may be discovered, but not the counsels of heaven.

1. The wealth of this world is hid in the earth. Iron and brass, the less costly, but more serviceable metals, are *taken out of the earth,* (*v.* 2.) and are there found in great abundance, which abates their price indeed, but is a great kindness to man, who could much better be without gold than without iron. Nay, *out of the earth comes bread,* i. e. bread-corn, the necessary support of life, *v.* 5. *Under it is turned up as it were fire;* precious stones, that sparkle as fire; brimstone, that is apt to take fire; coal, that is proper to feed fire. As we have our food, so we have our fuel, cut out of the earth There the sapphires and other gems are, and thence gold-dust is digged up, *v.* 6.

2. This wealth is hard to be found; there is but here and there *a vein for the silver, v.* 1. The precious stones, [in their rough state,] because buried in obscurity and out of sight, are called *stones of darkness, and the shadow of death.* Men may search long before they light on them; must, with their lamps, set an end to darkness, and if one expedient fail, try another, till they have searched out all perfection, and turned every stone to effect it, *v.* 3. They must grapple with subterraneous waters, (*v.* 4, 10, 11.) and force their way through rocks which are, as it were, the roots of the mountains, *v.* 9. God has made the getting of gold, silver, and precious stones, so difficult, (1.) To excite and engage industry. If valuable things were too easily come by, men would never learn to take pains. (2.) To check pomp and luxury. What is for necessity is had with a little labor from the surface of the earth; but what is for pride must be dug with a great deal of pains out of the bowels of it. To be fed is cheap, but to be fine is chargeable.

3. Though so hard to come by, yet men will have it: and so *search out all perfection, v.* 3. arts

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(1—12.) Commentators, in general, refer all these vs. to the works of man *alone.* ED.

(2.) Many tr. 'and the stone pours out brass,' and some seem to refer it to the making of brass, by adding the *lapis calaminaris* to copper: but *Rosenm.* tr. *eben nechushah, copper stone,* as *qeseth-nechusah* is tr. *brass* or *copper bow,* 2 Sam. 22:5. Thus the phrase would mean *melts the copper ore* to obtain the metal. So *Jerome* tr. 'and the stone melted by heat is turned to copper (*æs*);' and the *Syr.* 'and from stones *æs* is poured or melted.' *Pliny* says *æs* is made *ex lapide æroso,* called *cadmia;* and stones are melted by fire into *æs.* Native copper is found in the veins of primitive rocks, and of the older secondary. The sulphurets of copper are the ores from which copper is usually extracted. The ore is roasted by a low heat, in a furnace with flues, in which the sulphur that is volatilized is collected. The remaining ore is then smelted in contact with the fuel. The very ancient metal *bronze,* is an alloy of copper, with about 8 or 10 per cent. of tin. *Bell-metal* has 20 per cent. of tin. *Brass* (the best) has 4 parts of copper to 1 of zinc. Brass was well known to the Romans under the name *orichalcum.* See *Enc. Am.* ID.

(3.) *Out all perfection.*] Most render '*to the utmost limit.*' ID.

(4.) Most commentators refer *all* the vs. 1—11. to mining operations, but find difficulty in agreeing on the sense of much of it. The following remarks of *Roberts* induce the belief, that the immense hydraulic monuments of ancient art are *also* referred to here, in describing the enterprise and power of man. Fortunately, the learned translators of our version, having no theory to support, have kept near to the Heb. which diminishes many difficulties; occasioned perhaps by Job's describing several kinds of the triumphs of art, as mining, canalling, irrigation, &c. together; and some add navigation. 'Moeris (k. of Egypt) made the lake Moeris, 450 miles in circumf. and in some places 300 ft. deep, with 2 pyramids in the middle 200 cubits above and as many beneath the water. It communicates by a *secret channel* (v. 7.) with the Nile: for 6 months the lake empties itself into the Nile, and the remaining 6 the Nile supplies the lake. *Herod. Strabo, Diod: Sic. Pliny, M. Savary.* Moeris cut a canal 40 leagues long and 300 ft. wide, in many places *through the rock,* (v. 10.) to introduce the waters of the Nile into a vast basin, (formed by a chain of mountains stretching from the Nile at Fayoom, towards Lybia, and returning E. again to the Nile,) once but a sandy desert; 2 other canals with sluices rendered the lake useful to agriculture; and it relieved Egypt of superfluous waters; which when needed were let out to produce a second fertilizing inundation *directed at will.* Fearful this artificial sea might break its bounds, a canal was cut through the mountain, discharging the superfluous waters among the Lybian sands. History knows not a work so glorious, nor is it wonderful that antiquity esteems it above the pyramids and labyrinth; for with the grandeur of the enterprise, it included the happiness of the people.

'*Abd-Shems* (i. e. *servant of the sun,* comp. 31:27.), 3d in descent from Joktan son of Eber, (Gen. 10:25.) and surnamed Saba, having built the city Saba, afterwards called Marab, in *Arabia Felix,* made a vast *dam,* to serve as a basin or reservoir for the water which came down from the mountains, not only for irrigation, but distributed by aqueducts for drink, &c. This building stood like a *mountain* above the city (*v.* 11.), the water rising to 120 ft.; and so strong was the work, the inhabitants confidently built their houses upon it. At length God, highly displeased at their great pride, to humble them, sent a flood, (*v.* 4.) which broke down the *mound* (30:14.) by night, while the inhabitants slept, [34: 20.] and carried away the whole city, (Ps. 15:4.) with the neighboring towns and people (27:20, &c.): so that "they are gone and scattered like Saba," became a proverb. See *Sale:* Prel. Disc. to Koran. *Prideaux, Lowth.*

'*Heber* speaks of a tank *in India,* made by damming the gore of a large valley, as 4 miles (and during the rains, 6) in circumf. sufficient in industrious hands to give fertility (*v.* 5.) to a neighborhood. The *artificial lakes* of India are superintended by English engineers. The largest is 30 miles in circumf.; the largest dam is of stone, 54 ft. high, 130 broad at the base, and 30 at the top: another is 12 miles in length, 30 ft. in height, 120 ft. at base, and 24 at top. In every village is a man whose duty it is to distribute the water. The largest agricultural canal is 54 miles in length. A great many tanks are formed by uniting two hills, thus stopping the stream between. The artificial lakes of Ceylon are also of astonishing magnitude, and made of stones (*v.* 6.) of great size: (*v.* 9.) *Tunnels* (*v.* 7.) are made at the base of the mounds, with sluice gates. Comp. Deut. 8:7. 2 Sam. 5:20. 2 K. 18:17. 20:20, &c.' ROBERTS. ED.

Inhabitant.] From their fountains, or localities, so some. *Forgotten of the foot.*] Some refer this and the rest of the v. to the manner of *mining;* being let down into the shaft, miners dangle in the air, far from the usual walks of life, or crawling upon the knees, &c. so that there is little use for the foot. Others, as *Good,* understand, the metal is taken from ores which before were of so little value as to be trodden carelessly under foot. *Roberts* refers the phrase to waters broken out and lost in the desert, or sands, as in the case of those superabundant waters let from the great Moeris lake into the Lybian desert: 'the feet of men in walking where they were, think of them no more.' The phrase seems still to need explanation. *Hewlett* suggests the rendering, 'flood forgetting its course.' *Noyes* tr. 'from the foot of the mountain they open a passage, unsupported of the feet they descend, they move away from men.' ID.

(5.) *Under it is turned up as it were fire.*] 'As it were by fire,' pierced and excavated, as volcanic regions are by the action of fire. *Castalio,* and *Rosenm. Good* tr. 'but below windeth a fiery region.' The *Chal.* has 'and under which is Gehenna.' The Vulg. has 'The land from which bread has been produced has been destroyed by fire!'

9 He putteth forth his hand upon the * rock; [j] he overturneth the mountains by the roots.

10 He cutteth out rivers among the rocks; and his eye seeth [k] every precious thing.

11 He [l] bindeth the floods from † overflowing; [m] and *the thing that is* hid bringeth he forth to light.

12 But [n] where shall wisdom be found? and where *is* the place of understanding?

13 Man [o] knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found [p] in the land of the living.

14 The [q] depth saith, *It is* not in me: and the sea saith, *It is* not with me.

15 ‡ It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed *for* the price thereof.

16 It cannot be valued with [r] the gold of Ophir, with the precious [s] onyx, or the sapphire.

17 The gold and the [t] crystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it *shall not be for* § jewels of fine gold.

18 No mention shall be made of ‖ coral, or of [u] pearls: for the price of wisdom *is* above [x] rubies.

19 The [y] topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.

20 [z] Whence then cometh wisdom? and where *is* the place of understanding?

21 Seeing it is [a] hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close [b] from the fowls of the ¶ air.

22 [c] Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.

and engines, to dry up and carry off the waters, when they break in upon their mines, *v.* 4. pumps, pipes, and canals, to clear their way; and, obstacles being removed, they tread *the path no fowl knoweth*, (*v.* 7, 8.) unseen by the vulture's eye, piercing and quick-sighted, untrodden by the lion's whelps, which traverse all the paths of the wilderness, to obtain it. They work their painful way through the rocks, and undermine the mountains, *v.* 10. have their lives in their hands, (*v.* 11.) and are continually in danger of being suffocated by damps, or crushed or buried alive by the fall of the earth. But, what carries men through all this toil and peril? *v.* 10. Silver and gold are *precious things* with them; these they have in their eye; they fancy them glittering before their faces, and, in prospect of laying hold on them, make nothing of all these difficulties; *that which is hid bringeth he forth to light*, *v.* 11. What was hid under ground, is laid on the bank; the metal hid in the ore, is refined from its dross, and brought forth pure out of the furnace; and then he thinks his pains well bestowed. Go to the miners, then, thou sluggard in religion, consider their ways, and be wise. Let their courage, diligence, and constancy in seeking the wealth that perisheth, shame us out of slothfulness and faint-heartedness in laboring for the true riches. *How much better to get wisdom than gold!* How much easier and safer! Yet gold is sought for, but grace neglected. Will the hopes of *precious things* out of the earth, (so they call them, though really paltry and perishing,) be such a spur to industry, and shall not the certain prospect of truly precious things in heaven be much more so?

V. 12—19. Job, having spoken of the wealth of the world, which men put such a value on, and take so much pains for, here comes to speak of another more valuable jewel, and that is, *wisdom and understanding*, the knowing and enjoying of God and ourselves. They that found out all those ways and means to enrich themselves, thought themselves very wise; but Job will not own that to be wisdom, and still asks, *Where is wisdom?* We must seek it elsewhere, and it will be found nowhere but in the principles and practices of religion. There is more true knowledge, satisfaction, and happiness, in sound divinity, which shows us the way to the joys of heaven, than in [that] natural philosophy, or [those] mathematics, which help us [only] to find a way into the bowels of the earth.

Gold is another's, wisdom our own; gold is for the body and time, wisdom for the soul and eternity. Let what is most precious in God's account, be so in ours. See Prov. 3: 14, &c. Let us ask after that only true wisdom which best improves our faculties, and best secures our spiritual and eternal welfare. Prov. 2: 3, 4.

Job asks it, as one that utterly despaired of finding wisdom any where but in God, and any way but by divine revelation, *v.* 13. We cannot attain to a right understanding of God and his will, of ourselves, and our duty, and interest, but by reading God's book and the men of God. Such is the degeneracy of human nature, that there is no true wisdom to be found with any but those who are born again, and who, through grace, partake of the divine nature. Men more easily break through difficulties in getting worldly wealth, than in getting heavenly wisdom; and will take more pains to learn how to live in this world, than for ever in a better. So blind and foolish is man become, that it is in vain to ask him, *Where is the place of wisdom*, and which the road to it?

V. 20—28. The question (*v.* 12.) he asks again here, as too worthy, too weighty, to be let fall; at length he comes to this issue; that there is a twofold wisdom; one *hid in God*, which is secret, and *belongs not to us;* the other made known by Him, and revealed to man, which *belongs to us and to our children.*

1. Let us then be content not to know the future events of Providence, until time discover them, (Acts 1: 7.) and not to know the secret reasons of Providence, until eternity discover them. *Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame of it;* cannot give an account of it ourselves; yet, have a little patience, 'and we will fetch thee shortly to a place where even this wisdom will be found.' When *the mystery of God shall be finished*, it will be laid open, and we shall know as we are known; when the veil of flesh is rent, and the interposing clouds are scattered, John 13: 7.

2. Nothing sensible is to us more unaccountable than the wind; but God gives it out by weight, wisely ordering both from what point it shall blow, and with what strength. The waters of the sea, and the rain waters, He both weighs and measures; allotting the proportion of every tide and every shower: vapors go up, rains come down, air is condensed into water, water rarified into air: but the great God keeps [their component elements in the exact proportion requisite for man, animals and plants,] and sees that none of it be lost. Now if, in these things, Providence be so exact, how much more in dispensing frowns and favors, rewards and punishments, to the children of men, according to the rules of equity!

3. All events were, from eternity, designed and determined by an infallible prescience, and immutable decree, *v.* 26, 27. When He settled the course of nature, He foreordained all the operations of his government. Some make Job to speak, in *v.* 27. of wisdom as a person, and translate it, *Then He saw her, and showed her, &c.* so it is parallel with that of Solomon, concerning the essential Wisdom of the Father, the eternal Word, Prov. 8: 22, &c. *Before the earth was, then was I by Him*, John 1: 1, 2.

4. The knowledge of God's *revealed will*, is within our reach; level to our capacity, *v.* 28. Let it not be said, that, when God concealed his counsels from man, and forbade him that tree of knowledge, it was because He grudged him any thing that would contribute to his real bliss; no, He let him know as much as he was concerned to know, in order to his duty and happiness: but he must not think to be a privy-counsellor. He said to *Adam*, so some, plainly, it was not for him to amuse himself with over-curious searches into the mysteries of creation, he would find it neither possible nor profitable to do so. No less wisdom (says Abp. Tillotson) than that which made

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* Or, *flint.*
[j] Nah. 1:4—6.
[k] Prov. 14:23. 24:4.
[l] Is. 37:25. 44:27.
† Heb. *weeping.*
[m] Is. 45:2,3. 1 Cor. 4:5.
[n] 20,28. 1 K. 3:9. Ps. 51:6. Prov. 2: 4—6. 18:1. Ec. 7:23—25. 1 Cor. 1: 19,20. Col. 2:3. Jam. 1:5,17.
[o] 13—19. Ps. 19:10. 119:72. Prov. 3: 14,15. 8:11,18,19. 16:16. 23:23. Ec. 8:16,17.
[p] 21,22. Ps. 52:5. Is. 38:11. 53:8.
[q] Rom. 11:33,34.
‡ Heb. *Fine gold shall not be given for it.* 18.
[r] 1 Chr. 29:4. Ps. 45:9. Is. 13:12.
[s] Ex. 28:20. Ez. 28:13.
[t] Ez. 1:22. Rev. 4:6. 21:11. 22:1.
§ Or, *vessels.*
‖ Or, *Ranoth.* Ez. 27:16.
[u] Matt. 7:6. 13:45,46. 1 Tim. 2:9. Rev. 17:4. 18:12. 21:21.
[x] Prov. 3:15. 31:10. Lam. 4:7.
[y] Ex. 39:10. Rev. 21:20.
[z] See on 12. Prov. 2:6. Ec. 7:23 24. 1 Cor. 2:6—15.
[a] Ps. 49:3,4. Matt. 11:25. 13:17,35. 1 Cor. 2:7—10. Col. 2:3.
[b] 7.
¶ Or, *heaven.*
[c] 14. Ps. 88:10—12.

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alluding, Dr. *A. Clarke* thinks, to Sodom. The opinion is prevailing among geologists, that the earth is still an ignited mass, a few miles below the surface. *Boothr.* renders, 'though its interior is subverted as by fire:' and so *Noyes.* ED.

Verses 12—19.

Job here maintained, that 'wisdom,' (or the knowledge of God, and his works and ways, which led to a prudent and holy practice, and might enable men to unravel the mysteries of Providence,) was far more difficult to be found, than the subterraneous treasures before spoken of. Several different words are used in the original for *gold;* which are supposed to denote, either the place from which it came, the manner in which it had been purified, or the form in which it was offered for sale, whether wrought or unwrought. The words also, rendered 'crystal,' 'onyx,' 'sapphire,' &c. are differently interpreted. SCOTT.

Verses 20—22.

As no wealth could purchase wisdom, so no creature could discover it. It was hid from the eyes of all living. Men of the greatest talents, who soared above the rest of mankind, as the fowls of the air above other creatures, could not, by all their speculations and discoveries, acquire wisdom. 'Destruction and death,' indeed, brought reports of it: and if men deeply thought on these solemn subjects, they might understand something of the reasons, for which the wicked were permitted to prosper; and the event would at length clear up difficulties, and effectually show what was man's wisdom. But previous and more particular instruction was necessary to make men truly wise.—'The *grave* is the only place where we may learn something of it.' *Patrick.*—Surely nothing can be learned in the grave; and hell rather than the grave must be meant by the word translated 'destruction.' (*Note, Rev.* 9:11.) SCOTT.

23 [j] God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof.

24 For [k] he looketh to the ends of the earth, *and* seeth under the whole heaven:

25 To make [l] the weight for the winds; and he weigheth the waters by measure.

26 When [m] he made a decree for the rain, and [n] a way for the lightning of the thunder:

27 Then did he see it, and [*] declare it; [i] he prepared it, yea, and searched it out.

28 And [k] unto man he said, Behold, [l] the fear of the Lord, that *is* wisdom; and [m] to depart from evil *is* understanding.

CHAP. XXIX.

Job regrets the loss of his comforts, and of the respect which had been shown him, 1—11. He declares the good use which he had made of his authority, 12—17; and the grounds on which he had hoped for abiding prosperity, 18—25.

MOREOVER, Job † continued his parable, and said,

2 Oh, that I were [a] as

d Ps. 19:7. 147:5. Prov. 8:14. Matt. 11:27. Luke 10:21,22. Acts 15:18. Rom. 11:33. 1 Cor. 1:30. Jude 25.
e 2 Chr. 16:9. Prov. 15:3. Zech. 4:10. Rev. 5:6.
f Ps. 135:7. Is. 40.12.
g 38:26,27,32. 38:25. Ps. 148:8. Jer. 14:22. Am. 4:7. Zech. 10:1.
h 37:3—5. Ps. 29:3—10.
* Or, *number it.*
i Ps. 19:1. Prov. 8:22—29.
k Deut. 29:29. Prov. 8:4,5,32—36.
l Deut. 4:6. Ps. 111:10. Prov. 1:7. 9:10. Ec. 12:13. Jam. 3:13—17.
m Ps. 34:14. Prov. 5:7. 13:14. 16:6, 17. Is. 1:16. 2 Tim. 2:19. 1 Pet. 3:11. † Heb. *added to take up.* 27:1.
a 1:1—5. 7:3.

the world, can thoroughly understand the philosophy of it. But let man look upon this as his wisdom, To fear the Lord and to depart from evil; let him learn that, and he is learned enough, let this knowledge serve his turn. When God forbade man the tree of knowledge, He allowed him the tree of life, and this is that tree, Prov. 3: 18. We cannot attain true wisdom but by divine revelation: *The Lord giveth wisdom*, Prov. 2: 6. the matter of which is not the secrets of nature or providence, but the rules of our own practice: unto man He said not, 'Go up to heaven, to fetch happiness thence;' or, 'Go down to the deep, to draw it up thence.' No, *the Word is nigh thee;* (Deut. 30: 14.) *He hath shewed thee, O man,* not what is *great*, but what is *good*, not what the Lord thy God designs to do with thee, but what He *requires of thee*, Mic. 6: 8. *Unto you, O men, I call*, Prov. 8: 4. Lord, what is man that he should be thus minded, thus visited!

The fear of the Lord, that is the wisdom. Here is, 1. The description of true religion, pure religion, and undefiled; it is to *fear the Lord, and depart from evil*, which agrees with God's character of Job, *ch.* 1: 1. The *fear of the Lord* is the spring and summary of all religion. There is a slavish fear of God, springing from hard thoughts of Him, which is contrary to religion, Matt. 25: 24. There is a selfish fear of God, springing from dreadful thoughts of Him, which may be a good step toward religion, Acts 9: 5. But there is a filial fear of God, springing from great and high thoughts of Him, which is the life and soul of all religion. And wherever this reigns in the heart, it will appear by a constant care *to depart from evil*, Prov. 16: 6. This is essential to religion; we must first cease to do evil, or we shall never learn to do well. 2. To be truly religious, is to be truly wise: as the wisdom of God appears in the institution of it, so the wisdom of man appears in the practice and observance of it; it is *understanding*, for it is the best knowledge of truth; *it is wisdom*, for it is the best conduct of our affairs. nothing more surely guides our way, and gains our end, than being religious.

CHAP. XXIX. V. 1—6. After that excellent discourse concerning wisdom in the foregoing ch. Job sat down and paused awhile, not because he had talked himself out of breath, but because he would not, without leave of the company, engross the talk to himself, but would give room for his friends, if they pleased, to make their remarks on what he had said; but they had nothing to say, therefore, after he had recollected himself a little, he went on with his discourse concerning his own affairs, in this and the two following chs. Job begins with a wish, *v.* 2. So he brings in this account of his prosperity. His wish was, 1. That he was in as good a state as formerly; not for his own ease, but reputation, and the glory of his God, which, he thought, was eclipsed by his present sufferings. If this be our end in desiring life, health, and prosperity, that God may be glorified, and the credit of our holy profession rescued, preserved, and advanced, the desire is not only natural, but spiritual. Or, 2. That he were in as good a frame of spirit, as then! What Job complained most of now, was a load on his spirits, through God's withdrawing from him; therefore he wishes he had now his spirit as much enlarged and encouraged in the service of God, as then, and had as much freedom and fellowship with Him, as he then thought himself happy in.

Four things were then very pleasant to holy Job;

1. Confidence in the divine protection, *v.* 2. Those only whom God protects are safe, and [those only who do his will] may be secure; therefore those who have ever so much of this world, must not think themselves safe, unless God preserve them.

2. Complacency in the divine favor, *v.* 3. God lifted up the light of his countenance on him, gave him the assurances and sweet relishes of his love. Those that have the brightest sun-shine of outward prosperity, must yet expect some moments of darkness: but those that are interested in the favor of God, and know how to value it, can, by the light of that, walk cheerfully, and comfortably through all the darkness of this vale of tears. THAT PUTS GLADNESS INTO THE HEART, ENOUGH TO BALANCE ALL THE GRIEVANCES OF THIS PRESENT TIME.

3. Communion with the divine Word, *v.* 4. *The secret of God was upon my tabernacle*, i. e. When God conversed freely with him, as one bosom friend with another. See Ps. 25: 14. God communicates his favor and grace to his people, and receives the returns of their devotion in a way secret to the world. Some read it, *When the society of God was in my tabernacle;* which Rabbi Solomon understands of an assembly of God's people, that used to meet at Job's house for religious worship, in which he presided; this he took great pleasure in, and the scattering of it was a trouble to him. Or, it may be understood of the angels of God pitching their tents about his habitation.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Riches are good for the uses to which they were appointed: and the bountiful kindness of the Creator appears, in covering the surface, and storing the bowels, of the earth with so many useful productions: nor should the ingenuity or industry which men employ about them be condemned, except as disproportionate. (*Gen.* 1: 20—25.) Neither *silver* nor *gold*, but the *love of them*, 'is the root of all evil:' and the avarice, pride, and luxury of the human heart, not the creatures which God hath made for our use, ought to bear the whole blame of the mischiefs, to which they merely give occasion. It is also observable, that whilst God gives us all these things, He gives them in the way of industry; the productions of nature cannot be prepared for use, without enduring hardship for them, and often venturing into perilous situations: and, in like manner, whilst wisdom and grace are *freely* bestowed, we must labor and deny ourselves, and face dangers and enemies, if we would appropriate them. But did we understand the infinite value of these gifts, and our urgent want of them, we should think every hardship and sacrifice comparatively small.—True wisdom and grace confer peace, and joy, and lively hope; they deprive death of his sting, and ensure an eternal inheritance. Who then can estimate their value? All the treasures of the world, and the whole world itself, are worthless in the comparison: yet alas! every gilded bauble is preferred to them! (*P. O. Prov.* 2: 1—9.) Where is true wisdom to be found? The treasures of it are 'hid in Christ,' revealed by the Word of truth, and received by faith, through the operation of the Holy Spirit. There the Lord has prepared and declared it: there we may search for it and discover it. But it does not consist, in explaining all mysteries, settling all controversies, or solving all difficulties in the phenomena of nature, or in the divine government. Our business here is, to believe, adore, love, and obey; not to comprehend and dispute. We receive the benefit of the rain, and avail ourselves of the winds and tides, and seek shelter from the storm, whether we understand the theory of them or not. Thus let us flee from the wrath to come, take refuge in the hope of the Gospel, receive the comforts of life thankfully, and bear its burdens cheerfully. SCOTT.

Verses 23—28.

All the preceding observations and inquiries were evidently intended as introductory to these closing instructions; in which Job showed, that God alone was the Source and Giver of wisdom.—Thus Job intimated to the disputants, that they might show their wisdom much more, by a conscientious performance of their own duty, than by presumptuously intruding into the secret reasons of the divine dispensations; or rashly condemning their afflicted friend as a hypocrite. SCOTT.

(25.) We can now carry this idea further, as modern science teaches and demonstrates mathematically, that the elementary gases of the air and of water are combined in definite proportions, by *number, weight* and *measure*; and that wherever found they contain the same proportions. We can also, by combining larger proportions of the same elementary gases, produce gases most fatal to life, demonstrating to us that if an All-wise and All-good Creator did not cause the gases which produce air and water to be evolved on our earth exactly in the proportion we now find them; i. e. if God did not accurately *weigh* and *measure* them out to our atmosphere, we could not exist with our present constitution: and if He did not continue so to do, the whole earth would be one mass of death. See also Chemical Works: and remarks on the balance and weight of the atmosphere in *Clarke*. ED.

V. 26. '*Lightning of the thunder* storm.] The Heb. CHAZYZ, here rendered lightning, is strikingly emphatic: it is from *chaz*, to *notch*, or *jag*, and immediately refers to the jagged or zig-zag figure, which particularly characterizes the lightning of hot countries.' CLARKE.

in months past, as *in* the days *when* [b] God preserved me;

3 When [c] his [*] candle shined upon my head, *and when* [d] by his light I walked *through* darkness;

4 As I was in the days of my youth, when [e] the secret of God *was* upon my tabernacle;

5 When [f] the Almighty *was* yet with me, *when* [g] my children *were* about me;

6 When [h] I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured [†] me out rivers of oil;

7 When I went out [i] to the gate through the city, *when* I prepared my seat in the street!

8 The [k] young men saw me, and hid themselves: and [l] the aged arose, *and* stood up.

9 The princes [m] refrained talking, and [n] laid *their* hand on their mouth.

10 The [‡] nobles held their peace, and [o] their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.

11 When [p] the ear heard *me*, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw *me*, it gave witness to me.

12 Because [q] I deliv-

b 1:10. Ps. 37:28. Jude 1.
c 18:6. 21:17. Ps. 18:28. Prov. 24:20.
* Or, *lamp*. Prov. 13:9. 20:20.
d 22:28. Ps. 4:6. 27:1. 84:11. Is. 2:4. John 8:12. 12:46. Eph. 5:8,14.
e 1:10. 15:8. Ps. 25:14. 27:5. 91:1. Prov. 3:32. Col. 3:3.
f 23:3,8—10. Deut. 33:27—29. Josh. 1:9. Judg. 6:12,13. Ps. 30:7. 43:2. 44:3,9. Cant. 2:4. 3:1,2. Jer. 14:8. Matt. 9:15.
g 1:2—5. 42:13—16. Ps. 127:3—5. 128: 3. Prov. 17:6.
h 20:17. Gen. 49:11. Deut. 32:13, 33: 24. Ps. 81:16.
† Heb. *with me*.
i Deut. 16:18. 21:19. Ruth 4:1,2,11. Zech. 8:16.
k Lev. 19:32. Prov. 16:31. 20:8. Rom. 13:3,4. Tit. 3:1. 1 Pet. 5:5.
l Rom. 13:7. 1 Pet. 2:17.
m 4:2. 7:11. Prov. 10:19. Jam. 1:19.
n 21:5. 40:4. Judg. 18:19. Prov. 30: 32.
‡ Heb. *voice of the nobles was hid*.
o Ps. 137:6. Ez. 3:26.
p 31:20. Prov. 29:2. Luke 11:27.
q 22:5—9. Neh. 5:2—13. Ps. 72:12. 82:2—4. Prov. 21:13. 24:11,12. Jer. 22:16.

4. Assurance of the divine presence, *v.* 5. *The Almighty was yet with me.* Now, he thought God was departed; in those days, He was *with him*, and that was all in all to him. God's presence with a man in his house, though it be but a cottage, makes it both a castle and a palace.

Lastly, He had comfort in his family, every thing was agreeable there: 1. A numerous offspring to enjoy his estate. It is a comfort to tender parents to see their children about them; Job speaks very feelingly of this comfort, now he was deprived of it. He thought it an instance of God's being with him, that his *children were about him;* and yet we reckon wrong, if, when we have lost our children, we cannot comfort ourselves with this, that we have not lost our God. 2. He had a plentiful estate for the support of this numerous family, *v.* 6. His dairy abounded to that degree, that he might, if he pleased, *wash his steps with butter;* and his olive-yards were so fruitful, beyond expectation, that it seemed as if the *rock poured him out rivers of oil.* He reckons his wealth, not by his silver and gold, which were for hoarding, but by his butter and oil, which were for use; for what is an estate good for, unless we take the good of it ourselves, and do good with it to others?

V. 7—17. Job, though he had comfort enough in his own house, yet did not confine himself to that; we are not born for ourselves, but for the public. The gate was the place of judgment, Job *went out to* it *through the city*, (*v.* 7.) not in an affectation of pomp, but in an affection to justice. Observe, Judgment was administered in the gate, in the street, in the places of concourse, to which every man might have a free access; that every one who would might be a witness to all that was said and done; and that, when judgment was given against the guilty, others might hear and fear.

Job being a prince, a judge, a magistrate, a man in authority, we are here told,

I. What respect was paid him by all sorts of people, not only for the dignity of his place, but for his personal merit, his eminent prudence, integrity, and good management. Young and old, even princes and nobles, honored and respected him, *v.* 8, 9, 10. The gravity and majesty of his looks and mien, and his known strictness in animadverting on every thing evil and indecent, commanded all about him into due decorum; they who expected honor from others, gave honor to him. Virtue and piety challenge respect from all, and usually have it; but they that not only *are* good, but *do* good, are worthy of double honor. Modesty becomes those that are young and in subjection, as much as majesty becomes those that are aged and in power. Honor and fear are due to magistrates, and must be rendered to them, Rom. 13: 7. But if a great and good man was thus reverenced, how is the great and good God to be feared! Some think these princes and nobles were inferior magistrates under him, and that the respect they paid him was due to his place, as their sovereign and supreme; it should rather seem that they were his equals in place, and joined in commission with him, and that the peculiar honor they gave him was gained by his extraordinary abilities and services. It was agreed, he excelled in quickness of apprehension, soundness of judgment, closeness of application, clearness and copiousness of expression; and therefore he was an oracle of law, and counsel, and justice, and what he said all attended to, and acquiesced in. When he came into court, especially when he stood up to speak, *the princes refrained talking, the nobles held their peace*, that they might the more diligently hearken to what he said, and might be sure to take his meaning. When the princes and nobles wrangled among themselves, all agreed to refer the matters in dispute to Job, and to abide by his judgment. Happy the men blessed with such eminent gifts as these; they have great opportunities of honoring God, and doing good, but have great need to watch against pride: happy the people blessed with such eminent men; it is a token for good to them.

II. What good he did in his place. Here we shall see Job valued himself, in the day of his prosperity, not by the honor of his family, his great estate, his large income, his full table, his many servants, the ensigns of his dignity, his equipage and retinue, the splendid entertainments he gave, and the court made to him, but by his [disinterested] *usefulness*. Goodness is God's glory, and it will be ours; if we be merciful as God is, we are perfect as He is, *v.* 11—17.

1. He valued himself by the interest he had in the esteem, affections, and prayers of sober people; not by the studied panegyrics of the wits and poets, but the natural praises of all about him. He did not think it an honor to make every body fear him, but, like Mordecai, to be *accepted of the multitude of his brethren*. He did not so much value the applauses of those at a distance, as the attestations of those that constantly attended him, saw him, and heard him, and could speak of their own knowledge; especially theirs who could speak by their own experience; such was the blessing of him who was ready to perish, (*v.* 13.) and who by Job's means was rescued from perishing. Let great men, and men of estates, thus do good, and they shall have praise of the same; and let those who have good done them, look upon it as a just debt they owe to their protectors and benefactors, to bless them and give witness to them; to use their interest on earth for their honor, and in heaven for their comfort, to praise them, and pray for them. Those are ungrateful indeed, who grudge these small returns.

2. He valued himself by the care he took of persons least able to help themselves. He delivered the poor that cried, (*v.* 12.) and would not suffer them to be trampled on and run down. Nay, (*v.* 16.) he was *a father to them*, not only a judge to protect, but a father to provide for them, to counsel and direct them, and to appear and act for them on all occasions. It is no disparagement to the son of a prince to be a father to the poor. The fatherless found him ready to help them, and, if they were in straits, to deliver them. Those that were ready to perish he saved from perishing, relieving the hungry, taking care of the sick, and vindicating the falsely accused; also, widows he relieved that were sighing for grief, and trembling for fear; and those that were on any account at a loss, he gave suitable and seasonable relief to; *v.* 15. *was eyes to the blind*, counselling and advising those for the best, that knew not what to do; and *feet to the lame*, assisting those with money and friends, that knew what they should do, but knew not how to compass it. Those we

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIX. V. 3, 4. Some trace an allusion here to the custom (see *Norden*) of illuminating the tents of princes, in triumph, &c. others refer it to the custom among the wealthy Arabs, of hanging lamps from the ceiling of their banqueting rooms. *Maillet* says, Egyptian houses are never without lights in the night. 'To say, the secret of the king is with a person, is (in the E.) a strong way of describing the *intimacy* which exists between them. "Friendly! yes, indeed: why, his secret is with him." "Alas! alas! his secret is no longer with me; his lamp no longer shines in my heart."' *Roberts.* ED.

(4.) *Youth.*] 'Or *autumn*; the richest, and, in the E. pleasantest season.' ID.

Verses 7—11.

Job next expatiated on the *honor*, which had been rendered him. He had acquired great influence and authority, and was become chief ruler over the neighboring tribes; probably through his reputation for wisdom and justice, as well as on account of his affluence. SCOTT.

(7.) *Prepared my seat.*] 'Who has not seen a great man or a saint thus having his seat prepared in the street? There he goes to a shady tree, or under a verandah, or in a rest-house, with his servant following him, [comp. note, 1 K. 13: 46.] having a mat or a tiger's skin, or that of some other animal under his arm. The seat is prepared, the cross-legged sage sits to hear and answer questions.' *Roberts.* 'It is the custom of Asia, to sit on the wooden seats outside of their small shops, and, if a man of quality, they lay a cushion there. The people of quality cause carpets and cushions to be carried where they like to repose. *Chardin.* It is extremely natural to suppose, that Job sent his servants to lay a cushion or a carpet, on one of the public seats, or some such place. Eli's seat (1 Sam. 4: 13.) we may suppose was thus adorned.' *Hewlett.* ED.

(8, 9.) *Hid.*] 'When a man of rank passes a croud (in India), the young people and children conceal themselves behind their seniors, and the aged always rise from their seats. See the man in a court of justice, who is listening to the address of the judge, and his hand is placed on his mouth.' ROBERTS.

Verses 12—17.

'Because Job's adversaries did so much charge him with wickedness, he is compelled to render account of his life.' And as no one

ered the poor that cried, and [r] the fatherless, and *him that had* none to help him.

13 [s] The blessing of him that was [t] ready to perish came upon me: [u] and I caused the widow's heart to [x] sing for joy.

14 [y] I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment *was* as a robe and [z] a diadem.

15 I was [a] eyes to the blind, and feet *was* I to the lame.

16 I *was* [b] a father to the poor: and [c] the cause *which* I knew not I searched out.

17 And [d] I brake the [*] jaws of the wicked, [e] and † plucked the spoil out of his teeth.

18 Then I said, [f] I shall die in my nest, and I shall [g] multiply *my* days [h] as the sand.

19 My [i] root *was* ‡ spread ou tby the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch.

20 My [k] glory *was*

r Ex. 22:22—24. Deut. 10:18. Ps. 68:5. Jam. 1:27.
s Deut. 24:13. Acts 9:39—41. 2 Cor. 9:12—14. 2 Tim. 1:16—18.
t 31:19. Deut. 26:5. Prov. 31:6—9. Is. 27:13.
u Deut. 16:11. Neh. 8:10—12. Philem. 7.
x Ps. 67:4. Is. 65:14.
y Ps. 132:9. Is. 59:17. 61:10. Rom. 13:14. 2 Cor. 6:7. Eph. 6:14. 1 Thes. 5:8. Rev. 19:8.
z Is. 28:5. 62:3.
a Num. 10:31. Matt. 11:5. 1 Cor. 12: 12, &c.
b 31:18. Esth. 2:7. Ps. 68.5. Eph. 5: 1. Jam. 1:27.
c Ex. 18:26. Deut. 13:14. 17:8—10. 1 K. 3:16—28. Prov. 25:2. 29:7.
d Ps. 3:7. 58:6. Prov. 30:14.
* Heb. *jaw teeth*, or, *grinders*.
e 1 Sam. 17:35. Ps. 124:3,6.
† Heb. *cast*.
f Ps. 30:6,7. Jer. 22:23. 49:16. Obad. 4. Hab. 2:9.
g 5:26. 42:16,17. Ps. 91:16.
h Gen. 32:12. 41:49.
i 18:16. Ps. 1:3. Jer. 17:8. Hos. 14: 5—7.
‡ Heb. *opened*.
k 14. 19:9. Gen. 45:13. Ps. 3:3.

best help, whom we help out [promptly] in that very thing wherein they are defective, and most need help.

3. He valued himself by the conscience he made of justice and equity in all his proceedings: his friends had unjustly censured him as an oppressor; 'So far from that,' (says he,) 'I always made it my business to maintain and support right.' (1.) He devoted himself to the administration of justice, *v.* 14. i. e. he had an habitual disposition to execute, and put on a fixed resolution to do it. It was *the girdle of his loins*. It kept him tight and steady in all his motions; he always appeared in it, as in his clothing, and never without it. Righteousness will clothe them that put it on; it will keep them warm, and safe; it will adorn them, and recommend them to the favor both of God and man. (2.) He took pleasure in it, and looked upon it as his greatest glory, to do justice to all, and injury to none. Perhaps he did not himself wear a robe and a diadem, he was very indifferent to those ensigns of honor; but the settled principles of justice, by which he was governed and did govern, were to him instead of all those ornaments. If a magistrate do not make conscience of his duty, such badges are but a reproach. (3.) He took pains in the business of his place, *v.* 16. He diligently inquired into the matter of fact, patiently and impartially heard both sides, set every thing in its true light, and cleared it from false colors; he laid all circumstances together, that he might find out the truth, and the merits of every cause, and then, and not till then, gave judgment upon it; he never answered a matter before he heard it, nor did he judge a man to be righteous, however he seemed, for his being *first in his own cause*.

4. He valued himself by the check he gave to the violence of proud and evil men, *v.* 17. He did not take away their lives, but *brake their jaws*, i. e. took away their power of doing mischief, humbled them, mortified them, and curbed their insolence, and so plucked the spoil out of their teeth; fearlessly delivered persons and estates from being made a prey. Good magistrates must thus be a terror and restraint to evil doers, and a protection to the innocent, and, in order to this, they have need to arm themselves with zeal, resolution, and an undaunted courage: a judge on the bench has as much need to be bold and brave, as a commander in the field, [though courage to fight is but an instinct shared with the brutes; and firmness to do right is of a higher order of character, not so common.]

V. 18—25. What crowned Job's prosperity, was, the pleasing prospect he had of the continuance of it; he knew, in general, that he was liable to trouble, and therefore was not secure; (*ch.* 3:26.) yet he had no particular occasion for fear, but as much reason as ever any man had to count on the lengthening out of his tranquillity.

I. In the midst of his prosperity, he thought of dying, and the thought was not uneasy to him. He knew that though his nest was high, it did not set him out of the reach of the darts of death. Yet he flattered himself with vain hopes, both that he should live long, and die in the same prosperous state, *v.* 18. in which he had lived: so apt are even good people to put death at a distance. If such an expectation arise from a lively faith in the providence and promise of God, it is well; but if from a conceit of our own wisdom, and the stability of these earthly things, it is ill-grounded, and turns into sin. We hope Job's confidence was like David's, *Whom shall I fear?* not like the rich fool's, *Soul, take thine ease.*

II. See the ground of these thoughts.

1. If he looked at home, his stock was all his own, his neighbors had no demand on him, and he found no bodily distemper growing on him. He was getting forward in his affairs, lost no reputation, but gained rather; and he knew no rival that threatened either to eclipse his honor, or abridge his power: see how beautifully he describes this, *v.* 19, 20. Providence favored him, and made all his enjoyments comfortable, and all his enterprises successful. His bow also was renewed in his hand, that is, his power to protect himself, and annoy those that assailed him, still increased, so that he thought he had as little reason as any man to fear the insults of Sabeans or Chaldeans.

2. If he looked abroad, he found he had a good interest and well confirmed. He was (1.) The *oracle* of his country; consulted as an oracle, and his dictates acquiesced in as oracles, *v.* 21. All men gave ear to him; as nothing could be said against it, so nothing needed to be added to what he said, *v.* 22. Why should men meddle with a subject already exhausted?—(2.) The *darling* of his country. All about him were well-pleased with every thing he said and did, as David's people with him, 2 Sam. 3: 36. He had the hearts and affections of all his neighbors, all his servants, tenants, subjects; never was man so much admired, nor so well beloved. [1.] They were thought happy to whom he spake, and they thought themselves so, *v.* 22, 23. Those are wise, or likely to be so, that know how to value wise discourse; and those who have such an interest as Job had in the esteem of others, as they have a great opportunity of doing good, so they must take great care lest they do hurt, for a bad word out of their mouths is very infectious. [2.] Much more happy were they thought on whom he smiled, and they thought themselves so, *v.* 24. Many seek the ruler's favor: Job was a ruler whose favor was courted, and valued at a high rate. Familiarity often breeds contempt, but if Job at any time saw fit, for his own diversion, to make himself free with those about him, yet it did not in the least diminish their veneration for him: *the light of his countenance they cast not down.* So wisely did he dispense his favors, as not to make them cheap, and so wisely did they receive them, as not to make themselves unworthy of them another time.—(3.) The *sovereign*, *v.* 25. all referring themselves to his

attempted to disprove his attestations, no doubt he spoke what was under duly true: indeed God Himself, at the close, as it were, attested the truth of it. SCOTT.

Verse 14.

'It is still an Arab proverb, "Knowledge is a diadem to a young person, and a chain of gold about his neck."' *Scott* in *Hewlett.*

Verses 18—25.

Some read all the latter vs. in the *present* tense. 'My roots are, &c. as Job's recollection of his inward thoughts, during his prosperous days, when anticipating the continuance of them, in which he had been so grievously disappointed. SCOTT.

(19.) *The Dew.*] On this, vegetation in the E. much depends; and dew is there extremely copious, in summer. See *Hasselquist*, &c. ED.

(20.) *Bow*, &c.] Explained by the parallel clause. *Heeren* states, that the bow was borne by the Medes, another pastoral nation, about their persons, as the English gentleman once wore *his sword*: it being a mark of his order or rank. So, perhaps, Job connects it with glory. The figure is much used in Indian poetry, says *Roberts*. ED.

CONCLUDING NOTE. This ch. presents a striking picture of society; and *Gibbon* thus describes the social condition of the Arabs, as it has been and is: (comp. also the pref. to Job.) 'The slaves of domestic tyranny may vainly exult in their national independence; but the Arab is personally free. In every tribe, superstition, or gratitude, or fortune, has exalted a particular family above their equals. The dignities of *sheich* and *emir* invariably descend in this chosen race; but the order of succession is loose and precarious; and the most worthy or aged of the noble kinsmen are preferred to the simple, though important *office of composing disputes* by their advice, and *guiding valor* by their example. The momentary junction of several tribes produces an army; their more lasting union constitutes a nation; and the supreme chief, the emir of emirs, whose banner is displayed at their head, may *deserve*, in the eyes of strangers, the honors of the *kingly name*. If the Arabian princes abuse their power, they are quickly punished by the desertion of their subjects, accustomed to a mild and parental jurisdiction. Their spirit is free, their steps are unconfined, the desert is open, and the tribes and families are held together by a mutual and voluntary compact. The softer natives of Yemen supported the pomp and majesty of a monarch; but if he could not leave his palace without endangering his life, (*Agatharchides*, *Diod: Sic.* and *Strabo*,) the active powers of government must have been devolved on his nobles and magistrates. Mecca and Medina present the form, or rather the substance, of a commonwealth. The grandfather of Mahomet, and his lineal ancestors, appear in foreign and domestic transactions as the princes of their country; but they reigned, like Pericles at Athens, or the Medici at Florence, by the opinion of their wisdom and integrity; their influence was divided with their patrimony. On solemn occasions they convened the assembly of the people; and since mankind must be either compelled or persuaded to obey, the use and reputation of oratory among the ancient Arabs, is the clearest evidence of public freedom. But their simple freedom was of a very different cast from the nice and artificial machinery of the Greek and Roman republics, in which each member possessed an undivided share of the civil and political rights of the community. In the more simple state of the Arabs, the nation is free, because each of her sons disdains a base submission to the will of a master. His breast is fortified with the

* fresh in me, and [l] my bow [m] was † renewed in my hand.

21 Unto me *men* [n] gave ear, and waited and kept silence at my counsel.

22 [o] After my words they spake not again; and [p] my speech dropped upon them.

23 And they waited for me [q] as for the rain; and they opened their mouth wide *as* for [r] the latter rain.

24 *If* I laughed on them, [s] they believed *it* not; and [t] the light of my countenance they cast not down.

25 I [u] chose out their way, and sat chief, and [x] dwelt as a king in the army, as [y] one *that* comforteth the mourners.

CHAP. XXX.

Job complains that he is sunk into extreme contempt, 1—14; that he suffers great anguish of soul and body, 15—19; that God deals rigorously with him, 20—24; that he, who had comforted others, now suffers without a comforter, 25—31.

BUT now [z] *they that are* ‡ younger than I have me in derision, [b] whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.

2 Yea, whereto *might* the strength of their hands *profit* me, in whom old age was perished?

3 For want and famine *they were* § solitary; [c] fleeing into the wilderness ‖ in former time desolate and waste.

4 Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots [d] *for* their meat.

* Heb. *new.*

conduct, and submitting themselves to his command. To this perhaps, in many countries, monarchy owed its rise: such a man as Job, that so far excelled all his neighbors in wisdom and integrity, could not but sit chief, and the fool will, of course, be servant to the wise in heart: and if the wisdom did but for awhile run in the blood, the honor and power would certainly attend it, and so by degrees become hereditary. Two things recommended Job to the sovereignty. [1.] The authority of a commander, or general; every one that has the spirit of wisdom, has not the spirit of government, but Job had both, and, when there was occasion, could assume state, as the king in the army does, and say, Do this, Matt. 8:9. [2.] The tenderness of a comforter. He was as ready to succor those in distress, as if it had been his office to comfort the mourners. Eliphaz himself owned he had been very good in that respect, *ch.* 4:3. And this he now reflected on with pleasure, when himself a mourner; but we find it easier to comfort others with comforts we have been formerly comforted with, than ourselves with those wherewith we have formerly comforted others.

I know not but we may look upon Job as a type and figure of Christ, in his power and prosperity: our Lord Jesus is such a King as Job was; the poor man's King, who loves righteousness and hates iniquity, and on whom the blessing of a world ready to perish comes; see Ps. 72: 2, &c. To Him therefore let us give ear, and let Him sit chief in our hearts.

CHAP. XXX. It is a melancholy *But now*, which begins this ch. Adversity is here described as much to the life as prosperity was there, and the height of that did but increase the depth of this. God sets the one over-against the other, and so did Job, that his afflictions might appear the more grievous, and, consequently, his case the more pitiable.

V. 1—14. Job makes a very large and sad complaint of the great disgrace he was fallen into, from the height of honor and reputation, which was exceedingly grievous and cutting to such an ingenuous spirit as Job's. Two things he insists on as very aggravating.

I. The meanness of the persons that affronted him. None can be represented as more base than those here, who insulted Job, on all accounts. They were,

1. Young, younger than he, *v.* 1. They were youth, *v.* 12. even the children, in their play, played on him. Children soon learn to be scornful, when they see their parents so.

2. Of fathers very despicable, such as Job would have disdained to take into the lowest service about house, *v.* 1. Job here speaks of what he might have done: he was not of such a spirit as to set any of the children of men with the dogs of his flock; he knew the dignity of human nature better.

3. The unprofitable burdens of the earth, good for nothing; Job himself, with all his prudence and patience, could make nothing of them, *v.* 2. the young were so lazy, and awkward, the old twice children.

4. Extremely poor, (*v.* 3.) and this, on account of their own slothfulness and wastefulness, so nobody was forward to relieve them; hence they were forced to flee into the deserts both for shelter and sustenance, and were put to sorry shifts indeed, *v.* 4. See what hunger will bring men to: those that have abundance ought to think sometimes of those whose fare is very coarse, and short too; but we must own the righteousness of God, and not think it strange, if slothfulness clothe men with rags, and the idle soul be made to suffer hunger. This beggarly world is full of the devil's poor.

5. Very scandalous and wicked, not only the burdens, but the plagues, of the places where they lived, the scum of the country, *v.* 5. They were such lying, thieving, lurking, mischievous people, that the best service the magistrates could do, was, to rid the country of them, while the very mob

[l] Gen. 49:24.
[m] Ps. 103:5. Is. 40:31. 2 Cor. 4:16.
† Heb. *chanzed.*
[n] 9,10. 32:11,12.
[o] 32:15,16. 33:31—33. Is. 52:15. Matt. 22:46.
[p] Deut. 32:2. Cant. 4:11. Ez. 20:46. Am. 7:16. Mic. 2:6. *marg.*
[q] Ps. 72:6.
[r] Hos. 6:3. Zech. 10:1.
[s] Gen. 45:26. Ps. 126:1. Luke 24:41.
[t] Ps. 4:6. 89:15.
[u] Gen. 41:40. Judg. 11:8. 2 Sam. 5:2. 1 Chr. 13:1—4.
[x] Gen. 14:14—17. Deut. 33:5.
[y] 4:3,4. Is. 35:3,4. 61:1—3. 2 Cor. 1:3,4. 7:5—7. 1 Thes. 3:2,3.
[z] 19:13—19. 29:8—10. 2 K. 2:23. Is 3:5.
‡ Heb. *of fewer days than I.*
[b] Ps. 35:15,16. 69:12. Mark 14:65. 15 17—20. Luke 23:14,18,19,35,36,39 Acts 17:5. Tit. 1:12.
§ Or, *dark as the night.* 24:13—16.
[c] Heb. *yesternight.*
‖ 24:5. Heb. 11:38.
[d] 2 K. 4:38,39. Am. 7:14. Luke 15:16.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord protects and prospers us as He pleases; and He confers on those who love Him whatever can be beneficial to them. But when the mind is enlightened by the Holy Spirit; when a man walks in the light of God's comforting presence, and enjoys the *secret* pleasure of communion with Him; every outward comfort is doubled, every trouble is diminished, and he may pass cheerfully, by this light, through life and death to heaven. The sensible comfort, however, of this happy state is often withdrawn from those who have enjoyed it. (*Ps.* 42: 4, 5.) In general, this change arises from negligence, and 'grieving the Holy Spirit;' but sometimes it may be a trial of faith and grace. Yet it is always right in such cases to examine ourselves, to inquire into the cause by fervent prayer, and to redouble diligence and watchfulness.—Many, however, who *profess* that they have walked in this heavenly light, complain that now it is not with them 'as in months past,' and rest satisfied with unavailing lamentations! Depending on past experience, and concluding their state safe, they put up at present with worldly comforts, and are as negligent as they are joyless. And others, who have *really* walked with God, finding their comforts decline, are tempted to think all their past experience a delusion, and to conclude that the Almighty has finally forsaken them. But for those comforts, which are indeed from God, the true believer can find no substitute in the whole creation: and though they may be withdrawn, they shall never be extinguished, but shall be restored, and endure till lost in the blaze of heavenly glory. SCOTT.

austere virtues of courage, patience, and sobriety; the love of independence prompts him to exercise the habits of self-command; and the fear of dishonor guards him from the meaner apprehension of pain, of danger, or death. The gravity and firmness of the mind is conspicuous in his outward demeanor: his speech is slow, weighty, and concise, he is seldom provoked to laughter, his only gesture is that of stroking his beard, the venerable symbol of manhood; and the sense of his own importance teaches him to accost his equals without levity, and his superiors without awe.—Of the time of ignorance, which preceded Mahomet, 1700 battles are recorded by tradition. In private life, every man, at least every family, was the judge and avenger of its own cause. The nice sensibility of honor, [?] which weighs the insult rather than the injury, sheds its venom on their quarrels. The slightest insult calls for blood, and their inveterate malice waits long for revenge; and transfers the penalty to the noblest of the race by whom they have been injured. The distant tribes (before Mahomet's time) resorted to an annual fair, at which 30 days were employed in the exchange not only of corn and wine but of eloquence and poetry. The prize was disputed by the generous emulation of the bards; the victorious performance was deposited in the archives of princes and emirs; and we may read in our own language [tr. by Sir W. *Jones*] the 7 original poems which were inscribed in letters of gold, and suspended in the temple of Mecca. The Arabian poets were the historians and moralists of the age; and if they sympathized with the prejudices, they inspired and crowned the virtues of their countrymen. The indissoluble union of generosity and valor was the darling theme of their song; and when they pointed their keenest satire against a despicable race, they affirmed, in the bitterness of reproach, that the men knew not how to give, nor the women to deny.' GIBBON. Job's mind certainly soared far beyond this civilization: notes, 31: 1—4. 13—15. ED.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXX. V. 4. *Mallows.*] 'Heb. *maluach*, from *melech*, *salt*: some salt shrub, as sea purslane, saltwort, &c. *Bochart* says, it is the *halimos*, of the Greeks and Romans; and so the *Sept.* Some tr. *nettles.*' Dr. A. CLARKE. '*Biddulph*' (Trav.) 'says, he saw in Syria many people gathering mallows, and three-leaved grass, to boil and eat; it was all their food.' HEWLETT. Blessed with plenty, we are happily, in these U. S. spared the sight of such poverty; but the Irish poor are often reduced to boil *nettles*, for food. See *Rep.* of *Comm.* on *Irish Poor.* 'The deserts of Arabia abound in saline plants. *Galen* says *the tops* of the halimus, in Syria called *maluch*, in Bagdad, *molochia*,) when young, are used for food.' *Harris.* ED.

5 They were [e] driven forth from among *men*, (they cried after them as *after* a thief;)

6 To [f] dwell in the clefts of the valleys, *in* [*] caves of the earth, and *in* the rocks.

7 Among the bushes they [g] brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together.

8 *They were* [h] children of [i] fools, yea, children of † base men: they were [k] viler than the earth.

9 And now [l] am I their song, yea, I am their by-word.

10 They [m] abhor me, they [n] flee far from me, and ‡ spare not to [o] spit in my face.

11 Because he hath [p] loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also [q] let loose the bridle before me.

12 Upon *my* right *hand* [r] rise the youth: they push away my feet, and [s] they raise up against me the ways of their destruction.

13 They mar my path, [t] they set forward my calamity, they have no helper.

14 They came *upon me* [u] as a wide breaking in *of waters:* in the desolation they rolled themselves *upon me.*

15 [x] Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my § soul as the wind; and my welfare passeth away [y] as a cloud.

16 And now [z] my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction [a] have taken hold upon me.

17 [b] My bones are pierced in me [c] in the night-season: and my sinews take no rest.

18 [d] By the great force *of my disease* is my garment changed; it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.

19 He hath [e] cast me into the mire, and I am become like [f] dust and ashes:

20 [g] I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me *not.*

21 Thou art ‖ become [h] cruel to me: with ¶ thy [i] strong hand thou opposest thyself against me.

22 Thou [k] liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me [l] to ride *upon it*, and dissolvest my ** substance.

23 For I know *that* thou wilt bring me *to*

cried after them, as after a thief, *Away with such fellows.* They were lazy, and were exclaimed against as thieves; and justly, for they that do not earn their own bread by honest labor, do, in effect, steal the bread out of other people's mouths; an idle fellow is a public nuisance; but it is better to drive such into a work-house, than, as here, into a wilderness, which will punish them indeed, but never reform them. They were forced to dwell in caves of the earth, and they brayed like asses among the bushes, *v.* 6, 7. See what is the lot of those that have the cry of the country, the cry of their own conscience, against them; they cannot but be in a continual terror and confusion; they groan among the trees, (so Broughton,) and smart among the nettles; they are stung and scratched there, where they hoped to be sheltered and protected. See what miseries wicked people bring themselves to in this world; yet this is nothing to what is in reserve for them in the other world.

6. They were all that is base, *v.* 8. banished from the earth, as viler than the earth. One would not think it possible that human nature should sink so low, and degenerate so far, as in these people. But such were abusive to Job, (1.) In revenge; because, when in prosperity and power, like a good magistrate, he put the laws in execution against vagabonds, rogues, and sturdy beggars. (2.) In triumph, because they thought he was now become like one of them, Isa. 14: 10, 11. The abjects, men of mean spirits, insult over the miserable, Ps. 35: 15.

II. The greatness of their affronts beyond imagination.

1. They made ballads on him, with which they made themselves and their companions merry, *v.* 9. Those have a very base spirit, that turn the calamities of their honest neighbors into a jest.

2. They shunned him as loathsome, fled far from him, (*v.* 10.) as a monster, or infected; themselves driven out from among men, they would have driven him out. For,

3. They spit in his face, or were ready to do so; tripped up his heels, pushed away his feet, (*v.* 12.) kicked him, either in wrath, from hate, or in sport, to make themselves merry, as they did with their companions at foot-ball. The best of saints have sometimes received the worst of injuries and indignities, from a spiteful, scornful, wicked world, and must not think it strange; our Master Himself was thus abused.

4. They not only made a jest of him, but a prey; not only affronted, but did him all the real mischief they could devise; *raised up the ways of their destruction;* or, as some read it, *They cast upon me the cause of their woe;* i. e. 'Lay the blame of their being driven out, upon me;' and it is common for criminals to hate the judges and laws which punish them. But, under this pretence, (1.) They accused him falsely, misrepresenting his former conversation, here called *marring his path.* They reflected on him as a tyrant and an oppressor, because he had done justice on them; and perhaps Job's friends grounded their uncharitable censures of him (*ch.* 22: 6, &c.) on the unjust and unreasonable clamors of these sorry people; but who can be innocent, if the accusations of such persons may criminate? (2.) They did all they could to add to his miseries. It is a great sin to forward the calamity of any, especially of good people: in this they have nobody to set them on, or countenance them; but do it of their own accord; they are fools in other things, but wise enough to do mischief, and need no help in inventing that. Some read it thus, *They hold my heaviness a profit, though they be never the better.* Wicked people, though they get nothing by the calamities of others, yet rejoice in them.

5. In all this they were numerous, unanimous, and violent, *v.* 14. *They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters,* when the dam is broken, [note, 7: 12.] or, 'as soldiers into a broad breach they have made in the wall of a besieged city;' and in this they took pride and pleasure; rolled themselves in the desolation, as a man in a soft and easy bed; and rolled themselves upon him with all the weight of their malice.

Lastly, All this contempt was caused by his troubles, *v.* 11. 'Because He has loosed my cord; taken away the honor and power with which I was girded, (*ch.* 12: 18.) scattered what I had got together, and untwisted all my affairs; because He has afflicted me, therefore *they have let loose the*

e Gen. 4:12—14. Ps. 109:10. Dan. 4:25,32,33.
f Judg. 6:2. 1 Sam. 22:1,2. Is. 2:19. Rev. 6:15.
* Heb. *holes.*
g 6:5. 11:12. Gen. 16:12.
h 2 K. 8:18,27. 2 Chr. 22:3. Jer. 7:18. Mark 6:24.
i Prov. 1:7,22. 16:22.
† Heb. *men of no name.*
k 40:4. Ps. 15:4.• Is. 32:6.
l 17:6. Ps. 35:15,16. 44:14. 69:12. Lam. 3:14,63.
m 19:19. 42:6. Ps. 88:8. Zech. 11:8.
n 19:13,14. Ps. 88:8. Prov. 19:7. Matt. 26:56.
‡ Heb. *withhold not spittle from.*
o Num. 12:14. Deut. 25:9. Is. 50:6. Matt. 26:67. 27:30.
p 12:18,21. 2 Sam. 16:5—8.
q Ps. 35:21. Matt. 26:67,68. 27:39—44. Jam. 1:26.
r 19:18. Is. 3:5.
s 19:12.
t Ps. 69:26. Zech. 1:15.
u 22:16. Ps. 18:4. 69:14,15. Is. 8:7,8.
x 6:4. 7:14. 9:27,28. 10:16. Ps. 88:15.
§ Heb. *principal one.*
y Is. 44:22. Hos. 6:4. 13:3.
z Ps. 22:14. 42:4. Is. 53:12.
a Ps. 40:12.
b 33:19—21. Ps. 6:2—6. 38:2—8.
c 7:4. Ps. 22:2. Is. 38:13.
d 2:7. 7:5. 19:20. Ps. 38:5. Is. 1:5,6.
e 9:31. Ps. 69:1,2. Jer. 38:6.
f 2:8. 42:6. Gen. 18:27.
g 19:7. 27:9. Ps. 22:2. 80:4,5. Lam. 3:8,44. Matt. 15:23.
‖ Heb. *turned to be.*
h 7:20,21. 10:14—17. 13:25—28. 16:9—14. 19:6—9. Ps. 77:7—9. Jer. 30:14.
¶ Heb. *the strength of thy hand.*
i 6:9. 23:6. Ps. 89:13. 1 Pet. 5:6.
k 21:18. Ps. 1:4. Is. 17:13. Jer. 4:11, 12. Ez. 5:2. Hos. 4:19. 13:3.
l Ps. 18:10. 104:3.
** Or, *wisdom.*

Juniper.] '*Rothem.* As the Arabic synonym, *ratam*, seems to be explained by the Spanish *retama*, (probably introduced by the Moors), and that word is known to signify *broom(genista)*, *Celsius* thinks it clear, this must be the plant. [A cut is given of it.] Both juniper roots (*Olaus Magnus*) and the orobanche, or rape which grows from broom, have been eaten; but the Arabic ratam seems to have pernicious properties; so that Job might mean, they were even reduced to this root which causes fainting.' HARRIS.

Verse 7.

Nettles.] Celsius and Scheuchzer tr. *paliurus.* 'It means briers or brambles, under the brushwood, where they huddled together like wild-beasts.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* ED.

Verse 11.

My cord.] '*Yithry; yithro, his cord,* is the reading of many copies (*vav* for *yod*), i. e. the cord of God's bow. The Vulg. and Sept. have "He hath opened his quiver." ' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 14.

See note, probably explaining this allusion, 28:4. ED.

Verses 15—19.

Job again complained of terrors, which doubtless arose, in great measure, from Satan's temptations. (6:1—4. 7:13, 14. *Ps.* 88:15—17.) (*M. R.* z.) SCOTT.

(18.) See note on the *elephantiasis*, Deut. 28:34 ED.

Verse 22.

Thou liftest, &c.] 'A figure probably taken from the [eastern] custom of an angry man, who takes any light substance and throws it into the wind, saying to his antagonist, "Thus shall it be with thee" ' ROBERTS

Verse 23.

House, &c.] Heb. *moad*, the *rendezvous*, [rest-house?] Dr. *A. Clarke* 'The house of the appointed assembly.' *Rosenm.* Comp. the ancient heathen ideas of the congregation of the dead. The Romans put on their tombs the phrase '*domus æterna*,' the *eternal house.* Comp. note, 11:14. ED.

death, and *to* [m] the house appointed for all living.

24 Howbeit he will not stretch out *his* hand to the * grave, though [n] they cry in his destruction.

25 ¶ [o] Did not I weep for him that was † in trouble? [p] was *not* my soul grieved for the poor?

26 [q] When I looked for good, then evil came *unto me:* and when I waited for [r] light, there came darkness.

27 [s] My bowels boiled, and rested not: the days of affliction prevented me.

28 [t] I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, *and* I cried in the congregation.

29 I am [u] a brother to dragons, and a companion to ‡ owls.

30 [x] My skin is black upon me, and [y] my bones are burned with heat.

31 [z] My harp also is *turned* to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.

m 14:5. 21:33. Gen. 3:19. 2 Sam. 14: 14. Ec. 8:8. 9:5. 12:5—7. Heb. 9:27.
* Heb. *heap.*
n Judg. 5:31. Ps. 35:25. Matt. 27:39—44.
o Ps. 35:13. Jer. 13:17. 18:20. Luke 19:41. John 11:35. Rom. 12:15.
† Heb. *hard of day.*

bridle before me,' i. e. 'have given themselves a liberty to say and do what they please against me.' They that by Providence are stripped of honor, may expect to be loaded with contempt by inconsiderate, ill-natured people. 'Because He hath loosed *his* cord,' (the original has that reading also,) i. e. 'because he has taken his bridle of restraint off their malice, they cast away the bridle from me,' i. e. 'make no account of my authority, nor stand in any awe of me.' It is owing to the hold God has of the consciences even of bad men, and the restraints He lays on them, that we are not continually thus insulted and abused; and if at any time thus ill-treated, we must acknowledge the hand of God in taking off those restraints; as David did, when Shimei cursed him; *So let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him.*

Now, in all this, we may see the uncertainty of worldly honor, and particularly of popular applause; how suddenly a man may fall from the height of dignity into the depth of disgrace. What little cause therefore have men to be ambitious or proud of what may be so easily lost, and what little confidence is to be put in it! They that, to-day, cry, *Hosannah,* may, to-morrow, cry, *Crucify.* But there is an honor which comes from God, which, if we secure, we shall find it not thus changeable and loseable. Nothing is more grievous in poverty [to generous minds] than that it renders men contemptible: *The Roman populace, faithful to the turns of fortune, still persecutes the fallen.* We may see in Job a type of Christ, who was thus made a *reproach of men,* and *despised of the people,* (Ps. 22: 6. Isa. 53: 3.) and who hid not his face from shame, and spitting, but bore it better than Job.

V. 15—31. In this second part of Job's complaint, which is very bitter, and has a great many sorrowful accents, we may observe a great deal that he complains of, and some little that he comforts himself with.

1. In general, affliction seized and surprised him: as the bailiff arrests the debtor, and by violence secures him. It *surprised* him, *v.* 27. '*The days of affliction prevented me,*' i. e. 'came upon me without any previous warning.' His bowels boiled with grief, and rested not, *v.* 27. The sense of his calamities was continually preying on his spirits: he went mourning from day to day, sighing and weeping; and such a cloud was constantly on his mind, that he went, in effect, without the sun, *v.* 28. walked out of the sun, (so some,) in dark, shady places, as melancholy people used to do. If he went to worship in the congregation; instead of standing up calmly to desire their prayers, he stood up and cried aloud, through pain of body, or anguish of mind, like one half distracted. If he appeared in public, to receive visits, when the fit came on him, he could not contain himself, nor preserve due decorum, but stood up, and shrieked aloud. Thus he was a brother to dragons and owls, (*v.* 29.) both in choosing solitude and retirement, as they do, (Isa. 34: 13.) and in making a fearful, hideous noise, as they do; his inconsiderate complaints were fitly compared to their inarticulate ones.

2. The terror and trouble that seized his soul, were the sorest part of his calamity, *v.* 15, 16 (1.) *My soul.*—Heb. *My principal one. My princess;* for the soul is the principal part of the man; our glory; every way more excellent than the body, therefore what pursues the soul, and threatens that, should be most dreaded. His spirit is not only wounded, but *poured out upon him, v.* 16. He was not only weak as water, but, in his own apprehension, lost as water spilt on the ground. Compare Ps. 22: 14. *My heart is melted like wax.*

3. His bodily diseases were very grievous, *v.* 17. *His bones were burnt with heat, v.* 30. He was in a constant fever, which even consumed the marrow in his bones. See how our frail bodies carry in themselves the seeds of disease and death *His skin was black upon him, v.* 30. The blood settled, and the sores suppurated, which made his skin look black. Even his garment had its color changed with the continual running of his boils, and the soft clothing he used to wear was now grown so stiff, that all his garments were *like his collar, v.* 18. It would be noisome to describe Job's condition, for want of clean linen and good

p 31:16—21. Ps. 12:1. Prov. 14:21,31. 17:5. 19:17. 28:8. Is. 58:7,8. Dan. 4:27. 2 Cor. 9:9.
q 3:25,26. 29:18. Jer. 8:15. 14:19. 15: 18. Mic. 1:12.
r 18:6,18. 29:17. Ps. 97:11. Is. 50:10.
s Ps. 22:4. Jer. 4:19. 31:20. Lam. 1:20. 2:11.
t Ps. 38:6. 42:9. 43:2. Is. 53:3,4. Lam. 3:1—3.
u 17:14. Ps. 102:6. Is. 13:21,22. 38: 14. Mic. 1:8. Mal. 1:3.
‡ Or, *ostriches.*
x Ps. 119:83. Lam. 3:4. 4:8. 5:10.
y Ps. 102:3.
z Ps. 137:1—4. Ec. 3:4. Is. 21:4. 22: 12. 24:7—9. Lam. 5:15. Dan. 6:18

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

All earthly honor, prosperity, and comfort are precarious: and 'they build too low, who build beneath the skies.' But if a contrast, so affecting as this narrative exhibits, may be drawn, between the summit of earthly felicity, and the depth of earthly misery; how inconceivable must be the distance between eternal life and eternal punishment! And if the thoughts of former enjoyments greatly enhance the anguish of present sufferings; in what a wretched case will the wealthy, honored, and self-indulgent sinner be, when it shall be said to him, 'Remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst *thy* good things!' (*Luke* 16: 22—26.) —A Christian must not disdain nor despair of any fellow creature, nor reproach men for their poverty, nor indulge resentment; and they who, through incapacity, or the imbecility of old age, cannot work, have a right to be maintained by others: yet men may persevere in so base a conduct, that no wise man can employ, trust, or favor them; and whilst they continue in their vile practices, they are less entitled to respect, than the meanest of the inoffensive and useful brute creatures. There are numbers, who cannot, by any human wisdom or power, be preserved from present and future ruin: we may lament to see them dying with disease and in misery; but we cannot make them willing to be done good to: and in some scenes, it is equally surprising and afflicting to notice the multitudes which answer to this description. As, however, some of every sort may be rescued from ruin, it is *our* part to do what we can in the use of proper means; and to look to Him, with whom all things are possible, for an effectual blessing.—But they, who are themselves base and foolish, train up families of children of the same character, inured to vice, and fitted to be the nuisance of society. So that, except some method be devised to prevent the rising generations, one after another, from being corrupted, no extensive reformation can take place; and alas! the sword of the magistrate will still find abundance of employment.—When inward temptations unite with outward calamities, the soul often loses its firmness, is hurried on as in a tempest, and is filled with confusion. It then becomes difficult to speak, or complain, without seeming 'to charge God foolishly,' as if He dealt too rigorously with us, and were become our *Enemy.* But wo be to those, who have Him for an *Enemy!* They will not only be brought with others to the grave, but to the bottomless pit of destruction. Compared with this 'perdition of ungodly men,' what are all outward, or even inward, *temporal* afflictions? But, as the grave is the house appointed for all living, let us look more to the things which are unseen and eternal.

SCOTT.

Verse 24.

Grave.] Marg. *heap.* 'Tumulus.' *Rosenm.* Referring to that no made method of burial, in tumuli, or mounds, so ancient and so extended. See note and cuts, 2 Chr. 14:2—5. 'This obscure v. seems to mean, "He will not extend his judgments, or punishments, to the grave, though they (the worthless persecutors described in the former part of this ch.) cry, or shout in his destruction;" i. e. the destruction God brings on me. "To stretch out the hand," being a preparatory act for inflicting punishment, is an expression often taken for punishment itself.' HEWLETT.

Verse 29.

Dragons.] *Tannim.* Creatures long and flexible. The common notion of *dragons,* i. e. vigilant beasts with a bird's head, lion's claws, wings, and a lizard's tail, seems a fable of northern India. See *Heeren.* The unsightly animal given in the cut, is the nearest approach to the

old idea, which modern science has yet brought to light. It is the *draco volans,* or *flying dragon* of zoologists; of habits like the chameleon and lizard tribe. Possibly, the sight of some such beast might have given rise to the idea of the fabulous dragon, through the exaggerations of wonder-loving travellers in distant regions, during the early ages of ignorance and wonder. *Owls.*] Heb. *daughters of vociferation,* i. e. *ostriches:* note, Lev. 11:16. ED.

CHAP. XXXI.

Job solemnly, before God, protests, that he was not guilty of unchastity or dishonesty, 1—12; of unkindness to his servants, or to the poor, 13—22; of trusting in riches; of idolatry, revenge, neglect of hospitality, hypocrisy, or fear of man, 23—34. He appeals to God, and challenges his accusers to prove their allegations, 35—40.

I MADE [a] a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I [b] think upon a maid?

2 For [c] what portion of God *is there* from above? and *what* inheritance of the Almighty from on high?

3 *Is* not [d] destruction to the wicked? and [e] a strange *punishment* to the workers of iniquity?

4 [f] Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?

5 [g] If I have [h] walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit;

6 * Let me be [i] weighed in an even balance, that God may [k] know mine integrity.

7 [l] If my step hath turned out of the way, and [m] mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath [n] cleaved to mine hands;

8 *Then* [o] let me sow, and let another eat; yea, [p] let my offspring be rooted out.

a Gen. 6:2. 2 Sam. 11:2—4. Ps. 119: 37. Prov. 4:25. 23:31—33. Matt. 5:28,29. 1 John 2:16.
b Jam. 1:14,15.
c 20:29. 27:13. Heb. 13:4.
d 21:30. Ps. 55:23. 73:18. Prov. 1: 27. 10:29. 21:15. Matt. 7:13. Rom. 9:22. 1 Thes. 5:3. 2 Thes. 1:9. 2 Pet. 2:1.
e Is. 28:21. Jude 7.
f 14:16. 34:21. Gen. 16:13. 2 Chr. 16:9. Ps. 44:21. 139:1—3. Prov. 5:21. 15:3. Jer. 16:17. 32:19. Heb. 4:13.
g Ps. 7:3—5.
h Ps. 4:2. 12:2. Prov. 12:11. Jer. 2: 5. Ez. 13:8.
* Heb. *Let him weigh me in balances of justice.*
i 1 Sam. 2:3. Ps. 7:8,9. 17:2,3. 26: 1. Prov. 16:11. Is. 26:7. Dan. 5: 27. Mic. 6:11.
k Josh. 22:22. Ps. 1:6. 139:23. Matt. 7:23. 2 Tim. 2:19.
l Ps. 44:20,21.
m Num. 15:39. Ec. 11:9. Ez. 6:9. Matt. 5:29.
n Ps. 101:3. Is. 33:15.
o 5:5. 24:6. Lev. 26:16. Deut. 28: 30—33,51. Judg. 6:3—6. Mic. 6:15.
p 5:4. 15:30. 18:19. Ps. 109:13.

attendance, and what filthy rags all his clothes were. Some think, that, among other diseases, Job was ill of a swelling in his throat, and that that was it which bound him about, like a stiff collar.

Thus was he *cast into the mire*, *v.* 19. *compared to mire*, so some: his body looked more like a heap of dirt than any thing else. Let none be proud of their clothing, nor their cleanness, Isa. 3: 24. We are but dust and ashes at the best, and our bodies vile bodies; but we are apt to forget, till God, by some sore disease, makes us sensibly to feel and own, what we are.

4. What afflicted him most of all, was, that God seemed to be his Enemy, *v.* 19. He was very importunate in his applications, but in vain, *v.* 20. If our most fervent prayers bring not in speedy and sensible returns, we must not think it strange. Though the seed of Jacob did never seek in vain, yet they have often thought that they did, and that God has not only been deaf, but angry, at the prayers of his people, Ps. 80: 4. We have here *v.* 21. one of the worst words Job ever spake; far be it from the God of mercy and grace, to be *cruel* to any; his compassions fail not, especially to his own children: Job was unjust and ungrateful, when he said so of Him; but harboring hard thoughts of God was now the sin which most easily beset him. *Thou liftest me up to the wind*, (*v.* 22.) as a feather, or the chaff the wind plays with; so unequal a match did Job think himself for Omnipotence, and so unable was he to help himself, when he was made to ride, not in triumph, but in terror, on the wings of the wind; and the judgments of God did even dissolve his substance, as a cloud is dissolved and dispersed by the wind.

5. He expected no other now, than that God, by these troubles, would shortly make an end of him, *v.* 23. *The living know that they shall die;* let us, each, know it with application.

Here is something, in the midst of all, with which he comforts himself, though but a little. 1. That death will end his calamities, *v.* 24. The hand of God's wrath would bring him to death, but not follow him beyond; his soul would be safe and happy in the world of spirits, his body safe and easy in the dust. Men cry in their destruction, when dying; yet in the grave they feel nothing, fear nothing, but all is quiet. 'Though in hell, (called *destruction*,) they cry, yet not in the grave; and I being delivered from the second death, the first to me will be an effectual relief.' Therefore he wished he might be *hid in the grave*, *ch.* 14: 13. 2. He reflects with comfort on the concern he always had for the calamities of others, when himself at ease, *v.* 25. Some think he herein complains of God, thinking it very hard, that he, who had showed mercy to others, should not himself find mercy. I would rather take it as a quieting consideration to himself; his conscience witnessed for him, that he had always sympathized with persons in misery, and done what he could to help them, and therefore had reason to expect that, at length, both God and his friends would pity him. They who mourn with them that mourn, will bear their own sorrows the better, when it comes to their turn. *Did not my soul burn for the poor?* So some read it, comparing 2 Cor. 11: 29. *Who is offended, and I burn not?* As they who have been unmerciful and hard-hearted may expect to hear of it from their own consciences, when in trouble, so they who have considered and succored the poor, shall have the remembrance of that to make their bed easy in their sickness, Ps. 41: 1, 3.

CHAP. XXXI. Job had often protested his integrity in general, here he does it in particular; not in commendation, (for he does not here proclaim his good deeds,) but in his own just and necessary vindication; a debt every man owes to his own reputation. Job's friends had been particular in their articles of impeachment, therefore he is so in his protestation, which seems to refer especially to what Eliphaz had accused him of, *ch.* 22: 6, &c. They had produced no witnesses nor proofs, therefore he may well be admitted to purge himself on oath, which he does very solemnly, and with many awful imprecations of God's wrath, if he were guilty of those crimes; this protestation confirms God's character of him, that there was none like him in the earth. Nor does he only maintain the cleanness of his practices, but shows also that the *reason* of his eschewing evil, was, he feared God, and piety was at the bottom of his justice and charity; and this crowns the proof of his sincerity. Now, in all this, we may see, (1.) The sense of the patriarchal age concerning good and evil, and what was so long ago condemned as sinful, that is, both hateful and hurtful. (2.) A noble pattern of piety and virtue proposed to us for our imitation, which, if our consciences can witness for us that we conform to it, will be our rejoicing, as it was Job's, in the day of evil.

V. 1—8. The lusts of the flesh, and the love of the world, are the two fatal rocks on which multitudes split; against these Job protests he was always careful to stand on his guard.

I. The lusts of the flesh. He not only kept himself clear from adultery, (*v.* 9.) but from all lewdness whatsoever, even of the imagination, *v.* 1. From the beginning it was so, that a man should have but one wife, and cleave to her only; and Job kept close to that institution, and abhorred the thought of transgressing it. Those that would keep their hearts pure, must guard their eyes, which are both the outlets and inlets of uncleanness. Hence we read of *wanton eyes*, and *eyes full of adultery*. The first sin began in the eye, Gen. 3: 6. What we must not meddle with, we must not lust after; and what we must not lust after, we must not look at; not the forbidden wealth, (Prov. 23: 5.) not the forbidden wine, (Prov. 23: 31.) not the forbidden woman, Matt. 5: 28. Those are not chaste, that are not so in spirit as well as body, 1 Cor. 7: 34. See how Christ's exposition of the seventh commandment agrees with the ancient sense of it, and how much better Job understood it than the Pharisees, though they sat in Moses' chair.

His reasons: not fear of reproach among men, though that is to be considered, (Prov. 6 : 33.) but fear of the wrath and curse of God. He knew very well, that there is no portion, no inheritance, no true happiness, for a soul, but what is in God, in the Almighty, and what comes from above, from on high. Those that wallow in uncleanness, render themselves utterly unfit for communion with God, either in grace here, or in glory hereafter, and become allied to unclean spirits, which are for ever separated from Him; and then

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXI. V. 1—4. It appears, from this protestation, that Job understood the spiritual nature of the divine commandments, as reaching to the thoughts and intents of the heart, far better, than almost any of those did, to whom the written law was delivered, and among whom it was preserved. (*Rom.* 7:9—14. *Ex.* 20:14. *Matt.* 5:27, 28.) —In this chapter, and in ch. 29. much more is contained of genuine purity and equity; of condescending, liberal, self-denying kindness to the poor and needy; of superiority to the love of the world and the fear of men, and all corrupt motives, as well as of sterling piety, than in all the writings of pagan antiquity combined. The standard of duty is fixed as high as in the moral law, and explained as spiritually as in our Savior's sermon on the mount. And the entire coincidence of this ancient book with the N. T. in this essential matter, as well as in the grand doctrines of revealed religion, and the effect of them on the practice of true believers, forms a striking proof, that it was 'written by inspiration from God;' that all the sacred writers 'spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;' and that true religion has been the same for substance in every age from the beginning.—Job's conduct as a magistrate, in his public capacity, was before exhibited: this chapter contains an avowal of his habitual conduct in private life. SCOTT.

(1.) *Maid.*] *Bethulah.* Some, as Dr. *A. Clarke*, refer this to 'idols called *Baithulia, Bætylia;* which *Sanchoniatho* says Ouranos [heaven] first introduced, when he erected animated stones, [the famous 'rocking stones,'] or rather, as *Bochart* observes, anointed stones.' See notes, Gen. 28:18, &c. These upright stones came to have various shapes, a favorite one was that of a female. *Bochart*, in *Hewlett.* Schultens says, the last clause of this v. is so worded as to express vehement and indignant repelling of a charge, utterly denying its possibility. ED.

(2.) What is the portion the Most High decrees to such sins? ID. Verses 5—8.

(*Gen.* 3:6. *Ex.* 20:17. *Josh.* 7:21. 1 *K.* 21:1, 2.) (*Notes*, 5:3.—5.) SCOTT.

(6.) Note and cut, Ps. 62:9. ED.

9 [q] If mine heart hath been deceived by a woman, or [r] *if* I have laid wait at my neighbor's door;

10 *Then* let my wife [s] grind unto another, [t] and let others bow down upon her.

11 For this *is* [u] an heinous crime, yea, it *is* [x] an iniquity *to be punished by* the judges.

12 For it *is* [y] a fire *that* consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase.

13 ¶ If I did despise [z] the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me;

14 [a] What then shall I do when God riseth up? and [b] when he visiteth, [c] what shall I answer him?

15 [d] Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and [*] did not one fashion us in the womb?

q Judg. 16:5. 1 K. 11:4. Neh. 13:26. Prov. 2:16—19. 5:3, &c. 6:25. 7:21. 22:14. Ec. 7:26.
r 24:15, 16. Jer. 5:8. Hos. 7:4.
s Ex. 11:5. Is. 47:2. Matt. 24:41.
t 2 Sam. 12:11. Jer. 8:10. Hos. 4:13, 14.
u Gen. 20:9. 26:10. 39:9. Ex. 20:14. Prov. 6:29—33.
x Gen. 38:24. Lev. 20:10. Deut. 22: 22—24. Ez. 16:38.
y Prov. 3:33. 6:27. Jer. 5:7—9.
z Ex. 21:20, 21, 26, 27. Lev. 25:43, 46. Deut. 15:12—15. Jer. 34:14—17. Eph. 6:9. Col. 4:1.
a 9:32. 10:2. Ps. 7:6. 9:12, 19. 10: 12—15. 76:9. 143:2. Is. 10:3. Zech. 2:13.
b Hos. 9:7. Mic. 7:4. Matt. 7:2. Jam. 2:13.
c Rom. 3:19.
d 34:19. Neh. 5:5. Prov. 14:31. 22: 2. Is. 58:7. Mal. 2:10.
* Or, *did he not fashion us in one womb?* 10:3—12. Ps. 139:14—16.

what portion, what inheritance, can they have with God? No unclean thing shall enter into the New Jerusalem, that holy city. Fools make a mock at this sin, make a jest of it, it is with them a peccadillo, a trick of youth; but they deceive themselves with vain words, for, because of these things, the wrath of God, the insupportable wrath of the eternal God, *comes on the children of disobedience*, Eph. 5: 6. There are some sinners whom God sometimes goes out of the common road of providence to meet with; such are these. The destruction of Sodom is a strange punishment. Is there not *alienation* (so some read it) to the workers of iniquity? This is the sinfulness of the sin, that it alienates the mind from God; (Eph. 4: 18, 19.) and this is the punishment of the sinners, that they shall be eternally set at a distance from Him, Rev. 22: 15. A wanton thought cannot be so close, nor a wanton look so quick, as to escape God's cognizance, much less any act of uncleanness so secretly done, as to be out of his sight. If at any time tempted, Job restrained himself from it, and all approaches to it, with this pertinent thought, *v.* 4. as Joseph did, Gen. 39: 9. God takes a more exact notice of us, than we do of ourselves.

II. The love of the world, and all sinful, indirect means of getting wealth. He dreaded all forbidden profit as much as all forbidden pleasure. Let us see,

1. His protestation: in general, he had been honest and just in all his dealings, and never, to his knowledge, did any body any wrong. (1.) He never *walked with vanity*, i. e. told a lie, or equivocated, to get a good bargain. Some men's constant walk is a constant cheat. They either make what they have more than it is, that they may be trusted; or less than it is, that nothing may be expected from them. But Job was a different man. His wealth was not gotten by vanity, though now diminished, Prov. 13: 11. (2.) He never hasted to deceit. Those that deceive, must be quick and sharp, but Job's quickness and sharpness were never turned that way. He never made haste to be rich by deceit, but always acted cautiously, lest, through inconsideration, he should do an unjust thing. Note, What we have in the world, may be either used with comfort, or lost with comfort, if honestly got. (3.) *His steps never turned out of the way*, the way of justice and fair dealing, *v.* 7. In every particular action and affair, we must closely tie ourselves up to the rules of righteousness. (4.) His heart did not walk after his eyes, i. e. he did not covet what he saw, that was another's. Covetousness is called the *lust of the eye*, 1 John 2: 16. Achan saw, and (5.) That *no blot had cleaved to his hands*, i. e. he then took, the accursed thing. was not chargeable with getting any thing dishonestly, or keeping that which was another's, whenever it appeared to be so. Injustice is a blot, a blot to the estate, a blot to the owner; therefore, let it not *cleave to our hands*. See Isa. 33:15.

2. How he ratifies his protestation. So confident is he of his own honesty, that, (1.) He is willing to have his goods searched, *v.* 6. An honest man is so far from dreading a trial, that he desires it rather, being well assured God knows his integrity, and will approve it, and that the trial of it will be to his praise and honor. (2.) He is willing to forfeit the whole, if any thing were found but what he came honestly by, *v.* 8. '*Let me sow, and let another eat*,' was already agreed to be the doom of oppressors; (*ch.* 5: 5.) 'and let my offspring be rooted out.' This intimates, he believed the sin deserved this punishment, that, usually, it is thus punished; but that, though now his estate was ruined, yet he knew himself innocent, and would venture all the poor remains of his estate on the issue of the trial.

V. 9—15. Here are two more instances of Job's integrity.

I. His very great abhorrence of adultery. See here,

1. How clear he was from this sin, *v.* 9. (1.) He did not so much as covet his neighbor's wife, for even *his heart was not deceived by a woman*. The beauty of another man's wife did not kindle in him any unchaste desires, nor was he ever moved by the allurements of an adulterous woman, such as is described, Prov. 5: 6, &c. See the original of all the defilements of this life; they come from a deceived heart. Every sin is deceitful, and none more so than the sin of uncleanness. (2.) He never compassed or imagined any unchaste design. See *ch.* 24: 15.

2. What a dread he had of this sin, and what frightful apprehensions of its malignity, *v.* 11. as one of the greatest, vilest sins a man can be guilty of, highly provoking to God, and destructive to the prosperity of the soul. With respect to the mischievousness of it, and the punishment it deserved, he owns that, if he were guilty of that heinous crime, (1.) His family might justly be made infamous in the highest degree, *v.* 10. *Let my wife grind to another*. Let her be a *slave*, so some; a *harlot*, so others. God often punishes the adultery of the husband with the adultery of the wife, as in David's case, which does not in the least excuse the treachery of the adulterous wife; but, how unrighteous soever she is, God is righteous. See Hos. 4: 13. Note, Those who are not just and faithful to their relations, must not think it strange, if their relations be unjust and unfaithful to them. (2.) He himself might justly be made a public example; *For it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges;* yea, though the guilty are themselves judges, as Job. Note, Adultery is a crime the civil magistrate ought to take cognizance of, and punish: so it was adjudged even in the patriarchal age, before the law of Moses made it capital. It is an evil work, to which the sword of justice ought to be a terror. (3.) It might justly become the ruin of his estate; nay, he knew it would be so, *v.* 12. Lust is a fire in the soul: they that indulge it, are said to *burn*. It consumes all that is good there, (the convictions, the comforts,) and lays the conscience waste. It kindles the fire of God's wrath, which, if not extinguished by the blood of Christ, will burn to the lowest hell. It will consume even to that eternal destruction. It consumes the body, (Prov. 5: 11.) it consumes the substance, it roots out all the increase. Burning lusts bring burning judgments. Perhaps it alludes to the burning of Sodom, which was intended for an example to those who should afterward, in like manner, live ungodly.

II. He had a very great tenderness for his servants, and managed it well. By this he evidenced his sincerity, that he had grace to govern his passion as well as his appetite; and he that in these two things has the rule of his own spirit, is *better than the mighty*, Prov. 16: 32. Here observe,

1. Job's condescensions to his servants, *v.* 13. If they contradicted him in any thing, he was willing to hear their reasons. If they had offended him, or were accused to him, he would patiently hear what they had to say for themselves in their own vindication or excuse. Nay, if they complained of any hardship he put on them, he did not brow-beat them, and bid them hold their tongues, but gave them leave to tell their story, and redressed their grievances, as far as it appeared they had right on their side. He was tender of them, not only when they served him and pleased him, but even when they contended with him. Herein, he was a great example to masters, to *give unto servants what is just and equal;* nay, to do the same things *to* them, that they expect *from* them, (Col. 4: 1. Eph. 6: 9.) and not to rule them with rigor, and carry it with a high hand. Many of Job's servants were slain in his service, (*ch.* 1: 15—17.) the rest were unkind and undutiful, and despised his cause, though he never despised theirs; (*ch.* 19: 15, 16.) but he had this comfort, that in prosperity he had behaved well to them. Note, When relations are either removed from, or imbittered to us, the testimony of our consciences, that we have done our duty to them, will be a great support and comfort.

2. The considerations that moved him to treat his servants thus kindly; he had, herein, an eye to God, both as his Judge, and their Maker.

(1.) As his Judge, *v.* 14. He considered that he had a Master in heaven, to whom he was accountable, who will rise up, and will visit; and

Verses 9—12.

(*Note*, *Ex.* 20:14.) SCOTT.

(10.) *Grind*, &c.] Be, even in her person, at his absolute disposal; see *Hewlett*, &c. as female slaves are still to their masters in the E. For a cut of the handmill, see on Matt. 24:41. *Grinding* at the mill is also several times used in S.S. to denote the lowest drudgery. ED.

Verses 13—15.

(*Eph.* 6:5—9. *Col.* 4:1.) Compare this statement, and the motives here adduced, with the conduct of the most civilized pagans towards their slaves, and the opinions of their strictest moralists on this subject; and note the immense disparity, between natural principles, and that religion which God has revealed! SCOTT.

16 If I have [e] withheld the poor from *their* desire, or have caused [f] the eyes of the widow to fail;

17 Or [g] have eaten my morsel myself alone, and [h] the fatherless hath not eaten thereof;

18 (For from my youth he was brought up with me, as *with* a father, and I have guided [*] her from my mother's womb;)

19 If I have seen any [i] perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering;

20 If [k] his loins have not blessed me, and *if* he were *not* warmed with the fleece of my sheep;

21 If I have [l] lifted up my hand against the fatherless, [m] when I saw my help in the gate;

22 *Then* [n] let mine arm fall from my shoulder-blade, and mine arm be broken from the † bone.

23 For [o] destruction *from* God *was* a terror to me, and [p] by reason of his highness I could not endure.

24 ¶ If I have [q] made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, *Thou art* my confidence;

25 If I [r] rejoiced because my wealth *was* great, and [s] because mine hand had ‡ gotten much:

[e] 22:7—9. Deut. 15:7—10. Ps. 112:9. Luke 16:21. Acts 11:29. Gal. 2:10.
[f] Deut. 28:32. Ps. 69:3. 119:82,123. Is. 38:14. Lam. 4:17.
[g] Deut. 15:11,14. Neh. 8:10. Luke 11: 41. John 13:29. Acts 4:32.
[h] 29:13—16. Ex. 18:7,16. Rom. 12:13. Jam. 1:27. 1 John 3:17.
[*] That is, *the widow.*
[i] 22:6. 2 Chr. 28:15. Is. 58:7. Matt. 25:36,43. Luke 3:11. Acts 9:39. Jam. 2:16. 1 John 3:18.
[k] 29:11. Deut. 24:13.
[l] 6:27. 22:9. 24:9. 29:12. Prov. 23: 10,11. Jer. 5:28. Ez. 22:7.
[m] Mic. 2:1,2. 7:3.
[n] 10,40. Josh. 23:22,23. Ps. 7:4,5. 137:6.
† Or, *chanel-bone.*
[o] 20:23. 21:20. Gen. 39:9. Ps. 119: 120. Is. 13:6. Joel 1:15. 2 Cor. 5: 11.
[p] 13:11. 40:9. 42:5,6.
[q] Gen. 31:1. Deut. 8:12—14. Ps. 49: 6,7. 52:7. 62:10. Prov. 10:15. 11:28. 30:9. Mark 10:24. Luke 12: 15. Col. 3:5. 1 Tim. 6:10,17.
[r] Esth. 5:11. Prov. 23:5. Jer. 9:23. Ez. 28:5. Luke 12:19. 16:19,25.
[s] Deut. 8:17,18. Is. 10:13,14. Dan. 4:30. Hos. 12:8. Hab. 1:16.
‡ Heb. *found.*

we are concerned to consider *what we shall do in the day of his visitation,* (Isa. 10: 3.) and, considering that we are undone, if God should then be strait and severe with us, we ought to be very mild and gentle towards all with whom we have to do. And let not us be rigorous with our inferiors. Consider what will become of us, if we be cruel and unmerciful to our brethren. The cries of the injured will be heard, the sins of the injurious will be punished, they that showed no mercy, shall find none; and what shall we do then?

(2.) As his and his servants' Creator, *v.* 15. 'I am a creature as well as he; he partakes of the same nature, and is the work of the same hand; *have we not all one Father?*' Note, Whatever difference there is among men in their outward condition, capacity of mind, strength of body, or place in the world, He that made the one, made the other also; which is a good reason why we should not mock at men's natural infirmities, nor trample on persons any way our inferiors, but, in every thing, do as we would be done by. It is a rule of justice, *Let equals be equally estimated and treated;* therefore, since there is so great a parity among men, they being all made of the same mould, by the same power, for the same end, notwithstanding the disparity of our outward condition, we are bound so far to set ourselves on the level with those we deal with, as to do to them, in all respects, as we would they should do to us.

V. 16—23. Eliphaz had particularly charged Job with unmercifulness to the poor, *ch.* 22: 6, &c. yet it appears by Job's protestation, his charge was utterly false and groundless. See here,

I. The testimony of Job's conscience, concerning his constant behavior toward the poor. He is most large on this head, because in this matter he was most particularly accused. He solemnly protests,

1. That he had never been wanting to do good to them, as there was occasion, to the utmost of his ability. He was always compassionate to the poor, especially destitute widows and fatherless. (1.) He was always ready to grant their desires, and answer their expectations, *v.* 16. (2.) He respected and honored them, *v.* 17. As it is one of the greatest grievances of poverty, that it exposes to contempt, SO IT IS NONE OF THE LEAST SUPPORTS TO THE POOR, TO BE RESPECTED. (3.) He was very tender of them, and had a fatherly concern for them, *v.* 18. He was a father to the fatherless, brought them up, and gave them, not only maintenance, but education. He was a guide to the widow, advised her in her affairs, took cognizance of them, and undertook their management. Those that need not our alms, may yet have occasion for our counsel, and it is a real kindness. This, Job says, he did from his birth, i. e. he had something of tenderness and compassion woven in his nature; and his parents taught him betimes to pity and relieve the poor, and brought up orphans with him. (4.) He took particular care to clothe them that were without covering, which would be more expensive to him than feeding them, *v.* 19, 20. Poor people may perish for want of clothing, as well as for want of food. Job's sheep were burned with fire from heaven; but this was his comfort, that, when he had them, he came honestly by them, and used them charitably, fed the poor with their flesh, and clothed them with their wool.

2. That he had never been accessary to the wronging of any that were poor. It might be said, perhaps, that he was kind here and there to a poor orphan that was a favorite, but to others he was oppressive. No, he was tender of all, and injurious to none, *v.* 21. Those that have it in their power to do a wrong thing, and go through with it, and a prospect of getting by it, and yet do justly, and love mercy, and are firm to both, may afterward reflect on it with much comfort, as Job does here.

II. The imprecation wherewith he confirms this protestation, *v.* 22. that is, 'Let the flesh rot off from the bone, and one bone be disjointed and broken off from another.' Had he not been perfectly clear in this matter, he durst not thus have challenged the divine vengeance. And he intimates, that it is a righteous thing with God to break the arm that is lifted up against the fatherless, as he withered Jeroboam's arm that was stretched out against a prophet.

III. The principles by which Job was restrained from all uncharitableness and unmercifulness; God being the Patron of oppressed poverty, who will not let oppressors go unpunished, *v.* 23. Good men, even the best, have need to restrain themselves from sin with the fear of *destruction from God,* and all little enough. This should especially restrain us from all acts of injustice and oppression—that God Himself is the Avenger thereof. Even Adam, in innocency, was awed with a threatening.

V. 24—32. Four articles more of Job's protestation we have in these vs. which, as all the rest, not only assure us what he was and did, but teach us what we should be and do.

I. He protests, he never set his heart on the wealth of this world, nor took the things of it for his portion and happiness. Our wealth is either advantageous or pernicious to us, according as we stand affected to it. If we make it our rest and our ruler, it will be our ruin; if we make it our servant and an instrument of righteousness, it will be a blessing to us. Job here tells how he stood affected to his worldly wealth, 1. He put no great confidence in it, *v.* 24. They are very unwise that do, and enemies to themselves. Some make it their hope and confidence for another world, as if it were a certain token of God's favor: and those who have so much sense as not to think so, yet promise themselves that it will be a portion for them in this life, whereas the things themselves are uncertain, and our satisfaction in them much more so. It is hard to have riches, and not to trust in riches; and that is it which makes it so difficult for *a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.* 2. He took no great complacency in it, *v.* 25. as if it added any thing to his real excellency, or in comparison with the spiritual things which were the delight of his soul. His joy did not terminate in the gift, but passed through it to the Giver. He never said, *Soul, take thine ease* in these things, nor blessed himself in his riches. He did not inordinately rejoice in his wealth; and that helped him to bear the loss of it so patiently. The way to *weep as though we wept not,* is, to *rejoice as though we rejoiced not.*

II. He protests he was never guilty of idolatry, *v.* 26—28. We do not find his friends charged him with this. But there were those, it seems, at that time, who were so sottish as to worship the sun and moon, else he would not have mentioned it. The most ancient idolatry was, the worshipping of the sun and moon, to which the temptation was most strong, as appears, (Deut. 4: 19) where Moses speaks of the danger the people were in of being driven to worship them. But, as yet, it was practised secretly, and durst not appear in open view, as, afterward, the most abominable idolatries did. Observe,

1. How far Job kept from this sin. Some think Baal was designed to represent the sun; but Job never worshipped the sun, or the moon. He kept his heart with all diligence, that that should not be secretly enticed to think, that there is a divine glory in their brightness, or a divine power in

Verses 16—23.

(22:5—14. 2 *Cor.* 1:12—14.)—In what other ancient book, not written by an Israelite, shall we meet with sentiments so kind and considerate concerning the lower orders in society? SCOTT.

(20.) The parts chiefly protected are delicately represented as blessing: comp. cut, Neh. 13:15. Or, the loins are personified as being the place of the girdle, (Jer. 13.11, &c.) which held together all the dress: cut, 1 Chr. 29:24. ED.

(21.) *Help.*] 'Influence, authority in the court where he presided.' HEWLETT.

Verses 24—28.

(*M. R.* t. *Note, Deut.* 4:19.) The words, rendered 'an iniquity to be punished by the judge,' have led some to think that this book was written, after the giving of the Mosaic law: but the circumstance of no idolatry, except that of the sun and moon being mentioned, is a much more probable argument in favor of a higher antiquity. The judicial law for punishing idolatry by the magistrate, seems to have been intended for Israel alone, as under the Sinai-covenant. The plural of the same word is used and rendered *judges,* when the punishment of adulterers is spoken of. (11) Adultery is a crime, which

26 If I [t] beheld the * sun when it shined,
or [u] the moon walking † *in* brightness;

27 And [x] my heart hath been secretly enticed, or ‡ my mouth hath [y] kissed my hand:

28 This also *were* [z] an iniquity *to be punished by* the judge: [a] for I should have denied the God *that is* above.

29 ¶ If [b] I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him:

30 Neither [c] have I suffered [d] my § mouth to sin, by wishing a curse to his soul.

31 If [e] the men of my tabernacle said not, [f] Oh, that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied.

32 [g] The stranger did not lodge in the street: *but* I opened my doors to the ‖ traveller.

33 If I [h] covered my transgressions ¶ as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom:

34 [i] Did I fear a great

t Gen. 1:16—18. Deut. 4:19. 17:3. 2 K. 23:5,11. Jer. 8:2. Ez. 8:16.
* Heb. *light.*
u Ps. 8:3,4. Jer. 44:17.
† Heb. *bright.*
x Deut. 11:16. 13:6. Is. 44:20. Rom. 1:21,28.
‡ Heb. *my hand hath kissed my mouth.*
y 1 K. 19:18. Ps. 2:12. Hos. 13:2.
z 11. 9:15. 23:7. Gen. 18:25. Deut. 17:9. Judg. 11:27. Ps. 50:6. Heb. 12:23.
a Josh. 24:23,27. Prov. 30:9. Tit. 1: 16. 2 Pet. 2:1. 1 John 2:23. Jude 4.
b 2 Sam. 1:12. 4:10,11. 16:5—8. Ps. 35:13,14,25,26. Prov. 17:5. 24:17,18.
c Ex. 23:4,5. Matt. 5:43,44. Rom. 12: 14. 1 Pet. 2:22,23. 3:9.
d Ec. 5:2,6. Matt. 5:22. 12:36. Jam. 3:6,9,10.
§ Heb. *palate.*
e 1 Sam. 24:4,10. 26:8. 2 Sam. 16:9, 10. 19:21,22. Jer. 40:15,16. Luke 9:54,55. 22:50,51.
f 19:22. Ps. 27:2. 35:25. Prov. 1:11, 12,18. Mic. 3:2,3.
g 17,18. Gen. 19:2,3. Judg. 19:15,20, 21. Matt. 25:35,40,44,45. Rom. 12: 13. 1 Tim. 5:10. Heb. 13:2. 1 Pet. 4:9.
‖ Or, *way.*
h Gen. 3:7,8,12. Josh. 7:11. Prov. 28: 13. Acts 5:3. 1 John 1:8—10.
¶ Or, *after the manner of men.* Hos. 6:7
i Ex. 23:2. Prov. 29:25. Jer. 38:4,5, 16,19. Matt. 27:20—26.

their influence, and that therefore divine honors are to be paid to them. Here is the source of idolatry; it begins in the heart; every man is tempted to that, as to other sins, when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed. Job did not so much as put a compliment on these pretended deities, did not perform the least and lowest act of adoration. *His mouth did not kiss his hand*, which, it is likely, was a ceremony then commonly used, even by some that yet would not be thought idolaters. It is a long-established piece of civil respect among ourselves, in making a bow, to kiss the hand; a form, it seems, anciently used in giving divine honors to the sun and moon; they could not reach to kiss them, as *the men that sacrificed kissed the calves;* (Hos. 13:2. 1 K. 10:18.) but, to show their good will, they kissed their hand, reverencing those as their masters, which God has made servants to this lower world, to hold the candle for us: Job never did it.

2. How ill Job thought of this sin, *v.* 28. (1.) He looked upon it as a public nuisance. Idolatry debauches men's minds, corrupts their manners, takes off the true sense of religion, which is the great bond of societies, and provokes God to give men up to a reprobate sense, and to send judgments on a nation; therefore the conservators of the public peace are concerned to restrain it by punishing it. (2.) He looked upon it as a much greater affront to the God of heaven, and no less than high treason against his crown and dignity. Idolatry is, in effect, atheism; hence the Gentiles are said to be *without God* (*atheists*) in the world. Note, We should be afraid of every thing that does but implicitly deny the God above, his providence, or any of his perfections.*

III. He protests, he was so far from doing or designing mischief to any, that he neither desired nor delighted in the hurt of the worst enemy he had. The forgiving of those that do us evil, it seems, was Old Testament duty. The Pharisees made the law concerning it of no effect, by teaching, *Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.*

Those about him, were so enraged at his enemy who hated him, that they could have eaten him, if Job would but have set them on, or given them leave. See how much beloved Job was by his family; see what a strict hand also Job kept on his passions, that he would not avenge himself, though he had those about him that blew the coals of his resentment. Note, (1.) A good man commonly does not himself lay to heart the affronts done him, so much as his friends do for him. (2.) Great men have commonly those about them that stir them up to revenge. David had, 1 Sam. 24: 4.—26: 8. 2 Sam. 16: 9. But if they keep their temper, notwithstanding the spiteful insinuations of those about them, afterward it shall be no grief to them, but shall turn very much to their praise, and comfort.

IV. He protests, that he had never been unkind or inhospitable to strangers, v. 32. He that is *at* home, must consider those that are *from* home, and put his soul into their soul's stead, and then do as he would be done by. Hospitality is a Christian duty, 1 Pet. 4: 9. Job, in his prosperity, was noted for good house-keeping: *He opened his door to the road;* so it may be read; he kept the street door open, that he might see who passed by, and he invited them in, as Abraham, Gen. 18: 1.

V. 33—40. We have here Job's protestation against three more sins, together with his general appeal to God's bar, and his petition for a hearing there, which, it is likely, was intended to conclude his discourse, (and therefore we will consider it last,) but that another particular sin occurred, from which he thought it requisite to acquit himself. He clears himself from the charge,

I. Of dissimulation and hypocrisy, the general crime his friends accused him of. Zophar insinuated, (*ch.* 20:12.) that he *hid his iniquity under his tongue.* It is natural to us to cover our sins; we have it from our first parents; we are loath to confess our faults, willing to extenuate them, and make the best of ourselves, to devolve the blame on others, not without a tacit reflection on God Himself. But *he that* thus *covers his sins shall not prosper.*

II. Of cowardice and base fear. His courage in doing good, he produces as evidence of sincerity in it, *v.* 34. All that knew Job, knew him to be a man of undaunted resolution in a good cause, that never was threatened or brow-beaten out of his duty, but set his face as a flint. Observe, 1. What great conscience Job had made of his duty as a magistrate, or a man of reputation, in the place where he lived. The case may be such, that it may be our sin to be silent and retired; as when we are called to reprove sin, and bear our testimony against it, to vindicate the truths and ways of God, to right the injured or oppressed, or any way to serve the public, or do honor to our religion. 2. What little account Job made of discouragements in duty. He valued not the clamors of the mob; was not deterred by the number or quality, the scorns or insults, of the injurious, from doing justice to the injured; no, he scorned to be swayed and biassed by any such considerations, nor ever suffered a righteous cause to be run down by a high hand. He feared the great God, not the great multitude, and his curse, not the contempt of families.

III. From the charge of oppression, violence, and wrong to his poor neighbors.

1. His estate he both got and used honestly, so his land could not *cry out against him, nor the furrows thereof complain,* (*v.* 38.) as they do against those who get the possession of them by fraud and extortion, Hab. 2: 9—11. (2.) That he *never ate the fruits of* his estate *without money, v.* 39. What he purchased, he paid for, as Abraham, (Gen. 23: 16.) and David, 2 Sam. 23: 24. The laborers he employed had their wages duly, and if he used the fruits of any lands he let out, he paid his tenants for them, or allowed it in their rent. (2.) He never caused the owners thereof to lose their life, as Ahab got Naboth's vineyard, killing the heir and seizing the inheritance; never starved

* The use of the term *nature*, tends in some degree to prevent that direct and simple reference of every event to God, universally prevalent in the Bible. It is borrowed from the heathen: why should Christians use it? The word *Providence* also, is not found in Scripture, and seems to put something between us and God, in *whom we have our being.*—*Ed.*

tends to destroy the peace of society, and, as such, falls directly under the cognizance of magistrates; but idolatry is committed immediately against God: and if our translation be just, He, as the Judge of the world, seems meant, and not the civil magistrate. May not the Heb. signify *my Judge*, meaning God Himself? Especially as Job was speaking of a supposed crime, concealed from man. (*Note, Deut.* 27: 15.) SCOTT.

(27.) '*Adoration*, or the religious act of *kissing the hand*, comes to us from the Latin, *ad*, to, and *os*, *oris*, the mouth. The hand lifted up to the mouth, and there saluted by the lips.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* Three different customs in the E. seem connected with putting the hand to the mouth. In Persia, formerly, a person covered the mouth before a royal personage, as it was considered impolite to breathe upon him: this is seen in the cut, Esth. 5:2. and on the monument whence that picture was taken, an ambassador stands before the king with his *hand on his mouth.* Kissing the hand was also considered an act of worship by the early Christians, note, Ezra 1:3. Kissing the hand is also still a salute, among the Turks, Arabs, &c. to a passing traveller. *Henry*, see above, has well and sufficiently illustrated the v. The sun was worshipped at his rising, the moon at her change. ED.

Verse 31.

Bp. Hall thus paraphrases:—'If the people of my house were not so taken up with the offices of my hospitality to others, that they had no leisure to feed themselves, and therefore complained for the want of that flesh, which they dressed for others.'—The words may be literally rendered, 'Who will give us of his flesh? we shall not be satisfied.' SCOTT.

'If the men of my tabernacle do not say, Who can produce a person not satisfied from his flesh? i. e. from his provisions.' *Ikenius*, in *Schultens.* So the Chal. *Scott.*' HEWLETT. '"40 camels were roasted at his hospitable feast," says tradition of the Arab Chief, Hatem.' *Gibbon.* ED.

Verse 32.

Stranger, &c.] 'Hospitality was, and still is, the national character of the Arabs. They value themselves upon it as their highest glory. One of their poets expresses himself very warmly on this subject: "How often, when echo gave me notice of a *stranger's* approach, have I stirred my fire that it might give a clear blaze! I flew to him as to a prey, through fear that my neighbors should get possession of him before me." The echo here refers to the practice of a stranger who travels in Arabia by night. He imitates the barking of a dog, and thus sets all the curs in the neighborhood a barking; whereupon the people rush out from all parts, striving who shall get the stranger first. *Scott*, in HEWLETT.

Verse 34.

Schultens and *Heath* tr. 'Verily, let me fear the great multitude, and let the contempt,' &c. and so, nearly, *Good.* As we read it, it affords a fine lesson, especially for magistrates in a popular government, not

multitude, or did [k] the contempt of families terrify me, [l] that I kept silence, *and* went not out of the door?

35 [m] Oh, that one would hear me! behold, * my desire *is*, [n] *that* the Almighty would answer me, and *that* [o] mine adversary had written a book.

36 Surely [p] I would take it upon my shoulder, *and* bind it *as* [q] a crown to me.

37 I would [r] declare unto him the number of my steps: [s] as a prince would I go near unto him.

38 ¶ If my land [t] cry † against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain;

39 If I have eaten the ‡ fruits thereof without money, or have § caused the owners thereof [u] to lose their life;

40 [x] Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and ‖ cockle instead of barley. [y] The words of Job are ended.

those that held lands of him, nor killed them with hard bargains and hard usage. No tenant, no workman, no servant, he had, could complain of him.

2. He confirms this protestation, as often before, with a suitable imprecation, *v.* 40. When men get estates unjustly, they are justly deprived of the comfort of them, and disappointed in their expectations from them. What men do not come honestly by, will never do them any good.

Job, toward the close of his protestation, appeals to the judgment-seat of God concerning the truth of it, *v.* 35—37. *Oh that He would hear me*, even *that the Almighty would answer me!* This was what he often desired, and often complained that he could not obtain; and now, that he had drawn up his own defence so particularly, he leaves it on record, in expectation of a hearing, files it, as it were, till his cause be called.

3. A trial is moved for, and the motion earnestly pressed, *v.* 35. An upright heart does not dread a scrutiny: he that means honestly, wishes he had a window in his breast, that all men might see the intents of his heart. But an upright heart does particularly desire to be determined in every thing by the judgment of God, which, we are sure, is according to truth. It was holy David's prayer, *Search me, O God, and know my heart;* and it was blessed Paul's comfort, *He that judgeth me, is the Lord.* (1.) The prosecutor is called, and ordered to bring in his information, to say what he has to say against the prisoner, for he stands on his deliverance. '*Oh that mine adversary had written a book.*' Job would be very glad to have a copy of his indictment; he would not hide it under his arm, but take it on his shoulder, to be seen and read of all men, nay, he would bind it as a crown to him, would be pleased with it, and look upon it as his ornament; for, [1.] If it discovered to him any sin he had been guilty of, which he did not yet see, he should be glad to know it, that he might repent of it, and get it pardoned. A good man is willing to know the worst of himself, and will be thankful to those that will faithfully tell him of his faults. [2.] If it charged him falsely, he doubted not to clear up his innocency, and come off with so much the more honor. But, [3.] He did believe, that, when his adversaries came to consider the matter so closely, as to put the charge in writing, the accusations would be trivial, and every one that saw them would say, 'If this was all they had to say against him, it was a shame they had given him so much trouble.' (2.) The defendant is ready to appear, and give his accusers fair play.—He will *declare unto them the number of his steps*, *v.* 37. let them into the history of his own life, show them all the stages and scenes of it; give them a narrative of his conversation, what would make against as well as for him; and, so confident is he of his integrity, that, as a prince to be crowned, rather than as a prisoner to be tried, he would go near to him, both to his ac-

* Or, *my sign* is that *the Almighty will answer me.*
† Heb. *weep.* Isa. 65:13.
‡ Heb. *strength.* Gen. 4:12.
§ Heb. *caused the soul of the owners thereof to expire*, or, *breathe out.*
‖ Or, *noisome weeds.*

k 22:8. 34:19. Ex. 32:27. Num. 25:14,15. Neh. 5:7. 13:4—8,28. 2 Cor. 5:16.
l Esth. 4:11,14. Prov. 24:11,12. Am. 5:11—13. Mic. 7:3.
m 13:3. 17:3. 23:3—7. 33:6. 38:1—3. 40:4,5.
n 13:21,22. Ps. 26:1.
o 13:24. 19:11,23,24. 33:10,11. Matt. 5:25.
p Ex. 28:12. Is. 22:22.
q 29:14. Is. 62:3. Phil. 4:1.
r 9:3. 13:15. 14:16. 42:3—6. Ps. 19:12.
s Gen. 32:28. Eph. 3:12. Heb. 4:15, 16. 1 John 3:19—21.
t 20:27. Hab. 2:11. Jam. 5:4.
u 1 K. 21:13—16. Prov. 1:19, Is. 26:21. Ez. 22:6,12,13.
x Gen. 3:17,18. Is. 7:23. Zeph. 2:9. Mal. 1:3.
y Ps. 72:20.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

'The grace of God, which bringeth salvation,' has, in all ages, 'taught men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' Repentance and faith produce hatred of sin, and love to God and man; and our interest in redeeming love is evidenced by a course of conscientious obedience. In general, however, it is best to let our actions speak for us: and though, in some cases, we owe to ourselves and to the cause of God, a solemn protestation of innocency, as to those crimes of which we are falsely accused; yet this is seldom made without some *real* or *apparent* ostentation.—While we pray to the LORD 'to turn away our eyes from beholding vanity,' we should be careful to have all our senses and faculties occupied about lawful things: and, lest secrecy or the hope of impunity entice us, we should habitually recollect, that 'the LORD sees our ways and counts all our steps.'—Without strict honesty and fidelity in all our dealings, we can have no good evidence of true godliness. Yet how many, who profess to believe the Gospel of Christ, are unable to bear this touchstone!—Alas! that [impurity, too great indulgence of the sexual propensity, and even] adultery also should be so common among professed Christians!—How contrary to it, must it be to Christianity, for men to enslave, oppress, and plunder the poor, because they 'see their help in the gate,'—have the law of the land and the countenance of the ruler on their side! (*Jam.* 2:13.) These crimes spring from [selfish pride and] covetousness, which make gold a man's confidence Divine grace destroys this idolatry; yet it is to be feared, tha but few prosperous Christians can properly appeal to a heart-searching God, that they have not rejoiced because their gains were great. (1 *Tim.* 6:6—10.)—It is indeed a great favor to be preserved from all the false and fashionable kinds of religion, which from age to age supplant 'the truth as it is in Jesus,' and its sanctifying effects; and which eventually prove 'a denial of God above.' The Holy Spirit has always taught the children of God to do good against evil; to bless, and not to curse, their enemies; [to do justice, disinterestedly and without respect of persons;] to repress revenge; to forgive as they hope to be forgiven; to avoid all rejoicing in calamities; and to restrain others from revenge and cruelty.—In respect of all these things, in using hospitality, without grudging, being ready for every good work, and in every particular, we should examine, with prayer, how far we are followers of this ancient believer. If our conscience testify for us, we should give God the praise, and may hope to stand with humble boldness, as justified believers, before his judgment-seat. But let us all judge ourselves, and not cover our sins: and where we are guilty, let us seek forgiveness; entreating 'the Lord to have mercy upon us, and 'to write all his laws in our hearts,' by the new creating power of his Holy Spirit. SCOTT.

to yield the claims of conscience to popular clamor: or the public opinion of one's family circle, order, or profession, nation, or age. How difficult, how rare, such virtue! ED.

Verses 35—37.

Upon the whole, this protestation and appeal were well grounded, and honorable to Job's character. Paul in different places makes similar appeals; but in a more modest and reverential manner. (1 *Cor.* 4:3—5. 9:19—27. 10:29—33. 2 *Cor.* 1:12—14. 6:3—10. 7:2—4. 11:7—12. 12:11—19. *Phil.* 3:12—19. 1 *Thes.* 2:1—12.) SCOTT.

(35.) *Behold my desire is.*] 'There is my pledge.' *Good.* Dr. *A. Clarke.* 'Ecce signum meum,' or 'En tabulas signatas!' referring to the *signature* one subscribed, to show he brings his cause into court, and will prosecute or defend it: or to *signed vouchers*, by which the pleadings were sustained.' So *Rosenm.* ED.

(35, 36.) Some explain these vs. by referring to the respectful manner in which the letter of a king, governor, &c. is received; in falling on the earth, placing it on the head, or forehead, &c. See *Burder.* Dr. *A. Clarke* refers to the Chinese customs; 'a criminal when brought *to* trial, *in* trial, and *after* trial, has a board on which his *accusation* or *crime* is fairly written.' Comp. too, the account of the crucifixion. *Roberts* remarks, 'A man charged of a crime he has not committed [in India], says, "If I am guilty, I will carry it on my head." "I am sure you have done this deed."—"I?" "Yes."—"Then will I wear it on my head." "That fellow wears his crimes on his head, i. e. he is not ashamed of them." The head is reckoned superior to all parts of the body.' ED.

Verses 38, 39.

Complain.] 'Lit *weep*. Does a man, through idleness or meanness, neglect to cultivate, or water, or manure his fields and gardens, those who pass that way say, "Ah! these fields have good reason to *complain* against the owner." "Sir, if you defraud these fields, will they not defraud you?" "The fellow who robs his own lands, will he not rob you?" "These fields are in great sorrow, through the neglect of their owner." Great land owners in the E. generally employ men to cultivate their lands, who find all the labor, and have a certain part of the produce as a remuneration. The cultivator if defrauded will say, "The furrows I made bear witness against him, they complain."' ROBERTS.

Verse 40.

Job concluded, as with an air of triumph and confidence. SCOTT.

Thistles.] *Choach*, elsewhere tr. *hook*; it is generally understood of briars with hooks on their seeds, or seed-vessels, like the American *witch hazel*, *burrs*, &c. *Cockle.*] Heb. *baseh.* The word occurs here only. Noxious herbs. *Chal.* Plants of imperfect fruit. *Symmachus.* Black-berry bush. *Sept.* Dwarf elder *Castalio.* Night-shade. *Stock*, *Good.* Aconite, *Celsius* and *Mich.* The word imports a plant, not only noxious, but of a fœtid smell. See HARRIS. ED.

CHAP. XXXII.

Job's three friends being silenced, Elihu speaks, and is angry both with Job and them, 1—5. He excuses his interference, though young; because great and aged men are not always wise, 6—10. He complains, that the reasonings of the disputants were not suited to produce conviction, 11—14. He shows that he is earnestly desirous of speaking; and declares that he will be impartial, 15—22.

SO these three men ceased * to answer Job, because he *was* [a] righteous in his own eyes.

2 Then was [b] kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the [c] Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, [d] because he justified † himself rather than God.

3 Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, [e] because they had found no answer, [f] and *yet* had condemned Job.

4 Now Elihu had ‡ waited till Job had spoken, because they *were* § elder than he.

5 When Elihu saw that *there was* no answer in the mouth of *these* three men, then [g] his wrath was kindled.

6 And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, [h] I *am* ‖ young, and [i] ye *are* very old; wherefore I was afraid, and ¶ durst not show you mine opinion.

7 I said, [k] Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.

8 But *there is* a spirit

* Heb. *from answering.*
a 6:29. 10:2,7. 13:15. 23:7. 27:4—6. 29:11—17. 31:1,&c. 33:9.
b Is. 65:9. Mark 3:5. Eph. 4:26.
c Gen. 22:21.
d 10:3. 27:2 34:5,6,17,18. 35:2. 40:8. Luke 10:29.
† Heb. *his soul.*
e 1. 24:25. 25:2—6. 26:2—4.
f 8:6. 15:34. 22:5,&c. Acts 24:5,13.
‡ Heb. *expected Job in words.* 11,12.
§ Prov. 18:13.
§ Heb. *elder for days.*
g 2. Ex. 32:19.
h Lev. 19:32. Rom. 13:7. 1 Tim. 5:1. Tit. 2:6. 1 Pet. 5:5.
‖ Heb. *few of days.*
i 15:10.
¶ Heb. *feared.* 15:7. 1 Sam. 17:28—30.
k 8:8—10. 12:12. 1 K. 12:6—8. Ps. 34:11,12 Prov. 1:1—4. 16:31. Heb. 5:12.

cuser to hear his charge, and to his Judge to hear his doom. Thus the testimony of his conscience was his rejoicing. Those that have kept their hands without spot from the world, as Job did, may lift up their faces without spot unto God; and may comfort themselves with the prospect of his judgment, when they lie under the unjust censures of men. *If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.*

Thus the *words of Job* in this controversy *are ended.* He now keeps the field, and doubts not but to win it. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies.*

CHAP. XXXII. V. 1—5. Usually young men are the disputants, and old men the moderators: but here, when old men were the disputants, as a rebuke for their unbecoming heat, a young man is raised up as moderator. Divers of Job's friends were present, to visit him, and receive instruction. Now here we have,

I. The reason his three friends were silent; they alleged, it was to no purpose to argue with so opinionative a man, *v.* 1. The self-conceited are indeed hard to be wrought upon; but they did not judge fairly of Job: he was really righteous before God, and not righteous only in his own eyes; so that it was only to save their own credit, that they made this the reason of their silence, as peevish disputants commonly do, when they find themselves run a-ground, and are not willing to own themselves unable to make their part good.

II. The reasons why Elihu, the fourth, now spake. His name *Elihu* signifies *My God is he.* He is said to be a *Buzite,* from Buz, Nahor's second son, (Gen. 22: 21.) and *of the kindred of Ram,* i. e. *Aram;* so some; (Gen. 22: 21.) whence the Syrians or Aramites descended and were denominated. *Of the kindred of Abram;* so the Chaldee paraphrase; supposing him to be the first called *Ram, High,* then *Abram, a high father,* and lastly, *Abraham, The high father of a multitude.* Elihu was not so well known as the rest, therefore is more particularly described thus.

1. Elihu spake because he was angry, and thought he had good cause to be so. Job, he thought, did not speak so reverently of God as he ought to have done; which was too true, *v.* 2. He took more care and pains to clear himself than to clear God, as if he were more concerned for his own honor than for God's; whereas he should, in the first place, have justified God, and cleared his glory, and then he might well enough have left his own reputation to shift for itself. Note, A gracious heart is jealous for the honor of God, and cannot but be angry, when that is neglected or postponed, or any injury done it. Nor is it any breach of the law of meekness, to be angry at our friends when they are offensive to God; *Get thee behind me, Satan,* says Christ to Simon. Elihu owned Job to be a good man, yet would not say as he said, when he thought he said amiss: it is too great a compliment to our friends, not to tell them of their faults.

2. He was angry at his friends, because he thought they had not been so candid to Job as they ought to have been, *v.* 3. They had adjudged him to be a hypocrite, a wicked man, and would not recede from that sentence; yet could not prove him so, nor disprove his evidences of integrity. Seldom is a quarrel begun, and more seldom carried on to the length this was, where there is not a fault on both sides. Elihu, as became a moderator, took part with neither, but was equally displeased with the mistakes and mismanagement of both. Those that in good earnest seek for truth, must thus be impartial, and learn to separate between the precious and the vile.

3. Elihu spake because he thought it was time, and now, at length, his turn, *v.* 4, 5. He had patiently heard Job out, and modestly waited on his friends' silence; because they were elder. Some certain rules of precedency must be observed, for the sake of order: and though this can afford no certain criterion of merit, yet seniors may the better require this respect, because they paid it when juniors, and juniors may better pay it, because they shall have it when seniors.

V. 6—14. Elihu here appears to be,

I. A young man of great modesty, humility, and abilities. Let his diffidence, (*v.* 6.) and deference to his seniors, (*v.* 7.) be observed by all, especially by young people, as worthy their imitation. Observant of all that passed, he had formed in himself a judgment of it; but, how clear soever the matter was to himself, he was afraid to deliver himself upon it, because he differed in his sentiments from those who were older. Note, It becomes us to be suspicious of our own judgment in matters of doubtful disputation, to be swift to hear the sentiments of others, and slow to speak our own, especially when we go contrary to the judgment of those whom, on the score of their learning and piety, we justly venerate. Age and experience give a man great advantage in judging of things, both as they furnish a man with so much the more matter for his thoughts to work upon, and as they ripen and improve the faculties he is to work with; which is a good reason why old people should take pains both to learn, themselves, and to teach others, (else the advantages of their age are a reproach to them,) and why young people should attend on their instructions: it is good *lodging with an old disciple,* Acts 21: 16. Tit. 2: 4.

Elihu's modesty appeared in the patient attention he gave to what his seniors said, *v.* 11, 12. They were slow, and sometimes trifled, and none of them answered Job's words, yet he attended to them, in hopes they would bring the matter to some head at last. We must often be willing to hear what we do not like, else we cannot prove all things. He pleads his patient attendance, 1. As entitling him to speak freely in his turn, and to claim their attention. 2. As enabling him to pass a judgment on what they had said: he had observed what they aimed at, and therefore knew what to say to it. Let us be thoroughly apprized of the sentiments of our brethren, before we censure them; for *he that answers a matter before he hears it,* or when he has heard it only by halves, it is folly and shame to him, and bespeaks him both impertinent and imperious.

II. He appears to have been a man of great sense and courage, that knew as well when and how to speak, as to keep silence. He respected his friends, so as not to interrupt them, yet so much regarded truth and justice, (his better friends,) as not to betray them by his silence. He boldly pleads,

1. That man is a rational creature, and therefore every man has for himself a judgment of discretion, and ought to be allowed to speak in his turn. He means (*v.* 8.) the same Job did, (*ch.* 12: 3.) *I have understanding as well as you;* only he expresses it a little more modestly, that one man has understanding as well as another, and no man can pretend to have the monopoly of reason, or to engross all the trade of it. Had he meant, *I have revelation as well as you,* (as some understand it,) he must have proved it; but if he meant

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXII. V. 1. 'Elihu offers this solution of the difficult question agitated: That indeed all who struggle even with most afflictive evils are not to be considered impious, nor as suffering the punishment of intentional wickedness: but yet that there lurks, even in the most pious, a secret infection of sin, of which themselves are not conscious; that this is to be curbed by such searching medicine, lest, the evil gradually increasing, the good man slide into wickedness; that these are salutary castigations, and not penal, nor for public example. So he speaks best of all: and Job, unable to answer him, is silent; and when God is introduced, the rest are reproved as having greatly sinned, but Elihu escapes reprehension, and his truth is confirmed by the divine oracle.' ROSENM.

Verses 2—5.

It is evident, that others besides the disputants were present during this controversy, and Elihu among the rest. Many singular opinions have been formed concerning him: unquestionably, he was a young man of singular modesty and wisdom: and not more than man, as some have imagined. He came indeed nearer the true state of the case, than any other of the contending parties; but he bore too hard on Job, and, in some instances, put harsh constructions on his words. (34:5—9.) He, however, charged him with no crime, except his misconduct in the management of the argument; and in this respect he was justly displeased both with him and his friends. SCOTT.

in man: and [l] the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

9 [m] Great men are not *always* wise: [n] neither do the aged understand judgment.

10 Therefore I said, [o] Hearken to me; I also will show mine opinion.

11 Behold [p] I waited for your words; I gave ear to your * reasons, [q] while ye searched out † what to say.

12 Yea, I attended unto you, and, [r] behold, *there was* none of you that convinced Job, *or* that answered his words:

13 [s] Lest ye should say, [t] We have found out wisdom: [u] God thrusteth him down, not man.

14 Now he hath not ‡ directed *his* words against me: neither will I answer him with your speeches.

15 They were [x] amazed, they answered no more: they § left off speaking.

16 When I had waited, ([y] for they spake not, but stood still, *and* answered no more;)

17 *I said*, [z] I will answer also my part, I also will shew mine opinion.

18 For I am full of ‖ matter, [a] the spirit ¶ within me constraineth me.

19 Behold my belly *is* as wine which ** hath no vent; it is ready to burst like [b] new bottles.

20 [c] I will speak, that I may †† be refreshed: [d] I will open my lips and answer.

21 Let me not, I pray you, [e] accept any man's person, neither let me give [f] flattering titles unto man.

22 For [g] I know not to give flattering titles; *in so doing* my Maker would soon take me away.

only, *I have reason as well as you*, they cannot deny it, for it is every man's honor, and it is no presumption to claim it, nor could they gainsay his inference from it, *v.* 10. Learn here, 1. That the soul is a spirit, neither material itself, nor dependent on matter, but capable of conversing with things spiritual, which are not the objects of sense. 2. It is an understanding spirit. It is able to discover and receive truth, to discourse and reason upon it, and to direct and rule accordingly. 3. This understanding spirit is in every man; it is the light that lighteth every man, John 1: 9. 4. It is the inspiration of the Almighty, that gives us this understanding spirit; for He is the Father of spirits, and Fountain of understanding. See Gen. 2: 7. Eccl. 12: 7. Zech. 12: 1.

2. That those who are advanced above others in grandeur and gravity, do not always proportionably go beyond them in knowledge and wisdom, *v.* 9. *Great men are not always wise:* it is pity but they were, for then they would never do hurt with their greatness, and would do so much the more good with their wisdom. The aged do not always understand judgment, even *they* may make mistakes, and therefore must not expect to bring every thought into obedience to them; nay, therefore they must not take it as an affront to be contradicted, but rather take it as a kindness to be instructed, by their juniors: *Therefore I said, Hearken to me*, *v.* 10. We must be willing to hear reason from those that are every way inferior to us, and to yield to it. *Better is a poor and wise child, than an old and foolish king.*

3. That it was requisite something should be said, to set this controversy in a true light, which, by all that had hitherto been said, was but rendered more intricate and perplexed, *v.* 13. 'I must speak, to show you that yours is a false hypothesis about Job, and that he may be convinced without maintaining it.' Or, 'Lest you should think you have found out the wisest way, to reason no more with him, but leave it to God to thrust him down.' It is time to speak, when we hear errors advanced and disputed for, especially under pretence of supporting the cause of God with them. It is time to speak, when God's judgments are vouched to patronise men's pride and passion, and their unjust, uncharitable censures of their brethren; then we must speak on God's behalf.

4. That he had something new to offer, and would endeavor to manage the dispute in a better manner than it had hitherto been managed, *v.* 14. He thinks he may expect a favorable hearing; for, (1.) He will not reply to Job's protestations of his integrity, but allow the truth of them, and therefore does not interpose as his enemy: '*He hath not directed his words against me;* I have nothing to say against the main of his discourse, nor do I differ from his principles. I have only a gentle reproof to give him for his passionate expressions.' (2.) He will not repeat their arguments, nor go upon their principles; '*Neither will*

l 4:12—21. 33:16. 35:11. 38:36. Gen. 41:39. 1 K. 3:12,28. 4:29. Prov. 2: 6. Ec. 2:26. Dan. 1:17. 2:21. 1 Cor. 2:10—12. 12:8. 2 Tim. 3:16. Jam. 1:5.
m Jer. 5:5. Matt. 11:25. John 7:48. 1 Cor. 1:26. 2:7,8. Jam. 2:6,7.
n 12:20. Ec. 4:13.
o 1 Cor. 7:25,40.
p 4. 29:21,23.
* Heb. *understandings.*
q 5:27. Prov. 18:17. 28:11. Ec. 12:9, 10.
† Heb. *words.*
r 3. 1 Tim. 1:7.
s Gen. 14:23. Judg. 7:2. Is. 48:5,7. Zech. 12:7.
t 12:2. 15:8—10. Is. 5:21. Jer. 9:23.
Ez. 28:3. 1 Cor. 1:19—21,27—29. 3: 18.
u 1:21. 2:10. 4:9. 6:4. 19:6,21. John 19:11.
‡ Heb. *ordered.*
x 6:24,25. 29:22. Matt. 7:28. 22:22, 33,34,46.
§ Heb. *removed speeches from themselves.*
y 13:5. Prov. 17:28. Am. 5:13. Jam. 1:19.
z 10. 33:12. 35:3,4.
‖ Heb. *words.*
a Ps. 39:3. Jer. 20:9. Ez. 3:14,&c. Acts 4:20. 2 Cor. 5:13,14.
¶ Heb. *of my belly.*
** Heb. *is not opened.*
b Matt. 9:17.
c 13:13,19. 23:2. 21:3.
†† Heb. *breathe.*
d Prov. 8:6,7.
e 13:8. 34:19. Lev. 19:15. Deut. 1: 17. 16:19. Prov. 24:23. Matt. 22: 16.
f 2 Sam. 14:17,20. Acts 12:22,23. 24: 2,3.
g 17:5. Ps. 12:2,3. Prov. 29:5. 1 Thes. 2:5.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The self-flattery of the human heart often prevents men from being convinced of their errors, or from acknowledging that they are; and it is not worth while to persist in arguing with the pertinacious and self-sufficient, or with such as are 'righteous in their own eyes:' yet sometimes those who are accepted with God, and have truth and justice on their side, are unjustly charged with obstinacy and self-confidence.—An unprejudiced by-stander frequently understands controverted points, better than the eager disputants, [and a disputant seldom or never acknowledges his error.]—If we perceive others in a fault, it is generally advisable, to mention it before them: and it is not sinful anger, if we are *greatly displeased* to hear God dishonored, his truths misrepresented, and men unjustly condemned, or fatally deceived. (*Mark* 3: 5.)—It belongs to the aged to take the lead in conversation, and to teach wisdom; and modesty, and deference towards seniors and superiors, always become the young. Yet reason is common to man, and God communicates both natural abilities and spiritual gifts, in measure, as He pleases. 'So that great men are not always wise, neither do the aged understand judgment:' and by an attention to the Word of God, and dependence on his Spirit, the young may become wiser than the aged, than their teachers, and their rulers. (*Ps.* 119:98—100.) But this wisdom will render them 'swift to hear, and slow to speak,' and disposed to give others a patient attention, though they seem to argue inconclusively, and to say little to the purpose. However full we may think ourselves of suitable matter, for the conviction of others, and the termination of a controversy; and whatever uneasiness we feel in keeping silence, when others are discoursing, as we think, in a manner contrary to truth; we should remember, that it is indecent, and savors of arrogance, to interrupt them. Nay, if we were sure, that the Spirit of God suggested to us what we were about to say, we ought to refrain, until it fairly come to our turn to speak: for 'the spirits of the prophets were subject to the prophets,' and God is the Source of order, and not of confusion. (1 *Cor.* 14:32,33.) The faithful minister of God will regard times and seasons, but he must speak, whether men will hear or forbear; and faithfully, without respect of persons, or knowing to give flattering titles: for 'he is not a man-pleaser, but a servant of Jesus Christ;' and is ambitious, whether present or absent, of being accepted of Him. (2 *Cor.* 5:9—12,16. 1 *Thes.* 2:1—8.)

SCOTT.

Verses 15—17.

These vs. favor the opinion, that Elihu was the writer of this book. SCOTT.

(16.) '*Lightfoot* thinks Elihu wrote this book of Job, because when, in ch. 2. Job's friends who came to comfort him are mentioned by number and name, nothing is said of Elihu: whence it is evident, 1st, that Elihu did not come from a great distance, as the rest, but was a neighbor; 2d, that he is the author and writer of the history; for which reason, when he names the others, he is silent about himself. Further, because in these vs. 16 and 17 of this ch. Elihu speaks as the historian. So also *Staeudlein.*' ROSENM.

Verses 18—22.

Elihu's mind was agitated by his own meditations, in the manner that fermenting wine is ready to burst the bottle when it cannot have vent [note and cut, Matt. 9:16, 17.]; so that it would be a *relief*, or *enlargement*, to him to speak, though it should not profit them. (*Jer.* 6:10—12. 20:7—9. *Ez.* 3:12—15.) *Give flattering titles.* (22.) The original word signifies, to give an additional name, as a title of distinction. SCOTT.

(19.) *Wine.*] 'The new wine or must is to be understood, and the phrase, *new* skin-*bottles*, must be used for bottles filled with new wine, as *old bottles* would be more likely to burst than new ones. Matt. 9:17. *Jerome* tr. "behold my belly is like new wine without a vent."' ROSENM. *Belly.*] Note, 15:2. Yet it seems doubtful if the orientals made the distinction there noticed. ED.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Elihu requires Job's attention, while he pleads with him, in God's stead, and without terrifying him, 1—7. He blames him for being too earnest in vindicating himself, and for irreverently complaining of God, 8—13. He shows how God instructs men by dreams, afflictions, and messengers; that repenting they may find mercy, 14—30. He calls on Job to answer, or patiently to attend to his discourse, 31—33.

WHEREFORE, Job, I pray thee, [a] hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words.

2 Behold now [b] I have opened my mouth, my tongue hath spoken in my * mouth.

3 My words *shall be of* [c] the uprightness of my heart: and [d] my lips shall utter knowledge clearly.

4 [e] The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

5 [f] If thou canst answer me, [g] set *thy words* in order before me: [h] stand up.

6 Behold, [i] I *am* according to thy † wish [k] in God's stead: [l] I am also ‡ formed out of the clay.

7 Behold, [m] my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall [n] my hand be heavy upon thee.

8 Surely thou hast spoken in mine § hearing, and I have heard the voice of *thy* words, *saying*,

9 I *am* [o] clean without transgression, I *am* [p] innocent; neither *is there* iniquity in me.

10 Behold, [q] he findeth occasions against me, [r] he counteth me for his enemy.

11 He [s] putteth my

a 13:6. 34:2. Ps. 49:1—3. Mark 4:9.
b 3:1. Ps. 78:2. Matt. 5:2.
* Heb. *palate.* 31:30. *marg.*
c 27:4. Prov. 8:7,8. 1 Thes. 2:3,4.
d 15:2. 36:3,4. 38:2. Ps. 37:30,31. Prov. 15:2,7. 20:15. 22:17,18.
e 10:12. 32:8. Gen. 2:7. Ps. 33:6. Rom. 8:2. 1 Cor. 15:45.
f 34,33. 32:1,12.
g 23:4,5. 32:14. Ps. 50:21.
h Acts 10:26.
i 9:32,35. 13:3,21,22. 23:3,4. 31:35.
† Heb. *mouth.*
k Gen. 30:2. Ex. 4:16. 2 Cor. 5:20.
l 4:19. 10:9. 13:12. Gen. 2:7. 3:19. 2 Cor. 5:1.
‡ Heb. *cut out of.*
m 9:34. 13:21. Ps. 88:16.
n Ps. 32:4.
§ Heb. *ears.* Deut. 13:14. Jer. 29:23.
o 9:17. 10:7. 11:4. 16:17. 23:11,12. 27:5,6. 29:14. 31:1,&c.
p 9:23,28. 17:8. Jer. 2:35.
q 9:30,31. 10:15—17. 13:25,26. 14:16, 17. 34:5,6.
r 13:24. 16:9. 19:11. 30:21,22. 31:35.
s 13:27. Ps. 105:18. Jer. 20:2. Acts 16:24.

I answer him with your speeches: not with the same matter; nor in the same manner; I will not be guilty of that peevishness toward him myself, which I dislike in you.' The controversy that has already been fully handled, a wise man will let alone, unless he can amend and improve it.

V. 15—22. Three things here apologize for Elihu's interposing in this controversy.

1. The way was now clear, and he did not break in upon any one on either side, *v.* 15, 16. so that (as we say) he had room and fair play given him. The disputants seemed not fully satisfied themselves with what they had said, else they would have adjourned the court, and not have stood still, expecting what might further be offered. And therefore I said, (*v.* 17.) '*I will answer also my part.* Since you have each of you showed your opinion, I also will show mine, and let it take its fate with the rest.' When what is offered, even by the meanest, is offered thus modestly, it is pity but it should be fairly heard and considered.

I see no inconvenience in supposing, that Elihu here discovers himself to be the penman of this book; and that he here writes as an historian, relating the matter of fact, that, after he had bespoken their attention in the foregoing vs. they were amazed, left off whispering among themselves, did not gainsay the liberty of speech he desired, but stood still to hear what he would say, being much surprised at the admirable mixture of boldness and modesty that appeared in his preface.

2. He was uneasy, and even in pain, to be delivered of his thoughts on this matter, *v.* 18—20. He pleads, (1.) That he had a great deal to say. When aged men have spent their stock, in discoursing of the Divine Providence, God can raise up others, even young men, and fill them with matter, for the edifying of his church, for it is a subject that can never be exhausted, though they that speak to it may. (2.) That he was under a necessity of saying it, *v.* 19. See what a grief it is to a good minister to be silenced, and thrust into a corner; he is full of matter, full of Christ, full of heaven, and would speak of these things for the good of others, but he may not. (3.) That it would be an ease and satisfaction to himself, to deliver his mind, *v.* 20. It is a great refreshment to a good man, to have liberty to speak for the glory of God and the edification of others.

3. He was resolved to speak, with all possible freedom and sincerity, what he thought was true, not what he thought would please, *v.* 21, 22. He would not make Job's case better than he really took it to be, for fear of increasing his grief. The afflicted must not be flattered, but dealt faithfully with: when trouble is upon any, it is foolish pity to suffer sin upon them too, (Lev. 19: 17.) for that is the worst addition to their trouble. Thou shalt not countenance, any more than discountenance, *a poor man in his cause*, (Ex. 23: 3.) nor regard a sad look any more than a big look, so as, for the sake of it, to pervert justice, for that is accepting persons. No, though a young man, and on his preferment, he will not dissemble truth, to court their favor, though great men: his is a good resolution, '*I know not to give flattering titles;*' and he gives a good reason for it; '*In so doing my Maker would soon take me away.*' It is good to keep ourselves in awe with a holy fear of God's judgments: He that made us will take us away in his wrath, if we do not conduct ourselves as we should, Ps. 12: 3. The more closely we eye the majesty of God, as our Maker, and dread his justice, the less danger shall we be in of dissimulation, and a sinful fearing, or flattering, of men.

CHAP. XXXIII. V. 1—7. Pompous prefaces, like the teeming mountain, often introduce poor performances: but Elihu's discourse here does not disappoint the expectations his preface had raised: it is substantial, lively, and very much to the purpose. He had, in the foregoing ch. said what he had to say to Job's three friends; and now he directs his speech to Job himself. Several arguments Elihu here uses, to persuade Job to give him a patient hearing, to believe that he designed him a good office, and to take it kindly, and be willing to receive his instructions. Let Job consider, that,

1. Elihu does not join his three friends against him, *v.* 1. 'They all spake in the same strain; but I am trying a new way, *therefore hearken to all my words*, and not to some of them only;' we cannot judge of a discourse unless we take it entire, and hearken to it all.

2. He intends to make a solemn business of it; (not to give a short repartee, to show his wit;) *he opened his mouth*, (*v.* 2.) with deliberation and design; on mature consideration, he had already begun to speak, and was prepared to go on, if Job would encourage him by his attention.

3. That he was resolved to speak only as he thought, *v.* 3. There was reason to suspect Job's three friends did not, in their consciences, think Job so bad a man as their discourses, merely to support their hypothesis, represented him; and that was not fair. It is base to condemn those with our tongues, to serve a turn, whom, at the same time, we cannot but in our consciences think well of: Elihu is an honest man, and scorns to do so.

4. What he said should be easy to be understood, *v.* 3. Those that speak of the things of God, should carefully avoid all obscurity and perplexedness; by that it will appear they do themselves understand what they speak of, mean honestly, and design the edification of hearers.

5. He would, in his discourse, make the best use he could of the reason and understanding God had given him, that life, that rational soul which he received from *the Spirit of God*, and *the breath of the Almighty*, *v.* 4. With this consideration, also, we should quicken ourselves to do good in our places, according to our capacity; God has made us, and given us life, therefore we should study to use our life to some good purpose, in glorifying God, and serving our generation according to His will, answering the end of our creation, that it may not be said we were made in vain.

6. He would very willingly hear what Job could object, *v.* 5. 'If not quite spent with the distemper, *set thy words in order*, and they shall have due consideration.' Those that can *speak* reason, will *hear* reason.

7. That he had often wished for one that would appear for God, with whom he might freely expostulate, and to whom, as arbitrator, he might refer the matter, and such a one Elihu would be, *v.* 6. How pathetically had Job wished, (*ch.* 16: 21.) *O that one might plead for a man with God!* and (*ch.* 23: 3.) *O that I knew where I might find Him!* Only he would make it his bargain, that *his dread should not make him afraid*, *ch.* 13: 21. 'Now,' says Elihu, 'look on me, this once, as in God's stead; I will undertake to plead his cause with thee, and to show thee wherein thou has affronted Him, and what He has against thee; and what appeals or complaints thou hast to make to God, make them to me.'

8. That he was not an unequal match for him; '*I also am formed out of the clay.* I also, as well as the first man, (Gen. 2: 7.) I also as well as thou:' *formed out of the same clay*, so some. It is good for us all to consider, that we are formed out of the clay; and well for us it is, that those who are to us in God's stead, are so; that He speaks to us by men like ourselves, according to Israel's wish, on a full trial, Deut. 5: 24. God has wisely deposited the treasure in earthen vessels like ourselves, 2 Cor. 4: 7.

Lastly, 'I will not reproach thee as thy friends have, nor draw up such a heavy charge. I stand on the same level with thee, and am of the same mould, therefore cannot impress that terror upon thee, which thou mayest justly dread from the appearance of the Divine Majesty.' If we would rightly convince men, it must be by reason, not by

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIII. V. 1—7. Elihu had given his reasons for speaking, and here he demanded the attention of Job in particular; for Job himself had sufficiently answered his friends. SCOTT.

feet in the stocks, [t] he marketh all my paths.

12 Behold, *in* this [u] thou art not just: [x] I will answer thee, that [y] God is greater than man.

13 Why dost thou [z] strive against him? for [a] he * giveth not account of any of his matters.

14 For [b] God speaketh once, yea twice, *yet man* [c] perceiveth it not.

15 In [d] a dream, in a vision of the night, when [e] deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed;

16 Then [f] he † openeth the ears of men, and [g] sealeth their instruction,

17 That he may [h] withdraw man *from his* ‡ purpose, and [i] hide pride from man.

18 He [k] keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from § perishing by the sword.

t 31:4.
u 1:22. 34:10—12,17—19,23. 35:2. 36: 22,23. Ez. 18:25. Rom. 9:19—21.
x 32:17. 35:4.
y 9:4. 26:14. 36:5. 37:23. 40:2,8,9. Jer. 18:6.
z 9:14. 15:25,26. Is. 45:9. Jer. 50:24. Ez. 22:14. Acts 5:39. 9:4,5. 1 Cor. 10:22.
a 40:2. Deut. 29:29. Ps. 115:3. Is. 44: 10. Dan. 4:35. Matt. 20:15. Acts 1:7. Rom. 11:34.
* Heb. *answereth not.*
b 40:5. Ps. 62:11.
c 2 Chr. 33:10. Prov. 1:24,29. Is. 6:9. Matt. 13:14. Mark 8:17,18. Luke 24:25. John 3:19.
d 4:13. Gen. 20:3. 31:24. Num. 12: 6. Jer. 23:28. Dan. 4:5. Heb. 1:1.
e Gen. 15:12. Dan. 8:18. 10:9.
f 36:10,15. Ps. 40:6. Is. 6:10. 48:8. 50:5. Luke 24:45. Acts 16:14.
† Heb. *revealeth*, or, *uncovereth*. 2 Sam. 7:27.
g Neh. 9:38. Rom. 15:28.
h Gen. 20:6. Hos. 2:6. Matt. 27:19. Acts 9:2—6. 26:10—13.
‡ Heb. *work.*
i Deut. 8:16. 2 Chr. 32:25,26. Is. 2: 11. Dan. 4:30—37. 2 Cor. 12:7. Jam. 4:10.
k Acts 16:27—33. Rom. 2:4. 2 Pet. 3: 9,15.
§ Heb. *passing.*

terror [that low motive]; by fair arguing, not by a heavy hand.

V. 8—13. In these verses,

I. Elihu particularly charges Job with unbecoming expressions, reflecting on the justice and goodness of God in his dealings with him. He does not ground the charge on report, *v.* 8. did not hear it from Job in private conversation, then he would not have been so ill-bred as to repeat it thus publicly. Them that sin before all, rebuke before all. What is said amiss in our hearing, we are concerned to reprove; for *ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord*, publicly, if need be, to confront the accuser.

1. Job had represented himself as innocent, *v.* 9. Thou hast said, *I am clean without transgression; Job had not said this in so many words;* nay, he had owned himself to have sinned, and to be impure before God; but he had indeed said, *Thou knowest that I am not wicked: My righteousness I hold fast*, and the like, on which Elihu might ground this charge. It was true, Job was a perfect and an upright man, and not such a one as his friends had represented him; but he ought not to have insisted so much on it, as if God had therefore done him wrong in afflicting him. Yet, it should seem, Elihu did not deal fairly, in charging Job with saying that he was clean and innocent from all transgression, when he only pleaded, that he was upright and innocent from the great transgression. But those that speak passionately and unwarily, must thank themselves if they be misunderstood; they should have taken more care.

2. He had represented God as severe in marking what he did amiss, and taking all advantages against him, as if He sought opportunity to pick quarrels with him, *v.* 10, 11. To this purport Job had spoken, *ch.* 14: 16, 17. So he had expressly said, (*ch.* 13: 24.—10: 11.) '*He putteth my feet in the stocks;* that, as I cannot contend with Him, so I may not be able to flee from Him.' This he had said, *ch.* 13: 27. where also we meet with these words, *Thou lookest narrowly unto all my paths.*

II. He endeavors to convince him, that he had spoken amiss in speaking thus, and that he ought to humble himself before God for it, and by repentance to unsay it, *v.* 12. See the difference between the charge Elihu exhibited against Job, and that preferred against him by his other friends; they would not own he was just at all, but Elihu only says, 'In this, in saying this, thou art not just.' To be just, is to render to all their due; nor are we just to God, if we do not acknowledge his equity and kindness in all the dispensations of his providence towards us. Many that are just, yet, in some instances, do not speak and act like themselves; and as, on the one hand, we must not fail to tell even a good man wherein he mistakes and does amiss, nor flatter him in his errors and passions, for in that we are not kind; so, on the other hand, we must not draw men's characters, nor pass a judgment on them, from one instance, or some few misplaced words, for in that we are not just. *In many things we all offend*, and must be candid in our censures.

To convince Job, Elihu proposes,

1. That God is infinitely above us, *I will answer thee*, says Elihu, in one word, which carries its own evidence with it, *God is greater than man.* 'Now, do but consider what thou thyself hast admirably well said concerning the greatness of God, and apply it to thyself, and thou wilt see reason enough to repent of these ill-natured, ill-favored reflections on Him, and to blush at thy folly, and tremble to think of thine own presumption.' Note, There is enough in this one plain, unquestionable truth, *That God is greater than man*, if duly improved, for ever to put to silence, and to shame all our complaints of his providence, and our exceptions against his dealings with us.

2. That God is not accountable to us, *v.* 13. Those that complain of God, strive against Him, implead Him, impeach Him, bring an action against Him. Note, It is an unreasonable thing for us, weak, foolish, sinful creatures, to strive with a God of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness. He is under no obligation to show us a reason for what He does; neither to tell us what He designs to do, in what method, at what time, by what instruments; nor to tell us why He deals thus with us. It is therefore daring impiety to arraign God at our bar, or challenge Him to show cause for what He doeth, to say unto Him, *What doest Thou?* or, *Why doest Thou so?* He gives not account of all his matters; so some. He reveals as much as it is fit for us to know, as follows here, *v.* 14.

V. 14—18. Job had complained, that God kept him wholly in the dark concerning the meaning of his dealings with him; and therefore concluded He dealt with him as his enemy. 'No,' says Elihu, 'He speaks to you, but you do not perceive Him; so that the fault is yours, not his; He is designing your real good, even in those dispensations which you put this harsh construction upon.' Observe in general, *v.* 14.

1. What a Friend God is to our welfare: *He speaketh to us once, yea twice.* It is a token of his favor, that He is pleased to speak to us; yea, an evidence of his gracious design, that He is pleased to speak to us of our own concerns, to show us what is our duty, tell us of our faults, and warn us of our danger; to show us the way, and to lead us in it. This He does once, yea, twice, i. e. again and again; when one warning is neglected, He gives another, so sinners are left inexcusable.

2. What enemies we are to our own welfare; *Man perceives it not*, i. e. he does not heed it or regard it; he does not discern or understand it; is not aware that it is the voice of God, nor does he receive the things revealed, for they are foolishness to him; he stops his ear, stands in his own light, rejects the counsel of God against himself, and so is never the wiser, no not for the dictates of wisdom itself.

God speaks to us by conscience, by providences, and by ministers; of all which Elihu here discourses at large, to show Job that God was both telling him his mind, and doing him a kindness, even now that He seemed to keep him in the dark, and so treat him as a stranger, and to keep him in distress, and so treat him as an enemy. There was not then, that we know of, any divine revelation in writing; therefore that is not here mentioned among the ways by which God speaks to men, though now it is the principal way. In these vs. he shows how God teaches and admonishes the children of men by their own consciences Observe, as to these admonitions,

I. Their proper season and opportunity, *v.* 15. When men are retired from the world, its business and its conversation; it is a good time for them to retire into their own hearts, and commune with them, Ps. 4: 4. It is the time God takes for dealing personally with men. Thus He made his mind known to the prophets by visions and dreams; (Num. 12: 6.) thus he warned Abimelech, (Gen. 20: 3.) Laban, (Gen. 31: 24.) Joseph, Matt. 1: 20. Thus He made known to Pharaoh, and Nebuchadnezzar, things that should come to pass hereafter. When He stirred up conscience, that ordinary deputy of his, in the soul, to do its office, He took that opportunity, either when deep sleep fell on men, (for though dreams mostly come from fancy, some may come from conscience,) or, in slumberings, when men are between sleeping and waking, reflecting at night on the business of the foregoing day, or projecting in the morning the business of the ensuing day, then is a proper time for their hearts to reproach them for what they have done ill, and to admonish them what they should do. See Isa. 30: 21.

II. Their power and force, *v.* 16. When God designs men's good, by the convictions and dictates of their own consciences, 1. He gives them admission, and makes them to be heeded, Ps. 58: 5. He opens the heart, as He opened Lydia's, and so opens the ears. He works in the soul a submission to the regimen of conscience, and a compliance with its rules, for that follows on God's opening the ear, Isa. 50: 5. 2. He gives them a settlement, and makes them to abide; *He sealeth their instruction*, i. e. the instruction designed for, and suited to them; this He makes their souls to receive the deep and lasting impression of, as the wax of the seal. When the heart is delivered

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Verses 12, 13.

(*Notes*, 40:1, 2. *Dan.* 4:34—37. *Matt.* 20:1—16. *Rom.* 9:19—21. 11:33—36.) SCOTT.

Verses 14—18.

In many things God acts as a Sovereign, who explains not the meaning of his orders; but in general He shows Himself a merciful and kind Father. He does not ask men what methods He should use, but He employs such as are most proper. SCOTT.

(18.) *Pit.*] Tr. *grave*, *v.* 22. Heb. *shachath.* 'Fovea, fossa.' *Rosenm.* Several methods of burying seem alluded to in Job: — as, common

19 He is [l] chastened also with [m] pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong *pain:*

20 So that [n] his life abhorreth bread, and his soul * dainty meat.

21 [o] His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and [p] his bones *that* were not seen stick out.

22 Yea, [q] his soul draweth near unto the grave, and [r] his life to the destroyers.

23 If there be [s] a messenger with him, [t] an interpreter, [u] one among a thousand, [x] to show unto man his uprightness:

24 [y] Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, [z] Deliver him from going down to the pit; [a] I have found † a ransom.

25 [b] His flesh shall be fresher than ‡ a child's: he shall [c] return to the days of his youth:

[l] 5:17,13. Deut. 8:5. Ps. 94:12,13. 119: 67,71. Is. 27:9. 1 Cor. 11:32. Rev. 3:19.

[m] 7:4 20:11. 30:17,18,30. 2 Chr. 16: 10,12. Ps. 38:1—8. Is. 38:12,13. Ps. 107:17,18.

[n] Heb. *meat of desire.* Gen. 3:6. Jer. 3:19. Am. 5:11. *Marg.*

[o] 7:5. 13:28. 14:20,22. 19:20. Ps. 32:3,4. 39:11. 102:3—5. Prov. 5:11.

[p] Ps. 22:15—17.

[q] 7:7. 17:1,13—16. 1 Sam. 2:6. Ps. 30:3. 88:3—5 Is. 38:10.

[r] 15:21. Ex. 12:23. 2 Sam. 24:16. Ps. 17:4. Acts 12:23. 1 Cor. 10:10. Rev. 9:11.

[s] Judg. 2:1. *Marg.* 2 Chr. 36:15,16. Hag. 1:13. Mal. 2:7. 3:1. 2 Cor. 5: 20.

[t] 34:32. Ps. 94:12. Is. 61:1—3. Acts 8:30,31. 1 Cor. 11:30—32. Heb. 12: 5—12.

[u] 9:3. Ec. 7:28. Rom. 11:13.

[x] 11:6. 34:10,12. 35:14. 36:3,8—13. 37:23. Neh. 9:33. Ps. 119:75. Lam. 3: 22,23,32,39—44. Ez. 18:25—28. Dan. 9:14.

[y] 5:18. 22:21. Ex. 33:19. 34:6,7. Ps. 33:5,15. Hos. 14:2,4. Mic. 7:18—20. Rom. 5:20,21.

[z] 36:10,11. Ex. 15:26. Ps. 30:9—12. 40:2. 71:3. 86:13. Is. 38:17—19. Jer. 31:20. Zech. 9:11.

[a] 36:18. Ps. 49:7,8. Matt. 20:28. Rom. 3:24—26. 1 Tim. 2:6. 1 Pet. 1:18,19.

† Or, *an atonement.*

[b] 2 K. 5:14.

‡ Heb. *childhood.*

[c] 42:16. Deut. 34:7. Josh. 14:10,11. Ps. 103:5. Hos. 2:15.

into divine instructions, as into a mould, then the work is done.

III. Their end and design.

1. To keep men from sin, and particularly the sin of pride, *v.* 17. *That He may withdraw man from his purpose*, i. e. evil purpose; may change the temper of his mind, and the course of his life, his disposition and inclination, or prevent some particular sin he is in danger of falling into: that He may withdraw man from man's work, and set him to work the work of God. Many a man has been thus stopped. Particularly, God does, by this mean, hide pride from man, i. e. hide those things from him which are the matter of his pride, and take his mind off from dwelling on them, by setting before him what reason he has to be humble. That He may *take* away pride from man, so some; pluck up that root of bitterness, the cause of so much sin. All, whom God has mercy in store for, He will humble, and hide pride from. Pride makes people eager and resolute in the prosecution of their purposes; they will have their way, therefore God withdraws them from their purposes, by mortifying their pride.

2. To keep men from ruin, *v.* 18. While sinners are pursuing their evil purposes,and indulging their pride, their souls are hastening apace to destruction, both in this world and that to come: but when God, by the admonitions of conscience, withdraws them from sin, He thereby keeps back their souls from the pit, and saves them from perishing, so iniquity shall not be their ruin. That which turns men from sin, saves them from hell, *saves a soul from death.* See what a mercy it is to be under the restraints of an awakened conscience; faithful are the wounds, and kind are the bonds, of that friend, for the soul is kept from perishing eternally.

V. 19—28. God has spoken once to sinners by their own consciences, to keep them from the paths of the destroyer, yet this they perceive not, as from God; but it is imputed to melancholy, or the preciseness of their education; therefore God speaks a second time, and tries another way to convince and reclaim sinners, i. e. by providences, afflictive and merciful, (in which He speaks twice,) and by the seasonable instructions of good ministers setting in with them. Job complained much of his diseases, and judged by them God was angry with him; his friends did so too: but Elihu shows they were all mistaken, for God often afflicts the body in love, and with gracious designs of good to the soul, as appears in the issue which here it is brought to. This part of Elihu's discourse will be of great use to us for the due improvement of sickness, in and by which God speaks to men. Here is,

I. The patient described in his extremity, *v.* 19, &c. See what work sin makes, what mischief it does. Pain is the fruit of sin; yet, by the grace of God, the pain of the body is often made a mean of good to the soul. The pangs of death, here called *the destroyers*, are just ready to seize him; they compass him about, Ps. 116: 3. Perhaps it intimates the very dreadful apprehensions those have of death as a destroying thing, when it stares them in the face, who, when it was at a distance, made light of it.

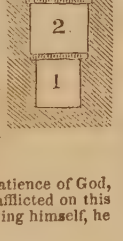
II. The provision made for his instruction, in order to a sanctified use of his affliction. God may not speak in vain, *v.* 23. He is happy, if there be a messenger to attend him in his sickness, to convince, counsel, and comfort him, an interpreter to expound the providence; for, when God speaks by afflictions, we are, frequently, so unversed in the language, that we have need of a wise interpreter. The advice and help of a good minister are as needful, and should be as acceptable, in sickness, as of a good physician, especially if well-skilled in the art of explaining and improving providences; he is then one of a thousand, and to be valued accordingly: his business, at such a time, is, *to show unto man his uprightness*, i. e. *God's* uprightness, that in faithfulness He afflicts him, and does him no wrong; which it is necessary to be convinced of, in order to a due improvement of the affliction: or rather, it may mean man's uprightness, or rectitude: 1. That *is.* If it appear, that the sick person is truly pious, the interpreter will not, as Job's friends, make it his business to prove him a hypocrite, because afflicted; but, will show him his uprightness, notwithstanding his afflictions, that he may take the comfort of it, and be easy, whatever the event. 2. The uprightness, the reformation, that *should be*, in order to life and peace: then the work is done.

III. God's gracious acceptance of him, on his repentance, *v.* 24. 1. He will give a gracious order for his discharge. When afflictions have done their work, they shall be removed. When we return to God in a way of duty, He will return to us in a way of mercy. 2. He will give a gracious reason for this order, *I have found a ransom*, or propitiation; Jesus Christ is that Ransom, so Elihu calls Him, as Job had called Him his Redeemer, for He is both the Purchaser and the Price, the Priest and the Sacrifice; so high was the value put on souls, that nothing less would redeem them, and so great the injury done by sin, that nothing less would atone for it, than the blood of the Son of God, who gave his life a ransom for many. This is a ransom of God's finding; we could never have found it ourselves, neither the angels themselves; it is the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom; and such an invention as is, and will be, the everlasting wonder of those principalities and powers that desire to look into it. Observe how God glories in the invention here, '*I have found, I have found*, the Ransom, I, even I, am He that has done it.'

IV. The recovery, hereupon. Take away the cause, and the effect will cease. When the patient becomes a penitent,

1. His body recovers its health, *v.* 25. This is not always the consequence of a sick man's repentance and return to God, but sometimes it is; and recovery is then a mercy indeed, when it arises from the remission of sin, Isa. 38: 17. That is the method of a blessed recovery; *Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee;* and then, *Rise, take up thy bed, and walk*, Matt. 9: 2, 6 So here, interest him in the Ransom, and when the distemper that oppressed nature is removed, how strangely does nature help itself; in which the power and goodness of the God of nature must be

graves; spacious and magnificent caverns, supported by pillars, and having doors; artificial caverns, with places for coffins pierced in the side; mounds, or heaps, sometimes having a chamber in them: and here a kind of ditch, (the Heb. is said to be from a root signifying to *sink*,) sunk in the ground, somewhat like the method still practised with us. A cut is given of a section of ancient tombs noticed at Syracuse. They are dug at the surface (like our graves) in the calcareous sand-stone, to the depth of 6 or 8 ft. or more; the lowest cavity is of a size for a man's body, the next above is a little wider, thus leaving a shoulder on which rests a slab, forming the cover to the lowest, and the bottom to the next grave. The 3d grave is also wider than the 2d, having likewise a shoulder, on which the slab, forming its own bottom and the cover of the 2d grave, rests; and so on to the surface of the rock, where seems to have been a cover, (movable till all the series of graves were occupied by corpses,) afterwards closely plastered down, and probably covered with the inscriptions. Ed.



Verses 19—26.

When men disregard the warnings and despise the patience of God, He often sends severe afflictions. And if Job had been afflicted on this account, instead of murmuring against God, and justifying himself, he ought to have considered what sins he had committed, and what duties he had neglected.—Some interpret this *Messenger*, or *Angel*, of Christ Himself, the *Interpreter* of God's will to man, the Chief among the 10,000 of his saints and servants. But, as in general He comes to men by his messengers, or ministers; and as their instructions and encouragements are deduced from his mediation, and are made effectual by his gracious presence; it is not very material, whether we interpret the passage, of the messengers of God pointing to the Savior, or the Savior revealing Himself by their ministry. It is equally immaterial, whether the words, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit,' be considered as the language of Christ's intercession, pleading the *ransom* of his blood, in behalf of the sinner; or the words of the Father accepting of this plea, and giving command to save the sinner, as satisfied with that appointed ransom. It cannot reasonably be doubted, that Elihu had reference to the promised Redeemer, though he might also intend the sacrifices which prefigured the great atonement. (1 *Pet.* 1:19, 20. *Rev.* 13:8. *Gen.* 3:21. 4:3—5. 8:20—22. 12: 6, 7.) Scott.

(22.) *Destroyers.*] 'The Hebrews understand this of the angels of death, sent by God, with power to take the lives of men; comp. 2 Sam. 24:16, 17. Understand it rather of all things which cause death to man. Elihu remarks, that God often severely chastises men, bringing them to the borders of the grave, and then, when their hearts are duly softened, raising them up again.' *Rosenm. Good*, whom see, tr. '*Des*

26 He shall [d] pray unto God, and he will be favorable unto him: [e] and he shall see his face with joy: for [f] he will render unto man his righteousness.

27 [g] He [*] looketh upon men, and *if any* say, [h] I have sinned, and [i] perverted *that which was* [k] right, and [l] it profited me not;

28 He [†] will [m] deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall [n] see the light.

29 Lo, [o] all these *things* worketh God [‡] oftentimes with man,

30 [p] To bring back his soul from the pit, to be [q] enlightened with the light of the living.

31 [r] Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I will speak.

32 If thou hast any thing to say, answer me: speak, [s] for I desire to justify thee.

33 If not, [t] hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and [u] I shall teach thee wisdom.

d 2 K. 20:2—5. 2 Chr. 33:12,13,19. Ps. 6:1—9. 28:1,2,6. 30:7—11. 41:8—11. 50:15. 91:15. 116:1—6. Is. 30:19. Jer. 33:3. Jon. 2:2—7. Acts 9:11.

e 42:8,9. Num. 6:25,26. Ps. 4:6,7. 16:11. 30:5. 67:1. Acts 2:28. Jude 24.

f 34:11. 1 Sam. 26:23. Ps. 18:20. 62:12. Prov. 24:12. Matt. 16:41,42. Heb. 11:26.

g Gen. 16:13. 2 Chr. 16:9. Ps. 11:4. 14:2. 139:1—4. Prov. 5:21. 15:3. Jer. 23:24.

* Or, *shall look upon men, and say I have sinned*, &c.

h 7:20. Num. 12:11. 2 Sam. 12:13. Prov. 28:13. Jer. 3:13. 31:18,19. Luke 15:18—22. 18:13. 1 John 1:8—10.

i Ec. 5:8.

k Ps. 19:7,8. 119:128. Rom. 7:12—14, 16,22.

l 34:9. Jer. 2:8. Matt. 16:26. Rom. 6:21.

† Or, *hath delivered my soul, &c. and my life.*

m 18,24. 17:16. Ps. 55:23. 69:15. Is. 38:17,18. Rev. 20:1—3.

n 28,22. 3:9,16,20. Ps. 49:19. Is. 9:2. John 11:9.

o 14—17. 1 Cor. 12:6. 2 Cor. 5:5. Eph. 1:11. Phil. 2:13. Col. 1:29. Heb. 12: 21.

‡ Heb. *twice* and *thrice*. 14. 40:5. 2 K. 6:10. 2 Cor. 12:8.

p 24. Ps. 40:2. 118:17,18.

q Is. 56:13. Is. 2:5. John 8:12.

r 13:6. 18:2. 21:2. 32:11.

s 15:4,5. 21:27. 22:5—9. 27:5.

t Ps. 34:11. Prov. 4:1,2. 5:1,2.

u 3. Ps. 49:3. Prov. 8:5.

thankfully acknowledged! By such merciful providences, God speaketh once, yea twice, to men, letting them know (if they would but perceive it) their dependence on Him, and his tender compassion.

2. His soul recovers its peace, *v.* 26. (1.) The patient, being a penitent, is a supplicant, and has learned to pray; when he finds himself recovering, he shall not then think prayer no longer necessary; we need grace as much to sanctify a mercy as an affliction. (2.) His prayers are accepted, God will be favorable to him; and then it follows, (3.) That he has the comfort of communion with God; he shall now see the face of God, which before was hid from him, and he shall see it with joy, for what sight can be more reviving? See Gen. 33: 10. All true penitents rejoice more in the returns of God's favor, than in any instance whatsoever of prosperity or pleasure, Ps. 4: 6, 7. (4.) He has a blessed tranquillity of mind, arising from the sense of his justification before God. He shall receive the atonement, i. e. the comfort of it, Rom. 5: 11. Righteousness shall be imputed to him, and peace spoken thereupon. God will now deal with him as a righteous man, with whom it shall be well. He shall *receive the blessing from the Lord, even righteousness*, Ps. 24: 5. God shall give him grace to go and sin no more. Perhaps this may bespeak the reformation of his life after his recovery.

V. The general rule God will go by in dealing with men, inferred from this instance, *v.* 27, 28. As sick people, on submission, are recovered, so all others that truly repent, shall find mercy with God. 1. Would we know the nature of sin, and its malignity? It is the perverting of that which is right; a most unjust, unreasonable thing, the rebellion of the creature against the Creator, the usurped dominion of the flesh over the spirit, and a contradiction to the eternal rules and reasons of good and evil. It is *perverting the right ways of the Lord*, Acts 13: 10. therefore the ways of sin are called *crooked ways*, Ps. 125: 5. Would we know what is to be got by sin? *It profiteth us not.* The works of darkness are unfruitful works. All true penitents are ready to own this; and it is a mortifying consideration, Rom. 6: 21. 2. See what repentance is, and what reason we have to repent. Would we approve ourselves true penitents? We must then, with a broken and contrite heart, confess our sins to God, 1 John 1: 9. the *fact*, the *fault*, and the *folly* of sin. Is there not good reason for this penitent confession? For, (1.) God looks upon men, when they have sinned, to see whether they will go on in it, or bethink themselves, and return. He hearkens and hears whether any say, *What have I done?* He looks upon sinners with an eye of compassion, for He has no pleasure in their ruin. He looks upon them, and, as soon as He perceives these workings of repentance, He encourages, and is ready to accept them, (Ps. 32: 5, 6.) as the father went forth to meet the returning prodigal. (2.) It will turn to our unspeakable advantage. Whoever they are, such shall not come into condemnation, but be saved from the wrath to come; *He shall deliver his soul from the pit* of hell; iniquity shall not be his ruin. They shall be happy in everlasting life and joy; *his life shall see the light*, i. e. all good, in the vision and fruition of God. To obtain this bliss, if the prophet had bid us do some great thing, would we not have done it? How much more, when he only says, *Wash and be clean;* Confess and be pardoned, Repent and be saved?

V. 29—33. Here concludes this first part, which,

1. Briefly sums up what Elihu had said, showing that God's great and gracious design, in all dispensations toward the children of men, is, to save them from being for ever miserable, and bring them to be for ever happy, *v.* 29, 30. All these things God is working with men; by conscience, by providences, by ministers, by mercies, by afflictions. He often works twice, thrice; so the original, referring to *v.* 14. Why all this pains with man? It is *to bring back his soul from the pit*, *v.* 30. If God did not take more care of us than we do of ourselves, we were miserable. The former method, by dream and vision, was, *to keep back the soul from the pit*, *v.* 18. i. e. to prevent sin, that we might not fall into it. This, by sickness and the Word, is, to bring back the soul, to recover those that have fallen into sin, that they may not lie still and perish in it. Whom God saves from sin and hell, He will bring to heaven, this He aims at, in all his institutions, all his dispensations. *Lord, what is man, that Thou shouldest thus visit him!* This renders those that perish for ever inexcusable.

2. He bespeaks Job's acceptance of what he had offered, and begs of him to *mark it well*, *v.* 31. If so, (1.) He is welcome to object if he can, *v.* 32. Elihu contends for truth, not, as the others, for victory. (2.) If he has nothing to say, Elihu tells him he has something more to say, which he desires him patiently to attend to, *v.* 33. Those that would both show and learn wisdom, must hearken and keep silence, be swift to hear, and slow to speak. The wise and good, as Job, may yet be wiser and better, and must therefore improve by the means of wisdom and grace.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ought always to discourse on religious subjects, with seriousness, recollection, candor, sincerity, and plainness; if we expect to be heard with attention, and to convince and instruct others.—Public offences should be publicly rebuked or retracted, to prevent scandal; but we may allow a man's general character to be good, and yet reprove him for particular offences.—The general tendency of all the Lord's dealings with men, is to lead them to repent and to turn to Him; but the proud, careless rebel does not regard, though God speak to him again and again. The works of creation proclaim his eternal power and Godhead, and leave all those without excuse, who neither worship Him nor are thankful.—Christ Himself is the only effectual *Interpreter;* by his Spirit He shows the sinner the way of acceptance and salvation; who, believing, receives the gift of righteousness, and partakes of sanctification.—To the end of our lives corrections are the needful and salutary means of keeping us near, or bringing us nearer, to God; and, as such, are not only to be submitted to, but to be valued as pledges of his love: for it is immensely better to be 'chastened of the Lord, than to be condemned with the world.'

SCOTT.

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tinies;' see pref. to Job. 'This patriarchal doctrine, of destinies or powers appointed to execute the judgments of the Almighty, descended to almost all countries. The Greeks had their *Lisai*, or *Morai;* the Romans their *Parcæ;* and the Goths their *Fatal Sisters.* The Icelandic Scandinavians had a destroying goddess *Hela.* The modern Arabs have their Azrael: he is of their first order of the celestial hierarchy. See also the Koran.' *Good. Horsley* opposes the doctrine *Good* asserts. ED.

(28.) 'Elihu doubtless refers here covertly to himself.' ROSENM.

Verses 27—30.

Elihu further showed, that God always observed the ways of men. Therefore Job had no reason to think that God was become his enemy; but to hope that he should derive great advantage from his calamities.—The original is rather difficult as to the construction, and has been variously translated: but the grand outline of instruction is not at all affected by the different renderings. SCOTT.

(27.) 'He shall sing among men, and say, "I sinned, and perverted what was right; He hath not dealt with me after my desert; (28.) He hath preserved my soul from going to the pit, and my life, that I might behold the light." (29.) Lo! all these things worketh God, time after time, on the behalf of man;' &c. *Boothr.* 'As the verb signifies *to sing* (29) as well as *to look*, the connexion requires the former sense, and I follow *Schultens* and others. To make out any sense, our tr. supplies, *if any*, and adopts the Keri [Rabbinic reading] in v. 28. which introduces a repetition of the sentiment of vs. 24, 25. besides the anachronism of God delivering a man, after he had offered thanksgiving for his deliverance.' BOOTHR.

Verses 31—33.

It seems, that Job was so far convinced by Elihu's discourse, that he would not attempt an answer. ID.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Elihu calls on the wise to judge in the cause; and charges Job with arraigning the divine justice, 1—9. He affirms, that the all-powerful and all-perfect God cannot do iniquity; and vindicates his dealings with men, 10—30. He shows Job, that he ought to humble himself before God; and sharply reproves his words, 31—37.

FURTHERMORE Elihu answered and said,

2 Hear my words, [a] O ye wise *men;* and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge.

3 For [b] the ear trieth words, as the * mouth tasteth meat.

4 Let us [c] choose to us judgment: let us [d] know among ourselves what *is* good.

5 For Job hath said, [e] I am righteous: and [f] God hath taken away my judgment.

6 Should [g] I lie against my right? my † wound *is* incurable without transgression.

7 What man *is* like Job, *who* [h] drinketh up scorning like water?

8 Which [i] goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men.

9 For he hath said, [k] It profiteth a man nothing, that he should [l] delight himself with God.

10 Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of ‡ understanding: [m] far be it from God, *that he*

CHAP. XXXIV. V. 1—9. Pausing awhile, it is likely, to see if Job had any thing to say against the discourse; who sitting silent, and, probably, intimating a desire he would go on, Elihu here proceeds. Job not only bore it patiently, but took it kindly, seeing that Elihu meant well; and, whereas the others accused him against his own conscience, Elihu charged only what probably his own heart, now on reflection, began to smite him for. Here,

I. Elihu humbly addresses himself to the auditors, and endeavors, like an orator, to gain their good will, and their favorable attention, *v.* 2. 1. He differed in opinion, yet calls them *wise and knowing men;* not like a peevish, [ignorant] disputant, thinking all fools that are not of his mind. 2. He appeals to their judgment, *v.* 3. and he that speaks must stand the test of the intelligent. 3. He pretends not to be sole dictator, as to what is just and good, but is willing to join them in searching it out, and desires a consultation, *v.* 4. We are then likely to discern what is right, when we agree to assist one another in searching it out.

II. He warmly accuses Job, for some passionate words that reflected on the divine government, appealing to the house, whether he ought not to be checked for them.

1. He recites these words, as near as he can remember. (1.) He had insisted on his own innocency, *v.* 5. and, when urged to confess his guilt, had stiffly maintained his plea of *Not guilty, v.* 6. Job had spoken to this purport, *ch.* 27: 6. *My righteousness I hold fast.* (2.) He had charged God with injustice in dealing with him; *God has taken away my judgment;* so Job had said, *ch.* 27: 2. (3.) He had despaired of relief, and concluded that God could not, or would not, help him; that his *wound* was likely to be mortal, yet *not for any injustice in his hand, ch.* 16: 16, 17. (4.) He had, in effect, said, that there is nothing to be got in the service of God, and that no man will be the better, at last, for his religion, *v.* 9. *He hath said* that which gives occasion to suspect that he thinks, *It profiteth a man nothing, that he shall delight himself with God.* It is granted there is a present *pleasure* in religion, yet the *advantage* of it is denied, as if it were *vain to serve God,* Mal. 3: 14. This Elihu gathers as Job's opinion, by an inu-

endo from what he said, *ch.* 9: 22. *He destroys the perfect and the wicked,* which has a truth in it, (for all things come alike to all,) but it was ill-expressed, and gave too much occasion for this imputation; therefore Job sat down silent under it, and attempted not his own vindication; whence Caryl well observes, That good men sometimes speak worse than they mean; and that a good man will rather bear more blame than he deserves, than stand to excuse himself when he has deserved any blame.

2. 'Did you ever know such a man as Job, or ever hear a man talk at such an extravagant rate?' *v.* 7. He represents him, (1.) As sitting in the seat of the scornful; i. e. as taking great liberty and pleasure in reproaching both God and his friends. Or, 'He is very greedy in receiving and hearkening to the scorns and contempts others cast on their brethren, is well pleased with such, and extols them.' Or, as some explain it, 'By his foolish expressions, he makes himself the object of scorn, lays himself very open to reproach, and gives occasion to others to laugh at him; while his religion also suffers by it.' We need pray God never to leave us to ourselves, to say or do any thing which may *make us a reproach to the foolish,* Ps. 39: 8. (2.) As walking in the course of the ungodly, and standing in the way of sinners, *v.* 8. not that in his conversation he associated with them, but, in his opinion, he did favor and countenance them, and strengthen their hands. If (as it follows, *v.* 9. for the proof of this) *it profits a man nothing to delight himself in God,* why not lay the reins on the neck of his lust, and herd with the workers of iniquity? He that says, I have *cleansed my hands in vain,* does not only *offend against the generation of God's children,* (Ps. 73: 13, 14.) but gratifies his enemies, and says as they say.

V. 10—15. The scope of Elihu's discourse is to reconcile Job to his afflictions, and to pacify him under them. In order to this, he had showed, in the foregoing ch. that God meant him no hurt in afflicting him, but intended his spiritual benefit. In this ch. he shows He did him no wrong in afflicting him, nor punished him more than he deserved. If the former could not prevail to satisfy him, yet this ought to silence him. In these vs. he directs his discourse to all the company, *v.* 10. And he says, That the righteous God never did, nor ever will,

a Prov. 1:5. 1 Cor. 10:15. 14:20.
b 6:30. 12:11. 1 Cor. 2:15. Heb. 5:14.
* Heb. *palate.* 31:30. 33:2. *marg.*
c 36. Judg. 19:30. 20:7. 1 Cor. 6:2—6. Gal. 2:11—14. 1 Thes. 5:21.
d Is. 11:2—5. John 7:24. Rom. 12:2.
e 10:7. 11:4. 16:17. 29:14. 32:1. 33:9.
f 9:17. 27:2.
g 27:4—6.
† Heb. *arrow.* 6:4. 16:13.
h 15:16. Deut. 29:19. Prov. 1:22. 4: 17.
i 2:10. 11:3. 15:5. Ps. 1:1. 26:4. 50: 18. 73:12—15. Prov. 1:15. 2:12. 4: 14. 13:20. 1 Cor. 15:33.
k 9:22,23,30,31. 21:14—16,30. 22:17. 35:3. Mal. 3:14.
l 27:10. Ps. 37:4.
‡ Heb. *heart.* 2,3,34. Prov. 6:32. 15: 32. *marg.*
m 36:23. 37:23. Gen. 18:25. Deut. 32: 4. 2 Chr. 19:7. Ps. 92:15. Jer. 12: 1. Rom. 3:4,5. 9:14. Jam. 1:13.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIV. V. 1. In connection with many passages of Elihu's discourse, let us consider the following remarks of *G. Combe,* Esq. 'A man who shall neglect [God's] physical law, will suffer the physical punishment, although he may be very attentive to the moral law; one who infringes the organic law, will suffer organic punishment, although he may obey the physical law; and a person who violates the moral law, will suffer the moral punishment, although he should observe the other two.

'After the intellect and moral sentiments have been brought to recognise the principles of the divine administration, so much wisdom, benevolence and justice are discernible in [these] natural laws, that *our whole nature is ameliorated in undergoing the punishments annexed to them.* So strikingly conspicuous, indeed, is the ameliorating influence of suffering, that many suppose this its primary object; a notion which, with great deference, appears to me unfounded in principle, and dangerous in practice. If evils and misfortunes are mere mercies of Providence, it follows that a headache consequent on a debauch, is not intended to prevent repetition of drunkenness, so much as to prepare the debauchee for "the invisible world;" and that shipwreck in a crazy vessel is not designed to render the merchant more cautious, but to lead him to heaven.—It is however undeniable, that, in innumerable instances, pain and sorrow are the direct consequences of our own misconduct; at the same time it is obviously benevolent in God to render them beneficial directly, as a warning against future transgression, and indirectly, as a mean of purifying the mind. Nevertheless, if we shall imagine that in some instances it is dispensed as a direct punishment for particular transgressions, and in others, only on account of sin in general, and with the view of ameliorating the spirit of the sufferer, we shall ascribe inconsistency to the Creator, and expose ourselves to the danger of attributing our own afflictions to his favor, and those of others to his wrath; thus fostering in our own minds self-conceit and uncharitableness. Individuals who entertain the belief that bad health, worldly ruin, and sinister accidents, befalling them, are not punishments for infringement of the laws of nature, but particular manifestations of the love of God towards themselves, make slight inquiry into the natural causes of their miseries, and bestow few efforts to remove them. In consequence, the chastisements endured by them, neither correct their own conduct, nor deter others from similar transgressions. Some religious sects, who espouse these notions, literally act upon them, and refuse to inoculate with the cow pox to escape contagion, or take other means of avoiding natural calamities. Regarding these as dispensations of Providence, sent to prepare them for a future world, they conceive that the more they have of them the better. Further, these ideas, besides being repugnant to the common sense of mankind, are at variance with the principle, that the world is arranged so as to favor virtue and discountenance vice; because favoring virtue means obviously, that the favored virtuous will positively enjoy more happiness, and, negatively, suffer fewer misfortunes, than the vicious. The view then now advocated, appears less exceptionable, viz. that punishment serves a double purpose—directly to warn us against transgression, and indirectly, when rightly apprehended, to subdue our lower propensities, and purify and vivify our moral and intellectual powers. See Bp. Butler.' *Constitution of Man.*

The above modest attempt to 'vindicate the ways of God to man,' does not entirely satisfy the mind; which looks to a future state as necessary to display all God's justice, as we term it in reference to our own feelings. Job's case, too, seems a special exception, chs. 1 and 2. The apostle also refers to it as an example of patience under persecution for righteousness' sake, James 5:10, 11. analogous to cases of suffering *for* acting according to the dictates of the better nature, which the pleasure of the indulgence of the good feelings does not fully make up at the time, or at least in the eyes of others. See on ch. 42. ED.

V. 5—9. Job by no means intended all Elihu charged on him. He had not spoken precisely all the words, Elihu attributed to him; those he had used, might admit of a more favorable construction; and other parts of his discourse plainly showed his deliberate judgment widely differed from the sentiments, apparently conveyed by some of his detached expressions. He had repeatedly owned he was a sinner; and he spake of the wicked as reserved to the day of wrath and destruction. (21:27—30.) But Elihu did not condemn Job as a hypocrite he therefore quietly submitted to his reproof. SCOTT.

(7.) *Drinketh up scorning,* &c.] 'Of a man who does not care for contempt or hatred, it is still said, [in India,] "He drinks up their hatred like water." So it is said of enemies, and talents: as, "He drinks up enemies," or "science, as water." Thus, Elihu wished to show that Job had hardened himself, and was insensible to scorn.' ROBERTS.

Verses 10—15.

Elihu next laid down the principle, by which he desired Job's conduct might be tried. (7:17—21. 9:4—13.) SCOTT.

should do wickedness; and *from* the Almighty, *that he should commit* iniquity.

11 For [n] the work of a man shall he render unto him, and [o] cause every man to find according to *his* ways.

12 Yea, [p] surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty [q] pervert judgment.

13 [r] Who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed * the whole world?

14 If he [s] set his heart † upon man, *if* [t] he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath;

15 [u] All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

[*Practical Observations.*]

16 If now [x] *thou hast* understanding, hear this: hearken to the voice of my words.

17 Shall [y] even he that hateth right ‡ govern? and [z] wilt thou condemn him that is most just?

18 *Is it fit* [a] to say to a king, *Thou art* wicked? *and* to princes, *Ye are* ungodly?

19 *How much less to him* that [b] accepteth not the persons of [c] princes, nor [d] regardeth the rich more than the poor? for [e] they all *are* the work of his hands.

20 In [f] a moment shall they die, and the people shall be [g] troubled at midnight, and pass away: and § the mighty shall be taken away [h] without hand.

21 For [i] his eyes *are* upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings.

22 *There is* [k] no darkness, [l] nor shadow of death, where [m] the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.

23 For [n] he will not lay upon man more *than right;* [o] that he should ‖ enter into judgment with God.

24 He shall [p] break in pieces mighty men without ¶ number, and [q] set others in their stead.

25 Therefore [r] he knoweth their works, and he overturneth *them* ' in the night, so that they are ** destroyed.

26 He striketh them as wicked men [t] in the open sight of others;

27 Because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his ways:

28 So that they cause the cry of the poor to come unto him, and he heareth the cry of the afflicted.

29 When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth *his* face, who then can behold him? whether *it be done* against a nation, or against a man only:

30 That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.

31 Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne *chastisement*, I will not offend any more:

32 That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.

33 Should it be according to thy mind? he will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose; and not I: therefore speak what thou knowest.

34 Let men of understanding tell me, and let a wise man hearken unto me.

35 Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words *were* without wisdom.

36 My desire *is* that Job may be tried unto the end because of his answers for wicked men.

37 For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he clappeth *his hands* among us, and multiplieth his words against God.

1. His independent, absolute sovereignty and dominion, *v.* 13. This is also a good reason why we should acquiesce in all God's dealings with us. [Finite beings may have lower motives, as fear, favor, temporal interests, &c. but the Infinite can have no motive but the best.] And if an absolute Sovereign, we are bound to submit to Him, for there is no higher power to which we may appeal, so that the virtue is a necessity

2. His irresistible power, *v.* 14. If he *set his heart on man*, to contend with him, much more if (as some read it) He set his heart *against* man, to ruin him, if He should deal with man either by *mere sovereignty*, or by *strict justice*, there were no standing before Him; man's spirit and breath would soon be gone, and *all flesh would perish together*, *v.* 15. Many men's honesty is owing purely to their impotency; but God is able, yet does not by arbitrary power crush any man, which therefore must be attributed to the infinite perfection of his nature, and that is immutable. See here what God can do with us, and may do with us, without doing us any wrong; He may recall the being He gave, of which we are but tenants at will, and which also we have forfeited; therefore, as long as that is continued of his mere favor, we have no reason to cry out of wrong, whatever other comforts are removed.

V. 16—30. Elihu here applies himself more directly to Job, *v.* 16.

I. Hear this, That God is not to be quarrelled with for any thing He does. It is daring presumption to arraign and condemn God's proceedings, as Job had done by his discontents. 1. As absurd, as to advance to power a professed enemy to justice, *v.* 17. When we consider the corruption of our nature, and the contrariety there is in us to the eternal rule of equity, we cannot but see it an impudent, impious thing for us to prescribe to God. 2. As absurd, as to call a most evidently righteous, innocent person to the bar, and give judgment against him. 3. It is more absurd and unbecoming, than to say to a sovereign prince, *Thou art wicked*, and to judges on the bench, *Ye are ungodly*, *v.* 18. This would be looked upon as an insufferable affront; no king, no prince, would bear it. Government, we presume, is right, unless the contrary be very evident; but, whatever we think, it is not [customary or] fit to tell a king to his face that he is wicked. Nathan reproved David by a parable. But, whatever a high priest or a prophet might do, it is not for an ordinary subject to make so bold with the powers that are. How absurd then to say so to God! To impute iniquity to Him, who, having no respect of persons, is in no temptation to do an unjust thing!

n 33:26. Ps. 62:12. Prov. 24:12. Jer. 32:19. Ez. 33:17—20. Matt. 16:27. Rom. 2:6. 2 Cor. 5:10. 1 Pet. 1:17. Rev. 22:12.
o Prov. 1:31. Gal. 6:7,8.
p Ps. 11:7. 145:17. Hab. 1:12,13.
q 8:3.
r 36:23. 38:4,&c. 40:8—11. 1 Chr. 29:11. Prov. 8:23—30. Is. 40:13,14. Dan. 4:35. Rom. 11:34—36.
* Heb. *the world, all of it.*
s 7:17. 9:4.
† Heb. *upon him.*
t Ps. 104:29. Is. 24:22.
u 30:23. Gen. 3:19. Ps. 90:3—10. Ec. 12:7. Is. 27:4. 57:16.
x 12:3. 13:2—6.
y Gen. 18:25. 2 Sam. 23:3. Rom. 3:5—7.
‡ Heb. *bind.*
z 1:22. 40:8. 2 Sam. 19:21. Rom. 9:14.
a Ex. 22:28. Prov. 17:26. Acts 23:3, 5. Rom. 13:7. 1 Pet. 2:17. 2 Pet. 2:10. Jude 8.
b 13:8. Deut. 10:17. 2 Chr. 19:7. Acts 10:34. Rom. 2:11. Gal. 2:6. Eph. 6:9. Col. 3:25. 1 Pet. 1:17.
c 12:19,21. Ps. 2:2—4. Ec. 5:8. Is. 3:14.
d 36:19. Ps. 49:6,7. Jam. 2:5.
e 31:15. Prov. 14:31. 22:2.
f Ps. 73:19. Is. 30:13. 37:38. Dan. 5:30. Luke 12:20. Acts 12:23. 1 Thes. 5:2. 2 Pet. 2:3.
g Ex. 12:29. Is. 37:36. Matt. 25:6. Luke 17:26—29.
§ Heb. *they shall take away the mighty.*
h 1 Sam. 25:37—39. 26:10. Is. 10:16—19. 30:30—33. Dan. 2:34,44,45. Zech. 4:6.
i 31:4. Gen. 16:13. 2 Chr. 16:9. Ps. 34:15. Prov. 5:21. 15:3. Jer. 16:17. 17:10. 32:19. Am. 9:3.
k Ps. 139:11,12. Is. 29:15. Jer. 23:24. Am. 9:2,3. 1 Cor. 4:5. Heb. 4:13. Rev. 6:16.
l 3:5. 24:17. Is. 9:2.
m 31:3. Ps. 5:5. Prov. 10:29. Matt. 7:23. Luke 13:27.
n 10—12. 11:6. Ezra 9:13. Ps. 119: 137. Dan. 9:7—9.
o 9:32,33. 16:21. 23:7. Jer. 2:5. Rom. 9:20.
‖ Heb. *go.*
p 19:2. Ps. 2:9. 72:4. 94:5. Jer. 51: 20—23. Dan. 2:34,35,44,45.
¶ Heb. *searching out.*
q 1 Sam. 2:30—36. 15:28. 1 K. 14:7, 8,14. Ps. 113:7,8. Dan. 5:28—31.
r 1 s. 33:15. Is. 65:18. Hos. 7:2. Am. 8:7. Rev. 20:12.
s 20. Cant. 3:8. Is. 15:1. 1 Thes. 5:2.
** Heb. *crushed.*
t Ex. 14:30. Deut. 13:9—11. 21:21. 2 Sam. 12:11,12. Ps. 58:10,11. Is. 66:24. 1 Tim. 5:20. Rev. 18:9,10,20.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—15. It is generally prudent to conciliate the affections of all, whose benefit we seek, or whose help we want, by acknowledging in them the good which they really possess; and when we address men, as endued with wisdom and piety, we cogently admonish them to act consistently with their character: nor should we withhold this tribute of respect from any, because we deem them in some respects mistaken. (*Phil.* 1:9—11. *Heb.* 5:11—14.)—It is discordant, in the ears of a spiritual man, to hear persons intent on justifying themselves; or reflecting on the dealings of God, as unjust or unkind; or supposing that they suffer without remedy, or transgression. This jealousy for the honor of God, and deep acquaintance with the depravity of man, will indeed sometimes render pious persons too suspicious; and too severe in censuring such as vindicate themselves from unjust aspersions, in an unguarded manner. But the believer, when convinced that his reprover means well, and when conscious of having deserved censure, will, on calm reflection, submit to those rebukes which are too rigorous, rather than engage in minute exculpation.—Pious men cannot deliberately allow, that while life and hope remain, a sinner can have cause to murmur, but are sure he must have great cause to be thankful. SCOTT.

Verses 20—30.

Even Elihu seems to have had some suspicions, that Job was a dissembler; and spake as if he was at a loss, how to reconcile his calamities with his character for piety; and thought the case would have

* open sight of others;
27 Because they [u] turned back † from him, and [x] would not consider any of his ways.
28 So that [y] they cause the cry of the poor to come unto him, [z] and he heareth the cry of the afflicted.
29 [a] When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and [b] when he hideth *his* face, [c] who then can behold him? [d] whether *it be done* against a nation, or against a man only:
30 [e] That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.
31 Surely [f] it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne *chastisement*, I will not offend *any more:*
32 *That* [g] *which* I see not, teach thou me: [h] if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.
33 [i] *Should it be* ‡ according to thy mind? [k] he will recompense it, [l] whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose; and not I: therefore speak [m] what thou knowest.
34 Let men of § understanding tell me, and let a wise man hearken unto me.
35 Job [n] hath spoken without knowledge, and his words *were* without wisdom.
36 ‖ My desire *is that* Job may be [o] tried unto

* Heb. *place of beholders.*
u 1 Sam. 15:12. Ps. 125:5. Zeph. 1:6. Luke 17:31,32. Acts 15:38. 2 Tim. 4:10. Heb. 10:39.
† Heb. *from after him.*
x Ps. 28:5. 107:43. Is. 1:3. 5:12. Hag. 2:15—19.
y 22:9,10. 24:12. 29:12,13. 31:19,20. 35:9. Ex. 2:23,24. 3:7,9. Ps. 12:5. Is. 5:7. Jam. 5:4.
z Ex. 22:23—27.
a 23:1—3. 2 Sam. 7:1. Is. 14:3—8. 26:3. 32:17. John 14:27. Rom. 8: 31—34. Phil. 4:7.
b 23:8,9. Ps. 13:1. 27:9. 30:7. 143:7
c 12:14. 23:13.
d 2 K. 13:9—12. 2 Chr. 36:14—17. Jer. 27:8.
e 21. 1 K. 12:28—30. 2 K. 21:9. Ps. 12:8. Ec. 9:18. Hos. 5:11. 13:11. Mic. 6:16. 2 Thes. 2:4—11. Rev. 13:3,4,11—14.
f 33:27. 40:3—5. 42:6. Lev. 26:41. Ezra 9:13,14. Neh. 9:33—38. Jer. 31:18,19. Dan. 9:7—14. Mic. 7:9.
g 10:2. Ps. 19:12. 25:4,5. 139:23,24. 143:8—10.
h Prov. 28:13. Luke 3:8—14. Eph. 4: 25—28.
i 9:12. 18:4. Is. 45:9. Rom. 9:20. 11:35.
‡ Heb. *from with thee?*
k 11. 15:31. Ps. 89:30—32. Prov. 11: 31. 2 Thes. 1:6,7. Heb. 2:2. 11:26.
l Ps. 135:6. Matt. 20:12—15.
m 33:5,32.
§ Heb. *heart.* 2,4,10,16. 1 Cor. 10:15.
n 13:2. 15:2. 35:16. 38:2. 42:3.
‖ Or, *My father, let Job, &c.*
o 23:16. Ps. 17:3. 26:2. Jam. 5:11.

v. 19. Note, Rich and poor stand on the same level before God. Their persons are so; their conditions are so; the poor were made poor by the Divine Providence, as well as the rich made rich; therefore the poor shall fare never the worse for that which is their lot, not their fault.

II. Hear this, That God is to be acknowledged and submitted to in all He does. Divers considerations Elihu here suggests, to beget in Job great and high thoughts of God, and so to persuade him to submit, and quarrel no further with Him.

1. God is almighty, *v.* 20. What cannot He do, that has all the powers of death at his command? Observe the suddenness of the destruction He brings; *In a moment shall they die;* the season of it; *at midnight,* when secure, careless, and unable to help themselves; as the Egyptians, when their first-born were slain, [and the Sabeans? note, 28: 4.] Nor is it one single mighty man only that He can thus overpower, but even hosts of them, *v.* 24. Omnipotence *shall break in pieces mighty men* combined *without number;* Yet, when God destroys tyranny, He does not design anarchy; when He breaks mighty men, He sets others in their stead, that will rule better; or, if they do not, He overturns them also in the night, or in a night, so that they are destroyed, *v.* 25. Witness Belshazzar. Or, if He designs them space to repent, He does not presently destroy them, but *He strikes them as wicked men, v.* 26. Some humbling, mortifying judgments are brought upon them, in their bodies, estates, or families, and this, for warning to their neighbors; the stroke is given *as an alarm to others,* therefore in the open sight of others, that the less mighty also may see, and fear, and tremble, before the justice of God.

2. God is omniscient, *v.* 21, 22. As the strongest cannot oppose his arm, so the most subtle cannot escape his eye; therefore, if some are punished, either more or less than we think they should be, instead of quarrelling with God, it becomes us to ascribe it to some secret cause, known to God only. Observe here, The workers of iniquity would hide themselves, if they could, as Adam among the trees of the garden; the day is coming when mighty men, and chief captains, will call to the rocks and mountains to hide them. They would gladly be hid even in the grave, in annihilation, than appear before the judgment-seat of Christ: but in vain.

3. God is righteous. Even when overturning mighty men, and breaking them in pieces, *He will not lay upon man more than right, v.* 23. As He will not punish the innocent, so He will not exact of the guilty more than their iniquities deserve; of the proportion between the sin and the punishment, Infinite Wisdom shall be the Judge; for God will be justified when He speaks, and clear when He judges. Therefore Job was very much to be blamed, and is here well advised to let fall his action. *It is not for man ever to purpose to enter into judgment with the Omnipotent;* so some read the whole v. Job had often wished to plead his cause before God. Elihu asks, 'To what purpose? The judgment already given concerning thee will certainly be affirmed; no errors can be found in it, nor any exceptions taken to it, but, after all, it must rest as it is.' All is well that God does, and will be found so.

To prove, that, when God destroys the mighty men, and *strikes them as wicked men,* He does not *lay upon them more than right,* He shows what their wickedness was; (*v.* 27, 28.) and let any compare that with their punishment, and then judge whether they did not deserve it. In short, these unjust judges, whom God will justly judge, neither *feared God, nor regarded man.* This is at the bottom of all the wickedness of the wicked, they turn back from God; and it is because they do not consider, not because they cannot; they will not. From inconsideration comes impiety, and thence all immorality. Their case is bad who have the prayers and tears of the poor against them; for the cry of the oppressed will, sooner or later, draw down vengeance on the heads of the oppressors, and no one can say, that this is *more than right,* Ex. 22: 23.

4. God has an uncontrollable dominion in all the affairs of men, and so guides and governs whatever concerns both communities and persons, that, as what He designs cannot be defeated, so what He does cannot be changed, *v.* 29. What can make them uneasy, whose *souls dwell at ease in God?* See Phil. 4: 7. The smiles of all the world cannot quiet those whom God troubles with his frowns.

5. God is wise, and careful of the public welfare, therefore provides *that the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared, v.* 30. The praise of men, and power, are the hypocrite's reward, his aim. Tyrants sometimes use religion as a cloak for ambition, and by hypocrisy come to the throne. The people, when hypocrites reign, are likely to be ensnared in sin, or trouble, or both. Power, in the hands of dissemblers, is often destructive to the rights and liberties of a people, which they are more easily wheedled out of, than forced out of. Much mischief has been done likewise to the power of godliness, under the pretence of a form of godliness. Divine Providence takes care of the people, to prevent this danger, *that the hypocrite reign not;* either that he do not reign at all, or not long. If God has mercy in store for a people, He will either prevent the rise, or hasten the ruin, of hypocritical rulers.

V. 31—37. I. Elihu instructs Job what to say under his affliction, *v.* 31, 32. In general, he would have him repent of his misconduct, and indecent expressions. Job's other friends would have had him own himself a wicked man, and by overdoing they undid. Let us remember this, in giving reproofs, and not make the matter worse than it is; for the stretching of the crime may defeat the prosecution. Elihu directs Job,

1. To humble himself before God for his sins, and to accept the punishment of them; '*I have borne chastisement.* What I suffer comes justly upon me, therefore I will bear it, and not only justify God in it, but acknowledge his goodness.' Many are chastised, that do not bear chastisement, do not bear it well, and so, in effect, do not bear it at all. Penitents, if sincere, will take all well that God does, and will bear chastisement as a medicinal operation intended for good.

2. To pray to God to discover his sins to him, *v.* 32. A good man is willing to know the worst of himself, and particularly, under affliction: and what God designs in it.

3. To promise reformation, *v.* 31. The penitent here completes his repentance; for it is not enough to be sorry for our sins, but we must go and sin no more, and, as here, bind ourselves with the bond of a fixed resolution never more to return to folly. This is meet to be said in a steadfast purpose, and to God in a solemn promise and vow.

II. He reasons with him concerning his discontent and uneasiness under his affliction, *v.* 33. We are ready to think every thing that concerns us should be just as we would have it; but Elihu here shows, 1. That it is absurd and unreasonable to expect it. He speaks with a great deference to the divine will and wisdom, and a satisfaction therein. It is highly fit every thing should be according to God's mind. Elihu speaks also with a just disdain of the pretensions of the proud, who would be their own carvers. Should we always have the good we have a mind to enjoy? We should then wrongfully encroach on others, and foolishly ensnare ourselves. Must we never be afflicted, because we have no mind to it? Or, if we must be afflicted, is it fit we should choose what rod we will be beaten with? No, every thing should be according to God's mind. 2. That it is in vain, and to no purpose, to expect it. 'God will take his own way, fulfil his own counsel, and

been plain, if he had been a hypocrite, advanced to authority, but now depressed, lest he should lead the people into sin and misery. Yet he did not venture to condemn him, but hoped the best. SCOTT.

When he giveth, &c. (29) Or, 'If He impart peace, who can condemn a man as wicked?' (*Rom.* 5:1, 2. 8:28—34.) ID.

Verses 31—37.

(31:35—40.)—Job had given some ground for these charges: but Elihu evidently made the worst of his expressions, and criminated him much more than the Lord afterwards did. (38:2. 40:1—8. 42:1—9.)—Several of the clauses in these vs. are to us very difficult, and consequently

the end, because of [p] *his* answers for wicked men.

37 For he addeth [q] rebellion unto his sin, [r] he clappeth *his hands* among us, and [s] multiplieth his words against God.

CHAP. XXXV.

Elihu further reproves Job's words in justifying himself; and shows, that the effects of man's conduct extend to man alone, and not to God, 1—8. He observes, that if God hear not the cry of the oppressed, it is because they do not address him aright, 9—13. He exhorts Job to patience and trust in God, 14—16.

ELIHU spake moreover, and said,

2 * Thinkest thou this to be right, *that* thou saidst, [b] My righteousness *is* more than God's?

3 For thou saidst, [c] What advantage will it be unto thee? *and*, What profit shall I have, * *if I be cleansed* from my sin?

4 I will † answer thee, and [d] thy companions with thee.

5 [e] Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold [f] the clouds *which* are higher than thou.

6 If thou sinnest, [g] what doest thou against him? or *if* thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him?

p 8:3. 12:6. 21:7. 24:1.
q 1 Sam. 15:23. Is. 1:19,20.
r 27:23.
s 8:2,3. 11:2,3. 35:2,3,16. 42:7.
a Matt. 12:36,37. Luke 19:22.
b 9:17. 10:7. 16:17. 19:6,7. 27:2. 34:5. 40:8.
c 9:21,22. 10:15. 21:15. Ps. 73:13. Mal. 3:14.
* Or, by it *more than by my sin.*
† Heb. *return to the words.*
d 34:8. Prov. 13:20.
e 22:12. 25:5,6. 36:26—33. 37:1—5, 22,23. 1 K. 8:27. Ps. 8:3,4. Is. 40:22,23. 55:9.
f 38:29. 37:16. Nah. 1:3.
g Prov. 8:36. 9:12. Jer. 7:19.

recompense according to the sentence of his own justice, whether thou art pleased or displeased; it is therefore thy wisdom to be easy, and *make the best of that which is*, as it is out of thy power to make it otherwise. The matter lies plain before thee; be at a point; thou art in God's hand, not in mine.'

III. He appeals to all intelligent, indifferent persons, whether there was not great sin and folly in what Job said. 1. He would have the matter thoroughly examined, and brought to an issue, *v.* 36. Many understand 'Let his troubles be continued till he be thoroughly humbled, made to see his error, and to retract what he has so presumptuously said against God and his providence. Let the trial be continued till the end be obtained.' 2. He appeals both to God and man, and desires the judgment of both upon it. Some read *v.* 36. as an appeal to God, *O my Father, let Job be tried.* So the margin of our Bibles, for the same word signifies *my desire*, and *my father;* and some suppose he lifted up his eyes, when he said this, meaning, '*O my Father which art in heaven*, let Job be tried till he be subdued.' When praying for the benefit of afflictions either to ourselves or others, we must eye God as a Father, because they are fatherly corrections, and a part of our filial education, Heb. 12: 7. He appeals to the bystanders, *v.* 34. [whether, as he said, Job had not] talked foolishly, (*v.* 35.) in this matter; whatever his heart is, his words are without prudence. What he said to his wife, may be retorted on himself, *ch.* 2: 10. Sometimes we need and deserve those reproofs ourselves, which we have given to others. Those that reproach God's wisdom, really reproach their own. He had also talked wickedly, and taken part with God's enemies; what he has said, tends to strengthen the hands, and harden the hearts, of wicked people in their wickedness. 'He has, moreover, insulted God's friends, and hectored over them, as if he had gotten the day, and silenced us all.' To speak ill is bad enough, but to *clap our hands*, and triumph in it when we have done, as if error and passion had won the victory, is much worse. Finally, he has spoken against God Himself, and, by standing to what he had said, *added rebellion to his sin.* To speak, though but one word, against God, by whom we speak, and for whom we ought to speak, is a great sin; what is it then to multiply words against Him, as if we would out-talk Him? What is it to repeat them, instead of unsaying them? Those that have sinned, and, when they are called to repent, thus go on frowardly, add rebellion to their sin, and make it exceeding sinful.

CHAP. XXXV. Job being still silent, Elihu here, a third time, undertakes to show him that he had spoken amiss, and ought to recant. Three improper sayings he here charges him with, and returns answer to them distinctly.

V. 1—8. I. Here are the bad words Elihu charges on Job, *v.* 2, 3. To evince their badness, he appeals to himself, which intimates Elihu's confidence, the reproof he now gave was just: (for they that have truth and equity on their side, sooner or later will have every man's conscience on their side,) and his good opinion of Job, that he thought better than he spake, and, though he had spoken amiss, yet, when he perceived his mistake, he would not stand to it. He reproves Job for,

1. *Justifying himself more than God*, the thing that first provoked him, (*ch.* 32: 2.) 'Thou hast, in effect, said, *My righteousness is more than God's*,' i. e. 'I have done more for God than ever He did for me; so that, when the accounts are balanced, He will be brought in my debtor;' a most unjust and wicked thought: for, though we be ever so good, God is not our debtor; and though our afflictions be ever so great, God is not unrighteous.

2. Disowning the benefits and advantages of religion, because he suffers these things, *v.* 3. This is gathered from *ch.* 9: 30, 31. and *ch.* 10: 15. The psalmist, when he compared his own afflictions with the prosperity of the wicked, was tempted to say, *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain.* And if Job said so, he did, in effect, say, *My righteousness is more than God's;* (*v.* 2.) for if he got nothing by his religion, God was more beholden to him than he to God. But though there might be some color for it, yet it was not fair to charge these words on Job, when he himself had made them the wicked words of prospering sinners, *ch.* 21: 15. and had immediately disclaimed them, *v.* 16. It is not a fair way of disputing, to charge men with those consequences of their opinions, which they expressly renounce.

II. The good answer of Elihu, *v.* 4. 'I will undertake to answer thee, and thy companions with thee,' i. e. 'all that are ready to justify thy sayings; and all others that say as thou: I have that to offer which will silence them all:' viz. his old maxim, *ch.* 33: 12. *That God is greater than man;* a truth, which, if duly improved, will serve many good purposes, and this particularly, to prove that God is debtor to no man: his being obliged by his purpose and promise, is only to Himself. That is a challenge no man can take up, Rom. 11: 35. *Who hath first given to God*, let him prove it, *and it shall be recompensed to him again.* Why demand, as a just debt, to gain by our religion, (as Job seemed to,) when the God we serve does not gain by it?

1. Elihu needs not prove that God is above man; it is agreed by all; but he endeavors to affect Job and us with it, by an ocular demonstration of the height of the heavens and the clouds, *v.* 5.

2. But hence he infers, that God is not affected, either one way or other, by any thing we do. To men we are in a capacity either of doing injury, or kindness, *v.* 8. And in both, the sovereign Lord and Judge of all will interest Himself, rewarding those that do good, punishing those that do hurt, to fellow creatures and fellow subjects; but, Job

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 16—37. It is evident, that it must be immensely more dangerous and atrocious to arraign the conduct of God, than that of any earthly prince. Yet all our murmurs, when duly investigated, will be found to have a tendency to the blasphemous sentiment, that the Governor of the world hates right: they condemn Him who is most just, and are therefore pregnant with rebellion. But He knows the works of all men, and sees far more evil in every one of us, than we suspect: therefore in his most terrible judgments his justice must be acknowledged; and even when 'the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God,' the publishing of their crimes will demonstrate the righteousness of their dreadful doom. But the vengeance of the Almighty, either here or hereafter, will be most terrible against apostate professors of his holy religion; those who have deliberately rejected his authority, and his Gospel; and such as have cloked their ambitious designs under a hypocritical profession of piety.—It is meet, we address ourselves to God, when He afflicts us, with the language of humble submission: confessing our transgressions, and praying to be further enlightened in the knowledge of his truth, and acquaintance with our own sinfulness; and that He would incline and enable us to repent; and to forsake all our sins; that 'where we have done iniquity, we may do so no more.'

SCOTT.

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are differently interpreted. Patrick paraphrases v. 33. thus: 'Hast thou addressed thyself to God in this manner? Answer me that question; for God will recompense it, if thou dost despise such good counsel; which perhaps thou wilt choose to do; but so would not I. Speak therefore what thy opinion is.' SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXV. V. 1—3. Job had labored to prove, that there was no exact discrimination in this world between the righteous and the wicked; and he seemed to Elihu to assert, that it would be no advantage to any one, (as it had been none to him,) to seek diligently to be cleansed from sin. This he thought equivalent to saying, 'that his righteousness was more than God's:' for he did his duty; but God did not fulfil his promises, nay, He punished him more severely than he deserved. Job had not spoken exactly these words, and certainly had no such meaning: but he had dropped some expressions capable of being thus understood; and it was proper they should be noticed, lest others should make a bad use of them. (9:22—24. 10:4—7. 21:7—16. 27:2—6.) SCOTT.

If I be cleansed *from my sin;* (3) '*by it* more than by my sin.' (*M.*) This appears to be the more exact rendering. 'What profit shall I have by my righteousness, more than by my sin?' In.

7 If thou be righteous, [h] what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?

8 Thy wickedness [i] *may hurt* a man as thou *art;* and thy righteousness [k] *may profit* the son of man.

9 By reason of the multitude of oppressions, [l] they make *the oppressed* to cry; they cry out by reason of [m] the arm of the mighty.

10 But [n] none saith, [o] Where *is* God [p] my Maker, [q] who giveth songs in the night;

11 Who [r] teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?

12 [s] There they cry, but none giveth answer, [t] because of the pride of evil men.

13 Surely [u] God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty [x] regard it.

14 Although [y] thou sayest thou shalt not see him, [z] *yet* judgment *is* before him; therefore [a] trust thou in him.

15 But now, [b] because *it is* not *so*, * he hath [c] visited in his anger; yet † he knoweth *it* not [d] in great extremity:

16 Therefore doth

h 22:2,3. 1 Chr. 29:14. Ps. 16:2. Rom. 11:35.
i Josh. 7:1—5,24,25. 22:20. Ec. 9:18. Jon. 1:12.
k 42:8. Gen. 12:2. 18:24,&c. 19:29. Ps. 106:23,30. Ez. 22:30. Acts 27: 24. Heb. 11:7.
l 24:12. 34:28. Ex. 2:23. 3:7,9. Neh. 5:1—5. Ps. 12:5. 43:2. 55:2,3. 56: 1,2. Luke 18:3—7.
m 40:9. Ps. 10:15.
n 36:13. 1 Chr. 10:13,14. 2 Chr. 28: 22,23. Is. 8:21.
o Ec. 12:1. Is. 51:13. 1 Pet. 4:19.
p 32:22. 36:3. Is. 54:5.
q Ps. 42:8. 77:6. 119:62. 149:5. Acts 16:25.
r 32:8. Gen. 1:26. 2:7. Ps. 94:12.
s Ps. 18:41. Prov. 1:28. John 9:31.
t Ps. 73:6—8. 123:3,4. Is. 14:14—17.
u 22:22—27. 27:8,9. Prov. 15:8,29. 28: 9. Ec. 5:1—3. Is. 1:15. Jer. 11:11. Hos. 7:14. 8:2,3. Matt. 6:7. 20:21, 22. Jam. 4:3.
x 30:20. Ps. 102:17. Am. 5:22.
y 9:11. 23:3,8—10.
z 9:19. 19:7. Ps. 97:2. Is. 30:18. 54: 17. Mic. 7:7—9.
a Ps. 27:12—14. 37:5,6. 62:5,8. Is. 50:10. Rom. 8:33,34.
b 9:14. 13:15. Num. 20:12. Luke 1: 20.
* That is, *God.*
c Ps. 89:32. Rev. 3:19.
† That is, *Job.*
d 4:5. 30:15,&c. Ps. 88:11—16. Heb. 12:11,12.

erred then in saying, *What profit is it that I am cleansed?* God was no gainer by his reformation; who then would gain, if he himself did not? We can demand nothing from God, nor have any reason to complain if we have not what we expect, but to be thankful that we have better than we deserve.

V. 9—13. Elihu here answers another word of Job, which, he thought, reflected much on God's justice and goodness, and therefore ought not to pass without a remark.

I. Job complained, that God did not regard the cries of the oppressed against their oppressors, *v.* 9. This seems to refer to those words of Job, (*ch.* 24: 12.) and is a thing Job knows not what to make of, nor how to reconcile to the justice of God and his government. *Is there a righteous God, and can it be, that He should so slowly hear, so slowly see?*

II. How Elihu solves the difficulty: If the cries of the oppressed be not heard, the fault is not in God, He is ready to hear and help them, but the fault is in themselves; they *ask and have not, because they ask amiss. They cry out, by reason of the arm of the mighty,* but it is a complaining cry, a wailing cry, not a penitent, praying cry, the cry of nature and passion, not of grace. See Hos. 11: 14. *They have not cried unto Me with their heart when they howled upon their beds.* How then can we expect they should be answered and relieved?

1. They do not inquire after God, nor seek to acquaint themselves with Him, under their affliction, *v.* 10. Afflictions are sent, to direct and quicken us to *inquire early after God,* Ps. 78: 34. But of the many that are afflicted and oppressed, how few get the good they might get by their affliction! It should drive them to God, [and obedience to all his laws,] but how seldom is this the case! It is lamentable to see so little religion among the poor and miserable part of mankind. Every one complains of his troubles; *but none saith, Where is God my Maker?* i. e. None [reform their disobedience, or] repent of their sins, none return to Him that smites them, none seek the face and favor of God, and that comfort in Him which would balance their outward afflictions. They are wholly taken up with the wretchedness of their condition, as if *that* would excuse them in living without God in the world, which should engage them to cleave the more closely to Him. All are asking, Where is mirth? Where is wealth? Where is a good bargain? But none ask, *Where is God my Maker?*

2. They do not notice their mercies in and under their afflictions, nor are thankful for them, therefore cannot expect God to deliver from them. (1.) He provides for our inward comfort and joy under outward troubles, and we ought to use that, and wait his time for their removal. He *gives songs in the night,* i. e. when our condition is ever so dark, sad, and melancholy, there is that in God, his providence and promise, sufficient, not only to support, but to fill with joy and consolation, and enable us, in every thing, to give thanks, and even to rejoice in tribulation. When we only pore on afflictions, and reject the consolations of God treasured up for us, it is just to reject our prayers. (2.) He preserves to us the use of reason and understanding, *v.* 11. *who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth,* i. e. who has endued us with more noble powers and faculties, [to know and practise his universal laws,] than they are endued with, and has made us capable of more excellent pleasures and employments here and for ever. Now this comes in here, [1.] As that which furnishes us with matter for thanksgiving, even under the heaviest burden of affliction; those that kill the body, cannot hurt our immortal souls; and if our affliction prevail not to disturb our reason, and the peace of our consciences, we may be thankful, how pressing soever our calamities otherwise are. [2.] As a reason why we should, under our afflictions, inquire after God our Maker, and seek unto Him. The greatest excellency of reason, is, that it makes us capable of religion, [of finding out and doing God's will.] And it is in that especially that we are *taught more than the beasts and the fowls.* They have wonderful instincts and sagacities in seeking out food, physic, shelter; but none are capable of inquiring, *Where is God my Maker?* Something like logic, and philosophy, and politics, has been observed among the brute-creatures, but never any thing of divinity or religion; these are peculiar to man. If, therefore, the oppressed only *cry by reason of the arm of the mighty,* and do not look up to God, they do no more than the brutes, (who complain when hurt,) and they forget that instruction and wisdom by which they are advanced so far above them. God relieves the brute-creatures, because they cry to Him according to the best of their capacity, Ps. 104: 21. *ch.* 38:41. But what reason have men to expect relief, who are capable of inquiring after God as their Maker, and yet cry to Him no otherwise than as brutes do?

3. They are proud and unhumbled under afflictions, sent to hide pride from them, *v.* 12. *There they cry,* exclaim against their oppressors, and complain to all about them, not sparing to reflect on God Himself and his providence; but none give answer. God does not work deliverance for them, and perhaps men do not much regard them; *because of the pride of evil men;* they are evil men; they *regard iniquity in their hearts,* therefore God will not hear their prayers, Ps. 66: 18. Is. 1: 15. God hears not such sinners. They have, it may be, brought themselves into trouble by their own wickedness, they are the devil's poor; and then who can pity them? Yet this is not all; they are proud still, *therefore* they do not seek unto God; (Ps. 10: 4.) or if they do cry unto Him, *therefore* He does not answer, for He hears only the *desire of the humble,* (Ps. 10: 17.) and delivers those by his providence, whom He has first, by his grace, prepared and made fit for deliverance; and that we are not, if, under humbling afflictions, our hearts remain unhumbled, and pride unmortified. The case is plain then, If we cry to God for the removal of the oppression and affliction we are under, and it is not removed, the reason is, not because the Lord's hand is shortened, or his ear heavy, but because the affliction has not done its work; we are not sufficiently humbled, and therefore must thank ourselves that it is continued.

4. They are not sincere and upright, and inward with God, in their supplications to Him, therefore He does not hear and answer them, *v.* 13. *God will not hear vanity,* i. e. the hypocritical prayer, which is a vain prayer, coming out of feigned lips.

V. 14—16. I. Here is another improper word, Elihu reproves, *v.* 14. *Thou sayest thou shalt not see Him;* i. e. 1. Complainest thou dost not understand the meaning of his severe dealings with thee, nor discern the drift and design of them,' *ch.* 23: 8, 9. And, 2. 'Thou despairest of seeing his gracious returns to thee, of seeing better days again, and art ready to give up all for gone;' as Hezekiah, Isa. 38: 11. *I shall not see the Lord.* As, in prosperity, we are ready to think our mountain will never be brought low; so, in adversity, we are ready to think our valley will never be filled, but, in both, to conclude that *to-morrow must*

Verses 9—13.

Job had stated, that the oppressed cry out, but are not delivered, and that the oppressors remain unpunished: (24:2—12.) and Elihu, in showing how the wickedness of some men made others to suffer, attempted to account for this. (*Ps.* 42:6—10. *Hab.* 3:17—19. *Acts* 16:25—28. *Rom.* 5:3—5.)—God would not regard the *vain* and rebellious complaints of ungodly men. (*Notes, Judg.* 10:13—16. 2 *Sam.* 22:37—42. *Prov.* 1:24—31. *Is.* 57:13. 58:2—12. 59:1—8. *John* 9:27—34.) And indeed Job's complaint, that the Lord would not hear his cry, (19:7.) as Elihu supposed, originated from a similar cause: for though he might not be an ungodly man, yet he had not duly humbled himself under his afflictions, and therefore he was disregarded. SCOTT.

Verse 14.

'*How much less* (sc. shalt thou be heard) *who sayest that thou dost not see Him:* referring to what Job said, 23:8. *Judgment is before him.*] I. e. There is no doubt but judgment and equity is with Him: so some.' *Rosenm.* 'However thou mayest say, "Thou dost not behold us!" Judgment is before Him, and thou shalt abide it.' *Good.* ED.

Verse 15.

He knoweth it not.] Many understand 'Job (*M.*) knoweth not, or doth not acknowledge, his sin; or knoweth not how he ought to act though exceedingly tried and afflicted.' SCOTT.

Rosenm. understands, '*And now because* his *anger* with which *He* has *visited* you is *nothing*, or but slight, compared with your sins, and

Job [e] open his mouth in vain; he multiplieth words without knowledge.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Elihu requires attention, while, with truth and knowledge, he shows the justice of God in all his judgments, the designs of his chastisements, and the profit of making a right use of them, 1—15. He reproves, warns, and counsels Job, 16—21. He reminds him that the power of God is uncontrollable; and that his works and dispensations should be magnified, but cannot be comprehended, 22—33.

ELIHU also proceeded, and said,

2 [a] Suffer me a little, and I will show thee that * *I have* yet to speak [b] on God's behalf.

3 I will [c] fetch my knowledge from afar, and will [d] ascribe righteousness to my Maker.

4 For truly [e] my words *shall* not *be* false: he that is [f] perfect [g] in knowledge *is* with thee.

5 Behold, God *is* mighty, and [h] despiseth not *any: he is* [i] mighty in strength *and* † wisdom.

6 He [k] preserveth not the life of the wicked;

e 3:1. 33:2,8—12. 34:35—37. 38:2. 42:3.
a 21:3. 33:31—33. Heb. 13:22.
* Heb. there are *yet words for God.*
b 13:7,8. 33:6. Ex. 4:16. Jer. 15:19. Ez. 2:7. 2 Cor. 5:20.
c 28:12,13,20—24. 32:8. Prov. 2:4,5. Matt. 2:1,2. 12:42. Acts 8:27,&c. Rom. 10:6—8. Jam. 1:5,17. 3:17.
d 32:2. 34:5,10—12. Deut. 32:4. Ps. 11:7. 145:17. Jer. 12:1. Dan. 9:7, 14. Rom. 3:25,26. 9:14. Rev. 15:3.
e 13:4,7. 21:27,34. 22:6,&c. Prov. 8: 7,8. 2 Cor. 2:17.
f 37:16. Luke 1:3. Acts 24:22. 1 Cor. 14:20. *Marg.* Col. 4:12. 2 Tim. 3:16,17.
g Ps. 49:3. Prov. 22:20,21.
h 10:3. 31:13. Ps. 22:24. 138:6.
i 9:4,19. 12:13—16. 26:12—14. 37:23. Ps. 99:4. 147:5. Jer. 10:12. 1 Cor. 1:24—28.
† Heb. *heart.*
k 21:7—9,30. Ps. 55:23. Jer. 12:1,2. 2 Pet. 2:9.

be as this day; which is as absurd, as to think that the weather, when it is either fair or foul, will be always so, that the flowing tide will always flow, or the ebbing tide will always ebb.

II. Elihu's answer to this despairing word.

1. When he looked up to God, he had no just reason to speak thus despairingly; 'There is a day of judgment, when all the seeming disorders of providence will be set to rights, and its dark chapters expounded.' When we consider that God is infinitely wise, and righteous, and faithful, and that He is a God of judgment, (Isa. 30: 18.) we shall see no reason to despair of relief from Him, but all reason to hope in Him, that it will come in due time, in the best time.

2. That, if he had not yet seen an end of his troubles, the reason was, Because he did not thus trust in God, and wait for Him, *v.* 15. 'The affliction which came at first from love, has now displeasure mixed with it.' If there be mixtures of divine wrath in our afflictions, it is because we do not behave aright under them; we quarrel with God, are fretful and impatient, and distrustful of the Divine Providence. This was Job's case; *The foolishness of man perverts his way, and* then *his heart frets against the Lord;* yet Elihu thinks Job, being in great extremity, did not know and consider that as he should, that it was his own fault that he was not yet delivered.

He concludes, therefore, that *Job opens his mouth in vain, v.* 16. It is in vain for us either to appeal to God, or to acquit ourselves, if we do not study to answer the end of affliction; and in vain to pray for relief, if we do not [do our best, and] trust in God: let not that man who distrusts God, *think that he shall receive any thing from Him.* Or this may refer to all that Job had said. Having showed the absurdity of some passages in his discourse, he concludes there were many others, in like manner, the fruits of his ignorance and mistake. He did not, as his other friends, condemn him for a hypocrite, but charges him only with Moses' sin, *speaking unadvisedly with his lips,* when his spirit was provoked. When at any time we do so, (and who is there that offends not in word?) it is a mercy to be told of it, and we must take it patiently and kindly, as Job did; not repeating, but recanting, what we have said amiss.

CHAP. XXXVI. Elihu, having largely reproved Job for some of his unadvised speeches, which Job had nothing to say in vindication of, here comes, more generally, to set him to rights in his notions of God's dealings with him. His other friends had stood to it, that, because he was a wicked man, therefore his afflictions were so great and so long. But Elihu only maintained, that the affliction was sent for his trial, and that, *therefore,* it was lengthened out, because Job was not, as yet, thoroughly humbled under it, nor had duly accommodated himself to it. He urges many reasons, taken from the wisdom and righteousness of God, his care of his people, and especially his greatness and almighty power, with which, in this and the following ch. he persuades him to submit to the hand of God.

V. 1—4. Once more Elihu begs the patience of the auditory, and Job's particularly, for, 1. He had a good cause, a noble and fruitful subject; *to speak on God's behalf.* Some, indeed, pretend to speak on God's behalf, who really speak for themselves; but those who sincerely appear in the cause of God, and speak in behalf of his honor, his truths, his ways, his people, shall be sure neither to want instructions, nor to lose their cause, or their fee: or to exhaust their subject. They that have spoken ever so much, may yet find more to be spoken on God's behalf.

2. He had something uncommon to offer, (*v.* 3.) i. e. 'We will have recourse to our first principles, and the highest notions we can make use of to serve any purpose.' It is worth while to go far, and seek earnestly for this knowledge of God, it will recompense our pains, and [cannot be bought too dear.]

3. His design was undeniably honest; to maintain and clear this truth, that God is righteous in all his ways. In speaking *of* God, and *for* Him, it is good to remember that He is our Maker; if He be our Maker, we have our all from Him, must use our all for Him, and be very zealous for his honor.

4. That his management should be very just and fair, *v.* 4. He will make use of plain, solid arguments, and not the subtleties and niceties of the schools. The perfection of our knowledge, in this world, is, to be honest and sincere in searching out truth, in applying it to ourselves, and in making use of what we know for the good of others.

V. 5—14. Elihu, being to speak on God's behalf, and particularly to ascribe righteousness to his Maker, here shows, that the disposals of Divine Providence are all, not only according to the eternal counsels of his will, but according to the eternal rules of equity. God acts as a righteous Governor. For,

1. He does not think it below Him to notice the meanest of his subjects. Mighty men are apt to look with a haughty disdain on those that are not of distinction, and make no figure; but God, though infinitely mighty, despises not any, *v.* 5. He takes cognizance of the affairs of the meanest, to do them justice, and to show them kindness. Job thought himself and his cause slighted, because God did not immediately appear for him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is very useful to appeal to men's reason and conscience, concerning their conduct in those things, which have been evidently faulty.—The immensity of the works of God may lead us to some feeble apprehensions of his infinite Majesty; and the consideration of his underived and unchangeable glory and felicity should convince us, that all his commandments, laws, judgments, and dispensations result from his unchangeable perfections. He forbids [by all his laws natural or moral] and punishes that which is evil in itself, and tends to misery: He commands and delights in what is good and tends to felicity, without any possible accession to his own infinite blessedness. This is the proper display of his own glory, and demands the tribute of our adoring praise. The Judge of all the earth cannot but do right, and as He cannot receive any thing from us, which He has not first given unto us, we can have no cause to complain of hard measure when afflicted: and as our Judge is now, as a Savior, on a mercy-seat, we can have no reason to conclude, that it would be in vain for us to repent, to seek forgiveness, and to cleanse ourselves from our iniquities: and when impatience, pride, and unbelief suggest such conclusions, we associate ourselves for the time with the workers of iniquity, and expose ourselves to just reproofs. When God's corrections excite obstinacy, impatience, and unbelief, He will infuse more anger into the bitter cup; will withhold comfort, and appear to disregard the extremities, to which even his people are reduced. Then their rebellious murmurs only add to their guilt and vexation, and they multiply words without knowledge, in attempting to excuse themselves. Let us not then, under affliction, prolong our own misery, by keeping at a distance from the throne of grace, standing in our own vindication, expecting help from other quarters, or despairing of help from God. SCOTT.

God has acted towards you, as if your sins were, as it were, *yet unknown* to Him in their entire *multitude;* (16) Therefore doth Job, &c.' *Good* is, as often, very different from other interpreters; 'But at present, because He hath not mustered up his wrath, nor manifested *his* fury in excess, Therefore,' &c. ED.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXVI. V. 3. To 'fetch knowledge from afar,' still in India expresses a careful argument, of great value. See *Roberts.* ID.

Verse 4.

He that is, &c.] Elihu alludes to himself, and uses the 3d, for the 1st person, through modesty or politeness. ID.

Verses 5—15.

In this passage, Elihu laid down his system of divine providence; in which he spake more accurately than the other disputants had done, without attempting to decide on Job's character. Yet he seems to have leaned to the sentiments of Job's friends, that, in some way or other, *temporal* deliverance and prosperity, or the contrary, generally distinguished between the righteous and the wicked.—Elihu further stated, that wicked men were not under that *peculiar protection,* which secured the righteous; and therefore their lives were more exposed, and generally terminated prematurely; and this indeed might often take place by the judgment of God, in doing right to the poor

but [l] giveth right to the * poor.

7 He [m] withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but [n] with kings *are they* on the throne; yea, [o] he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.

8 And [p] if *they be* bound in fetters, *and* be holden in [q] cords of affliction;

9 Then [r] he showeth them their work and [s] their transgressions, that they have exceeded.

10 He [t] openeth also their ear to discipline, and [u] commandeth that they return from iniquity.

11 [x] If they obey and serve *him*, they shall [y] spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.

12 But [z] if they obey not, they shall † perish by the sword, and they shall [a] die without knowledge.

13 But the hypocrites in heart [b] heap up wrath: [c] they cry not when he [d] bindeth them.

14 ‡ They [e] die in youth, and their life *is* among the § unclean.

15 He [f] delivereth the ‖ poor in his affliction,

'No,' says Elihu, '*God despises not any;*' which is a good reason why we should honor all men. *Therefore* God despises not any, because his wisdom and strength are incontestably infinite, and the condescensions of his grace can be no diminution to Him. They that are wise and good, will not look on any with scorn and disdain.

2. He gives no countenance to the greatest, if they be bad, *v.* 6. Their life may be prolonged, yet not under any special care of the Divine Providence, but only its common protection. Job had said, *the wicked live, become old, and are mighty in power, ch.* 21: 7. 'No,' says Elihu, 'He seldom suffers wicked men to become old. He preserves not their life so long as they expected, nor with that comfort and satisfaction which are indeed our life; and their preservation is but a reservation for the day of wrath,' Rom. 2: 5. [2 Pet. 2: 9.]

3. He is always ready to right those that are any way injured, and to plead their causes, *v.* 6. He *gives right to the poor*, avenges their quarrel on their persecutors, and forces them to restore what they have robbed them of. If men will not right the injured poor, God will.

4. He takes a particular care for the protection of his good subjects, *v.* 7. He withdraws not his eyes from the righteous. Though they seem sometimes neglected and forgotten, and that befalls them which looks like an oversight of Providence, yet the tender, careful eye of their Heavenly Father never withdraws from them. If our eye be ever toward God in duty, his eye will be ever on us in mercy, even when we are at the lowest.

(1.) Sometimes He prefers good people to places of trust and honor, *v.* 7. When advanced to places of honor and power, it is in mercy to them; for God's grace in them will both arm against the temptations that attend preferment, and enable them to improve opportunities of doing good. It is also in mercy to others; *When the righteous bear rule, the city rejoices.* But, because it is not often we see good men made great men in this world, this may be supposed to refer to the honor to which the righteous shall rise when their Redeemer shall *stand at the latter day on the earth.*

(2.) If, at any time, also, He bring them into affliction, it is for the good of their souls, *v.* 8—10. The distress supposed, *v.* 8. is imprisonment, as in Joseph's case, or pain, sickness, and poverty, as in Job's; he was caught, and kept fast, in the cords of *anguish*, so some read. God's design in bringing his people into such distresses is, the benefit of their souls; which consideration should reconcile us to affliction, and make us think well of it. Three things God intends, when He afflicts, [1.] To discover past sins, and bring them to our remembrance, *v.* 9. *shows them* that amiss in them, which, before, they did not see; [2.] To dispose our hearts to receive present instructions; then *He opens their ear to discipline, v.* 10. Whom God *chastens, He teaches;* (Ps. 94: 12.) and the affliction makes people willing to learn, softens the wax, that it may receive the impression of the seal; yet it does not do it of itself, but the grace of God, working with and by it: He opens the ear that opens the heart, who has the key of David. [3.] To deter and draw us off from iniquity for the future. The affliction is a command to return from iniquity, to have no more to do with sin, to turn from it with an aversion to it, and a resolution never to return to it any more, Hos. 14: 8.

(3.) If the affliction do its work, and accomplish that for which it is sent, He will comfort them again, according to the time He has afflicted them, *v.* 11. Piety is the only sure way to prosperity and pleasure; this is a certain truth, and yet few will believe it. If we faithfully serve God, we have the promise of outward prosperity, as far as is for God's glory and our good; and who would desire them any further? We have the possession of inward pleasures, the comfort of communion with God, and a good conscience, and that great peace which they have that love God's law. If we rejoice not in the Lord always, and in hope of eternal life, it is our own fault; and what better pleasures can we spend our years in?

(4.) If the affliction do not its work, if his rod do not cure, his sword will kill, *v.* 12. and the consuming fire will prevail, if the refining fire do not. If *Ahaz, in his distress, trespass yet more against the Lord, this is that king Ahaz* that is marked for ruin, 2 Chr. 28: 22. Jer. 6: 29, 30. God would have instructed them by afflictions, but they received not instruction, would not take the hints given them; therefore *they shall die without knowledge*, ere they are aware, without any further previous notices; or, *because without knowledge*, notwithstanding the means of knowledge they were blessed with. They that *die without knowledge*, die without grace, and are undone for ever.

Lastly, He brings ruin on hypocrites, the secret enemies of his kingdom, such as he described, *v.* 12. who, though numbered among the righteous whom he had spoken of before, yet did not obey Him, but, being children of disobedience and darkness, become children of wrath and perdition; these are the *hypocrites in heart, who heap up wrath, v.* 13. See the nature of hypocrisy; it lies in the heart, which is for the world and the flesh, when the outside seems to be for God and religion. See the mischievousness of it; hypocrites heap up wrath. They are doing that every day which is provoking to God, and will be reckoned with for it altogether in the great day. Rom. 2: 5. Their sins are *laid up in store with God among his treasures*, Deut. 32: 34. Comp. Jam. 5: 3. They think they are heaping up wealth, heaping up merits, but, when the treasures are opened, it will prove they were heaping up wrath.

Observe, what they do to heap up wrath: *They cry not when He binds them;* i. e. When in affliction, bound with the cords of trouble, their hearts are hardened, they are stubborn and unhumbled, and will not cry to God, nor apply to Him. Christ denounced many woes against such hypocrites, if they continue impenitent, (*v.* 14.) 1. They shall die a sudden death, *die in youth*, when death is most a surprise; and death (i. e. the consequences of it) is always so to hypocrites; as they that die in youth die when they hoped to live, so hypocrites, at death, go to hell, when they hoped to go to heaven. 2. They shall die the second death; *their life*, after death, (for so it comes in here,) *is among the unclean;* the *fornicators*, so

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l 29:12—17. Ps 9:12. 10:14,15. 72: 4,12—14. 82:1—4. Prov. 22:22,23. Is. 11:4.

* Or, *afflicted.* Ex. 22:22—24. Ps. 140:12.

m 2 Chr. 16:9. Ps. 33:18. 34:15. Zeph. 3:17. 1 Pet. 3:12.

n 1:3. 42:12. Gen. 23:6. 41:40. 1 Sam. 2:8. Esth. 10:3. Ps. 78:70—72. 113:7,8.

o 2 Sam. 7:13—16. Ps. 112:7—10. 2 Thes. 3:3.

p 13:27. 19:6. 33:18,19. Ps. 18:5. 107:10. 116:3. Lam. 3:9.

q Prov. 5:22.

r 10:2. Deut. 4:21,22. 2 Chr. 33:11—13. Ps. 94:12. 119:67,71. Lam. 3: 39,40. Luke 15:17—19. 1 Cor. 11:32.

s Ps. 5:10. Is. 59:12. Ez. 18:28—31. Rom. 5:20. 1 Tim. 1:15.

t 15. 33:16—23. Ps. 40:6. Is. 48:8, 17. 50:5. Acts 16:14.

u Prov. 1:22,23. 8:4,5. 9:4—6. Is. 1: 16—20. 55:6,7. Jer. 4:3,4. 7:3—7. Ez. 18:30,31. Hos. 14:1. Matt. 3:8. Acts 3:19. 17:30. Jam. 4:8.

x 2:21,&c. Deut. 4:30,31. Is. 1:19. Jer. 7:23. 26:13. Rom. 6:17. Heb. 11:8.

y 11:13—19. 21:11—13. 22:23—25. 42: 12. Ec. 9:2,3. Jam. 5:5. Rev. 18:7.

z Deut. 18:15,&c. 29:15—20. Is. 1:20. 3:11. Rom. 2:8,9.

† Heb. *pass away.*

a 4:21. John 8:21—24.

b Num. 32:14. 2 Chr. 28:13,22. Rom. 2:5.

c 15:4. 27:8—10. 35:9,10. Matt. 22: 12,13.

d 8. Ps. 107:10.

‡ Heb. *Their soul dieth.*

e 15:32. 21:23—25. Gen. 38:7—10. Lev. 10:1,2. Ps. 55:23.

§ Or, *sodomites.* Gen. 19:5,24,25. Deut. 23:17.

f 6.

‖ Or, *afflicted.*

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whom they had injured.—*Exceeded.* (9) Or, *strengthened themselves.* SCOTT.

(8—14), &c. . . . 'We have obtained glimpses of some of the *sanctions* of the moral law, which may be briefly recapitulated. If we obey it, we enjoy, 1. The highest gratifications of which our nature is susceptible, in habitual and sustained activity of our noblest faculties. 2. We become objects of esteem and affection to our fellow men, and enjoy exalted social pleasure. 3. Whatever we undertake, being projected in harmony with the course of nature, will prosper. 4. By observing the moral law, we shall place ourselves in the most favorable condition for obeying the organic law, and then enjoy health of body and buoyancy of mind. 5. By obeying the moral, intellectual and organic laws, we shall place ourselves in the best condition for observing the physical laws, and thereby reap countless benefits conferred by them.

'We need just to reverse the picture, to perceive, on the other hand, the penalties by which the Creator punishes infringements of the moral law. There is denial of that elevated, refined, and steady enjoyment which springs from the supreme activity of the moral sentiments and intellect, and from the perception of the harmony between them and the institutions of creation. By infringing the moral law, we become objects of dislike and aversion to our fellow men; and this carries denial of gratification to our social faculties. Whatever we undertake in opposition to the moral law, being an enterprise against the course of nature, cannot succeed; and its fruits must therefore be disappointment and vexation. Inattention to the moral and intellectual law incapacitates us for obedience to the organic and physical laws; and sickness, pain and poverty overtake us. The whole scheme of creation, then, appears constituted for the purpose of enforcing obedience to the moral law;—virtue, religion and happiness, seem to be founded in the inherent constitution of the human faculties, and in the adaptation of the world to them; and not to depend on the fancies, the desires, or the mere will of man.' *Combe.* Constit. of Man. See further on ch. 34. ED.

and [g] openeth their ears in oppression.

[*Practical Observations.*]

16 Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait *into* [h] a broad place, where *there is* no straitness: and * that which should be set on thy table *should be* [i] full of fatness.

17 But thou hast [k] fulfilled the judgment of the wicked: judgment and justice † take hold *on thee.*

18 [l] Because *there is* wrath, *beware* lest he take thee away with [m] *his* stroke, [n] then a great ransom cannot ‡ deliver thee.

19 [o] Will he esteem thy riches? *no,* not gold, [p] nor all the forces of strength.

20 [q] Desire not the night, when people are [r] cut off in their place.

21 Take heed, [s] regard not iniquity: for [t] this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.

22 Behold, [u] God exalteth by his power; [x] who teacheth like him?

23 [y] Who hath enjoined him his way? or who can say, [z] Thou hast wrought iniquity?

24 Remember that thou [a] magnify his work, [b] which men behold.

25 Every man may see it; man may behold *it* afar off.

g 10. 2 Chr. 12:8.
h 19:8. 42:10—17. Ps. 18:19. 31:8. 40:1—3. 118:5.
* Heb. *the rest of thy table.*
i Ps. 23:5. 36:8. 63:5. Is. 25:6. 55:2.
k 15:5. 34:8,36. Rom. 1:32. Rev. 18:4.
† Or, *should uphold* thee.
l Ps. 2:5,12. 110:5. Matt. 3:7. Rom 1:18. 2:5. Eph. 5:6.
m Ps. 39:10. Is. 14:6. Ez. 24:16.
n 33:24. Ps. 49:7,8. 1 Tim. 2:6. Heb. 2:3. 10:26.
‡ Heb. *turn thee aside.*
o Prov. 10:2. 11:4. Is. 2:20. Zeph. 1:18 Jam. 5:3.

some; among the worst and vilest of sinners, the *sodomites,* so the marg.; who *are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire,* Jude 7. The souls of the wicked live after death, but among the unclean, the unclean spirits, the devil and his angels, for ever separated from the New Jerusalem, which *no unclean thing shall enter.*

V. 15—23. Elihu here comes more closely to Job; and,

I. He tells him what God would have done for him, before this, if he had been duly humbled under his affliction, *v.* 15. 'We all know how ready God is to *deliver the poor in his affliction;* He always was so; the poor in spirit, those that are of a broken and contrite heart, He looks upon with tenderness, and is ready to help them in affliction. Even so would He have done to thee, if thou hadst submitted to his providence, and conducted thyself well. If thou hadst accommodated thyself to the will of God, thy liberty and plenty would have been restored to thee with advantage,' *v.* 16. See Deut. 32: 14. Note, It ought to silence us under our afflictions, to consider that, if we were better, it would be every way better with us: if we had answered the ends of an affliction, the affliction would be removed; and deliverance would come, if we were ready for it. God would have done well for us, if we had conducted ourselves well, Ps. 81: 13, 14. Is. 48: 18.

II. He charges him with standing in his own light, and makes him the cause of the continuance of his own trouble, *v.* 17. 'Whatever thou art really, in this thou hast conducted thyself like a wicked man, hast spoken and done like such; *therefore* judgment and justice take hold on thee as a wicked man; such as a man's cause is, such will the judgment of God be upon him.' So Patrick.

III. He cautions him not to persist in his frowardness.

1. Let him not make light of divine vengeance, nor feel secure, as if in no danger of it, *v.* 18. 'Because God is a righteous Governor, who resents all affronts to his government, therefore beware lest He take thee away suddenly with his stroke; and be so wise as to make thy peace with Him quickly, and get his anger turned away from thee.' A warning to this purport Job had given his friends, *ch* 19: 29. Thus contenders are apt, with too much boldness, to bind one another over to the judgment of God, and threaten one another with his wrath: but he that keeps a good conscience, needs not fear the impotent menaces of proud men. This was a friendly caution to Job, and necessary. Even good men have need to be kept to their duty by the fear of God's wrath. 'Thou art a wise and good man, but beware lest He take thee away, for the wisest and best have enough in them to deserve his stroke.'

2. Let him not promise himself escape, (*v.* 19, 20.) from God's wrath, through wealth, numbers, or obscurity; or imagine that God retires, as people to their beds. Some understand it of the night of death; that night cuts off men from their place, and Job had earnestly breathed for it, as the hireling desires the evening, *ch.* 7: 2. Those that passionately wish for death, as a shelter from God's wrath, may perhaps be mistaken. There are those whom wrath pursues into that night.

3. Let him not continue his unjust quarrel with God and his providence, which hitherto he had persisted in, when he should have submitted to the affliction, *v.* 21. Let us never dare think a favorable thought of sin, nor allow ourselves in it. Elihu thinks Job had need of this caution, he having chosen iniquity rather than affliction, i. e. rather to gratify his own pride and humor in contending with God, than to mortify it by a submission to Him, and accepting the punishment. We may take it more generally, and observe, that they who choose iniquity rather than affliction, make a very foolish choice; they that ease their cares by sinful pleasures, increase their wealth by sinful pursuits, escape their troubles by sinful projects, and evade sufferings for righteousness' sake by sinful compliances against their consciences, these make a choice they will repent of, for there is more evil in the least sin than in the greatest affliction. It is an evil, it is only evil.

4. Let him not dare prescribe to the Almighty, nor give Him his measures, *v.* 22, 23. (1.) Who *puts Him in mind of his way?* (so some, *v.* 23.) Does the Eternal Mind need a remembrancer? No, his own way, as well as ours, is ever before Him, Isa. 40: 13, 14. let us then leave it to Him to govern the world, who is fit to do it. (2.) He is an incomparable Teacher; *Who teaches like Him?* See Ps. 94: 9, 10. Observe, when Elihu would give glory to God as a Ruler, he praises Him as a Teacher, for rulers must teach; God does so, He binds with the cords of a man. In this, as in all, He is unequalled. None so fit to direct his own and our actions as He: none teaches with such authority and convincing evidence, such condescension and compassion, such power and efficacy, as God. He teaches by the Bible, and that is the best book, by his Son, and He is the best Master. (3.) He is unexceptionably just in all his proceedings; *Who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity?* Not, Who *dares* say it? (many do iniquity, and persons tell them of it, at their peril;) but, Who *can* say it? Say it with cause, and prove it? It is a maxim without limitation, that *the King of kings can do no wrong.*

V. 24—33. Elihu is here endeavoring to possess Job with great and high thoughts of God, and so to persuade him into a cheerful submission to his providence.

I. He represents the work of God, in general, as illustrious and conspicuous, *v.* 24. We are

p 9:13. 34:20. Ps. 33:16,17. Prov. 11:21. Is. 37:36.
q 3:20,21. 6:9. 7:15. 14:13. 17:13,14. John 9:4.
r Ez. 12:29. 2 K. 19:35. Prov. 14:32. Ec. 11:3. Dan. 5:30. Luke 12:20. Acts 1:25. 1 Thes. 5:2,3.
s Ps. 66:18. Ez. 14:4. Matt. 5:29,30.
t 34:7—9. 35:3. Dan. 3:16—18. 6:10. Matt. 13:21. 16:24. Acts 5:40,41. Heb. 11:25. 1 Pet. 3:17. 4:15,16.
u 1 Sam. 2:7,8. Ps. 75:7. Is. 14:5. Jer. 27:5—8. Dan. 4:25,32. 5:18. Luke 1:52. Rom. 13:1.
x Ps. 94:10. Is. 48:17. 54:13. Jer. 31: 33. John 6:45.
y 34:13—33. Is. 40:13,14. Rom. 11:34. 1 Cor. 2:16. Eph. 1:11.
z 8:3. 34:10. 40:8. Rom. 2:5. 3:5. 9:14.
a 12:13,&c. 26:5—14. Ps. 28:5. 34:3. 72:18. 86:8—10. 92:4,5. 104:24. 17: 8,15. 111:2—4. 139:5,6,14. 145:10—12. Jer. 10:12,13. Dan. 4:3,37. Luke 1:46—55. Rev. 15:3—5.
b Deut. 4:19. Ps. 19:1—4. Acts 14:17. Rom. 1:19—21.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—15. When wise and pious men speak in the behalf of God, they are entitled to our strictest and most patient attention. But those who attempt this service, should beware of insincerity and corrupt motives: for many professed teachers of divine truth are evidently consulting their own interest and reputation, and not seeking to glorify God and edify their brethren.—In the glorious character of our God, almighty power, infinite wisdom, and omniscience, harmonize with the most perfect justice, and the most condescending goodness and mercy: and, while his providential kindness reaches to the most rebellious of his enemies on earth; He receives to his special favor the meanest and most guilty, who trust in his mercy, and seek to return to Him and his service. May we enjoy his love, and copy his example; and not despise the poor and weak, or treat with undue severity, or disdain, the most atrocious criminals.—The wicked, however, have no security for the preservation of their lives and comforts: they are interested in no promises, but lie under dreadful threatenings, and are liable every moment to be cut off in their sins; though they be spared from day to day, that they may have space for repentance; or if they neglect it, to fill up the measure of their iniquities. SCOTT.

Verses 16—21.

No doubt Elihu, in this conclusion, was far too severe on Job; for, though he had impatiently and rashly wished for death, he had never at all insinuated that he preferred sin to suffering. SCOTT.

(20.) 'Lit. "Do not pant after the night, when depart (perish) people, under themselves;" i. e. sink down to the regions beneath, the lower regions, as if absorbed into the bosom of the earth, as 40:12. Or, *from their place* being understood, it means, suddenly, so that no trace is left.' ROSENM.

Verses 22—33.

By dreadful thunder-storms, inundations, or deluges, the Lord sometimes executed his judgments upon sinners; and at others He made the earth yield in abundance food for man and beast. The same clouds, which just before were a blaze of light, immediately after obscured

26 Behold, [c] God *is* great, and [d] we know *him* not; [e] neither can the number of his years be searched out.

27 For [f] he maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to [g] the vapor thereof;

28 Which [h] the clouds do drop *and* distil upon man abundantly.

29 Also can *any* understand [i] the spreadings of the clouds, *or* [k] the noise of his tabernacle?

30 Behold, [l] he spreadeth his light upon it, [m] and covereth the [*] bottom of the sea.

31 For [n] by them judgeth he the people; [o] he giveth meat in abundance.

32 [p] With clouds he covereth the light; and commandeth it *not to shine* by *the cloud* that cometh betwixt.

33 The [q] noise thereof sheweth concerning it, [r] the cattle also concerning [†] the vapor.

c 37:5. Ps. 145:3. 147:5.
d 11:7—9. 26:14. 37:23. 1 K. 8:27. Matt. 11:27. John 17:25,26. 1 Cor. 13:12.
e Ps. 90:2. 102:24—27. Heb. 1:12. 2 Pet. 3:8.
f 5:9,10. 38:25—28,34. Gen. 2:5,6. Ps. 65:9—13. 147:8. Is. 5:6. Jer. 14:22.
g 83. Ps. 148:8.
h 37:11—13. Gen. 7:11,12. Prov. 3:20.
i 37:16. 38:9,37. 1 K. 18:44,45. Ps. 104:3.
k 37:2—5. Ps. 18:13. 29:3—10. 77:16—19. 104:7. Nah. 1:3. Hab. 3:10.
l 38:25,34,35.
m 38:8—11. Gen. 1:9. Ex. 14:22,28. 15:4,5. Ps. 18:11—16. 104:5—9.
* Heb. *roots.*
n 37:13. 38:22,23. Gen. 6:17. 7:17—24. 19:24. Ex. 9:23—25. Josh. 10:11. 1 Sam. 2:10. 7:10. 12:18.
o 38:26,27. Ps. 65:9—13. 104:13—15, 27,28. 136:25. Acts 14:17.
p 26:9. Ex. 10:21—23. Ps. 18:11. 135:7. 147:8,9. 148:8. Acts 27:20.
q 29. 37:2. 2 Sam 22:14. 1 K. 18:41—45.
r Jer. 14:4—6. Joel 1:18. 2:22.
† Heb. *that which goeth up.* 27.

here called to *consider the work of God*, Eccl. 7:13. 1. It is *what men behold*, plain before our eyes, nothing more obvious. Look which way we will, we see the productions of God's wisdom and power. Every man may see, afar off, the heaven and all its lights, the earth and all its fruits, to be the work of Omnipotence: much more when we behold them nigh at hand. Look at the minutest works of nature through a microscope! The eternal power and godhead of the Creator are *clearly seen and understood*, by the *things that are made*. Every man, even those that have not the benefit of divine revelation, may see this, for *there is no speech or language where the voice* of these natural, constant preachers *is not heard*. 2. It ought to be marvellous in our eyes. Man may see his works, and is capable of discerning his hand in them, (which the beasts are not,) therefore man ought to praise them, and give Him the glory of them.

II. He represents God, their Author, as infinite and unsearchable, *v.* 26. The streams of being, power, and perfection, should lead us to the Fountain. *God is great*, infinitely so: great, and therefore we know Him not; we know *that* He is, but not *what* He is; we know what He is not, but not what He is. We know in part, but not in perfection. This comes in here, as a reason why we must not arraign his proceedings, nor find fault with what He does, because it is speaking evil of the things we understand not, and answering a matter before we hear it. We know not the duration of his existence, for He is eternal: He is a being without beginning, succession, or period, who ever was, and ever will be, and ever the same, the great *I AM*. This is a good reason why we should not prescribe to Him, or quarrel with Him, because, as He is, such are his operations, quite out of our reach. Thus shall we avoid this [insufferable] presumption, and be filled with proper humility, reverence and adoration.

III. He gives some instances of God's wisdom, power, and sovereign dominion, in the works of nature, and the dispensations of common providence; beginning, in this ch. with the clouds, and rain. We need not be critical in examining either the phrase, or the philosophy, of this noble discourse. Consider the clouds,

1. As springs to this lower world; the source and treasure of its moisture, and a necessary provision, the stagnation of which would be as hurtful to this lower world, as of the blood to the body of man. It is worth while to observe, in this common occurrence, (1.) That the clouds above distil on the earth below: therefore thus the promise of plenty runs, *I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth*. This intimates that every good gift is from above, and it instructs us to direct our prayers to God, and to look up. (2.) That they are here said to *distil upon man*, *v.* 28. for tho' it *rain in the wilderness, where no man is, ch.* 34: 26. Ps. 104: 11. special respect is had to man herein; among men, He *causes his rain to fall upon the just, and upon the unjust*. (3.) They are said to distil the water in *small drops;* not in spouts, as when the *windows of heaven were opened*. God waters the earth with what He once drowned it with, to let us know how much we lie at his mercy, and how kind He is, in giving rain by drops. (4.) Sometimes the rain pours down in great rain, and this difference between one shower and another must be resolved into the Divine Providence which orders it so. (5.) Though it comes down in drops, yet it distils upon man *abundantly*, (*v.* 28.) and therefore is called *the river of God which is full of water*. (6.) The clouds pour down according to the vapor they draw up, *v.* 27. So just the heavens are to the earth, but the earth is not so in return. (7.) The produce of the clouds is, sometimes, a great terror, at others, a great favor, *v.* 31. When He pleases, *by them He judges the people* He is angry with. [Note, 28: 4.] Storms, and tempests, and excessive rains, de-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 16—33. It is lamentable, that men professing godliness should ever so yield to murmurs and despondency, as to seem to favor the cause, and justify the objections, of the wicked. Surely they ought to be plainly rebuked; and even warned not to deceive themselves, but to fear lest that wrath come on them, which awaits 'the workers of iniquity:' for how can it be determined that *they* are the servants of God, who are imitating the conduct of his enemies?—All should remember, that men at death are cut off *in their place*, and their condition becomes eternally irreversible. (*Ec.* 11:3—6.) Instead therefore of shrinking from adversity, we should seek deliverance from the love and power of sin; and prefer the greatest suffering to the least iniquity. Yet alas! most men 'choose iniquity rather than affliction.' But this is a miserable choice, of which they will at length bitterly repent; for the favor of God alone can exalt or make us happy.—Every appearance in nature at once *displays*, and *conceals*, his infinite glories: much remains incomprehensible; but enough is seen to call forth our gratitude, animate our praises, or excite our consternation. The clouds and rain, with the thunders and lightnings, declare his goodness, and proclaim 'the power of his wrath.' Each object bears a double aspect; and while the worker of iniquity ought to tremble, the true believer should rejoice. (*Ps.* 97: 1. 99: 1—3.) 'It is the glorious God that maketh the thunder,' as well as that fertilizes the earth; and the children should hear with pleasure their Father's voice, even when nature seems convulsed, and He speaks in terror to his enemies. (*Ps.* 29:3—11. *P. O.*)

SCOTT.

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the light of the sun and darkened the air.—It seems evident, that a terrible storm, actually approaching, suggested these thoughts to Elihu. SCOTT.

(27, 28.) 'Elihu adverts to the *formation of clouds*, and *rain*, which, notwithstanding the extent of modern discoveries, still (1824) remain, in a great measure, unknown. That exhalation is one cause, is generally admitted, and that heat produces this is ascertained; but by what laws the heat is regulated, so as at one time to hold the particles of water in a buoyant form, and at another, to cause them to fall in gentle or impetuous rain, who can tell? That rain may be formed of different gases, [oxygen and hydrogen,] and that the great agent is heat, has been discovered; but what are the causes of the heat being collected in one part of the atmosphere, or of its [or the gases] being evolved, who can inform us? It is above our comprehension.' BOOTHR.

Hutton's theory of *rain*, (1787,) is this; 'Air, in cooling, has the property of depositing the moisture it contains. But how is it cooled in the free atmosphere, unless by the contact or commixture of a colder portion? Now the portion of air which is chilled must, in an equal degree, warm the other. If, in consequence, the former be disposed to resign its moisture, the latter is more inclined to retain it; and so, if such opposite effects were balanced, there could on the whole be no *precipitation* of moisture. The separation of moisture, on the mixing of two masses of damp air at different temperatures, would therefore prove, that the dissolving power of air suffers more diminution from losing part of the combined heat, than it acquires augmentation from gaining an equal measure of it; and consequently, this power must, under equal accessions of heat, increase more slowly at first, than afterwards, thus advancing always with accumulated celerity. The quantity of moisture which air can hold, thus increases in a much faster ratio than its temperature. . . . Showers are most copious during hot weather, and in tropical climates. Rain is most abundant at the equator, and diminishes as we approach the pole. The quantity of rain precipitated from the atmosphere, thus depends on a variety of circumstances,—on the previous dampness of the commixed portions of the fluid,—their difference of heat,—the elevation of their mean temperature,—and the extent of the combination which takes place. When the deposition is slow, the very *minute aqueous globules* remain suspended and form *clouds;* but if it be rapid and copious, those particles conglomerate, and produce, according to the temperature of the medium through which they descend, rain, mist, snow, or hail. [Electricity also is supposed to assist or determine these phenomena.] The foregoing theory tallies precisely with our experience in the connection of rain with the variableness of the winds. Steady, dry weather is always accompanied by a steady direction of the winds; whereas in rainy weather the winds are unsteady and variable. The heavy rains of India always fall during the shifting of the monsoons; and while they last, the winds are always veering.' 1831. ENC. AM.

(29.) *Noise.*] 'The thunder of Arabia is tremendous.' HEWLETT Thunder is known to be the noise of the swift passage through air, of electricity, from a cloud which has more of it, to a cloud or the ground which has less. This but describes the mystery in more words. ED.

(30.) *Upon it.*] 'About Him.' *Rosenm.* '"His lightning around Himself;" or "it," meaning his tabernacle or pavilion.' BOOTHR *Covereth.*] 'Concealeth.' HEWLETT.

(29, 30.) *He spreadeth*, &c.] 'He throweth forth from it his flash *Good.* 'These two vs. may both have an allusion to the sudden rare

CHAP. XXXVII.

Elihu extols the power of God, shown in thunder and lightning, snow, rain, whirlwinds, and frost, 1—13. His works in these things are inexplicable, 14—22. His perfections should impress men with lowly fear, 23, 24.

AT this also [a] my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place.

2 * Hear attentively [b] the noise of his voice, and the sound *that* goeth out of his mouth.

3 [c] He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his † lightning unto the ‡ ends of the earth.

4 After it [d] a voice roareth: he thundereth with [e] the voice of his excellency; and [f] he will not stay them when his voice is heard.

5 God [g] thundereth marvellously with his voice; [h] great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.

6 For [i] he saith to the snow, Be thou *on* the earth; § likewise to the small rain, and to the [k] great rain of his strength.

7 [l] He sealeth up the hand of every man; [m] that all men may know his work.

8 Then [n] the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places.

9 Out of the ‖ south cometh [o] the whirlwind,

a 4:14. 21:6. 38:1. Ex. 19:16. Ps. 89:7. 119:120. Jer. 5:22. Dan. 10: 7,8. Hab. 3:16.
* Heb. *Hear in hearing.*
b 5. 36:29,33. 38:1. Ex. 19:16—19. Ps. 104:7.
c Ps. 77:13. 97:4. Matt. 24:27. Rev. 11:19.
† Heb. *light.*
‡ Heb. *wings.* 38:13. Is. 11:12. *Marg.*
d Ps. 29:3—9. 68:33.
e Ex. 15:7,8. Deut. 33:26.
f 36:27—33.
g 2 Sam. 22:14,15.
h 5:9. 9:10. 11:7. 26:14. 36:26. Is. 40:28,22,28. Rev. 15:3.
i 38:22. Ps. 147:16—18. 148:8.
§ Heb. *and to the shower of rain, and to the showers of rain of his strength.* 36:27.
k Gen. 7:10—12. Ezra 10:9,13. Prov. 28:3 Ez. 13:11,13. Am. 9:6. Matt. 7:25 -27.
l 5:12. 9:7.
m 36:24. Ps. 46:8. 64:9. 92:4. 109: 27. 111:2. Ec 8:17. Is. 5:12. 26:11.
n Ps. 104:22.
‖ Heb. *chamber.* 9:9. Ps. 104:3.
o 37:1. Is. 21:1. Zech. 9:14.

stroying the fruits of the earth, and causing inundations, come from the clouds; but, on the other hand, from them, usually, He gives meat in abundance; they drop fatness upon the pastures that are clothed with flocks, and the valleys that are *covered with corn*, Ps. 65: 11—13. *Lastly*, Notice is sometimes given of the approach of rain, *v.* 33. We read of its noise, [note, 1 K. 18: 41.] As the noise, so the face of the sky, shows concerning it, Luke 12: 46. The cattle also, by a strange instinct, are apprehensive of a change in the weather nigh at hand, and seek for shelter, shaming man, who will not foresee the evil, and hide himself.

2. As shadows to the upper world, *v.* 29. They are spread over the earth as a curtain or canopy; how we cannot understand. Shall we then pretend to understand the reasons and methods of God's judicial proceedings with the children of men? *v.* 32. By coming *betwixt*, *v.* 32. *ch.* 26: 9. (1.) Now they favor us, as an umbrella that shelters from the violent heat of the sun, which otherwise would beat upon us. *A cloud of dew in the heat of harvest*, is spoken of as a very great refreshment, Isa. 18: 4. (2.) Sometimes they frown on us; for they darken the earth at noon-day, and eclipse the light of the sun. Sin is compared to a cloud, (Isa. 44: 22.) because it comes between us and the light of God's countenance, and obstructs the shining of it. But though the clouds darken the sun for a time, and pour down rain, yet, *The sun shines forth after the rain;* after He has wearied the cloud, *He spreads his light upon it*, *v.* 30. There is a *clear shining after rain;* (2 Sam. 23: 4.) the sunbeams are darted forth, and reach to cover even the bottom of the sea, thence to exhale a fresh supply of vapors, and so recruit the clouds. In all this we must remember to magnify the work of God.

CHAP. XXXVII. Elihu here goes on to extol the wonderful power of God in the meteors, and all the changes of the weather: if, in those changes, we submit to the will of God, take the weather as it is, and make the best of it, why should we not do so in other changes of our condition?

V. 1—5. Thunder and lightning, which usually go together, are sensible indications of the glory and majesty, the power and terror, of Almighty God, one to the ear, and the other to the eye; in these, God leaves not Himself without witness of his *greatness*, as, in the rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, He leaves not Himself without witness of his *goodness*, (Acts 14: 17.) even to the most stupid and unthinking. Though there are natural causes and useful effects of them, which the philosophers undertake to account for, yet they seem chiefly designed by the Creator to startle and awaken the slumbering world of mankind to the consideration of a God above them. It is very probable, that, while Elihu was speaking, it thundered and lightened, for he speaks of it as present: and God being about to speak, (*ch.* 38: 1.) these were, as afterward on Sinai, the proper prefaces to command attention and awe.

Our hearts, like Elihu's, should tremble at the thunder, for fear of God's judgments, Ps. 119: 120. He also calls on Job to attend to it, *v.* 2. Perhaps, as yet, it thundered at a distance, and could not be heard without listening. Thunder is called *the voice of the Lord*, (Ps. 29: 3, &c.) because, by it, God speaks to men, to fear before Him, and it should remind us of that mighty word by which the world was at first made, which is called *thunder*, Ps. 104: 7. *At the voice of thy thunder, they hasted away*, namely, the waters, when God said, *Let them be gathered into one place.* They that are themselves affected with God's greatness should labor to affect others. From this one instance we may argue to all, that, in the dispensations of his providence, there is that which is too great, too strong, for us to strive against, and too high, too deep, for us to arraign or quarrel with.

V. 6—13. The changes and extremities of the weather, are the subject of a great deal of our common talk and observation; but how seldom we think and speak of these things, as Elihu does here, with an awful regard to God the Director of them, who shows his power, and serves the purposes of his providence, by them? We must notice the glory of God, not only in the thunder and lightning, but in the more common revolutions of the weather, which are not so terrible, and which make less noise. As,

1. In the snow and rain, *v.* 6. The winter rain, so the LXX; for, in these countries, when the winter was past, the rain was over and gone, Cant. 2: 11. The distinction in the Heb. between the small and the great rain, is this, that the former is called a shower of *rain*, the latter of *rains*, many showers in one; but all are the showers of his strength. It is sin and folly to contend with God's providence in the weather; can we hinder, shall we be angry at them? It is as absurd to quarrel with any other disposal of Providence concerning ourselves or ours.

The effect of winter is, that it obliges both men and beasts to retire, making it uncomfortable and unsafe to go abroad, *v.* 7, 8. Note, The less we have at any time to do in the world, the more we should do for God and our souls. When thus confined to our houses, we should thereby be driven to our Bibles and our knees. Nature directs all creatures to shelter themselves from a storm; and shall man only be unprovided with an ark?

2. In the winds, *v.* 9. Out of *the hidden place*, so it may be read, *comes the whirlwind;* out of *the secret chamber*, as the word signifies, which I am not so willing to understand of the *south*, because he says here, (*v.* 17.) that the wind out of the S. so far from being a whirlwind, is a warming, quieting wind. But, at this time, perhaps, Elihu saw a whirlwind-cloud coming out of the S. and making toward them, out of which the Lord spake soon after, *ch.* 38: 1. Or, if turbulent winds, which bring showers, come out of the S. cold and drying blasts come out of the N. to scatter the vapors, and clear the air of them.

3. In the frost, *v.* 10. See the cause of it; *the breath of God*, i. e. the word of his power, and the command of his will; or, as some understand it, the wind, which is the breath of God, as the thunder is his voice; it is caused by the cold freezing wind out of the N. See its effect; the waters that had spread themselves, and flowed with liberty, are congealed, benumbed, arrested, bound up in crystal fetters. This is such an instance of God's power as, if it were not common, would be next to a miracle.

4. In the clouds; the womb where all these watery meteors are conceived, of which he had

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faction of this part of the atmosphere whence the thunder proceeds, by the agency of the electric fluid; the *rushing in of the air* on each side to restore equilibrium, which the passage of the fire had destroyed. The noise produced by this sudden rushing in of the air, as well as that occasioned by the *ignition* of the *hydrogen gas*, which is one of the constituents of water, is the *thunder of his tabernacle*, viz. the *atmosphere*, where God appears, in such cases, to be manifesting his presence and his power.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(32, 33.) 'In his hands He hideth the light.' *Vulg.* or, more literally, 'By the hollow of his hands He concealeth the light, viz. the sun referring to eclipses?' Dr. *A. Clarke.* 'Over *his* hands he covers light, i. e. veils, clothes his hands with light, i. e. lightning.' *Rosenm.* 'He covereth the concave with lightning, and charges it what it shall strike. Its noise declareth concerning Him; a magazine of wrath against iniquity,' [and so Dr. *A. Clarke.*] GREENF.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXVII. V. 5, 6. *Voice.*] Dr. *A. Clarke* thinks ch. 20. should end here. ED.

Verse 7.

Sealeth up the hand.] 'John 6.27. Eph. 1:13. 1 Cor. 9:2. Rev 22: 3. Has a man something in his hand he does not wish to show, he says, "My hand is sealed." Of a very benevolent gentleman, it is said, "His hand is sealed for charity only." "Is my hand sealed to give you all?" "What secret was that?" "I cannot answer, my mouth is sealed." "That man never forgets an injury." "No, no, he seals it in his mind." A husband who has full confidence in his wife, says, "I have sealed her." Cant. 4:12. To seal a person, therefore, is to secure him, and prevent others from injuring him.' *Roberts.* Dr. *A. Clarke* states, that the absurdity of telling fortunes by the wrinkles in the palm of the hand, (*chiromancy, palmistry,*) is built on this verse! ED.

Verse 9.

Out of the S. &c.] 'The wind began to be felt, coming in short and sudden puffs, which, instead of cooling or refreshing, oppressed us even more than the calm; each of these blasts seeming like the hot and dry vapor of an oven, just at the moment of its being opened. The S. desert was now covered with a dull red mist, not unlike the sunrise

and cold out of the * north.

10 By the breath of God [p] frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened.

11 Also by watering [q] he wearieth the thick cloud: [r] he scattereth † his bright cloud:

12 And [s] it is turned round about by his counsels: [t] that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth.

13 He causeth it to come, [u] whether for ‡ correction, or [x] for his land, or [y] for mercy.

14 Hearken unto this, O Job: [z] stand still, and [a] consider the wondrous works of God.

15 [b] Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused [c] the light of his cloud to shine?

16 Dost thou know [d] the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is [e] perfect in knowledge?

17 How thy garments *are* warm, when [f] he quieteth the earth by the south *wind*?

18 Hast thou with him [g] spread out the sky, *which is* strong, *and* [h] as a molten looking-glass?

19 [i] Teach us what we shall say unto him; *for* [k] we cannot order *our speech* by reason of darkness.

20 [l] Shall it be told him that I speak? If a man speak, [m] surely he shall be swallowed up.

21 And now *men* [n] see not the bright light which *is* in the clouds: but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them.

22 § Fair [o] weather cometh out of the north: [p] with God *is* terrible majesty.

* Heb. *scattering* winds.
p 38:29,30. Ps. 78:47. 147:16—18.
q 36:27,28.
r 36:30,32. Is. 18:4. Matt. 17:5.
† Heb. *the cloud of his light.*
s Ps. 65:9,10. 104:24. Jer. 14:22. Joel 2:23. Am. 4:7.
t Ps. 148:8. Jam. 5:17,18. Rev. 11:6.
u 6. 36:31. 38:37,38. Ex. 9:18—25. 1 Sam. 12:18,19. Ezra 10:9.
‡ Heb. *a rod.*
x 38:26,27.
y 2 Sam. 21:10,14. 1 K. 18:45. Joel 2:23.
z Ex. 14:13. Ps. 46:10. Hab. 2:20.
a 26:6—14. 36:24. Ps. 111:2. 145:5, 6,10—12.
b 38:24—27. 34:13. 38:4,&c. Ps. 119: 90,91. Is. 40:26.
c 11. 36:30—32. 38:24,25.
d 26:8. 36:29. Ps. 104:2,3. Is. 40:22 Jer. 10:13.
e 36:4. Ps. 104:24. 147:5. Prov. 3:19, 20. Jer. 10:12.
f 6:17. 38:31. Ps. 147:18. Luke 12:55.
g 9:8,9. Gen. 1:6—8. Ps. 104:2. 148: 4—6. 150:1. Prov. 8:27. Is. 40:12. 44:24.
h Ex. 38:8.
i 12:3. 13:3,6.
k 26:14. 28:20,21. 38:2. 42:3. Ps. 73:16,17,22. 139:6. Prov. 30:2—4. 1 Cor. 13:12. 1 John 3:2.
l Ps. 139:4. Matt. 12:36,37.
m 6:3. 11:7,8.
n 26:9. 36:32. 38:25.
§ Heb. *Gold.*
o Prov. 25:23.
p 40:10. 1 Chr. 29:11. Ps. 29:4. 66:5. 68:7,8. 76:12. 93:1. 104:1. 145:5. Is. 2:10,19. Mic. 5:4. Nah. 1:3. Hab. 3:3,&c. Heb. 1:3. 12:29. Jude 25.

of *his handy-work*, Ps. 19: 1. When we look up to heaven above, we should remember it is but a faint representation of the purity, dignity, and brightness of the upper world, and its glorious inhabitants.

III. That neither he nor they were able to speak of the glory of God, in any proportion to the merit of the subject, *v.* 19, 20. 1. Thou hast a mind to reason with God, and wouldst have us to contend with Him on thy behalf; teach us, then, what to say. 2. He owns his own insufficiency, in speaking both to, and of God, *by reason of darkness*. Note, The best of men are much in the dark concerning the glorious perfections of the divine nature, and the administrations of the divine government. They that through grace know much of God, know little, nothing, in comparison with what is to be known, and will be known, when what is perfect is come, and the veil rent. When we would speak of God, we speak confusedly and with great uncertainty, and are soon at a loss. As we must always begin with fear and trembling, lest we speak amiss, so we must conclude with shame and blushing, for having spoken no better. Elihu himself had, for his part, spoken well on God's behalf, yet he is so far from thinking God beholden to him for it, or that he was fit to be standing counsel for God, that, (1.) He is even ashamed of what he has said; fears the subject has suffered by his undertaking it, and his performance, so far from meriting thanks, needs pardon. *Shall it be told Him*, as a meritorious service, *that I speak?* When we have done all we can for God, we must acknowledge we are unprofitable servants, and have nothing to boast of. He is afraid of saying more. *If a man speak*, if he undertake to plead, *for* God, much more, *against* Him, *surely he shall be swallowed up*. If he speak presumptuously, God's wrath shall soon consume him; but if ever so well, he will soon lose himself in the mystery, and be overpowered by the divine lustre. Astonishment will strike him blind and dumb.

V. 21—24. Elihu here concludes with some short, but great, sayings concerning God's glory, as desiring to possess others, with his own holy awe. He speaks concisely, and in haste, because, it should seem, he perceived that God was about to take the work into his own hands.

1. He observes, that God, who has said that He will *dwell in the thick darkness*, and *make that his pavilion*, is in that awful chariot advancing toward them, as if preparing his throne for judgment, surrounded with *clouds and darkness*. He saw the cloud, with a whirlwind in its bosom, coming out of the S.; but now it hung so thick, so black, over

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skies of our N. climates in a rainy morning; and soon after we saw large columns of sand and dust whirled up into the air, and carried along in a body over the plain with a slow and stately motion. One of these passed within a few yards of us, to the N. having been driven over a stony land, to a distance of perhaps 20 miles. It was apparently 80 to 100 ft. in diam., and was certainly of sufficient force, by its constant whirling motion, to throw both men and animals off their legs, so that if crossing a caravan, and broken by the interruption of its course, the danger of suffocation to persons buried beneath its fall would be very great, though, if there were prepared for it, it might not perhaps be fatal.' BUCKINGHAM, Trav. in Mesopotamia.

Verse 10.

Arabia extends to 30° N. Lat. 'At Aleppo, in 32° N. Lat. the cold (says Rev. Mr. Dawes) was so intense in 1756–7, that the mercury in Farenheit's thermometer, exposed a few minutes to the open air, sunk entirely into the ball of the tube. Millions of olive trees that had withstood 50 winters, were blasted; and thousands of souls perished merely through cold.' *Hewlett.* ED.

Verse 12.

Turned, &c.] 'And turns about, brings around, their circlings, turns, conversions, or interchanges, i. e. the changes from clear to cloudy, cold to warmth.' *Rosenm.* 'This vicissitude of sunshine and clouded weather is produced by his counsels.' *Hewlett.* ID.

Verses 14—20.

Mirrors were in those days formed of brass, cut into a proper form [rather, of concave steel,] and highly polished. (*Ex.* 38:8.) SCOTT.

(19.) 'The author here gives us an evident proof of his great skill in the management of [his subject,] as he by degrees, prepares us for the appearance of the Almighty. His awful harbingers, the thunder and lightning, at a distance, had announced his coming. Elihu then "trembled, and his heart was ready to leap out of his breast," *v.* 1. But at his nearer approach, he is in the utmost hurry and confusion: he is afraid to open his mouth; he is lost in amazement. The glory of God is too dazzling for mortal eyes. Vs. 20, 21. may be rendered, "Could what I say be reported to Him? Can a man speak when he is swallowed up in amazement?" *v.* 21. "Even now men cannot behold the bright light, when the wind passeth over and scoureth them clean;" *v.* 22. "and fair weather cometh from the N."—As to God, terrible is the majesty of the Almighty: we cannot, &c. The argument in v. 21. is to this effect, "Man cannot bear to look at the sun when he shineth in his lustre; how much less on that tremendous blaze of glory, which surrounds the throne of the Almighty!" See *Schultens* and *Heath.*' HEWLETT.

Verses 21—24.

Whilst Elihu was speaking, he observed that the wind had scattered the clouds, and the lightnings were ceased, and that the N. wind had

23 *Touching* the Almighty, [q] we cannot find him out: *he is* [r] excellent in power, and [s] in judgment, and in plenty of justice: [t] he will not afflict.

24 Men do therefore [u] fear him: [x] he respecteth not any *that are* wise of heart.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

The Lord, out of the whirlwind, challenges Job to answer Him, 1—3. By enumerating several of his mighty works in creation and providence, he convinces Job of ignorance, 4—30; and of weakness, 31—41.

THEN the LORD answered Job [a] out of the whirlwind, and said,

2 Who *is* this that [b] darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

3 [c] Gird up now thy

q 19. 11:7. 26:14. 36:26. Prov. 30: 3,4. Ec. 3:11. Luke 10:22. Rom. 11:33. 1 Tim. 6:16.
r 9:4,19. 12:13. 36:5. Ps. 65:6. 66: 3. 93:1 99:4. 146:6,7. Matt. 6:13.
s Ps. 36:5—7.
t 16:7—17. Ps. 30:5. Lam. 3:32,33. Heb. 12:10.
u Ps. 130:4. Jer. 32:39. 33:9. Hos. 3:5. Luke 12:4,5. Rom. 2:4. 11:20—22.
x 5:13. Ec. 9:11. Is. 5:21. Matt. 11: 25,26. Luke 10:21. 1 Cor. 1:26. 3: 19.
a 37:1,2,9,14. Ex. 19:16—19. Deut. 4:11,12. 5:22—24. 1 K. 19:11. 2 K. 2:1,11. Ez. 1:4. Nah. 1:3.
b 12:3. 23:4,5. 24:25. 26:3. 27:11. 34:35. 35:16. 42:3. 1 Tim. 1:7.
c 40:7. Ex. 12:11. 1 K. 18:46. Jer. 1: 17. 1 Pet. 1:13.

their heads, that they could none of them see the bright light, which just before was in the clouds. The light of the sun was now eclipsed; this reminded him of the darkness, by reason of which he could not speak, (*v.* 19.) and made him afraid to go on, *v.* 20. Luke 9: 34. Yet he looks to the N. and sees it clear that way, which gives him hope the clouds are not gathering for a deluge. He expects the wind will pass, (so it may be read,) and cleanse them; (Gen. 8: 1.) in token of the return of God's favor; and then *fair weather will come out of the north* (*v.* 22.) and all will be well God will not always frown, nor contend for ever.

2. He hastens to conclude, now that God is about to speak; therefore he delivers much in a few words, as the sum of all he had been discoursing of, which, if duly considered, would not only confirm what he had been saying, but make way for what God would say.

With God is terrible majesty Our finite understandings cannot comprehend his infinite perfections. *He is excellent in power.* The universal extent and irresistible force of his power, are its excellency. He is no less excellent in wisdom and righteousness; *in judgment and plenty of justice;* else there would be little excellency in his power. In judgments on sinners, there is yet plenty of justice, and deserts. *He will not afflict,* i. e. willingly; it is no pleasure to Him to grieve the children of men, much less his own children. He never afflicts but when there is cause, and need, and He does not overburden us with affliction, but considers our frame. Some read it thus: 'The Almighty, whom we cannot find out, is great in power, but He will not afflict in judgment; and with Him is plenty of justice, nor is He extreme to mark what we do amiss.' He values not the censures of those that are wise in their own conceit, *v.* 24. He regards the prayer of the humble, but not the presumptuous prescriptions and policies of the crafty. No, the *foolishness of God is wiser than men.*

Lastly, From all this it is easy to infer, that, since God is great, He is greatly to be feared; nay, because He is gracious, and will not afflict, men do therefore fear Him, for *there is forgiveness with Him, that he may be feared.* It is the duty and interest of all to fear God. Men shall fear Him; so some. Sooner or later they shall fear. They that will not fear the Lord and his goodness, shall for ever tremble under the pourings out of the vials of his wrath.

CHAP. XXXVIII. V. 1—3. In most disputes, the strife is, who shall have the last word. Job's friends had, in this controversy, tamely yielded it to Job, and then he to Elihu. But now it remained for God, here, as in every controversy, to decide. Job had often appealed to God, and talked boldly how he would *order his cause before Him,* and *as a prince, go near unto Him;* but this is not so easy as some think. When God took the throne, Job had nothing to say in his own defence, but was silent before Him. Job's friends had sometimes appealed to God too, ch. 11: 5. And now, at length, God speaks, when Job, by Elihu's clear and close arguings, was mollified a little, and mortified, and so prepared to hear what God had to say. It is the office of ministers to prepare the way of the Lord. That which the Great God designs in this discourse, is, to humble Job, and bring him to repent of, and to recant, his passionate, indecent expressions concerning God's providential dealings with him; and this He does by calling on Job to compare God's eternity with his own time, God's omniscience with his own ignorance, and God's omnipotence with his own impotency. Observe here,

1. Who speaks; The Lord Jehovah, not a created angel, but the Eternal Word Himself, the second person in the blessed Trinity, by whom the worlds were made. The same that afterward spake from Sinai. Here he begins with the creation of the world, there with the redemption of Israel out of Egypt, and from both is inferred the necessity of our subjection to Him. Elihu had said, *God speaks to men, and they do not perceive it, ch.* 33: 14. but this they could not but perceive, and

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The attentive mind will perceive affecting displays of the power, wisdom, goodness, and majesty of God, in the operations of nature; and the terrors excited by some of them, should remind us of that tremendous scene which will usher in 'the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.' Oh, that men would attentively hearken to the voice of God, who in various ways 'warns them to flee from the wrath to come;' and from his mercy-seat, with a voice of less terror, but of more glorious excellency, invites them to accept of his salvation and be happy!—All irrational creatures obey the voice and subserve the will of the great Creator: surely then we, whom He hath endued with reason, should be shamed into obedience and submission!—Our wisdom consists, in accommodating ourselves to the situation allotted us; and in deriving benefit, as we can, from those appointments which we cannot alter; in accepting of proffered mercy in the Lord's way; in submitting to his correction and his righteousness; and in leaving all difficulties to another world.—The weather is altogether of God's appointment: it is generally ordered in mercy as well as in wisdom, for the common good; and if at any time it be really afflictive, it is sent for correction, and to call us to repentance and prayer. But the bad opinion which men entertain of the divine management, is evident in their incessant murmurs in this particular; though the result of the whole system, through the year, generally demonstrates the folly and ingratitude, as well as the rebellion, of their complaints. Believers should carefully avoid such peevishness: there are no *bad days,* as the Lord makes them; but we make ourselves many by our sins.—Whatever scenes we witness, whatever changes we experience, we may stay our minds on Him, who will 'give strength to his people, and bless' them with his unspeakable peace. SCOTT.

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brought on fair weather, bright and resplendent as *gold;* for that is the meaning of the original. (*M.—Zech.* 4:12. *marg.*)—It is evident, that, towards the close of his discourse, Elihu spake as one in great confusion. Some conjecture, that what is rendered, 'Fair weather cometh out of the N.' referred to some *glorious appearance in the N.* which intimated the Lord's immediate presence, as about to speak. Elihu evidently thought, Job had been irreverent and presumptuous; and when the Lord Himself spake, He brought exactly the same charge against him. (38: 40:1—5.)—In what other ancient book, can be found so exalted and just sentiments and reasonings, on the perfections and works of God, as every where occur in the sacred volume? SCOTT.

(22.) 'Out of the N. cometh the golden light.' *Fry.* 'Out of the N. come clouds of a golden color; and there is in them a terrible brightness and glory of the Almighty.' *Sept.* HENRY abr.

CONCLUDING NOTE. *Geography,* &c. of *Arabia.* 'On the W. coast are high chains of mountains, uniting in the N. with the mts. of Syria, and connected with the primitive mts. of Asia: among them are Sinai and Horeb. Its rivers appear only after great rains, and seldom reach the sea; the Aftan is the most considerable. The climate is very various. Countries where it rains half the year, alternate with others, where dew supplies the place of rain for the whole season. (30:10.) The greatest cold prevails on high places, and the most oppressive heat in the plains. Damp winds [v. 17?] succeed to the dry simoom [v. 9.] which is as dangerous to life as the harmattan, and khamseen in Africa. The soil consists of sandy deserts and the most fruitful fields. Wheat, millet, rice, kitchen vegetables, coffee (on trees), manna, sugar-cane, cotton, tropical fruits, senna-leaves, gums, aloes, myrrh, tobacco, indigo, odorous woods, balsam, &c. are the rich products of Arabia. There are also precious stones, iron and other metals, (gold excepted, which, howe[ver] the ancients seem to have found pure in rivers and the earth). The animals are, mules, asses, camels, buffaloes, horned cattle, goats, noble horses, lions, hyænas, antelopes, foxes, apes, jerboas; birds of all sorts, pelicans, ostriches, &c.; esculent locusts, scorpions, &c.' ENC. AM.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXVIII. V. 1. The debate would have terminated inconclusively, had it not pleased God to interpose. With terrible majesty the Lord spake out of the cloud, or tempest, which probably was raised to a vehement whirlwind while He was speaking. (*M. R.*) He addressed Job, and continued Elihu's argument; 'but in inimitable words, excelling his and all other men's, in the loftiness of the style, as much as thunder doth a whisper.' *Patrick.*—In attempting to comment on these words of the Almighty, we may well say, with Elihu, 'If a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up.' The very attempt might create a tremor, lest it should be reproved, 'as darkening counsel by words without knowledge:' and, as the whole discourse was intended as a reproof of the want of reverence and modesty, which an eminently wise and pious man had fallen into, it stands as a beacon, cautioning the expositor to keep at a distance from the same perilous rock. But, if giving the supposed meaning, in language more intelligible to the plain *modern* reader, though immensely less suited to the sublime subject, may assist in understanding the passage; the attempt will meet with a pardon from a merciful God, and perhaps a candid perusal from man. SCOTT.

Verse 2.

(*M. R.—Notes, Is.* 45:9—11. *Rom.* 9:19—21.) ID.

Verse 3.

Gird up, &c.] (*Notes,* 13:15—23. 23:3—7. 31:35—37. *M. R.* c *notes,* 40:1—8.) SCOTT. Still a common phrase in the E. on a difficult attempt. ED.

loins like a man; [d] for I will demand of thee, and * answer thou me.

4 [e] Where wast thou when [f] I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou † hast understanding.

5 Who hath [g] laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or [h] who hath stretched the line upon it?

6 [i] Whereupon are the ‡ foundations thereof § fastened? or who laid [k] the corner-stone thereof;

7 When [l] the morning-stars sang together, and all [m] the sons of God [n] shouted for joy?

8 Or [o] *who* shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, *as if* it had issued [p] out of the womb;

9 When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and [q] thick darkness a swaddling-band for it,

10 And ‖ brake up for it my decreed *place*, and set bars and doors,

11 And said, [r] Hitherto shalt thou come, [s] but no further: and here shall ¶ thy proud waves be stayed.

12 ¶ Hast thou [t] commanded the morning [u] since thy days; *and* caused [x] the day-spring to know his place;

13 That it might [y] take hold of the ** ends

d 13:15,22. 23:3—7. 31:35—37.
* Heb. *make me know.*
e Prov. 8:29,30. 30:4.
f Gen. 1:1. Ps. 102:25. 104:5. Heb. 1:2,10.
† Heb. *knowest understanding.*
g 11:9. 28:25. Prov. 8:27. Is. 40:12,22.
h Ps. 19:4. 78:55. Is. 34:11. Zech. 2:1,2. 2 Cor. 10:16.
i 26:7. 1 Sam. 2:8. Ps. 24:2. 93:1. 104:5. Zech. 12:1. 2 Pet. 3:5.
‡ Heb. *sockets.* Ex. 26:18—25.
§ Heb. *made to sink.*
k Ps. 118:22. 144:12. Is. 28:16. Eph. 2:20,21.
l Rev. 2:28. 22:16.
m 1:6. 2:1. Ps. 104:4. Rev. 5:11.
n Ezra 3:11,12. Zech. 4:7.
o 10. Gen. 1:9. Ps. 33:7. Prov. 8:29.
p 29.
q Gen. 1:2.
‖ Or, *established my decree upon it.* 26:10. Gen. 1:9,10. 9:15. Ps. 104:9. Jer. 5:22.
r Ps. 65:5,7. 93:3,4. Prov. 8:29. Mark 4:39—41.
s 1:12. 2:6. Ps. 76:10. 89:9. Is. 27:8. Luke 8:32,33. Rev. 20:2,3,7,8.
¶ Heb. *the pride of thy waves.*
t Gen. 1:5. Ps. 74:16. 136:7,8. 148:3—5.
u 4,21. 8:9. 15:7.
x Luke 1:78. 2 Pet. 1:19.
y Ps. 19:4—6. 139:9—12.
** Heb. *wings.* 37:3. *marg.*

yet we have *a more sure word of prophecy.*

2. When; *Then:* when they had all had their saying, yet had not gained their point. When we know not who is in the right, and perhaps are doubtful whether we ourselves are, this may satisfy us, That God will determine shortly *in the valley of decision.* Job had silenced his three friends, yet could not convince them of his integrity in the main; Elihu had silenced Job, yet could not bring him to acknowledge his mismanagement of this dispute; but now God comes, and does both; convinces Job, first, of his unadvised speaking, and then, having humbled him, honors him, by convincing his three friends that they had done him wrong. These two things God will, sooner or later, do for his people; show them and make them ashamed of their faults, and show others their righteousness, bringing it forth as the light, to shame unjust censures.

3. How; *Out of the whirlwind,* the rolling and involving cloud, Elihu noticed, *ch.* 37: 1, 2, 9. A whirlwind prefaced Ezekiel's vision, (Ezek. 1: 4.) and Elijah's, 1 K. 19: 11. God is said to have *his way in the whirlwind,* (Nah. 1: 3.) and, to show that even the stormy wind fulfils his word, here it was made the vehicle of it. Sometimes God, to command attention, answers his own people in terrible corrections, as out of the whirlwind, but always in righteousness.

4. To whom; He answered *Job,* directed his speech to him, to convince him of what was amiss, before he cleared him from the unjust aspersions cast on him. It is God only that can effectually convince of sin; and those shall so be humbled, whom He designs to exalt. Those that desire to hear from God, as Job did, shall certainly hear from Him at length.

5. What He said; We may conjecture that Elihu, or some other of the auditory, wrote down *verbatim* what was delivered out of the whirlwind; when the thunders uttered their voices, John was prepared to write, Rev. 10: 4. Or, if it was not written then, yet, the penman of the book being inspired by the Holy Ghost, we are sure we have here a very true and exact report of what was said; *The Spirit* (says Christ) *shall bring to your remembrance,* as He did here, *what I have said to you.*

The preface is very searching.

(1.) God charges him with ignorance and presumption in what he had said, *v.* 2. 'Who talks at this rate? Is it Job? Can he so far forget himself?' Note, Darkening the counsels of God's wisdom with our folly, is a great affront and provocation to God. God's counsels are a deep we cannot fathom; we are too apt to talk of them as if we understood them; but, alas! we do but darken them, instead of explaining them; we confound and perplex ourselves and one another, when we dispute of the order of God's decrees, and the designs, and reasons, and methods, of his operations of providence and grace. A humble faith and sincere obedience shall see further and better into the secret of the Lord, than all the philosophy of their schools, and the searches of science so called. This first word which God spake is the more observable, because Job, in his repentance, fastens on it as that which succeeded to humble him, *ch.* 42: 3. There was some color to have turned it on *Elihu,* as if God meant *him,* for he spake last, and was speaking when the whirlwind began; but Job applied it to himself, as it becomes us to do, when faithful reproofs are given, and not (as most do) to billet them on other people.

(2.) He challenges him to give such proofs of his knowledge as would serve to justify his inquiries into the divine counsels, *v.* 3. 'Gird up *now thy loins like a* stout *man;* prepare for the encounter; I will demand of thee, will put some questions to thee; and answer Me, if thou canst, before I answer thine.' Those that go about to call God to an account, must expect thus to be made sensible of their ignorance and arrogance. Job had said, *ch.* 13: 22. *Call Thou, and I will answer:* 'Now make thy words good.'

V. 4—11. 1. To humble Job, God here shows him his ignorance, even concerning the earth and the sea. He could give no account of their origination; much less of heaven above or hell beneath, which are at such a distance, or of the several parts of matter which are so minute, and then, least of all, of the divine counsels.

1. *I laid the foundations of the earth.* This proves Him to be the only living and true God, the God of power, (Is. 40: 21. Jer. 10: 11, 12.) and encourages us to trust in Him at all times, Is. 51: 13, 16. '*Where wast thou then?* Thou that hast made such a figure among the children of the east, and settest up for an oracle, and a judge of the divine counsels, where wast thou when the foundations of the earth were laid?' Christ was present when this was done; (Prov. 8: 22, &c. John 1: 1, 2.) but *we are of yesterday, and know nothing.* Let us not, therefore, find fault with the works of God, nor prescribe to Him.

2. Let him describe how this world was made. How it came to be so finely framed, with so much exactness, and such an admirable symmetry and proportion of all its parts, *v.* 5. How it came to be so firmly fixed: it is hung upon nothing, yet is established, that it cannot be moved; but who can tell upon what the foundations of it are fastened, that it may not sink with its own weight, or who laid the corner-stone thereof, that the parts of it may not fall asunder? *v.* 6. *What God does, it shall be for ever,* therefore, as we cannot find fault with God's work, so we need not be in fear concerning it; it will last, and answer the end, the work of his providence, as well as the work of creation; and the work of redemption is no less firm, of which Christ Himself is both the Foundation and the Corner-stone. The church stands as fast as the earth.

3. Let him repeat, if he can, the songs of praise at that solemnity, *v.* 7. The angels are called *the sons of God,* because they bear much of his image, are with Him, and serve Him as a son his father. Now observe here, (1.) The glory of God, as the Creator of the world, is to be celebrated with joy and triumph by all his reasonable creatures; this is the work of angels, and the more we abound in holy, humble, thankful, joyful praise, the more we do the will of God as they do it; they were unanimous in singing God's praises: and the sweetest concerts are in praising God. They all did it, even those who afterward fell, and left their first estate; even those who have praised God may, by the deceitful power of sin, be brought to blaspheme Him, and yet God will be eternally praised.

II. Concerning the limiting of the sea to the place appointed for it, *v.* 8, &c. This refers to the third day's work, when God said, (Gen. 1: 9.) *Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and it was so.* He seems to speak here of the sea at its formation, as of an infant at its birth, *v.* 8, 9. *The cloud* is made *the garment thereof,* with which it is covered, and *thick darkness* (i. e. shores vastly remote and distant from one another, and quite in the dark one to another) *is a swaddling band for it,* a cradle to receive it. See with what ease the great God manages the raging sea, notwithstanding the violence of its tides, and the strength of its billows, even as the nurse does the child in swaddling-clothes. Moreover, for the sea, as for every one of us, a place is decreed, and there are set up for it *bars and doors,*

Verses 4—7.

These abrupt questions, which could be answered only in the negative, were suited to impress Job with a conviction of the infinite knowledge, wisdom, and power of the Eternal God; and of his own extreme ignorance, and incompetency to form a judgment of his appointments. SCOTT.

(4.) *Stay them.*] 'Rather, as the Vulg. "be traced."' HEWLETT.

(7.) *Morning stars.*] 'The angels, in many passages of the prophets are compared to, or spoken of, under the metaphor of *stars:* as Is. 14:12, &c. [The Arabs in ancient time were star-worshippers.] ID.

Verses 8—11.

Job was next called on to consider the mighty ocean. At the Creator's word, the seas separated from the dry land, issuing forth as an infant from the womb. The clouds that hover over the ocean, and the unknown shores which surround it, form, as it were, the swaddling-band and garment of it, 'as if it were but as a little babe in the hands of God.' The vast hollows of the earth are its appointed place, in which it is confined, not so much by the barrier of the shores, as by virtue of that *inexplicable* property, which we call *gravitation.* SCOTT.

of the earth, that [z] the wicked might be shaken out of it?

14 It is turned as clay *to* the seal; and they stand [a] as a garment.

15 And [b] from the wicked their light is withholden, and [c] the high arm shall be broken.

16 ¶ Hast thou entered into [d] the springs of the sea? or hast thou [e] walked in the search of the depth?

17 Have [f] the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of [g] the shadow of death?

18 Hast thou perceived [h] the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all.

19 ¶ Where *is* [i] the way *where* light dwelleth? and *as for* [k] darkness, where *is* the place thereof?

20 That thou shouldest take it * to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths *to* the house thereof?

21 Knowest thou *it*, [l] because thou wast then born? or *because* the number of thy days *is* great?

22 ¶ Hast thou entered into [m] the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,

23 [n] Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?

24 By what way is [o] the light parted, *which* scattereth the east wind upon the earth?

25 Who hath [p] divided

z 24:13—17. Ex. 14:27. Ps. 104:21,22, 35.
a Ps. 104:2,6.
b 5:14. 18:5,18. Ex. 10:21—23. 2 K. 6:18. Prov. 4:19. Is. 8:21,22. Jer. 13:16. Acts 13:10,11.
c Ps. 10:15. 37:17. Ez. 30:22.
d Ps. 77:19. Prov. 8:24. Jer. 51:36.
e 26:5,6.
f Ps. 9:13. 107:18. 116:3.
g 3:5. 12:22. Ps. 23:4. 107:10,14. Am. 5:8. Ma.t. 4:16.
h Ps. 74:17. 89:11,12. Is. 40:28. Jer. 31:37. Rev. 20:9.
i 12,13. Gen. 1:3,4,14—18. Deut. 4: 19. Is. 45:7. John 1:9. 8:12.
k Ps. 18:11. 104:20. 105:28. Jer. 13: 16. Ez. 32:8. Am. 4:13. Matt. 27: 45.
* Or, *at.*
l 4.12. 15:7.
m 6:16. 37:6. Ps. 33:7. 135:7.
n 36:31. 37:13. Ex. 9:18,24. Josh. 10:11. Is. 30:30. Ez. 13:11—13. Matt. 7:27. Rev. 16:21.
o 12,13. Jon. 4:8. Matt. 24:27.
p 28:26. 36,27,28. 37:3—6. Ps. 29: 3—10.

v. 10. and its insolence is checked, *v.* 11. This is mentioned, also, as a reason why we should stand in awe of God, (Jer. 5: 22.) and yet why we should encourage ourselves in Him, Ps. 65: 7.

V. 12—24. If we will but try ourselves with such interrogatories as these, we shall soon be brought to own, that what we know is nothing in comparison with what we know not. Job is here challenged to give an account of six things.

1. Of the springs of the morning, the day-spring from on high, *v.* 12—15. As there is no visible being, of which we may be more firmly assured that it is, so there is none which we are more puzzled in describing, nor more doubtful in determining what it is, than the light. We welcome the morning, and are glad of the day-spring; but we take it as we find it, and as the many generations had it that went before us. 'Hast thou, at any time, ordered it earlier or later for thy convenience, or to any other place than its own? Why then pretend to direct the divine counsels, or expect to have the methods of Providence altered in favor of thee?' [Rather find out and obey its laws.] It is God that appoints the morning, and causes the earth to dress itself, as it were, and put on its garment of light. Except to evil-doers, nothing is more comfortable, pleasant, or serviceable, than the light of the morning; but God here observes how unwelcome it is to those that do evil. Job had observed what a terror the morning-light is to criminals, because it discovers them, (*ch.* 24: 13, &c.) and God here seconds the observation, and asks him, whether the world was indebted to him for that kindness? Whether what is here said of the morning-light, was designed to represent, as in a figure, the light of the gospel of Christ, and to give a type of it, I will not say; but I am sure it may serve to put us in mind of the encomiums given to the gospel just at the rising of its morning-star, by Zecharias, and the virgin Mary. Luke 1: 51, 78.

2. Of the springs of the sea, *v.* 16. 'Knowest thou what lies in the bottom of the sea, the treasures there hid in the sands? Or canst thou give an account of the rise and original of the waters of the sea? Vapors are continually exhaled out of the sea. Dost thou know how it is continually supplied? Rivers are constantly poured into the sea. Dost thou know how they are continually discharged, so as not to overflow the earth? Art thou acquainted with the secret subterraneous passages by which the waters circulate?' God's way, in the government of the world, is said to be *in the sea*, and *in the great waters*, intimating that it is hid from us, and not to be pried into by us.

3. Of the gates of death, *v.* 16. Death is a grand secret. (1.) We know not beforehand when, or by what means, we or others shall be brought to death; (by what road we must go the way whence we shall not return;) what disease or what disaster will be the door to let us into the house appointed for all living; *Man knows not his time.* (2.) We cannot describe what death is, how the knot is untied between body and soul, nor how the *spirit of a man goes upward*, to be we know not what, and live we know not how, as Mr. Norris expresses it; with what dreadful curiosity (says he) does the soul launch out into the vast ocean of eternity, and resign to an untried abyss! Let us make it sure that the gates of heaven shall be opened to us on the other side death. (3.) We have no correspondence at all with separate souls, nor any acquaintance with their state. While here in a world of sense, we speak of the world of spirits, as blind men do of colors, and when we remove thither, shall be amazed to find how much we have mistaken.

4. Of the breadth of the earth, *v.* 18. The knowledge of this might seem most within his reach; yet he is challenged to declare this, if he can. It is but a point to the universe; yet, small as it is, we cannot be exact in declaring its dimensions. Job had never sailed round the world, nor any before him; so little did men know the breadth of the earth, that it was but a few ages ago the vast continent of America was discovered, which had, time out of mind, lain hid.

5. Of the place and way of light and darkness. The *day-spring* was spoken of before, (*v.* 12.) and here again, (*v.* 19.) and again, *v.* 24. (1.) How the light and darkness were at first made; when God, in the beginning, first spread darkness upon the face of the deep, and afterward commanded the light to shine out of darkness, by that mighty word, *Let there be light*, was Job a witness? can he tell where the fountains of light and darkness are, and where those mighty princes keep their courts distinct, while in one world they rule alternately? Though we long ever so much either for the shining forth of the morning, or the shadows of the evening, we know not whither to send, or go, to fetch them, nor can tell *the paths to the house thereof*, *v.* 20. Nor are we old enough to describe the birth of the first-born of the visible creation, *v.* 21. Shall we then undertake to discourse of God's counsels, which were from eternity, or to find out the paths to the house thereof, to solicit for their alteration? God glories, that He forms the light and creates the darkness; we must take those as we find them, and in like manner, accommodate ourselves to the peace and the evil God likewise created, Is. 45: 7. (2.) How they still keep their turns interchangeably. It is God that *makes the outgoings of the morning and of the evening to rejoice:* we cannot so much as tell whence they come, or whither they go, *v.* 24. or how *the light is parted* in the morning, when, in an instant, it shoots itself into all parts of the air above the horizon, as on the wings of the wind, so swiftly, so strongly, scattering the darkness of the night, as the east-wind does the clouds. Hence we read of the *wings of the morning*, Ps. 139: 9. It is a marvellous change, that passes over us every morning by the return of the light, and every evening by the return of the darkness; but we expect them, and so they are no surprise or uneasiness. If we would, in like manner, count on changes in our outward condition, we should neither in the brightest noon count on perpetual day, nor in the darkest midnight despair of the return of the morning, Eccl. 7: 14.

6. Of the *treasures of the snow and hail*, *v.* 22, 23. In the clouds the snow and hail are generated, thence they come in such abundance, that one would think there were treasures of them laid up in store there, whereas indeed they are produced *extempore*, as I may say, *on the occasion.* Sometimes they come so opportunely, to serve the purposes of Providence, in God's fighting for his people, and against his and their enemies, that one would think they were laid up as magazines, against the day of battle and war; when God will either contend with the world in general, as in the deluge, or with some particular persons or parties, as Josh. 10: 11. What folly to strive against God!

V. 25—41. Hitherto, God had put such questions to Job, as were proper to convince him of his ignorance and short-sightedness. Now, He

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Verse 14.

'This v. has caused many conjectures among commentators. "Hast thou, taking clayey earth, formed of it a living creature, and giving it the faculty of speech, placed it on the earth?" *Sept.*' *Henry* abr. 'Restituetur ut lutum signaculum, et stabit ut vestimentum.' *Vulg.* The inspectors of the uncovered "granary of Joseph," in Egypt, cover the lock with a handful of *clay*, and *set their seal upon it.*' HARMER.

Verses 19—21.

Though modern experiments have enabled men to form some theories concerning light and colors; yet how very little do the most scientific men yet know about them, of *what* they are, and *how* they are! SCOTT.

Verses 22—30.

These are indeed most stupendous displays of the divine power, and only unnoticed because common. ED.

(23.) '*Leo Africanus* says, caravans in the African deserts, are sometimes suddenly overtaken with such furious storms of snow, that their beasts, and carriages, and themselves, are buried in it.' *Hewlett.* Comp. notes, 37:10. 36:27, 28. ED.

(24.) 'One may suppose an allusion to the separation of the rays

a water-course for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder;

26 To cause it to rain on the earth, *where* no man *is;* [q] *on* the wilderness, wherein *there is* no man;

27 To satisfy the desolate and waste *ground;* and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?

28 [r] Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of [s] dew?

29 [t] Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?

30 The waters are hid as *with* a stone, and [u] the face of the deep is * frozen.

31 Canst thou bind the sweet influences of † Pleiades, or loose the bands of ‡ Orion?

32 Canst thou bring forth § Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou ‖ guide Arcturus with his sons?

33 Knowest thou [x] the ordinances of heaven? [y] canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?

34 [z] Canst thou lift up thy voice to the comes, in the same manner, to show his impotency and weakness.

I. Has Job thunder, lightning, rain, and frost, at command, as God! Observe,

1. How great God is. He has *divided a water-course,* directs the rain where to fall, even when the shower is most violent, with as much certainty as if it were conveyed by canals or conduit-pipes. Every drop goes as it is directed. God has *sworn, that the waters of Noah shall no more return to cover the earth;* and we see He is able to make good his promise. The lightning and thunder go not at random, but in the way He directs them. They are mentioned here, because He *prepares the lightnings for the rain,* Ps. 135: 7. Let not those then that fear God, be afraid of the lightning or the thunder, God means no hurt to such, *v.* 26, 27. God's providence reaches farther than man's industry; and He can make the earth fruitful, without any art or pains of ours, Gen. 2: 5, 6. it is He that gives the increase. With very peculiar favor He visits and regards man, yet does not overlook the inferior creatures, but causes *the bud of the tender herb to spring forth for food for all flesh,* as well as *for the service of man.* Even the wild asses shall have their thirst quenched, Ps. 104: 11. God is, in a sense, *the Father of the rain, v.* 28. produces it by his power, governs and directs it, and makes what use he pleases of it. Even the small drops of the dew He distils on the earth, as the God of nature, and, as the God of grace, rains righteousness on us, and is Himself as the dew unto Israel; see Hos. 14: 5, 6. Mic. 5: 7. The ice and the frost, (*v.* 29, 30.) are very common things, which lessens their strangeness. But, considering what a change is made by them in a very little time, how the waters are hid as with a stone, as with a grave-stone, laid on them; (so thick, so strong, is the ice, covering sometimes the face even of the deep;) we may well ask, 'What created power could produce such a wonderful work?' None but that of the Creator Himself. Frost and snow come from Him, and therefore should lead our thoughts and meditations to Him. And we shall the more easily bear the inconveniences of winter, if we learn to make this good use of it.

2. Observe, How weak man is; can he do such things? Could Job? *v.* 34, 35. (1.) If we lift up our voice to God, to *pray* for rain, we may have it; (Zech. 10: 1.) but if we lift up our voice to the clouds, to *demand* it, they will soon tell us they are not at our beck, and we shall go without it, Jer. 14: 22. The heavens will not hear the earth, unless God hear them, Hos. 2: 21. See what poor, indigent, depending creatures we are; we cannot do without rain, nor can we have it when we will. (2.) He cannot commission one flash of lightning, *v.* 35. '*Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go* on thine errand, and do the execution thou wishest for? Will they come at thy call?' No, the ministers of God's wrath will not be ministers of ours. Why should they, since the *wrath of man works not the righteousness of God?* See Luke 9: 55.

II. God has the stars of heaven under his com

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q Ps. 104:10—14. 107:35. 147:8,9. Is. 35:1,2. 41:18,19. 43:19,20. Heb. 6: 7,8.
r 8. 5:9,10. 1 Sam. 12:17,18. Ps. 65: 9,10. Jer. 5:24. 10:13. 14:22. Joel 2:23. Am. 4:7. Matt. 5:45.
s ‡ 9:19. Gen. 27:28,39. Deut. 33:13, 28. 2 Sam. 1:21. 1 K. 17:1. Prov. 3:20. Hos. 14:5.
t 8. 6:16. Ps. 147:16,17.
u 37:10.
* Heb. *taken.*
† Or, *the seven stars.* Heb. *Cimah* 9:9. *marg.* Am. 5:8.
‡ Or, *Cesil.*
§ Or, *the twelve signs.*
‖ Heb. *guide them.* 9:9.
x Gen. 1:16. 8:22. Ps. 119:90,91. Jer 31:35,36. 33:25.
y 12,13.
z 1 Sam. 12:18. Am. 5:8. Zech. 10:1 Jam. 5:18.

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of light, and the formation of the prismatic colors of the rainbow.' *Hewlett.* This would be in some degree comprehensible by observant auditors, who had noticed the scattering of light into different colored rays, by a dewdrop, crystal, or diamond. Ed.

(26, 27.) Note, end of ch. 37. 'This instance might be intended to suggest the comforting consideration, that He who turns the barren wilderness into a fruitful field, is equally able to change a miserable condition to a happy one.' *Scott,* in *Hewlett.* Ib.

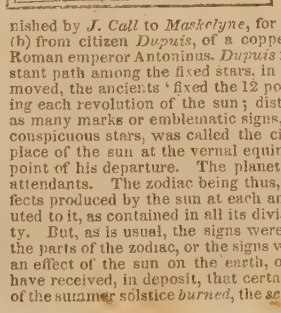
Verses 31—41.

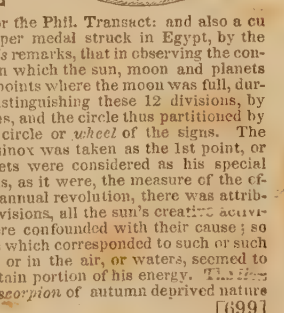
The different seasons of the year are marked out, by the relative situation of the fixed stars to the earth, and to the sun. (9:9—13.) Scott.

(31.) '*Pococke* remarks, that one of the 3 branches of knowledge, to which the ancient Arabs chiefly applied themselves, was, the influence of the stars in producing rainy weather.' Hewlett.

(31, 32.) *Pleiades, Orion.*] 'Heb. *Kymah,* (Orion.) *Kesil,* Pleiades or Hyades, so most agree. See note, 9:9. The Pleiades are also termed *Vergiliæ,* by the Latins, because they announce the spring (*ver*), and at their rise the season again becomes mild, the earth loosens, and vegetation revives, and puts forth blossoms: which is understood by the Heb. word *maadannoth,* delicias, [tr. "sweet influences,"] denoting the beauty and amenity of the spring. So *Beigelius,* in *Ideler,* tr. "Canst thou bind on (scatter abroad in the earth) the ornaments [the gemmed jewelry] of the Pleiades?" The Persian poets *Saadi* and *Hafiz* speak of "the knots of the Pleiades." To these is opposed the constellation Kesyl, i. e. Orion, because at his rising he excites clouds and tempests, whence Virgil has "cloudy Orion;" here however it is put for the stars bringing the wintry storms, and cold. *Cocceius* tr. "Canst thou bind again with winter's cold the vernal loosening of the earth, and resolve in the spring season the bindings up of winter?" ['The meaning is, canst thou make it freeze in summer, or thaw in winter?' *Orton.* Ed.] *Doederlein* understands, "man cannot tie up the stars, or cause them to remain longer with us, nor loosen their chains, and let them go, or hurry them away." So also *Schnaar. Maadannoth* rather signifies *chains,* and so it is often used by the Talmuds: see *Buxtorf.* And this the parallel demands, which both the Alexandrine and Chal. vers. tr. *bond, chains. Tingstad,* and *Nachmanides* also, understand chains. So that the v. means, according to the former, "Canst thou tie or untie the chains, by which the Pleiades, or the stars of the constellation of Orion, are bound together, or drawn along?" Thus also *Nachmanides* explains the v. of the location, and arrangement of those constellations.' Rosenm. 'The Vulg. has, 'Art thou able to join together the glittering stars, Pleiades, or canst thou dissipate the circle of Arcturus? (32.) Canst thou produce Lucifer in his time, cause Vesper to rise over the sons of earth?' *Sept.* 'Hast thou understood the bond of Pleiad, and opened the seal of Orion? Wilt thou disclose mazzouth in his season, and Hesperos by (*epi*) his hair, wilt thou bring them?' Referring perhaps to what the Greeks called the hair of Berenice? 'The Pleiades are 6 stars in Taurus, visible to the naked eye, the telescope discovers ten times that number. They appear in spring. Orion may be seen in the morning toward the end of October; and is visible through Nov. Dec. and Jan.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* Ed.

(32.) *Mazzaroth.*] 'The 12 signs, *Marg.* of the zodiac: and so *Chrysostom.* ['The *Syr.* has *ogalta,* wagon,' [or wheel?] The late Hebrews call the zodiac *galgal,* dam-*mazzaloth. Buxtorf* says, their astronomers call it, *azor-hammaggaloth,* the girdle of the celestial signs. *Hyde* supposes *mazzaroth* contracted for *maezzaroth,* a *girdle,* and refers it to those stars which the Arabs call "Orion's girdle." Canst thou bring forth in its season any one of the signs or stars of the northern hemisphere?' *Rosenm.*] 'The Indian division of the zodiac into the 12 usual signs, says Sir *W. Jones,* has been known in the E. from time immemorial. It was known, also, by the most ancient Chaldees and Phœnicians. *Hyde.*' *Hewlett.* For existing Egyptian zodiacs, however, see note, end of 2 K. 23: *Bailly* 'is quite of the opinion' of *Pluche,* 'that the signs of the zodiac originated in the pastoral life of the first men:' in Chaldea, perhaps, but as they were also said to be invented in Egypt, 'we must probably refer them to some people more ancient than either, from whom both borrowed them.' *Astronomie Ancienne.* A cut (a) is given of an Indian zodiac from Bailly, furnished by *J. Call* to *Maskelyne,* for the Phil. Transact: and also a cut (b) from citizen *Dupuis,* of a copper medal struck in Egypt, by the Roman emperor Antoninus. *Dupuis* remarks, that in observing the constant path among the fixed stars, in which the sun, moon and planets moved, the ancients 'fixed the 12 points where the moon was full, during each revolution of the sun; distinguishing these 12 divisions, by as many marks or emblematic signs, and the circle thus partitioned by conspicuous stars, was called the circle or *wheel* of the signs. The place of the sun at the vernal equinox was taken as the 1st point, or point of his departure. The planets were considered as his special attendants. The zodiac being thus, as it were, the measure of the effects produced by the sun at each annual revolution, there was attributed to it, as contained in all its divisions, all the sun's creative activity. But, as is usual, the signs were confounded with their cause; so the parts of the zodiac, or the signs which corresponded to such or such an effect of the sun on the earth, or in the air, or waters, seemed to have received, in deposit, that certain portion of his energy. Thus the [illegible] of the summer solstice *burned,* the *scorpion* of autumn deprived nature





clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?

35 [a] Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, * Here we *are*?

36 [b] Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or [c] who hath given understanding to the heart?

37 Who can [d] number the clouds in wisdom? or [e] who can † stay the bottles of heaven,

38 When the dust ‡ groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together?

39 [f] Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the § appetite of the young lions,

40 When [g] they couch in *their* dens, *and* abide in the covert to lie in wait?

41 [h] Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they

a Ex. 9:23—25,29. Lev. 10:2. Num. 11:1. 16:35. 2 K. 1:10,14. Rev. 11: 5,6.
* Heb. *Behold us.* 1 Sam. 22:12. Is. 6:8. *marg.* 65:1.
b 32:8. Ps. 51:6. Prov. 2:6. Ec. 2:26. Jam. 1:5,17.
c Ex. 31:3. 36:1,2. Is. 28:26.
d Gen. 15:5. Ps. 147:4.
e Gen. 8:1. 9:15.
† Heb. *cause to lie down.*
‡ Or, *is turned into mire.* Heb. *is poured.*
f 4:10,11. Ps. 34:10. 104:21. 145:15, 16.
§ Heb. *life.*
g Gen. 49:9. Num. 23:24. 24:9.
h Ps. 104:27,28. 147:9. Matt. 6:26. Luke 12:24.

maud and cognizance; we have not. 1. We cannot alter the influences of the stars, or the ordinary course of nature, (*v.* 31.) Gen. 1:14. not the *Pleiades*, or the seven stars, a constellation which lies in so small a compass, (none in less,) yet sheds very benign influences on the earth; those of *Orion*, or that magnificent constellation which makes so great a figure, (none greater,) and dispenses rough and unpleasing influences. But God can change both summer and winter when He pleases, can make the spring cold, and so bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, and the winter warm, and so loose the bands of Orion. 2. We cannot bring forth *Mazzaroth*—the stars in the southern signs, nor guide *Arcturus*—those in the northern, *v.* 32. God appoints their rising and setting. 3. We are not only unconcerned in the government of the stars, but utterly unacquainted with it; we *now not the ordinances of heaven*, *v.* 33. So far from being able to change them, we can give no account of them: they are a secret to us. Shall we then pretend to know God's counsels, and their reasons?

III. God is the Author and Giver, the Father and Fountain, of all wisdom and understanding, *v.* 36. The souls of men are nobler and more excellent than the stars. The faculties of reason with which man is endued, and the wonderful performances of thought, bring him into some alliance to the blessed angels; and whence comes this light, but from the Father of lights? We did not make our own souls, nor can we describe how they act, or how they are united to our bodies. He only, that made them, knows them, and knows how to manage them. He fashioneth men's hearts alike in some things, and yet unlike in others. True wisdom, with its furniture and improvement, comes from Him as the God of grace, and the Father of every good and perfect gift. Shall we then pretend to be wiser than God, who have all our wisdom from Him? Nay, shall we pretend to be wise above our sphere, and beyond the limits He that gave us our understanding sets to it?

IV. God has the clouds under his cognizance and government, but so have not we, *v.* 37. Can any man, with all his wisdom, undertake to number them? or (as it may be read) to declare and describe their nature? Though near us, in our own atmosphere, yet we know little more of them than of the stars at their great distance. And when they pour down rain in abundance, so that *the dust grows into* solid mire, and *the clods cleave fast together*, (*v.* 38.) *who can stay* them, that it may not always rain? The power and goodness of God are *herein* to be acknowledged, that He gives the earth rain enough, but does not surfeit it; softens it, but does not drown it; makes it fit for the plough, but not unfit for the seed.

V. God provides food, not we, for the inferior creatures. The following ch. is wholly taken up with the instances of God's power and goodness about animals; therefore some transfer to it the last three vs. of this ch. which speak of the provision made,

1. For the *lions*, *v.* 39, 40. 'Thou dost not pretend the clouds and stars have any dependence on thee, for they are above thee; but, on the earth, thou thinkest thyself paramount, valuest thyself on thy possessions of cattle which thou wast once owner of, the oxen, and asses, and camels, that were fed at thy crib. But wilt thou undertake the maintenance of the lions? No, thou needest not, they can shift for themselves without thee: thou canst not, for thou hast not wherewithal to satisfy them: thou darest not; shouldest thou come to feed them, they would be upon thee. But I do it.' See the all-sufficiency of the Divine Providence: it has wherewithal to satisfy the desire of every living thing, even the most ravenous. See its bounty, in that, wherever it has given life, it will give livelihood, even to creatures not only not serviceable, but dangerous, to man; and see its sovereignty, [and benevolent wisdom,] that it suffers some creatures to be killed for the support of other creatures, the harmless sheep, to fill the appetite of the young lions; [making even universal death 'favorable to the enjoyment not only of the race, but of each individual animal while life is given. Old age to such would prove a burden;' 'and by their production without restraint, creatures would be multiplied beyond all limits, till even the globe itself could not contain them. The preservation of each individual produced, would lead to the ultimate destruction of the species.' See *G. Combe*, and *St. Pierre*.]

2. For the *young ravens*, *v.* 41. As ravenous beasts, so ravenous birds, are fed by the Divine Providence. The ravens, young ones, are specially necessitous, and God supplies them, Ps. 147: 9. God's feeding the fowls, specially these, Matt. 6:26. is an encouragement to us to trust Him for our daily bread. The ravens, they say, neglect their young: and indeed those that are ravenous

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of her fecundity, and poisoned her productions. What is said of the stars (marking influential residences of the sun) in the zodiac, applies to those out of, but related to it by position. It being perceived that, every year, when a particular star arose in the morning for the first time, at the end of night, after having disappeared for some time, at setting; or when the same star, after having been seen, at last ceased to be, and disappeared for some time, the sun was in a certain sign, and produced in sublunary nature a certain effect: then the star was connected with the sign, and seemed to share its *influence*.[Vs. 31,33.] Thus Sirius passed in Egypt for the cause of the overflowings of the Nile. [*Bailly* notices another division of the zodiac by the moon, 'which being perceived to run through the zodiac, between 27 and 28 hours, caused its division into 27 parts among the Siamese and Indians, and 28 with all nations of high antiquity, as the Arabs, Chinese, Persians, Indians. These divisions were marked by conspicuous stars *in* the zodiac, and when these did not occur there, they chose stars out of the zodiac, even as far as 40° of Lat. The divisions were called *residences*, *houses*, in the Chinese, and Coptic, or ancient Egyptian,' &c. The Chaldeans made all the stars into 24 constellations, 12 for the N. and 12 for the S. hemisphere: other nations more.] Regarding as the 1st sign that which about 2500 B. C. answered to the vernal equinox, the 1*st div.* of the zodiac was figured by an *ox* or *bull*, and so on, the 12th by a *ram*. The retrocession of the equinoxial node [note, 9:9.] caused the 12th to become, in the course of ages, the 1st, and afterwards the 2d, yielding its place in turn to *the fishes*, which now occupy the 1st div. of the zodiac. ['The most anciently observed of all the constellations, were the Pleiades and the Bull. *Goguet* would fix Job's time at 1730 B. C.; but if by *Kymah* we understand *the Pleiades*, as announcing spring in Job's time, it places his era at 3000 B. C. if we understand *Aldebaran*, 3700 B. C.' *Bailly*.]—The 7 planets were distributed among the zodiacal signs. The sun and moon had one sign each, as file-leaders; the 10 other inferior places were assigned in two files, thus: the Sun had the Lion, the Moon the Crab; below were ranged in order, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. Mercury had the Twins and the Virgin; Venus, the Bull and the Balance; Mars, the Ram and the Scorpion; Jupiter had his station between the Fishes and the Archer. The cut (a) gives the signs, each one with the effigy of the planet which has there its assigned house.—Each sign was also divided into three parts, and the planets had a new distribution among these 36 parts.' 'The Egyptians had their 36 *decani*,(of 10° each,) again divided into three parts, and presided over by 108 divinities. The Chinese appropriated a mark and a planet to each *decan*.' *Bailly*. The drawing out of these several divisions and subdivisions of the heavens, gave rise to the *wheel-shaped* planispheres, horoscopes and zodiacs of ancient monuments, and modern astrology. Comp. notes, Gen. 37: 9. 49. *concl.* ED.

Sons.] I. e. the three stars of the tail of the bear, as is generally thought: note, 9:9. ID.

(33.) *Ordinances.*] Sept. *tropas*, commentationes. (*Walt.*) Vulg. *ordinem*. Syr. and Arab. *legem*. Chal. *statuta*. (*Walt.*) *Dominion*.] Vulg. *rationem*, Sept. *homothymadon;* things done at the same moment. (*Walt.*) Syr. and Arab. *legem*. Chal. the reason (ratio) of its (the heaven's) revolution. An ancient idea, common over the world, see note, v. 31, 32. and Dan. 4:26. Heb. *huggoth*—(statuta) *mishtaro* (dominium). *Walt.* and so *Rosenm.* &c. See note, *vs.* 31, 32. ID.

(37.) *Bottles*, or pitchers, *of heaven*.] In illustration of this ancient image, a cut is inserted of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, which *Champollion* gives, as 'figurative and symbolico-phonetic groups expressing

(a) and (b) the *water* of the Nile, and the *overflowing* of that river;' (c) symbolic, *libation, making of libations;* (d) *purification*, and *to purify;* (e) a *priest*, i. e. one who makes libations; (f) the letter *vav, ou, u, o, oy, upsilon, omega*, (?) being the initial sound of the Coptic word for *overflowing* water, *oub*, or *oeb*, or for *water*, *oumoou*, or *oemooe*. (?) 'The image in the text is similar to the inclined urn, which the heathens place in the hand of a river god.' *Schultens*. ID.

CONCLUDING NOTE. 'The poet having worked up his drama with the most admirable skill, in this ch. represents the Deity as interrogating Job, in the loftiest style, and the boldest images. A celebrated ancient writer, [Longinus,] in a Treatise on the Sublime, shows how much interrogations contribute to it. This speech of the Almighty is made up of them; and indeed it seems to be the proper style of incensed majesty. He who asks the guilty a proper question, makes him in effect pass sentence on himself.' ORTON

wander for lack of meat.

CHAP. XXXIX.

God shows his own power, and man's weakness and ignorance, by instancing from among animals, the wild goats and hinds, 1—4; the wild ass, 5—8; the unicorn, 9—12; the peacock and ostrich, 13—18; the war-horse, 19—25; the hawk and eagle, 26—30.

KNOWEST thou the time when [a] the wild goats of the rock bring forth? *or* canst thou mark [b] when the hinds do calve?

2 Canst thou number [c] the months *that* they fulfil? or knowest thou the time when they bring forth?

3 They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows.

4 Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not unto them.

5 ¶ Who hath sent

a 1 Sam. 24:2. Ps. 104:18.
b Ps. 29:9. Jer. 14:5.
c Jer. 2:24.

to others, are commonly barbarous to their own, and unnatural. In that distress, they cry; for they are noisy, clamorous creatures; and this is interpreted a crying to God. It being the distress of nature, it is looked upon as directed to the God of nature. The putting of so favorable a construction as this on the cries of the young ravens, may encourage us in our prayers, though we can but cry, *Abba, Father*. Some way or other, God provides for them, so that they grow up, and come to maturity. And He that takes this care of them, certainly will not be wanting to his people, or theirs.

CHAP. XXXIX. God proceeds here to show Job what little reason he had to charge Him with unkindness, who was so compassionate to the inferior creatures, and took such a tender care of them; or to boast of himself, and his own good deeds before God, which were nothing to the divine mercies. He shows him also, what great reason he had to be humble, who knew so little of the nature of the creatures about him, and had so little influence on them, and to submit to that God on whom they all depend.

V. 1—12. God here shows Job what little acquaintance he had with the untamed creatures that run wild in the deserts, and live at large, but are the care of the Divine Providence. As,

1. The *wild goats* and the *hinds*. What is noticed concerning them, is, the bringing forth, and bringing up, of their young ones, *v.* 3, 4. For as every individual is fed, so every species of animals is preserved, by the care of the Divine Providence, and, for aught we know, none extinct [since man's creation, perhaps. ED.] to this day. Some think it is intimated, (Ps. 29: 9.) that God by thunder helps the hinds in calving. Let it be observed, for the comfort of women in labor: and let the young hinds (*v.* 4.) be an example to children, when grown up, not to be always hanging on their parents, and cravings from them, but to put forth themselves to get their own livelihood, and to requite their parents.

2. The *wild ass;* a creature we frequently read of in Scripture; some say, untameable. Man is said to be born as the wild ass's colt, so hard to be governed. The tame ass is bound to labor, but the wild ass has unbounded liberty, *v.* 5. no bonds on him. Note, Freedom from service, and liberty to range at pleasure, are but the privileges of a wild ass. It is a pity any of human kind should covet it, or value themselves on it. It is better to labor and be good for something, than ramble and be good for nothing. But if, among men, Providence sets some at liberty, and suffers them to live at ease, while others are doomed to servitude, we must not marvel at the matter, it is so among the brute-creatures. Observe, The tame ass, that labors, and is serviceable to man, has his master's crib to go to, both for shelter and food, and lives in a fruitful land: but the wild ass, that will have his liberty, must have it in a barren land. He that will not labor, let him not eat. He that will, shall eat the labor of his hands, and have also to give to him that needs. Jacob, the shepherd, had good red pottage to spare, when Esau, a sportsman, was ready to perish for hunger. A further description of the liberty and livelihood of the wild ass we have, *v.* 7, 8. He has no owner, nor will he be in subjection: *he scorns the multitude of the city*. He laughs at those that live in the tumult and bustle of cities, (so Patrick,) thinking himself happier in the wilderness; and opinion is

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PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The condescension of the God of glory, in making Himself known to sinful man for his humiliation, instead of executing vengeance on him for his rebellion, demands our highest admiration, and our warmest gratitude: and the most tremendous method, by which He abases a sinner in the dust, should be acknowledged as the effect of his mercy; for it tends to comfort, and joy, and salvation.—When the wisest of men presume to intrude into those 'secret things which belong to God,' and to be 'wise above what is written,' they are sure to 'darken counsel by words without knowledge,' and perhaps undesignedly to serve the cause of impiety, or skepticism: so that numbers, who have been vain of their acute, learned, and accurate reasonings on mysterious subjects, and who have been admired for their sagacity and judgment, will meet with such a rebuke from the Lord, as Job did, or rather one far more severe. We should then be very careful, in all our investigations, not to exceed our assigned limits; not to go out of our depth; nor to leave the friendly shore of the Word of God, to launch into the immense ocean of *infinities*. Conscious of our ignorance, guilt, and weakness, it becomes us to speak with trembling humility and reverence, when the perfections, decrees, or operations of God are our subject. (*Ps.* 139: 4—6.)—But indeed none of us are suitably impressed with awe of the infinite majesty of God: our appeals to Him generally savor of presumption.—Though He sometimes deigns to reason with his creatures, and to demonstrate his equity in his dealings with them; yet He more generally silences the arrogant objector, by a display of his infinite power, authority, and majesty, as more becoming the Sovereign of the world. Indeed, all nature proclaims his glory: no creature fully comprehends his works; but contemplation of them, with adoring and exulting praises, forms the delight of each intelligent being, in exact proportion to the extent of his powers, and the degree of his holiness. And, in proportion as the new creating-Spirit renders us like the [angels] in knowledge and holiness; we shall become capable of participating their exalted joys, and find pleasures of which we now have scarcely a conception.—But, the boasted knowledge of mankind is in fact a very small matter: the best informed perceive most of their own ignorance in every thing: none can fully understand the most common *phænomena* of nature; and after all the discoveries of modern times, they remain, in some respects, as inexplicable as ever.—Indeed, we are of yesterday; our days are passing away as a shadow: and a humble willingness to be taught of God, and to credit his 'sure testimony,' as contained in the sacred oracles, with a diligent attention to our proper interest and duty, as fallen creatures under a dispensation of mercy, are infinitely preferable to all the learning of the schools. Not that learning should be depreciated; provided it be accompanied with humility, kept in its proper place, directed to its proper objects, and not allowed to interfere within the province of revelation and faith. Yet even in natural things man's scanty measure of knowledge avails him but little; for he still finds himself unable to effect those alterations, which might give him ease, or conduce to his comfort. [See, however, notes on chs. 34, 36.] The constancy and exactness, with which natural effects are produced, should remind us of the faithfulness of the Lord's promises, and the immutability of his counsel; and excite us to be constant and exact in our course of daily worship and obedience.* SCOTT.

* We must be careful not to make the abuse of knowledge, all knowledge, an argument against its use: for the more true knowledge we have, when the heart is right, the better 'obedience' can we give to God. Nor can we, without knowledge, understand what is the 'province of revelation,' and what of faith; but must fall, bound hand and foot, into superstitious belief. Indolence would prefer this, the mere contemplative faith, as taught by many of the Asiatics of all ages; and some expect that simple faith will inspire with necessary knowledge; or 'the new-creating Spirit' will do it when we already have other means; this, too, gratifies human indolence and pride; Christ says, *he that doeth God's will shall know of the doctrine;* the Bible inculcates a well directed activity of *all* our powers, as duty: and when God's sovereignty has so richly endowed us with the means of knowledge, we may not say that a display of power, appealing to fear and wonder only, is more *becoming* 'the Sovereign of the world' than appeals to our other faculties. Pride does not belong to God; it is *overbearing* self-complacency, a mortal feeling. How indispensable is a true philosophy of mind and matter, knowledge, as well as humility and faith, to the *full education* of the physical, animal, intellectual, and moral man! When thus educated, the reach and the limits of our nature will be known, and we shall fitly receive the communications of God, and be suitably affected by the displays of his power; a loving reverence will take the place of tormenting fear, true humility of pernicious meanness, the unbounded confidence of faith will forever deliver us from the disquieting whispers of distrust, the agonies of that despair which those will know who love not God. But see on Ps. 19. *Ed.*

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIX. V. 1—4. In this ch. some animals are selected, the nature or situation of which is peculiarly illustrative of the power, wisdom, and manifold works of God: and the questions proposed concerning them, were suited to convince Job how little he knew or could do. The several species of the wild goats, and hinds, are continued from age to age; but not by the care of man. They bring forth their young with difficulty and pain, yet need no human help; soon forget their sorrows; and their young, being active and vigorous, are in a short time able to shift for themselves, by entering the corn-fields, as well as pastures and meadows, notwithstanding the precautions of the owner. SCOTT.

(1.) *Wild goats of the rock.*] Generally understood to be the *Ibex;* see *Bush's* 'Illustrations of Scripture,' and *Rob. Calm.* 'Understandest thou the process, the course and progress of parturition, how the bones grow, and acquire solidity in the womb, &c. The mountain goat goes 5 months with young.' *Good.* ED.

(3.) *Sorrows.*] '*Chebleyhem;* the *placenta*, or the umbilical cord, has been understood.' [A reference to the latter is exceedingly common in Arabic poetry.] Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 5—8.

Wild-ass.] Note, Judg. 5:10. Comp. *Porter's* description of this animal, the *onager*, Heb. *phere.—Bands of the wild-ass.*] 'Heb. *orud*, *brayer;* the *wild-mule*, or jickta, the *equus* Hemionus, of *Pallas:* with

out [d] the wild ass free? or [e] who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?

6 Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the * barren land his dwellings.

7 He [f] scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the † driver.

8 [g] The range of the mountains *is* his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing.

9 ¶ Will [h] the unicorn be willing to serve thee, [i] or abide by thy crib?

10 Canst thou [k] bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee?

11 Wilt thou [l] trust him, because his strength *is* great? or [m] wilt thou leave thy labor to him?

12 Wilt thou believe him that [n] he will bring home thy seed, and [o] gather *it into* thy barn?

13 ¶ *Gavest thou* the goodly wings unto the [p] peacocks? or ‡ wings and feathers unto the [q] ostrich?

14 Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the dust,

15 And forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them.

16 She is [r] hardened against her young ones, [s] as though *they were* not hers: [t] her labor is in vain without fear;

17 Because God hath [u] deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he

the rate of things. The range of the mountains is his pasture, a bare pasture; there he searches here and there after a green thing, as he can find it and pick it up, for he has no owner; whereas the laboring asses have green things in plenty, without searching. From the untameableness of this and other creatures, we may infer how unfit *we* are to give law to Providence, who cannot give law even to a wild ass's colt.

3. The unicorn; *Rhem;* a strong creature, (Num. 92: 22.) a stately, proud creature, Ps. 63: 10. He is able to serve, but not willing; and God here challenges Job to force him to it. Job expected every thing should be just as he would have it. 'Since thou dost pretend' (says God) 'to bring every thing beneath thy sway, begin with the unicorn. *Will he abide by thy crib?* No, Thou canst not tame him, nor *bind him with his band,* nor set him to *draw the harrow;* nor will he bring home thy seed, nor gather it into thy barn,' *v.* 10—12. There are creatures that are willing to serve man, and seem to take a pleasure in it, and to have a love for their masters; but there are such as will never be brought to it; and it is the effect of sin: man is revolted from his subjection to his Maker, and is therefore justly punished with the revolt of the inferior creatures from their subjection to him; and yet, as an instance of God's good-will to man, there are some that are still serviceable to him. By the unicorn here, some think is meant the wild bull. 'Thou darest not trust him; though his strength is great, yet thou wilt not *leave thy labor to him;* thou wilt never depend on him; for *therefore* he will not draw the plough, because He that made him never designed him for it. A disposition to labor is as much the gift of God, as an ability for it; and it is a great mercy, if, where God gives strength for service, He gives a heart; it is what we should pray for, and reason ourselves into, which the brutes cannot do; for, as among beasts, so among men, those may justly be reckoned wild and abandoned to the deserts, who have no mind either to take pains, or to do good.

V. 13—18. The ostrich is a wonderful animal, a very large bird, but it never flies. Some have called it *a winged camel.* God here gives an account of it.

1. In common with the peacock, it has beautiful feathers, *v.* 13. *Gavest thou proud wings unto the peacocks?* So some read it. Fine feathers make proud birds. The peacock is an emblem of pride; the ostrich too is a foolish bird; for wisdom does not always go along with beauty and gaiety. Other birds do not envy the peacock or the ostrich their gaudy colors, nor complain for want of them; why then should we repine, if we see others wear better clothes than we can afford? God gives his gifts variously; and those gifts are not always the most valuable, that make the finest show. Who would not rather have the voice of the nightingale, than the tail of the peacock; the eye of the eagle, and her soaring wing, and the natural affection of the stork, than the beautiful wings and feathers of the ostrich, which can never rise above the earth, and is without natural affection? We must suppose, either that God, by a special providence, with the heat of the sun and the sand (so some think) hatches the neglected eggs of the ostrich, as He feeds the neglected young ones of the raven; or that, though the ostrich *often* leaves her eggs thus, yet not *always.* The reason why she thus exposes her eggs, is, she is without natural affection, *v.* 16. To be hardened against any is unamiable, even in a brute, much more in a rational creature that boasts of humanity; especially to be hardened against young ones. V. 17. intimates, that the art other animals have to nourish and preserve their young, is God's gift; and that, where it is not, God denies it, that, by the folly of the ostrich, as well as by the wisdom of the ant, we may learn to be wise; for, careless as the ostrich is of her eggs, many people are as careless of their own souls; and many parents of their own children. Thus their labor in rearing them becomes vain; and it were better for their country they had never been born. Are not also too many ministers equally careless of

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[d] 6:5. 11:12. 24:5. Gen. 16:12. Ps. 104:11. Is. 32:14. Jer. 2:24. 14:6. Dan. 5:21. Hos. 8:9.

[e] Gen. 49:14.

* Heb. *salt places.* Deut. 29:23. Ps. 107:34. *marg.* Jer. 17:6. Ez. 47:11.

[f] 18. 3:18. Is. 31:4.

† Heb. *exactor.* Ex. 5:13—16,18. Is. 58:3.

[g] 40:15,20—22. Gen. 1:29,30. Ps. 104: 27,28. 145:15,16.

[h] Num. 23:22. Deut. 33:17. Ps. 22:21. 92:10.

[i] Is. 1:3.

[k] 5,7. 1:14. 41:5. Ps. 129:3. Hos. 10:10,11. Mic. 1:13.

[l] Ps. 20:7. 33:19,17. 147:10. Is. 30: 16. 31:1—3.

[m] Gen. 1:26,28. 9:2. 42:26. Ps. 144: 14. Prov. 14:4. Is. 30:6. 46:1.

[n] Neh. 13:15. Am. 2:13.

[o] Prov. 3:10. Hag. 2:19. Matt. 3:12. 13:30.

[p] 2 K. 10:22. 2 Chr. 9:21.

‡ Or, *the feathers of the stork and ostrich.* Lev. 11:19. Ps. 104:17. Jer. 8:7. Zech. 5:9.

[q] 30:29. *marg.*

[r] Lam. 4:3.

[s] Deut. 28:56,57. 1 K. 3:26,27. 2 K. 6:28,29. Lam. 2:20. Rom. 1:31.

[t] Ec. 10:15. Hab. 2:13.

[u] 17:4. 35:11. Deut. 2:30. 2 Chr. 32: 31. Is. 19:11—14. 57:17. Jam. 1:17.

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solid hoofs, an uniform color, no cross on the back, and the tail hairy at the tip only; color, brownish above, white beneath, with a blackish list along the back. It inhabits Arabia, China, Siberia and Tartary, in grassy, saline plains, or salt wastes (*v.* 6.); but avoids woods and snowy mountains; is timid, swift, untameable; its hearing and smell acute; *neighing* more *sonorous* than that of a horse; in size and habits resembling a mule; but is not a hybrid; like the zebra as to ears and tail, the ass as to hoofs and body; the horse as to limbs; length 8 ft. the animal I think called *jumar* by the Arabs. The Mongolians call it *Dschikketai* (Pennant); the Chinese, Yo-to-tse. Dr. Shaw, (from the Mongolian,) *jickta.*' Good.

Verses 9—12.

The *rhinoceros* (which is generally supposed to be here intended,) is possessed of immense strength: (*M. R. h. Note, Num.* 23:22.) and might perform proportionable labor, if he could be made to bear the yoke as the passive ox does. Yet Job was not so absurd as to expect this from him; nor would he depend on his assistance to plough his land, or gather in his harvest: knowing that it would be vain and dangerous, to attempt any thing of this kind with so powerful and fierce a creature. But was it not far more perilous to quarrel with the allotments of the Almighty? Scott.

(9.) *Unicorn.*] Note, Num. 23.22. 'The Heb. *reem* is still the Arabic for *rhinoceros.*' *Good.* Ed.

(12.) *Seed.*] 'Harvest; *barn* (*arn*) area or threshing-floor.' *Good.* Notes, 1 Sam. 23:1. Cut, Deut. 25:4. Id.

Verses 13—18.

The Creator has divided his gifts among his creatures as He saw good; and in this, and in every other thing, his will and wisdom should be implicitly submitted to. (*M.*) The ostrich is remarkable for its stupid insensibility in various respects. But when she is alarmed for her own safety, she uses her wings to assist her in running, and in this many exceeds in swiftness the fleetest animals which have no wings. Scott.—The accounts of the ostrich are somewhat contradictory, especially as regards her parental affection: see a full description of the animal, from Dr. *Shaw,* in Dr. *A. Clarke.* Perhaps the habits, &c. of the African ostrich are somewhat different from those of the Arabian: but a French writer asserts, that 'the only difference between the ostrich of Africa and that of Hindostan is in color and size. If their forms were alike, the mass of the black ostrich would be double that of the grey.' The black 'African or true ostrich is 7 to 9 ft. high.' *Enc. Am.* 'The male is accompanied by from 2 to 6 females, who all lay their eggs (disposed, the smaller end inwards, in circles,) in the same nest, (hollowed in the earth,) and *incubate by turns,* [*v.* 16.] during the day. The male takes their place at night, both to keep up the heat and defend the eggs. A nest contains from 12 even to 60 eggs, but generally from 24 to 32. Incubation does not stop the laying: the last laid eggs, however, are not placed in the nest, but aside, reserved for nourishment to the young when first they break the egg. They incubate 36 to 40 days. Nests sometime contain eggs broken to pieces, for, when the ostrich finds her nest discovered, she breaks her eggs.' [*V.* 16.] The French writer, who extracts this account, considers it contradictory to Scripture; but, if true, is it not strictly reconcilable to it, even in our translation? How probable that some of 6 parents should *forget* some of 50 eggs, all in the same nest; how little would they distinguish their own from others [*v.* 16.]; how different the parental care which feeds part of the brood on another part, from the tenderness of most birds, particularly the stork and eagle. Surely we cannot have a great opinion of the wisdom according to *vulgar opinion*) of a bird, who breaks her eggs to save them from harm. *Shaw,* too, states that they devour their excrement greedily, and that he *saw* an ostrich swallow a 'bullet scorching hot from the mould, without uneasiness.' It is well known to swallow iron, stones, &c. which are but slightly acted upon in their passage, and are not of course digested and assimilated. The bird, in flight, runs in a circle, which enables the Arabs, by changing horses, at last to run it down: these two classes of facts, also, agree with v. 17. The *Enc. Am.* says, 'no bird has a stronger affection for its offspring, or watches its nest with more assiduity. *Contrary to the general opinion,* she always broods over her eggs [the whole 40?] at night, [comp. above,] only leaving them during the hottest part of the day. If the eggs be touched, she destroys them.' But, says Dr. *Shaw,* 'a very little of that *storge,* or natural affection, so strong in other animals, is observable in the ostrich. For, upon the

imparted to her understanding.

18 What time she lifteth up herself on high, [x] she scorneth the horse and his rider.

[*Practical Observations.*]

19 ¶ Hast thou given [y] the horse strength? hast thou [z] clothed his neck with [a] thunder?

20 Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? [b] the glory of his nostrils * *is* terrible.

21 † He paweth in the valley, [c] and rejoiceth in *his* strength: [d] he goeth on to meet the ‡ armed men.

22 He [e] mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.

23 [f] The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.

24 [g] He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: [h] neither believeth he that *it is* the sound of the trumpet.

25 He saith among the trumpets, [i] Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

26 ¶ Doth [k] the hawk fly by thy wisdom, *and* stretch her wings toward the south?

27 Doth [m] the eagle mount up § at thy command, and [n] make her nest on high?

28 She dwelleth and

their people, with whom they should reside; but they leave them in the earth, and forget how busy Satan is to sow tares while men sleep. They overlook those whom they should oversee, and are really hardened against them.

2. Mark what care the ostrich has of herself. She leaves her eggs in danger, but, if she herself be in danger, no creature shall strive better to get out of the way. Then she lifts up her wings on high, and a horseman, at full speed, cannot overtake her, *v.* 18. Those that are least under the law of natural affection, often contend most for the law of self-preservation.

V. 19—25. God, having displayed his own power in those creatures that are strong, and despise man, here shows it in one scarcely inferior to any of them in strength, and yet very tame, and serviceable to man, the *horse;* especially, *the horse that is prepared against the day of battle*, and is serviceable to man at a time when he has more than ordinary occasion for his service. It seems there was, in Job's country, a noble, generous breed of horses. Job, it is probable, kept many, though they are not mentioned among his possessions; cattle for use in husbandry being there valued more than those for state and war, which alone, horses were then reserved for.

High mettle is the praise of a *horse* rather than of a *man*, whom fierceness and rage ill become. This description of the war-horse will help to explain that character given of presumptuous sinners, Jer. 8: 6. *Every one turneth to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.* When a man's heart is fully set in him to do evil, and he is carried on in a wicked way by the violence of inordinate appetites and passions, there is no making him afraid of the wrath of God, and the fatal consequences of sin. Let his own conscience set before him the curse of the law, the death, that is the wages of sin, and all the terrors of the Almighty, in battle-array; he mocks at this fear, and is not affrighted, neither turns he back from the flaming sword of the cherubim. Let ministers lift up their voice like a trumpet, to proclaim the wrath of God against him, *he believes not that it is the sound of the trumpet*, nor that God and his heralds are in earnest with him; but what will be the end is easy to foresee.

V. 26—30. The birds of the air also are proofs of the wonderful power and providence of God. Two stately ones are specified,

1. The *hawk*, a noble bird, of great strength and sagacity, and yet a bird of prey, *v.* 26. here noticed for her flight, which is swift and strong, and especially for the course she steers *toward the south*, whither she follows the sun in winter, out of the colder countries in the north, especially when she is to cast her plumes, and renew them. This is her wisdom, and it was God, and not man, that gave it her. Pity, the reclaimed hawk, which is taught to fly at man's command, and to make him sport, should at any time be abused to the dishonor of God, since from God she receives that wisdom which makes her flight entertaining and serviceable.

2. The *eagle*, a royal bird, and yet a bird of prey too, the permission of which, nay, the giving of power to which, may help to reconcile us to the prosperity of oppressors among men. The eagle is here noticed, (1.) For the height of her flight; no bird soars so high, has so strong a wing, nor can so well bear the light of the sun, *v.* 27. (2.) For the strength of her nest, which sets her and her young out of the reach of danger, *v.* 28. Secure sinners think themselves as safe in their sins as the eagle in her nest on high, in the *clefts of the rock*, Jer. 49: 16. *But I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord.* The higher bad men sit above the resentments of the earth, the nearer they ought to think themselves to the vengeance

x 7,22. 5:22. 41:29. 2 K. 19:21.
y Ex. 15:1,21. Ps. 147:10.
z Ps. 93:1. 104:1.
a 25. Mark 3:17.
b 41:20,21. Jer. 8:16.
* Heb. *terrors*.
† Or, His feet *dig*. Ju lg. 5:22.
c 1 Sam. 17:4—10,42. Ps. 19:5. Jer. 9:23.
d Prov. 21:31. Jer. 8:6.
‡ Heb. *armor*.
e 16,18. 41:33.
f 41:26—29.
g 37:20. Hab. 1:8,9.
h 9:16. 29:24. Luke 24:41.
i Ps. 70:3. Ez. 26:2. 36:2.
k Lev. 11:16. Deut. 14:15.
l Cant. 2:12. Jer. 8:7.
m Ex. 19:4. Lev. 11:13. Ps. 103:5. Prov. 23:5. Is. 40:31. Hos. 8:1.
§ Heb. *by the mouth*.
n Jer. 49:16. Ob. 4.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—18. The infinite power, wisdom, and goodness of God are legible in all the variety of his creatures. Every species of animals reminds us of our ignorance and impotence: they continue as God has created them, and we can neither understand whence their different propensities arise, nor yet alter them: we often can derive no benefit from them; nay, some of them seem a nuisance to us, nor can we know for what purpose they were created. Yet we should acknowledge the wisdom of God, and submit to his will: we ought to be thankful for the benefit derived from some, and to be patient under the inconveniences occasioned by others: and we may learn from them, to confide in his kind providence, and to aim to answer the end of our creation.—It is very absurd for rational creatures to be vain of personal beauty, strength, courage, agility, or external decorations; when they are eclipsed in them all by the various species of brutes.—It is lamentable to observe, that many human beings are more stupid, and hardened against their young, than the very ostrich, the disgrace of the animal tribes. By contemptuous defiance or forgetfulness of God, or vain attempts to hide or excuse their sins, men plainly show that God has *judicially* deprived them of understanding. SCOTT.

least distant noise, or trivial occasion, she forsakes her eggs, or young, to which, perhaps, she never returns; or if she do, it may be too late to restore, or preserve life. So the Arabs sometimes find whole nests of undisturbed eggs, some sweet and good, others addle and corrupted; others again have their young of different growths, according to the assumed time since they were forsaken. They often meet a few of the little ones, no bigger than well grown pullets, half-starved, straggling and moaning about, like so many distressed orphans, for their mother: *v.* 16. Lam. 4.3.' It is an easy assumption of wisdom, to reject 'vulgar opinions,' but is it not more truly wise to do it with reason? God, who knew how many of the species of ostrich could be supported in the barren desert, doubtless knew what instincts to give, and by what force to deny to common instincts, in the native inhabitants of those deserts, to accomplish his all-wise purposes in their creation. 'Ostriches make a loud, doleful noise in the night. [Note, Lev. 11:16.] I have often heard them groan as if in the greatest agonies. (Mic. 1:8.) *Jaanah*, therefore, and *rinonim*, the SS. name for ostrich, may very properly be deduced from *onah* and *ronan*, meaning to *cry out aloud*.' *Shaw.* Ostrich *feathers* are still highly prized, and the tribute paid to the kings of Egypt, as well as the use of the feather, as an honorable symbol, of justice, &c. (cuts, Ex. 25:18. 1:8. 2 Chr. 15:9. Ps. 62:9. &c.) on the earliest monuments, show that they have been valued ever since history began (*v.* 13.). ED.

(13.) 'The wing of the ostrich-tribe is for flapping, but of the stork and the falcon for flight.' *Good.*—The ostrich uses its wings only to increase its speed in running, which is so great, that '*Xenophon* says, Cyrus had horses that could overtake the goat and the wild ass; but none that could reach the ostrich [v. 18.]: 1000 golden ducats, or 100 camels, was the stated price of a horse that could.' *Young*, in Dr. *A. Clarke.* ID.

Verses 19—25.

This description of the horse has been universally admired, as inimitably sublime. It especially relates to those horses which are used in war; and in which the eastern countries have always excelled. (*Note, Ps.* 147:10, 11. 93:1, 2. *Gen.* 9:1, 2.) SCOTT.

(23.) The quiver (he bears) rattleth (with its arrows) against (his flanks), &c. The fleet and brave Arab troops of horse, have ever been a terror, from their agility, dexterity, equipments, and manner of attack, to the best disciplined foreign armies. ED.

(24.) 'He swalloweth with his *motion* and *concussion* the ground.' (*Rosenm.*) I. e. it disappears before him, in his rapid course, as if swallowed out of sight. A striking figure, exactly conveying the idea experienced by one who moves very swiftly over the earth. There seems a shaking, gliding motion, the ground seems to hurry by like a stream, or like gurgling water passing into the throat,) and appears to be instantly swallowed up, especially if the look be directed straight forward. This is felt in the swiftest modern travelling. ED.—*Believeth.*] 'Most understand, he so joys in the war-trumpet, he can hardly for delight believe his senses that it actually sounds. Others; nor seems he to believe that it is a war trumpet's sound, so little does its noise affect him with fear. I prefer, with *Bochart*, "he cannot stand still, [for eagerness,] when he hears the trumpet."' ROSENM.

Verses 26—30.

(*Note, Matt.* 24:26—28.) SCOTT.

(26.) 'Most of the falcon tribe are migratory, they pass their spring or summer in cold climates, and wing their way towards warmer regions on the approach of winter. The flight of a strong falcon, says *Shaw*, is wonderfully swift.' *Good.* The hawk was the emblem of the god Hor among the Egyptians, and seems to have symbolized *wisdom.* ED.

abideth on the rock, upon [o] the crag of the rock, and the strong place.

29 From thence [p] she seeketh the prey, *and* her eyes behold afar off.

30 Her young ones also suck up blood: and [q] where the slain *are*, there *is* she.

CHAP. XL.

God calls on Job to answer, 1, 2. Job humbles himself, and will proceed no further, 3—5. God requires him to show by acts of power, that he is able to save himself, 6—14. The power of the Lord is shown in behemoth, 15—24.

MOREOVER, [a] the LORD answered Job, and said,

2 [b] Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty [c] instruct *him*? [d] he that reproveth God, let him answer it.

3 ¶ Then Job answered the LORD, and said,

4 [e] Behold, I am vile; [f] what shall I answer thee? [g] I will lay my hand upon my mouth.

5 Once have I spoken; [h] but I will not answer: yea, [i] twice; [k] but I will proceed no further.

6 ¶ Then answered the LORD unto Job [l] out of the whirlwind, and said,

o 1 Sam. 14:4.
p 9:26.
q Ez. 39:17—19. Matt. 24:28. Luke 17:37.
a 6. 38:1.
b 9:3. 33:13. Ec. 6:10. Is. 45:9—11. 50:8. 1 Cor. 10:22.
c Is. 40:14. 1 Cor. 2:16.
d 3:11,12,20,23. 7:12,19—21. 9:17,18, 32—35. 10:3—7,14—17. 13:21—27. 14:16,17. 16:11—21. 19:6—11. 27:2. 30:21—23. Ez. 18:2,25. Matt. 20:11—15. Rom. 9:19—23. 11:34—36.
e 42:6. Gen. 18:27. 32:10. 2 Sam. 24: 10. 1 K. 19:4. Ezra 9:6,15. Neh. 9:33. Ps. 51:4,5. Is. 6:5. 53:6 64: 6. Dan. 9:5,7. Luke 5:8. 15:18,19. 18:13 1 Tim. 1:15.
f 9:31—35. 16:21. 23:4—7. 31:37.
g 21:5. 29:9. Judg. 18:19. Ps. 39:9. Prov 30:32. Mic. 7:16. Hab. 2:20. Zech. 2:13.
h 34:31,32. Rom. 3:19
i 3:14. 2 K. 6:10. Ps. 62:11.
k Jer. 31:18 19.
l 38:1. Ps. 50:3,4. Heb. 12:18—20. 2 Pet. 3:10—12.

of Heaven. (3.) For her quicksightedness, *v.* 29. not upward, but downward, in quest of her prey. In this, she is an emblem of a hypocrite, who, while, in the profession of religion, he seems to rise toward heaven, keeps his eye and heart on the prey on earth, some temporal advantage, some widow's house or other, that he hopes to devour, under pretence of devotion. (4.) For the way she has of maintaining herself and her young; she preys on living animals, which she seizes and tears to pieces, and then carries to her young ones, who are taught to *suck up blood;* they do it by instinct, and know no better; but for men that have reason and conscience, to thirst after blood, is what could scarcely be believed, if there had not been, in every age, wretched instances of it. She also preys on the dead bodies of men; *where the slain are, there is she.* Our Savior refers to this instinct of the eagle, Matt. 24: 28. Every creature will make toward its proper food; for He that provides their food, has implanted that inclination. These, and many such instances of natural power and sagacity in the inferior creatures, which we cannot account for, oblige us to confess our own weakness and ignorance, and to give glory to God, as the Fountain of all being, power, wisdom, and perfection.

CHAP. XL. V. 1—5. Here is,

I. A humbling challenge God gave to Job, *v.* 1, 2; which stands by itself here as the application of the whole. It should seem, God paused to allow Job to answer; but he was in such confusion, he remained silent. As this is not said to be spoken *out of the whirlwind;* some think God said it in a still small voice, which wrought more upon Job than the whirlwind, as on Elijah, 1 K. 19: 12, 13. Though Job had not spoken, yet God is said to answer him; for He knows men's thoughts, and can return a suitable answer to their silence.

1. God's convincing question is a question with disdain; *Shall any teach God knowledge? ch.* 21: 22. Intimating, that those who quarrel with God, do, in effect, go about to teach Him how to mend his work. But is it a thing to be suffered, that any man should teach his Maker? Some read it, *Is it any wisdom to contend with the Almighty?* The answer is easy; No, it is the greatest folly in the world. Is it wisdom to contend with Him whom it will certainly be our ruin to oppose, and unspeakably our interest to submit to?

2. He demands a speedy reply; '*He that reproaches God, let him answer* this question to his own conscience, thus, '*Far be it from me to contend with the Almighty*, or to *instruct Him.*' Those have high thoughts of themselves, and mean thoughts of God, who reprove any thing He says or does.

II. Job's humble submission thereupon. The good man is here overcome by God's treatment of him, so much better and more candid than that of his friends, and yields himself a conquered captive to the grace of God. 1. Sensible he has sinned, he owns it, and therefore calls himself *vile, v.* 4. Sin debases us, and penitents abase themselves, reproach themselves, are ashamed, yea, even confounded. Job now vilifies, as much as ever he had justified and magnified himself: repentance changes men's opinion of themselves. His silence, he says, was not sullen, but because he was convinced he had been in the wrong. Those that are truly sensible of sinfulness and vileness, dare not justify themselves before God, but are ashamed that ever they entertained such a thought, and, in token of it, lay their hand on their mouth.

2. He promises so to offend no more; for Elihu had told him this was meet to say to God. When we have spoken amiss, we must repent of it, and not repeat nor stand to it. He enjoins himself silence, *v.* 4. It is bad to think amiss, but much worse to speak amiss, for that is an allowance of the evil thought, publishing of the seditious libel; therefore, *if thou hast thought evil, lay thy hand on thy mouth,* and let it go no further, and that will be an evidence for thee, that what thou thoughtest, thou allowest not. Job had suffered his evil thoughts to vent themselves; '*Once have I spoken* amiss, *yea twice,*' i. e. 'divers times; but I have done.' Observe, true repentance is to rectify our errors, and our false principles, in doing as we did. It is to return from every by-path, and to proceed not one step further in it; '*I will not add,*' so the word is; 'I will never indulge my passion so much again, nor give myself such a liberty of speech.' Till it comes to this, we come short of repentance. Further, Those who dispute with God, will be silenced. Job had been very forward in demanding a conference with God, and talked very boldly, how plain he would make his case, and how sure he was he should be justified; *as a prince he would go near unto Him,* (*ch.* 31: 37.) he would *come even to his seat;* (*ch.* 23: 3.) but he lets fall his plea. 'Lord, the wisdom and right are all on thy side, and I have done foolishly and wickedly in questioning it.'

V. 6—14. Job was greatly humbled for what God had already said, but not sufficiently; therefore God here proceeds to reason with him, in the same manner, and to the same purport, as before, *v.* 6. Observe, 1. Those who duly receive what they have heard from God, and profit by it, shall hear more from Him. 2. Those who are truly convinced of sin, and penitent for it, yet have need to be more thoroughly convinced, and to be made more deeply penitent. Those who are under convictions, who have their sins set in order before their eyes, and their hearts broken for them, must learn from this instance not to catch at comfort too soon; it will be everlasting when it comes, therefore prepare for it by deep humiliation, that the wound be searched to the bottom, and not healed slightly. When our hearts begin to melt and relent, let those considerations be dwelt upon and pursued, which will help to make a thorough, effectual softening.

God begins with a challenge, *v.* 7. as before, *ch.* 38: 3. and every proud heart must be ruined, or brought to confess, that we cannot vie with God,

1. For justice; that God is righteous and holy with us, but we are unrighteous and unholy toward Him, *v.* 8. Many of Job's complaints had too much of a tendency to accuse God's justice; *I cry out of wrong,* says he, *but I am not*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 19—30. Man, by nature, is prone to imitate the animals in their worst qualities. Like the wild ass, he scorns the yoke of God; and like the wild bull in the net, he rages against his corrections. Even his courage is generally unreasonable, instinctive, and furious, like that of a horse. His feet are swift to shed blood, or to venture his own life, when ambition, avarice, or revenge inspires him. Moreover, men naturally glory in their own strength and prowess, and rejoice in ostentatiously displaying them; and are more disposed to seek renown by rendering themselves terrible, than by becoming useful. [The nature, instincts, or propensities we have in common with the animals, indeed, predominate over man's highest nature, to our shame be it spoken, in all the earth.]—God forbid, we should be like the eagle only in soaring aloft, and in keenness of sight; but, reverencing the Divine Majesty, and abasing ourselves before Him in deep repentance, may we by faith and love mount upwards as on eagles' wings, till we obtain 'those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.' SCOTT.

(27.) *On high.*] Mark the contrasted variety of instincts! The ostrich has her careless nest on the ground; the eagle, most careful of her young, builds her long retained home, of such durable materials as to be almost indestructible, on high: each is diversely gifted with instincts corresponding to their relative situations, by an all-adjusting, all-wise benevolence! ED.

(30.) As the eagle is said not to feed except on what she kills herself, the word *slain,* forms an argument with some for tr. *nesher* (eagle) by '*the vulture,*' note, Matt. 24:28. *Cruden* says, some eagles [i. e. some species of the genus *falco?*] feed on carrion. 'When the bald eagle has fasted for some time, its appetite is extremely voracious and indiscriminate. Even the most putrid carrion is acceptable. The sight of the eagle is exquisite. [*V.* 29.] Few birds provide more abundantly for their young, than the bald eagle:' note, *v.* 27. *Enc. Am.* ED.

NOTES.

CHAP. XL. V. 1, 2. 'Does he who contends with the Almighty, draw back?' *E. Smith.*—By a trivial change of the vowel points, this rendering may be admitted. SCOTT.

Verses 3—5.

(*Notes*, 9:14—21. 10:3. 16:17—22. 42:1—6.) ID.

7 [m] Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

8 [n] Wilt thou also [o] disannul my judgment? [p] wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?

9 [q] Hast thou an arm like God? or [r] canst thou thunder with a voice like him?

10 [s] Deck thyself now *with* [t] majesty and excellency; and array thyself with [u] glory and beauty.

11 [x] Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and [y] behold every one *that is* proud, and abase him.

12 Look on every one *that is* proud, *and* bring him low; and [z] tread down the wicked [a] in their place.

13 [b] Hide them in the dust together; *and* [c] bind their faces in secret.

14 Then will I also confess unto thee, [d] that thine own right hand can save thee.

15 ¶ Behold now * behemoth, [e] which I made with thee; [f] he eateth grass as an ox.

16 Lo now, his

m 13:22. 23:3,4. 38:3.
n Ps. 51:4. Rom. 3:4.
o Is. 14:27. 28:13. Gal. 3:15,17. Heb. 7:18.
p 10:3. 27:2–6. 32:2. 34:5,6. 35:2,3.
q 9:4. 23:6. 33:12,13. Ex. 15:6. Ps. 89:10,13. Is. 45:9. 1 Cor. 10:22.
r 37:4,5. Ps. 29:3–9.
s 39:19. Is. 93:1. 104:1,2. Is. 59:17.
t 1 Chr. 29:11. Ps. 21:5. 45:3,4. Matt. 6:13. 2 Pet. 1:16,17. Jude 24,25.
u Ex. 28:2. Ps. 50:2. 90:16,17. 149:4. Is. 4:2. *Marg.* 1 Cor. 15:54.
x 20:23. 27:22. Deut. 32:22. Ps. 78:49,50. 144:6. Rom. 2:8,9.
y Ex. 9:16,17. 15:6–12. 19:11. Is. 2:11,12,17. 10:12–19. Ez. 28:2–9. Dan. 4:37. 5:20–23. Ob. 3,4. Mal. 4:1. Luke 18:14. Acts 12:22,23. Jam. 4:6. 1 Pet. 5:5,6.
z Ps. 60:12. Is. 10:6. Zech. 10:5. Mal. 4:3. Rom. 16:20. *Marg.*
a 38:20. Ec. 11:3. Acts 1:25.
b 14:13. Ps. 49:14. Is. 2:10.
c 36:13. Esth. 7:8. John 11:44.
d Ps. 44:3,6. Is. 40:29. Rom. 5:6. Eph. 2:4–9.
* Or, *the elephant*, as some think.
e Gen. 1:24–26.
f 20. 39:3. Ps. 104:14.

heard; but such language is by no means to be suffered. God's judgment cannot, must not, be disannulled, for we are sure it is according to truth, therefore it is great impudence and iniquity in us to call it in question. Our duty is to condemn ourselves, that God may be righteous; as David, Ps. 51: 4. See Neh. 9: 33. Dan. 9: 7.

2. For power; and therefore, as it is great impiety, so it is great impudence, to contest with Him, and we go as much against our interest, as we do against reason and right, *v.* 9. The power of creatures, even angels, is derived from God, limited by Him, and dependent on Him; but the power of God is original, independent, and unlimited.

3. For beauty and majesty; *v.* 10. God decks Himself with such majesty and glory, as are the terror of all the powers of darkness, and make them tremble; He arrays Himself with such glory and beauty, as are the wonder of angels, and all the saints in light, and make them rejoice. David could dwell all his days in God's house, to behold the beauty of the Lord. But, in comparison, what is all the majesty and excellency by which princes think to make themselves feared, and all the glory and beauty by which lovers think to make themselves beloved! Does Job think to carry the day by looking great, if even *the sun shall be ashamed, and the moon confounded, when God shines forth!*

4. For dominion over the proud, *v.* 11—14. Here the cause is put on this short issue; if Job can abase proud oppressors as easily and effectually with a look, even, as God can, it shall be acknowledged he has some color to compare with God. Observe, Proud people are wicked people, and pride is at the bottom of a great deal of wickedness in this world, both toward God and man, and the *wicked will be trodden down in their place*, i. e. wherever found. They were proudly confederate to do mischief, but are now hid together, to their *shame, in the dust*, *ch.* 17: 16. Nay, as malefactors condemned, they have their faces covered, as Haman's; He *binds their faces in secret;* they are treated, so complete is the victory, as dead men; Lazarus, in the grave, had his face bound about. Now by this God proves Himself to be God. Does He thus hate proud men? Then He is holy. Will He thus punish them? Then He is the just Judge of the world. Can He thus humble them? Then He is the Lord Almighty. When God had abased proud Pharaoh, and hid him in the sand of the Red Sea, Jethro inferred this, Ex. 18: 11. See Rev. 19: 1, 2.

(1.) Job had cast abroad the rage of his wrath toward heaven, complaining of the prosperity and power of tyrants and oppressors, and must God regard it, when it had so little effect on men; He was ready to charge God with mal-administration for suffering it; but he ought not to find fault, except he could mend. If God, and He only, has power to humble and bring down proud men, no doubt He has wisdom to know when and how, and it is not for us to prescribe to Him, or to teach Him how to govern the world.

(2.) The justice, here promised, shall be done him, if he can perform such mighty works *v.* 14. '*Then will I also confess unto thee, that thy right hand* is sufficient to save thee, though it be too weak to contend with Me.' It is man's innate pride and ambition, that he would be his own savior, would have his own hands sufficient for him, and be independent; but what presumption! Our own hands cannot save us by recommending us to God's grace, much less by rescuing us from his justice; if our own power cannot humble our enemies, it cannot save ourselves; but if it could, God Himself would confess it. He never did, nor ever will, defraud any of his just praise, nor deny merited honor. But since we cannot save, we must confess it, and therefore into his hand commit ourselves.

V. 15—24. God, for the further proving of his own power, and disproving of Job's pretensions, concludes his discourse with the description of two vast animals, far exceeding man in bulk and strength, *behemoth*, and *leviathan*.

I. In these vs. we have the former described. *Behemoth* signifies beasts in general, but must here mean some particular species. Some understand it of the *bull;* others of an amphibious animal, [well-known once in Egypt, but now seen in Nubia,] called the *river-horse*, (*Hippopotamus*,) living among the fish in the Nile, but coming out to feed on the earth. [One was 16 ft. 9 in. long, 6 ft. 9 in. high, and 15 ft. round. PAXTON.] But I confess I see no reason to depart from the ancient and most generally received opinion, that the elephant is here described, which, among so many four-footed beasts as we have had the natural history of, (*ch.* 38: and 39:) we can scarcely suppose would be omitted. Some understand *v.* 17. of the trunk of the elephant, the word (tr. tail) signifying any extreme part, and in that there is indeed a wonderful strength. No animal whatsoever comes near the elephant for strength of body, which is the main thing insisted on in this description.

1. He feeds on the productions of the earth, and not on other animals, *v.* 15, 20. and the beasts of the field do not tremble before him, nor flee from him, as from a lion, but play about him, knowing they are in no danger. This may give us occasion, (1.) To acknowledge the goodness of God, that a creature which requires so much food, should not feed on flesh. (2.) To commend living on herbs and fruits, without flesh, according to the original appointment of man's food, Gen. 1: 29. Even the strength of an elephant, as of a horse and an ox, may be supported without flesh; and why not that of a man? Though, therefore, we use the liberty God has allowed us, yet *be not among riotous eaters of flesh.* (3.) To commend a quiet and peaceable life. Who would not rather, like the elephant, have his neighbors easy and pleasant about him, than, like the lion, have them all afraid of him?

2. He is a very great and greedy drinker, not of wine and strong drink, (to be greedy of that is peculiar to man, who by his drunkenness makes a beast of himself,) but of fair water: and so much, that one would think he could drink up a river, if you would give him time, and not hasten him. Or, when he drinks, confident of his own strength and safety, he makes no haste, in fear. His eye anticipates more than he can take, *v.* 24. as that of a

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Verses 9—14.

The Lord would not at all deign to argue the question of *right* with his servant; but insisted on *that* being taken for granted. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' [who alone endowed us with the sense of right! What does man know of right or wrong, except as he has been constituted by *God* to feel it?] (*Gen.* 18:23—26. *Jer.* 12: 1—4.) [See *Wayland's* Mor. Sci.] SCOTT.

(13.) *Bind their faces in secret.*] 'The bodies of the *rich* Egyptians (3000 yrs. ago) were generally thus embalmed; the brain was extracted through the nostrils, the entrails through an incision in the side mostly, the body shaved, washed, salted, and after a certain period steeped in balsam and wrapped up in linen [or *cotton*, see *Rosellini*] bandages; each finger and toe was separately enveloped, or sometimes sheathed in a gold case. The bandages were then folded round each of the limbs, and finally round the whole body, to the number of 15 to 20 thicknesses. The *head* was the object of particular attention; it was sometimes *enveloped in several folds* of fine muslin; the first was glued to the skin, and the others to the first; the whole was then coated with a fine plaster, &c. Instead, the mummy is sometimes contained in a sort of sheath of paper or linen, coated with a layer of plaster, on which are paintings [often of the judgment-trial, cut, Ps. 62:9.] and gilding; the name of the deceased, his relations, titles, &c. The whole is then placed in a coffin [of sycamore or cedar wood, paper, or stone]. Mummies present very different appearances; some, opened, have been dried by vegetable and balsamic substances, (as aromatic gums, or asphaltum,) others by salt. The former are reddish, and in good preservation, the latter, black, hard, smooth,' &c. See *Enc. Am.* and *Rosellini;* and comp. notes, John 11:44. Gen. 50:26. ED.

Verses 15—24.

There have been various opinions concerning *behemoth:* but probably the most ancient is the most true; namely, that the elephant is intended. The word is often used for quadrupeds in general; and more frequently for cattle, or animals which feed on vegetables, as distinguished from the carnivorous animals. This, however, is not exclusively the case: but probably it cannot be clearly shown ever to mean any other than *land animals*, of which the elephant is the largest and most remarkable. It is evident the elephant surpasses all other quadrupeds in size, strength, sagacity, and longevity; and yet is equally remarkable for his gentleness, when not provoked.—Probably, it was not become customary at that time to take, tame, and employ elephants in war or in journeying, as has since been done. SCOTT.—This word, denoting a species of creature made when the earth was also fit to receive human beings (which the phrase, *with thee*, may possibly allude to), note, end of Job; seems well considered by *Scott*, to stand for the largest of land animals; and if the Heb. words of natural history, as is asserted, often mean as well the order, as the genus, species, or even

strength *is* in his loins, and his force *is* in the navel of his belly.

17 He * moveth his tail like a cedar: [g] the sinews of his stones are wrapped together.

18 His [h] bones *are as* strong pieces of brass; his bones *are* like bars of iron.

19 He *is* [i] the chief of the ways of God: [k] he that made him can make his sword to approach *unto him.*

20 Surely [l] the mountains bring him forth food, [m] where all the beasts of the field play.

21 He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of [n] the reed and fens.

22 The shady trees cover him *with* their shadow; [o] the willows of the brook compass him about.

23 Behold, † he drinketh up a river, *and* [p] hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up [q] Jordan into his mouth.

24 ‡ He taketh it with his eyes; *his* nose pierceth through snares.

CHAP. XLI.

The power of God shown in the huge and terrible leviathan, 1—34.

CANST thou draw out § leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord *which* thou ‖ lettest down?

2 Canst thou [a] put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn?

3 Will he make many supplications unto thee? [b] will he speak soft *words* unto thee?

* Or, *seeth up.*
[g] 41:23.
[h] 7:12. Is. 48:4. Mic. 4:13.
[i] 26.13.14. Ps. 104:24.
[k] Ps. 7:12. Is. 27:1. 34:6. Luke 2:35.
[l] 15. Ps. 147:8,9.
[m] Ps. 104:26.
[n] Is. 19:6,7. 35:7.
[o] Lev. 23:40. Is. 15:7. Ez. 17:5.
† Heb. *oppresseth.* Is. 37:25.
[p] Ps. 55:8. Is. 28:16.
[q] Gen. 13:10. Josh. 3:15.
‡ Or, *Will* any *take him in his sight*, or *bore* his *nose with a gin?* 41:1,2.
§ That is, *a whale*, or, *a whirlpool.* 3: 8. *marg.* Ps. 74:14. 104:26. Is. 27:1.
‖ Heb. *drownest.*
[a] Is. 30:28. 37:29. Ez. 29:4,5.
[b] Ps. 55:21. Prov. 15:1. 18:23. 25:15. Is. 30:10.

covetous man. His nose has in it strength for the purpose; for when he goes greedily to drink with it, he pierces through snares or nets, which perhaps are laid in the waters to catch fish. He makes nothing of difficulties in his way, so great is his strength, so eager his appetite.

II. The use of this description. We have taken a view of this mountain of a beast, here set before us, not merely as a show, but as an argument to humble ourselves before the great God; for,

1. He made it. This beast is here called *the chief*, in its kind, *of the ways of God; (v.* 19.) an eminent instance of the Creator's power and wisdom. They that will peruse accounts of the elephant, will find that his capacities approach nearer to those of reason, than the capacities of any other brute-creature whatsoever, and therefore he is fitly called *the chief of the ways of God*, in the inferior part of the creation no creature below man being preferable to him.

2. He made him with man, as He made other four-footed beasts; on the same day with man, (Gen. 1: 25, 26.) whereas the fish and fowl were made the day before; He made him, to live and move on the same earth, in the same element, and therefore man and beast are said to be jointly preserved by Divine Providence, as fellow-commoners, 'I made that beast as well as thee, and he does not quarrel with Me; why then dost thou? I made thee as well as that beast, therefore I can as easily manage thee, whether thou refuse or choose. I made him with thee, that thou mayest look on him, and receive instruction.' We need not go far for proofs and instances of God's almighty power and sovereign dominion; they are near us, with us, under our eye, wherever we are.

3. The same hand that made him, notwithstanding his bulk and strength, can unmake him at pleasure, can kill an elephant as easily as a worm or a fly, and without the imputation either of waste or wrong, *v.* 19. May not God do what He will with his own? He that has power to create with a word, no doubt, has power to destroy with a word, and can as easily speak the creature into nothing, as, at first, He spake it out of nothing. The *behemoth* perhaps is here intended (as well as the *leviathan* afterward) to represent those proud tyrants and oppressors, whom God had just now challenged Job to abase. They think themselves as well fortified against God's judgments, as the elephant with his bones of brass and iron; but He that made man's soul, knows all the avenues to it, and can make the sword of justice approach it, and touch it in the most tender part. He that framed the engine, and put its parts together, knows how to take it in pieces. Wo to him therefore that strives with his Maker, for He that made, has therefore power to make him miserable, and will not make him happy, unless he will be ruled by Him.

CHAP. XLI. 1—10. Whether this *leviathan* be a *whale* or a *crocodile*, is a great dispute among the learned, which I will not undertake to determine; some of the particulars agree more easily to the one, others to the other; both are very strong and fierce, and the power of the Creator appears in them. Sir R. Blackmore, though he admits the more received opinion concerning the *behemoth*, that that must be the *elephant*, yet agrees with Bochart that the *leviathan* is the *crocodile*, so well known in the river of Egypt. I confess I incline rather to understand it of the whale, not only because it is much larger, and a nobler animal, but because, in the history of the Creation, there is such express notice of it, as is not of any other species of animals whatsoever, Gen. 1: 21. *God created great whales;* by which it appears, not only that whales were well known in those parts, in Moses' time, who lived a little after Job,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It behooves us to speak with great reverence and caution concerning the ways and works of God: for it will appear at length, that many of our expressions sprang from such corrupt principles, and led to such desperate conclusions, that we could not on reflection do otherwise than unreservedly condemn them. Yet all our words must be given an account of at the day of judgment, and be produced as evidences of the frame of our hearts: and, probably, it will then appear, that the presumptuous cavils and objections of philosophic speculators, sprang from deeper enmity against God, and were more provoking to Him, than the scandalous profligacy of the profane and licentious. One clear and distinct view of God's holy majesty would appal the stoutest rebel on earth; or even drive him to despair, if not tempered with discoveries of his mercy. How then will the wicked bear the blaze of his glory at the approaching day of wrath and judgment?—But when we see this glory of our God 'in the face of Jesus Christ,' we are humbled without being terrified; and our deepest reverence and self-abasement consist with filial confidence and love.—The progressive renewal of a believer proceeds in the same way of conviction, humiliation, and watchfulness against remaining sin, as his first conversion did; and every progressive step in this way makes us more and more sensible, that we, in no case, have either right or reason to complain. Even when we protest against ill-treatment from men, or vindicate ourselves from injurious charges, we are apt to reflect on God; and to be so tenacious of our own right or reputation, as to neglect a proper regard to his honor; and we frequently seem as if we would 'disannul his judgment, and condemn Him, that we may be righteous.'—Happy are they, who trust in God, and leave Him to manage all their concerns, who orders all things in heaven and earth, in perfect wisdom, justice, truth, and goodness. SCOTT.

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individual, we may understand this word, *behemoth*, even of the largest land animals known to have existed. These are the *mammoth* (or fossil elephant), and the *mastodon*, called *mammoth* by the Indians of N. America, which is *graminivorous*, and herbivorous, though the Indian tradition says it was driven to the N. W. by the Great Spirit, lest it should devour all other animals. Mammoth sounds much like the Heb. *bhmoth*, *m* and *b* being interchangeable in many languages. The Russian word for the fossil elephant is *momot* (the *hammer*, *flail*, *corn-trampler*, *trampler?*). 'Although a Hebrew would regard the word [*behemoth*] as a pluralis excellentiæ, yet it may have originated from the Egyptian word *Pehemout*, river ox.' *Gesenius.* Note, 41:7. 'The tusk of a *mammoth* seen by *Adams* in Siberia, was 9 ft. long, the skeleton 9½ ft. high, and 14 long, from nose to coccyx. The *mastodon* skeleton at Philadelphia is 18 ft. long, 11 ft. 5 in. high; tusks 10 ft. 7 in. long. It seems to have been provided with a trunk, and in its food and manner of living to have much resembled the elephant. There are no traces within the period of history of the existence of these animals as a living genus.' *Enc. Am.* Their position, upright, the skull often above ground, (with bones of *existing races*, in the most recent class of bogs, never covered by diluvium,) as if mired, as bisons still are, while frequenting salt-licks, show them contemporary with the latest formations. See *Rogers;* Geol. of U. S. That possibly these *greatest of God's works* might not all have been extinct in the extensive forests and morasses of Asia, especially, when it was a newer and probably less peopled world, than now, so as to be known to those addressed in v. 19. is but a conjecture, of little enough weight, to add perhaps unnecessarily to those already brought forward in these vs. But see *Bush's* 'Illustr. of the SS.' ED.

NOTES.

CHAP. XLI. V. 1—11. Naturalists find many difficulties, in applying the particulars of the description to the whale. But several species of whales are known, and probably others exist in different parts of the ocean, with which we have but little acquaintance: and there is some reason to think that the deep contains enormous creatures, comprehended under that general name, which are even larger than any yet taken. (26:5—13.) As 'behemoth' seems to denote the largest of the quadrupeds; so, it is probable, 'leviathan' means the largest of the inhabitants of the ocean. [Note, Ps. 11:1.]—Perhaps, in the days of Job, it was not thought possible to take whales as they now do: but some of the species might have been cast on the shore, and divided for the use of different persons. It however served equally for Job's humiliation, if *he supposed it impossible* to take them, as if it really had been so. SCOTT.

(1.) *Leviathan.*] To the unsatisfactory attempts to reconcile all

4 [c] Will he make a covenant with thee? [d] wilt thou take him for [e] a servant for ever?

5 Wilt thou [f] play with him as *with* a bird? or wilt thou [g] bind him for thy maidens?

6 Shall [h] thy companions make a banquet of him? shall they part him among thy merchants?

7 Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with [i] fish-spears?

8 [k] Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more.

9 Behold, the hope of him is in vain: [l] shall not *one* be cast down even at the sight of him?

10 None *is so* fierce that [m] dare stir him up: [n] who then is able to stand before me?

11 [o] Who hath prevented me, that I should repay *him*? [p] *whatsoever is* under the whole heaven is mine.

12 ¶ I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his [q] comely proportion.

13 Who can discover the face of his garment? *or* who can come *to him* * with his [r] double bridle?

c 1 K. 20:31—34.
d Gen. 1:28. 2:19. Ps. 8:5,6.
e Ex. 21:6. Deut. 15:17.
f Judg. 16:25—30.
g 28:11.
h Judg. 14:11.
i 26—29.
k 1 K. 20:10. 2 K. 10:4. Luke 14:31,32.
l Deut. 28:34. 1 Sam. 3:11. Is. 28:19. Luke 21:11.
m Gen. 49:9. Num. 24:9. Is. 2:11,12. Ez. 8:17,18.
n 9:4. 40:9. Jer. 12:5. 1 Cor. 10:22.
o 22:2,3. 35:7. Ps. 21:3. Rom. 11:35.
p Ex. 19:5. Deut. 10:14. 1 Chr. 29: 11—14. Ps. 24:1. 50:12. 115:16. 1 Cor. 10:26,28.
q Gen. 1:25.
* Or, *within*.
r 2 K. 19:28. Ps. 32:9. Jam. 3:3.

but that the creation of whales was generally looked upon as a most illustrious proof of the eternal power and godhead of the Creator; and we may conjecture this was the reason (for otherwise it seems unaccountable) why Moses there so particularly mentions the creation of the whales, because God had so lately, in this discourse with Job, more largely insisted on the bulk and strength of that creature than of any other, as the proof of his power; and the *leviathan* is here spoken of as an inhabitant of the sea, *v.* 31. which the crocodile is not, so Ps. 104: 25, 26.

I. Job could not catch him, as a little fish, with angling, *v.* 1, 2. He could not make him his prisoner, nor force him to cry for quarter, or surrender himself at discretion, *v.* 3, 4. He could not entice him into a cage, and keep him there as a bird for the children to play with, *v.* 5. He could not serve him up for him and his companions as a banquet; his flesh is too strong for food, and if it were not, he is not easily caught. They could not enrich themselves with his spoil; *part* the bones to one merchant, the oil to another. Probably the art of taking whales was not brought to perfection then, as it has been since. They could not destroy him, *v.* 7. He kept out of the reach of their instruments of slaughter, or, if they touched him, they could not touch him to the quick. It was to no purpose to attempt it, so formidable is he, the very sight of him will make a stout man ready to faint, *v.* 9. Job is bid, at his peril, to *lay his hand upon him*, *v.* 8. 'Touch him, if thou dare. Remember the battle, how unable thou art to encounter such a force, and what is therefore likely to be the issue of the battle, and do no more, but desist from the attempt.' And hereby he is admonished to desist from his controversy with God, but to make his peace with Him, remembering what the battle will certainly end in, if he come to an engagement. See Isa. 27: 4, 5.

2. If the inferior creatures, that are put under the feet of man, and over whom he has dominion, keep us in awe thus, how terrible must the majesty of our great Lord be, (*v.* 10.) against whom man has been so long in rebellion!

V. 11—34. God, having in the foregoing vs. showed Job how unable he was to deal with the *leviathan*, here sets forth his own power in that massy, mighty creature. Here is,

I. God's sovereign dominion and independency laid down, *v.* 11. 1. That he is indebted to none of his creatures. '*Who has prevented Me?*' i. e. 'Who has laid any obligations on Me, by any service they have done Me? Who can pretend to be before-hand with Me? If any were, I would not long be behind-hand with them, I would soon repay them.' The apostle quotes this, for the silencing of all flesh in God's presence, *Who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?* 2. All is his, we are his, all we have and do, therefore we cannot make God our debtor; but *of thine own, Lord, have we given Thee.* All is his, therefore, if He were indebted to any, He has wherewithal to repay them; the debt is in good hands. All is his, therefore He needs not our services, nor can He be benefited by them. Ps. 50: 12.

II. The proof and illustration of it, from the wonderful structure of the leviathan, *v.* 12. In our eye, beauty lies in little, because we ourselves are little; but, in God's eye, even the *leviathan* is comely; and it is not for us to say of any of God's works, that they are ugly or ill-favored. Here is an anatomical view (as it were) of the *leviathan;* for God's works appear most beautiful and excellent, and his wisdom and power appear most in them, when they are taken in pieces, and viewed in their several parts and proportions.

1. The *leviathan*, even *at first sight*, appears formidable and inaccessible, *v.* 13, 14. Who dares come so near him, while he is alive, as to discover or take a distinct view of *the face of the garment*, the skin he is clothed with as with a garment; so near him, as to bridle him like a horse, and so lead him away; so near him, as to be within reach of his jaws, which are like *a double bridle?* Who will venture to look into his mouth, as we do into a horse's mouth? He that *opens the doors of his face*, will see his *teeth terrible round about.*

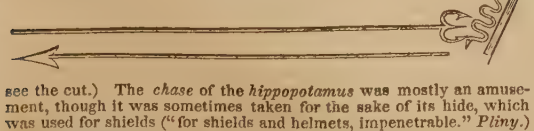
2. *His scales are* his beauty and strength, and therefore *his pride*, *v.* 15—17. The *crocodile* is indeed remarkable for his scales; if we understand it of the *whale*, we must understand by these *shields*, (for so the word is,) the several coats of his skin. What is remarkable concerning the scales, is, they stick so close together no air can pierce him; hence he is warm and safe. Fishes, that live in the water, are fortified accordingly by the wisdom of Providence, which gives clothes as it gives cold.

3. He scatters terror with his very breath, and looks; if he sneeze, or spout water, it is like a light shining, either with the froth, or the light of the sun shining through it, [or what is called the *phosphoric light* of the waves, disturbed at night,] *v.* 18. [Several fishes thus 'blow,' on coming to the surface, and thus, in the night, by their *neesings, a light doth shine.* Ed.] The eyes of the *whale* are reported to shine in the night-time, like a flame, or, as here, *like the eye-lids of the morning;* the same they say of the *crocodile.* The breath of this creature is so hot and fiery, from the great natural heat generated within, that burning lamps and sparks of fire, smoke and a flame, are said to *go out of his mouth*, even such as one would think sufficient to set coals on fire, *v.* 19—21. Probably, these hyperbolical expressions are used concerning the *leviathan*, to intimate the power and terror of the wrath of God, for that is it which all this is designed to convince us of; *fire out of his mouth devours*, Ps. 18: 7, 8. The *breath of the Almighty*, like a *stream of brimstone, kindles Tophet*, and will for ever keep it burning, Isa. 30: 33. The wicked one shall be consumed with *the breath of his mouth*, 2 Thess. 2: 8.

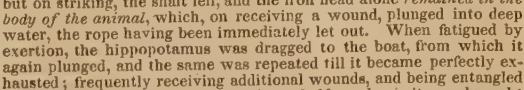
4. He is of invincible strength, and most terrible fierceness. Take a view of his neck, and

particulars of the description to any one animal, the mere conjecture is thrown out, that the frightful creature called the *sea-serpent*, might have been seen and described by voyagers to India, and the countries beyond, as early as Job's time, and is alluded to here as the vastest of *ocean* animals. Ps. 104:26. This serpent has been seen lately on the N. E. coasts of the U. S. and is represented as, 'from 100 to 140 ft. in length: but all accounts agree as to the protuberances on its back, its vertical sinuosities, and its [elevated] serpent-shaped head.' *Enc. Am.* The expressions here seem *too* hyperbolical if applied to the *crocodile*, and we have no better proof that the *whale* was known to Job, than that the sea-serpent was. Ed.

(7.) *Barbed irons . . . fish-spears.*] 'In Egypt, fishing, fowling and the chase were among the amusements of the great; birds were taken by nets or traps, shot with a bow, or felled with a stick thrown at them. The fish were taken in nets, by angling, or *spearing* with a trident, like that still used by the South Sea islanders. (Is. 19:8, 10. and



see the cut.) The *chase* of the *hippopotamus* was mostly an amusement, though it was sometimes taken for the sake of its hide, which was used for shields ("for shields and helmets, impenetrable." *Pliny.*) as by the modern Æthiopians.—The mode of attacking and securing the hippopotamus, appears to have been very similar to that now adopted about Sennâr. It was first entangled by a running noose, at the extremity of a long line wound upon a reel, and then struck by the spear of the chasseur. This weapon consisted of a broad, flat blade,



furnished with a deep tooth, or barb, at the side, having attached to its upper end a strong rope of considerable length, running over the notched summit of a wooden shaft, which was inserted in the head or blade, like a common javelin. It was thrown, of course, in the same manner: but on striking, the shaft fell, and the iron head alone *remained in the body of the animal*, which, on receiving a wound, plunged into deep water, the rope having been immediately let out. When fatigued by exertion, the hippopotamus was dragged to the boat, from which it again plunged, and the same was repeated till it became perfectly exhausted; frequently receiving additional wounds, and being entangled by other nooses, which the attendants held ready, as it was brought within their reach.' 'Other wild animals were hunted in *cars*, or on foot, with the bow, or with hounds in slips, leopards, and even lions.' Wilkinson.

Verses 12—34.

The remainder of this ch. contains a particular and most sublime description of leviathan.—It is undeniable, that some particulars in this description do not accord to any known species of whale; for

14 Who can open [s] the doors of his face? [t] his teeth *are* terrible [u] round about.

15 *His* * scales *are his* [u] pride, shut up together *as with* [x] a close seal.

16 One is so near to another, that no air can come between them.

17 They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered.

18 By his neesings a light doth shine, and his eyes *are* like [y] the eyelids of the morning.

19 [z] Out of his mouth go burning lamps, *and* sparks of fire leap out.

20 Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, [a] as *out* of a seething pot or caldron.

21 His breath [b] kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth.

22 [c] In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow † is turned into joy before him.

23 The ‡ flakes of his flesh [d] are joined together: they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved.

24 His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, [e] as hard as a piece of the nether *mill-stone*.

25 When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid; [f] by reason of breakings they purify themselves.

26 [g] The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the § habergeon.

27 He esteemeth iron as straw, *and* brass as rotten wood.

28 The arrow cannot make him flee: [h] slingstones are turned with him into stubble.

29 Darts are counted as stubble: [i] he laugheth at the shaking of a spear.

30 || Sharp stones *are* under him: he spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire.

31 He maketh [k] the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment.

32 He maketh a path to shine after him: *one* would think the deep *to be* hoary.

33 [l] Upon earth there is not his like, who [¶] is made without fear.

34 He beholdeth all high *things*: [m] he *is* a king over all the children of pride.

there remains strength, *v.* 22. His head and his body are well-set together; *sorrow rejoices*, or *rides in triumph*, before him, for he makes terrible work wherever he comes. Or, Those storms which are the sorrow of others, are his joy; what is tossing to others, is dancing to him. His flesh is well-knit, *v.* 23. The flakes of it are joined so closely together, and are so firm, that it is hard to pierce it; he is as if he were all bone; *his flesh is of brass*, which Job had complained his was not, *ch.* 6: 12. *His heart is as firm as a stone*, *v.* 24. He has spirit equal to his bodily strength, and, though bulky, is sprightly, and not unwieldy; as his flesh and skin cannot be pierced, so his courage cannot be daunted; but, on the contrary, he puts all he meets into consternation, *v.* 25. *When he raises up himself*, like a moving mountain in the great waters, even *the mighty are afraid* lest he do them some mischief: *by reason of the breakings* he makes in the water, which threaten death, *they purify themselves*, confess their sins, betake themselves to their prayers, and get ready for death. We read (*ch.* 3: 8.) of those who, when they raise up a *leviathan*, are in such a fright, that they curse the day. It was a fear which, it seems, used to drive some to their curses, and others to their prayers; for as now, so then there were seafaring men of different characters, and on whom the terrors of the sea have contrary effects.

5. All the instruments of slaughter used against him, do him no hurt, therefore are no terror to him, *v.* 26—29. It is the picture of a hard-hearted sinner, that despises the terrors of the Almighty, and laughs at all the threatenings of his Word. The *leviathan* so little dreads the weapons used against him, that, to show how hardy he is, he chooses to lie on the sharp stones, *the sharp pointed things*, (*v.* 30.) and lies as easy there, as on the soft mire. Those that would endure hardness, must inure themselves to it.

6. When he rolls and tosses, and makes a stir in the water, (*v.* 31, 32.) or is in pursuit of his prey, he *makes the deep to boil like a pot*, raises a froth and foam on the water, as is upon a boiling pot, especially a pot of boiling ointment; and he *makes a path to shine after him*, [like the wake of a ship.] One may trace the *leviathan* under water by the bubbles on the surface; and yet who can take that advantage against him in pursuing him? Men track hares in the snow and kill them, but he that tracks the leviathan dares not come near him.

Lastly, Having given this particular account of *his parts, and his power, and his comely proportion*, four things in general conclude the description of this animal, *v.* 33, 34. He is, 1. A none such among the inferior creatures; *On earth there is not his like*, no creature in this world is comparable to him for strength and terror; or, the earth is here distinguished from the sea; *His dominion is not on the earth*, so some, but *in the waters;* none of all the savage creatures on earth come near him for bulk and strength. 2. More bold and daring than any other creature. 3. Very proud; though lodged in the deep, yet *he beholds all high things;* the rolling waves, the impending rocks, the hovering clouds, and the ships under sail with top and top-gallant, this mighty animal beholds with contempt. Those that are great, are apt to be scornful. 4. *That he is a king over all the children of pride*, i. e. He is the proudest of all proud ones, has more to be proud of (so Mr. Caryl); and so it is a mortification to the haughtiness and lofty looks of men. Some understand it

s 38:10. Ec. 12:4.
t Ps. 57:4. 58:6. Prov. 30:14. Dan. 7:7.
* Heb. *strong pieces of shields.*
u Jer. 9:23.
x Rev. 5:2,3,5.
y 3:9. *marg.* Rev. 1:14.
z Ps. 18:8.
a Jer. 1:13,14.
b Ps. 18:8,12. Is. 30:33. Hab. 3:5.
c 39:19. 40:16.
† Heb. *rejoiceth.* Hos. 13:14. 1 Cor. 15:55—57.
‡ Heb. *fallings.*
d 17.
e Is. 48:4. Jer. 5:3. Zech. 7:12.
f Ps. 107:28. Jon. 1:4—6.
g 39:21—24.
§ Or, *breast-plate.*
h 39:7. Hab. 1:10.
i 2 Chr. 36:16.
|| Heb. *Sharp pieces of potsherd.*
k 20.
l 40:19.
¶ Heb. *behave themselves without fear.* 24.
m 26:12. Ex. 5:2. Ps. 74:13,14. Is. 27:1. Ez. 29:3. Rev. 12:1—3. 13: 2. 20:2,3.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If language so sublime was proper in describing the terrible force of 'leviathan,' what words can express the power of God's indignation, who 'is a consuming fire!' But He more delights in showing his glory from the mercy-seat; and in encouraging sinners to take refuge 'under the shadow of his wings,' and to prostrate themselves before Him. If his anger be thus turned away, his omnipotence will be our protection. Satan, the king and father of all the children of pride, with his legions of evil spirits, is not confined to the ocean; nor can he be fenced out or resisted by our puny arm [alone]. 'The poor in spirit,' who humbly trust in the Lord's mercy, may defy and resist this tremendous foe, and be made more than conquerors over him. They should however remember, that they are saved wholly by grace; 'for who hath prevented the LORD, that He should repay him?' And if mercifully rescued from the deserved wrath of God, and from the malice of Satan, they have no right to complain of any affliction or distress; or to boast of any wisdom, strength, or endowment. Submission, dependence, grateful obedience are *their* part; and to give all the glory to their gracious God and Savior. —When any man becomes proud of his personal strength and courage, let him be reminded of leviathan: when he is vain of his sagacity, ingenuity, or mental endowments, let him consider how much Satan excels him in them all. SCOTT.

none of them are covered with scales, or have an impenetrable skin: but it agrees still less with any other creature that we know; and especially is wholly unsuited to the crocodile.—The ancient fathers generally understood the passage as an emblematic, or typical description of Satan, that 'king over all the children of pride.' (*Is.* 27:1.) SCOTT.

(13.) *Bridles.*] 'The Greeks (says *Bochart*) called those parts of the lips which end at the cheeks, *bridles*. The same term [as the Heb.] and in the same two-fold sense, of a *bridle*, or *halter* applied round the *nose* of a horse, and the *nose* itself, is still common in the Arabic.' [Cut, Ex. 14:6.] GOOD.

(15, 17.) 'The crocodile is [now] confined to the latitude S. of Manfaloot. Egypt produces two varieties of this animal, distinguished by the number and position of the *scales* on its neck. One has the front row composed of 6 scales, behind which is a cluster of 4 large central scales in two lines, with 2 smaller ones on each side of the upper of three lines; the other has in the front row 4 only, and the disposition of the other 8 is thus: 4 central scales in 2 lines, with 1 smaller one on each side of the upper line, and 2 behind the second or lower line. The first row of the body consists of 6 scales, the former variety having only 4. The other scales of the body are nearly alike in both. They do not exceed 18 or 19 ft. in length, though travellers have *mentioned* some of stupendous size. *Pliny* says 22 cubits; a later author gives them 40 ft.; and a recent traveller at least 50 or 60; by which it might be inferred they continue to increase in length. They differ from alligators by the nose being much less broad and round at the end. The glands beneath the arm afford musk.' WILKINSON.

(24.) *Nether* mill-stone.] 'Anvil.' *Vulg. Sept.* ED.

(25.) *Breakings.*] *Rosenm.* tr. 'breakings, or contritions, of mind, i. e. terrors: words for breaking, see *Bochart*, have in the E. also the signification of *fearing*. Comp. 32:15. and 1 Sam. 2:4. Lam. 3:47. &c.' *Purify themselves.*] '*Schultens* rightly tr. *are astonished*, disturbed in mind.' ROSENM.

(26.) *Dart.*] Cut, 2 Sam. 18.14. *Habergeon.*] Cut, 2 Sam. 1:9. ED.

(28.) *Sling-stones.*] The cut is of a Javanese sling, and its bullet; it shows what is meant by the *middle* (Heb *kaph*, and hand, hollow) of a sling, 1 Sam. 25:29. ID.

CHAP. XLII.

Job, in deep humility, submits to God, 1—6. God decides in Job's favor; and requires his three friends to present burnt-offerings for their sins, and submissively to engage Job to pray for them, 7, 8. They obey, and God accepts Job, 9. His prosperity is restored and doubled, 10—12. His children, 13—15. His age and death, 16, 17.

THEN Job answered the LORD, and said,

2 I know that [a] thou canst *do* every *thing*, and *that* [b] no thought [*] can be withholden from thee.

3 [c] Who *is* he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; [d] things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.

4 [e] Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: [f] I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

5 I have [g] heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now [h] mine eye seeth thee.

6 Wherefore [i] I abhor *myself*, and [k] repent in dust and ashes.

[*Practical Observations.*]

a Gen. 18:14. Jer. 32:17. Matt. 19:26. Mark 10:27. 14:36. Luke 18:27.
b Ps. 44:21. 139.2. Jer. 17:10. Ez. 38:10. John 2.24,25. 21:17. Heb. 4:12,13.
* Or, *of thine can be hindered.* 23:13. Prov. 19:21. Ec. 3:14. Is. 14:27. 46: 10. Dan. 4:35. Eph. 1:11.
c 38:2.
d Ps. 40:5. 131:1. 139:6. Prov. 30: 2—4.
e Gen. 18:27,30—32.
f 38.3. 40:7.
g 4:12. 26:22. 33:16. Rom. 10:17.
h 23:8,9. Num. 12:6—8. Is 6:1. John 1:18. 12:41,45. Acts 7:55,56.
i 9:31. 40:4. Ezra 9:6. Is. 6:5. Jer. 31:19. Ez. 16:63. 20:43. 36:31. Luke 15.18,19. 1 Cor. 15:9. 1 Tim. 1: 13—16. Jam. 4:7—10.
k 2:8. 30:19. 1 K. 21:27. Esth. 4:1—3. Is. 58:5. Dan. 9:3. Jon. 3:6—10. Matt. 11:21. Luke 10:13.

of God; *He that beholds all high things, even He, is King over all the children of pride;* He can tame the *behemoth*, (*ch.* 40: 19.) and the *leviathan*, big and stout-hearted as they are. As the discourse concerning those two animals was brought in, to prove that it is God only who can *look upon proud men and abase them*, (*ch.* 40: 11—13.) so it concludes with this, as a 'Q. E. D.' *What was to be demonstrated. The Lord alone shall be exalted*, Is. 2: 11.

CHAP. XLII. Solomon says, *Better is the end of a thing than its beginning;* so in Job's story. Three things we have met with in this book, which, I confess, have troubled me much; but we find all the three grievances thoroughly redressed in this ch. It has been a great trouble to us, 1. To see such a holy man as Job, so fretful, peevish, and uneasy to himself, and especially to hear him quarrel with God, and speak indecently to Him; but, though he thus fall, he is not utterly cast down, for here he recovers himself by repentance, is sorry for what he has said amiss, unsays it, and humbles himself before God. 2. To see Job and his friends so much at variance, not only differing in their opinions, but giving one another a great many hard words, and passing severe censures one on another, though they were all very wise and good men; but here we have the differences between them happily adjusted, all the peevish reflections they had cast upon one another forgiven and forgotten, and all joining in sacrifices and prayers, mutually accepted of God. 3. To see a man of such eminent piety and usefulness as Job, so grievously afflicted, so pained, sick, poor, reproached, so slighted, and made the very centre of all the calamities of human life; but here we have this grievance redressed too; Job healed of all his ailments, more honored and beloved than ever, enriched with an estate double what he had before, surrounded with all the comforts of life, and as great an instance of prosperity, as ever he had been of affliction and patience. All this is written for our learning, that we, under these and the like discouragements, through patience and comfort of this Scripture, may have hope.

V. 1—6. The words of Job, justifying himself, were ended, *ch.* 31: 40. After that, he said no more to that purport: the words of Job, judging and condemning himself, began, *ch.* 40: 4, 5. Here he goes on with words to the same purport; though his patience had not its perfect work, his repentance for his impatience had. He is here thoroughly humbled for his folly and unadvised speaking, and it was forgiven him.

1. He subscribes to the truth of God's unlimited power, knowledge, and dominion, to prove which was the scope of God's discourse out of the whirlwind, *v.* 2. Corrupt passions and practices arise either from some corrupt principles, or from the neglect and disbelief of the principles of truth; therefore true repentance begins in *the acknowledgment of the truth*, 2 Tim. 2: 25. Job here owns his judgment convinced of the greatness, glory, and perfection, of God, from which would follow the conviction of his conscience concerning his own folly, in speaking irreverently to Him.

2. He owns himself guilty of what God had charged him with in the beginning of his discourse, *v.* 3. 'Lord, the first word thou saidst, *Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?* convinced me; I own, *I am the man* that has been so foolish. That word reached my conscience, and set my sin in order before me; it is too plain to be denied, too bad to be excused; *I have hid counsel without knowledge;* I have ignorantly overlooked the counsels and designs of God in afflicting me, and therefore have quarrelled with God, and insisted too much on my own justification; *Therefore I uttered that I understood not,*' i. e. 'I have presumptuously passed a judgment on the dispensations of Providence, though I was utterly a stranger to the reasons of them.' And so we are all.

3. He will not answer, but will *make supplication to his Judge*, as he had said, *ch.* 9: 15. '*Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak, v.* 4. not as plaintiff or defendant, *ch.* 13: 22. but as a humble petitioner; not as one that will undertake to teach and prescribe, but as one that desires to learn, and is willing to be prescribed to. Lord, give me leave to ask instruction from Thee, and do not deny it me, do not upbraid me with my folly and self-sufficiency,' Jam. 1: 5. Now he is brought to the prayer Elihu taught him, *That which I see not, teach Thou me.*

4. He puts himself into the posture of a penitent, and on a right principle. In true repentance there must be not only conviction of sin, but contrition and godly sorrow for it, sorrowing *according to God*, 2 Cor. 7: 9. Such was Job's. In his repentance,

(1.) He eyed God, *v.* 5. '*I have heard of Thee* many a time from my teachers, when I was young; from my friends, now of late; yet I was not brought, by what I heard, to submit myself to Thee as I ought; the notions I had, served me only to talk of, and had not a due influence on my mind: but now Thou hast by immediate revelation discovered Thyself to me in thy glorious majesty; *now mine eyes see Thee*, now I feel the power of those truths which before I had only the notion of, therefore now I repent, and unsay what I have foolishly said.' Note, 1. It is a great mercy to have a good education, and to know the things of God by the instructions of his Word and ministers;

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—6. The Lord will assuredly bring those whom He loves to adore Him, in humble submission and self-abasement.—Clear discoveries of the glorious power and wisdom of God, even in the inanimate or irrational works of the creation, tend to humble our pride, and to induce us to subscribe to his rebukes, and to the charges which his Word brings against us; to fear his wrath above all things, and to expect every blessing from his favor. As none of *his* thoughts can fail of accomplishment, so none of *ours* can escape his notice, but must all be accounted for at the day of judgment.—Even the true believer, in discoursing of heavenly things, is very liable to go out of his depth; and by uttering what he does not understand, and speculating on things too wonderful for him, he often exposes himself to rebukes for his rashness and irreverence. What then will be the case of the infidel, the skeptic, and the disputer of this world? They will be speechless, and despair; whilst all the world shall behold and acknowledge the wisdom, justice, and goodness of those laws, truths, and decrees, which they arraigned and blasphemed as unjust, oppressive, and unreasonable. It behooves us humbly to crave God's instructions, and to be satisfied with the explanations He vouchsafes to give of those difficulties which intercept our path. For many hear of Him, from parents and teachers, who have no heart-affecting, influential views of his perfections. After all they have heard, He is to them an *unknown God;* for they do not *so* know Him, as to reverence, love, trust, and submit to Him.—All true knowledge of God proportionably humbles and abases us, and causes us 'to abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes;' but false doctrines and mere speculative knowledge puff men up, and feed their self-importance. By this criterion let us judge ourselves, and our knowledge in religion: let us take care not to be put off with empty notions; or to be satisfied with our present measure of humiliation and experience. Did such self-abasing language suit the lips of Job, that most eminent saint and servant of God, at the moment when every grace was in its fullest exercise, and can any language be too humiliating for us? If we start, and scruple to say, that we 'abhor ourselves;' or if we find that we cannot do it with sincerity, does it not demonstrate, that we have never perceived so much of the divine glory, as Job had, and therefore are not made so sensible of our own guilt and pollution? For it would be very arrogant for any of us to suppose ourselves better, by nature and practice, or more eminent in faith, patience, or piety, than this most approved and applauded character. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XLII. V. 1—6. (*Note*, 40:3—5.) Job, borne down as it were with a torrent of light and conviction, at length answered; not in his own vindication, but with unreserved submission. (*M.—Notes, Prov.* 19:21. *Is.* 46:10,11. *Dan.* 4:34—37. *Eph.* 1:9—12.)—No doubt Job, before this, had had spiritual and experimental knowledge of God in some measure; but nothing equal to what he received now. (1:1,8 20—22. *Is.* 6:5. *Luke* 5:1—11, *latter part.*)—'This passage is totally unintelligible, as it stands in the Bible. Vs. 3 and 4 seem to have crept in from the beginning of JEHOVAH's address to Job.' *E. Smith.* Accord-

7 ¶ And it was *so*, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to [l] Eliphaz the Temanite, [m] My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for [h] ye have not spoken of me *the thing that is* right, as my servant Job *hath*.

8 Therefore take unto you now [o] seven bullocks and seven rams, and [p] go to my servant Job, and [q] offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering, and [r] my servant Job shall pray for you; for * him I will accept: [s] lest I deal with you *after your* folly, in that ye have not spoken of me *the thing which is* right, like my servant Job.

9 So Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, *and* Zophar the Naamathite, went, and [t] did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted † Job.

2:11. 4:1. 8:1. 11:1.
m 32:2,3,5.
n 11:5,6.
o Num. 23:1,14,29. 1 Chr. 15:26. 2 Chr. 29:21. Ez. 45:23. Heb. 10:4,10 —14.
p Matt. 5:23,24.
q 1:5. Ex. 18:12.
r Gen. 20:17. Is. 60:14. Jer. 14:11. 15: 1. Ez. 14:14. Heb. 7:25. Jam. 5: 14—18. Rev. 3:9.
* Heb. *his face*, or, *person*. 9. 1 Sam. 25:35. Mal. 1:9. Matt. 3:17. Eph. 1:6.
s Ps. 103:10. 2 Tim. 4:14.
t 32:31,32. Is. 60:14. Matt. 7:24. John 2:5. Acts 9:6. 10:5. Heb. 11:8.
† Heb. *the face of Job*. 8. 22:27. Ec. 9:7.

faith comes by hearing, and then it is most likely to come, when we hear attentively, and with the *hearing of the ear*. 2. When the understanding is enlightened by the Spirit of grace, our knowledge of divine things as far exceeds what we had before, as that by ocular demonstration exceeds that by report and common fame. By the teachings of men God *reveals his Son* to *us;* but by the teachings of his Spirit He *reveals his Son* in *us*, (Gal. 1:16.) and so *changes us into the same image*, 2 Cor. 3:18. 3. God is pleased sometimes to manifest Himself most fully to his people by the rebukes of his word and providence. '*The rod and reproof give wisdom. Blessed is he whom Thou chastenest and teachest.*'

(2.) He eyed himself, thought hardly of himself, and thereby expressed his sorrow for his sins, *v.* 6. Observe, 1. It concerns us to be deeply humbled for sins we are convinced of, and not to rest in a slight, superficial displeasure. Even good people, that have no gross enormities to repent of, must be greatly afflicted in soul for the workings and breakings out of pride, passion, peevishness, and discontent, and all their hasty, unadvised speeches. Till the enemy be effectually humbled, the peace will be insecure. 2. Outward expressions of godly sorrow well become penitents; without an inward change, they do but mock God; but where they come from sincere contrition of soul, the sinner by them gives glory to God, takes shame to himself, and may be instrumental to bring others to repentance. Job's *afflictions* had brought him to the ashes, (*ch.* 2:8.) but now his *sins* brought him thither. True penitents mourn for their sins as heartily, as ever they did for outward afflictions; for they see more evils in their sins than in their troubles. 3. Self-loathing is evermore the companion of true repentance, Ezek. 6:9. We must not only blame ourselves for the wrong we have by sin done our own souls, but must abhor ourselves, as having by sin made ourselves odious to the pure and holy God; if sin be truly an abomination to us, sin in ourselves will especially be so; the nearer, the more loathsome. 4. The more we see of God's glory and majesty, and of the vileness and odiousness of sin, and of ourselves because of sin, the more we shall abase and abhor ourselves for it. 'Now mine eyes see what a God He is, whom I have offended, his majesty, and the tenderness of his mercy; now I see what a just and holy God He is, whose wrath I have incurred; wherefore I abhor myself,' Isa. 6:5. God had challenged Job to look *upon proud men and abase them;* 'I cannot,' says Job, 'pretend to it; I have enough to get my own proud heart humbled, to bring that low.' Let us leave it to God to govern the world, and make it our care, in the strength of his grace, to govern ourselves and our own hearts well.

V. 7—9. Job, in his discourses, had complained very much of his friends' censures, and hard usage, and had appealed to God as Judge between him and them, and thought it hard, that judgment was not immediately given on the appeal. While God was catechising Job out of the whirlwind, one would have thought the cause would certainly go against him; but here, to our great surprise, we find the definitive sentence given in Job's favor. Wherefore judge nothing before the time. Those who are truly righteous before God, may have their righteousness clouded and eclipsed by great and uncommon afflictions, the severe censures of men, their own frailties and foolish passions, the sharp reproofs of the Word and conscience, and the deep humiliation of their own spirits under the sense of God's terrors; and yet, in due time, these clouds shall all blow over, and God will *bring forth their righteousness as the light, and their judgment as the noon-day*. Here is,

I. Judgment against Job's three friends. Elihu is not censured, for he distinguished himself from the rest in the management of the dispute, and acted, not as a party, but as a moderator; and moderation will have its praise with God, whether it have with men or no. While we were examining the discourses on both sides, we could not cleave the hair between them; nor would we, for all the world, have been to give the decisive sentence on the case, lest we should have determined wrong: but it is well the judgment is the Lord's, according to truth; to it we will refer ourselves, and by it abide. In it,

1. After God had convinced and humbled Job, and brought him to repentance, then He owned, comforted, and honored him, not till then; we are not ready for God's approbation till we judge and condemn ourselves; but then He will heal us, He that *has smitten, will bind us*. The Comforter shall convince, John 16:8. See in what method we are to expect divine acceptance. It is taken for granted, all his offences are forgiven, for if dignified, as here, no doubt he is justified. Job had sometimes intimated, with great assurance, that God would clear him at last, and was not made ashamed of the hope.

(1.) God calls him again and again *his servant Job*, and seems to take a pleasure in calling him so, as before his troubles, *ch.* 1:8. 'Though poor and despised, he is my servant, as dear to me as when in prosperity; he has his faults, yet sees his error, and retracts it, therefore he is my servant Job still.' If we still hold fast the integrity and fidelity of servants to God, as Job, though for a time deprived of the credit and comfort of the relation, we shall be restored to it at last, as he. The devil had undertaken to prove Job a hypocrite, and his three friends had condemned him as wicked; but God will confess those whom He accepts, and not suffer them to be run down by the malice of hell or earth. If God says, *Well done, good and faithful servant*, it is of little consequence who says otherwise.

(2.) He owns he had *spoken of Him the thing that was right*, beyond what his antagonists had done; had given a much better account of the Divine Providence. They had wronged God, by making prosperity a mark of the true church, and affliction a certain indication of God's wrath; but Job had done Him right, by maintaining that God's love and hatred are to be judged of by what is *in* men, not by what is *before* them, Eccl. 9:1. Observe, [1.] Those do most justice to God and his providence, who have an eye to the rewards and punishments of another world more than to those of this, and with the prospect of those solve the difficulties of the present administration. [2.] Though Job had spoken some things amiss, even concerning God, whom he made too bold with, yet he is commended for what he spake that was right. We must not only not reject what is true and good, but must not deny it its due praise, though there appear in it a mixture of human frailty and infirmity. [3.] Job was in the right, and his friends in the wrong, yet he was in pain, and they at ease; a plain evidence, that we cannot judge of men and their sentiments by looking in their faces or purses; He only can do it infallibly, who sees men's hearts.

(3.) Job, notwithstanding all their wrong, is so good, and of such a humble, tender, forgiving spirit, he will very readily pray for his friends, and use his interest in heaven on their behalf. 'I know he will. I have pardoned him, and he has the comfort of it, therefore he will pardon you.'

(4.) God appoints him priest of this congregation, and promises to accept him and his mediation. Those whom God washes from their sins, He makes to Himself kings and priests. True penitents shall not only find favor as petitioners for themselves, but be accepted as intercessors for others also. This was a great honor, the appointing him to offer sacrifice for his friends, as formerly for his own children, *ch.* 1:5. And a happy presage it was of his restoration to prosperity, indeed a good step towards it, thus to be restored to the priesthood. Thus he became a type of Christ, through whom alone we and our spiritual sacrifices are *acceptable to God;* see 1 Pet. 2:5. And as Job prayed and offered sacrifice for those that had grieved and wounded his spirit, so Christ prayed and died for his persecutors, and ever lives, *making intercession for the transgressors*.

2. Job's friends were good men and belonged to God, therefore He would not leave them in their mistake any more than Job, but, having humbled him by a discourse out of the whirlwind, He takes another course to humble them. Job, who was

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ingly this writer omits a great part of them. They are however found in the Heb. and in other versions, manuscripts, &c. Deciding in this peremptory manner on the Word of God, is irreverent and dangerous in the extreme. SCOTT.

Verses 7—9.

It is not unlikely, that some readers have been ready to conclude, while we have gone through the preceding chs. that the discourses of Job have been too favorably, and those of his friends too unfavorably explained. But this ch. was all along considered as the clue of the whole narration; without which it would have been presumptuous to decide positively, and without hesitation. It is however evident, that the general doctrine of Job was more honorable to God, and consistent with the truth, than that of his friends. (4:1—11. 5:3—5,25—27. 8:1—7,20—22. 9:22—24. 11:1—4,13—20. 15:1—13. 18:2—4. 20:1—9. 22

10 And the LORD [a] turned the captivity of Job, [x] when he prayed for his friends: also [y] the LORD * gave Job twice as much as he had before.

11 Then came there unto him [z] all his brethren, and all his sisters; and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and [a] they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: [b] every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

12 [c] So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for [d] he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.

13 He had also [e] seven sons and three daughters.

14 And he called the name of the first Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Keren-happuch.

15 And in all the land were [f] no women found

u 5:18—20. Deut. 30:3. Ps. 14:7. 53:6. 126:1,4.
x Ex. 17:3,4. Num. 12:2,13. 14:1—4, 10,13—20. 16:21,22,46—48. Deut. 9:20. Luke 23:34. Acts 7:50,60.
y 8:6,7. 22:24,25. Deut. 8:18. 1 Sam. 2:7. 2 Chr. 25:9. Prov. 22:4. Hag. 2:8.
* Heb. *added all that* had been *to Job unto the double.* Is. 40:2. 61:7.
z 19:13,14. Prov. 16:7.
a 2:11. 4:4. 16:5. Gen. 37:35. Is. 35:3,4. John 11:19. Rom. 12:15. 1 Cor. 12:26. Heb. 12:12. 13:3.
b 6:22,23. Gen. 24:22,53. 1 Sam. 10:27.
c 8:7. Prov. 10:22. Ec. 7:8. 1 Tim. 6:17. Jam. 5:11.
d 1:3. Gen. 24:35. 26:12—14. Ps. 107:38. 144:13—15.
e 1:2. Ps. 107:41. 127:3. Is. 49:20.
f Ps. 144:12. Acts 7:20.

dearest, was first chidden, but the rest in turn. When they heard Job talked to, probably they flattered themselves they were in the right, and Job in all the fault, but God soon made them know the contrary. In most disputes and controversies, there is something amiss on both sides, and both should be made to see their errors. God addresses this to Eliphaz, not only as the senior, but as the ringleader in the attack on Job. Now, (1.) They had *not spoken of God the thing that was right, like Job*, i. e. they had censured and condemned Job, on a false hypothesis, had represented God fighting against Job as an Enemy, when really He was only trying him as a Friend; this was not right. Those do not say well of God, who represent his fatherly chastisements of his own children as judicial punishments, and who cut them off from his favor on account of them. Note, It is dangerous to judge uncharitably of the spiritual and eternal state of others, for, in so doing, we may perhaps condemn those whom God has accepted, which is a great provocation to Him, it is offending his little ones. (2.) God assures them He was angry with them; God is very angry with those who despise and reproach their brethren, insult over them, judge hardly of them, either for their calamities, or infirmities. (3.) He requires a sacrifice, to atone for what they had said amiss, *v.* 8. for it should seem, that, before the law of Moses, *all* sacrifices were wholly burnt, and therefore were called burnt-offerings. God is often angry at that in us, of which we ourselves are proud, and sees much amiss in what we think was done well. (4.) He orders them to beg Job to offer their sacrifices, and pray for them, otherwise they should not be accepted. It was to humble them, Rev. 3: 9. The foolish virgins will beg oil of the wise. To oblige them also to make their peace with Job, as the condition of peace with God. *If thy brother has aught against thee,* (as Job had a great deal against them,) *first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* Satisfaction must first be made for wrong done, according as the nature of the thing requires, before we can hope to obtain from God the forgiveness of sin. See how thoroughly God espoused the cause of his servant Job. Those who differ in judgment about less things, yet are one in Christ the great Sacrifice, and meet at the same throne of grace, and therefore ought to love and bear with one another. Our quarrels with God always begin on our part, but the reconciliation begins on his.

II. The acquiescence of Job's friends in this judgment, *v.* 9. They were good men, and, as soon as they understood what the mind of the Lord was, they did as He commanded them, speedily and without gainsaying, though against flesh and blood. Those who would be reconciled to God, must carefully use the prescribed means and methods. They that conscientiously observe God's commands, need not doubt his favor; *The Lord also accepted Job,* and his friends, in answer to his prayer. It is not said, He accepted *them,* (though that is implied,) but, He accepted *Job,* for them; so He has *made us accepted in the Beloved,* Eph. 1: 6. Matt. 3: 17. God being graciously reconciled, Job was easily reconciled. This must be the top of our ambition, not to have praise of men, but to please God.

V. 10—17. *Ye have heard of the patience of Job,* says the apostle, (Jam. 5: 11.) *and have seen the end of the Lord,* i. e. what end the Lord, at length, put to his troubles. Perhaps, too, this extraordinary prosperity was intended to be, to us Christians, a type and figure of the glory and happiness of heaven, which the afflictions of this present time are working for us.

1. Job's sorest complaint was, that God appeared against him: but now God plainly appeared for him, and *watched over him to build and to plant, like as He had* (at least, in his apprehension) *watched over him to pluck up and to throw down,* Jer. 31: 28. God *turned his captivity,* i. e. redressed his grievances, and took away all the causes of his complaints; he *loosed him from the bond with which Satan had* now, for a great while, bound him. We may suppose all his bodily pains and distempers were now healed, so suddenly, and thoroughly, that the cure was next to miraculous; more, he felt a very great alteration in his mind; it was calm and easy, the tumult all over, his disquieting thoughts all vanished, his fears silenced, and the consolations of God now as much the delight of his soul, as his terrors had been its burden: the tide turned just then *when he was praying for his friends,* over his sacrifice for them; not when he was disputing with them, no, though he had right on his side; for God is better served and pleased with warm devotions than warm disputations. When Job completed his repentance by *forgiving men their trespasses,* then God completed his remission by *turning his captivity.* Christ has taught us to *pray with, and for others,* in teaching us to say, *Our Father;* and in seeking mercy for others, we may find mercy ourselves. Some, by the turning of Job's captivity, understand the restitution the Sabeans and Chaldeans made of the cattle they had taken from him, God wonderfully inclining them to do it; and with these he began the world again. Probably, it was so; those spoilers had *swallowed down his riches,* but they were forced to *vomit them up again, ch.* 20: 15. But I rather understand this more generally of the turn now given. It is also probable God at first, some way or other, intimated to him, that it was his gracious purpose, by degrees, in due time, to prosper him with twice as much as ever he had, to encourage his hope and quicken his industry, and that it might appear that this wonderful increase was a special token of God's favor, Heb. 10: 35. Job's friends had often put their severe censure on this issue, *If thou wert pure and upright, surely now He would awake for thee, ch.* 8: 6. But He does not *awake for thee,* therefore *thou art not upright;* 'I will, even by that, demonstrate the integrity of my servant Job.' Now it appeared Job had reason to bless God for taking away, (as he did, *ch.* 1: 21.) since it made so good a return

2. His old acquaintance, neighbors, and rela

5—14,21—30.) If Job were not an intended type of the Savior, the whole history is suited to bring his sufferings and the event of them to our remembrance. (*Jam.* 5:9—11.)

SCOTT.

Verses 10—17.

Job's longevity is strong proof, that he lived at a very early period. (5:25—27.)

ID.

(V. 11.) *Piece of money.*) *Qesytah.*] Lamb. *Sept. Vulg. Chal.* understanding a coin thus stamped, note Gen. 33: 19. The earliest Egyptian money was in rings, as already remarked; as was also that of the Celts. ED.

(V. 14.) *Keren-happuch.*] *Horn of plenty.* Vulg. *Cornu stibii* (horn of antimony?). Sept. Cornu Amaltheæ. The cut gives probably the most antique form of this symbol of plenty, as it is from an ancient temple, ('Temple at the S.') on the island Elephantine, in Egypt. The horn, or basket formed of leaves, in the shape of a horn, is sometimes seen filled with flowers, &c. ID.

ADDITIONAL NOTES TO JOB.

Semitic Language. In the book we have just been considering, we find a specimen of several members (see the pref.) of that great family of languages, thus described by *Heeren.* 'On the E. bank of the river Halys, began the empire of a mighty language spoken from the Halys E. as far as the Tigris; and from the heights of Caucasus to the S. coast of Arabia; and which, with some variations, preserves every where a distinctive or original character, being usually styled SEMITIC. Its dialects were the *Cappadocian,* in the W. countries on the banks of the Halys; the *Syrian,* between the Mediterranean and the Euphrates; and the Assyrian, on the farther side of the Tigris, in Kurdistan, or the ancient Adiabene; the *Chaldæan,* in Babylonia; the *Hebrew* and *Samaritan* in Palestine; the *Phœnician,* in the maritime cities of Phœnicia and their extensive colonies; and lastly, the *Arabic,* extending not only over the whole of the Arabian peninsula, but also over the steppes of Mesopotamia, which have at all times been frequented by wandering hordes of Arabs. Several of these dialects still survive; with others we are acquainted only through their literary fragments; and it cannot be doubted that at some remote period, antecedent to the commencement of historical records, one mighty race possessed these vast plains, varying in character according to the nature of the country which they inhabited; in the deserts of Arabia pursuing a nomad life; in Syria applying themselves to agriculture, and taking up settled abodes; in Babylonia erecting the most magnificent cities of ancient times, and in Phœnicia opening the earliest ports, and constructing

so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father [f] gave them inheritance among their brethren.

16 After this lived Job [h] an hundred and forty years, [i] and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, *even* four generations.

17 So Job died, *being* old and [k] full of days.

f Num. 27:7. Josh. 15:18,19. 18:4.
h Gen. 11:32. 25:7. 35:28. 47:28. 50: 26. Deut. 34:7. Josh. 24:29. Ps. 90:10.
i Gen. 50:23. Ps. 128:6. Prov. 17:6.
k 5:26. Gen. 15:15. 25:8. Deut. 6:2. Ps. 91:16. Prov. 3:16.

those that have thriven, must acknowledge their obligations. The last days of a good man sometimes prove his best days, his last works his best works, his last comforts his best comforts; for his path, like that of the morning-light, shines more and more to the perfect day. *His end is peace.* God is pleased sometimes strangely to outdo the expectations of his afflicted people, who thought they should never live to see better days, that we may not despair even in the depths of adversity; we know not what good times we may yet be reserved for. Job's possessions were just doubled; which is a remarkable instance of the extent of the Divine Providence to things that seem minute, as this, the exact number of a man's cattle; as also of the harmony of Providence, and the reference of one event to another; *known unto God are all his works, from the beginning to the end.* Job's other possessions, no doubt, were increased in proportion.

4. His family was built up again, and he had great comfort in his children, *v.* 13—15. The last of his afflictions and the most grievous, was, the death of all his children at once: his friends upbraided him with it, (*ch.* 8: 4.) but God repaired even that breach in process of time, either by the same wife, or, she being dead, by another. Some give this reason why his children were not doubled tions, were very kind, *v.* 11. They had been estranged, and it was not the least of his grievances *ch.* 19: 13, &c. They bemoaned him, when they talked over the calamities of his afflicted state; and comforted him, when they noticed God's gracious returns to him. These were not such great, learned, eloquent men as the miserable comforters, but proved much more skilful and kind. God sometimes chooses the foolish and weak things of the world, as for conviction, so for comfort. They made a collection among them to repair his losses, and set him up again: did not think it enough to say, *Be warmed, Be filled.* But why? God put it in their hearts; and every creature is that to us that He makes it.

3. His estate strangely increased, by God's blessing on the little his friends gave him: it is He that gives us power to get wealth, and success in honest endeavors. Those therefore that would thrive, must have an eye to God's blessing, and

as his cattle were, that they that were dead were not lost, but gone before to a better world; therefore if he have but the same number, they may be reckoned doubled. The names of his daughters are here registered, (*v.* 14.) because, in the significations of them, they seemed designed to perpetuate the remembrance of God's great goodness to him in the surprising change of his condition; he called the first *Jemima, The day,* because of the shining forth of his prosperity after a dark night of affliction. The next *Kezia,* a spice of a very fragrant smell, because (says Patrick) God had healed his ulcers. The third *Keren-happuch,* i. e. *Plenty restored,* or *A horn of paint;* because (says he) God had wiped away the tears which fouled his face, *ch.* 16: 16. We are told, *v.* 15. *no women* were *so fair.* In the O. T. we often find women praised for beauty, as Sarah, Rebekah, and many others; but never any in the N. T. whose beauty is in the least noticed, no not the Virgin Mary herself, because the beauty of holiness is that which is brought to a much clearer light by the Gospel. Their father supplied them great fortunes. Probably they had some extraordinary personal merit, which Job eyed. Perhaps they excelled their brethren in wisdom and piety; therefore, that they might continue in his family, a stay and blessing, he made them co-heirs.

5. The life of Job was long. We are told he lived 140 years; whence some conjecture he was 70 when in his troubles, and that so his age was doubled, as his possessions. He lived till he was satisfied, for he died full of days, willing to leave the world; not peevishly so, as in the days of his affliction, but piously so; thus, as Eliphaz had encouraged him to hope, he *came to his grave like a shock of corn in his season.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 7—17. When the Lord has duly humbled and graciously pardoned his servants, He will clear their reputations, silence their slanderers, answer their confidence, and exceed their largest expectations; and He will also teach them, after his example, to forgive, love, and pray for those who have injured them. In this frame of spirit, they will be prepared to bear honor in an unassuming manner, and then He will confer it. He generally *first* rebukes those whom He most loves: (5: 17. *Heb.* 12: 4—11. *Rev.* 3: 18, 19.) but let not such, as for a time escape, be too confident, for their turn will soon come.—It is indeed very painful to be confuted, rebuked, and constrained to confess our mistakes and offences, and to beg the assistance and good offices of those, whom we have despised, condemned, and injured. Yet the true penitent will submit to all this and far more, when the will of God is known: his self-abasement will be proportioned to his former self-confidence; and whenever we approach God in his ordinances, such mutual concessions, restitutions, and forgivenesses should *first* be attended to. (*Matt.* 5: 23, 24.) Nothing cements the affections of believers, who have jarred or disputed, so much as praying with and for each other: when they enjoy communion with their common Savior, they feel a more lively disposition to delight in 'the communion of the saints;' and to forget all which for a season interrupted it; and 'the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.'—When a man is oppressed, censured, and tempted, He appears very different, from what he does when delivered and comforted: and he that is at ease, can scarcely conceive what effect sharp trials would have upon him.—Whether the Lord gives us health, long life, affluence, friends, and flourishing families, or not; we shall eventually be happy, if we patiently suffer according to his will.—But though Job's trials and their happy event are replete with instruction and consolation, to the suffering and tempted believer; yet we shall be still more edified and encouraged by looking unto Jesus. May we then experience his grace, share his victories, tread in his steps, and copy his patience; and we shall find in the 'event, that the Lord is pitiful, and of tender mercy.'—But 'we have need of patience, that after having done the will of God, we may receive the promise.' (*Heb.* 10: 36.) SCOTT.

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fleets which secured to them the commerce of the known world.' HEEREN.

Structure of the Earth.

As the subject of *Geology,* in connection with the SS. would be improperly dismissed with the notes, Gen. 1: 1 and 2, and 1—10; and as the *structure of the earth,* and, there is some reason to think, even *fossil remains,* are alluded to in this most ancient book; the little space, here left us, is well occupied with the following remarks of Prof. HITCHCOCK, whose opinions need no commendation to an American reader who loves the hallowed union of science, philosophy and religion. The able professor considers (1836) the following points in Geology (among others) as established. '(1.) The sea and land have changed places at least once, and probably oftener, in some parts: i. e. a large part of existing continents once formed, and for a long period, the bottom of the ocean; from whence it has been subsequently elevated, either gradually, or by paroxysms, by means of a volcanic or internal force. (2.) The whole crust of the globe, or all known rocks, have resulted from the operation of second causes, either igneous or aqueous. (3.) For the most part, the processes by which the stratified rocks, especially the fossiliferous ores, have been formed, was such as are now in operation on the globe; and consequently, must have required a great length of time for their completion, even if those causes operated in early times with greater intensity than at present. (Almost every fact proves this to a practical geologist, and nearly every geologist adopts it.) (4.) The animals and vegetables found in the rocks, must have lived and died near the spots where they are now found; or if drifted at all, it could not have been, in most instances, but a short distance. (5.) These fossil animals and plants, even in high latitudes, correspond more nearly to those found living within the tropics, than to those within the temperate or frigid zones. (6.) From this and other considerations, it is clear that the temperature of the globe in early times must have been higher than at present. (7.) In the secondary rocks, (in which term I include all the fossiliferous strata below the tertiary,) no species of animals or plants corresponds with those in the tertiary strata; and hence they could not when alive have been contemporaries; i. e. the races buried in the secondary rocks, must have become extinct before those in the tertiary strata had an existence. (8.) No species among living animals and plants corresponds to those now found in the secondary rocks; (which constitute by far the greatest part of the fossiliferous strata,) and only a small proportion of those in the tertiary strata correspond to living species; and those that do correspond are found chiefly in the upper portions of the tertiary. Hence the existing races could not have lived on the earth at the same time with those in the secondary rocks, and but few if any with those in the tertiary rocks. In other words, great and sometimes entire changes of organic life have taken place on the globe since its original creation. (9.) In all countries hitherto examined, the remains of man have not been found except in alluvium, and in a few instances in what is called diluvium, and therefore he could not have existed in such countries at the same time with the fossil races found deeper in the earth.' *Bib. Repos.* April, 1836. ED.

AN EXPOSITION,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS AND NOTES,

UPON THE BOOK OF

PSALMS.

We have now before us one of the choicest and most excellent parts of all the O. T.; nay, so much is there in it of CHRIST and his gospel, as well as of GOD and his law, that it has been called *the abstract*, or *summary, of both Testaments*. The history of Israel led us to camps and council-boards; the book of Job brought us into the schools; but this brings us into the sanctuary, and directs us into communion with GOD, by solacing and reposing our souls in Him, lifting up, and letting out, our hearts toward Him: and we understand not ourselves, if we say not, *It is good to be here.*

I. The title of this book is, 1. The *Psalms*, Luke 24: 44. in Hebrew, *Tehillim*, properly *Psalms of praise;* because many of them are such: but *Psalms* is a more general word, meaning all metrical compositions fitted to be sung, as well historical, doctrinal, or supplicatory, as laudatory; and to excite all the other affections, as well as this of joy. The divine institution of singing psalms is thus largely displayed; for we are directed, not only to praise GOD, but to teach and admonish ourselves and one another *in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs*, Col. 3: 16. 2. The *Book of Psalms*, Acts 1: 20. It is a collection of all the divinely inspired psalms, which, though composed at several times and on several occasions, are here put together without any reference to, or dependence on, one another, for the service of the church.

II. The Author of this book is, no doubt, originally the Blessed Spirit. They are spiritual songs, words which the Holy Ghost taught. David wrote most of them, therefore he is called the *sweet Psalmist of Israel*, 2 Sam. 23: 1. Some that have not his name in their titles, yet are expressly ascribed to him elsewhere; as Ps. 2: (Acts 4: 25.) and Ps. 96: 105. (1 Chr. 16.) One psalm is expressly said to be *the prayer of Moses*, Ps. 90. and that some were penned by Asaph, is intimated, 2 Chr. 29: 30. Some seem to have been penned long after; as Ps. 137. at the time of the captivity in Babylon; but the far greater part were certainly penned by David himself, whose genius lay toward poetry and music, and who was raised up, qualified, and animated, to establish the ordinance of singing psalms in the church of GOD, as Moses and Aaron were, in their day, to settle the ordinances of sacrifice; theirs is superseded, but his remains, and will to the end of time, when it shall be swallowed up in the songs of eternity. Herein David was a type of CHRIST, who descended from him, not from Moses, because he came to take away sacrifice, (the family of Moses was soon lost and extinct.) but to establish and perpetuate joy and praise; for of the family of David in CHRIST there shall be no end.

III. The scope of it is manifestly, 1. To assist the exercises of natural religion. The book of Job helps to prove our first principles of the divine perfections and providence; but this to improve them in prayers and praises, and professions of desire toward Him, dependence on Him, and an entire devotedness and resignation to Him. Other parts of Scripture show that GOD is infinitely above man, and his sovereign LORD; but this shows that He may, notwithstanding, be conversed with by us sinful worms of the earth; and there are ways in which, if it be not our own fault, we may keep up communion with Him in all the various conditions of human life. 2. To advance the excellences of revealed religion, and, in the most pleasing, powerful manner, to recommend it to the world. And CHRIST, the Crown and Centre of revealed religion, the Foundation, Corner, and Top-stone, of that blessed building, is here clearly spoken of in type and prophecy; both his sufferings and subsequent glory, and his kingdom. What a high value does this book put on the word of GOD, his statutes and judgments, his covenant, and the great and precious promises of it; and how does it recommend them to us as our guide and stay, and our heritage for ever!

IV. The use of it. No one book of Scripture is more helpful to the devotions of the saints than this, and it has been so in all ages of the church, since it was written. 1. It is of use to be sung. Further than David's psalms we *may*, but *need* not go, for hymns and spiritual songs. What the rules of the Hebrew metre were, even the learned are not certain. [See pref. to Poet. Books.] But these psalms ought to be rendered according to the metre of every language, at least, so as that they may be sung for the edification of the church. 2. It is of use to be read and opened by the ministers of CHRIST, as containing great and excellent truths, and rules concerning good and evil. JESUS expounded the gospel psalms to his disciples, and opened their understandings to understand them, Luke 24: 44. 3. It is of use to be read and meditated upon by all good people. The psalmist's experiences are of great use for our direction, caution, and encouragement. David was a man after GOD'S own heart, therefore those who find themselves in some measure according to his heart, have reason to hope they are renewed by the grace of GOD, after the image of GOD, and may have much comfort in the testimony of their consciences for them. 4. The Psalmist's expressions, too, are of great use; by them the Spirit helps our praying infirmities, because we know not what to pray for as we ought. Hos. 14: 2. If we make David's psalms familiar, as we ought, whatever errand we have at the throne of grace, we may thence be assisted in the delivery of it; whatever devout affection is working in us, we may there find apt words wherewith to clothe it. It will be good to collect the most proper and lively expressions of devotion, which we find here, and to methodize them, and reduce them to the several heads of prayer, that they may be the more ready to us. Or, we may take sometimes one choice psalm, and sometimes another, and pray it over, i. e. enlarge on each v. in our own thoughts, and offer up our meditations to God, as they arise from the expressions we find there. The book is also a directory to the actions of our lives, and teaches us how to *order our conversation aright, so as that*, in the end, *we may see the salvation of GOD*, Ps. 50: 23. The Psalms were thus serviceable to the Old Testament Church, but to us Christians they may be of more use than they could be to them who lived before the coming of CHRIST; for, as Moses' sacrifices, so David's songs, are expounded and made more intelligible by the Gospel of CHRIST, which lets us within the veil; so that, if to David's prayers and praises we add Paul's prayers in his Epistles, and the new songs in the Revelation, we shall be thoroughly furnished for this good work; for the Scripture, perfected, makes the man of GOD perfect. HENRY.

Various divisions of this book have been made, apparently without much reason.—'The version of the Psalms, in our Bible, which was made by the translators employed by James the First, is posterior to that printed in our prayer books, which was executed in 1539. This last, as very excellent, and familiarized by custom, was retained in the Liturgy; though, as translated chiefly from the Septuagint, it does not so exactly correspond with the original, as does that in our Bibles.' *Gray's Key.* Indeed the Prayer-book translation is in no respect comparable to the Bible translation. SCOTT.

As to the division of this book, we need not be solicitous; there is no connection, or very seldom, between one psalm and another; but the order wherein we here find them, seems to be ancient, for that which is now the second psalm, was so in the Apostles' time, Acts 13: 33. The vulgar Latin joins the 9: and 10: together; all popish authors quote by that, so that thenceforward, throughout the book, their number is one short of ours; our 11: is their 10: our 119: their 118. But then they divide the 147: into two, and so make up the number of 150. Some have endeavored to reduce the psalms to proper heads, according to the matter of them, but there is often such a variety of matter in one and the same psalm, that it cannot be done with any certainty; yet the seven penitential psalms have been in a particular

manner singled out by the devotions of many. They are reckoned to be the 6, 22, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143. [See note, end of Ps.] The psalms were divided into five books, each concluding with *Amen, Amen*, or *Hallelujah;* the first ending with Ps. 41: the second with Ps. 72: the third with Ps. 89: the fourth with Ps. 106: the fifth with Ps. 150. Others divide them into three fifties; others into sixty parts, two for every day of the month, one for the morning, the other for the evening. Let good Christians divide them for themselves, so as may best increase their acquaintance with them, that they may have them at hand on all occasions, and may sing them in the Spirit and with the understanding. [See the 'Chronological arrangement of the Psalms,' from *Cot. Bib.*, next page.*] HENRY.

'It is plain, from Jos. 10: 13. and 2 Sam. 1: 18. that the Hebrews had poems and collections of poems which were sacred, long before David's time; but the psalms belong, principally, to the ages which elapsed between the time of David and the Babylonian captivity: it is matter of dispute, whether some of them are more ancient than this period; some are certainly more modern, but it cannot be proved, by sufficient arguments, that any are as recent as the age of Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabees.' JAHN.—'This collection of sacred hymns has ever been held in the highest estimation. Athanasius styles them an epitome of the whole Scriptures; Basil, a compendium of theology; Luther, a little Bible, and the summary of the Old Testament; and Melancthon, the most eloquent writing in the world.' *Critica Biblica.*—'In general, it may be viewed as a collection of sacred odes, composed by different bards, on various occasions of national history, individual experience, and prophetic excitement. The subjects embraced are endlessly diversified; corresponding to the varieties of nature, the complex operations of the divine government, the changing fortunes of the Jewish people, the vicissitudes of the life of David, the symbolical character of ritual worship, the progressive disclosures of the divine will, and the manifold states of the church on earth and in heaven.... It is a kind of sacred repository of all the great elements of devotion and praise. The most vital inquiry, perhaps, involved in the legitimate interpretation of this inspired book, is that which relates to it as a prophecy of the Messiah, and the times of the Gentiles. For my part, I can perceive no infallible guide but in the comments and appropriations of Christ and his apostles. Where they have set the example of recognising the prophetic spirit, we are safe in following in their footsteps: beyond this, all is doubt and uncertainty.' But 'he who has read the book of psalms without being led to Bethlehem, to the judgment-hall of Pilate, to the garden of Gethsemane, to the scene of crucifixion, to the mount of Olives, and to the Throne of Heaven, has had his spiritual vision obscured by ignorance, or blinded by prejudice.' Dr. JOHN MORISON.

The word *Psalms* is from the Greek, and denotes that these sacred hymns were, when sung, accompanied with the psaltery, harp, or lute: and indeed, from the time of David, psalmody, with various kinds of instrumental music, formed a considerable part of the daily worship at the sanctuary. (1 *Chr.* 9: 33. 15: 16—22. 16: 4—6, 37—43. 25:)—The whole collection is often called, 'The Psalms of David.' (See 2 *Sam.* 23: 1—4.)—Josephus informs us, that the Levites were enjoined to preserve, at the temple, all such hymns as might be composed in honor of God: and it is thought by some learned men, that the book of Psalms which we now have was selected from a much larger number, as divinely inspired, and therefore admissible into the canon of Scripture; while many others were rejected, as not entitled to this honorable distinction. However this may be, the entire book has certainly been considered as a part of the 'oracles of God' in every age, by an invariable testimony. Nearly fifty of the Psalms are quoted, or referred to, in the N. T. Our Lord, proposing a question to the scribes concerning the Messiah, introduces a passage from Ps. 110. in this manner: 'David himself said *by the Holy Ghost;*' and 'David *in Spirit* calleth him Lord:' and when instructing his disciples, after his resurrection, He says: 'All things must be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me.' (*Matt.* 24: 41—46. *Mark* 12: 35—37. *Luke* 24: 44—49.) In like manner, the apostle Paul, quoting a passage from Ps. 95. which he ascribes to David, uses this language; 'Wherefore as *the Holy Ghost saith*, To-day, if ye will hear his voice.' (*Heb.* 3: 7—13. 4: 3—11.) The assembled Christian church also applies the second Psalm to Christ, in these words: 'Lord, thou art God,... who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said.' (*Acts* 4: 23—28.) In so decided a manner is the divine inspiration of the O. T. attested by Christ and his apostles.—The Jewish writers indeed are unwilling to bestow on David the title of prophet, and ascribe to him only a subordinate kind of inspiration, according to the several distinctions which they have devised in this respect: [see pref. to Poet. Books:] but Peter expressly calls him a prophet; (*Acts* 2: 30.) and the number and clearness of the predictions which he delivered, and which were evidently fulfilled after many ages, most fully prove him entitled to that character. Indeed, the several particulars respecting the descent, kingdom, priesthood, and life of Christ, &c. with the success of his Gospel, and the calling of the Gentiles, are so circumstantially foretold in one or other of the Psalms, that a history of these events might in great measure be compiled from them; and in some cases, with a minuteness to which historians seldom descend.—The words which our Lord used on the cross, in two instances, were taken from the Psalms; and the insulting language of his persecutors was the very same as David, above a thousand years before, had put into their mouths. (*Ps.* 22: 1, 7, 8. 31: 5. *Matt.* 27: 39—46. *Luke* 23: 46.)—Many Psalms indeed are, directly and throughout, prophecies of Christ; various passages in others must be interpreted of Him: and David was so eminent a type of the Savior, that his very name, in some instances in the prophecies, is given to this his most illustrious Descendant. (*Ez.* 37: 24, 25. *Is.* 55: 1—5. *Ez.* 34: 23—31. *Hos.* 3: 4, 5.) But besides this, that union, which subsists between the Redeemer and his people, and the conformity thence resulting, are of such a nature, that it is impossible the same things should not apply in many respects to both, though a discrimination must needs be observed in others. This may lead us to an obvious decision of the controversy, which has often been agitated, whether all the Psalms should be applied to Christ, or not. No doubt every pious mind will allow, that each of them either immediately points to Him in his Person, character, and offices; or may be so applied as to lead the believer's thoughts to Him, who is the centre of all acceptable religion: and probably there are few persons, who suppose that all the Psalms speak of Christ in exactly the same manner; but rather according to the nature of the subject. 'The Psalms are an epitome of the Bible, adapted to devotion. They treat occasionally of the creation and formation of the world, the dispensations of Providence, and the economy of Grace; the transactions of the patriarchs; the Exodus of Israel, their journey through the wilderness, and settlement in Canaan; their law, priesthood, and ritual; the exploits of their great men, wrought through faith; their sins and captivities; their repentances and restorations; the sufferings and victories of David; the peaceful and happy reign of Solomon; the advent of Messiah, with its effects and consequences; his incarnation, birth, life, passion, death, resurrection, ascension, kingdom, and priesthood; the effusion of the Spirit; the conversion of the nations; the rejection of the Jews; the establishment, increase, and perpetuity of the Christian church; the end of the world; the general judgment; the condemnation of the wicked, and the final triumph of the righteous with their Lord and King. These are the subjects here presented to our meditation.... They are... adorned with the figures and set off with the graces of poetry; and poetry itself is designed yet further to be recommended by the charms of music, thus consecrated to the service of God; that so delight may prepare the way for improvement, and pleasure become the handmaid of wisdom, while every turbulent passion is calmed by sacred melody, and the evil spirit is still dispossessed by the Harp of the son of Jesse.' *Bp. Horne's Pref. to his Comm. on the Ps.* 3*d ed.* 8*vo. Oxf.* 1781, pp. i, ii.—'They present religion to us in its most engaging dress; communicating truths, which philosophy could never investigate, in a style which poetry can never equal; while history is made the vehicle of prophecy, and Creation lends all its charms to paint the glories of Redemption.' *Ib.* p. lxiv.—'Besides their incomparable fitness to express our sentiments, they are at the same time memorials of, and appeals to, former mercies and deliverances; they are acknowledgments of prophecies accomplished.' *Ib.* p. xxviii.—In commenting therefore on this book, we should continually keep the Savior in our mind; and while we consider who He was, and what He did; how and why He suffered, and how He rose and reigns; we should also endeavor to learn

what his true disciples are, what they ought to be, and what they actually do aspire after. The literal meaning, as far as the Psalmist is concerned, should be adverted to, where it can be ascertained; the particulars noted, in which Christ is predicted or typified; and the use that is to be made of every part of each Psalm to encourage the faith and hope, to direct the temper and conduct, to enliven the devotions, and to assist the self-examination of the reader, should be plainly shown.—We are also here continually reminded of what we must have to struggle against, from within and from without, and how we may succeed in this conflict: and solemn warnings, and denunciations of vengeance against oppressors and persecutors, and the despisers and opposers of Christ and his gospel, are every where interspersed. This indeed has been considered as an objection to the use of the Psalms, in public or private devotion; and a prejudice has arisen in some pious minds against several parts of them, as if contrary to the Christian spirit: but, doubtless, the *right spirit* has always been the same; and these parts must be considered, either as direct prophecies, or as divinely inspired declarations of the certain doom awaiting all the opposers of Christ, and his cause or people; and not as expressions of private resentment, or malevolence against injurious individuals. In short, there is nothing in true religion, doctrinal, experimental, and practical, but will present itself to our attention, while we meditate on the Psalms: scarcely any part of the book, which, when properly understood and accommodated, will not be found to suit the case of private Christians, and which may not be usefully employed in public worship: hardly an occasion of praise and thanksgiving can be conceived, to which some portion of them, faithfully rendered in poetical versions, may not be applied with peculiar energy and propriety; and indeed the Christian's use of them in the closet, and the minister's in the pulpit, will generally increase, with their growing experience of the power of true religion in their own hearts. From this eulogium on this part of Scripture, let the reader be excited to meditate on it carefully for himself; but let him not expect too much from the expositor. Brevity must be consulted; a writer's inclination may exceed his ability; and at last, the teaching Spirit of God, sought in fervent prayer, leading the pious soul into the genuine exercise of faith, hope, love, and gratitude, will do more to enable a man to enter into the Psalmist's views, than any human explication. If the author is enabled to suggest a few profitable hints on each Psalm, he shall have cause to be very thankful. SCOTT.

* *Chronological Arrangement of the Psalms, after Townsend and Calmet.*

NUMBER.	AUTHOR.	PROBABLE OCCASION.	CONNECTION.	DATE B. C.
88.	Heman.	Israel's affliction in Egypt.	Ex. ii. 23—25.	1531
90.	Moses.	Shortening of life.	Num. xiv. 45.	1490
9.	David.	Victory over Goliath.	1 Sam. xviii. 4.	1063
11.	——	Advised to flee to mts.	—— xix. 5.	1062
59.	——	Saul's soldiers surrounding his house.	—— —— 17.	——
56.	——	With Philistines at Gath.	—— xxi. 1.	——
34.	——	Leaving Gath.	—— ——	——
142.	——	In the cave of Adullam.	—— xxii. 1.	——
17.	——	Priests murdered by Doeg.	—— —— 17—19.	——
52. 109. 35. 140.	——	Persecution by Doeg.	—— ——	——
64. 31.	——	Persecution by Saul.	—— xxiii. 12.	1061
54.	——	Treachery of the Ziphites.	—— —— 23.	——
57. 58.	——	Refusal to kill Saul.	—— xxiv. 22.	——
63.	——	In the wilderness of Engedi.	—— ——	——
141.	——	Driven out of Judea.	—— xxvii. 1.	1058
139.	——	King of Israel.	2 Ch. xii. 40.	1048
68.	——	First removal of the ark.	2 Sam. vi. 11.	1042
24. 132. 105. 96. 106.	——	Second removal of the ark.	1 Ch. xv. 4. xvi. 43.	——
2. 45. 22. 16. 118. 110.	——	Nathan's proph. address.	1 Ch. xvii. 27.	——
16. 103.	——	Joab's conquest of Syria and Edom.	—— xviii. 13.	1040
20. 21.	——	War with the Ammonites and Syrians.	2 Sam. x. 19.	1036
6. 51. 32. 38. 39. 40. 41. 103.	——	Adultery with Bathsheba, and murder of Uriah.	—— xii. 15.	1034
3.	——	Flight from Absalom.	—— xv. 29.	1021
7.	——	Reproaches of Shimei.	—— xvi. 14.	——
42. 43. 55. 4. 5. 62. 143. 144. 70. 71.	——	By Jordan, having fled from Absalom.	—— xvii. 29.	——
18.	——	Conclusion of his wars.	—— xxii. 1—51.	1018
30.	——	Dedication of Araunah's threshing floor.	1 Ch. xxi. 30.	1017
91.	——	After his advice to Solom.	—— xxviii. 10.	1015
145.	——	Review of his past life.	—— ——	——
8. 12. 19. 23. 29. 33. 61. 65. 69. 86. 95. 101. 104. 120. 121. 122. 124. 131. 133.	——	Occasions and dates unknown.	—— ——	——
72.	——	Coronation of Solomon.	1 Ch. xxix. 19.	1015
47. 97. 98. 99. 100.	Solomon.	Removal of the ark into the temple.	2 Ch. vii. 10.	1004
135. 136.	Solomon.	Dedication of the temple.	—— ——	——
78.	Asaph.	Asa's victory over Israel.	—— xvi. 6.	950
82. 115. 46.	Asaph & oth.	Reign of Jehoshaphat.	—— xx. 26.	896
44.	Hezekiah.	Blasphemous message of Rab-shakeh.	2 Ki. xix. 13.	710
73. 75. 76.	Asaph.	Destruction of Sennacherib's army.	—— 19.	——
79. 74. 83. 94.	——	Burning of the temple.	Jer. xxxix. 10.	588
137. 130. 80. 77. 37. 67. 49. 53. 50. 10. 13. 14. 15. 25. 26. 27. 36. 89. 92. 93. 123.	Asaph, Ethan, and others.	During the Babylonian captivity.	Dan. vii. 28.	541 to 539
102.	Daniel.	Near the close of the capt.	—— ix. 27.	538
126. 85.	Sons of Korah.	Decree of Cyrus for restoring the Jews.	Ezra i. 4.	536
107. 87. 111. 112. 113. 114. 116. 117. 125. 127. 128. 134.	Various.	Return of the Jews from captivity.	—— iii. 7.	——
84. 66.	Sons of Korah.	Foundation of 2d temple.	—— —— 13.	535
129.	Ezra or Neh.	Opposition of Samaritans.	—— iv. 24.	534
138.	Hag. or Zec.	Rebuilding of the temple.	—— vi. 13.	519
43. 81. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150.	Various.	Dedication of the 2d temple.	Zech. viii. 23.	515
1. 119.	Ezra.	Manual of devotion.	Neh. xiii. 3.	444

PSALM I.

The character and happiness of the righteous, 1—3. The misery and ruin of ungodly men, 4—6.

[a] BLESSED *is* the man that [b] walketh not in [c] the counsel

a 2:12. 32:1,2. 34:8. 84:12. 106:3. 112:1. 115:12—15. 119:1,2. 144:15. 146:5. Deut. 28:2,&c. 33:29. Jer. 17:7. Matt. 16:17. Luke 11:28. John 13:17. 20:29. Rev. 22:14.
b 81:12. Gen. 5:24. Lev. 26:27,28. 1 K. 16:31. Job 31:5. Prov. 1:15. 3:14,15. 13:20. Ez. 20:18. 1 Pet. 4:3.
c 64:2. Gen. 49:6. 2 Chr. 22:3—5. Job 10:3. 21:16. Luke 23:51.

NOTES.

PSALM I. V. 1—3. This psalm is generally considered as a preface to the book, and supposed to have been prefixed to it by Ezra. The translation in our prayer-book renders this in the past tense; and though the original might very well bear that meaning, yet the context and the whole tenor of Scripture show, that this cannot be the exclusive sense; for that would imply, that they alone are blessed, who never have walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful: whereas penitent believers, whatever their previous character has been, are partakers of the blessings, which is evidenced by their subsequent conduct; and none but they answer this description. (32:1,2. 106:3—6. 119:1—5. *Matt.* 5:1—12. *Luke* 11:27, 28. *Rom.* 4:6—8.)—'The ungodly' are those, however moral or virtuous, who profanely despise spiritual blessings, and live without any due regard to God and religion, as all unconverted men do.—'The counsel of the ungodly' signifies, the maxims and principles of worldly men, who form their plans and calculate advantages or disadvantages, according to their several pursuits, without bringing eternal things, and the favor or displeasure of God, into the account: and 'walking in this counsel,' signifies an habitual conduct formed on such principles, and regulated according to such rules. 'Sinners,' in this climax, seems to mean, those who add to their ungodliness, gross immoralities, and such crimes as natural conscience and the opinion of the world protest against. (*Luke* 7:37—39. *John* 9:24—34. *Rom.* 5:6—10.) And to 'stand in the way of sinners,' implies, the habit of vices gradually overcoming the sense of shame and remorse of conscience; till a quiet, rarely interrupted by convictions, is superinduced. Yet these occasional convictions are the source of uneasiness; and this prepares the sinner for 'sitting down in the seat of the scornful.'—'The scornful' no doubt are those, who encourage themselves and each other in ungodliness and wickedness, by infidel and atheistical tenets; and who have recourse to corrupt principles, to bear them out in corrupt practices; and so are given up to a blinded and deluded mind, as a punishment of their conduct in following the impulse of a wicked heart. *The seat of the scornful.* (1) 'The seat of pestilences.' *Sept.* See *Acts* 24:5. Gr. SCOTT.

'The grand moral postulate, which runs through this Ps. and constitutes its theme, is, that virtue is rewarded with prosperity, and vice punished with adversity, in the present life, ... which, though admitted as a general truth, is yet not invariable.' {Notes, Job, chs.

of the * ungodly, nor [d] standeth in [e] the way of sinners, nor [f] sitteth in the seat of the [g] scornful.

2 But [h] his delight *is* in the law of the LORD: and in his law doth he [i] meditate [k] day and night.

3 And he shall be like [l] a tree planted by the rivers of water, that [m] bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also [n] shall not † wither; and [o] whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

4 The ungodly *are* not so: but *are* [p] like

* Or, *wicked.*
d 26:12. Rom. 5:2. Eph. 6:13,14.
e 6. 36:4. 146:9. Prov. 2:12. 4:19. 13:15. Matt. 7:13,14.
f 26:4,5. 119:115. Jer. 15:17.
g Prov. 1:22. 3:34. 9:12. 19:29.
h 40:8. 112:1. 119:11,35,47,48,72,92. Job 23:12. Jer. 15:16. Rom. 7:22. 1 John 5:3.
i 104:34. 119:11,15,97—99. Josh. 1:8. 1 Tim. 4:15.
k 88:1. Luke 2:37. 18:7. 1 Thes. 2: 9. 2 Tim. 1:3.
l Job 14:9. Is. 44:4. Jer. 17:8. Ez. 17:8. 19:10. 47:12. Rev. 22:2.
m 92:14. Matt. 21:34,41.
n Is. 27:11. Matt. 13:6. 21:19. John 15:6. Jude 12.
† Heb. *fade.*
o 128:3. Gen. 39:3,23. Josh. 1:7,8. 1 Chr. 22:11. 2 Chr. 31:21. 32:23. Is. 3:10.
p 35:5. Job 21:18. Is. 17:13. 29:5. Hos. 13:3. Matt. 3:12.

Ps. I. V. 1—3. This is a psalm of instruction concerning good and evil. The different character and condition of godly and wicked people, is here plainly stated in a few words; so that every man, if he will be faithful to himself, may here see his own face, and then read his own doom. That division of the children of men into saints and sinners, as it is ancient, ever since the struggle began between sin and grace, the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, so it is lasting, and will survive all other divisions and subdivisions of men; for by this, men's everlasting state will be determined, and the distinction will last as long as heaven and hell. Whoever collected the psalms of David, (probably it was Ezra,) with good reason put this psalm first, as a preface to the rest, because it is absolutely necessary, to the acceptance of our devotions, that we be righteous before God, (for only the prayer of the upright is his delight,) therefore, that we be right in our notions of blessedness, and in our choice of the way that leads to it. Those are not fit to put up good prayers, who do not walk in good ways.

I. An error in the choice of our standard and leader, is original and fatal; but if we be right here, we are in a fair way to do well.

1. A godly man, that he may avoid the evil, utterly renounces the conduct of evil-doers, and will not be led by them, *v.* 1. This part of his character is put first, because those that will keep the commandments of their God, must say to evil-doers, *Depart from us*, 119: 115. and departing from evil, is that in which wisdom begins. The world is full of evil-doers; but they are here described by three characters, *ungodly*, *sinners*, and *scornful*. See by what steps men arrive at the height of impiety. *None reach the height of vice at once.* They are *ungodly* first, casting off the fear of God, and living in the neglect of their duty to Him: but when the services of religion are laid aside, they come to be *sinners*, break out into open rebellion against God, and engage in the service of sin and Satan; at length, they come to be *scorners*, openly defy all that is sacred, scoff at religion, and make a jest of sin. The word we translate *ungodly*, signifies such as are unsettled, aim at no certain end, and walk by no certain rule, but are at the command of every lust, and at the beck of every temptation. The word for *sinners*, signifies such as are determined for the practice of sin, and set it up as their trade. The *scornful*, are those that set *their mouths against the heavens.* These the good man sees with a sad heart, but he shuns them, wherever he sees them. He does not do as they do; and, that he may not, he does not converse familiarly with them. He does *not walk in the counsel of the ungodly;* though ever so witty, and subtle, and learned, if ungodly, they shall not be the men of his counsel; he does not consent to them, nor *say as they say*, Luke 23: 51. adopt their principles, or act according to their advice. *He stands not in the way of sinners;* their way shall not be his, he will not come into it, much less continue in it, as the sinner does, who *sets himself in a way that is not good*, 36: 4. He will not associate with them, nor choose them for his companions. He does not stand in their way, to be picked up by them, (Prov. 7: 8.) but keeps as far from them as from a place or person infected with the plague, for fear of the contagion, Prov. 4: 14, 15. He that would be kept from harm, must keep out of harm's way. He *sits not in the seat of the scornful;* not in close cabal, to find out ways and means to support and advance the devil's kingdom, or in open judgment, magisterially to condemn the generation of the righteous. The seat of the drunkards, is the *seat of the scornful*, 69: 12. Happy the man that never sits in it, Hos. 7: 5.

2. A godly man, that he may do what is good and cleave to it, submits to the direction of the Word of God, and makes that familiar to him, *v.* 2. This keeps him out of the way of the ungodly, and fortifies him against their temptations. We may judge of our spiritual state by asking, 'What is the law of God to us? What account do we make of it! What place has it in us?' See here, (1.) The entire affection a good man has for the law of God; his delight is in it, though it be a law, a yoke, because it is the law of God, holy, just, and good, which he freely consents to, and so delights in, *after the inner man*, Rom. 7: 16, 22. All who are well pleased that there is a God, must be well pleased that there is a Bible, a revelation of God, of his will, and the only way to happiness in Him. (2.) The intimate acquaintance a good man keeps up with the Word of God; *in that law doth he meditate day and night;* by this it appears his delight is in it, for what we love, we love to think of, 119: 97. No time is amiss for meditating on the Word of God. We must not only do it morning and evening; but thoughts of it should be interwoven with the business and converse of every day, and with the repose and slumbers of every night; *When I awake, I am still with Thee.*

II. An assurance of the godly man's happiness, with which we should encourage ourselves to answer the character of such.

1. He is *blessed*, *v.* 1. God blesses him, and that blessing will make him happy: none of the ingredients of happiness shall be wanting to him. When he undertakes to describe a blessed man, he describes a good man; for, after all, those only are truly happy, that are truly holy; and we are more concerned to know the way to blessedness, than to know wherein blessedness will consist. Nay, goodness and holiness are not only the way to happiness, Rev. 22: 14, but happiness itself; supposing there was not another life after this, yet that man is a happy man, that keeps in the way of his duty.

2. *He shall be like a tree*, fruitful and flourishing. The means of grace are here called *the rivers of water*, those rivers which *make glad the city of our God*, 46: 4. from these a good man receives supplies of strength and vigor, but in secret, undiscerned ways. His practices are the fruit, abounding to a good account, Phil. 4: 17. It is expected that those who enjoy the mercies of grace, will, both in the temper of their minds, and in the tenor of their lives, comply with the intentions of that grace, and then, to the praise of the great Vine-Dresser, they bring forth fruit *in due season*. His profession, here called *his leaf*, [as that which shows him,] shall be preserved from blemish and decay: if the Word of God rule in the heart, that will keep the profession green, both to our comfort and to our credit. Prosperity shall attend him, wherever he goes, soul-prosperity. Whatever he does, in conformity to the law, it shall prosper and succeed, to his mind, or above his hope.

In singing these vs. being duly affected with the malignant and dangerous nature of sin, and transcendent excellences of the divine law, and the power and efficacy of God's grace, from which our fruit is found, we must teach and admonish

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34. 36.] 'The exemption in which blessedness is said to consist, includes an immense proportion of the elements of happiness.' MORISON.

(1.) *Blessed.*] 'The Hebrew word is a noun plural, "Blessings" on the man.' *Cottage Bible.* 'O! the felicities,' or, 'O! the prosperities of the man!' BUSH.—'The v. is a specimen of *gradational parallelism*, in which the secondor responsive clause so diversifies the preceding clause, as generally to rise above it, forming a sort of *climax;* and sometimes by a descending scale in the value of related terms and periods forming an *anti-climax;* but in all cases with a marked distinction of meaning. This species of parallelism is the most frequent of all: it prevails chiefly in the shorter poems, in many of the psalms, and very frequently in Is.—The exclamation with which the Ps. opens belongs equally to each line of the succeeding triplet. In the triplet itself, each line consists of three members, and the lines gradually rise one above the other, not merely in their general sense, but especially throughout the correspondent members. To *walk*, implies no more than casual intercourse; to *stand*, closer intimacy; to *sit*, fixed and permanent connection; the *council*, the ordinary place of meeting, or public resort; the *way*, the select and chosen footpath; the *seat*, the habitual and final resting place; the *unrighteous*, negatively wicked; *sinners*, positively wicked; the *scorners*, scoffers at the very name or notion of piety and goodness.' CRIT. BIB.

The man.] 'This is emphatic: THAT *man;* that *one* among a thousand who lives for the accomplishment of the end for which God created him.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 2.

Delight in the law.] 'It is a fine symptom of the spiritual health of the mind, when we feel that we delight in the law of the Lord, whether by that law we understand the entire revelation of God, or only its preceptive parts.' MORISON.—'*The law* is here not to be taken for the ten commandments only, but for the whole revealed will of God.' COTT. BIB.—*Day and night.*] 'It is more than probable, that allusion is here made to the time of the morning and evening services of the sanctuary; and that the general sentiment expressed is, that the perusal of the Word of God must be alike unremitting and punctual.' MORISON.

Verse 3.

Rivers of water.] 'Alluding to the custom of *irrigation* in the east, where streams are conducted from a canal or river to different parts of the ground, and turned *off* or *on* at pleasure. Deut. 11:10.' Dr. *A. Clarke*, after HAMMOND.—*Wither.*] 'More literally, "fall." It may be rendered impersonally; "*Its* leaf shall not wither, and whatsoever *it* doeth (for produceth) shall prosper." A tree is said to make fruit when it beareth it Jer. 17:18.' AINSWORTH.

the chaff which the wind driveth away.

5 Therefore the ungodly [q] shall not stand in the judgment, nor [r] sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6 For the LORD [s] knoweth the way of the righteous: but [t] the way of the ungodly shall perish.

PSALM II.

The throne of Christ established, in contempt of all opposers, 1—6. Christ declares the Father's decree concerning his kingdom, 7—9. Kings and rulers are warned to submit to Him, 10—12.

WHY [a] do the heathen * rage, and [b] the people † imagine a vain thing?

2 [c] The kings of the earth set themselves, and [d] the rulers take counsel together, * against the LORD, and [f] against his anointed, *saying*,

3 [g] Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

4 [h] He that sitteth in

q 5:5. 26:3. Luke 21:36. Jude 24.
r 26:9. Mal. 3:18. Matt. 13:49. 25:32.
s 37:18—24. 139:1,2. 142:3. Job 23: 10. Nah. 1:7. John 10:14,27. 2 Tim. 2:19.
t 112:10. 146:9. Prov. 14:12. Matt. 7:13. 2 Pet. 2:12.
a 18:43. 46:6. 83:4—8. Is. 8:9,10. Luke 18:32. Acts 4:25—27.
* Or, *tumultuously assemble*. Luke 22: 1,2,5,22,23. Acts 16:22. 17:5,6. 19: 28—32.
b Matt. 21:38. John 11:49,50. Acts 5:39. Rev. 17:14.
† Heb. *meditate*.
c 10. 48:4. 110:5. Matt. 2:16. Luke 13:31. 23:11,12. Acts 12:1—6. Rev. 17:12—14.
d Matt. 26:3,59. 27:1. Acts 4:5—8.
e Ex. 16:7. Prov. 21:30. John 15:23. Acts 9:4.
f 45:7. 89:20. Is. 61:1. John 1:41. 3: 34. Acts 10:38. Heb. 1:9.
g Jer. 5:5. Luke 19:14. 1 Pet. 2:7,8.
h 11:4. 68:33. 115:3. Is. 40:22. 57: 15. 66:1.

ourselves, and one another, to watch against sin and all approaches toward it, to converse much with the Word of God, and abound in the fruit of righteousness: and, in praying over them, we must seek to God for his grace both to fortify us against every evil word and work, and to furnish us for every good word and work.

V. 4—6. Here is,

1. The description of the ungodly, *v.* 4 they are the reverse of the righteous, both in character and condition. The LXX emphatically repeat this, *not so* the ungodly, they are *not so;* they are led by the counsel of the wicked, in the way of sinners, to the seat of the scornful; they have no delight in the law of God, and bring forth no fruit, but the grapes of Sodom: whereas the righteous are like useful, fruitful trees, *they* are *like the chaff*, the very lightest, of the floor, not capable of being put to any use; of no worth at all in God's account, how highly soever they may value themselves: light and vain, easily driven to and fro by every wind of temptation, and have no steadfastness. Would you know their end? The wrath of God will drive them away in their wickedness, as the wind does the chaff. The chaff may be, for awhile, among the wheat; but He is coming, *whose fan is in his hand*, and who will *thoroughly purge his floor*. They that by their own sin and folly make themselves as chaff, will be found so, before the whirlwind and fire of divine wrath, 35: 5. so unable to stand before it, or to escape it, Isa. 17: 13.

2. The doom of the ungodly read, *v.* 5. There is a judgment to come, in which every man's present character and work, though ever so artfully concealed and disguised, shall be truly and perfectly discovered, and appear in their own colors, and every man's future state will be, by an irreversible sentence, determined for eternity. The ungodly must appear in that judgment, to receive according to the things done in the body; they may hope to come off, nay, to come off with honor, but *they shall not stand in the judgment;* so plain will the evidence be against them, and so just and impartial the judgment upon it. They will be for ever shut out from the society of the blessed; they shall not stand *in the congregation of the righteous;* in the *judgment*, so some, with the saints, as assessors with Christ, and those holy myriads with which He shall come, Jude 14. 1 Cor. 6: 2. Or, in *heaven; in the general assembly of the church of the first-born, a congregation of the righteous*, of all the saints, and none but saints, and saints made perfect, 2 Thess. 2: 1.

3. The reason of this different state of the godly and wicked, *v.* 6. (1.) God must have all the glory of the prosperity and happiness of the righteous. They are blessed, because *the Lord knows their way.* (2.) Sinners must bear all the blame of their own destruction. *Therefore* the ungodly perish, because the very way they have chosen and resolved to walk, leads directly to destruction, and must necessarily end in it. Or, we may take it thus, The Lord is well pleased with the way of the righteous, therefore, under the influence of his gracious smiles, it shall prosper, and end well; but He is angry at the way of the wicked, therefore it shall perish, and they in it. Let this support the drooping spirits of the righteous, that the Lord knows their way, their hearts, Jer. 12: 3. their secret devotions, Matt. 6: 6. their character; and will shortly make them and their way manifest before the world, to their immortal joy and honor. Let this cast a damp on the security and jollity of sinners, that their way, though pleasant now, will perish at last.

In singing these vs. and praying over them, let us possess ourselves with a holy dread of the wicked man's portion, and deprecate it with a firm and lively expectation of the judgment to come; and stir up ourselves to prepare for it, with a holy care to approve ourselves to God in every thing, entreating his favor with our whole hearts.

Ps. II. As the foregoing Psalm was *moral*, and showed us our *duty*, so this is *evangelical*, and shows us our *Savior*. Under the type of David's kingdom, which was of divine appointment, met with much opposition, but prevailed at last, the kingdom of the Messiah, the Son of David, is prophesied of, which is the primary intention and scope of the Ps.; and I think there is less in it of the type, and more of the anti-type, than in any of the gospel-psalms, for there is nothing in it but what is applicable to Christ, but some things that are not at all applicable to David, *v.* 6, 7. *Thou art my Son*, *v.* 8. *I will give Thee the uttermost parts of the earth*, and, *v.* 12. *Kiss the Son.* It is interpreted of Christ, *Acts* 4: 27.—13: 33. *Heb.* 1: 5. This Ps. as the former, is very fitly prefixed to this book of devotions, because, as it is necessary to our acceptance with God, that we should be subject to the precepts of his law, so it is likewise, that we should be subject to the grace of his gospel, and come to Him in the name of a Mediator. Observe here,

V. 1—6. I. The mighty opposition that would be given to the Messiah and his kingdom, *v.* 1–3. One would have expected that so great a blessing to this world, should be universally welcomed and embraced; but never were the notions of any sect of philosophers, though ever so [pernicious, or] absurd, nor the powers of any prince or state, though ever so tyrannical, opposed with so much

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The tendency of corrupt nature is from bad to worse. None know, when they first shake off the impressions of a religious education, or venture to neglect known duty, how far they may be left to proceed. And young persons should be warned [to be unremittingly careful of every imagination even, and] not to venture aside into a path which leads to such fatal consequences: for numbers are left to wander from God, to be hardened in sin, and finally to perish. But blessed be God for his covenant of grace, and Jesus the Mediator of it: by his perfect obedience even unto death, He is become 'the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.' Whenever the sinner becomes sensible of his guilt and misery, he may return by Christ, the living Way, and join the company of the righteous. SCOTT

Verse 6.

'When it is said, "the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, it is but an emphatic mode of declaring that He smiles on it, that it meets his approving sanction, that it cannot, and shall not lose its gracious reward; that all its trials, temptations, responsibilities and conflicts, are naked and open to his benignant and paternal survey.' MORISON.

NOTES.

Ps. II. V. 1—3. The occasion of this Ps. might be taken from David's advancement to the throne, and his expectation of triumphing over the opposition to his authority, both of disaffected Israelites and the surrounding nations: (2 *Sam.* 2:4, 9. 5:) but it is throughout an evident prophecy of Christ, and repeatedly quoted as such in the N. T.; where it is ascribed to David, though his name is not prefixed to it. (*Acts* 4:25—28. 13:33.) SCOTT.

'Many have supposed the occasion of this Ps. is found in 2 Sam. 5: 17, 18. and this is perhaps as probable as any other conjecture, which takes it for granted, that it refers literally and principally to David, and to his inauguration. . . . But every sentence in the Ps. points, as with a line of light, to Christ and his kingdom. . . David was not anointed on Zion, but first at Bethlehem and afterwards at Hebron; nor was his kingdom so *extensive* or of *such a kind* as that here spoken of, *v.* 8, 9. David also warns against '*trusting in princes*,' or 'in the son of man'; yet those who trust in the Prince here spoken of, are expressly said to be blessed, *v.* 12. The whole Ps. therefore, in its original drift, was designed to refer *directly, primarily*, and *exclusively* to the Messiah, and the things of his kingdom.' BUSH.—'In some limited sense it may refer to the settlement of David in the throne of Judah and Israel; but its principal design is to celebrate the glories of the Messiah,—to predict the triumphs of his reign,—and to foretell the impending doom of his enemies.' MORISON.—*Rosenm.* after having shown *historically*, but very conclusively, that the Ps. cannot refer to David, nor to Solomon, nor to any of the later kings of Judah or of Israel, and therefore to no one but to 'the "great King," the "Anointed" *by way of distinction*;' yet, strange as it may seem,—thinks, from v. 9. that 'Jesus the Savior was not present to the mind of the poet.'(!) ED.—'The structure of the Ps. is peculiar. There are evident indications of more than one speaker; and we may perhaps safely denominate it, short as it is, a sacred drama, a divine collocution, in which the Father, the Son, and some third party, probably the psalmist, moved by the Holy Ghost, are introduced, bearing their several parts.' BUSH.

(1.) *Imagine a vain thing.*] 'The narrative of the various frustrated plots of the Jews at Jerusalem, at Antioch, at Thessalonica, at Corinth, affords the most pertinent commentary on the prophetic burden of this part of the Ps.' ID.

(2.) *Take counsel.*] 'As soldiers in an army, or as senators in a council: in the former way against David, in the latter against Christ.' HAMMOND.

Verses 4—6.

When the priests and rulers prevailed on Pilate to crucify their

the heavens [i] shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision.

5 Then [k] shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and * vex them in his [l] sore displeasure.

6 [m] Yet have I † set my King upon ‡ my holy hill of Zion.

7 ¶ I will declare § the decree: The LORD hath said unto me, [n] Thou *art* my Son; [o] this day have I begotten thee.

8 [p] Ask of me, [q] and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession.

9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him.

i 37:13. 53:5. 59:8. 2 K. 19:21. Prov. 1:26.
k 50:16—22. Is. 11:4. 66:6. Matt. 22: 7. 23:33—36. Luke 19:27,43,44. Rev. 1:16. 19:15.
* Or, *trouble.*
l 110:5,6. Zech. 1:15.
m 45:6. 89:27,36,37. 110:1,2. Is. 9:6, 7. Dan. 7:13,14. Matt. 28:18. Acts 2:34—36. 5:30,31. Eph. 1:22. Phil. 2:9—11.
† Heb. *anointed.*
‡ Heb. *Zion, the hill of my holiness.* 43:1,2. 5:2. 78:68. 132:13,14. Heb. 12:22. Rev. 14:1.
§ Or, *for a decree.* 148:6. Job 23:13. Is. 46:10.
n Matt. 3:17. 16:16. Acts 9:37. 13: 33. Rom. 1:4. Heb. 1:5. 3:6. 5:5,8.
o 35:27. John 1:14,18. 3:16. Heb. 1:6.
p John 17:4,5.
q 22:27. 72:8. Dan. 7:13,14.

violence, as the doctrine and government of Christ. A sign it was from heaven, for the opposition was plainly from hell originally.

1. Christ's adversaries would be princes and people, court and country; not the mighty only, but the mob, the *heathen*, the *people*, numbers, communities of them; though usually fond of liberty, yet averse to the liberty Christ came to procure and proclaim. The unbelieving Jews are here [also] called *heathen*, so wretchedly were they degenerated from the faith and holiness of their ancestors; they stirred up the heathen, the Gentiles, to persecute the Christians. As the Philistines and their lords, Saul and his courtiers, the disaffected party and their ringleaders, opposed David's coming to the crown; so Herod and Pilate, the Gentiles and the Jews, did their utmost against Christ and his interest in men, Acts 4: 27.

2. They muster against *the Lord, and his Anointed*, all religion in general, the Christian in particular. All enemies to Christ, whatever they pretend, are enemies to God; they *have hated both Me and my Father*, John 15: 24. The great Author of our holy religion is here called *the Lord's Anointed*, (Heb. *Messiah*, Gr. *Christ*,) in allusion to the anointing of David to be king: He is both authorized and qualified to be the church's Head and King; yet there are those that are against Him; nay, *therefore* against Him, because impatient of God's authority, envious at Christ's advancement, and rooted in enmity to the Spirit of holiness.

3. Their opposition is described. (1.) As most spiteful and malicious. They *rage*, fret, gnash their teeth, are vexed, uneasy, and full of indignation, so they have no enjoyment of themselves; see Luke 13: 14. John 11: 47. Acts 5: 17, 33. —19: 28. Idolaters raged at the discovery of their folly, the chief priests and Pharisees at the eclipsing of their glory, and the shaking of their usurped dominion. They that did evil, raged at the light. (2.) As deliberate and politic. They *imagine*, or meditate; they contrive; and are very confident of success. (3.) As resolute, obstinate [and besotted]. They *set themselves*, their faces as a flint, their hearts as an adamant, in defiance of reason, conscience, and all the terrors of the Lord. (4.) As combined and confederate. They *counsel*, assist and animate one another in this opposition; carry their resolutions, *unanimously*, to push on the unholy war against the Messiah with the utmost vigor: thereupon, councils are called, cabals formed, and all their wits are at work, to prevent the establishment of Christ's kingdom, 83: 5.

4. What they are exasperated at, and aim at, *v.* 3. They will not be governed; children of Belial, they cannot endure the yoke, at least, the yoke of the Anointed, which will restrain their corrupt appetites and passions, regulate and reform them. Christ has *bands and cords* for us; they that will be saved by Him, must be ruled by Him; but they are cords of a man, agreeable to right reason, and bands of love, conducive to our true interest: yet against those the quarrel is. Why do men oppose religion, but because they are impatient of its restraints and obligations? They would break asunder the bands of conscience, and the cords of God's commandments.

5. How reasonless, how hopeless, *v.* 1. Why oppose so just, holy, and gracious a government, supported by Omnipotence! Christ will have a church in the world, and that church shall be glorious and triumphant.

II. The conquest over all this. God sits as one easy and at rest, (*v.* 4.) out of the reach of all their impotent menaces and attempts: secure of the full accomplishment of his purposes and designs. The perfect repose of the Eternal Mind may be our comfort under all disquietments. Sometimes God is said to *awake*, and *arise*, and *stir up Himself*, for the vanquishing of his enemies; here He is said to *sit still*, and do it; for the utmost operations of God's omnipotence create no difficulty, nor the least disturbance to his eternal rest.

1. Christ's enemies are *laughed* at as fools, and *justly punished*, *v.* 5. Though God despises them as impotent, yet He does not therefore wink at them, but will make the most daring sinners to tremble before Him. They were vexations to Christ's good subjects; but the day is coming, when vexation shall be recompensed to them.

2. Their councils are turned headlong, *v.* 6. David was advanced to the throne, notwithstanding the malcontents in his kingdom, and particularly the affronts he received from the garrison of Zion, 2 Sam. 5: 6. The Lord Jesus is exalted to the right hand of the Father, Head over all things to the church, notwithstanding restless enemies. He is sovereign Prince in the kingdom both of providence and grace. God is pleased to call Him *his* King, because appointed by Him, and intrusted for Him with the sole administration of government and judgment. He is his King, as dear to the Father, and one in whom He is well-pleased. Christ took not this honor to Himself, but was called to it, and He that called Him, owns Him; *I have set Him.* Christ's throne is set up in his church, i. e. in the hearts of all believers, and in the societies they form. The evangelical law of Christ is said to *go forth from Zion*, Isa. 2: 3. Mic. 4: 2. therefore that is spoken of as the head-quarters of this General, the royal seat of this Prince, in whom men shall be joyful.

We are to sing these vs. with a holy exultation, triumphing in Jesus Christ as the great Trustee of power; and we are to pray, in firm belief of the assurance here given; 'Father in heaven, *Thy kingdom come;* let thy Son's kingdom come.'

V. 7—9. We have heard what the kings of the earth have to say against Christ's kingdom, and have heard it gainsaid by Him that sits in heaven; let us now hear what the Messiah Himself says to make good his claims.

I. The kingdom of the Messiah is founded on a decree, an eternal decree, of God the Father; the result of the counsels of the divine wisdom, and the determinations of the divine will, before all worlds, neither of which can be altered. The *precept* or *statute*, so some; the *covenant* or *compact*, so others; the federal transactions between the Father and the Son concerning man's redemption, represented by the covenant of royalty made with David and his seed, 89: 3. This Christ often re-

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anointed King, they eventually forwarded his exaltation; and their persecution of his disciples drove numbers into remote regions, and thus greatly promoted the promulgation of the gospel. (*Notes, Gen.* 3:14, 15. *John* 11:47—53. *Acts* 8:4.)—After a time, the Roman legions, the executioners of divine vengeance, surrounded Jerusalem; and at length destroyed the city and temple, and subverted both their civil and ecclesiastical state, with the most dreadful miseries and destruction of the devoted Jews; the wretched remains of whom to this day, scattered throughout the nations, unwillingly attest the fulfilment of this ancient prophecy. The Roman empire too, having set itself against the cause of Christ, began directly to decline, and at length sunk in the unequal contest. (*Note, Zech.* 14:1—3.) The emperor Julian also, an apostate from Christianity, having undertaken to rebuild the temple and restore the Jews, was strangely baffled, and soon came to an untimely end; while the kingdom of Christ continues to this present time, in contempt and defiance of all the machinations of earth. SCOTT.

(6.) The Sept. render this as the words of David or of Christ: 'But I have been constituted King by Him,' &c. ID.

(4.) *Sitteth.*] 'Tantamount to *dwelleth:* Ps. 123:1.'—*Laugh*, &c.] 'Introducing the Most High as laughing at and deriding his enemies, is in the true spirit of sacred poetry, and is of frequent occurrence in the more impassioned parts of Scripture.' BUSH.—'Ridicule can only be ascribed to God in the same manner as grief and repentance are in other places. God is not affected by human passions; but his actions are explained in analogy with ours.'—'This may with great propriety be called a *mission* Ps. since it relates principally to the conversion of the heathen.' COTT. BIB.

(6.) 'It was then, if we mistake not, in the midst, and by the means, of this plenary effusion of the spirit of God in the power of his grace, at the memorable era of the pentecost, that the appointed king of Zion was inaugurated into his divine office; and in this view of the *historical facts*, and in this only, do we find an adequate clew to the peculiar phraseology of the psalmist.' BUSH.

Verses 7—9.

Christ's Sonship in this place seems mentioned as coeval with the decree, which is grounded upon it:—'Thou art my Son, therefore I make the decree, of which, in due time, this declaration shall be published.' Christ is here recognised as the Begotten of the Father, and as partaker of the divine nature and perfections as really, as any son is of the nature of him who begat him. (*John* 1:18. *M. R.* r.)—The divine appointment of David to be king, his victories, and dominion, were very faint shadows of the intended events. SCOTT.

(7.) 'Messiah is here introduced as speaking in his own person.' COTT. BIB.—*Declare.*] Speak more fully—enlarge upon.—*Decree.*] 'Purpose of the Father respecting the establishment, tenure, administration and extension of the kingdom of the Messiah, alluding to, or formally reciting, the words of the promise, 2 Sam. 7:12—14.' BUSH.—*Thou art my son.*] 'Whether it is to be understood of Christ's divine nature, as he is the Son of God from all eternity; or as God and man, either *conceived* at such a time, as some; or publicly *declared* by a voice from heaven to be the Son of God, at his baptism, as others; or, lastly, constituted King after his resurrection, is not agreed among interpreters. We follow those who interpret it of the manifestation and public demonstration of Christ's deity by his resurrection.' ASSEMB.

termost parts of the earth *for* thy possession.

9 Thou shalt [r] break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

10 [s] Be wise now therefore, [t] O ye kings: [u] be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

11 [x] Serve the LORD with fear, and [y] rejoice with trembling.

12 [z] Kiss [a] the Son, lest he be angry, and [b] ye perish *from* the way, [c] when his wrath is kindled but a little. [d] Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him.

r 21:8,9. 89:23. 110:5,6. Is. 30:14. 60:12. Jer. 19:11. Dan. 2:44. Matt. 21:44. Rev. 2:26,27. 12:5.
s Jer. 6:8. Hos. 14:9.
t 45:12. 72:10,11. Is. 49:23. 52:15. 60:3,10,11.
u 82:1—8.
x 89:7. Heb. 12:28,29.
y 95:1—8. 97:1. 99:1. 119:120. Phil. 2:12. Heb. 4:1,2. 12:25.
z Gen. 41:40,43,44. 1 Sam. 10:1. 1 K. 19:18. Hos. 13:2. John 5:23.
a 7
b 1:6. John 14:6.
c 5. 2 Thes. 1:8,9. Rev. 6:16,17. 14: 9—11.
d 40:4. 146:3—5. Prov. 16:20. Is. 26: 3,4. 30:18. Jer. 17:7. Rom. 9:33. 10:11. Eph. 1:12. 1 Pet. 1:21. 2:6.

feriority to the Father, by taking on Him the human nature; for, as God, He was equal in power and glory with the Father, and had nothing to ask. It supposes the making of a satisfaction, by the virtue of which, the intercession must be made, and the paying of a price, on which this large demand was to be grounded; see John 17: 4, 5. The Son, in asking the heathen for his inheritance, aims, not only at his own honor, but at their happiness in Him; so that He intercedes for them, ever lives to do so, and is therefore able to save to the uttermost. (2.) The Father will grant the kingdom. It is here promised, his government shall be [1.] Universal; He shall have, not the Jews only, but the Gentiles also. Baptized Christians are the possession of the Lord Jesus; God the Father gives them to Him, when by his Spirit and grace He works on them to submit their necks to the yoke of the Lord Jesus. This is, in part, fulfilled; a great part of the Gentile world received the Gospel, when it was first preached. But it is to be yet further accomplished, when *the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ*, Rev. 11: 15. *Who shall live when God doeth this!* [2.] Victorious, *v.* 9. This was, in part, fulfilled, when the unbelieving, opposing Jews were destroyed by the Romans, represented, Dan. 2: 40. by feet of iron, as here by a rod of iron. It had a further accomplishment in the destruction of the Pagan powers, when the Christian religion came to be established; but it will not be completely fulfilled, till all opposing rule, principality, and power, shall be finally put down, 1 Cor. 15: 24. See 110: 5, 6.

In singing this, and praying it over, we must give glory to Christ as the eternal Son of God, and our rightful Lord, and must take comfort from this promise, and plead it with God, that the kingdom of Christ shall be enlarged and established, and shall triumph over all opposition.

V. 10—12. We have here the practical application of this gospel doctrine, concerning the kingdom of the Messiah, by way of exhortation to the kings and judges of the earth, *v.* 10. Those that would be truly wise, must receive instruction from the Word of God. Kings and judges stand on a level with common persons before God. What is said to them, is said to all, and is required of every one of us; only it is directed to kings and judges, because of the influence of their example on inferiors, and because rank and power opposed the setting up of Christ's kingdom, *v.* 2. We are exhorted,

I. To reverence God, and to stand in awe of Him, *v.* 11. We must serve God in all ordinances of worship, and all instances of a godly conversation, but with a holy fear, a jealousy over ourselves, and a reverence of Him. We must rejoice in God; in subordination to Him, we may rejoice in other things, but still with a holy trembling, Phil. 2: 12. Whatever we rejoice in; in this world, it must always be with trembling, lest we grow vain [and corrupt] in our joy, and be puffed up with the things we rejoice in; and because of their uncertainty, and the damp which a thousand accidents may soon cast on our joy. To *rejoice with trembling, is to rejoice as though we rejoiced not.*

II. To welcome Jesus Christ, and to submit to Him, *v.* 12. This is the great duty of the Christian religion. Observe here,

1. The command given for this purpose; *Kiss the Son.* Christ is called the *Son*, because so He was declared, *v.* 7. He is the Son of God by eternal generation, and, on that account, is to be adored by us. He is the *Son of man*, the Media-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As this apostate world is in fact the kingdom of Satan, unconverted men of every rank, party, or character, may be excited by him, to concur in opposing the cause of God, and the kingdom of Christ. But the kings and the rulers of the earth have generally been especially instigated, by the slanders and misrepresentations of false teachers, and other interested persons, as well as by their own prejudices and passions, to combine in this opposition. (*Notes, John* 16:1—3. *Acts* 9:3—6. 26:9—11.) But their imaginations are vain, the decree of the Father has in part taken effect; and the kingdom of the Mediator shall at length universally prevail, whilst every enemy shall be dashed in pieces by his iron rod. (*Rev.* 2:24—28.) SCOTT.

ANN.—*This day.*] 'No other period can with any propriety be referred to than that spoken of by Paul, Acts 13:32, 33.' BUSH.—*Begotten thee.*] 'This Ps. by the writers of the N. T. is unequivocally understood to have been fulfilled in what they denominate the *raising up* of Jesus Christ; which refers, not only to his being *brought into the world*, as Matt. 22:24. Acts 2:30. 3:32. but also to his *resurrection* from the dead, as Rom. 4:24. 8:11. 1 Cor. 15:15.—The kingdom of Christ may be said, in a degree, to have commenced at the advent, yet it was not fully established till after the resurrection. At that period He might be said, in a pre-eminent sense, to have been *begotten*. Then the *open, public announcement* was made of what we may term his *reigning sonship*. This *begetting the Son* was a visible and momentous act on the part of the eternal Father, performed in the bestowment on Christ of that promised ascendency with which He was to be invested.' BUSH, principally after *Hammond.*—'It is manifest, this application [of the Apostle, Acts 13:32, 33.] of the clause [in the Ps.] expresses not the *effecting*, but the *annunciation* of the Messiah's sonship. Christ is undoubtedly designated as the Son of God, previously to his resurrection, and on grounds independent of it.'

Dr. J. P. SMITH.

(8.) *Ask.*] 'To be understood not of the Messiah only, in his own person, but of his church, as members of that mystical body of which He is the head.' BUSH.

Verses 10—12.

(*Notes*, 1 *Sam.* 10:1. 1 *Kings* 19:18. *Hos.* 13:1, 2. *M. R.* d. *Note*, 146:3, 4.)—The evident fulfillment of the unequivocal predictions in this Ps. is in reality a full demonstration, that both the prophecy and the accomplishment were from God, and that our holy religion is of divine original and authority. The Jews themselves attest, that this Ps. was extant many ages before the birth of Jesus; and many of them allow, that it principally relates to the promised Messiah, whom they are yet vainly expecting! How can any one then be so absurdly skeptical, as to imagine that human sagacity, or mere conjecture, could have suggested explicit predictions, which should at length be verified in the most exact and circumstantial manner, by events no otherwise to be accounted for, than on scriptural principles, and by allowing them to have been effected by the power of God Himself! SCOTT.

(12.) *Kiss.*] 'The kiss was anciently a token of fealty and homage.' BUSH.—'To *kiss* is used for *adoration*, 1 K. 19:18. [Job 31:27.] and so fitly belongs to the Messiah.' HAMMOND.—*Perish from the way.*] 'Or, "by the way;" or "on the road."' J. P. SMITH. 'Or, "and ye lose the way," and "ye perish in the way." The Sept. and Vulg. have, "and ye perish from his way."' GREENF.—'Ps. 6:1. may suggest this *figurative*, but *literal* rendering of it: "*ye shall perish the way*," i. e. "your way shall perish, all you have shall be utterly destroyed."' HAMMOND. '"*For* the way," i. e. "*on account of*, for your evil way, or manner of living."' POOLE.—*But a little.*] '*Instantly*, or *on the spot*, which is very emphatic.' Bp. HARE, in MORISON.

'We cannot close these reflections without feeling how transcendently blessed are those, who have sought and found shelter beneath the shadow of the Redeemer's merits. Nor can we think of the sad exposure of a Christless sinner without breathing forth the prayer: "See, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine Anointed!"' MORISON.

PSALM III.

David, amidst numerous insulting foes, firmly relies on the divine protection, 1—6. He prays for deliverance, and ascribes salvation to the Lord, 7, 8.

A Psalm of David, [a] when he fled from Absalom his son.

LORD, [b] how are they increased that trouble me! [c] many *are* they that rise up against me.

2 Many *there be* which say of my soul, *There is* [d] no help for him in God. [e] Selah.

3 But thou, O LORD, *art* [f] a Shield * for me; [g] my Glory, and [h] the Lifter up of mine head.

a 2 Sam. 15:—18:
b 2 Sam. 15:12. 16:15. 17:11—13. Matt. 27:25.
c 17:7. Matt. 10:21.
d 22:7,8. 42:3,10. 71:11. 2 Sam. 16: 8. Matt. 27:42,43.
e 4,8. 4:2,4. Hab. 3:3,9,13.
f 18:2. 28:7. 84:11. 119:114. Gen. 15:1. Deut. 33:29.
* Or, *about*.
g 4:2. 62:7. Is. 45:25. 60:19. Luke 2:32. Rev. 21:11,23.
h 27:6. 110:7. Gen. 40:13. 2 K. 25:27.

is enough to make the proudest sinner miserable, if it fasten on his conscience; for it will burn to the lowest hell: one would think it should therefore follow, 'When his wrath is kindled, wo be to those that despise Him;' but the Psalmist startles at the thought, and blesses those that escape such a doom. They that trust in Him, and so kiss Him, are truly happy; but they will especially appear to be so, when the wrath of Christ is kindled against others.

In singing this, and praying it over, we should have our hearts not only filled with a holy awe of God, but borne up with a cheerful confidence in Christ, in whose mediation we may comfort and encourage ourselves and one another; *We are the circumcision, that rejoice in Christ Jesus.*

Ps. III. As the foregoing Ps. in the type of David in preferment, showed us the royal dignity of the Redeemer; so this, by the example of David in distress, shows us the peace and holy security of the redeemed. Those speak best of the truths of God, who speak experimentally; so David here speaks of the power and goodness of God, and of the safety and tranquillity of the godly.

V. 1—3. The title of this Ps. and many others, is as a key to open it; when we know on what occasion a Ps. was penned, we know the better how to expound it. This was composed, or meditated, when David fled from Absalom his son. See 2 Sam. 15. &c. 1. David was now in great grief; when, in his flight, he went up the Mount of Olives, he wept greatly, with his head covered, and bare-foot; yet *then* he composed this comfortable Ps. 2. He was now in great danger, his affairs seemed at the last extremity; yet *then* he kept hold of his interest in God, and improved that. Perils and frights should drive us *to* God, not *from* Him. 3. He was now greatly provoked by those, from whom he had reason to expect better things; this he could not but resent, yet he had calmness enough for devotion. The sedateness of his mind was evinced by the Spirit's coming on him; let no unkindness, no, not of a child or a friend, ever be laid so much to heart as to unfit us for communion with God. 4. He was now suffering for his sin in the matter of Uriah, 2 Sam. 12: 11. which, no doubt, he observed, and took occasion thence to renew his repentance. Yet he did not *therefore* despair of succor. Even our sorrow for sin must not hinder either our joy, or our hope, in God. 5. He seemed cowardly in fleeing from Absalom, and quitting his royal city, before he had had one struggle for it; yet, by this Ps. it appears, he was full of true courage arising from his faith in God. True Christian fortitude consists more in a gracious security and serenity of mind, in patient bearing, and patient waiting, than in daring enterprises with sword in hand.

In these three vs. he applies himself to God. Whither else should we go, when any thing grieves or frightens us? David was now at a distance from where he used to pray; yet he could find a way open heaven-ward. Wherever we are, and whithersoever driven, we may draw nigh to God. David, in his flight, attends his God,

I. With a representation of his distress, *v.* 1, 2. That his enemies,

1. Were very many; Absalom's faction, like a snow-ball, strangely gathered in its motion. He speaks of it as one amazed; and well he might. How slippery and deceitful are the many! And how little fidelity and constancy is to be found among men! David had had the hearts of his subjects, as much as ever any king had, yet now, of a sudden, he had lost them. Christ, the Son of David, had many enemies, when a great multitude came to seize Him, when the crowd cried, *Crucify him, Crucify him.* Even good people must not think it strange, if the stream be against them, and grow more and more formidable.

2. That they were very malicious; they said of his soul, *There is no help for him in God.* I. e. (1.) They put a spiteful, invidious construction on his troubles, as Job's friends did on his; concluding that, because his servants and subjects forsook him thus, God had deserted him, and he was therefore to be looked on as a hypocrite, and a wicked man. (2.) They blasphemously reflected on God, as unable to relieve him. It is strange, so great unbelief should be found in any, especially in many, in Israel. (3.) They endeavored to shake his confidence in God, and drive him to despair of relief from Him. 'They have said it *to* my soul;' so it may be read; compare 11: 1.—40: 10. This grieved him worst of all. The mere temptation was a buffeting to him. Note, A child of God startles at the very thought of despairing of help in God. David comes to God, and tells Him what his enemies said of him, as Hezekiah spread Rabshakeh's blasphemous letter before the Lord. To this complaint he adds *Selah*, which occurs about 70 times in the book of Ps. Some refer it to the music with which, in David's time, the Pss were sung; others to the sense, and that it is a note commanding a solemn pause. *Selah, Mark*

NOTES.

Ps. III. *Title.* These titles are found in the Heb. though, it is said, several are wanting in some MSS. They seem however, in general, to belong to the Ps. to which they are prefixed, and to be of the same authority with them. In this and other instances, they are useful in fixing the interpretation: but often their meaning is *to us* doubtful or difficult. SCOTT.

'It is hardly to be supposed David penned this Ps. in his flight, as he went up Mt. Olivet, though it is not improbable the leading sentiments of it may have formed the substance of his prayer, as he came to the top of the mount. . . . It is an effusion every way worthy of the heart and pen of David; instinct with piety towards God, and the loftiest magnanimity towards his enemies. Compare it with the vindictive ebullition which the great dramatic poet puts into the mouth of Lear, under somewhat similar circumstances; and how does the meek and lamb-like gentleness of the one contrast with the fell and fiery malignity of the other!

A psalm.] 'A three-fold designation is given, in the original, to the sacred songs contained in this book, *psalm, hymn* and *song, canticle*, or *ode*; all are mentioned, Eph. 5:19. The word rendered *psalm*, signifies in its root, *to cut off, to prune*, and may indicate the character of metrical language in Heb. poetry, as *cut into short sentences*, and *pruned* of every redundance of expression; whereas prose composition is loose, free and irregular, like a wild tree luxuriating on every side in its leaves and branches. Some have supposed the *cutting* implied in the term, had reference rather to *sounds* of the voice, or instrument with which the psalm was played or sung; but this is supported by no adequate authority. The peculiarity on which the word is founded, doubtless pertains to the structure of the v. and not to the methods of its recitation, or cantillation.

Of David.] 'Or, TO *David*; the former indicates David to be the author; the latter, that he only received it, as an amanuensis, from the Holy Spirit, which was an opinion of some of the older commentators. See Acts 4:24, 25. The reader must be left to choose between the two.' BUSH.

Verse 1.

Increased.] 'The parallel history, 2 Sam. 15:12. throws light on this expression.' ID.

Verse 2.

'*Selah*,' occurs three times in this Ps. frequently in others, and also in the prophecy of Habakkuk; its meaning is not fully ascertained: some entirely omit it: but this may be thought taking an unwarrantable liberty with Scripture. The Sept. seem to have understood it to be merely a musical term, *a change of song, or melody* In general, however, it appears to have been used, as a call on him who read or sang, to pause and reflect; as something peculiarly important or surprising had been mentioned. SCOTT.—*Of my soul.*] 'To *my soul*, with which agrees the rendering of the Sept. as if the address were made directly and personally to David.—*No help.*] 'The original is peculiarly significant, intimating the entire, utter and absolute hopelessness of David's condition. The same peculiarity of phrase is to be noted, Ps. 44:27. 92:16.'—*Selah.*] 'The result of all our investigations in respect to this word affords nothing conclusive.' BUSH.—'That this word [*selah*] is used nowhere but in this book of Pss. and in Habakkuk, makes it probable that it was a musical note.' POOLE.—'Let a man peruse all the places where this word [*selah*] occurs, and he will be put to it, perchance, to find, in the importance of the passages, any good reason for the use of it in those passages, and not elsewhere. I think it safest to let it pass as a musical note.' *Assemb. Ann.*—'The Chald. sometimes tr. it by a word which signifies—*for ever.*' Dr. *A. Clarke.* ED.

Verse 3.

My glory.] 'Or, *honor*, a word which in the original conveys the idea of *weightiness*, an import alluded to, 2 Cor. 4:17.'—*Lifter up*, &c.]

4 [i] I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of [k] his holy hill. Selah.

5 [l] I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for [m] the LORD sustained me.

6 [n] I will not be afraid of [o] ten thousands of people, that have [p] set *themselves* against me ound about.

7 [q] Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God: for [r] thou hast smitten all mine enemies *upon* the cheek-bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

8 [s] Salvation *belongeth* unto the LORD. [t] Thy blessing *is* upon thy people. Selah.

i 22:2—5. 34:6. 50:15. 65:17—19. 86:3,4. 91:15. 116:1—4. 130:1,2. 138:3. 142:1—3. Is. 65:24. Jer. 29:12, 13. Matt. 7:7. Jam. 5:13.
k 2:6. 43:3. 99:9. 132:13,14.
l 4:3. Lev. 26:6. Job 11:18,19. Prov. 3:24. Acts 12:6.
m 4:8. 65:9. Prov. 14:26. 18:10. Is. 26:3.
n 27:1—3. 46:2,7. 118:10—12. 2 K. 6:15—17. Rom. 8:31.
o 2 Sam. 18:7.
p 2:2.
q 10:12. 12:5. 35:23. 44:23. 59:5. 74:11. 78:9. Is. 51:9. Hab. 2:19.
r 58:6. Job 16:10. 29:17. Lam. 3:30.
s 37:39,40. Prov. 21:31. Is. 43:11. 45:21,22. Hos. 13:4. Jon. 2:9. Acts 4:12. Rev. 7:10. 19:1.
t 29:11. 72:17. Acts 3:26. Eph. 1:3. Heb. 6:14. 1 Pet. 3:9.

crown his own interest both in the world, and in the hearts of his people.

V. 4—8. David here reflects on the benefit he had derived from trusting in God, and looks forward with pleasing expectations of a very bright and happy issue to the dark dispensation he was now under.

I. See with what comfort he looks back on the communion he had had with God, and the communications of his favor, either in some former troubles he had been in, and, through God's goodness, got through, or, in this, hitherto.

He now remembered, with pleasure,

1. That in all his troubles, difficulties and dangers, he had always been enabled to lift up his heart and voice to God, *v.* 4. Care and grief do us good and no hurt, when they set us a praying, as those in earnest. And though God understands the language of the heart, when the *voice is not heard*, 1 Sam. 1: 13. and values not the hypocritical prayers of those who *cause their voice to be heard on high*, Isa. 58: 4. yet when the earnestness of the voice comes from the fervency of the heart, it shall be noticed.

2. That he had always found God ready to answer his prayers; *He heard me out of his holy hill*, from heaven, and from the ark on mt. Zion, whence He used to answer those that sought Him. David had ordered Zadok to *carry back the ark into the city*, when flying from Absalom, 2 Sam. 15: 25. knowing that, notwithstanding the distance of place, he could by faith receive answers of peace; nothing can fix a gulf between God's favor to us, and our faith in Him. The ark of the covenant was in mt. Zion, and all the answers to our prayers come from the promises of that covenant; Christ was *set King upon the holy hill of Zion*, 2: 6. and it is through Him, whom the Father hears always, that our prayers are heard.

3. That he had always been very safe, and very easy, under the divine protection, *v.* 5. (1.) This is applicable to the common mercies of every night, which we ought to give thanks for alone, and with our families, every morning. Many have not where to lay their head, but we have laid us down in peace. Many lie down, and cannot sleep, but we lie down, and sleep in safety, though incapable of doing any thing then for our own preservation. Many lie down, and sleep, and never wake again, but we lie down, and sleep, and awake again to the light and comfort of another day; and whence is it, but because the Lord has sustained us with sleep as with food? (2.) It seems here to be meant of the wonderful quietness and calmness of David's spirit, in the midst of his dangers. Having by prayer committed himself and his cause to God, and being sure of his protection, his heart was fixed, and he was easy. The undutifulness of his son, the disloyalty of his subjects, the treachery of many of his friends, the hazard of his person, the fatigues of his march, and the uncertainty of the event, never deprived him of an hour's sleep, nor gave any disturbance to his repose; for the Lord, by his grace and the consolations of his Spirit, powerfully sustained him, and made him easy. It is a great mercy, when in trouble, to have our minds stayed on God, so as never either to eat or sleep with trembling and astonishment. (3.) Some of the ancients apply it to the resurrection of Christ; the Lord sustained Him, that He should not see corruption.

4. That God had often broken the power, and restrained the malice, of his enemies, *v.* 7. Saul and the Philistines, who were sometimes ready to swallow him up, could not effect what they designed. The teeth that are gnashed or sharpened against God's people, shall be broken. When, at any time, the power of the church's enemies seems threatening, it is good to remember how often God has broken it; and we are sure his arm is not shortened.

II. See with what confidence he looks forward to the dangers he had yet in prospect.

1. His *fears were all stilled and silenced*, *v.* 6. With what a holy bravery does he bid defiance to the impotent menaces and attempts of his enemies! No man seemed less safe, yet no man was more secure. When, in his flight from Absalom, he bade Zadok carry back the ark, he spake doubtfully of the issue of his present troubles, and concluded, *that*, or, 'Stop there, and consider a little.' As here, they say, *There is no help for him in God, Selah.* 'Take time for such a thought as this, *Get thee behind me, Satan; The Lord rebuke thee!* Away with such a vile suggestion!'

II. With a profession of his dependence on God, *v.* 3. An active believer, the more he is beaten off from God, either by providential rebukes, or the reproaches of enemies, the closer will he cleave to Him; so David here. See what God is to his people, what He will be, what they have found Him, what David found in Him. 1. Safety. '*Thou art a Shield for me*, a Shield *about* me,' so some, 'to secure me on all sides, since my enemies surrounded me.' 2. Honor; *Thou art my Glory*. Those whom God owns for his, are not only safe and easy, but really have true honor, far above what the great ones of the earth are proud of. David was now in disgrace, but he will not think the worse of himself, while he has God for his Glory, Isa. 60: 19. '*Thou art my Glory;* thy glory I reckon mine;' (so some;) 'this is what I aim at, whatever my lot is, and whatever becomes of my honor—that I may be to my God for a name and a praise.' 3. Joy and deliverance; '*Thou art the Lifter up of my head; out of* my troubles, to restore me to my dignity again, in due time; *under* my troubles, so that I shall not droop nor be discouraged.' If, in the worst of times, God's people can lift up their heads with joy, knowing that all shall work for good to them, they will own, it is God that gives them both *cause* and *hearts* to rejoice.

In singing this, and praying it over, we should possess ourselves with an apprehension of the danger we are in from the multitude and malice of our spiritual enemies, who seek the ruin of our souls by driving us from God, and we should concern ourselves in the distresses and dangers of the church of God, which is every where spoken against, nay, fought against; but, in reference to both, we should encourage ourselves in our God who owns and protects, and will, in due time,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

All true Christians should avow their confidence in God, and be open and avowed, as well as fervent, in their prayers unto Him. Thus they will enjoy safety and inward peace, in the midst of enemies and the alarms of war: for the Lord will hear and sustain them; and what are ten thousands of armed foes encamped against those whom the Omnipotent protecteth? (2 *Chr.* 32: 8. *Rom.* 8:28—31.)—Past experience should encourage the hope of future answers to our prayers; we may even rejoice in being the objects of the enmity of ungodly men; and should desire that they may be deprived of their power to do mischief, but not that any further harm may befall them: and every temporal deliverance should be received as an earnest of eternal salvation.—But we shall cease to wonder at the troubles of the king of Israel, and almost to *think* of our own light afflictions, if we duly look unto Jesus, and contrast his glory and his grace, with the contempt and cruelty with which He was treated. Having yielded to death, He sanctified the grave, and became the First-fruits of the resurrection; his head was then lifted up above his enemies; and thus He has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

SCOTT.

'Lifting up the head is a signal of prosperity, confidence, ease and comfort: and, by a natural transition, is applied to *gaining a victory* over enemies, or to triumphing over difficulties, opposition, and discouragement. Gen. 40:20. Ps. 27:6.' BUSH.

Verse 4.

Heard me.] 'God's *answering* his people is something more than barely *hearing* them. It is *certifying*, by some outward and visible token, that He receives their petition. 1 K. 18:24.' ID.

Verse 5.

Laid me down, &c.] 'Proverbial, to denote the height of security and tranquillity. Lev. 26:6. Job 11:18, 19.' ID.

Verse 6.

Ten thousands.] 'Merely a definite for an indefinite number; a common phraseology by which to express a vast multitude. Comp. Lev. 26:8. Ps. 91:7.' BUSH.

Verse 7.

Smitten upon the cheek-bone.] 'Proverbial, to signify *putting to flight*; for that was most shameful and reproachful.' HAMMOND.—'The language of the psalmist here is interpreted by many as referring to *past* events; but we prefer to consider it, as expressive of his assurance of the approaching overthrow of those, who had now risen up against him. On the former supposition, the prayer would seem to be superfluous.' ID.

Verse 8.

Thy blessing is, &c.] 'More correctly rendered as an invocation, "*Let thy blessing*," &c.' *Bush*, after HAMMOND.—'How strikingly are we reminded of David's benevolent resolve on another occasion, "For yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities."' ID.

PSALM IV.

David calls on God to hear him, 1. He reproves, warns, and counsels his enemies, 2—5. He shows his comfort and confidence in God, 6—8.

To the * chief Musician on [a] Neginoth, A Psalm of David.

HEAR me when I call, [b] O God of my righteousness: [c] thou hast enlarged me *when I was* in distress, † have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.

2 O [d] ye sons of men, [e] how long *will ye turn* [f] my glory into shame? *how long* will ye [g] love vanity, *and* seek after [h] leasing? Selah.

3 But know that [i] the LORD hath set apart him that is godly [k] for himself: [l] the LORD will hear when I call unto him.

4 [m] Stand in awe, and [n] sin not: [o] commune with your own heart upon your bed, and [p] be still. [q] Selah.

5 Offer [r] the sacrifices of righteousness, and [s] put your trust in the LORD.

* Or, *overseer.* 22: 42: 45: *titles.* 1 Chr. 25:1—6.
[a] 6: 67: 76: *titles.* Hab. 3:19. *marg.*
[b] 11:7. 24:5. 41:12. Is. 45:24. Jer. 23:6. 1 Cor. 1:30. 2 Cor. 5:20,21.
[c] 18:18,19. 31:8. 40:1—3. 116:6,16. 1 Sam. 17:37. 19:11,12. 23:26—28. Job 36:16. 2 Cor. 1:8,10.
† Or, *be gracious unto me.* 56:1. 57: 1. 86:3—5. 119:75—77,132. 143:2. Ex. 34:6,7.
[d] 57:4. 58:1. Ec. 8:11. 9:3.
[e] 82:2. Ex. 10:3. Num. 14:11. Prov. 1:22.
[f] 3:3. 14:6. 106:20. Is. 20:5. 45:17. Jer. 2:11. Hos. 4:7. 1 Cor. 1:31.
[g] 2:1. 1 Sam. 12:21. Is. 59:4. Jer. 2: 5. Jon. 2:8.
[h] 5:6. 58:3. 63:11. Jer. 9:3. Eph. 4: 25.
[i] Ex. 33:16. Eph. 2:10. 2 Thes. 2:13, 14. 2 Tim. 2:19. 1 Pet. 2:9. 2 Pet. 2:9.
[k] Tit. 2:14.
[l] 34:15. 55:16,17. 56:9. 91:14,15. John 15:16.
[m] 2:11. 33:8. 119:161. Jer. 5:22.
[n] Job 28:28. Prov. 3:7. 16:6,17. Eph. 4:26.
[o] 63:6. 77:6. 2 Cor. 13:5.
[p] 46:10. Hab. 2:20.
[q] 3:2,4.
[r] 50:14. 51:19. Deut. 33:19. Is. 1:11—18. 61:8. Mal. 1:8,11—14. Matt. 5:23,24. Heb. 13:15,16.
[s] 2:12. 26:1. 37:3. 62:8. 84:11,12. Is. 26:3,4. 50:10. 1 Pet. 4:19

like an humble penitent, *Here I am, let Him do to me what seemeth Him good,* 2 Sam. 15: 26. But now, like a strong believer, he speaks confidently, and has no fear concerning the event. Note, A cheerful resignation to God is the way to obtain a cheerful satisfaction and confidence in God.

2. His *prayers were quickened and encouraged, v.* 7. He believed God was his Savior, yet prays; nay, he *therefore* prays, *Arise, O Lord, save me, O my God.* Promises of salvation do not supersede, but engage, our petitions for it. He will for this be inquired of.

3. His faith became triumphant. He began the psalm with complaints of the strength and malice of his enemies; but concludes it with exultation in the power and grace of his God, and now sees *more with him than against him, v.* 8. Two great truths he here builds his confidence on, and fetches comfort from. (1.) The Lord has power to save, be the danger ever so great; it is his prerogative, his pleasure, his property, his promise to those that are his, whose salvation is not of themselves, but of the Lord. (2.) His blessing is on his people; He has, in his Word, pronounced a blessing on them; and we are bound to believe, that that blessing does accordingly rest on them, though there are not the visible effects of it.

In singing this, and praying it over, we must own the satisfaction we have had in depending on God, and committing ourselves to Him, and encourage ourselves, and one another, to continue still hoping, and quietly waiting for, the salvation of the Lord.

Ps. IV. Many of David's Pss. are doctrinal and practical, as well as devotional: the greatest part of this Ps. is so. The title does not tell us it was penned on any particular occasion, nor are we to think all the Pss. occasional, but many general, to instruct the people, who attended in the courts of his house, assist their devotions, and direct their conversations: such a one I take this psalm to be.

V. 1—5. For an account of the modelling of the several classes of singers, each with a chief, and the share each bore in the work, see 1 Chr. 25: &c. Some *prophesied according to the order of the king, v.* 2. Others *with the harp, to give thanks, and to praise the Lord, v.* 3. Others *lifted up the horn, v.* 5. But all were *for song in the house of the Lord,* (*v.* 6.) and *instructed in the songs of the Lord, v.* 7. *Neginoth* signifies *Stringed instruments,* Hab. 3: 19. played on with the hand; with music of that kind the choristers were to sing this Ps.: and it should seem that then *they* only sung, not the people; but the N. T. appoints all Christians to sing, (Eph. 5: 19. Col. 3: 16.) from whom it is expected that they do it decently, if not skilfully; therefore there is not now so much occasion for musical instruments as then; the melody is to be made in the heart. In these vs. David addresses himself,

1. To God, *v.* 1. '*Lord, have mercy upon me,* and *hear me.*' The experience we have had of God's goodness in enlarging us when in distress, is not only a great encouragement to our faith and hope for the future, but a good plea with God in prayer; '*Thou hast; wilt Thou not?* For Thou art God, and changest not; thy work is perfect.'

II. To men, for their conviction and conversion.

1. He endeavors to convince them of the folly of their impiety, *v.* 2. '*O ye sons of men,*' of *great* men, so some; understanding it of the partisans of Saul or Absalom: Or, it may be taken more generally; God, by the psalmist, here reasons with sinners to bring them to repentance. (1.) 'You debase yourselves, for you are *sons of men;*' and the word signifies man as a noble creature. Let the *sons of men* consider and show themselves men. (2.) 'You dishonor your Maker, and turn his glory into shame.' They may well be taken as God's own words, charging sinners with the wrong they do Him in his honor: or, if David's words, glory may be understood of God, whom he called *his Glory,* 3: 3. Idolaters are charged with *changing the glory of God* into shame, Rom. 1: 23. All wilful sinners do so, by disobeying the commands of his law, despising the offers of his grace, and giving that affection and service to the creature, which are due to God only. (3.) 'You cheat yourselves, *you love vanity,* and *seek after leasing,* or *lying,* or that which is *a lie.* You are yourselves vain and lying, and you love to be so.' Or, 'You set your hearts on that which will prove, at last, but vanity and a lie: the world, and the delights of sense; for these will deceive, and so ruin you. How long will you do this? Will you never be wise for yourselves, never consider your duty and interest? *When shall it once be?*' God thinks the time long that sinners persist in dishonoring Him, and in deceiving and ruining themselves.

2. He shows them the peculiar favor God has for good people, *v.* 3. This comes in here, (1.) As a reason why they should not oppose or persecute him that is godly, or think to run him down. It is generally supposed David speaks of his own designation to the throne; he is the *godly* man, whom *the Lord has set apart* for that honor, and who does not usurp it, or assume it to himself God has, in like manner, set apart the Lord Jesus for Himself; and all attempts against Him will certainly be baffled. Or, (2.) As a reason why they should themselves be good, and walk no longer in the counsel of the ungodly; 'You have hitherto sought vanity; be truly religious, and you will be truly happy, here and for ever; for,' [1.] 'God will *secure to Himself* his interest *in you.*' *The Lord has set apart* every particular godly man, for Himself, in his eternal choice, in his effectual calling, in the special disposals of his providence, and operations of his grace; they are *purified unto Him a peculiar people.* Let godly people know it, and let them never alienate themselves from Him to whom they are thus appropriated; let wicked people know it, and take heed how they hurt those whom God protects. [2.] 'God will secure to you an interest in Himself;' this David speaks with application; *The Lord will hear when I call unto Him.* We should think ourselves happy, if we had the ear of an earthly prince; and is it not worth while, on any terms, especially such easy ones, to gain the ear of the King of kings? Let us know

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NOTES.

Ps. IV. 'Th] Heb. interpreters, unanimously, and most of our own, make this Ps. synchronical with Ps. 3. and refer it to the time of Absalom's usurpation. But the opinion of *Venema* is worth considering, who refers it to the time when Ziklag was destroyed by the Amalekites. See 1 Sam. 30: particularly, v. 6—8.' ROSENM.

Title.] The 'chief musician,' or *overseer,* or *president,* seems to have been the person appointed in the Psalmody of the sanctuary, to set the tune, [beat the time by 'lifting up the horn,' perhaps. ED.] and lead the singers and musicians. (1 *Chr.* 6:33—38. 15:22. 25:1—8.) 'Neginoth' may mean either the instruments with which the Ps. was to be sung; or the tune to which it was set. Perhaps this Ps. was composed on the same occasion as the foregoing. (3: *title.*) SCOTT. 'To the giver of victory. Upon the stringed instrument. A psalm of David.' HORSLEY in *Morison.* 'There is certainly no allusion to music; the LXX. make no reference to the chief musician, and among the ancients there is a very general consent for the rendering I have adopted.' MORISON.

Verse 1.

Of my righteousness.] By this expression, the Psalmist acknowledged God to be in all respects the Author and Source of his righteousness, as accepted and sanctified; and he appealed to Him to do *justice* between him and his unrighteous adversaries. (*M. R.* h.) SCOTT.

Verse 2.

My glory.] David might have considered his throne as a special honor to him, seeing he was called to it by the immediate choice of God, and as a type of the Messiah: but the Lord Himself, and his relation to Him, were indeed 'his Glory.' (3:3—5.) ID.

Verses 3—5.

The piety of David evinced, that he was the object of the Lord's special choice and favor; who, having advanced him to the throne, as 'the man after his own heart,' would certainly establish his kingdom. His prayers would therefore surely be heard, and that would involve the ruin of all his enemies. Of this he solemnly reminded them, and exhorted them to take heed what they did; to repent of their sins, to examine their own hearts, to hearken to the voice of conscience, to court retirement, to pause and reflect on their conduct; to bring the appointed sacrifices, with repentance, faith, and piety; and thus to cast themselves on the mercy of God, and trust in Him for forgiveness and salvation.—*Godly.* (3) Also, *merciful, beneficent, upright, holy.* 18:26. 86:2. 145:17.—*Stand in awe.* (4) From a word sign. says *Robertson, To be put into vehement commotion.* ID.

(4.) *Stand in awe.*] 'Be angry.' So the Vulg. Syr. Æthiopic and Arab.' HAMMOND.

6 *There be* [t] many that say, Who will show us *any* good? LORD, [u] lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.

7 Thou hast [x] put gladness in my heart, more than in [y] the time *that* their corn and their wine increased.

8 [z] I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for [a] thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.

t 39:6. 49:16—20. Ec. 2:3,&c. Is. 55:2. Luke 12:19. 16:19. Jam. 4:13. 5:1—5.
u 21:6. 42:5. 44:3. 67:1. 80:1—3,7, 19. 89:15. 119:135. Num. 6:26.
x 37:4. 43:4. 63:2—5. 92:4. Cant. 1:4. 1 Pet. 1:8.
y Judg. 9:27. Is. 9:3. Jer. 48:33.
z 3:5. 16:8. Job 11:18,19. Prov. 3:24. 1 Thes. 4:13,14. 5:10. Rev. 14:13.
a Lev. 25:18. Deut. 12:10. 33:27—29. Ez. 34:25. Hos. 2:18. Rom. 8:35—39.

I. In singing these vs. we must preach to ourselves the doctrine of the provoking nature of sin, the lying vanity of the world, and the unspeakable happiness of God's people; and we must press on ourselves the duties of fearing God, conversing with our own hearts, and offering spiritual sacrifices; in praying over these vs. we must beg of God grace thus to think, and thus to do.

V. 6—8. We have here,

1. The foolish wish of worldly people. What good they meant, is intimated, *v.* 7. All they desired was plenty of the wealth of this world, that they might enjoy abundance of the delights of sense. Thus far they are right, to desire good, and be solicitous about it; but here three things are amiss, 1. They do not apply themselves to God, who alone can make us happy; so they expose themselves to be ill-advised, and show they would rather be beholden to any than to God, for they would willingly live without Him. 2. They inquire for good that may be *seen*, seeming, sensible good; not the good things out of sight, which are objects of faith only: as we must be taught to worship an unseen God, so to seek an unseen good, 2 Cor. 4:18. 3. They inquire for *any* good, not for the chief good; all they want is outward, present, partial good, good meat, good drink, a good trade, and a good estate. Any good will serve the turn of most men, but a gracious soul will not be put off so.

II. The wise choice godly people make. David, and the pious few that adhered to him, dissented from that wish, and joined in this prayer, *Lord, lift Thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.* God had set him apart for Himself by distinguishing favors, therefore he sets himself apart by a distinguishing character. 'Any good will not serve my turn; the wealth of the world will never make a portion for my soul, therefore I cannot take up with it.' He and his friends agree in their choice of God's favor as their felicity; that is it which, in their account, is better than life and all the comforts of life. That is it which,

1. They most earnestly desire and seek after: this is the breathing of their souls. Good people, as they are distinguished by their practices, so by their prayers, not their length and language, but their faith and fervency; 'Lord, let us have thy favor, and let us know that we have it, and we desire no more; that is enough to make us happy.' Observe, Though David speaks of himself only, in vs. 7, 8. he speaks, in this prayer, for others also, 'upon *us*,' as Christ taught us to pray, '*Our* Father.' All the saints come to the throne of grace on the same errand, and in this they are one, they all desire God's favor as their chief good.

2. In which, above any thing, they rejoice, *v.* 7. When God puts grace, He puts gladness in the heart; nor is any joy comparable to that which gracious souls have in the communications of the divine favor. 'Thou hast *given;*' so the word is. True joy is God's gift, *not as the world giveth*, John 14: 27. The saints have no reason to envy carnal worldlings their mirth and joy, but should pity them rather, for they may know better, and will not.

3. Which they entirely confide in, and in that confidence are always easy, *v.* 8. He had laid him down, and slept, 3: 5. so he will still. If he have the light of God's countenance, (1.) He can enjoy himself. His soul returns to God, and reposes itself in Him as its Rest, so he lays him down, and sleeps in peace. (2.) He fears no disturbance from enemies, sleeps quiet, and is very secure, because God Himself has undertaken to keep him safe. When he comes to die, he will then, with good old Simeon, *depart in peace*, assured God will receive his soul, to be safe with Himself, and that his body also shall be made to dwell in safety in the grave. (3.) He commits all his affairs to God, and contentedly leaves the issue of them with Him, as the husbandman the seed he has sown, Mark 4: 26, 27. So a good man, having, by faith and prayer, cast his care on God, sleeps and rests night and day, and is very easy, leaving it to his God to perform all things for him, and prepared to welcome his holy will.

In singing these vs. and praying over them, let us, with a holy contempt of the wealth and pleasure of this world, as insufficient to make us happy, earnestly seek the favor of God, and pleasingly solace ourselves in that favor; and, with a holy this, and forsake lying vanities for our own mercies.

3. He warns them against sin, and exhorts them both to frighten and to reason themselves out of it, *v.* 4. '*Stand in awe and sin not;*' '*Be angry and sin not,*' so the LXX, and some think the apostle takes that exhortation from him, Eph. 4: 26. '*commune with your own hearts.* Be converted; and, in order thereunto, consider and fear.' Note, One good remedy against sin is to stand in awe. 'Be moved,' so some, in opposition to carelessness and carnal security. 'Always keep up a holy reverence of the glory and majesty of God, and a holy dread of his wrath and curse, and dare not to provoke Him.' One good mean of preserving a holy awe, is, to be frequent and serious in *communing with our own hearts.* A thinking man is in a fair way to be a wise and a good man. '*Commune with your hearts;* examine them by serious self-reflection; employ them in solemn, pious meditations; consider your ways, and observe the directions here given, in order to the doing of this work well and to good purpose.' (1.) 'Choose a solitary time; do it when awake on your beds; before you go to sleep at night,' as some of the heathen moralists have directed; 'examine your consciences with respect to what you have done that day, particularly what you have done amiss, that you may repent of it. When you awake in the night, meditate on God, and the things that belong to your peace.' David himself practised what he here counsels others to do, 63: 6. On a sick-bed particularly we should consider our ways, and commune with our own hearts about them. (2.) 'Compose yourselves into a serious frame; Be still. When you have asked conscience a question, be silent, and wait for an answer.'

4. He counsels them to make conscience of their duty, *v.* 5. We must not only cease to do evil, but learn to do well. They that were disaffected to David and his government, would soon come to a better temper, and return to their allegiance, if they would but worship God aright: and those that know the concerns that lie between them and God, will be glad of the Mediator, the Son of David. It is required here from every one of us, (1.) That we serve Him; *Offer* ourselves first, and our best sacrifices: they must be *sacrifices of righteousness;* all the fruits of the reigning love of God and our neighbor, and all the instances of a religious conversation, which are better than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices. The sacrifices of the unrighteous are an abomination, Isa. 1: 11, &c. (2.) That we confide in Him. 'First offer the sacrifices of righteousness, then you are welcome to trust in the Lord.'

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The servants of God, when distressed, call upon Him with confidence; and neither have nor desire any other plea, than his free mercy. [Note, Job 22:2.]—In proportion as we are conscious of devotedness to God, we have evidence that we are chosen and 'set apart by Him,' to show forth his praises and enjoy his love. Instead then of reviling our slanderers, we should warn them and expostulate with them, and invite them to seek a share in our happiness.—In every thing we ought to use means, and attend to the ordinances and commandments of God; but after all we must place our whole dependence on his mercy and grace.—Let worldly men know, that the true Christian has found that good, which they are in vain inquiring after: whilst he enjoys peace and communion with God, he envies not their wealth or indulgence. But, as salvation is in Christ alone, where will they appear, who despise his personal and mediatorial glory, refuse to have Him to reign over them, and revile Him in his disciples? SCOTT.

Verse 6.

Who will, &c.] The uncertainty of men concerning the nature of happiness, in what it consists, and where it is to be found, is strikingly shown in the numerous and discordant opinions of the more philosophical heathens about the CHIEF GOOD. SCOTT.—*Many.*] 'Either, 1. Of his own followers, who are weary of waiting on God and ready to despair. Or rather, 2. Of his enemies, even of the people who were either engaged against him, or at least unconcerned for him, and sought their own ease and advantage.' POOLE.—'Not, as many think, David's enemies; as if they would see some indication of his overthrow; but his friends, who, now that he was a fugitive, despaired of his affairs.' ROSENM.—'David's visible strength and military preparation were so small, comparatively with those of his enemies, that they that looked on, were ready to despair of victory; . . . so David here opposes to those fearful objectors the favor of God, as a banner or ensign that hath a whole army belonging to it, i. e. all security attending it.' HAMMOND.—'The word *any* is a supplement, and weakens the force of the question. It is simply, "*who will* show us good."' MORISON.—*Good.*] 'Worldly good, as appears by the opposition of *the light of God's countenance* to it in the next words, and by the explication of it of *corn* and *wine* in the next v.' POOLE.—*Light of thy countenance.*] 'I have no doubt allusion is made to the bright symbol of Jehovah's presence, which stood on the mercy-seat between the cherubim of glory.' MORISON.—*Roberts* notes such expressions as common still in the E. to signify the countenance and favor of a great man; the hiding of whose face, or turning it away, greatly chagrins a dependent or applicant. ED.

PSALM V.

David prays, and purposes to persist in prayer, 1—3. He shows that God abhors the wicked, 4—6. He professes hope in God's mercy; and entreats his guidance, because of the malice of his enemies, 7—9. He predicts that the wicked will be destroyed, and the righteous made prosperous and joyful, 10—12.

To the chief Musician upon Nehiloth, A Psalm of David.

[a] GIVE ear to my words, O LORD, consider [b] my meditation.

2 Hearken [c] unto the voice of my cry, [d] my King, and my God: for [e] unto thee will I pray.

3 [f] My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct *my prayer* unto thee, and will look up.

4 For thou *art* not a [g] God that hath pleasure in wickedness; neither shall [h] evil dwell with thee.

5 [i] The foolish shall not [k] stand * in thy sight: [l] thou hatest all workers of iniquity.

6 Thou shalt [m] destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor [n] the † bloody and deceitful man.

a 17:1. 54:2. 55:1,2. 64:1. 80:1. 88: 1. 1 Pet. 3:12. 1 John 5:14,15.
b 19:14. 1 Sam. 1:13,16. *marg.* Rom. 8:26.
c 3:4.
d 10:16. 24:7,8. 44:4. 47:6,7. 74:12. 99:1—4. 145:1. Is. 33:22.
e 65:2.
f 22:2. 55:17. 59:16. 88:13. 119:147. 130:6. Is. 26:9. Mark 1:35.
g 50:21. 1 Chr. 29:17. Hab. 1:13. Mal. 2:17.
h 94:20. 101:7. 140:13. John 14:23. Heb. 12:14. 2 Pet. 3:13. Rev. 21:23, 27.
i 14:1. 92:6. 94:8. Prov. 1:7,22. 8: 5. Ec. 5:4.
k 1:5. 130:3.
* Heb. *before thine eyes.*
l 10:3. Lev. 20:23. Prov. 6:16—19. Hos. 9:15. Zech. 11:8. Matt. 7:23. 25:41.
m 4:2. Rev. 21:8. 22:15.
n 26:9. 55:23. 2 Sam. 16:8. 20:1. Is. 26:21. Rom. 1:29.
† Heb. *man of bloods and deceit.* 26: 8—10. 43:1. Gen. 34:14,25,26.

indifferency about the issue of all our wordly concerns, let us commit ourselves and all our affairs to the conduct and custody of the Divine Providence, and be satisfied that all shall be made to work for good to us, if we keep ourselves in the love of God.

Ps. V. This Ps. is a prayer, at a time when the psalmist was in distress from the malice of his enemies; many such times passed over David, nay, there was scarcely any time of his life to which this Ps. may not be accommodated; for in *this* he was a type of Christ, continually beset with enemies; and his powerful and prevalent appeals to God, when so beset, pointed at Christ's dependence on his Father, and triumphs over the powers of darkness, in the midst of his sufferings. It is all of great use to direct us in prayer.

V. 1—6. *Nehiloth* is a word nowhere else used. It is conjectured, (and it is but a conjecture,) that it signifies *wind*-instruments, with which this psalm was sung, as *Neginoth* was supposed to signify the *stringed*-instruments. In these vs. David had an eye to God,

I. As a prayer-hearing God; such He has always been, and He is still as ready to hear prayer as ever. Observe how David here styles Him, *Lord*, *v.* 1, 3. *Jehovah*, a self-existent, self-sufficient Being, *my King and my God*. *v.* 2. The most commanding, encouraging principle of prayer, and the most powerful, prevailing plea in prayer is, that He is *our* King and *our* God, whom we lie under peculiar obligations to, and whom we have peculiar expectations from.

1. What David here prays for, may encourage our faith and hopes, in all our addresses to God. If we pray fervently, and in faith, we have reason to hope, (1.) That God will take cognizance of our case, our representation of it, and our requests upon it; for so he prays here; *Give ear to my words, O Lord.* (2.) That He will not slight it, or turn it off with a cursory answer; for so he prays, *Consider my meditation.* David's prayers were not his words only, but his meditations; meditation and prayer should go together, 19: 14. It is when we thus consider our prayers, and then only, that we may expect God will consider them, and take that to his heart which comes from ours. (3.) That He will, in due time, return a gracious answer of peace: for so he prays, *v.* 2. *Hearken to the voice of my cry.* His prayer was a *cry*, which denotes fervency, and importunity; such effectual, fervent prayers of a righteous man avail much.

2. David here promises four things, as the condition on his part to be fulfilled, that he might obtain this gracious acceptance: this may guide and govern us in addresses to God, that we may present them aright; for we ask, and have not, if we ask amiss. (1.) That he will make conscience of prayer, and a business of it; *unto Thee will I pray.* God's assurances of his readiness to hear prayer, should confirm our resolution to live and die praying. (2.) He will pray *in the morning;* morning-prayer is especially our duty; we are then fittest for prayer, when in the most fresh, and lively, and composed frame, clear of the slumbers of the night, revived by them, and not yet filled with the business of the day. We have then most need of prayer, considering the dangers and temptations of the day to which we are exposed, and against which we are concerned, by faith and prayer, to fetch in fresh supplies of grace. (3.) He will have his eye single, and his heart intent, in the duty; *I will direct my prayer*, as a marksman directs his arrow; with such a fixedness and steadiness of mind: Or, as we direct a letter to a friend at such a place. All our prayers must be directed to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; and then, when God and his honor and glory are our highest aim, they will not miscarry. (4.) He will patiently wait an answer of peace, will look up, 85: 8. Hab. 2: 1. We must look up, or look out, as he that has shot an arrow looks to see how near it has come to the mark. We lose much of the comfort of our prayers, for want of observing their returns. Thus praying, thus waiting, as the lame man, Acts 3: 4. we may expect God will hear and consider our words.

II. As a sin-hating God, *v.* 4—6. David notices this, 1. As a warning to himself, and all other praying people, to remember that, as the God with whom we have to do is gracious and merciful, so He is pure and holy, 66: 18. 2. As an encouragement to his prayers against his enemies; as wicked, and therefore enemies to God, and such as He had no pleasure in. See here,

(1.) The holiness of God's nature; when he says, *Thou art not a God that has pleasure in wickedness*, he means, 'Thou art a God that hates it, as directly contrary to thine infinite purity and rectitude, and holy will.' Dr. Hammond thinks this refers to that law of Moses, which would not permit strangers, who persisted in their idolatry, to dwell in the land of Israel.

(2.) The justice of his government; The foolish *shall not stand in his sight*, shall not be smiled upon by Him, nor admitted to attend on Him, nor be acquitted in the judgment of the great day. The workers of iniquity are very foolish. Wicked people hate God, justly therefore may they be said to be hated of Him, and it will be their endless misery and ruin.

Two sorts of sinners are here marked for destruction. [1.] The lying, and deceitful; on which is laid particular emphasis, Rev. 21: 8. *All liars*, and *ch.* 22: 15. *Whosoever loves and makes a lie;* nothing is more contrary than this, and therefore nothing more hateful, to the God of truth. [2.] The cruel; for inhumanity is no less contrary, no less hateful, to the God of mercy, whom mercy pleases. Liars and murderers are in a particular manner said to resemble the devil, and to be his children, therefore it may well be expected God should abhor them. These were the characters of David's enemies; and such as these are still the enemies of Christ and his church; the worse they are, the surer we may be of their ruin in due time.

In singing these vs. and praying them over, we must engage and stir up ourselves to the duty of prayer, and encourage ourselves in it, because we shall not seek the Lord in vain; and must express our detestation of sin, and our awful expectation of that day of Christ's appearing, which will be the day of the perdition of ungodly men.

V. 7—12. In these vs. David gives three characters; of himself, of his enemies, and of all the people of God; and subjoins a prayer to each.

I. Of himself, *v.* 7, 8. 1. Sinners go away from

NOTES.

Ps. V. 'The ancient Hebrew interpreters make this a Ps. of David against Doeg and Ahithophel. Some refer it to the time of Saul, but others, and most, to that of Absalom's sedition; and then they consider it as levelled at the leaders under him.' ROSENM.

Title.] Some suppose 'Nehiloth' implies, that the Ps. was sung in parts. SCOTT. '*Nehiloth.* An eminent musical instrument; so lexicographers. According to one derivation, it may have resembled, in its sound, the *murmurs* of a stream, or the *hum* of bees; or, according to another, it may have been a *hollow wind-instrument*, as a *pipe*, or *flute* or, *timbrel.* And it indicates *succession*, i. e. in the performance of the parts. Hence the LXX. render it an *inheritor*, and so the Vulg. Arab. and Æthiopic, all which must be conceived to have rendered it intelligibly. To this agree also the ancient translators. But more probably, as Kimchi on *Nichiloth*, Ps. III. it is the *name of a tune*, derived from some word signifying *heritage*, or the like.' HAMMOND.

Verse 1.

It is not evident, whether this Ps. was composed during Absalom's rebellion, or while David was persecuted by Saul: but the latter seems most probable.—The word rendered 'meditation,' appears to denote those inward thoughts, desires, fears, or sorrows, which break forth in earnest prayers, or are relieved by complaining unto God, and by pouring out the heart before him. SCOTT. *Meditation.*] 'Sighing. HORSLEY. *Dove-like mournings*, is the beautiful rendering of *Bp. Horne.*—Mental prayer. *Gill.*' MORISON. The cooing of the turtle-doves (extremely numerous and unmolested) in the dark cedars of Smyrna, is a soothing, pensive, and delicious melody; dwelling long in the mind of one who has heard it, and not easily forgotten. ED.

Verses 2—6.

The word rendered 'foolish,' signifies *insane*, or *mad*; denoting the infatuation of sinners, when urged on by their unbridled passions, to venture all consequences for the sake of present gratification. (*Ec.* 9: 1—3.)—The penitent sinner's character and state are changed, and he is reconciled to God: but sin is irreconcilably the object of divine hatred. (*M. R. Rev.* 21:5—8. 22:14, 15.) SCOTT.

(3.) *Morning.*] 'Either, 1. Metaphorically, i. e. early, seasonably: or, 2. Properly, every morning.' POOLE.—*Direct.*] 'Set every thing in order; alluding to the offerings to be presented to God.' MUDGE, followed by Bp. *Horsley*, in *Morison.* ED.

(4.) 'The negative form gives emphasis to the words.' MORISON.

(5.) *Foolish.*] 'The foolish, in Scripture, seldom or never means persons deficient in capacity.' COTT. BIB.

7 But [o] as for me, I will come *into* thy house [p] in the multitude of thy mercy; *and* [q] in thy fear will [r] I worship toward * thy holy temple.

8 [s] Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness, because of † mine enemies; [t] make thy way straight before my face.

9 For [u] *there is* no ‡ faithfulness in § their mouth; [x] their inward part *is* ‖ very wickedness; [y] their throat *is* an open sepulchre; [z] they flatter with their tongue.

10 ¶ Destroy thou them, O God; [a] let them fall ** by their own counsels; cast them out in [b] the multitude of their transgressions; for [c] they have rebelled against thee.

11 But [d] let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever [e] shout for joy, because thou †† defendest them: let them also that [f] love thy name be joyful in thee.

12 For thou, LORD,

o 55:16. Josh. 24:15. Luke 6:11,12.
p 51:1. 52:8. 69:13,16. Is. 55:7. Rom. 5:20,21.
q 130:4. Hos. 3:5. Acts 9:31. Heb. 12:28,29. 1 Pet. 1:17—19.
r 28:2. 132:7. 138:2. 1 K. 8:29,30,35, 38. Dan. 6:10. Heb. 4:16.
* Heb. *the temple of thy holiness.* Is. 64:11.
s 25:4,5. 86:11. 119:10,64. 143:8—10. Prov. 3:5,6.
† Heb. *those which observe me.* 27:11. 54:5. 59:10. *marg.* 2 Sam. 12:14.
t Prov. 4:25. Matt. 3:3. Heb. 12:13.
u 36:1—4. 52:2. 59:3. 62:4,9. 111: 1—3. Jer. 9:3—6. Mic. 6:12. Rom. 1:29—31. 3:13.
‡ Or, *steadfastness.*
§ Heb. *his mouth*, that is, *the mouth of any of them.*
x 51:6. 58:2. 62:4. *marg.* 64:6. Jer. 4:14. 17:9. Mark 7:21,22. Luke 11:39.
‖ Heb. *wickednesses.*
y Luke 11:44. Rom. 3:13.
z 12:2,3. Job 32:21,22. Prov. 29:5. 1 Thes. 2:5.
¶ Or, *Make them guilty.* Rom. 3:19,20.
a 7:9—15. 9:15,16. 10:15. 17:13. 21: 8—10. 28:3,4. 31:18. 35:1—8,26. 55:15. 59:12,13. 64:6—8. 66:7. 68: 1,2. 69:22—25. 71:13. 79:12. 83: 9—18. 109:6—20. 137:7—9. 140:9, 10. 144:6,7. Deut. 2:30. 1 Sam. 25: 29,39. 2 Sam. 15:31. 17:14,23. 2 Chr. 25:16. Esth. 7:10. Job 5:12—14. 1 Cor. 3:19. 2 Tim. 4:14.
** Or, *from.*
b Lam. 1:5. Hos. 9:7.
c Is. 1:2,20. 63:10. Dan. 9:5,9.
d 35:27. 40:16. 58:10. 63:3. 70:1—4. Judg. 5:31. Is. 65:13. Rev. 18: 20. 19:1—7.
e 47:1—5. 65:13. Job 38:7. Zech. 9:9
†† Heb. *coverest over*, or, *protectest.*
f 69:36. Rom. 8:28. 1 Cor. 2:9. Jam 1:12. 2:5.

God, but he is steadfastly resolved to keep close to God and to his worship. God's holiness and justice are so far from being a terror, to drive the upright in heart from God, that they rather invite them to cleave to Him. David was much in secret worship, prayed often alone, (*v.* 2, 3.) yet was very constant and devout in attendance on the sanctuary. The duties of the closet are designed to prepare us for, not excuse us from, public ordinances. He worshipped God reverently, and with a due sense of the infinite distance between God and man; '*In thy fear will I worship*,' Heb. 12: 28. He would take his encouragement, in worship, from God Himself only; from his infinite mercy, and not in any merit or righteousness of his own: the mercy of God should ever be the foundation both of our hopes, and of our joy, in every thing wherein we have to do with Him: From the instituted medium of worship, here called *the temple of his holiness*, as a type of Christ, the great and only Mediator, who sanctifies the service, as the temple sanctified the gold, and to whom we must have an eye in all our devotions, as they then had to the temple. 2. He earnestly prays God, by his grace, to guide and preserve him always in the way of his duty, *v.* 8. *Because of mine enemies*, Heb. '*Because of those which observe me*, which watch for my halting, and seek occasion against me.' See here, (1.) The good use David made of the malice of his enemies against him, to be the more cautious to avoid sin and all appearances of it, and the more solicitous to be always found in the good way of God and duty. Thus, by wisdom and grace, good may come out of evil. (2.) The right course David took to baffle those who sought occasion against him; committing himself to the divine guidance, both by providence and by grace, so that his enemies, like Daniel's, might find no occasion against him. The way of our duty is here called *God's way* and *his righteousness*, because He prescribes to us by his just and holy laws, which if we sincerely set before us as our rule, we may in faith beg of God to direct us in all particular cases. How this prayer of David's was answered to him, see 1 Sam. 18: 14, 15.

II. Of his enemies, *v.* 9, 10. 1. If his account of them be true, as, no doubt, it is, they had a very bad character. He had spoken, *v.* 6. of God's hating the bloody and deceitful man; 'Now, Lord,' says he, 'that is the character of my enemies: they are deceitful; there is no trusting them, for there is no faithfulness in their mouth.' '*They flatter with their tongues*, to cover their malice, and to gain their point the more securely. They are likewise bloody, for *their throat is an open sepulchre*, cruel as the grave, gaping to devour and to swallow up; insatiable as the grave, which never says, '*It is enough*,' Prov. 30: 15, 16. This is quoted, Rom. 3: 13. to show the general corruption of mankind, for they are all naturally prone to malice, Tit. 3: 3. The grave is opened for them all, and yet they are as open graves to one another. 2. If his prayer against them be heard, as, no doubt, it is, they are in a bad condition. He prays God to destroy them, according to what he had said, *v.* 6. to cast them out of his protection and favor, out of his heritage, out of the land of the living. Their sins deserve destruction Persecuting God's servants, fills the measure as soon as any thing, 1 Thess. 2: 15, 16. Nay, they may be easily made to *fall by their own counsels;* that which they do, to secure themselves, and do mischief to others, by the over-ruling providence of God, may be made the means of their destruction, 7: 15.—9: 15. He pleads, '*They have rebelled against thee:* had they been only *mine* enemies, I could safely have forgiven them; but they are rebels against God, his crown and dignity; therefore I plainly foresee their ruin.' His prayer for their destruction comes not from a spirit of revenge, but from a spirit of prophecy, by which he foretold, That all who rebel against God will certainly be destroyed by their own counsels. If it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble his people, as we are told it is, 2 Thess. 1: 6. we pray it may be done, whenever we pray, *Father, thy will be done.*

III. Of the people of God. Observe,

1. They are described as the righteous; (*v.* 12.) for they trust in God, are well assured of his power and all-sufficiency, venture their all on his promise, and are confident of his protection in the way of their duty; and they love his name, are well-pleased with all that by which God has made Himself known, and take delight in their acquaintance with Him. This is true and pure religion, to live a life of complacency in God, and dependence on Him.

2. His prayer for them; '*Let them rejoice;* let them have cause, and hearts to rejoice; *Let them be joyful in Thee*, in thy favor, in thy salvation; not in any creature. Let them rejoice because Thou coverest them, or overshadowest them, dwellest among them.' Perhaps it is an allusion to the pillar of cloud and fire. Let us learn of David to pray, not for ourselves only, but for others; let all that are entitled to God's promises, share in our prayers; grace be with all that love Christ in sincerity. This is to concur with God.

3. His comfort concerning them, *v.* 12. *Therefore* he takes them into his prayers, because they are God's peculiar people; therefore he doubts not but his prayers shall be heard, and they shall al-

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(6.) 'Let it be remembered, that, in the Scriptures, *lying* and *murder* are the invariable companions of *deceit*, *treachery*, and *circumvention*.' MORISON.

Verse 7.

Towards thy holy temple.] 'Wherever they were, they were to turn, in offering their prayers, to the temple; or if we understand the inmost and holiest part of the tabernacle to be meant, before the temple was built; then, even they that were within the tabernacle might be said to pray towards it.' *Assemb. Ann.*—'Doubtless the holy of holies, the ark, the mercy-seat, the Shekinah and the cherubim of glory' [were referred to.] ID.

Verse 9.

(*Rom.* 3:9—20.)—If the Israelites, with all their advantages, manifested such hateful dispositions, in opposing 'the man after God's own heart,' and afterwards in their conduct towards their promised Messiah; it is plain that the whole race must be corrupt and alienated from God; that nothing except an internal renovation by the Spirit of God can make them holy; and that they can never find acceptance with God, on the ground of their own obedience to his righteous laws; but must be saved *mercifully*, if at all.—Some consider the open sepulchre as an emblem of rapacity and sensuality. (*Prov.* 30:15, 16.) SCOTT. 'As a part of this is cited, Rom. 3:13. to prove the depravity of mankind [in general], it is plain the description was designed for others besides the enemies of the literal David.' *Horne.—Flatter.*] 'I doubt whether *flattery* be the thing meant. Is it not rather the *plausibility* and *ensnaring eloquence*, with which libertines, in all ages, idolaters of old and philosophical atheists of modern days, have contrived to set a fair appearance on mischievous maxims and pernicious practices?' HORSLEY, in *Doyly* and *Mant.—Sepulchre.*] An exact metaphor, notes, Gen. 23:9, &c. ED.

Verses 10, 11.

These vs. might be rendered as follows: 'Deal with them as guilty, O God! Let them fall by their own counsels. Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against Thee. But all those who put their trust in Thee shall rejoice, they shall shout for joy for ever, because Thou defendest them. They that love thy name shall be joyful in Thee.'—The future tense is indeed often used, for the imperative, or the optative mood, in the Heb. which has not precision as to tenses and moods. But where the literal rendering contains simply a *prediction*, and changing the future for the imperative, or optative, implies an *imprecation*, or a *wish*; the literal version is frequently preferable. Yet it cannot be denied, that the form of imprecation is often used; implying that the impenitent enemies of God and Christ will perish, with the approbation of all holy creatures; and that the very prayers of believers for themselves and the church, will be answered in the destruction of their enemies. (*M. R.*—35:25—28. 68: 1—3. 69:22—28. 109:6—20.) SCOTT.

Verse 12.

Note, 3:3—5. SCOTT.—*With favor*, &c.] 'Like a shield of good will thou wilt stand guard around him.' HORSLEY in *Morison.*—'The word rendered *shield*, signifies rather a buckler, or a shield with pointed spikes in it: [cut, Job 15:26.]' MORISON.—*Shield.*] *Taannah.* 'A large kind of shield or target.' *Parkh.*: but comp. note and cut, 18:2. *Sept.* ὁπλον *Chal.* and *Syr.* clypeo. *Æthiopic* and *Vulg.* scuto. *Arab.* arma. *Com pass.*] Marg. *crown:* so Sept. Vulg. Arab. Chal. Æthiopic, the Latin tr. of which last, in Walton's Polyglott, is 'scuto bonæ voluntatis coronasti nos:' and in the marg. the singular reading of 'tanquam sepulchrum' '*as*, or *like a sepulchre.*' The Syr. has (Latin tr. in *Walt.*) Domine, ut clypeus opportunus, *cinges* me. The Heb. for *shield* (*tsinnah*), according to some, is from a root signifying *sharpened*, according to others

wilt [g] bless the righteous, with favor [h] wilt thou * compass him as *with* [i] a shield.

PSALM VI.

David, being SICK, deprecates wrath and entreats mercy, with mournful complaints, and earnest pleadings, 1—7. Confiding in God, he triumphs over his enemies, 8—10.

To the chief Musician on [a] Neginoth upon † Sheminith, A Psalm of David.

O LORD, [b] rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

2 Have mercy upon me, O LORD, [c] for I *am* weak: [d] O LORD, heal me, for * my bones are vexed.

3 [f] My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O LORD, [g] how long?

4 [h] Return, O LORD, [i] deliver my soul: oh, save me [k] for thy mercy's sake.

5 For [l] in death *there is* no remembrance of

g 18:35. 33:8. 29:11. 147:11. 115:13.
h 32:10.
* Heb. *crown.*
i 3:3. 84:11.
a 4. 54:1.
† Or, *the eighth.* 12: *title.* 1 Chr. 15: 21. *Marg.*
b 38:1. Is. 54:9. 57:16. Jer. 10:24. 46:28. 1 Cor. 11:31,32.
c 33:7,8. 41:3. 103:13—17.
d 30:2. Gen. 20:17. Ex. 15:26. Num. 12:13. Deut. 32:39. Job 5:18. Jer. 17:14. Hos. 6:1. Matt. 4:24.
e 32:3. 38:3. 51:8. Job 19:20. 33:19—21.
f 22:14. 31:9,10. 38:8. 42:5,11. 77: 2,3. Prov. 18:14. Matt. 26:38.
g 13:1,2. 77:7. Luke 18:7.
h 80:14. 90:13. Mal. 3:7.
i 17:13. 22:20. 86:13. 116:4,8. 120: 2. 124:7. Is. 38:17.
k 25:7. 69:13. 79:8,9. Dan. 9:18. Eph. 1:6.
l 30:9. 88:10—12. 115:17. 118:17. Is. 38:18,19.

ways rejoice. They are happy in the assurance of God's blessing; safe under the protection of his favor, with that thou wilt *crown* him, so some read it. A shield, in war, guards only on one side, but the favor of God is to the saints a defence on every side; like the hedge about Job, round about, so that, while they keep themselves under the divine protection, they are entirely safe, and ought to be entirely satisfied.

In singing these vs. and praying them over, we must by faith put ourselves under God's guidance and care, and then please ourselves with his mercy and grace, and with the prospect of God's triumphs, at last, over all his enemies, and his people's triumphs in Him and in his salvation.

Ps. VI. David was a weeping prophet as well as Jeremiah, and this Ps. is one of his lamentations: either it was penned in a time, or, at least, calculated for a time, of great trouble, both outward and inward. The method is very observable, and what we shall often meet with. He begins with doleful complaints, but ends with joyful praises; like Hannah, who went to prayer with a sorrowful spirit, but, when she had prayed, went her way, and her countenance was no more sad. This Ps. is like the book of Job.

V. 1—7. These vs. speak the language of a heart truly humbled under humbling providences. Observe here,

I. The representation David makes to God of his grievances; he pours out his complaint before Him: whither else should a child go with his complaints, but to his father? 1. He complains of bodily pain and sickness, *v.* 2. His bones and his flesh, like Job's, were touched. Let this help to reconcile us to pain and sickness, that it has been the lot of some of the best saints, and that their example directs and encourages to show before God our trouble in that case, who is *for the body*, and takes cognizance of its ailments. 2. He complains of inward trouble; sickness brought his sin to his remembrance, and, as a token of God's displeasure, it was the vexation of his soul: this completed David's complicated trouble, that it was continued a great while, here intimated in that expostulation, *v.* 3. *Thou, O Lord, how long?* The living God is the only Physician both of body and mind.

II. The impression his troubles made on him, *v.* 6, 7. David had more courage and consideration, than to mourn thus for any outward affliction; but, when sin sits heavy on his conscience, and God withdraws from him, then he mourns in secret, and even his soul refuses to be comforted This kept his eyes not only waking, but weeping. Note, 1. The best men have often been men of sorrows; our Lord Jesus Himself was so: our way lies through a vale of tears, and we must accommodate ourselves to the temper of the climate. 2. It well becomes the greatest spirits to be tender, and to relent, under the tokens of God's displeasure. David could face any threatening enemy, with undaunted bravery, yet melts into tears at the remembrance of sin. 3. True penitents weep in their retirements. The Pharisees disguised their faces, that they might appear unto men to mourn; but David mourns in the night on his bed, communing with his own heart, when no eye witnesses his grief, but the eye of Him who is all eye. Peter went out, covered his face, and wept. 4. Sorrow for sin ought to be great sorrow; so David's was. 5. The triumphs of wicked men, in the sorrows of the saints, add much to their

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is our privilege, that we may come before God as often, and ask as much, as we will: and it must be our sin and folly, if we do not avail ourselves of his condescension and bounty. We should take care, that He may hear our voice every morning, 'who arose a great while before day, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed;' lest we should yield to sloth, or admit carnal excuses for our negligence. (*Luke* 6:12. *P. O.* 1—19.) —We none of us could come before God, if it were not for his abounding mercy: humility and reverence then become us in all our worship.—We need not wonder at the cruelty, treachery, hypocrisy, or flattery of *our* enemies, when we consider how David, or how Christ was treated: but we should remember, that we are by nature as depraved as our opposers; that we may renewedly repent of the sinful thoughts, words, and actions of our past lives; that we may still watch over our own hearts, and against all polluting or dissembling conversation; and that we may bless God for restraining or converting grace, and for Jesus Christ and his salvation.—Joy is the privilege of the righteous, their duty, and their strength; and they should be exhorted, to 'rejoice in the Lord always.' SCOTT.

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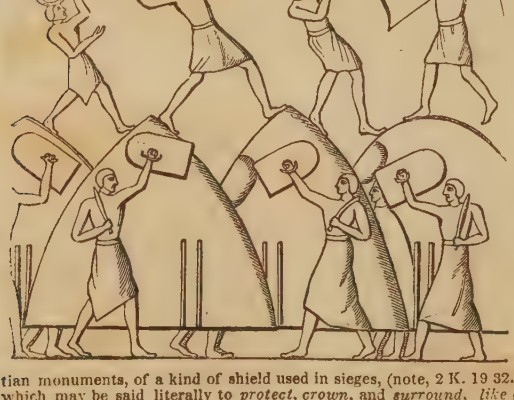
from a root signifying to protect. See *Poole's* Syn. &c. The phrase of the psalmist, it is believed, is generally referred to holding a shield *over the head* of one, as the foot-soldiers formerly did in besieging a city. *Schleusner*, (whom see,) refers the phrase here, 'to the round form of the shields, which formerly were used to protect persons *sitting under* (sedentes sub) them.' A cut is given from the ancient Egyptian monuments, of a kind of shield used in sieges, (note, 2 K. 19 32.) which may be said literally to *protect*, *crown*, and *surround*, *like a sepulchre*, too,) the person beneath it. Possibly this is alluded to, as it must have been in use among the Hebrews: note, 2 Chr. 26:10. The cut is from the *Ramesseion*. ED.



NOTES.

Ps. VI. 'The supplicatory Psalms may be divided into two classes, according to the prayer; which, in some, regards the public, and, in others, the individual.' HORSLEY in COT. BIB.—'The other penitential Psalms are the 32d, 38th, 51st, 102d, 130th, and 143d.' HOLDEN.—'*Rudinger* makes this Ps. synchronical with the 22d, 25th, 69th, and 86th; and refers it to the time of Absalom's usurpation and David's flight.' ROSENM.

Sheminith.] This word signifies the eighth: and some suppose that the Ps. or tune, was adapted to a harp with 8 strings.—This is the first of the *penitential Psalms;* but it is not known on what occasion it was written. SCOTT.—*Title.*] 'Literally. "To the giver of victory; on the stringed instruments, upon the eighth, a Psalm of David." Paraphrased, "To the giver of victory: a Psalm of David, to be sung, or performed, on the stringed instruments; *Sheminith*, or the one of loftiest sound, to be used, a particular species of the *Neginoth*, or stringed instruments, perhaps the only one with 8 strings.' MORISON.

Verses 1, 2.

'Though I deserve destruction, yet let thy mercy pity my frailty.' (*Is.* 57:15, 16. *Jer.* 10:23—25.) SCOTT.

(1.) *God of my righteousness.*] 'Either the witness and defender of my righteous cause; or from whom I expect a righteous judgment and decision of my cause.' POOLE.

Verses 3, 4.

(13:1—4. 94:1—7.)—'Return, O Lord, in mercy to my soul, and relieve and comfort me.' (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verse 5.

In the grave.] The word *sheol*, Sept. *hades*, is often translated *hell*, and frequently denotes the place of separate spirits, happy or unhappy, according to the context: yet it sometimes must be understood of the grave, and that appears to be the sense here. (16:8—11.) SCOTT.—'In this v. we have a poetical description of the state of departed souls, which the Heb. poets conceived to be entirely separate from the society of men living in this world—that same state of eternal silence, mantled in sadness and covered with shadows, which the Greeks and Romans conceived their *orcus* to be. Hence many passages occur in

thee: [m] in the grave who shall give thee thanks?

6 [n] I am weary with my groanings; [*] all the night make I my bed to swim; [o] I water my couch with my tears.

7 [p] Mine eye is consumed because of grief; [q] it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.

8 [r] Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for [s] the LORD hath heard the voice of my weeping.

9 [t] The LORD hath heard my supplication; [u] the LORD will receive my prayer.

10 [x] Let all mine enemies be ashamed and [y] sore vexed; let them [z] return *and* [a] be ashamed suddenly.

m Ec. 9:10. John 9:4.
n 38:3,9. 69:3. 77:2—9. 88:9. 102: 3—5. 143:4—7. Job 10:1. 23:2.
* Or, *every night.*
o 39:12. 42:3. Job 16:20. Jer. 14:17. Lam. 1:2,16. 2:11,18,19. 3:48—50. Luke 7:38.
p 31:9,10. 38:10. 88:9. Job 17:7. Lam. 5:17.
q 32:3.
r 119:115. 139:19. Matt. 7:23. 25:41. Luke 13:27.
s 56:8 116:1. Is. 30:19. 38:3,5. Heb. 5:7.
t 3:4. 31:22. 40:1,2. 66:19,20. 118: 5. 120:1. 138:3. Jon. 2:2,7. 2 Cor. 12:8—10.
u 116:1,2. 2 Cor. 1:10,11.
x 5:10. 7:6. 25:3. 35:28. 40:14,15. 71:13. 83:16,17. 86:17. 109:28,29. 112:10. 132:18. Is. 26:11. Jer. 20:11.
y 2:5. 21:8,9.
z Job 6:29. Mal. 3:18.
a Prov. 29:1. 1 Thes. 5:3.

grief. David's eye waxed old, because of his enemies, who rejoiced in his afflictions, and put bad constructions on his tears. In this great sorrow, David was a type of Christ, who often wept, and who cried out, *My soul is exceedingly sorrowful*, Heb. 5: 7.

III. The petitions he offers up to God, in this sorrowful and distressed state. 1. What he dreads as the greatest evil, is, the anger of God; therefore he prays, *v.* 1. *O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger*, though I have deserved it, *neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.* He does not pray, 'Lord, rebuke me not; Lord, chasten me not; the affliction of his body will be tolerable, if he have but comfort in his soul. Herein David was a type of Christ, whose sorest complaint, in his sufferings, was, of the trouble of his soul, and suspension of his Father's smiles. Let us thus deprecate the wrath of God more than any outward trouble whatsoever, and always take heed of treasuring up wrath against a day of affliction. 2. What he desires as the greatest good, and which would be to him the restoration of all good, is, the favor and grace of God. He prays God to pity him, and look on him with compassion; to pardon his sins; to be at peace with him; and especially to preserve the inward man, and the interests of that, whatever becomes of the body; 'O Lord, deliver my soul from sinning, from sinking, from perishing for ever.' It is an unspeakable privilege, that we have a God to go to in our afflictions, and it is our duty to go to Him, and thus to wrestle with Him, and we shall not *seek* in vain.

IV. The pleas with which he enforces his petitions; not to move God, but himself. He pleads his own misery, and its long continuance; he pleads God's mercy; whence we take some of our best encouragements in prayer; *Save me, for thy mercies' sake.* He pleads God's glory, *v.* 5. '*For in death there is no remembrance of Thee.* Not but that separate souls live and act, and the souls of the faithful joyfully remember God, and give thanks to Him. But in the second death, there is no pleasing remembrance of God; and even the death of the body puts an end to our opportunity and capacity of glorifying God in this world, and serving the interests of his kingdom among men. Some have maintained, that the joys of the saints in heaven are more desirable, infinitely more so, than the comforts of saints on earth; yet the services of saints on earth, especially such eminent ones as David was, are more laudable, and redound more to the glory of the divine grace, than the services of the saints in heaven, who are not employed in maintaining the war against sin and Satan, nor in edifying the bod of Christ. To depart and be with Christ, is most happy for the saints themselves; but for them to abide in the flesh, is more profitable for the church. This, David had an eye to, when he pleaded thus, *In the grave, who shall give Thee thanks?* 30:9.—88: 10.—115: 17. Is. 38: 18. And this, Christ had an eye to, when He said, *I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world.*

We should sing these verses with a deep sense of the terrors of God's wrath, which we should therefore dread and deprecate above any thing; and with thankfulness, if this be not our condition, and compassion to persons thus afflicted: if thus troubled, let it comfort us, that our case is not without precedent, nor, if we humble ourselves and pray, as David did, shall it be long without redress.

V. 8—10. What a sudden change is here for the better! He that was groaning, and weeping, and giving up all for gone, *v.* 6, 7. here looks, and speaks, very pleasantly. Having *made his requests known to God*, and lodged his case with Him, he confides that the issue will be good, and his sorrow turned into joy.

1. He distinguishes himself from the wicked and ungodly, and fortifies himself against their insults, *v.* 8. Now his cloud of melancholy was blown over, he is assured his soul shall not be gathered with sinners, for they are not his people. The workers of iniquity had teased him, taunted him, and asked him, 'Where was thy God?' triumphing in his despondency and despair; but now God was about to return, had comforted his spirit, and would shortly complete his deliverance. Perhaps they had tempted him to do as they did, quit religion, and betake himself to the pleasures of sin. But now, he says, 'Depart from me, I will never hearken to your counsel, but I will bless God and live.' God's mercies to us, should strengthen our resolution never to have any thing more to do with sin and sinners. David, as a king, takes occasion to renew his purpose of using his power to suppress sin, and reform manners, 75: 4.—101: 3. Our Lord Jesus seems to borrow these words, when, having all judgment committed to Him, He shall say, *Depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity*, Luke 13: 27. and so teaches us to say now, 119: 115.

2. He assures himself God was, and would be, propitious to him, notwithstanding present intimations of wrath. He speaks of it as a thing done, and repeats it with an air of triumph, 'The Lord *hath* heard;' by the workings of God's grace on his heart, he knew his prayer was graciously accepted, therefore did not doubt it would, in due time, be effectually answered. Thence he infers the like favorable audience of all his other prayers; for God gives, and does not upbraid with former grants.

3. He either prays for the conversion, or predicts the destruction, of his enemies and persecutors, *v.* 10. It may very well be taken as a prayer for their conversion; if they be not converted, it is a prediction of their confusion and ruin. *They shall be ashamed and sore-vexed*, (so it may be read,) and that justly; they rejoiced that David was vexed, *v.* 2, 3. therefore, as usual, it turns on themselves. They that will not give glory to God, shall have everlasting shame.

In singing this, and praying over it, we must give glory to God, as ready to hear prayer, own his goodness in hearing our prayers, and encourage ourselves to wait on, and trust in Him, in the greatest difficulties.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Infidels, profligates, and hypocrites, and ungodly men of every description, have always more noticed David's sins, than his mourning for them: for the former serve for an objection to the truths which they hate, and an excuse for the sins they love; but they are not disposed to imitate him in the latter.—Great tenderness of conscience, and a disposition to mourn for sin with brokenness of heart, distinguish the believer from all other men. The true penitent desires to live on earth to remember and give thanks to his God; and he seeks the deliverance of his soul from hell, and the resurrection of the body from the grave, for the same purpose. To enjoy the favor, and celebrate the praises, of his God and Savior, form that happiness on earth and in heaven, which he desires; but he cannot endure the thought of ceasing for ever to love and praise Him. His sorrow for sin is inward, and flows most in retirement: groans and tears express the compunction of his heart: and when his crimes have dishonored God, and caused his enemies to exult and triumph, and returning comforts are withheld: his spirits are exhausted, his eye is dimmed, and he seems to wax old before his time. But such mourning will terminate in rejoicing: the Lord will not number the weeping penitent with 'the workers of iniquity;' for he will separate from them, and rebuke and warn them. His very tears have a prevailing voice with God, who has heard, and will hear his prayers: and all they, who rejoice in the falls and sorrows of the Lord's devoted servants, will be 'put to shame, vexed, and perish suddenly,' unless they repent.—Sinners of every rank have sorrowed and wept for their transgressions; but Jesus alone was a sinless sufferer, and through his sufferings, and in no other way, can the penitent find mercy. At length HE will bid the impenitent workers of iniquity to depart from Him; and then will all his enemies be confounded, vexed, and perish with an everlasting destruction. SCOTT.

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the Psalms in which the departed do not praise God, all opportunity for that being supposed to have been taken away by death. Comp. Ps. 88:12. 115:17.' ROSENM.—*In death.*] 'See Isa. 38:18, 19. and Ps. 30: 9. also 115:17, 18. and elsewhere; all which places must not be understood as though intended positively to determine any thing concerning the state of the dead, but only the better to set out the duty of the living. God having revealed, that the most acceptable service men can render Him is to call on Him in trouble, and after deliverance to glorify Him, those holy men of old, being in danger of death, could fix no better consideration than this of God's glory, by which to press the plea of their prayers for life and prosperity.' ASSEMB. ANN.

Verses 8—10.

Many mournful Psalms end thus triumphantly, for the encouragement of other mourners to hope and pray. (13:5, 6. 30:9—12.)—The old version thus renders the last verse: 'All my enemies shall be confounded and sore vexed; they shall be turned back, and put to shame suddenly.' (*Note*, 5:10, 11.) SCOTT.

PSALM VII.

David, protesting his innocence of the crimes charged on him, entreats God to protect him from his enemies, and to plead his cause for the sake of the people, 1—9. He expresses his confidence in God, predicts the destruction of persecutors, and determines to praise the Lord, 10—17.

[a] Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the LORD, concerning the * words of Cush the Benjamite.

[b] O LORD my God, [c] in thee do I put my trust: [d] save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me:

2 Lest [e] he tear my soul [f] like a lion, [g] rending *it* in pieces, [h] while *there is* † none to deliver.

3 O LORD my God, [i] if I have done this; [k] if there be iniquity in my hand;

4 [l] If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, [m] I have delivered him that [n] without cause is mine enemy:)

5 [o] Let the enemy persecute my soul and take *it;* yea, let him [p] tread down my life upon the earth, and [q] lay mine honor in the dust. [r] Selah.

6 [s] Arise, O LORD, in thine anger, [t] lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and [u] awake for me *to* [x] the judgment *that* thou hast commanded.

7 [y] So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about: for their sakes therefore [z] return thou on high.

8 [a] The LORD shall judge the people: [b] judge me, O LORD, [c] according to my righteousness, and according [d] to mine integrity *that is* in me.

9 Oh, [e] let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but [f] establish the just: [g] for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.

a Hab. 3:1.
* Or, *business.*

Ps. VII. It appears by the title, that this Ps. was penned with reference to the malicious imputations David was unjustly laid under by some of his enemies.

V. 1—9. *Shiggaion* is a *song* or *psalm;* the word is used so only here and Hab. 3: 1. A *wandering* song, so some: the matter and composition of the several parts being different, but artificially put together. A *charming* song, so others; very delightful. *Cush the Benjamite*, i. e. Saul, whose barbarous usage of David bespoke him rather a Cushite, or Ethiopian, than a true born Israelite. Or, more likely, some kinsman of Saul, named *Cush*, an inveterate enemy to David; one of those men of Belial, whom David complains of, 1 Sam. 26: 19. that made mischief between him and Saul. Injuries from men should drive us (as David) to God; nay, He sings to the Lord, his spirit was not ruffled, nor cast down, but composed, cheerful, in tune for sacred songs. Let injuries, instead of provoking our passions, kindle and excite our devotions. In these verses,

I. He flies to God for succor and shelter, *v.* 1.

II. He solemnly protests his innocency, as to those things whereof he was accused, and by a dreadful imprecation appeals to God, the Searcher of hearts, concerning it, *v.* 3—5. Happy indeed are we, when our hearts can disprove calumnies to our own satisfaction. David had no court on earth to appeal to; his prince was his sworn enemy; but he had the court of heaven, and a righteous Judge there, whom he could call *his God.* See,

1. The indictment he pleads not guilty to, a traitorous design against Saul's crown and life. This he utterly denies, *v.* 3. He never rewarded evil to Saul, when at peace with him, nor to any other, *v.* 4. Nay, as some think it should be rendered, he never rendered evil for evil.

2. The evidence he produces of his innocency: it is hard to prove a negative, yet of this negative David could produce very good proof, *v.* 4. Beyond contradiction, he had no design against Saul's life—when, once and again, Saul lay at his mercy, and those about him would soon have despatched him, but David generously and conscientiously prevented it, 1 Sam. 24: 4. 26: 12. Saul himself owned these to be undeniable proofs of David's integrity and well-affectedness to him. If we render good for evil, and deny ourselves the gratifications of our passion, it may turn to us for a testimony, more than we think of, another day.

3. What doom he would submit to, if guilty, *v.* 5. It is natural to us to wish well to ourselves; therefore, a curse to ourselves, if we swear falsely, has been thought as awful a form of swearing as any other. With such an oath, or imprecation, David, on this important occasion, ratifies the protestation of his innocency, which yet will not justify the like for every light and trivial cause.

III. Having this testimony of his conscience to his innocency, he humbly prays to God to appear for him against his persecutors, and backs every petition with a proper plea, *v.* 6, 7, 8.

God's appearing on David's behalf, and fulfilling his promise to him, would be such an instance of his righteousness, goodness, and faithfulness, as would greatly enlarge the hearts of all his faithful worshippers, and fill their mouths with praise. If David come into power, as God had promised him, he will take care to bring people to church, and the ark shall not be neglected, as *in the days of Saul*, 1 Chr. 13: 3.

b 13:3,5. 18:28. 30:2,12. 43:4. 89: 26. Josh. 14:8. Jer. 31:18. Dan. 9: 4,19,20. Zech. 14:5.
c 11:1. 18:2. 25:2. 26:1. 31:1. 32: 10. 146:3—6. Is. 50:10. 1 Pet. 1:21.
d 3:7. 17:7—9. 31:15. 35:1—3. Jer. 15:15. 20:11. 1 Pet. 4:19.
e 35:15. Is. 38:13.
f 10:9. 17:12. 22:13. Deut. 33:20. Prov. 19:12. 2 Tim. 4:17. 1 Pet. 5:8.
g 50:22. Hos. 13:7,8.
h Judg. 18:28. 2 Sam. 14:6. *marg.* Job 10:7.
† Heb. *not a deliverer.*
i 59:3. Josh. 22:22. 1 Sam. 20:3. 22: 8,13. 24:9. 26:18,19. 2 Sam. 16:7, 8. Job 16:17—19.
k 66:18. 1 Sam. 24:11. Job 11:14.
l 55:20. 109:5. Gen. 44:4. Prov. 17: 13. Jer. 18:20,21.
m 1 Sam. 24:7,10,11. 26:10—17,24.
n 1 Sam. 19:4,5. 20:1. 22:14. 24:11—15,17—19. 25:28,29. 26:21.
o Job 31:5—10,38—40.
p 44:5. 60:12. Job 40:12. Is. 10:6. 63:3. Zech. 10:5. Mal. 4:3.
q 49:12. Job 16:15. 40:13. Jer. 17:13.
r 3:2. Hab. 3:13.
s 9:7. 12:5. 35:1,23. 44:26 68:1,2. Is. 3:13.
t 74:3. 94:2. Is. 33:10. 37:20.
u 44:23. 59:5. 78:65. Is. 51:9
x 76:8,9. 103:6. 2 Sam. 17:14. *marg.*
y 48:11. 58:10,11. Rev. 11:17,18. 16: 5—7. 18:20. 19:2.
z 93:4. 113:5,6. 138:6. Is. 57:15.
a 9:8. 11:4. 22:1. 96:13. 98:9. Gen. 18:25. Acts 17:31. Rom. 14:10—12. 1 Cor. 4:4,5.
b 26:1. 35:24. 43:1. Gen. 31:53. 2 Chr. 20:12.
c 17:2,3. 18:20—24. 35:24—27. 2 Cor. 1:12.
d 25:21. 26:11. 41:12. 78:72. Prov. 19:1. 1 Thes. 2:10.
e 9:5,6. 10:15,18. 58:6. 74:10,11,22, 23. Is. 37:36—38. Dan. 11:45. Acts 12:23.
f 37:23. *marg.* 40:2. 1 Sam. 2:9. Rom. 16:25. 1 Thes. 3:13. 1 Pet. 5:10. Jude 1.
g 17:3. 44:21. 139:1. 1 Sam. 16:7. 1 Chr. 28:9. Jer. 11:20. 17:10. 20:12. Rev. 2:23.

NOTES.

Ps. VII. Many conjectures have been formed concerning Cush; but at last we only know, that he was of the same tribe as Saul, and most likely one of his relations and courtiers, who brought some false accusation against David. (1 *Sam.* 22:7, 8. 26:17—19.) SCOTT.—'This Ps. will better answer to Saul's unjust persecution and David's innocence, than to any other subject in David's history.' Dr. A. CLARKE.—'There might have been many reasons for speaking of Saul in enigmatical terms; and there are not wanting numerous instances in Scripture, in which the mystic style of address is applied both to persons and things. In Jer. 25:26. and 51:41. Babylon is called Sheshach; and in the Apocalypse, the mystic Rome is called Egypt, and Sodom, and Babylon MORISON.—*Horsley* thinks the subject of the Ps. to be, 'the Messiah's appeal to God against the false accusations of his enemies,' and says, 'the predictions it contains of the final conversion of the world, and of the future judgment, are clear and explicit.' ED.

Verses 1, 2.

The Psalmist had many persecutors; but probably the one, whom he distinguishes from the rest, was Saul. (1 *Sam.* 22:9—19. 23:26—28.) SCOTT.

(2.) *Lion.*] 'This word seems to answer to Saul. The lion is *king* of the forest, *fierce* and *powerful;* so was Saul in his kingdom.' Dr. A. CLARKE.—His rough generosity, caprice, and blind fury, contrasted with his helpless dependence on the wisdom, moderation, and opinion of men of better intellect, and of less 'feeble temper,' show Saul to have had much more of the mere animal than the man. ED.

Verse 3.

This.] 'What Cush and others falsely lay to my charge, as if I had designed the crown, or Saul's death.' POOLE.

Verse 4.

Yea, I have delivered, &c.] 'The original for *delivered*, is ambiguous, often rendered *to take, lead,* or *snatch, out,* and so deliver; but it primarily signifies *to take off, to despoil.* Thus the sense is perspicuous; and in this notion of despoiling an enemy, it seems to refer to David's so dealing with Saul, as he did to his skirt in the cave, and his spear in the camp.' HAMMOND.

Verses 6, 7.

David was assured that the Lord intended to cut off Saul. (1 *Sam.* 15:26—29. 24:8—15. 25:23—31. 26:8—12.) This was 'the judgment He had commanded,' and for which David prayed, not only on his own account, but for the sake of the people. Saul's tyranny, and neglect of his duty as king of Israel, had crushed and scattered the Israelites: and his persecution and impiety had driven them from the ordinances and worship of God, and seduced them into many crimes. (*M. R.*—75:2—10. 141:6—10. *Jer.* 12:1—4.) SCOTT.

(7.) 'Some think, David here mainly refers to the effect of the full vindication of his character on the minds of the people; but it appears far more probable, that he spake of the grateful feelings with which they would compass God's altar, when his worship should be established by David in Zion. He beseeches Jehovah, for the sake of his people, to "return on high;" i. e. either to assume a posture of kingly majesty in order to humble the pride of Saul, or to hasten the time when He should return to the throne of his sanctuary in Jerusalem, when the interests of religion would be effectually revived, when the righteousness of his case would be fully vindicated. *Horsley's* idea is not very probable, though it is ingenious, "that God would bring on the last age, that He would bring the Gentiles to the knowledge of Himself, and reassume the immediate government of all nations, which He had so visibly exercised in the first ages, before the heathen were cut off for their idolatry.' MORISON.

Verses 8—11.

(17:1—3.) David referred to God the cause between him and his persecutors, desiring to be judged, *in this respect,* according to his righteousness and integrity, which were known to God. (26:1. 2 *Sam.* 22:21—28.)—'How few among Christians seriously and deliberately consider, whether the sentence of that day' (the day of judgment) 'is likely to be in their favor! yet how many, with the utmost composure and self-complacency, repeat continually the words of this Ps. as well as those in the *Te Deum,* "We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge!"' *Bp. Horne.* SCOTT.

(8.) 'The confident assertion of his own righteousness and integrity, can belong to no character but Jesus Christ Himself.' HORSLEY.

10 * My defence *is* of God, [h] which saveth the upright in heart.

11 † God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry *with the wicked* every day.

12 If [i] he turn not, [k] he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.

13 He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; [l] he ordaineth his arrows against the [m] persecutors.

14 Behold, [n] he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.

15 He ‡ made a pit, and digged it, [o] and is fallen into the ditch *which* he made.

16 [p] His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealings shall come down upon his own pate.

17 I will praise the LORD [q] according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD [r] most high.

He prays, in general, for the conversion of sinners, and the establishment of saints, *v.* 9. two things every one of us must desire, and may hope for.

As far as we have the testimony of an unbiassed conscience for us, that in any instance we are wronged and injuriously reflected on, we may, in singing these vs. lodge our appeal with the righteous God, and be assured that He will own our righteous cause, and in the last day, at furthest, bring forth our integrity as the light.

V. 10—17. David, having lodged his appeal with God, in the former part of the Ps. now, as it were, takes out judgment on the appeal, by assurance from the Word of God, of the happiness and safety of the righteous, and the certain destruction of the wicked that continue impenitent. Two things David builds this confidence upon. 1. The particular favor God has for all that are sincere; *He saves the upright in heart.* 2. The general respect He has for justice and equity; *God judgeth the righteous;* He owns every righteous cause, and will maintain it in every righteous man, and will protect him. *God is a righteous Judge,* so some read it, who not only doeth righteousness Himself, but will take care that righteousness be done by men, and will punish all unrighteousness. 3. He reads the doom of the wicked here, for their good, if possible; or, however, that he might not be afraid of them. He goes into the sanctuary of God, and there understands, That they are children of wrath, therefore not to be envied; if suffered to prosper, it is in wrath; if they pray, their very prayers are an abomination. The wrath of God abides on them, John 3: 36. and continual additions are made to it. All the children of wrath, too, are sons of perdition, marked out for ruin. See their destruction:

(1.) God will destroy them; the destruction they are reserved for is, *destruction from the Almighty,* which ought to be a terror to every one of us, for it comes from the *wrath of God, v.* 13, 14. It is here intimated, that the destruction of sinners may be prevented by their conversion; or that, if it be not thus prevented, it will be prepared for them by the justice of God. And if God will slay, He will not want instruments of death; here is a variety of instruments, a sword which wounds and kills at hand, a bow and arrows which wound and kill at a distance. These instruments of death are all said to be *made ready;* God has them always at hand; *judgments are prepared for scorners; Tophet is prepared of old.* Yet, He gives sinners timely warning, and space to repent and prevent their ruin. He is slow to punish, and *long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish.* But the longer the destruction is delayed, the sorer will it be, and the heavier will it fall, and lie for ever, if the delay be not improved by repentance; while God is waiting, the sword is in the whetting, and the bow in the drawing. The destruction of impenitent sinners, though it come slowly, yet comes surely; for it is *ordained,* they are of old ordained to it. Persecutors especially are set up as the fairest marks of divine wrath

(2.) They will *destroy themselves, v.* 14—16. The sinner is here described as taking great pains to ruin himself, *v.* 14—16. He contrives, plots, and is in pain to be delivered of, malicious projects against the people of God. But in this he cheats himself, for he cannot compass what he intended; nor, if he gain his point, will he gain the satisfaction he promised himself; he brings forth *wind,* Isa. 26: 18. *stubble,* Isa. 23: 11. *death,* James 1: 15. i. e. *falsehood.* His are as the pains of a laboring man, that works hard to dig a pit, and then falls into it, and perishes in it. This is true, in a sense, of all sinners; they prepare destruction for themselves, by preparing themselves for destruction; loading themselves with guilt, and submitting themselves to their corruptions. It is often remarkably true of those who contrive mischief against the people of God, or against their neighbors; for, by the righteous hand of God, what they designed for the shame and destruction of others, proves to be their own confusion. *There is no juster law than, That the* author of a *murderous contrivance should perish by it.* Some apply it to Saul, who fell on his sword.

In singing this Ps. we must do as David here does, *v.* 17. *praise the Lord according to his righteousness;* give Him the glory of that gracious pro-

* Heb. *My buckler is upon God.* 3:3. 18:1,2. 31:11. Gen. 15:1.
[h] 112:2. 125:4. Job 8:6. Prov. 2:21. 11:20. 28:18.
† Or, *God is a righteous Judge.* 8. 94:15. 140:12,13.
[i] 85:4. Is. 55:6,7. Jer. 31:18,19. Ez. 18:30. 33:11. Acts 3:19.
[k] Deut. 32:41. Is. 27:1. 34:5. Ez. 21:9—11,23.
[l] 11:2. 45:5. 64:3,7. 144:6. Deut. 32: 23,42. Job 6:4. Lam. 3:12,13. Hab. 3:11,13.
[m] 2 Thes. 1:6. Rev. 6:10. 16:6.
[n] Job 15:20,35. Is. 33:11. 59:4,5. Jam. 1:15.
‡ Heb. *hath digged.* 35:7. 119:85. Job 6:27. Jer. 18:20.
[o] 9:15,16. 10:2. 35:8. 94:13. 140:9, 10. 141:10. Esth. 7:10. Job 4:8. Prov. 5:22. 26:27. Ec. 10:8,9.
[p] 38:4,12. 37:12,13. 1 Sam. 23:9. 24: 12,13. 26:10. 28:19. 31:3,4. 1 K. 2:32. Esth. 9:25. Matt. 27:3—5.
[q] 35:28. 51:14. 71:15,16. 98:2. 111: 3. 145:7.
[r] 9:2. 92:1,8. Dan. 4:17,25,34. Acts 7:48.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The servants of God must expect the persecution of the tongue, as a preparation for further injuries; and to the ingenuous mind it often appears very formidable. But no slanderers or persecuting tyrants can do real harm to those who trust in God. 'Happy he who can reflect, that he has been a benefactor to his persecutors!' *Bp. Horne.*—While we patiently bear the injuries to which we are exposed, we should be much affected and grieved, when we behold 'one sinner destroying much good:' and we ought to pray, that the Lord would convert or destroy all those, who scatter and oppress his people; and effectually interpose to encourage their faith and obedience, and to stop the growth of impiety and infidelity.—The Lord is every day provoked by the wicked; and while He waits to receive the submissions, and pardon the sins, of those who repent and turn to Him, He is preparing to execute judgment on all the impenitent. Under all our trials let us look unto the Savior. He alone was perfect in righteousness; yet none was ever reviled, slandered, and hated as He was. He lived and died, doing good to his enemies, and praying for them: but after his exaltation, the welfare of his church [of the universe] required that judgment should be executed on such as continued impenitent. The Jews first felt the weight of his indignation, and at the same time great multitudes of Gentile converts compassed Him about. Wherever anti-christian corrupters or persecutors have been from time to time destroyed, the church has been replenished with numerous real converts to the faith; and when these enemies of the truth shall finally come to an end, the whole earth will be filled with truth and righteousness. SCOTT

(11.) With the wicked.] 'A supplement, which, though it may seem bold, is yet necessary, and easily fetched out of the next following vs.' POOLE.—'The meaning of this v. has been much controverted, and is not easily determined. The words in italics are not in the original. *Ainsworth* tr. "God is a just judge, and God angrily threateneth every day." Correspondent is the reading of *Coverdale's* Bible, and *King Edward's,* of 1549. Others, apparently with much color of argument, adopt a different view. *Horsley* reads it, "God is a righteous Judge, although He is not angry every day." *Vulg.* "God is a righteous Judge, strong and patient: will He be angry every day?" *Sept.* "God is a righteous Judge, strong and long-suffering; not bringing forth his anger every day." The *Syr.* "God is the Judge of the righteous; He is not angry *every day.*" The text at large, as is intimated by the *Vulg.* the *Sept.* and some other ancient versions, conveys a strong intimation of the long-suffering of God, whose hatred of sin is unchangeable, but whose anger against transgressors is marked by infinite patience, and does not burst forth in vengeance every day.' MORISON.—'Considering the entire design of this and the following vs. this [the sense given by the *Sept.* the *Vulg.* and the *Syr.* as above] may well pass for a perspicuous paraphrase, and not any contradiction to the rational, though it agree not to the literal notion of it.' HAMMOND.—'Not a few render it, "God is a just Judge, a God indignant, *exercising severity,* every day." 'The *Chal.* "God is just, but is moved with anger towards the wicked every day," i. e. He is always angry with the wicked.'—'The words "*strong* and *long-suffering,*" which occur in the *Sept.* from which they are retained also in the *Vulg.* Drusius justly observes, are a mere *gloss.*' ROSENM. The Genevan vers. has, in the 2nd. clause, 'and him that contemneth God.' ED.

Verses 12, 13. (*Note,* 6, 7.) SCOTT.

Verses 14—16.

'When an evil thought is instilled into the heart of a man, the seed of the wicked one is sown; by . . . . cherishing the diabolical suggestion, "he conceiveth" a purpose of "mischief;" when that purpose is gradually formed and matured for the birth, he "travaileth with iniquity;" at length, by carrying it into action, he "bringeth forth falsehood."' *Bp. Horne.* (*Jam.* 1:13—15.) Saul was killed by the Philistines, whom he wanted to employ in cutting off David; (1 *Sam.* 18:17—27. 31:2—6.) and the Jews, who excited the Romans to crucify Christ, were awfully destroyed by the Romans, and numbers of them crucified. (*Matt.* 27:24, 25.) ID.

Verse 17.

Most high.] 23:18. *Is.* 57:15. *Dan.* 4:17—34. 5:18—21. ID.

PSALM VIII.

The glory of God is displayed in the works of creation, 1—3; and in his condescending love to man, 4—9.

To the chief Musician upon [a] Gittith, A Psalm of David.

O LORD [b] our Lord, [c] how excellent *is* thy name in all the earth! who hast set [d] thy glory above the heavens.

2 [e] Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou * ordained [f] strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest [g] still [h] the enemy and the avenger.

3 When [i] I consider thy heavens, [k] the work of thy fingers, [l] the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained:

4 [m] What is man that thou art mindful of him?

a 81: 84: *titles.*
b 9. 63:1. 145:1. Is. 26:13. Matt. 22:45. John 20:28. Phil. 2:11. 3:8. Rev. 19:16.
c 72:17—19. 113:2—4. 148:13. Ex. 15:11. 34:5—7. Deut. 28:58. Cant. 5:16.
d 36:5. 57:10,11. 68:4. 103:4,5. 1 K. 8:27. Hab. 3:3. Eph. 4:10. Phil. 2: 9,10. Heb. 7:26.
e Matt. 11:25. 21:16. Luke 10:21. 1 Cor. 1:27.
* Heb. *founded.*
f 81:5—7. Is. 40:31. Am. 5:9. 2 Cor. 12:9,10.
g 4:4. 46:10. Ex. 11:7. 15:16. Josh. 2:9—11. 1 Sam. 2:9. Is. 37:20—29, 36—38. Hab. 2:20.
h 44:16.
i 19:1. 111:2. Job 22:12. 36:24. Rom. 1:20.
k 33:6. Gen. 1:1. Ex. 8:19. 31:18. Luke 11:20.
l 104:19. 136:7—9. 148:3. Gen. 1:16—18. Deut. 4:19. Job 25:3,5.
m 144:3. 2 Chr. 6:18. Job 7:17. 25:6. Is. 40:17. Heb. 2:6,7.

tection under which He takes his afflicted people, and of that just vengeance with which He will pursue those who afflict them.

Ps. VIII. This Ps. is a solemn meditation on, and adoration of, the glory and greatness of God, of which we are all concerned to think highly and honorably. It begins and ends with the same acknowledgment of the transcendent excellency of God's name. It is proposed for proof, *v.* 1. *That God's name is excellent in all the earth!* And then it is repeated, as proved, in the last v. For the proof of God's glory, he gives instances of his goodness to man; for God's goodness is his glory. When observing the glory of God in the kingdom of nature and providence, we should be led by that, and through that, to the contemplation of his glory in the kingdom of grace.

V. 1—2. *Hammond* grounds a conjecture on the title of this Ps. concerning the occasion of penning it. *Gittith*, he renders *Gittite*, i. e. *Goliah the Gittite*, whom David vanquished and slew, 1 Sam. 17: The conjecture would be probable enough, but that we find two other Pss. with the same title, 81 and 84.

I. How plainly God displays his glory Himself, *v.* 1. David addresses himself to God with all humility and reverence, as the Lord, and his people's Lord; *O Lord, our Lord.* If we believe that God is the Lord, we must avouch and acknowledge Him to be ours: and we shall never think we can praise Him with affection enough, if we consider,

1. How bright God's glory shines even in this lower world; *How excellent is his name in all the earth!* The works of creation and providence evince and proclaim to all the world, that there is an infinite Being, the Fountain of all being, power, and perfection, the sovereign Ruler, powerful Protector, and bountiful Benefactor, of all the creatures, Rom. 1: 20. But this looks farther, to the Gospel of Christ, by which the name of God, as notified by divine revelation, which, before, was great in *Israel* only, came to be so in all the earth, the utmost ends of which have thus been made to *see God's great salvation*, Mark 16: 15, 16.

2. How much brighter it shines in the upper world; *Thou hast set thy glory above the heavens.* God is infinitely more glorious and excellent than the noblest and brightest of creatures. We on earth only hear his excellent name, and praise that, the angels and blessed spirits above see his glory, and praise that, yet He is exalted far above even their blessing and praise. In the exaltation of the Lord Jesus to the right hand of God, who is the Brightness of his Father's glory, and the express Image of his person, God set his glory above the heavens, far above all principalities and powers.

II. How powerfully He discovers it by the weakest of his creatures, *v.* 2. 1. In the kingdom of nature, the care God takes of little children, ought to be acknowledged by every one of us, to the glory of God, as a great instance of his power and goodness; and the more sensibly, because we have all had the benefit of it, for to this we owe it, that we *died not from the womb*, that the knees then prevented us, *and the breasts.* 2. In the kingdom of providence, God uses men to promote his glory, some that know Him, and others that do not, Isa. 45: 4. nay, sometimes He is pleased to serve his own purposes by the ministry of such as are still, in wisdom and strength, little better than babes and sucklings. 3. In the kingdom of grace, the kingdom of the Messiah; the apostles were looked upon but as babes, Acts 4: 13. mean and despicable, yet *by the foolishness of their preaching*, the devil's kingdom was to be overthrown. The Gospel is called *the arm of the Lord*, and *the rod of his strength;* but it was ordained to work wonders, not out of the mouth of philosophers or orators, politicians or statesmen, but of a company of poor fishermen, who lay under the greatest external disadvantages; yea, we hear children crying, *Hosanna to the Son of David*, when the chief priests and Pharisees owned Him not, but despised and rejected Him; to that therefore our Savior applies this, Matt. 21: 16. and by it stilled the enemy. Sometimes the grace of God appears wonderfully in young children, and He *teaches* them *knowledge, and makes* them *to understand doctrine, who are* but *newly weaned*, Isa. 28: 9. Sometimes the power of God brings to pass great things in his church by very weak and unlikely instruments; 1 Cor. 1: 27, 28. This He does, because of his enemies, that He may silence them, and put them to shame, and so be justly avenged on the avengers; see Acts 4: 14.—6: 10. The devil is the great enemy and avenger, and by the preaching of the gospel he was, in a great measure, stilled, his oracles silenced, the advocates of his cause confounded, and unclean spirits themselves not suffered to speak.

In singing this, let us give God the glory of his great name, and of the great things He has done by the power of his Gospel, in the chariot of which the exalted Redeemer rides forth, conquering and to conquer, and ought to be attended, not only with our praises and good wishes, [but with our best

NOTES.

Ps. VIII. *Title.* 'Gittith' perhaps is the name of some tune, which David had learned when in Gath, or from the Gittites, and to which this and two other Pss. were set. (*M. R.*) SCOTT. *Gittith.*] 'In Jer. 13: 15. the word, slightly varied, is rendered *wine-press.* So the *Sept.* the *Vulg.* and the Ethiopic. It is very probable, this and the other Pss. which bear this title, (81 and 84) were composed about the time of the feast of the tabernacles, when, having completed their vintage, the Jews were accustomed, with every demonstration of joy, to cast their grapes into the wine-press, and thus mature for use the abundance of the year. Thus explained, the title may contain a twofold allusion, the one retrospective to the creation, the time of which the vintage is supposed to be the anniversary; and the other prophetic, looking towards Him who "trod the wine-press" of his Father's wrath "alone, when of the people there was none with Him." To this latter opinion agree most of the ancient Christian writers, and it certainly is not without support in the analogies of Scripture, and in the distinct references of the Ps. itself.' MORISON.—*Rosenm.* quotes *Rudinger* as saying, that 'this Ps. in itself contains nothing of prophecy, or concerning Christ, or his kingdom.'—Dr. *J. P. Smith*, though not 'fully convinced' of the application of the whole psalm as a 'direct prophecy' of Christ, yet says of it, 'as cited in the Epistle to the Hebrews,' that 'it conveys,' as appears to him, 'this sentiment: that the honors here declared to have been conferred on the human race by the Creator, had never, either generally or in a single instance, been actually verified, till the man Christ Jesus was exalted above all principality and authority, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet.'—*Poole* thinks the application of the Ps. may be allowed both to man in general and to the man Christ Jesus in particular, inasmuch as 'the scope of it seems plainly to be, to display and celebrate the great love and kindness of God towards mankind, not only in creation, but especially in his redemption by Jesus Christ.' 'So Christ,' he says, 'is the principal subject of the Ps.' ED.

Verse 1.

O LORD, our Governor.' *Prayer-Book version.* SCOTT.

Verse 2.

The new born infant is such a display of God's power, skill, and goodness, as unanswerably confutes the cavils of atheism.—The *Sept.* render the clause, here translated, 'ordained strength,' '*perfected praise*;' and the Evangelist, recording our Lord's words, gives them according to that version. (*Note, Matt.* 21: 14—16.) SCOTT. 'The import of these words is plainly, that the praises of the Messiah, celebrated in the church by his children, have in them a strength and power which nothing can withstand: they can abash infidelity, when at its greatest height, and strike hell itself dumb.' Bp. HORNE. Dr. *A. Clarke*, considers that, literally, the manner in which the *mouths* of new-born infants produce, by instinct, a vacuum, so that the external air presses into them the milk, is an argument of God's being, providence and goodness, sufficient to confound every infidel and atheist in the universe. ED.

Verse 3.

The Psalmist, instead of being tempted to worship the heavenly host, contemplated the magnificent scene, and the immensity of the creation, till he was filled with adoring admiration of the Creator's incomprehensible majesty, which naturally suggested the subsequent reflections. (148:3. *Deut.* 4:19. *Job* 31:24—28.) SCOTT.

Verses 3, 4.

'A very natural and sublime interpretation of these words might remain, were even their prophetic sense entirely excluded; but they may, and doubtless ought to be understood with reference to the wondrous union of afflicted and prostrated human nature to the Deity, in the glorious person of Immanuel, God with us. If any difficulty arises in considering this v. (4.) as uttered by the adorable Messiah, let it be remembered that He assumed human nature entirely for our sakes, and that it did not cease to be *our* nature, even when He wore it, and spoke the language peculiar to it.' MORISON. When he fully uses his powers to observe the works of God, it must and should be the chief source of happiness to a human being, that, in the overpowering immensity of God's universe, an atom, apparently so utterly insignificant as himself, should have an Almighty Being, to be accountable to, who, in his omniscient goodness, will *take account* of him. See for short views of the reciprocal relations between man and God's universe, *Turner's* Sacred Hist. *G. Combe's* Constitution of Man, (ed. 1836.) *A. Combe's* Princip. of Physiology, and *Wayland's* Elts. Mor. Science. ED.

Verses 4—9.

Adam, even when created in the image of God, was *infinitely* beneath his Maker; and it was an unspeakable favor for him to be placed

and [n] the son of man, that thou [o] visitest him?

5 For [p] thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and [q] hast crowned him with glory and honor.

6 Thou [r] madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast [s] put all *things* under his feet:

7 [t] All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field:

8 [u] The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, *and whatsoever* passeth through the paths of the seas.

9 O [v] LORD our Lord, [w] how excellent *is* thy name in all the earth!

PSALM IX.

David praises God for punishing his enemies, and maintaining his cause, 1—6. He shows that God will preserve his servants, and calls on them to praise his name, 7—12. He prays for deliverance from present trials, that he may still praise the Lord; and predicts the ruin of the wicked, 13—20.

To the chief Musician upon Muth-labben, A Psalm of David.

[a] I WILL praise *thee*, O LORD, [b] with my whole heart; [c] I will show forth all thy marvellous works.

2 [d] I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will

n 4:2. 80:17. 146:3. Is. 51:12. Ez. 8:15. Matt. 3:20.
o 106:4. Gen. 21:1. Ex. 4:31. Luke 1:68. 19:44. 1 Pet. 2:12.
p 103:20. Gen. 1:26,27. 2:7. 2 Sam. 14:20. Job 4:18—20. Phil. 2:7,8. Heb. 2:7,9,16.
q 21:3—5. 45:1—3,6. John 13:31,32. Eph. 1:21. Phil. 2:9—11. Heb. 2:9. 1 et 1:20,21.
r Gen. 1:26,28. 9:2. Matt. 28:18. Heb. 1:2.
s 110:1. 1 Cor. 15:24—27. Eph. 1:22. Heb. 2:8. 1 Pet. 3:22.
t Heb. *Flocks and ozen, all of them.* Gen. 2:20.
u 148:10. Gen. 1:20—25. Job 38:39—41. 39:1,&c. 40:15—24. 41:1,&c.
v 1. 104:24. Deut. 33:26. Job 11:7.
w 7:17 34:1—4. 103:1,2. 145:1—3. 146:1,2. 1 Chr. 29:10—13. Is. 12:1. Heb. 13:15. Rev. 5:9—14.
b 86:12. 111:1. 138:1. Luke 10:27.
c 14. 51:15. 106:2. 1 Chr. 16:12,24. Is. 43:21. 60:6. Rev. 15:3.
d 5:11. 27:6. 28:7. 43:4. 92:4. 97: 12. Hab. 3:17,18. Phil. 4:4.

efforts.] Praise is perfected, God is in the highest degree glorified, when strength is ordained out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, [early taught to lisp his praise.]

V. 3—9. David here goes on to magnify the honor of God, by recounting the honors He has put upon man, especially the man Christ Jesus. See here,

I. How the psalmist's consideration of the lustre and influence of the heavenly bodies, leads him to admire the condescending favor of God to man, *v.* 3. But why not notice the sun? Probably because it was in the night he entertained and instructed himself with this meditation, when only the moon and the stars were to be seen; which, though they are not so serviceable to man as the sun, yet are no less demonstrations of the wisdom, power, and goodness, of the Creator. Observe, It is our duty to consider the heavens. The beasts look downward to the earth, but man is made erect to look upward toward heaven; that thus he may be directed to set his affections on things above; for what we see has not its due influence upon us, unless we consider it. The heavens are, in a peculiar manner, God's heavens, 115: 16. they are the place of the residence of his glory, and we are taught to call Him *Our Father in heaven.* They are *therefore* his, because the work of his fingers; He made them easily, with a word, with very great curiosity and fineness, like a nice piece of work which the artist makes with his fingers. God ordained them; and the ordinances of heaven can never be altered. When we consider how the glory of God shines in the upper world, we may well wonder He should take cognizance of such a mean creature as man, and humble Himself to behold the things done on this earth, see 113: 5, 6. '*Lord, what is man,* that his comfort and convenience should be so much consulted in the making of the lights of heaven, and directing their motions!'

II. How he expresses this admiration, *v.* 4. '*Lord, what is man! Enosh,* sinful, weak, miserable man, a creature so forgetful of Thee, and his duty to Thee! that Thou takest cognizance of him, of his actions and affairs; that, in the making of the world, Thou hadst a respect to him! [Note, below.] What is the *son of man, that thou visitest him;* not only feedest, clothest, protectest, but visitest him, art pleased to converse with him, and concern Thyself for him! What *is* man, so mean a creature, that he should be thus honored, so sinful a creature, that he should be thus countenanced and favored!' Now this refers,

1. To mankind in general. Though man is a worm, and the son of man is a worm, Job 25: 6. yet God respects him, and shows him abundance of kindness. (1.) Man is, above all the creatures in this lower world, the favorite and darling of Providence; very honorable in rank, but a *little lower than the angels, v.* 5. lower indeed, because allied to the earth, yet but *a little lower than they,* as next in order to them; and but for a little while lower; the children of the resurrection shall be *angels' peers,* Luke 20: 36. and no longer lower than they. (2.) He is endued with noble faculties and capacities; *Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor;* He that gave him his being, having *made him wiser than the beasts of the earth, and the fowls of heaven,* made him fit to rule them, and it is fit they should be ruled by him. Man's reason is his crown of glory; let him not profane that crown by disturbing the use of it, nor forfeit it by acting contrary to its dictates. (3.) He is invested with a sovereign dominion over the inferior creatures, under God, and is constituted their lord, *v.* 6. His charter, by which he holds this royalty, bears equal date with his creation, Gen. 1: 28. and was renewed after the flood, Gen. 9: 2. God has put all things under man's feet, that he might serve himself, not only of the labor, but of the productions and lives, of the inferior creatures. He specifies some of the inferior animals, *v* 7, 8. Jam. 3: 7. *Every kind of beasts, and birds, and things in the sea, is tamed, and has been tamed,* man has likewise liberty to use them as he has occasion; *Rise, Peter, kill and eat,* Acts 10: 13. Every time we partake of fish or of fowl, we realize this dominion which man has over the works of God's hands; and it is a reason for our subjection to God, our chief Lord, and to his dominion over us.

2. But this refers, in a particular manner, to Jesus Christ; of Him we are taught to expound it, Heb. 2: 6—8. And it is certain the greatest favor ever bestowed on man, and the greatest honor ever put on the human nature, were exemplified in the incarnation and exaltation of the Lord Jesus. Some apply *visitest,* to Christ's sufferings for us, for it is said, Heb. 2: 9. *For the suffering of death,* a visitation in wrath, *He was crowned with glory and honor.* God visited Him with a rod and with stripes, that we by them might be healed. He was, *for a little while,* so the apostle interprets it, made lower than the angels, when He took on Him the form of a servant, and made Himself of no reputation. In this nature, God the Father exalted Him, because He had humbled Himself; *crowned Him with glory and honor,* the glory He had with Him before the worlds were; set Him at his own right hand; constituted Him not only the *Head of the church,* but *Head over all things to the church.* All the creatures are put under his feet; and, even in the days of his flesh, He gave some specimens of his power over them, as when He commanded the winds and the seas, and appointed a fish to pay his tribute.

With good reason, therefore, does the psalmist conclude as he began, *Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth,* which has been honored with the presence of the Redeemer, and is still enlightened by his gospel, and governed by his wisdom and power! In singing this, and praying it over, though we must not forget to acknowledge, with suitable affections, God's common favors to mankind, particularly in the serviceableness of his creatures to us, yet we must especially set ourselves to give glory to our Lord Jesus, by confessing that He is Lord, submitting to Him as our Lord, and waiting till we see all things put under Him.

Ps. IX. V. 1—10. The title gives a very uncertain sound concerning the occasion of this Ps. *Muth-labben,* some refer to the death of Goliath, others of Nabal, others of Absalom; I think

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

No words can express the glorious excellency of JEHOVAH, our Ruler and Lord; nor can Cherubim or Seraphim reach his worthiness by their most exalted adorations: yet every creature speaks the Creator's praise to the mind of the devout believer; whose pious contemplations render his solitary walks unspeakably pleasant and profitable.—But in the person of Emmanuel, every other instance of divine condescension is eclipsed, and our most exalted previous conceptions of the divine love are far exceeded, and the powers of our minds are almost overwhelmed. His love, his humiliation in assuming our nature, his atoning sufferings unto death, his subsequent glory, and his dominion over all creatures, which shall endure till all enemies are put under his feet, can never sufficiently be admired and adored.—Thus our nature, in the second Adam, is infinitely more honored and exalted, than it could have been in the first Adam. Thus also the true dignity of human nature, even the worth of a rational, immortal soul, though ruined by sin, yet capable of recovery and eternal felicity, is clearly shown. SCOTT.

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at the head of this lower world, in a state of honor and dominion. (*Gen.* 1:26,27.) After the fall, it was still more wonderful that his children should be permitted to retain any authority over, or derive any benefit from, the different orders of creatures. SCOTT.

Than the angels. (5) *Elohim* is generally translated *God,* or *gods:* yet the apostle quotes the LXX, who render it *angels;* which shows the latitude with which the term is used. (82:6,7. *John* 10:32—39.) But when the true God is meant, it is, though plural, always joined with the singular verb; and the name JEHOVAH is never given to any but to the true God: and, when applied to Christ, it shows who He is, even 'the true God and eternal Life.' SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. IX. *Title. Muth-labben.*] 'Muth' signifies *death:* and some imagine that 'labben,' *the son,* may denote Goliath. Goliath is called by a name something like this, and which is rendered 'a champion,' (*Ishhabbenaym*) *a man who comes between,* 1 *Sam.* 17:4. If, however, this

sing praise to thy name, [a] O thou most High.

3 When mine enemies are turned back, [f] they shall fall and perish at thy presence.

4 For [g] thou hast * maintained my right and my cause; thou sattest in the throne judging † right.

5 Thou hast [h] rebuked the heathen, [i] thou hast destroyed the wicked, [k] thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.

6 ‡ O [l] thou enemy, [m] destructions are come to a perpetual end: and [n] thou hast destroyed cities; their [o] memorial is perished with them.

7 But [p] the LORD shall endure for ever: [q] he hath prepared his throne for judgment:

8 And [r] he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.

9 [s] The LORD also will be § a Refuge for the oppressed, a Refuge [t] in times of trouble.

10 And they that [u] know thy name will [x] put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, [y] hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

11 [z] Sing praises to the LORD, [a] which dwelleth in Zion: [b] declare among the people his doings.

12 [c] When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: [d] he forgetteth not the cry of the ‖ humble.

it signifies only some tune, or musical instrument, to which this Ps. was intended to be sung; and that the enemies he is here triumphing in the defeat of, are the Philistines, and other neighboring nations that opposed his settlement, 2 Sam. 6: 8. In these verses,

1. David excites and engages himself to praise God for the great things He had of late done for him and his government, *v.* 1, 2. Note, 1. God expects suitable returns of praise from those for whom He has done marvellous works. 2. If we would praise God acceptably, we must praise Him in sincerity, with our whole heart. 3. When we give thanks for some one particular mercy, we should take occasion thence to remember former mercies. 4. Holy joy is the life of thankful praise, as thankful praise is the language of holy joy. 5. Whatever occurs to make us glad, our joy must pass through it, and terminate in God only; *I will be glad and rejoice in Thee*, not in the gift so much as in the Giver. 6. Joy and praise are properly expressed by singing psalms. 7. When God has showed Himself to be above the proud enemies of the church, we must take occasion thence to give glory to Him as the Most High. 8. The triumphs of the Redeemer ought to be the triumphs of the redeemed; see Rev. 12: 10.—19: 5.—15: 3, 4.

2. He acknowledges God's almighty power, *v.* 3. That is easily done, which a man does with his very *presence;* with *that* alone, God confounds his enemies. This was fulfilled, when our Lord Jesus, with one word, *I am He*, made his enemies to *fall back at his presence;* He could, at the same time, have made them perish. When the church's enemies are put to confusion, we must ascribe it to God's presence, give Him all the glory.

3. He gives to God the glory of his righteousness, in appearing on his behalf, *v.* 4. Observe, God sits in the throne of judgment; to Him it belongs to decide controversies, to determine appeals, to right the injured, and to punish the injurious; for He has said, *Vengeance is mine.* If there seem some irregularity in the present decisions of Providence, yet these, instead of shaking our belief of God's justice may serve to strengthen our belief of the judgment to come, which will set all to rights. [Notes, Job 34. 36.] Whoever disown and desert a just and injured cause, we may be sure the righteous God will maintain it, and plead it with jealousy.

4. He records, with joy, the triumphs of the God of heaven over all the powers of hell, and attends those triumphs with his praises, *v.* 5. God had checked them; '*Thou hast rebuked the heathen;*' He had cut them off; '*Thou hast destroyed the wicked.*' He had buried them in oblivion and perpetual infamy; had put out their name for ever, that they should never be remembered with any respect.

5. He exults over the enemy God thus appears against, *v.* 6. *Thou hast destroyed cities.* Either, 'Thou, O enemy,' or, 'Thou, O God.' Either way, the psalmist will have the enemy to know, 1. That their destruction, that of the malicious and vexatious neighbors of Israel, as the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, and Syrians, is just, Isa. 33: 1. 2. That it is total and final, such a destruction as should make a perpetual end of them, so that the very memorial of their cities should perish with them. Such desolations do the righteous judgments of God make, that great and populous cities have been reduced to such ruins, that those who have sought them could not find where they stood.

6. He comforts himself, and others, in God, pleases himself with thoughts,

1. Of his eternity, and unchanging being, felicity, power, and perfection; our enemies may put an end to our liberties, our privileges, our lives, but our God is still the same, (*v.* 7.) unshaken, undisturbed, 29: 10. 93: 2. 2. Of his sovereignty both in government and judgment. 3. Of his justice and righteousness in all the administrations of his government: in both worlds, so that there shall not be the least color of exception against it. 4. Of that peculiar favor God bears to his own people, and the special protection He takes them under, *v.* 9. *He will be a refuge for the oppressed;* perhaps God may not immediately appear for his people as their Deliverer and Avenger; but, in the midst of their distresses, they may by faith fly to Him, and depend on his power and promise, so that no real hurt shall be done them. 5. Of that sweet satisfaction and repose

e 7:17. 56:2,3. 83:18. 97:9. Dan. 5: 18.
f 68:1,2. 76:7. 80:16. Is. 64:3. 2 Thes. 1:9. Rev. 6:12—17. 20:11.
g 16:5. 140:12.
* Heb. *made my judgment.*
† Heb. *in righteousness.* 45:6,7. 47:8. 89:14. 96:13. 98:9. Is. 11:4. 1 Pet. 2:23.
h 2:1,8,9. 78:55. 79:10. 149:7. 1 Sam. 17:43—51. 2 Sam. 5:6,&c. 8:1—15. 10:6—9. 21:15—22. 22:44—46. Rev. 19:15.
i 5:6. 1 Sam. 25:39. 31:4. 2 Sam. 17:23. Mal. 4:3.
k Deut. 9:14. Prov. 10:7. 13:9.
‡ Or, *The destructions of the enemy are come to a perpetual end, and their cities hast thou destroyed, &c.*
l 7:5. 8:2. Ex. 15:6. Mic. 7:8,10.
m 46:9. Ex. 14:13. Is. 10:24,25. 14: 6—8. Nah. 1:9—13. 1 Cor. 15:26,54 —57. Rev. 20:2.
n 1 Sam. 30:1. 31:7. Is. 10:6,7,13,14. 14:17. 37:26. Jer. 51:25.
o Is. 14:22,23. Jer. 51:62—64.
p 90:2. 102:12,24—27. Heb. 1:11,12. 13:8. 2 Pet. 3:8.
q 50:3—5. 103:19. Rev. 20:11.
r 50:6. 94:15. 96:13. 98:9. 99:4. Gen. 18:25. Is. 11:4,5. Acts 17:31. Rom. 2:5,6,16.
s 18:2. 32:7. 46:1. 48:3. 62:8. 91: 1,2. 142:4,5. Deut. 33:27. Prov. 18:10. Is. 4:5,6. 8:14. 32:2. Nah. 1:7. Luke 13:32. Heb. 6:18.
§ Heb. *an high place.* 20:1. 46:7. *Marg.*
t 50:15. 77:1,2. 108:12.
u 91:14. Ex. 34:5—7. 1 Chr. 28:9. John 17:3. 2 Cor. 4:6. 2 Tim. 1:12. 1 John 2:3,4. 5:20.
x 5:11. 57:1. 146:5,6. Is. 26:3,4.
y 105:3,4. Is. 45:19. 46:3,4. 55:6,7. Jer. 29:13. 2 Cor. 1:9,10.
z 33:1—3. 47:6,7. 96:1,2. 148:1—5, 13,14.
a 78:68. 132:13,14. Is. 12:6. 14:32. Heb. 12:22. Rev. 14:1.
b 66:2,5. 96:10. 105:1,2. 107:22. 118: 17. Is. 12:4—6. John 17:26.
c Gen. 9:5. 2 K. 24:4. Is. 26:21. Matt. 23:35. Luke 11:50,51. Rev. 6:9,10. 16:6.
d 10:14,17. 22:24. 34:6. 102:17. Ex. 3:7,9. Luke 18:7,8.
‖ Or, *afflicted.* Judg. 10:16.

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be the meaning, it is very obscurely expressed: and, as Zion was not the place of Israel's assembling for public worship, till David had for some time been king over all Israel, the Ps. must have been composed long after Goliath's death. (11—14.) Others therefore suppose 'Muthlabben' to mean, *the death of his son*, and refer the occasion of the Ps. to the death of Absalom.—The Psalmist might have some reference to the various deliverances of his past life; but he was also led, while praising God for them, to speak, as the type of Christ, concerning *his* conflicts and victories, and those of his church; and to celebrate her triumphs over every heathen and anti-christian persecutor, while he included also the trials and deliverances of every believer. SCOTT. 'We have no idea that any of these Heb. terms refer to hymn tunes. The Hebrews had no musical characters, nor any metrical tunes, like modern psalmody. Their hymns were all chanted.' COTT. BIB. *Morison*, takes Henry's view of the title, and says it is sustained 'by many ancient Jewish authorities.' ED.

Verses 1—3.

The Psalmist determined, on occasion of some recent deliverance, to 'praise JEHOVAH with his whole heart.' (27 :1—3. 2 *Sam.* 22 :37—42.)—This admits of the most obvious application to the works of God for his church, and for every believer; and, no doubt, was intended by the Holy Spirit, to be thus used in our worship and meditations. (*M. R.* e.) SCOTT.

Verses 4—6.

God had pleaded David's righteous cause against the wicked persecution of Saul, and had advanced him to the throne of all Israel, with the destruction of almost the whole family of Saul. He had given his king the victory over the surrounding heathen nations, who perished in great numbers, and had finally lost the reputation of their former successes. So that every enemy which had before destroyed the cities of Israel, was deprived *perpetually* of power to continue these desolations; and most of them soon became so insignificant, that the memorial of them, and of their former greatness, perished with them.—Thus v. 6. must be understood, if we adhere to the translation in the text; but the marg. r. here seems the proper sense.—Thus likewise the renowned monarchies, that successively made havoc on earth, and oppressed Israel, are now destroyed and almost forgotten; the first opposers of Christ and Christianity have shared the same fate; and all these divine interpositions are earnests of the final ruin of all the enemies of the cause of Christ. (*Dan.* 2:38—45.) SCOTT.

(6.) 'In that lofty spirit of prediction which runs through the entire book of Ps. we may conceive David as stretching his prophetic eye over the wide field of the Church's history, and anticipating those extraordinary revolutions by which Nineveh, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome were, each in turn, hurled from their lofty seats, and left the sad monuments of providential vengeance, the awful wrecks of pride, ambition and inveterate idolatry.' MORISON.

Verses 7—12.

The reflection on the transient glory of earthly kingdoms, and illustrious conquerors, led the Psalmist to reflect on the eternity of JEHOVAH, and of his universal kingdom.—It was only as dwelling in Zion, on the mercy-seat, above the ark of the covenant, through the sacrifices and ordinances which typified the promised Savior, that God could be sought by sinful men with acceptance; therefore his people should abound in praising Him, as the God of salvation; and making known his works, that others might learn to seek and serve Him. (*M R. c.—Is.* 26:20,21.) SCOTT.

(12.) '"To make inquisition" is not to inquire after blood spilled, but to sit as inquisitor or judge on all capital crimes, where the blood of the offender is due to justice. "These," refers to the "humble" or afflicted, at the end of the verse.' MUDGE, in *Doyly and Mant.*

13 [c] Have mercy upon me, O LORD; [d] consider my trouble *which I suffer* of them that hate me, [e] thou that liftest me up from the gates of death:

14 That [h] I may show forth all thy praise [i] in the gates of [k] the daughter of Zion: [l] I will rejoice in thy salvation.

15 [m] The heathen are sunk down in the pit *that* they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.

16 The LORD is [n] known *by* the judgment *which* he executeth. [o] the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. * Higgaion. Selah.

17 [p] The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that [q] forget God.

18 For [r] the needy shall not alway be forgotten: [s] the expectation of the poor shall *not* perish for ever.

19 [t] Arise, O LORD; [u] let not man prevail: [x] let the heathen be judged in thy sight.

20 [y] Put them in fear, O LORD; *that* the nations [z] may know themselves *to be but* men. Selah.

of mind they have, that make God their Refuge, *v.* **10.** The grace of God is the same in all the saints, and his favor the same towards all. Note, The better God is known, the more He is trusted. Those who know Him to be the Father of spirits, and an everlasting Father, will trust him with their souls, at all times, even to the end. The more God is trusted, the more He is sought unto: and the more constant will be our care, to approve ourselves to Him in our whole conversation. God never did, nor will, disown or desert any that duly seek to, and trust in Him.

V. 11—20. In these verses,

1. David, having praised God himself, calls on and invites others to praise Him likewise, *v.* **11.** In all our praises, we should have an eye to God as dwelling in Zion, in a special manner present in the assemblies of his people, as their Protector and Patron. David would have us notice here the justice of God in avenging the blood of his people Israel on the Philistines, and their other wicked neighbors, who had, in making war on them, used them barbarously, and given them no quarter, *v.* **12.** Deut. 32: 43. *He will avenge the blood of his servants.* Note, There is a day coming, when God will make inquisition for blood, when He will discover what has been shed secretly, and avenge what has been shed unjustly; see Isa. 26: 21. Jer. 51: 35. In that day, it will appear how precious the blood of God's people is to Him, 72: 14. when it must all be accounted for.

2. David, having praised God for former mercies and deliverances, earnestly prays God still to appear for him, (*v.* **13, 14.**) in which, he is not particular, lest he should seem to prescribe to God; but modestly refers himself to the wisdom and will of God. 'Lord, save me; not that I may have the comfort and credit of it, but that thou mayest have the glory, *that I may show forth all thy praise*, and that publicly, *in the gates of the daughter of Zion.*'

3. By faith he foresees and foretells the certain ruin of all wicked people, both in this world and in that to come. In these and all judgments, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. The psalmist, therefore, adds here a note extraordinary, commanding special regard, *Higgaion;* it is a thing to be carefully observed and meditated upon. What we see of present judgments, is a what we believe of the judgment to come, ought to be the subject of our frequent and serious meditations. Note, Forgetfulness of God is the cause of all the wickedness of the wicked. There are *nations* that forget God, many great and many mighty nations. Temporal ruin, and hell at the last, will be the portion of such, a state of everlasting misery and torment; *Sheol*, a pit of destruction, in which they and all their comforts will be for ever lost and buried.

4. David encourages the people of God to wait for his salvation, though it should be long deferred, *v.* **18.** We may build on it as undoubtedly true, that God's people, God's elect, shall not always

c 51:1. 119:132.
d 13:3. 25:19. 119:153. 142:6. Neh. 9:32. Lam. 1:9,11.
e 30:3. 56:13. 86:13. 107:18. 116: 3,4. Is. 38:10. Jon. 2:6.
h 51:15. 79:13. 105:2. 138:1.
i 22:22,25. 35:18. 42:4. 109:30,31. 116: 18,19 118:19,20. 149:1,2.
k Is. 37:22. 62:11. Mic. 4:13. Matt. 21:5.
l 13:5. 20:5. 21:1. 35:9 51:12. 1 Sam. 2:1. Is. 12:3. Hab. 3:18. Luke 1:47.
m 7:15,16. 35:8. 37:15. 57:6. 94:23. Prov. 5:22. 22:8. 26:27.
n 48:11. 58:10,11. 83:17,18. Ex. 7:5. 14:4,31. Deut. 29:22—28. Josh. 2:10, 11. Judg. 1:7. 1 Sam. 6:19,20. 17: 46. 2 K. 19:19,34,35.
o 11:6. 140:9. Prov. 6:2. 12:13. Is. 8:15. 28:13.
* That is, *Meditation.* 5:1. 19:14. 92: 3. *marg.*
p Prov. 14:32. Is. 3:11. 5:14. Matt. 25:41—46. Rom. 2:8,9. 2 Thes. 1: 7—9. Rev. 20:15. 21:8.
q 44:17,20. 50:22. 106:13,21. Job 8: 13. Jer. 2:32. 3:21. 13:25. 18:15. 23:27. Hos. 2:13.
r 12. 12:5. 72:4,12—14. 102:17,20. 109:31. Luke 1:53. 6:20. Jam. 2:5.
s Prov. 23:18. 24:14. Phil. 1:20.
t 3:7. 7:6. 10:12. 44:23,26. 68:1,2. 74:22,23. 76:8,9. 80:2. Is. 42:13,14. 51:9. Zeph. 3:8.
u Gen. 32:28. 1 Sam. 2:9. 2 Chr. 14: 11. Is. 42:13.
x 2:1—3. 79:6. 149:7. Jer. 10:25. Joel 3:12. Mic. 5:15. Zech. 14:18. Rev. 19:15.
y 76:12. 83:15. Ex. 15:16. 23:27. Deut. 2:25. Jer. 32:40. Ez. 30:13.
z 82:6,7. Is. 31:3. Ez. 28:2,9. Acts 12:22,23.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

All our mercies should be acknowledged before God, in fervent praises; for the whole glory of every success or deliverance belongs to Him.—He who advanced David, and maintained his righteous cause; who exalted the Savior 'to his own right hand in heavenly places,' will help the Christian also in all his conflicts and temptations, and support and comfort him in all his troubles, till he is finally delivered from the body of sin; and till 'Satan is bruised under his feet,' and death itself is 'swallowed up in victory.'—The eternal God has already prepared his throne for judgment: He will certainly execute judgment in righteousness and in faithfulness; and then every iniquitous sentence will be reversed, and every oppressor punished.—The Lord never did, and never will, forsake or reject any, who seek his favor according to his Word. He is 'in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself;' He may be found on a mercy-seat: let saints then sing praises to Him, and call on sinners to come and trust in Him. —Satan, who hates us, will stir up opposition, and excite our depravity by his suggestions: but the Lord, who has lifted us up from the gates of death and hell, considers all our conflicts and temptations, and will give us merciful deliverances.—Often it has seemed, as if man would prevail against the cause of God; but the church has prayed, her Advocate has pleaded, and the arm of the Lord has been extended; some of her enemies have been judged and have perished; many have been intimidated, and others humbled in cordial submission; so that the cause of God yet maintains its ground. Still we have abundant reason to unite in the prayer, 'Arise, O Lord, let not Satan or man prevail to confine thy church within such narrow limits, to corrupt it by so many heresies and scandals, or to distract it with so many divisions and disputes. put those in fear and to shame, who arrogate more to themselves, than can belong to fallible, sinful, mortal man; humble and convert every opposer, and destroy every system of superstition and delusion; that all may gladly welcome the Savior, and become his willing subjects. Higgaion. Selah. Amen.' SCOTT.

Verses 13. 14.

David, after all his triumphs, still had enemies, conflicts, and trials: the church, though victorious over all former opposers, is still 'militant here on earth:' and the believer, though rescued from 'the gates of death' and hell, and enabled to bless God for many deliverances, must still encounter troubles and temptations, and mingle prayers with his thanksgivings. The expression, 'the daughter of Zion,' seems to denote the inhabitants of Zion, with all those who came to worship at the sanctuary, (which was placed there when this Ps. was written,) considered as one collective body, the visible church, the type of the true church, which God our Savior has espoused to Himself, and which, in the true mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, shall show forth all the praises of Him, who has lifted her up from the gates of death, and raised her to that glorious felicity.—The contrast between 'the gates of death,' and 'the gates of the daughter of Zion,' is remarkable. SCOTT.

(14.) *T. H. Horne* says, *gates of the daughter of Zion* is *symbolical*, and denotes 'the ordinances of Jehovah, by which the soul is helped forward in the way of salvation.' ED.

Verse 16.

'There is nothing that a wicked man does, that is not against his own interest.' DR. A. CLARKE.

Verse 17.

(*Rom.* 1:28—32.)—The future condemnation of the wicked seems to be intended; for as all men go down to the *grave*, the word, rendered *hell*, must in this connection have a more awful meaning. (16:8—11. *Rev.* 20:11—15.) SCOTT.

Verses 18—20.

Many princes have claimed and received divine honors: the arrogant titles of infallibility and of *his holiness*, which one chief antichrist has assumed, are well known: and the proud and impious conduct of multitudes too evidently proves, not only that they forget God, but that they forget themselves to be men; sinful, weak, and dying creatures, who will soon be called to give an account of themselves to God.—David therefore prayed, that these haughty enemies of the Lord and his people, might be so terrified, as to recollect their own weakness, and submit to omnipotence. The LXX. translate the first clause, 'Place a lawgiver over them;' and the original word, by varying a vowel point, means a *Teacher;* and in this sense the prayer is for their instruction and conversion. SCOTT.

(18.) *Hell.*] 'The old English word *hell* was most probably derived from the Saxon verb *helan, to hide*; or, *hell*, a *cavern*. The Heb. *sheol* signifies, according to Cocceius, "*the place and state of those who are out of the way, and to be sought for.*" This is nearly the meaning of the Greek word *hades*. After all that can be said, it is the context must determine the particular application of the word. Sometimes it denotes merely the dead, as in Gen. 38:35; and sometimes it signifies the place of torment, as in the text.' MORISON.—*Man of the earth.*] *Morison* understands by *earth*, 'the land of Israel,' and by *man*, 'the nation of Israel.' *Boothroyd* adds, that 'man is often said to be made of dust, to denote his frailty; but such a construction, as is here, nowhere else occurs;' and he conceives 'the common version cannot be correct.' ED.

PSALM X.

The Psalmist complains that the Lord hid his face, amidst the outrages of wicked persecutors, 1—11. He prays for redress, and professes his confidence in God, 12—18.

WHY [a] standest thou afar off, O LORD? *why* [b] hidest thou *thyself* in times of trouble?

2 * The wicked [c] in *his* pride doth persecute the poor: [d] let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined

3 For the wicked [e] boasteth of his † heart's desire, [f] and ‡ blesseth the covetous [g] *whom* the LORD [h] abhorreth.

4 The wicked, through [i] the pride of his countenance, [k] will not seek *after God:* § God *is* not in all his [l] thoughts.

5 [m] His ways are always grievous; [n] thy judgments *are* far above out of his sight: *as for* all his enemies, [o] he puffeth at them.

6 He hath [p] said in his heart, [q] I shall not be moved: for *I shall* ‖ never *be* in adversity.

7 His mouth is [r] full of cursing, [s] and [t] deceit, and fraud: [t] under his tongue *is* [u] mischief [x] and ** vanity.

8 He sitteth in [y] the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: [z] his eyes †† are privily set against the poor.

9 [a] He lieth in wait ‡‡ secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait [b] to catch the poor, he doth catch [c] the poor, when he draweth him into his net.

a 22:1. 46:1. 109:31. Jer. 14:8.
b 13:1—3. 27:9. 30:7. 44:24. 88:14. Job 13:24. 23:9. 34:29.
* Heb. *In the pride of the wicked he doth*, &c.
c 31:18. 36:11. 59:12. 119:51,69,85, 122. 123:4. 140:5. Ex. 9:17. 18:11. Is. 10:12,13. 14:13,16. Jer. 43:2.
d 7:16. 9:15,16. Prov. 5:22.
e 35:21. 49:6. 52:1. 73:8,9. 94:4. Ex. 15:9. Is. 10:7—11. 37:23,24. Jam. 4:13,16.
† Heb. *soul's*.
f 49:18. 1 Sam. 23:21. Prov. 28:4. Rom. 1:32.
‡ Or, *the covetous blesseth* himself, *he abhorreth the* LORD. 49:11—13. Deut. 29:19. Job 31:24,25. Hos. 12: 7,8. Zech. 11:5—8. Luke 12:19. Rom. 1:29,30. 2 Tim. 3:2—4. 1 John 2:15, 16.
g Is. 57:17. Jer. 22:17. Mic. 6:10—12. Hab. 2:9. Matt. 26:15,16. Luke 12: 15. 16:14,15. 1 Cor. 6:10. Eph. 5: 5. Col. 3:5. 1 Tim. 6:9,10. 2 Pet. 2:3,14,15.
h 5:6. 10:40. Lev. 26:30. Deut. 32: 19.
i 18:27. 101:5. Prov. 6:17. 21:4. 30: 13. Is. 2:11. 3:9. 16:12.
k 14:2. 27:8. Ex. 5:2. Deut. 8:14. Job 22:17. Prov. 30:9. Jer. 2:31. Dan. 5:22,23. Zeph. 2:3.
§ Or, *all his thoughts* are, there is *no God*. 14:1. 53:1.
l Gen. 6:5. Is. 59:7. 65:2. Jer. 4:14. Mark 7:21. Acts 8:22. Rom. 1:21,28.
m Gen. 6:12. Prov. 1:19. 2:13—15. Is. 10:1. 59:7,8. Hos. 9:9. Rom. 3:16.
n 9:2,5,6. Prov. 15:24. Is. 5:12. 26: 11. 28:15. 42:25. Hos. 14:9.
o 12:5. Judg. 9:27,28,38. 2 Sam. 5:6. 1 K. 20:10,11,13. 2 Chr. 32:15—19.
p 14:1. 14:1. Matt. 24:48.
q 15:5. 30:6. Ec. 8:11. Is. 47:7. 56: 12. Nah. 1:10. Matt. 24:48—51. 1 Thes. 5:3. Rev. 18:7.
‖ Heb. *unto generation and generation.*
r 59:12. 62:4. 109:17,18. Rom. 3:14.
s 5:9. 7:14. 36:3. 52:4. 55:21. 58: 3. 64:3. Is. 59:4. Jer. 9:3,6. Rom. 3:13.
¶ Heb. *deceits.*
t Job 20:12.
u 7:14. 140:9. Job 15:35. Matt. 12: 34. Jam. 3:6—8.
x 12:2. 41:6. 144:8,11. Prov. 21:6. 30:8. 2 Pet. 2:18.
** Or, *iniquity.*
y 1 Sam. 22:18,19. 23:23. 2 K. 21:16. Prov. 1:11,12. Hab. 3:14. Luke 8:1. 10:1.
z 17:11. Prov. 6:12,13. Jer. 22:17.
†† Heb. *hide themselves.*
a 17:12. 59:3. Mic. 7:2. Acts 23:21.
‡‡ Heb. *in the secret places.* Lam. 3: 10. Am. 3:4. Nah. 2:11,12. Zech. 11:3.
b Jer. 5:26. Ez. 19:3—6. Hab. 1:15. John 10:12.
c 12:5. 14:6. 35:10. 37:14. 109:31. Job 5:15,16. 20:19. 24:14. Prov. 14: 31. 22:16. 28:15. Is. 3:15. 32:7. Ez. 22:29. Am. 2:6,7. 4:1. 5:11,12. 8:4,6. Hab. 3:14.

be forgotten, nor disappointed of their hopes from the promise.

5. He concludes with prayer, that God would humble the pride, break the power, and blast the projects, of all the wicked enemies of his church, *v.* 19. It is very desirable, much for the glory of God, and the peace and welfare of the universe, that men should know and consider themselves to be but men, depending creatures, mutable, mortal, and accountable.

In singing this, we must give to God the glory of his justice, in pleading his people's cause against his and their enemies, and encourage ourselves to wait for the year of the redeemed, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion, even the final destruction of all anti-christian powers and factions, to which many of the ancients apply this psalm.

Ps. X. V. 1—11. The Sept. joins this Ps. with Ps. 9. and makes them but one; but the Heb. makes it a distinct Ps.; the scope and style are certainly different. David, in these verses, discovers,

I. A very great affection to God and his favor; for, in the time of trouble, that which he complains of most feelingly, is, God's withdrawing his gracious presence, *v.* 1. Note, God's withdrawings are very grievous to his people at any time, but especially in times of trouble. It is our own fault, if we think God is afar off; it is because we judge by outward appearance, we stand afar off from God by our unbelief, and then complain God stands afar off from us.

II. A very great indignation against sin, the sins that made the time perilous, 2 Tim. 3: 1. He beholds the transgressors, and is grieved, is amazed, and brings to his Heavenly Father their evil report, as one that laid to heart that which is offensive to God, and all good men, and earnestly desired a reformation of manners. Passionate and satirical invectives against bad men do more hurt than good; if we will speak of their badness, let it be to God in prayer, for He alone can make them better. This long representation of the wickedness of the wicked, is here summed up in the first words of it, *v.* 2. where two things are laid to their charge, *pride* and *persecution;* the former the cause of the latter. The psalmist, having begun this description, presently inserts a short prayer in a parenthesis, an advantage, and no prejudice, to the sense, *v.* 2. These two heads are here enlarged upon.

1. They are very proud, and extremely conceited; justly, therefore, did he wonder God did not speedily appear against them, for He hates pride, and resists the proud. Men will not seek after God, because they think they have no need of Him, their own hands are sufficient for them; they think it a thing below them to be religious, because religious people are few, and despised, and the restraints of religion will be a disparagement. Tell one of God's authority over him, he turns it off with this, that he never saw God, (*v.* 5.) and therefore does not know that there is a God; tell him of God's judgments, which will be executed on those that go on still in their trespasses, and he will not be convinced that there is any reality in them; they are *far above out of his sight*, therefore he thinks they are mere bugbears. He proudly despises all his enemies, whom God is preparing to be a scourge and ruin to him. But

NOTES.

Ps. X. '*Calmet*, *Grey* and *Horne* suppose this Ps. to have been composed during the Bab. captivity; but there is no certainty of this. Having no title, it is in vain to guess at its author or occasion.' COTT. BIB. —'There is a very remarkable coincidence of thought and expression between this Ps. and the preceding.' *Morison.*—'A great similarity between it and Pss. 12. 14. 25. and 53.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 1.

David's name is not prefixed to this Ps.; yet it probably was composed by him, with reference to the persecution, he and the church of God suffered during the reign of Saul: but it is applicable to similar cases in every age. SCOTT.

Verses 2—11.

Several of the Pss. seem intentionally to have been written in general terms, that they might serve to direct the devotions of the church in persecution, and those of every believer, in his personal troubles and afflictions.—Pride and ambition caused Saul to envy and hate David, as one who had eclipsed his glory, and who was appointed by God to the kingdom, as 'the man after his own heart;' therefore he persecuted him. (1 *Sam.* 18:6—11. 20:31.)—The Jewish priests, scribes, and rulers hated Christ and his apostles, because their ignorance and hypocrisy were exposed, and their authority endangered, by his clear and convincing instructions, his answers to their objections, and his holy example: and the same general principle has made way for the persecution of the humble and zealous servants of God in all ages. But the Psalmist *predicted*, (for the original is in the future tense, 'They shall be taken, &c.') that his enemies would ruin themselves, instead of him. —Saul at length avowed and boasted of his desire of murdering David, which at first he concealed: and he 'blessed the covetous,' who courted favor by betraying him. But God abhorred such men; as indeed they resembled Judas who sold his Lord.—Saul, with evident haughtiness, refused to submit to the decree of God made known by Samuel, or to seek his favor; and in his subsequent conduct, he acted as an infidel or an atheist. He became grievously cruel and oppressive in his government, especially when he murdered the priests. (1 *Sam.* 22: 14—19.) God's judgments were out of his sight: he believed nothing about them; and, growing more presumptuous by impunity, he scorned all those as enemies, who opposed his rage. His conversation became a mixture of profaneness, perjury, violent imprecations, and deceit; and he was continually avowing his base and mischievous purposes. (1 *Sam.* 20:30—33.) Personally, and by his agents, he watched for David in every place where he was likely to surprise him; being bent on murdering a poor fugitive who had never injured him, as much as a hungry lion is on seizing his prey. Nay, he even seemed to pay court, and humble himself, to David and others, as well as to stoop to the meanest practices, that he might get him within his reach, and murder him by one of his captains. This deliberate plan of virulent opposition to one whom God had expressly marked out as the object of his special favor, could be the result of nothing but contempt of God, and practical atheism. (36:1—4.) SCOTT

(2.) *Persecute.*] 'The Heb. signifies such acts of persecution as are hot and vehement.' MORISON.—*Poor.*] 'The humble, afflicted, helpless.' Bp. WILSON.

(3.) Whom *the Lord abhorreth.*] He *contemneth*, or *provoketh* the LORD. (13. Heb.) And thus also in v. 13. generally, *to provoke*, or *greatly to despise*.—The clause may either mean, 'the Lord *abhorreth*, or *despiseth*, the covetous man;' or, 'the covetous man *despiseth*, or *provoketh*, the Lord.' (*Zech.* 11:8.) SCOTT.—*Boasteth.*] 'Seems to import the idea of *praise*. *Horsley*, "is mad upon his heart's desire." Chal. "praiseth himself for the desire of his heart;" in which *Ains worth* substantially agrees.'—*Blesseth the covetous.*] "Blesseth gain." *Horsley. A. Montanus* accords. Others, as *Ainsworth*, *Piscator*; "the covetous man blesseth himself."—*The Lord abhorreth.*] "He causeth the Lord to be angry"—"despiseth Jehovah," so *Ainsworth* and Abp. *Secker*, rendering it as a verb.' MORISON.

(4.) *Wicked.*] 'He was a deist, at least in words, but denied God's providence.' POOLE.

(5.) *Are grievous.*] 'Always cause terror. *Aben Ezra*, are defiled *Sept.* Are at all times confident. *Horsley.*' MOR. 'Vexatious to all within his reach. *Judgments.*] Laws, or rather threatenings; either he doth not feel, or doth not fear, nor think of them. ID.

(6.) 'The Chal. renders this v. "I shall not be moved, from genera

10 He * croucheth, *and* [d] humbleth himself, that the poor may fall † by his strong ones.

11 He hath [e] said in his heart, [f] God hath forgotten: he hideth his face, he will never see *it*.

12 [g] Arise, O LORD: O God, [h] lift up thine hand; [i] forget not the ‡ humble.

13 Wherefore doth the wicked [k] contemn God? he hath said in his heart, [l] Thou wilt not require *it*.

14 [m] Thou hast seen *it;* for [n] thou beholdest mischief and spite, [o] to requite *it* with thy hand: [p] the poor § committeth himself unto thee: thou art [q] the helper of the fatherless.

15 [s] Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil *man:* [t] seek out his wickedness *till* thou find none.

16 [u] The LORD *is* King for ever and ever: [x] the heathen are perished out of his land.

17 LORD, [y] thou hast heard the desire of [z] the humble: [a] thou wilt ‖ prepare their heart,

* Heb. *breaketh himself.* 1 Sam. 2:36.
d 1 Sam. 18:21—26. 23:21,22. 2 Sam. 15:5.
† Or, *into his strong parts.*
e 6. Mark 2:6. Luke 7:39.
f 94:5. 73:11. 94:7. Job 22:13,14. Ez. 8:12. 9:9.
g 3:7. 7:6. 9:19.
h 94:2. Is. 26:11. 33:10. Mic. 5:9.
i 9:12. 13:1. 44:24. 74:19. 77:9.
‡ Or, *afflicted.*
k 74:10,18. Num. 11:20. 2 Sam. 12:9, 10. Luke 10:16. 1 Thes. 4:8.
l Gen. 9:5. 42:22. 2 Chr. 24:22. Luke 11:50,51.
m 35:22. Prov. 15:3. Jer. 16:17. 23: 24. Heb. 4:13.
n Hab. 1:13.
o Jude 1:7. 2 K. 9:26. 2 Chr. 6:23. Jer. 51:56. Joel 3:4.
p 65:22. 2 Tim. 1:12. 1 Pet. 4:19. 5:7.
§ (Heb. *leaveth.* Is. 10:3. Jer. 49:11.
q 68:5. 146:9. Deut. 10:18. Hos. 14:3.
s 3:7. 37:17. Job 38:15. Ez. 30:21,22. Zech. 11:17.
t 7:9. Job 10:6. 20:27. Jer. 2:34. Ez. 23:48. Zeph. 1:12.
u 29:10. 93:1. 145:13. 146:10. Is. 33:22. Jer. 10:10. Lam. 5:19. Dan. 4:34. 6:25. 1 Tim. 1:17. 6:15.
x 9:5,15. 18:13—45. 44:2,3. 78:55. 80:8.
y ‡ 12,18. 37:4. 145:19. Prov. 10:24.
z 2 Chr. 33:12,13. 34:27. Prov. 15:8. Matt. 5:3. Luke 18:13,14. Jam. 4:6, 10. 1 Pet. 5:5.
a 1 Chr. 29:18. 2 Chr. 29:36. 30:12. Prov. 16:1. Rom. 8:26. Jam. 1:16, 17.
‖ Or, *establish.* 112:7,8. Eph. 2:18. 3:12.

as it is impolitic to despise an enemy, so it is impious to despise any instrument of God's wrath. He proudly sets trouble at defiance, and is confident of the continuance of his own prosperity; *v.* 6. Isa. 47: 7. Rev. 18: 7. Those are nearest ruin, who thus set it farthest from them.

2. They are persecutors, cruel persecutors: where there is a heart full of malice, there is commonly a mouth full of curses, *v.* 7. they are very false and treacherous. Mischief designed, is hid under the tongue, not to be discerned, for his mouth is full of deceit and vanity; he has learned of the devil to deceive, and so to destroy; with this his hatred is covered, Prov. 26: 26. He cares not what lies he tells, nor what oaths he breaks, nor what arts of dissimulation he uses to compass his ends. Such are cunning and crafty in carrying on their designs. *He sits in the lurking places*, lest the discovery of his designs should be the breaking of them. Perhaps it refers particularly to robbers and highwaymen, who lie in wait for honest travellers, to make a prey of them and what they have, very cruelly. Their malice is against the innocent, who never provoked them; the poor, who cannot resist; and over whom it will be no glory to triumph. He will be the destroyer of those whose guardian he ought to be. What they aim at is, to get *the poor* into their power, not to strip only, but to murder them; they hunt for the precious life. The devil, whose agent the wicked is, is compared to a roaring lion, that seeks not *what*, but *whom*, he may devour. Base and hypocritical, *v.* 10. He *crouches, and humbles himself*, as beasts of prey to get their prey within their reach. This intimates, that the sordid spirits of persecutors and oppressors will stoop to any thing, though ever so mean, to compass their wicked designs; witness the scandalous practices of Saul, when he hunted David. It intimates likewise, that they cover their malicious designs with the pretence of meekness and humility, and kindness to those to whom they design mischief. They are impious and atheistical, *v.* 11. When conscience rebuked such an one for his wickedness, threatened him with its consequences, and asked, how he would answer it to the righteous Judge, he turned it off with this, *God has forsaken the earth*, Ezek. 8: 12.—9: 9. a blasphemous reproach on God's omniscience and providence, on his holiness and the rectitude of his nature, on his justice and the equity of his government; as if, though He did see and dislike their wickedness, He would never reckon with the wicked, either because He could not punish, or durst not, or was not inclined.

In singing this, and praying it over, we should have our hearts much affected with a holy indignation at the wickedness of the oppressors, a tender compassion for the oppressed, and a pious zeal for the glory and honor of God, with a firm belief that He will, in due time, right the injured.

V. 12—18. David here, on the foregoing representation of the inhumanity and impiety of the oppressors, grounds an address to God: wherein observe,

I. He prays that God would Himself appear, *v.* 12. '*Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up thine hand;* manifest thy presence and providence, to the confusion of those who say Thou hidest thy face; for the maintaining of thine own cause, and to give a fatal blow to these oppressors; let thine everlasting arm be made bare for thy people.' 'Their oppressors, in their presumption, say Thou hast forgotten them; and they, in their despair, are ready to say the same; Lord, make it to appear that both are mistaken.' 'Appear against their persecutors,' *v.* 15. to disable them from farther mischief; and to deal with them for the mischief they have done.

II. What he pleads, to encourage his own faith in these petitions.

1. The great affronts these proud oppressors put on God Himself, *v.* 13. The psalmist here speaks with astonishment, (1.) At the wickedness of the wicked; it is a great trouble to good men, to think what contempt is cast on the holy God by sinners, on his precepts, his promises, his threatenings, his favors, his judgments. *Wherefore do the wicked thus contemn God?* It is because they do not know Him. (2.) At the patience and forbearance of God toward them; 'Why are they suffered?' It is because the day of reckoning is yet to come, when the measure of their iniquity is full.

2. The notice God took of the impiety and iniquity of these oppressors, *v.* 14.

3. The dependence of the oppressed on Him; *The poor commits himself unto Thee*, each of them does so, I among the rest. *They leave themselves with Thee*, (so some,) 'not prescribing, but subscribing, to thy wisdom and will. They thus honor Thee, as much as their oppressors dishonor Thee. They are thy willing subjects, and put themselves under thy protection; therefore protect them.'

4. The relation God is pleased to stand in to us As *King for ever and ever*, *v.* 16. A king administers justice, and protects. To whom should the injured subjects appeal, but to the sovereign? As the Helper of the fatherless, *v.* 14. of those who have no one else to help, and many to injure them. He has appointed kings to *defend the poor and fatherless*, 82: 3. therefore much more will He do it Himself; He has taken it among the titles of his honor, to be a Father to the fatherless, 68: 5. a Helper of the helpless.

5. The experience God's church and people had had of God's readiness to appear for them. He had dispersed and extirpated their enemies, *v.* 16. probably the Canaanites are referred to. He had heard and answered their prayers, *v.* 17. 'Lord, thou hast many a time heard the desire of the humble, and never saidst to a distressed supplicant, *Seek in vain.*' Why may not we hope for the continuance and repetition of the wonders, the favors, our fathers told us of?'

6. Their expectations from God, pursuant to their experience of Him; '*Thou hast heard*, therefore *Thou wilt cause thine ear to hear*, as 6: 9. Thou art the same, thy power, and promise, and relation to thy people; and the work and workings of thy grace in them; why may we not hope that He who has been, will still be, will ever be, a God hearing prayer?' But observe, (1.) In what method God hears prayer. He first prepares the heart of his people, and then gives them an answer of peace; nor may we expect his gracious answer, but in this way; so that God's working *upon* us, is the best earnest of his working *for* us. The preparation of the heart is from the Lord, and we must seek unto Him for it, Prov. 16: 1. and take that as a leading favor. (2.) What He will do, in answer to prayer, *v.* 18. He will plead the cause of the persecuted; judge for the fatherless and oppressed, clear up their innocency, restore their comforts, and recompense all their loss and damage. He will put an end to the fury of the persecutors. See how light the psalmist now

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tion to generation, from doing evil.' MORISON.

(8.) *Villages.*] 'Some of the Rabbins understand by this word, *open courts, public halls*, and the like: the original word includes both senses.' ASSEMB. ANN.

(10.) *By.*] 'Rather, *in* his strong ones, i. e. teeth or paws.' ID.

Verse 14.

Fatherless.] 'Any friendless or neglected object.' MORISON.

Verse 15.

Arm.] 'I. e. all the instruments of his cruelty.' ASSEMB. ANN.

Verse 16.

Saul and his adherents were in reality no less heathens than the Canaanites: David, therefore, in faith expected their extirpation from among the people of God. (*Note, Rev.* 11:1, 2.) The original words, rendered 'for ever and ever,' appear always strictly to denote *eternity.* SCOTT.

Verses 17, 18.

The encouragement to be derived from the readiness, which God had ever shown, to answer the prayers of the humble; the reason of this condescension to them in particular, because their prayers sprang from hearts prepared by his special grace; (*Rom.* 8:24—27. *Jam.* 5:16—18. *Jude* 20, 21.) the pleasure, so to speak, which He took in listening to them; and the deliverances in consequence granted to his church by crushing worldly oppressors; are circumstances replete with instruction and encouragement. SCOTT.

(17.) *Prepare their heart.*] 'See the economy of the grace of God. No man ever had a cry in his heart after salvation, but from God.' DR. A. CLARKE.

CONCLUDING NOTE. 'This whole Ps. may serve for an ample confutation of their error, who make the worldly success of great undertakers an argument of the goodness of their cause; as also for their

[b] thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:

18 [c] To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that [d] the man of the earth may no more * oppress.

PSALM XI.

David, when advised to flee from his enemies, professes confidence in God, 1—3. He shows the Lord's abhorrence of the wicked, and his care of the righteous, 4—7.

To the chief Musician, *A Psalm* of David.

[a] IN the LORD put I my trust; [b] how say ye to my soul, [c] Flee, *as* a bird to your mountain?

2 For, lo, [d] the wicked bend *their* bow, they [e] make ready their arrow upon the string, [f] that they may † privily shoot at [g] the upright in heart.

3 If [h] the foundations be destroyed, [i] what can the righteous do?

4 [k] The LORD *is* in his holy temple, [l] The LORD's throne *is* in heaven: [m] his eyes behold,

a 102:17. Is. 65:24. Acts 4:24—31. 12: 5,&c. 1 Pet. 3:12.
c 14. 72:4. 91:1—6. Luke 18:7,8.
d 17:14. Luke 16:25. 1 Cor. 15:47,48. Phil. 3:18,19.
* Or, *terrify.*
a 7:1. 9:10. 16:1. 25:2. 31:14. 56: 11. 2 Chr. 14:11. 16:8. Is. 26:3,4.
b 1 Sam. 19:11. 20:38. 21:10—12. 22: 3. 23:14. 26:19,20. 27:1.
c 55:6,7. Prov. 6:5. Luke 13:31.
d 10:2. 37:14. 64:3,4. Jer. 9:3.
e 21:12.
f 10:8,9. 64:5. 142:3. 1 Sam. 18:21. 23:9. Matt. 26:4. Acts 23:12—15.
† Heb. *in darkness.*
g 7:10. 32.11. 64:10. 94:15. 97:11. 125:4.
h 75.3. 82:5. Is. 58:12. 2 Tim. 2:19.
i 1 K. 19:13—18. 22:12—14. 2 Chr. 32:13—15. Neh. 6:10—12. Jer. 26: 11—15. Dan. 3:15—18. 6:10,&c. John 11:8—10. Acts 4:5—12,24—33.
k 9:11. 18:6. Ex. 40:34,35. 1 Chr. 17:5. Hab. 2:20. Zech. 2:13. 2 Thes. 2:4.
l 2:4. 103:19. Is. 66:1. Matt. 5:34. 23:21,22. Acts 7:49. Rev. 4:2.
m 33:13. 34:15,16. 44:21. 66:7. 2 Chr. 16:9. Prov. 15:3. Jer. 17:10. 23:24. Heb. 4:13.

makes of the power of that proud persecutor, and how slightly he speaks of him, now that he had been considering God's sovereignty. He is but *a man of the earth*, a man *out of* the earth, so the word is; therefore mean, weak, and hastening to the earth again. Why then should we be afraid of his fury? He is but *man that shall die, a son of man that shall be as grass.* When God speaks the word, Satan shall by his instruments no more deceive, (Rev. 20: 3.) no more oppress.

In singing these vs. we must commit religion's just, but injured, cause to God, as heartily concerned for its honor and interests, believing He will, in due time, plead it with jealousy.

Ps. XI. This Ps. is supposed to have been penned, when David began to feel the resentments of Saul's envy, and had had the javelin thrown at him once and again. He was then advised to run his country; 'No,' says he, 'I trust in God, and therefore will keep my ground.' In time of public fears, when the insults of the church's enemies are daring and threatening, it will be profitable to meditate on this Ps. Here is,

V. 1—3. 1. David's fixed resolution to make God his confidence, *v.* 1. It is the character of the saints, who have taken God for their God, that they make Him only their Hope: therefore, when second causes frown, yet their hopes do not fail them, because the First Cause is ever the same. The psalmist, before he gives an account of the temptation he was in to distrust God, records his resolution to trust in Him, as what he was resolved to live and die by.

2. His resentment of a temptation to the contrary; '*How say ye to my soul*, which has thus returned to God as its Rest, and reposes in Him, *Flee as a bird to your mountain?* to be safe there, out of the reach of the fowler.' This may be taken, either,

(1.) As the serious advice of his timorous friends; so many understand it, and with great probability. Some, when they saw how much Saul was exasperated against him, and how maliciously he sought his life, pressed him by all means to flee, and not to depend too much on his anointing. What grieved him in this, was, not that to flee now would savor of cowardice, and ill become a soldier, but that it would savor of unbelief, and ill become a saint, who had so often said, *In the Lord put I my trust.* Taking it thus, the two following vs. contain the reason with which these faint-hearted friends of David backed this advice. They would have him flee, because he could be no longer safe or useful where he was. 'Observe,' say they, 'how Saul and his instruments aim at thy life, and the uprightness of thine heart will not be thy security.' 'Alas, it is to no purpose to attempt the saving of a kingdom so wretchedly shattered by Saul's mal-administration, (75: 3. 82: 5.); whatever the righteous can do, signifies nothing.' Many are hindered from doing the service they might do to the public, in difficult times, by a despair of success.

(2.) It may be taken as a taunt of his enemies, upbraiding him with the professions he used to make of confidence in God, and scornfully bidding him try what stead that would stand him in now. The confidence and comfort the saints have in God, when all the hopes and joys in the creature fail them, are a riddle to a carnal world, and ridiculed accordingly.

Taking it thus, the two following vs. are David's answer to this sarcasm; in which he complains of the malice of those who did thus abuse him, *v.* 2. and resists the temptation with a gracious abhorrence, *v.* 3. He looks upon this suggestion, as striking at the foundations which every Israelite builds upon. The principles of religion are the foundations on which the faith and hope of the righteous are built. These we are concerned, in interest, as well as duty, to hold fast against all temptations to infidelity; for if these be destroyed, if we let these go, *What can the righteous do?* Good people would be undone, if they had not a God to go to, a God to trust to, and a future bliss to hope for.

V. 4—7. David's enemies' attempt to discourage his confidence in God, only made him cleave so much the closer to his first principles; hence we are here called to consider,

1. That there is a God, a God in heaven. Let not the enemies of the saints insult over them, as if they [had no resort.] Or, He is in his holy temple, i. e. in his church; a God in covenant and communion with his people, through a Mediator, of whom the temple was a type. God is nigh us, in his Word; his Spirit is in his saints, those living temples, and the Lord is that Spirit.

2. That this God governs the world; the Lord has not only his residence, but his *throne*, in heaven, and he has *set the dominion thereof in the earth;* for, having *prepared his throne in the heavens, his kingdom ruleth over all.* Hence *the heavens* are said *to rule*, Dan. 4: 26. Let us by faith see God on his throne, his throne of government, giving law, motion, and aim to all the creatures; his throne of judgment, rendering to every man according to his works; his throne of grace, to which his people may come boldly for mercy and grace; we shall then see no reason to be discouraged by the pride and power of oppressors, or any afflictions of the righteous.

3. God is said to try *with his eyes*, and *his eyelids*, because He knows men, not as earthly princes, by report and representation, but by his own

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is a sad mark of a reprobate mind, when men glory in those desires, principles, and practices, which are really shameful. (*Phil.* 3: 17—19.)—Nothing is more hateful to God, more contrary to true religion, or more prolific of other crimes, than covetousness. Yet many who are severe against sins of inferior malignity, favor and speak well of the covetous; too often, it is to be feared, from covetousness in themselves. But persecutors are most liable to this; for the tools which they employ, are generally those who sell their souls, and would, if they had the opportunity, sell Christ Himself, 'for filthy lucre.' (*Matt.* 26: 14—16, 57—62. *Acts* 6: 9—14. 1 *Tim.* 6: 6—10.)—Pride, however, is especially the image of Satan, and the root of apostasy. From this source, no doubt, originates a great part of that enmity and contempt, which infidels express against the inoffensive disciples of Christ. Full of self-conceit, they affect to be thought wiser, and are ambitious of being greater, than other men. They consider Christianity and its zealous friends as standing in the way [of these lusts]; and in opposing them, they bring ruin on themselves.—Indeed, all our deliberate sins spring from unbelief, forgetfulness, or contempt of God; and our hearts are prone to atheism itself. From heaven alone will all sin and temptation be excluded: no Canaanite shall find entrance there; no lust shall then remain in the heart of any inhabitant; no imperfection will be known; but all shall be complete in love, purity, and joy. SCOTT.

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consolation and confirmation, who suffer, though it be much and long.' ASSEMB. ANN.

NOTES.

Ps. XI. *Title.*] 'The Heb. has no part of the second clause of this inscription, but simply *the word of David.* The *Sept.* supply the ellipsis, and our translators have adopted the amended reading. Sometimes they have supplied it where the *Sept.* did not. See Ps. 26 and 27.' MOR. 'The occasion of this Ps. is wholly uncertain, but we may reckon it, with *De Wette*, among those, which, in the name of the people, implore divine aid against barbarous enemies.' ROSENM.

Verses 1—3.

David considered the service of Saul and of Israel, as his post of duty; and, trusting in the Lord, he would not at present listen to any exhortations to desert it. (1 *Sam.* 22:5. 27:1, 2.) SCOTT.

(1.) *Flee*, &c.] 'The expression seems to be proverbial, Prov. 27: 8. The word rendered "*bird*" signifies a sparrow: as the words which denote the names of most animals in the Heb. admit of application to the individual or the species.' MOR.—*Your mountain.*] 'The Heb. reads, "to your mountain, a sparrow;" all the ancient interpreters, uniformly, "to your mountain as a sparrow;" and so possibly the reading anciently was. However, if it be, "fly, sparrow, to your mountain," the sense will be the same.' HAMMOND.

(3.) *Foundations.*] 'Of justice.' BOOTHR. *Morison.* 'It is not certain what the original word here signifies. It is probably here used in the sense of *fortresses* or *strong-holds*, or else in that of *forces* or *military preparations*; the latter is the most probable.' HAMMOND. '*Jarchi* understands *priests*, the *preservers* of knowledge and truth; the divine worship is overthrown.' GILL.

Verse 4.

His eyes behold.] 'The Sept. Vulg. Arab. and Æthiop. read, "his eyes look unto the poor." *Horsley*, after *Lowth*, reads "afflicted one."' MORISON.

his eye-lids try, the children of men.

5 The LORD [n] trieth the righteous: but [o] the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth.

6 [p] Upon the wicked he shall rain * snares, fire and brimstone, and † an horrible tempest: *this shall be* [q] the portion of [r] their cup.

7 For [s] the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; [t] his countenance doth behold the upright.

PSALM XII.

David, lamenting the decay of godliness, and the prevalency of deceit, craves help from God, 1, 2. He predicts the destruction of flatterers, proud boasters, and oppressors, 3—5. He comforts himself in assurance of divine protection, grounded on the faithful promises of God, notwithstanding the triumph of the wicked, 6—8.

To the chief Musician upon ‡ Sheminith, A Psalm of David.

§ HELP, LORD; for [a] the godly man ceaseth; for [b] the faithful fail from among the children of men.

2 [c] They speak vanity every one with his neighbor: *with* [d] flatter-

n 7:9. 17:3. 26:2. 66:10. 139:1,23, 24. Gen. 22:1. Zech. 13:9. Mal. 3:3. Jam. 1:12. 1 Pet. 1:7. 4:12.
o 5:4,5. 10:3. 21:8. Prov. 6:16—19. Jer. 12:8. Zech. 11:8.
p 105:32. Gen. 19:24. Ex. 9:23,24. Job 18:15. 20:23. Is. 24:17,18. Ez. 13: 13. 38:22. Luke 17:29.
* Or, *quick burning coals.* 18:12,13.
† Or, *a burning tempest.*
q 16:5. Gen. 43:34. 1 Sam. 9:23. Job 20:29. 27:13 &c.
r 75:8. Is. 51:17,22. Jer. 25:15—17. Hab. 2:16. John 18:11.
s 45:7. 99:4. 146:8. Is. 61:8.
t 5:12. 21:6. 33:18. 42:5. Job 36:7.
‡ Or, *The eighth.* 6: *title.* 1 Chr. 15:21.
§ Or, *Save.* 3:7. 6:4. 54:1. Matt. 8:25. 14:30.
a Gen. 6:12. Is. 1:9,21,22. 57:1. 63: 5. Jer. 5:1. Mic. 7:1,2. Matt. 24: 12.
b Prov. 20:6. Is. 59:4,13—15.
c 10:7. 36:3,4. 38:12. 41:6. 52:1—4. 59:12. 144:8,11. Jer. 9:2—6,8.
d 5:9. 28:3. 62:4. Prov. 26:19. 29: 5. Ez. 12:24. Rom. 16:18. 1 Thes. 2:5.

strict inspection, which cannot err, or be imposed on. This may comfort us when deceived in men, even in men we think we have tried.

4. That, if He afflict good people, it is for their trial, and therefore for their good, *v.* 5. The Lord tries all men, that He may do them justice; but the righteous, that He may *do them good in their latter end.* Let not that therefore shake our foundations, or discourage our hope and trust.

5. That, however persecutors and oppressors may prosper and prevail awhile, they now lie under, and will for ever perish under, the wrath of God. He that hates nothing He has made, yet hates those who have ill-made themselves. Hammond offers another reading of this v. *The Lord trieth the righteous and the wicked;* (distinguishes infallibly between them, which is more than we can do;) and *he that loveth violence hateth his own soul,* i. e. persecutors bring certain ruin on themselves, Prov. 8: 36. as follows here. Their punishment will be inevitable and very terrible, *v.* 6. Here is a double metaphor, to denote the unavoidableness of the punishment. It shall be rained from heaven, Job 20: 23. against which there is no fence, and from which no escape; see Josh. 10: 11. 1 Sam. 2: 10. It shall surprise them, as a sudden shower sometimes surprises the traveller in a summer's day. It shall be as snares on them, to hold them fast, and keep them prisoners, till the day of reckoning comes. It is *fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest,* which plainly alludes to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and very fitly, for that destruction was intended for a figure of *the vengeance of eternal fire,* Jude 7. What a horrible tempest are the wicked hurried away in, at death! What a lake of fire and brimstone must they make their bed in for ever, in the congregation of the dead and damned! That is it that is here meant, and shall be the portion of their cup, the cup of trembling, which shall be put into their hands, which they must *drink the dregs* of, 75: 8. Every man has the portion of his cup assigned him. They who choose the Lord for their Portion, shall have what they choose, and be for ever happy in their choice, 16: 5. but they who reject his grace, shall be made to drink the cup of his fury, Jer. 25: 15. Isa. 51: 17. Hab. 2: 16.

6. That, though honest, good people may be run down, and trampled on, yet God does and will own, and favor them; and that is reason why God will severely reckon with persecutors and oppressors, because those whom they oppress and persecute are dear to Him; so that, whosoever toucheth them, *toucheth the apple of his eye, v.* 7. He loves them, and the work of his own grace in them. Himself a righteous God, He loves righteousness wherever He finds it. He, like a tender Father, looks upon them with pleasure, and they, like dutiful children, are pleased and abundantly satisfied with his smiles.

In singing this Ps. we must encourage and engage ourselves to trust in God at all times, depend on Him to protect our innocence, and make us happy, dread his frowns as worse than death, and desire his favor as better than life.

Ps. XII. It is supposed David penned this Ps. in Saul's reign, when there was a general decay of honesty and piety both in court and country, which he here complains of to God, and very feelingly, for he himself suffered by the treachery of his false friends, and the insolence of his sworn enemies: it is certainly calculated for a bad reign; and perhaps David, in spirit, foresaw that some of his successors would bring things to as bad a pass as is here described.

V. 1—8. This psalm furnishes us with good thoughts for bad times, in which, though the prudent will keep silent, (Am. 5: 13.) because a man may be made an offender for a word, yet a man may comfort himself with such suitable meditations and prayers.

I. Let us see here, what makes the times bad, and when they may be said to be so. The children of this world, will tell you scarcity of money, decay of trade, and the desolations of war; but the Scripture lays the badness of the times on causes of another nature, 2 Tim. 3: 1. *Perilous times shall come,* for iniquity shall abound; and that is what David here complains of. The times are bad, 1. When there is a general decay of piety and honesty among men, *v.* 1. Observe how the *godly* and the *faithful* are here put together. As there is no true policy, so there is no true piety, without honesty. Godly men are *faithful;* their word is as confirming as their oath, as binding as their bond; they make conscience of being true both to God and man. They are here said to *cease and fail,* either by death, or by desertion, or by both: so that there were few or no good people: perhaps he means among Saul's courtiers; or, there were few in comparison; a general decay of religion and virtue. 2. When dissimulation and flattery have corrupted and debauched all conversation, *v.* 2. when men are generally so profligate, that they make no conscience of a lie, so spiteful as to design the worst of mischiefs, and yet so base as to cover the design with the most specious and plausible pretences, and professions of friendship, as Joab to Abner and Amasa in David's own time, smile in your face, and cut your throat. This is the devil's image complete, a complication of malice and falsehood. The times are bad indeed, when there is no sincerity to be met with, and an honest man knows not whom to believe, nor whom to trust, nor dares confide in a friend, in a guide, Mic. 7: 5, 6. Jer. 9: 4, 5. Wo to those who help to make the times thus perilous. 3. When the enemies of God, and religion, and religious people, are impudent and daring, and threaten to run down all that is just and sacred; when proud sinners are arrived at such a pitch of impiety as to say, 'With our tongue

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The servant of God, though tempted to desert his post, should abide in his place and at his work, though it expose him to many dangers and difficulties: and the honor of God, the interests of his people, and regard to consistency of character, require eminent persons to expose themselves more, in times of persecution, than their inferiors are called to do. Let it not be thought, that, in times of prevailing iniquity, when all regard to the laws of God and man is discarded, the righteous can do no good. 'All is not over, while there is a man left to reprove error, and bear testimony to the truth; and a man, who does it with becoming spirit, may stop a prince, or senate, when in full career, and recover the day.'—'No place on earth is out of the reach of care and trouble. Temptations are every where; and so is the grace of God.' *Bp. Horne.*—The upright and zealous servants of God are indeed peculiarly exposed to the malice of wicked persecutors, who commonly have power on their side; but what has he to fear, who has a righteous cause, a rejoicing conscience, an almighty Friend, and a faithful promise on his side? (2 *Sam.* 22: 29—33.) SCOTT.

Verse 6.

Snares.] 'The Heb. denotes in SS. such judgments of the divine government as are sudden, inevitable, and without parallel.' *Morison.* 'Some render it *coals of fire,* or *burning coals;* as, besides others, *Lowth* in his Heb. Poet. *Michaelis* on the contrary, in his notes on *Lowth,* defines *snares,* and says, that the Arabians call lightnings, *snares;* i. e. as it were, *fiery ropes:* he adds, therefore the Sept. and the Syr. rightly render it *snares.*'—*Horrible tempest.*] *A wind of heats:* a pestilent east wind, well known to orientals, which sometimes blows in July and August for about 7 or 8 minutes, (*octavam horæ partem*) and kills whatever it meets. The Arabs call it *Samoom.* —*The wind of the plague,* so the Syr.—*Jahn* says it blows in Persia, Babylonia, Arabia, and the deserts of Egypt, in June as well as in July and August; and in Nubia, in March, April, Sept. Oct. and Nov.—The indications of its approach are distant clouds, slightly tinged with red, in appearance like the rainbow; also a rushing noise; though of the last circumstance some make no mention: note, Job 37:9. ED.

CONCLUDING NOTE. 'In v. 1. David expostulates with those who advise him to flee; vs. 2 and 3. give the reasons of his friend's advice; vs. 4, 5, 6, 7, reply to them.' *Green.* 'The dialogue form of the Ps gives it great spirit and beauty.' DODD.

NOTES.

Ps. XII. 'Some think this Ps. was made when Doeg and the Ziphites betrayed David to Saul; but it is most likely it was written during the Babylonish captivity: v. 5. alludes to this.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 1—4.

This Ps. may be supposed to have been written towards the end of Saul's reign; when his impiety, and abuse of authority, had given such a sanction to vice and ungodliness, that not only piety, but truth and honesty, seemed about to expire; while every kind of wickedness was

n 7:9. 17:3. 26:2. 66:10. 139:1,23, 24. Gen. 22:1. Zech. 13:9. Mal. 3:3. Jam. 1:12. 1 Pet. 1:7. 4:12.
o 5:4,5. 10:3. 21:8. Prov. 6:16—19. Jer. 12:8. Zech. 11:8.
p 105:32. Gen. 19:24. Ex. 9:23,24. Job 18:15. 20:23. Is. 24:17,18. Ez. 13: 13. 38:22. Luke 17:29.
* Or, *quick burning coals.* 18:12,13.
† Or, *a burning tempest.*
q 16:5. Gen. 43:34. 1 Sam. 9:23. Job 20:29. 27:13 &c.
r 75:8. Is. 51:17,22. Jer. 25:15—17. Hab. 2:16. John 18:11.
s 45:7. 99:4. 146:8. Is. 61:8.
t 5:12. 21:6. 33:18. 42:5. Job 36:7.
‡ Or, *The eighth.* 6: *title.* 1 Chr. 15:21.
§ Or, *Save.* 3:7. 6:4. 54:1. Matt. 8:25. 14:30.
a Gen. 6:12. Is. 1:9,21,22. 57:1. 63: 5. Jer. 5:1. Mic. 7:1,2. Matt. 24: 12.
b Prov. 20:6. Is. 59:4,13—15.
c 10:7. 36:3,4. 38:12. 41:6. 52:1—4. 59:12. 144:8,11. Jer. 9:2—6,8.
d 5:9. 28:3. 62:4. Prov. 26:19. 29: 5. Ez. 12:24. Rom. 16:18. 1 Thes. 2:5.

ing lips, *and* with * a double heart do they speak.

3 The LORD shall [e] cut off all flattering lips, *and* [f] the tongue that speaketh † proud things:

4 Who have said, [g] With our tongue will we prevail; our lips *are* ‡ our own: [h] who *is* lord over us?

5 [i] For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, [k] now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set *him* in safety *from him that* § puffeth at him.

6 [l] The words of the LORD *are* pure words; [m] *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, [n] thou shalt preserve || them from [o] this generation for ever.

8 [p] The wicked walk on every side, [q] when the ¶ vilest men are exalted.

PSALM XIII.

David mournfully complains, that God delays to comfort and deliver him; and prays for help, that his enemy might not insult over him, 1—4. Trusting in the mercy of God, he expects to rejoice, and to sing his praises, 5, 6.

To the ** chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

1 [a] HOW long wilt thou [b] forget me, O LORD? for ever? [c] how will we prevail against the cause of virtue, our lips are our own, and we may say what we will; *who is lord over us*, either to restrain us, or to call us to an account?' *v.* 4. This bespeaks a proud conceit of themselves, and an insolent contempt of God's dominion, as if he had no propriety in them. *Our lips are our own*—an unjust pretension, for *who made man's mouth*, in whose hand is his breath, and whose is the air he breathes? Their language would intimate, He has no authority either to command, or to judge them; *Who is Lord over us?* Like Pharaoh, Ex. 5: 2. This is as absurd and unreasonable as the former, for He, in whom we live, and move, and have our being, must needs be, by an indisputable title, Lord over us. 4. When the poor and needy are oppressed, and abused, and puffed at: this is implied, *v.* 5. where God Himself takes notice of the oppression of the poor, and the sighing of the needy; see 10: 5. 5. When wickedness abounds, and goes barefaced, under the protection and countenance of those in authority, *v.* 7. When the vilest men are exalted to places of trust and power, who, instead of putting the laws in execution against vice and injustice, and punishing the wicked according to their merits, patronise, protect, [and share with them,] and support their reputation, by their own example; then the wicked walk on every side, they swarm in all places, and go up and down seeking to deceive, debauch, and destroy, neither afraid nor ashamed to discover themselves; there is none to check or control them. Bad men are base men, the vilest of men, and they are so, though ever so highly exalted in this world. Antiochus the illustrious, the Scripture calls *a vile person*, Dan. 11: 21. But it is bad with a state, when such are preferred; no marvel if wickedness then grows impudent and insolent. *When the wicked bear rule, the people mourn.*

II. Let us now see what good things we are here furnished with for such bad times; and what times we may yet be reserved for, we cannot tell. 1. We have a God to go to, from whom we may ask and expect the redress of all our grievances. This he begins with, *v.* 1. 2. God will certainly reckon with false and proud men, will punish and restrain their insolence. Some translate it as a prayer, 'May God cut off those false and spiteful lips;' *Let lying lips be put to silence.* 3. God will, in due time, deliver his oppressed people, and shelter them from the malicious designs of their persecutors, *v.* 5. *Now will I arise, saith the Lord.* This promise of God, is an answer to David's petition, *v.* 1. When oppressors are in the height of their pride and insolence, and the oppressed in the depth of their distress and despondency, then is God's time to appear for them, as for Israel, when they were most dejected, and Pharaoh most elevated. Note, There is a time fixed for the rescue of oppressed innocency; so that, on the whole, it shall lose nothing by sufferings. 4. Though men are false, God is faithful; though they are not to be trusted, God is: his *are pure words*, *v.* 6. not only all true, but all pure. It denotes the sincerity of God's Word; its preciousness, and the many proofs that have been given of its power and truth; it has been often tried, all the saints in all ages have trusted it, and have all set to their seal that God's Word is true. Probably, this refers especially to these promises of succoring and relieving the poor and oppressed. The less confidence is to be put in men's words, let us with the more assurance trust in God's Word. 5. God must secure his chosen remnant to Himself, how bad soever the times, *v.* 7. This intimates, that, as long as the world stands, there will be a generation of proud and wicked men in it, who will threaten by their wretched arts to ruin religion. But God will keep his own people from this generation; from being debauched by them and drawn away from God; from being destroyed and rooted out by them. In the worst of times, God has his remnant, and in every age will reserve to Himself a holy seed, and preserve that to his heavenly kingdom.

In singing this Ps. and praying it over, we must bewail the general corruption of manners, thank God things are not worse, but pray and hope they will be better in God's time.

Ps. XIII. V. 1—6. This Ps. is the deserted soul's case and cure. Whether it was penned on any particular occasion, does not appear. David, in affliction, is here pouring out his soul before God; his address is short, but the method is very observable, and of use for direction and encouragement.

I. His troubles extort complaints, *v.* 1, 2. and 102: *title.* It is some ease to a troubled spirit, to give vent to its griefs, especially at the throne of grace, where we are sure to find One who is afflicted in the afflictions of his people, and troubled with the feeling of their infirmities; thither we have boldness of access by faith, and there we have freedom of speech. David complains,

* Heb. *an heart and an heart.* 1 Chr. 12:33. *marg.* Jam. 1:8.
e Job 32:22.
f 17:10. 73:8,9. Ex. 15:9. 1 Sam. 2: 3. 17:43,44. 2 K. 19:23,24. Is. 10: 10. Ez. 23:2,9. 29:3. Dan. 4:30,31. 7:8,25. Mal. 3:13. 2 Pet. 2:18. Jude 16. Rev. 13:5.
† Heb. *great.* 52:2. Prov. 18:21.
g Jer. 18:18. Jam. 3:5,6.
‡ Heb. *with us.*
h Gen. 3:5. Ex. 5:2. Job 21:14,15. Jer. 2:31. 44:16,17. Dan. 3:15. 11: 36. 2 Thes. 2:4.
i 10:12. 74:21,22. 79:10,11. 146:7,8. Ex. 2:23,24. 3:7—9. Judg. 10:16. Prov. 14:31. 22:22,23. Ec. 4:1. 5: 8. Is. 19:20. Ez. 13:12,13,18. Jam. 5:4.
k Is. 33:10. Mic. 7:8,9.
§ Or, *would ensnare him.* 10:5. Job 5:15,21.
l 18:30. 19:8. 119:140. Prov. 30:5.
m 66:10.
n 16:1. 37:28,40. 121:8. 145:20. Deut. 33:3. 1 Sam. 2:9. Is. 27:3. 1 Pet. 1:5. Jude 1.
|| Heb. *him*, that is, *every one of them.*
o 10:18. Matt. 3:7.
p Prov. 29:12. Hos. 5:11. Mic. 6:16.
q Judg. 9:18,&c. 1 Sam. 18:17,18. Esth. 3:6,&c. Is. 32:4—6. Mark 14:63—65.
¶ Heb. *vilest of the sons of men.* Job 30:8. Dan. 11:21.
** Or, *overseer.*
a 6:3. 35:17. 74:1. 80:4. 85:5. 89: 46. 90:14. 94:3,4.
b 10:12. Lam. 5:20.
c 22:1,2. 44:23,24. 88:14. Deut. 31: 17. Job 13:24. Is. 59:2.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The decrease of piety, and the prevalence of iniquity, form the worst times, in the judgment of the spiritually-minded.—When apostasies, superstitions, and damnable heresies corrupt the church, or when persecutions waste it, and when infidels and profligates triumph; then the believer thinks the times very bad, however otherwise peaceful and prosperous. But by these very things He will be excited to call upon God, who can and will deliver, when human help is vain.—Honesty and sincerity will not long survive piety in any place. But He who made man's mouth, will cut off the flatterer as well as the slanderer, and the proud infidel as well as the covetous oppressor. He will also rise to revive his church. He hath *promised*, and his Word is more pure and precious than the finest silver. Let us rest upon it, and comfort our souls with it; though we cannot but grieve to see the degeneracy of the times, and the abounding of iniquity and infidelity. SCOTT.

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practised without fear or shame.—Dissimulation, flattery, profane and arrogant boastings, treachery, and calumny, were the general recommendations of the superior people in Israel, to the favor of their king and his courtiers; and the infection spread rapidly among all orders of men. Forgetful of God, to whom they were indebted for the gift of speech, and for what purpose it was given, and of their accountableness to Him, they considered their tongues as their own, to be employed as they pleased; and they thought to carry all before them, by their wit, eloquence, flatteries, or calumnies. SCOTT.

(1.) *Godly man.*] 'In general, an individual that is kind, bountiful and compassionate. It embraces also the notion of goodness and sanctity, and describes a man who lives agreeably to the dictates of *piety* and *holiness*.' MORISON. 'Mic. 7:2. One who dares defend the truth, and show mercy to the oppressed.' ASSEMB. ANN.

(2.) *Vanity.*] '*Ainsworth* reads, *false* vanity, or *vain* falsehood; the root seems to refer as much to falsehood as vanity.' MORISON.

Verses 5—7.

For the comfort of the remnant of poor and persecuted believers, David addressed them in his prophetical character.—Saul's death, the ruin of his party, and David's advancement, shortly after this, exactly fulfilled the prediction. SCOTT. *Puffeth at him.* (5.) 'Of a proud and powerful man, it is said [in the E.], "He puffs away his foes;" [note, Job 30: 22.] great contempt is shown by puffing through the mouth and blowing through the nostrils.' See *Bush's* Ill. *As silver.* (6) Of a just judge it is said, "His mouth pours out gold."' ROBERTS. The *Sept.* render v. 7. 'Thou, Lord, wilt guard us, and preserve us from this generation, and for ever.' 2 *Tim.* 4: 16—18. SCOTT. *Keep them.*] 'Either the poor and needy, or thy words and promises, v. 6.' POOLE

Verse 8.

When such vile men as Doeg and his party, (the dregs of the human race,) were advanced to great authority, the wicked were emboldened to show themselves, and encouraged openly to avow their corrupt principles, and practise every kind of iniquity. (52: 1 *Sam.* 22:6—19.) But when the power should be put into other hands, they would be driven away, and the righteous would be countenanced: and this would soon take place. (101:) 'The wicked walk on every side: when they are exalted, *it is* a shame for the sons of men:' [particularly in a popular government. ED.] *Old Translation.* SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. XIII. V. 1—4. 'The trouble Saul gave David,' says *Theodoret*

long wilt thou hide thy face from me?

2 How long shall I [d] take counsel in my soul, *having* [e] sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall [f] mine enemy [g] be exalted over me?

3 [h] Consider *and* hear me, O LORD my God: [i] lighten mine eyes, [k] lest I sleep the *sleep of* death;

4 Lest mine enemy say, [m] I have prevailed against him; *and* those that trouble me rejoice [n] when I am moved.

5 But [o] I have trusted in thy mercy; [p] my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.

6 [q] I will sing unto the LORD, because [r] he hath dealt bountifully with me.

PSALM XIV.

David describes the universal depravity of mankind, and the enmity of the wicked against the people of God, 1—6. He longs and prays for the salvation of Israel, 7.

To the chief Musician, *A Psalm* of David.

THE [a] fool hath said in his heart, *There is* [b] no God. [c] They are corrupt, they have done [d] abominable works, [e] *there is* none that doeth good.

c 77:2—12. 94:18,19. 142:4—7. Job 7:12—15. 9:19—21,27,28. 10:15. 23: 8—10. Jer 15:18.
e 38:17. 116:3. Neh. 2:2. Prov. 15: 13. Ec. 5:17. Jer. 8:18. 45:3. Matt. 26:38. John 16:6. Rom. 9:2. Phil. 2:27.
f 7:2,4,5. 8:2. 9:6. 10:18. 17:9. 74: 10,18. 1 Sam. 18:29. 24:19. Esth. 7:6. Lam. 1:9. Mic. 7:8—10.
g 2:2,7,8. 31:18. 42:10. 44:14—16. 123: 3,4. 143:3,4. Lam. 1:5. Luke 22:53.
h 9:13. 25:19. 31:7. 119:153. Lam. 5:1.
i 18:28. 1 Sam. 14:27,29. Ezra 9:8. Luke 2:32. Rev. 21:23.
k Jer. 51:39,57. Eph. 5:14.
l 10:11. 25:2. 35:19,25. 38:16. Ex. 32:12. Deut. 32:27. Josh. 7:9. Ez. 35:12—15.
m 9 19. Jer. 1:19. Lam. 1:16.
n 55:22. 62:2,6. 112:6. 121:1—3. Prov. 12:3.

1. Of God's unkindness; so he construed it, and it was his infirmity. He thought God had forgotten him, his promises to him, his covenant with him, his former loving-kindness He had showed him, which he took to be an earnest of farther mercy. Thus Zion said, *My God has forgotten me;* Israel said, *My way is hid from the Lord.* Not that any good man can doubt the omniscience, goodness, and faithfulness, of God; but it is a peevish expression of prevailing fear, which yet, when it arises from a high esteem and earnest desire of God's favor, though it be indecent and culpable, shall be passed by and pardoned, for the second thought will retract it, and repent of it. God hid his face from him, so that he wanted that inward comfort in God which he used to have, and herein was a type of Christ on the cross, crying out, *My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?* God sometimes hides his face from his own children, and leaves them in the dark concerning their interest in Him: and this they lay to heart more than any outward trouble whatsoever.

2. He was racked with care: anxious cares are heavy burdens, with which good people often load themselves more than they need. He was overwhelmed with sorrow, had a constant disposition to it, so it preyed on his spirits; not only in the night, when he was silent and solitary, but by day too, when lighter griefs are diverted and dissipated by conversation and business; nay, every day. The bread of sorrows is sometimes the saint's daily bread; our Master Himself was a Man of sorrows.

3. His enemies' insolence. Saul, his great enemy, and others.

He expostulates with God hereupon; 'How long?' Long afflictions try our patience, and often tire it: and a common temptation it is then to think it will last always; despondency then turns into despair, and persons long without joy, begin, at last, to be without hope.

II. His complaints stir up his prayers, *v.* 3, 4. We should never allow ourselves to make any complaints, but what are fit to be offered up to God, and what drive us to our knees. Observe here,

1. His petitions; *Consider* my case, *hear* my complaints, and *lighten mine eyes.* What revives the drooping spirits, is said to *enlighten the eyes,* 1 Sam. 14: 27. Ezra 9: 8.

2. His pleas. He mentions his relation to God and interest in Him; *O Lord my God;* and insists on the greatness of the peril, which called for speedy relief and succor. If his eyes were not enlightened quickly, he concludes he must perish. Nothing is more killing to a soul than the want of God's favor, nothing more reviving than the return of it. His enemies, too, would triumph.

o 32:10. 33:18,21,22. 36:7. 52:8. 147: 11. Is. 12:2. Jude 21.
p 9:14. 20:5. 35:9. 43:4,5. 51:12. 119:81. 1 Sam. 2:1. Hab. 3:18. Luke 1:47. 2:20.
q 21:13. 57:9—11. 59:16.
r 116:7. 119:17.
a 73:3. 92:6. 107:17. 1 Sam. 25:25. Prov. 1:7,32. 13:19. 27:22. Luke 12:20.
b 10:4. *marg.* 52:1—6. Job 22:13. Rom. 1:28. Eph. 2:12.
c 36:1—4. 73:8,9,11,12. 94:4—8. Gen. 6:5,12. Is. 1:4.
d Job 15:16. Matt. 12:34. 15:19. John 3:19,20. Rom. 1:21,&c. Tit. 1:16. 3:3. 1 Pet. 4:3. Rev 21:8.
e Rom. 3:10—12. Eph. 2:1—3.

III. His prayers are soon turned into praises, *v.* 5, 6. What a surprising change in a few lines! See the power of faith, the power of prayer, and how good it is to draw near to God. If we bring our cares and griefs to the throne of grace, and leave them there, we may go away like Hannah, and our *countenance will be no more sad.* Observe the method of his comfort.

1. God's mercy supports his faith. 'In former distresses, his mercy has in due time relieved me, and my confidence in it has in the mean time supported me. Even in the depth of this distress, *I trusted in the mercy of God;* and that was as an anchor in a storm.' And still '*I do trust in thy mercy;*' so some. This he pleads with God, knowing what pleasure He takes in those that *hope in his mercy.*

2. His faith in God's mercy filled his heart with *joy in his salvation;* joy and peace come *by believing,* Rom. 15: 13. 1 Pet. 1: 8. Having put his trust in the mercy of God, he is fully assured of salvation, and that his heart, now daily grieving, should *rejoice in that salvation.* Though weeping endure long, joy will return.

3. His *joy in God's salvation* would fill his mouth with *songs of praise, v.* 6. But he speaks of it as a thing past; *He has dealt bountifully with me;* because by faith he had received the earnest of it, and was confident of it, as if done already.

In singing this Ps. and praying it over, if we have not the same complaints David had, we must thank God we have not, dread and deprecate his withdrawings, sympathize with the troubled in mind, and encourage ourselves in our most holy faith and joy.

Ps. XIV. V. 1—3. It does not appear on what occasion this Ps. was penned, nor whether on any particular occasion. Some say, when Saul persecuted David; others, when Absalom rebelled. But they are mere conjectures, which have not certainty enough to warrant us to expound the Ps. by them. The apostle, in quoting part of it, Rom. 3: 10, &c. to prove that *Jews and Gentiles are all under sin, v.* 9. and that *all the world is guilty before God, v.* 19. leads us to understand it, in general, as a description of the depravity of the human nature, and the deplorable corruption of a great part of mankind, even of *the world that lies in wickedness,* 1 *John* 5: 19. But as in those Pss. designed to discover our remedy in Christ, there is commonly an allusion to David, yea, and some passages to be understood primarily of him, as in 2: 16: 22: and others; so in this, designed to discover our wound by sin, there is an allusion to David's enemies and persecutors, and other oppressors of good men at that time, to whom some passages have immediate reference. In all the

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The most eminent believers are sometimes left to great discouragement, either for the chastisement of their sins, or the trial of their faith. At such times, their fervent expostulations with God will very frequently be tinged with unbelieving fears. They inwardly take counsel about ascertaining the state of their souls, discovering the cause of their troubles, or devising how to obtain deliverance; but all seems in vain: every day appears an age, while continual sorrow oppresses their hearts; and they are ready to trouble themselves with the idea, how Satan and their other enemies are triumphing in their fallen state. All this however is intended for their humiliation; that they may search out and repent of their sins, renounce every false confidence and worldly idol, and be made more fervent in prayer. And it may be of use to the tempted and discouraged believer to recollect, that the Savior, soon after his doleful complaint, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?' subjoined, 'It is finished;' and, 'Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit:' and that the depth of his humiliation immediately preceded the dawn of his glorious exaltation. (*Matt.* 27: 46, 50. *John* 19: 28—30.) SCOTT.

'was before his great sin, and so he was full of confidence; but that of Absalom after it, which made him cry out in this doleful manner.' *Patrick.*—Whatever enemy the Psalmist especially meant, Satan, our common enemy, was not forgotten. SCOTT.

(2.) *Shall I have counsel in my soul.*] 'Seems to express the condition of a mind distressed with its own reflections. *Boothr.* tr. "How long shall I be distressed in mind?" Evidently, the act of a painful rumination is here described.' MORISON.

(3.) 'Give me wisdom to find out proper measures for my safety, and cheer my spirits; lest I die with grief, or my enemy destroy me.' Dr. WELLS, in *D'Oyly and Mant.*

Verses 5, 6.

David here owns his unworthiness, as well as misery: but as salvation originated from God's rich mercy to sinners; and as he was conscious his whole dependence was placed on that mercy, and not in any claim on divine justice; he took courage from this consideration, and rising above his distresses, became confident he should soon rejoice in God. SCOTT.

(6.) *Hath dealt bountifully.*] The verb is more frequently rendered *reward* or *recompense,* but a gracious recompense is intended, when good received from God is spoken of; and this is 'dealing bountifully. (62:12.) ID.

NOTES.

Ps. XIV. 'The title refers this Ps. to David, as its author; but the prayers in v. 7. forbid altogether the reference, for the people were not then in exile and oppressed, as is complained of v. 4. Most of our

2 [f] The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were [g] any that did understand, *and* [h] seek God.

3 They are [i] all gone aside; they are *all* together become [k] filthy: [l] *there is* none that doeth good, no, not one.

4 [l] Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who [m] eat up my people *as* they eat bread, [n] and call not upon the LORD.

5 There † were they in great fear: for [o] God *is* in [p] the generation of the righteous.

6 [q] Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because [r] the LORD *is* his refuge.

7 ‡ Oh, that [s] the salvation of Israel *were come* out of Zion! When the LORD [t] bringeth back the captivity of his people, [u] Jacob

[f] 33:13,14. 102:19,20. Gen. 6:12. 11: 5. 18:21. Is. 63:15. 64:1. Lam. 3: 50.
[g] 82:5. 107:43. Prov. 2:9. 8:5. 9:4, 16. Is. 27:11. Jer. 4:22. Dan. 12: 10. Matt. 13:15. Rom. 3:11.
[h] 69:32. 83:16. 2 Chr. 19:3. 30:19. Is. 8:19. 55:6. Heb. 11:6.
[i] 119:176. Ec. 7:29. Is. 53:6. 59:7,8, 13—15. Jer. 2:13. Rom. 3:12,23. Eph. 2:3. 2 Pet. 3:13—15.
[k] Heb. *stinking.* 38:5. Job 15:16. Is. 64:6. Ez. 36:25. 2 Cor. 7:1.
[l] 1. Ex. 8:31. 12:30. Deut. 1:35. Job 14:4. Rom. 3:10. 1 Cor. 6:5.
[l] 94:8,9. Is. 5:13. 27:11. 29:14. 44: 19,20. 45:20. Rom. 1:21,22,28. 2 Cor. 4:3,4. Eph. 4:17,18.
[m] Jer. 10:25. Am. 8:4. Mic. 3:2,3. Gal. 5:15.
[n] 79:6. Job 21:15. 27:10. Is. 64:7.
† Heb. *they feared a fear.* 53:5. Ex. 15:16. Esth. 8:17. Prov. 1:26,27. 28:1. Is. 7:2. 8:12.
[o] 48:5,7,11. Is. 8:10. 12:6. 41:10. 43: 1,2. Matt. 1:23.
[p] 22:30. 24:6. 73:15. 112:2. 1 Pet. 2:9.
[q] 3:2. 4:2. 22:7,8. 42:10. Neh. 4:2—4. Is. 37:10,11. Ez. 35:10. Dan. 3: 15. Matt. 27:40—43.
[r] 9:9. 142:4,5. Heb. 6:18.
‡ Heb. *Who will give,* &c. 53:6. 106: 47. 1 Chr. 16:35.
[s] 25:22. 51:18. Is. 14:32. 45:17. 46: 13. 59:20. 62:11. Zech. 9:9. Luke 2:10,11. Rom. 11:26.
126:1,2,4. Job 42:20. Jer. 30:18. 31: 23. Ez. 39:25. Joel 3:1. Am. 9:14.
[t] 43:11. 85:6. 149:2. Neh. 12:43. Jer. 33:10,11. Rev. 18:20. 19:7.

Pss., from the 31 to this, except the 8th, David had been complaining of those that hated and persecuted, insulted and abused him; now here he traces all those bitter streams to the fountain, the general corruption of nature, and sees that not his enemies only, but all men, were thus corrupted. If we apply our hearts, as Solomon, *to search out the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness,* these vs. will assist, and show us that sin is exceeding sinful. Sin is the disease of mankind, and appears here to be malignant and epidemical.

1. How malignant, *v.* 1. in two things,

(1.) The contempt it puts on the honor of God; something of practical atheism being at the bottom of all sin. We are sometimes tempted to think, 'Surely there never was so much atheism and profaneness as in our days;' but we see the former days were no better. Observe, The sinner here described; he is one that *saith in his heart, There is no God: in his heart,* it is not his judgment. He cannot satisfy himself there is none, but he wishes there were none, and pleases himself with the fancy, that it is possible there may be none; he cannot be *sure,* but is willing to *think* there is none. He dares not speak it out, less he be confuted, and so undeceived, but whispers it secretly *in his heart,* to silence his conscience, and embolden himself in evil. His character is that of a fool, simple, unwise; and this is an evidence of it: he is wicked and profane; and this is the cause of it. Note, Atheistical thoughts are very foolish, wicked thoughts, and at the bottom of a great deal of the wickedness in the world. The Word of God is a *discerner of these thoughts,* and puts a just brand on him that harbors them. *Nabal is his name, and folly is with him;* for he thinks against the clearest light, against his own knowledge and convictions, and the common sentiments of all the wise and sober part of mankind. No man will say, *There is no God,* till he is so hardened in sin, that it is become his interest that there should be none, to call him to an account.

(2.) The disgrace and debasement it puts on man's nature. Sinners are corrupt, quite degenerated from what man was in his innocent estate; *They are become filthy, v.* 3. putrid. All their faculties are so disordered, they are become odious to their Maker, and utterly incapable of answering the ends of their creation. They are corrupt indeed; they do God no service, bring Him no honor, nor do themselves any real kindness; their works are *abominable,* Jer. 44: 4. and, sooner or later, will be *found to be hateful,* 36: 2. making desolate, Matt. 24: 15. This follows on their saying, *There is no God:* for they that *profess they know God, but in works deny Him, are abominable, and to every good work reprobate,* Tit. 1: 16.

2. How epidemical; the disease has infected the whole race. To prove this, God Himself is here a Witness, an Eye-Witness, *v.* 2, 3. Observe, His inquiry and its result, *v.* 3. Upon search, the apostasy appeared universal. Till the free and mighty grace of God has wrought a change, whatever good is in any, or done by them, it is not of themselves, but God's work in them. When God had made the world, He looked upon his own work, and *all was very good;* but, some time after, he looked upon man's work, and, behold, all was very bad, Gen. 6: 5. every operation of the thought of man's heart was evil, only evil, and that continually. In singing this, let us lament the corruption of our own nature, and see our need of grace; and since what is born of the flesh is flesh, let us not marvel that we must be born again.

V. 4—7. In these vs. the psalmist endeavors,

1. To convince sinners of the evil and danger of their way, how secure soever they seem in it. Three things he shows them; (1.) Their wickedness; described in four instances. They are themselves *workers of iniquity;* they design it, practise it, and take as much pleasure in it as ever any man in his business; nay, it is their meat and drink to persecute, they *eat up God's people;* they do it easily, daily, securely, without either check, or remorse of conscience; as Joseph's brethren *cast him into a pit,* and then *sat down to eat bread:* such is their innate and inveterate enmity, and so heartily do they desire their ruin, because they really hate God. See Mic. 3: 2, 3. They *call not upon the Lord.* Note, Those that care not for God's people, for God's poor, care not for God Himself. The reason people run into all manner of wickedness, even the worst, is, they do not call on God for his grace. What good can be expected from those that live without prayer? They *shame the counsel of the poor,* and upbraid them with making God their Refuge, as David's enemies upbraided him, 11: 1. Note, Those are very wicked indeed, and have a great deal to answer for, who not only live without religion themselves, but say and do what they can to put others out of conceit with it, that are well-inclined. Those that banter religion and religious people, will find, to their cost, it is dangerous persecuting those that make God their Refuge. *Be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong.* (2.) Their folly; *They have no knowledge;* this is obvious. (3.) Their danger, *v.* 5. *There were they in great fear;* there, where they ate up God's people, their own consciences condemned what they did, and filled them with secret terrors. Many instances there have been of proud and cruel persecutors, who have been made like Pashur, *Magor-missabibs—Terrors to themselves,* and all about them. They that will not fear God, perhaps may be made to fear at the shaking of a leaf.

2. He endeavors to comfort the people of God, (1.) With what they have; they have God's presence, *v.* 5. He *is in the generation of the righteous;* they have his protection, *v.* 6. *The Lord is their Refuge.* (2.) With what they hope for; the *salvation of Israel, v.* 7. When David was driven out by Absalom and his rebellious accomplices, he comforted himself with an assurance, that God would in due time *turn again his captivity,* to the joy of all his good subjects. But surely this pleasing prospect looks farther; salvation from sin,

own and of the Jewish interpreters refer it to the times of the Bab. captivity.—Whether this or Ps. 53. is repeated, and which of the two is genuine, or original, cannot be determined.' ROSENM.

Verse 1.

This Ps. is thought to have been written on Absalom's rebellion, and the people's defection from their aged and pious king; and the mention of Zion, as the place whence salvation was to come, (7) shows that it was composed some time after David came to the kingdom over all Israel. From the degeneracy of Israel shown in that instance, the Psalmist takes occasion to lament the entire depravity of human nature: and the Ps. is almost entirely the same as the 53d.—The word *fool,* in Scripture, denotes one who not only is destitute of true wisdom, but who hates it; the openly ungodly and wicked man. (*M. R.* a.) Persons of this description, 'like not to retain God in their knowledge,' and therefore 'say in their hearts, No God.'—This is the real history of the rise and progress of atheism, that deepest stigma of human nature. Man, having done abominable works, being conscious of guilt, and bent on further transgression, expects nothing but wrath from God, and so runs into atheism for a shelter from terror and alarm: unless idolatry, or some species of false religion, can be rendered equally efficacious in quieting the conscience, and giving encouragement in sin. And, as speculative atheism is the offspring of a depraved heart and vicious life, it also tends to increase wickedness: thus the fatal infection spreads, and produces degeneracy and profligacy. (*Rom.* 1:28—32.) SCOTT.—*For ever.*] 'Better, *entirely*—so *Gesenius,* after Luther and other German critics.' MORISON.

Verses 2, 3.

This must be understood of man left to himself, man as he is by nature, without regeneration. (*Rom.* 3:9—20.)—Between this v. and that which follows, three vs. are inserted in the version used in the Common Prayer Book, which are taken from some copies of the Sept.: for in other copies they are not found, any more than in the Heb. and Syr. The apostle in Rom. 3: has the same vs.; and it is evident he selected them from several parts of the O. T., especially from Pss. 5. 36. 140. and Is. 59: probably therefore some transcriber of the Sept. inserted those vs. from that remarkable passage of the apostle. SCOTT.

Verses 4—6.

Every kind of wickedness will, in the event, be found contrary to prudence and wise self-love. SCOTT.

(4.) *Eat.*] An orientalism still in use, see *Bush's* Ill. ED.

Verse 7.

The more fully and deeply David experienced and witnessed the depravity of man, and the disposition of Israel to apostatise; the more fervently he longed and prayed for the salvation of Israel; by which it is reasonable to suppose, that he did not merely intend Israel's deliverance from bondage, or from subjection to foreign enemies or domestic usurpers: nor his own restoration to the throne, and return to the courts of God; but especially the promised kingdom and salvation of the Messiah. *Salvation.*] The Heb. nearly the same as JESUS. (*Mat.* 1:20, 21.) SCOTT.

shall rejoice, *and* Israel shall be glad.

PSALM XV.

The inhabitant of Zion, or character of the heirs of heaven, 1—5.

A Psalm of David.

LORD, [a] who shall [*] abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in [b] thy holy hill?

2 [c] He that walketh uprightly, and [d] worketh righteousness, and [e] speaketh the truth in his heart.

3 *He that* [f] backbiteth not with his tongue, nor [g] doeth evil to his neighbor, nor [†] taketh up a reproach against his neighbor.

4 In whose eyes [h] a vile person is contemned; [i] but he honoreth them that fear the LORD. *He that* [k] sweareth to *his own* hurt, and changeth not.

5 *He that* [l] putteth not out his money to usury,

a 1:1—4. 23:3. 24:3—5. 27:4. 61:4. 84:4. 92:13. John 3:3—5. 14:3. 17: 24. Rev. 7:14—17. 21:3,4,23,24.
* Heb. *sojourn.*
b 2:6. 3:4. 43:3,4. 87:1—3. Heb. 12: 22. Rev. 14:1
c 84:11. Prov. 2:7,8. 28:18. Is. 33: 15. Mic. 2:7. Luke 1:6. Gal. 2:14. 1 John 2:6.
d Acts 10:35. Rom. 2:10. Eph. 2:10. Heb. 11:33. 1 John 2:29. 3:7. Rev. 22:14,15.
e 34:12,13. Is. 63:8. Zech. 8:16,17. Eph. 4:25. Col. 3:9. Rev. 21:8.
f 101:5—8. Ex. 23:1. Lev. 19:16. Jer. 9:4—9. Rom. 1:30. Tit. 3:2. Jam. 4:11. 1 Pet. 2:1,2.
g 1 Sam. 24:11. Is. 56:2. Matt. 7:12. Rom. 12:17. 13:10. 3 John 11.
† Or, *receiveth*, or, *endureth.* Prov. 22:10. 25:23.
h 101:4. 2 K. 3:13,14. Esth. 3:2. Job 32:21,22. Is. 32:5,6. Dan. 5:17,&c. Acts 24:2,3,25. Jam. 2:1—9.
i 16:3. 101:6. 119:63. Matt. 12:49,50. 1 John 3:14.
k Josh. 9:18—20. Judg. 11:35. 2 Sam. 21:1,2. Matt. 5:33.
l Ex. 22:25. Lev. 25:35—37. Deut. 23:19,20. Neh. 5:2—5 7—13. Ez. 18: 8,17. 22:12.

that great salvation which should be wrought out by the Redeemer, who was expected *to come to Zion, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob.* The triumphs of Zion's King will be the joys of Zion's children. The second coming of Christ, finally to extinguish the dominion of sin and Satan, will be the completing of this salvation, which is the hope, and will be the joy, of every Israelite indeed; with the assurance of that, we should, in singing this, comfort ourselves, and one another, with reference to the present sins of sinners, and sufferings of saints.

Ps. XV. V. 1—5. The scope of this short but excellent Ps. is, to show us the way to heaven, and to convince us, that, if we would be happy, we must be holy and honest. Christ, who is Himself the Way, and in whom we must walk as our Way, has also showed us the same way that is here prescribed, Matt. 19: 17. *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* Here is,

I. A very serious and weighty question concerning the character of a citizen of Zion, *v.* 1. This supposes it is a great privilege to be a citizen of Zion, an unspeakable honor and advantage; that a remnant only are thus privileged; and they not by their birth and blood; but, according as their hearts and lives are. It concerns us all to put this question to ourselves, *Lord, what shall I be, and do, that I may abide in thy tabernacle?* Luke 18: 18. Acts 16: 30.

1. This inquiry is addressed to God Himself. Note, Those that would find the way to heaven, must look up to God, take direction from his Word, and beg direction from his Spirit. It is fit He Himself should give laws to his servants, appoint the conditions of his favors, tell who are his, and who not.

2. It is expressed in Old Testament language. By the *tabernacle* we may understand the church militant, typified by Moses' tabernacle, fitted to a wilderness-state, mean and movable. Who shall dwell in this tabernacle? Who shall be accounted a true, living member of God's church? We are concerned to inquire this, because many pretend to a place in this tabernacle, who really have no part nor lot in the matter. By the *holy hill* we may understand the church triumphant, alluding to mt. Zion, on which the temple was to be built by Solomon. It is the happiness of glorified saints, that they dwell there, they shall be for ever there. It concerns us to make this sure to ourselves, then rejoice in prospect of it.

II. A very plain and particular answer. Those that desire to know their duty, with a resolution to do it, will find the Scripture a very faithful director, and conscience a faithful monitor. Let us see then the particular character of a citizen of Zion.

1. He is sincere and entire in his religion; *He walketh uprightly*, according to the condition of the covenant, Gen. 17: 1. '*Walk before Me, and be thou perfect*,' (it is the same word here,) 'then thou shalt find Me a God All-sufficient.' He is really what he professes to be, is sound at heart, and can approve himself to God, in his integrity, in all he does; his conversation is uniform, and he is of a piece with himself, and endeavors to stand complete in all the will of God. His eye perhaps is weak, but it is single; he has his spots indeed, but does not paint; an *Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile*, John 1: 47. 2 Cor. 1: 12. I know no religion, but sincerity.

2. He is conscientiously honest and just in all his dealings, faithful and fair to all with whom he has to do. He *worketh righteousness;* is just both to God and man; and, in speaking to both, he speaks that which is *the truth in the heart;* his prayers, professions, and promises to God, come not out of feigned lips, nor dares he tell a lie, or so much as equivocate, in his converse or commerce with men: he reckons that that cannot be a good bargain, nor a saving one, which is made with a lie, and that he who wrongs his neighbor, will prove, in the end, to have done the greatest injury to himself.

3. He does all the good he can to his neighbors; but is very careful to hurt no man. He is especially careful not to injure his neighbor in his good name, *v.* 8. though many who would not otherwise wrong their neighbors, make nothing of that; if any man, in this matter, bridles not his tongue, his religion is vain. He knows the worth of a good name, therefore he backbites not, defames no man, speaks evil of no man, makes not others' faults the subject of his common talk, much less of his sport and ridicule, nor speaks of them with pleasure, nor at all but for edification; he makes the best of every body, and the worst of nobody. He frowns on a backbiting tongue, and so silences it, Prov. 25: 23. If an ill-natured character of his neighbor be given him, or an ill-natured story be told him, he will disprove it, if he can; if not, it shall die with him, and go no farther. His charity will *cover a multitude of sins.*

4. He values men by their virtue and piety, not by their figure in the world, *v.* 5. (1.) Wicked people are vile people, worthless and good for nothing; so the word signifies; dross, chaff, salt that has lost its savor; they are vile in their choices, Jer. 2: 13. in their practices, Is. 32: 6. For this, wise and good men contemn them, not denying them civil honor and respect as men, as men in

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If the thoughts of ungodly persons were detected and published, as they will be at the day of judgment, how vile would they appear! (1 *Cor.* 4: 3—5.)—Men differ in their peculiar propensities* and outward characters: but are all naturally carnal, alienated from God, destitute of true wisdom, incapable of things spiritually good, gone aside from the right way, and corrupt in their desires and imaginations: therefore all would have gone further, and sunk deeper in 'abominable works,' continually and eternally, if it had not been for the inestimable redemption of Jesus Christ. We should be thankful, if we have been restrained from the more destructive excesses, into which so many are hurried; but we ought not to rest in any thing short of union with Christ, and a new creation unto holiness by his Spirit. If we have experienced this blessed change, let us give the Lord all the glory; and let us pity and pray for our fellow sinners.—The enmity of the human heart against God appears, not only from man's proud aversion to call on his name, but from the delight, which in all ages men have taken, in persecuting his inoffensive people.—All our acquaintance with the depravity of human nature, should endear to us 'salvation out of Zion.' SCOTT.

* Rather, all have the same number of propensities, &c. but these *differ in force* in different individuals: and the influence of the selfish and animal appetites, &c. predominates in all men. *Ed.*

NOTES.

Ps. XV. 'The Ps. is highly important, as it shows the exalted character of that morality which was demanded of God's ancient people, and which the acknowledged principles of their faith were eminently fitted to promote.' MORISON.

Verse 1.

Probably as soon as the ark was stationed on Zion, the Psalmist addressed himself to God; desirous of being taught who would be the accepted and persevering worshipper at his tabernacle. (*Heb.* 12:22—25.) It is not inquired, what are the grounds of a sinner's acceptance with God: on this subject we are fully instructed in other parts of Scripture; but the question is virtually this: Who is he, that so worships God in this world, as to have a well grounded hope of eternal life hereafter? And the answer is evidently in perfect consistency with the N. T. and especially with John's first epistle, *viz.* 'They may be distinguished by their sanctification.' (1 *John* 2:3—6, 28—29. 3:4—10, 18—24. 5:1—5.) Thus believers are conformed in their measure to Christ, the perfect Exemplar: and the character, here given of them, forms a beautiful contrast to that of ungodly men, as delineated in the preceding Ps. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verses 2, 3.

'The fruits meet for repentance;' 'the work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope,' 'the fruits of the Spirit,' and 'the things which accompany salvation,' are here compendiously enumerated, or rather pointed out, in some of the most striking and observable particulars. SCOTT.

Verse 4.

'The vile person' is an openly wicked and ungodly man, who renders himself base and contemptible by his crimes. (1 *Sam.* 25 23—31. *Dan.* 11: 21. *M. R.*)—The Sept. render the last clause, 'He that sweareth *to his neighbor*, and changeth not; which requires only a little alteration in the pointing. SCOTT.—'The original affords, unquestionably, the sense also of the former Eng. tr. "*He that setteth not by himself, but is lowly in his own eyes;*" which sense none reject, as not agreeable to the Heb.' ASSEMB. ANN.—'He that will not be honest *without* an oath, will not *with* one.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 5.

The concluding clause of this v. in the original, is emphatical. 'He that doeth these things shall not be moved for ever,' *i. e.* to eternity SCOTT.—*Usury.*] 'The Heb. is derived from a word denoting the act

[m] nor taketh reward against the innocent. [n] He that doeth these *things* shall never be moved.

PSALM XVI.

David seeks protection from God, disclaims all merit; and avows his love to the saints, and his hatred of idolatry, 1—4. He rejoices in God as his Portion, and thanks Him for giving him counsel, 5—7. He speaks prophetically of the resurrection and glory of Christ, and of the happiness of his people, 8—11.

* Michtam of David.

[a] PRESERVE me, O God: [b] for in thee do I put my trust.

2 *O my soul,* [c] thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou *art* my Lord: [d] my goodness *extendeth* not to thee;

3 [e] *But* to [f] the saints that *are* in the earth, and *to* [g] the excellent, [h] in whom *is* all my delight.

m Ex. 23:7,8. Deut. 16:19. Is. 33:15. Mic. 7:3. Matt. 26:15. 27:3—5.
n 55:22. 106:3. 112:6. Prov. 12:3. Ez. 18:27. Matt. 7:21—25. John 13:17. Jam. 1:22—25. 2 Pet. 1:10,11.
* Or, *A golden* Psalm *of David* 56: —60: *titles.*
a 17:5,8. 31:23. 37:28. 97:10. 116:6. Prov. 2:8.
b 9:10. 22:8. 25:20. 84:12. 125:1. 143:5. Is. 26:3,4. Jer. 17:7,8. 2 Cor. 1:9. 2 Tim. 1:12.
c 8:1. 27:8. 31:14. 89:26. 91:2. Is. 26:13. 44:5. Zech. 13:9. John 20: 28.
d 5:9,10. Job 22:2,3. 35:7. Luke 17: 10. Rom. 11:35.
e Gal. 6:10. Tit. 3:8. Heb. 6:10.
f 30:4. 116:15. 2 Chr. 6:41. Acts 9: 13. Eph. 1:1.
g Prov. 12:26. Cant. 4:1, &c. 6:4, &c. 7:1, &c.
h 119:63. Prov. 8:31. 13:20. Cant. 7: 10. Is. 62:4. Eph. 5:25—27. 1 John 3:14—17.

authority and power perhaps, 1 Pet. 2: 17. Rom. 13: 7. but, in their judgment of them, agreeing with God's Word. So far from envying, they pity them, despising their gains, Isa. 33: 15. as turning to no account; their dainties, 141: 4. their pleasures, Heb. 11: 24, 25. as sapless and insipid. They despise their society; 119: 115. 2 K. 3: 14. their taunts and threats; the feeble efforts of their impotent malice, 2: 1, 4. and will shortly see their fall, 53: 6, 7. God despises them, and they are of his mind. (2.) He thinks the worse of no man's piety, for his poverty and meanness, *but He knows them that fear the Lord.* With him serious piety, wherever found, honors a man, and makes his face to shine, more than wealth, or wit, or a great name among men, does, or can. By this, we may judge of ourselves in some measure, What rules do we go by in judging of others?

5. He always prefers a good conscience before any secular interest or advantage whatsoever; *v.* 4. See how weak-sighted and short-sighted even wise and good men may be; they may swear to their own hurt, which they were not aware of when they took the oath: but see how strong the obligation of an oath is, that a man must rather suffer loss to himself and his family, than wrong his neighbor by breaking his oath. An oath is a sacred thing, which we must not think to play fast and loose with.

6. He will not increase his estate by any unjust practices, *v.* 5. (1.) Not by extortion; *He putteth not out his money to usury,* that he may live at ease on the labors of others, while in a capacity for improving it by his own industry. Not that it is any breach of the law of justice or charity, for the lender to share in the profit which the borrower makes of his money, any more than for the owner of the land to demand rent from the occupant, money being, by art and labor, as improvable as land: [and, when laws do not interfere, as much an article of merchandise.] But a citizen of Zion will freely lend to the poor, according to his ability, and not be rigorous and severe in recovering his right from persons reduced by Providence. (2.) Not by bribery.

III. The Ps. concludes with a ratification of this character of the citizen of Zion; He is like Zion-hill itself, which cannot be moved, but abides for ever; 125: 1. temptations shall not overcome him, troubles shall not overwhelm him, nothing shall rob him of his present peace, or his future bliss.

In singing this, we must teach and admonish ourselves, and one another, to answer the character here given of the citizen of Zion.

Ps. XVI. V. 1—7. This Ps. has something of David in it, but much more of Christ. It begins with such expressions of devotion as may be applied to Christ; but concludes with such confidence of a resurrection, so timely as to prevent corruption, as must be applied to Christ only, and not to David, as both Peter and Paul have observed, *Acts* 2: 24.—13: 36. David speaks of himself as a member of Christ, and so speaks the language of all good Christians; he speaks of himself as a type of Christ, and so it is the language of Christ Himself, to whom all the rest of the Ps. from *v.* 7. is expressly, and at large, applied, *Acts* 2: 25, &c.

Michtam, some translate *golden;* and so the Ps. is, very precious, more to be valued by us than gold; because it speaks so plainly of Christ, the true Treasure hid in the field of the O. T.

1. David here flies to God's protection with a cheerful, believing confidence in it, *v.* 1. 'Those that by faith commit themselves to the divine care, and submit themselves to the divine guidance, have reason to hope for the benefit of both. This is applicable to Christ, who prayed, *Father, save Me from this hour,* and trusted in God that He would deliver Him.

2. He recognises his solemn dedication of himself to God, as his God. *v.* 2. Note, It is the duty and interest of every one of us, to acknowledge the Lord for our Lord, to subject ourselves to Him, and then to stay ourselves upon Him. *Adonai* signifies *my Stayer,* the Strength of my heart. This must be done with our souls. Covenanting with God must be heart-work; all that is within us must be employed and engaged. Those who have avouched the Lord for their Lord, should be often putting themselves in mind of what they have done; stand to it, abide by it, take the comfort of it, and live up to it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We should all, with hearts devoutly lifted up to God in prayer, inquire who they are, that so 'walk with Him in his ordinances and commandments,' as to possess a well-grounded assurance of dwelling with Him in heaven for ever. If we would ascend after our risen Savior to that holy habitation, we must copy his example; for 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' This will both *evidence* our title to 'the inheritance of the saints in light,' and prepare us for it. If we be indeed born again, and led by the spirit of Christ, we shall bring forth 'the fruits of the Spirit, in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.' Unfeigned piety; constant and conscientious integrity in all our dealings; sincerity and fidelity in all our professions and engagements; and abhorrence of slander in all its hateful forms; a carefulness not to injure any man, in body or soul, in his connections, property, reputation, or peace; a mind deeply humbled before God in self-abasement for sin, yet superior to flattering or fawning on wicked men from selfish motives; and disposed to love and honor the image of God in the poorest and meanest of his people; a willingness to recede from every personal advantage, rather than seem to do evil; and, at the same time, a determination to adhere scrupulously to duty and conscience; a disposition to keep at the utmost distance from oppression and injustice, and to cultivate humanity and benevolence to the poor and afflicted; a union of all these tempers, and this habitual conduct, can spring only from repentance of sin, faith in the Savior, and love to his name and cause; and therefore they form an unequivocal proof of our acceptance in Him. 'He that doeth these things shall not be moved to eternity.'

SCOTT.

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of biting as does a serpent. Striking emblem of a greedy, griping usurer, who grinds the faces of the poor and distressed.' MOR. 'The Roman laws condemned the usurer to forfeit 4 times the sum. *Cato.*'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

NOTES.

Ps. XVI. 'A hymn prophetically descriptive of the Messiah; as expressing his abhorrence of the general idolatry of mankind, and his own zeal for the honor of Jehovah: with the full assurance of his being raised from the dead, before *his body should be corrupted* in the grave. That David did not here speak of *himself,* but of the Messiah, and of him only, is asserted, Acts 2:25—32. 13:35—37. And if this Ps. speaks in a literal sense concerning an *actual and speedy resurrection;* by that same literal sense *David himself* is necessarily excluded.' *Kennicott,* in Dr. J. P. SMITH. 'The entire Ps. is replete with interest, as applied to the Lord Jesus; in its different parts it is He that speaks by the mouth of David; and the difficulties involved in this principle of interpretation may be all obviated, by keeping constantly in view the distinction between the divine and human natures of the Messiah.'

MORISON.

Title.] Probably David began his meditation with reference to his own case: but he was carried out beyond himself to use expressions prophetical of the Messiah, and indeed he seems to have known, that the Holy Spirit intended much greater things than any of his personal concerns. In this view, it may be considered, as, throughout, the soliloquy of Christ. SCOTT. '*D'Herbelot* observes of the works of seven of the most excellent Arabian poets, that they are called *Al Modhahebat,* i. e. *golden,* because written in letters of gold [note, Job 29.] on Egyptian paper.—Might not the six Pss. thus distinguished, viz. this and Pss. 55—60. be so called from their having been, on some occasion, written in letters of gold, and hung up in the sanctuary?' *Cot. Bib.*—'Why the *six* Pss. should be golden rather than many others, one would find it difficult to say.'

Prof. STUART.

Verses 2, 3.

Even the perfect righteousness of the Savior can add nothing to the *essential* glory and happiness of the Father; but it is the meritorious cause of the acceptance, and sanctification, and eternal felicity of his people, in whom *alone* of Adam's race He greatly delights. (*Prov.* 8: 31. *Is.* 62:1—5. *John* 15:9—11. *Eph.* 5:22—27.) SCOTT. 'This seems a declaration, on the part of the Messiah, as to the real design of his undertaking,—an announcement that its benefit could not extend to the independent and self-existent Jehovah, but only to that people whom, in character of a surety, He represented. A doubt may be expressed whether "*O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord,*" may not be rendered "*I have said unto Jehovah.*" So *Montanus, Horsley, Boothr.* and others, also the *Sept.* ['So,' says Pr. *Stuart,* 'most recent critics incline to render it.'] Some think it an address of Christ to his church: "Thou hast said, Lord," &c.—*Extending.*] One class of interpreters understand the Messiah as asserting that all his goodness is given to Him by the Father. So the *Chal.* the *Syr. Horsley, Kennicott,* and *Boothr.* variously expressing it, "My good is given only by Thee"—"My good is from thee"—"Thou art my good,"—"not beside Thee,"—"My goodness is not without Thee"—"No good have I

4 [i] Their sorrows shall be multiplied *that* [*] hasten *after* another *god:* [k] their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor [l] take up their names into my lips.

5 [m] The LORD *is* the Portion of [†] mine inheritance and [n] of my cup: [o] thou maintainest my lot.

6 [p] The lines are fallen unto me [q] in pleasant *places;* yea, [r] I have a goodly heritage.

7 I will bless the LORD, [s] who hath given me counsel; [t] my reins also instruct me [u] in the night seasons.

8 [x] I have set the LORD always before me: because [y] *he is* at my right hand, [z] I shall not be moved.

9 Therefore [a] my heart is glad, and [b] my glory rejoiceth: [c] my flesh also shall [‡] rest in hope.

i 32:10. 97:7. Jon. 2:8. Rev. 14:9—11. 18:4,5.
* Or, *give gifts to another.*
k Gen. 35:14. Lev. 23:13. Is. 57:6. 65:11. 66:3. Jer. 7:18.
l Ex. 23:13. Josh. 23:7. Hos. 2:16,17.
m 73:26. 119:57. 142:5. Jer. 10:16. Lam. 3:24.
† Heb. *my part.*
n 11:6. 23:5. 116:13. Eph. 5:18.
o 2:6. 9:4. 21:7—12. 61:6,7. 89:4, 20—37. 110:1,2. 132:11,17,18. Is. 42:1. 53:12. Acts 2:32. 5:31. 1 Cor. 15:25.
p 78:55. Am. 7:17.
q 21:1—3. Heb. 12:2.
r Jer. 3:19. John 10:17. Rom. 8:17. 1 Cor. 3:21—23. Eph. 1:18. Phil. 2: 9 11. 2 Tim. 2:12. Rev. 3:21.
s 73:24. 119:7. Prov. 8:14. Is. 11:2—4. 48:17. 50:4.
t 73:21. Jer. 12:2. 17:10. Rev. 2:23.
u 17:3. 22:2. 42:8. 63:6. 77:2,6. 119: 55 148. Is. 26:9. Luke 6:12.
x 139:18. Acts 2:25—28. Heb. 11:27.
y 73:23. 109:31. 110:5. 121:5.
z 15:5. 62:6.
a Luke 10:21,22.
b 30:12. 57:8. Acts 2:26 Jam. 3:5—9.
c Job 14:14,15. 19:26,27. Prov. 14:32. Is. 26:19. 1 Thes. 4:13,14.
‡ Heb. *dwell confidently.*

3. He devotes himself to the honor of God, in the service of the saints, *v.* 2, 3. Observe, 1. Those that have taken the Lord for their Lord, must, like Him, be good, and do good; we do not expect happiness without goodness. 2. We cannot pretend to merit any thing; Our goodness extends not to God. The wisest, and best, and most useful men in the world, cannot be profitable to God, Job 22: 2.—35: 7. David owns it, 1 Chr. 29: 14. 3. If God be ours, we must, for his sake, extend our goodness to those that are his; for what is done to them, He is pleased to take as done to Himself, having constituted them his receivers. Note, There are saints on earth; and such we must all be, or we shall never be saints in heaven; such are renewed by the grace, and devoted to the glory of God: these are excellent, great, mighty, magnificent, yet some were so poor, they needed David's goodness. God makes them excellent by grace. *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor*, and then he accounts them excellent. Their God is their Glory. All that have taken the Lord for their God, delight in his saints as excellent ones, because they bear his image, and because He loves them. David, though a king, was a *companion of all that feared God*, 119: 63. It is not enough to delight in the saints, but, as there is occasion, we must show them kindness, and abound in the labor of love to them. This is applicable to Christ. The salvation He wrought out for us was no gain to God; but the goodness and benefit of it extend to us men. *For their sakes*, says He, *I sanctify Myself.* Christ delights even in the saints on earth, notwithstanding their weaknesses and manifold infirmities, which is a good reason why we should.

4. He disclaims all false gods, and all communion with their worshippers, *v.* 4. Thus must we hate idols and idolatry with a perfect hatred. Some make this also applicable to Christ and his undertaking, showing the nature of his sacrifice: it was not the blood of bulls and goats, offered according to the law, (that was never named,) but his own; showing also the multiplied sorrows of the unbelieving Jews, who hastened after another king, Cæsar, and are still hastening after another Messiah in vain.

5. He repeats his solemn choice, *v.* 5. takes to himself the comfort of it, *v.* 6. and gives God the glory of it, *v.* 7. This is very much the language of a devout and pious soul in its gracious exercises. (1.) Choosing the Lord for its Portion and Happiness. 'Let me have the love and favor of God, and be accepted of Him; and I have enough, I need no more, I desire no more, to complete my felicity.' Would we do well and wisely for ourselves, we must take God, in Christ, to be the Portion of our inheritance in the other world; and the Portion of our cup, our nourishment and refreshment, in this. Those have not God for theirs, who do not reckon his comforts the most reviving cordials, and use them as sufficient to balance all grievances, to sweeten the most bitter cup. (2.) Confiding in Him to secure this portion; '*Thou maintainest my lot.* The saints and their bliss are kept by the power of God. (3.) Rejoicing in this portion, and taking a complacency in it, *v.* 6. *The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places;* they have reason to say so, that have God for their Portion. What can they have better? Or desire more? *Return unto thy Rest, O my soul*, and look no further. Note, Gracious persons, though they still covet more *of* God, never covet more *than* God; but, being satisfied *of* his loving-kindness, are abundantly satisfied *with* it, envy not any their sensual pleasures and delights, but account themselves truly happy in what they have, and doubt not but to be completely happy in what they hope for. (4.) Thanking God for it, and for grace to make this wise and happy choice, *v.* 7. So ignorant and foolish are we, that, if left to ourselves, we choose our own delusions, and forsake our own mercies for lying vanities; therefore, if we have indeed taken God for our Portion, and preferred spiritual and eternal blessings before sensible and temporal, we must thankfully acknowledge the power and goodness of divine grace, directing and enabling us to that choice. (5.) Making a good use of it. God having given him counsel by his Word and Spirit, his own *reins*, his own thoughts, when silent and solitary, his own conscience, called the *reins*, Jer. 17: 10. not only reflected with comfort on his choice, but instructed or admonished him concerning the duties arising out of it; [note, Job 27: 6.] catechized him, and engaged and quickened him to live as one that had God for his Portion; by faith to live upon Him and to Him. Those who have God for their Portion, and who will be faithful to Him, must give their own consciences leave to deal thus faithfully and plainly.

All this may be applied to Christ; we may also apply it to ourselves, in singing it, renewing our choice of God as ours, with a holy complacency and satisfaction.

V. 8—11. All these vs. are quoted by Peter in his first sermon, after the pouring out of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost; and he tells us expressly, David in them speaks of Christ, and particularly of his resurrection. Something we may allow of the workings of David's own pious and devout affections, but in these holy elevations toward God and heaven he was carried, by the Spirit of prophecy, quite beyond the consideration of himself and his own case, to foretell the glory of the Messiah, in such expressions as were peculiar to that, and could not be understood of himself. The N. T. furnishes

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but from Thee." Another class, [with whom *Morison* concurs] consider the Messiah as asserting that the work in which He was engaged was one, the benefit of which did not extend to the Divine Father. So the *Sept.* "Of my goods thou hast no need." Also the *Vulg.* and *Arab.* *Ainsw.* reads: "My goodness not unto Thee; i. e. extendeth not or pertaineth not to Thee; or is not for Thee." Dr. *A. Clarke*, "My bounty is not to Thee." ' MORISON.—Pr. *Stuart* says, 'Most commentators incline to interpret "*my goodness*," as having respect to the *goodness* or *happiness* bestowed on the speaker; not of the good conduct or deeds he has exhibited.' ED.

Verse 4.

It is the opinion of learned men, that this Ps. was composed when David lived among the Philistines; and when, perhaps, some of his associates were strongly tempted to join the idolatrous worship they witnessed. But he showed them, that this would certainly bring on them additional miseries, by the just judgment of God—adverting perhaps to Joshua's resolution. (*Josh.* 24:15.)—We do not read of 'drink-offerings of blood' in any other place. Either it was customary among the idolaters to taste the blood of the victims, (which were often *human* victims,) before it was poured out in honor of the idol; or they poured the blood, as the Israelites did wine, for a libation, on the sacrifice when burning on the altar: or else the wine, used in idolatrous sacrifices, was as abominable to God, as if the blood itself had been drunk; which, being the atonement for sin, was expressly prohibited to be tasted by the Israelites.—Even the sacrifices at the sanctuary of God at length became an abomination to those who rejected Christ; and to those who hastened after others professing to be the promised Messiah. In like manner the most splendid services of those, who approach God through other mediators than Jesus Christ, whether deceased men or angels, are, as idolatrous, an abomination to God. (*Is.* 66:3, 4. *Col.* 2:18, 19. *Heb.* 10 26, 27.) SCOTT.—*Sorrows.*] 'It is not a little remarkable, that the word rendered *sorrows* here, also signifies, as its primary meaning, *idols*; as if idolatry necessarily involved the misery of its votaries.'—*Another god.*] Or, "another *Messiah*," so some. See Dr. *A. Clarke* and *Gill.* 'Whether this be the true supplement or not, it conveys a sentiment the truth of which may be read with interest in the long, dark history of the Jewish nation.' MORISON. "Another way." *Stuart.* ED.—*Drink-offerings.*] 'The drink-offerings of the Jews were of wine only, Lev. 17:10—14. part of which was poured on the head of the victim; but the heathen offered "drink-offerings of blood, even of human blood, the blood of their enemies." In *Dupuis'* Journal in Ashantee, mention is made of a wretched tyrant, who delighted in drinking the blood of his enemies. In one instance, he had the body of an enemy bound, laid before him, "and pierced with hot irons; then gathering the blood as it flowed, in a vessel, he drank one half of it, and offered up the rest to his god." ' COTT. BIB. See also Hannibal's and Cataline's blood-drinking vows, in *Bush's* Ill. ED

Verses 5, 6.

As Canaan was divided by *lot* and *line*, these metaphors are used to represent his joy in the favor of God. (78:55. 23:5, 6. *Num.* 26:53—56 *Josh.* 13:6.) But the Savior Himself has obtained the most goodly heritage; and his people are admitted to partake of it. (*Matt.* 25:19—23. *Luke* 19:11—27. *Rev.* 3:20—22.) SCOTT.

Verse 7.

The Psalmist's experience, and the immediate communications of wisdom and knowledge he received during his midnight reflections and devotions, concurred with outward instructions, in teaching him to act with prudence and caution, in his difficult circumstances. They likewise combined, in confirming him to choose God for his Portion. In the dark season of adversity and affliction, and when chastened with painful sickness, as well as in the silent hours of the night, heavenly wisdom was communicated to him.—The *reins*, or *kidneys*, were considered, by the Israelites, as especially affected by whatever caused uneasiness or satisfaction; nay, they are often spoken of as the seat of reflection and the secret purposes of the soul. (*M. R.* t.) ID.

Verses 8—11.

David might perhaps have some regard to his own hope and experience, in these vs.: but doubtless Christ was specially intended. ID.

10 For thou wilt not leave [d] my soul in hell;
[e] neither wilt thou suffer
[f] thine Holy One to see corruption.

11 Thou wilt shew me [g] the path of life:
[h] in thy presence *is* fulness of joy;
[i] at thy right hand *there are* [k] pleasures for evermore.

PSALM XVII.

David appeals to God for his integrity, 1—4. He prays to be upheld, and saved from his proud, malicious, and prosperous enemies, 5—14. He chooses the path of righteousness, and expects complete satisfaction when he shall awake in the likeness of God, 15.

[a] A Prayer of David.

[b] HEAR * the right, O LORD; [c] attend unto my cry; give ear

d 9:17. 49:15. *marg.* 139:8. Deut. 32:22. Job 11:8. Prov. 15:11. 27: 20. Is. 5:14. 14:9. Am. 9:2. Luke 16:23. 1 Cor. 15:55. *marg.* Rev. 1: 18. 20:13,14.
e Acts 2:27—31. 13:35—38. 1 Cor. 15: 42,50—54.
f Dan. 9:24. Luke 1:35. 4:34. Acts 3:14.
g 21:4. Prov. 2:19. 4:18. 5:6. 12:28. Is. 2:3. Matt. 7:14. Rom. 3:11. 1 Pet. 1:21.
h 17:15. 21:5,6. Matt. 5:8. Acts 2: 28. 1 Cor. 13:12. 2 Cor. 4:17. Eph. 3:19. 1 John 3:2. Rev. 7:15—17. 22:5. Mark 16:19. Acts 7:56. 1 Pet. 3:22.
k 36:8. Matt. 25:46.
a 86: 142: *titles.*
b 7:8. 18:20. 43:1. 140:12. 1 John 3:21.
* Heb. *justice.*
c 5:2. 55:2,3. 61:1. 66:19. 142:6. 2 Chr. 7:15. Neh. 1:6. Dan. 9:18,19.

Three things bore Him up, and carried Him on thus cheerfully. (1.) The respect He had to his Father's will and glory in what He did; *I have set the Lord always before Me.* He still had an eye to his Father's commandment, John 10: 18.—14: 31. (2.) His assurance of his Father's presence with Him in his sufferings; *He is at my right hand;* a present Help to Me, nigh at hand in the time of need. *He is near that justifieth Me;* Isa. 50: 8. 89: 21. When in his agony, an angel was sent from heaven, to strengthen Him, Luke 22: 43. To this the victories and triumphs of the cross were all owing; it was the Lord at his right hand, that *struck through kings,* 110: 5. Isa. 42: 1, 2. (3.) The prospect He had of a glorious issue of his sufferings. It was *for the joy set before Him,* that He *endured the cross,* Heb. 12: 2. He rested in hope, and that made his rest glorious, Isa. 11: 10. He knew He should be justified in the Spirit by his resurrection, and straightway glorified. See John 13: 31, 32.

3. That He should be brought through his sufferings, and brought from under the power of death by a glorious resurrection. His soul, his human spirit should not be long left, as other men's spirits are, in a state of separation from the body, but should, in a little time, return and be re-united to it, never to part again. Being God's Holy One in a peculiar manner, sanctified to the work of redemption, and perfectly free from sin, He should not see corruption, nor feel it. This implies, that He should not only be raised from the grave, but raised so soon, that his dead body should not so much as begin to corrupt, which, in the course of nature, it would have done, if it had not been raised the third day. Under the law, it was strictly ordered, that those parts of the sacrifices, which were not burnt on the altar, should by no means be kept till the third day, lest they should putrefy, Lev. 7: 15, 18. which perhaps pointed at Christ's rising the third day, that He might not see corruption—neither was a bone of Him broken.

4. That He should be abundantly recompensed for his sufferings, with the joy set before Him, *v.* 11. He was well assured He should not miss of his glory; in confidence of this, when He gave up the ghost, He said, *Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit;* and, a little before, *Father, glorify Me with thine own Self.* He should be received into the presence of God, to sit at his right hand this would be the acceptance of his service, and the recompense of it. Thus, as a reward for his sorrows, He should have a fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore; not only the glory He had with God, as God, before all worlds, but the joy and pleasure of a Mediator, in seeing his seed, and the success and prosperity of his undertaking, Isa 53: 10, 11.

II. Christ being the Head of the body, the church, these vs. may, for the most part, be applied to all good Christians, who are guided and animated by the Spirit of Christ; and, in singing them, when we have first given glory to Christ, in whom, to our everlasting comfort, they have had their accomplishment, we may then encourage us with a key to let us into the mystery of these lines.

I. These vs. must certainly be applied to Christ; many of the O. T. prophets *testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow,* 1 Pet. 1: 11. and that is the subject here. It is foretold, as He Himself showed of this, no doubt, among other prophecies in this psalm, Luke 24: 44, 46. that *Christ should suffer, and rise from the dead,* 1 Cor. 15: 3, 4.

1. That He should suffer and die. This is implied here, when He says, *v.* 8. *I shall not be moved;* He supposed He should be struck at, and He prayed the cup might pass from Him. When He says, '*My flesh shall rest,*' it is implied, He must put off the body, and therefore must go through the pains of death. It is likewise plainly intimated, his soul must go into a state of separation from the body, and that his body, so deserted, would be in imminent danger of seeing corruption; that he should not only die, but be buried, and abide for some time under the power of death.

2. That He should be wonderfully borne up by the divine power, in suffering and dying: He should not be moved, nor driven off, from his undertaking, nor sink under the weight of it; He should not fail, nor be discouraged, Isa. 42: 4. but should proceed and persevere in it, till He could say, *It is finished.* And He was not moved, but set his face as a flint, Isa. 50: 7—9. *Here am I, let these go their way.* Nay, his heart should rejoice, and his glory be glad; He should go on with his undertaking, not only resolutely, but cheerfully, and with unspeakable pleasure and satisfaction; and so He did; witness that saying, *Now I am no more in the world, but I come to thee;* and that, *The cup that my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?* and many the like. By *his* glory is meant his *tongue,* as appears, Acts 2: 26. For our tongue is our glory, and never more so, than when employed in glorifying God.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our Lord and Savior has shown us, by his example, how to overcome temptations, and how we may be preserved through trials: we must trust in God, and pour out our prayers before Him, as in Christ reconciled to every believer.—When from our heart we avouch the God of heaven for our Lord, we shall for his sake do good to his people. And, as our righteousness and salvation were the purchase of his blood, we should not be reluctant to deny ourselves, to labor, or to suffer for that purpose.—Not only they who seek after other gods, but those who worship other mediators, and invent other methods of salvation than that revealed in the Scripture, are hastening to multiply their own sorrows: God abhors their pompous and expensive superstitions and services; our great High Priest will not present such sacrifices, nor mention the names of such worshippers, in his continual intercession; and Christians should carefully avoid all fellowship with anti-christian delusions. (*Rom.* 8:28—39.)—He who has learned to set God before Him, to act as in his presence, and to rely on his watchful care and protection, may be sharply tried and tempted: but he cannot be moved; for the power, which upheld the Savior, is engaged on his side. SCOTT.

(10.) *In hell.*] *Sheol. Acts* 2:27—32.—Many learned men interpret the two clauses of this v. to mean exactly the same thing, referring both of them to the body of Christ, laid in the grave, and raised before it saw corruption: but, as the article concerning 'Christ's descending into hell,' in the very ancient form called the apostle's creed, though doubtless of something later date than the apostolical age, is grounded on this expression, and the application of it; it is evident, that the compilers of it supposed, that something further was intended than merely being *buried.* And the original, as well as the LXX. quoted in the Acts of the Apostles, favors the idea of a distinct meaning in each clause. Both the Heb. word *sheol,* and the Greek *hades,* by which it is constantly rendered, denote the state of man, when no longer seen on earth. 'When spoken of the body, the grave;—when of the soul, that state in which the soul is without the body, whether *Paradise* or *Hell,* properly so called.' Abp. *Usher.* The human nature of Christ consisted of body and soul: his soul was, during the space between his death and his resurrection, as certainly in the place of separate spirits, as his body was in the grave; but when He arose, they were both called forth and re-united. (*Acts* 2:25—32. 13:24—37.) These words are never used, but with respect to men between death and the resurrection; and never concerning angels, or the state of men after the resurrection: nor are they ever used, when the burial or grave of an individual is spoken of. But they are applied, both with respect to the grave and the place of separation, to good and to bad men in general, without much discrimination: and the representation given in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, seems to place Lazarus as well as the rich man in *hades;* but in another division of it. (*Luke* 16:19—31.)—Thus the pagans placed their Elysium adjacent to Tartarus, as two parts in the same region of the dead. SCOTT.—*My soul in hell.*] 'Bp. *Pearson* says, "It appears, that the first intention of putting these words into the creed was only to express the burial of our Savior, or the descent of his body into the grave." It is most certain, however, that the phrase was afterwards explained, even by the Christian fathers, of Christ's descent into the place of punishment. See 1 Pet. 3:18, 19. "But that it was actually so, or that the apostle intended so much," the *Bp.* confesses is not manifest. See also *Witsius,* who contends, "that Christ descended into hell, the place of torment, is nowhere expressly affirmed in Scripture, nor in the most ancient creeds. The creeds which mentioned the *descent,* were generally silent with respect to the *burial;* nor was it without some mistake that both were afterwards joined together." Dr. *Smith* renders the first clause of this v. (10.) 'Thou wilt not leave my life in the grave," and *Kennicott* tr. "Thou wilt not abandon my life to the grave."' COTT. BIB.—'The entire context, and the par. pass. Acts 2:27. distinctly prove that *hell* here simply denotes the *grave,*—the place of the Redeemer's sepulture; and that *my soul* was intended to designate that life which actually expired on the cross. It is not denied, that the word rendered *soul* often denotes the spiritual part of man, as Deut. 26:16. Cant. 1:7. 1 Sam. 1:15. [note, Gen. 2:7.]; but in all such instances the context must determine.' MORISON.

(11.) *Fulness.*] 'The original denotes the perfection of that bliss which the human nature of the Savior realized when ushered into the divine presence.' ID.

NOTES.

Ps. XVII. 'It is by no means improbable, that there are prophetic bearings in this Ps. The Arab. favors the idea of its referring to the

unto my prayer, *that goeth* * not out of feigned lips.

2 [d] Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold [e] the things that are equal.

3 [f] Thou hast proved mine heart; [g] thou hast visited *me* in the night; thou hast tried me, *and* [h] shalt find nothing: [i] I am purposed *that* my mouth shall not transgress.

4 Concerning [k] the works of men, [l] by the word of thy lips, I have kept *me from* the paths of [m] the destroyer.

5 [n] Hold up my goings in thy paths, [o] *that* my footsteps † slip not.

6 [p] I have called upon thee; for thou wilt hear me, O God: [q] incline thine ear unto me, *and* hear my speech.

7 Show [r] thy marvellous loving kindness, O thou that ‡ savest [s] by thy right hand them which put their trust *in thee*, from those that rise up *against them*.

* Heb. *without lips of deceit.* 18:44. *marg.* 145:18. Jer. 3:10. Matt. 15: 8. John 1:47.
d 37:6,33. 2 Thes. 1:6—9. Jude 24.
e Ez. 18:25,29. 33:17,20.
f 11:5. 26:2. 66:10. 139:1—4. Job 23:10. Zech. 13:9. Mal. 3:2,3. 1 Cor. 4:4.
g 16:7. Job 24:14,15. Hos. 7:6. Mic. 2:1. Acts 16:9. 18:9,10.
h 7:4. 44:17—21. 1 Sam. 24:10,12. 26: 11,23. 2 Cor. 1:12.
i 39:1. 119:106. Acts 11:23. Jam. 3:2.
k 14:1—3. Gen. 6:5,11. Job 15:16. 31: 33. 1 Cor. 3:3. 1 Pet. 4:2,3.
l 119:9—11. Matt. 4:4,7,10. John 17: 17. Eph. 6:17. Jam. 1:18. Rev. 12: 11.
m 1 Pet. 5:8. Rev. 9:11. *marg.*
n 119:116,117,133. 121:3,7. 1 Sam. 2: 9. Jer. 10:23.
o 18:36. 38:16. 94:18.
† Heb. *be not moved.*
p 55:16. 63:19,20. 116:2.
q 13:3,4. Is. 37:17,20. Dan. 9:17—19.
r 31:21. 78:12. Rom. 5:20,21. Rev. 15:3.
‡ Or, *savest them which trust* in thee, *from those that rise up against thy right hand.* 5:11,12. 10:12—16. 1 Sam. 17:45—47. 25:28,29. 2 K. 19: 22,34. 2 Chr. 16:9.
s 20:6. 44:3. 60:5. Ex. 15:6. Is. 41: 10. Acts 2:33.

and edify ourselves and one another with them. Hence,

1. Our wisdom and duty is to set the Lord always before us, and at our right hand, wherever we are; and, while we do thus, we shall not be moved either from duty or comfort. Acts 20: 24.

2. If our eyes be ever toward God, our hearts and tongues may ever rejoice in Him; it is our own fault if they do not. If the heart rejoice in God, out of the abundance of that let the mouth speak, to his glory, and the edification of others.

3. Dying Christians may cheerfully put off the body, in a believing expectation of a joyful resurrection; *My flesh also shall rest in hope.* Our bodies have little rest in this world, but in the grave they shall rest as in their beds, Isa. 57: 2. We have little to hope for from this life, but we shall rest in hope of a better life; we may put off the body in that hope. Death *destroys the hope of man*, Job 14: 19. but the good Christian has hope in his death, living hopes in dying moments, hopes that the body shall not be left for ever in the grave; Prov. 14: 32. Christ's resurrection is an earnest of ours, if we be his.

4. To die comfortably we must live piously. In this world, sorrow is our lot, but in heaven, joy; here all our joys are empty and defective, but there full; our pleasures here are transient, such is the nature of them, it is not fit they should last long; but those at God's right hand are pleasures for evermore; the [active] pleasures of immortal souls, in the immediate vision and fruition of an eternal God.

Ps. XVII. V. 1—7. David, being in great distress and danger by the malice of his enemies, in this Ps. addresses himself, for shelter, to God, his tried Refuge. Some make him, in this, a type of Christ, who was perfectly innocent, and yet was hated and persecuted; but, like David, committed Himself and his cause to Him that judgeth righteously. This Ps. is a prayer. David was now persecuted, probably, by Saul.

He addresses himself to God, both by way of appeal, *Hear the right, O Lord;* and, by way of petition, *Give ear unto my prayer, v.* 1, 6. God gives us leave thus to express our earnest desire of his gracious answers. He pleads, 1. His sincerity. Feigned prayers are fruitless; but if our hearts lead our prayers, God will meet them with his favor. 2. His habit of prayer. It was not his distress and danger now first brought him to his duty; '*I have called upon Thee* formerly, *v.* 6. therefore, Lord, hear me now.' 3. His faith. Believing dependence on God is a good plea to enforce our desires toward Him. Let us now see,

I. What his appeal is; and,

1. The court where he makes it, viz. the court of heaven. 'Lord, I appeal from men to Thee.' This he did in a public remonstrance before Saul's face, 1 Sam. 24: 12. and he repeats it here in his private devotions. Note, (1.) The equity and extent of God's government and judgment are a support to injured innocency. (2.) Sincerity dreads no scrutiny, no, not that of God Himself, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace. *Let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.* God's omniscience is as much the joy of the upright, as it is the terror of the hypocrites; and is particularly comfortable to those who are falsely accused, and in any wise wronged.

2. The evidence by which he hopes to make good his appeal, viz. the trial God had made of him, *v.* 3. God's sentence is *therefore* right, because He always proceeds on his certain knowledge. He knew God had tried him, (1.) By his own conscience, which is God's deputy in the soul. *The spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord.* He had submitted to the search, and seriously reviewed the actions of his life, to discover what was amiss, but could find nothing of what his enemies charged him with. (2.) By providence; God had tried him by giving a fair opportunity, once and again, to kill Saul; by the malice of Saul, the treachery of his friends, and the many provocations given him; so that, if he had been the man he was represented to be, it would have appeared; but nothing was found against him.

For the further proof of his integrity, he himself notices two things, concerning which his conscience bare him record. [1.] He had fixed a resolution against all sins of the tongue; 'I am purposed and fully determined, in the strength of God's grace, that my mouth shall not transgress.' He does not say, 'I hope it will not,' or, 'I wish it may not,' but, 'I am fully purposed it shall not:' with this bridle he kept his mouth, 39: 1. Note, Constant resolution and watchfulness against sins of the tongue, will be a good evidence of our integrity; *If any offend not in word, the same is a perfect man*, Jam. 3:2. He does not say, 'My mouth never shall transgress,' for in many things we all offend, but, 'I purpose it shall not;' and He that searches the heart, knows whether the purpose be sincere. [2.] He had been as careful to refrain from sinful actions, *v.* 4. 'Concerning the common works of men, the actions and affairs of human life, I have, by the direction of thy Word, *kept me from the paths of the destroyer.*' Some understand it particularly, that he had not been himself a destroyer of Saul, when it lay in his power, nor permitted others to be so, 1 Sam. 26: 9. But it may be taken more generally; he kept himself from all evil works, and endeavored, according to the duty of his place, to keep others from them too. Note, The ways of sin are paths of the destroyer, (*Abaddon*, and *Apollyon*,) who ruins souls by decoying them into them. It concerns us all to keep out of these paths of destruction, and it is by the Word of God, as our guide and rule, that we must be kept from them, 119: 9. If we carefully avoid all the paths of sin, it will be very comfortable in the reflection, when in trouble. If we *keep ourselves, that the wicked one touch us not* with his temptations, 1 John 5: 18. we may hope he shall not be able to touch us with his terrors.

II. His petition.

1. For the work of God's grace in him, *v.* 5. Those who are, through grace, in God's paths, need pray, and do, that their goings may be held up in those paths; for we stand no longer than He is

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Messiah, and the true Church, in which view, *Jerome* and many ancient fathers shared.' MORISON.

Title.] The inscription found at the beginning of many of these sacred hymns, *viz.* 'A psalm of David,' may literally be rendered 'A psalm *to* David;' thence some have been led to think he did not write all, or even most of them. But at the head of this Ps. the same mode of expression is used; and consequently if those Pss. were not *composed by* him, but only addressed *to* him, this Ps. would be entitled 'A prayer *to* David.' This shows that our version is so far right; that the translation is of the same import as the original, which means *A Psalm, ascribed to David, as its author.* SCOTT.—'Most interpreters think this Ps. was composed by David when beset with the snares of Saul and his courtiers; yet in itself it contains nothing that should lead us to think so; and it should seem it ought to be reckoned among the Pss. which complain of the oppressions of the people in general from their enemies, and direct to God for aid to withstand them.' ROSENM.

Verses 1—3.

We shall not fully enter into the spirit of this Ps. unless we place ourselves in the circumstances of David. The whole tenor of it shows, that he has recorded his earnest meditation and prayer, at the most interesting crisis, when Saul, instigated by groundless suspicions, and false accusations, and pursuing him as a traitor, had surrounded him with his troops, and must have seized on him, had not God most wonderfully interposed. (54: *title.* 1 *Sam.* 23:19—28.) SCOTT.

Verses 4, 5.

'The works of men,' (of Adam, or of his descendants, as inheriting his fallen nature,) are those works to which they are propense; and among others, they have a strong propensity to 'render evil for evil:' but David had so studied the oracles of God, that by regarding his promises and precepts, he had resisted every temptation to this conduct.—The word, rendered 'destroyer,' signifies *a robber* or *murderer.* —In the present circumstances of human nature, the ways of godliness are become slippery paths, through the artifices of Satan, and the snares of the world, combining with 'the sin that dwelleth in us.'—In some of these things David may be considered as a type of Christ: He alone was universally and perfectly free from sin, and could say in the fullest sense, that a heart-searching God could find nothing wrong in Him. (3) ID.

Verses 6—8.

(*M. R.*) 'Make wonderful thy mercies, O Thou, who savest those that trust, from those who rise up against, thy right hand.' (7) This address to God, as the especial Protector of those, who trust in Him, from those who rebel against Him, is worthy of special notice. In answering such prayers, He acts according to his known character. (*Rom.* 15:5, 13. *Notes*, 2 *Cor.* 7:5—7. *Heb.* 13:20, 21. 1 *Pet.* 5:10, 11.) ID.

(8.) *Apple.*] *The pupil, or black spot, the daughter of the eye.* ID.

8 Keep me as [t] the apple of the eye, [u] hide me under the shadow of thy wings,

9 From the wicked that * oppress me, *from* my † deadly enemies *who* compass me about.

10 [x] They are enclosed in their own fat: [y] with their mouth they speak proudly.

11 They have now [z] compassed us in our steps: they have [a] set their eyes bowing down to the earth;

12 ‡ Like as a lion *that* is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion § lurking in secret places.

13 [b] Arise, O LORD, ‖ disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, ¶ *which is* [c] thy sword:

14 From men ** *which are* thy hand, O LORD, from [d] men of the world, [e] *which have* their portion in *this* life, [f] and whose belly thou fillest with thy [g] hid

t Deut. 32:10. Prov. 7:2. Zech. 2:8.
u 36:7. 57:1. 61:4. 63:7. 91:1,4. Ruth 2:12. Matt. 23:37. Luke 13:34.
* Heb. *waste*. 1 Chr. 17:9.
† Heb. *enemies against the soul*. 7:5. 35:4,7,12. 1 Sam. 24:11.
x 73:7—9. 119:70. Deut. 32:15. Job 15:27. Is. 6:10. Matt. 13:15. Acts 28:27.
y 12:3,4. 31:18. 123:4. Ex. 5:2. 15: 9. 1 Sam. 2:3. 2 Pet. 2:18. Rev. 13:5,6.
z 1 Sam. 23:26. 24:2,3. 26:2,3.
a 10:8—10. Prov. 6:13,14.
‡ Heb. *The likeness of him*, (that is, *of every one of them*,) is *as a lion* that *desireth to raven*. 7:2. 22:13. 2 Tim. 4:17. 1 Pet. 5:8.
§ Heb. *sitting*.
b 3:7. 7:6. 44:23,26. 119:126. Is. 51:9.
‖ Heb. *prevent his face*.
¶ Or, by *thy sword*. 7:11—13.
c Is. 10:5,15. 13:5. 37:26. Hab. 1:12. Acts 4:28.
** Or, by *thine hand*.
d Luke 16:8. John 8:23. 15:19. 17:14. 1 John 4:4,5.
e 49:17—19. 73:12. Luke 12:19—21. 16:25. Jam. 5:5.
f Job 12:6,9. 21:7—15. 22:18.
g Prov. 2:4. Matt. 13:44.

pleased to hold us, we go no further than He is pleased to lead us, bear us up, and carry us. David had been kept in the way of his duty hitherto, yet he does not think *that* his security for the future, therefore he prays, 'Lord, still hold me up.' Those that would proceed and persevere in the way of God, must, by faith and prayer, fetch in daily fresh supplies of grace and strength from Him. David was sensible his way was slippery, himself weak, and that there were those who watched for his halting, and would improve the least slip against him, therefore he prays to be kept.

2. For the tokens of God's favor, *v.* 7. He eyes God, as the Protector and Savior of his people; so he calls Him, and thence takes his encouragement in prayer. It is the character of God's people, that they trust in Him; He is pleased to make them confidants, for his secret is with the righteous. Those that trust in God, have many enemies that seek their ruin; but they have one Friend able against all. The margin reads it, *O Thou that savest them which trust in Thee, from those that rise up against thy right hand*. Those that are enemies to the saints, are rebels against God and his right hand, therefore, no doubt, He will, in due time, appear against them. See what he expects and desires from God; *Show thy marvellous loving-kindness*. The word signifies distinguishing, wonderful favors. God's loving-kindness is marvellous, for the freeness and fulness of it; in some instances, it appears, in a special manner, marvellous, 118: 23. and it will certainly appear so in the salvation of the saints, when Christ shall come to be *glorified in the saints, and to be admired in all them that believe*.

V. 8—15. In these vs. David prays, 1. That he himself might be protected, *v.* 8. in which is both a prediction of Christ in his humiliation, and a pattern to Christians. Those who put themselves under God's protection, may in faith implore the benefit of it. Nature has wonderfully fenced the eye, and teaches us to guard it. And if we keep God's law as the *apple of our eye*, Prov. 7: 2. we may expect God will so keep us; for it is said of his people, whoso *touches them, touches the apple of his eye*, Zech. 2: 8. The similitude of the hen gathering her young under her wings, Christ uses, Matt. 23: 37. '*Hide me under the shadow of thy wings*, where I may be both safe and warm.' Or, perhaps, it rather alludes to the wings of the cherubim shadowing the mercy-seat; 'Let me be taken under the protection of that glorious grace which is peculiar to God's Israel.' What David here prays for, was performed to the Son of David, of whom it is said, Isa. 49: 2. that God hid *Him in the shadow of his hand*, hid Him *as a polished shaft in his quiver*. David further prays, 'Lord, keep me from the wicked, from men of the world;' 'from being, and doing, like them; and from being destroyed and run down by them.'

2. That all the designs of his enemies, to bring him either into sin or into trouble, might be defeated, *v.* 13. While Saul persecuted David, how often did he miss his prey, then when he thought he had him sure! And how were Christ's enemies disappointed by his resurrection, who thought they had gained their point when they had put Him to death!

Observe, To encourage his own faith in these petitions, He pleads,

1. The malice and wickedness of his enemies. (1.) 'They are very spiteful and malicious; deadly enemies, that thirst after my heart's blood;' *enemies against the soul*, so the word is. David's enemies did what they could to drive him to sin, and drive him away from God; they bade him *go serve other gods*, 1 Sam. 26: 19. therefore he had reason to pray against them. Note, Those are our worst enemies, and we ought so to account them, that are enemies to our souls. (2.) 'They are very secure and sensual, insolent and haughty, *v.* 10. wrap themselves in their own honor, power, and plenty, and then make light of God, and set his judgments at defiance, 73: 7. Job 15: 27. They wallow in pleasure, and promise themselves that to-morrow shall be as this day. Therefore with their mouth they speak proudly, glorying in themselves, blaspheming God, trampling on his people, and insulting them.' See Rev. 13: 5, 6. 'Lord, are not such men fit to be mortified and humbled, and made to know themselves? Will it not be for thy glory *to look upon these proud men and abase them?*' (3.) 'They are restless and unwearied in their attempts against me; they *compass me about*, *v.* 9. They have now in a manner gained their point, having surrounded us, they track us, follow us close, as the hound the hare; yet they pretend to look another way, and set their eyes bowing down to the earth, as if meditating, and thinking of something else;' or, as some, 'They are watchful and intent to do us mischief; and never slip an opportunity of compassing their design.' (4.) The ring-leader, Saul, is specially bloody and barbarous, politic, and projecting, *v.* 12. like a lion that lives by prey, and is therefore greedy of it. This is fitly applied to Saul, who sought David *on the rocks of the wild goats*, 1 Sam. 24: 2. and in *the wilderness of Ziph*, *ch.* 26: 2. where lions used to lurk for their prey.

2. The power God had over them: 'Lord, they are thy sword; and will any father suffer his sword to be drawn against his own children?' As this is a reason why we should patiently bear the injuries of men, that they are but instruments in God's hand; so it is an encouragement to us to hope both that their wrath shall praise Him, and that the remainder thereof He will restrain. 'They are thy hand, by which Thou dost chastise thy people, and make them feel thy displeasure.' He therefore expects deliverance from God's hand, because from God's hand came his trouble. There is no flying from God's hand, but by flying to it.

Verses 9—12.

'The whole imagery here is taken from hunting.' [Note, Job 41: 7.] MUDGE, and KENNICOTT.

(9, 10.) (*M.*) David's persecutors were prosperous, self-indulgent, and luxurious; and thus they grew arrogant, impious, unfeeling, and presumptuous. (73:6—9. 119:70.) SCOTT.

(10.) 'The difficulty will be removed, if we join *mouth* with what goes before it, rather than with what follows it. It is a poetical or proverbial expression for haughtiness or pride, caused by wealth or great prosperity. The *Chal.* well paraphrases thus: "Their wealth is multiplied: with their fat they have covered their mouth." *Sebas. Castellio* says: "Having stuffed their mouth with fat, they speak proudly." ' HAMMOND.—'What a fearful spectacle is a pampered worldling, swelling with rage and contempt against the servants of the Most High!' MORISON. *Fat*, and *fat mouth*, are orientalisms, still used to denote haughtiness and pride. See *Bush*, in loc. ED.

(11.) 'It is a well established fact, that expert huntsmen in the eastern countries are accustomed to regulate their movements by a minute reference to the track of the animals they are pursuing. In this way they determine the age and particular species of the animal; and also whether or not it has passed recently. The enemies of David traced his very footsteps.' MORISON. And see *Roberts*, who notes similar phrases as still used in the E. The lion, too, like the rest of the feline tribe, stoops with his eyes bowing down to the earth, as he watches the motions of the prey on which he is stealing. This manner may be noticed in the menageries. The bull bows his eyes and stoops, to rush headlong on his enemy. Perhaps the v. alludes to such habits. ED.

(12.) *A young lion lurking*, &c.] 'It is a well known fact, that while the parent lioness is in quest of food for her cubs, they are left in the deepest possible secrecy. This perhaps led to the mention of the young lion. Or it may refer to the lion in full vigor, when all his wonderful energies, and his subtlety, with every quality, are ready to be exerted, for the destruction of his unwary prey. The lion, it is said, being the terror of all his fellows of the forest, is often obliged to conceal himself with great care in order to catch his prey by surprise The lioness, when rearing her young, is more fierce than the lion.' MORISON.

Verses 13—15.

The Psalmist determined, whatever might be the event, to act as in the immediate presence of God.—The former clause of v. 15. is here interpreted of David's *purpose*, and only the latter of his *prospect*. Some explain both to mean his expectation of happiness in the eternal world; yet not excluding his hope of deliverance from his urgent dangers.—The Sept. render the last clause; 'I shall be satisfied in beholding thy glory.' SCOTT.

(13.) *Thy sword.*] 'If *sword* connect with *wicked*, our English renders it according to the sense; but none of the ancient interpreters so understood it. The Chal. have it, "Deliver me from the wicked, which ought to be slain by thy sword;" the Syr. "from the wicked, and the sword," meaning the sword of wickedness. It is not improbable *sword* should be considered the *instrument* here, and be joined with *deliver me*. This perfectly agrees with the context.' *Hammond.* '*Houbigant* r. "*Deliver my soul* from the wicked one with thy sword;" which *Horsley*, *Horne*, *Boothr*. Dr. *A. Clarke*, *Dathe*, *and Venema*, approve.' MORISON.

(14.) *Men of the world.*] A phrase understood of those who in their conduct have no reference to a future world. ED. 'The primary meaning of the word rendered *world* seems to be *that which endures*. Hence it has been taken to denote *outward prosperity*. So *Dathe*, who renders it, "men who are prosperous."—*Full of children.*] 'Some

treasure: * they are full of children, [h] and leave the rest of their *substance* to their babes.

15 [i] As for me, [k] I will behold thy face in righteousness: [l] I shall be satisfied when [m] I awake [n] with thy likeness.

PSALM XVIII.

David's psalm of thanksgiving, for his manifold deliverances, and singular prosperity, 1—50.

To the chief Musician, *A Psalm* of David, [a] the servant of the LORD, who spake unto the LORD the words of this song, [b] in the day *that* the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said,

[c] I WILL love thee, O LORD, [d] my Strength.

2 [e] The LORD *is* my Rock, and [f] my Fortress, and my Deliverer; my God, my † Strength

* Or, their *children are full.*
[h] 39:6. Job 21:21. 27:14—17. Luke 15:27,28.
[i] 5:7. Josh. 24:15.
[k] 4:6. 119:111. Job 19:26,27. 2 Cor. 3:18.
[l] 16:11. 36:8,9. 65:4. Matt. 5:8. Rev. 7:16,17. 21:3,4,23.
[m] 49:14. Job 14:12. Is. 26:19. Matt. 27:52,53.
[n] Gen. 1:26,27. Phil. 3:21. 1 John 3: 2,3.
[a] 36: *title.* 116:16. Acts 13:36. Heb. 2:5.
[b] 34:19. Ex. 15:1, &c. Judg. 5:1, &c. 1 Sam. 2:1—10. Is. 12:1—6.
[c] 116:1—6. 144:1,2. 1 John 4:19.
[d] 32. 28:7,8. 118:14. Is. 12:2. Phil. 4:13. Col. 1:11.
[e] 28:1. 62:2,7. Is. 32:2.
[f] 91:2. 144:2. Jer 16:19.
† Heb. *rock.*

It is very comfortable, when we are in fear of the power of man, to see it dependent on, and in subjection to, the power of God; see Isa. 10: 6, 7, 15.

3. Their outward prosperity, *v.* 14. 'Lord, appear against them. They are entirely devoted to the world, and care not for Thee or thy favor.' The things of the world are their consolation, Luke 6: 24. *their good things*, Luke 16: 25. *their reward*, Matt. 20: 13. 'Now, Lord, shall men of this character be supported and countenanced against those who honor Thee, by preferring thy favor before all the wealth in this world, and taking Thee for their portion?' 16: 5. They have abundance of the world. They have enlarged appetites, and a great deal wherewith to satisfy them. The things of this world are called *treasures*, because they are so accounted; otherwise, to a soul, and in comparison with eternal blessings, they are but trash. They are hid in the several parts of the creation, and hid in the sovereign disposals of Providence. They that fare deliciously every day, have their *bellies*, not their souls! *filled with* them. 1 Cor. 6: 13. But they are husks, ashes, wind; Isa. 55: 2. yet most men, having no care for their souls, but all for their bellies, take up with them. They have numerous families, and a great deal to leave to them; and this is their heaven, their bliss, their all. 'Lord,' said David, '*deliver me from them:* let me not have my portion with them.'

4. He pleads his own dependence on God as his Portion and Happiness. 'They have their portion in this life, but as for me, *v.* 15. I am none of them, I have but little of the world. It is the vision and fruition of God I place my happiness in, that is it I hope for, and comfort myself with the hopes of, and thereby distinguish myself from those who have their portion in this life.' Beholding God's face with satisfaction, may be considered, (1.) As our duty and comfort in this world. Clothed with Christ's righteousness, we must by faith behold God's face, and set Him always before us; and, when we awake every morning, we must be satisfied with his likeness set before us in his Word, and with his likeness stamped on us by his renewing grace. (2.) As our recompense and happiness in the other world; with the prospect of that he concluded the foregoing Ps. and so this. That happiness will consist in three things: The immediate vision of God and his glory; *I shall behold thy face;* the knowledge of God will there be perfected, and the enlarged intellect filled with it. The participation of his likeness; our holiness will there be perfect, 1 John 3: 2. A complete and full satisfaction resulting from all this; *I shall be satisfied*, abundantly satisfied with it; even that satisfaction will not be perfect till we come to heaven.

Ps. XVIII. This Ps. we had before in the history of David, 2 Sam. 22. Here we have it altered a little, and fitted for the service of the church. It is David's thanksgiving for the many deliverances God had wrought for him; these he desired always to preserve fresh in his own memory, and to diffuse and entail the knowledge of. It is an admirable composition. The poetry is very fine, the images bold, the expressions lofty, and every word proper and significant; but the piety far exceeds the poetry. Holy faith, and love, and joy, and praise, and hope, are here lively, active and on the wing.

V. 1—19. The title gives us the occasion of this Ps.; we are told, also, that it was delivered *To the chief musician*, or precentor, in the temple songs. Note, The private compositions of good men, designed for their own use, may be serviceable to the public; examples sometimes teach better than rules. David is here called *the servant of the Lord*, because, with his sceptre, sword, and pen, he greatly promoted the interests of God's kingdom in Israel. It was more his honor, to be a servant of the Lord, than to be the king of a great kingdom; so he himself accounted it, 116. 16. *O Lord, truly I am thy servant.* In these vs

I. He triumphs in God and his relation to Him The first words of the Ps. *I will love Thee, O Lord, my Strength*, are here prefixed as the scope and contents of the whole. Love to God is the first and great commandment, because the principle of all acceptable praise and obedience; and this use we should make of all the mercies God bestows on us, our hearts should thereby be enlarged in love to Him. This He requires, and will accept; and we are very ungrateful if we grudge Him so poor a return. An interest in the person loved, is the lover's delight; this he touches on with much pleasure, *v.* 2. For there is that in God, which is suited to all the exigences and occasions of his people. 'He is my Rock, and

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Believers must follow their Savior, in the way by which He passed through this world to glory; and such men as were *his* enemies will be *theirs* also: but He was more hated, insulted, and cruelly entreated, than any of his followers ever were.—Unallowed evil, felt and mourned over, should in nowise weaken their confidence: but without conscious integrity in our conduct towards God and man, such appeals [as David here makes] would be the most impious presumption. The Lord sees us in secret, visits us in the night, and witnesses our conduct in our most secret retirement, when solitude tempts the hypocrite to sin, and when the imagination is apt to roam after forbidden objects: and if He find one indulged and allowed iniquity, He will abhor our feigned devotions. We should therefore purpose not to offend with our lips, or even in our hearts.—We cannot safely depend on our own watchfulness or resolutions, and former upright and consistent behavior.—The profane, the sensual, and the proud, are at all times enemies of the righteous; yet they are not always left to take an active part against them; and Satan is their most deadly foe: he is destitute of compassion, hardened in malice, and replete with subtlety; and concerning him we may pray in assured faith, 'Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, and cast him down; deliver my soul from this wicked one.' SCOTT.

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think the polygamy of eastern countries is here referred to.' MORISON.

(15.) *When I awake.*] '"At the awaking;" most probably to be understood of *God's glory*, signifying his glorious and powerful interposition to David's present rescue, and not deferring to relieve and avenge him till the resurrection.' HAMMOND. PATRICK. 'Some restrain the joys here spoken of to the present sense and feeling only, but if David looked no further than the present world, I see not where lies the antithesis, "*As for me*," &c. and I conclude he had a further aim.' ASSEMB. ANN. *When I shall awake.*] 'Either, 1. When I shall be delivered from my present distresses and calamities. But these are never in Scripture, nor indeed can fitly be, called by the name *sleep*, which is every where spoken of as a state of rest and quietness, Ps. 127:2. John 11:12, 13. consequently deliverance from them, cannot be compared to *awaking*. Or rather, 2. When I shall arise from the dead. *Death* is very frequently called a *sleep*, 1 K. 1:21. Is. 26:19. Jer. 51:39, 57. Dan. 12:2. John 11:11, 13. consequently resurrection from the dead is justly and fitly called an *awaking*, as Job 14:12. Dan. 12:2. John 11: 11.' POOLE. *Rosenm.* thinks it can scarcely be otherwise than that we should understand this phrase of a *future life.* ED.

NOTES.

Ps. XVIII. 'It is very probable, David prepared this Ps. in the latter part of his life, when now peacefully settled on the throne, and his enemies all around effectually subdued.' *Rosenm.* Dr. *A. Clarke*, *Gill*, &c. 'From N. T. quotations it is perfectly obvious, that this Ps. breathes a prophetic spirit, and alludes to the Messiah; yet it is equally certain, that its primary reference is to the literal David.—*Kennicott* and *Horne* apply the whole to Christ.—From the frequent changes of person in it, it is thought by some to be responsive. Those who hold this opinion, consider David as speaking only in those parts where he addresses Jehovah in the second person.—It is impossible to enter on the investigation of this Ps. without feeling, that it is one of the most wonderful of compositions.' *Morison.*—'The strong current of commentators and critics apply it to Christ.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* ED.

Title.] See on this, and the whole Ps., *notes*, 2 *Sam.* 22: ID.

Verse 1.

The variations, between the copies, (here and in Sam.) seem principally poetical improvements of the style, as few of them materially alter the sense, and several evidently render the composition more elegant. Indeed, the whole Ps. seems one of the most finished poetical compositions, extant in any language.—The word here rendered, '*I will love Thee*,' is peculiarly emphatical: 'I will love Thee with my inmost soul, and all its powers, and with the most fervent affections of my heart.'—'I will greatly desire and long after Thee. (63:1—4. 116:1.)—The experience, the aged Psalmist had acquired, of the Lord's faithfulness, power, and love, no doubt excited the lively exercises of admiring and adoring love, as well as gratitude.—Some think David spake in the person of the risen Redeemer, taking a retrospect of his sufferings and triumphs; and the words, in that view, convey a most interesting and animating reflection to the mind of the true Christian. SCOTT.

Verses 2, 3.

'As the Ps. so evidently throughout is a thanksgiving for past deliverances, the verbs in this v. (3) seem to require the same rendering given them below, at v. 6.' Bp. *Horne.* I. e. they should be render-

in whom I will trust, [g] my Buckler, and [h] the Horn of my salvation, *and* [i] my high Tower.

3 [k] I will call upon the LORD, [l] *who is worthy* to be praised: [m] so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

4 [n] The sorrows of death compassed me, and [o] the floods of * ungodly men made me afraid.

5 [p] The † sorrows of hel. compassed me about: [q] the snares of death prevented me.

6 [r] In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: [s] he heard my voice out of his temple, and [t] my cry came before him, *even* into his ears.

7 Then [u] the earth shook and trembled; [x] the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.

g 91:4. Prov. 2:7.
h 132:17. 2 Sam. 22:3.
i Prov. 18:10.
k 5:2,3. 28:1,2. 55:16. 62:8. 2 Sam. 22:4. Phil. 4:6,7.
l 65:1,2. Neh. 9:5. Rev. 4:11. 5:12—14.
m 91:15. Luke 1:71. Acts 2:21. Rom. 8:31—39.
n 116:3. 2 Sam. 22:5,6. Is. 13:8. 53:3,4. Matt. 26:38,39. Mark 14:33,34. 2 Cor. 1:9.
o 22:12,13,16. Jon. 2:2—7. Matt. 26:47,55. 27:24,25,39—44. Acts 21:30.
* Heb. *Belial.*
p 86:13. 88:3—8,15—17. Acts 2:24.
† Or, *cords.*
q Ec. 9:12.
r 3,4. 50:15. 130:1,2. Mark 14:36. Acts 12:5.
s 5:7. 11:4. 27:4,5. 2 Sam. 22:7. Hab. 2:20. Rev. 11:19.
t Ex. 2:23 1 K. 8:27—30. 2 Chr. 30:27.
u 114:4—7. Matt. 28:2. Acts 16:25,26.
x 46:2. Deut. 32:22. Jer. 4:24. Ez. 38:19,20. Hab. 3:6,10. Zech. 14:4. 1 Cor. 13:2.

Strength, and Fortress;' i. e. 'I have found Him so, and chosen Him to be so, disclaiming all others, and depending on Him alone to protect me.' Those that truly love God, may thus triumph in Him as theirs, and may with confidence call upon Him, *v.* 3. This further use we should make of our deliverances, we must not only love God better, but prayer also; *call on Him as long as we live*, especially in time of trouble, with an assurance, that so we shall be saved; for thus it is written, *Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*, Acts 2: 21.

II. He sets himself to magnify his deliverances, to be the more affected in returns of praise. It is good to observe all the circumstances of a mercy, which magnify the power of God and his goodness to us in it.

1. The more imminent and threatening the danger, the greater the mercy of the deliverance. David now remembered how the forces of his enemies poured in upon him, surrounded him, compassed him about, surprised him, and by that mean were very near seizing him, and when without were fightings, within were fears and sorrows, *v.* 4, 5. His spirit was overwhelmed, and he looked upon himself as a lost man; see 116: 3.

2. The more earnest we have been with God for deliverance, and the more direct answer it is to our prayers, the more we are obliged to be thankful, *v.* 6. If we pray as he, we shall speed as he.

3. The more wonderful God's appearances in a deliverance, the greater it is: such were the deliverances wrought for David, in which God's manifestation of his presence and glorious attributes is most magnificently described, *v.* 7, &c. Little appeared of man, but He appeared a God of almighty power, *v.* 7. as of old at Sinai. When the men of the earth were struck with fear, then the earth might be said to *tremble;* when the great men of the earth were put into confusion, then the hills moved. He showed his anger and displeasure against the enemies and persecutors of his people, *v.* 7, 8. His arrows were his lightnings, *v.* 14. He showed his readiness to plead his people's cause, and work deliverance for them, *v.* 10. No opposition, no obstruction, can be given to Him, *who rides upon the wings of the wind, on the heavens, for the help of his people, and, in his excellency, on the skies.* He showed his condescension, in taking cognizance of David's case, *v.* 9. did not send an angel, but came Himself, as one afflicted in the afflictions of his people. He wrapped Himself in darkness, yet commanded light to shine out of darkness for his people, (Is. 45: 15.) *v.* 11.

4. The greater the difficulties in the way of deliverance, the more glorious the deliverance. To rescue David, the waters were to be divided till the very channels were seen; the earth was to be cloven till the very foundations of it were discovered, *v.* 15—18.

5. What especially magnified the deliverance, was, his comfort was the fruit, God's favor the root and fountain of it, *v.* 19. 2 Sam. 15: 26. We owe our salvation, that great deliverance, to the delight God had in the Son of David.

In singing this, we must triumph in God, and

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ed in the past, and not in the future tense.—But perhaps the Psalmist meant to give the feelings and purpose of his heart, while struggling with his difficulties and overcoming them by faith, to which the event corresponded: for the words are plainly future; and a total disregard to the tense should not be supposed without evident necessity. (142: *title. Is.* 38:9—13. *Jon.* 2:1, 2.) SCOTT.

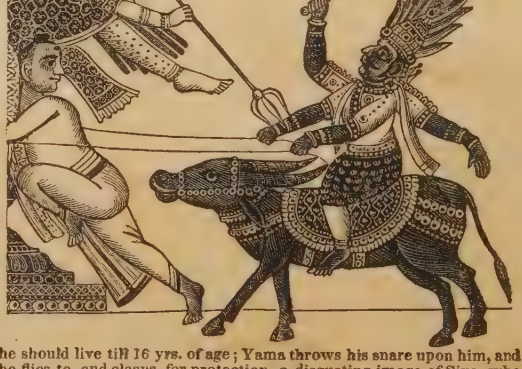
(2.) *Buckler.*] Heb. *magen;* so v. 30, 35. In 91:4. *soherah* is tr. 'buckler,' and *tsinnah*, 'shield:' target is the tr. of *kidon*, 1 Sam. 17:6. of *tsinnah*, 1 K. 10:16. Thus several different kinds of shield are mentioned in the SS. These are illustrated by the notes and cuts, Ps. 5:12. Job 15:26. 2 Chr. 25:14, 15. Ex. 17: 10. and 15:4. &c. To these a cut is here added (from 'Tomb 5,' or 'of the Harpers,' at Thebes,) of a royal Egyptian shield, of the largest size used. The jackalls and lions, as well as the partitionings and border, are bright yellow (gold?); the ground is azure (steel?). The quarterings of this curious and splendid buckler, whose bright colors were drawn doubtless long before David's time, remind us of modern heraldry. ED.

Verses 4, 5.

The word rendered 'sorrows,' in these vs. signifies *cords*, or *pangs*, especially those of women in travail; and it is translated *pangs* in the Sept. And as Luke, in recording the apostle Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, uses the same word concerning Christ, in respect of his resurrection, where it does not seem so apposite as *cords* or *bonds* would have been; it is supposed, that he refers to the Sept. vers. of this Ps. This is an additional proof, that it should be considered chiefly, as prophetical of his conflicts and triumphs. (*Acts* 2:22—24.) SCOTT.

(4.) *Sorrows of death.*] 'Some understand the cords or ropes by which dead bodies were lowered into the tomb; I think it is used to denote distress of mind, and figuratively to express evils of the most formidable kind, especially the machinations of a powerful, insulting and distressing foe. The *Chal.* interprets it of the wicked by whom David was surrounded. And if "cords of the grave," (so *Street*,) are referred to, I should think the winding of the body in linen, according to Jewish custom, the practice alluded to. See John 11:14,' [and note, Job 40:13.] MORISON.

(5.) *Sorrows*, (marg. *cords*) . . . *snares.*] 'Cords of hades, snares of death.' *Boothr.* 'Death seems thus personified, also, in 2 Sam. 22:6. Prov. 13:14. 14 27. Matt. 23:33. 'When people are in the article of death, they are said to be caught in the *snare* of Yama, "the catcher of the souls of men," a Hindoo deity bearing some resemblance to the Charon and Minos of the Egyptians and Greeks. This hideous monster has a large *snare* in his hand, and rides on a buffalo.' ROBERTS. See the cut, from an original drawing, for which, (with some 90 more, exhibiting the Hindoo gods,) the editor is indebted to the kindness of Rev. Dr. *Poor*, Am. Miss. at Ceylon. Siva promised Markanda that



he should live till 16 yrs. of age; Yama throws his snare upon him, and he flies to, and clasps, for protection, a disgusting image of Siva, who defends him with his trident. The mark of Siva (note, Deut. 32: 5.) is seen on Markanda's forehead. ED.

Verse 6.

This v. also is future in the original. (*Note*, 2, 3.) It varies from the parallel verse in Sam. by using two nearly synonymous words, for 'called' and 'cried,' while in the other copy the latter is merely a repetition of the former. SCOTT.

Verse 7.

The words 'foundations of heaven,' used in Sam. are here changed for 'foundations of the *hills*,' or mountains. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.—*Then*, &c.] 'It does not appear, from any part of David's history, that there was any such storm as is here described, unless it may be thought that something of this nature is intimated in the account given of his second battle with the Philistines, 2 Sam. 5:23, 34. It is understood, however, that the storm is represented as real, though David, in describing it, has heightened and embellished it with all the ornaments of poetry.' Dr. *A. Clarke.* Some, as *Assemb: Ann. Hammond*, take it, not as a simple historical relation, but as a poetical description [only] of God's presence, and concurrence in David's conquests.—*Morison* thinks, there is here a manifest allusion to the miraculous events at the deliverance from Egypt, and at Sinai, as *Henry* suggests.

8 There [y] went up a smoke * out of his nostrils, and [z] fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

9 [a] He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and [b] darkness *was* under his feet.

10 And [c] he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.

11 He made darkness [d] his secret place; his pavilion round about him *were* dark waters, [e] *and* thick clouds of the skies.

12 [f] At the brightness *that was* before him his thick clouds passed, [g] hail-*stones* and coals of fire.

13 The LORD also [h] thundered in the heavens, and [i] the Highest gave his voice; hail-*stones* and [k] coals of fire.

14 Yea, [l] he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and [m] he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.

15 Then [n] the channels of waters were seen, [o] and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, [p] at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.

16 [q] He sent from above, he took me, [r] he drew me out of † many waters.

17 He delivered me from [s] my strong enemy, and from [t] them which hated me: for [u] they were too strong for me.

18 They prevented me [x] in the day of my calamity, [y] but the LORD was my stay.

19 He brought me forth also [z] into a large place: he delivered me, [a] because he delighted in me.

20 The LORD [b] rewarded me according to my righteousness; [c] according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.

21 For [d] I have kept the ways of the LORD, [e] and have not wickedly departed from my God.

22 For [f] all his judgments *were* before me, [g] and I did not put away his statutes from me.

23 I was also [h] upright ‡ before him, and [i] I kept myself from mine iniquity.

24 Therefore hath [k] the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands § in his eye-sight.

25 [l] With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man [m] thou wilt show thyself upright.

26 With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and [n] with the froward thou wilt ‖ show thyself froward.

trust in Him: and we may apply it to Christ the Son of David, in his resurrection.

V. 20—28. Here,

1. David reflects, with comfort, on his own integrity, and rejoices in the testimony of his conscience, 2 Cor. 1: 12. His deliverances were an evidence of his integrity, and this was their great comfort. His enemies had misrepresented him, and perhaps, when his troubles continued long, he began to suspect himself; but, when God visibly took his part, he had both the credit and comfort of his righteousness. (1.) His deliverances cleared his innocency before men, and acquitted him from those crimes he was falsely accused of. This he calls *rewarding him according to his righteousness*, *v.* 20, 24. He had often appealed to God concerning his innocency; and now God had given judgment on the appeal, as He always will, according to equity. (2.) They confirmed the testimony of his own conscience for him, which he here reviews with great pleasure, *v.* 21—23. His own heart knows, and is ready to attest it: though conscious of many a false step, yet, if we recover ourselves by repentance, and go on in the way of our duty, it shall not be construed into a departure from our God. Constant care to abstain from that sin, whatever it be, which most easily besets us, and to mortify the habit of it, will be a good evidence for us, that we are upright before God. As David's deliverances cleared his integrity, so did the exaltation of Christ clear his; therefore He is said to be *justified in the Spirit*, 1 Tim. 3: 16.

2. He takes occasion thence to lay down the rules of God's government and judgment, that we may know not only what God expects from us, but what we may expect from Him, *v.* 25, 26. (1.) Those that show mercy to others, shall find mercy with God, Matt. 5: 7. Those that are faithful to their covenants with God, and relations to Him, shall find Him all to them He has promised. Those that serve God with a pure conscience, shall find the words of the Lord pure, sure, sweet. Those that resist, and walk contrary to God, shall find He will resist, and walk contrary to them, Lev. 26: 21, 24.

3. Hence he speaks comfort to the humble; '*Thou wilt save the afflicted people:*' terror to the proud; 'Thou wilt bring down high looks:' and encouragement to himself; '*Thou wilt light my candle;* revive and comfort my sorrowful spirit, recover me out of my troubles, and restore me to peace and prosperity; wilt make my honor bright, which is now eclipsed; guide my way, and make it plain before me, that I may avoid the snares laid for me; wilt light my candle to work by, and give me an opportunity of serving Thee, and the interests of thy kingdom among men.'

So Bp. *Lowth* and *Horne*. *Morison* adds, that the Christian can hardly fail to be reminded of the scenes at Calvary. ED.

Verse 9.

'What can be more overwhelming in sublimity, than the scene here pictured to the mind!' MORISON.

Verse 10.

Two letters in the original, nearly alike, one used in Sam. the other here, make the variation between the two copies: probably it was originally a trivial error of a transcriber. In Sam. it is, 'He was seen upon the wings of the wind.' SCOTT.—'*Sternhold* and *Hopkins*' vers. of this sublime stanza has been the subject of just admiration by all biblical critics: "On cherub and on cherubim, Full royally He rode; And, on the wings of mighty winds, Came flying all abroad."—*Cherub and Cherubim.*] *Parkhurst*, *Hutchinson*, and others of the same school, consider these as *symbolical representations* of the Holy Trinity, and of the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ. But may they not be considered [rather] as the symbolical bearers or supporters of the divine throne? and, may they not, as the fit hieroglyphics of power, wisdom and might, represent the ever-watchful and resistless energies of the divine government, especially as administered by legions of angels, swift and powerful to execute the divine will?' ID.

Verse 12.

The brightness of JEHOVAH'S appearance dispersed the '*thick clouds*,' which preceded it. The clause 'his thick clouds passed,' is not in Sam. The words 'coals of fire kindled,' are here changed for 'hailstones and coals of fire,' which are also repeated in the next v.; and the M. Rr. show the propriety of the allusion in them. SCOTT.

Verse 14.

Arrows.] 'In Scripture, *arrows* represent God's various judgments. Here the hail may be referred to. Comp. Jos. 10:11. with Hab. 3.11. MORISON.

Verse 15.

As the grand imagery of this passage more aptly suits the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, than any of David's deliverances; (*Matt.* 27:51—53. 28:1—8. *Acts* 1:9—12.) so it naturally leads the pious mind to reflect on the awful descriptions given us of the Savior's last coming to judge the world. (2 *Thes.* 1:5—10. 2 *Pet.* 3:10—13. *Rev.* 20:11—15.) SCOTT.—*Blast of the breath*, &c.] 'Figuratively, that "strong east wind" by which Jehovah caused the sea to go back, and made it dry land, and divided the waters.' ID.

Verse 16.

Many waters.] 'Many waters are employed in Scripture, as the fit emblems of great and sorrowful afflictions, and of mighty, hostile powers.' ID.

Verses 20—24.

'The expressions here, considered as David's, must certainly be confined either to his steadfast adherence to the true worship, in opposition to idolatry, or to his innocency with regard to some particular crimes [as treason, &c.] falsely alleged against him by his adversaries.' HORNE.—'The great question here is, do these vs. admit of a primary reference to the literal David? or are they altogether prophetical, and exclusively belong to the Messiah? They may, doubtless, in a sense, be applied to the son of Jesse; but that they realized their only perfect fulfilment in Him whose life was pure without a spot, may be readily conceded.' ID.

Hab. 3:5.

y 11:12. 77:17. Num. 24:8. Deut. 32: 23,42. Job 6:4. Hab. 3:11.

z 144:6. Job 38:35. 40:9—12. Zech. 9:14,15

a 74:15. Josh. 3:13—16. 2 Sam. 22:16.

b 104:5. Job 38:4—6. Jer. 31:37. Jon. 2:6. Mic. 6:2.

c 2 K. 19:7. Job 4:9. Is. 11:4. 30:27, 28.33.

d 57:3. 144:7.

e 43. 40:1—3. Ex. 2:10. 2 Sam. 22: 17.

† Or, *great waters.* Jon. 2:5,6. Rev. 17:15.

f 38:19. 2 Sam. 22:1,18. Heb. 2:14,15.

g 40,41. 9:13. 25:19. 69:4—14. 118: 7. Job 16:9. Luke 19:14.

h 35:10. Eph. 6:10—12.

i Deut. 32:35. 2 Sam. 22:19. Jer. 18: 17. Ob. 10—14. Zech. 1:15.

k 46:1,2,11.

l 36. 40:2. Job 36:16.

m 37:23. 2 Sam. 22:18—27. 1 K. 10:9.

n 58:11. Prov. 11:18. Is. 49:4. 62:11. Matt. 6:4. 1 Cor. 3:8.

o 24. 7:3. 24:4. 26:6. 1 Sam. 24:11— 13. Heb. 7:26.

p 17:4. 26:1. 119:10,11. Acts 24:16. 1 Thes. 2:10.

q 119:102. 1 Sam. 15:11. 1 John 2:19.

r 119:13,168. John 5:14.

s 119:112,117.

t 7:8. 11:7. 17:3. 1 Sam. 26:23. 1 Chr. 29:17.

‡ Heb. *with.*

i Matt. 5:29,30. 18:8,9.

k Ruth 2:12. Matt. 10:41,42. 2 Thes. 1:6,7. Heb. 6:10.

§ Heb. *before his eyes.*

l 41:1—4. 112:4—6. 1 K. 8:32. Is. 57:1,2. 58:7,8. Matt. 18:33—35. Luke 6:35—38.

m Is. 26:7. Ez. 18:25—30. Rom. 9:14.

n 109:17—19. Prov. 3:34. Rom. 2:4— 6,9. Jam. 2:13.

‖ Or, *wrestle.*

27 For thou wilt [o] save the afflicted people; but wilt [p] bring down high looks.

28 For [q] thou wilt light my [*] candle: the LORD [r] my God will enlighten my darkness.

29 For [s] by thee I have [†] run through a troop; and [t] by my God have I leaped over a wall.

30 *As for* God, [u] his way *is* perfect; the word of the LORD is [‡] tried: [x] he *is* a Buckler to all those that trust in him.

31 For [y] who *is* God save the LORD? or who *is* a rock save our God?

32 *It is* God that [z] girdeth me with strength, [a] and maketh my way perfect.

33 He maketh my feet like hinds' *feet*, and setteth me upon [b] my high places.

34 [c] He teacheth my hands to war, [d] so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.

35 Thou hast also given me [e] the shield of thy salvation: and [f] thy right hand hath holden me up, and § thy gentleness hath made me great.

36 Thou hast [g] enlarged my steps under me, that my ‖ feet did not slip.

37 I have [h] pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed.

38 I have [i] wounded them, that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet.

39 For thou hast [k] girded me with strength unto the battle: [l] thou hast [¶] subdued under me those that rose up against me.

Let those that walk in darkness, and labor under many discouragements, in singing these vs. encourage themselves, that God Himself will be a Light to them.

V. 29—50. In these vs.

I. David looks back, with thankfulness, on the great things God had done for him; and so we, when we set ourselves to praise God for one mercy, should observe the many more with which we have been compassed about, and followed, all our days. He owns the hand of God in all that had contributed to his advancement, to teach us to do likewise, in reviewing the several steps by which we have risen to our prosperity. 1. God had given him all his skill and understanding in military affairs, which he was not bred up to, nor designed for; his genius leading him more to music, poetry, and a contemplative life, *v.* 34. 2. God had given him bodily strength to go through the business and fatigue of war, *v.* 32, 39. to that degree, that he could break even a bow of steel, [*] *v.* 34. What service God designs men for, He will be sure to fit them for. 3. God had likewise given him great swiftness, not to flee from the enemies, but to fly upon them, *v.* 33, 36, 37. 4. God had made him very bold and daring in his enterprises, and given him spirit proportionable to his strength, *v.* 29, 33. 5. God had protected him, and kept him safe, in the midst of the greatest perils, *v.* 35. He had delivered him from the strivings of the people, *v.* 43. particularly, *v.* 48. from Saul. 6. God had prospered and succeeded him in his designs; He it was that made his way perfect, *v.* 32. and it was his right hand, that held him up, *v.* 35. 7. God had given him victory over his enemies, the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, and all that fought against Israel: those especially he means, yet not excluding the house of Saul, and the partisans of Absalom and Sheba. He enlarges much on the goodness of God to him in defeating his enemies, attributing his victories, not to his own sword or bow, or the valor of his mighty men, but to the favor of God, *v.* 37—39 All the praise is ascribed to God, *v.* 39. 'Thou hast *given me their necks*, *v.* 40. not only to trample on them, as Josh. 10: 24. but to cut them off.' Even those who hated David whom God loved, and were enemies to the Israel of God, in their distress, cried unto the Lord, but in vain; He answered them not. How could they expect He should, when it was He whom they fought against? And when He disowned them, (as He will all those that act against his people,) no other succors could save them, *v.* 41. Those whom God has abandoned are easily vanquished; *Then did I beat them small as the dust*, *v.* 42. But those whose cause is just He avenges, *v.* 47. and those whom He favors will certainly be *lifted up above those that rise up against them*, *v.* 48. 8. God had raised him to the throne, not only delivered him and kept him alive, but dignified him and made him great, *v.* 35. thy *discipline* and *instruction;* so some. The good lessons David learned in his affliction prepared him for the dignity and power intended him; and

[*] The Median and Medo-Persian kings are generally represented on the monuments of Persia, bearing a huge bow (comp. cut, 2 K. 17:6.); and *Heeren* thinks, this was in compliment to their personal strength, which could bend, with foot or hand, such bows. The bow was, indeed, and still is, in proper hands, a formidable weapon; the story of Jonathan, and other allusions of the SS. as well as the text here, show that much care and pains were spent in training to the use of this weapon: comp. also the notes, 2 Chr. 26:10—15. and see *Fleury*, 'Manners of Anc. Israelites.' David seems to have had every physical and mental accomplishment. The figure Ulysses' bow makes in *Homer* is well known; and feats of personal strength and dexterity, as being tokens of superiority most obvious to vulgar eyes, have ever been, and still are, elements of 'glory,' eliciting popular applause. Indeed, as indicative of what careful and persevering education will do for the powers God has endowed us with, strength and skill are, in their place, proper subjects of admiration and gratitude. *Ed.*

40 Thou hast also given me [m] the necks of mine enemies; [n] that I might destroy them that hate me.

41 They cried, [o] but *there was* none to save *them; even* unto the LORD, but he answered them not.

42 Then did [p] I beat them small as the dust before the wind: [q] I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets.

43 Thou hast delivered me [r] from the strivings of the people; *and* [s] thou hast made me the head of the heathen: [t] a people *whom* I have not known shall serve me.

44 [**] As soon as they hear of me they shall obey me: the [††] strangers shall [‡‡] submit themselves unto me.

45 The strangers shall [u] fade away, and [x] be afraid out of their close places.

46 [y] The LORD liveth; and [z] blessed *be* my Rock; and let [a] the God of my salvation be [b] exalted.

o 9:18. 34:6,19. 40:17. 2 Sam. 22:28. Is. 57:15. 66:2. Luke 1:52,53. 2 Cor. 8:9. Jam. 2:5.
p 10:4. 17:10,13. 101:5. Prov. 6:16, 17. 30:12. Is. 3:9. 10:12. Luke 18: 14.
q 112:4. Job 18:6. 29:3.
* Or, *lamp.* 132:17. 2 Sam. 22:29. 1 K. 11:36. Is. 62:1.
r Is. 42:16. Matt. 4:16. Luke 1:79. 1 Pet. 2:9.
s 44:6,7. 144:1,10. 1 Sam. 17:49. 23: 2. 30:8. 2 Sam. 5:19,20,25. Eph. 6: 10—13. Col. 2:15. Rev. 3:21.
† Or, *broken.*
t 2 Sam. 22:30. 1 Cor. 15:10. 2 Cor. 12:9,10
u 19:7. 25:10. 2 Sam. 22:31. Rom. 12:2.
‡ Or, *refined.* 19:8—10.
x 2. 17:7. 84:11,12.
y 86:9. 2 Sam. 22:32. Is. 45:21,22.
z 28:7. 93:1. Is. 45:5.
a 2 Sam. 22:33.
b Deut. 33:29. 2 Sam. 22:34. Hab. 3: 19.
c 2 Sam. 22:35. Is. 28:6. 45:1.
d 46:9. Jer. 49:35. Hos. 1:5.
e 5:12. 28:7. Deut. 33:29. 2 Sam. 22: 36.
f 17:7. 44:3.
§ Or, *with thy meekness thou hast multiplied me.* 45:4. Is. 40:11. 42:3. 2 Cor. 10:1. Gal. 5:22,23. Jam. 3:17, 18.
g 4:1. Job 18:7. 36:16. Luke 12:50. 24:46—48.
‖ Heb. *ankles.* 2 Sam. 22:37.
h 3:7. 9:3. 35:2—5. 118:11,12. Num. 24:17—19. Is. 53:10—12. 62:1—6. Rev. 6:2. 19:19,20.
i 1 Sam. 17:49—51. 23:5. 30:17. 2 Sam. 5: 8: 10: 18:7,8. 21:15—22. 22:39.
k 32. Ez. 30:24,25.
l 1 Chr. 22:18. 1 Cor. 15:25—28. Eph. 1:22. Phil. 3:21.
¶ Heb. *caused to bow.* 66:3. 2 Sam. 22:40. Is. 45:14.
m Lam. 5:5.
n 34:21. 2 Sam. 22:41. Prov. 3:36. John 15:23.
o 2 Sam. 22:42,43. Job 35:12,13. Is. 59:1,2. Jer. 11:11. 14:12. Ez. 8:18. Hos. 7:14. Zech. 7:13. Luke 13:25.
p 50:22. 2 K. 13:7. Is. 41:2,15,16.
q Is. 10:6. 25:10. Zech. 10:5. Mal. 4:3.
r 2 Sam. 2:9,10. 5:1—7. Acts 5:31.
s 22:27,28. 108:9. 2 Sam. 5: 8: 10: 22:44—46. Is. 49:6,22,23. 52:15. Rom. 15:12,18. Eph. 1:22.
t Hos. 1:10. Rom. 16:26. 1 Pet. 2:10. Rev. 11:15.
** Heb. *At the hearing of the ear.* Rom. 10:16,17.
†† Heb. *sons of the stranger.* 2 Sam. 1:13. Is. 62:8. Ez. 44:7. marg.
‡‡ Or, *yield feigned obedience.* Heb *lie.* 66:3. 2 Sam. 22:44—46.
u Is. 24:4. Jam. 1:11.
x Rev. 6:16.
y 2 Sam. 22:47. Jer. 10:10. John 14 19. Rev. 1:18.
z 2. 42:9.
a 25:5. 68:20. 79:9. Ex. 15:2. Is. 12:2. Luke 1:47.
b 21:13. 57:5,11. 99:9.

Verse 27.

The contrast between 'afflicted people' and 'high looks,' shows, that *humility* rather than *suffering* was intended; or rather *humble sufferers.* (Is. 57:15, Is. Luke 1:46—55.) SCOTT.

Verses 28, 29.

Some apply the expression, 'Thou wilt' or *dost*, 'light my candle,' which had been extinguished, to the restoration of the Savior from death, in which his body had lain as an extinguished taper; and the act, to his bursting the barriers of the tomb. ID.

(28) Some refer this to the taking of Zion from the Jebusites, Sam. &c.—to others to David's pursuit of the troops of the Amalekites, who burnt Ziklag. ED.

Verses 30—42.

'Thus we learn to trust in JEHOVAH without fear, when our enemies are victorious, and to glorify him without reserve, when we are [illegible]. SCOTT.

(34.) *He teacheth my hands to war.*] 'War is as contrary to the spirit of Christianity as any thing: and the nation that is first to break peace, is under a heavy curse.' [See *Wayland*, &c.]—*Bow of steel*, &c.] 'All the versions render it, "*Thou hast made my arm like a brazen bow.*"' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(40.) The example of Christ in the temple, &c. shows us that *there are times* when the propensities to oppose and destroy may be virtuously used; let them never be exerted under the direction of a selfish malice, but when necessary for opposition to, and destruction of evil, let them be ever subordinated to benevolence, conscience, and God's will. See Ps. 35.14, 27, &c. 86:9. 120:7. 139:19—22. 37:3,8,20, &c. 58:10,11, (last clause,) and also Matt. 5:43—48. Mar. 12:30,31. Gal. 5:20. James 1: 20, &c. &c. Thus shall we feel a Christian energy, guarded on the one hand against a weak fear that yields to wrong influences, and neglects duty, and on the other, against a persecuting spirit, which forgets God in self-aggrandizement. ED.

(44.) *Submit*, &c.] 'Heb. *Shall lie unto me*, i. e. shall submit not willingly and cheerfully, as they will pretend, but only out of fear, and by constraint. By which it appears that this is spoken with reference to *David*, and not, as some would have it, to Christ; because Christ's

47 *It is* God that * avengeth me, and † subdueth the people unto me.

48 He delivereth me from mine enemies: yea, [c] thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me: thou hast delivered me from the ‡ violent man.

49 Therefore [d] will I § give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, * and sing praises unto thy name.

50 Great deliverance giveth he [f] to his King; and showeth mercy [g] to his anointed, to David, and to his Seed for evermore.

PSALM XIX.

The heavens, and especially the sun, proclaim the Creator's glory to all lands, 1—6. The manifold excellence and usefulness of the Word of God, 7—11. David prays to be delivered from his sins, and accepted in his services, 12—14.

To the chief Musician A Psalm of David.

[a] THE heavens declare the glory of God; and [b] the firmament sheweth his handywork.

* Heb. *giveth avengements for me.* Deut. 32:35. 2 Sam. 22:48. Nah. 1: 2. Rom. 12:19.
† Or, *de-troyeth.* 47:3.
c 22:27—30. 59:1,2. 89:13. Phil. 2:9.
‡ Heb. *man of violence.* 7:16. 86:14. 140:1,4,11.
d 14:7. 30:12. 72:18,19. 138:4.
§ Or, *confess.* 2 Sam. 22:50,51. 1 Tim. 6:13.
e 108:3. Matt. 26:30. Rom. 15:9.
f 2:6. 78:71,72. 89:3,4. 1 Sam. 2:10. 16:1. Acts 2:34—36. Phil. 2:9—11.
g 89:20—39. 132:10. 1 Chr. 17:11—14, 27. Is. 9:6,7. Luke 1:31—33,69. Rom. 1:3. Gal. 3:16.
a 8:3. 33:6. 115:16. 148:3,4. Is. 40: 22—26. Jer. 10:11,12. Rom. 1:19,20.
b 150:1,2. Gen. 1:6—8,14,15. Dan. 12: 3.

the lessening of him helped very much to greaten him. God made him not only a great conqueror, but a great ruler, *v.* 43. all the neighboring nations were tributaries. See 2 Sam. 8: 6, 11. In all this, David was a type of Christ, whom the Father brought safely and victoriously through his conflicts with the powers of darkness, and gave to be Head over all things to his church, which is his body.

II. David looks up, with humble and reverent adorations of the divine glory and perfection; when God had, by his providence, magnified him, he endeavors, with his praises, to magnify God, to bless and exalt Him, *v.* 46. He gives honor to Him, 1. As a living God; *The Lord liveth, v.* 46. We had our lives at first from, and we owe their continuance to, that God who has life in Himself, *the living God.* 2. As a finishing God; As for God, He is not only perfect Himself, but *his way is perfect, v.* 30. He is known by his name *Jehovah*, Ex. 6: 3. a God performing and perfecting what He begins, in providence as well as creation, Gen. 2: 1. If it was God that made David's way perfect, *v.* 32. much more is his own so. Eccl. 3: 14. 3. As a faithful God; *The Word of the Lord is tried.* David, in God's providences concerning him, takes notice of the performance of his promises to him, which, as it sweetens the providence, so it honors the promise. 4. As the Protector and Defender of his people. David had found Him so to him; '*He is the God of my salvation, v.* 46. by whose power and grace I am, and hope to be, saved; but not of mine only; He is *a Buckler to all those that trust in Him, v.* 30. He shelters and protects them all, is both able and ready to do so.' 5. As incomparable in all this.

III. David looks forward, with a believing hope that God would still do him good: 1. That He will completely subject his enemies, and cause his government to be extensive, so that even a people whom he had not known should serve him, *v.* 43. Thus the Son of David, though He sees not yet all things put under Him, yet knows He shall reign till all opposing rule, principality, and power, shall be quite put down. 2. That his seed should be for ever continued in the Messiah, who, he foresaw, should come from his loins, *v.* 50. He shows mercy to his anointed, his Messiah, to David himself, the anointed of the God of Jacob in the type, and to his seed for evermore. *He saith not unto seeds, as of many, but to his Seed, as of one, that is Christ*, Gal. 3: 16. It is He only that shall reign for ever, and of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end. Christ is called *David*, Hos. 3: 5. God has called Him *his King*, 2: 6. Great deliverance God does give, and will give, to Him, and to his church and people, here called *his seed for evermore.*

In singing these vs. we must give God the glory of the victories of Christ and his church hitherto, and of all the deliverances and advancements of the gospel-kingdom; and encourage ourselves and one another with an assurance, that the church militant will be, shortly, eternally triumphant.

Ps. XIX. Two excellent books the great God has published for the instruction and edification of men; this psalm treats of both, and recommends both to our diligent study: 1. The book of creation, in which we may easily read the power and Godhead of the Creator; 2. The book of the Scriptures, which makes known to us the will of God concerning our duty.

V. 1—6. From the things every day seen by all the world, the psalmist, in these vs. leads us to consider the invisible things of God, whose being appears incontestably evident, and whose glory shines transcendently bright, in the visible heavens, their structure, beauty, order and influence. This instance of the divine power serves not only to show the folly of atheists, but also of idolaters Observe,

I. The creatures plainly speak themselves to be God's handy-works; for they could not exist from eternity, all succession, motion [and composition, note, Gen. 1: 1.] must have had a beginning; they could not make themselves, that is a contradiction; they could not be produced by a casual hit of atoms, that is an absurdity; therefore they must have a Creator, who can be no other than an Eternal Mind, infinitely wise, powerful, and good. Thus it appears they are God's works, the *work of his fingers*, 8: 3. therefore they declare his glory. From the excellency of the work, we may easily infer the infinite perfection of its great Author. From the brightness of the heavens, we may collect that the Creator is Light; their vastness of extent speaks his immensity; their height his transcendency and sovereignty; their influence on this earth, his dominion and providence, and universal beneficence: and all declare his almighty power, by which they were at first made, and continue to this day, according to the ordinances then settled.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In David, the type, we may here behold Jesus, our Redeemer, conflicting with enemies, compassed with sorrows, and with 'floods of ungodly men,' (*Ps.* 22: 11—18. *Matt.* 27: 39—44.) enduring not only the pains of death, but the wrath of God for us: yet calling on the Father with strong cries and tears; rescued from the grave with a tremendous earthquake, and various convulsions of nature; advanced to the mediatorial throne, and made Head of the heathen, as a recompense of his most perfect obedience even unto death; executing vengeance on the Jewish nation, beating them as small as the dust before the wind, and casting them out as the mire in the streets; and proceeding either to reconcile, or to put under his feet, all other enemies, till death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed. (1 *Cor.* 15: 20—28.) In the full assurance of these truths, and expectation of his appearing and his glory, we should hasten to submit willingly to his authority, and to embrace his salvation; we should trust in his merits, rejoice in his triumphs, and imitate his example. SCOTT.

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people are a willing people, Ps. 110:3. and those whom He conquers, freely obey Him.' POOLE.

Verse 49.

Paul quotes this v. to prove, that the Gentiles would glorify God for his mercy: (*Rom.* 15:8—13.) and this shows beyond a doubt, that he considered the Ps. as prophetical of Christ, and in some respects as his language. (22:23—31.) Yet it is not advisable to apply every clause to Him, so as to overlook his ancestor and type; who seems to have been led, by the Holy Spirit, from speaking of his own conflicts and deliverances, to use language, which could never have its full accomplishment, but in his promised Seed. SCOTT.—'From the use made of this v. by the apostle Paul, (Rom. 15:9.) there can be no doubt, that, with a reference to the personal feelings of David, on occasion of his signal victories over all his enemies, there combined a prophetic allusion to the joy of the Redeemer, in contemplating the salvation of the Gentile Church. The manner, indeed, in which Paul introduces a reference to this v. would rather induce the supposition, that in the whole of the Ps. there is a mystic adumbration of Christ and the Church.' MORISON.

(49, 50.) 'David is here transported beyond himself to Christ, and therefore justly is this (v. 49.) applied to Him, and to his preaching to, and calling of the Gentiles, Rom. 15:9.' POOLE.

Verse 50.

For evermore.] 'This shows that another *David* is meant, with another kind of *posterity*, and another sort of *kingdom*. From *the family of David* came the *man Christ Jesus*. His *posterity* are *genuine Christians;* his *kingdom*, in which they are *subjects*, is *spiritual.* This *government* shall last through all time, and extend through eternity; for that is the kingdom of glory in which Jesus Christ reigns on the throne of his Father, and in which his followers shall reign with Him for ever and ever.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

NOTES.

Ps. XIX. 'On account of the sudden transition from the *works* to the *law* of God, I once suspected the Ps. was made up of two; but as it is not easy to see why it should be so, and as such transitions are frequent in Hebrew and Arabian poets, the supposition is not necessary. *When* the Ps. was composed, cannot be shown with any probability.' ROSENM.

Verse 1.

This Ps. seems especially to have been intended to prove, that the idolatry and irreligion of mankind were wholly inexcusable. SCOTT. It was an old idea, that the heavens, or 'firmament,' were a solid hollow sphere, which revolved round the earth, and carried the sun, planets and stars with it. The later Arab cosmology had first and lowest, earth; then water; then air; then fire; then ten heavens, one above another, viz. the *emerald* heaven (with bird-shaped angels, and their president); the *gemmy* (with eagle-shaped do. and do.); the *hyacinthine* (vulture-shaped do. do.); the *silver* (horse-shaped do.); the *gold* (girl-shaped); the *pearly* (do.); 7th. the *light or lucid* (human-shaped do); 8th. the heaven full of angels. the *firmament*; 9th. *enclosed space* full of angels; 10th. *great sea* without bound. The Syrians had first, *earth;* then *water;* then *air;* then *fire;* then 10 *expanses*, 9 having their respective choirs of angels; archangels; principalities; powers; virtues; dominions; thrones; cherubim; and 9th, seraphim, which

ment sheweth his handy work.

2 [c] Day unto day uttereth speech, and [d] night unto night sheweth knowledge.

3 [e] *There is* no speech nor language, [*] *where* their voice is not heard.

4 [f] Their [†] line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. [g] In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun;

5 Which *is* [h] as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, *and* [i] rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

6 [k] His going forth *is* from the end of the heaven, [l] and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

7 ¶ The [‡] law of the LORD *is* [m] perfect, [§] converting the soul: [n] the testimony of the LORD *is* [o] sure, [p] making wise the simple.

8 The [q] statutes of the LORD *are* [r] right,

c 24:7—10. 78:3—6. 134:1—3. 148: 12. Ex. 15:20,21. Is. 38:19.
d 74:16. 136:8,9. Gen. 1:17,18. 8:22.
e Deut. 4:19.
* Or, *without* these *their voice is heard.* Heb. *without their voice heard.*
f 93:3. Is. 49:6. Rom. 10:18. 2 Cor. 10:13—16.
† Or, *rule*, or *direction.*
g Gen. 1:14—18. Mal. 4:2.
h Is. 61:10. 62:5. John 3:29.
i 1 Cor. 9:24—26. Phil. 3:13,14. Heb. 12:1,2.
k 139:9. Job 26:3. Ec. 1:5. Col. 1:23.
l Job 22:14.
‡ Or, *doctrine.* 78:1—7. 119:72,96—100,105,127,128. 147:19,20. Deut. 6: 6—9. 17:18—20. Josh. 1:8. Job 23: 12. Rom. 3:2. 15:4.
m 18:30. Deut. 32:4. Rom. 12:2. Jam. 1:17.
§ Or, *restoring.* 23:3. 119:9. Jam. 1:21—25.
n 93:5. 119:14,24,111,152. Is. 8:16,20. John 3:32,33. 5:39. Acts 10:43. 2 Tim. 1:8. 1 John 5:9—12. Rev. 19: 10.
o 111:7. 2 Sam. 23:5. 2 Tim. 2:19. Heb. 6:18,19.
p 119:130. Prov. 1:4,22,23. Col 2:16. 2 Tim. 3:15—17.
q 105:45. 119:12,16,80,171. Gen. 26:5. Ex. 18:16. Deut. 4:5,6. Ez. 36:27.
r 119:128. Neh. 9:13.

II. What some of those things are which [must strike the most inobservant eye, and] notify this. 1. The heavens and the firmament: the vast expanse of air and ether, and the spheres of the planets, and fixed stars. 2. The constant and regular succession of day and night, *v.* 2. to which covenant of providence, the covenant of grace is compared for its stability, Jer. 33:20.—31:35. Every day and every night speak the goodness of God, and leave it to the next day, and next night, to say the same. 3. The sun, in a special manner, declares the glory of God; without it this lower world would be a desert, a dungeon! The heavenly bodies are called *hosts of heaven*, therefore are fitly said to *dwell in tents*, as soldiers in their encampments: the sun is said to have a *tabernacle*, not only because he never has a fixed residence, but because the mansion he has, will, at the end of time, be taken down like a tent. His assigned circuit is performed with such steadiness and constancy, that we can certainly foretell the hour and the minute at which the sun will rise at such a place, any day to come. [What an example for punctuality, and constancy, and cheerfulness in duty!]

III. To whom this declaration is made of God's glory; to all parts of the world; *v.* 3, 4. *There is no speech nor language*, no nation, for the nations were divided *after their tongues*, Gen. 10:31, 32. where their voice is not heard. *Their line is gone through all the earth*, the equinoctial line suppose, and with it, *their words to the end of the world*, proclaiming the eternal power of the God of nature, *v.* 4. The apostle uses this, as a reason why the Jews should not be angry with him and others for preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, because God had already made Himself known to the Gentile world by the works of creation, and left not Himself without witness among them, Rom. 10:18. so that they were without excuse, if idolaters, Rom. 1:20, 21. If God used these means to prevent their apostasy, and they proved ineffectual, the apostles did well to use other means to recover them from it. They have no speech or language, (so some,) and yet their voice is heard. All people may hear these natural, immortal preachers speak to them, in their own tongue, the wonderful works of God.

In singing these vs. we must give God the glory of all the comfort and benefit we have by the lights of heaven, still looking above and beyond them to the Sun of righteousness.

V. 7—14. God's glory, i. e. his goodness to man, appears much in creation, but much more in and by revelation. The discoveries of God by his works might have served, had man retained his integrity; but to recover him out of his fallen state, there was needed the Word of God. And here,

I. The psalmist gives an account of the excellent properties and uses of the Word, in six sentences, *v.* 7—9. in each repeating the name *Jehovah*, and not in vain, for the law has its authority and all its excellency from the Law Maker. Here are six several titles of the Word of God, to take in the whole of divine revelation, precepts, and promises, and especially the gospel.

1. *The law of the Lord is perfect;* perfectly free from all corruption, perfectly filled with all good, and perfectly fitted for the end for which it is designed; it will make the man of God perfect, 2 Tim. 3:17. Nothing is to be added to, or taken from it. It is of use to convert the soul, to bring us back to ourselves, to our God, to our duty; for it shows us our sinfulness and misery in our departures from God, and the indispensable necessity of our return.

2. *The testimony of the Lord* (which witnesses for Him to us) *is sure*, incontestably and inviolably sure; what we may credit, and rely on, confident it will not deceive us: a sure discovery of divine truth, a sure direction in duty, a sure fountain of living comforts, and a sure foundation of lasting hopes. It is of use to make us wise, wise to salvation, 2 Tim. 3:15. It will give us an insight into things divine, and a foresight of things to come; will employ us in the best work, and secure to us our true interests; will make even the simple, poor contrivers as they may be for the present world, wise for their souls and eternity. Those that are humbly simple, sensible of their own folly, and willing to be taught, those shall be made wise by the Word of God, 25:9. [Matt. 18:3.]

3. *The statutes of the Lord* (enacted by his authority, and binding on all wherever they come) *are right*, exactly agreeing with the eternal rules and principles of good and evil, i. e. with the right reason [and harmonious constitution] of man, and the right counsels of God. All God's precepts, concerning all things, are right, 119:128. just as they should be; and they will set us to rights, if we receive them, and submit to them; and, because they are right, they rejoice the heart. The law, as we see it in the hands of Christ, gives cause for joy; and, when written in our hearts, it lays a foundation for lasting joy, by restoring us to our right mind.

4. *The commandment of the Lord is pure;* clear from all darkness, dross and defilement; purified from all alloy, and purifying to those that receive and embrace it. It is the ordinary means the Spirit uses in enlightening the eyes; it brings us to a sight and sense of our sin and misery, and directs us in the way of duty.

5. *The fear of the Lord* (true religion and godliness, prescribed in the Word, reigning in the heart, and practised in the life) *is clean;* clean itself, and will make us clean, John 15:3. it will cleanse our way, 119:9. and it endureth for ever; it is of perpetual obligation, and can never be repealed; the ceremonial law is long since done away, but the law concerning the fear of God is ever the same. Time will not alter the nature of moral good and evil.

6. *The judgments of the Lord* (all his precepts, which are framed in infinite wisdom) *are true;* they are grounded on the most sacred and unquestionable truths; they are *righteous*, all consonant to

last was the expanse full of the invisible stars; 10th, expanse whence Lucifer fell, after which was the *great ocean* without limit; above, the *crown of light*. See *Kircher*. But, says *Morison*, 'heavens' here mean 'simply, that majestic scene which meets the eye on looking upward, or which may exist beyond the reach of mortal vision; but without any reference apparently to those philosophical theories which either contravene or establish the Newtonian System.'—*Handy-work.*] There is no warrant in the original for the phrase, 'thy handy-work.' '*The work* of his hands, is the true rendering.' ED.

Verse 2.

Day unto day.] 'Or, "after day." So *unto* is used for *after*, Ex. 16:1. 19:1. in Heb.' *Cott. Bib.—Uttereth.*] 'The original denotes literally the flow of a river or brook; and as applied to that evidence, which returning days and nights furnish, of the wisdom, glory, and goodness of the great Eternal, in his works of creation and redemption, it supplies a fine image of its fulness and continuity.' MORISON.

Verses 3, 4.

'No speech, no language, Nor is their voice heard; Yet their sound is gone through all the earth, And their indications to the limits of the world.' BOOTHR. 'What is here said of the *sun*, Justin Martyr, (dialogue with Trypho,) affirms to be a scripture spoken of Christ. So in Mal. 2:2. *sun of righteousness* is mystically understood to denote Christ: and so the *Bridegroom*, to which the sun is here resembled, is a signal title of Christ in respect to his spouse the church.' HAMMOND. *Paxton* supposes an allusion here, and in v. 5. to an ancient oriental ceremony of marriage; see *Bush*. ED.

Verse 5.

'Many versions read, "In the sun hath he placed his tabernacle." The Heb. however, gives no countenance to this, but fully bears out the reading of the common version, "In or among, &c."' MORISON. The bridegroom in the E. was splendidly attired, and issued forth from his own house to go to that of his intended bride, accompanied by a train of friends, richly decked and bearing torches. The planets were anciently considered to be the special attendants of the sun round the world: note, Job 38:31,32. ED.

Verse 6.

'From one end of the heavens is his going forth, And to the other end, his revolution down So that nothing is deprived of his heat.' BOOTHR.

Verses 7—11.

The word, here translated 'law,' may be rendered *doctrine;* and be understood as a general name for divine revelation, as then extant, the law of Moses being the principal part of it. (*Deut.* 32:4.)—'The statutes' frequently mean the *ordinances* of God, by which Israel maintained communion with Him, and received all blessings from Him. These, though burdensome in themselves, under that dispensation, were entirely suited to its object, and proved a source of joy to the believing worshipper. (*M. R.* q.) But some explain the word, in this place, to signify the laws given to regulate the conduct of magistrates, in administering justice; which were peculiarly equitable, and tended to render the nation happy. 'The commandment,' or the moral law, is 'holy, just, and good,' and spiritual; enlightening the

[s] rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD [t] *is* pure, [u] enlightening the eyes.

9 [x] The fear of the LORD *is* clean, [y] enduring for ever: [z] the judgments of the LORD *are* [a] true *and* righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired *are they* [b] than gold, yea, than much fine gold: [b] sweeter also than honey, and † the honey-comb.

11 [c] Moreover, by them is thy servant warned: *and* [d] in keeping of them *there is* great reward.

12 ¶ Who [e] can understand *his* errors? [f] cleanse thou me from [g] secret *faults*.

13 [h] Keep back thy servant also from [i] presumptuous *sins;* [k] let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be [l] upright, and [m] I shall be innocent from the ‡ great transgression.

14 [n] Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my § Strength, and [o] my Redeemer.

[s] 40:8. 119:14,21,54,92,111,143. Deut. 12:11,12. 16:11,14. Neh. 8:12. Is. 61:5. Jer. 15:16. Rom. 7:22.

natural equity; and *altogether* so, there is no unrighteousness in any.

II. He expresses his great value for God's Word, and the great advantage he had, and hoped to have, from it, *v.* 10, 11.

1. It is the character of all good people, that they prefer their religion and the Word of God, (1.) Far before all wealth; gold is only for the body, and time; grace for the soul, and eternity. (2.) Far before all the pleasures of sense. Those are the delight of brutes, and therefore debase the great soul of man; these are the delight of angels, and exalt the soul. Those are deceitful, will soon surfeit, and yet never satisfy; but these are substantial and satisfying, and there is no danger of excess in them.

2. See what use he made of the precepts of God's Word; *By them is thy servant warned.* The Word of God is a word of warning to the children of men; it warns us of the duty we are to do, the dangers we are to avoid, and the deluge we are to prepare for, Ezek. 3: 17.—33: 7. It warns the wicked not to go on in his wicked way, and the righteous not to turn from his good way. All that are indeed God's servants take this warning.

3. See what advantage he promised himself by his obedience to God's precepts; *In keeping of them there is great reward:* [which need not be the motive, but will be the consequence of good conduct.] Those who make conscience of their duty, will not only be no losers by it, but unspeakable gainers. There is a reward, not only *after* keeping, but *in* keeping, God's commandments; a present great reward of obedience in obedience. Religion is health and honor, peace and pleasure; it will make our comforts sweet, and our crosses easy, life truly valuable, and death itself truly desirable. [Note, Job 36:]

III. He draws some good inferences.

1. He takes occasion hence to make a penitent reflection on his sins; for *by the law is the knowledge of sin.* From the rectitude of the divine law he learns to call his sins his errors; if the commandment be true and righteous, every transgression of it is an error, as grounded on a mistake. From the extent, and strictness, and spiritual nature, of the divine law, he learns that his sins are so many, that he cannot understand their number, and so exceeding sinful, that he cannot understand their heinousness and malignity. We are guilty of many sins, which, through our carelessness and partiality to ourselves, we are not aware of; many we have forgotten; so that when we have been ever so particular in the confession of sin, we must conclude with—*and such like:* for God knows a great deal more evil of us, than we of ourselves. It is well we are under grace, and not the law.

2. He takes occasion hence to pray against sin; all the law's discoveries of it, should drive us to pray, as David, (1.) For pardon; finding himself unable to specify all the particulars of his transgressions, he cries, *cleanse me from my secret faults;* not secret to God, (so none are,) nor only to the world, but such as were hid from his own self observation. The best have reason to suspect many secret faults, and to pray God not to lay that guilt to their charge; for even our sins of infirmity, and inadvertency, and our secret sins, would be our ruin, if God should deal with us according to their desert. Even secret faults are defiling, and unfit us for communion with God; but pardon cleanses from them, 1 John, 1: 17. (2.) For grace to help in time of need; that presumptuous sins might be prevented, *v.* 13. All that truly repent, and have pardon, are in care not to relapse into sin, and folly, as appears by their prayers,

[t] 12:6. 119:140. Prov. 30:5. Rom. 7: 12—14.
[u] 119:98—100,105,130. Prov. 2:6. 6: 23. Rom. 2:17—20. 3:20. 7:7. Gal. 2:19. 3:10—13,21.
[x] 34:11—14. 36:1. 115:13. Gen. 22: 12. 42:18. 1 Sam. 12:24. 1 K. 18: 3,4,12. Neh. 5:15. Prov. 8:13. Acts 10:22. Rom. 3:10—18.
[y] 111:10. 112:1—6.
[z] 16:5. 33:6. 72:1,2. 119:7,39,62,75, 106,137,138,142,160,164. 147:19. Ex. 21:1. Deut. 4:8. Is. 26:8. Rom. 2: 2. 11:22. Rev. 15:3. 16:7. 19:2.
[a] Heb. *truth.*
[b] 119:72,127. Job 28:15—17. Prov. 3: 13—15. 8:10,11,19. 16:16.
[c] 63:5. 119:103. Job 23:12. Prov. 24: 13,14.
† Heb. *the dropping of honey-combs.*
[d] 119:11. 2 Chr. 19:10. Prov. 6:22,23. Ez. 3:17—21. 33:3—9. Matt. 3:7. Acts 20:31. 1 Cor. 4:14. 1 Thes. 5: 14. Heb. 11:7.
[e] Prov. 3:16—18. 11:18. 29:18. Is. 3: 10,11. Matt. 6:4,6,18. Heb. 11:6, 26. Jam. 1:25. 2 John 8. Rev. 14: 13.
[f] 40:12. Job 6:24. Is. 64:6. 1 Cor. 4: 4. Heb. 9:7.
[g] 90:8. 139:2,23,24. Lev. 4:2,&c. Jer. 17:9.
[h] Gen. 20:6.
[i] Ex. 21:14. Num. 15:30,31. Deut. 17:12,13. 2 Pet. 2:10.
[k] 119:133. Rom. 6:12—14,16—22.
[l] 7:10. 11:7. 84:11. Acts 24:16.
[m] 18:23. 1 Chr. 10:13,14.
‡ Heb. *much.*
[n] 5:1,2. 51:15. 66:18—20. 119:103. Gen. 4:4,5. Prov. 15:8. Rom. 15:16. Heb. 11:4. 13:15. 1 Pet. 2:5.
§ Heb. *rock.* 18:2.
[o] Job 19:25. Is. 43:14. 44:6. 47:4. 54:5. Tit. 2:14. 1 Pet. 1:18,19. Rev 5:9.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

By considering the inanimate servants of our Creator, we may learn to adore his magnificence and liberality; be stirred up to cheerfulness, constancy, and diligence in doing good; and led to use our nobler gifts of reason and speech to proclaim his praise. —The transition is easy and natural to the contemplation of the Sun of righteousness, the Bridegroom of the church, and Light of the world. He shines on us through his Word: may He send forth more and more faithful ministers to publish it throughout the earth!—Let it be observed, that the more any man studies and understands the Holy Scriptures, the more deeply will he be convinced of his own sinfulness, in thought, word, and deed: serious and frequent self-examination by this faithful mirror, will discover to him innumerable deviations from his perfect rule; and convince him that those, which have escaped his recollection or observation, are equally innumerable. This will induce him to cast himself unreservedly on the mercy and grace of God, for deliverance from those sins which have been hitherto unnoticed by himself, or vanished from his recollection. He will also grow more jealous of his own heart, and more afraid of temptation, lest he should be drawn into presumptuous sins, and come under the dominion of them: and whilst he longs, more and more, to be preserved from every transgression, and that his thoughts, words, and works, may be acceptable to the Lord; he will feel more sensibly his own insufficiency for every good thing, and learn to depend more entirely on Christ Jesus, as 'made of God unto him, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption;' and he will 'rejoice and glory in Him alone.' (1 *Cor.* 1: 26—31.)

SCOTT.

mind to perceive what men should be and do, and how far they are from that holiness which it demands —'The fear of the LORD, is clean,' as it sets the soul against all sin, and leads to holy watchfulness and diligence; and being once truly implanted in the soul, it will endure for ever. The term also may include the worship rendered to God, according to his Word; which was free from all profane mixtures of superstition and idolatry, and far removed from the gross immoralities attending the religion of the surrounding nations. The obligation to this holy worship is perpetual; but the external form was varied, when the old dispensation was superseded by the new, and a more spiritual worship appointed.—'The judgments' commonly, in the books of Moses, denote the *judicial law:* (*Ex.* 21:1. *Deut.* 4:6—8. 6:1.) but the term is used in various senses, in other parts of Scripture; and may include warnings, counsels, threatenings, and the instances given of divine wrath executed on sinners in different ways. SCOTT.

(7—9.) *Law.*] 'Contemplating the Ps. in its prophetic bearings, we may understand the phrase *law* to extend both to the Old and New Test.—Many divines and critics, and *Castalio* in particular, endeavor to attach a distinct shade of meaning to the words, *law, testimony, statutes, commandments, fear, judgments;* thus law will denote the preceptive part of revelation; testimony, the doctrinal; statutes, things given in charge; commandments, the general body of the divine revelation and doctrine; fear, *religious* fear; and judgments, the civil statutes of the Mosaic law, more particularly the penal sanctions.' MORISON.

(10.) *Honey . . . honey-comb.*] 'A climax, simply as the flavor of honey dropping from the comb, is richer than when it is become old, and been long exposed to the action of the air.' ID.

Verses 12—14.

Presumptuous sins.] Deliberate, the result of proud contempt of God, through the dominion of some powerful lust. (Num. 15:30—36.) The 'great transgression was, the great offence of rebellion, idolatry, or apostasy.' David's dependence was entirely the same as that of every Christian, who says, 'Surely in the Lord' Jesus, 'have I righteousness and strength.' SCOTT.

(12.) *Errors.*] 'I. e. unadvised errors, or faults of ignorance.' AINSW.—*Secret faults.*] '*Horsley* tr. disguises, concealments, or dissimulations, i. e. hypocrisy; which accords well with all the primary [radical] meanings of the Heb.' MORISON.

(13.) *Presumptuous sins.*] 'Such a sin was that of David's in the matter of Uriah, to which he seems to have an eye.'—*The great transgression,*] 'I. e. any presumptuous sin, for all such are great transgressions.' POOLE.—'It may be understood of the easily besetting sin of a man's constitution and temperament; or the more dreadful sin of final apostasy [so Bp. *Horne*]; or it may refer to some flagrant sin which stood recorded in awful colors in the book of conscience.' MORISON. Dr. *Kennicott* refers it to idolatry. ED.

PSALM XX.

Israel prays that her king may be defended, accepted, and prospered, 1—4: and rejoices in confidence of being answered and succeeded, 5—9.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

THE LORD [a] hear thee in the day of trouble: [b] the name of [c] the God of Jacob * defend thee.

2 Send † thee help [d] from the sanctuary, and ‡ strengthen thee [e] out of Zion.

3 [f] Remember all thy offerings, and § accept thy burnt-sacrifice. Selah.

4 [g] Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel.

5 [h] We will rejoice in thy salvation, and [i] in the name of our God we will set up *our* banners: the LORD fulfil all thy petitions.

a 41:1. 46:1. 50:5. 60:11. 91:15. 138:7. Jer. 30:7. Matt. 26:38,39. Heb. 5:7.
b 9:10. 83:18. Ex. 34:5—7. Prov. 18:10. Is. 50:10.
c 46:7,11. Gen. 32:27—29. 48:15,16. Ex. 3:13—15.
* Heb. *set thee on an high place.* 18:2. 91:14. 144:2.
† Heb. *thy help.*
d 73:17. 1 K. 8:44,45. 2 Chr. 20:8,9.
‡ Heb. *support.*
e 2 Sam. 5:7. 6:17. Is. 12:6. 14:32. 37:34,35.
f Gen. 4:4. Is. 60:7. Eph. 5:2. 1 Pet. 2:5.
§ Heb. *turn to ashes, or make fat.* Lev. 9:24. 1 Chr. 21:26. 2 Chr. 7:1.
g 21:2. 37:4. 145:19. Prov. 11:23. Matt. 21:22. John 11:42. 16:23. Rom. 8:27,28. 1 John 5:14,15.
h 13:5. 21:1. 35:9. 118:15. Is. 12:1—3. 25:9. 61:10. Hab. 3:18. Luke 1:47.
i Ex. 17:15. *marg.* Num. 10:35,36. 1 Sam. 17:45. Is. 11:10. Mic. 4:5.

which concur with David's. See, [1.] His petition; We ought to pray to be kept from sins of infirmity, but especially from presumptuous sins, which most offend God, and wound conscience, wither our comforts, and shock our hopes. [2.] His plea; 'So shall I be upright; appear upright; preserve the evidence and comfort of my uprightness; and *be innocent from the great transgression;*' so he calls a presumptuous sin, because no sacrifice was accepted for it, Num. 15: 28—30. Note, Presumptuous sins are very heinous and dangerous: as sins against the habitual convictions and actual admonitions of conscience, in contempt and defiance of the law and its sanctions, with a high hand. Every good man ought to be jealous of sinning presumptuously, yea, though through grace hitherto kept from it. Let none be high-minded, but fear. Being so much exposed, we have great need to pray God, when pushing toward a presumptuous sin, either by his providence to prevent the temptation, or by his grace to give us victory over it.

3. He takes occasion humbly to beg the divine acceptance of his pious thoughts and affections, *v.* 14. Observe the connection: for if we favor our sins, we cannot expect God should *favor us or our services*, 66: 18. Gracious souls must have all they aim at, if accepted of God, for that is their bliss. His encouragement to hope for this, was, God was his Strength and Redeemer: by his strength we have power with Him.

In singing this, we should get our hearts much affected with the excellency of God's Word, and delivered into it; we should be much affected with the evil of sin, our danger *of* it, and *by* it, and fetch in help from heaven against it.

Ps. XX. V. 1—5. This prayer for David is entitled, *a psalm of David;* nor was it at all absurd for him, who was divinely inspired, to draw up a form of prayer, to be used in the congregation for himself, and those in authority under him; nay, it is very proper for those who desire their friends' prayers to tell them particularly what they would have asked for them. Even great and good men, and that know well to pray for themselves, must not despise, but earnestly desire, others' prayers, for them, even if inferiors in all respects. Paul often begged his friends to pray for him. Magistrates, and those in power, should esteem praying people, (encouraging them, reckon them their strength, Zech. 12: 5, 10.) do what they can for such, that they may have an interest in their prayers, and do nothing to forfeit it. Observe,

I. What they are taught to ask for the king. That God would,

1. Answer his prayers, *v.* 1, 5. Note, Even the greatest of men may be much in trouble. Neither the crown on his head, nor the grace in his heart, would exempt David from it. Even the greatest of men must be much in prayer; and let none expect benefit by the prayers of the church, or ministers, or friends, who are capable of praying for themselves, and yet neglect it. Happy the people that have praying princes, to whose prayers they may thus say, *Amen.*

2. Protect his person, and life, in war.

3. Enable him to go on in his undertakings for the public good; in performance of the promises, and in answer to the prayers in the sanctuary. Mercies out of the sanctuary are the sweetest mercies, and tokens of God's peculiar love, even our own God. Strength out of Zion is spiritual strength, and what we should most desire, both for ourselves and others, in services and sufferings.

4. Testify his gracious acceptance of the sacrifices he offered with his prayers, according to the law of that time, before he went out on this dangerous expedition, *v.* 3. i. e. 'The Lord give thee the victory and success thou didst by prayer with sacrifices ask, and thereby give as full proof of his acceptance of the sacrifice, as ever by kindling it with fire from heaven.' By this we may now know that God accepts our spiritual sacrifices, if by his Spirit He kindles in our souls a holy fire of pious and divine affection, and with that makes our hearts burn within us.

5. Crown all his enterprises and noble designs for the public welfare with the desired success, *v.* 4. This they might in faith pray for, because they knew David was a man after God's own heart, and would design nothing but what was pleasing to Him. Those who make it their business to glorify God, may expect God will, one way or other, gratify them; and they who walk in his counsel may promise themselves He will fulfil theirs; *Thou shalt devise a thing, and it shall be established unto thee.*

II. Their confidence of an answer of peace, for themselves and their good king, *v.* 5. 'We, that are subjects, will rejoice in the preservation and prosperity of our prince;' or rather, 'In thy salvation, O God, in thy power and promise to save,

NOTES.

Ps. XX. 'To what precise period of David's history this Ps. refers, is not easy with any certainty to determine.—The opening, I incline to think, is a song of praise, and not a prayer; and contains an assertion as to the conduct of Jehovah, not a petition to Him.' MORISON. '*Ainsworth* thinks this whole Ps. a prophecy of Christ's sufferings, and deliverance, for which the church with him triumphs. *Theodoret* takes it to be a prophecy of Sennacherib's invasion of Judea, and of Rabshakeh's blasphemy, and of Hezekiah's distress and prayer on that account.' GILL.—'This is one of the dialogue Pss. and appears to be thus divided. Previously to his undertaking the war, David comes to the tabernacle to offer sacrifice. This being done, the *people*, in the king's behalf, offer up their prayers; these are included in the first *three* vs V. 4. was probably spoken by the high priest. V. 5. by David and his attendants; the last clause by the high priest. V. 6. by the *high priest*, after the victim was consumed. Vs. 7. and 8. by *David* and his *men*. And v. 9. as a chorus by all the *congregation*.' Dr. A. CLARKE.—If this was thus performed, and by different bands, with different kinds of instruments, stationed at different heights and distances; the effect must have been grand and moving in the extreme. See on Ps. 150. ED.

Verses 1, 2.

This Ps. was doubtless composed, and publicly sung, when David was about to engage in some perilous expedition: it is generally thought, in that against the Ammonites and Syrians. (2 *Sam.* 10: 1 *Chr.* 19:)—David was a type of Christ, in his conflicts and victories: and the Ps. may be applied as a prayer of the ancient church for his coming, and of the Christian church, for the completion of his work, and the establishment of his kingdom, and for its enlargement and prosperity. SCOTT.

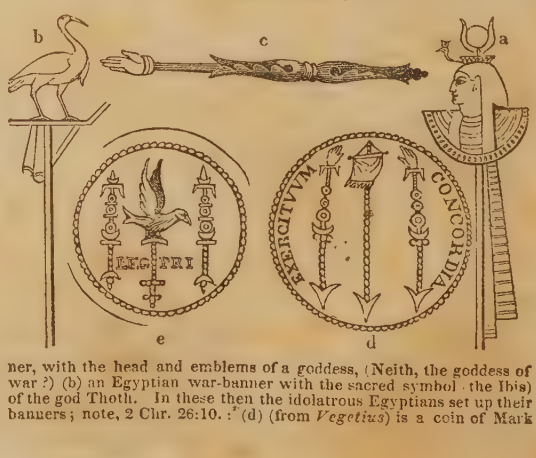
(1.) *Name.*] 'Names are often put for persons, as Num. 26:53. Acts 1:15. 4:12.' POOLE.

Verse 4.

In respect of the designs of our great Redeemer, the words may be adopted in the most unreserved manner; but seldom in respect of other kings or princes. SCOTT.

Verse 5.

The king of Israel was their anointed deliverer; and when they went forth to war under his command, they might properly set up their banners in the name of the LORD, as well as 'rejoice in his salvation.' —As the king is immediately addressed, the meaning may be, 'We shall rejoice in thy preservation, or deliverance,' or, 'in the deliverance, which we expect that thou wilt, in answer to our united prayers, accomplish for us.' SCOTT.—*Banners.*] 'It is said, [as has been before stated,] the Maccabees had their name from the inscription on their banners, taken from Ex. 15:11. *Mi camoed baelim Yehovah*—"Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods?" the word being formed from the *initial* letters M. C. B. I. Ma Ca Bi, whence Maccabeus and *Maccabees*.' Dr. A. CLARKE.—The Jewish tradition is, that each of the 12 tribes had a banner on which was painted the symbol of the tribe, corresponding to Jacob's blessings, Gen. 49: where see notes; and cuts, Job 38:31,32. To finish the subject of *ancient military ensigns*, a cut is here given containing (a) an Egyptian war-banner, with the head and emblems of a goddess, (Neith, the goddess of war?) (b) an Egyptian war-banner with the sacred symbol (the Ibis) of the god Thoth. In these then the idolatrous Egyptians set up their banners; note, 2 Chr. 26:10. (d) (from *Vegetius*) is a coin of Mark



6 Now [k] know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; [l] he will hear him from [*] his holy heaven, [†] with the saving strength of his right hand.

7 [m] Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses: [n] but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.

8 [o] They are brought down and fallen: [p] but we are risen and stand upright.

9 [q] Save, LORD: [r] let the king hear us when we call.

PSALM XXI.

The king and people rejoice in God, and bless Him for fully answering their largest prayers, 1—6; expressing the strongest assurance of future success, with the ruin of all enemies, 7—12; and calling upon God to exalt Himself, that they might more and more sing his praises, 13.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

[a] THE king shall [b] joy in thy strength, O LORD; and [c] in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!

2 Thou hast given him [d] his heart's desire,

k 2:2. 18:50. 28:8. 89:20—23. Acts 2:36. 4:10.
l 1 K. 8:30,43. Matt. 6:9.
* Heb. *the heaven of his holiness.* Is. 57:15. 63:15.
† Heb. *by the strength of the salvation of his right hand.* 17:7. 18:35. Acts 2:33. 5:31.
m 33:16,17. 1 Sam. 13:5. 2 Sam. 8:4. 10:18. Prov. 21:31. Is. 30:16. 31:1. Jer. 17:5.
n 45:17. 2 Chr. 13:10—12,18. 14:11. 20:12,20. 32:8.
o 24:21,22. Jude 5,31.
p 125:1. 146:5—9. Jer. 17:7,8.
q 119:25,26. Matt. 21:9 15.
r 2:6—10. 5:2. 24:7. 44:4. 74:12.
a 2:6. 20:6,9. 63:11. 72:1,2. Is. 9:6, 7. Matt. 22:2.
b 28:7. 62:7. 95:1. 99:4.
c 20:5. 71:17—24. 118:14,15. Heb. 12:2.
d 2:8,9. 20:4,5. 92:11. Is. 49:6—12. Heb. 7:25.

will we rejoice, that is it which we depend on now, and which, in the issue, we shall have occasion greatly to rejoice in.' Those that eye still the salvation of the Lord, shall have their hearts filled with its joy; *In the name of our God will we set up our banners:* make his glory always our end, and refer the issue to Him. David went against Goliath in the name of the Lord of hosts, 1 Sam. 17: 45. We will celebrate our victories in his name; when we lift up our banners in triumph, and set up our trophies, He shall have all the glory of our success.

In singing this, we ought to offer up to God our hearty good wishes to the good government we are under, and to its prosperity. But we may look further; these prayers for David are prophecies concerning Christ the Son of David, and in Him were abundantly answered.

V. 6—9. Here is,

1. Holy David himself triumphing in the interest he had in the prayers of good people, *v.* 6. Note, It may justly be taken as a happy presage to any prince and people, when God pours on them a spirit of prayer.

2. His people triumphing in God and their relation to Him, and his revelations of Himself to them, by which they distinguish themselves from those that live without God in the world, *v.* 7. Probably, David has here an eye to the Syrians, whose forces consisted much of chariots and horsemen, as we find in the history of David's victories over them, 2 Sam. 8: 4.—10: 18. A believing, obedient trust in God, and his name, is the surest way both to preferment and establishment, to rise and to stand upright, and this will help us, when creature-confidences fail those that depend on them.

3. They conclude their prayer for the king with a *Hosanna*, *v.* 9. As we read this v. it may be taken as a prayer, that God would not only bless the king, 'Save, Lord, give him success:' but that He would make him a blessing to them, 'Let the king hear us, when we call to him for justice and mercy.' Those that would have good of their magistrates, must thus pray for them, for they, as all other creatures, are that to us, and no more, that God makes them. Or, it may refer to the Messiah, that King of kings; let Him hear us when we call; let Him come to us, according to the promise, in the time appointed; let Him, as the great Master of requests, receive all our petitions, and present them to his Father. But many interpreters give another reading, by altering the pause, *Lord, save the king, and hear us when we call;* and so it is a summary of the whole Ps. and is taken into our Liturgy. *O Lord, save the king, and mercifully hear us, when we call upon Thee.*

In singing these vs. we should encourage ourselves to trust in God, and stir up ourselves to pray earnestly, as in duty bound, for those in authority over us, that, under them, we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty.

Ps. XXI. V. 1—6. As the foregoing Ps. was a prayer for the king, that God would protect and prosper him; so this is a thanksgiving for the success God had blessed him with.

David here speaks for himself in the first place, professing his joy was in God's strength and salvation, and not in the strength or success of his armies. He also directs his subjects herein to rejoice with him, and to give God all the glory of the victories he had obtained; and all, with an eye to Christ, of whose triumphs over the powers of darkness David's victories were but shadows.

1. They here congratulate the king on his joys, and concur with him in them, *v.* 1. 2 Sam. 3: 36 Happy the people, whose king makes God's strength his confidence, and God's salvation his joy; pleased with all the advancements of God's kingdom, trusting God to bear him out in all he does for its service. Jesus, in his great undertaking, relied on help from Heaven, and pleased Himself with the prospect of that great salvation He was thereby to work out.

2. They give God all the praise of the following matters of their king's rejoicing, *v.* 2. No prayer is accepted, but what is the heart's desire: 20: 4. When God gives to Christ the heathen for his inheritance, gives Him to see his seed, and accepts his intercession for all believers, He gives Him his heart's desire. God had, in a manner specially gracious, surprised David with favors, and much outdone his expectations, *v.* 3. When God's blessings come sooner, and prove richer than we imagine; when they are given before we prayed for, or were ready for them, nay, when we feared the contrary; then it may be truly said, He prevented [anticipated] us with them. Nothing was ever more preventing than our redemption by Christ, and all the blessed fruits of his mediation. Further, God had advanced him to the highest honor, and the most extensive power: had assured him of the perpetuity of his kingdom, and therein had done more for him than he either asked or thought, *v.* 4. See how God's grants often exceed our petitions and hopes, and infer thence, how rich He is in mercy to those that call upon Him. See also, and rejoice in, the length of the days of Christ's kingdom. God had advanced the king to the highest honor and dignity, *v.* 5. The glory which every good man is ambitious of, is, to see the sal-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They who pray most fervently for themselves, put the greatest value on the prayers of others; and are encouraged by them in further calling upon God.—As far as our desires are spiritual, and our counsels holy, we may hope to have them granted and fulfilled; but it would be ruinous to have our sinful inclinations indulged.—Fervent, united prayers tend much to the joyful assurance of faith and hope; and it is the first step to victory, in our spiritual warfare, to renounce all self-dependence and carnal confidence, and to trust only in the mercy and grace of God.—Happy is it for that people, whose rulers are influenced, in all their measures, by the faith and fear of God, aiming at his glory and the public good; when they value the prayers of true Christians, and act with such justice, that pious men can unreservedly pray for their success.—It is our duty to pray for our rulers, that they may be like David: and we should continually entreat the Lord, that they who are or shall be placed over us, may be directed and prospered in every undertaking, for the honor of God, the peace and welfare of the land, and the common benefit of mankind.—In answer to the hopes and prayers of the old-testament church, the anointed King of God's people came in the appointed season. in 'his salvation let us rejoice.' SCOTT.

Antony; and with (c), the 'hand of justice,' from a picture of Louis IX. of France, completes the history of the *hand* as a military ensign: note, 2 Sam. 18:18. (*e*) is the *eagle* of the Roman legion from a coin of M. Antony in *Veg.*); comp. Matt. 24:28. The barbs show they were *set up*, and they seem to have been adored; the *labarum* was the most sacred: its form is seen at Matt. 24:34. it seems to have had the emperor's *name* upon it: see *Vegetius*, by *Stewechius*. ED.

Verse 6.

His anointed.] 'His Messiah.' David, as immediately chosen by God, and anointed by Samuel, at his command, to be king of his people Israel, was a type of Christ, more directly than his successors in general were. (*John* 10:32—39.) SCOTT.

Verse 9.

'Let the king of heaven hear, while we pray for his anointed on earth.'—Or the clause may be rendered, 'O LORD, Save the king: He shall (or let Him, i. e. *the LORD*) hear us when we call.' ID.

CONCLUDING NOTE. 'This and the following are two of the Pss. appointed to be used in the inauguration service in England.' D'OYLY and MANT.

NOTES.

Ps. XXI. 'No question, David was the author of this Ps. though some, on weak grounds, would have it otherwise.' ASSEMB. ANN.—'Many think it is to be wholly referred to the victories of the Messiah.' Dr. A. CLARKE.—'What is predicted of the king celebrated here, is far more august and illustrious, especially in vs. 5. and 7. than any thing which fell to the lot of David, or any who succeeded him; therefore, as in Ps. 2. so here, the Messiah seems the subject.' [The Jews themselves thought it to relate to Christ. DODD.] ROSENM.

Verse 1.

Several circumstances of the Ps. may be accommodated to the case of David. Yet the whole seems more immediately intended for Christ and his kingdom.—'Many of the Hebrews themselves apply it to the Messiah. So that it may be called a Ps. of triumph after the victories which David got over his enemies, which were a type of Christ's victory over death, and of the triumph that ensued. And truly there are some things in it, which are more literally fulfilled in Christ than in David.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

Verses 2—5.

God had, on all occasions, answered the prayers of David; had *prevented* him, by directing Samuel to anoint him, as king of Israel before he had thought of such an honor; and had made him successful and distinguished beyond his largest hopes. The Lord had not only

and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah.

3 For thou [e] prevent-est him with [f] the bless-ings of goodness: [g] thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.

4 [h] He asked life of thee, *and* thou gavest *it* him, *even* [i] length of days for ever and ever.

5 [k] His glory *is* great in thy salvation: [l] honor and majesty hast thou laid upon him.

6 For thou hast * made him most blessed for ever: [m] thou hast † made him exceeding glad with thy counte-nance.

7 [n] For the king trust-eth in the LORD, and, through the mercy of [o] the most High, [p] he shall not be moved.

8 [q] Thine hand shall find out all thine ene-mies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.

9 [r] Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: [s] the LORD shall swallow them up [t] in his wrath, and [u] the fire shall de-vour them.

10 [x] Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.

11 For they intended evil against thee: they [y] imagined a mischiev-ous device, *which* [z] they are not able *to perform.*

12 [a] Therefore shalt thou ‡ make them turn their § back, *when* [b] thou shalt make ready *thine arrows* upon thy strings against the face of them.

13 [c] Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength: [d] *so* will we sing and praise thy power.

PSALM XXII.

David, prophetically speaking in the person of Christ, complains griev-ously, that he was forsaken by his God, and left to the insulting cruelty of his enemies; and he predicts many circumstances of the Messiah's suffer-ings, 1—21. He proclaims the name and praise of the Lord, calling on the people to trust and glorify him; and foretells the permanent success of the Gospel, 22—31.

To the chief Musician upon ‖ Aijeleth Shahar, A Psalm of David.

MY God, [a] my God, [b] why hast thou forsaken me? *why art thou so* [c] far from ¶ help-

e 18:18. 1 Sam. 16:13. 2 Sam. 2:4. 5:3. Job 41:11. Rom. 11:35.
f 31:19. 2 Chr. 6:41. Rom. 2:4. Eph. 1:3.
g 2 Sam. 12:30. 1 Chr. 20:2. Heb. 2: 9. Rev. 19:12.
h 13:3. 16:10,11. 61:5,6. 119:77,175.
i 72:17. 89:29,36,37. 91:16. Rev. 1: 18.
k 3:3. 62:7. 2 Sam. 7:8,9. Is. 49:5—7. 63:1. John 13:31,32. 17:1,5,22. Phil. 2:9—11. Heb. 3:1. Rev. 5:8—13.
l 110:1. 1 Chr. 17:11—15,27. Matt. 28:18. Eph. 1:20—22. 1 Pet. 3:22.
* Heb. *set him* to be *blessings*. 72:17—19. Gen. 12:2. Luke 2:10,11,30—32. Acts 3:26. Gal. 3:9,14. Eph. 1:3.
m 4:6,7. 16:11. 45:7. 63:2—5. Acts 2:28.
† Heb. *gladded him with joy.*
n 13:5. 18:2. 20:7,8. 61:4,8,7. 91:2, 9,10. Matt. 27:43. Heb. 2:13.
o 9:2. Deut. 32:8,9.
p 16:8. Dan. 7:14.
q 2:9. 18: *title.* 72:9. 89:22,23. 110: 1,2. 1 Sam. 25:29. 2 Sam. 7:1. Luke 19:14,27. 1 Cor. 15:25. Heb. 10:28, 29. Rev. 19:15.
r Gen. 19:28. Dan. 3:20—22. Mal. 4: 1. Matt. 13:42,50. 25:41,46. 2 Thes. 1:8. Rev. 20:14.
s 56:1. 106:17. Job 6:3. Lam. 2:2.
t 2:5,12. Matt. 22:7. 1 Thes. 2:16. Rev. 6:16,17. 19:15.
u 18:8. Deut. 32:22. Is. 26:11. Nah. 1:6. Matt. 3:10,12.
x 37:28. 109:13. 1 K. 15:34. Job 18: 16—19. 20:28. Is. 14:20. Mal. 4:1.
y 2:1. 10:2. 31:13. 35:20. Jer. 11: 18,19. Ez. 11:2. Matt. 21:46. 26:4, 5. Acts 5:27,28.
z 33:4. Is. 7:6,7. 8:9,10. Matt. 2:8, 16. 27:63,64. 28:2—6. Acts 4:17,18.
a 9:3. 44:10. 56:9.
‡ Or, *set them* as a *butt*. Job 7:20. 16: 12,13. Lam. 3:12.
§ Heb. *shoulder.*
b 7:13. 18:14. 64:7.
c 18:46. 46:10. 57:5,11. 72:18,19. 113: 5. *Marg.* 1 Chr. 29:11. Matt. 6: 10,13. Rev. 11:17.
d 55:10,11. Rev. 15:3,4. 16:5—7. 18: 20. 19:1—6.
‖ Or, *the hind of the morning.* 16. 42:1,2.
a 31:14—16. 43:1—5. Matt. 27:46. Mark 15:34.
b 26:9. 37:28. 71:11. 1 Sam. 12:22. Heb. 13:5.
c 11. 46:1.
¶ Heb. *my salvation.* Is. 46:13.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If David rejoiced greatly in the honor conferred on him, as king of Israel; what is the joy of our Redeemer in his exaltation to the mediatorial throne, and in the salvation of his people! And if Israel, from love to David and his auspicious government, rejoiced, and praised God for him; how great should be our joy to behold by faith our Brother and Friend thus glorified; and how hearty and constant should be our praises for all the blessings we may expect from Him! SCOTT.

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very often preserved his life, in answer to his prayers, when in the most imminent danger; but had given him the assurance of continuing the kingdom in his family for many generations, and in Christ, as his Descendant, for ever; and he was encouraged personally to expect everlasting life in heaven. Thus his glory was in all respects 'great in God's salvation.'—Yet the passage, in its fullest import, can be accomplished only in Christ Himself. SCOTT.

(3.) *Thou preventest.*] Literally, *Thou shalt prevent.* This may be considered as the language of prophecy. SCOTT.—*Preventest.*] 'Lit. *to go before*; an exact vers.' Dr. A. CLARKE.—*A crown.*] 'That placed on David's head, 2 Sam. 12:30. as some [see cuts of *pure gold* crowns, Esth. 5:2. 2 Sam. 12:30.]; but more likely the word is taken metaphorically for a kingdom; so a crown of *fine gold* is taken for a *choice* kingdom, as was the kingdom of Israel.' ASSEMB. ANN.

Verses 6—7.

The marg. rendering, is the most literal, and suggests another important thought. David was *set to be blessings*, not only to his own generation, and to his posterity, and to Israel for many ages; but, by these divine poems, to the whole church, while the world shall endure; and in Christ, his Son, to all eternity. SCOTT.

Verses 8—12.

These vs. indicate, that the haters and opposers of Israel's anointed king were likewise the enemies of God. (2:1—9.) But they may be considered as addressed to the Messiah Himself. SCOTT.

(12.) *Turn their back.*] 'Bps. *Horne* and *Horsley* read, "Therefore thou shalt set them as a butt."—*Horsley's* entire tr. of the v. is very forcible: "Truly, thou shalt make them a butt for thine arrows; thou shalt take a steady aim at them." [Notes, 2 Chr. 26:10.] MOR.

Verse 13.

Both the prosperity of the church, and the ruin of its enemies, tend to *exalt* God, or to render his glory conspicuous to his rational creatures. These effects can be produced only by his Omnipotence; which his people unitedly pray to see displayed, that they may joyfully celebrate his praises.—This conclusion greatly resembles the first petitions, and closing doxology, of the Lord's prayer. SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. XXII. On the subject of this Ps. Dr. *A. Clarke* says, 'some refer it all to David; others, all to Christ; and others still,' with whom he agrees, 'partly to Christ, and partly to David.'—Most refer it to Christ, and nearly all agree that parts of it can be referred to no other but

ing me, *and from* [d] the words of my roaring?

2 O my God, [e] I cry in the day-time, [f] but thou hearest not; and [g] in the night-season, and * am not silent.

3 But [h] thou *art* holy, *O thou* [i] that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

4 [k] Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

5 They [l] cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee [m] and were not confounded.

6 But [n] I *am* a worm, and no man; [o] a reproach of men, and despised of the people.

7 All they that see me [p] laugh me to scorn: they † shoot out the lip, [q] they shake the head, *saying*,

8 [r] He ‡ trusted on

d 32:3,4. 38:8. Job 3:24. Is. 59:11. Luke 22:44. Heb. 5:7.
e 4:3. 55:16,17. 88:1. Luke 18:7. 1 Thes. 3:10. 2 Tim. 1:3.
f 80:4. Lam. 3:8,44.
g Luke 6:12. 18:7. 22:41—46.
* Heb. there is *no silence to me.* Matt. 26:44.
h 145:17. Is. 6:3. Rev. 4:8.
i 80:23. 65:1. Deut. 10:21.
k 44:1—7. Gen. 15:6. 32:9—12,28. Ex. 14:13,14,31. 1 Sam. 7:9—12. Rom. 4:18—22. Heb. 11:8—32.
l 99:6,7. 106:44. Judg. 4:3. 6:6. 10: 10—16.
m 25:2,3. 31:1. 69:6,7. 71:1. Is. 45: 17. 49:23. Rom. 9:33. 10:11. 1 Pet. 2:6.
n Job 25:6. Is. 41:14.
o 31:11. 69:7—12,19,20. 88:8. Is. 49: 7. 53:3. Zech. 11:8. Matt. 11:19. 12:24. 27:20—23. John 7:15,20,47— 49. 8:48. Rom. 15:3. Heb. 13:13.
p 35:15,16. Matt. 9:24. 27:29. Mark 15:20. Luke 16:14. 23:11,35—39.
† Heb. *open.* 31:18. Job 16:4,10. 30: 9—14. Is. 57:4. Matt. 26:66—68.
q 44:14. 109:25. Is. 37:22,23. Matt. 27:39,40. Mark 15:29—32.
r Matt. 27:42,43.
‡ Heb. *rolled* himself *on.* 37:5. 55:22. Prov. 16:3. *Marg.*

title of this psalm, *Aijeleth Shahar—The hind of the morning;* Cant. 8: 14. Prov. 5: 19. Gen. 49: 21. and *v.* 16. Others think it denotes only the tune. We have,

I. A sad complaint of God's withdrawings, *v.* 1, 2. This may be applied to David, or any other child of God, in the want of the tokens of his favor, crying earnestly for relief, and desiring his gracious returns. Note, 1. Spiritual desertions are the saints' sorest afflictions; when [fear and despondency prevail, and] their evidences are clouded, divine consolations suspended, their communion with God interrupted, and the terrors of God set in array against them, how sad are their spirits, and how sapless all their comforts! 2. Even their complaint of these burdens is a good sign of spiritual life, and spiritual senses exercised. To cry out, 'My God, why am I sick? poor?' would give cause to suspect discontent and worldliness. But, *Why hast Thou forsaken me?* is the language of a heart binding up its happiness in God's favor. 3. When lamenting God's withdrawings, yet still we must call Him our God, and continue to call on Him as ours. When we want the faith of assurance, we must live by a faith of adherence.

But it must be applied to Christ; for, in the first words of this complaint, He poured out his soul before God when on the cross, Matt. 27: 46. probably He proceeded to the following words, and, some think, repeated the whole Ps. Note, (1.) Christ, in his sufferings, cried earnestly to his Father, for his favor and presence with Him; in the day-time on the cross, and in the night-season in his agony in the garden, Heb. 5: 7. (2.) Yet God forsook Him, and this it was He complains of more than all his sufferings. But Christ having made Himself sin for us, in conformity thereunto, the Father laid Him under the present impressions of his wrath and displeasure against sin. It *pleased the Lord to bruise Him, and put Him to grief,* Is. 53: 10. But even then He kept fast hold of his relation to the Father as his God, by whom He was now employed, whom He was now serving, and with whom He should shortly be glorified.

II. Encouragement taken, in reference hereunto, *v.* 3—5. Though God did not hear him, did not help him, yet, 1. He will think well of God; '*But Thou art holy,* Hab. 1: 13. And as Thou art infinitely pure and upright Thyself, so Thou delightest in the services of thine upright people; *Thou inhabitest the praises of Israel,* in the sanctuary Thou art always ready to receive their homage, and of the tabernacle of meeting hast said, *This is my rest for ever.*' This bespeaks God's wonderful condescension, and it may comfort us in all our complaints, that, though God seem, for awhile, to turn a deaf ear to them, yet He is so pleased with his people's praises, that He will, in due time, give them cause to change their note; *Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him.* Our Lord Jesus, in his sufferings, had an eye to the holiness of God, to preserve and advance the honor of that, and of his grace in inhabiting the praises of Israel, notwithstanding the iniquities of their holy things. 2. He will take comfort from the experiences the saints in former ages had of the benefit of faith and prayer, *v.* 4, 5. Rom. 11: 28. He that was our fathers' God must be ours, and therefore will be ours. Our Lord Jesus, in his sufferings, supported Himself with this—that all the fathers who were types of Him in his sufferings, Noah, Joseph, David, Jonah, and others, were, in due time, delivered, and were types of his exaltation too; therefore He knew *He also should not be confounded,* Isa. 50: 7.

III. The complaint renewed of another grievance, the contempt and reproach of men, *v.* 6—8. It was great condescension that Christ became man, and is, and will be, the wonder of angels; yet, as if it were too much, too great, to be a man, he becomes a worm, and no man: Isa. 52: 14. else He could not have been trampled on as He was. The word signifies such a worm as was used in dying scarlet or purple; whence some make it as an allusion to his bloody sufferings. See what abuses were put upon Him; He was reproached as a bad man; despised as a mean man; ridiculed as a foolish man, and one that not only deceived others, but himself too. They that saw Him on the cross laughed Him to scorn. David was sometimes taunted for his confidence in God; but in the sufferings of Christ this was literally and exactly fulfilled; those very gestures were used by those that reviled him, Matt. 27: 39. they wagged their heads, nay, so far did their malice make them forget themselves, that they used the very words, *v.* 43. *He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him.* Our Lord Jesus, having undertaken to satisfy for the dishonor we had done to God by our sins, did it by submitting to the lowest possible instance of ignominy and disgrace.

IV. Encouragement taken as to this also, *v.* 9, 10. Men despise me; *but Thou art He that took me out of the womb.* David and other good men have often, for direction to us, encouraged themselves with this, that God was not only the *God of their fathers,* but the God of their infancy, who began to take care of them, as soon as they had a being, and therefore, they hope, will never cast them off. See the early instances of God's provi-

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Christ. *Rosenm.* refers to *Hengstenberg* as applying it to Christ, and says that, 'by far the greater part of Christian interpreters it is easily believed, that, among all the prophetic Pss. no one more clearly and certainly holds forth the last sufferings [*ultima fata*] of Christ, than this.' Ed.

Title.] 'Aijeleth Shahar.' (*marg.*) Various conjectures have been made concerning the intention of this singular title. Some think it refers to the time when it was to be sung, rendering it 'the first dawn.' Others apply it to Christ, as the Light of the world, whose rising was predicted.—But perhaps it points out the Savior, marked by Satan from his birth for persecution, as the hind or hart is in the morning for chase; and so hunted down by his enemies, until surrounded by them, when on the cross. (16—18. *Matt.* 2:13—18. 27:39—44. *Luke* 11:53, 54. *Acts* 4:23—28.) Of this the persecutions of David were a type. Scott. The orientals are fond of *fanciful names* for admired songs, as '*rose-bush,*' '*bed of anemonies,*' '*string of pearls,*' &c. See on 2 Sam. 1: 18. and *Bush's* Ill. Ed.

Verse 1.

The first clause of this v. is exactly of the same import with the words used by our Lord on the cross. (*Matt.* 27:46.) The Heb. verb indeed is there changed for one supposed to be Syriac; but the Evangelist's interpretation is given in the very words of the Sept. No reasonable doubt can be made, that He should be considered as the Speaker, throughout this whole prophetical Ps. It may even be questioned, whether David had any reference to his own case in it; as every thing is applicable to Christ, and most things utterly inapplicable to David.—While the man Jesus, without any personal transgression or defilement, but bearing our sins, in their guilt and punishment, was wholly deprived of all sensible comfort, and felt that horror in his soul which is the effect of the divine wrath; while the powers of darkness were permitted to assail Him with every dreadful temptation; and while wicked men unrestrainedly exercised their cruel malice towards Him; his God and Father seemed to have forsaken Him, and to stand at a distance from his salvation, as regardless of his agonies and prayers. Yet still He used the language of vigorous faith, conflicting with, and prevailing against, all despondency and impatience,—(*Gen.* 3:14, 15. *Matt.* 26:36—39. *Mark* 14:32—36. 15:34—39. *Luke* 22:43, 44.) The abruptness of the latter part is remarkable: 'Far from my salvation:' (*marg.*)—'the words of my roaring.'—How can this be? Scott.—*Roaring.*] 'When Jesus uttered the preceding words, it was with a loud voice, and in great agony, Heb. 5:7.—a cry so strong and agonizing as to be indistinct, which accounts for its being misunderstood by the by-standers, some of whom supposed He was calling for *Elias.*' Cott. Bib.

Verse 2.

The Lord Jesus continued whole nights in prayer; He arose a great while before day for that purpose; and in the cold, dark night He prostrated Himself in the garden, and 'prayed most earnestly:' yet did not the cup of his sufferings for sinners pass from Him! He felt a natural reluctance to such tremendous sorrows, but his zeal and love prevailed; and when He added, 'Not my will but thine be done,' He, as it were, retracted, or at least qualified, his former petition.—The prophecy expresses the feelings of his soul in the extremity of his suffering; yet his supplications were heard, as it soon appeared in his resurrection. (*John* 12:27—33. 17:1—3. *Heb.* 5:7—10.) Scott.

Verse 3.

This v. seems admirably expressive of perfect resignation under the severest sufferings, which peculiarly accords with the prophetical meaning. Id.

Verses 4—6.

(*M. R.*) *A worm,* &c. (6) The Savior here spake of the extremely abject state, to which He was reduced; and the language is very expressive of the contempt, with which he was treated by all ranks and orders of men, whether Jews or Gentiles. (*Is.* 49:7, 8. 53:2, 3. *Zech.* 11:7—9, 12—14. *Luke* 23:6—12.) Id.

Verses 7, 8.

The history of our Lord's sufferings is the best comment on this part of the prophecy: the language of the former v. might be thought *historical* of the insults attending his crucifixion; and that of the latter was adopted, without any variation at all affecting the sense, by the chief priests and rulers, to express their contempt of Him, when hanging on the cross. Little did they think, that the Spirit of prophecy, a thousand years before, had foretold that the murderers of the Messiah

the LORD, *that* he would deliver him; [s] let him deliver him, * seeing he delighted in him.

9 But thou *art* he [t] that took me out of the womb: [u] thou didst † make me hope *when I was* upon my mother's breasts.

10 I was [x] cast upon thee from the womb: [y] thou *art* my God [z] from my mother's belly.

11 [a] Be not far from me; for trouble *is* near; for *there is* ‡ none to help.

12 [b] Many bulls have compassed me: [c] strong *bulls* of Bashan have beset me round.

13 They § gaped upon me *with* their mouths, [d] *as* a ravening and a roaring lion.

14 [e] I am poured out like water, and [f] all my bones are ‖ out of joint: [g] my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

15 [h] My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and [i] my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me [k] into the dust of death.

16 For [l] dogs have [m] compassed me: [n] the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: [o] they pierced my hands and my feet.

17 [p] I may tell all my bones: [q] they look *and* stare upon me.

18 They [r] part my

dential care, 1. In our birth; 2. At the breast, Job 3: 12. 3. In our early dedication to Him; *I was cast upon Thee from the womb.* Which perhaps refers to his circumcision on the 8th day; He was then by his parents committed and given up to God as his God in covenant; for circumcision was a seal of the covenant; and this encouraged him to trust in God. Those have reason to think themselves safe, who were so soon, so solemnly, *gathered under the wings of the Divine Majesty.* 4. In our experience of God's goodness to us all along ever since; *Thou art my God;* providing for me, and watching over me for good, *from my birth,* unto this day. And if, as soon as we became capable of exercising reason, we put our confidence in God, and committed ourselves and our way to Him, we need not doubt but He would always remember the *kindness of our youth, and the love of our espousals,* Jer. 2: 2. This is applicable to our Lord Jesus, over whose incarnation and birth the Divine Providence watched with a peculiar care, when He was born in a stable, laid in a manger, and immediately exposed to the malice of Herod, and forced to flee into Egypt; *when He was a child, God loved Him, and called Him thence,* Hos. 11: 1. and the remembrance of this comforted Him in his sufferings.

V. 11—21. In these vs. we have Christ suffering, and Christ praying: by which we are directed to look for crosses, and to look up to God under them.

I. Here is Christ suffering: many of the particulars here specified are such as were never true of David, and therefore must be appropriated to Christ in the depths of his humiliation.

1. He is here deserted by his friends; trouble and distress are near, and there is none to help, none to uphold, *v.* 11. He trod the wine-press alone; all his disciples forsook Him, and fled. It is God's honor to help, when all other helps and succors fail.

2. Insulted and surrounded by his enemies; those of a higher rank are, for their strength and fury, compared to *bulls, strong bulls of Bashan, v.* 12. fat and fed to the full, haughty and sour; such were the chief priests and elders that persecuted Christ; those of a lower rank, are compared to dogs, *v.* 16. filthy and greedy, and unwearied in running Him down. The assembly of the wicked plotting against Him, *v.* 16. are the chief priests in council, consulting ways and means to take Christ. These enemies were numerous and unanimous; formidable, and threatening, *v.* 13.

3. Crucified; the very manner of his death is described, though never in use among the Jews, *v.* 16. There is no one passage, in all the O. T. which the Jews have so industriously corrupted as this, because it is such an eminent prediction of the death of Christ, and was so exactly fulfilled.

4. Dying, *v.* 14, 15. dying in pain and anguish, because to satisfy for sin, which brought in pain, and for which we must otherwise have lain in everlasting anguish. Here is, (1.) The dissolution of the whole frame of his body; *I am poured out like water,* weak as water, and yielding to the power of death, emptying Himself of all the supports of his human nature. (2.) The dislocation of his bones; care was taken that not one of them should be broken, John 19: 36. but they were all out of joint by the violent stretching of his body on the cross as on a rack. Or it may denote the fear that seized Him in his agony in the garden, when He began to be sore amazed; see Dan. 5: 6. (3.) The colliquation of his spirits; *My heart is like wax,* melted to receive the impressions of God's wrath against the sins He undertook to satisfy for; melting away like the vitals of a dying man; as this satisfied for the hardness of our hearts, so the consideration of it should help to soften them, Job 23: 16. and see Ps. 68. 2. (4.) The failing of his natural force; *My strength is dried up;* so that he became parched and brittle like a potsherd, the radical moisture being wasted by the fire of divine wrath preying on his spirits. Who then can stand before God's anger? or who knows the power of it? *If this were done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* (5.) The clamminess of his mouth, a usual symptom of approaching death; *My tongue cleaveth to my jaws;* this was fulfilled both in his thirst on the cross, John 19: 28. and in his silence under his sufferings; for, as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so He opened not his mouth, nor objected against any thing done to Him. (6.) His giving up the ghost; '*Thou hast brought Me to the dust of death;* I am just ready to drop into the grave;' for nothing less would satisfy divine justice. The life of the sinner was forfeited, therefore the life of the Sacrifice must be the ransom for it. The sentence of death passed upon Adam was thus expressed: *Unto dust thou shalt return.* Therefore Christ, having an eye to that sentence in his obedience to death, here uses a like expression; *Thou hast brought Me to the dust of death.*

He was stripped; His blessed body was lean and emaciated with labor, grief, and fasting, (*v.* 17.) during the whole course of his ministry, which made him look as if he was near 50 years old, when but 33; as we find, John 8: 57. Or, his bones might be numbered, because his body was distended on the cross. *They look and stare upon Me; i. e.* my bones do, being distorted, and having no flesh to cover them, as Job says, *ch.* 16: 8. *My leanness, rising up in me, beareth witness to my face.* Or, 'The standers by, the passers by, are amazed to see my bones start out thus; and, pleased, instead of pitying Me,' *v.* 18. The very circumstance, *v.* 18. was exactly fulfilled, John

[s] 3:1,2. 42:10. 71:11. Mark 15:30—32.
[*] Or, *if he delight.* 18:19. Is. 42:1. Matt. 3:17. 12:18. 17:5. Luke 23:35.
[t] 71:6. 139:15,16. Is. 49:1,2.
[u] 71:17. Is. 7:14,15. 9:6.
† Or, *keep me in safety.* Matt. 2:13—15. Rev. 12:4,5.
[x] Is. 46:3,4. Luke 2:40,52.
[y] John 20:17.
[z] Jer. 1:5. Gal. 1:15.
[a] 10:1. 35:1—3. 35:22. 38:21. 69:1, 2,13. 71:12. John 16:32. Heb. 5:7.
‡ Heb. *not a helper.* 72:12. 142:4—6. Deut. 32:36. Matt. 26:56,72—74.
[b] 68:30. Jer. 50:11.
[c] Deut 32:14,15. Is. 34:7. Ez. 39:18. Am. 4:1—3. Matt. 27:1. Acts 4:27.
§ Heb. *opened their mouths against me.* 7. 35:21. Job 16:10. Lam. 2:16. 3:46. Matt. 26:3,4,59—65.
[d] 21. 7:2. 17:12. 35:17. Ez. 22:27, 28. 1 Pet. 5:8.
[e] Josh. 7:5. Matt. 26:38. Luke 22:44. John 12:27.
[f] 17. Dan. 5:6.
‖ Or, *sundered.*
[g] 68:2. Job 23:16 Mark 14:33,34.
[h] 32:3,4. Prov. 17:22.
[i] 63:3,21. Job 29:10. Lam. 4:4. John 19:28.
[k] 30:9. 104:29. Gen. 3:19. 18:27. Job 7:21. 10:9. 34:15. Is. 53:12. Dan. 12:2. Matt. 27:50. 1 Cor. 15:3.
[l] Tit. 20. 59:6,14. Matt. 7:6. Phil. 3:2. Rev. 22:15.
[m] Luke 11:53,54.
[n] 86:14. Jer. 12:6. Matt. 26:57. Mark 15:16—20. Luke 22:63—71. 23:4,5, 10,11,23.
[o] Zech. 12:10. Matt. 27:35. Mark 15: 24. Luke 23:33. John 19:23,37. 20: 25.
[p] 102:3—5. Job 33:21.
[q] Matt. 27:36,39—41. Mark 15:29—32. Luke 23:27,35.
[r] Matt. 27:35. Mark 15:24. Luke 23: 34. John 19:24.

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would speak of Him, in this insulting and impious manner. (*Job* 16:4—16. 30:1—14. *Matt.* 26:63—68. 27:27—31, 39—44.) SCOTT.

Verses 9, 10.

David seems early to have devoted himself to God; but Jesus alone was a 'holy child,' born without sin. (71:17, 18. *Is.* 7:15. *Luke* 1:34—38. 2:41—52.) He was not only the peculiar care of Providence from his birth; but from his earliest infancy He exercised the most perfect faith, hope, and love towards his God and Father. ID.

Verses 11—13.

A helpless infant, or a harmless lamb, surrounded by furious bulls and hungry lions, aptly represented the Savior encompassed by his insulting and bloody persecutors; and in his extreme distress forsaken even by his disciples. (16—18. *Mat.* 26:40—56. *Luke* 23:1—5. *John* 16:31—33. 18:1—3.)—The bulls, which fed in the fertile pastures of Bashan, were remarkably fat, strong, and furious. ID.

(12.) *Bulls.*] 'Comp. 68:30. Wicked men, or those who have much bodily strength, who insult and domineer over the weak, and all "lewd fellows of the baser sort," are still called (in the E.) *Madukul,* i. e. bulls. "Of what country are you the bull?" (i. e. bully?] People of docile, peaceful disposition, also, are called cows or calves. "See those bulls, how they are oppressing the calves; look at them, they are always butting the cows."' ROBERTS.

Verses 16—18.

Crucifixion was not known in Judea, till many ages after this prophecy was delivered. Nothing, at all answering to the literal meaning of these terms, befell David, as far as we know; nothing could have been previously more unlikely, than that the promised and glorious Son of David should be treated in this cruel and ignominious manner: yet the fulfilment was so exact, that the vs. seem more like a narrative than a prediction!—Let any thinking man recollect, that the Jews, the greatest opposers of Christianity ever since its promulgation, have unanimously allowed, that David wrote this Ps. above a thousand years before the birth of Christ; then let him compare it with the history of his crucifixion, and determine, whether it does not stand as an unanswerable argument for the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, and for the divine original of the Christian religion. SCOTT.

(16.) *Dogs,* in *troops,* at night, are dangerous in the E. 1 K. 21: 23, and see in *Bush. Pierced.*] '*As a lion* my hands and my feet.' But this contains no clear sense. A very trivial change gives the reading of our version. The Sept. which is certainly more ancient than the Christian era, renders it [as we]; the Chal. Paraphrast gives the same meaning; and there seems scarcely the shadow of a doubt, this is the genuine reading: though the general exactness of the Jews in preserving their SS. precludes the charge of an intentional alteration. ID.

garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

19 But [s] be not thou far from me, O LORD: [t] O my Strength, haste thee to help me.

20 Deliver [u] my soul from the sword: * my darling from the power of [x] the dog.

21 Save me [y] from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from [z] the horns of the unicorns.

[*Practical Observations.*]

22 ¶ [a] I will declare thy name unto [b] my brethren; [c] in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

23 [d] Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; [e] all ye the seed of Jacob, [f] glorify him; and fear him, [g] all ye the seed of Israel.

24 For [h] he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; [i] neither hath he hid his face from him; but [k] when he cried unto him, he heard.

25 [l] My praise *shall be*

a 1. 10:1.
t 18:1. 21:1. 40:13,17. 69:13—18.
u 17:13. Zech. 13:7.
* Heb. *my only one from the hand.* 35: 17.
x 16.
y Luke 22:53. John 14:30. 2 Tim. 4: 17. 1 Pet. 5:8.
z Num. 23:22. Deut. 33:17. Job 39: 9,10. John 8:59. Acts 5:30—32
a 71:18,19. John 7:25,26. Heb. 2:11,12.
b Matt. 12:48,49. 25:40. 28:10. John 20:17. Rom. 8:29.
c 25. 40:9 10.
d 115:11,13. 1 Chr. 16:8—13. Luke 1: 50.
e 105:3—7. 106 5. 107:1,2. 135:19,20.
f 50:23. Is. 25:3. Luke 2:20. 1 Cor. 6:19,20. 10 31. Rev. 15:4.
g 30. 1 Chr. 16:13.
h 6. 35 10. 69:29—34. Is. 59:6—9.
i 1. Lam 23:48.
k 2. 34:6. 116:3—6. 118.5. Heb. 5:7.
l 22. 35:18. 111:1.

19: 23, 24. And though it was no great instance of Christ's suffering, yet it is a great instance of the fulfilling of the Scripture in Him. Thus it was written, and therefore thus it behooved Christ to suffer. Let this, therefore, confirm our faith in Him as the true Messiah, and inflame our love to Him as the best of friends, who loved us, and suffered all this for us.

II. Christ prays, and with that supports Himself under the burden of his sufferings; Christ, in his agony, prayed, prayed earnestly, prayed that the cup might pass from Him; of that, David's praying here was a type. He calls God his *Strength*, *v.* 19. When we cannot rejoice in God as our Song, yet let us stay ourselves on Him as our Strength; and take the comfort of spiritual supports, when we cannot come at spiritual delights. He prays that God would be with Him, and nearness of trouble should quicken us to draw near to God, and then we may hope He will draw near to us. The Father *heard Him in that He feared*, Heb. 5: 7. He prays God to deliver, and save Him, *v.* 20, 21. He is in care for the safety of his soul, 49: 15. 'Father, into thy hands I commit that, to be conveyed safe to paradise.' The psalmist here calls his soul his *darling*, *his only one*, so the word is, '*My soul* is *my only one;* therefore the greater my shame if I neglect it, my loss if I let it perish. Being my only one, it ought to be my darling, and I do not use it as such, unless I take care to preserve it, provide for it, and be entirely tender of its welfare.' Observe the danger from which He prays to be delivered,the sword of divine wrath. This He dreaded more than any thing, Gen. 3: 24. It was the wormwood and the gall. 'O, deliver Me from that. Lord, though I lose my life, let Me not lose thy love.' The dog, and the lion's mouth, seem to mean Satan, the prince of this world, with whom He was to engage in close combat, and whom He saw coming, John 14: 30. He pleads, 'Thou hast formerly *heard Me from the horns of the unicorn*,' i. e. 'saved Me from him, in answer to my prayer.' This may refer to the victory Christ had obtained over Satan and his temptations, Matt. 4: Luke 4: 13. 'Lord, thou gavest Me the victory then, give it Me now.' Let that encourage us to hope that we shall be delivered; He that has delivered, doth, and will. This prayer of Christ, no doubt, was answered, for the Father heard Him always. And though He did not deliver Him from death,yet He suffered Him not to see corruption, but raised Him from death, which was a greater instance of God's favor to Him than if He had helped Him down from the cross; for that would have hindered his undertaking, whereas his resurrection crowned it.

In singing this, we should meditate on the sufferings and resurrection of Christ, till we experience in our own souls the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering.

V. 22—31. The same that began the Ps. complaining, who was no other than Christ in his humiliation, ends it here triumphing, and it can be no other than Christ in his exaltation. And as the first words of the complaint were used by Christ Himself on the cross, so are the first words of the triumph expressly applied to Him, Heb. 2: 12. and made his own; *I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee.* The certain prospect Christ had of the joy set before Him, not only gave Him a satisfactory answer to his prayers, but turned his complaints into praises; He saw of the travail of his soul, and was well satisfied: witness that triumphant word wherewith He breathed his last; *It is finished.*

Five things are here spoken of, the view of which were the satisfaction and triumph of Christ in his sufferings.

I. That He should have a church on earth, and that those who were given Him from eternity should, in the fulness of time,be gathered in to Him. Isa. 53: 10. It pleased Him to think, 1. That by the declaring of God's name, the preaching of the everlasting gospel in its plainness and purity, many should be effectually called to Him, and to God by Him. 2. That those thus called in, should be brought into a very near and dear relation to Him as his brethren; fellow heirs, and of the same body, Heb. 2: 11. Christ is our elder Brother. 3. That these his brethren should be incorporated into a great congregation, the universal church, John 11: 52. Eph. 1: 10. 4. That these should be accounted the seed of Jacob and Israel, *v.* 23. That on them, though Gentiles, the blessing of Abraham might come, Gal. 3: 14. and to them might pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenant, and the service of God, as much as ever it did to *Israel according to the flesh*, Rom. 9: 4. Heb. 8: 10. The gospel-church is called *the Israel of God*, Gal. 6: 16.

II. That God should be greatly honored and glorified in Him by that church. His Father's glory was that He had in his eye throughout his whole undertaking, John 17: 4. particularly in his sufferings, which He entered upon with this solemn request, *Father, glorify thy name*, John 12: 27, 28. He foresees with pleasure,

1. That God would be glorified by the church that should be gathered to Him; and that for this end they should be called and gathered in, that they might be unto God *for a name and a praise.* Christ by his ministers will declare God's name to his brethren, as God's mouth to them, and then

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—21. The stupendous scene here exhibited should attract our most serious and affectionate attention. Here we behold the eternal justice and holiness of our God; the immutable excellency and obligation of his law; the inconceivable odiousness and guilt of sin; the inestimable worth of our souls; the ruined state of man, the insufficiency of all other expedients for magnifying the law, or satisfying the justice of God. We here learn the vanity of the world, and the misery of its deluded inhabitants; the dire malignity of the human heart, which naturally conceived and expressed such cruel hatred and contempt of Him, who was 'the Brightness of the Father's glory, and the express Image of his person;' we become acquainted with the infinitely free love and compassion of God the Father, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, for us wretched sinners: we perceive what is the Foundation of every human hope; the Source of all grace and consolation; the Exemplar to which we are to be conformed; together with the treatment we are to expect from man, and the conduct under it which, as Christians, we are to adopt. In short, the whole system of true religion is here viewed in its central point; and every lesson is learned, with peculiar advantage, by the enlightened and humble soul. (1 *Cor.* 1:23,24.) SCOTT.

Verses 19—21.

In these vs. the Psalmist, (speaking in the person of the suffering Redeemer,) having stated the extremity of his case, renews his supplications. SCOTT.

(20.) *My darling.*] *My united one.* (35:17. Heb.) The feminine of [the original] is rendered *desolate*; 25:16 *only son*; *Gen.* 22:2, 12, 16. *Zech.* 12:10. *only beloved*; *Prov.* 4:3.—*Only begotten*, Sept.—Some think it refers to the human nature of Christ, as united to the Deity. SCOTT.—'It appears to me, that the antithesis of the v. which is very beautiful, is between the natural life of the Savior, and a particular state of his human soul.' MORISON.

(21.) 'Save me from the *horn* of the *kandam*, [an unknown animal,] is still a prayer of distress in the E.' *Roberts.* Note, Num. 23: 22. ED.

Verse 22.

(*Heb.* 2:10—13.) The subsequent part of the Ps. is as evidently prophetical of Christ's glory and the success of his gospel, as the foregoing part is of his sufferings.—The whole Ps. is allowed to be highly poetical; but this transition is peculiarly beautiful. (*John* 13:1—5, 31—35. 17:1—3.) What follows seems descriptive of Christ's feelings when He cried, 'It is finished,' and, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' (*Luke* 23:44—49. *John* 19:28—30) SCOTT.

Verse 23, 24.

Some expositors think these vs. the song of praise, which the Messiah declares He will lead in the midst of the congregation. Israel is especially addressed; but all who are favored with the Gospel are equally concerned in the exhortation, as the resurrection and consequent glory of Christ are the common benefit of all that fear and seek God: for had He despised and rejected the Surety's sufferings, and left Him in the grave, all the hopes of sinners would have been for ever buried with Him. (2. *Rom.* 4:23—25. 8:32—34. 1 *Cor.* 15:12—18. *Heb.* 13:20, 21.) But, though man despised and abhorred Him, and the Father for a time seemed to disregard his sufferings and prayers; and though the character and conduct of those whom He represented, was abominable in the sight of God; He yet accepted the Savior's atoning sacrifice, raised Him from the dead, and made Him 'the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him.' (*Heb.* 5:7—10.) ID.

of thee in the great congregation: [m] I will pay my vows before them that fear him.

26 [n] The meek shall eat and be satisfied: [o] they shall praise the LORD that seek him: [p] your heart shall live for ever.

27 [q] All the ends of the world shall remember and [r] turn unto the LORD: and [s] all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.

28 For [t] the kingdom *is* the LORD's: and he *is* the Governor among the nations.

29 All *they* [u] *that be* fat upon earth [x] shall eat and worship: [y] all they that go down to the dust shall [z] bow before him, and [a] none can keep alive his own soul.

30 [b] A seed shall serve him; [c] it shall be accounted to the LORD for a generation.

31 [d] They shall come, and shall declare [e] his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done *this.*

m 56:12. 65:1. 66:13,16. 116:14—19. 118:19,20. Ec. 5:4.
n 69:32. Lev. 7:11—17. Is. 25:6. 65:13. John 6:48—58.
o 105:3,4.
p 69:32. John 4:14. 6:51.
q 2:8. 72:8,11. 86:9. 98:3. Is. 45:22. 48:8,9. 49:6,12.
r Acts 14:15. 20:21. 26:18—20. Rom. 15:26. 1 Thes. 1:9.
s 95:7. 102:22. 117:1. Rev. 7:9—12. 15:4.
t 47:7,8. Dan. 7:14. Ob. 21. Zech. 14:9. Matt. 6:13. Rev. 11:15.
u 73:7. 78:31. Is. 10:16.
x 45:12. 72:10,11. Is. 60:3—5,16. Rev. 21:24.
y 113:7. Is. 26:19. 29:4. Phil. 2:10. Rev. 20:12—15.
z Is. 45:23. Rom. 14:10—12.
a 49:6—9. Hos. 13:9. John 3:36. 11: 25,26.
b Is. 53:10. Heb. 2:13.
c 14:5. 24:6. 73:15. 87:6. Matt. 3: 9. Gal. 3:26—29. 1 Pet. 2:9.
d 78:6. 86:9. 102:18. 145:4—7. Is. 44:3—5. 49:21—23. 54:1. 60:4. 66: 7—9.
e Rom. 1:17. 3:21—25. 5:19—21. 2 Cor. 5:21.

by them, as the mouth of the congregation to God, will God's name be praised. All that fear the Lord, will praise Him, *v.* 23. even every Israelite indeed. See 118: 2, 4.—135: 19, 20. The business of Christians, particularly in their solemn religious assemblies, is, to praise and glorify God, with a holy awe and reverence of his majesty; therefore they that are here called upon to praise God, are called upon to fear Him.

2. That God would be glorified in the Redeemer and in his undertaking. *Therefore* Christ is said to *praise God in the church,* not only because He is the Master of the assemblies in which God is praised, and the Mediator of all the praises offered up to God, but the Matter of the church's praise. See Eph. 3: 21. All our praises must centre in the work of redemption, and great reason we have to rejoice and be thankful, (1.) That Jesus Christ was owned by his Father in his undertaking, *v.* 24. *For He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted* One, that is, of the suffering Redeemer; but has graciously accepted it. (2.) That He Himself will go on with his undertaking, and complete it. Christ says, *I will pay my vows, v.* 25. Having engaged to bring many sons to glory, He will perform his engagement to the utmost, and lose none.

III. That all humble, gracious souls should have a full satisfaction and happiness in Him, *v.* 26. It comforted his sufferings, that in and through Him all true believers should have everlasting consolation. 1. The poor in spirit shall be rich in blessings, spiritual blessings; the hungry shall be filled with good things. They that hunger and thirst after righteousness in Christ, shall have all they can desire to satisfy and make them easy, and shall not labor, as they have, for that which satisfies not. 2. They that are much in praying, shall be much in thanksgiving; *They shall praise the Lord, that seek Him,* because through Christ they are sure of finding Him; in the hopes of which they have reason to praise Him, even while seeking Him; and the more earnest they are in seeking Him, the more will their hearts be enlarged in his praises when they have found Him. 3. The souls devoted to Him shall be for ever happy with Him; '*Your heart shall live for ever.* Yours that are meek, that are satisfied in Christ, that continue to seek God; whatever becomes of your bodies, *your hearts shall live for ever;* the graces and comforts you have shall be perfected in everlasting life. Christ has said, *Because I live, ye shall live also,* John 14: 19. and, therefore, that life shall be as sure, and as long, as his.'

IV. That the church, and with it the kingdom of God, should extend to all corners of the earth, and take in all sorts of people, *v.* 27, 28.

1. The Jews had long been the only professing people of God, but now, all the ends of the world and all the Gentiles should come into the church It is here prophesied, (1.) That they should be converted, they shall *remember, and turn to the Lord.* Note, Serious reflection is the first step, and a good step, toward true conversion. We must consider, and turn. The prodigal came first to himself, and then to his father. (2.) That then they should be admitted into communion with God, and with the assemblies that serve Him; *They shall worship before Thee; for in every place incense shall be offered to God,* Mal. 1: 11. Isa. 66: 23. Those that turn to God will make conscience of worshipping before Him. And good reason there is why all the kindreds of the nations should do homage to God, for, *v.* 28. *The kingdom is the Lord's;* his, and his only, is the universal monarchy: the kingdom of nature; so the design of the Christian religion is to revive natural religion; and the kingdom of grace, Christ as Mediator being appointed Governor among the nations; Head over all things to his church. Let every tongue therefore confess that He is Lord.

2. That it should include many of different ranks, *v.* 29. High and low, rich and poor, bond and free, meet in Christ. Christ shall have the homage of many of the great ones. The poor also shall receive his gospel. Or, those that go down to the dust may be understood, in general, of dying men, whether poor or rich. See what is our condition—going down to the dust to which we are sentenced, and where shortly we must make our bed: we cannot secure our life long, nor can we be the authors of our own spiritual and eternal life. Our great interest therefore, as well as duty, is, to give up ourselves to the Lord Jesus, to be his subjects and worshippers.

V. That the church of Christ, and with it the kingdom of God among men, shall continue to the end, through all the ages of time. Mankind is kept up in a succession of generations; so that there is always a generation passing away, and a generation coming up. Now, as Christ shall have honor from that which is passing away, (*v.* 29 they that go down to the dust,) so He shall also from that which is rising up, and setting out, in the world, *v.* 30. Observe,

1. Their application to Christ; *A seed shall serve Him,* keep up the solemn worship of Him, and profess and practise obedience to Him as their Master and Lord. Note, God will have a church in the world, to the end of time; and, in order to that, there shall be a succession of professing Christians and gospel ministers, from generation

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 22—31. In this part of the Ps. viewed in connection with the former, we behold the ransom accepted, the Savior heard, and exalted to his glorious throne, receiving inestimable gifts to bestow on sinful man, and not ashamed to call his poor disciples brethren; declaring among them, and by them to the world, the name and truths of God; fulfilling in his exaltation the design of all his sufferings; and calling on all, who fear and seek the Lord, to rejoice in Him, and to praise and glorify Him. (*Heb.* 2: 10—13.)—Whilst numbers despise, and wonder, and perish; the gentiles have been brought into his church, which is preserved in the midst of opposition: and ere long 'all the ends of the earth shall remember, and turn unto the LORD, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him.'—Let the infidel then study this Ps. with serious attention, and no longer object his futile cavils, in opposition to demonstration. Let those, who go about to establish their own righteousness, inquire why the beloved Son of God thus suffered, if *their* performances could atone for sin, or recommend a sinner to his offended God. Let the antinomian consider, whether the Savior thus honored the divine law, to purchase him the liberty of despising it. Let the careless take warning to flee from the wrath to come; and the trembling be encouraged, and rest their hopes on this Redeemer. SCOTT.

Verse 25.

Vows, &c.] I. e. the Savior will publicly fulfil all the engagements of his exaltation, for the glory of God, and the benefit of his church; even as the Psalmist offered the various sacrifices, He had vowed in his distress. (56:12. 66:13,14. 116:14—19.)—The change in the person, from *thee* to *him,* is not uncommon. (27. *Prov.* 1:26—28.) SCOTT.

Verse 26.

The death of Christ was the great sacrifice for sin; his 'flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed;' the poor in spirit feed on this provision, in their hearts by faith, and are satisfied: thus while they seek the Lord, they praise Him also, and their hearts, or souls, are 'preserved unto eternal life.' (*John* 6:30—35, 47—58.)—The sacred feasts on the peace-offerings and vows, at the sanctuary, furnished this allusion. ID.

Verses 27, 28.

The fallen race of Adam in general, all over the world, had *forgotten,* through alienation of heart, the one living and true God; but, through the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that followed, vast multitudes in the most distant nations, 'remembered' God; and, forsaking their idols and iniquities, turned to Him, as his worshippers and subjects. Thus the kingdom of God, which always was his by right, began in fact to be established among the nations: but this part of the prophecy has by no means yet received its grand accomplishment. (*Rev.* 11:15—18. 20:1—3.) SCOTT.

Verse 29.

Even the rich and powerful must feed on this spiritual provision, or starve: worship, and submit to the exalted Savior, or perish: they, that persist in their rebellion, must bow as condemned criminals before his tribunal. The most exalted, and the most abased, are in this respect precisely in the same situation.—Christ alone is 'the Resurrection and the Life;' and at length all that sleep in the dust must *bow* before his tribunal, and all his believing subjects will enter into his joy. (*John* 5:28, 29. 11:20—27.) ID.

PSALM XXIII.

David rejoices in the compassionate care of the Lord his Shepherd, 1–3. He exults in the assurance of being supported by Him through life and death, and of spending eternity in his presence, 4–6.

A Psalm of David.

THE LORD *is* [a] my Shepherd: [b] I shall not want.

2 He [c] maketh me to lie down in * green pastures: he [d] leadeth me beside the † still waters.

3 He [e] restoreth my soul: [f] he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness [g] for his name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk [h] through the valley of the shadow of death, [i] I will fear no evil: [k] for thou *art* with me; [l] thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

5 Thou [m] preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: [n] thou ‡ anointest my head with oil; [o] my cup runneth over.

6 Surely [p] goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: [q] and I will dwell

a 79:13. 80:1. Is. 40:11. Jer. 23:3,4. Ez. 34:11,12,23,24. Mic. 5:2,4. John 10:11,14,27—30. Heb. 13:20. 1 Pet. 2:25. 5:4.
b 34:9,10. 84:11. Matt. 6:33. Luke 12:30—32. Rom. 8:32. Phil. 4:19. Heb. 13:5,6.
c Is. 30:23. Ez. 34:13,14.
* Heb. *pastures of tender grass.*
d 45:4. Is. 49:9,10. Rev. 7:17. 21:6. 22:1,17.
† Heb. *waters of quietness.* Job 34:29. Is. 8:6.
e 19:7. *marg.* 51:10—12. 85:4—7. 119: 176. Job 33:30. Jer. 32:37—42. Hos. 14:4—9. Mic. 7:8,9,18,19. Luke 22: 31,32. Rev. 3:19.
f 5:8. 31:3. 143:8—10. Prov. 8:20. Is. 42:16. Jer. 31:8—10.
g 79:9. Ez. 20:14. Eph. 1:6.
h 44:19. Job 3:5. 10:21,22. 24:17. Jer. 2:6. Luke 1:79.
i 3:6. 27:1—4. 46:1—3. 118:6. 138: 7. Is. 41:10. 1 Cor. 15:55—57.
k 14:5. 46:11. Is. 8:9,10. 43:1,2. Zech. 8:23. Matt. 1:23. 28:20. Acts 18:9, 10. 2 Tim. 4:22.
l 110:2. Mic. 7:14. Zech. 11:10,14.
m 22:26,29. 31:19,20. 104:15. Job 36: 16. Is. 25:6. John 6:53—56. 10:9, 10. 16:22.
n 45:9. 92:10. Am. 6:6. Matt. 6:17. 2 Cor. 1:21. 1 John 2:20,27.
‡ Heb. *makest fat.*
o 16:5. 116:13. 1 Cor. 10:16. Eph. 3: 20.
p 30:11,12. 36:7—10. 103:17. 2 Cor. 1:10. 2 Tim. 4:18.
q 16:11. 17:15. 73:24—26. 2 Cor. 5: 1. Phil. 1:23.

to generation. *A seed shall serve Him;* there shall be a remnant, more or less, to whom shall pertain the service of God, and to whom God will give grace to serve Him: perhaps but few, yet enough to preserve the entail.

2. Christ's acknowledgment of them; *They shall be accounted to Him for a generation;* He will be the same to them that He was to those who went before them; instead of the fathers shall be the children, whom all shall acknowledge to be a *seed that the Lord hath blessed*, Isa. 61: 9.—65: 23. The generation of the righteous, God will graciously own as his treasure, his children.

3. Their agency for Him, *v.* 31. *They shall come*, shall rise, not only to keep up virtue in their day, but to transmit the pure Gospel of Christ, even to a people that shall be born hereafter; to them they shall declare, (1.) That the everlasting righteousness, Jesus Christ has brought in, and not any of our own, is the foundation of all our hopes, and the fountain of all our joys. See Rom. 1: 16, 17. (2.) That the work of our redemption, by Christ, is the Lord's own doing, 118: 23. and no contrivance of ours. We must declare to our children, that God has done this; it is his wisdom in a mystery, it is his arm revealed.

In singing this, we must triumph in the name of Christ, as above every name; must give Him honor ourselves; rejoice in the honors others do Him, and in the assurance we have that there shall be a people praising Him on earth, when we are praising Him in heaven.

Ps. XXIII. Many of David's Pss. are full of complaints, but this is full of comforts, and the expressions of delight in God's great goodness, and dependence on Him. It is a Ps. which has been sung by good Christians, and will be while the world stands, with a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction. As in the foregoing Ps. he represented Christ dying for his sheep, so here he represents Christians receiving the benefit of all the care and tenderness of that great and good Shepherd.

V. 1—6. From three very comfortable premises, David, in this Ps. draws three very comfortable conclusions, and teaches us to do so too.

I. From God's being his Shepherd, he infers (as all believers should) that he shall not want any good thing, *v.* 1.

Time was, when David was himself a shepherd; so he knew by experience the cares and tender affections of a good shepherd, toward his flock: he once ventured his life to rescue a lamb. By this therefore he illustrates God's care of his people; and to this our Savior seems to refer, when He says, *I am the Shepherd of the sheep; the good Shepherd.* The Shepherd of Israel, of the whole church in general, 80: 1. is the Shepherd of every particular believer; the meanest is not below his cognizance, Isa. 40: 11. If God be as a shepherd to us, we must be as sheep, inoffensive, meek, and quiet, silent before the shearers; useful and sociable; we must know the Shepherd's voice, and follow Him.

See next the great confidence believers have in God; '*I shall not want.*' If David penned this Ps. before coming to the crown, though destined to it, he had as much reason to fear want as any man. Let not those fear starving that are at God's finding. More is implied than is expressed; not only, *I shall not want*, but, 'I shall be supplied; and if I have not every thing I desire, either it is not fit, or not good for me, or I shall have it in due time.'

II. From his performing the office of a good Shepherd to him, he infers that he needs not fear any evil in the greatest dangers and difficulties he could be in, *v.* 2—4. He experiences the benefit of God's presence and care now, and therefore expects the benefit of them when he most needs it. See here the comforts of living saints.

1. They are well-pleased, well-laid; *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.* God's ordinances are the green pastures; the Word of life is the nourishment of the new man; milk for babes, pasture for the sheep, never barren, never eaten bare, never parched, but always a green pasture for faith to feed in. God gives his saints quiet and contentment in their own minds, whatever their lot is; their souls dwell at ease in Him, and that makes every pasture green. It is by a constancy of the means of grace that the soul is fed.

2. They are well-guided, well-led; *He leadeth me beside the still waters;* by his Providence, by his Word, by his Spirit, disposes affairs for the best. The consolations of God, the joys of the Holy Ghost, are these still waters; streams which flow from the Fountain of living waters; not standing waters which corrupt and gather filth, nor troubled like the sea, nor rapid, rolling floods; but silent, purling waters; for the still, but running, waters, agree best with those spirits that flow out toward God, and yet do it silently. The divine guidance they are under is stripped of its metaphor, *v.* 3. *He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness*, in the way of my duty; in that He instructs me by his Word, and directs me by conscience and providence. These are the paths in which all the saints desire to be led and kept, and never to turn aside. And those only are led by the still waters of comfort that walk in the paths of righteousness. The way of duty is the truly pleasant way. It is the work of righteousness that is peace. In these paths we cannot walk, unless God both lead us into them, and lead us in them.

3. They are well-helped when any thing ails them; *He restoreth my soul;* 'He reduces me when I wander.' No creature will lose itself sooner than a sheep, so apt it is to go astray, and then so unapt to find the way back. The best saints are sensible of their proneness to *go astray like lost sheep*, 119: 176. When, after one sin, David's heart smote him, and, after another, Nathan was sent to tell him, *Thou art the man*, God restored his soul. God will not suffer his people to lie still in sin. 'He recovers me when I am sick, revives me when I am faint, and so restores the soul which was ready to depart.' He is the Lord our God that heals us, Ex. 15: 26. Many a time we had fainted, unless we had believed; and it was the good Shepherd that kept us from fainting.

See here the courage of a dying saint, *v.* 4. Those that are sick, those that are old, have reason to look upon themselves as in the valley of the shadow of death. One word, *death*, indeed sounds terrible; but, even in the supposition of the distress, four words lessen the terror. Death indeed

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NOTES.

Ps. XXIII. The *Chal.* paraphrast thinks this Ps. is to be understood of the whole Israelitish people as one person, who were led as a flock out of Egypt, and nourished in the wilderness; but *Kimchi* understands it of David, when he fled from Saul, and hid in the forest of Hareth, 1 Sam. 22:5. and supposes it was afterwards accommodated to the Hebrew people on their return, under God, from exile in Babylon: so in *Rosenm.*; which last opinion, he says, seems as if by no means to be rejected. Dr. *A. Clarke* dissents, and thinks the Ps. not by David at all, but by some one after the captivity. *Williams*, on the other hand, as also, *Morison*, refers it without doubt to David; and the former thinks it one of the earliest of his compositions. *Morison*, moreover, sees nothing in the general sentiment or imagery of the Ps. peculiarly adapted to the return of a captive people; nor does he perceive so much the action and feeling of the many, as the minute and personal review of the individual. He therefore concludes it far more natural to attribute the Ps. to David than to any one else. As to the time of the Ps. he agrees with *Dathe* in fixing it at the opening of the reign of David. And that the Ps. contains in it a prophetic reference to Him who is 'the Chief Shepherd,' and 'who gave his life for the sheep,' can be doubted, he says, by those only who would deprive the composition of one of its essential charms. ED.

Verses 1—3.

(*John* 10.1—18, 26—31.) As Christ is 'the good,' 'the great,' 'the *chief* Shepherd;' we cannot doubt that He is JEHOVAH, and is especially intended. (80:1. *Is.* 40:9—11. *Zech.* 13:7. *Acts* 20:28. *Heb.* 13:20,21. 1 *Pet.* 5:1—4.) He is JEHOVAH, the omnipresent, omniscient, almighty God, One with the Father, and every way able and willing to take care of his sheep. SCOTT.

Verse 4.

Between that part of the flock which is on earth, and that which is gone to heaven, death lies, like a deep valley, that must be passed in going from the one to the other. ID.

Verses 5, 6.

The images in these vs. are taken from feasts, and the general customs of anointing the guests, and distinguishing such as were most favored by the largest portions. (*Gen.* 43:34.) Under these images both temporal provisions and spiritual comforts seem included. ID.

in the house of the LORD * for ever.

PSALM XXIV.

The Creator's dominion over the whole earth, 1, 2. The subjects of the Redeemer's kingdom, 3—6. Entrance demanded for the king of glory into his temple, 7—10.

A Psalm of David.

THE [a] earth *is* the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; [b] the world, and they that dwell therein.

2 For [c] he hath founded it upon the seas, and [d] established it upon the floods.

* Heb. *to length of days.* 21:4.
[a] 50:12. Ex. 9:29. 19:5. Deut. 10:14. 1 Chr. 29:11. Job 41:11. Dan. 4:25. 1 Cor. 10:26,28.
[b] 89:11. 98:7. Nah. 1:5.
[c] 33:6,7. 95:4,5. 104:5,6. 136:6. Gen. 1:9,10. Job 38:4. Jer. 10:11—16. 2 Pet. 3:5—7.
[d] 93:1. 96:10. Gen. 8:22. Job 38:8—11. Jer. 5:22.

3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?

4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

5 He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

6 This *is* the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.

7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

8 Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

10 Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he *is* the King of glory. Selah.

PSALM XXV.

David, in trouble, prays for pardon, 1—7. Encouragement to others, 8—14. He prays for deliverance, 15—21.

A Psalm of David.

UNTO thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

2 O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

3 Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

4 Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.

5 Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou *art* the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

6 Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they have been ever of old.

7 Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD.

8 Good and upright *is* the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

9 The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

10 All the paths of the LORD *are* mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

11 For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity, for it *is* great.

12 What man *is* he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose.

13 His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.

14 The secret of the LORD *is* with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.

15 Mine eyes *are* ever toward the LORD; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.

16 Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I *am* desolate and afflicted.

17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.

18 Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.

19 Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.

20 O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.

21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.

22 Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

PSALM XXVI.

David, in trouble, prays for pardon, 1—7. Encouragement to others, 8—14. He prays for deliverance, 15—21.

A Psalm of David.

JUDGE me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide.

2 Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.

3 For thy lovingkindness *is* before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.

4 I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.

5 I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.

6 I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD:

7 That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.

8 LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.

9 Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men:

10 In whose hands *is* mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.

11 But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.

12 My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD.

PSALM XXVII.

David's confidence in God, 1—6. He prays for deliverance, 7—12. Encouragement to others, 13, 14.

A Psalm of David.

THE LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

3 Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

4 One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.

5 For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

6 And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

7 Hear, O LORD, *when* I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

8 When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.

9 Hide not thy face far *from me*; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

10 When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.

11 Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.

12 Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.

13 I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

14 Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, *I say*, on the LORD.

PSALM XXVIII.

David prays for deliverance, 1—5. Blessing God for hearing him, 6—8. He prays for the people, 9.

A Psalm of David.

UNTO thee will I cry, O LORD my rock; be not silent to me: lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.

2 Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.

3 Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief *is* in their hearts.

4 Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.

5 Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.

6 Blessed *be* the LORD, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.

7 The LORD *is* my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.

8 The LORD *is* their strength, and he *is* the saving strength of his anointed.

9 Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

PSALM XXIX.

The power and majesty of God in the thunder, 1—9. His kingdom, 10, 11.

A Psalm of David.

GIVE unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

2 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

3 The voice of the LORD *is* upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD *is* upon many waters.

4 The voice of the LORD *is* powerful; the voice of the LORD *is* full of majesty.

5 The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.

6 He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.

7 The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire.

8 The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.

9 The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every *one* speak of his glory.

10 The LORD sat upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever.

11 The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.

PSALM XXX.

David's thanksgiving for deliverance, 1—5. His prosperity, 6, 7. His prayer in trouble, 8—10. His thanksgiving, 11, 12.

A Psalm *and* Song at the dedication of the house of David.

I WILL extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.

2 O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.

3 O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

4 Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

5 For his anger *endureth* but a moment; in his favour *is* life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy *cometh* in the morning.

6 And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.

7 LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, *and* I was troubled.

8 I cried to thee, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication.

9 What profit *is* there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?

10 Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be thou my helper.

11 Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness;

12 To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

PSALM XXXI.

David's confidence in God, 1—8. His prayer in trouble, 9—18. His thanksgiving, 19—24.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

IN thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.

2 Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for a house of defence to save me.

3 For thou *art* my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.

4 Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou *art* my strength.

5 Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.

6 I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the LORD.

7 I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities;

8 And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room.

9 Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly.

10 For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.

11 I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me.

12 I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel.

13 For I have heard the slander of many: fear *was* on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.

14 But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou *art* my God.

15 My times *are* in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from *them that* persecute me.

16 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' sake.

17 Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, *and* let them be silent in the grave.

18 Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

19 Oh how great *is* thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!

20 Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

21 Blessed *be* the LORD: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.

22 For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.

23 O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

24 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

PSALM XXXII.

The blessedness of pardon, 1, 2. David's experience, 3—5. Encouragement to others, 6—11.

A Psalm of David, Maschil.

BLESSED *is he whose* transgression *is* forgiven, whose sin is covered.

2 Blessed the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

6 For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the flood of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

7 Thou *art* my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

10 Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.

11 Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all *ye* that are upright in heart.

PSALM XXXIII.

Exhortation to praise God, 1—3. His power and providence, 4—19. Encouragement to trust in him, 20—22.

REJOICE in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.

2 Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery *and* an instrument of ten strings.

3 Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.

4 For the word of the LORD *is* right; and all his works *are done* in truth.

5 He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.

8 Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

9 For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.

10 The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.

11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

12 Blessed *is* the nation whose God *is* the LORD; *and* the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

13 The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men.

14 From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.

15 He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.

16 There is no king saved by the multitude of a host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.

17 An horse *is a vain thing* for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.

18 Behold, the eye of the LORD *is* upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;

19 To deliver their soul from death, and keep them alive in famine.

20 Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he *is* our help and our shield.

21 For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.

22 Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.

PSALM XXXIV.

David's thanksgiving for deliverance, 1—7. Encouragement to others, 8—14. The happiness of the righteous, 15—22.

A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed.

I WILL bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

2 My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.

3 O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.

4 I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

5 They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.

6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

7 The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

8 O taste and see that the LORD *is* good: blessed *is* the man that trusteth in him.

9 O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for *there is* no want to them that fear him.

10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.

11 Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

12 What man *is he that* desireth life, *and* loveth many days, that he may see good?

13 Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

14 Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

15 The eyes of the LORD *are* upon the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their cry.

16 The face of the LORD *is* against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

17 The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

18 The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

19 Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.

20 He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

21 Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.

22 The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.

PSALM XXXV.

David prays for deliverance, 1—10. He complains of his enemies, 11—16. He prays for deliverance, 17—21. He encourages himself, 22—28.

A Psalm of David.

PLEAD my cause, O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.

2 Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help.

3 Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I *am* thy salvation.

4 Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.

5 Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase *them*.

6 Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the LORD persecute them.

7 For without cause have they hid for me their net *in a pit*, *which* without cause they have digged for my soul.

8 Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.

9 And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation.

10 All my bones shall say, LORD, who *is* like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?

11 False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge *things* that I knew not.

12 They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul.

13 But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing *was* sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.

14 I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth *for* his mother.

15 But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew *it* not; they did tear *me*, and ceased not:

16 With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.

17 LORD, how long wilt thou look on? rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.

18 I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.

19 Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.

20 For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land.

21 Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, *and* said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen *it*.

22 This thou hast seen, O LORD: keep not silence: O Lord, be not far from me.

23 Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, *even* unto my cause, my God and my Lord.

24 Judge me, O LORD my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me.

25 Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up.

26 Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify *themselves* against me.

27 Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous *cause*: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.

28 And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness *and* of thy praise all the day long.

PSALM XXXVI.

The wickedness of man, 1—4. The goodness of God, 5—9. He prays for his people, 10—12.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD.

THE transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, *that* there is no fear of God before his eyes.

2 For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.

3 The words of his mouth *are* iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to behave himself wisely, *and* to do good.

4 He deviseth mischief upon his bed, he setteth himself in a way *that is* not good; he abhorreth not evil.

5 Thy mercy, O LORD, *is* in the heavens; *and* thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.

6 Thy righteousness *is* like the great mountains; thy judgments *are* a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.

7 How excellent *is* thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

8 They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.

9 For with thee *is* the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

10 O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.

11 Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me.

12 There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.

PSALM XXXVII.

Exhortation to trust in God, 1—11. The prosperity of the wicked, 12—22. The happiness of the righteous, 23—40.

A Psalm of David.

FRET not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

4 Delight thyself also in the LORD: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass.

6 And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

9 For evil doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.

10 For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

12 The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.

13 The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming.

14 The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, *and* to slay such as be of upright conversation.

15 Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.

16 A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked.

17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholdeth the righteous.

18 The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever.

19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

20 But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.

21 The wicked borrowed, and paid not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.

22 For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off.

23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.

24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth *him* with his hand.

25 I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

26 He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.

27 Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.

28 For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

29 The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.

30 The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.

31 The law of his God *is* in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.

32 The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.

33 The LORD will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.

34 Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see *it*.

35 I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree.

36 Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

37 Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of *that* man *is* peace.

38 But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

39 But the salvation of the righteous *is* of the LORD: he *is* their strength in the time of trouble.

40 And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.

PSALM XXXVIII.

David's prayer in trouble, 1—14. His confidence in God, 15—22.

A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.

O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

2 For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.

3 There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.

4 For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.

5 My wounds stink *and* are corrupt because of my foolishness.

6 I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.

7 For my loins are filled with a loathsome *disease*: and *there is* no soundness in my flesh.

8 I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.

9 LORD, all my desire *is* before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.

10 My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.

11 My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off.

12 They also that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.

13 But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I *was* as a dumb man *that* openeth not his mouth.

14 Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth *are* no reasons.

15 For in thee, O LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.

16 For I said, *Hear me*, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify *themselves* against me.

17 For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me.

18 For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.

19 But mine enemies *are* lively, and they are strong: and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.

20 They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that good *is*.

21 Forsake me not, O LORD: O my God, be not far from me.

22 Make haste for my help, O Lord my salvation.

PSALM XXXIX.

David's prayer for the shortness of life, 1—6. His confidence in God, 7—13.

To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun, A Psalm of David.

I SAID, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.

2 I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, *even* from good; and my sorrow was stirred.

3 My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue,

4 LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it *is*; that I may know how frail I *am*.

5 Behold, thou hast made my days *as* an handbreadth; and mine age *is* as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state *is* altogether vanity. Selah.

6 Surely every man walketh in a vain show: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up *riches*, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

7 And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope *is* in thee.

8 Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish.

9 I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst *it*.

10 Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.

11 When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man *is* vanity. Selah.

12 Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I *am* a stranger with thee, *and* a sojourner, as all my fathers *were*.

13 O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.

PSALM XL.

David's thanksgiving for deliverance, 1—5. His resolution to obey God, 6—10. He prays for deliverance, 11—17.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

I WAITED patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

2 He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, *and* established my goings.

3 And he hath put a new song in my mouth, *even* praise unto our God: many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

4 Blessed *is* that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

5 Many, O LORD my God, *are* thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which *are* to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak *of them*, they are more than can be numbered.

6 Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me,

8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law *is* within my heart.

9 I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest.

10 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.

11 Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.

12 For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.

13 Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me.

14 Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to confusion that wish me evil.

15 Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha.

16 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified.

17 But I *am* poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou *art* my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.

PSALM XLI.

The happiness of him that considereth the poor, 1—3. David's prayer in trouble, 4—10. His confidence in God, 11—13.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

BLESSED *is he that* considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.

2 The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.

3 The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.

4 I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.

5 Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?

6 And if he come to see *me*, he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; when he goeth abroad, he telleth *it*.

7 All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt.

8 An evil disease, *say they*, cleaveth fast unto him: and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.

9 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up *his heel* against me.

10 But thou, O LORD, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.

11 By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.

12 And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.

13 Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.

BOOK II.

PSALM XLII.

The longing of the soul for God, 1—4. Encouragement to trust in God, 5—11.

To the chief Musician, Maschil, for the sons of Korah.

AS the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

2 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

3 My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where *is* thy God?

4 When I remember these *things*, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.

5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why *art thou* disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him *for the help* of his countenance.

6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and *of* the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.

7 Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.

8 Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, *and* my prayer unto the God of my life.

9 I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

10 As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where *is* thy God?

11 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why *art thou* disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance, and my God.

PSALM XLIII.

David's confidence in God, 1—4. Encouragement to trust in God, 5.

JUDGE me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.

2 For thou *art* the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

3 O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.

4 Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.

5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why *art thou* disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance, and my God.

PSALM XLIV.

The people's complaint of their distress, 1—8. Their complaint of God's dealings, 9—22. They pray for deliverance, 23—26.

To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, Maschil.

WE have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.

2 How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; how thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out.

3 For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.

4 Thou *art* my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.

5 Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.

6 For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.

7 But thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us.

8 In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever. Selah.

9 But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies.

10 Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy: and they which hate us spoil for themselves.

11 Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen.

12 Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase *thy wealth* by their price.

13 Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.

14 Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.

15 My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me,

16 For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of the enemy and avenger.

17 All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.

18 Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way;

19 Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.

20 If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god;

21 Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

22 Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.

23 Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off for ever.

24 Wherefore hidest thou thy face, *and* forgettest our affliction and our oppression?

25 For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth.

26 Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies' sake.

PSALM XLV.

The excellency of Christ, 1—9. The duty of the church, 10—15. The glory of Christ's kingdom, 16, 17.

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, for the sons of Korah, Maschil, A Song of loves.

MY heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue *is* the pen of a ready writer.

2 Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

3 Gird thy sword upon *thy* thigh, O most mighty, *with* thy glory and thy majesty.

4 And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness *and* righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

5 Thine arrows *are* sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.

6 Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom *is a* right sceptre.

7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

8 All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, *and* cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

9 Kings' daughters *were* among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.

10 Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;

11 So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he *is* thy Lord; and worship thou him.

12 And the daughter of Tyre *shall be there* with a gift; *even* the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour.

13 The king's daughter *is* all glorious within: her clothing *is* of wrought gold.

14 She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.

15 With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.

16 Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.

17 I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

PSALM XLVI.

God's protection of his people, 1—7. His power and providence, 8—11.

To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, A Song upon Alamoth.

GOD *is* our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into

3 [e] Who shall ascend into [f] the hill of the LORD? [g] or who shall stand in his holy place?

4 * He that hath [h] clean hands, and [i] a pure heart; who hath not [k] lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor [l] sworn deceitfully.

5 He shall [m] receive the blessing from the LORD, and [n] righteousness from [o] the God of his salvation.

6 This *is* [p] the generation of them that seek him, [q] that seek thy face, † O Jacob. Selah.

7 [r] Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and [s] the King of glory [t] shall come in.

8 Who *is* this King of glory? [u] The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift *them* up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

10 Who is this King of glory? [x] The LORD

e 15:1. 68:18. John 13:36. 20:17. Eph. 4:8—10.
f 68:15,16. 78:68,69. 132:13,14. 2 Sam. 6:12—17. 1 Chr. 15:1,25—28. Heb. 12:22—24.
g Lev. 10:3. Mal. 3:1,2. Heb. 12:28, 29.
* Heb. *The clean of hands.* 18:20.
h 26:6. Job 9:30. 17:9. Is. 1:15,16. 33:15. 1 Tim. 2:8. Jam. 4:8.
i 51:10. 73:1. Gen. 6:5. Prov. 20:9. Jer. 4:14. Matt. 5:8. Acts 15:9. 2 Cor. 7:1. Rev. 21:1—4,27. 22:14,15.
k 25:1. 143:8. Deut. 4:19. Ez. 18:6, 15. Acts 14:15.
l 15:4. Jer. 5:2. 7:9,10. Zech. 5:3,4. Mal. 3:5. 1 Tim. 1:10.
m 50:23. 67:6,7. 72:17. 115:12,13. 128: 1—5. Num. 6:24—27. Matt. 5:3—12. John 7:17. Rom. 4:6—9. Gal. 3:9,14. Eph. 1:3. 1 Pet. 3:9.
n Is. 46:13. 51:5,6,8. 54:17. 61:10. Rom. 3:22. 5:17,18. 1 Cor. 1:30. 2 Cor. 5:21. Gal. 5:5. Phil. 3:9.
o 68:19,20. 88:1. Is. 12:2. 45:17. Tit. 2:10—14. 3:4—6.
p 22:30. 73:15. Is. 53:10. Rom. 4:16. 1 Pet. 2:9.
q 27:8. 105:4. John 1:47—49.
† Or, O God of *Jacob*.
r 118:19,20. Is. 26:2.
s 21:1,5. 97:6. Hag. 2:7,9. Mal. 3:1. 1 Cor. 2:8. Jam. 2:1. 2 Pet. 3:18. Rev. 4:11.
t 68:16—18. 132:8. Num. 10:35,36. 2 Sam. 6:17. 1 K. 8:6,11. Mark 16: 19. Eph. 4:8—10. 1 Pet. 3:22.
u 45:3—6. 50:1. 98:1. Is. 9:6. 49: 24—26. 63:1—6. Col. 2:15. Rev. 6:2. 19:11—21.
x Is. 6:3—5. 54:5. Hos. 12:3—5. Zech. 2:8—11. John 12:40,41. 14:9.

accept the devotions and services of his peculiar chosen people, *v.* 3—5. it is not because He needs them, or can be benefited by them, see Exod. 19: 5.—Ps. 50: 12. It is likewise to be applied to the dominion Christ has, as Mediator, over the utmost parts of the earth, which are given Him for his possession. The apostle quotes this Scripture twice in his discourse about things offered to idols, 1 Cor. 10: 26, 28. This is a good reason why we should be content with our allotment in this world, and not envy others theirs; *the earth is the Lord's*, and may He not do what He will with his own, and give to some more of it, to others less, as it pleases Him?

II. The ground of this propriety; an indisputable title, *He hath founded it*, *v.* 2. The matter is his, for He made it out of nothing; the form is his, for He made it according to the eternal counsels and ideas of his own mind. He made it Himself, and for Himself, and it abideth, Eccl. 1: 4. so He is sole, entire, absolute, Owner, and none can let us a title to any part, but by, from, and under, Him; see 89: 11,12. The waters which at first covered the earth, and rendered it unfit to be a habitation for man, were ordered under it, that the dry land might appear, and so they are as a foundation to it; see 104: 8, 9.

V. 3—6. From this world, and the fulness thereof, the psalmist's meditations rise, of a sudden, to the great things of another world, the foundation of which is not on the seas, nor on the floods.

I. Here is an inquiry after better things, *v.* 3. A soul that knows and considers its own nature, original, and immortality, when it has viewed the earth and the fulness thereof, will sit down unsatisfied; there is not found among all the creatures a help meet for man, therefore it will think of ascending toward God, toward heaven. This question is much the same with that, 15: 1. The hill of Zion, on which the temple was built, typified the church, both visible and invisible. When the people attended the ark to its holy place, David put them in mind, that these were but patterns of heavenly things, and therefore that by them they should be led to consider the heavenly things themselves.

II. An answer to this inquiry.

1. The properties of God's peculiar people, (1.) They are such as keep themselves from all the gross acts of sin. None that were ceremonially unclean might enter into the mountain of the temple, which signified that cleanness of conversation required in all those that have fellowship with God. (2.) They are such as make conscience of being really, that is, inwardly, as good as they seem to be outwardly; they have pure hearts. We make nothing of our religion, if we do not make heart-work of it. Yet in vain do those pretend to have pure and good hearts, whose hands are defiled with the acts of sin. A pure heart is sincere and without guile in covenanting with God, is carefully guarded, that the wicked one, the unclean spirit, touch it not, is purified by faith, and conformed to the image and will of God; see Matt. 5: 8. (3.) They are such as do not set their affections on the things of this world; whose hearts are not carried out inordinately toward the wealth of the world, the praise of men, or the delights of sense; who do not choose these things for their portion, because they believe them to be vanity, uncertain and unsatisfying. (4.) They are such as deal honestly both with God and man. In their covenant with God, and their contracts with men, they have not sworn deceitfully, nor broken their promises, violated their engagements, or taken any false oath. (5.) They are a praying people, *v.* 6. In every age there is a remnant of this character, who are *accounted to the Lord for a generation*, 22: 30. such as seek God, *that seek thy face, O Jacob.* They join themselves to God, to seek Him; not only in earnest prayer, but in serious endeavors to obtain his favor, and keep themselves in his love; this is the top of their happiness. They join themselves to the people of God, to seek God with them; conforming to the patterns of the saints gone before (so some); they seek God's face, as Jacob, so some, who was *therefore* surnamed *Israel*, because he wrestled with God and prevailed, sought Him and found Him; and, associating with the saints of their own day, they shall court the favor of God's church, Rev. 3: 9. be glad of an acquaintance with God's people Zech. 8: 23. incorporate themselves with them, and when they *subscribe with their hands to the Lord*, shall *call themselves by the name of Jacob*, Isa. 44: 5. As soon as Paul was converted, he *joined himself to the disciples*, Acts 9: 26. They shall seek God's face *in* Jacob, so some, in the assemblies of his people; *Thy face, O God of Jacob;* so our margin supplies. As all believers are the spiritual seed of Abraham, so all that strive in prayer are the spiritual seed of Jacob, to whom God never said, *Seek ye Me in vain.*

2. The privileges of God's peculiar people, *v.* 5. They shall be made truly and for ever happy: shall be justified, and sanctified. These are the spiritual blessings in heavenly things, which they shall receive, even righteousness, the very thing they hunger and thirst after, Matt. 5: 6. Righteousness is blessedness, and it is from God only that we must expect it, for we have no righteousness of our own. They shall receive the reward of their righteousness, so some, the *crown of righteousness which the righteous Judge shall give.* They shall be saved; for God Himself will be the God of their salvation.

V. 7—10. What is spoken once, is spoken a second time, in these vs.; such repetitions are usual in songs, and have much beauty in them. Here is entrance once and again demanded for the King of glory, and inquiry once and again made concerning this mighty Prince, in whose name entrance is demanded; as, when any knock at our door, it is common to ask, *Who is there?* Also satisfaction is once and again given concerning the royal Person that makes the demand, *v.* 8, 10. Now,

1. This splendid entry here described, probably refers to the solemn bringing in of the ark into the tent David pitched for it, or the temple Solomon built for it; for when David prepared materials for its building, it was proper for him to prepare a Ps. for its dedication. The porters are called upon to open the doors, and they are called *everlasting doors*, because much more durable than the door of the tabernacle, which was but a curtain. They are taught to ask, *Who is this King of glory?* And they that bear the ark are taught to answer, in the language before us, and very fitly, because the ark was a symbol or token of God's presence,

Verses 3—6.

External privileges were granted to Israel as a nation; but the character of the true Israelite was here inquired after. (See on *Ps.* 15:) A holy life, springing from a sanctified heart, free from external and mental idolatry, and all corrupt affections and carnal confidences, united with watchfulness against all hypocrisy and dissimulation; an exact punctuality and fidelity to every vow, profession, or engagement, to God or man;—these things distinguished the acceptable worshippers from the rest of the congregation at the sanctuary, as they now do real from nominal Christians. This character originates from regeneration; and is gradually formed by the Divine Spirit, through faith: and while others derive no benefit from divine ordinances, persons of this description 'receive the blessing from the LORD' continually; even 'righteousness from the God of salvation.' For 'by the Spirit they wait for the hope of righteousness through faith.' (*M. R. n.*) Thus it is very clearly stated, that while separation from sin, and a pious, conscientious conduct, prepare a man's heart for receiving divine blessings, and evidence his interest in them; they do not constitute his justifying righteousness, or merit the favor of God; in whom he must trust as the 'God of his salvation,' and from whom he must receive 'the gift of righteousness by faith.' (*Is.* 54:15—17. *Rom.* 4:14—22. 10:1—4. *Gal.* 5:1—6.) They, who thus trust and serve God, constitute the generation of those who seek Him, as Jacob did, and so enjoy his favor, as 'the God of Jacob.' (*M.*) The clause is rendered in the old translation, '*This is* Jacob,' the true seed of Abraham, the true Israel.—To interpret this of Christ exclusively, or at all, except as our example, supposes Him to 'receive righteousness from the God of his Salvation,' instead of our being 'made the righteousness of God in Him.' SCOTT.

Verses 7—10.

It is supposed, that the priests who bare the ark, and the Levites who attended them, demanded entrance into the tabernacle from those who kept the gates. The expression, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates,' may allude to the form in which the gates were made, the upper part lifting up, to render the entrance more spacious: the gates might be called 'everlasting,' because the ark was to have an abiding residence on mt. Zion, where a durable temple was about to be erected. ID.

of hosts, [7] he *is* the King of glory. Selah.

PSALM XXV.

David, trusting in God and waiting on Him, prays for protection and guidance, 1—5. Pleading the mercy of God and the honor of his name, he entreats forgiveness; and shows the Lord's readiness to teach the meek and upright, 6—11. He states the privileges of the godly, and blends his complaints with earnest prayers for himself, and for Israel, 12—22.

A Psalm of David.

UNTO thee, O LORD, [a] do I lift up my soul.

2 [b] O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, [c] let not mine enemies triumph over me.

3 Yea, let none that [d] wait on thee [e] be ashamed: [f] let them be ashamed which transgress [g] without cause.

4 [h] Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.

5 [i] Lead me in thy truth, and [k] teach me: for thou *art* [l] the God of my salvation; [m] on thee do I wait all the day.

6 [n] Remember, O

y 2:6—12. Matt. 25:31,34. Luke 9:26. Tit. 2:13.
a 24:4. 86:4. 143:8. 1 Sam. 1:15. Lam. 3:41.
b 7:1. 18:2. 22:1,5,8. 31:1. 34:8. 37: 40. 71:1. Is. 26:3,4. 28:16. 41:16, 17. Rom. 5:5. 10:11. 1 Pet. 2:6.
c 13:2—4. 35:19—25. 41:11. 56:1,2. 94:3,4. 142:6. Is. 35:14—20. 37:10, 20,35.
d 27:14. 33:20. 37:34. 40:1—3. 62: 1,5. 123:2. 130:5. Gen. 49:18 Is. 25:9. 40:31. Lam. 3:25,26. Mic. 7: 7. Rom. 8:25.
e 69:6.
f 6:10. 31:17. 35:26. 40:14,15. 70: 2,3. 71:13. 132:18. Jer. 20:11.
g 7:4,5. 59:2—5. 69:4. 109:3,5. 119: 78. John 15:25.
h 5:8. 27:11. 86:11. 119:27,135. 143: 8,10. Ex. 33:13. Prov. 8:20. Is. 2: 3. Jer. 6:16. 50:5.
i 8,10. 43:3,4. 107:7. Is. 35:8. 42: 16. 49:10. Jer. 31:9. John 8:31,32. 14:26. 16:13. Rom. 8:14. Eph. 4: 21. 1 John 2:27. Rev. 7:17.
k 119:26,33,66. Neh. 9:20. Job 36:22. Is. 54:13. Jer. 31:33,34. John 6:45. Eph. 4:20,21.
l 24:5. 68:19,20. 79:9. 88:1.
m 22:2. 86:3. 88:1. 119:97. Prov. 8:34. 23:17. Is. 30:18. Luke 18:7.
n 98:3. 106:45. 136:23. 2 Chr. 6:42. Luke 1:54,71,72.

Josh. 3: 11. Or, it may be taken as a poetical figure designed to represent the subject more affectingly. God, in his Word and ordinances, is thus to be welcomed by us. (1.) With great readiness; the door and gates must be thrown open to Him. (2.) With all reverence, remembering how great a God He is, with whom we have to do, in all our approaches to Him.

2. Doubtless, it points at Christ, of whom the ark, with the mercy-seat, was a type. (1.) We may apply it to the ascension of Christ into heaven, and the welcome given to him there. His approach being very magnificent, the angels ask, *Who is this King of glory?* Rev. 21: 12. (2.) We may apply it to Christ's entrance into the souls of men by his Word and Spirit, that they may be his temples. Christ's presence in them is like that of the ark in the temple, it sanctifies them. *Behold, He stands at the door and knocks*, Rev. 3: 20. The gospel call and demand is, that we let Jesus Christ, the King of glory, come into our souls, and welcome Him with hosannas, *Blessed is He that cometh.* That we may do this aright, we are concerned to ask, *Who this King of glory is?* so to acquaint ourselves with Him whom we are to believe in, and to love above all. And the answer is ready; He is *Jehovah*, and will be *Jehovah our righteousness*, an all-sufficient Savior to us, if we give Him entrance and entertainment. He is *strong and mighty*, and *the Lord of hosts;* therefore it is at our peril if we deny Him entrance.

In singing this, let our hearts cheerfully answer to this call, as it is in the first words of the next Ps. *Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.*

Ps. XXV. This Ps. is full of devout affection to God; the out-goings of holy desires toward his favor and grace, and the lively actings of faith in his promises. We may learn out of it, What it is to pray; what we must pray for; what we may plead in prayer; and what precious promises we have to encourage us in prayer. It is easy to apply its several passages to ourselves in singing it; for we have often troubles, and always sins, to complain of, at the throne of grace.

V. 1—7. 1. Here we have David's professions of desire toward God, and dependence on and confidence in Him. He often begins his Pss. with such professions; not to move God, but to move himself, and to engage himself to answer those professions. Note, In worshipping God, we must lift up our souls to Him. Prayer is the ascent of the soul to God; God must be eyed, and the soul employed. With a holy contempt of the world and the things of it, by a fixed thought and active faith, we must set God before us, and let our desires be toward Him as the Fountain of our happiness. If we make our confidence in God our stay, it shall not be our shame; and if we triumph in Him, our enemies shall not triumph over us, as they would, if we should now sink under our fears, or should, in the issue, come short of our hopes. All the saints have obtained a like precious faith; therefore, doubtless, it will be alike successful in the issue. Thus the communion of saints is kept up, even by their praying one for another. True saints will make supplication for all saints. It is certain that none who, by a believing attendance, wait on God, and, by a believing hope, wait for Him, shall be made ashamed of it. But *they* shall *be ashamed, that transgress without cause*, or *vainly*, as the word is: on no provocation; they revolt from God and their duty, from David and his government, so some, without any occasion, not having found any iniquity in either. The weaker the temptation to sin, the stronger the corruption which drives us to it. They know their attempts against God are fruitless; they imagine a vain thing, therefore will soon be ashamed.

2. He begs direction from God in the way of his duty, *v.* 4, 5. Observe what he desired to learn; not fine words or fine notions, but 'thy ways, thy paths, thy truth; the ways in which Thou walkest toward me, *v.* 10. and the ways in which Thou wouldest have me to walk toward Thee.' Those are best taught who understand their duty, and know *the good things they should do*, Eccl. 2: 3. The *paths* of the Lord, and his *truth*, are the same; divine laws are all founded on divine truths. The way of God's precepts is the way of truth, 119: 30. Christ is both the Way and the Truth, therefore we must learn Christ. What he desires of God, in order to this, is, that He would enlighten his understanding concerning his duty, and incline his will to it, and strengthen him in it; we go no further in the way to heaven, than God is pleased to lead us, and to hold us up. What he pleads, is, his great expectation from God; *Thou art the God of my salvation;* and his constant attendance on God; *On Thee do I wait all the day.* Whence should a servant expect direction what to do, but from his own master, on whom he waits all the day? If we sincerely desire to know our duty, with a resolution to do it, we need not question but God will direct us in it.

3. He appeals to God's infinite mercy, and casts himself on that, not pretending to any merit of his own, *v.* 6. 'Thou always wast a merciful God; that is thy name, thy nature and property. Thy counsels and designs of mercy were from everlasting; the vessels of mercy were, before all worlds, ordained to glory. The instances of thy mercy to the church in general, and to me in particular, have been ever of old, and never ceased. Thou hast taught me from my youth up, teach me now.

4. He is in a special manner earnest for the pardon of his sins, *v.* 7. 'Lord, remember thy mercies, *v.* 6. which speak for me, and not my sins, which speak against me.' He specifies par-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As the earth, with its fulness and all its inhabitants, belongs to the great Creator, whose glorious wisdom, power, and goodness appear on every side; we should continually remember our obligations to love and serve Him with all our powers, to receive all our comforts as his gifts, and to employ all we possess, according to his will. This must also remind us of our need of his mercy, and lead us to continual humiliation before Him: for which of his gifts have we not abused? which of our powers have we not employed in rebellion? (*Luke* 7: 40—43.)—Lord, open the everlasting doors of our souls by thy grace, that we may most thankfully receive Thee as our Lord and Savior, and be willingly and wholly thine! SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. XXV. 'This Ps. consists of 22 stanzas, the number precisely of the Heb. alphabet, and is in the acrostic form, like Pss. 34. 37. 111. 112. 119. 145. though the insertion of the letters at the commencement is not perfectly observed.—The immediate object of this alphabetical arrangement is not known. Perhaps the most probable design was, to draw special notice to the matter of the acrostic Pss. and mark the care with which the Jews professed to watch over the sacred and canonical books.' MORISON.

Verse 1.

The repeated and deep confessions of sin, which are blended with the petitions and complaints throughout this Ps. favor the opinion of those, who think it was written during Absalom's rebellion, by which David's atrocious crimes in the matter of Uriah, as well as the sins of his youth, were brought to his remembrance. SCOTT.

Verses 2, 3.

These vs. are rendered, in most versions, merely as a prayer throughout. Yet v. 3. may be rendered more literally, 'Yea, none who wait on Thee shall be ashamed: they shall be ashamed who *act perfidiously* without cause.'—David had given Saul and his adherents no just cause to hate and persecute him; nor had Absalom, or the rebellious Israelites, any cause for their treason and perfidy. Their hatred was not only unmerited, but directly contrary to his deserts. It was wholly *free*, or *gratuitous*. The Jews hated Christ without a cause, or *freely:* the same word being employed, as the apostle uses in respect of a sinner's justification before God, 'Being justified freely.' (Comp. *John* 15:25. *Rom.* 3:24. Gr.) SCOTT.

(3.) *Yea let none, &c.*] As if the Psalmist had subjoined to his foregoing request, 'Yea, I know that my prayer will be answered, as I am one who wait upon God, and none who do so shall be ashamed.' It is peculiarly animated and beautiful. ID.

Verses 4, 5.

The term *wait*, implies a simple, dependent, expecting, attentive state of heart; which leads to frequency and perseverance in the use of proper means, notwithstanding delays and discouragements, with a determined rejection of all other confidences, and all inconsistent measures. (130:5,6. *Gen.* 49:18. *Lam.* 3:24—30. *Jam.* 5:7—11.) ID.

Verses 6, 7.

The contrast between the Lord's 'remembering his tender mercies,

LORD, [o] thy [*] tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses; [p] for they *have been* ever of old.

7 [q] Remember not [r] the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: [s] according to thy mercy remember thou me [t] for thy goodness' sake, O LORD.

8 ¶ [u] Good and [x] upright *is* the LORD: therefore will he [y] teach sinners in the way.

9 [z] The meek will he [a] guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach [b] his way.

10 All [c] the paths of the LORD *are* [d] mercy and truth, unto such as [e] keep his covenant and his testimonies.

11 For [f] thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; [g] for it *is* great.

12 ¶ [h] What man *is* he that feareth the LORD? [i] him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose.

o 40:11. 69:13,16. 103:4. 119:77,156. Is. 55.7. 2 Cor. 1:3
* Heb. *bowels.* Is. 63:15. Jer. 31:20. Luke 1:78. *marg.* Phil. 1:8. 2:1. Col. 3:12. 1 John 3:17.
p 77:7—12. 103:17. 106:1. 136:11, &c. Gen. 24:27. 32:9,10. Ex. 15:13. 34: 6,7. Neh. 9:19, 27,28. Jer. 33:11. Mic. 7:18—20. Luke 1:50.
q 79:8. 109:14,15. Is. 33:17. 43:25. 64:9. Heb. 8:12. 10:16—18.
r Job 13:26. 20:11. Prov. 5:7—14. Jer. 3:25. John 5:5,14.
s 51:1. 109:26. 119:124.
t 6:4. 31:16. Eph. 1:6,7. 2:4—8.
u 119:68.
x 9:15. Is. 26:7.
y Prov. 1:20—23. 2:1—6. 9:4—6. Mic. 4:2. Matt. 9:13. 11:29,30. Luke 11:13 John 6:44,45. 2 Cor. 4:6. Eph. 1:17,18. Jam. 1:5.
z 22:26. 76:9. 147:6. 149:4. Is. 11: 4. 61:1. Zeph. 2:3. Matt. 5:5. Gal. 5:23. Jam. 1:21. 1 Pet. 3:4,15.
a 23:3. 32:8,9. 73:24. 119:66, 143: 10. Prov. 3:5,6. 8:20. Is. 42:1—3. Ez. 11:19,20. 36:27.
b 119:35. John 14:6. Acts 9:2. 13:10. Heb. 10:20.
c 18:25 26. 23:4—6. 37:23,24. 91:14. 119:75,76. 138:7. Gen. 5:24. 17:1. 48:15,16. Is. 43:2. Rom. 8:28.
d 33:4. 57:3. 85:10 89:14. 98:3. Gen. 24:27. 2 Sam. 15:20. Is. 25:1. John 1:14,17. Jam. 5:11.
e 24:4,5. 50:23. 103:17,18. Is. 56:1—6. Zeph. 2:3. Acts 10:35. Rom. 2: 13. Heb. 3:8—12. 12:14. 13:20,21.
f 31:3. 79:9. 143:11. Is. 43:25. 48: 9. Ez. 20:9. 36:31,32.
g Num. 14:17—19. Rom. 5:20,21.
h 111:10. Prov. 1:7. 2:5. 15:33. 16: 6. Ec. 12:13. Is. 50:10. Acts 10:2, 22. 13:26.
i 37:23. Is. 35:8. John 3:20,21. 7:17. 8:31,32. Acts 11:14. 2 Thes. 2:10—12. 1 John 2:27.

ticularly the sins of his youth. Note, The sins of our youth should be matter of our repentance and humiliation long after, because time does not wear out the guilt of sin. He aggravates his sins, calling them his *transgressions;* and the more holy, just, and good, the law is, which sin is the transgression of, the more exceeding sinful sin ought to appear to us. He petitions for mercy; '*Remember not the sins.*' When God pardons sin, He is said to *remember it no more*, which denotes a plenary remission, He forgives, and forgets. We need no more to make us happy, than for God to remember us with favor. His plea is, 'according to thy mercy, and for thy goodness-sake.' Note, God's goodness, and not ours, his mercy, and not our own merit, must be our plea for the pardon of sin, and all the good we need.

V. 8—14. God's promises are here mixed with David's prayers; here he meditates on them, and by a lively faith draws satisfaction from these consolations; for the promises of God are not only the best foundation of prayer, but a present answer to prayer. Let the prayer be made according to the promise, and then the promise may be read as a return to the prayer; and we are to believe the prayer is heard, because the promise will be performed. But here one petition seems to come in abruptly, and should have followed on *v.* 7. It is that, *v.* 11. *Pardon mine iniquity.* But prayers for the pardon of sin are never impertinent; we mingle sin with all our actions, therefore should mingle such prayers with all our devotions. He enforces this petition with a double plea. The former is very natural; '*For thy name's sake*, because thou hast proclaimed thy name gracious and merciful, pardoning iniquity, for thy glory-sake, for thy promise-sake, for thine own sake,' Isa. 43: 25. But the latter is very surprising; '*Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great*; and the greater it is, the more will divine mercy be magnified in the forgiveness of it.' It is the glory of a great God to forgive great sins, to forgive iniquity, transgression, and sin, Ex. 34: 7. 'It is great, therefore I am undone, for ever undone, if infinite mercy do not interpose for the pardon of it. It is great; I see it to be so.' The more we see of the heinousness of our sins, the better qualified we are to find mercy with God. When we confess sin, we must aggravate it.

Let us now view the great and precious promises we have in these vs. and observe,

I. To whom they belong, and who may expect their benefit. They are sure to those who, though they have been sinners, yet now keep God's Word. To such, 1. As keep his covenant and his testimonies, *v.* 10. as take his precepts for their rule, and his promises for their portion. Though, through the infirmity of the flesh, they sometimes break the command, yet, by a sincere repentance, when at any time they do amiss, and a constant adherence by faith to God as their God, they keep the covenant, and do not break that. 2. To such as fear Him, *v.* 12. and, *v.* 14. as stand in awe of his majesty, and worship Him with reverence, submit to his authority, and obey Him with cheerfulness, dread his wrath, and are afraid of offending Him.

II. On what these are grounded, and what encouragement we have to build on them. Here are two things which ratify and confirm them all.

1. The perfections of God's nature. We value the promise by the character of Him that makes it; we may therefore depend on God's promises, for good and upright is the Lord, therefore He will be as good as his word. *Faithful is He who hath promised*, who also will do it.

2. The agreeableness of all He says and does, with the perfections of his nature, *v.* 10. *All the paths of the Lord;* i. e. all his promises, all his providences, all his dealings with his people, all are according to the mercy of his purposes, and the truth of his promises; all He does comes from love, covenant-love; and they may see in it his mercy displayed, and his Word fulfilled. What a rich satisfaction may this be to good people, whatever afflictions they are exercised with;—so it will appear at their journey's end.

III. What these promises are,

1. That God will instruct and direct them in duty This is most insisted on, because it is an answer to David's prayers, *v.* 4, 5. *Shew me thy ways, and lead me.* We should fix our thoughts, and act our faith, most on those promises which suit our present case. The devil leads men blindfold to hell, but God enlightens them in a true light, and so leads them to heaven. The meek will He guide, the meek will He teach, those that are humble and low in their own eyes, that are distrustful of themselves, desirous to be taught, and honestly resolved to follow the divine guidance; these He will guide in judgment, i. e. by the rule of the written Word; guide in what is practical, what relates to sin and duty; and He will do it judiciously, so some, i. e. will suit his conduct to their case; will teach them his way. All good people make God's way their way, and desire to be taught that; and those that do so shall be taught and led in that way. *Him that feareth the Lord, He will teach in the way that He shall choose;* either in the way God shall choose, or the good man choose. It comes all to one, for he that fears the Lord chooses the things that please Him. If we choose the right way, He that directed our choice will direct our steps, and will lead us in it. If we choose wisely, God will give us grace to walk wisely.

2. That God will make them easy, *v.* 13. *His soul shall dwell at ease, shall lodge in goodness*, marg. With respect to those that devote themselves to the fear of God, and give up themselves to be taught of God, it is their own fault, if they be not easy; [note, Job 36:] even when the body is sick, and lies in pain, yet the soul may dwell at ease in God, may return to Him, and repose in Him, as its rest. Many things occur to make us uneasy, but there is enough in the covenant of grace to balance them all, and to make us easy.

3. That He will give to them and theirs as much of this world as is good for them; *His seed shall inherit the earth.* Next to our care concerning our souls, is our care concerning our seed, and God has a blessing in store for the generation of the upright.

4. That God will admit them into the secret of communion with Himself, *v.* 14. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.* They understand his Word. John 7: 17. They that receive the truth in the love of it, and experience the power of it, best understand the mystery of it. They know the meaning of his providence, and what

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and loving kindnesses,' which had always been exercised to his worshippers, and sprang from his everlasting love; and his not 'remembering' the Psalmist's transgressions, is very expressive. (*Jer.* 31: 33,34.)—The language also is peculiarly emphatical. The distinction between the sins of youth, thus brought afresh to remembrance, and later transgressions of which David was conscious, seems to fix the occasion of the Ps. to have been as above stated. (*Note*, 1.) (*M. R.* s, t.)—Most of the vs. in this Ps. begin with the Heb. letters, in alphabetical order; (of which there are several instances in the Psalms;) but a few omissions and variations are found, which some ascribe to the perturbation of David's mind. SCOTT.

(6.) *Ever of old.*] 'The Heb. when applied to the affairs of the present life, expresses generally a lengthened duration, Gen. 6: 4. Isa. 42:14. but when applied to the divine character, and to the exercise of God's love to the church, it denotes *eternity*, in its proper sense.' MORISON.

Verse 11.

For it is great.] Some would render the clause '*though* it be great:' but certainly this is not the most obvious interpretation; and probably would not have been adduced, except either out of dislike to the doctrine implied in our version, or a fear of its being perverted. (*Rom.* 6:1,2.) SCOTT.—*For it is great.*] 'We are not to consider the greatness of our sins as an argument for divine forgiveness; but because our sin is great, therefore we should the more earnestly pray for pardon.' WILLIAMS.

Verses 12, 13.

It is said of all unconverted men, that 'there is no fear of God before their eyes;' and that 'the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.' (36:1. 111:9,10. *Rom.* 3:9—18.)—Where then is that man, in this evil world, who truly reverences the authority of God, who fears his displeasure, and seeks his favor, as the main concern of his life? How disadvantageously soever he may be circumstanced; how great soever his past guilt, or his present darkness and discouragement; the God of all grace, who has excited this fear by his own preventing grace, will assuredly afford him the means of instruction, and enable him to profit by them: so that eventually, he 'shall dwell at ease,' or *lodge in goodness*; (*marg.*) and shall find a never-failing source of comfort in the divine love, while he expects the complete felicity of heaven at last.—The inheritance of Canaan was a type of heaven: but indeed that man inherits the earth as far as it can profit him, who

13 [k] His soul shall * dwell at ease; and [l] his seed shall [m] inherit the earth.

14 The [n] secret of the LORD *is* with them that fear him; and † he will shew them his covenant.

15 [o] Mine eyes *are* ever toward the LORD; for he shall ‡ pluck my feet [p] out of the net.

16 [q] Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; [r] for I *am* desolate and afflicted.

17 [s] The troubles of my heart are enlarged: *O* bring thou me out of my distresses.

18 [t] Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and [u] forgive all my sins.

19 [x] Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with § cruel hatred.

20 [y] O keep my soul, and deliver me: [z] let me not be ashamed: for I put my trust in thee.

21 [a] Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.

God is doing with them, better than others, Gen. 18: 17. He calls them not *servants*, but *friends*, as He called Abraham. They know by experience the blessings of the covenant, and the pleasure of that fellowship which gracious souls have with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. This honor have all his saints.

V. 15—22. David, encouraged by the promises he had been meditating upon, here renews his addresses to God, and concludes the Ps. as he began, with the professions of dependence on God and desire toward Him.

I. He lays open before God the calamitous condition he was in. *v.* 15, 16. It is common for those that are afflicted to be desolate; their friends desert them then, and they are themselves disposed to sit alone, and keep silence, Lam. 3: 28. David calls himself *desolate and solitary*, because he depended not on his servants and soldiers, but entirely on God. Being in distress, in many distresses, he grew more and more melancholy, and troubled in mind, *v.* 17. Sense of sin afflicted him more than any thing else: that was it that broke and wounded his spirit, and made his outward troubles lie heavy upon him. He was in affliction and pain, *v.* 18. His enemies were many and malicious, and very barbarous; it was with a cruel hatred that they hated him, *v.* 19. Such were Christ's enemies, and the persecutors of his church.

22 [b] Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

k Deut. 33:12,28—29. Prov. 1:33. 29: 25. Ex. 34:25—28. Matt. 11:28,29.
* Heb. *lodge in goodness.* 31:19. 36: 8. 63:5. Is. 66:10—14. Jer. 31:12—14. Zeph. 3:17. Zech. 9:17. Phil. 4:19.
l 37:26. 69:36. 112:2. Gen. 17:7—10. Prov. 20:7. Is. 65:23. Jer. 32:39. Acts 2:39.
m 37:11,22,29. Ex. 33:24—26. Matt. 5:5. 1 Pet. 3:10. 2 Pet. 3:13.
n Gen. 18:17—19. Judg. 13:18. Prov. 3:32. Matt. 13:11,12. John 14:17,21—23. 15:15. 17:6. 1 Cor. 2:14. Col. 3:3. Rev. 2:17.
† Or, *his covenant to make them know it.* Gen. 17:13. Deut. 4:13. Jer. 31:31—34. Rom. 11:26,27.
o 121:1,2. 123:2. 141:8.
‡ Heb. *bring forth.*
p 31:4. 124:7. Jer. 5:26. 2 Tim. 2:25, 26.
q 60:1. 69:16. 86:16. Mic. 7:19.
r 69:14—20. 88:15—18. 143:4. Dan. 9:17. Mark 15:33—35.
s 34:19 38:1—8. 42:7. 77:2—4. 1 Cor. 4:11—13. 2 Cor. 1:9,10. 4:8,9.
t 119:132,153. 1 Sam. 1:11. 2 Sam. 16:12. Lam. 5:1. Luke 1:25.
u 32:1—5. 51:8,9. Matt. 9:2.
x 3:1,2. 27:2,12. 38:19. 56:2. 57:4. 138:7. 143:3. 2 Sam. 16:11. 17:2—4. Luke 22:2. 23:5,21—23.
§ Heb. *hatred of violence.* 11:5. 18: 48. *marg.* 52:2. 86:14. 140:1,4,11.
y 17:8. 22:20,21. 121:7. Luke 23:46. Acts 7:59.
z 71:1,2. Joel 2:26,27.
a 7:8. 18:20—24. 26:1,11. 41:12. 1 Sam. 24:11—13. 26:23. Prov. 11:3. 20:7. Dan. 6:22. Acts 24:16. 25:10, 11.
b 14:7. 51:18,19. 122:6. 130:8. 137: 5,6.

II. He expressed the dependence he had on God in these distresses, *v.* 15. Idolaters were for gods that they could see with their bodily eyes, and they had their eyes ever toward their idols, Isa. 17: 7, 8. But we must have an eye of faith toward God, who is a Spirit, Zech. 9: 1. we must always set Him before us: thus we must live a life of communion with God, not only in ordinances, but in providences, not only in the acts of devotion, but in the whole course of our conversation. David had the comfort of this, in his affliction; and those that have their eye ever toward God, shall not have their feet long in the net. He repeats his profession of dependence on God, *v.* 20. *Let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in Thee;* and of expectation from Him, *I wait on Thee, v.* 21. It is good thus to hope, and quietly to wait, for the salvation of the Lord.

III. He prays earnestly to God for relief and succor.

1. For himself; see how he begs for the remission of sin, *v.* 18. *Forgive all my sins.* Those were his heaviest burdens, and the cause of all his other burdens. He had begged *v.* 7. for the pardon of the sins of his youth, and, *v.* 11. for the pardon of some one particular iniquity remarkably great. But here he prays, Lord, *forgive all, take away all iniquity.* It is observable, that, as to his affliction, he asks for no more than God's regard to it; '*Look upon my affliction and my pain*,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In vain will our *voice* be lifted up in prayer, unless our *souls* be lifted up to God, in fervent desires and believing expectations.—We must be careful not to give our enemies so much as a plausible pretext for their malice; and for that reason should above all things be instant in praying, to be guided in the ways of truth and holiness. The most wise and experienced feel most their need of this continual teaching, and are most desirous of it; not only lest they should be wholly deceived, but lest they should be seduced into any paths of error or iniquity. They will therefore '*wait all the day*' on 'the God of their salvation.' And his tender mercies, and his love to his people of old, will encourage them to come to Him, that they may be remembered in the same gracious manner. The most ignorant or atrocious sinner may properly be encouraged to trust in our gracious God, who in perfect sincerity invites all who hear to come to Him. He who has learned, in meek and humble teachableness, to sit at the Savior's feet and hear his Word, shall soon be made acquainted with the secret comforts of true godliness, and shown the nature and excellency of his everlasting covenant: and having acceded to it, and learned to walk with Him in faith and obedience, according to its tenor; he shall find every one of the Lord's dispensations towards him to be unmingled truth and mercy; not excepting his sharpest trials and severest corrections. The sudden recollection of the greatness of his iniquity may often assail his confidence; but faith in the Lord's more abundant mercy can even convert that into an argument, why He should pardon.—Pride, obstinacy, and the love of sin, dictate all the complaints which are made of difficulty and uncertainty, in discovering the truth and will of God: for wherever a man truly fears the Lord, he shall certainly be taught by the Holy Spirit the safe and happy way. SCOTT.

has food and raiment, and lives contented and in peace. SCOTT.

(13.) 'The first clause of this verse has been considered by many Jewish and Christian commentators as referring to the felicity of the future life; for my own part, I think not with sufficient argument. The reading of *Street* seems unexceptionable. "He shall continue in prosperity, and his seed shall inherit the earth."' MORISON.

Verse 14.

The knowledge of the glory and harmony of the divine perfections, which encourages a sinner to trust and love a holy God; that sweet communion, which the believer enjoys with God his Savior; and that peace and joy, which springs from the earnest of the Spirit, may be well called 'The secret of the LORD:' and they lead the soul into a conciliating and satisfactory acquaintance with his purposes, and the wisdom and equity of them; and with the security and blessings of the new covenant, and the assurance of an interest in it. (*Prov.* 3:32. *Matt.* 13:10—13. *John* 14:21—24. *Col.* 3:1—4. *Rev.* 2:17.) But none, except those who fear God, can possibly enjoy this satisfaction, which must still remain a *secret* to all ungodly men.—Several other discoveries of the secret plan and purposes of God, may also be intended, which none but the pious Christian can receive. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.—*Secret*, &c.] 'The word primarily denotes a company of people sitting together; hence it is employed to express *confidential intercourse*, and, as in this verse, *intimate communion* with God. See also Prov. 3:32. Job 29:4.' *Morison*, after *Poole*.—'The counsel and covenant of the Lord to them that fear Him, is, to make known or reveal to them his will.' HAMMOND.—'By this we do not understand any knowledge of the divine decrees, or of mysteries unrevealed: but rather the assurance of his mercy, and that secret and divine communion with God, through Jesus Christ, in which consists the essence of true Christianity.' WILLIAMS.

Verses 15, 16.

(121:1,2. 123:1,2. 124:4—8. 141:8—10.) The word rendered 'desolate' is the masculine of the noun, which, when feminine, is translated 'my darling.' (*Note*, 22:19—21.)—The Sept. here render it, 'only begotten;' as it certainly means in some places: but in this connection it seems rather to imply the destitute condition of the Psalmist, when left *alone*, or forsaken by his former adherents and friends; and a fit type of Christ, as deserted by his disciples, and surrounded by his insulting enemies. SCOTT.

Verses 17—20.

Every occurrence during Absalom's rebellion tended to augment the distress of David; especially as reminding him of his sins, which were thus visited on him, as Nathan had foretold. (2 *Sam.* 12:10—12.) He therefore united reiterated prayers for pardon, with his earnest requests for deliverance.—He was aware, that even his own son, and his bosom-counsellor, and a large part of the nation, thirsted for his blood; and would decline no violence, treachery, or cruelty, to destroy him: so that his *life* could be preserved only by the same divine power and mercy, in which he trusted for the salvation of his soul. (2 *Sam.* 15:—18:) ID.

Verse 21.

In the sight of God, David pleaded guilty of great and many sins; but he had acted an upright part towards his unnatural son, and treacherous subjects. As a penitent likewise, he was 'without guile,' and was determined to adopt no sinful measures for his preservation. And thus waiting on God, he trusted that he should be preserved. ID.

Verse 22.

The cause of the royal sufferer was that of his nation, and of true religion. David, therefore, in this prayer for the redemption of Israel from oppression, was a type of Christ interceding, amidst his personal sufferings, for his Church; and for his own exaltation, as indispensably necessary to her interests, and to the salvation of his elect people (51:18,19. 130:7,8. *John* 17:) ID.

PSALM XXVI.

David professes his integrity, and his delight in the people and ordinances of God, with a solemn appeal to Him, 1—8. He deprecates the doom of the wicked, and unites earnest prayers with pious purposes and believing confidence in God, 9—12.

A Psalm of David.

[a] JUDGE me, O LORD; [b] for I have walked in mine integrity: [c] I have trusted also in the LORD; *therefore* [d] I shall not slide.

2 [e] Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.

3 For [f] thy loving kindness *is* before mine eyes; and [g] I have walked in thy truth.

4 I have not [h] sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.

5 I have [i] hated the congregation of evil doers; and [k] will not sit with the wicked.

6 I will [l] wash mine hands in innocency: [m] so will I compass thine altar, O LORD:

a 7:8. 35:24. 43:1. 54:1. 1 Sam. 24: 15. *marg.* 1 Cor. 4:3—6.
b 11. 15:2. 25:21. 2 K. 20:3. Prov. 20:7. 2 Cor. 1:12.
c 4:5. 25:2. 28:7. 31:14. Prov. 29:25.
d 21:7. 37:31. 62:2,6. 94:18. 121:3, 7,8. 1 Sam. 2:9. 1 Pet. 1:5. 2 Pet. 1:10.
e 7:9. 17:3. 66:10. 139:23,24. Job 13:23. 31:4—6. Jer. 20:12. Zech. 13:9.
f 52:1. 85:10—13. Matt. 5:44—48. Luke 6:36. 2 Cor. 3:18. 5:14,15. 8:3. Eph. 4:32. 5:1. 2 Col. 3:12,13. 1 John 4:7—12,19—21. 3 John 11.
g 25:5. 101:2. 119:142. Is. 2:5. 8:20. John 14:6. Eph. 4:20—25. 1 John 1: 7. 2 John 4. 3 John 3,4.
h 1:1. 119:63,115. 141:4. Prov. 9:6. 12:11. 13:20. Jer. 15:17. 1 Cor. 15: 33. 2 Cor. 6:17.
i 5:5. 15:4. 31:6. 101:3—8. 139:21, 22.
k Matt. 9:11,12. 1 Cor. 5:9—11.
l 24:4. 73:13. Ex. 30:19,20. Is. 1:16 —18. Tit. 3:5. Heb. 10:19—22.
m 43:4. Mal. 2:11—13. Matt. 5:23,24. 1 Cor. 11:28,29. 1 Tim. 2:8.

and do with it as thou pleasest.' But, as to his sin, he asks for no less than a pardon, *Forgive all my sins.* When at any time we are in trouble, we should be more concerned about our sins, to get them pardoned, than about our afflictions, to get them removed. Yet he prays for the redress of his grievances. His mind was troubled for God's withdrawings from him, and under the sense he had of his displeasure against him for his sin; therefore he prays, *v.* 16. *Turn Thee unto me.* And if God turn to us, no matter who turns from us. His condition was troubled, and, in reference to that, he prays, '*O bring Thou me out of my distresses.*' His enemies were spiteful; and, in reference to that, he prays, 'O keep my soul from falling into their hands, or else deliver me out of their hands.'

Four things he mentions by way of plea, to enforce these petitions; and refers himself and them to God's consideration: These are God's mercy, his own misery, especially the troubles of his heart; the iniquity of his enemies; and his own integrity, *v.* 21. which intimates that he did not expect to be safe, any longer than he continued in his integrity and uprightness; and that, while he did continue in it, he did not doubt of being safe. Sincerity will be our best security in the worst of times; this will preserve us to the heavenly kingdom; we should therefore pray to God to preserve us in our integrity.

2. For the church of God, *v.* 22. David was now in trouble himself, but he thinks it not strange, since trouble is the lot of all God's Israel; and he forgets not the distresses of God's church; for when we have ever so much business of our own at the throne of grace, we must still remember to pray for the public. Good men have little comfort in their own safety, while the church is in distress and danger. This prayer is a prophecy, that God would, at length, give David rest, and therewith give Israel rest from all their enemies round about. It is a prophecy of the sending of the Messiah in due time to *redeem Israel from his iniquities*, 130: 8. and so from their troubles. It refers also to the future state. In heaven only, will God's Israel be perfectly redeemed from trouble.

Ps. XXVI. Holy David is, in this Ps. putting himself on a solemn trial, by God and his own conscience. In singing it, we must teach and admonish ourselves, and one another, what we must be, and do, that we may have the favor of God, and comfort in our own consciences; and comfort ourselves with it, as David, if we can say, that in any measure we have, through grace, answered these characters. Amyraldus suggests, that David is here, by the spirit of prophecy, carried out to speak of himself as a type of Christ, of whom what he here says of his spotless innocence, was fully and eminently true, and of Him only, and to Him we may apply it in singing this Ps. *We are complete in Him.*

V. 1—5. Probably David penned this when persecuted by Saul and his party, who, to give some color to their unjust rage, represented him as a very bad man, and falsely accused him of many crimes and misdemeanors. Innocency itself is no fence to the name, though it is to the bosom, against the darts of calumny. Herein he was a type of Christ; whose followers, also, must have all manner of evil said against them falsely. In this case,

I. He appeals to God, *v.* 1. '*Judge me, O God;* be Thou Judge between me and my accusers; bring me off with honor, and put them to shame that falsely accuse me.' Saul was himself supreme judge in Israel, so that, in a controversy with him, David could appeal to no other than to God Himself. As to his offences against God, he prays, *Lord, enter not into judgment with me*, 143: 2. *Remember not my transgressions*, 25: 7. there he appeals to God's mercy; but as to his offences against Saul, he appeals to God's justice, and begs of Him to judge for him, as, 43: 1. Or thus; he cannot justify himself against the charge of sin, but he can against the charge of hypocrisy, and has reason to hope, that, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, he is one of those that may expect to find favor with God. Thus holy Job often owns he has sinned, and yet holds fast his integrity. God Himself is a Witness to sincerity.

II. He submits to his unerring search, *v.* 2. *Lord, examine me;* which intimates that he was well pleased that God did know him, and truly desirous that He would discover him to himself, and discover him to all the world: so sincere was he in his devotion to his God, and his loyalty to his Prince.

III. He solemnly protests his sincerity, *v.* 1. 'My conversation has agreed with my profession, and one part of it with another.' It is in vain to boast of our integrity, unless we can make it out, that, by the grace of God, we have walked in our integrity, and that our conversation in the world has been in simplicity and godly sincerity.

He produces here several proofs of his integrity,

1. He had a constant regard to God and to his grace, *v.* 3. aimed at God's favor as his end, and chief good; *Thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes;* and governed himself by the Word of God as his rule. '*I have walked in thy truth*, according to thy law, for thy law is truth.' Note, Those only may expect the benefit of God's loving-kindness, that value his favor, and live up to his truths, and his laws grounded on them. Some understand it of his conforming himself to God's example in truth and faithfulness, as well as in goodness and loving-kindness. Those certainly walk well, that are followers of God as dear children.

2. He had no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, nor with the workers of those works, *v.* 4, 5. By this it appeared he was truly loyal to his prince, and faithful to his God: that he never associated with the disaffected: nor with open enemies, or false friends, to religion. Great care to avoid bad company, is both a good evidence of our integrity, and a good mean to preserve us in it. David shunned the company, not only of wicked, but of vain persons, which may perhaps be the more pernicious of the two to a good man, because he will not be so ready to stand on his guard against the contagion of vanity, as against that of downright wickedness. The company of dissemblers is as dangerous as any other, and as much to be shunned, in prudence as well as piety. Sometimes he could not avoid being in the company of bad people, yet he would not choose such for his companions, nor seek an opportunity of acquaintance and converse with them; he would not *go in with them*, sit with them, be in their company longer than necessary, nor concur with them, as they that *sit* with *the scornful*, 1: 1. He would not sit in counsel with them, to do mischief, nor in judgment to condemn the righteous. The congregation of evil doers is in a special manner hateful to good people. In all this, David was a type of Christ, who, though He received sinners, and ate with them, to instruct them and do them good, yet, otherwise, was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, particularly from the Pharisees, those dissemblers; thus too David was an example to Christians, Acts 2: 40.

V. 6—12. In these verses,

NOTES.

Ps. XXVI. '*Calmet's* opinion, that this and the following Ps. belong to the time of the captivity, seems without any evidence whatever. It is the *individual* that here speaks, and he evidently the oppressed Psalmist under the cruel aspersions, as far as appears from internal evidence, of Saul. By comparing, the reader will perceive a remarkable correspondence between this Ps. and the 7th.' MORISON.—'This is another of those Pss. in which, though the writer maintains his integrity, we must not, on that account, either exclude David, or apply the whole to Christ.' WILLIAMS.

Verse 1.

It is the general opinion, and indeed it seems very probable, that this Ps. was written by David, in Philistia. (141: *title.* 1 *Sam.* 27:) SCOTT.—'*Integrity*, when used in a moral sense, seems to denote purity of intention. Gen. 20:5, 6. Prov. 10:9.' MORISON.

Verse 2.

Try.] The original word is derived from the *fire*, with which metals are tried and purified. SCOTT.

Verse 3.

By meditating on the kindness, mercy, and faithfulness of God, David had learned to copy them in his habitual conduct. (*M. R.*—2 *Cor.* 3:17, 18.) SCOTT.

Verse 4.

(*Note*, 1:1—3. 139:19—22. *Jer.* 15:15—18.) 'Dissemblers,' here denote hypocrites, or those who under specious pretensions cloked their unjust and malicious designs.—Persons who are *hidden*, artfully concealing their real characters and designs. ID.

Verse 5.

(*Notes*, *Gen.* 49:5—7. *Prov.* 13:20. 2 *Cor.* 6:14—18.) ID.

Verses 6—8.

The glory of God was manifested at the sanctuary, from above the mercy-seat; and in those ordinances which typified the Redeemer. Thus the *tent*, where the ark was placed, might be considered as '*the house* of God,' in which his honor dwelt; where He met his worshippers and blessed them, and was glorified by them. (*M. R.* p.) ID.

7 [n] That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and [o] tell of all thy wondrous works.

8 LORD, [p] I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place [*] where thine honor dwelleth.

9 † Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with ‡ bloody men:

10 [q] In whose hands *is* mischief, and their right hand is § full of [r] bribes.

11 But as for me, [s] I will walk in mine integrity: [t] redeem me, [u] and be merciful unto me.

12 [x] My foot standeth in an even place: [y] in the congregations will I bless the LORD.

PSALM XXVII.

David by strong faith rises above the fear of his enemies, 1—3. He chooses the courts and service of God, as his felicity, 4—6. He prays for guidance and assistance, and encourages his brethren, 7—14.

A Psalm of David.

THE LORD *is* [a] my Light and [b] my Salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD *is* [c] the

n 9:14. 66:13—15. 95:2. 100:4,5. 116: 12—14,18,19 118:19,27. 134:2. Deut. 26:2—10. 1 Sam. 1:24—27. 2 Chr. 20:26—29
o 71:17—19. 72:18. 105:2. 119:27. 136: 4,5. 145:5. Luke 19:37—40.
p 27:4—6. 42:4. 84:1,2,10. 122:1—4, 9. 2 Sam. 15:25. 1 Chr. 29:3. Is. 38:20,22. Luke 2:46,49. 19:45—47. John 2:14—17.
* Heb. *of the tabernacle of thine honor.*
63:2,3. Ex. 25:21,22. 40:34,35. 2 Chr. 5:14. 6:1,2.
† Or, *Take not away.* 28:1—3. 1 Sam. 25:29. Mal. 3:18. Matt. 24:51. 25: 32,41,46. Rev. 22:14,15.
‡ Heb. *men of blood.* 51:14. 55:23. 139:19. 1 Sam. 22:18,19. 2 Sam. 16: 7. 21:1.
q 10:14. 11:2. 36:4. 52:2. 55:9—11. Prov. 1:16. 4:16. Mic. 2:1—3. Matt. 26:3,4 Acts 23:12.
§ Heb. *filled with.*
r Ex. 23:8. Deut. 16:19. 1 Sam. 8:3. Is. 33:15. Ez. 22:12,13. Am. 5:12. Mic. 7:3.
s 1 Sam. 12:2—5. 2 Chr. 31:20,21. Neh. 5:15. Job 1:1. Is. 38:3. Luke 1:6. 1 Thes. 2:10.
t 49:7,15. 69:18. Tit. 2:14. 1 Pet. 1: 18,19.
u 130:3,4,7,8. Neh. 13:14,22,31.
x 27:11. 40:2. 1 Sam. 2:9. Prov. 10:9.
y 7. 22:22—25. 107:32. 111:1. 122: 4. Heb. 2:12.
a 19:28. 84:11. Job 29:3. Is. 2:5. 60: 1—3,19,20. Mic. 7:8. Mal. 4:2. John 1:1—5,9. 8:12. Rev. 21:23. 22:5.
b 3:8. 13:2. 62:2,6. 68:19,20. 118: 14,15. Ex. 15:2. Is. 12:2. 51:6—8. 61:10. Luke 2:30. 3:6. Rev. 7:10.
c 18:1,2,46. 19:14. 28:7,8. 43:2. Is. 45:24. 2 Cor. 12:9. Phil. 4:13.

I. David produces a farther evidence of his integrity, his sincere affection to God's ordinances, the constant care he took about them, and pleasure in them. Hypocrites and dissemblers may indeed attend God's ordinances, as the proud Pharisee went to the temple with the penitent publican; but it is a good sign of sincerity, if we attend on them, as David, *v.* 6—8.

1. He was very careful and conscientious in his preparation for holy ordinances. *I will wash mine hands in innocency.* This is like that, 1 Cor. 11: 28. *Let a man examine himself, and so* prepared *let him eat.* This denotes habitual preparation; see 24: 3, 4. and actual preparation; it alludes to the ceremony of the priests' washing, when they went in to minister, Ex. 30: 20, 21. David was no priest, yet, as every worshipper ought, he would look to the substance of that which the priests were enjoined the shadow of. In our preparations for solemn ordinances, we must not only be able to clear ourselves from the charge of reigning infidelity and hypocrisy, and to protest our innocency of that, (signified by *washing the hands*, Deut. 21: 6.) but we must take pains to cleanse ourselves from the spots of remaining iniquity, by renewing our repentance, and making a fresh application of the blood of Christ to our consciences, to purify and pacify them. He that is washed, i. e. in a justified state, has need thus to *wash his feet*, John 13: 10. to wash his hands, to wash them in innocency; he that is pardoned, is so far innocent, that his sins shall not be mentioned against him.

2. He was very diligent and serious in attendance; *I will compass thine altar;* alluding to the priests, who, while the sacrifice was offering, walked round the altar, and, probably, the offerers likewise did so at some distance, denoting a diligent regard to what was done, and a dutiful attendance in the service. David, a man of honor, of business, of war, thought it not below him to attend with the multitude on God's altars, and could find time for it. Note, All God's people will be sure to wait on God's altar, in obedience to his commands, and in pursuance of his favor. Christ is our Altar.

3. In all his attendance, he aimed at God's glory, and was much in thankful adoration of Him. He had an eye to the place of worship, as the place where God's honor dwelt, *v.* 8. and therefore made it his business there to honor God, and to give Him the glory due to his name; to publish, as should we, with the voice of thanksgiving, all God's wondrous, which are his gracious, works.

4. He did this with delight, and from a principle of true affection to God and his institutions. Touching this, he appeals to God, *v.* 8. David was sometimes forced by persecution into the countries of idolaters, and hindered from attending God's altars, which perhaps his persecutors upbraided him with as his crime. See 1 Sam. 20: 27. 'But, Lord,' says he, 'though I cannot come to the habitation of thine house, I love it, my heart is there, and it is my greatest trouble that I am not there.' All that truly love God, truly love his ordinances. Our Lord Jesus loved his Father's honor, and made it his business to glorify Him; those who love communion with God, and delight in approaching Him, find it a constant pleasure, a comfortable evidence of their integrity, and a comfortable earnest of their endless felicity.

II. David, having given proofs of his integrity, earnestly prays, that he might not fall under the doom of the wicked, *v.* 9, 10. Here, 1. David describes these sinners, whom he looked upon to be in a miserable condition, so miserable, that he could not wish the worst enemy he had in the world to be in a worse. 'They are bloody men, they do mischief, and though they get by their wickedness, (*v.* 10.) yet that will never better them. 2. He dreads having his lot with them; he never loved them, nor associated with them, in this world, and therefore could in faith pray he might not have his lot with them in the other. Balaam desired to die the death of the righteous. David dreaded dying the death of the wicked; so both sides are of that mind, which if we be of, and will live up to, we are happy for ever.

III. David, with a holy, humble confidence, commits himself to God's grace, *v.* 11, 12. 1. He promises, that by the grace of God he would persevere; When our consciences testify for us, that we have walked in our integrity, that should confirm our resolutions to continue therein. 2. He prays for the divine grace, both to enable him to do so, and to give him the comfort of it; Be we ever so confident of our integrity, still we must rely on God's mercy, and the great redemption Christ has wrought out, and pray for the benefit of them. 3. He pleases himself with his steadiness. This he speaks, as one that found his resolutions fixed for God and godliness, not to be shaken by temptation; and his comforts firm in God and his grace, not to be disturbed by crosses and troubles. 4. He promises himself he should yet have occasion to praise the Lord; be furnished with matter, and have a heart for praise; and that though now perhaps banished, he should again have opportunity of blessing God in his congregation.

Ps. XXVII. Some think David penned this Ps. before his coming to the throne, when in the midst of his troubles, and, perhaps, on occasion of the death of his parents; but the Jews think he penned it, when old, on occasion of his wonderful deliverance from the sword of the giant, 2 Sam. 21: 16, 17. and his people, thereupon, resolved he should never venture his life again in battle, lest he should quench the light of Israel. Perhaps it was not penned on any particular occasion; but it is very expressive of the pious and devout affections of gracious souls at all times, especially of trouble. And let our hearts be thus affected in singing this Ps. Observe here,

V. 1—6. 1. With what a lively faith David triumphs in God, glories in his holy name, and his interest in Him. 1. *The Lord is my Light.* David's subjects called him *the light of Israel*, 2 Sam. 21: 17. but he owns he shone, as the moon, with a borrowed light; *The Lord is my Light.* God is a Light to his people, to show the way in doubt, to comfort and rejoice them in sorrow: in his light they now walk on in their way, and hope to see light for ever. 2. '*He is my Salvation*, in whom I am safe, and by whom I shall be saved.' 3. 'He is *the Strength of my life;* not only the Protector of my exposed life, but the Strength of my frail, weak life, who keeps me from dying away.' God, is a believer's Light, the Strength of his life, by whom, in whom, he lives and moves. In God therefore let us strengthen ourselves.

2. With what an undaunted courage he tri-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

According to that covenant which Jesus mediated, the man who 'walketh in his integrity,' yet wholly trusts in mercy and grace, is evidenced to be in a state of acceptance: the Lord may be appealed to, to plead his cause: and he shall not slide, but 'be kept by a divine power, through faith unto salvation.' This man desires to have his inmost soul searched and proved to the uttermost. He is aware of the deceitfulness of his own heart, desires to detect and mortify every sin, and longs to be fully satisfied he is a true believer. He examines himself; and is willing to be examined by the penetrating and distinguishing Word of truth: but, lest after all he should be deceived, he appeals to the great Searcher of hearts; and, in his better judgment, welcomes even those fiery trials, by which his graces may be manifested and improved, as gold and silver in the furnace: and, as he delights in blessing God with his congregations on earth, he trusts that shortly he shall join the great assembly in heaven. SCOTT.

Verses 9—11.

The Psalmist especially refers here to Saul, Doeg, and others who gave or received bribes, in order to murder him and his pious adherents. (52: 1 *Sam.* 22:6—19.) In this conduct they resembled, and in some respects prefigured, Caiaphas, Judas, and the false witnesses and wicked priests, who combined to murder the Prince of life.—David, though conscious of integrity, and determined to persist in it, trusted only in the redeeming mercy and grace of God. (4:3—5.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. XXVII. 'David had three several anointings; the first, when a youth, by Samuel, at his father's; the second, after the death of Saul,

Strength of my life; [d] of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When [e] the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, * came upon me [f] to eat up my flesh, [g] they stumbled and fell.

3 Though [h] an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though [i] war should rise against me, [k] in this *will* I *be* confident.

4 [l] One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, [m] that will I seek after; [n] that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, [o] to behold the † beauty of the LORD, and to [p] inquire in his temple.

5 For [q] in the time of trouble [r] he shall hide me in his pavilion: [s] in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall [t] set me upon a rock.

6 And [u] now shall mine head be lifted up [x] above mine enemies round about me: [y] therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of ‡ joy; [z] I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

7 ¶ [a] Hear O LORD, *when* I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me; and answer me.

8 § *When thou saidst,* [b] Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, [c] Thy face, LORD, will I seek.

d 11:1. 46:1,2. 56:2—4. 118:6. Matt. 8:26. Rom. 8:31. Heb. 13:6.
e 3:7. 18:4. 22:16. 62:3,4.
* Heb. *approached against me.*
f 14:4. 53:4. Job 19:22. 31:31.
g 18:38—42. 118:12. Is. 8:9,15. John 18:3—6.
h 5:2,6. 2 K. 6:15—17. 2 Chr. 20:15. Phil. 1:28. 1 Pet. 3:14.
i 1 Sam. 23:15,16. Is. 41:11,12. 54:16, 17. Rom. 8:35—37. Rev. 2:10. 12: 7—11.
k 2 Cor. 5:6—8.
l Luke 10:42. Phil. 3:13.
m 8. Jer. 29:13. Dan. 9:3. Matt. 6: 33. 7:7,8. Luke 11:9,10. 13:24. 18: 1. Heb. 11:6.
n 23:6. 26:6. 65:4. 84:4,10. 1 Sam. 1:11. Luke 2:37. 1 Tim. 5:5.
o 50:2. 63:2. 90:17. Zech. 9:17. 2 Cor. 3:18. 4:6.
† Or, *delight.* 63:2—5.
p 1 Sam. 22:10. 30:8. 2 Sam. 21:1. 1 Chr. 10:13,14.
q 10:1. 32:6,7. 46:1. 50:15. 77:2. 91:15. 138:7. Prov. 1:24—28. Is. 26:16. Jer. 2:27,28.
r 57:1. 83:3. 119:114. Prov. 18:10. Is. 4:6. 26:20. 32:2. Matt. 23:37. Col. 3:3.
s 31:20. 91:1. 2 Chr. 22:12. Neh. 6: 10,11.
t 18:33. 40:2. 61:2. Hab. 3:18,19. Matt. 7:24,25. 16:18—18.
u 3:3. 110:7. Gen. 40:13,20. 2 K. 25: 27.
x 2 Sam. 7:9. 22:1,49. 1 Chr. 22:18.
y 22:22—25. 26:6,7. 43:3,4. 66:13—16. 107:22. 116:17—19. 2 Chr. 30: 21—26. Jer. 33:11. Heb. 13:15. 1 Pet. 2:5.
‡ Heb. *shouting.* 47:1. Ezra 3:11—13. Is. 12:6. Jer. 31:7. Zeph. 3:14,15. Zech. 9:9. Luke 19:37,38.
z 21:1,13. 81:1. 95:1. 100:1,2. 138: 5. Eph 5:19,20. Rev. 5:9. 15:3.
a 4:1. 5:2. 130:2—4. 143:1,2.
§ Or, *My heart said unto thee, Let my face seek thy face, &c.*
b 24:6. 105:4. Is. 45:19. 55:6,7. Hos. 5:15.
c 63:1,2. 119:58. *marg.* Jer. 29:12, 13.

umphs over his enemies, *v.* 2. no fortitude like that of faith. The gracious presence of God, his power, his promise, his readiness to hear prayer, the witness of his Spirit in the hearts of his people; these are *the secret of his tabernacle,* and in these the saints find cause for that holy security and serenity of mind in which they dwell at ease. David here, (*v.* 6.) by faith in the promise of God, triumphs before the victory, and is as sure, not only of the laurel, but of the crown, as if it were already on his head.

3. With what a gracious earnestness he prays for a constant communion with God in holy ordinances, *v.* 4. If our hearts can witness for us, that we delight in God above any creature, that may encourage us to depend on Him; for it is a sign we are of those whom He protects as his own.

Observe, (1.) What he desires; *to dwell in the house of the Lord.* In the courts of God's house the priests had their lodgings, and David wished he had been one. Disdainfully as some look on God's ministers, one of the greatest and best of kings would gladly have taken his lot, his lodging, among them. Or rather, he desires he might duly and constantly attend on the public service of God, with other faithful Israelites, according as the duty of every day required; therefore he longed to see an end of the wars in which he was now engaged. Thus Hezekiah, a genuine son of David, wished for health, not to go up to the thrones of judgment, but *to the house of the Lord,* Isa. 38: 22. Note, All God's children desire to dwell in God's house; where should they dwell else? Do we hope that the praising of God will be the blessedness of our eternity? Surely then we ought to make it the business of our time.

(2.) How earnestly he covets this, *v.* 4. If he were to ask but one thing of God, this should be it; for this he had at heart more than any thing. He desired it as a good thing; as the Lord's gift, and a token of his favor. And, having fixed his desire on this as the one thing needful, he sought after it; continued to pray for it; contrived his affairs so he might have this liberty and opportunity. They that truly desire communion with God, will set themselves with all diligence to seek it, Prov. 18: 1.

(3.) What he had in his eye in it; not the plenty of good entertainment in the feasts on the sacrifices, nor the music and good singing, but *to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.* He knew something of the beauty of the Lord, the infinite and transcendent amiableness of the Divine Being, and his perfections; his holiness is his beauty, 110: 3. and his goodness, Zech. 9: 17. The harmony of all his attributes is the beauty of his nature. But David here desires to behold more of it. He would be instructed also in his duty; for concerning this he would *inquire in God's temple,* Lord, *what wilt thou have me to do?* For the sake of these two things, he desired that one thing, to *dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of his life.* Mary's sitting at Christ's feet to hear his word, Christ calls the one thing needful, and the good part.

(4.) What advantage he promised himself there: he should be quiet and easy; troubles would not find him, for he should be set on high, *v.* 5; he should be pleasant and cheerful; there he would offer sacrifice of joy, *v.* 6. God's work is its own wages, 2 Cor. 2: 14.

V. 7—14. David, in these vs. expresses,

I. His desire toward God, in many petitions.

1. He humbly asks, because he firmly believes he shall have, a gracious audience. He asks also an answer of peace, which he expects, not from his own merit, but God's goodness, *v.* 7. If we pray and believe, God will graciously hear and answer.

2. He takes hold of the kind invitation God had given him to this duty, *v.* 8. *My heart said unto thee,* so it begins in the original, or *of* thee; *Thou saidst,* so it may be supplied, *Seek ye my face;* and then he returns, *Thy face, Lord, will I seek.* Observe, God calls us to seek his face, in our conversion to Him and converse with Him. He calls us, by the whispers of his Spirit, by his Word, by the stated returns of opportunities for his worship, and by special providences, merciful and afflictive. A gracious soul readily complies with this invitation immediately; *My heart answered, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.* The call was general; but, like David, we must apply it to ourselves. The Word does us no good, when we transfer it to others. A gracious heart readily echoes to the call of a gracious God, (Jer. 3: 22.) being made willing in the day of his power.

3. He is very particular in his requests. (1.) For the favor of God, that he might not be shut out from that, *v.* 9. He owns he had deserved God's displeasure, but begs God would not cast him away from his presence; for what is hell, but that? (2.) For the continuance of his presence with him; 'Thou hast been my Help formerly, and *art the God of my salvation;* therefore withdraw not the operations of thy power from me, for then I am helpless; nor the tokens of thy goodwill, for then I am comfortless.' (3.) For the benefit of a divine guidance, *v.* 11. It is not policy, but plainness, i. e. downright honesty, that will direct us into, and keep us in duty. He begs to be guided in a plain path, because of his *enemies;* or, as the margin reads it, his *observers.* His enemies watched for his halting, to find occasion against him. Saul eyed David, 1 Sam. 18: 9. This quickened him to pray, 'Lord, lead me in a plain path, that they may have nothing ill, or nothing that looks ill, to lay to my charge.' (4.) For the benefit of a divine protection, *v.* 12. *Deliver me not over to the will of mine enemies:* for it aims at my life. Herein, David was a type of Christ; for false witnesses rose up against Him, and such as breathed out cruelty.

II. He expresses his dependence on God.

1. That He would help and succor him when all other helps and succors failed, *v.* 10. This is God's time to help those that trust in Him. This promise has often been fulfilled in the letter. Forsaken orphans have been taken under the especial care of Providence, which has raised them up relief and friends, in a way not expected. God is a surer and better Friend than our earthly parents are, or can be.

2. That in due time he should see the displays of his goodness, *v.* 13. Even the best saints are subject to faint, when their troubles become grievous and tedious; but then faith is a sovereign cordial, it keeps them from despairing, from desponding, keeps them hoping, and praying, and waiting, in good thoughts of God, and the comfortable enjoyment of themselves. He now hoped he should outlive his troubles, and not perish under them. He should see it also in the land of Canaan, and in Jerusalem, where the lively oracles were; in comparison with the heathen that were

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at Hebron, by the men of Judah; and the third, at Hebron also, by the elders of Israel, when, after the death of Ishbosheth, he was recognised king. This Ps. might have been written before the second or third anointing, as David had been grievously harassed by Saul prior to both these events; and there is certainly something in the general structure and phraseology of the Ps. which connects it with those persecutions the son of Jesse endured at the hand of that wicked man.' MOR.

Verses 1—3.

It is probable, this Ps. was composed by David, in the extremity of his danger from Saul, in order to silence the fears of his companions, by showing them the strength and reasonableness of his confidence. (11:1—3.) Some, however, think it relates to his subsequent conflicts and dangers.—Being confident God was on his side, he was determined he would not yield to fear, even of a whole army. (3:6.) Comp. this with the complaint of Saul. (1 *Sam.* 28:15.) SCOTT.

Verse 8.

Lit. 'My heart said unto thee, Seek ye my face: Thy face LORD will I seek.' In retired meditation, the exhortations of God to men to

9 [d] Hide not thy face *far* from me; [e] put not thy servant away in anger: [f] thou hast been my Help: [g] leave me not, neither forsake me, [h] O God of my salvation.

10 When [i] my father and my mother forsake me, then [k] the LORD will * take me up.

11 [l] Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in † a plain path, because of ‡ mine enemies.

12 Deliver me not over unto [m] the will of mine enemies: for [n] false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as [o] breathe out cruelty.

13 *I had* [p] *fainted,* unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD [q] in the land of the living.

14 [r] Wait on the LORD: [s] be of good courage, and [t] he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

PSALM XXVIII.

David earnestly prays for deliverance, and denounces the righteous doom of the wicked, 1—5. He exults in God, and prays for his people, 6—9.

A Psalm of David.

UNTO thee, * will I cry, [b] O LORD my Rock, [c] be not silent § to me: lest, *if* thou be silent to me, [d] I become like them that go down into the pit.

2 Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee; [e] when I lift up my hands toward ‖ thy holy oracle.

d 13:1. 44:24. 69:17. 102:2. 143:7. Is. 59:2.
e 51:11. Is. 50:1.
f 71:5,6,17,18. 1 Sam. 7:12. Is. 46:3, 4. 2 Cor. 1:9,10. 2 Tim. 4:17,18.
g 38:21. 119:121. 1 Chr. 28:9. Jer. 32:40. Heb. 13:5.
h 24:5. 38:21,22. 88:1.
i 69:8. 2 Sam. 16:11. Is. 49:15. Matt. 10:21,22,36.
k John 9:35. 16:32. 2 Tim. 4:16,17.
* Heb. *gather me.*
l 25:4,5,9,12. 86:11. 119:10. 143:8—10. Prov. 2:6—9. Is. 30:20,21.
† Heb. *a way of plainness.* 26:12. Prov. 8:9. 15:19. Is. 35:8. Luke 3: 4—6.
‡ Heb. *those which observe me.* 5:8. 54:5. *marg.* 56:5,6. 64:6. Jer. 20: 10. Dan. 6:4,5. Luke 20: 0.
m 31:8. 35:25. 38:16. 41:11. 140:8.
n 35:11. Ex. 20:16. 1 Sam. 22:9,10. 26:19. 2 Sam. 16:7,8. Matt. 26:59, 60. Acts 6:11—13.
o 25:19. Acts 9:1. 26:11.
p 42:5. 56:3. 116:9—11. 2 Cor. 4:1, 8—14,16.
q 52:5. 56:13. 142:5. Job 33:30. Is. 38:11,19. Jer. 11:19. Ez. 26:20.
r 25:3,21. 33:20. 62:1,5. 130:5. Gen. 49:18. Is. 8:17. 25:9. 26:8. 30:18. Lam. 3:26. Hab. 2:3. Luke 2:25,38. Rom. 8:25.
s 31:24. Acts 28:15. 1 Cor. 16:13. 2 Tim. 4:5—8.
t 138:3. Is. 40:31. 2 Cor. 12:9,10. Eph 3:16. 6:10. Phil. 4:13. Col. 1:11.
a 3:4. 5:2. 22:2. 77:1. 142:1.
b 18:2. 42:9. Is. 26:4. *Marg.*
c 35:22. 83:1.
§ Heb. *from me.*
d 30:9. 69:15. 88:4—6. 143:7. Job 33:28. Prov. 1:12. Is. 38:18. Rev. 20:3.
e 63:4. 134:2. 141:2. 143:6. 2 Chr. 6:13. 1 Tim. 2:8.
‖ Or, *the oracle of thy sanctuary.* 5: 7. 138:2. 1 K. 6:19. 8:6—8,30,38. Dan. 6:10.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

He, who is 'the Light of the world, is the eternal JEHOVAH: and whosoever 'followeth Him shall not abide in darkness, but shall have the light of life.' (*John* 8: 12. 9: 4—7. 12: 44—50.)—The temporary success of the wicked is only an introduction to their deeper disgrace and misery: they shall soon stumble, and fall, and rise no more; while the trials of believers will terminate in everlasting honor and felicity.—But the believer's confidence should be carefully distinguished from the hypocrite's presumption. Whatever be the Christian's rank, expectations, reputation, or employment; he considers the salvation and service of God, as his 'one thing needful.' (*Note, Luke* 10: 38—42.) This he prays for and seeks after; for what is heartily desired will be diligently sought.—With such desires and experiences, we may triumph amidst conflicts, and 'rejoice in tribulation.' The Savior, who suffered and conquered for us, will conquer by us: and, in hope of rendering eternal songs of praise in the temple above, we may now celebrate every mercy, with sacrifices of exulting joy and thanksgiving here on earth. But we should all be far more joyful and thankful, if more instant and fervent in prayer.—The Christian's loss of earthly friends, or their unkindness, or his anxiety about them, leads him more diligently to seek, and more highly to value, a relation to his Heavenly Friend: and should his attachment to the Lord forfeit the favor of all his relatives, that loss would prove his richest gain. Let then the destitute, the orphan, and the widow, let us all seek the LORD with patient expectation and fervent prayer. SCOTT.

seek his favor, were recollected: and his heart answered, 'Dost Thou deign thus to invite us? Then without delay or hesitation, I will seek thy face.' SCOTT.—'The tr. of this v. has been thought by critics to involve considerable difficulty. The Sept. have it: "My heart said unto Thee, I have sought thy face,—thy face, O Lord, I will seek." Abp. *Secker* renders: "To Thee, my heart, He hath said, seek ye my face: Thy face, O Jehovah, I will seek."' MORISON.

Verse 9.

'Do not in anger reject my suits, because I am a sinner; but accept them, because I am thy servant; whom in former times Thou hast so often relieved, that even thence also I am emboldened to beseech Thee not to desert me; . . . but . . . continue to give me deliverance and safety.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

Verse 10.

Perhaps David's parents died about this time, or he was deprived of the solace of their company: or he meant in general, that the favor of God would compensate the loss of all earthly friends, and of the nearest and most endeared relations, should they prove treacherous; and he was determined to stay his mind on God alone. ID.

Verses 11, 12.

(*M. R.*) ID.

Verse 13.

'Unless I had believed,'—the consequences must have been dreadful. The broken form of the sentence, adds greatly to the effect. Perhaps some person had asked David, how he kept up his spirits under his manifold trials and dangers: and he gave him this answer, as comprising the whole secret of his cheerful confidence.—'The land of the living,' in this connection, seems to imply a prospect beyond this present dying world. (*M. R.* q.) ID.

Verse 14.

Some understand this v. as the Psalmist's apostrophe to his own soul: but perhaps it was chiefly intended as an exhortation to his discouraged companions in tribulation; and also as a pious counsel to every one, who might at any future time read this admirable Ps. (25: 4, 5. 62:1, 2, 5—10. *Mic.* 7:5—7. *Hab.* 2:1—3.) SCOTT

NOTES.

Ps. XXVIII. 'There is reason to regard this Ps. as partaking of the responsive character: it is highly probable it was composed on the same occasion with the former.' MORISON.

Verse 1.

It is not agreed, whether this Ps. was written during David's persecutions from Saul, or at a later period of life.—'Be not silent to me.' 'Treat not my humble requests with silent neglect.'—The word rendered 'the pit' generally means *the grave,* when used in this manner: yet when the death of the wicked is thus expressed, it seems also to denote the place of future punishment; for all men go down into the grave, but the wicked into the pit of destruction. (55:23.)—If God did not show, by some visible interposition, that He heard and answered David's prayers; he must soon be cut off and laid in the grave, never more to glorify God on earth; and it would appear, as if he died under the divine wrath, as the wicked do. (*M. R.* d.)—Had Christ continued in the grave, it might have been concluded, He had been justly put to death: but He was justified and proved to be the Son of God by his resurrection. (*Rom.* 1:1—5. 4:23—25. 1 *Cor.* 15:12—18.) SCOTT.

Verse 2.

Holy oracle.] 'The oracle of thy sanctuary.' (*M.*) (1 *K.* 6:15—22. 8:28—30. *Dan.* 6:10, 11.) ID.

3 [f] Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which [g] speak peace to their neighbors, but [h] mischief *is* in their hearts.

4 [i] Give them according to their deeds, and [k] according to the wickedness of their endeavors: [l] give them after the work of their hands: [m] render to them their desert.

5 Because [n] they regard not the works of the LORD, nor [o] the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and [p] not build them up.

6 [q] Blessed *be* the LORD, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.

7 The LORD *is* [r] my Strength and [s] my Shield; [t] my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: [u] therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth, and [x] with my song will I praise him.

8 The LORD *is* * their Strength, and he *is* the † saving Strength of [y] his anointed.

9 [z] Save thy people, and [a] bless thine inheritance: ‡ feed them also, and [b] lift them up for ever.

a type of Christ, and to Him we must lift up our eyes and hands, for through Him all good comes from God to us. It was also a figure of heaven, Heb. 9: 24. The Scriptures are called *the oracles of God*, and there is the Word on which God hath caused and encouraged us to hope.

II. He deprecates the doom of the wicked, as before, 26: 9. *v.* 3. 'Save me from being entangled in the snares they have laid for me; from being infected with their sins, and from doing as they do; from being involved in their doom.' Note, Good men dread the way of sinners; the best are sensible of their danger of being drawn aside into it; and therefore we should all pray earnestly for grace to keep us in integrity, Rev. 18: 4.

III. He imprecates the just judgments of God on the workers of iniquity, *v.* 4. This is not the language of passion or revenge, nor is it inconsistent with the duty of praying for our enemies. But, 1. He would show how far he was from complying with the workers of iniquity, and with what good reason he had begged not to be drawn away with them; and, 2. He would express his zeal for the honor of God's justice in governing the world; 'Lord, they think all well that they do, and justify themselves in their wicked practices; Lord, *give them after the work of their hands*, and so undeceive those about them, who think there is no harm in what they do, because it goes unpunished,' 94: 1, 2. 3. This prayer is a prophecy, that God will, sooner or later, render to all impenitent sinners according to their deserts: not only for the mischief they have done, but for what they intended and endeavored. And if God go by this rule, in dealing with the wicked, surely He will do so, in dealing with the righteous.

IV. He foretells their destruction, for their contempt of God and his hand, *v.* 5. A stupid regardlessness of the works of God is the cause of the sin of sinners, and so becomes the cause of their ruin. See Isa. 5: 12.

In singing this, we must arm ourselves against all temptations to join workers of iniquity, and animate ourselves against all troubles threatened by them.

V. 6—9. In these vs. I. David thanks God for the answer to his prayers, as affectionately as, a few vs. before, he had begged it, *v.* 6. How soon are the saints' sorrows turned into songs, and their prayers into praises! It was in faith that David prayed, *v.* 2. and by the same faith he gives thanks, *v.* 6. Note, 1. They that pray in faith may rejoice in hope. 2. What we win by prayer, we must wear with praise.

II. He encourages himself to hope in God for the perfecting of every thing that concerned him; having given to God the glory of his grace, *v.* 6. he is humbly bold to take the comfort of it, *v.* 7. 27: 13. The very actings of faith are present aids to a drooping spirit, and often help it at a dead lift. He improves; *my heart greatly rejoices.* The joy of a believer is seated in the heart, while, in the laughter of the fool, the heart is sorrowful. It is great joy, joy unspeakable, and full of glory. The heart that truly believes shall in due time greatly rejoice; it is joy and peace in believing that we are to expect. God shall have the praise of it.

III. He pleases himself with the interest all good people, through Christ, have in God, *v.* 8. The saints rejoice in their friends' comforts, as well as their own. This is our communion with all saints, that God is their Strength and ours; Christ their Lord and ours, 1 Cor. 1: 2. He is their Strength, the Strength of all Israel, because He is the saving Strength of his anointed, i. e. 1. Of David in the type. God, in strengthening him as king, strengthened the whole kingdom. He calls himself *God's anointed*, because it was the unction he had received, that exposed him to the envy of his enemies, and therefore entitled him to the divine protection. 2. Of Christ, his Anointed, his Messiah, in the anti-type. God was his saving Strength, qualified Him for his undertaking, and carried Him through it; see 89: 21. Isa. 49: 5. 50: 7—9. And so He becomes their Strength, the Strength of all the saints; He strengthened Him that is the church's Head, and from Him diffuses strength to all the members; *strengthens what He has wrought for us*, 68: 28.—80: 17, 18.

IV. He concludes with a short, but comprehensive prayer for the church of God, *v.* 9. He prays for Israel, not as his people, but as God's people. God's interest in them lay nearer his heart than his own, Isa. 61: 9.—63: 19. He begs for them, 1. That He would save them from their enemies, and dangers; bless them with all good, flowing from his favor, in performance of his promise, and amounting to a happiness for them; would feed them; bless them with plenty, and especially the plenty of his ordinances, food to the soul. *Rule*

f 26:9. Num. 16:26. Matt. 7:23. 25: 41,46. 2 Cor. 6:17.
g 12:2. 55:21. 62:4. Jer. 9:8,9. Mic. 3:5. Matt. 22:15—18.
h 7:14. 10:7,14. 36:4. 52:1. Prov. 26:23—26.
i 5:10. 59:12,13. 69:22—24. Jer. 18: 21—23. 2 Tim. 4:14. Rev. 18:6.
k 2:1—5. 21:10,11 Ez. 38:10.
l 62:12. 103:10. 109:17—21. 130:3,4. Rom. 2:6—8. 11:22. Jam. 2:13.
m Ezra 9:13. Job 11:6.
n 10:5. 92:4—6. 104:24. 111:2—4. Job 34:26,27. Is. 5:12. 22:11. 26:9—11. Hos. 14:9. John 12:37. Rom. 1:20, 28.
o 8:3. 19:1,2. Num. 23:23. Is. 40:28. 45:8,12,18. Jer. 10:12,13. Eph. 1:19—21.
p 2 Sam. 7:13,27. 1 K. 11:38. Jer. 31: 4. 33:0,21.
q 31:21,22. 66:19,20. 69:33,34. 107: 19—22. 116:1,2. 118:5.
r 8. 18:1,2. 19:14. 46:1. Is. 12:2. 45:24. Eph. 6:10.
s 84:11. 91:4. Gen. 15:1.
t 13:5. 22:4. 56:3,4. 118:6—9,13—15.
u 16:9—11. 21:1. 30:11,12. 33:21. 68: 3,4. Is 61:10.
x 96:1—3. Ex. 15:1,&c. Judg. 5:1,&c. 1 Sam. 2:1,&c. 2 Sam. 22:1,&c. Rev. 5:9. 15:3.
* Or, *his*.
† Heb. *strength of salvations*.
y 2:2. 20:6. 1 Sam. 16:13. Is. 61:1.
z 14:7. 25:22. 80:14—19. Jer. 31:7.
a Deut. 9:29. 2 Sam. 21:3. 1 K. 8:51, 53. Jer. 10:16. Eph. 1:18.
‡ Or, *rule*. 78:71. 2 Sam. 7:7. Is. 40: 11. Ez. 34:23,24. Mic. 5:2,4. 7:14. Matt. 2:6. *marg.*
b Ezra 1:4. *marg.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Believers, under distresses, should not rest from their prayers, till they have received some satisfactory token that their prayers are heard, for the Lord will never refuse to answer those, who come to the mercy-seat of a reconciled God, in 'the holy place not made with hands,' through the intercession of our great High Priest; sincerely desiring and humbly hoping for those blessings, which He purchased by his meritorious sacrifice, and is now exalted to bestow.—If men duly [studied, and] regarded the works of the Lord, the displays of his power and majesty would intimidate them from rebellion, and 'his goodness would lead them to repentance:' but alienation of heart from God causes men to neglect all his operations, and to despise even his redeeming love. SCOTT.

Verse 3.

'Draw me not away,' as criminals are violently carried to the place of execution.—David deprecated the doom which awaited his deceitful persecutors, or that of Saul in particular. (26:9—11. 36:3, 4. 52:1—5. *Prov.* 26:23—27.) SCOTT.

Verses 4, 5.

The first of these vs. is the language of *prayer*; the latter, that of *prediction*. In the one the Psalmist calls on God to 'deliver' him, and plead the cause of true religion, by executing deserved punishment on his implacable enemies: in the other he assigns the reason, why he used this language; namely, because he foresaw this doom coming on them, and because their conduct showed them to be given up to final hardness of heart.—In general we may and ought to pray, for the just punishment of all impenitent enemies of the church: but with particular application to individuals, such prayers can only be proper for inspired persons.—To be dealt with according to their deservings, must be most tremendous to every sinner. (*Jam.* 2:8—13.)—*Regard not*, &c. (5) *M. R.* n.—92:4—7. *Rom.* 1:18—20. ID.

Verses 6, 7.

This sudden transition from earnest prayers and the language of distress, to exulting joy and praise, accords so much to the method of those Ps. which are evidently prophetical of Christ, that some expositors interpret this of Him; and suppose these vs. spoken as an anticipation of the triumphs and glory, which followed his deep humiliation and sufferings. (22:22—31.)—David himself, however, seems frequently to have anticipated the answer of his prayers in a similar manner: or perhaps after his deliverances, while leading the praises of his people, he contrasted the joyful scene with the dangers and sorrows, the prayers and tears, which preceded it. SCOTT.

Verse 8.

Some render this, 'The LORD is Strength to them:' (i. e. to his people:) 'and his Messiah, the strength of salvation *is* He.'—It is not clear, that the original can bear this construction. SCOTT.—*Their strength.*] 'Six or eight MSS. read "*to his people*," instead of, "*to them*," or "*their strength*;" and in this reading agree all the ancient versions, except the Chal.' MORISON.

Verse 9.

David's prayer for Israel was in some respects typical of Christ's intercession for his church.—The authority of a good prince resembles the care of a tender shepherd over his flock. [the shepherd's crook, was an early symbol of such power; cut, Ex. 1:8.] The word rendered *feed*, therefore, means also *rule*: and is applied to JEHOVAH, to the Messiah, and to David, and others. (*M. R.* ‡—*Notes*, 2 *Sam.* 5:1, 2. *Is.* 40:9—11. *Jer.* 23:3, 4. *Mic.* 5:3, 4. 7:14—17.) SCOTT.

PSALM XXIX.

David calls on the mighty to give glory to God, 1, 2. He shows the majesty and power of his voice, 3—9: and that, as the eternal King, he will strengthen and bless his people, 10, 11.

A Psalm of David.

[a] GIVE unto the LORD, O ye [*] mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

2 [b] Give unto the LORD the [†] glory due unto his name; [c] worship the LORD in [‡] the beauty of holiness.

3 [d] The voice of the LORD *is* upon the waters: [e] the God of glory [f] thundereth: the LORD *is* upon [§] many waters.

4 The voice of the LORD *is* [‖] powerful; the voice of the LORD *is* full of majesty.

5 The voice of the LORD [g] breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.

6 He maketh them also to [h] skip like a calf: [i] Lebanon and [k] Sirion like a young [l] unicorn.

7 The voice of the LORD [**] divideth [m] the flames of fire.

8 The voice of the LORD [n] shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of [o] Kadesh.

9 The voice of the LORD [p] maketh the hinds to [††] calve, and [q] discovereth the forests: and [r] in his temple [‡‡] doth every one speak of *his* glory.

10 The LORD [s] sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth [t] King for ever.

a 51:10—12. 68:31—34. 96:7—9. Is. 60:12. Jer. 13:16—18.
* Heb. *sons of the mighty.*
b 1 Chr. 16:28,29.
† Heb. *honor of his name.* 96:6,8. 97: 9. 113:3—6. 145:3—7.
c 27:4. 95:6. 2 Chr. 20:21.
‡ Or, *his glorious sanctuary.*
d 18:13—15. 77:16—19. Matt. 8:26, 27. Rev. 17:14,15.
e 24:7—10. Acts 7:2.
f Ex. 9:28,33. 19:16. 1 Sam. 7:10. Job 37:2—5. John 12:29. Rev. 4:5. 8:5. 11:19. 16:18. 19:6.
§ Or, *great.* 93.3,4. 104:3.
‖ Heb. *in power.* 33:9. Job 26:11—14. Jer. 51:15,16. Luke 4:36. 8:25.
¶ Heb. *in majesty.* Job 40:9—12. Is. 66:6. Ez. 10:5.
g Is 2:13.
h 114:4—7.
i Jer. 4:23—25. Hab. 3:6—10. Rev. 20:11.
k Deut. 3:9.
l 92:10. Num. 23:22.
** Heb. *cutteth out.*
m 77:18. 144:5,6. Ex. 9:23. Lev. 10: 2. Num. 16:35. 2 K. 1:10—12. Job 37:3. 38:35.
n 18:7. 46:3. Job 9:6. Is. 13:13. Joel 3:16. Hag. 2:6,21. Heb. 12:26.
o Num. 13:26.
p Job 39:1—3.
†† Or, *is in pain.*
q Is. 9:18. 10:18,19. Ez. 20:46—48.
r 46:2—5. 48:9. 134:1,2. 135:1,2.
‡‡ Or, *every whit of it uttereth, &c.*
s 3. 65:7. 104:6—9. Gen. 6:17. Job 38:8—11,25. Mark 4:41
t 10:16. 93:1. 99:1. Dan. 2:44. Matt. 6:13. 1 Tim. 1:17.

them; so the marg That he would lift them up out of their troubles and distresses; not only those of that age, but his people in every age, even to the end. Observe, Those only, whom God feeds and rules, who are willing to be taught, guided, and governed, by Him, shall be saved, and blessed, and lifted up for ever.

Ps. XXIX. It is the probable conjecture of some very good interpreters, that David penned this on occasion, and just at the time, of a great storm of thunder, lightning, and rain; as Ps. 8. was his meditation in a moon-shine night, and 19. in a sun-shine morning. It is good to take occasion, from the sensible operations of God's power in nature, to give glory to Him. So composed was David, and so cheerful, even in a dreadful tempest, when others trembled, that then he penned this Ps. for *though the earth be removed, yet will we not fear.* Great and high thoughts of God should fill us, in singing it.

V. 1—11. We have here,

I. A demand of the homage of the great of the earth to the great God. Every clap of thunder David thus interpreted as a call to himself, and other princes and rulers; princes because they have their power from God, are to use it for Him, and owe Him this tribute of acknowledgment for it. This call being thrice repeated, intimates, that the mighty are backward to this duty, and with difficulty persuaded to it; but that it is of great consequence to the interests of God's kingdom among men, that they should heartily espouse them. Rev. 21:24. See what they are to give unto the Lord: the recognition of God's glory, and dominion over us, He is pleased to interpret as a gift to Him. Princes value themselves by their glory and strength; these they must ascribe to God, owning Him infinitely more glorious and powerful.

This demand may be looked upon as directed either to the grandees of David's own kingdom, the peers of the realm, the princes of the tribes, or to the neighboring kings, whom his sword had made tributaries. What is here said to the mighty, is said to all, *Worship God;* it is the sum and substance of the everlasting Gospel, Rev. 14: 6, 7. Here is the nature of religious worship; *giving to the Lord the glory due to his name, v.* 2. that whereby He has made Himself known: when we answer that revelation with suitable affections, [actions,] and adorations, then we give Him some of that glory. And here is the rule of its performance, *in the beauty of holiness;* denoting the Object of our worship, God, called *the beauty of holiness,* 2 Chr. 20: 21. Rev. 4: 8. or, the place of worship, the sanctuary, then the *beauty of holiness,* 48: 1, 2. Jer. 17: 12. or, the manner of worship. We must be holy, devoted to God, his will and glory. There is a beauty in holiness, and it is that which puts an acceptable beauty on all worship.

II. Good reasons given for this demand. 1. God's sufficiency in Himself, intimated in his name *Jehovah, I am that I am;* repeated here no less than 18 times in this short Ps. twice in every v. but three, and once in two of those three; I do not recollect the like in all this book. Let the mighty ones know Him by this name, and give Him the glory due to it. 2. His sovereignty over all things. Let those that rule over men, know there is a God that rules over them,—over all. The psalmist here sets forth God's dominion, in the kingdoms,

(1.) Of *nature:* wherein we ought to notice God's glory and strength. Some observe, there were then particular reasons why thunder should be called *the voice of the Lord,* as that God often spake in thunder, particularly at Sinai, and by thunder discomfited Israel's enemies. To speak it the voice of the God of glory, it is here said to be *upon the waters,* upon *many waters, v.* 3. it reaches over the vast ocean, the waters under the firmament; it rattles among the thick clouds, the waters above the firmament. Every time we hear it thunder, let our hearts be thereby filled with great, and high, and honorable thoughts of God, in the holy adorings and admirings of whom the power of godliness so much consists. *O Lord our God, Thou art very great!*

The voice of the Lord is powerful, 1st. Trees have been rent and split by thunderbolts, *v.* 5, 6. Some understand it of the violent winds which shook the cedars, and sometimes tore off their aspiring tops. Earthquakes also shook the ground itself, on which the trees grew, and made Lebanon and Sirion to dance; the wilderness of Kadesh was shaken, *v.* 8. the trees by winds, the ground by earthquakes, and both by thunders, of which I incline rather to understand it. Dr. Hammond understands it of the consternation and conquest of the neighboring kingdoms that warred with Israel, and opposed David; as the Syrians, whose country lay near the forest of Lebanon, the Amorites that bordered on mt. Hermon, and the Moabites and Ammonites that lay about the wilderness of Kadesh. 2dly. [Destructive fires have thus been kindled in dry forests, and in towns; the summers of Palestine are excessively dry. And we have several allusions in the Bible referring to fires kindled in thickets;] hence we read of hot thunderbolts, 78: 48. accordingly, the voice of the Lord, in the thunder, is here said to *divide the flames of fire, v.* 7. to scatter them on the earth, as God sees fit to direct them, and do execution by them.

NOTES.

Ps. XXIX. *Morison* observes, that the inscription of this Ps. exhibits great varieties, as it stands in the ancient versions; and Dr. *A. Clarke* suggests, that it was probably written to commemorate the abundant rain which fell in the days of David, after the heavens had been shut up three years, 2 Sam. 21:1—10. ED.

Verse 2.

Beauty of holiness.] 'Gesenius, among many other eminent critics, refers this to the sacred vestments, in which the priests and Levites were accustomed to officiate before the Lord.' MORISON.

Verses 3—11.

(*Notes,* 56:1—4. 104:6—9. *Gen.* 1:9. 8:1—3. *Job* 38:8—11.)

SCOTT.

(3.) *Upon the waters.*] 'It may refer to the rolling thunder, as it passes from cloud to cloud, or as heard resounding along the surface of the hoary deep; the latter is peculiarly natural, as those who lived in the land of Judea were accustomed to look to the Mediterranean Sea, as the place whence those thunderstorms generally arose, which afterwards descended in terror or blessing on their favored soil.' MOR.

(9.) *Hinds to calve.*] 'Oaks to tremble:' Bps. *Horne, Lowth.* This rendering requires a needless alteration of the original, from *hinds,* to *oaks.*—The original verb seldom if ever means *to tremble.* The change leaves out one of the most interesting points in this truly sublime description of a thunder-storm; namely, its effects on the inhabitants of the forest: and the clause becomes little more than a repetition of what went before. SCOTT.—*Morison* remarks, that the chief justification of the change is to be sought in the context; since, though it cannot be denied that the original word rendered *hinds* may, and often does, signify *oaks;* yet it may also be readily admitted, that the violent convulsions of a thunder-storm [especially of a hot climate] may so terrify certain animals, in their pregnant state, as to make them cast their young. He also refers to *Ainsworth's* remarks on this v. as going, without criticism on the original text, to confirm, in some degree, the common reading. *Roberts* remarks on the terrific loudness and extreme violence of tropical thunder and lightning, 'the earth literally trembles, fierce animals rush to covert, and birds fly to shade. Then the people say, "This will cause the womb to tremble"—"the pains to come." See *Bush.* People of peculiar temperaments (perhaps, too, influenced by education and example) are much more affected by electrical phenomena than others; the deer kind have peculiar 'nervous sensibility,' as any one who observes them knows; they tremble at the least agitation. Let us not then be too hasty in deciding, that the text either in the Heb. or our transl. is a vulgar error, while we have yet so much to learn of that wonderful family of powers called *electricity,* (and its connections with life,) of which the earth, acted upon by the sun's rays, is thought to be the vast reservoir. Caligula, *Henry* remarks, would hide himself during thunder; and Horace says he was reclaimed by it from atheism. ED.

11 The LORD will [u] give strength unto his people; the LORD will [x] bless his people with peace.

PSALM XXX.

David praises God for deliverance, and calls on the saints to join him, 1—5. He shows that undue confidence had preceded his troubles, and fervent prayers his deliverance, 6—10. He renews his animated praises, 11, 12.

A Psalm *and* Song, *at* [a] the dedication of the house of David.

I WILL [b] extol thee, O LORD, [c] for thou hast lifted me up, and [d] hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.

2 O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, [e] and thou hast healed me.

3 O LORD, thou hast [f] brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go [g] down to the pit.

4 [h] Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks [*] at the remembrance of his [i] holiness.

5 [k] For † his anger

u 28:8,9. 63:35. 84:7. 13:83. Is. 40: 29,31. 41:10. Zech. 10:6,12. Eph. 3:16. 2 Tim. 4:17.
x 72:3,7. Num. 6:24—27. Is. 9:6,7. John 14:27. 16:33. Rom. 14:17. 1 Cor. 1:3. Eph. 2:17. 2 Thes. 3:16. Rev. 1:4.
a Deut. 20:5. 2 Sam. 5:11. 6:20. 7:2. 20:3.
b 31:3,4. 68:17. 145:1. Dan. 4:37.
c 27:6. 28:9.
d 13:4. 25:2. 35:19,25. 41:11. 79:4, 10. 89:41—26. 140:8. Lam. 2:15.
e 6:2. 51:8. 103:3,4. 107:17—22. 118: 18. 147:3. Gen. 20:17. Ex. 15:26. 2 K. 20:5. Jam. 5:14,15.
f 16:10. 40:1,2. 56:13. 71:20. 86:13. *Marg.* 116:8. Job 33:19—22,28. Is. 38:17,18. Jon. 2:4—6.
g 28:1.
h 33:1. 33:1—3. 103:20—22. 132:9. 135:19—21. 148:14. 149:1. Rev. 19: 5,6.
* Or, *to the memorial.* 97:12. *marg.*
i Ex. 15:11. Is. 6:3. Rev. 4:8.
k 103:9,17. Is. 26:20. 54:7,8. 57:15, 16. 2 Cor. 4:17.
† Heb. there is but *a moment in his anger.*

3dly. The terror of thunder makes the hinds [whose labor, as Pliny remarks, is difficult,] to calve sooner, and some think more easily, than otherwise they would. The hind is a timorous creature, and much affected with the noise of thunder. The thunder is said here to *discover the forest*, i. e. it so terrifies the wild beasts of the forest, that they quit the dens and thickets in which they hid themselves, and so are discovered. Or it throws down the trees, and so discovers the ground that was shaded by them. Whenever it thunders, let us think of this Ps.; and whenever we sing it, let us bless God there is another voice of his, even the still small voice of his Gospel, the terror of which shall not make us afraid.

(2.) Of *providence*, *v.* 10. God is to be praised as the Governor of the world of mankind. The opposition of his enemies is compared to the floods, 93: 3, 4. but He sits upon *the flood;* He crushes it, conquers it, and completes his own purposes, in despite of all the devices of men. The word here translated *the flood*, is never used but of Noah's flood, therefore some think that here spoken of. God sat upon that flood, as a Judge executing the sentence of his justice on that world of the ungodly, swept away by it. And He still sits upon the flood, restraining the waters, that they turn not again to cover the earth, according to his promise, Gen. 9: 11. Isa. 54: 9. Besides the power, He shows the perpetuity of his kingdom; *He sits King for ever.* Its administration is consonant to his counsels from eternity, and his designs for eternity.

(3.) *Of grace;* here his glory shines brightest, 1. In adoration from the subjects of that kingdom, *v.* 9. *In his temple*, where his people attend his discoveries of Himself and his mind, and attend Him with their praises, there does *every one speak of his glory;* in the world, every man sees it, or, at least, *may behold it afar off*, Job 36: 25. but it is only in the church it is spoken of to his honor. *All his works do praise Him*, they minister matter for praise; but his saints only do bless Him, and speak of his glory in his works, 145: 10. 2. In his favors to them, *v.* 11. He will enable them for his service; *give strength to his people*, to fortify them against every evil work, and furnish them for every good work. He will encourage them in his service; *will bless his people with peace: great peace have they that love thy law;* the end of the righteous is peace, endless peace. When the thunder of God's wrath shall make sinners tremble, the saints shall lift up their heads with joy.

Ps. XXX. This is a Ps. of thanksgiving for the great deliverances God had wrought for David, penned on occasion of the dedicating of his cedar house, and sung in that pious solemnity, though there is nothing in it of particular reference to that occasion. Some collect, from divers passages of it, that it was penned on his recovery from a dangerous fit of sickness, which might happen about the time of the dedication of his house. In singing it, we ought to remember with thankfulness and faith any like deliverances.

V. 1—5. It was the laudable practice of the pious Jews, when they built a new house, to *dedicate it to God*, Deut. 20: 5. David did so, 2 Sam. 5: 11. Note, The houses we dwell in should, at our first entrance, be dedicated to God, as little sanctuaries. We must solemnly commit ourselves, our families, and all our family affairs, to God's guidance and care, devote ourselves, and all ours, to his glory, and resolve, both that we will put away iniquity far from our tabernacles, and that we and our houses will serve the Lord, both in family worship, and all gospel obedience. Some conjecture, this Ps. was sung at the re-dedication of David's house, after he had been driven out by Absalom's defilement of it; and as a thanksgiving for the crushing of that dangerous rebellion. In these verses,

I. David thanks God for the great deliverances He had wrought for him, *v.* 1. '*I will extol Thee, O Lord.*' In consideration of the great things God has done to exalt us, both by his providence and grace, we are bound, in gratitude, to do all we can to extol his name, though the most we can do is but little. The more imminent our dangers and deliverances, the more comfortable are these, and the more illustrious proofs of God's power and goodness. A life from the dead ought to be spent in extolling the God of our life.

II. He calls on others to join him in praise, not only for the particular favors God had bestowed on him, but for the general tokens of his good-will to all his saints, *v.* 4. All that are truly saints, He owns for his; there is a remnant of such, and they are expected to sing unto Him; for they are created, and sanctified, made, and made saints, that they be to Him for a name and a praise. His saints in heaven sing to Him; why should not those on earth?

1. They believe Him to be a God of unspotted purity; therefore let them sing to Him; '*Let them give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.* God is a holy God; his holiness is his glory; that is the attribute the holy angels, in their praises, fasten most on, Isa. 6: 3. Rev. 4: 8. We ought to be much in the mention and remembrance of God's holiness; and holy souls can give thanks at the mention of it: which, done heartily, is a good sign of partaking it in some measure. It is matter of joy to the saints, that God is a holy God; for then they hope He will make them holy, more holy. None of all God's perfections carries in it more

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The most exalted creatures indeed cannot render to the Infinite God, their Creator and constant Benefactor, all 'the glory due;' much less can any sinner: but when we come before Him, as 'in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself,' adoring his majesty, submitting to his authority and righteousness, in genuine repentance and faith, and offering our spiritual sacrifices of praise, and thanksgiving, and willing obedience; He will pardon and accept our defective services, though infinitely beneath his majesty and excellency.—The voice of the divine law, if duly attended to, would fill the consciences of sinners with more terror and amazement, than all the convulsions in nature; (*Ex.* 19: 16—20. 20: 18—20. *Deut.* 5: 22—27. *Heb.* 12: 18—21.) and the effects of the Word of God, when attended by the operations of his Holy Spirit, are far greater on the souls of men, than that of thunder in the material world. (*Heb.* 4: 12.) If we have heard his voice, and fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us; if we have welcomed Christ as a Savior, and submitted to Him as our King for ever; if, relying on his merits, we are no longer terrified by 'the ministration of death,' yet have learned to love Him and keep his commandments: let us remember, that it is the same glorious God our Savior who causes the thunder; and the children need not fear their Father's voice, when He speaks in anger to his enemies. SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. XXX. *Title.*] This title may be rendered, 'A Psalm: a song at the dedication of the house for David.' When advanced to the throne, the Psalmist built himself a house, which no doubt he dedicated to God. SCOTT.—Dr. *A. Clarke*, after *Calmet*, with whom concur *Morison*, and *Dathe*, refer this Ps. to David's building the place of sacrifice in the field of Ornan, 2 Sam. 24: 25. *Morison* says the inscription is in two parts; the one recognising the writer, the other, the occasion. He tr. 'A Ps. of David; a song at the dedication of the house.' ED.—But there is nothing in this Ps. peculiarly appropriate to that occasion. *M. R.* SCOTT.

Verses 1, 2.

(35:17—19, 25—28. 41:11—13.) *Healed.* (2) If this word be literally understood, a dangerous illness and an unexpected recovery, gave occasion to the Ps. But some think the expression figurative, as no doubt it frequently is, denoting a forlorn and hopeless condition, like that of a sick man given over by physicians, and unable to help himself. The expectation of his death, formed by David's enemies, and the joy and triumph which that event would have given them, peculiarly suit the state of things during Absalom's rebellion. (41:1—8.) SCOTT.

Verse 4.

'The word *saints*, *chasidim*, signifieth them that have received mercy, and show mercy liberally unto others.' Several words, varying in meaning, but all implying genuine piety and holiness, are translated 'saints' in different parts of Scripture. By persons of this character, the *holiness* of God, or his moral excellences, as displayed in his Word, and by his works, is reflected on with admiring and grateful love, and celebrated with joyful praises. (*Ex.* 15:11. *Is.* 6:1—4. 30:8—11. *Rev.* 4:6—8.) ID.

Verse 5.

The night is peculiarly the season of the clamorous grief of the orientals. ED. The concise manner in the original of this v. is very expressive. 'For a moment in his anger; life in his favor: weeping

endureth but a moment;
[l] in his favor *is* life:
[m] weeping may endure
* for a night, but † joy
cometh [n] in the morning.

6 And [o] in my prosperity I said, [p] I shall never be moved.

7 LORD, [q] by thy favor thou hast ‡ made my mountain to stand strong: [r] thou didst hide thy face, *and* I was troubled.

8 I cried to thee, O LORD; and [s] unto the LORD I made supplication.

9 [t] What profit *is there* in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?

10 [u] Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, [x] be thou my Helper.

11 Thou [y] hast turned for me my mourning into [z] dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and [a] girded me with gladness;

12 To the end that § *my* glory may sing praise to thee, [b] and not be silent. O LORD my God, [c] I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

l 16:11. 36:7—9. 63:3. Rev. 22:1,17.
m 6:6—9. 56:8—11. 126:5,6. Is. 38:3—5. Matt. 5:4. John 16:20—22. 2 Cor. 7:9,10.
* Heb. *in the evening.*
† Heb. *singing.*
n 49:5. *marg.* 59:16. 143:8. Gen. 32:24. *marg.* Hos. 6:3.
o Job 29:18—20. Is. 47:7. 56:12. Dan. 4:30. Luke 12:19. 2 Cor. 12:7.

terror to the wicked, or more comfort to the godly.

2. They have experienced Him to be a God gracious and merciful; therefore let them sing to Him, *v.* 5. When we offend Him, He is angry, but, slow to anger; so, on repentance and humiliation, his anger is soon turned away, and He is willing to be at peace with us. If He hide his face from his own children, and suspend the wonted tokens of his favor, it is but in a little wrath, and for a small moment; but He will *gather them with everlasting kindness*, Isa. 54: 7, 8. As sure as light returns after darkness, the covenant of grace is as firm as the covenant of the day. This word (*v.* 5.) has often been fulfilled to us in the letter. Observe, As long as God's anger continues, so long the saints' weeping continues; but if that be but for a moment, the affliction is but for a moment, and when the light of God's countenance is restored, the affliction is easily pronounced light and momentary.

We have found his smiles very sweet; *In his favor is life*, all good. The return of his favor to an afflicted soul, is as life from the dead; nothing can be more reviving. Our happiness is bound up in it, whatever else we want. It is the life of the soul, spiritual life, the earnest of life eternal.

V. 6—12. We have, in these vs. an account of three several states David was in successively, and of the workings of his heart toward God in each —what he said and did, and how his heart stood affected; in the first of which we may see what we are too apt to be, and in the other two what we should be.

I. He had long enjoyed prosperity, and then he grew secure, and over-confident of the continuance of it, *v.* 6, 7. Note, 1. We are very apt to dream, when things are well with us, that they will never be otherwise; *To-morrow shall be as this day.* 2. When we see ourselves deceived in our expectations, it becomes us to reflect, with shame, on our security, as our folly, as David does here, that we may be wiser another time, and may rejoice in our prosperity as though we rejoiced not, because the fashion of it passes away.

II. On a sudden he fell into trouble, and then he prayed to God, and pleaded earnestly for relief and succor. In every change of his condition, he still kept his eye on God, and as he ascribed his prosperity to God's favor, so, in his adversity, he observed the hiding of God's face to be its cause If God hide his face, a good man is certainly troubled, though no other calamity befall him. *Is any afflicted?* is any troubled? *let him pray.* Though God hid his face from him, yet he prayed. If God, in wisdom and justice, turn from us, yet it will be in us the greatest folly and injustice imaginable, if we turn from Him. It seems, God's withdrawings made his prayers the more vehement, *v.* 8. He pleaded, *v.* 9. that God would be no gainer by his death; he saw not what good could be done by his dying in the bed of sickness, as might be, if he had died in the bed of honor. Nay, that, in his honor, God would seem a Loser by his death; *Shall the dust praise Thee?* The sanctified spirit, which returns to God, shall praise Him, shall be still praising Him; but the dust, which returns to the earth, shall not praise Him, nor declare his truth. We ask aright for life, when we have in view that we may live and praise Him. He prayed, *v.* 10. for mercy to pardon, and for grace to help in time of need. On these two errands we also may come boldly to the throne of grace, Heb. 4: 16.

III. In due time, God delivered him, and restored his prosperity, *v.* 11. God's anger now endured but for a moment, and David's weeping but for a night. As David's plunge into trouble from the height of prosperity, and then when he least expected it, teaches us to rejoice as though we rejoiced not, because we know not how near trouble may be; so his sudden return to a prosperous condition teaches us to weep as though we wept not, because we know not how soon the storm may become a calm, and the formidable blast, a favorable gale.

But what temper of mind was he in, on this happy change? He tells us, *v.* 12. 1. His complaints were turned into praises. By his *glory* is meant his tongue; our tongue is our glory, and never more so than when employed in praising God; or his soul; that is our glory above the beasts, and must be employed in blessing the Lord, as in singing psalms. 2. These praises were likely to be everlasting; *I will give thanks for ever.* This bespeaks a gracious resolution to persevere to the end in praising God, and a gracious hope that he should never want fresh matter for praise, and that he should shortly be there where this would be the

p 15:5. 16:8. 119:117.
q 5. 5:12. 44:3. 89:17. Job 10:12.
r Heb. *settled strength for my mountain.* 40:2. 1 Chr. 17:26,27.
s 10:1. 13:1,2. 102:10. 104:29. 143:7. Job 30:26—31. Is. 38:17.
t 6:5. 88:10—12. 115:17,18. 118:17. Ec. 9:10. Is. 38:18.
u 51.1,2. 143:1,7—9.
x 28:7. 54:4.
y 5. Gen. 37:35. 45:28. 2 Chr. 20:3, 9,12,27,28. Esth. 9:22. Is. 25:8. 66: 10,11. John 16:20. Rev. 7:14—17. 21:4.
z 149.3. 150:4. 2 Sam. 6:14. Ec. 3:4. Jer. 31:4,13,14.
a Neh. 8:10. Is. 61:3,10. Luke 15:22.
§ That is, *my tongue*, or, *my soul.*
b Luke 19:40. Acts 4:20.
c 13:6. 71:14,23,24. 145:2. 146:1,2. Rev. 4:8,9. 7:12.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ought to dedicate all our possessions to Him, who gave them to us: and when our comforts have been interrupted, and are again restored; we should renew our dedication of them to the service of our God. Yet alas! how many houses, even of men called Christians, are not only destitute of religion, but are also scenes of such impiety and wickedness, that one might almost be led to conclude, they had been set apart to the service of the devil!—But let all beware of unwarranted confidence and carnal security: neither outward prosperity nor inward peace is here immovable: the Lord in his favor has fixed the believer's *safety* firm as the deep-rooted mountains; but in every thing else he may expect to be shaken, and to meet with temptations and afflictions. When we grow unwatchful, we fall into sin; and the Lord hides his face, our comforts droop, troubles assail, and perhaps our enemies insult over us. And to arise from such depths requires redoubled earnestness and diligence, renewed humble confessions, and fervent, importunate prayers. We should entreat the Lord, that we may not close our lives under his frown, in a way dishonorable to his name, or unprofitable to our brethren; and we may properly pray to have our lives spared, that we may yet praise Him on earth and declare his truth: but whatever may befall us by the way, or however we come to the end of our course; if we have learned to love and praise God on earth, we shall exult in his favor and give Him thanks for ever and ever. SCOTT.

may lodge in the evening; but singing in the morning.' No doubt this is meant exclusively of weeping penitents, or submissive, suffering believers, and not of the ungodly or hypocritical. (103:9. 126:5,6. *Matt.* 5.5.)—We may here 'see his clemency to his faithful servants.' *Patrick.* SCOTT.

Verses 6—8.

When the Psalmist had been delivered from Saul's persecuting malice, and was settled in his kingdom, he seems to have concluded, that he should thenceforth have uninterrupted peace. 2 *Sam.* 7:1—3, 18, 19, 26—29.) But though he ascribed all to the faithfulness, power, and love of God; he seems to have given way to unwarranted confidence, and to have remitted his vigilance and activity, and probably the fervency of his devotion. (2 *Sam.* 11:1—5.) Thus he was gradually drawn away into indulgence; and at length into most aggravated guilt, in the matter of Uriah, which threatened his ruin; and exposed him to sharp rebukes; till Absalom's rebellion formed a sort of crisis in his case, and reduced him to such a humble, submissive, believing, and devout state of mind, as prepared him for returning peace and comfort. (2 *Sam.* 11:—20:) The Lord 'hid his face and he was troubled.' (*Notes*, 10:1. 13:1—4.) his deepest trouble, however, was but for a moment: God, in answer to his prayers, 'restored to him the joy of his salvation;' (51:12, 13.) and he spent the rest of his days in a degree of prosperity, honor, and comfort, which, in so dreadful a case as his had been, was beyond what could at all have been expected. SCOTT.

(7.) *Mountain.*] 'Mountain would certainly appear to have little connection with the subject of this Ps. which as *Houbigant* observes, is health restored by God.—*Green*, after *Houbigant* and *Mudge*, as well as the *Sept. Vulg.* and *Syr.* r. v. 7, "Thou by thy favor, O Lord, Hadst given such firmness to my health: But no sooner didst Thou hide thy face, than I was in disorder." ' MORISON.

Verses 9—10.

The concluding part of 1 Chron. shows that his purposes and expectations were fully accomplished. SCOTT.

Verses 11, 12.

These vs. illustrate the doctrine of v. 5. by the Psalmist's own experience; whose case seemed as likely to form an exception to the general rule, as any that could well be conceived. The figurative language, used on the occasion, is highly descriptive of the most exulting

PSALM XXXI.

David avows his confidence in God, craves his help, and rejoices in his mercy, 1—8. He states his various trials, and blends his complaints with prayers, 9—18. He admires the goodness of God to those who fear Him, and excites the saints to love and trust Him, 19—24.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

IN [a] thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: [b] deliver me in thy righteousness.

2 [c] Bow down thine ear to me; [d] deliver me speedily: be thou * my strong Rock, for [e] an house of defence to save me.

3 For thou *art* my Rock and my Fortress; therefore, [f] for thy name's sake, [g] lead me, and guide me.

4 [h] Pull me out of the net, that they have laid privily for me: for thou *art* [i] my Strength.

5 [k] Into thine hand I commit my spirit: [l] thou hast redeemed me, O LORD [m] God of truth.

6 I have [n] hated them that regard [o] lying vanities: but I trust in the LORD.

7 [p] I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for [q] thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast [r] known my soul in adversity;

8 And hast not [s] shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast [t] set my foot in a large room.

9 ¶ Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble: [u] mine eye is consumed with grief, *yea*, [x] my soul and my belly.

a 22:4,5. 25:2. 71:1,2. Is. 49:23. Rom. 5:5. 10:11.
b 7:8,9. 43:1. 143:1,11,12. Dan. 9:16.
c 86:1. 130:2. Prov. 22:17.
d 40:17. 69:17. 70:1. 102:2. 143:7. Job 7:21. Luke 18:8.
* Heb. *to me for a rock of strength.*
e 18:1,2. 62:7. 94:32. Deut. 32:31. 2 Sam. 22:3. 23:3.
f 23:2,3. 25:11. 79:9. Josh. 7:9. Jer. 14:7. Ez. 36:21,22. Eph. 1:12.
g 25:5,9. 43:3. 139:24. 143:10,11. Neh. 9:12,19. Is. 49:10. Luke 1:79. John 16:13.
h 25:15. 35:7. 57:6. 124:7. 140:5. Prov. 29:5. 2 Tim. 2:26.
i 19:14. 2 Cor. 12:9.
k Luke 23:46. Acts 7:59. 2 Tim. 1:12.
l 71:23. 130:8. Gen. 48:16. Lev. 25:48. Is. 50:2. Tit. 2:14. 1 Pet. 1:18, 19. Rev. 5:9.
m Deut. 32:4. 2 Tim. 2:13. Tit. 1:2. Heb. 6:18.
n 26:5. 139:21.
o 24:4. Jer. 10:8,15. Jon. 2:8. Rom. 1:21. 1 Cor. 8:4. 10:20.
p 13:5. Is. 49:13. Jer. 33:11.
q 9:13. 25:18. 71:20. 119:153. Neh. 9:32. Job 10:15. Lam. 3:50. 5:1.
r 1:6. Job 23:10. Is. 43:2. 63:9,16. John 10:27—30. 1 Cor. 8:3. Gal. 4:9. 2 Tim. 2:19.
s 88:8. Deut. 32:30. 1 Sam. 17:46. 24: 18. 26:8. Job 16:11. Is. 19:4. *marg.*
t 4:1. 18:19. Job 36:16.
u 6:7. 88:9. Job 17:7. Lam. 4:17. 5:17.
x 6:1,2. 22:14,15. 38:1—10. 44:25. 73: 14,26. 88:3—5. 102:3—5. 107:10. Job 33:19—22.

everlasting work. Blessed are they that dwell in God's house, they will be still praising Him. Thus must we learn to accommodate ourselves to the various providences of God that concern us; to want and to abound, to sing of mercy and judgment, and to sing unto God for both.

Ps. XXXI. V. 1—8. David probably penned this when persecuted by Saul; some passages agree particularly to his narrow escape at Keilah, 1 Sam. 23: 13. then in the wilderness of Maon, and, soon after, in the cave in the wilderness of En-gedi; but that it was penned on any of those occasions we are not told. It is a mixture of prayers and praises, and professions of confidence in God, all which do well together, and are helpful to one another. Faith and prayer must go together. He that believes, let him pray; and he that prays, let him believe, for the prayer of faith is the prevailing prayer. We have both here.

1. David, in distress, is very earnest in prayer, for succor and relief. He prays, (1.) That God would deliver him, his life from his enemies, and that an end might be put to their persecutions; that, as a righteous Judge betwixt him and his unrighteous persecutors, He would deliver him speedily, lest, if the deliverance were long deferred, his faith should fail, *v.* 1, 2. (2.) That if He did not immediately deliver him out, yet He would protect and shelter him in his troubles; '*Be Thou my Rock.*' Thus may we pray God to secure to us our lives and comforts, and by his grace enable us to think ourselves safe in Him, Prov. 18: 10. (3.) That, his case having much in it of difficulty, both in respect of duty, and of providence, he might be under the divine guidance, *v.* 3. They that resolve to follow God's direction, may in faith pray for it. (4.) That, his enemies being very crafty, as well as very spiteful, God would baffle their designs, *v.* 4.

2. In this prayer, he gives glory to God, by a repeated profession of his confidence in Him, and dependence on Him. This encouraged his prayers, and qualified him for the mercies he prayed for; *v.* 1. (1.) He had chosen God for his Protector, and God had, by his promise, undertaken to be so, *v.* 2, 3. They that have in sincerity avouched the Lord for theirs, may expect the benefit, *v.* 4. (2.) He gave up his soul in a special manner to Him, *v.* 5. With these words, our Lord yielded up the ghost. By Stephen's example we are taught, in our dying moments, to eye Christ at God's right hand, and to commit our spirits to Him; *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.* But, in trouble, David's great care is about his soul, his spirit, his better part. Outward afflictions should increase our concern for our souls, 2 Cor. 4: 16.—Luke 21: 19. He thinks the best he can do for his soul is, to commit it into the hand of God, and lodge that great trust with Him. He had prayed, *v.* 4. to be plucked out of the net of outward trouble, but, as not insisting on that, (God's will be done,) he immediately lets fall that petition, and commits the spirit, the inward man, into God's hand. Note, It is the wisdom and duty of every one of us, solemnly to commit our spirits into the hands of God, to be sanctified by his grace, devoted to his honor, employed in his service, and fitted for his kingdom And what encourages us to this is, that He has not only created, but redeemed us; the particular redemptions of the O. T. church, and the O. T. saints, were typical of our redemption by Jesus Christ, Gen. 48: 16. The redemption of the soul is so precious, that it must have ceased for ever, if Christ had not undertaken it; but, that He has undertaken it, encourages us to commit our souls to Him, who has thus become their rightful owner, to be preserved to his heavenly kingdom, 2 Tim 1: 12.

3. He disclaimed all confederacy with those that made an arm of flesh their confidence, *v.* 6. *that regard lying vanities*, idolaters, so some; astrologers, and those that give heed to them, so others. David abhorred all these; he trusted in God only, and not in any creature; his interest in the court and country, his retreats or strongholds, even Goliath's sword itself—these were lying vanities, which he could not depend on, but trusted in the Lord only. See 40: 4.—Jer. 17: 5.

4. He comforted himself with his hope, *v.* 7. Those know not how to value their hope in God, who cannot find joy enough in that hope to balance their grievances.

5. He encouraged himself in this hope, with the experiences he had had, of late, and formerly, of God's goodness, *v.* 7, 8. God's eye is upon our souls, when in trouble, to see whether they be humbled for sin, submissive to the will of God, and bettered by the affliction. Christ's using these words, *v.* 5. on the cross, may warrant us to apply all this to Christ, who trusted in his Father, and was supported and delivered by Him, and (because he humbled Himself) highly exalted, which it is proper to think of, when we sing these vs., as also therein to acknowledge our experience of God's gracious presence in trouble, and to encourage ourselves to trust in Him for the future.

V. 9—18. In the foregoing vs. David had appealed to God's righteousness, and pleaded his relation to Him, and dependence on Him; here he appeals to his mercy, and pleads the greatness of his own misery, which made him the proper object of it. Observe,

I. His complaint, *v.* 9. The remembrance he makes of his condition is not much unlike some even of Job's complaints. 1. His troubles had fixed a very deep impression on his mind, and made him a man of sorrows, consumed his very soul, and spent his life, and he was continually

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gladness, and most animated, constant, and unmingled praises; such as are found in the six concluding Pss. (*M. R.*—145:1,2. 146:2. Comp. 16:9. with *Acts* 2:26.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. XXXI. Dr. *A. Clarke* thinks the time, place, occasion and author of this Ps. uncertain. Some, he says, think Jeremiah to have been the author. Comp. v. 13. with Jer. 20:10. Most, however, agree, with *Henry* and *Scott*, that it was written by David upon his escape from Keilah. Yet *Kimchi* and *Dathe* (in *Morison*) refer it rather to the time when the Ziphites proposed to deliver him to Saul; and 'Theodoret, with whom agree many of the fathers, refers it to David's flight from Absalom, and his painful state of mind connected with his sin against Uriah.—It may partake, in a slight degree, of the prophetic spirit, and so, many have understood it; while others, as Bps. *Horsley* and *Horne*, consider it as uttered *exclusively* in reference to the Messiah and the Church.' *Morison.* ED.

Verse 1.

(1 *Sam.* 23:22—28.) We should realize the circumstances, [of his exposure,] which precluded all hope of escape by ordinary means, if we would enter into the spirit of the Psalmist, and perceive the strength of his faith and confidence in God. But David was only a feeble type of the Savior, in his extreme sufferings, his deep humiliation, and his prospect of the joy set before Him.—The clause, rendered 'Let me never be ashamed,' may signify 'I shall by no means be ashamed for ever.' (*Is.* 45:15—17.) SCOTT.

Verse 5.

Christ [on the cross] omitted the latter clause of the v. which more properly relates to the type, than to the antitype. (*Luke* 23:46. *Acts* 7:54—60.)—All the deliverances of the church, and of believers, of old, were earnests of the redemption made by the death of Christ, and wrought with reference to it: and the merciful deliverances the Psalmist had received, encouraged him still to confide in 'the LORD God of truth.' ID.

Verses 7, 8

To conceive of the Psalmist in the crisis of his danger, thus anticipating his deliverance, and his joy in the mercy of God in it, gives the passage a peculiar animation. ID.

Verse 9.

The Psalmist's present feelings seem to have interrupted the full exercise of his faith and hope.—Some suppose, that entire want of provisions was added to the rest of his difficulties; so that he and his men were ready to die with hunger. ID.

10 For [y] my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: [z] my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and [a] my bones are consumed.

11 [b] I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but [c] especially among my neighbors, and [d] a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me.

12 I am [e] forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like * a broken vessel.

13 For [f] I have heard the slander of many: [g] fear *was* on every side: [h] while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.

14 But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, [i] Thou *art* my God.

15 [k] My times *are* in thy hand: [l] deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.

16 [m] Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: [n] save me for thy mercy's sake.

17 [o] Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon thee: [p] let the wicked be ashamed; *and* [q] let them be † silent in the grave.

18 Let [r] the lying lips be put to silence; which [s] speak ‡ grievous things, proudly and contemptuously, against the righteous.

19 *Oh*, [t] how great *is* thy goodness, [u] which

y 78:33. 88:15. Job 3:24. Rom. 9:2.
z 71:9.
a 32:3,4. 102:3—5.
b 22:6. 69:19,20. 89:50,51. Is. 49:7. 53:4,5. Matt. 27:39—44. Rom. 15: 3. Heb. 11:36. 13:13. 1 Pet. 4:14.
c 38:11. 41:8,9. 88:8,18. Job 19:13, 14. Jer. 12:6. Mic. 7:6. Matt. 10: 21,22.
d 64:8. Job 6:21—23. Matt. 26:56,74. 2 Tim. 4:16.
e 88:4,5. Is. 38:11,12.
* Heb. *a vessel that perisheth.* 2:9. 119:83. Is. 30:14. Rom. 9:21,22. Rev. 2:27.
55:10. 101:5. 1 Sam. 22:8—10. 24:9. Jer. 20:10. Luke 23:1,2,5.
f 58:1—3. 57:4. Jer. 6:25. 20:3,4. *marg.* Lam. 2:22.
h 1 Sam. 19:10—17. 20:33. 23:19,20. 2 Sam. 17:1—4. Jer. 11:19. Matt. 26:3,4,59. 27:1.
i 16:1,2. 18:2. 22:10. 43:5. 56:3,4. 63:1. 71:12,22. Matt. 26:39,42. 27: 43. John 20:17.
k 116:15. 1 Sam. 26:10. 2 Sam. 7:12. Job 24:1. Ec. 3:1—8. Luke 9:51. John 7:6,30. 12:27. 13:1. 17:1. Acts 1:7. 23:11. 27:24. 2 Tim. 4:6. 2 Pet. 1:14.
l 17:8,9,13. 71:10—12. 142:6. 143:3, 12. Jer. 15:20,21.
m 4:6. 30:7. 67:1. 80:3,7,19. Num. 6:25,26. Dan. 9:17.
n 6:4. 51:1. 106:45. Dan. 9:9,18. Rom. 9:15,23. Eph. 1:6,7. 2:4—7.
o 1. 25:2,3. 34:5. 69:6,7. Is. 50:6,7. Joel 2:26,27.
p 6:10. 35:4,26. 40:14,15. 70:2,3. 71: 24. 83:16,17. Is. 41:11,12. 45:16,17. 65:13,14. Jer. 20:11. Dan. 12:2.
q 115:17. 1 Sam. 2:9. Matt. 22:12,13.

† Or, *cut off for the grave.*
r 12:3. 59:12. 63:11. 140:9—11. Prov. 12:19. Is. 54:17. John 8:44. Rev. 21:8. 22:15.
s 64:3,4. 123:3,4. 1 Sam. 2:3. 2 Chr. 32:18. Is. 37:22—24. Matt. 10:25. 12:24. John 8:48. Acts 25:7.
‡ Heb. *a hard thing.* 94:4. Jude 15.
t 36:7—10. 73:1,24—26. 145:7—9. Is. 64:4. Lam. 3:3—25. 1 Cor. 2:9. 1 John 3:1,2.
u 16:11. Is. 35:10. Col. 3:2—4. Heb. 10:34. Jam. 2:5. 1 Pet. 1:4,5.

sighing, *v.* 9, 10. Herein he was a type of Christ. We may guess by David's complexion, which was ruddy and sanguine, by his genius for music, and by his daring enterprises in his early days, that his natural disposition was both cheerful and firm; yet here we see what he is brought to. Let the airy and gay take heed of extremes, and never set sorrow at defiance; God can find ways to make them melancholy, if they will not otherwise learn to be serious. 2. His body was affected with the sorrows of his mind, *v.* 10. As to Saul, and the quarrel he had with him, he could confidently insist on his righteousness; but as it was an affliction God laid on him, he owns he had deserved it, and freely confesses his iniquity to have been the procuring cause of all his trouble; and the sense of sin touched him to the quick, and wasted him more than all his calamities. 3. His friends were unkind, and became shy of him, *v.* 11. They durst not harbor him, nor give him any assistance, nor show him any countenance, not so much as to be seen in his company, for fear of being brought into trouble by it, now that Saul had proclaimed him a traitor, and out-lawed him. They saw how dear Abimelech the priest had paid for aiding and abetting him, though ignorantly; therefore, though they could not but own he had great wrong done him, yet they had not the courage to appear for him. He was forgotten by them, *as a dead man out of mind*, *v.* 12, looked upon with contempt *as a broken vessel.* Such swallow-friends the world is full of, that are gone in winter. Let those that fall on the losing side, not think it strange, if they be thus deserted, but make sure, and make use of, a Friend in heaven. 4. His enemies were unjust; they would not so have persecuted him, had they not first represented him as a bad man; he was a *reproach among all his enemies*, but especially *among his neighbors*, *v.* 11. Those that could not but be convinced he was an honest man, were the most forward to represent him quite otherwise, that they might get favor with Saul, because *fear was on every side.* Thus the best have been ranked with the worst by those that resolved to give them the worst treatment. 5. His life was aimed at, and he went in continual peril of it, *v.* 13. Thus, in all the plots of the Pharisees and Herodians against Christ, still the design was to take away his life; such are the enmity and cruelty of the serpent's seed.

II. His confidence in God, in the midst of these troubles; '*I trusted in Thee, O Lord*, *v.* 14, and that kept me from sinking.' Two things comforted him in his straits, and these he pleads with God; 1. '*Thou art my God;* I have chosen Thee for mine, and Thou hast promised to be mine. They need not be straitened in their prayers, who can plead this; for if God undertake for us, He will do that which will answer the compass and vast extent of that engagement. 2. *My times are in thy hand.* Join this with the former, and it makes the comfort complete. If God have our times in his hand, He *can* help us; and if He be our God, He *will* help us; and then what can discourage us? The time of life is in God's hands, to lengthen or shorten, imbitter or sweeten, as He pleases, according to the counsel of his will. Our times, all events that concern us, and the timing of them, these are at God's disposal; they are not in our own hands, not in our friends' hands, nor in our enemies' hands, but in God's; *every man's judgment proceedeth from Him.*

III. His petitions, in this faith:

1. That God would deliver him out of the hand of his enemies, *v.* 15, and save him, *v.* 16, and this, for his mercies' sake, and not for any merit of his own. Our *opportunities* are in God's hand, so some read, therefore He knows how to choose the fittest time for our deliverance, and we must be willing to wait that time. When David had Saul at his mercy in the cave, those about him said, '*This is the time* in which God will deliver thee,' 1 Sam. 24:4. 'No,' says David, 'the time is not come for my deliverance, till it can be wrought without sin; and I will wait that time, for it is God's, that is the best.' 2. That God would, in the meantime, let him have the comfortable tokens and evidences of favor, *v.* 16. 3. That his prayers might be answered, and his hopes in God accomplished, *v.* 17. For thou never saidst to thy people, Seek in vain, and hope in vain.' 4. That shame and silence might be the portion of wicked people, particularly his enemies. Confident of success, 'let them be made ashamed by disappointment.' Particularly, he prays for, i. e. he prophesies, the silencing of those that reproach and calumniate the people of God, *v.* 18 a very good prayer which we have often occasion to use; for religion, and the strict and serious professors of it, are every where spoken against, (1.) With great malice; they speak *grievous things*, on purpose to vex them, *hard things*, so the word is, which bear hard on them, and by which they hope to fasten indelible characters of infamy on them. (2.) With a great deal of falsehood; they are *lying lips.* (3.) With great scorn and disdain; they speak *proudly and contemptuously*, as if the righteous, whom God has honored, were the most despicable people in the world. One would think, they thought it no sin to tell a deliberate lie, if it may but serve to expose a good man either to hatred or contempt. *Hear, O our God, for we are despised.* We may pray it in faith: for these lying lips shall be put to silence. God has many ways of doing it; sometimes by their repentance, which our Savior teaches us to pray for, for all; sometimes by the consciences of those that reproach his people, and sometimes by his providence visibly bringing forth the righteousness of his people as the light. However, a day is coming, when God will convince ungodly sinners of these falsehoods, and will execute judgment on them, Jude 14, 15. Then shall this prayer be fully answered, [in justice on the wicked, which is mercy to the universe;] and to that day we should have an eye in singing it; engaging ourselves likewise, by

Verses 10—13.

The life of David, while persecuted by Saul, was one continued series of afflictions and sorrows, except as he rose above them by faith and communion with God. It must be supposed that he felt his sufferings with great sensibility: and while dejected and weakened under them, in body and mind, his former sins were brought to remembrance, and he considered himself as visited for them.—The M. R. will show how each of these circumstances was, still more emphatically, observable in the history of the divine Savior. One circumstance must be excepted: 'He was wounded for *our* transgressions,' but had no iniquity of his own.—This passage seems to mark out the crisis before mentioned as the date of the Ps.: but as events not wholly dissimilar occurred during Absalom's rebellion, after David had brought great guilt on his conscience, in the matter of Uriah; some expositors apply the several expressions to Shimei's reproaches, Ahithophel's counsel, and the other particulars of that eventful period. (2 *Sam.* 15:—17:) SCOTT.

(12.) Like similies are still used in the E. ED.

(13.) '*Horsley* r. thus: "Truly, I have heard the angry muttering of the mighty, Of them that are the general dread, While they sit in counsel against me; They have laid a plot to take my life!" So, in general, the Arab. the Sept. the Vulg. and the Syr. The Chal. is against it, and is followed by the Eng. Bible.' MORISON.

Verse 15.

Thus the counsels and decrees of the Jewish rulers against our Lord were continually disappointed for several years, because 'his time was not yet come.' (*M. R.*—116:15. 1 *Sam.* 26:8—12.) SCOTT.

Verses 17, 18.

(1.) The language implies both *prayer* and *prediction.*—The word *righteous* is singular: it especially marks David's strict integrity, while grievously slandered with insolent contempt; as typical of the Just and Holy One of God, who was reviled far more haughtily and despitefully. (*Jam.* 5:1—6, *end.* 1 *Pet.* 2:18—25.)—*In the grave.* (17) *Note*, 16:8—11.) ID

thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; * *which* thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men!

20 [y] Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence [z] from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from [a] the strife of tongues.

21 Blessed *be* the LORD: for he hath showed me his [b] marvellous kindness in a * strong city.

22 For [c] I said in my haste, [d] I am cut off from before thine eyes: * nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.

23 [f] O love the LORD, all ye [g] his saints: *for* [h] the LORD preserveth the faithful, and [i] plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

24 [k] Be of good courage, and [l] he shall strengthen your heart, [m] all ye that hope in the LORD.

PSALM XXXII.

David shows the happiness of a pardoned sinner, 1, 2; and that penitent confessions alone can relieve the misery of the guilty conscience, and make way for comfort, 3—7. He instructs and warns sinners to repent, and believers to rejoice in God, 8—11.

† *A Psalm* of David, Maschil.

[a] BLESSED *is he* [b] *whose* transgression *is* forgiven, *whose* sin *is* [c] covered.

x 63:28. 126:2,3. Num. 23:23. Is. 26:12. John 3:21. Acts 15:12. 2 Cor. 5:5.
y 27:5. 32:7. 64:2. 91:1—4.
z 10:2. 36:11. 40:4. 86:14. 124:5. 140:5. Ex. 18:11. Jam. 4:6.
a 64:2—4. 140:3. Job 5:21. Rom. 13:13. 2 Cor. 12:20. Gal. 5:20. 1 Tim. 6:4. Jam. 3:5,6,14—16.
b 17:7. 98:1. 118:23. 1 Pet. 2:9.
* Or, *fenced city.* 1 Sam. 23:7—13. Jer. 1:18.
c 116:11. 1 Sam. 23:26. 27:1.
d 17. *Marg.* 88:16. Is. 6:5. *marg.*

well-doing, if possible, to *silence the ignorance of foolish men,* 1 Pet. 2: 15.

V. 19—24. We have three things in these vs.

I. David's believing acknowledgment of God's goodness to his people in general, *v.* 19, 20.

1. God is good to all, but in a special manner to Israel. His goodness to them is wonderful, and will be, to eternity, matter of admiration; *Oh how great is thy goodness!* How profound the counsels, how rich the treasures, how free and extensive the communications of it! Those very persons whom men load with slanders, God loads with benefits and honors. There is *goodness laid up for them* in the other world, an inheritance *reserved in heaven,* 1 Pet. 1: 4. and goodness *wrought for them* in this world, goodness wrought in them. It is laid up in his promise for all that fear God, and wrought, in the actual performance of the promise, for all that trust in Him. If it be not wrought for us, it is our own fault; because we do not believe. Those that trust in God, as they have the comfort of his goodness in their own bosoms, so they have the credit of it; it is wrought for them *before the sons of men:* God's goodness to them puts an honor on them, *for all that see shall acknowledge them,* as *the seed the Lord hath blessed,* Is. 61: 9.

2. God preserves man and beast; but is, in a special manner, the Protector of his own people, *v.* 20. See here, the danger they are in, from the pride of man, and the strife of tongues; but see, too, the defence they are under; *Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence; in a pavilion.* God has many ways of sheltering them, Jer. 36: 26. God's grace shall keep them safe from the evil of the judgments, [on the disobedient,] that are abroad; his comforts shall keep them easy and cheerful; his sanctuary shelter them from the fiery darts of terror and temptation; and the mansions in his house above shall be shortly, eternally, their hiding place from all danger and fear.

II. David's thankful returns for God's goodness to him in particular, *v.* 21, 22.

1. Without were fightings; but God had wonderfully preserved his life; God's loving-kindness to his people is wonderful; but some instances of it, even in this world, are, in special; as this here, when God preserved David from the sword of Saul, in caves and woods, as safe as if it had been in a strong city. In Keilah, that strong city, God showed him great mercy, both in making him an instrument to rescue the inhabitants from the Philistines, and then in rescuing him from the same men, who would have ungratefully delivered him up to Saul, 1 Sam. 23: 5, 12. This was marvellous loving kindness indeed, on which he writes, with wonder and thankfulness, *Blessed be the Lord.* Special preservations call for particular thanksgivings.

2. Within were fears; but God was better to him than his fears, *v.* 22. He here mentions, (1.) His folly, in distrusting God, which he acknowledges to his shame. It refers perhaps to that expression, 1 Sam. 27: 1. This he said, in his *flight,* so some read, which denotes the distress of his affairs. Saul was just at his back, and ready to seize him, which made the temptation strong; *in my haste,* so we read it, which denotes the disturbance and discomposure of his mind, making the temptation surprising, so that it found him off his guard. Note, It is common to speak amiss, when we speak without consideration; but what we speak amiss in haste, we must repent of at leisure, particularly what we have spoken distrustfully of God. (2.) God's wonderful goodness to him notwithstanding; though his faith failed, God's promise did not; *Thou heardest the voice of my supplication,* for all this. When we have thus distrusted God, He might justly have taken us at our word, and brought our fears on us, as He did on Israel, Num. 14: 28. Isa. 66: 4. But He has pitied and pardoned us, and our unbelief has not made his promise and grace of none effect; for He knows our frame.

III. The exhortation and encouragement he, hereupon, gives all saints, *v.* 23, 24. 1. He would have them set their love on God; *v.* 23. It is the character of the saints, that they love God; yet they must be still called upon to love Him more, and better, and to give proofs. We must love Him, not only for his goodness, because He preserves the faithful, but for his justice, because He plentifully rewards the proud doer according to his pride. Some take it in a good sense; He plentifully rewards the magnificent or excellent doer, that is daringly good, whose heart, like Jehoshaphat's, is lifted up in the ways of the Lord. He rewards him that does well, but plentifully rewards him that does excellently well. 2. He would have them *set their hope in God; v.* 24. They that hope in God have reason to be of good courage, and strong hearts, for, as nothing truly evil can befall them, so nothing truly good for them shall be wanting.

In singing this, we should animate ourselves, and one another, to persevere in our Christian course, whatever threatens, and whoever frowns.

Ps. XXXII. This Ps. though it speaks not of Christ, as many of the Pss. hitherto have, has yet a great deal of Gospel in it. The apostle tells us David here describes *the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputes righteousness without works, Rom.* 4: 6. The way to obtain these privileges, is to make conscience of these duties. Grotius thinks it was designed to be sung on the day of atonement.

V. 1—6. *Maschil,* some take to be only the

38:10—12. 49:14. Lam. 3:54,55. Ez. 37:11. Jon. 2:4.
e 8:9. 2 Chr. 33:11—13. Jon. 2:7—9. Heb. 5:7.
f 34:9. 97:10. Deut. 10:12. 30:16. Is. 56:6. Mark 12:33. 1 Thes. 4:1.
g 30:4. 89:7. 97:10. 145.10. Rev. 19:5,6.
h Deut. 33:3. 1 Sam. 2:9. John 10:27—30. Jude 1.
i 54:5. 94:2. Rev. 18:6.
k 27:14. Is. 35:3,4. Luke 22:31,32. Heb. 12:12,13. Jam. 5:10,11.
l 29:11. 138:3. Col. 1:11.
m 146:5. Rom. 15:12,13. 1 Pet. 1:21.
† Or, A psalm *of David giving instruction.* 42: 45: 52: 53: 55: titles.
a 1:1,2. 40:4. 84:12. 89:15. 106:3. 119:1,2. 128:1. Jer. 17:7,8. Matt. 5:3—12. 16:17. Luke 11:28. Rev. 22:14.
b Is. 1:18. 43:25. 44:22. Mic. 7:19. Acts 13:38,39. Rom. 4:6—8.
c 85:2. Neh. 4:5.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The consciousness of trusting in God for every thing, on the warrant of his Word, inspires confidence in danger, and suggests pleas in prayer: for it would not be honorable for the Lord, to leave those who thus rely on Him to be ashamed of their hope.—Every true Christian, having learned the worth of his soul, and the dangers to which it is exposed, has been led to intrust it as a sacred deposit to the care of the Almighty: but, considering the holiness and justice of God, and his own guilt and pollution, he would not dare to do so, did he not behold Him as in Christ, his Redeemer, ready to forgive, and true to his covenant and promises. (2 *Tim.* 1:11,12.) But those who desire this comfortable assurance, must abhor the fellowship of all such as regard lying vanities; and renounce all idolatrous, superstitious, and carnal confidences, on which such immense numbers depend. They must rejoice in the mercy of God alone; and in every affliction remember, that He considers their trouble. They should treasure up, for future use, their experiences of his having noticed, supported, and comforted their souls in adversity.—It is our infirmity, 'if our life be spent with grief, and our years with sighing.' Should pain, sickness, poverty, reproach, contempt, and persecution, come upon us, with combined force;—should our foes prevail, and our friends prove unfaithful, or afraid of owning or regarding us;—should any be so degraded from honorable or useful stations, as to be 'forgotten like a dead man,' or 'thrown aside as a broken vessel;'—should enmity unite with contempt, and slanderous accusation give countenance to conspiracy against our lives;—still we ought to remember that we have deserved more than all this, and to be thankful for deliverance from the wrath to come.—Lord, pardon our complaints and fears; increase our faith, patience, love, and gratitude; and teach us to rejoice in tribulation, and in hope of thine eternal glory. SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. XXXII. '*Maschil* occurs in the inscriptions of 10 Pss. viz. the 32. 42. 52. 53. 54. 55. 74. 78. 88. 89. 142.—*Street* mentions an old Bible, in which the inscription of this Ps. is read—"*An instruction of David*"— . . . which harmonizes with the spirit of the composition.—*Gesenius* is more simple, and tr. it "a song, or poem, of David." He considers it as probably derived from the Arabic signification of the root. According to strict Heb. usage, it would denote *knowledge:*

2 Blessed *is* the man unto whom [d] the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and [e] in whose spirit *there is* no guile.

3 [f] When I kept silence, [g] my bones waxed old through [h] my roaring all the day long.

4 For day and night [i] thy hand was heavy upon me: [k] my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

5 [l] I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity [m] have I not hid. [n] I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and [o] thou forgavest [p] the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

6 [q] For this shall every one that is [r] godly [s] pray unto thee in * a time when thou mayest be found: surely [t] in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

d Lev. 17:4. Rom. 5:13. 2 Cor. 5:19—21.
e John 1:47. 2 Cor. 1:12. 1 Pet. 2:1,2. Rev. 14:5.
Gen. 3:8—19. 2 Sam. 11:27. 12:1—12. Prov. 28:13. Is. 57:17. Jer. 31:18,19. Luke 15:15,16.
g 6:2. 31:9,10. 38:3. 51:8. 102:3—5. Job 30:17,30. Lam. 1:13. 3:4.
h 22:1. 38:8. Job 3:24. Is. 51:20. 59:11. Lam. 3:8. Hos. 7:14.
i 38:2—8. 39:10,11. 1 Sam. 5:6,7,9. 6:9. Job 19:21. 33:7.
k 22:15. 90:6,7. 102:3,4. Job 30:30. Lam. 4:8. 5:10.
l 38:18. 51:3—5. Lev. 26:39,40. Josh. 7:19. 2 Sam. 12:13. 24:10. Job 33:27. Prov. 28:13. Jer. 3:13. 1 John 1:8—10.
m Job 31:33. Prov. 30:20. Jer. 2:23,35. Luke 16:15.
n Hos. 6:1. Luke 15:17—19.
o 30:5. 86:5,15. 103:3. 2 Sam. 12:13. Is. 65:24. Jer. 31:20. Luke 7:47. 15:20—23. Eph. 4:32.
p 51:4. 2 Sam. 12:9,13. Mal. 3:3.
q 34:2—5. 40:3. 51:12,13. 2 Cor. 1:4. 1 Tim. 1:16.
r 4:3. 2 Cor. 7:9,10. Tit. 2:12.
s Prov. 1:28. Is. 49:8. 55:6. Luke 19:42—44. John 7:34. 2 Cor. 6:2.
* Heb. *a time of finding.*
t 42:7. 69:1,2,13—15. 124:4,5. Gen. 7:17—22. Is. 43:2. Matt. 7:24—27. Rev. 12:15,16.

name of the tune to which the psalm was to be sung; but others think it significant: our margin reads it, *giving instruction;* and there is nothing in which we have more need of instruction than in the nature of true blessedness, wherein it consists, and the way that leads to it—what we must do, that we may be happy. There are divers things in which these vs. instruct us. In general, that our happiness consists in the favor and grace of God, in spiritual blessings, and not the good things of this world. When it is here said, *Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven,* the meaning is, 'This is the ground of his blessedness; this is that fundamental privilege from which flow all the other ingredients of his blessedness.' In particular, we are here instructed,

I. Concerning the nature of the pardon of sin; this is that which we all need, and are undone without; we are therefore concerned to be very solicitous and inquisitive about it. 1. It is the forgiving of transgression. *Sin is the transgression of the law;* on our repentance, the transgression is forgiven, lifted off, so some read it, as a heavy burden. Matt. 11:28. 2. It is the covering of sin, that it may not appear to our shame, Rev. 3:18. God is no longer displeased with us, but perfectly reconciled. Our sins are not covered from us; *My sin is ever before me;* nor from God's omniscience, but from his vindictive justice: when He pardons sin, He *remembers it no more,* He *casts it behind his back,* it *shall be sought for, and not found.* The sinner, being thus reconciled to God, begins to be reconciled to himself. 3. It is the not imputing of iniquity, not laying it to the sinner's charge, not proceeding against him for it, according to the strictness of the law, not dealing with him as he deserves. The righteousness of Christ being imputed to us, and we being made the righteousness of God in Him, our iniquity is not imputed, God having laid on Him the iniquity of us all, and made Him sin for us. Observe, Not to impute iniquity, is God's act, for He is the Judge. *It is God that justifies.*

II. Concerning the character of those whose sins are pardoned, *in whose spirit there is no guile;* He does not say, 'There is no *guilt,*' (for who is there that lives, and sins not?) but no *guile;* that does not dissemble with God, in his professions of repentance and faith, and in his prayers for peace or pardon; but, in all these, is sincere; that does not repent, with a purpose to sin again, and then sin, with a purpose to repent again, as a learned interpreter glosses upon it. Those that design honestly, that are really what they profess to be, are the Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile.

III. Concerning the happiness of a justified state; *Blessednesses are to the man whose iniquity is forgiven,* all manner of blessings, sufficient to make him completely blessed. The forgiveness of sin, is that article of the covenant, which is the reason and ground of all the rest; *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness,* Heb. 8:12.

IV. Concerning the uncomfortable condition of an unhumbled sinner, that sees his guilt, but is not yet brought to a penitent confession. This David describes very pathetically, from his own sad experience, *v.* 3, 4. Those may be said to keep silence, who stifle their convictions, and divert their minds to something else; as Cain to the building of a city; who *cry not when God binds them;* who will not unburden their consciences by a penitent confession, nor seek for peace, as they ought, by faithful and fervent prayer; and who choose rather to pine away in their iniquities, than to take the method God has appointed of finding rest for their souls; let such expect that their smothered convictions will be a fire in their bones; if conscience be seared, the case is so much the more dangerous; but if it be startled and awake, it will be heard. The hand of divine wrath will be felt lying heavy on the soul, and the anguish of the spirit will affect the body; to that degree David experienced it, so that when he was young, his bones waxed old; and even his silence made him roar all the day long, as if he had been under some grievous pain and distemper of body; when really the cause of all his uneasiness, was, the struggle he felt in his own bosom between his convictions and his corruptions. Note, *He that covers his sin shall not prosper;* some inward trouble is required in repentance, but there is much worse in impenitency.

V. Concerning the true and only way to peace of conscience. We are here taught to confess our sins, that they may be forgiven; to declare them, that we may be justified. This course David took; *I acknowledged my sin unto Thee,* [not unto man,] and no longer *hid mine iniquity, v.* 5. Note, Those that would have the comfort of pardon must take shame by a penitent confession. We must confess the fact of sin, and be particular in it; *Thus, and thus have I done;* confess the fault of sin, aggravate it, and lay a load upon ourselves for it; *I have done very wickedly;* confess the justice of the punishment we have been under for it; *The Lord is just in all that is brought upon us;* and that we deserve much worse; *I am no more worthy to be called thy son.* We must confess sin with shame and holy blushing, with fear and holy trembling.

VI. Concerning God's readiness to pardon sin to those who truly repent of it; '*I said, I will confess;* I sincerely resolved upon it, hesitated no longer, but came to a point, that I would make a free and ingenuous confession of my sins; and immediately *Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin,* and gavest me the comfort of the pardon in mine own conscience; immediately I found rest to my soul.' Note, God is more ready to pardon sin, on our repentance, than we are to repent, in order to obtain pardon. It was with much ado, David was here brought to confess his sins, *v.* 3, 4. but when

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hence *poetry:* inasmuch as the poets of antiquity were wise men and preservers of knowledge.—Upon the whole, I prefer the marg. reading, as most natural and intelligible, and of the highest authority.—It is highly probable the Ps. was composed soon after the commission of those crimes, which threw a shade over David's fair history, and brought him into a state of unutterable mental darkness before God.' MORISON.

Maschil.] This Ps. teaches the nature and effects of true repentance; 12 other Pss. have the same title, the subjects of which are various; but all replete with instruction: that the word *maschil* showed the music to which the Ps. was set, is by no means satisfactory.—This is one of the seven penitential Pss. It seems to have been written some time after the 51st, and when God had 'restored to him the joy of his salvation.' (51:12,13.) SCOTT.

Verses 1, 2.

(*Note,* 1:1—3.) Sin is the only cause of misery; and forgiveness is the commencement of a sinner's happiness. The believer's transgressions are not *imputed* to him, as to any of their *penal* consequences: nay, 'righteousness without works' is *imputed,* and as a righteous person, the reward is adjudged to him: hence all his present comforts, and hopes of future felicity. (*Rom.* 4:4—8.) ID.

Verses 3—5.

It seems David, before Nathan came to him, had often been exceedingly tortured in his conscience, on account of the atrocious crimes he had committed; (2 *Sam.* 11:27. 12:1—6.) yet reluctance to humble himself before God, or to be considered as a criminal by men, led him to 'keep silence,' or only to give vent to his anguish by solitary bemoanings; endeavoring, no doubt, by one sophistical excuse or other, to palliate his guilt to himself, and to be on better terms with his conscience. But this stubborn and rebellious conduct served only to prolong and enhance his misery. Thus the hand of God was 'heavy upon him:' (*M. R.* i.) and it is probable, some additional distressing malady was superadded to the natural effects of his inward conflicts (30:1,2. 38:1—10. 41:1—8.) But at length, being brought to a more proper frame of mind, he resolved humbly to submit himself to God, and to make full and ingenuous confession of his aggravated crimes, without attempting any excuse, or palliation. Having done this, the '*iniquity,*' or *injustice,* of his sin was pardoned, his burden was speedily removed, and at length his comforts were restored; and he recorded these things with a mark of peculiar emphasis, *Selah,* that others might profit by his painful and by his joyful experience. *Jer.* 31:18—20. *Luke* 15:13—24. 1 *John* 1:8—10. SCOTT.

(4.) 'The fields of Canaan are refreshed with frequent and copious rains, while some neighboring countries are scarce ever moistened with a shower. In the winter months, the rain falls indiscriminately, but seldom in summer. Soon after the heats commence, the grass withers, the flower fades, every green thing is dried up by the roots, and the fields, so lately clothed with the richest verdure, and adorned with the loveliest flowers, are converted into a brown and arid wilderness. To this uniform appearance of an eastern summer the psalmist alludes.' PAXTON.

(5.) *Hid.*] *covered:* 1. *Job* 31:33. *Prov.* 28:13.—The impenitent *covers* his sin, in vain; but God *covers* the sin of the penitent believer effectually. SCOTT.—'Although repentance and confession have no meritorious connection with the pardon of transgression, they are nevertheless essentially necessary as suitable acknowledgments of the evil of sin, the purity of the divine law, and the rectitude of the great Lawgiver; while on the other hand, they seem indispensable to the real enjoyment of forgiving mercy. Hence the wisdom and grace of that arrangement, which connects the manifestation of divine

7 Thou *art* [u] my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt [x] compass me about with [y] songs of deliverance. Selah.

8 ¶ I will [z] instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: [*] I will guide thee with mine eye.

9 [a] Be ye not as the horse, *or* as the mule, *which* have [b] no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

10 [c] Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked: [d] but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.

11 [e] Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and [f] shout for joy, all *ye that are* [g] upright in heart.

[u] 9:9. 27:5. 31:20. 119:114. 143:9. Jer. 36:26. Col. 3:3.
[x] 10. 5:12. 18:5.
[y] 40:3. 98:1. Ex. 15:1—3. Judg. 5:1. 2 Sam. 22:1. Rev. 7:10. 15:3.
[z] 34:11. Prov. 3:1. 4:1—13. 8:10,11. Matt. 11:29.
[*] Heb. *I will counsel* thee, *mine eye* shall be *upon thee.* 25:9,10. 33:18. Prov. 3:5,6. Is. 49:10.
[a] Prov. 26:3. Jer. 31:18. Jam. 3:3. 4: 7—10. [Ps. 123:2.]
[b] Job 35:11. Jer. 4:22. 8:6,7.
[c] 16:4. 34:19—21. 140:11. Prov. 13: 21. Ec. 8:12,13. Is. 3:11. 57:21. Rom. 2:8,9.
[d] 2:12. 5:12. 34:8. 40:4. 84:12. 146: 5. 147:11. Prov. 16:20. Is. 12:2,3. Jer. 17:7.
[e] 33:1. 64:10. 68:3. 97:12. Deut. 12: 12. 1 Sam. 2:1. Rom. 5:11. Phil. 3:1,3. 4:4.
[f] 5:11. 27:1. 98:4. Ezra 3:11—13. Zech. 4:7.
[g] 2. 125:4.

he surrendered, see how quickly, how easily, he obtained good terms; I did but say, *I will confess*, and Thou forgavest.' Thus the father of the prodigal saw his returning son *when yet afar off*, and ran to meet him with the kiss that sealed his pardon. What an encouragement this to poor penitents; what an assurance, that, *if we confess our sins*, we shall find God, not only faithful and just, but gracious and kind, *to forgive us our sins!*

VII. Concerning the good use we are to make of David's experience of God's readiness to forgive his sins, *v.* 6. *For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee.* Note, 1. All godly people are praying people. As soon as ever Paul was converted, *Behold, he prays*, Acts 11: 11. You may as soon find a living man without breath, as a living Christian without prayer. 2. The instructions given us concerning the happiness of those whose sins are pardoned, and the easiness of obtaining the pardon, should engage and encourage us to pray, and particularly to pray, *God be merciful to us sinners.* For this, shall every one that is well-inclined, be earnest with God in prayer, and *come boldly to the throne of grace*, with hopes to *obtain mercy*, Heb. 4: 16. 3. Those that would speed in prayer, must seek the Lord in *a time when He will be found.* When, by his providence, He calls them to seek Him, and by his Spirit He stirs them up to seek Him, they must *go speedily to seek the Lord*, (Zech. 8: 21.) and lose no time, lest death cut them off, and then it will be too late to seek Him, Isa. 55: 6. *Behold now is the accepted time*, 2 Cor. 6: 2. 4. Those that are sincere and abundant in prayer, will find the benefit of it, when in trouble; *floods of great waters*, very threatening, *shall not come nigh*, to terrify, much less to overwhelm them. Such is the security of all upright, penitent, praying people. As the temptations of the *wicked one touch them not*, 1 John 5: 18. so neither do the troubles of this evil world; these fiery darts, of both kinds, drop short of them.

V. 7—11. David is here improving his experience of the comfort of pardoning mercy.

I. He speaks to God, and professes his confidence in Him, and expectation from Him, *v.* 7. having tasted the sweetness of divine grace to a penitent sinner, he cannot doubt its continuance to a praying saint, and that in it he should find both safety and joy. 1. Safety; '*Thou art my Hiding-Place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble*, such trouble as I was in, *while I kept silence*,' *v.* 3. When God has pardoned our sins, if He leave us to ourselves, we shall soon plunge ourselves again into the same gulf; therefore we must fly to the grace of God, to be preserved from having our hearts again hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. God keeps his people from trouble, by keeping them from sin. 2. Joy; 'Thou shalt not only deliver me, but *compass me about with songs of deliverance;* which way soever I look, I shall see occasion to rejoice, and to praise God; and my friends also shall compass me about in the congregation, to join their songs with mine; as *every one that is godly shall pray with me*, so they shall give thanks with me.'

II. He turns his speech to men, to *strengthen his brethren*, *v.* 8. *I will instruct thee*, whoever thou art that desirest instruction, and *teach thee in the way which thou shalt go:* see 51: 12, 13. When Solomon became a penitent, he immediately became a preacher, Eccl. 1: 1. Those are best able to teach others the grace of God, who have themselves had the experience of it: and those who are themselves taught of God, ought to *tell others what He has done for their souls*, 66. 16. and so teach them. *I will guide thee with mine eye.* Some apply it to God's conduct and direction. He teaches us by his Word, and guides us by the secret intimations of his will in the hints and turns of Providence, which He enables his people to understand and take direction from; as a master makes a servant know his mind by a wink of his eye. When Christ turned and looked upon Peter, He guided him with his eye. But it is rather to be taken as David's promise to those who sat under his instruction, his own children and family especially; '*I will counsel thee, mine eyes shall be upon thee*,' so the marg. 'I will give thee the best counsel I can, and then observe whether thou takest it or no.' Those that are taught in the Word, should be under the constant inspection of those that teach them; spiritual guides must be overseers.

In this application of the foregoing doctrine concerning the blessedness of those whose sins are pardoned, here is a word to sinners, and a word to saints; and this is rightly dividing the Word of truth, and giving to each their portion.

1. A word of caution to sinners, and a good reason given for it. (1.) The caution is, not to be unruly and ungovernable, *v.* 9. *Be ye not as the horse, or the mule, which have no understanding.* When the psalmist would reproach himself for the sins he repented of, he compared himself to a *beast before God; so foolish have I been and ignorant*, 73: 22. and therefore warns others not to be so. Let us not be like brute animals, hurried by appetite and passion. If sinners would be governed and determined by the dictates of right reason, they would soon become saints, and go no

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

All men would be happy, but they vainly expect that riches, pleasures, and worldly honors can make them so; and when disappointed, change one vanity for another: so that he, and he alone, who attends to the Word of God, seeks felicity successfully.—Pride and stoutness of heart; aversion to God and his holy character and spiritual worship; and unbelief, either absolutely, or to a considerable degree, prevailing in the heart; keep back from unreserved submission, ingenuous confession, and fervent prayer, numbers who are deeply distressed with a sense of guilt. In this way many are at length driven to despair and suicide; while far more seek relief from a condemning conscience, by having recourse to infidelity, or some corrupt system, which excuses or explains away the evil of sin, and so enables them to keep up a delusive hope of being happy, or at least of escaping misery, without 'repentance and works meet for repentance.' When, however, God is pleased to visit the soul with his special grace, He sends his Word, not only by a Nathan to the outward ear, but by his Holy Spirit to the inmost soul: (2 *Sam.* 12: 7.) and then godly sorrow, unfeigned submission, ingenuous confessions, and believing prayers for mercy and forgiveness, through the atoning blood of Christ, soon make way for hope, and peace, and joy: and the justified believer tastes a happiness, of which before he had no conception; while he expatiates in praise of his present consolations, as contrasted with his preceding anguish, in a strain not unlike the encomiums on health of one recovering from a dangerous disease. Yet even this man may relax his vigilance, and fall into grievous sins, nay, be led to 'keep silence,' in the same perverse and foolish manner, as he did before: so deceitful is the heart of man, and so powerful the influence of temptation operating on human depravity!—But God will continue to frown, to rebuke, and to correct, till his children kiss the rod, confess their sins, and implore forgiveness. Happy are they, who trust in the Lord, and uprightly walk with Him. (*Is.* 54:17.)

SCOTT.

forgiveness with the sorrows of penitence, and the humble confession of iniquity before God.' MORISON.

Verses 6, 7.

The word rendered 'godly' is frequently translated 'a saint,' and seems to mean one whom God favors. All that fear Him, and in humble submission desire his mercy, show so far that right state of heart which springs from special grace: and such persons, hearing how readily God forgave the heinous guilt of David, when he was brought to ingenuous confession and deep repentance; would be encouraged to copy his example, and learn to pray in faith and hope, 'in a time when God might be found.'—While his Word is brought home to the conscience, and the Holy Spirit strives with the sinner, by painful convictions and terrors, or draws him to hope for mercy; it is especially 'a time of finding,' (*marg.*) 'an acceptable time,' 'a day of visitation,' a critical season in his experience. In some respects, this life is a 'time of finding,' except to such as are judicially hardened: but in another world, God will no more be found on a mercy-seat, waiting to be gracious; but as a [punishing] Judge to all the impenitent. (*Is.* 49 7,8. 55:6,7. *Luke* 13:22—30. 19:41—44. *John* 12:34—36. 2 *Cor.* 6:1,2 *Heb.* 3:7—13.)—They however, who, as David supposed, might by his example be animated to seize the invaluable opportunity, would be received into favor; and, secure of protection, (like Noah in the ark during the deluge,) could be approached by no overwhelming troubles, temptations, or enemies; or by those judgments and that vengeance which overtook the wicked and hurried them into destruction. (*Matt* 7:24—27. *Luke* 6:46—49.) In this happiness the Psalmist rejoiced and daily received so many mercies, which he celebrated with songs o deliverance, that he was wholly compassed about with them. SCOTT

(9.) *Bit and bridle.*] Cuts, Gen. 41:42,43. Ex. 14:6. Esth. 6:8—11. ED

Verses 8—11.

David, in the name of God, here offered to instruct those who would regard him. Or, the Lord Himself, by his prophet, promises to be

PSALM XXXIII.

The righteous are called on to rejoice in God, and to praise his perfections as displayed in his word and works; and all men, to fear the great Creator and Governor of the world, 1—12. His providential kindness to his chosen people, in ordering all things for their good, 13—19. Their confidence and prayer, 20—22.

[a] REJOICE in the LORD, O [b] ye righteous; *for* [c] praise is comely for the upright.

2 [d] Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery, *and* an instrument of ten strings.

3 Sing unto him [e] a new song; [f] play skilfully with a loud noise.

4 For [g] the word of the LORD *is* right; and [h] all his works *are done* in truth.

5 [i] He loveth righteousness and judgment: [k] the earth is full of the * goodness of the LORD.

6 By [l] the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all [m] the host of them by [n] the breath of his mouth.

7 He [o] gathereth the waters of the sea together [p] as an heap: he layeth up the depth in store-houses.

8 [q] Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world [r] stand in awe of him:

a 32:11. 97:12. 1 Cor. 1:30,31.
b 118:15. Rom. 3:10. 5:19.
c 50:14—16. 78:36,37. 135:3. 147:1. Prov. 15:8.
d 81:2,3. 92:3. 98:4,5. 144:9. 149:3. 150:3—6. Ex. 15:20. 2 Sam. 6:5. 1 Chr. 15:16,28. 25:3,6. Rev. 5:8. 14:2.
e 96:1. 98:1. 149:1. Is. 42:10. Eph. 5:19. Col. 3:16. Rev. 5:9. 14:3.
f 1 Chr. 13:8. 15:22. 25:7. 2 Chr. 34:12.
g 12:6. 19:8. 119:75,128. Prov. 30:5. Mic. 2:7. Rom. 7:12.
h 25:10. 36:5,6. 85:10,11. 96:13. Gen. 24:27. Deut. 32:4. Dan. 4:37. John 14:6. Rom. 15:8,9. Tit. 1:2.
i 11:7. 45:7. 99:4. Heb. 1:9. Rev. 15:3,4.
k 104:24. 119:64. 145:15,16. Matt. 5:45. Acts 14:17.
* Or, *mercy*.
l 9. 148:1—5. Gen. 1:1,6,7. John 1:1—3. 2 Pet. 3:5.
m 148:2,3. Gen. 2:1. Deut. 4:19. Jer. 8:2. Rom. 1:25.
n 104:30. Gen. 2:7. Job 26:13. 33:4. John 20:22.
o 104:6—9. Gen. 1:9,10. Job 26:10. 38:8—11. Prov. 8:29. Jer. 5:22.
p Ex. 15:8. Josh. 3:13,16. Psa. 3:15.
q 22:27. 96:9,10. Jer. 10:7—12. Dan. 6:5,26. Rev. 14:6,7. 15:4.
r 76:7. Heb. 12:28.

farther in their sinful courses. (2.) The reason for this caution, is, the way of sin ends in sorrow, *v.* 10. *Many sorrows shall be to the wicked.* Sin will have sorrow, if not repented of, everlasting sorrow. It was part of the sentence, *I will greatly multiply thy sorrows.* 'Be wise for yourselves, therefore, and turn from your wickedness, that you may prevent those sorrows, those many sorrows.'

2. A word of comfort to saints, and a good reason given for that too. (1.) If they will but trust in the Lord, and keep close to Him, *mercy shall compass them about* on every side, *v.* 10. so that they shall not depart from God, for that mercy shall keep them in, nor shall any real evil break in upon them, for that mercy shall keep it out. (2.) They are therefore commanded to be glad in the Lord, and to rejoice in Him, to that degree, as even to *shout for joy*, *v.* 11. Let them be so transported with this holy joy, as not to be able to contain themselves: and let them affect others with it, that they also may see, that a life of communion with God is the most pleasant and comfortable life we can live, in this world. This is that present bliss which the upright in heart, and they only, are entitled to, and qualified for.

Ps. XXXIII. V. 1—11. This is a Ps. of praise, probably David wrote it, but God would have us look above the penmen of sacred writ, to that blessed Spirit that moved and guided them. We need not be at a loss for proper thoughts in singing this Ps. which so naturally speaks the pious affections of a devout soul toward God. Four things the psalmist expresses in these vs.

I. The great desire he had that God might be praised: holy joy is the heart and soul of praise, and that is here pressed on all good people, *v.* 1. *Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous*, so the foregoing Ps. concluded, and so this begins. Thankful praise is the breath and language of holy joy; and that also is here required, *v.* 2. Religious songs are the proper expressions of thankful praise, and these are here required, *v.* 3. a new song is most likely to move the affections, and on every new occasion, we should renew our songs, even every morning and evening. Music was then used, by the appointment of David, with the temple songs, that they might be the better sung: and this also is here called for, *v.* 2. *Sing unto Him with the psaltery.* Here is, 1. A good rule for this duty; 'Do it skilfully, [with a will,] intelligently, affectionately. 2. A good reason for it; *praise is comely for the upright;* well pleasing to God, and an excellent ornament to our profession; *it becomes the upright*, whom God has so much honored, to honor Him. The upright praise God in a comely manner, for they praise Him with warm hearts, that is praising Him with their glory. Whereas the praises of hypocrites are awkward and uncomely, like *a parable in the mouth of fools*, Prov. 26: 7.

II. The high thoughts he had of God, and of his infinite perfections, *v.* 4, 5. God makes Himself known to us, 1. In his Word; here put for all divine revelation, which is all right, and has nothing amiss in it: God's commands exactly agree with the rules of equity, and the eternal reasons of good and evil. His promises all are wise and good, and inviolably sure, and there is no iniquity in his threatenings, but even those are designed for our good, by deterring us from evil: therefore all our deviations from God's Word are wrong, and we are then in the right when we agree with it. 2. In his works, which are all done in truth, according to his counsels, called the *Scriptures of truth*, Dan. 10: 21. The copy in all God's works agrees exactly with the original plan laid in the Eternal Mind, and varies not in the least. God has made it to appear in his works, (1.) That He is a God of inflexible justice. He *loveth righteousness and judgment.* He never did or can do wrong to any of his creatures. He is Himself the righteous Lord, the Teacher and watchful Guide of all, who desire to walk in his ways. Some understand it, as the word of God to David, inducing him to repentance.—Obstinate sinners render sharp usage necessary, either to preserve them from ruin, or to restrain them from injuring others. So that their sorrows are multiplied, as the deliverances and praises of the righteous are enhanced. SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. XXXIII. The Sept. the Syr. and the Vulg. entitle this, 'A Ps. of David,' and in 8 of Kennicott's MSS. it is written as a part of Ps. 32. ED.—'From v. 1. to v. 19. it appears to have been sung by an individual, perhaps the high priest, or the leader of some procession of the Israelites. From v. 20. to the close, the use of plural pronouns intimates that the Ps. was sung by a band of the people.' MORISON.

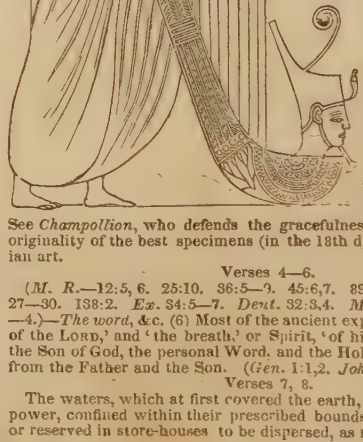
Verse 1.

'God, and not the world, is the fountain of joy, which sinners talk of, but the righteous only possess.' *Bp. Horne.*—Joy and praise are *becoming* and beautiful, when united with piety and integrity; but the appearance of them, without soundness of character, is inconsistent and disgusting. SCOTT.

Verses 2, 3.

Instrumental, as well as vocal music, in the worship of God, preceded the ceremonial law: not being explicitly there appointed, it can be no part of it; and if properly conducted, it may be rendered greatly subservient to devotion. (*M. R.—Ex.* 15: 1,20,21. 1 *Sam.* 10: 5,6. 1 *Chr.* 15: 16,20,21. 16: 4—6.)—'Let not the ancient songs of praise suffice you; but endite a new hymn, to testify your singular love and gratitude; employ your best skill to make the sweetest music; and sing as cheerfully as you are wont to do at your most solemn feasts.' *Patrick.* (96:1. *Rev.* 5:8—10. 14:1—5, 2 *col.*) ID.

(2.) *Harp.*] 'A musical instrument invented by Jubal, Gen. 4: 21. used by the Jews only when feelings of mirth and joy were expressed. Ps. 137:1, 2. Isa. 24:8. Gen. 31:27. It is called a *pleasant* harp, Ps. 81: 2. as opposed to instruments of sorrow. David's skill in handling it was great, 1 Sam. 16:16,24. It was used, in connection with other instruments, to celebrate the goodness of Jehovah, in the service of his house. 1 Chron. 13:8, 15, 16, 28. 25:1. Neh. 12.27. Calmet thinks the ancient *testudo*, or *lyre* with 8 strings, is here meant.' Though the above guess is retained, it advances us little in the knowledge of Hebrew musical instruments. See notes, 1 Sam. 10: 5, and Ps. 150. and *Pfeiffer* on Heb. Music, in Bib. Repos. An investigation of the Egyptian music, (note, 1 Chr. 15: 16, &c.) would lend to greater certainty in determining these instruments. Such an investigation cannot be expected here. *Psaltery.*] 'It was made in the form of a leathern bottle, and turned round in playing. Bp. *Horsley* thinks it was an instrument with 10 strings: if so, the "and" here is improperly supplied; but in Ps. 92: 3. they appear to be distinguished.' *Cott. Bib.* A cut is given of a beautiful ancient harp with 11 strings, from the magnificent tomb, 5, ('of the harpers.') in the valley of Biban el Molook, at Thebes. Notes, Ps. 150. In so small a wood cut it has been impossible to preserve the graceful outline or nice workmanship of the original; indeed this may be said of most of these cuts from the Egyptian monuments, which do very little justice to the state of the arts among the ancient Egyptians.



See *Champollion*, who defends the gracefulness, truth to nature, and originality of the best specimens (in the 18th dyn. of kings) of Egyptian art. ED.

Verses 4—6.

(*M. R.*—12:5, 6. 25:10. 36:5—9. 45:6,7. 89 13,14. 99:4. 104:24, 27—30. 138:2. *Ex.* 34:5—7. *Deut.* 32:3,4. *Mic.* 7:18—20. *Rev.* 15:1—4.)—*The word*, &c. (6) Most of the ancient expositors, by the 'Word of the LORD,' and 'the breath,' or Spirit, 'of his mouth;' understand the Son of God, the personal Word, and the Holy Spirit, as proceeding from the Father and the Son. (*Gen.* 1:1,2. *John* 1:1—3.) SCOTT.

Verses 7, 8.

The waters, which at first covered the earth, were, by the Creator's power, confined within their prescribed bounds, as if laid on a heap; or reserved in store-houses to be dispersed, as required, to supply the

9 For [s] he spake, and it was *done;* he commanded, [t] and it stood fast.

10 [u] The LORD * bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: [x] he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.

11 [y] The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever; [z] the thoughts of his heart to † all generations.

12 [a] Blessed *is* the nation whose God *is* the LORD; *and* [b] the people *whom* he hath chosen for [c] his own inheritance.

13 The LORD [d] looketh from heaven; [e] he beholdeth all the sons of men.

14 From [f] the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.

15 He [g] fashioneth their hearts alike; [h] he considereth all their works.

16 There is [i] no king saved by the multitude of an host: [k] a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.

17 [l] An horse *is* a vain thing for safety: neither

s 6. 148:5,5. Gen. 1:3. Heb 11:3.
t 33:5. 119:90,91. Col. 1:16,17. Heb. 1:3. Rev. 4:11.
u 2:1—4. 9:15. Ex. 1:10—12. 2 Sam. 15:31,34. 17:14,23. Job 5:12,13. Prov. 21:30. Is. 7:5—7. 8:9,10. 19:3,11—14.
* Heb. *maketh frustrate.* Is. 44:25.
x 21:11. 140:8.
y Job 23:13. Prov. 19:21. Is. 14:24,27. 46:10. Lam. 3:37. Ez. 38:10, &c. Dan. 4:37. Acts 4:27,28. Eph. 1:11.
z 92:5. Is. 55:8,9. Jer. 29:11. Mic. 4:12.
† Heb. *generation and generation.* Acts 15:18.
a 144:15. 147:19,20. Ex. 19:5,6. Deut. 33:29.
b 65:4. 135:4. Deut. 7:6—8. John 15: 16. Eph. 1:4. 1 Pet. 2:9.
c 28:9. Jer. 10:16. Tit. 2:14.
d 11:4. 14:2. 102:19. Gen. 6:12. 2 Chr. 16:9. Job 28:24. Prov. 15:3. Lam. 3:50.
e 53:2. Jer. 23:23,24. Heb. 4:13.
f 123:1. 1 K. 8:27,30. Is. 57:15. 66: 1. Luke 11:2. 1 Tim. 6:16.
g Prov. 22:2. 27:19. Ec. 7:29. Is. 64: 8. Acts 17:26.
h 44:21. Job 11:11. 34:21,22. Prov. 24:12. Jer. 32:19. Hos. 7:2. 1 Cor. 4:5.
i 44:6. Ex. 14:17,18,28. Josh. 11:4—8. Judg. 7:2,12, &c. 1 Sam. 14:8—16. 1 K. 20:10,27—29. 2 Chr. 14:9—13. 20:12,23. 32:8,9,21.
k Josh. 14:12. 1 Sam. 17:4,45—49. 2 Sam. 21:16—22. Jer. 9:23.
l 20:7 Judg. 4:15. 2 K. 7:6,7. Prov. 21:31. Ec. 9:11. Is. 30:16.

and therefore loveth righteousness. (2.) That He is a God of inexhaustible bounty; *the earth is full of his goodness*, i. e. of the proofs and instances of it; the darkest, the coldest, hottest, and most dry and desert part not excepted: what pity that this earth, which is so full of God's goodness, should be so empty of his praises; and that, of the multitudes that live on his bounty, so few live to his glory!

III. The conviction he was under of the almighty power of God, evidenced in the creation of the world. We believe in God, therefore we praise Him as the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; so we are here taught to praise Him. What cannot that Power do, which, with a word, made a world? the Spirit is the Breath, Christ is the Word, so that God the Father made the world, as He rules it, and redeems it, by his Son and Spirit. How effectually it was done, *v.* 9. Eccl. 3: 14. It is by virtue of that command to stand fast, that they *continue to this day according to God's ordinance*, 119: 91. The everlasting Gospel gives this as the reason why we must worship God, because He made the heaven and the earth, and the sea, Rev. 14: 6, 7. Let us all fear Him, i. e. dread his wrath, and displeasure, and be afraid of having Him our enemy, and standing it out against Him. Let us not dare to offend Him, who, having this power, no doubt, has all power in his hand. Jer. 5: 22.

IV. The satisfaction he had in God's sovereignty and dominion, *v.* 10, 11. Through all the revolutions of time God never changed his measures, but in every event, the eternal counsel of God is fulfilled; nor can any thing prevent its being accomplished in its times. With what pleasure to ourselves may we, in singing this, give praise to God! How easy may this thought make us at all times, that God governs the world, that He did it in infinite wisdom before we were born, and will do it when we are silent in the dust.

V. 12—22. We are here taught to give to God the glory,

I. Of his common providence towards all men. Though He has endued man with understanding and freedom of will, yet He reserves to Himself the government of him, and even of those very faculties by which he is qualified to govern himself.

1. Men are all under his eye, even their hearts are so; and all the motions and operations of their souls, which none know but they themselves, He knows better than they themselves, *v.* 13, 14. *Looks upon them*, looks *narrowly*, so the word here used is sometimes rendered, so narrowly, that not the least thought can escape his observation.

2. Their hearts, as well as their times, are all in his hand; *He fashions their hearts.* He made them at first; hence He is called *the Father of spirits:* and this is a good argument to prove that He perfectly knows them; David uses it with application to himself, 139: 1, 14. He still moulds the hearts of men, turns them as He pleases, to serve his own purposes, darkens or enlightens men's understandings, stiffens or bows their wills, according as He is pleased to make use of them. He that fashions men's hearts fashions them alike; it is in hearts as in faces, though there is a great difference, and such a variety, as that no hearts are exactly of the same temper, yet there is such a similitude, that, in some things, all faces and all hearts agree. [All men, except the idiot, are born organized with like elementary animal, intellectual, and moral faculties, but these are in different force or relative proportion in each individual. Ed.] *He fashions them together;* so some read; as the wheels of a watch, though of different shapes, sizes, and motions, are yet all put together, to serve one and the same purpose, so the hearts of men and their dispositions, however varying from each other, and seeming to contradict one another, are yet all overruled, to serve the divine purpose, which is one.

3. They, and all they do, are subject to his judgment; *for He considers all their works*, not only knows them, but weighs them, that He may render to every man according to his works, now, in the judgment, and to eternity.

4. All the powers of the creature have a dependence on Him, and are of no account, of no avail at all, without Him, *v.* 16, 17. It is much for the honor of God, that not only no force can prevail in opposition to Him, but that no force can act but in dependence on Him, and by a power derived from Him. The strength of a giant, of a king, of an army, is nothing without God. Let not the strong then glory in strength, but let us all strengthen ourselves in the Lord our God, go forth, and go on, in his strength. In war, horses were then so highly accounted of, and so much depended on, that God forbade the kings of Israel to *multiply horses*, Deut. 17: 16. lest they should be tempted to trust to them, (*v.* 17.) and their confidence should thereby be taken off from God.

II. We are to give God the glory of his special grace. In the midst of his acknowledgments of God's providence, he pronounces those blessed that have Jehovah for their God, who governs the world, and has wherewithal to help them in every time of need; while they were miserable who had this and the other senseless, helpless Baal for their God, *v.* 12. It is their wisdom, that they take the Lord for their God, and their happiness, that they are the people whom God has chosen for his own inheritance, Deut. 32: 9. Now let us observe here, to the honor of divine grace,

1. The regard God has to his people, *v.* 18, 19. God beholds all men with an eye of observation, but his eye of favor and complacency is on them that fear Him; He looks on them with delight, as the father on his children, as the bridegroom on his spouse, Isa. 62: 5. If He do not deliver the body from temporal death, yet He will deliver the soul from spiritual and eternal death; their souls, whatever happens, shall live and praise Him, either in this world, or in a better. He does not say He will give them abundance, (they have no reason either to desire it, or to expect it,) but He will keep them alive, they shall not starve; and when destroying judgments are abroad, it ought to be reckoned a great favor, for it is a very striking one, and lays us under peculiar obligations, to have our lives given us for a prey. They that have the Lord for their God, shall find Him their Help and their Shield, *v.* 20.

2. The regard God's people have to Him, and which we all ought to have, in consideration of this. (1.) We must wait for God; we must attend the motions of his providence, and accommodate ourselves to them, and patiently expect the issue of them, *v.* 20. (2.) We must rely on God; (hope in his mercy, in the goodness of his nature though we have not an express promise to depend on;) they that fear God and his wrath must hope in God and his mercy. These pious dispositions will not only consist together, but befriend each other; a holy fear of God, and yet at the same time a hope in his mercy. This is *trusting in his holy name*, *v.* 21. (3.) We must *rejoice in God*,

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want of all that dwell on earth, by various methods of communication. (*Notes*, 24:1,2. 104:6—9. *Gen.* 1:9. 7:10—12. *Ex.* 14:21—23. *Job* 38:8—11. *Jer.* 5:20—25. *Am.* 9:5, 6.) SCOTT.

Verse 9.

The sublimity of this v. is admirable: 'He spake, and it was; He commanded, and it stood.' The transl. cannot equal the original; the emphatical pronoun rendered *he*, twice repeated, giving much additional energy. JEHOVAH did but signify his pleasure, and the thing was done, and each of his creatures took the station allotted to it. (*Notes*, *Gen.* 1:3—5. *Matt.* 8:1—4, *end.*) ID.

Verses 10—12.

(*Notes*, *Is.* 14:24—27. 46:10,11. *Dan.* 4:34—37. *Acts* 4:23—28. *Eph.* 1:9—12. 3:9—12.) 'The counsels of states and empires are either directed to the accomplishment of the great counsel of Heaven; or, if they attempt to thwart it, are blasted and brought to nothing. History will force all who read it with this view, to acknowledge thus much. And with this view indeed it should always be read.' Bp. *Horne.* The nation, therefore, which was distinguished as the chosen inheritance of this almighty Creator and universal Sovereign, possessed inestimable advantages above the worshippers of idols, and should rejoice in them and improve them. (*Notes*, 147:19,20. *Rom.* 3:1,2.) SCOTT.

Verses 13—15.

The Lord made the human species originally of the same nature; all are derived from the same stock, and all receive that nature impaired through the fall: and one heart (the same views, judgment, disposition, and affections) is given to all, who are renewed by the Holy Spirit, with merely circumstantial differences, in things of smaller consequence. (*Note*, *Jer.* 32 39—41.) ID.

Verses 16—19.

(*M. R.*—*Notes*, 44:5—7. 147:10,11. 1 *K.* 20:20,21. 2 *Chr.* 14:9—15.)—

shall he deliver *any* by [m] his great strength.

18 Behold, [n] the eye of the LORD *is* upon them that fear him, upon them that [o] hope in his mercy;

19 [p] To deliver their soul from death, and [q] to keep them alive in famine.

20 [r] Our soul waiteth for the LORD; [s] he *is* our Help and our Shield.

21 [t] For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in [u] his holy name.

22 [x] Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.

PSALM XXXIV.

David praises God, and exhorts others, from his own experience, to bless and trust in Him, 1—10. He teaches the fear of God; and contrasts the privileges of the righteous with the miseries of the wicked, 11—22.

A Psalm of David, when he changed his behavior before * Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed.

I [a] WILL bless the LORD at all times: his praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.

2 My soul shall [b] make her boast in the LORD: [c] the humble shall hear *thereof*, and be glad.

3 [d] O magnify the LORD with me, and [e] let us exalt his name together.

4 [f] I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me [g] from all my fears.

5 [h] They looked unto him, [i] and were † lightened; and [k] their faces were not ashamed.

6 [l] This poor man cried, and the LORD heard *him*, and [m] saved

m 147:10. Job 39:19—25.
n 34:15—20. 147:11. Job 36:7. 1 Pet. 3:12.
o 13:5. 52:8. Rom. 4:4—8. Heb. 6:18.
p 91:3—7,10. John 10:28—30.
q 37:3,19. Job 5:19—22. Prov. 10:3. Is. 33:16. Matt. 6:31—33.
r 27:14. 62:1,2,5,6. 130:5,6. Is. 40:31.
s 115:9—12. 144:1,2. 1 Chr. 5:20.
t 28:7. 30:10—12. 32:10,11. Zech. 10:7. John 16:22.
u 1 Chr. 16:10,35. Luke 1:47—50. Rev. 4:8.
x 5:11,12. 13:5. 32:10. 119:49,76. Matt. 9:29.
* *Or, Achish.* Gen. 20:2. 26:1. 1 Sam. 21:13—15 Prov. 29:25.
a 71:8,14,15. 145:1,2. Is. 24:15,16. Acts 5:41. 16:25. Eph. 5:20. Col. 3:17. 1 Thes. 5:18. 2 Thes. 1:3. 2:13.
b 44:8. 105:3. Is. 45:25. Jer. 9:24. 1 Cor. 1:31. 2 Cor. 10:17.
c 22:22—24. 32:5,6. 119:74. 142:7. 1 Tim. 1:15,16.
d 35:27. 40:16. 69:30. Luke 1:46. Acts 19:17. Phil. 1:20.
e 33:1,2. 66:8. 103:20—22. 148:1,&c. 1 Chr. 29:20. 2 Chr. 29:30. Rev. 14:7. 19:5,6.
f 18:6. 22:24. 31:22. 77:1,2. 116:1—6. Jon. 2:2. Matt. 7:7. Luke 11:9. 2 Cor. 12:8,9. Heb. 5:7.
g 27:1,2. 46:2. 56:3. 1 Sam. 27:1. Is. 12:2. 2 Cor. 7:5,6. 2 Tim. 1:7.
h 123:1,2. Is. 45:22. Heb. 12:2.
i 13:3. 18:28. 97:11. Esth. 8:16. Job 33:30. Mic. 7:8,9. John 8:12.
† Or, *flowed* unto him.
k 83:16. 2 Sam. 19:5.
l 3:4. 10:17. 40:17. 66:16—20.
m 17—19. Gen. 48:16. Rev. 7:14—17.

v. 21. Those do not truly rest in God, or do not know the unspeakable advantage they have by so doing, who do not rejoice in Him at all times; because they that hope in God hope for an eternal fulness of joy in his presence. (4.) We must seek to Him for that mercy which we hope in, *v.* 22. Our expectations from God are not to supersede, but to quicken and encourage, our applications to Him; He will be sought unto for that which He has promised, therefore the Ps. concludes with a short, but comprehensive prayer, '*Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us;* let us always have the comfort and benefit of it, not according as we merit from Thee, but according as we hope in Thee, according to the promise Thou hast in thy Word given to us, and according to the faith Thou hast by thy Spirit and grace wrought in us.' If, in singing these vs. we put forth a dependence on God, and let out our desires towards Him, we make melody with our hearts to the Lord.

Ps. XXXIV. V. 1—10. The title of this Ps. tells us both by whom, and on what occasion it was penned. It has as much in it of the marks of a calm, sedate spirit, as any in all the book; and there is something curious too in the composition, for it is what is called an alphabetical psalm, that is, a psalm in which every v. begins with each letter in its order, as it stands in the Heb. alphabet. Happy they who can thus keep their temper, and keep their graces in exercise, even when tempted to change their behavior.

In this former part of the psalm,

I. David engages and excites himself to praise God. Though it was his fault that he changed his behavior, yet it was God's mercy that he escaped, and the mercy was so much the greater, in that God did not deal with him according to the desert of his dissimulation, and we must in every thing give thanks. He resolves, 1. That he will praise God constantly; *at all times,* on all occasions. If we hope to spend our eternity in praising God, it is fit we should spend as much as may be of our time in this work. 2. That he will praise Him openly; *His praise shall continually be in my mouth.* Thus he would show how forward he was to own his obligations to the mercy of God, and how desirous to make others also sensible of theirs. 3. That he will praise Him heartily; '*My soul shall make her boast in the Lord,* in my relation to Him, my interest in Him, and expectations from Him.' It is not vain glory to glory in the Lord.

II. He calls on others to join him herein. He expects they will, *v.* 2. '*the humble shall hear thereof,* both of my deliverance and of my thankfulness, and be glad that a good man has so much favor showed him, and God so much honor.' Those have most comfort in God's mercies, both to others and to themselves, that are humble, and have the least confidence in their own merit and sufficiency. It pleased David to think, that God's favors to him would rejoice the heart of every Israelite. Three things he would have us all concur with him in.

1. High thoughts of God, which we should express in magnifying Him, and exalting his name, *v.* 3. We cannot make God greater or higher than He is; but, if we adore Him as infinitely great, and higher than the highest, He is pleased to reckon this magnifying and exalting Him. We have reason to join in thanksgiving to God,

(1.) For his readiness to hear prayer, which all the saints have had the comfort of, for He never said to any of them, *Seek ye Me, in vain.* David, for his part, will testify, that he has found Him a prayer-hearing God, *v.* 4. Unbelieving, distrust-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Rejoicing in the Lord, as our Father and Friend, is the genuine effect of humiliation and mourning for sin: for, being justified by faith, and walking uprightly before Him, joy is our privilege and duty. But the joy of the hypocrite springs from presumption, and his praises are an offence and affront to the Lord.—Every endowment which we possess should be employed, with all our skill and earnestness, in the service of the Giver; and we should be avowed in our worship: but well regulated and heavenly affections are most harmonious and acceptable. (*Notes, Eph.* 5: 15—20. *Col.* 3:16,17.)—Every part of his Word is holy, just, and good, and very useful to the upright; (*Note, Mic.* 2:6,7.) and all his works are done in truth, correspond to the prophecies and promises of the Scripture, and are, in one way or other, a fulfilment of them.—Though the Lord delights in righteousness and judgment, yet the earth, which is full of man's wickedness, is filled also with his goodness: yea, his most abundant mercy consists perfectly with his most awful justice. (*Note, Matt.* 25: 41—46. *Luke* 19: 11—27.)—All human power and policy are ineffectual against his omnipotent will: 'his counsel shall stand, and He will do all his pleasure;' and his vengeance against the ungodly will be everlasting.—But blessed are his people, who have Him for their Portion, and are his chosen inheritance: who worship and serve Him, live under his protection, and enjoy his favor! We possess the outward means of this blessing: may He visit our souls with salvation, and new create us unto holiness! For He who formed man's heart, cannot be imposed on by any appearances.—All confidence, except in his mercy, is vain. All human devices are ineffectual for the salvation of our souls: but the Lord's watchful eye is over those, who unite the conscientious fear of his name, with a believing hope in his mercy through the great Redeemer. May He teach us to say from our hearts, 'Our soul waiteth for the LORD, He is our Help and Shield.' Then shall 'we rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in his holy name:' for 'his mercy will surely be upon us, according as we hope in Him.' SCOTT.

God continues the same, in every age; and effects the same things, by ordinary means, as He did in former times by miracles, both against his powerful and haughty enemies, and for his humble, believing children. SCOTT.

Verses 20—22.

M. R.—Notes, 13:5,6. 2 *Sam.* 22:2,3. ID.

NOTES.

Ps. XXXIV. *Title.* 'Some have doubted the authenticity of this title; but we think without sufficient reason.—Many expressions used in this Ps. may be applied to the Redeemer; and *Horsley* thinks v. 20. is applied to Him, John 19:36. but it is more generally thought John refers to the paschal lamb: nor can we by any means admit, with Hutchinson, cited by the Bp., that any one passage being applicable to the true David, i. e. Messiah, and to none else, determines the Ps. to *that* David. On the contrary, we believe few are confined to the Messiah only, or to any one single topic, it being common to these lyric odes generally to admit a variety of topics. In fact, it is the very nature of a typical dispensation, to advert sometimes to the typical things themselves, and sometimes to the sublimer objects they were intended to represent. So it is in typical prophecies. A spiritual Christian may see Christ in a thousand objects which surround, without excluding the moral improvement arising from their literal sense.' WILLIAMS.—This is the second of the acrostic, or alphabetic Pss. See Ps. 25. ED.

Verses 1, 2.

The event, during almost 3000 years, has fully verified this expectation.—The word rendered *humble*, is afterwards transl. *poor.* (6) It seems applicable either to poverty and affliction borne with meek submission; or to the lowly sense, which true believers have of their unworthiness; and the poverty in spiritual things, which renders them teachable, dependent, and thankful. (*Is.* 66:1,2. *Matt.* 5:3.) SCOTT.

him out of all his troubles.

7 [n] The angel of the LORD [o] encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

8 [p] O taste and see that [q] the LORD *is* good: [r] blessed *is* the man *that* trusteth in him.

9 O [s] fear the LORD, ye his saints: [t] for *there is* no want to them that fear him.

10 [u] The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: [x] but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good *thing*.

11 ¶ Come, [y] ye children hearken unto me: [z] I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

12 [a] What man *is he that* desireth life, *and* loveth *many* days, [b] that he may see good?

13 [c] Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from [d] speaking guile.

14 [e] Depart from evil, and [f] do good; [g] seek peace, and pursue it.

15 [h] The eyes of the LORD *are* upon the righteous, [i] and his ears *are open* unto their cry.

n 91:11. 2 K. 6:17. 19:35. Dan. 6:22. Matt. 18:10. Luke 16:22. Heb. 1:14.
o Gen. 32:1,2. Zech. 9:8
p 63:5. 119:103. Cant. 2:3. 5:1. Heb. 6:4,5. 1 Pet. 2:2. 1 John 1:1—3.
q 86:7,10. 52:1. Jer. 31:14. Zech. 9:17. 1 John 4:7—10.
r 2:12. 84:12.
s 22:23. 31:23. 89:7. Gen. 22:12. Is. 8:13,14. Hos. 3:5. Rev. 15:3,4.
t 23:1. Luke 12:30—32. Rom. 8:32. 1 Cor. 3:22,23. Phil. 4:19.
u 104:21. Job 4:10,11. Luke 1:51—53.
x 84:11. Matt. 6:32.
y Prov. 4:1. 7:24. 8:17,32. 22:6. Ec. 11:9,10. 12:1. Is. 28:9. Matt. 18:2—4. Mark 10:14—16. John 13:33. 2 Tim. 3:15.
z 32:8. 111:10. Prov. 1:7. 2:1—9.
a 21:4. 91:16. Deut. 6:2. 30:20. 1 Pet. 3:10,11.
b 4:6. Job 7:7. Ec. 2:3. 12:13.
c 39:1. Prov. 18:21. Matt. 12:35—37. Jam. 1:19,26. 3:2,5—10.
d 55:11. Prov. 12:17,19,22. 19:9. Is. 63:8. Col. 3:9. 1 Pet. 2:1,22. Rev. 14:4,5.
e 37:27. Job 28:28. Prov. 3:7. 8:13. 13:14. 16:16,17. Is. 1:16,17. Rom. 12:9. 1 Pet. 3:11.
f Acts 10:38. Gal. 6:10. Tit. 2:14. Heb. 13:16. 3 John 11.
g 120:7. Matt. 5:9. Rom. 12:18. 14:17. 2 Cor. 13:11. 1 Thes. 4:11. Heb. 12:14. Jam. 3:17,18.
h 33:18. Job 36:7. 1 Pet. 3:12. 130:2. 2 Chr. 6:40. Is. 37:14—21. Dan. 9:17—23.

ful fear of trouble, is our sin; nay, often more our torment, too, than the thing itself. David's prayers helped to silence his fears; having sought the Lord, and left his case with Him, he could with great composure wait the event. Others, too, have experienced the like benefit. Yes, many beside him have looked unto God by faith and prayer, and *have been lightened by it*, *v.* 5. When we look to the world, we are darkened, perplexed, at a loss; but when we look to God, from Him we have the light both of direction and joy, and our way is made both plain and pleasant. And if these also, (*v.* 5.) were persons of great eminency, like David himself, and, on that account, highly favored; or their numbers made them considerable; yet *this poor man*, a single person, mean and inconsiderable, whom no man respected or cared for, even he was as welcome to the throne of grace as David, or any of his worthies; the Lord heard him, took cognizance of his case and of his prayers, and *saved him out of all his troubles*, *v.* 6. God will *regard the prayer of the destitute*, 102: 17. See Isa. 57: 15.

(2.) For the ministration of the good angels about us, *v.* 7. *The angel of the Lord*, a guard of angels, so some, or a guardian angel, encamps round about them that fear God, as the life-guard about the prince, and delivers them. The holy angels do us more good offices, every day, than we are aware of. Though very much superior to us, though they retain their primitive rectitude, which we have lost, though they have constant employment in the upper world, yet, in obedience to their Maker, and in love to those that bear his Image, they condescend to minister to the saints, and stand up for them against the powers of darkness; they not only visit them, but encamp round about them, acting for their good as really, though not as sensibly, as for Jacob's, Gen. 32: 1. and Elisha's, 2 K. 6: 17. All the glory be to the God of the angels.

2. Kind and good thoughts of God, *v.* 8. The goodness of God includes both the beauty and amiableness of his being, and the bounty and beneficence of his providence and grace; and, accordingly, we must taste and relish the goodness of God in all his gifts to us; see that He is a beautiful Being, and delight in the contemplation of his infinite perfections. By taste and sight we both make discoveries, and take complacency; taste, and see, God's goodness; notice it, and take the comfort of it, 1 Pet. 2: 3. He is good, for He makes all those truly blessed that trust in Him; let us, therefore, be so convinced of his goodness, as thereby to be encouraged in the worst of times to trust in Him.

3. A resolution to seek God and serve Him, and continue in his fear; *v.* 9. when we taste and see that He is good, we must not forget that He is great, and greatly to be feared; nay, even his goodness is the proper object of a filial reverence and awe, Hos. 3: 5. *Fear the Lord;* worship Him, and make conscience of your duty to Him in every thing; not fear Him and shun Him, but fear Him and seek Him, *v.* 10. as a people seek unto their God; apply yourselves to Him, and portion yourselves in Him. To encourage us to fear God and seek Him, it is here promised that those that do so, even in this wanting world, shall *want no good thing*. [Note, Job 36: 8—14.] Heb. *They shall not want all good things;* they shall so have of all good things, that they shall have no reason to complain of the want of any. As to the things of the other world, they shall have grace sufficient for the support of the spiritual life, 2 Cor. 12: 9. Ps. 84: 11. And as to this life, they shall have what is necessary to the support of it from the hand of God; as a Father, He will feed them with food convenient; what farther comforts they desire, they shall have, as far as Infinite Wisdom sees good, and what they want in one thing shall be made up in another. What God denies them, He will give them grace to be content without, and then they do not want it, Deut. 3: 26. Paul had all, and abounded, because he was content, Phil. 4: 11, 18. Those that live by faith in God's all-sufficiency, want nothing; for in Him they have enough. They that trust to themselves, and think their own hands sufficient for them, shall want, for bread is not always to the wise; but verily they shall be fed that trust in God, [obey his laws,] and desire to be at his finding. They that are ravenous, and prey on all about them, shall want, but *the meek shall inherit the earth;* they shall not want, who with quiet obedience work, and mind their own business; plain-hearted Jacob has pottage enough, when Esau, the cunning hunter, is ready to perish.

V. 11—22. David, in this latter part of the Ps. undertakes to teach children; though a man of war, and anointed to be king, though now full of cares and business, yet he can find heart and time to counsel young people, from his own experience. It does not appear that he had now any children of his own, at least, any grown up to a capacity of being taught; but, by divine inspiration, he instructs the children of his people. Those that were in years would not be taught by him, though he had offered them his service, 32: 8. but he hopes children and young people will be more tractable; therefore he calls together a congregation of them, *v.* 11. Perhaps he intends especially neglected children; and it is as great a charity to teach children whose parents are not in a capacity to teach them, as to feed children whose parents have not bread for them. Observe, 1. What he expects, attention; '*Hearken unto me.*' 2. What he undertakes to teach—*The fear of the Lord*, inclusive of all the duties of religion. He could have taught music, or war, or politics; but, no; 'I will teach you *the fear of the Lord*, which is better than all the arts and sciences, better than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices. That is it which we should be solicitous both to learn ourselves, and to teach our children.

I. He supposes we all aim to be happy, *v.* 12. *What man is he that desireth life?* that is, as it follows, not only to see many days, but to see good, comfortable days. Surely this must look farther than time and this present world. What man is he that would be eternally happy? Who would? Alas, very few have that in their thoughts; most ask, *Who will show us any good?* But few ask, *What shall we do to inherit eternal life?* This question implies that there are some such.

II. He prescribes the true and only way to happiness, both in this world and that to come, *v.* 13, 14. We must bridle our tongues, and be careful what we say; so great a way does this go in religion, that, *if any offend not in word, the same is a perfect man;* and so little a way does religion

i 5:2. 17:1. 18:6. 55:1,2. 65:24. 66:19. 69:33. 102:17. 116:1,2. 145:19. Is. 30:19. 58:9. 65:24. Jer. 29:12. Dan. 9:20—23. Matt. 7:7—11. Luke 11:9—13. 18:1—8. John 9:31. 1 John 3:22. 5:14,15.

Verse 7.

(*Gen.* 24·2—9.) 'Though God's power be all sufficient, yet for man's infirmity, He appointeth his angels to watch over us.' (*M. R.*) The singular number being here used, many think, with great probability, that Christ 'the great Angel of the covenant' was intended. (*Gen.* 32 30. 48:16. *Ex.* 3:2. *Hos.* 12:3—6. *Mal.* 3:1—4.) SCOTT.

V. 8. *Taste.*] An orientalism still in use. See *Bush's* Illustr. ED.

The apostle applies this v. expressly to Christ. (1 *Pet.* 2:1—3.)—The experience, which faith makes way for, of the Lord's faithfulness and goodness, may be compared to the evidence received by the senses concerning their respective objects. The believer *tastes*, and *sees*, that God is good, as he perceives that honey is sweet, the light pleasant, and the landscape beautiful. This is no longer a matter of reasoning or expectation; but of actual enjoyment, in which he cannot be deceived. (*M. R.*—63:5, 6. 119:103. 1 *John* 1:1—4. 5:9,10.) SCOTT.

Verse 10.

Young lions.] '*Ainsworth* renders it "lurking lions, which are lusty, strong-toothed, fierce, roaring and ravenous. And hereby," says he, "may be meant the *rich* and *mighty* of the *world*, whom God often bringeth to misery." One of Kennicott's MSS. reads *powerful men*, instead of *young, or lurking lions.* The Vulg. Sept. Æthiopic, Syr. and Arab. substantially support this. The Chal. alone is in favor of the common reading.' MORISON.

Verses 11—14.

The Psalmist having addressed 'the saints,' or such as were established in the way of holiness; next exhorts young persons, or new converts, as children, or sons, beloved sons. Youth is the learning and remembering season; what first occupies the mind lasts the longest.—True religion begins in the fear of God, in dread of his anger, and hope and desire of his favor; and it has the promise both of this world and the next. (*M. R.*)—The manner, in which the apostle quotes this passage, demonstrates that such exhortations perfectly coincide with evangelical principles. (1 *Pet.* 3:8—12.) SCOTT.

Verses 15—17.

'The death of martyrs is their deliverance; and the greatest of all deliverances.' Bp. *Horne.* This is true also of the death of every be-

16 [k] The face of the LORD *is* against them that do evil, [l] to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

17 *The righteous* [m] cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

18 The LORD [n] *is* nigh * unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth † such as be of a contrite spirit.

19 [o] Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all

20 [p] He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

21 [q] Evil shall slay the wicked; and they [r] that hate the righteous shall be ‡ desolate.

22 The LORD [s] redeemeth the soul of his servants; and [t] none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.

PSALM XXXV.

David prays that God would fight against his enemies; and anticipates their confusion, and his triumph over them, 1—10. He complains of their calumny, malice, and ingratitude; blending supplications and appeals to God, 11—22. He renews his prayers and predictions, 23—28.

A Psalm of David.

[a] PLEAD *my cause*, O LORD, with them that strive with

k Lev. 17:10. 26:17. Jer. 44:11. Ez. 14:8. Am. 9:4.
l 10:16. Job 18:17. Prov. 10:7. Ec. 8:10. Jer. 17:13.
m 6:15,19. 91:15. 145:18—20. 2 Chr. 32:20,21,24. Acts 12:5—11.
n 75:1. 85:9. 119:151. 145:18. Is. 55:6.
* Heb. *to the broken of heart.* 51:17. 147:3. Is. 61:1. Luke 4:18.
† Heb. *the contrite of spirit.* 2 K. 22:19. Is. 57:15. 66:2. Ez. 36:26,31.
o 71:20. Job 5:19. 30:9,&c. 42:12. Prov. 24:16. John 16:33. Acts 14:22. 2 Cor. 4:7—12,17. 11:23—27. 1 Thes. 3:3,4. 2 Tim. 3:11,12. Heb. 11:33—38. Jam. 5:10,11. 1 Pet. 4:12,13. Rev. 7:14—17.
p 35:10. 91:12. Dan. 6:22—24. John 19:36.
q 37:30—40. 94:23. Is. 3:11.
r 37:12—15. 40:15. 89:23. 1 Sam. 19:4,5. 31:4. 1 K. 22:8,37. Luke 19:14,27,41—44. John 7:7. 15:18—23. 1 Thes. 2:15,16. 2 Thes. 1:6—9.
‡ Or, *guilty.* Ex. 20:7.
s 31:5. 71:23. 103:4. 130:8. Gen. 48:16. 2 Sam. 4:9. 1 K. 1:29. Lam. 3:58. 1 Pet. 1:18,19. Rev 5:9.
t 9:9,10. John 10:27—29. Rom. 8:31—39. 1 Pet. 1:5.
a 43:1. 119:154. 1 Sam. 24:15. Prov. 22:23. 23:11. Jer. 51:36. Lam. 3:58. Mic. 7:9.

go without this, that it is said, of him who *bridles not his tongue, His religion is vain.* We must be upright and sincere, not double-tongued; our words must be the indications of our minds; our lips must be kept from speaking guile either to God or man. We must leave all our sins, and depart from evil, evil works and evil workers; nay, not only depart from evil, but do good; good for ourselves, especially for our souls, and, as we have ability and opportunity, to others also. Because nothing is more contrary to that love which never fails, which is the summary both of law and gospel, than strife and contention, which bring confusion and every evil work; we must seek peace and pursue it; show a peaceable disposition, study the things that make for peace, do nothing to break the peace, and to make mischief. If peace seem to flee from us, we must pursue it; spare no pains, no expense, to preserve and recover it, be willing to deny ourselves a great deal, both in honor and interest, for peace-sake. These excellent directions in the way to life and good, are transcribed into the N. T. and made part of our gospel-duty, 1 Pet. 3: 10, 11. And perhaps David, in warning us that we speak no guile, reflects on his own sin, in changing his behavior. They that truly repent of what they have done amiss, will warn others to take heed of doing likewise.

III. He enforces these directions, by setting before us the happiness of the godly in the love and favor of God, and the miserable state of the wicked under his displeasure. Here are life and death, good and evil, the blessing and the curse, plainly stated before us, that we may choose life, and live. See Isa. 3: 10, 11. It is very well observed by Dr. Hammond, that the evil here, which slays the wicked, (*v.* 21.) is the same word, in the singular number, that is used, *v.* 19. for the afflictions of the righteous, to intimate that godly people have many troubles; which yet do them no hurt, but are made to work for good to them; whereas, wicked people have fewer troubles, perhaps but one, and yet that one may prove their utter ruin. One trouble, with a curse in it, kills and slays; but many, with a blessing in them, are harmless, nay, gainful. The wicked often hate the righteous, name and thing; but shall be desolate, condemned as guilty, and laid waste for ever, forsaken and abandoned of God, and all good angels, and men; and those that are so are desolate indeed.

Yet, *say to the righteous, it shall be well with them;* all good people are under God's special favor and protection. We are here assured of that, under a great variety of instances and expressions, *v.* 15. to direct and guide them, to protect and keep them. Parents that are very fond of a child, will not let it be out of their sight; none of God's children are ever from under his complacent, tender eye. *v.* 15. *His ears are open to their prayers, v.* 16 open to them, as the tender mother's to the cry of her nursing child, which another would not notice, *v.* 17. This intimates the constant practice of good people, when in distress, to cry unto God, and their constant comfort that God hears them: *He is nigh* for relief *to them that are of a broken heart, and saves them, v.* 18. Note, Here we have the character of the righteous, whose prayers God will hear; they are of a broken heart and a contrite spirit, i. e. humbled for sin, and emptied of self; low in their own eyes, and have no confidence in their own merit and sufficiency, but in God only. Those who are so have God nigh unto them, to comfort and support them, that the spirit may not be broken, more than is meet, lest it should fail before Him. See Is. 57: 15.

They are taken under the special protection of the divine government, *v.* 20. *He keepeth all his bones;* not only his soul, but his body; not only his body in general, but every bone in it, *not one of them is broken.* One would not expect to meet with any thing of Christ here, yet this Scripture is said to be fulfilled in Him, John 19: 36. and the promises being made good to Christ, through Him, are sure to all the seed.

They are, and shall be, delivered out of their troubles. It is supposed they have their share, perhaps a greater share than others. In the world they must have tribulation, that they may be conformed both to the will of God, and to the example of Christ; *v.* 19. their God loves them, and therefore corrects them, so that, between the mercy of Heaven, and the malice of hell, their afflictions must needs be many. But God has engaged for their deliverance and salvation, *v.* 17, 19. He saves them, *v.* 18, 22. Whatever troubles befall them, they shall not hurt their better part. *The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants,* 49: 15. He keeps them from sinning in trouble, which is the only mischief, and keeps them from despair, and from being put out of possession of their own souls Troubles shall not hinder their everlasting bliss; *none that trust in Him shall be desolate;* no man is desolate, but he whom God has forsaken, nor any undone till he is in hell. God's faithful [obedient] servants are safe, and shall be happy.

In singing these vs. let us be confirmed in the choice we have made of God, quickened in his

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is our duty to 'bless the Lord at all times,' in pain, sickness, poverty, persecution, and even in the agonies of death.—It encourages the humble believer, and silences the proud Pharisee, when the servants of God are enabled to rejoice, and make their boast in Him, under circumstances of [trial,] extreme danger, and the deepest distress: and if our faith were strong, we might thus call on all around us to magnify and exalt our God with us, extolling his glorious excellences, and celebrating the praises of his abundant mercy. — But we should especially look to Him, 'who, though He was rich, for our sakes became poor;' and remember how He suffered, and how He is glorified, in order to save all that trust in Him.—They must be safe and happy, 'who fear the LORD.' Oh, that sinners would but make trial of his love! But even the saints need exhortations to the reverential fear of God: the more humbly and obediently they walk with Him, the happier they are. Let then all, who have themselves 'tasted that the Lord is gracious,' take delight in leading others, and especially the young, into these happy ways: by no means thinking the instruction even of little children beneath them. Let young persons set out in life with learning the fear of the Lord, if they desire true comfort here, and eternal happiness hereafter; for they are the happiest, who begin the soonest to serve so good a Master.—Nothing is more essential to true godliness, than a *contrite* heart, broken off from every kind of self-confidence and self-preference, and crushed down into the dust of self-abasement [before God]: in this soil every grace flourishes; and to this contrite person nothing can give encouragement, but the free mercy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. SCOTT.

liever, by whatever means effected: then 'the LORD delivers him out of all his troubles.' SCOTT.

Verse 18.

The 'broken in heart' and 'contrite in spirit,' in the language of Scripture, are not those who, being weighed down by sorrows and sufferings, through impatience and despondency sink under them; but such as are broken-hearted under a sense of their sins, and led to renounce all self-confidence. Their hearts, naturally stout, hard, and unfeeling, are humbled, softened, and made sensibly alive to the feelings of remorse, fear, shame, godly sorrow, and self-abhorrence. Their self-will also is subdued; they submit to God without plea or hope, save in his mercy and grace. They are prepared to welcome his Gospel, and exclusively possess its blessings. (51:17. *Is.* 57:15,16. 66:1,2. *Ez.* 11:17—20. 36:25—27.) ID.

Verses 21, 22.

'Desolation' means *utter destruction*, whether of nations as such, or of individuals. The desolation of the several kingdoms, which have persecuted the church, and that of the Jews who crucified the Savior, 'hating that righteous One,' with the preservation ensured to true Christians, form a striking exposition of these vs. (*M. R.*—37:10—15. 40:13—16. *Rom.* 8:28—37. 1 *Thes.* 2:13—16. 2 *Thes.* 1:5—12. *Rev.* 20:11—15.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. XXXV. Most interpreters agree, with *Henry* and *Scott*, in referring this Ps. to the time of David's persecution from Saul, and *Rosenm.* among others evidently inclines to this; but *Rudinger*, in *Rosenm.* does not doubt it should be referred to the time of David's trouble from Absalom, and thinks that Ahithophel, Shimei, Mephibosheth, &c. are

me; [b] fight against them that fight against me.

2 [c] Take hold of shield and buckler and stand up for mine help.

3 Draw out also the spear, and [d] stop *the way* against them that persecute me: [e] say unto my soul, I *am* thy Salvation.

4 [f] Let them be confounded and put to shame [g] that seek after my soul: let them be [h] turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.

5 Let them be [i] as chaff before the wind: [k] and let the angel of the LORD chase *them.*

6 [l] Let their way be [m] dark and slippery; and let the angel of the LORD persecute them.

7 For [n] without cause have they [o] hid for me their net *in* a pit, *which* without cause they have digged for my soul.

8 [p] Let destruction come upon him [†] at unawares; and [q] let his net that he hath hid catch himself: [r] into that very destruction let him fall.

[b] Ex. 14:25. Josh. 10:42. Neh. 4:20. Acts 5:39. 23:9.
[c] 7:12 '3. Ex. 15:3. Deut. 32:41,42. Is. 13:5. 42:13.
[d] 27:2. 76:10. 1 Sam. 23:26,27. Job 1:10. Is. 8:9,10. 10:12. Acts 4:28.
[e] 51:12. 62:7. 91:16. Gen. 15:1. Is. 12:2. Luke 2:30.
[f] 26. 31:17,18. 40:14,15. 70:2,3.
[g] 38:12. 1 Sam. 23:23. 1 K. 19:10. Est. 13:19. Matt. 27:1.
[h] 129:5. Is. 37:29. Jer. 46:5. John 18:6.
[i] 1:4. 83:13—17. Job 21:18. Is. 17:13. 29:5. Hos. 13:3.
[k] Ex. 14:19. Is. 37:36. Acts 12:23. Heb. 11:28.
[l] 73:18. Prov. 4:19. Jer. 13:16. 23:12.
[*] Heb. *darkness and slipperiness.*
[m] 7:3—5. 25:3. 64:4. John 15:25.
[n] 9:15. 119:85. 140:5. Job 18:8.
[o] 64:7. 73:18—20. Prov. 29:1. Luke 21:34. 1 Thes. 5:3.
[†] Heb. which *he knoweth not of.*
[p] 7:15,16. 57:6. 141:9,10. Prov. 5:22.
[q] 1 Sam. 18:17. 31:2—4. 2 Sam. 17:2—4,23. 18:14,15. Esth. 7:10. Matt. 27:3—5.

service, and greatly encouraged by his assurances.

Ps. XXXV. David, in this Ps. appeals to the righteous Judge of heaven and earth, against his enemies, that hated and persecuted him. It is supposed Saul and his party are the persons meant, for with them he had the greatest struggles. In singing this, and praying over it, we must take heed of applying it to any little peevish quarrels and enmities of our own, and of expressing by it any uncharitable, revengeful resentments of injuries done to us; for Christ has taught us to forgive our enemies, and not to pray against them, but to pray for them, as He did; but, 1. We may comfort ourselves with the testimony of our consciences, concerning our innocency, with reference to those that are any way injurious to us, and with hopes that God will, in his own way, and time, right us, and, in the meantime, support us. 2. We ought to apply it to the public enemies of Christ, and his kingdom, typified by David and his kingdom, to resent the indignities done to Christ's honor, to pray to God to plead the just and injured cause of Christianity and serious godliness, and to believe that God will, in due time, glorify his own name in the ruin of all the irreconcilable enemies of his church, that will not repent, to give Him glory.

V. 1—10. In these vs. we have,

I. David's representation of his case to God, setting forth the restless, unwearied rage and malice of his persecutors; no less than his life, (*v.* 4.) would satisfy their bloody minds; they treated him as a dangerous beast of prey, digged a pit for him, and laid a net in it, *v.* 7. Saul, especially, was too strong for him, *v.* 10. having the army at his command, and carrying, not a sceptre, but a javelin, in his hand, to cast at any man that stood in his way; such was the manner of the king, and all about him were compelled to do as he bade them, right or wrong: comp. Saul's power, 1 Sam. 22: 7. with David's, 1 Sam. 22: 2. If the kings of the earth set themselves against the Lord and his Anointed, who can contend with them? Note, It is no new thing, for the most righteous men, and the most righteous cause, to meet with many mighty and malicious enemies: Christ Himself is striven with, and fought against, and war is made upon the holy seed; nor are we to marvel; it is a fruit of the old enmity in the seed of the serpent, against the seed of the woman.

II. His appeal to God concerning his integrity, and the justice of his cause. If a fellow subject had wronged him, he might have appealed to his prince, as Paul to Cæsar; but when his prince wronged him, he appealed to his God, who is Prince and Judge of the kings of the earth, *v.* 1. Note, A righteous cause may, with the greatest satisfaction imaginable, be laid before a righteous God. It will be a comfort to us, when men do us wrong, if our consciences can witness for us, that we have never done them any. It was so to Paul, Acts 25: 10. We are apt to justify our uneasiness at the injuries men do us by this, That we never gave them any cause; whereas this should, more than any thing, make us easy, for then we may the more confidently expect God will plead our cause.

III. His prayer to God to manifest Himself both for him, and to him, in this trial. 1. *For* him, *v.* 1, 2. This prayer we may put up against our persecutors, that God would restrain them, and stop their way. 2. *To* him; '*Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation;* let me have inward comfort under all these outward troubles, to support my soul. Let God be my salvation, not only my Savior out of my present troubles, but my everlasting Bliss. And let me have the comfortable assurance of it in my own breast.' If God, by his Spirit, witness to our spirits, that He is our Salvation, we have enough, we need no more, to make us happy; and this is a powerful support in persecution.

IV. His prospect of the destruction of his enemies, which he prays for, not in malice or revenge; he who was so meek as to bear Shimei's curses, cannot be supposed to give vent to any intemperate heat or passion in his devotion; but, by the spirit of prophecy, he foretells the just judgments of God, that would come on them for their great wickedness, their malice, cruelty, and perfidiousness, and especially their enmity to the counsels of God, the interests of religion, and that reformation they knew David, if ever he had power, would be an instrument of. They seemed to be hardened in their sins, and to be of the number of those who have sinned unto death, and are not to be prayed for, Jer. 7: 16. 11: 14. 14: 11. 1 John 5: 16. As for Saul himself, David, it is probable, knew God had rejected him, and forbidden Samuel to mourn for him, 1 Sam. 16: 1. And these predictions look further, and read the doom of the enemies of Christ and his kingdom, as appears by comp. Rom. 11: 9, 10.

He here prays, 1. Against his many enemies, *v.* 4—6. *Let them be confounded, &c.* Or, as Hammond reads it, *They shall be confounded, they shall be turned back.* This may be taken as a prayer for their repentance, for all penitents are put to shame for their sins; turned back from them; or, that they might be defeated and disappointed in their designs against him, and so put to shame. Their way shall be *dark and slippery*, so the way of sinners is, and it will prove so at last, for *their foot shall slide in due time*, Deut. 32: 35. But this is not the worst; it is here foretold, the angel of the Lord shall chase them, *v.* 5. so that they shall find no rest; shall persecute them, *v.* 6. so that they cannot possibly escape the pit of destruction. God's angels encamp about them that fear him, and against them that fight against Him. They are the ministers of his justice, as well as of his mercy. 2. Against his one mighty enemy, *v.* 8. *Let destruction come upon him:* probably he means Saul. David vowed, his hand should not be upon him, he would not be judge in his own cause; but, at the same time, he foretold that *the Lord*

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the persons against whom he prays and offers his complaints.—The Syr. regards it as written on occasion of the attack of the Idumeans upon David, and the Arab. contemplates it as a prophecy of the incarnation. Others, as *Morison*, think there is nothing in the Ps. which may not have been applicable to David in the persecuting scenes through which he passed. Bp. *Horsley* thinks our Lord's sufferings are particularly pointed at in some passages, which, he says, can apply to no one else so literally and exactly. ED.

Verses 1—3.

This Ps. we are sufficiently informed by the matter of it, was penned by David, when he was fiercely persecuted by Saul.' *Patrick.*—The Psalmist, too, was led by the Holy Spirit, to speak of his own case in language, which was more emphatically applicable to the divine Savior, and to his sufferings.—'Albeit God can with his breath [will] destroy all his enemies; yet the Holy Ghost attributeth unto Him these outward weapons, to assure us of his present power;' [nor can we, in speaking of God, avoid some form of what modern theology terms anthropomorphism; especially was it necessary for the dull age of animalism in which David wrote. The abuses of this necessity are rife in all ages. The most enlightened, even, are prone to think God is too much like themselves. ED.]—SCOTT. 'The language of war is here employed because of the actual circumstances of the suppliant.' MORISON.

(3.) *Draw out the spear, &c.*] *Notes, Ex.* 15:3. *Josh.* 5:13—15.—*Say, &c.*] 'Assure me, against these temptations, that thou art the Author of my salvation.' SCOTT.

Verses 4—9.

All the verbs, in these vs. in the original, are in the *future*, as *a prediction*; though they stand in most translations and paraphrases, ancient and modern, in the *imperative*, as *an imprecation.* No doubt, there are many instances, in which such denunciations stand in the form of petitions; and, considered as the language of inspired men, respecting the inveterate enemies of God, and Christ, and religion, no reasonable objection can be made against them.—It is not however desirable, to understand any passages in this sense, which more obviously express one of more general application. The vs. under consideration are simply a prediction, that David's enemies would, by their unprovoked, assiduous, and crafty devices to take away his life, bring on themselves the deepest infamy, along with unexpected and inevitable ruin; and that his trials would terminate in thanksgiving and rejoicing. (25—28. 5:10,11.)—(*Note*, 7:14—16.) In like manner, [as Saul,] Ahithophel and Absalom brought ruin on themselves by their counsel against David; (2 *Sam.* 15:31. 16:20—23. 17:1—14,23. 18:9—14.) and so did Judas, and the Jewish rulers, and the nation, by opposing Christ; of whom David, in this Ps. especially, seems to have spoken, as a type or representative. Indeed, the whole Scripture predicts the final ruin of all the impenitent enemies of God and religion, and that of Satan, their great leader: (*Rev.* 19:17—21. 20:1—3, 7—10.) and the intercession of Christ, the prayers of his church, and the ministration of angels, while they tend to complete the salvation and joy of his people, concur in accomplishing the prophecies which foretell the destruction of his enemies.—'A traveller, benighted in a bad road, is an expressive

9 And [x] my soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation.

10 [*] All my bones shall say, LORD, [t] who *is* like unto thee, [u] which deliverest the poor from him that is [x] too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?

11 [*] False witnesses did rise up; they † laid to my charge *things* that I knew not.

12 [y] They rewarded me evil for good, *to* the ‡ spoiling of my soul.

13 But as for me, [z] when they were sick, my clothing *was* sackcloth: I § humbled my soul with fasting; and [a] my prayer returned into mine own bosom.

14 I ‖ behaved myself as though *he had been* my friend *or* brother: [b] I bowed down heavily, [c] as one that mourneth *for his* mother.

15 But [d] in mine ¶ adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: *yea*, [e] the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and [f] I knew *it* not; they did tear *me*, and ceased not:

- 13:5. 21:1. 33:21. 48:11. 58:10,11. 68:1—3. 1 Sam. 2:1. Is. 61:10. Hab. 3:18. Luke 1:46,47. Gal. 5:22. Phil. 3:1—3.
- [t] 22:14. 32:3. 34:20. 38:3. 51:8. 102: 3. Job 33:19—25. 71:19. 86:8. 89:6—9. Ex. 15:11. Is. 40:18,25. Jer. 10:7.
- [u] 10:14. 22:24. 34:6. 69:33. 102:17—20. 109:31. 140:12. Job 5:15,16. Prov. 22:22,23.
- [x] 18:17.
- [*] Heb. *Witnesses of wrong.* 27:12. 1 Sam. 24:9. 25:10. Matt. 26:59,60. Acts 6:13. 24:5,6,12,13.
- † Heb. *asked me.*
- [y] 38:20. 109:4,5. 1 Sam. 19:4,5,15. 22: 13,14. Prov. 17:13. Jer. 18:20. John 10:32.
- ‡ Heb. *depriving.* 1 Sam. 20:31—33. Luke 23:21—23.
- [z] 69:10,11. Job 30:25. Matt. 5:44. Rom. 12:14,15.
- § Or, *afflicted.* Lev. 16:29,31. 1 K. 21:27—29. Is. 58:3,5. Matt. 9:14,15.
- [a] Matt. 10:13. Luke 10:6.
- ‖ Heb. *walked, as a friend, as a brother to me.*
- [b] 2 Sam. 1:11,12,17,&c. Luke 19:41,42.
- [c] Gen. 24:67.
- [d] 25.26. 41:8. 71:10,11. Job 31:29. Prov. 17:5. 24:17,18.
- ¶ Heb. *halting.* 38:17. Jer. 20:10. 1 Cor. 13:6.
- [e] 22:16. 69:12. Job 30:1—11. Matt. 27:27—30,39—44. Mark 14:65. Acts 17:5.
- [f] 8. *Marg.*
- [g] 7:2. 57:4.

would smite him, 1 Sam. 26: 10. and here, that the net he had hid should catch himself; which was remarkably fulfilled in Saul's ruin, for, having laid a plot to make David *fall by the hand of the Philistines*, 1 Sam. 18: 25. under pretence of doing him honor, in that very net was he himself taken, when his day came to fall.

V. His prospect of deliverance, which, having committed his cause to God, he did not doubt, *v.* 9, 10. 1. He hoped for the comfort of it; '*My soul shall be joyful*, not in mine own ease and safety, but in the Lord:' Joy in God, and in his salvation, is the only true, solid, satisfying joy. The sorrowful, who sorrow after a godly sort, shall in due time be joyful in the Lord. 2. He promised that then God should have the glory of it, *v.* 10. He will praise God with the whole man; praise Him as one of peerless and unparalleled perfection. Our formation so wonderful, so curious, Eccl. 11: 5. Ps. 139: 16. the serviceableness of our bones, and their preservation, constant renewal, and especially the life which we shall receive, at the resurrection, oblige every bone in our bodies, if it could speak, to say, *Lord, who is like Thee?* and willingly to undergo any services or sufferings for Him.

V. 11—16. Two very wicked things David here lays to the charge of his enemies, to make good his appeal to God against them; perjury and ingratitude.

I. Perjury, *v.* 11. *False witnesses did rise up*, who would swear any thing; *they laid to my charge things that I knew not*, nor ever thought of. Something of this kind may have taken place, when Saul wished to convict David of treason. See how much the honors, estates, liberties, and lives, even of the best men, lie at the mercy of the worst. This instance was typical, and had its accomplishment in the Son of David, against whom false witnesses did arise, Matt. 26: 60. If at any time charged with what we are innocent of, let us not think it strange, or new; so persecuted they the prophets, even the great Prophet.

II. Ingratitude. Call a man ungrateful, and you can call him no worse; David's enemies, *v.* 12. *rewarded evil for good.* Much good service he had done his king, witness his harp, Goliath's sword, the trophies from the Philistines. This is *to the spoiling of his soul;* this base, unkind usage robs him of his comfort, and cuts him to his heart, more than any thing else. He had not only deserved well of the public, but of those particular persons now most bitter against him. Probably, it was then well known whom he meant, it may be Saul himself for one; to others also of the courtiers, it is likely, he had showed his respect, while he lived at court, who now were most abusive. Herein he was a type of Christ, to whom this wicked world was very ungrateful, John 10: 32

1. David here shows, how much, when they were sick, he mourned for them, and sympathized with them in their grief. David was a man of war, and of a bold, stout spirit, yet was thus susceptible of the impressions of sympathy, love and pity; it was a rare composition of hardiness and tenderness, courage and compassion, in the same breast. Observe, He took on as for a brother or mother; which intimates our duty, to lay to heart the sickness, and sorrow, and death, of our near relations. Those that do not, are justly stigmatized as without natural affection. He prayed for them; he discovered not only the tender affection of a man, but the pious affection of a saint. He was concerned for their precious souls. With his prayers he joined humiliation and self-affliction; we ought to mourn for the sins of those that do not mourn for themselves. His fasting also put an edge on his praying, and was an expression of its fervor; he was so intent in his devotions, that he had no appetite to meat, nor would allow himself time for eating. '*My prayer returned into mine own bosom;* I had the comfort of having done my duty, and of having approved myself a loving neighbor, though I could not thereby win on them, nor make them my friends.' We shall not lose by the good offices we have done to any, how ungrateful soever they are, for our rejoicing will be this, *the testimony of our conscience*

2. How basely and insolently, and with what a brutish enmity, and worse than brutish, they had carried it toward him, *v.* 15, 16. When he was banished the court, and persecuted as a criminal, they were pleased, and got together in their drunken clubs to make themselves merry with the disgrace of this great favorite. Well might he call them *abjects*, for nothing could be more vile and sordid, than to triumph in the fall of a man of such unstained honor, and consummate virtue. But this was not all; They tore him, rent his good name without mercy, said all the ill they could of him; *They gnashed on him with their teeth;* they never spoke of him but with the greatest indignation imaginable, as those that would have eaten him up, if they could. David was the fool in the play, and his disappointment the table-talk of the hypocritical mockers at feasts, the song of the drunkards, the comedians, whose comedies, it is likely, were acted at feasts, while the auditory, in token of their agreement with the plot, hummed. The apostles were made a spectacle to the world. David was looked upon with ill-will, for no other reason, than because he was caressed by the people. It is a vexation of spirit which

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emblem of a sinner walking in the slippery and dangerous ways of temptation; . . . whilst an enemy is in pursuit of him, whom he can neither resist nor avoid.' Bp. *Horne.* SCOTT.

(5.) *Chaff.*] The manner, (as *Rosenm.* remarks,) in the E. was to thresh with an instrument [cut, Is. 28:27. comp. 41:15, 16.] which cut the straw fine, the chaff and grain being then thrown up into the wind, with a broad shovel; the grain falls and the chaff is driven away. ED.

(7.) *Net in a pit.*] 'This alludes to the custom of digging pits, and putting nets in them, covered with straw, &c. to catch wild beasts.' BURDER.

Verse 10.

(*M. R.* s.) Christ was raised from the dead, and not one of his bones was broken; every member of his mystical body shall be forthcoming at the general resurrection; and every believer now has, and shall then have, cause to praise the Lord for taking care of his soul and body, in every part, and in all respects. (22:16—18. 34:19, 20.)—Saul was too powerful for David in his poor and destitute condition; Christ was made poor, and a man of sorrows, and had no armed force to oppose to the power of the Jews and Romans; and Satan and other enemies are too strong for the afflicted and humble believer. SCOTT.

Verses 11, 12.

This was far more emphatically accomplished in the great Antitype. (*M. R.*) ID.

Verses 13, 14.

The nature of *fasting*, as an occasional, voluntary act of self-abasement, submission to God under adverse dispensations, sorrow for sin as the cause of sufferings, and [healthful] self-discipline in order to self-government, is illustrated by the expression, 'I humbled,' or afflicted, or chastened, 'myself with fasting.' (*Lev.* 16:29—31. *Matt.* 9:14, 15. *P. O.* 9—17.) [See *Lloyd* on rel. Fasting.] SCOTT

(15.) *Returned*, &c.] The original is *future*; '*shall* return:' and as David was still conflicting with trials, and anticipating deliverance, the future best suits his case.—He thus mourned over the afflictions of Saul and of Israel, with fasting and prayer: and Christ wept over Jerusalem, and fasted, prayed, and suffered for sinners, as for a friend, a brother, or a parent; and He prayed for his crucifiers, when about to expire amidst their cruelty and contempt! SCOTT.—*My prayer returned into mine own bosom.*] 'I. e. 1. I frequently, daily, fasted and prayed for them in secret, and with sincere affection: so what is said to be done *in the bosom*, is spoken of, see Num. 11:12. Ps. 89:50. Prov. 21:14. Or, 2. (which seems to be the truest sense,) Let it return upon myself; let the all-seeing, heart-searching God grant to me, when I come into their circumstances, the same things, good or evil, that I have begged for them. This sense agrees with the most common use of the phrase, where whatever is paid to a man, is said to be rendered into his bosom.' POOLE.—May it not allude merely to the peculiarly suppliant posture (bending the head into the bosom, as is an ancient and modern oriental custom) of ardent, importunate, long-continued, prayer. ED.

Verses 15, 16.

All this was far more emphatically true of Christ, and the treatment He met from the hypocritical Jews, and from the most abject persons, not excepting the crucified malefactors who reviled Him on the cross. (*Is.* 53:2, 3. *Matt.* 26:63—68. 27:27—31, 39—44.)—The hypocritical priests, and scribes, who mocked Jesus, were at the same time keeping the feast of unleavened bread. SCOTT

(16.) *Wilkinson* states, that the ancient Egyptians were entertained

16 With [h] hypocritical mockers in feasts, they [i] gnashed upon me with their teeth.

17 LORD, [k] how long wilt thou [l] look on? [m] rescue my soul from their destructions, my * darling from the lions.

18 [n] I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: [o] I will praise thee among † much people.

19 [p] Let not them that are mine enemies ‡ wrongfully rejoice over me; *neither* let them [q] wink with the eye, [r] that hate me without a cause.

20 For [s] they speak not peace: but [t] they devise deceitful matters against *them that are* [u] quiet in the land.

21 Yea, [x] they opened their mouth wide against me; *and* said, [y] Aha, aha, our eye hath seen *it*.

22 *This* [z] thou hast seen, O LORD: [a] keep not silence: O LORD, [b] be not far from me.

23 [c] Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, *even* unto my cause, [d] my God and my LORD.

24 [e] Judge me, O LORD my God, according to thy righteousness; [f] and let them not rejoice over me.

25 Let them not [g] say in their hearts, § Ah, [h] so would we have it: let them not say, [i] We have swallowed him up.

26 [k] Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together, that rejoice at mine hurt: [l] let them be clothed with shame and dishonor, [m] that magnify *themselves* against me.

27 [n] Let them shout for joy and be glad, that favor my ‖ righteous cause: yea, [o] let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, [p] which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.

attends even a right work, that *for this a man is envied of his neighbor*, Eccl. 4: 4. And *who can stand before envy?* Prov. 27: 4.

V. 17—28. In these verses, as before,

I. David describes the great injustice, malice, and insolence, of his persecutors, pleading this with God, as a reason why He should protect him from them, and appear against them. 1. They were very unrighteous; *hated him without a cause;* nay, for that for which they ought rather to have loved and honored him. This is quoted with application to Christ, and is said to be fulfilled in Him, John 15: 25. 2. They were very rude; could not find in their hearts to show him common civility; like Joseph's brethren, that could not *speak peaceably to him.* 3. They were very proud and scornful, *v.* 21. They shouted and huzzaed when they saw his fall; they bawled after him, when he was forced to quit the court, 'Aha, aha, this is the day we longed to see.' 4. They were very barbarous and base, and trampled on him when down, *v.* 26. Thus, when the Son of David was run upon by the rulers, the fickle people cried, *Crucify Him, crucify Him.* 5. They set themselves against all the sober, good people that adhered to David, *v.* 20. *They devised deceitful matters*, to trepan and ruin *them that are quiet in the land.* Note, (1.) It is the character of good people, that they are quiet; live in all dutiful subjection to government and governors, in the Lord, and endeavour, as much as in them lies, to live peaceably with all men, however they have been misrepresented as enemies to Cæsar, and hurtful to kings and provinces. I *am for peace*, 120: 7. (2.) Though the people of God are, and study to be, a quiet people, yet it has been the common practice of their enemies to devise deceitful matters against them, Dan. 6: 4, &c. They that hated David, thought scorn, like Haman, to lay hands on him alone, but contrived to involve all the religious people of the land in the same ruin.

II. He appeals to God against them, the *God to whom vengeance belongs;* appeals to his knowledge, *v.* 22. *This Thou hast seen.* They had falsely accused him, but God, who knows all things, knew he did not falsely accuse them, nor make them worse than really they were. They carried on their plots against him with great secrecy, *v.* 15 He appeals to God's justice, *v.* 23. See this explained by Solomon, 1 K. 8: 31, 32.

III. He prays earnestly to God, to appear graciously for him and his friends, against his and their enemies, that by his providence the struggle might issue to the honor and comfort of David, and to the conviction and confusion of his persecutors.

1. He prays that God would act for him, and not stand by as a spectator, *v.* 17. '*Lord, how long wilt Thou look on?* how long suffer the wickedness of the wicked? It is my soul that is in danger, Lord, rescue it; it is thine, save it! *Lord, keep not silence*, as if thou didst consent to what is done against me! *Lord, be not far from me*, *v.* 22 as if I were a stranger that Thou art not concerned for; let not me be beheld afar off, as the proud are.'

2. He prays that his enemies might not have cause to rejoice, *v.* 19. and again, *v.* 24. not so much because it would be a mortification to him to be trampled on by the abjects, but because it would dishonor God, and reproach his confidence in God; harden them in their wickedness, and confirm them in their enmity to Him, and be a great discouragement to all the pious Jews that were friends to his righteous cause. He prays he might never be in such imminent danger, that they should say in their hearts, *Ah, so would we have it*, *v.* 25. much more that he might not be reduced to such extremity, that they should say, *We have swallowed him up.* But, on the contrary, that they might be *ashamed and brought to confusion together*, *v.* 26. as before, *v.* 4. he desires his innocency might be so cleared, and his interest so confirmed, that they might be ashamed of their designs and expectations; either brought to that shame which would be a step to their reformation, or [lasting misery.]

3. He prays that his friends might have cause to rejoice, and give glory to God, *v.* 27. notwithstanding. Note, God has pleasure in the prosperity of good people, both temporal and spiritual, and delights not in their griefs; He does not afflict

h 1 Sam. 26:24,&c. Is. 1:14,15. John 18:28. 1 Cor. 5:8.
i 37:12. Job 16:9. Lam. 2:16. Acts 7:54.
k 6:3. 13:1,2. 74:9,10. 89:46. 94:3,4.
l 10:14. Hab. 1:13.
m 22:20,21. 57:4. 69:14,15. 142:6,7.
* Heb. *only one.*
n 22:22—25. 40:9,10. 69:30—34. 111: 1. 116:14,18. Heb. 2:12.
o 67:1—4. 117: 138:4,5. Rom. 15:9.
† Heb. *strong.* Is. 25:3.
p 15. 13:4. 38:16. John 16:20—22. Rev. 11:7—10.
‡ Heb. *falsely.* 38:19.
q Job 15:12. Prov. 6:13. 10:10.
r 69:4. 109:3. 119:161. 1 Sam. 24:11, 12. Lam. 3:52. John 15:25.
s 120:5—7.
t 31:13. 36:3,4. 38:12. 52:2. 64:4—6. 140:2—5. Jer. 11:19. Dan. 6:5. Matt. 26:4. Acts 23:15. 25:3.
u Matt. 12:19. 1 Pet. 2:22,23.
x 22:13. Is. 9:12. Luke 11:53,54.
y 40:15. 70:3.
z Ex. 3:7. Acts 7:34.
a 28:1. 39:12. 83:1.
b 10:1. 22:11,19. 38:21. 71:12.
c 7:6. 44:23. 80:2. Is. 51:9.
d 89:26. 142:5. John 20:28.
e 7:8. 18:20—24. 26:1. 43:1. 2 Thes. 1:6.
f 19. Job 20:5.
g 28:3. 74:8. Job 1:5. Mark 2:6,8.
§ Heb. *Ah, ah, our soul.*
h 140:8. Ex. 15:9. Matt. 27:43.
i 56:1,2. 57:3. 124:3. 2 Sam. 20:19. Lam. 2:16. 1 Cor. 15:54.
k 4. 40:14,15. 71:13. 129:5. Is. 41: 11. 65:13—15.
l 109:28,29. 132:18. Job 8:22. 1 Pet. 5:5.
m 38:16. 55:12. Job 19:5. Jer. 48:26. Dan. 11:36.
n 40:16. 68:3. 132:9,16. 142:7. Is. 66:10,11. John 16:22. 1 Cor. 12:26.
‖ Heb. *righteousness.*
o 70:4.
p 149:4. Jer. 32:40,41. Zeph. 3:14,17.

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at their feasts, by buffoons. Qu. were these, among the Hebrews, ever masked? *Roberts* says, on Job 16:9,10. (see note there,) that showing, and gnashing the teeth, like a wild beast, is a method of displaying anger still common in the E. May not the verse then allude to pantomimes of mock respect, grimaces, jests and songs of court buffoons, perhaps grotesquely masked, during hours of festal ribaldry, when the worst passions were excited by intemperance? ED.

Verses 17—19.

(22:7—24. The exact agreement of the language used in these vs. with that of the passage referred to, favors the opinion that this Ps. also is a direct prophecy of the Messiah. SCOTT.

(17.) *My soul—my darling.*] 'If *my soul* denotes David's *life*, the *life of his body*; perhaps *my darling* may refer to the *mind*, as in a lonely, afflicted state, suffering grievously from the evil reproaches of men, relentless and powerful as lions. Or, perhaps, the rendering of GREEN may at once obviate all the difficulties. "How long, O Lord, wilt thou look on? Oh rescue my life from their destruction, And my helpless *person* from the lions."' MORISON.

(18.) 'If in this and the preceding vs. there is any distant prophetic allusion to the Messiah, it is more than probable that the scene here anticipated is the triumph of Christianity in the Roman Empire, after the resurrection of Christ, and the outpouring of the Spirit.' MOR. 'Is not this an indirect prediction of the establishment of Christianity among the mighty people—i. e. the Roman Empire?' HORSLEY.

V. 20. 'David would have lived quietly under the government of Saul: our Lord did not aim at temporal sovereignty; . . . nor did the primitive Christians desire to intermeddle with the politics of the world: yet all were betrayed, mocked, and persecuted, as rebels, and usurpers, and the pests of society.' *Bp. Horne.* SCOTT

Verses 21, 22.

They 'boldly accuse me as a traitor, . . . saying, So, so, we have found him out.' *Patrick.*—The appeal to God, the ever present Witness of his conduct, and the prayer grounded on it, have a peculiar energy, when viewed in connection with the preceding v. (40:13—17. *Matt.* 26:63—68.) ID.

(21.) Note, Job 16: 10. 'See that rude fellow who has triumphed over another, he *distends* his *mouth* to the utmost, then claps his hands, and bawls out that most provoking expression, "*Aga! Aga!* I have seen, I have seen."' *Roberts.* ED.

Verses 26—28.

These vs. (24 and 25 remaining in the imperative mood,) may be thus rendered, 'They shall be ashamed and confounded together, who rejoice in my shame. They shall be clothed with shame and dishonor, that magnify themselves against me. They will shout for joy and be glad, that favor my righteous cause, &c.' V. 28 is rendered in the future tense, and the two preceding vs. might, with equal propriety, and perhaps more energy, be tr. in the same manner. The clamor against David, as cursing his enemies, when considered as an objection to the Scriptures, is indeed irrational; for it assumes the point in question, and determines that he spake in his own spirit, and not 'as moved by the Holy Spirit;' yet it is not desirable to give needless occasion even to irrational and impious objections. (*M. R.*)—How applicable is the whole passage to the Savior's sufferings and triumphs, and to their consequences! (41:4—8. 56:1, 2.) SCOTT.

28 And [q] my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness *and* of thy praise all the day long.

PSALM XXXVI.

The corrupt principles and practices of wicked men, 1—4. An admiring view of the mercy and justice of God, and of the felicity of his people, 5—9. David prays for his brethren and himself; and in faith triumphs over the workers of iniquity, 10—12.

To the chief Musician, *A Psalm* of David, [a] the servant of the LORD.

[b] THE transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, *that there is* [c] no fear of God before his eyes.

2 For [d] he flattereth himself in his own eyes, * until his iniquity be found to be hateful.

3 [e] The words of his mouth *are* iniquity and deceit: [f] he hath left off to be wise, *and* to do good.

4 [g] He deviseth † mischief upon his bed; [h] he setteth himself in a way *that is* not good: he [i] abhorreth not evil.

willingly; we ought therefore to have pleasure in, and not envy, their prosperity, but acknowledge it, with thankfulness, to God's praise, saying, *The Lord be magnified.*

Lastly, The mercy he hoped to win by prayer, he promises to wear with praise, *v.* 18. and this, 1. Publicly, as one that took pleasure in owning his obligations; so far from being ashamed of them, he will do it in the great congregation, and among much people, that God might be honored, and many edified. 2. Constantly; he will speak God's praise *every day,* so it may be read, and *all the day long,* for it is a subject that will never be exhausted, no not by the endless praises of saints and angels.

Ps. XXXVI. It is uncertain when, and on what occasion, David penned this Ps. probably when struck at, either by Saul, or Absalom; for in it he complains of his enemies' malice, but triumphs in God's goodness. If, in singing it, our hearts be duly affected with hatred of sin, and satisfaction in God's loving kindness, we sing it with grace and understanding.

V. 1—4. David, in the title, is styled *the servant of the Lord;* why in this, and no other, except in 18. (*title,*) no reason can be given; but so he was, not only as every good man is, but as a king, as a prophet, as one employed in serving the interests of God's kingdom among men, more immediately, and more eminently, than any other in his day. He glories in it, 116: 16. It is the highest preferment a man is capable of in this world.

These vs. describe the wickedness of the wicked, whether his persecutors in particular, or all notorious, gross sinners, in general, is not certain. But we have here sin in its root, and in its branches.

I. The root.

1. Contempt of God, and want of a due regard to Him, *v.* 1. '*The transgression of the wicked,* *v.* 3, 4. makes me to conclude, *that there is no fear of God before his eyes,* for if there were, he would not talk and act as he does. The wicked did not openly renounce the fear of God, but their transgression whispered it secretly to the minds of all that knew any thing of the nature of piety and impiety.

2. Conceit, and a cheat wilfully put on the soul, *v.* 2. While the wicked man goes on in sin, he thinks he does wisely and well for himself, calls evil good, and good evil. If his own conscience threaten him, he says, *God will not require it, I shall have peace though I go on.* Sinners are self-destroyers, by being self-flatterers; Satan could not deceive them, did they not deceive themselves. But the cheat will not last always. Iniquity is a hateful thing; that abominable *thing the Lord hates,* and which his pure and jealous eye cannot endure to look upon; hurtful to the sinner himself, and therefore ought to be hateful, though it is not; yet when conscience is convinced, and sin appears in its true colors, then their iniquity will be found hateful, and their self-flattery their unspeakable folly, and an aggravation of their condemnation.

II. The branches. The sinner defies God, and even defies himself, and then what can be expected, but that he should go all to naught? These two were the first inlets of sin. Men do not fear God, therefore they flatter themselves; and then, 1 They make no conscience of what they say, true or false, right or wrong, *v.* 3. It is no marvel, if those that deceive themselves contrive how to deceive all others; for whom will *they* be true to, that are false to their own souls? 2. What little good there has been in them is gone; they have left off to be wise, and to do good. They that leave off to do good, leave off to be wise. 3. Having left off to do good, they contrive to do hurt, and to be vexatious to those about them that are good, and do good, *v.* 4. *He devises mischief upon his bed.* Note, Omissions make way for commissions; when men leave off their duty to God, the devil easily makes them his agents, to draw those

[q] 50:15. 51:14,15. 71:24. 104:33,34. 145:1,2,5,21.
[a] 18: 90: *titles.* 143:12. Deut. 34:5. 2 Tim. 2:24. Tit. 1:1. Jam. 1:1. 2 Pet. 1:1. Jude 1. Rev. 1:1.
[b] 1 Sam. 15:13,14. Prov. 20:11. Matt. 7:16—20. 12:33,34. Tit. 1:16.
[c] 112:1. Gen. 20:11. Prov. 8:13. 16: 6. Ec. 12:13. Rom. 3:18.
[d] 10:3. 49:18. Deut. 29:19. Jer. 2:23, 34,35. 17:9. Hos. 12:7,8. Luke 10: 29. 16:14,15. Rom. 7:9. 10:3.

* Heb. *to find his iniquity to hate.*
[e] 5:9. 12:2,3. 55:21. 58:3. 140:3. 1 Sam. 18:21. 19:6,7. 26:21. Matt. 22:15—18,35.
[f] 125:5. 1 Sam. 11:6—13. 13:13,14. 15:26. 16:14. Jer. 4:22. Zeph. 1:6. Heb. 10:39. 1 John 2:19.
[g] 38:12. 1 Sam. 19:11. Esth. 5:14. 6: 4. Prov. 4:16. Hos. 7:6,7. Mic. 2: 1. Matt. 27:1. Acts 23:12.

† Or, *vanity.*
[h] Prov. 24:23. Is. 65:2. Jer. 6:16. 8: 6. 9:2—9. Mic. 6:8.
[i] Job 15:16. Am. 5:15. Rom. 1:32. 12:9. Rev. 2:2.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The believer is admitted into a covenant of friendship with his God: and they who strive with him, fight against his omnipotent Ally; whose presence and assistance will effectually defend his servants.—We must not desire the ruin of any enemies, except our lusts, and those evil spirits who would compass our destruction: yet we ought fervently and constantly to pray for the desolation of all the inveterate enemies of Christ our anointed King. Assuredly, they will at length be thrown as chaff into the fire; yea, driven in a dark and slippery path, by the angels of God into the bottomless pit: and their crafty and unwearied enmity, against the Holy Jesus and his harmless followers, will involve them in unexpected and inevitable misery. Let then the persecuted and afflicted believer rejoice in the salvation of the Lord. His preservation is ensured by the Savior's resurrection and exaltation; who will shortly 'change our vile bodies, and make them like his own glorious body,' by his almighty power.—While in faith we anticipate this glorious event of our trials, let us prepare for the cross in this world. When we consider the ingratitude, contempt, and hatred, with which the holy Jesus was treated, in return for his unspeakable love; let us learn to possess our souls in patience and meekness; like Him, let us persevere in praying for our enemies, and attempting to do them good: and acting towards them with compassion and affection, in hopes of 'overcoming evil with good.' And let us chiefly fear lest they should rejoice at beholding us betrayed into sin, and disgracing our profession. Then indeed those, who hate us without cause, would wink with their eyes, encouraging each other's blasphemies; and open wide their mouths to proclaim our infamy, to the reproach of our religion. This the Lord knows, and as his glory is concerned, let us call upon Him, entreating Him not to be far from us; but constantly to uphold us, that Satan and his servants may not thus magnify themselves against us. In all things let us act conscientiously, and leave our cause with God. SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. XXXVI. This Ps., *Rosenm.* remarks, resembles the 12th and 14th, though not synchronical with them. The time and occasion of it seem not to be agreed upon. Most think it was on occasion of Saul's persecution of David, and *Patrick* supposes at the beginning of it. Dr *A. Clarke,* on the other hand, after *Calmet,* supposes it was written during the Babylonish captivity; but *Morison* justly observes, that it is wanting both in the pensiveness and national feeling which run through the ascertained compositions of that interesting period of Jewish history. He thinks it not without reason, therefore, that both the *Syr.* and *Arab.* connect it with the mournful event of Saul's persecution, though the particular occasion or time is not easily determined. Dr. *A. Clarke* says, it is one of the finest Pss. in the whole collection. *Poole* considers it as embracing in its view, not David merely, with Saul and his courtiers, but the state and condition of the world and of the church at that time, in which wickedness of all sorts greatly abounded and seemed to prosper. ED.

Verse 1.

The Ps. seems to have been written, soon after Saul began to show his hatred to David. SCOTT.—'The depravity here represented as uttering a distinct language, must not be supposed, as the text would suggest, to be speaking within the heart of the Psalmist.' MORISON.—But 'the meaning, if the present reading be the true one, must be this—The transgressions of a bad man show plainly, in the apprehension of a good one, that the former is destitute of a true fear of God.' Bp. HORNE. *Morison,* however, remarks, that we may, on the best authority, [that of the Sept. and several of the old trs.] substitute *his* for *my* before heart; and the meaning will be this—'Depravity, or wickedness in the heart of the ungodly, is ready to say, "there is nothing to fear in a course of rebellion against God." And thus it may be truly said, that "God is not before their eyes." ' So he would render it, "Depravity said to the wicked, within his heart. There is no fear: God is not before his eyes." ' ED.

Verse 2.

Thus Saul's self-flattery kept him from being aware of the malignity of his conduct, till he became odious in the open view of mankind. (1 *Sam.* 15:13—28. 22:6—19. 1 *Chr.* 10:13, 14.) SCOTT.

Verses 3, 4.

Saul, in the beginning of his reign, behaved wisely, and performed good services to his people: but he soon began to act foolishly, and to disobey God; and at length he entirely ceased to use his understanding to do good. (1 *Sam.* 11: 28:3—10.) He became a treacherous and cruel persecutor of David: and while he perhaps ascribed his conduct in throwing his javelin at him, to a sudden paroxysm of disease; David was aware that he most deliberately, and in his retired hours, plotted his destruction; and had no aversion in his heart to any wickedness, however abominable, though he tried to cloke his malice by plausible professions. (*M. R.*) ID.

5 [k] Thy mercy, O LORD, *is* in the heavens, *and* [l] thy faithfulness *reacheth* unto the clouds.

6 [m] Thy righteousness *is* like the * great mountains; [n] thy judgments *are* a great deep: O LORD, [o] thou preservest man and beast.

7 [p] How † excellent *is* thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men [q] put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

8 They shall be [r] abundantly ‡ satisfied with the fatness of thy house; [s] and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.

9 For [t] with thee *is* the fountain of life: [u] in thy light shall we see light.

10 O § continue thy loving-kindness unto them [x] that know thee; [y] and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.

11 [z] Let not the foot of pride come against me, and [a] let not the hand of the wicked remove me.

12 [b] There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, [c] and shall not be able to rise.

k 52:1. 57:10. 103:11. 108:4. Is. 55:7—9.
l 89:2. 92:2. 100:5. Matt. 24:35. Heb. 6:18—20.
m 71:19. 97:2. 145:17. Gen. 18:25 Deut. 32:4. Is. 45:19,21—24. Rom. 3:25.
* Heb. *mountains of God.* Ex. 9:28. 1 Sam. 14:15. *margins.*
n 77:19. 92:5. Job 11:7—9. 37:23. Is. 40:28. Jer. 12:1. Matt. 11:25,26. Rom. 11:33.
o 104:14,&c. 145:9. 147:9. Job 7:20. Jon. 4:11. Matt. 10:29,30. 1 Tim. 4:10.
p 31:19. 86:5,15. 145:7,8. Ex. 34:6. John 3:16. 1 John 3:1. 4:9,10.
† Heb. *precious.* 139:17. 1 Pet. 2:6,7. 2 Pet. 1:4.
q 17:8. 57:1. 63:7. 91:4. Ruth 2:12. Luke 13:34.
r 16:11. 17:15. 63:5. Cant. 5:1. Is. 25:6. 55:1,2. Jer. 31:12—14. Zech. 9:17. Matt. 5:6. John 7:37.
‡ Heb. *watered.* Is. 58:11.
s 45:4. Is. 43:20. 43:21. Rev. 22:1.
t Is. 12:3. Jer. 2:13. John 4:10,14. 7:37—39. Rev. 21:6. 22:17.
u 27:1. Job 29:3. Prov. 4:18. Is. 2:5. 60:1,2,19. Mal. 4:2. John 1:8,9. 8:12. Jam. 1:17. 1 Pet. 2:9. 1 John 1:7. Rev. 21:23.
§ Heb. *draw out at length.* 103:17. Jer. 31:3. John 15:9,10. 1 Pet. 1:5.
x 9:10. Jer. 22:16. 24:7. John 17:3. Heb. 8:11.
y 7:8—10. 18:24,25. 94:14,15. 97:10, 11. 143:1,2. Is. 51:6—8. 2 Tim. 4:7,8.
z 10:2. 12:3—5. 119:51,69,85,122. 123: 3,4. Job 40:11,12. Is. 51:23. Dan. 4:37.
a 16:8. 17:8—14. 21:7,8. 62:6. 125: 1—3. Rom. 8:35—39.
b 9:16. 55:23. 58:10,11. 64:7—9. Judg. 5:31. 2 Thes. 1:8,9. Rev. 15:4. 19: 1—6.
c 1:5. 18:38. Jer. 51:64.

that will be drawn, into sin, and with respect to those that will not, to draw them into trouble. It is bad to do mischief, but worse to devise it, to do it deliberately and with resolution, with plot and management; with the subtlety, as well as the malice, of the old serpent; to devise it on the bed, where we should be meditating on God and his Word, Mic. 2: 1. This argues the sinner's heart fully set in him to do evil. 4. Having entered the way of sin, they persist in it. 5. Doing evil themselves, they have no dislike at all of it in others, but, on the contrary, are glad to see others as bad as themselves. Or, this may bespeak their impenitency in sin; these hardened sinners have such seared, stupified consciences, that they never reflect on their sins afterward with any regret, abhorrence, or remorse, but stand to what they have done, as if they could justify it before God Himself.

Some think David, in all this, particularly means Saul, who had cast off the fear of God, and left off all goodness; who pretended kindness to him, when he gave him his daughter to wife, but, at the same time, was devising mischief. But we are under no necessity of limiting ourselves so in the exposition; there are too many among us to whom the description agrees, which is to be greatly lamented.

V. 5—12. I. David's meditations; having looked round with grief on the wickedness of the wicked, he here looks up with comfort to the goodness of God; a subject as delightful as the former was distasteful, and very proper to balance against it. *However it be, yet Thou art good.* He here acknowledges,

1. The transcendent perfections of the Divine Nature. Among men, we have often reason to complain, There is *no truth or mercy*, Hos. 4: 1. no *judgment nor justice*, Isa. 5: 7. But all these may be found in God, without the least alloy.

(1.) God's inexhaustible goodness; *Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens.* How bad soever the world is, let us never think the worse of God, or of his government; but admire his patience, that He bears so much with those that so imprudently provoke Him; nay, and causes his sun to shine, and his rain to fall, on them. If God's mercy were not infinitely above the mercies of any creature, He would, long ere this, have drowned the world again. See Is. 55: 8, 9. Hos. 11: 9. (2.) God's inviolable truth; *Thy faithfulness reaches unto the clouds.* God suffers the wicked to do a great deal of mischief, yet He is, and will be, faithful to his threatenings against sin; He is faithful also to his covenant with his people, one jot or tittle of the promises of which can never be broken by all the malice of earth and hell. This is matter of great comfort, that the words of the Lord are pure. (3.) He is a God of incontestable justice and equity; *Thy righteousness is like the great mountains*, so immovable and inflexible itself; and so conspicuous and evident to all the world; no truth more certain or more plain, 97: 2. (4.) He is a God of unsearchable wisdom and design; '*Thy judgments are a great deep*, not to be fathomed by any finite understanding.' As his power is sovereign, so his method is mysterious, and cannot be accounted for by us; *His way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters.* What He does, it is time enough to know hereafter.

2. The universal care and beneficence of Providence; '*Thou preservest man and beast*, not only protectest, but suppliest them.' Let us not wonder God gives food to bad men, for He feeds the brute-creatures; and let us not fear but He will provide well for good men; He that feeds the young lions will not starve his own children.

3. The peculiar favor of God to the saints: such as are allured, by the *excellency of God's loving-kindness, to put their trust under the shadow of his wings*, v. 7. Those know not God, that do not admire his loving-kindness; and those know not themselves that do not earnestly covet it. It was the character of proselytes, that they came to *trust under the wings of the God of Israel*, Ruth 2: 12. and what more proper to gather proselytes, than the excellency of his loving-kindness? What more powerful to engage our entire confidence, our complacency to Him and on Him? Happy, thrice happy, the people whose God is the Lord, for in Him they have, or may have, or shall have, a complete happiness. Their desires shall be answered, v. 8. their capacities filled: in God all-sufficient they shall have enough, all that which an enlightened, enlarged soul can desire or receive. A gracious soul, though still desiring more *of* God, never desires more *than* God. The gifts of Providence so far satisfy them, that they are content with such things as they have, Phil. 4: 18. But the full, the abundant satisfaction is reserved for the future state. Every vessel will be full there. These pleasures are, as a river, full and constant: and being purely spiritual, they are of the same nature with those of the glorious inhabitants of the upper world, and bear some analogy even to the delights of the Eternal Mind. Rev. 22: 1. Ps. 16: 11.

God is the Fountain of eternal life; the happiness of glorified saints consists in the vision and fruition of Him, and in the immediate communications of his love, without interruption or fear of cessation, v. 9. In Him they have light in perfection, wisdom, knowledge, and joy; all included in this light: *In thy light we shall see light*, i. e. 'In the knowledge of Thee in grace, and the vision of Thee in glory, we shall have what will abundantly suit and satisfy our understandings.' 1 Cor 13: 12. 1 John 3: 2. 'In communion with Thee now, by the communications of thy grace to us, and the return of our devout affections to Thee, and in the fruition of Thee shortly in heaven, we shall have complete felicity and satisfaction.'

II. We have here David's prayers, intercessions, and holy triumphs, grounded on these meditations.

1. He intercedes for all saints, v. 10; (1.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Those who are advanced to eminent stations should glory to fill them up, as serving God and his church in them.—Men's actions speak more plainly than their words; and when they commit atrocious crimes without remorse, or habitually live in the practice of any sin, we may be sure, 'that there is no fear of God before their eyes;' and that they habitually despise his favor, and defy his wrath.—Let us then daily beg of God to preserve us from self-flattery, and to bring us acquainted with our own character, that we may judge and condemn ourselves, and not finally be condemned at his tribunal.—If we willingly banish holy meditations, in our solitary hours, nay, if we do not encourage them, Satan will soon occupy our minds with polluting and mischievous imaginations: and if any yield frequently to sudden temptations, they will at length deliberately 'devise mischief on their beds.'—Whatever be a man's outward conduct, if he do not '*abhor* evil,' he is no true penitent: and if he do not set himself heartily to walk in the ways of godliness, he will soon return into the more direct road to temporal and eternal destruction.—They must be happy, who have access to 'the Fountain of life.' (*Rev.* 21:5—8. 22:1.) Indeed God is the Source of felicity; but fallen man has forsaken Him and is miserable. In Christ, however, this Fountain is accessible; 'wells of salvation' are opened for us by the Gospel; and sinners, returning to God according to it, see and enjoy light and felicity, in their Source and Perfection. (*Is.* 12:3.)—May we then know, and love, and uprightly serve the Lord!

SCOTT.

Verses 5—9.

The Psalmist here contrasted the divine perfections and government, with the conduct of wicked men, especially when in power. The word rendered *pleasures*, (8.) is the plural of *Eden*. SCOTT.

Verse 12.

'Faith calleth things that are not, as though they were; it carries us forward to the end of time.' Bp. *Horne*. SCOTT.

PSALM XXXVII.

Miscellaneous cautions against envy, anger, and discontent; descriptions of the characters, situations, and end of the righteous and the wicked; exhortations to faith, hope, patience, and obedience; and promises to believers under the trials of this evil world, 1—40.

A Psalm of David.

[a] FRET not thyself because of evil-doers, [b] neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

2 For [c] they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

3 [d] Trust in the LORD, and do good; *so* [e] shalt thou dwell in the land, and [*] verily [f] thou shalt be fed.

4 [g] Delight thyself also in the LORD; and [h] he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

5 † Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him, [i] and he shall bring *it* to pass.

6 And [k] he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy

a 7. 1 Sam. 1:6—8. Prov. 19:3. 24: 1,19.
b 73:3. Prov. 3:31. 23:17. Gal. 5:21. Jam. 4:5,6.
c 35,36. 73:17—20. 90:5,6. 92:7. 129: 5—7. Job 20:5—9. Jam. 1:10,11. 1 Pet. 1:24.
d 4:5. 26:1. Is. 1:16—19. 50:10. Jer. 17:7,8. 1 Cor. 15:57,58. Heb. 6:10—12.
e Gen. 26:2. 1 Sam. 26:19. Heb. 11: 13—16.
* Heb. *in truth*, or, *stab'eness*.
f 33.19. 34:9,10. Matt. 6:31—33. Luke 22:35.
g 43:4. 104:34. Job 27:10. 34:9. Cant. 2:3. Is. 58:14. 1 Pet. 1:8.
h 21:1,2. 145:19. John 15:7,16. 1 John 5:14,15.
† Heb. *Roll thy way upon*. 55:22. Prov. 16 3. *marg*. Matt. 6:25. Luke 12: 29,30. Phil. 4:6,7. 1 Pet. 5:7.
i Job 22:28. Ec. 9:1. Lam. 3:37. Jam. 4:15.
k 31:20. Is. 54:17. Mic. 7:8,9. 1 Cor. 4:5.
l Job 11:17. Mal. 3:18. Matt. 13:43.

Those that know God, are acquainted with Him, acknowledge Him, and avouch Him for theirs: (2.) He begs for them God's loving-kindness, i. e. the tokens of his favor; and his righteousness, i. e. the workings of his grace in them; or his loving-kindness and righteousness are his goodness, according to promise; they are mercy and truth. (3.) The manner in which he desires this blessing may be conveyed; *Oh continue it, draw it out*, to eternity itself; the happiness of the saints in heaven will be in perfection, and yet in continual progression, as some think; the fountain always full, and the streams always flowing. *In these is continuance*, Is. 64: 5.

2. He prays for himself, that he might be preserved in his integrity and comfort, *v.* 11. Let not those who fight against God, triumph over those who desire to cleave to Him. They that have experienced the pleasure of communion with God, cannot but desire that nothing may ever remove them from Him.

3. He rejoices in hope of the downfall of his enemies, in due time, *v.* 12. 'There where they thought to have gained the point against me, they are themselves fallen; there, in the other world, (so some,) there where the saints stand in the judgment, and have a place in God's house, the workers of iniquity are cast in the judgment; we are not to rejoice, when any particular enemy of ours falls; but the final overthrow of all the workers of iniquity, will be the everlasting triumph of glorified saints.

Ps. XXXVII. This Ps. is an excellent, useful sermon, calculated not (as most of the Ps.) for our devotion, but for our conversion; there is nothing in it of prayer or praise, but it is all instruction, *Maschil, a teaching;* it is an exposition of some of the hardest chapters in the book of Providence, the advancement of the wicked, and the disgrace of the righteous, a solution of the difficulties that arise thereupon, and an exhortation to conduct ourselves as becomes us, under such dark dispensations. The work of the prophets, (David was one,) was to explain the law. It had promised temporal blessings to the obedient, and denounced temporal miseries against the disobedient, which principally referred to the body of the people, the nation as a nation; for, when they came to be applied to particular persons, many instances occurred of sinners in prosperity, and saints in adversity; to reconcile those instances with the word God had spoken, is the scope of the prophet in this Ps. In which, I. He forbids us to fret at the prosperity of the wicked, in their wicked ways, *v.* 1, 7, 8. II. He gives very good reasons why we should not. 1. Because of their scandalous character, (*v.* 12, 14, 21, 32.) notwithstanding their prosperity; and the honorable character of the righteous, *v.* 21, 26, 30, 31. 2. Because of the destruction they are nigh to, (*v.* 2, 9, 10, 20, 35, 36, 39.) and the salvation and protection the righteous are sure of, from all their malicious designs, *v.* 13, 15, 17, 28, 33, 39, 40. 3. Because of the particular mercy God has in store for all good people, and the favor He shows them, *v.* 11, 16, 18, 19, 22, 25, 28, 29, 37. III. He prescribes very good remedies against this sin of envying the prosperity of the wicked, and great encouragement to use those remedies, *v.* 3, 6, 27, 34. In singing it, we must teach and admonish one another rightly to understand God's providence, and to accommodate ourselves to it; at all times carefully to do our duty, and then patiently leave the event with God, believing that, how black soever things may look for the present, it shall be well with them that fear God.

V. 1—6. The instructions here given are very plain; but a deal is to be done to reduce them to practice, and there they will look best.

I. We are here cautioned against discontent at the prosperity and success of evil-doers, *v.* 1,2. We may suppose, David preaches this first to his own heart, to suppress those corrupt passions he found working there, and then leaves it in writing, for instruction to others in the like temptation. That is preached best, and with most probability of success, to others, which is first preached to ourselves. Now, 1. When we look abroad, we see the world full of evil-doers, and workers of iniquity, that flourish and prosper, that have, and do, what they will, live in ease and pomp, and have power to do mischief to those about them. So it was in David's time; therefore, if it is so still, let us not marvel, as though it were some new or strange thing. 2. When we look within, we find ourselves tempted to fret at this—to fret at God, as if He were unkind to the world, and to his church, in permitting such men to live, and prosper, and prevail, as they do. We are apt to vex ourselves at their success in their evil projects, envy them the liberty they take in getting wealth, and in the indulgence of [other] lusts, and wishing we could shake off the restraints of conscience, as they do. We are tempted to think them the only happy people, and to incline to imitate them, and to join ourselves with them, that we may share in their gains, and eat of their dainties: this is what we are warned against; *Fret not, neither be envious.* Fretfulness and envy are sins that are their own punishments; it is therefore in kindness to ourselves, that we are warned against them. Yet that

NOTES.

Ps. XXXVII. 'This Ps. is by common consent attributed to David, but to what scene of his life, is next to impossible to tell. Delany in his "Life of King David," thinks it was written for the consolation of Mephibosheth, under the calumny of Ziba.' MORISON. Dr. *A. Clarke*, followed by *Greenf.* and cited in the *Comp. Bib.* regards it as belonging to the time of the captivity. Accordingly, the green bay tree, *v.* 35. is with him, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; and so wherever any thing occurs capable of a similar reference. But, as *Morison* finely as well as justly observes, 'the allusions are not sufficiently specific, nor is the tone sufficiently plaintive and tender.'—The Ps. is noted as the third of the alphabetic or acrostic Pss.—*Henry* calls it a sermon, but Bp. *Horne*, 'a collection of sacred aphorisms, rather than a continued discourse,' and so *Hawker*. *Rosenm.* thinks the Psalmist's object, undoubtedly, was, to console his countrymen under the oppression of tyrannical invaders, and, at the same time, to confirm and invigorate their minds with the hope that they should, notwithstanding, still possess the land, and possess it in perpetuity, if they continued faithful and pious; the promises to which effect, he says, the Psalmist illustrates from his own observation and experience, and from the events of common life.—*Horsley* thinks the Messiah principally, if not exclusively, the subject of the Ps. But he seems nearly alone, in his opinion. ED.

Verses 1, 2.

It is probable, this Ps. was written towards the close of David's life, as the result of his long experience and observation, for the instruction and encouragement of others, who might be called to pass through such trying scenes, as he had been conversant with.—Every other *v.* in the original, begins with a letter of the Heb. alphabet, nearly in regular order: and this arrangement, which, with some variations, is frequently adopted, might be intended as a help to those, who desired to commit to memory these sacred poems, for their comfort and benefit in silence and solitude.—The Mosaic dispensation engaged peculiar temporal blessings to *the nation* of Israel, while obedient: yet individuals frequently prospered in wickedness, while the righteous were afflicted and persecuted. (*Ps.* 73:1—17.) This seemed to imply an inconsistency between the word and the providence of God, and formed a great trial to ancient believers. To this difficulty the Psalmist here gives a copious solution, with many excellent cautions and counsels, which at the same time are equally suited, by varying a few expressions, to the case of Christians. (*M. R.*—73:18—22. *Prov.* 23:17, 18. 24:19, 20.) SCOTT.

Verse 3.

This *v.* may be rendered: 'Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land; and feed thou verily,' or, *in confidence*. All the verbs are imperative.—The union between entire dependence on God, and doing good, as the way to be comfortable and happy, is peculiarly to be noticed. [Comp. notes, Job 34:36.] The land of Canaan was considered as the sum of earthly, and the type of heavenly felicity: But the words may be considered as an exhortation to the people to dwell in the land, and not to remove on every difficulty among the surrounding Gentiles; with a promise that verily God would feed them there. (*Ruth* 1:1—10.) SCOTT.—*Verily thou shalt be fed.*] 'These words have been variously understood. *Ainsworth* reads, "Fed by faith;" Abp. *Secker*, "Fed in plenty;" *Parkhurst*, "Fed in security:" and *Gesenius*, deriving the word rendered "*feed*," from another root, signifying "to take delight," or "to follow after," reads, "Follow after truth:" or "seek to be faithful." This reading seems excellent.' MORISON.

Verse 4.

To 'delight,' not in earthly possessions, pleasures, and distinctions, but in God; in knowing, loving, and worshipping Him, [obeying his laws, physical, animal, intellectual, moral and scriptural,] and enjoying his love, and in contemplation, devotion, and admiring praise; is to be spiritually-minded, like the inhabitants of heaven, and qualified for their felicity.—He that seeks delight in worldly objects [alone, obtains not] the wishes of his heart; but the largest and most earnest desires and requests of those who delight in God [and obey Him] will be granted, nay, far exceeded. (*M. R.*—*Is.* 58:13, 14. *Hab.* 3:17—19. *Rom.* 5:11. 8:5—9. *Phil.* 4:4. *Col.* 3:1—4. 1 *Pet.* 1:8, 9.) SCOTT.

Verses 5—8.

Commit, &c.] (*Marg.*—55:22. *Prov.* 16:3. *marg.* 1 *Pet.* 5:5—7.)

judgment as the noon-day.

7 * Rest in the LORD, and [m] wait patiently for him: [n] fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, [o] because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

8 [p] Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: [q] fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

9 For [r] evil doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall [s] inherit the earth.

10 For [t] yet a little while, and the wicked [u] *shall* not *be:* yea, [x] thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it *shall* not *be.*

11 But [y] the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall [z] delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

12 [a] The wicked † plotteth against the just, and [b] gnasheth upon him with his teeth.

13 The LORD [c] shall laugh at him, for he seeth that [d] his day is coming.

14 The wicked [e] have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the

* Heb. *Be silent to.* 62:1. Josh. 10: 12. Jon. 1:11. *margins.*
m 27:14. 40:1. Is. 8:17. 30:15. Lam. 3:25,26. Hab. 2:3. Gal. 6:9. Heb. 10:36,37. Jam. 5:7—11.
n 1,8. 73:3—14. Jer. 12:1.
o Job 21:7, &c. Ec. 5:8. Is. 10:13,14. Dan. 11:36. Rev. 13:3—10.
p Job 5:2. 18:4. Prov. 14:29. 16:32. Eph. 4:26,31. Jam. 1:19,20. 3:14—18.
q 31:22. 73:15. 116:11. 1 Sam. 25:21, 22,33. Jer. 20:14,15. Jon. 4:1,9. Luke 9:54,55.
r 35:36. 55:23. Job 20:23—29. 27:13, &c.
s 11,22,29. 25:13. Is. 58:14. 60:21. Heb. 11:16. Rev. 5:10.
t 73:18—20. Job 24:24. Heb. 10:37. 1 Pet. 4:7. Rev. 6:10,11.
u 35,36. 49:10. 103:16. Job 7:10,21. 14:10. 20:8,9. Luke 12:20,21. 16: 27,28.
x 52:5—7. 59:10,11. 107:42,43. 1 Sam. 25:38,39. 2 K. 9:25,34—37. Esth. 7: 10. 8:1. Is. 14:16—19.
y Matt. 5:5. Gal. 5:22,23. 1 Tim. 6: 11. Jam. 1:21. 3:13.
z 36:8. 72:7. 119:165. Is. 26:3. 48: 18. 57:18—21. John 14:27. Phil. 4:7.
a 32. 1 Sam. 18:21. 23:7—9. 2 Sam. 15:10—12. Esth. 3:6. Matt. 26:4,16.
† Or, *practiseth.* Dan. 8:12,24. Mic. 2:1.
b 35:16.
c 2:4. Prov. 1:26.
d 1 Sam. 26:10. Jer. 50:27. Ez. 21:25, 29. Dan. 5:26.
e 64:3—6. Acts 12:2,3,11,23.

is not all, for, 3. When we look forward with an eye of faith, we shall see no reason to envy wicked people their prosperity, for their ruin is at the door, and they are ripening apace for it, *v.* 2. Their triumphing is short, but their weeping and wailing will be everlasting.

II. We are here counselled to live a life of [obedience,] confidence, and complacency in God, that will keep us from fretting at the prosperity of evil-doers. Here are three excellent precepts, which we are to be ruled by, and, to enforce them, three precious promises, which we may rely upon.

1. We must make God our Hope in the way of duty, [obedience,] and then we shall have a comfortable subsistence in this world, *v.* 3. The life of religion lies much in a believing reliance on God, his favor, his providence, his promise, his grace, and a diligent care to serve Him and our generation, according to his [whole] will. We must not think to trust in God, and then live as we list; no, it is not trusting, but tempting Him, if we do not make conscience of [obedient] duty to Him; nor must we think to do good, and then to trust to ourselves, and our own righteousness and strength; no, we must both trust in the Lord, and do good. And then it is promised we shall be provided for in this world; *So shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.* He does not say, 'So shalt thou get preferment, dwell in a palace, and be feasted.' This is not necessary; a man's life consists not in the abundance of these things; but, 'Thou shalt have a place to live in, and that in the land, in Canaan, the valley of vision, and thou shalt have food convenient for thee.' This is more than we deserve,—as much as a good man will indent for, Gen. 28: 20. and enough for one that is going to heaven. Thou shalt have a quiet settlement, and a comfortable maintenance; *Verily thou shalt be fed,* (so some read it,) fed by faith, as the just are said to live by faith. '*Verily thou shalt be fed,* as Elijah in the famine, with what is needful for thee.' God Himself is a Shepherd, a Feeder, to all those that trust in Him, 23: 1. [Note, Job 36: 8—14.]

2. We must make God our heart's delight, then we shall have our heart's desire; *v.* 4. we must not only depend on God, but solace ourselves in Him. We were commanded, *v.* 3. to do good, and then follows the command, to delight in God, which is as much a privilege as a duty: with this promise annexed; *He shall give thee the desires of thy heart;* not gratify all the [depraved] appetites of the body, and the humors of the fancy, but all the cravings of the renewed, sanctified soul. A good man's heart's desire is, to know, [obey,] and love, and live to, God, to please Him, and to be pleased in Him.

3. We must submit in every thing to God's guidance and disposal; and then all our affairs shall issue well, *v.* 5, 6.

(1.) The duty is very easy; and if we do it aright, it will make us easy; *Commit thy way unto the Lord; roll thy way upon the Lord,* so the marg. Prov. 16: 3. Ps. 55: 22. *Cast thy burden upon the Lord,* the burden of thy care, [after having done our duties,] 1 Pet. 5: 7. We must roll it off ourselves, so as not to afflict and perplex ourselves with thoughts about future events, Matt. 6: 25. not be *cumbered* and *troubled* either with the means, or end, but [having done our best] refer it to God, by his wise and good providence to order and dispose of all our concerns, as He pleases; *Reveal thy way unto the Lord,* so the LXX. i. e. 'By prayer spread thy case, and all thy cares about it, before the Lord,' as Jephthah *uttered all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh,* Judg. 11: 11. 'and then trust in Him to bring it to a good issue, with a full satisfaction that all is well that God does.' We must do our duty, that must be our care, and then leave the event with God; *Sit still, and see how the matter will fall,* Ruth 3: 18. We must follow Providence, not force it.

(2.) The promise is very sweet. 'He shall bring that to pass, whatever [good thing] it is, which thou hast committed to Him, if not to thy contrivance, yet to thy content.' In particular, 'He will take care of thy reputation, and bring thee out of thy difficulties, not only with comfort, but with credit and honor, *v.* 6. 'He shall make it to appear, that thou art an honest man, and that is honor enough.' The righteousness and judgment of good people, may, for a time, be clouded and eclipsed, but God will, in due time, roll away their reproach, clear up their innocency, and bring forth their righteousness, to their honor; perhaps in this world, at farthest, in the great day, Matt. 13: 43. Note, If we take care to keep a good conscience, we may leave it to God to take care of our good name.

V. 7—20. In these verses, we have,

I. The foregoing precepts inculcated.

1. Let us compose ourselves by believing in God, *v.* 7. be well reconciled to all He does, and acquiesce in it, for that is best that is, because it is what God has appointed; and be well satisfied that He will still make all to work for good to us, though we know not how or which way. 'Be silent to the Lord,' so the word is; not with a sullen, but a submissive silence.

2. Let us not discompose ourselves at what we see in this world. 'If thy heart begins to rise at it, stroke down thy folly, and *cease from anger,* *v.* 8. check the first stirrings of discontent and envy, and do not harbor any hard thoughts of God and his providence; be not angry at any thing that God does, but forsake that worst kind of wrath. *Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.*' Note, A fretful, discontented spirit lies open to many temptations; and those that indulge it [do evil, and] are in danger of doing [more].

II. The foregoing reasons, taken from the approaching ruin of the wicked, notwithstanding their prosperity, and the real happiness of the righteous, notwithstanding their troubles, are here much enlarged upon, and the same things repeated in a pleasing variety of expression. We are cautioned, *v.* 7. not to envy the wicked either worldly prosperity, or their success against the righteous. The reasons here given respect these two temptations severally.

1. Their worldly prosperity. (1.) Because it will soon end, *v.* 9. What they have got by sin, will not only flow away from them, Job 20: 28. but they shall be carried away with it, *v.* 10. 73: 17. they are *brought into desolation in a moment,* 83: 19. Have then a little patience, *the Judge stands before the door,* Jam. 5: 8, 9. Moderate your passion, *for the Lord is at hand,* Phil. 4: 5. To the same purport, *v.* 20. *The wicked shall perish;* their death is their perdition, the period of all their joy, and a passage to endless misery. Their prosperity, which gratifies their sensuality, is like the fat of lambs, not solid or substantial; and when their ruin comes, they shall fall as sacrifices to the justice of God, and be consumed as the fat of the sacrifices was on the altar. Is. 34: 6. Mark 9: 49. This is a good reason; while fed to the full, they are but in the fattening for the sacrifice, *like a lamb in a large place,* Hos. 4: 16. and the more they prosper, the more will God be glorified in their

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The Sept. rendering, 'Reveal thy way, &c.' is very expressive of the relief which the believer, when burdened with trouble and anxiety, obtains by opening his case, and pouring out his soul, before God in fervent prayers. (1 *Sam.* 1:9—16.) SCOTT. '*Roll,* a metaphor taken probably from the camel, which lies down till his load be *rolled* upon him.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 9.

(36:12.)—*The earth.*] Or 'the land.' He has all that the earth itself can supply, who has food and raiment, and things suited to his station, with peace, contentment, and a thankful heart. (10, 11, 21, 22. *Matt.* 5.5.) SCOTT.

Verses 10, 11.

'The whole duration of the world itself is but "a little while," in the sight of him, whose hope is full of immortality.' '*P. O.* 149:—149 4. *Is.* 29:17—19. 57:15, 16.)—The meek, here spoken of, are not those of naturally easy, quiet, and indolent tempers; but such as are rendered humble, teachable, submissive, and gentle, by the special grace of God: and the abundant inward peace which He bestows, which passes all understanding, fills their souls with unspeakable delight. (*M. R.* y, z.) SCOTT.

Verse 13.

Day.] The word rendered *day,* is often used by the sacred writers to denote a day of calamity and misfortune. *Gesenius* reads, "He sees that his unhappy day approaches." ' MORISON.

Verse 14.

Bent.] Heb. *drk;* which radical refers to the *foot,* and *Rosenm.* tr. *tread.* '*Arrian* says, "The Indian foot-warriors, in bending their bow (of a man's length) set it on the ground, *tread on it* with the left foot,

poor and needy, *and* [f] to slay * such as be of upright conversation.

15 [g] Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and [h] their bows shall be broken.

16 [i] A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked.

17 For [k] the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but [l] the LORD upholdeth the righteous.

18 The LORD [m] knoweth [n] the days of the upright; and [o] their inheritance shall be for ever.

19 They shall not be ashamed [p] in the evil time: and [q] in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

20 But [r] the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD *shall be* as the † fat of lambs: they shall consume; [s] into smoke shall they consume away.

21 The wicked [t] borroweth, and payeth not again: [u] but the righteous showeth mercy and giveth.

22 For *such as be* [x] blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and *they that be* [y] cursed of

f 1 Sam. 24:11,17. Prov. 29:10,27. Hab. 1:13. Matt. 23:30—34. Acts 7:52. 1 John 3:12.
* Heb. *the upright of way.*
g 7:14,15. 35:8. 1 Sam. 31:4. 2 Sam. 17:23. Esth. 7:9,10. Is. 37:38. Matt. 27:4,5.
h 46:9. 76:3—6. Jer. 1:56. Hos. 1:5 2:18.
i Prov. 3:33. 13:25. 15:16,17. 16:8. 30:9. Ec. 2:26. 4:6. Matt. 6:11. 1 Tim. 6:6.
k 10:15. Job 38:15. Ez. 30:21—25.
l 34. 41:12. 51:12. 63:8. 119:116, 117. 145:14. Is. 41:10. 42:1. Jude 24.
m 1:6. 31:7. Matt. 6:32. 2 Tim. 2:19.
u 13. 31:15. 49:5. Deut. 33:25. Matt. 24:21—24. 2 Tim. 3:1—5. 4:2—4. Rev. 11:3—5.
o 16:11. 21:4. 73:24. 103:17. Is. 60: 21. Rom. 5:21. 6:23. 1 Pet. 1:4,5. 1 John 2:25.
p Ec. 9:12. Am. 5:13. Mic. 2:3. Eph. 5:16.
q 33:19. Job 5:20—22. Prov. 10:3. Is. 33:16. 65:2. 92:9. Judg. 5:31. Luke 13:3, 5. 2 Pet. 2:12.
† Heb. *preciousness.* Deut. 33:14—16.
s 102:3. Gen. 19:28. Lev. 3:3—11,16. Deut. 29:20. Heb. 12:29.
t Deut. 28:12,43,44. 2 K. 4:1—5. Neh. 5:1—5. Prov. 22:7
x 112:5,9. Deut. 15:8—11. Job 31:16—20. Is. 32:8. 58:7—10. Luke 6:30. Acts 11:29. 20:35. 2 Cor. 8:9. 9:6, &c. Heb. 6:10. 13:16.
x 11,18. 32:1. 115:15. 128:1.
y 119:21. Matt. 25:41. 1 Cor. 16:22. Gal. 3:10,13.

ruin. (2.) Because the condition of the righteous, even in this life, is every way better, and more desirable, *v.* 16. Observe, The wealth of the world is so dispensed by the Divine Providence, that it is often the lot of good people to have but a little of it, and of wicked people to have abundance of it; but [cares and wants increase in proportion as wealth increases, and] a godly man's little is really better than a wicked man's much; see Prov. 15: 16, 17.—16: 8.—28: 6. It is better, for it comes from a better hand, is better enjoyed and by a better title; God gives it to them by promise, Gal. 3: 18. it is theirs by virtue of their relation to Christ, who is the Heir of all things; and it is put to a better use; [being applied with wiser economy to the gratification of nobler wants,] it is sanctified to them by the blessing of God; *unto the pure all things are pure*, Tit. 1: 15.

The promises here to the righteous, secure such a happiness that they need not envy them.

[1.] They shall inherit the earth, so far as Infinite Wisdom sees good for them, 1 Tim. 4: 8. All is theirs, 1 Cor. 3: 21, 22. They have it by inheritance, a safe and honorable title, not by permission only and connivance: the *wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just*, Job 17: 17. Prov. 13: 22. This promise is here made, 1st. To those that live a life of [obedient] faith, *v.* 9. *that wait on the Lord*, as dependants on Him, expectants from Him, and supplicants to Him. 2dly. To those that live a quiet and peaceable life, *v.* 11. *The meek shall inherit the earth.* They are in least danger of being injured and disturbed in the possession of what they have; and have most satisfaction in themselves, and consequently the sweetest relish of their creature-comforts. Our Savior has made this a gospel promise, and a confirmation of the blessing He pronounced on the meek, Matt. 5: 5.

[2.] That they shall *delight themselves in the abundance of peace*, *v.* 11. inward peace and tranquility of mind, peace with God, and then peace in God, that great peace which they have that love God's law, whom *nothing shall offend*, 119: 165. that abundance of peace which is in the kingdom of Christ, 72: 7. that peace which the world cannot give, John 14: 27. and which the wicked cannot have, Isa. 57: 21. In this they shall have a continual feast; while they that have abundance of wealth do but cumber and perplex themselves with it, and have little delight in it.

[3.] That God knows their days, *v.* 18. He takes particular notice of them, all they do, all that happens to them. He knows their fair days, and has pleasure in their prosperity; knows their dark days of affliction, and, as the day is, so shall the strength be. [4.] That *their inheritance shall be for ever.* God gives them the blessings of every day in its day; but it was never intended their inheritance should be confined within the limits of their days on earth; no, it must be the portion of an immortal soul, and therefore must last as long as that lasts, and run parallel with eternity itself. They that are sure of an everlasting inheritance in the other world, have no reason to envy the wicked their transitory possessions and pleasures in this. [5.] That, in the worst of times, it shall go well with them, *v.* 19. *They shall not be ashamed* of their hope and confidence in God, nor of their profession of religion; for the comfort of that will stand them in stead, and be a real support to them, in evil times. If they should be hardly bestead and hungry, they shall not, as the wicked do, *fret themselves, and curse their being and their God*, Isa. 8: 21. but rejoice in God as the God of their salvation, even when *the fig-tree does not blossom*, Hab. 3: 17, 18.

2. The good have no reason to fret at the occasional success of the designs of the wicked against the just; though they bring some, which makes us fear they will bring them all to pass, yet let us cease from anger, and not think of giving up. For,

(1.) Their plots will be their shame, *v.* 12, 13. It is true, there is a rooted enmity in the wicked against the righteous; their aim is, if they can, to destroy their righteousness; if that fail, then to destroy them. With this in view, they plot, they practise against the just; but by all this they do but make themselves ridiculous; *the Lord shall laugh at them*, 2: 4, 5. Men have their day now; *this is your hour*, Luke 22: 53. But God will have his day shortly, a day of recompenses, a day which will set all to rights, and render that ridiculous which now passes for glorious, 1 Cor. 4: 3.—Isa. 37: 22.

(2.) Their attempts will be their destruction, *v.* 14, 15. Barbarous are their designs against good people. Uprightness itself is no fence against their malice. But, how justly their malice recoils on themselves; *their sword shall turn into their own heart;* which implies the preservation of the righteous from them, and the filling up of the measure of their own iniquity by it. Sometimes that very evil design they projected, proves their own destruction; however, God's sword, which their provocations have drawn, will give them their death's wound.

(3.) Those that are not suddenly cut off, shall yet be so disabled to do farther mischief, that the interests of the church shall be effectually secured; *v.* 15. the instruments of their cruelty shall fail them, and they shall lose those whom they had made tools of, to serve their bloody purposes with; nay, their arms shall be broken, so that they shall not be able to go on with their enterprises. *But the Lord upholds the righteous*, so that they neither sink under their afflictions, nor are crushed by the violence of their enemies. He upholds them, both in their integrity, and in their prosperity; and they that are so upheld by the Rock of ages, have no reason to envy the wicked the support of their broken reeds.

V. 21—33. These verses are much to the same purport with the foregoing. Observe,

I. What is required of us, as the way to our happiness; which we may learn both from the characters, and the directions here given.

1. We must make conscience of giving every body his own; for *the wicked borroweth, and payeth not again*, *v.* 21. It is the first thing God requires of us, that we do justly, and render to all their due. It is not only a shameful, paltry thing, but a sinful, wicked thing, not to repay what we have borrowed. Some make this an instance, not so much of the wickedness of the wicked, as of the misery and poverty to which they are reduced by the just judgment of God, that they shall be necessitated to borrow for their supply, and then be in no capacity to repay again, and so lie at the mercy of their creditors. Whatever some seem to think of it, as it is a great sin for those that are able, to deny the payment of their just debts, so it is a great misery not to be able to pay them.

2. We must be ready to all acts of charity and beneficence; for as it is an instance of God's goodness to the righteous, that He puts it into the power of his hand to be kind, and to do good, (so some understand it,) so it is an instance of the goodness of the righteous man, that he has a heart

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while they draw on the string." *Rosenm.* 'Their arrows are 3 cubits long, and no shield, breast-plate, or other armor can withstand them.' *Rooke's* Arrian. '*Suidas* says, the Arabs bend their bows with their feet, and use arrows as long as themselves' (*Rooke*); like the jerreed, perhaps, now thrown by hand, not feathered, but tapering to a point, as arrows seen on ancient Egyptian monuments. Some savages have been said to sit on the ground, and bending their bow with their feet raised in the air, to use both hands, to poise the arrow and draw the string; thus availing themselves of the 'full strength' of all their limbs. ED.

Verses 16, 17.

The little, which is allotted to the righteous, comes from special covenanted love, and is secured by faithful promises; it is given in answer to their prayers, and in the use of lawful means; it is received with thankfulness, and used with temperance and charity; and being attended with a blessing, it subserves the salvation of their souls: and in all these, and many other respects, it is far more comfortable and profitable, than the ill-gotten or abused riches of ungodly men: (*Prov.* 30:7—9. *Matt.* 6:11. 1 *Tim.* 6:6—10.)—'The great question is, whether God be with us, or against us; and the great misfortune is, that this question is seldom asked.' *Bp. Horne.* SCOTT

Verses 21, 22.

This more especially referred to the Israelites in Canaan; yet the same blessing and curse, even in temporal things, are still often experienced and observed. (*Notes, Deut.* 28:3—14, 43, 44. *Job* 36:8—14. *Prov.* 22:7.) ID.

him shall be [x] cut off.

23 [a] The steps of a *good* man are * ordered by the LORD: and [b] he delighteth in his way.

24 [c] Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: [d] for the LORD upholdeth *him with* his hand.

25 [e] I have been young, and *now* am old; [f] yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, [g] nor his seed begging bread.

26 *He is* † ever [h] merciful, and lendeth; and [i] his seed *is* blessed.

27 [k] Depart from evil, [l] and do good; and dwell for evermore.

28 For the LORD [m] loveth judgment, and [n] forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: [o] but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

29 [p] The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.

x 9,28. Zech. 5:3,4.
a 17:5. 85:13. 119:133. 121:3,8. 1 Sam. 2:9. Job 23:11,12. Prov. 16:9. Jer. 10:23.
* Or, *established.* 40:2. Prov. 4:26.
b 147:10. Prov. 11:1,20. Jer. 9:24. Heb. 13:16.
c 91:12. 94:18. 145:14. Prov. 24:16. Mic. 7:7,8. Luke 2:34. 22:31,32,60—62.
d 17. 145:14. John 10:27—30.
e 71:9,18. Job 32:6,7. Acts 21:16. Philem. 8:9.
f 28. 94:14. Josh. 1:5. 1 Sam. 12:22. 2 Cor. 4:9. Heb. 13:5.
g 25:13. 109:10. 112:2. Gen. 17:7. Prov. 13:22. Luke 1:53—55.
† Heb. *all the day.*
h 21. 112:5,9. Deut. 15:9. Matt. 5:7. Luke 6:35—38.
i Prov. 20:7. Jer. 32:39.
k 34:14. Job 28:28. Prov. 16:6,17. Is. 1:16,17. 2 Tim. 2:19. Tit. 2:11—14.
l 3. 1 Thes. 5:15. Tit. 3:8,14. Heb. 13:16,21. 1 John 2:16,17.
m 11:7. 45:6,7. 99:4. Is. 61:8. Jer. 9:24.
n 25,40. 92:13—15. Is. 59:21. Jer. 32:40,41. John 5:24. 6:39,40. 10:28—30. 15:9. 1 John 2:19. Jude 1.
o 21:10. Ex. 20:5. Job 18:19. 27:14. Prov. 2:22. Is. 14:20,21.
p 9,11,18,27. Deut. 30:20. Prov. 2:21. 2 Pet. 3:13. Rev. 21:3,4,7.

proportionable to his estate; *he shows mercy, and gives*, v. 21. Giving and lending are then acceptable to God, when from a merciful disposition in the heart, which, if it be sincere, will be constant, and keep us from being weary of well-doing. He that is truly benevolent will be ever so.

3. We must leave our sins, and engage in the practice of serious godliness, v. 27. *Depart from evil, and do good;* cease to do evil, and abhor it; learn to do well, and cleave to it. This is true religion.

4. We must abound in good discourse, with our tongues glorify God, and edify others. It is part of the righteous man's character, see v. 30. that *his mouth speaketh wisdom;* not only he speaks wisely, but wisdom, like Solomon himself, for the instruction of those about him. Out of the abundance of a good heart will the mouth speak what is good, and to the use of edifying.

5. We must have our wills brought into entire subjection to God's will and word, v. 31. in vain do we pretend God is our God, if we do not receive his laws into our hearts, and resign ourselves to their government. It is but a jest and mockery to speak wisdom, and talk of judgment, v. 30. unless we have the law in our hearts, and [act and] think as we speak. The law of God must be a commanding, ruling principle in the heart; a light, a spring there; and then the conversation will be regular and uniform, *none of his steps will slide;* it will effectually prevent backsliding into sin, and the consequent uneasiness.

II. What is assured to us, as instances of our happiness and comfort, on these conditions.

1. The blessing of God, and that blessing the spring, sweetness, and security, of all our temporal comforts and enjoyments, v. 22. Creature-comforts are then comforts indeed, when we see them flowing from God's blessing, favor, promise, and covenant with us; and if sure of God's blessing, we are sure not to want any thing good for us in this world.

2. God will direct and dispose of our actions and affairs, so as may be most for his glory, v. 23. *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord;* by his grace and holy Spirit, He directs the thoughts, affections, and designs, of good men; by his providence he overrules the events that concern them, so as to make their way plain before them, both what they should do, and may expect. Observe, God orders the steps of a good man; not only his way in general, by his written Word, but his particular steps, by the whispers of conscience; *for the Lord knows with favor the way of the righteous.*

3. God will keep us from being ruined by our falls either into sin or into trouble, v. 24. A good man may be overtaken in a fault, but the grace of God shall recover him to repentance; he may, for a time, lose the joys of God's salvation, yet they shall be restored; and though he may be in distress, his affairs embarrassed, his spirits sunk, yet he shall not be utterly cast down; God will be the Strength of his heart, and uphold him with his comforts.

4. He shall not want the necessary supports of this life, v. 25. David had himself begged his bread of Ahimelech the priest, but it was when Saul hunted him; and our Savior has taught us to except the case of persecution for righteousness-sake out of all the temporal promises, Mark 10:30. because that has such peculiar honors and comforts attending it, as make it rather a gift, as the apostle reckons it, Phil. 1:29. than a loss or grievance. But there are very few instances of good men, or their families, that are reduced to such extreme poverty, as many wicked people bring themselves to by their wickedness. [Notes, Job 36:8—14. 34:1.] He had not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread; *forsaken*, so some. Some make this promise relate especially to those that are charitable and liberal to the poor, and to intimate that David never observed any that brought themselves to poverty by their charity; it is *withholding more than is meet that tends to poverty*, Prov. 11:24.

5. God will not desert us, but graciously protect us in our difficulties and straits, v. 28. *The Lord loves judgment;* He delights in doing justice Himself, and in those that do it; therefore He forsakes not his saints in affliction, when others make themselves strange to them; but takes care that they be preserved for ever, from age to age; and that particular saints be preserved from all the temptations, and through all the trials, of this present time, to that happiness which shall be for ever. He will *preserve them to his heavenly kingdom;* that is a preservation for ever, 2 Tim. 4:18. Ps. 12:7.

6. We shall have a comfortable settlement in this world, and in a better when we leave this: dwell for evermore, v. 27. and not be cut off, as the *seed of the wicked*, v. 28. That we shall inherit the land our God gives us, and *dwell therein for ever*, v. 29. They shall not be tossed that make God their Rest, and are at home in Him. But, it is in heaven only, the righteous shall dwell for ever.

7. We shall not become a prey to our adversaries, [within or without,] that seek our ruin, v. 32, 33. There is an adversary that takes all opportunities to do us mischief, and wicked men that are very subtle, and very spiteful: nay, it may very well be applied to the wicked one, the devil, that old serpent, who has his wiles to entrap the righteous, his devices which we should not be ignorant of. But he shall not prevail, nor his instruments. (1.) He shall not prevail. As a field-adversary; a good man may fall into the hands of a messenger of Satan, and be sorely buffeted, but God will not leave him in his hands, 1 Cor. 10:13. Nor, (2.) As a law-adversary; *God will not condemn him when he is judged*, though urged to it

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Verses 23, 24.

Our translators here insert the word *good;* and no doubt the pious man, the true believer, is exclusively meant. SCOTT.—'There is no word in the original for *good;* this circumstance has led *Green* to adopt the following reading: "The steps of a man are firmly fixed By the Lord, when He delighteth in his way." ' MORISON.—(147:10, 11. 1 *Sam.* 2:9. *Jer.* 9:23, 24. *Zeph.* 3:14—20. *Phil.* 4:14—20. *Heb.* 13:15, 16.) SCOTT.

Verses 25, 26.

There is not indeed an absolute promise in Scripture that no righteous man shall ever want bread, or his seed become beggars: but the Psalmist had never, during a long course of observation, known an instance of the kind. It is, no doubt, a very rare case in any age, but was peculiarly so under the Mosaic dispensation.—Yet times of persecution seem excepted, from general rules concerning temporal things, having so many particular promises relating to them. But in general the godly man will best secure himself and his children from want: and that gennine liberality to the poor, in giving or lending, according as circumstances may require, which men think will impoverish their families, is in fact by far the best way of laying up a provision for them. (112:5—10. [Job 34:1.] *Prov.* 11:24—26. 13:22, 23. 19:17. *Ec.* 11:1—6.) ID.

(25.) 'Isa. 33:6. is a precious promise of bread and water, upon which multitudes have relied, and have not been disappointed: still it does not disclose the *manner* in which the supply is to come.' *Cott. Bib.*—'General declarations, even of Scripture, admit of individual exceptions. . . . It may also be noticed, that it is not necessity simply that is spoken of, but actual beggary from door to door; and very few [if any] of the seed of the righteous, who walk in the footsteps of their fathers, are thus humbled. Moreover, possibly a supplement is here required: "Nor his seed begging bread;"—i. e. asking it *in vain*. And, finally, it might be observed, that David does not state a general proposition, but only the result of his own observation and experience.' MORISON, after *Poole*. Perhaps many will be better satisfied with the explanation, at Job 36:8—14. Should, however, a supplement be admitted, the word *though* before 'begging bread,' would give the emphasis of David's remark to the term 'forsaken,' as if he had said, 'even when most reduced.' ED.

Verses 27, 28.

This general counsel for present and future happiness is here again inculcated, (34:11—14.) in a manner which shows, that none but the *saints*, the regenerate and believing who have obtained mercy, do thus 'depart from evil and do good:' and the final preservation of the saints is most expressly maintained, and grounded on the Lord's love of judgment, and faithfulness to his promises.—Some think this doctrine is to be found nowhere, except in Paul's epistles; and then they endeavor to explain away his language: but not one sentence in his writings is more explicit, than this declaration of the inspired Psalmist. (1 *Pet.* 1:3—5.) SCOTT.

Verses 29—31.

(9—11.)—'The righteous man, whose mouth speaketh wisdom, whose tongue talketh of judgment, and in whose heart is the law of his God, shall not slide in any of his steps.' Thus some render these vs. which strongly mark the character of those saints, 'who are preserved for ever.' (40:6—8. *Jer.* 31:33, 34. *Rom.* 7:22—25.)—Wise and pious conversation, when it comes from the abundance of the heart, and is enforced by a holy example, is one grand mean of communicating the savor of divine truth around, in families and neighbor-

30 [q] The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.

31 [r] The law of his God *is* in his heart; [s] none of his * steps shall slide.

32 The wicked [t] watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.

33 The LORD [u] will not leave him in his hand, [x] nor condemn him when he is judged.

34 [y] Wait on the LORD, and [z] keep his way, and he shall [a] exalt thee to inherit the land: [b] when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see *it*.

35 [c] I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like † a green bay-tree.

36 Yet [d] he passed away, and, lo, he *was* not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

37 [e] Mark the perfect *man*, and behold the upright: for the end of *that* man *is* peace.

38 But [f] the transgressors shall be destroyed together; the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

39 But [g] the salvation of the righteous *is* of the LORD, *he is* [h] their Strength in the time of trouble.

40 And [i] the LORD shall help them, and deliver them; he shall deliver them [k] from the wicked, and save them, [l] because they trust in him.

PSALM XXXVIII.

The Psalmist deprecates the wrath of God, and describes the sufferings to which his sins had exposed him, 1—10. He complains that his friends deserted him, while persecuted by his foes, 11, 12. He resigns himself to God, and hopes in Him; while he confesses his sins, shows the character of his enemies, and pleads for deliverance, 13—22.

A Psalm of David, [a] to bring to remembrance.

O LORD, [b] rebuke me not in thy wrath;

q 71:15,24. Deut. 6:7—9. Prov. 16: 21,31. 15:7. 25:11—13. 27:9. Matt. 12:35. Eph. 4:29. Col. 4:6.
r 1:2. 40:3. 119:11. Deut. 11:18—20. Prov. 55:4. Is. 51:7. Jer. 31:33. Heb. 8:10.
s 23. 121:3. * Or, *goings*. 40:2.
t 12. 10:8—10. Jer. 20:10. Luke 6:7. 11:54. 14:1. 19:47,48. 110:20. Acts 9:24.
u 34:7,8. 124:6,7. 1 Sam. 23:26—28. 2 Tim. 4:17. 2 Pet. 2:9.
x 109:31. Rom. 8:1,33,34.
y 3,9. 27:14. Prov. 20:22.
z Job 17:9. 23:10—12. Prov. 4:25—27. 16:17. Matt. 24:13.
a 92:10. 112:9. Luke 14:11. 1 Pet. 1:7. 5:6.
b 92:5,6. 91:8. 92:11.
c 73:3—11. Esth. 5:11. Job 5:3. 21: 7—17.
† Or, *a green tree that groweth in his own soil*. Job 8:13—19. Ez. 31:6—10,18. Dan. 4:20, &c.
d See on 10.—Ex. 15:9,10,19. Is. 10: 16—19,33,34. Acts 12:22,23.
e Job 1:1. 42:12—17. Is. 32:17. 57: 2. Luke 2:25—29. Acts 7:58,60. 2 Tim. 4:6—8. 2 Pet. 1:14.
f 1:4—6. 9:17. 52:5. Prov. 14:32. Matt. 13:49,50. 25:46. 2 Thes. 1:8,9.
g 3:8. Is. 12:2. Jon. 2:9. Eph. 2:8.
h 9:9. 46:1. 91:15. Is. 33:2. Col. 1: 11. 2 Tim. 4:17.
i Is. 31:5. 46:4.
k 17:13. 27:2. 1 John 2:13,14. 5:18.
l 22:4,5. 1 Chr. 5:20.
a 70: *title*.
b 6:1. 88:7,15,16. Is. 27:8. 54:8. Jer. 10:24. 30:11. Hab. 3:2. Heb. 12:5—11.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is of vast importance to understand the present and future condition of the righteous and the wicked, that we may know what to choose and to expect. The workers of iniquity, even monsters of wickedness, often prosper for a time, succeed in their projects, flourish in wealth, pomp, and mirth, and seem to enjoy happiness. (*Job* 21: 7—16.) But their flourishing resembles that of the grass, and they will be soon cut down and withered. Then their power of doing mischief will be at an end, and their injurious swords will pierce their own souls, with inexpressible anguish. As they are *now* under the wrath and curse of the Almighty, their plenty and prosperity only pamper them for destruction; and the wealth they leave behind them proves a snare, and often a curse, to their posterity; while terrors of conscience, dread of death, and furious passions, mar their precarious enjoyments, and give them a sad foretaste of the wrath to come.—But the righteous bear another character, meet with other treatment, have other supports, and will experience a contrary end. They [subordinate their lower to their higher nature] 'trust in the LORD,' walk in his ordinances and commandments, and imitate Him who went about doing good to the bodies and souls of men. Yet must Christians expect tribulation in the world. In general they are poor and afflicted, and Satan distresses, as much as he can, those whom he is not able to deceive, defile, or destroy: their endeavors to do good are often unsuccessful, and ingratitude proves their only recompense. They therefore have need of faith and patience, of hope and love: but, observing the directions and pleading the promises of God, they find inward comfort to counterbalance their outward trials.—The Lord will also vindicate their characters, and give them peace of conscience. Even in this world it is evident, that the afflicted righteous man is far happier than the most prosperous of the wicked.—Let sinners then be counselled to 'depart from evil, and to do good,' to repent, and forsake sin, to trust in the mercy of God through Jesus Christ, and take his yoke upon them, and learn of Him, that they may dwell for evermore in heaven. Let us all watch against impatience, envy, and despondency, and look more to the wretched end of wicked men, than to their present state; committing all we are, and have, and do, to the Lord's disposal, being assured that He will order that which is best for us; [especially] let us mark the closing scenes of different characters; and thus, keeping our eyes fixed on eternal things, and depending on God's mercy, we may pass safely into his kingdom. SCOTT.

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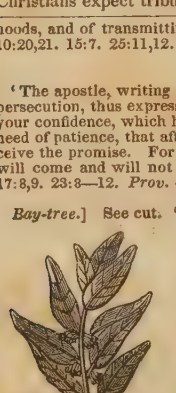
hoods, and of transmitting it to posterity. (71:18—15, 22—24. *Prov.* 10:20,21. 15:7. 25:11,12. *Matt.* 12:33—37. *Jam.* 3:3—12. *P. O.* 1—12.) SCOTT.

Verse 34.

'The apostle, writing to the Hebrew converts, under affliction and persecution, thus expresseth the sentiment of this v.; "Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward: for ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come, will come and will not tarry." *Heb.* 10:35—37.' *Bp. Horne.* (*Job* 17:8,9. 23:3—12. *Prov.* 4:23—27.) ID.

Verses 35, 36.



Bay-tree.] See cut. 'Heb. *æsrach*, occurs here only. Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Kimchi, Jerome, and some others say, that the original may mean only "a native tree," i. e. growing in its own soil. The *Sept.* and *Vulg.* r. "cedars;" but Luther's bib., the old Saxon, the French, Spanish, Italian of Diodati, and Ainsworth's vers. make it the *laurel*; and Sir T. Browne says: "as the sense of the text is sufficiently answered by this, we are unwilling to exclude that noble plant from the honor of having its name in Scripture. The word *flourishing* is also more applicable to the laurel, which in its prosperity abounds with pleasant flowers."' HARRIS.—The text of our tr. gives, as the emblem of a wicked man's prosperity, an *ever-green*, flourishing and beautiful to look upon, but bearing no fruit, or only such as is poisonous. But most expositors suppose that a tree, growing in its native soil and never transplanted, is meant: and in these circumstances, trees acquire their largest and most luxuriant growth. (*M.*)—Thus Saul, Doeg, and Ahithophel, in David's time, had flourished; and thus they had vanished.—The vision of Nebuchadnezzar, and Daniel's interpretation, form a striking illustration of these vs. (*Dan.* 4:1—33.) 'I looked about me to see what was become of him, and whether he might not be removed (as a tree sometimes is) to another place, but there was no such man . . . to be found.' *Patrick.* (*Job* 5 3—5. 18:5—21.) SCOTT.

Verses 39, 40.

M. R.—*Eph.* 2:4—10. 2 *Tim.* 4:16—18. *Tit.* 2:11—14. ID

NOTES.

Ps. XXXVIII. *Title.*] This Ps. is the third of those called penitential; and describes among the Psalmist's other trials some grievous diseases, with which he was visited for his sins; or, as some think, his inward trials represented by language, taken from enfeebling and loathsome sickness. Probably the calamities which befell David, after his sin in respect of Bathsheba and Uriah, gave occasion to its doleful complaints. (6: 32:) SCOTT.—Considerable variety obtains in the ancient versions respecting the *title* of this Ps. but nothing of importance to be noted here in addition to *Henry* and *Scott*.—*Lowth* suggests that the disease spoken of may be understood of all sin generally, and adds, that it could be no less absurd to inquire what river David complained that he was plunged in, when he said 'the deep waters have gone over my soul,' than it would to inquire into the nature of the disease here complained of. And *Rosenm.* argues against the [common] supposition that David's sin of adultery is referred to; for when he committed that sin he was in general acceptance with the people, or, at least, not persecuted by his enemies, as when he wrote this. (v. 12,18,19.) The *Assemb.* (*Ann.*) though inclined, from the title, to think it may be his adultery, yet confess, 'there be no words in the whole Ps. but may admit of a metaphorical interpretation, warrantable by other places of Scripture, where the miserable condition of a sinner is set out by corporal diseases.' *Rosenm.* says, some think the Psalmist wrote it about the beginning of Absalom's sedition; and *Theodoret* (in *Patrick*) 'supposes he reflects, not only on Absalom's rebellion, but on other disastrous things that befell him after he came to the crown; by the murder of his son Amnon, the falseness of Ahithophel, the abusive reproaches of Shimei, and all the afflictions mentioned in his history, which were sent for the cure of his sins.' And *De Wette* (in *Rosenm.*) notices the resemblance between this and Ps. 6. ED

neither chasten me in thy [c] hot displeasure.

2 For [d] thine arrows stick fast in me, and [e] thy hand presseth me sore.

3 *There is* [f] no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger; [g] neither *is there any* * rest in my bones, [h] because of my sin.

4 For [i] mine iniquities are gone over mine head: [k] as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.

5 [l] My wounds stink *and* are corrupt, because of my foolishness.

6 I am † troubled; [m] I am bowed down greatly; [n] I go mourning all the day long.

7 For [o] my loins are filled with a loathsome *disease;* and *there is* no soundness in my flesh.

8 I am feeble and sore broken: [p] I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.

9 Lord, all my desire *is* before thee; and [q] my groaning is not hid from thee.

10 [r] My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for [s] the light of mine eyes, it also is ‡ gone from me.

11 [t] My lovers and my friends [u] stand aloof from my § sore; and my ‖ kinsmen stand [x] afar off.

12 They also that seek after my life [y] lay snares *for me;* and

c Deut. 9:19.
d 21:12. 64:7. Job 6:4. Lam. 3:12.
e 32:4. 39:10,11. Deut. 2:15. Ruth 1:13. 1 Sam. 5:6,11. 6:9.
f 31:9. 2 Chr. 28:19. Job 2:7,8. 33: 19—22. Is. 1:5,6.
g 6:2. 51:8. 102:3,5.
* Heb. *peace*, or, *health*.
h 9:7,8. Lam. 3:40—42.
i 40:12. Ezra 9:6.
k Lev. 7:18. Is. 53:11. Lam. 1:14. Matt. 11:28. 1 Pet. 2:24.
l 7. 32:3. Is. 1:5,6. Jer. 8:22.
† Heb. *wearied*.
m 35:14. 42:5. *Marg.* 57:6. 145:14.
n 6:6. 31:10. 42:9. 43:2. 88:9. Job 30:28. Is. 38:14.
o 41:8. 2 Chr. 21:18,19. Job 7:5. 30: 18. Acts 12:23.
p 22:1,2. 32:3. Job 3:24. 30:28. Is. 59:11.
q 10:5,20. Rom. 8:22,23,26,27. 2 Cor. 5:2.
r 42:1. 119:81—83. 143:4—7. Is. 21:4.
s 6:7. 69:3. 119:123. 1 Sam. 14:27—29. Lam. 2:11.
‡ Heb. *not with me*.
t 31:11. Job 6:21—23. 19:13—17. John 16:32.
u Luke 10:31,32.
§ Heb. *stroke*.
‖ Or, *neighbors*.
x Luke 2:44. 23:49.
y 10:9. 64:2—5. 119:110. 140:5. 141: 9 2 Sam. 17:1—3. Luke 20:19,20.

17. there he understands their end, and thence gives us to understand it, and by comparing that with the end of the righteous, baffles and silences the temptation. Observe,

1. The misery of the wicked, at last, however they may prosper awhile, *v.* 38. Some instances of the remarkable ruin of wicked people David had himself observed, *v.* 35, 36. *I have seen a wicked man,* (the word is singular,) suppose Saul, or Ahithophel, (for David was an old man when he penned this,) *in great power, formidable,* (so some,) *the terror of the mighty,* carrying all before him with a high hand, and seeming to be firmly fixed, and finely flourishing, like a green bay-tree, all leaves and no fruit; like a native, home-born Israelite, (so Hammond,) likely to take root. But what became of him? Eliphaz, long before, had learned, when he saw the foolish taking root, to curse his habitation, Job 5: 3. And David saw cause for it; for this bay-tree is withered away as soon as the fig-tree Christ cursed; *he passed away as a dream,* as a shadow; he was gone in an instant, *he was not;* he had acted his part, and then quitted the stage, and there was no miss of him. The total and final ruin of sinners, of all sinners, will shortly be made as much a spectacle to the saints, as saints are now sometimes made a spectacle to the world, *v.* 34. *The transgressors shall be destroyed together, v.* 38. In this world, God singles out here one sinner, and there another, out of many, to be made an example—*as a warning;* but in the day of judgment will be a general, total destruction. They that have sinned together shall be damned together; *Bind them in bundles, to burn them.*

2. The blessedness of the righteous, God's poor, despised people, at last. (1.) Preferment; *v.* 34. dignity, honor, and true wealth, in the New Jerusalem. (2.) Peace, *v.* 37. Let all people *mark the perfect man, and behold the upright;* notice him to admire and imitate him, keep your eye on him to observe what comes of him, and you will find that *the end of that man is peace.* Sometimes his latter end proves more comfortable to him than his beginning was; however, if all his days continue dark and cloudy, perhaps his dying day may prove comfortable, and his sun set bright; or, if it should set under a cloud, yet his future state will be peace, everlasting peace, Isa. 57: 2. A peaceful death has concluded the troublesome life of many a good man; and all is well that thus ends everlastingly well. (3.) Salvation, *v.* 39, 40. *The salvation of the righteous,* is (1 Pet. 1: 10.) of the Lord; it will be the Lord's doing.

Ps. XXXVIII. This is one of the penitential psalms; it is full of grief, and complaint, from beginning to end. David's sins and afflictions are the cause of his grief, and the matter of his complaints. It should seem, he was now sick and in pain, which reminded him of his sins, and helped to humble him for them; he was, at the same time, deserted by his friends, and persecuted by his enemies; so the Ps. is calculated for the depth of distress, and a complication of calamities. In singing it, we ought to be much affected with the malignity of sin; and if we have not such troubles as are here described, we know not how soon we may have, and therefore must sing of them by way of preparation; or, knowing others have them, we must sing of them by way of sympathy.

V. 1—11. This title is very observable; it is a psalm *to bring to remembrance;* the 70th, likewise penned in affliction, is so entitled. It is designed,

1. To bring to his own remembrance; times of sickness are times to bring to remembrance, to awaken our consciences, and set our sins in order before us, for our humiliation. *In a day of adversity, consider.* Or, if penned after his recovery, it was designed as a record of the workings of his heart when in affliction, that, on every review of it, he might call to mind the good impressions then, and make a fresh improvement of them. So the writing of Hezekiah, when he had been sick. Thus he would,

2. Remind others of the same things he was himself mindful of, and so teach them what to think, and say, when sick and in affliction.

I. He deprecates God's displeasure in his affliction, *v.* 1. *O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath.* With this same petition he began another prayer, *for the visitation of the sick,* 6: 1. This was most on his heart, and should be most on ours, when in affliction, that, however God rebukes and chastens us, it may not be in displeasure. Those that would escape God's wrath, must pray against that, more than any outward affliction, and be content to bear any outward affliction, while it comes from, and consists with, the love of God.

II. He bitterly laments the impressions of God's displeasure on his soul, *v.* 2. *Thine arrows stick fast in me.* Let Job's complaint, *ch.* 6: 4. expound David's here. He was under a very melancholy, frightful apprehension of the wrath of God against him for his sins, and thought he could look for nothing but judgment and fiery indignation to devour him. This will be the everlasting misery of the damned. He complains of God's wrath, as that which inflicted his bodily distemper, *v.* 3. And what was worse, it caused disquietude of heart, by reason of which he forgot the courage of a soldier, the dignity of a prince, and all the cheerfulness of the sweet psalmist of Israel, *v.* 8. Nothing will disquiet the heart of a good man so much, as the sense of God's anger. The way to keep the heart quiet, is, to keep ourselves in God's love, and do nothing to offend Him.

III. He acknowledges his sin to be the procuring, provoking cause of all his troubles, and groans more under the load of guilt than any other load, *v.* 3. If our trouble be the fruit of God's anger, we may thank ourselves; our sin causes it. Are we restless? Sin makes us so. If sin [disobedience] were not in our souls, there would be no pain in our bones, no illness in our bodies.

It is sin, therefore, that this good man complains most of, 1. As a burden, a heavy burden, *v.* 4. The power of sin dwelling in us is a weight, Heb. 12: 1. it keeps men from soaring upward and pressing forward; all the saints are complaining of it, as a body of death they are loaded with, Rom. 7: 24. It is a burden to God, Am. 2: 13. a burden to the whole creation, Rom. 8: 21, 22. It will, first or last, be a burden to the sinner himself, a burden of repentance, or of ruin to sink him; it will be a talent of lead on him, Zech. 5: 8. Sinners are said to bear their iniquity. Threatenings are burdens. 2. As wounds, dangerous wounds, *v.* 5. Sins are wounds, Gen. 4: 23. painful, mortal wounds. Our wounds by sin are often in a bad condition, owing to the sinner's foolishness, in not confessing sin, 32: 3, 4. A slight sore neglected may prove of fatal consequence, and so may a slight sin, slighted and left unrepented of.

IV. He bemoans himself because of his afflictions, and eases his grief, by giving it vent, and pouring out his complaint before the Lord.

1. He was troubled in mind, and had no rest in his spirit, *v.* 6. He was always pensive and melancholy, which made him a burden and terror to himself. His spirit was feeble and sore-broken, and his heart disquieted, *v.* 8. Herein David's sufferings were a type of Christ's, who cried out, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful.* This is a sorer affliction than any other in this world; we have no reason to complain of affliction, as long as God preserves to us the use of our reason and the peace of our consciences.

2. He was sick and weak in body; his loins filled with a loathsome disease, some swelling, or ulcer, or inflammation; some think a plague-sore,

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Verses 1, 2.

Arrows.] (2) Acute pains, anguish of spirit, and sharp sufferings of any kind. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verse 3.

it seems evident, the writer was visited with some dire malady; which he considered as the chastisement of God, for some particular sins. [So most commentators suppose.] SCOTT.

Verse 4.

(*Notes*, 40:11, 12. *Is.* 53:4—12.) ID.

they that seek my hurt [z] speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.

13 But [a] I, as a deaf *man*, heard not; and *I was* as a dumb man *that* openeth not his mouth.

14 Thus I was as a man [b] that heareth not, and in whose mouth *are* no reproofs.

15 For * in thee, O LORD, [c] do I hope: thou wilt † hear, O LORD my God.

16 [d] For I said, *Hear me*, lest *otherwise* they should rejoice over me: when [e] my foot slippeth, they magnify *themselves* against me.

17 For I *am* ready ‡ to halt, and [f] my sorrow *is* continually before me.

18 For [g] I will declare mine iniquity; I will be [h] sorry for my sin.

19 But [i] mine enemies § *are* lively, *and* they are strong: and [k] they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.

20 They also [l] that render evil for good are mine adversaries; [m] because I follow *the thing that* good *is*.

21 Forsake me not, O LORD: [n] O my God, be not far from me.

22 [o] Make haste ‖ to

z 35:20. 62:3,4. 2 Sam. 16:7,8. Luke 20:21,22.
a 39:2,9. 2 Sam. 16:10—12. Is. 53:7. 1 Pet. 2:23.
b Am. 5:13. Mic. 7:5. Mark 15:3—5. John 8:6.
* Or, *thee do I wait for.*
c 39:7. 123:1—3.
† Or, *answer.* 138:3.
d 13:3,4. 35:24—26.
e 94:18. Deut. 32:35.
‡ Heb. *for halting.* 35:15. *marg.* Mic. 4:6,7.
f 6. 6:6. 77:2,3. Is. 53:3—5.
g 32:5. 51:3. Job 31:33. 33:27. Prov. 28:13.
h 2 Cor. 7:9—11.
i 3:1. 25:19. 56:1,2. 59:1—3.
§ Heb. being *living are strong.*
k 35:19. 69:4. Matt. 10:22. John 15: 18—25. Acts 4:25—29.
l 7:4. 35:12. 109:3—5. 1 Sam. 19: 4—6. 23:5,12. 25:16,21. Jer. 18:20.
m Matt. 5:10. John 10:32. 1 Pet. 3: 17,18. 4:14—16. 1 John 3:12.
n 22:1,11,19,24. 35:21,22.
o 40:3,17. 70:1,5. 71:12. 141:1.
‖ Heb. *for my help.*

like Hezekiah's boil; and there was no soundness in his flesh, like Job. David himself, though so great a prince, and so great a saint, was not exempt from the most grievous diseases; there was no soundness even in his flesh; probably this was after his sin in the matter of Uriah, and thus did he smart in his flesh for [disobedience, through] his fleshly lusts. When, at any time, distempered in our body, we ought to remember how God has been dishonored in and by our bodies. He was *feeble and sore-broken*, *v.* 8. His heart panted, and was in a continual palpitation, *v.* 10. His strength and limbs failed him; as for the light of his eyes, that was gone from him, either with much weeping, or by a defluxion of rheum on them, or through the lowness of his spirits, and the frequent returns of fainting. Sickness will tame the strongest body, and the stoutest spirit. Therefore let not the strong man glory in his strength, nor any man set grief at defiance, however it may be thought at a distance.

3. His friends were unkind to him, *v.* 11. Luke 10: 31. Even his kinsmen stood afar off. See what little reason we have to trust in man, or to wonder if we be disappointed in our expectations of kindness from men. Adversity tries friendship, and separates between the precious and the vile. It is our wisdom then to make sure a Friend in heaven, who will not stand aloof from our sore, and from whose love no tribulation or distress can separate us. David, in his troubles, was a type of Christ in his agony, on his cross, feeble and sore-broken, and then deserted by his friends and kinsmen, who *beheld afar off*.

Lastly, In the midst of his complaints, he comforts himself with the cognizance God graciously took both of his griefs and of his prayers, *v.* 9. The *groanings which cannot be uttered* are not hid from Him that *searches the heart*, and *knows what is the mind of the Spirit*, Rom. 8: 26, 27. In singing this, and praying it over, whatever burden lies on our spirits, we should by faith cast it on God, and all our care concerning it, and then be easy.

V. 12—22. In these vs.

I. David complains of the power and malice of his enemies, who, it should seem, not only took occasion, from the weakness of his body, and the trouble of his mind, to insult over him, but to do him mischief. He has a great deal to say against them, which he humbly offers as a reason why God should appear for him, as 25: 19. *Consider mine enemies.*

1. 'They are very spiteful and cruel; *seek my hurt;* nay, *my life,*' *v.* 12. such is the enmity of the serpent's seed. It thirsts after the blood of the saints.

2. 'They are very subtle, unwearied and politic. Mischief, covered and carried on by deceit, may well be called a *snare.*'

3. 'They are very insolent and abusive; *when my foot slips*, when I fall into any trouble, make any mistake, misplace a word, or take a false step, they magnify themselves against me, are pleased, and promise themselves my ruin.'

4. 'They are not only unjust, but very ungrateful; *hate me wrongfully*, *v.* 19. nay, *render evil for good,*' *v.* 20. 109: 4. Such a rooted enmity is there in wicked hearts to goodness for its own sake, that they hate it, even when they themselves have the benefit of it; they hate prayer, even in those that pray for them; and hate peace, even in those that would be at peace with them; but very ill-natured are those whom no courtesy will oblige, but rather exasperate.

5. 'They are very impious and devilish; *they are my adversaries* merely *because I follow the thing that good is.*' If we suffer ill for doing well, we must not think it strange; from the beginning it was so; Cain slew Abel, because his works were righteous; nor must we think it hard, because it will not always be so; for so much the greater will our reward be.

6. They are many and mighty; lively, strong, multiplied, *v.* 19. *Lord, how are they increased that trouble me?* 3: 1. Holy David was weak and faint, melancholy, of a sorrowful spirit, and persecuted by his friends; at the same time, his wicked enemies were strong, lively and increased in number; let us not therefore pretend to judge of men's characters by their outward condition; none knows love or hatred by all that is before them. It should seem that David, in this, as in other complaints he makes of his enemies, has an eye to Christ, whose persecutors were such as are here described, perfectly lost to all honor and virtue. None hate Christianity, but such as have first divested themselves of the first principles of humanity, and broken through its most sacred bonds.

II. He reflects, with comfort, on his own peaceable and pious behavior, under all the injuries and indignities done him. It is then only that our enemies do us a real mischief, when they provoke us to sin, Neh. 6: 13. when they prevail to put us out of the possession of our own souls, and drive us from God and our duty; if by divine grace we are enabled to prevent this mischief, we quench their fiery darts, and are saved from harm; if still we hold fast our integrity and our peace, who can hurt us? This David did here.

1. He kept his temper, and was not ruffled or discomposed by any of the slights put on him, or the mischievous things said or done against him, *v.* 13, 14. '*I, as a deaf man, heard not;* I took no notice of the affronts put on me, did not resent them, nor was put into disorder by them, much less did I meditate revenge, or study to return the injury.' Note, The less notice we take of the unkindness and injuries done us, the more we consult the quiet of our own minds. Being deaf, he was dumb, as a man in whose mouth there are no reproofs; though they sought after his life, and his silence might be taken for a confession of his guilt, yet he opens not his mouth. Note, When our enemies are most clamorous, it is, generally, our prudence to be silent, or to say little, lest we make bad worse. David could not hope by his mildness to win on his enemies, or by his soft answers to turn away their wrath, for they were men of such base spirits, that they rendered him evil for good; and yet he carried it thus meekly toward them, that he might prevent his own sin, and might have the comfort of it in the reflection. Herein David was a type of Christ, who was as a sheep dumb before the shearer, and, when He was reviled, reviled not again; and both are examples to us, not to render railing for railing.

2. He kept close to his God by faith and prayer, and so both supported himself under these injuries, and silenced his own resentments [sense] of them, *v.* 15. His lovers and friends, that should have owned him and stood by him, and appeared as witnesses for him, withdrew from him, *v.* 10. But God is a friend that will never fail us, if we hope in Him. Note, It is a good reason why we should bear reproach and calumny with silence and patience, because God is a Witness to all the wrong done us, and, in due time, will be a Witness for us, and against those that do us wrong; therefore let us be silent, because if we be, then we may expect God will appear for us, for this is an evidence we trust in Him; but if we undertake to manage for ourselves, we take God's work out of his hands, and forfeit the benefit of his appearing for us. Our Lord Jesus, when He suffered, *therefore* threatened not, because He *committed Himself to Him that judges righteously*, 1 Pet. 2: 23. It is a great support to us, when men are false and unkind, that we have a God to go to, whom we may be free with, and who will be faithful to us.

Verse 15.

The translation of the last clause of this v. in the book of common prayer, contains an important instruction: 'Thou shalt answer for me, O Lord, my God.' (*M.*) SCOTT.

Verses 19, 20.

The humble spirit of a penitent pleading guilty before God; and the consciousness, at the same time, of being wrongfully hated, and ungratefully and basely used, by men, not for the sins into which he had fallen in particular instances, but for the general tenor of a holy and useful life; are strongly marked in this passage. This shows, that the most decided rejoicing in the testimony of a man's conscience, respecting his conduct towards men, in those things of which he has been unjustly condemned, is perfectly consistent with the deepest humiliation as a sinner in the sight of God. (7:3—5. 35:11, 12. 2 *Cor.* 1:12—14.) SCOTT.

Verses 21, 22.

'I am persuaded, and confident, Thou wilt deliver me; but do not longer delay.' (*M. R.*—71:12.) ID.

help me, [p] O LORD my Salvation.

PSALM XXXIX.

David purposes not to offend with his tongue; and describes his inward commotion, 1—3. His prayers, and meditations on the shortness of life, and the vanity of human pursuits, 4—6. His hope in God, with prayer for pardon and comfort before his death, 7—13.

To the chief Musician, *even* to [a] Jeduthun, A Psalm of David.

I SAID [b] I will take heed to my ways, [c] that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep * my mouth with a bridle, [d] while the wicked is before me.

2 [e] I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, [f] *even* from good; and [g] my sorrow was † stirred.

3 [h] My heart was hot within me; while I was musing the fire burned: *then* spake I with my tongue.

4 LORD, [i] make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it *is; that* I may know ‡ how frail I *am.*

5 Behold, [k] thou hast made my days *as* an hand-breadth; and mine age *is* [l] as nothing before thee: [m] verily every

p 27:1. 62:2,6. Is. 12:2.
a 62: 77: *title.* 1 Chr. 16:41. 25:1—6.
b 119:9. 1 K. 2:4. 2 K. 10:31. Prov. 4:26,27. Heb. 2:1.
c 12:4. 73:8,9. 141:3. Prov. 18:21.
* Heb. *a bridle,* or *muzzle, for my mouth.* Jam. 1:26. 3:2—8.
d Am. 5:13. Mic. 7:5,6. Col. 4:5.
e 38:13,14. Is. 53:7. Matt. 27:12—14.
f Matt. 7:6.
g Job 32:19,20. Acts 4:20.
† Heb. *troubled.*
h Jer. 20:9. Ez. 3:14. Luke 24:32.
i 90:12. 119:84. Job 14:13.
‡ Or, *what time I have here.*
k 90:4,5,9,10. Gen. 47:9. Job 7:6. 9: 25,26. 14:1,2. Jam. 4:14.
l 39:47. 2 Pet. 3:8.
m 11. 62:9. 144:4. Ec. 1:2. 2:11. Is. 40:17.

III. He here bewails his own follies and infirmities. 1. He was very sensible of the present workings of corruption in him, and that he was now ready to repine at the providence of God, and to be put into a passion by the injuries men did him; *I am ready to halt, v.* 17. This will best be explained by a reflection like this which the psalmist made on himself in a like case, 73: 2. Good men, by setting their sorrow continually before them, have been ready to halt, who, by setting God always before them, have kept their standing. 2. He remembered against himself his former transgressions, acknowledging that by them he had brought these troubles on himself, and forfeited the divine protection; though he could justify himself, before God he will judge and condemn himself, *v.* 18. and this helped to make him silent under the rebukes of Providence, and the reproaches of men. If we be truly penitent for sin, that will make us patient under affliction, and particularly under unjust censures. Confession and contrition accompany true repentance, *v.* 18.

IV. He concludes with very earnest prayers to God, for his gracious presence with him, and seasonable, powerful succor in his distress, *v.* 21, 22. Nothing goes nearer to the heart of a good man in affliction, than to be under the apprehension of God's deserting him in wrath; nor does any thing therefore come more feelingly from his heart than this prayer, '*Lord, be not Thou far from me; make haste for my help.*' Is any afflicted, let him thus pray, let him thus plead, let him thus hope, in singing this psalm.

Ps. XXXIX. David seems to have been in a great strait, when he penned this, and with difficulty composes himself to take that good counsel he had given to others, (37.) to *rest in the Lord, and* wait patiently for Him, without fretting: it is easier to give the good advice, than the good example, of quietness under affliction. What the particular trouble was which occasioned his conflict, does not appear—perhaps it was the death of some dear friend or relation; and, at the same time, it should seem too, himself was weak and ill, and under some prevailing distemper. His enemies likewise were seeking advantages against him, and watched for his halting, that they might have something to reproach him for. This is a funeral Ps. and very proper for the occasion; in singing it, we should get our hearts duly affected with the brevity, uncertainty, and calamitous state, of human life; and those on whose comforts God has, by death, made breaches, will find this Ps. of great use, to their obtaining, what we should aim at under such an affliction, spiritual benefit, and reconcilement to the holy will of God.

V. 1—6. David here recollects, and leaves on record, the workings of his heart under his afflictions; and it is good for us to do so, that what was thought amiss, may be amended, and what was well thought of, may be improved the next time.

I. He remembered the covenants he had made with God, to walk circumspectly, and to be very cautious both of what he did, and what he said. When, at any time, tempted to sin, we must call to mind our solemn vows against sin, against the particular sin we are on the brink of. God can, and will, remind us of them, Jer. 2: 20. therefore we ought to remind ourselves of them. 1. He remembers he had resolved, in general, to be very cautious and circumspect in his walk, *v* 1 This is the great concern of every one of us, while others walk at all adventures. We ought steadfastly and frequently to resolve we will take heed to our ways; and, on all occasions, remind ourselves of our resolution. 2. He remembers he had in particular covenanted against tongue-sins It is not so easy as we could wish, not to sin in thought; but if an evil thought should arise in his mind, he would suppress it; which, for any one to do, is so great an attainment, that *if any offend not in word, the same is a perfect man;* and so needful, that he who *seems to be religious, but bridles not his tongue, his religion is vain:* see Jam. 3: 3. Watchfulness in the habit, is the bridle on the head; in the act and exercise, it is the hand on the bridle; by particular, steadfast resolution, corruption is muzzled, restrained from breaking out at the lips. David resolved he would double his guard, when there was most danger of scandal; *when the wicked is before me.* If good men fall into bad company, they must take heed what they say. Or, *when the wicked is before me,* in my thoughts; when contemplating their pride and power, prosperity and flourishing estate. The stronger the temptation to a sin, the stronger the resolution must be against it.

II. Pursuant to these covenants, he, with much ado, bridled his tongue, *v.* 2. His silence was commendable; and the greater the provocation, the more praise-worthy his silence. Watchfulness and resolution, in the strength of God's grace, will do more toward bridling the tongue than we can imagine, though it be an unruly evil. But what shall we say of his keeping silence even from good? Was it his wisdom, because he would not cast pearls before swine? I rather think it his weakness; because he might not say any thing, he would say nothing, but ran into an extreme, which was a reproach to the law, for that prescribes a mean. The same law which forbids all corrupt communication, requires that which is *to the use of edifying,* Eph. 4: 29.

III. The less he spake, the more he thought, and the more warmly. Binding the distempered

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

God often sees good, in order to warn others, to silence the reproaches of scoffers, to vindicate the honor of religion, and for his own glory, to make the afflictions of his offending children very sharp, complicated, and permanent; and to extort from them many doleful groans and lamentations. In such circumstances, when the correction begins to produce its salutary effects, they readily trace their sorrows to the fatherly displeasure of the Lord; and humbly acknowledge their sins to be the cause of his anger. [Comp. Note, Job 34: 1.]—Pride, covetousness, envy, malice, and lust, are diseases of the soul of far greater malignity, than fevers, dropsies, palsies, gout, or stone, are of the body: yet numbers feel not their sickness, till it be too late to apply the remedy. But, when we perceive our true condition, the good Physician is valued, resorted to, and obeyed: (*Matt.* 9: 10—13.) though even they, who are in this sure way of an effectual cure, often retard it, through their foolishness; and would we not prolong our own miseries, when conscious of having offended, we should immediately approach the mercy-seat with penitent confessions and believing prayers; that without delay our sins may be pardoned, our strength renewed, and our enemy prevented from rejoicing over us.—While the hypocrite takes encouragement from David's sins to transgress, he is a perfect stranger to David's ingenuous anguish of spirit under the consciousness of his guilt.—In the true believer's case, however, all this trouble will be useful: nay, should [he, with all his other troubles] be attended with the unkindness and inconstancy of lovers, friends, and relatives; still that consciousness of guilt which forms his heaviest load, will keep down indignation, silence murmurs and reproaches, and produce meek and quiet submission. For, if Jesus bore all this, without complaint or reproof; what reason can a sinner think he has for impatience or anger, when mercifully corrected for his sins, whatever rod God is pleased to employ? SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. XXXIX. The occasion of this Ps. is thought generally to be similar to that of the preceding. *Rosenm.* says, the ancient Hebrews, according to *Jarchi,* maintain, that it refers to decrees and judgments made with regard to the Israelites in circumstances of affliction.—*Jeduthun* is variously understood. Jewish commentators understand by it a musical instrument, or the first word of a song to the tune of which this Ps. was to be sung. Others think it the name of one of David's principal musicians, perhaps *Ethan,* mentioned among the sons of *Merari.* 1 Chr. 6:44. 9:16. and 16:33, 41, 42. So Dr. A. CLARKE and MORISON. *Rosenm.* favors the latter opinion. ED.

Verses 1—4.

It is thought, that David wrote this Ps. during Absalom's rebellion: and it is evident the writer's mind was greatly discomposed, by injuries and temptations, when he began his meditation. SCOTT.

(3.) *While I was musing the fire burned.*] 'A metaphor taken from vegetables, [&c.] which, being heaped together, begin to heat and ferment, if not scattered and exposed to the air; and will soon produce a *flame.*' Dr. A. CLARKE. But this is perhaps too fanciful. ED.

V. 5. *Roberts* notes as still common in the E. such expressions as, 'What are the days of man? only four fingers.' 'My son has gone, and has had a life of only four fingers.' ED.

man * at his best state *is* altogether vanity. Selah.

6 Surely every man walketh in † a vain shew: [n] surely they are disquieted in vain: [o] he heapeth up *riches*, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

[*Practical Observations.*]

7 And now, Lord, [p] what wait I for? [q] my hope *is* in thee.

8 [r] Deliver me from all my transgressions: [s] make me not the reproach of the foolish.

9 [t] I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst *it*.

10 [u] Remove thy stroke away from me: [x] I am consumed by the ‡ blow of thine hand.

11 When [y] thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest § his beauty [z] to consume away like a moth: [a] surely every man *is* vanity. Selah.

12 Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; [b] hold not thy peace at my tears: [c] for I *am* a stranger

* Heb. *settled.*
† Heb. *an image.* 1 Cor. 7:31.
n Ec. 1:14. 2:17,20,21. 4:7,8. 6:11, 12. 12:8,13. Is. 55:2. Luke 10.40—42. 12:29. 1 Pet. 5:7.
o 49:10,11. Job 27:16,17. Prov. 13:22. 23:5. 27:24. Ec. 2:8,19,21. 5:14. Luke 12:20,21. Jam. 5:3.
p 130:5,6. Gen. 49:18. Luke 2:25.
q 38:15. 119:81,166. Job 13:15. Rom. 15:13.
r 25:11,18. 51:7—10,14. 65:3. 130:8. Mic. 7:19. Matt. 1:21. Tit. 2:14.
s 35:21. 44:13. 57:3. 79:4. 119.39. 2 Sam. 16:7,8. Joel 2:17,19. Rom. 2.23,24.
t 38:13 Lev. 10:3. 1 Sam. 3:18. 2 Sam. 16:10. Job 1:21. 2:10. 40:4, 5. Dan. 4:35.
u 25:16,17. 1 Sam. 6:5. Job 9:34. 13: 21.
x 38:3,4.
‡ Heb. *conflict.* Job 40:8.
y 38:1—8. 90:7—10. 1 Cor. 5:5. 11: 30—32. Heb. 12:6. Rev. 3:19.
§ Heb. *that which is to be desired in him to melt away.* 102:10,11.
z Job 4:19. 13:28. 30:30. Is. 50:9. Hos. 5:12.
a 5.
b 56:8. 116:8. 2 Sam. 16:12. *Marg.* 2 K. 20:5. Job 16:20. Heb. 5:7.
c 119:19,54. Lev. 25:23. 1 Chr. 29:15. 2 Cor. 5:6. Heb. 11:13. 1 Pet. 1:17. 2 11.

part, did but draw the humor to it; *My sorrow was stirred, my heart was hot*, v. 3. He could bridle his tongue, but could not keep his passion under: Note, The fretful and discontented ought not to pore much, [but change the subject of thought,] for, while they suffer their thoughts to dwell on the causes of their calamity, the fire of their discontent is fed with fuel, and burns the more furiously. Impatience is a sin that has its ill cause within ourselves, and that is musing; and has its ill effects on ourselves, and that is no less than burning. If therefore we would prevent the mischief of ungoverned passions, we must redress the grievance of ungoverned thoughts.

IV. When he did speak, at last, it was to the purpose, v. 3. some make it the breach of his good purpose, and that, in what he said, he sinned with his tongue; so they make what follows, a passionate wish, *that he might die like Elijah;* 1 K. 19: 4. and Job, *ch.* 6: 8, 9. But I rather take it to be, not the breach of his good purpose, but the reformation of his mistake in carrying it too far; he had kept silence from good, but now he would do so no longer. He had nothing to say to the wicked that were before him, for to them he knew not how to place his words, but, after long musing, the first word he said was a prayer, and a devout meditation on a subject, which it will be good for us all to think much of.

1. He prays to God to make him sensible of the shortness and uncertainty of life, and the near approach of death, v. 4. He does not mean, 'Lord, let me know how long I shall live, and when I shall die;' but, 'Lord, give me wisdom and grace to consider mine end, Deut. 32: 29. and to improve what I know concerning it.' *The living know that they shall die*, Eccl. 9: 5. but few care for thinking of it; we have therefore need to pray, that God by his grace would conquer that aversion, which is in our corrupt hearts, to the thoughts of death. 'Lord, make me to consider,' (1.) 'What death is; it is my end, the end of my life, and all the employments and enjoyments of life; it is the end of all men,' Eccl. 7: 2. It is a final period to our state of probation and preparation, and an awful entrance on a state of recompense and retribution. To the wicked man, it is the end of all his joys, to a godly man, the end of all his griefs. (2.) How near it is. When we look upon death as at a distance, we are tempted to adjourn the necessary preparations for it; but when we consider how short life is, [that our *day* is *determined*,] we see ourselves concerned to do what our hand finds to do, not only with all our might, but with all possible expedition. (3.) That it is continually working in us. We find, by daily experience, the earthly house of this tabernacle mouldering and going to decay; 'Lord, make us to consider this, that we may secure mansions in the house not made with hands.'

2. He meditates on the brevity and vanity of life, pleading it with God for relief under the burdens of life, as Job often, and pleading it with himself, for his quickening to the business of life.

Man's life on earth is of no continuance, and that is a reason why we should sit loose to it, and prepare for the end of it, v. 5. *Behold, Thou hast made my days as a hand-breadth;* the breadth of four fingers, a measure we have always about us; we need no rod, no pole, no measuring line, wherewith to take the dimension of our days, nor any skill in arithmetic wherewith to compute their number. All time is nothing to God's eternity, much less our share of time. Man's life on earth is vain, and of no value, and therefore it is folly to be fond of it, and wisdom to make sure of a better. He is vanity; mortal, mutable. Observe how emphatically this truth is expressed here, 1. *Every man is vanity*, without exception; high and low, rich and poor, all meet in this. 2. He is so *at his best estate*, when young, strong, and healthful, in wealth and honor, and the height of prosperity; when most easy, merry, and secure. 3. He is *altogether vanity*, as vain as you can imagine. *All man is all vanity*, so it may be read; every thing about him uncertain, nothing substantial and durable, but what relates to the new man. 4. *Verily* he is so. A truth of undoubted certainty, but which we are very unwilling to believe, and need to have solemnly attested to us, as indeed it is by frequent instances. 5. *Selah* is annexed, as a note commanding observation. 'Stop here, take time to consider and apply this truth.'

For the proof, he here mentions three things, and shows the vanity of each, v. 6. 1st. Our joys and honors: *Surely every man walks* in a shadow, an image, *a vain show.* When he makes a figure, his fashion passes away, and his great pomp is but great fancy, Acts 25: 23. It is but a show, therefore vain like the rainbow, the gaudy colors of which must needs vanish and disappear quickly, when the substratum is but a cloud, a vapor; such is life, Jam. 4: 14. therefore such are all the gaieties of it. 2dly. Our griefs and fears; *Surely they are all disquieted in vain.* Our disquietudes are often groundless; we vex ourselves without any just cause, and the occasions of our trouble are often the creatures of our own fancy and imagination: and always fruitless; we disquiet ourselves in vain, for we cannot, with all our disquietment, alter the nature of things, nor the counsel of God; things will still be as they are. 3dly. Our cares and toils. He takes great pains to *heap up riches*, but they are like heaps of manure in the furrows of the field, good for nothing, unless they be spread. But when he has filled his treasuries with trash, he *knows not who shall gather them*, nor to whom they shall descend when he is gone: for he [does not use them during his life, nor provide *effectually* for their proper use at his death, nor] shall he take them away with him. He asks not, *For whom do I labor?* and that is his folly, Eccl. 4: 8. But if he did ask, he could not tell whether he should be a wise man or a fool, a friend or a foe, Eccl. 2: 19. *This is vanity.*

V. 7—13. The psalmist, having meditated on the shortness and uncertainty of life, and the vanity and vexation of spirit that attend all the comforts of life, here, in these vs. turns heaven-ward; and expresses,

I. His dependence on God, v. 7. The consideration of the vanity and frailty of human life, should deaden our desires to the things of this world, and

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—6. The presence of the wicked, especially if powerful and prosperous, exposes us to many temptations, either by enticing or terrifying us into improper compliances, or by exciting our indignation or envy. When we are not able wholly to separate from them, we should double our watchfulness, and especially impose a strict restraint on our tongues; remembering that they will criticise every expression, and turn it, if they can, to our disadvantage, and to the discredit of religion. Sometimes it may be necessary to keep silence even from good words, when they are likely to excite profane contempt or rage; yet in general we run into an extreme, when backward to engage in edifying discourse. (*Jam.* 1: 26.) But even if we be enabled to bridle our tongues, we shall often find ourselves incapable of repressing our passions. In this case, it is our wisdom to retire, and pour out our hearts before God, and to utter our complaints, sorrows, and desires to Him alone. It is also very composing to the believer's mind, under sore trials and temptations, to know and consider his end, and the measure of his days: but we are never suitably affected with such subjects, except we pray over them, and are inwardly taught by the Spirit of God.—How absurd are the perplexing anxieties, and the incessant fatigues, of the most successful worldling, who pursues shadows to the marring of his present comfort, and the ruin of his immortal soul! Indeed the believer's disquietudes about the difficulties of his path, and the treatment that he meets with, are not much more rational.

Scott.

Verse 11.

'The word' (rendered *his beauty*,) 'signifieth all that he desireth, as health, force, strength, beauty, and in whatsoever he hath delight; so that the rod of God taketh away all that is desired in this world.' (38:3—10. *Job* 2:7,8. 13:24—28.) Scott.

A moth, &c.] 'The body is as a garment to the soul: in this garment sin hath lodged a moth, which by degrees fretteth ... away, first the beauty, then the strength, and finally the contexture of its parts.' Bp. *Horne.* [Note, Job 34:1.] Scott.

Verse 12.

The patriarchs lived in Canaan, as in a foreign country, by the allowance of the possessors, moving their tents from place to place;

with thee, *and* a sojourner, [d] as all my fathers *were*.

13 O [e] spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and [f] be no more.

PSALM XL.

David praises God for deliverance out of deep distress, and shows the benefit which would thence be derived to numbers; and the happiness of such as trust in God, 1—5. As a type of Christ, (or, Christ speaking by him,) he states the inefficacy of legal sacrifices, and the efficacy of the Redeemer's obedience, 6—8. He declares that he had published God's righteousness and salvation; and pleads for deliverance from urgent troubles, and for the confusion of his enemies, with the triumphing of the righteous, 9—17.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

* I [a] WAITED patiently for the LORD; and [b] he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

d Gen. 47:9.
e Job 10:20,21. 14:5,6.
f Gen. 5:24. 42:36. Job 14:10—12.
* Heb. *In waiting I waited.*
a 27:13,14. 37:7. Jam. 5:7—11.
b 116:2. 130:2. Dan. 9:18.

of conscience, and for grace, that God would never leave him to himself, so far as to do any thing that might make him a reproach to bad men. This is a good reason why we should both watch and pray against sin, because the credit of our profession is nearly concerned in the preservation of our integrity.

2. For the removal of his affliction, that he might speedily be eased of his present burdens, *v.* 10. Note, when under the correcting hand of God, our eye must be to God Himself, and not to any other, for relief; and we may then, in faith, and with satisfaction, pray that our afflictions may be removed, when our sins are pardoned, Is. 38: 17. and when, as here, the affliction is sanctified, and has done its work, and we are humbled under the hand of God.

(1.) He pleads the great extremity he was reduced to, which made him the proper object of God's compassion; *I am consumed by the blow of thy hand.* His sickness prevailed to that degree, that his spirits failed, his strength was wasted, and his body emaciated. When God, at any time, with rebukes corrects us, [1.] We must acknowledge He is righteous in it; for, whenever He corrects man, it is for iniquity. It is the yoke of our transgressions, though it be *bound with his hand*, Lam. 1: 14. [2.] We cannot oppose the *effects* of his controversy. Some make the *moth* here to represent man, who is as easily crushed as a moth with the touch of a finger, Job 4: 19. Others make it to represent the divine rebukes, which lower our expectations from it. 'I have sometimes foolishly promised myself this and the other, from the world; now, I am of another mind, but what wait I for?' He takes hold of happiness and satisfaction in God; *My hope is in Thee.* When creature-confidences fail, it is our comfort that we have a God to go to, a God to trust to, and we should thereby be quickened to take so much the faster hold of Him by faith.

II. His cheerful acquiescence in God's holy will, *v.* 9. '*I was dumb, I opened not my mouth*, in a way of complaint and murmuring.' He now again recovered that serenity and sedateness of mind which were disturbed, *v.* 2. Whatever comforts he is deprived of, whatever crosses he is burdened with, he will be easy; '*because Thou didst it;* it did not come to pass by chance, but according to thine appointment.' All that God does is well done.

III. His desire toward God, and prayers,

1. For the pardon of his sin, and preventing his shame, *v.* 8. Before he prays, *v.* 10. *Remove thy stroke from me*, he prays, *v.* 8. '*Deliver me from all mine offences*, the guilt I have contracted, the punishment I have deserved, and the power of corruption I have been captivated by.' When God forgives our sins, He delivers us from them, from them all. He pleads, *Make me not a reproach to the foolish.* Wicked people are foolish; and they show their folly most, when they think to show their wit, by scoffing at God's people. When David prays that God would pardon his sins, and not make him a reproach, it is to be taken as a prayer for peace

silently and insensibly waste and consume us, as the moth does the garment. All which abundantly proves what he had said before, that surely every man is vanity, weak and helpless; so he will be found when God comes to contend with him.

(2.) He pleads the good impressions made on him by his affliction. He hoped the end was accomplished for which it was sent, and that therefore it would be removed in mercy; and unless an affliction has done its work, though it may be removed, it is not removed in mercy. He hoped God would notice his weeping; when the Lord God called to mourning, he accommodated himself to the dispensation, and therefore could, in faith, pray, *Lord, hold not thy peace at my tears*, *v.* 12. His afflictions had stirred him up, too, to prayer. If they have that effect, and, when we are afflicted, we pray more, and better, than before, we may hope God will give ear to our cry; for the prayer which, by his providence, He gives occasion for, and by his Spirit of grace, indites, shall not return void. They had helped to wean him from the world; now he began, more than ever, to look upon himself as a stranger and sojourner here, and would never reckon himself at home till he came to heaven.

Lastly, He prays for a reprieve yet a little longer, *v.* 13. '*O spare me.*' Some make this a passionate wish, that God would send him hel quickly, or it would be too late, like that, Job 10: 20, 21. But I rather take it as a pious prayer, that God would continue him here, till by his grace He had made him fit to go hence, and that he might finish the work of life, before his life was finished; *Let my soul live, and it shall praise Thee.*

Ps. XL. It should seem, David penned this Ps. on occasion of his deliverance, by God's power and goodness, from some great and pressing trouble, by which he was in danger of being overwhelmed; probably, some trouble of mind, arising from a sense of sin, and of God's displeasure against him for it; whatever it was, the same Spirit that indited his praises for that deliverance, was in him, at the same time, a Spirit of prophecy, testifying of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow; or, ere he was aware, he was led to speak of the discharge of his undertaking, in words that must be applied to Christ only; therefore how far the praises that here go before that illustrious prophecy, and the prayers that follow, may safely and profitably be applied to Him, it will be worth while

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 7—13. It is worthy of notice, that, in fact, we become happy in exact proportion, as we despair of happiness from this changing, sinful world; and wait and hope for it, from the mercy and all-sufficient love of God our Savior. Instead of being much concerned about temporal things, let us earnestly pray to be 'delivered from all our transgressions;' and that we may not be made a reproach to those, who, being foolish at all times, never so much expose their folly, as when they deride the hopes, or insult over the falls, of the righteous. We should look above instruments, and view the hand of God in all our afflictions: and then faith in his wisdom, justice, truth, and love; united with consciousness that He rebukes us for our iniquity; will render us silent and submissive, because He has done it. Then our prayers for the removal of his stroke, even when we 'are consumed with the blow of his hand,' will be offered with resignation to his will, and hope in his mercy.—The Christian's sorrows are all sanctified; the gracious Lord will wipe away his tears, and answer all his prayers: he cannot but feel his afflictions; yet, as a stranger and a pilgrim on earth, he hopes for a better and more enduring habitation in heaven, where his heart and his treasure are already. He only desires to be spared, till his measure of service on earth be finished, and his title to heaven clear; and that he may depart in that vigorous exercise of faith and grace, which may be honorable to God, encouraging to his brethren, and comfortable to himself. Then going hence, and being no more on earth, he enters on his perfect and eternal rest; and leaves his pious friends consoled with the joyful hope of a blessed re-union; and instructed by his words and actions, how to live, to suffer, and to die. (*Prov.* 14: 32. 1 *Thes.* 4: 13—18.) SCOTT.

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and they confessed themselves to be strangers and pilgrims in the land: but David ruled, as a powerful monarch and a renowned conqueror, over the people of Israel, now fully settled in their promised inheritance. When, however, he considered the shortness and vanity of life, and looked forward to a future and permanent state; *he* too owned, that *he* was a stranger and pilgrim on earth, even as they also had been. SCOTT.

Verse 13.

If this Ps. was composed during Absalom's usurpation, David might mean, that he was desirous, before he left the world, to recover his peace of mind, to be reinstated in his authority, and to retrieve his character. He however prayed, that his faith, hope, and love, might recover strength; that he might be enabled to do some further service to his people, before his death; and have inward comfort, when about to depart. His prayer in all these respects was completely answered. (1 *Chr.* 29:) ID.

NOTES.

Ps. XL. *Greenf.* thinks this Ps. was composed about the same *time* and on the same *occasion* as the two preceding Pss.—The subject, many, with *Henry* and *Scott*, consider as relating primarily to David, but secondarily, and, in parts, exclusively, to the Messiah. So *Morison*; who thinks it, in an extraordinary degree, prophetic, yet doubts if it be so altogether. Prof. *Stuart* understands it wholly of the Messiah; so also *Doddridge*, apparently; see his note on *volume of the book*, Heb. 10:7.—Some find a difficulty in applying the whole Ps. to Christ, on account of v. 12. yet, as Christ *bore our sins* by way of atoning for them, most see no impropriety in applying that v. to Him. ARCHIBALD M'LEAN, in *Morison*, defends the application on the ground that, while all the sin-offerings appointed by the law were perfectly free from all iniquity or moral guilt, and indeed incapable of it, they yet had the sins of the people confessed over, and laid upon them, in order to expiation; and that such being the case as to these, the types, there was thus a propriety in speaking prophetically in this manner of Christ as the Antitype. And if it be said that *iniquities* here mean the punishment and sufferings Christ endured as a substitute for the iniquities of his people, it comes, he argues, (and so *Stuart*,) to the same thing; since the original word in v. 12. frequently signifies the punishment of sin; as, Gen. 4:13. 19:15. Lev. 1:5. Job 21:19. 2 K.7:

2 [c] He brought me up also out of an [*] horrible pit, out of [d] the miry clay, and [e] set my feet upon a rock, *and* [f] established my goings.

3 And [g] he hath put a new song in my mouth, *even* [h] praise unto our God: [i] many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

4 [k] Blessed *is* the man that maketh the LORD his trust; and [l] respecteth not the proud, nor such [m] as turn aside to lies.

5 [n] Many, O LORD my God, *are* thy wonderful works *which* thou hast done, and [o] thy thoughts *which are* to us-ward: [†] they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: *if* I would declare and speak *of them*, they are more than can be numbered.

6 [p] Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; [q] mine ears hast thou [‡] opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required.

7 Then said I, [r] Lo, I come · [s] in the volume of the book *it is* written of me:

c 18:16,17. 71:20. 86:13. 116:3. 142:6,7. 143:3. Is. 24:22. Jon. 2:5,6. Zech. 9:11. Acts 2:24,27—31.
* Heb. *pit of noise.* Matt. 13:50.
d Is. 69:2,14,15. Jer. 38:6—12. Lam. 3:53—55.
e 27:5. 61:2. Matt. 7:24,25.
f 17:5. 18:36. 37:23. 119:133.
g 33:3. 144:9. Rev. 5:9,10. 14:3.
h 103:1—5. Is. 12:1—4.
i 34:1—6. 35:27. 52:6. 64:9,10. 142:7. Hos. 3:5. Acts 2:31—41. 4:4.
k 2:12. 34:8. 84:11,12. 118:8,9. Jer. 17:7,8. Rom. 15:12,13.
l 15:4. 101:3—7. 119:21.
m Is. 44:18—20. Jer. 10:14,15. Jon. 2:8. 2 Thes. 2:9—11.
n 139:4. Ex. 15:11. Job 5:9. 9:10. 26:14.
o 71:15. 92:5. 139:6,17,18. Is. 55:8,9. Jer. 29:11.
† Or, *none can order them unto thee.* Job 37:19,20.
p 50:8. 51:16. 1 Sam. 15:22. Is. 1:11. 66:3. Jer. 7:21—23. Hos. 6:6. Matt. 9:13. 12:7. Heb. 10:5—12.
q Ex. 21:6. Job 33:16. Is. 50:4,5.
‡ Heb. *digged.*
r Heb. 10:7—9.
s Gen. 3:15. Luke 24:27,44. John 5:39. Acts 10:43. 1 Cor. 15:3,4. 1 Pet. 1:10,11. Rev. 19:10.

to consider. If, in singing this Ps. we mix faith with the prophecy of Christ, and join in sincerity with these praises and prayers, we make melody with our hearts to the Lord.

V. 1—5. In these vs. we have,

1. The great distress and trouble the psalmist had been in, *v.* 2. and in which he found himself sinking yet further. He says nothing of sickness, or the insults of his enemies, therefore we have reason to think, some inward disquiet was now his greatest grievance. Despondency of spirit, under the sense of God's withdrawings, and prevailing doubts and fears about the eternal state, are indeed a horrible pit and miry clay, and have been so to many a dear child of God.

2. His humble attendance on God, and his believing expectations from Him in those depths, *v.* 1. *Waiting I waited.* Those whose expectation is from God may wait with assurance, but must wait with patience. This is very applicable to Christ, both in the garden, and on the cross. Then was his soul troubled and exceeding sorrowful; but then He prayed, *Father, glorify thy name; Father, save Me;* and thus waited patiently.

3. His comfortable experience in his distress, which he records for the honor of God, and his own and others' encouragement. (1.) God answered his prayers; *He inclined unto me, and heard my cry.* Those that wait patiently for God, though they may wait long, do not wait in vain. Our Lord Jesus was *heard, in that He feared*, Heb. 5: 7. Nay, He was sure the Father heard Him always. (2.) He silenced his fears, stilled the tumult of his spirits, and gave him a settled peace of conscience, *v.* 2. Those that have been under the prevalency of [desponding apprehensions, constitutional, or accidental, or] a religious melancholy, and by the grace of God have been relieved, may apply this very feelingly to themselves; they are brought up out of a horrible pit. Christ is the Rock on which a poor soul may stand fast, and on whose mediation alone between us and God we can build any solid hopes or satisfaction. Where God has given a steadfast hope, He expects there should be a steady, regular conversation; and if that be the blessed fruit of it, we have reason to acknowledge, with abundance of thankfulness, the riches and power of his grace. (3.) He filled him with joy, as well as peace, in believing; '*He has put a new song in my mouth;* He has given me cause to rejoice, and a heart to rejoice.' Fresh mercies, especially such as we never before received, call for new songs. This is applicable to our Lord Jesus, in his reception to paradise, his resurrection from the grave, and his exaltation to the joy and glory set before Him.

4. The good improvement of it.

(1.) David's experience would encourage many to hope in God, and, for that end, he leaves it here on record, *Many shall see, and fear, and trust in the Lord.* There is a holy, reverent fear of God, which is not only consistent with, but the foundation of, our hope in Him. God's dealings with our Lord Jesus, are our great encouragement to trust in God; and what greater encouragement can we have to his fear and worship? See Rom. 4: 25. 5: 1, 2. The psalmist invites others to make God their Hope, as he did, by pronouncing those happy that do so, *v.* 4. This is applicable, particularly, to our faith in Christ.

(2.) The joyful sense he had of this mercy, led him to observe, with thankfulness, his many other favors from God, *v.* 5. When God puts new songs into our mouth, we must not forget our former songs, but repeat them. Many are the benefits we are daily loaded with, both by providence, and grace. They are God's works; not only the gifts of his bounty, but the operations of his power; his wonderful works; the contrivance of them is admirable, and his condescension in bestowing them, admirable. All his wonderful works are the product of his thoughts to us-ward. He does all, according to the counsel of his own will, Eph. 1: 11. the purposes of his grace which He purposed in Himself, Eph. 3: 11. They are the projects of Infinite Wisdom, the designs of everlasting love, 1 Cor. 2: 7. Jer. 31: 3. *thoughts of good only*, Jer. 29: 11. His gifts and callings will *therefore* be without repentance, because they are not sudden resolves, but the result of his thoughts, his many thoughts, to us-ward. They are innumerable, and eternity itself will be too short to reckon them; they are in order, but so many, that we know not where to begin, nor which to name next; their order, references and dependencies are a mystery we shall not be able to account for, till the veil be rent, and the mystery of God finished: when we have said the most we can, of the wonders of divine love to us, we must conclude with an *et cætera*, and adore the depth, despairing to find the bottom.

V. 6—10. The psalmist, being struck with amazement at the wonderful works God had done for his people, is strangely carried out here to foretell that work of wonder which excels all the rest, and is the foundation and fountain of all, that of our redemption by our Lord Jesus Christ. God's thoughts concerning that work, were the most curious, the most copious, the most gracious, and therefore to be most admired. This paragraph is quoted by the apostle, Heb. 10: 5, &c. and applied to Christ, and his undertaking for us. As in the institutions, so in the devotions of the O. T. there is more of Christ than perhaps the O. T. saints were aware of. Observe,

1. The utter insufficiency of the legal sacrifices to atone for sin, in order to our peace with God and our happiness in Him; *Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire;* Thou wouldest not have the Redeemer to offer them; something He must have to offer, but not these, Heb. 8: 3. therefore He must not be of the house of Aaron, Heb. 7: 14. Or, In the days of the Messiah, burnt-offering and sin-offering will be no longer required, but all those ceremonial institutions will be abolished. But that is not all; even while the law concerning them was in full force, it might be said, God did not desire them, nor accept them, for their own sake; they could not take away the guilt of sin by satisfying God's justice; the terror of sin, by pacifying the conscience; nor the power of sin, by sanctifying the nature; it was impossible, Heb. 9: 9.—10: 1—4. What in them was valuable, resulted from their reference to Christ, of whom they were types. The Substance must come, who must bring that glory to God, and that grace to man, it was im-

9.—*Morison* pronounces this 'clear, sound reasoning,' and says, this, if any thing short of 'express divine authority,' would reconcile him to the view in question. Yet he inclines to the view of *Dathe*, 'that vs. 7—11. only belong strictly to the Messiah.'—*Williams*, in Cott. Bib. divides the Ps. after *Kennicott*, into three parts, the first of which vs. 1—5. he applies, primarily to David, and typically to the Redeemer; the second, vs. 6—10. to the incarnation and to that only; and the third, vs. 11—17. again to David: the second he regards as 'a kind of parenthesis, though an important one.'—*Kennicott* considers the Ps. as closing with v. 10. and thinks the remainder, with Ps. 70. which is manifestly incomplete, should form another Ps.; as Ps. 14. and Ps. 53. are different editions of the same Ps.; this Dr. *J. P. Smith* highly approves. ED.

Verses 1—5.

In this Ps. David seems to have intended to speak of his own case and experience; but the Holy Spirit led him to use language, which in its full meaning can be applied to none but the Lord Jesus Himself. The whole indeed may be accommodated to Him, yet some passages are more suited to the case of the type, than of the Antitype.—These vs. may be interpreted of the Redeemer's deep and dreadful sufferings, and the happy effects which followed his deliverance out of them.—Yet the passage may also be explained of David; and answers to some parts of the believer's experience. V. 3. and 4. may be connected as follows: 'Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD: *Saying*, Blessed is the man, &c.' (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verses 6—8.

It is uncertain, whether David had in these vs. any intention of declaring, that cheerful and prompt obedience to the precepts of the moral law, proceeding from faith and love, was more acceptable to God than legal sacrifices: (50:7—15. 1 *Sam.* 15:22.) but it is evident that the Holy Spirit foretold the obedience of the promised Messiah.—The apostle, in quoting this passage, follows nearly the translation of the LXX. which gives an interpretation, rather than a translation, of the words rendered, 'Mine ears hast thou opened.' But, as this variation did not at all affect his argument, or alter the meaning of the passage, it was not necessary, he should interrupt his subject by noticing it. (*Heb.* 10:5—10.) ID.

(6.) *Mine ears*, &c.] The apostle, Heb. 10:5. quotes from the Sept. '*a body*,' &c. *Kennicott* supposes the original Heb. read, as some MSS. and versions 'body,' for ears. The word rendered '*opened*,' means also '*to prepare*' or '*obtain*,' Deut. 2:6. 2 K. 6:23. and Hos. 3:2.; and '*ears*,' by synecdoche, are taken for the whole body. So *Rosenm.*

8 [t] I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, [u] thy law *is* * within my heart.

9 [x] I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, [y] I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, [z] thou knowest.

10 [a] I have not hid [b] thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared [c] thy faithfulness and [d] thy salvation: I have not concealed [e] thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.

11 [f] Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD; [g] let thy loving-kindness and thy truth continually preserve me.

12 For [h] innumerable evils have compassed me about: [i] mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: [k] they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore [l] my heart † faileth me.

13 [m] Be pleased, O

t 112:1. 119:16,24,47,92. Job 23:12. Jer. 15:16. John 4:34. Rom. 7:22. 8:29.
u 37:30,31. Prov. 3:1. Jer. 31:33. 2 Cor. 3:3.
* Heb. *in the midst of my bowels.*
x 22:22,25. 35:18. 71:15—18. Mark 16:15,16. Heb. 2:12.
y 119:13,171,172.
z 139:2. John 21:17.
a Ez. 2:7. 3:17,18. Acts 20:20,21,26, 27. Rom. 10:9,10. 1 Thes. 1:8. Rev. 22:17.
b Rom. 1:16,17. 3:22—26. 10:3. Phil. 3:9.
c Acts 13:32,33. Rom. 15:8,9.
d Is. 49:6. Luke 2:30—32. 3:6. 1 Tim. 1:15.
e 25:10. 34:6. Mic. 7:20. John 1:17. 3:16,17.
f 69:13,16.
g 23:6. 43:3. 57:3. 61:7. Heb. 5:7.
h 22:11—19.
i 38:4. Is. 53:6. 1 Pet. 3:18.
k 19:12. 69:4.
l 73:26. Gen. 42:28. Luke 21:26.
† Heb. *forsaketh.*
m 25:17,18. Matt. 26:36—44.

possible those sacrifices should ever do.

2. The designation of our Lord Jesus to the work and office of Mediator; *Mine ears hast Thou opened;* God the Father disposed Him to the undertaking Isa. 50: 5, 6. and then obliged Him to go through with it. *Mine ear hast Thou digged,* is supposed to allude to binding servants to serve for ever, by boring their ear to the door post, Ex. 21: 6. Our Lord Jesus so loved, that he would not go out free from, his undertaking, therefore engaged to persevere for ever in it; and, *for this reason,* He is able to save us to the uttermost, because He has engaged to serve his Father to the uttermost, who upholds Him in it, Isa. 42: 1.

3. His own voluntary consent to this undertaking; '*Then said I, Lo, I come;* then, when sacrifice and offering would not do, rather than the work should be undone, I said, Lo, I come, to enter the lists with the powers of darkness, and to advance the interests of God's glory and kingdom.' This bespeaks, (1.) That He freely offered Himself to this service, which He was under no engagement at all to, prior to his own voluntary susception: had He not been perfectly voluntary in it, He could not have been a Surety, for it is by this will, this *mind of the Offerer,* that we are sanctified, Heb. 10: 10. (2.) That He firmly obliged Himself to it; 'I come; I promise to come in the fulness of time.' Therefore the apostle says, 'It was when He came into the world that He had an actual regard to this promise, by which He had *engaged his heart to approach unto God.* (3.) That He frankly owned Himself engaged; He said, *Lo, I come,* said it all along to the O. T. saints, who therefore knew Him by the title of *Ho Erchomenos, He that should come.* This word was the foundation of their faith and hope, and which they looked and longed to have accomplished.

4. The reason why He came, in pursuance of his undertaking; because, *in the volume of the book,* the close-rolls of the divine decree and counsel, in the letters patent of the O. T. *it was written of Him;* Moses and all the prophets testified of Him; in all the rolls, volumes, of that book, something or other was written of Him, which He had an eye to, that all might be accomplished, John 19: 28.

5. The pleasure He took in his undertaking, *v.* 8, 9. *I delight to do thy will, O my God;* it was, to Christ, his meat and drink to go on with this work appointed to Him; John 4: 34. and the reason here given, is, *Thy law is within my heart;* it is written there, it rules there, it is an active commanding principle there. It is meant of the law, concerning the work and office of the Mediator, what He was to do and suffer; this law was dear to Him, and had an influence on Him in his whole undertaking. Note, When the law of God is written in our hearts, our duty will be our delight.

6. The publication of the Gospel to the children of men, even in the great congregation, *v.* 9, 10. The same that, as a Priest, wrought out redemption for us, as a Prophet, by his own preaching first, then by his apostles, and still by his Word and Spirit, makes it known to us. Observe, (1.) What is preached; righteousness, *v.* 9. God's righteousness, *v.* 10. the everlasting righteousness Christ has brought in, Dan. 9: 24. comp. Rom. 1: 16, 17. It is God's faithfulness to his promise, and the salvation long looked for; God's loving-kindness and truth, his mercy according to his Word. Note, In the work of our redemption, we ought to notice how bright all the divine attributes shine, and give to God the praise of each. (2.) To whom? the great congregation, *v.* 9. and again, *v.* 10. When Christ was here on earth, He preached to multitudes, thousands at a time. The Gospel was preached both to Jews and Gentiles, to great congregations of both. Solemn, religious assemblies are a divine institution, and in them the glory of God, in the face of Christ, ought to be both praised, to the glory of God, and preached for the edification of men. (3.) How? freely and openly; *I have not refrained my lips, I have not hid it, I have not concealed it.* This intimates, that whoever undertook to preach the Gospel of Christ, would be in great temptation to hide it and conceal it, because it must be preached with great contention, and in the face of great opposition; but Christ Himself, and those whom He calls to that work, set their faces *as a flint,* Isa. 50: 7. and were wonderfully carried on in it: and well for us they were so; thus our eyes come to see this joyful light, and our ears to hear this joyful sound; which otherwise we might for ever have perished in ignorance of.

V. 11—17. The psalmist, having meditated on the work of redemption, and spoken of it in the person of the Messiah, now comes to make improvement of the doctrine of his mediation between us and God, and therefore speaks in his own person. Christ having done his Father's will, and finished his work, and given orders for the preaching of the Gospel to every creature, we are encouraged to come boldly to the throne of grace, for mercy and grace.

1. This may encourage us, to pray for the mercy of God, and to put ourselves under the protection of that mercy, *v.* 11. Rom. 8: 32. The best saints are in continual danger, and see themselves undone, if not continually preserved by God's grace; and the everlasting loving-kindness and truth of God are what we have to depend on for our preservation to the heavenly kingdom, 61: 7.

2. This may encourage us, in reference to the guilt of sin, that Jesus Christ has done that towards our discharge from it which sacrifice and offering could not do. See here, (1.) The frightful sight he had of sin, *v.* 12. This was it that made the discovery he was now favored with, of a Redeemer, very welcome. Convinced, awak-

(*Edit.* 1831.)—The whole expression, '*mine ears hast thou opened,*' is equivalent to, 'Thou hast made me to hear thy will'—'Thou hast revealed Thyself to me'—'Thou hast rendered me obedient.' So *Morison, Stuart, Rosenm.*' Dr. *J. P. Smith,* and the commentators generally.—That the expression has reference to the boring of the ear by way of indenture for perpetual servitude, as suggested by *Henry,* seems not generally approved. Dr. *J. P. Smith* says, the word rendered '*opened*' is '*never used*' in passages where the law is given relating to that ceremony. See *Bush's* Ill. on this and the next v. Ed.

(7.) *Volume [Roll] of the book.*] 'What book? Some say, the book of the divine decrees—the book of eternity; but this is a mere conceit in theology. Nor is it quite satisfactory to refer it to the *Pentateuch,* as do others; for though much is written in the Pentateuch concerning Christ and his work, it seems unnatural to restrict the record of Him to this particular portion of the O. T. I would therefore suggest, that the whole O. T. is referred to—all in fact written concerning Him, in the "Law of Moses, in the prophets, and in the Psalms," Luke 24:25—27, 44—46. Acts 3:18. 1 Pet. 1:11. True, no other part [?] of the ancient Scriptures was, at the time when this Ps. was penned, committed to writing, save the five books of Moses; yet, as the expression under consideration is a part of an acknowledged prophecy of the Messiah, it may be carried down to that period in the Redeemer's history, in which the prophetic testimony concerning Him was complete. Moreover, the apostle, in illustrating and applying this very prophecy, fixes the period of its reference to the time when the Messiah "cometh into the world," Heb. 10:5. at which time Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms were all complete, and were all collected into one uniform record.' MORISON.

Verses 9, 10.

When David avowed the earnestness and boldness, with which he had celebrated the works and ways of God, he typified Christ in the performance of his prophetical office. (1—5. 22:22—25. 35:17—19. *Heb.* 2:10—13.)—The connection of the term, 'thy righteousness,' with loving-kindness, mercy, faithfulness, and salvation, and the evident subject of the passage, warrants this interpretation, and shows, that 'the righteousness of God, which is unto all and upon all that believe,' was primarily meant. (*Rom.* 3:21—26.) SCOTT.

(9.) *Preached.*] The Heb. word, tr. by the *Sept. Evangelisamen,* in the O. T. seems precisely to signify, *preaching the Gospel,* proclaiming glad tidings; as a similar word does in the Arabic. ID.

Verses 11, 12.

David might be here pleading for an interest in those mercies and that salvation, which he proclaimed to others; when he was struggling with those complicated evils, which were consequent to his iniquities in the matter of Uriah. These called his other sins to remembrance, which took such hold on him, and so discouraged him, that he should not have dared to look up, if it had not been for his belief of the infinite mercies of God. But some think, that Christ may be supposed to speak, in the depth of his humiliation, when our innumerable iniquities met upon Him, in his agony in the garden, and his sufferings on the cross. (69:4. *Is.* 53:4—7. *Matt.* 26:36—39. 27:46.)—The original of v. 11. is simply future: 'Thou wilt not withhold, &c.' ID.

(12.) 'I am not without suspicion, sustained by the opinion of some of the most distinguished biblical critics that ever lived, that the theme is here changed, and that David speaks in his own person, and expresses his own experience, and that of the church.' MORISON.

Verses 13—15.

(*Ps.* 70:) V. 13. is *imperative,* in which the Psalmist simply prays for deliverance: the others are throughout in the future, and naturally express the language of lively faith and hope, rather than that of wish-

LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, [n] make haste to help me.

14 [o] Let them be ashamed and confounded together, [p] that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be [q] driven backward, and put to shame, that wish me evil.

15 Let them be [r] desolate for a reward of their shame, that [s] say unto me, Aha, aha!

16 [t] Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as [u] love thy salvation [x] say continually, The LORD be magnified.

17 But [y] I *am* poor and needy; *yet* [z] the LORD thinketh upon me: thou *art* [a] my Help and my Deliverer; [b] make no tarrying, O my God.

PSALM XLI.

David shows the blessedness of those who consider the poor, 1—3. He prays for mercy, and complains of the treachery and malice of his enemies, and the ingratitude of one who had been his friend, 4—10. He expresses confidence in God, and praises Him, 11—13.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

BLESSED [a] *is* he that considereth * the poor: [b] the LORD will deliver him in † time of trouble.

2 The LORD will [c] preserve him, and keep him alive; *and* he shall be [d] blessed upon

n 38:22. 70:1.
o 31:17,18. 35:4,26. 70:2. Is. 41:11. 45:24.
p Matt. 21:38—41.
q 9:3. John 18:6. Acts 9:4—6. 12:23, 24.
r 69:24,25. 73:19. 109:6—20. Luke 19:43,44. 21:23,24.
s 35:21,25. 70:3,4.
t 22:26. 35:27. 63:3. 105:3. Is. 65: 13,14.
u 119:81,111,123,166,167. Matt. 13:45, 46. Phil. 3:7—9.
x 35:27. Luke 1:46,47. Acts 19:17.
y 34:6. 69:33. 70:5. Is. 41:17. Matt. 8:20. 2 Cor 8:9. Jam. 2:5.
z 1 Pet. 2:23. 5:7.
a 54:4. Is. 50:7—9. Heb. 13:6.
b 143:7,8. Rev. 22:20.
a 11:2,9. Deut. 15:7—11. Job 29:12—16. 31:16—20. Prov. 14:21. 19:17. Ec. 11:1,2. Is. 58:7—11. Mark 14:7. Luke 14:13,14. 2 Cor. 9:8—14. Gal. 2:10.
* Or, *the weak*, or *sick*. Matt. 25:34—39. Acts 20:35. 1 Thes. 5:14.
b 34:19. 37:26,39,40. Heb. 6:10. Jam. 2:13.
† Heb. *the day of evil*. 37:19. Prov. 16:4. Ec. 12:1. Rev. 3:10.
c 33:19. 91:3—7. Jer. 45:4,5.
d 128:1—6. 1 Tim. 4:8.

ened consciences are apprehensive of danger from their numberless sins of infirmity. The sight of sin so oppressed him, that he could not hold up his head; much less his heart. Note, The sight of our sins, in their own colors, would drive us to distraction, if we had not at the same time some sight of a Savior. (2.) The careful recourse he had to God, under the sense of sin; *v.* 10. seeing himself brought by his sins to the very brink of ruin, eternal ruin, with what a holy passion does he cry out, '*Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me*, *v.* 13. from the wrath to come, and my apprehensions of that wrath. In a case of this nature, where the bliss of an immortal soul is concerned, delays are dangerous; therefore, *O Lord, make haste to help me.*'

3. This may encourage us to hope for victory over our spiritual enemies, that seek after our souls to destroy them, *v.* 14. If Christ has triumphed over them, we, through Him, shall be more than conquerors. In the belief of this, we may pray, with humble boldness, as David in v. 14, 15. Both the conversion of a sinner, and the glorification of a saint, are great disappointments to Satan, who does his utmost to hinder both; now, our Lord Jesus having undertaken to bring about the salvation of all his chosen, we may in faith pray, that that great adversary may be confounded.

4. This may encourage all that seek God, and love his salvation, to rejoice in Him, and to praise Him, *v.* 16. See here, The character of good people. All that shall be saved love the salvation, not only as a salvation from hell, but from sin. And they that love his salvation shall be filled with the joy of his salvation, and shall say continually, *The Lord be magnified;* thus they shall have a heaven on earth; blessed are they that are thus still praising God.

Lastly, this may encourage the saints, in distress and affliction, to trust in God, and comfort themselves in Him, *v.* 17. David was a king, perhaps, now on the throne, yet, being troubled in spirit, he calls himself *poor and needy*, lost and undone, without a Savior; in want and distress, *yet the Lord thinketh upon me*, in and through the Mediator, by whom we are made accepted. Men forget the poor and needy, and seldom think of them; but God's thoughts toward them, which he had spoken of, *v.* 5. are their support and comfort, [and if they trust in Him and do good, He will in due time come to their deliverance, and not tarry].

Ps. XLI. God's kindness and truth have often been the support and comfort of the saints, when they have had most experience of men's unkindness and treachery. David here found it so on a sick bed. Is any afflicted with sickness? let him sing the beginning of this Ps. Is any persecuted by enemies? let him sing the latter end of it; and we may any of us, in singing it, meditate on both the calamities and comforts of good people in this world.

V. 1—4. In these verses, we have, I. God's promises of succor and comfort to those that consider the poor; and we may suppose David mentioned these, with application, either, To friends who were kind to him, and very considerate of his afflicted case: or, To himself; he had the testimony of his conscience, that he had considered the poor. Here is a comment on that promise; *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* Observe,

1. The mercy required; to consider the poor or afflicted, whether in mind, body, or estate: we must notice their affliction, inquire into their state; sympathize with them, judge charitably concerning them; wisely consider the poor; be ourselves instructed by the poverty and affliction of others; it must be *Maschil* to us, that is the word here.

2. The mercy promised. He that considers the poor, shall be considered by his God: not only be recompensed in the resurrection of the just, but *be blessed on the earth;* this branch of godliness, as much as any other, has the promise of the life that now is, and is usually recompensed with temporal blessings. Liberality to the poor is the surest and safest way of thriving; such as

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are here again called upon to contemplate the intense sufferings, into which our sins plunged the divine Savior, when He willingly gave Himself for us a sacrifice to God: the new song, which was put into his mouth, was intended for our use, that we may render praises unto our God: (*Rev.* 5: 8—10.) and the whole interesting scene, and all the mediatorial power and grace of our exalted Savior, were designed to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come, and to put their entire trust in the mercy of the Lord. Happy are all they, who renounce every lying vanity and carnal confidence, thus to depend on the living God: they shall continually experience the faithfulness of his promises; and contemplate with admiring gratitude all the counsels of his love, and his wonderful works in behalf of his redeemed people: nor will they be able to eternity to exhaust the subject, or to recount all the particular instances of his mercy to them. Yet the incarnation and suretiship, the obedience and sufferings, of the Son of God, are the centre and the means of all other mercies to us. (*John* 3: 16. 14: 6. 1 *John* 4: 9—12.) Thus God is glorified, and sinners are saved: no costly sacrifices, nor even moral righteousness, can be acceptable from sinners to a holy God, except as they stand in relation to the person and atonement of his beloved Son. In his obedience unto death, the eternal purposes of JEHOVAH were accomplished; the types and prophecies of the O. T. were fulfilled; the law of God was magnified, and the demands of justice were satisfied. Had it not been for his voluntary sufferings, our sins would have taken such hold on us, that we should never have been able to look up: our hearts must indeed have failed, and in the horrible pit, whence there is no escape, our hopes would for ever have expired. Of this believers are fully convinced; and this should teach them patient submission under every trial. And if any are struggling with remorse of conscience, and fears of wrath, and, to their own apprehension, sinking in a deep and horrible pit; let them [repent, and believe on the Lord Jesus, and] cry humbly unto God, and He will hear and help them, and turn their fears and sorrows into joyful praises

SCOTT.

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ing or desiring the destruction foreseen and predicted; and the transition is worthy our notice. A regard to the Sept. and other ancient vers. seems to have induced our venerable translators generally to put such passages in the imperative, which, at first view at least, gives them an appearance of harshness, not so congenial to the spirit of devotion. The two vs. however, viewed as predictions of the destruction, which awaits the obstinate enemies of Christ and his church, have been wonderfully accomplished in the dire end of many traitors and persecutors, and in the condition of the Jews to this day. (69:22—28. 109:6—20.) SCOTT.

Verse 16.

'All those who seek Thee shall be glad and rejoice in Thee; such as love thy salvation, shall say continually, The LORD be magnified.' 'I am confident, that this eventually will be the case; notwithstanding present temptations and sufferings.'—The clause, 'love thy salvation,' exactly discriminates a true believer from all other men. (*M. R.*) ID.

CONCLUDING NOTE. *Rosenm.* would interpret this Ps. of the Israelites collectively, as a single individual; so he would the two preceding. ED.

NOTES.

Ps. XLI. 'The title to this Ps. in the Syr. corresponds in a remarkable degree with the general character and spirit of the composition: "A Ps. of David, when he appointed overseers to take care of the poor." The Arab. recognises the mystical and prophetic bearings of the Ps: "A prophecy concerning the incarnation and the kiss of Judas." From the use made by our Lord of v. 9. (John 13.18.) we may fairly conclude it partakes of the spirit of prophecy, though I rather agree with Dr. *Clarke*, that the only prophetic allusion is in v. 9.' MORISON. Yet others, as *Gill*, think we may safely explain the whole, of Christ. ID.

Verses 1—3.

It is generally agreed, David wrote this Ps. during Absalom's rebellion, when, it seems, his other afflictions were accompanied with sick

the earth: * and * thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.

3 The LORD will [f] strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt † make all his bed in his sickness.

4 I said, [g] LORD, be merciful unto me; [h] heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.

5 [i] Mine enemies speak evil of me; When shall he die, and [k] his name perish?

6 And if he come to see *me*, [l] he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; [m] *when* he goeth abroad he telleth *it*.

7 All that hate me [n] whisper together against me: [o] against me do they devise ‡ my hurt.

8 § An [p] evil disease, *say they*, cleaveth fast unto him: [q] and *now* that he lieth he shall rise up no more.

9 [r] Yea, ‖ mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, * which did eat of my bread, hath [t] lifted up *his* heel against me.

10 But thou, O LORD, [t] be merciful unto me, and raise me up, [u] that I may requite them.

e 27:12. 140:8,9.
* Or, *do not thou deliver.*
f 73:26. 2 K. 1:3,16. 20:5,6. 2 Cor. 4:16,17. Phil. 2:26,27.
† Heb. *turn.*
g 51:1—3.
h 6:2—4. 103:3. 147:3. 2 Chr. 30:18—20. Jam 5:15,16.
i 22:6—8. 102:8.
k Job 18:17. 20:7. Prov. 10:7.
l 12:2 Neh. 6:1—14. Prov. 23:24—26. Dan. 11:27. Mic. 7:5—7. Luke 11:53,54. 20:20—23. 2 Cor. 11:26.
m Jer. 20:10.
n Prov. 16:28. 26:20. *marg.* Rom. 1:29. 2 Cor. 12:20.
o 31:13. 55:5,8. Matt. 22:15. 26:3,4.
‡ Heb. *evil to me.*
§ Heb. *a thing of Belial.*
p 38:3—7. Job 2:7,8. Luke 13:13.
q 3:2. 71:11. Matt. 27:41—44,63,64.
r 55:12—14,20—22. 2 Sam. 15:12. Job 19:19.
‖ Heb. *the man of my peace.*
s Deut. 32:15. Obad. 7. Johb 13:18, 26,27.
¶ Heb. *magnified.*
t 57:1. 109:21.
u 18:37—42. 21:8—10. 69:22—28. 109:6—20. Luke 19:27.

practice it may be sure of seasonable and effectual relief from God. (1.) In all troubles; He *will deliver them in the day of evil*, so that, if any be hid in the day of the Lord's anger, *they* shall. Are they in danger? He will preserve and keep them alive. Do their enemies threaten them? God will not *deliver them unto the will of their enemies;* and the most potent enemy we have can have no power against us, but what is given him from above. The good-will of God is sufficient to secure us from the ill-will of all that hate us, men or devils! and that good will we may promise ourselves an interest in, if we have considered the poor, and helped to relieve and rescue them. (2.) Particularly in sickness, *v.* 3. This is a very condescending expression, alluding to the care of those that nurse and tend sick people, especially of mothers for their children when sick, which is to make their beds easy for them. He will *turn* his bed, (so the word is,) to shake it up, and make it very easy; or, he will turn it into a bed of health. Note, God has promised his people that he will strengthen them, and make them easy, under their bodily pains and sicknesses. He has not promised they shall never be sick, nor that they shall not lie long languishing, nor that their sickness shall not be unto death; but He has promised to enable them to bear their affliction with patience, and cheerfully to wait the issue; the soul shall by his grace be made to dwell at ease, when the body lies in pain.

II. David's prayer, directed and encouraged by these promises, *v.* 4. *I said, Heal my soul.* It is good to keep some account of our prayers, that we may not unsay, in our practices, any thing we said in our prayers. He appeals to mercy, as one that knew he could not stand the test of strict justice. The best saints must throw themselves on mercy. Sin is the sickness of the soul, pardoning mercy and renewing grace heal it; and this spiritual healing we should be more earnest for, than for bodily health. He penitently confesses; '*I have sinned against Thee*, therefore my soul needs healing; I am a sinner, a miserable sinner, therefore, *God be merciful to me*,' Luke 18: 13. It does not appear that this has any reference to any particular, gross act of sin, but, in general, to his many sins of infirmity, which his sickness set in order before him.

V. 5—13. David often complains of the insolent conduct of his enemies toward him, when he was sick, which was very barbarous in them, and grievous to him. They were not, indeed, arrived at that modern [?] pitch of wickedness, to poison his meat and drink, or give him something to make him sick; but, when he was sick, they insulted over him, *v.* 5. designing thereby to grieve his spirit, to ruin his reputation, and so to sink his interest.

1. They longed for his death; *When shall he die, and his name perish* with him? We ought not to desire the death of *any;* but to desire the death of useful men, for their usefulness, has much in it of the venom of the old serpent. They envied him his name, and honor, and doubted not but, if he were dead, that would be laid in the dust with him; yet, see how they were mistaken; when he had served his generation, he did die, Acts 13: 36. but did his name perish? No, it lives and flourishes, to this day, in the sacred writings, and will, to the end of time; for the memory of the just is, and shall be, blessed.

2. They picked up every thing they could, to reproach him with, *v.* 6. '*If he come to see me*,' (it has always been reckoned a neighborly kindness to visit the sick,) '*he speaks vanity;* he pretends friendship, tells me he is very sorry to see me so much indisposed, and wishes me my health; but it is all flattery and falsehood.' David's friends were all compliment, nor was that the worst of it; they came to see him on a mischievous design, that they might make invidious remarks on every thing he said or did, and represent it as they pleased to others, so as to render him odious or ridiculous; *His heart gathereth iniquity to itself*, puts ill constructions on every thing; and then, when he goes among his companions, he tells it them, that they may tell it others; *Report, say they, and we will report it*, Jer. 20: 10. If he complained much, they would reproach him for his pusillanimity; if scarcely at all, for his stupidity. If he prayed, or gave them good counsel, they would banter it, and call it *canting;* if he kept silence from good, when the wicked were before him, they would say he had forgotten his religion, now he was sick. There is no fence against those whose malice thus gathers iniquity.

3. They promised themselves he would never recover, nor ever wipe off the odium they had loaded him with; they *whispered together against him*, *v.* 7. speaking that secretly, to one another, which they could not for shame speak out, and which, if they did, they knew would be confuted; whisperers and backbiters are put together among the worst of sinners, Rom. 1: 29, 30. and there is seldom whispering, (we say,) but there is lying, or some mischief on foot. Those whisperers devised evil to David; concluding he would die quickly, they contrived how to undo all he had hitherto been doing for the public good: this he calls *devising hurt against him;* and they doubted not but to gain their point; reproach, they hoped, would cleave so fast to him, that his name would perish with him, and then they should gain their point; they went by a modern maxim, *Fling abundance of calumny, and part will be sure to stick.* The disease he is now under will certainly end him; for it is the punishment of some enormous crime, he will not repent of, and proves him, however he has appeared, a son of Belial; or, it is inflicted by Satan, who is called *Belial, the wicked one*, 2 Cor. 6: 15. We are not to think it strange, if, when good men are sick, there be those that hope for their death, as well as those that fear it, which makes the world not worthy of them, Rev. 11: 10.

4. There was one particularly, in whom he had reposed great confidence, that took part with his enemies, and was as abusive to him as any of them, *v.* 9. *My own familiar friend;* probably, he means Ahithophel, who had been his bosom friend, and prime minister of state; those are wicked indeed, whom no courtesy done them, nor confidence reposed in them, will oblige; yet let us not think it strange, if we receive abuses from such: David did, and the Son of David; for of Judas the traitor David here, in the Spirit, spake; our Savior Himself so expounds this, and *therefore* gave Judas the sop, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, John

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ness: or rather he had previously been visited with some dangerous disorder, from which his enemies hoped he would not recover; and this emboldened them in their treasonable practices. (4—8. 30:1,2. 38:3—10.) Finding his own afflictions aggravated by their cruelty and perfidy; he was led to commend that temper of mind, which disposed a man to consider, and compassionate and relieve, the poor and afflicted; and to declare him happy who possessed it. Some render the first clause, 'Blessed is he that *judgeth wisely* of the poor:' not condemning him as accursed whom God doth visit,' (as Job's friends did him;) 'knowing that there are divers causes why God layeth his hand upon us, yea and afterward He restoreth us.' It is, however, generally understood to refer to the considerate, active, and liberal kindness, shown to the poor and afflicted, from genuine faith and love. (*M. R.* a.)—It is astonishing to the student of Scripture, in reading the most admired writings of pagan moralists, to observe, how entirely this branch of morality is omitted! Certainly it is peculiar to the Scriptures, and to writings formed on them. (*P. O. Deut.* 15: *concl.*) SCOTT.

Verse 9.

As David was a type of Christ, so was Ahithophel in some respects of Judas. The latter clause of this v. was fulfilled in Judas's ungrateful and cruel treachery. But Christ never *trusted in* him, as David had confided in Ahithophel; and therefore the former part was more suited to the type than to the Antitype. (55:12—15. 20, 21. 109 2—5. 2 *Sam.* 15:12, 31. 16:20—23. 17:1—4. *John* 13:18—30.)—'The sufferings of the church, like those of her Redeemer, generally begin at home; . . . and, unnatural as it may seem, they, who have waxed fat upon her bounty, are sometimes the first to 'lift up the heel' against her.' Bp. *Horne.* (*Deut.* 32:15.) SCOTT.—*Mine own familiar friend.*] 'Either Ahithophel' or some other perfidious counsellor or courtier, who was a type of Judas, as David was of Christ.—These words were literally fulfilled in David, yet the Holy Ghost looked further in them, even to Christ and Judas.' POOLE.—'It is somewhat difficult to determine the principle on which this v. is applicable to the Messiah. Some think, as Dr. *A. Clarke*, our Lord may have selected some scene in David's life similar to the treachery of Judas, and applied it to his own case, John 13:18, 26. others, that a prophetic spirit pervades this v. and Christ determined its distinct bearing on Himself, as betrayed into the hands of wicked men: others still consider David as speaking in the person of Christ. The second opinion appears most reasonable.' [Note. 49: 5.] MORISON.

11 By this I know that thou favorest me, [x] because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.

12 And as for me, [y] thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and [z] settest me before thy face for ever.

13 [a] Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, from everlasting and to everlasting. [b]Amen, and Amen.

PSALM XLII.

The Psalmist thirsts after God; mourns his absence from the sanctuary, while amidst insulting foes; and recollects with regret former seasons of comfort, 1—4. He struggles against unbelief and despondency, complains unto God, and stays his dejected soul on Him, 5—11.

To the chief Musician, * Maschil, for [a] the sons of Korah.

AS the hart † panteth after the water-brooks, [b] so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

2 My soul [c] thirsteth for God, for [d] the living God: [e] when shall I come and appear before God?

3 My [f] tears have been my meat day and night, [g] while they continually say unto me, Where *is* thy God.

4 [h] When I remem-

x 13:4. 31:8. 35:25. 86:17. 124:6. Jer. 20:13. Col. 2:15.
y 25:21. 94:18.
z 16:11. 17:15. 73:23,24. Job 36:7. John 17:24.
a 72:18,19. 89:52. 106:48. 1 Chr. 29: 10. Eph. 1:3. Rev. 4:8. 5:9—14. 7:12. 11:17.
b Num. 5:22. Deut. 27:15,&c. 1 K. 1:36. 1 Chr. 16:36, Jer. 28:6. Matt. 6:13. 1 Cor. 14:16. Rev. 22:20.
* Or, A Psalm *giving instruction, of the, &c.*
a 44: 45: 46: 47: 48: 49: 84: 85: *titles.* Num. 16:1,32. 26:11. 1 Chr. 6:33—37. 25:1—5.
† Heb. *brayeth.*
b 63:1,2. 84:2. 143:6,7. Is. 26:8,9.
c 35:9. John 7:37. Rev. 22:1.
d Jer. 2:13. 10:10. John 5:26. 1 Thes. 1:9.
e 27:4. 84:4,10.
f 80:5. 102:9. 2 Sam. 16:12. *marg.*
g 10. 3:2. 22:8. 79:10,12.
h Ruth 1:21. Job 29:2,&c. 30:1,&c. Lam. 4:1. Luke 16:25.

13: 18, 26. Nay, have not we ourselves carried it thus perfidiously and disingenuously toward God? We *eat of his bread* daily, and yet *lift up the heel against Him*, as Jeshurun, Deut. 32: 15.

How did David bear this insolent, ill-natured carriage?

1. He prayed to God that they might be disappointed. He said nothing to them, but turned himself to God, *v.* 10. He had prayed in reference to the guilt of his sins, *v.* 4. *Lord, be merciful to me;* and now again, in reference to the insults of his enemies, *Lord, be merciful to me*, for that prayer will suit every case. God's mercy has in it a redress for every grievance. 'They endeavor to run me down, but, Lord, do thou raise me up, *that I may requite them*, that I may render them good for evil;' so some; for that was David's practice, 7: 4. 35: 13. A good man will wish to make it appear, that he bears no malice to those that have been injurious to him, but, on the contrary, is ready to do them any good office. Or, 'That, as a king, I may put them under the marks of my just displeasure, banish them the court, and forbid them my table for the future;' which would be a necessary piece of justice, for warning to others. Perhaps in this prayer is couched a prophecy of the exaltation of Christ, whom God raised up, that He might be a just Avenger of all the wrongs done to Him and to his people, particularly by the Jews, whose utter destruction followed, not long after.

2. He assured himself they would be disappointed, *v.* 11. 'By *this I know that Thou favorest me* and my interest, *because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.*' They hoped for his death, but he found himself, through mercy, recovering; and this would add to the comfort of his recovery, that it would be a disappointment to his adversaries, a token of God's favor to him, and a certain evidence that He did favor him, and would continue to do so. Note, When we can discern the favor of God to us, in any mercy personal or public, that doubles it, and sweetens it: we may take pleasure in the designs of our enemies being frustrated, though not in their fall.

3. He depends on God, who had thus delivered him from many an evil work, to *preserve him to his heavenly kingdom*, as blessed Paul, 2 Tim. 4: 18. Note, (1.) When at any time we suffer in our reputation, our chief concern should be about our integrity, and then we may cheerfully leave it to God to secure our reputation. David knows, that if he can but persevere in his integrity, he needs not fear his enemies' triumphs over him. (2.) The best man in the world holds his integrity no longer than God upholds him in it; for by his grace we are what we are; if we be left to ourselves, we shall not only fall, but fall away. (3.) It is a great comfort to us, that, however weak we are, God is able to *uphold us in our integrity*, and will do it, if we commit the keeping of it to Him. (4.) If the grace of God did not take a constant care of us, we should not be upheld in our integrity; his eye is always upon us, else we should soon start aside from Him. (5.) Those whom God now upholds in their integrity, He will set before his face for ever, and make happy in the vision and fruition of Himself; *He that endures to the end, shall be saved.*

4. The Ps. concludes with a solemn doxology, or adoration of God as *the Lord God of Israel*, *v.* 13. It is not certain whether this v. pertains to this particular Ps.; if so, it teaches us this, That a believing hope of our preservation through grace to glory, is enough to fill our hearts with joy, and our mouths with everlasting praise, even in our greatest straits; or, this v. may have been added as the conclusion of the first book of *Psalms*, which is reckoned to end here; the like being subjoined to 72: 89: 106: and then it teaches us to make God the End, who is the Beginning, of every good work. We are taught, (1.) To give glory to God as the *Lord God of Israel*, a God in covenant with his people; who has done great and kind things for them, and has more and better in reserve. (2.) To give Him glory as an eternal God, that has both his being and his blessedness *from everlasting and to everlasting.* (3.) To do this with great affection and fervor of spirit; intimated in the double seal set to it; *Amen and Amen;* Be it so now, be it so to all eternity. We say, *Amen* to it, and let all others say, *Amen*, too.

Ps. XLII. If the book of Pss. be, as some have styled it, a looking-glass of pious and devout affections, this psalm, in particular, deserves, as much as any one psalm, to be so entitled, and is as proper as any other to kindle and excite such in us: gracious desires are here strong and fervent; gracious hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, are here struggling, but the pleasing passion comes off a conqueror. Or we may take it for a conflict between sense and faith: sense objecting, and faith answering. Faith begins with holy desires toward God, and communion with Him, *v.* 1, 2. Sense complains of the darkness and cloudiness of the present condition, aggravated by the remembrance of the former enjoyments, *v.* 3, 4. Faith silences the complaint with the assurance of a good issue at last, *v.* 5. Sense renews its complaints of the present dark and melancholy state, *v.* 6, 7. Faith holds up the heart, notwithstanding, with hope that the day will dawn, *v.* 8. Sense repeats its lamentations, (*v.* 9, 10.) and sighs out the same remonstrance it had before made of its grievances. Faith gets the last word, (*v.* 11.) for the silencing of the complaints of sense, and now it prevails and carries the day. Most probably David penned the psalm; and, we may conjecture, at a time when, either by Saul's persecution, or Absalom's rebellion, he was driven from the sanctuary, and cut off from the privilege of waiting on God in public ordinances. The strain of it is much the same with 63, and therefore we may presume it was penned by the same hand, and on the same or a like occasion. In singing it, if we be either in outward affliction, or in inward distress, we may accommodate to ourselves the melancholy expres-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The people of God are not exempted from poverty, sickness, or any external affliction: but He considers their case and wants, and vouchsafes them relief proportioned to the exigency.—After the Lord's example of kindness and compassion, the believer has also learned to consider his poor and afflicted brethren. In them he sees the once suffering Savior; and gratitude to Him unites with love to his people, in disposing him to alleviate their sorrows, and supply their wants, according to his opportunity and ability: nor does he exclude any other sufferers from his deep compassion, and such relief as he can afford them; or decline labor and self-denial in order to confer it. Thus he evidences the reality of his faith, and obtains the assurances of gracious supports from God, when afflictions fall to his lot. SCOTT.

Verse 13.

'There is some probability this v. was added by the original collector of the book, and similar additions will be found to have been made to the other three divisions.—The word "AMEN" is used in Greek, Eng. and [most] other languages, and generally denotes, as *Ainsworth* observes, unity of faith and spirit. It implies both a wishing of any thing so to be, and a persuasion by faith that so it shall be.' MORISON.

NOTES.

Ps. XLII. *Title.*] Rendered in the old tr. 'A Psalm to give instruction, *committed* to the sons of Korah.' SCOTT.—*Sons of Korah.*] 'Perhaps a society, (so *Mudge*,) of musicians, who derived their name from Korah its president or founder; or perhaps the descendants of that Levite who rebelled against Moses, Num. 16. some of whose sons died not with their father. Num. 26:11. 16:24, 26. Samuel the prophet was one of the race of Korah, and Heman his nephew was a singer, 1 Chr. 6:33. Whoever they were, the Pss. characterized by reference to them, seem to have been only dedicated to them. They are, in general, rich in consolation to the sorrowing and afflicted, and partake more of the spirit of the man after God's own heart than of any other of all Israel's prophets.' MOR.—Dr. *A. Clarke* supposes them to have been written during the Bab. captivity, with how much probability of truth the reader must judge.—*Rosenm.* thinks, none of the Pss. whose titles have 'for the sons of Korah' were written by David. ED.

Verses 1—3.

The disconsolate state of the Psalmist's mind is illustrated, by one of the most expressive comparisons that can be imagined. The hart, or deer, when covered with dust and sweat, having been long chased on a sultry day, is ready to faint and die, and pants, or *brays*, (*marg.*) makes a complaining noise, to quench his extreme thirst from the

ber these *things*, [l] I pour out my soul in me: [k] for I had gone with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, [l] with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.

5 [m] Why art thou * cast down, O my soul? and *why* art thou disquieted in me? [n] hope thou in God: for I shall yet † praise him [o] *for* ‡ the help of his countenance.

6 O [p] my God, my soul is cast down within me: [q] therefore will I remember thee [r] from the land of Jordan, and of [s] the Hermonites, from § the hill Mizar.

[l] 62:8. 1 Sam. 1:15,16. Job 30:16.
[k] 1 Chr. 15:15—28. 16:
[l] 81:1—3. 122:1. Deut. 16:11,14,15. 2 Chr. 7:10. 30:23—26. Is. 30:29. Nah. 1:15.
[m] 11. 43:5. 55:4,5. 61:2. 142:2,3. 143:3,4. 1 Sam. 30:6. Mark 14:33,34.
* Heb. *bowed down.* 35:14.
[n] 27:13,14. 37:7. 56:3,11. 71:14. Job 13:15. Is. 50:10. Lam. 3:24—26. Rom. 4:18—20. Heb. 10:36,37.
† Or, *give thanks.*
[o] 44:3 Num. 6:26.
‡ Or, *his presence* is *salvation.* 91:15, 16. Matt. 1:23. 28:20.
[p] 22:1. 43:4. 88:1—3. Matt. 26:39. 27:46.
[q] 77:6—11. Jon. 2:7.
[r] 61:2. 2 Sam. 7:22,27.
[s] Deut. 3:8,9. 4:47,48.
§ Or, *the little hill.*

sions we find here; if not, we must, in singing them, sympathize with those whose case they speak too plainly, and thank God it is not our own case; but those passages in it, which express and excite holy desires toward God, and dependence on Him, we must earnestly endeavor to bring our minds up to.

V. 1—5. Holy love to God, as the Chief Good, and our Felicity, is the power of godliness, the very life and soul of religion, without which, all external professions and performances are but a shell and carcass: now here we have some of the expressions of that love.

I. Holy love, *thirsting;* love on the wing, soaring upward in holy desires toward the Lord, and toward the remembrance of his name, *v.* 1, 2. Observe,

1. When it was that David thus expressed his vehement desire toward God. (1.) He was now debarred from outward opportunities of waiting on God; banished to the land of Jordan, a great way off from the courts of God's house. Note, Sometimes God teaches us effectually to know the worth of mercies by the want of them. The manna that we loathe when plenty, will be very precious, when scarce. (2.) He was deprived, in a great measure, of the inward comfort he used to have in God; now he went mourning, but panting. Note, Lamenting after God is as sure an evidence that we love Him, as rejoicing in God.

2. The Object of his desire, and what he thus thirsts after. (1.) God. Not the ordinances themselves, but the God of the ordinances. A gracious soul can take little satisfaction in God's courts, if it do not meet with God Himself there; '*Oh that I knew where I might find Him!* That I might have more tokens of his favor, the graces and comforts of his Spirit, and the earnests of his glory!' (2.) The *living* God, that has life in Himself, and is the Fountain of life and all happiness to those that are his; the living God, not only in opposition to dead idols, but to all the dying comforts of this world, which perish in the using. Living souls can never take up their rest any where short of a living God. (3.) To come and appear before God; to make himself known to Him, as conscious of his own sincerity; to attend Him as a servant his master, to pay his respects to Him, and receive his commands; to give an account to Him, as one from whom our judgment proceeds. To appear before God is as much the desire of the upright, as the dread of the hypocrite. The psalmist knew he could not come into God's courts, but he must incur expense, for so was the law, that *none should appear before God empty;* yet he longs to come, and will not grudge the charges.

3. The degree of this desire. It is very importunate, it is his soul that pants, and thirsts, which bespeaks not only the sincerity, but the strength, of his desire. He compares it to the panting of a hart, or deer, naturally hot and dry, especially of a hunted buck, after the water-brooks. Thus earnestly does a gracious soul desire communion with God; thus impatiently want that; so impossible does it find it to take up in any thing short of that; and so insatiable is it in taking the pleasures of that communion, when the opportunity returns, still thirsting after the full enjoyment of Him in the heavenly kingdom.

II. Holy love, *mourning* for God's present withdrawings, and the want of the benefit of solemn ordinances, *v.* 3. His circumstances were sorrowful, and he accommodated himself to them, received the impressions, and returned the signs, of sorrow; even the royal prophet was a weeping prophet, when he wanted the comforts of God's house. It was a satisfaction to him, that he found his heart so much affected with a grievance of this nature. Observe, He did not think it enough to shed a tear or two, at parting from the sanctuary, but, as long as he continued under a forced absence, he never looked up, but wept, day and night. Note, Those that are deprived of the benefit of public ordinances, constantly miss them, and therefore should constantly mourn the want of them, till restored again.

Two things aggravated his grief:

1. The reproaches his enemies teased him with, *v.* 4. (1.) Because he was absent from the ark, the token of God's presence; judging of the God of Israel by the gods of the heathen, they concluded he had lost his God. But, though *we* are bound to ordinances, when they are to be had, God is not; we know where our God is, though we know not where his ark is; wherever we are, there is a way open heaven-ward. (2.) Because God did not immediately appear for him, they concluded He had abandoned him; but herein also they were deceived: however, nothing is more grievous to a gracious soul, than that which is intended to shake its hope and confidence in God.

2. The remembrance of his former liberties and enjoyments, *v.* 4. *Son, remember thy good things,* is a great aggravation of evil things; so much do our powers of reflection and anticipation add to the grievance of the present. But what occasioned this painful melting of spirit? Not the remembrance of court pleasures, or the entertainments of his own house, from which he was now banished; but the remembrance of his former free access to God's house, and pleasure in attending the sacred solemnities there. In his time it was but a tent; nay, if this Ps. was penned, as many think, at the time of his being persecuted by Saul, the ark was then in a private house; 2 Sam. 6: 3. yet this did not lessen his esteem of that sacred symbol of the divine presence. David was a courtier, a prince, a man of honor, a man of business, yet very diligent in attending God's house, and joining in public ordinances; even in the days of Saul, when he and his great men *inquired not at it,* 1 Ch. 13: 3. Whatever others did, David and his house would serve the Lord. He went with the multitude, thought it no disparagement to his dignity, to head a crowd in attending on God. Nay, this added to the pleasure of it, therefore it is twice mentioned, as what he greatly lamented the want of now. The more the better, in the service of God; it is more like heaven, and a sensible help to our comfort in the communion of saints. He went with *the voice of joy and praise;* not only with joy and praise in his heart, but with the outward expressions of it, proclaiming his joy, and speaking forth the high praises of his God. Note, When we wait on God in public ordinances, we have reason to do it both with cheerfulness and thankfulness, to take to ourselves the comfort, and give to God the glory, of our liberty of access to Him. He went also to keep holy-days, not in vain mirth and recreation, but in religious exercises. Solemn days are spent most comfortably in solemn assemblies.

III. Holy love, *hoping*, *v.* 5. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul?* His sorrow was on a very good account, yet it must not exceed its due limits, nor prevail to depress the spirits; he therefore communes with his own heart, for his relief. This may be taken as an inquiring question; 'Let the cause of this uneasiness be duly weighed; is it a just cause?' Our disquietudes would often vanish before a strict scrutiny into the grounds and reasons of them. Or, it may be taken as an expostulating question; those that commune much with their own hearts, will often have occasion to chide them, as David did here. 'Why do I thus dishonor God by my melancholy dejections? Why discourage others, and so much injure myself? Can I give a good account of this tumult?' But whatever the *cause*, here we have the *cure* of his disquietude; *Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him.* A believing confidence in God is a sovereign antidote against prevailing despondency, and disquiet of spirit. Therefore, when we chide ourselves for our dejections, we must charge ourselves to hope in God; when the soul embraces itself, it sinks; if it catch hold on the power and promise of God, it keeps the head above water. *Hope in God,* 1. That He shall have glory from us; '*I shall yet praise Him.*' It is the greatest honor and happiness of a man, and the greatest desire and hope of every good man, to be unto God for a name and a praise. What is the crown of heaven's bliss but this, that there we shall be for ever praising God? And what is our support under our present woes but this, that we shall yet praise God, that they shall not prevent, or abate, our endless hallelujahs? 2. That we shall have comfort in Him. We shall praise Him *for the help of his countenance;* for his favor, and the support we have by it, and satisfaction in it. Those that know how to value and improve the light of God's countenance, will find in that a suitable, seasonable, and sufficient help, in the worst of times, furnishing them with constant matter for praise. David's believing expectation of this kept him from sinking, nay, from drooping; his harp was a palliative cure of Saul's melancholy, but his hope an effectual cure of his own.

brooks of water. (*Joel* 1:20. Heb.) SCOTT.

Verse 6.

Land of Jordan.] 'The country E. of Jordan embracing Reuben, Gad, and the Half Tribe of Manasseh. The country W. of the Jordan only was properly called Canaan. Into this region David had betaken himself in flight from his son, 2 Sam. 17:22.—*Of the Hermonites.*] This describes his situation more precisely. Hermon is the name of the eastern Anti-Lebanon range of mountains, which bounds the land of Israel on the N. [Note, Josh. 12:3.] The term *Hermonites*, like *Alps* and *Apennines*, has its origin from the circumstance, that the mountain has a number of summits.—*Mahanaim* was at the foot of Mount Hermon.' ROSENM.

7 [t] Deep calleth unto deep, at the noise of thy water-spouts: [u] all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.

8 *Yet* the LORD will [x] command his loving-kindness in the day-time, and [y] in the night his song *shall be* with me, *and* my prayer unto [z] the God of my life.

9 I will say unto [a] God my Rock, [b] Why hast thou forgotten me? [c] why go I mourning [d] because of the oppression of the enemy?

10 [e] *As* with a * sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, [f] Where *is* thy God?

11 [g] Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, *who is* [h] the health of my countenance, and my God.

t Job 1:14—19. 10:17. Jer. 4:20 Ez. 7:26.
u 69:14,15. 88:7,15—17. Lam. 3:53—55. Jon. 2:3.
x 41:1. 133:3. Lev. 25:21. Deut. 28:8. Matt. 8:8.
y 63:6. 149:5. Job 35:10. Is. 30:29. Acts 16:25.
z 27:1. Col. 3:3.
a 18:2. 28:1. 62:2,6,7. 78:35.
b 13:1. 22:1,2. 44:23,24. 77:9. Is. 49:14. 54:7. 49:15
c 38:6. 43:2. 88:9. Job 30:26—31.
d 55:3. Ec. 4:1. Lam. 5:1—16.
e 3. Prov. 12:18. Luke 2:35.
* Or, *killing*.
f Joel 2:17. Mic. 7:10.
g 5. 43:5.
h Jer. 30:17. 33:6. Matt. 9:12.

V. 6—11. Complaints and comforts here, as before, take their turn, like day and night, in nature.

I. He complains of the dejections of his spirit, but comforts himself with the thoughts of God, *v.* 6. It is a great support to us, when on any account we are distressed, that we have liberty of access to God, and may open to Him the causes of our dejection. David had communed with his own heart, and had not as yet found relief; therefore he turns to God. Note, When we cannot get relief for our burdened spirits, by pleading with ourselves, we should try what we can do, by praying to God, and leaving our case with Him. Finding the disease very painful, David had recourse to devotion as a sovereign remedy. Note, The way to forget the sense of our miseries, is, to remember the God of our mercies. It was an uncommon case, when the psalmist *remembered God, and was troubled*, 77: 3. He had often remembered God, and was comforted, therefore he had recourse to that expedient now. He was now driven to the utmost borders of Canaan, to shelter himself there from his persecutors; sometimes to the country about Jordan, when discovered there, to *the land of the Hermonites*, or to a hill called *Mizar*, or the little hill; but, wherever he went, he remembered God, and kept up his secret communion with Him; and wherever he was, he retained his affection for the courts of God's house; from the land of Jordan, or from the top of the hills, he used to take a long, a longing look, toward the place of the sanctuary, and wish himself there. Distance and time could not make him forget what his heart was so much upon, and what lay so near it.

II. He complains of the tokens of God's displeasure against him, but comforts himself with the hopes of the return of his favor in due time.

1. He saw his troubles coming from God's wrath, and that discouraged him, *v.* 7. '*Deep calls unto deep*, one affliction on another, as if called to hasten after it;' and by *water-spouts* may be meant the terrors and tosses of his mind, under the apprehensions of God's anger: a deluge of grief. Or, it is an allusion to a ship at sea, in a great storm, tossed by the roaring waves, which go over it, 107: 25. Whatever waves and billows of affliction go over us at any time, we must call them *God's waves* and *his billows;* for the waves and billows are under a divine check. Let not good men think it strange, if they be exercised with many and various trials; God knows what He does, and so shall they shortly. Jonah, in the whale's belly, made use of these words of David, Jon. 2: 3. they are exactly the same in the original, and of him they were literally true, *All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me;* for the book of Psa. is contrived so as to reach every one's case.

2. He expected his deliverance to come from God's favor, *v.* 8. Observe, (1.) What he promised himself from God; *The Lord will command his loving-kindness.* He eyes the favor of God, as the fountain of all the good he looked for: God's conferring of his favor, is called his *commanding* it; this intimates its freeness and efficacy. He *commands deliverance*, 44: 4. *commands the blessing*, 133: 3. as one having authority. (2.) What he promised for himself to God. If God command his loving-kindness for him, he will welcome it with his best affections and devotions. [1.] He will rejoice in God; *In the night, his song shall be with me.* The mercies we receive in the day, we ought to return thanks for at night; see 119: 62. *At midnight, will I rise to give thanks.* In silence and solitude, when retired from the hurries of the world, we must be pleasing ourselves with the thoughts of God's goodness. Or in the night of affliction; 'Before the day dawns, in which God commands his loving-kindness, I will sing songs of praise in the prospect of it.' Even in tribulation, the saints can rejoice in hope of the glory of God, Rom. 5: 2, 3. It is God's prerogative to *give songs in the night*, Job 35: 10. [2.] He will seek to God in a constant dependence on Him; *My prayer shall be to the God of my life.* Our believing expectation of mercy must not supersede, but quicken, our prayers for it. And from God what good may not we expect? It would put life into our prayers, in them to eye God as the God of our life; for then it is for our lives, and the lives of our souls, that we stand up to make request.

III. He complains of his enemies' insolence, yet comforts himself in God as his Friend, *v.* 9—11.

1. It must needs grieve a man that truly loves his country, and seeks the good of it, to see himself persecuted and hardly used, as an enemy to it. Yet David ought not hence to have concluded that God had forgotten him, (*v.* 9.) and cast him off, nor thus to have expostulated with God, as if He did him as much wrong in suffering him to be trampled on, as they did that trampled on him. We may complain *to* but not *of* God. They reproached him so cuttingly, it was a *sword in his bones*, *v.* 10. He had mentioned before what the reproach was, and here he repeats it, *They say daily unto me, Where is thy God?* A reproach which was *therefore* very grievous, because it reflected dishonor on God, and was intended to discourage his hope in God, which he had enough to do to keep alive, and which was but too apt to fail of itself.

2. His comfort is, that God is his Rock, *v.* 9. A Rock to build upon, to take shelter in; the Rock of ages, in whom is everlasting strength. To Him he had access with confidence; therefore he repeats what he had said, *v.* 5. and concludes with it, *v.* 11. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul?* Note, It may be of great use to us, to think our good thoughts over again, and if we do not gain our point with them at first, perhaps we may the second time; however, where the heart goes

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The believer, in proportion to the degree in which he is spiritually-minded, will continually either be rejoicing in the living God, or mourning after Him; and he looks especially with longing expectation for that season, when He shall appear before Him in the temple above, and be for ever satisfied in his favor, and in that joy with which his manifested glory fills every enraptured beholder. (*Matt.* 5: 8.)—We may have great cause to mourn for sin, and to pray against prevailing impiety: but our great dejection, even under the severest outward afflictions or inward trials, springs from unbelief and a rebellious will: we should therefore strive and pray against it, and endeavor to hope in God, persuaded that we shall 'yet praise Him for the salvation of his countenance.' And if one trouble follow hard after another, let us remember that they all are appointed and over-ruled by the Lord, and that we deserve more than all we endure on earth: let us recollect how Jesus said, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death;' and how He suffered both from the cruelty of man, the rage of Satan, and the justice of the Father: yet was He heard and delivered. In his name, let us hope and pray: one word from Him will calm every storm, turn the midnight darkness into the light of noon, and the bitterest complaints into joyful praises. SCOTT.

(7.) *Water-spouts.*] Some, as *Boothr.* refer this to *mountain cataracts*, others to water-spouts occasioned by a whirlwind formed by opposing currents of air, on the water. 'From a dense cloud a cone descends in the form of a trumpet, with the small end downwards: at the same time, the surface of the sea under it is agitated and whirled round, the waters are converted [in consequence of the rarefaction of the air above?] into vapor, and ascend, with a spiral motion, till they unite with the cone from the cloud: frequently, however, they disperse before this junction. [Electricity, also, is thought greatly to influence these phenomena.] Both columns diminish towards their point of contact, where they are not above 3 or 4 ft. in diam. In the middle there is a white, transparent tube, less distinct on approaching it; and it is then discovered to be a vacant space, in which none of the small particles of water ascend; and in this, as well as around the outer edges, of the water-spout, large drops of rain precipitate themselves. Water-spouts sometimes continue a quarter of an hour.' *Enc. Am.* Travellers state, that they are common on the coasts of Syria. On our own Lake Champlain, they have been noticed: and may perhaps occur on the Sea of Galilee, (near which David was,) surrounded as it is by mountains, through whose narrow gorges gusts of wind are ever coming to disturb the water. The Dead Sea, too, may perhaps be exposed to such whirlwinds and their consequences. *Roberts* says of one he saw, 'The noise the water made in rushing *from* the water-spout, and again dashing into the sea, strongly recalled the expression, "Deep calleth unto deep," &c.' The expression is singularly beautiful and sublime; mark, too, the Psalmist, though speaking to 'ears polite,' refers all to God, they are not Nature's water-spouts, but 'Thy water-spouts,' God's water-spouts. A popular, cant phraseology, which estranges us from God, should be discountenanced by the Christian. Notes, Ruth 2 4. ED.

PSALM XLIII.

The Psalmist prays, that God would judge his cause, and restore him to his sanctuary, 1—3. He anticipates his joy and praise which should then take place, and encourages himself to hope in God, 4, 5.

[a] JUDGE me, O God, and [b] plead my cause against an * ungodly nation: O deliver me from † the deceitful and unjust man.

2 For thou *art* [c] the God of my strength: [d] why dost thou cast me off? [e] why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

3 O [f] send out thy light and thy truth: [g] let them lead me; let them bring me unto [h] thy holy hill, and to [i] thy tabernacles.

4 [k] Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God ‡ my exceeding Joy: yea, [l] upon the harp will I praise thee, [m] O God, my God.

5 [n] Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the Health of my countenance, and my God.

a 7:8. 26:1. 35:24. 75:7. 1 Cor. 4:4. 1 Pet. 2:23.
b 35:1. 1 Sam. 24:15. Prov. 22:23. 23:11. Mic. 7:9.
* Or, *unmerciful.*
† Heb. *a man of deceit and iniquity.* 71:4. 2 Sam. 15:31. 16:20—23. 17: 1—4.
c 28:7. 140:7. Ex. 15:2. Is. 40:31. 45:24. Zech. 10:12. Eph. 6:10. Phil. 4:13.
d 71:9. 77:7. 94:14. 1 Chr. 28:9.
e 42:9
f 57:3. 97:11. 119:105. 2 Sam. 15:20. Mic 7:8,20. John 1:4,17.
g 25:4,5. 143:10. Prov 3:5,6.
h 2:6. 3:4. 68:15,16. 78:68. 132:13, 14.
i 1 Chr. 16:1,39. 21:29.
k 65:13—15 116:12—19.
‡ Or, *the gladness of my joy.* 71:23. Is. 61.10. Hab. 3:17,18. Rom. 5:11.
l 57:9. 71:22. 81:2. 2 Sam. 6:5. Rev. 5:8.
m 42:6.
n 42:5,11.

along with the words, it is no vain repetition. We have need to press the same thing over and over again on our hearts, and all little enough. but now he adds one word to it; *there*, he hoped to praise God for the salvation that was in his countenance; *here*, 'I will praise Him,' says he, 'as the Salvation of my countenance, from the present cloud that is upon it; if God smile on me, that will make me look pleasant, look up, look forward, look round, with pleasure.' He adds also, *and my God*, 'related to me, in covenant with me; all that He is, all that He has, is mine, according to the true intent and meaning of the promise;' this thought enabled him to triumph over all his griefs and fears; God's being with the saints in heaven, and being their God, is that which will *wipe away all tears from their eyes*, Rev. 21: 3, 4.

Ps. XLIII. V. 1—5. This Ps. it is likely, was penned on the same occasion with the former, and, having no title, may be looked upon as an appendix to it; the malady presently returning, he had immediate recourse to the same remedy. V. 2. of this Ps. is almost the very same with v. 9. of the foregoing, as the 5th of this is exactly the same with the 11th of that. Christ Himself, who had the Spirit without measure, when there was occasion, prayed a second and third time, *saying the same words*, *Matt.* 26: 44. David here makes his application to God by faith and prayer, as his Judge, his Strength, his Guide, his Joy, his Hope, with suitable affections and expressions.

I. As his Judge, *v.* 1. There were those that impeached him, against them he appeals to the court of heaven, the supreme judicature; praying to have their judgment against him reversed, and his innocency cleared. There were those that had injured him, against them he exhibits his complaint to Him, who is the Avenger of wrong, praying for justice for himself, and on them. Observe, 1. With whom he had this struggle. A body of sinful men, whom he calls an *ungodly* or *unmerciful* nation; their head was a deceitful, unjust man; most probably, Saul, who not only showed no kindness to David, but dealt most perfidiously and dishonestly with him. If Absalom was meant, his character was no better. Some think David, by the spirit of prophecy, calculated this Ps. for the use of the Jews in their captivity in Babylon, and that the Chaldeans are the ungodly nation here meant; to them it was very applicable, but only as other like scriptures, none of which are of private interpretation. God might design it for their use, whether David did or no. 2. His prayer with reference to them; *Judge me.* As to the quarrel God had with him for sin, he prays, '*Enter not into judgment with me*, for then I shall be condemned;' but as to the quarrel his enemies had with him, he prays, 'Lord, *judge me*, for I know that I shall be justified, *plead my cause against them*, take my part, and in thy providence appear on my behalf.' He that has an honest cause may expect that God will plead it. We must reckon our cause sufficiently pleaded, if we be delivered, though our enemies be not destroyed.

II. As his Strength, *v.* 2. David now went mourning, destitute of spiritual joys, yet he found God to be the God of his strength If we cannot comfort ourselves in God, we may stay ourselves on Him, and have spiritual supports when we want spiritual delights. David here pleads this with God; 'Thou art the God on whom I depend as my Strength; why then cast me off?' This was a mistake; for God never cast off any that trusted in Him, whatever their melancholy apprehensions. 'Thou art the God of my strength; why then is mine enemy too strong for me, and why go I mourning because of his oppressive power?' It is hard to reconcile the mighty force of the church's enemies with the almighty power of the church's God; but the day will reconcile them, when all his enemies shall become his footstool.

III. As his Guide, *v.* 3. He prays, 1. That God by his providence would bring him back from his banishment, and open a way for him again to the free enjoyment of the privileges of God's sanctuary. His heart is only on *the holy hills and the tabernacles*, nothing so amiable in his eyes as those; thither he would be brought back. In order to this, he prays, '*Send out thy light and thy truth;* let me have this as a fruit of thy favor, which is light, and the performance of thy promise, which is truth.' We need desire no more to make us happy, than the good that flows from God's favor, and is included in his promise. Note, Those whom God leads, He leads to his holy hill, and to his tabernacles; those therefore who pretend to be led by the Spirit, and yet turn their backs on instituted ordinances, certainly deceive themselves. 2. That God by his grace would bring him into communion with Himself, and prepare him for the vision and fruition of Himself in the other world. Some Jewish writers by *light* and *truth* here understand Messiah the Prince, and Elias his forerunner; these are come in answer to the prayers of the O. T.; but we are still to pray for God's light and truth, the Spirit of light and truth, who supplies the want of Christ's bodily presence, to lead us into the mystery of godliness, and to guide us in the way to heaven. When God sends his light and truth into our hearts, those will guide us to the upper world in all our devotions, as well as in all our aims and expectations; and if we conscientiously follow that light and that truth, they will certainly bring us to the holy hill above.

IV. As his Joy, *v.* 4. He will get as near as he can to God, his exceeding Joy. Note, 1. Those that come to the tabernacles, should come to the altar; those that come to ordinances, should qualify themselves to come, and then come to special ordinances, to those that are most affecting and most binding. The nearer we come, the closer we cleave, to God, the better. 2. Those that come

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Under the returns of distress and disconsolation, we should, again and again, have recourse to the effectual and only remedy of faith and prayer.—No eminence or usefulness can exempt any pious man from the contempt or injuries of the wicked; whether he have to do with collective bodies, or individuals. But we should commit our cause to God, and He will plead it, and deliver us from every unrighteous and treacherous assault. And though inward temptations often concur with outward afflictions, yet God will never cast off those, who trust in Him as their Protector and Strength, according to his merciful and faithful promises. We should therefore discard such dishonorable fears, and resolve still to 'hope in God.' SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. XLIII. 'The subject of this Ps. assimilates so closely to that of the 42d, that many have regarded it as originally belonging to it, and as only separated by the act of transcribers. Except in the *Syr.* and *Arab.* it has no title. The former speaks of it as "composed by David, when Jonathan told him Saul intended to slay him;" and the latter represents it as "a prayer for the backsliding Jews." In 46 of the MSS. of *Kennicott* and *De Rossi*, it stands as a part of Ps. 42.' MORISON.

Verse 1.

This is evidently a continuation of the preceding Ps. and was written before David had obtained deliverance. Every day brought him fresh intelligence concerning the ungodly, ungrateful, and *unmerciful* conduct of Israel in general; the bulk of the nation having joined the conspirators, and being ready to proceed to all lengths against the life of their aged king, which the deceit and iniquity of Absalom or Ahithophel could suggest against him. SCOTT.

Verses 2, 3.

Note, 42:9, 10.—*Thy light.* (3) 'Thy favor, which appeareth by the performance of thy promises.' Perhaps the Psalmist also meant, the light of heavenly wisdom, teaching him how to act in such trying circumstances, so as to wait in the path of duty for the performance of God's promises. SCOTT.

(3). *Tabernacles.*' There were at this time *two tabernacles*, or sacred tents; that erected by Moses at Gibeon, and the ark of the covenant stationed on mt. Zion, in a tent David had prepared for it. (1 *Chr.* 16:37—43.) SCOTT.—'Probably he alludes to the different *parts* of the tabernacle. There was, first, the holiest of all, then the sanctuary, and then the tabernacle of the convocation. Heb. 9:1—8.' *Morison.* Comp. too, the cut, 1 K. 7:2—12. ED.

Verse 4.

My exceeding joy.] (*M.*) The fervent language used by the Psalmist, while anticipating his sacrifices of thanksgiving at the altar, is widely different from the frigid, unimpassioned religion of nominal Christians in general, and shames the lukewarmness of most of us. (107.17—22, 31, 32. 116:13—19. 118:19—26. *Rom.* 5:11.) SCOTT.

PSALM XLIV.

The church acknowledges the former mercies of God, and resolves to trust in Him, 1—8; complains of being left under grievous distresses and persecutions, 9—16; professes integrity under sufferings, 17—22; and earnestly prays for speedy deliverance, 23—26.

To the chief Musician, [a] for the sons of Korah, Maschil.

WE [b] have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, *what* work thou didst in their days, [c] in the times of old.

2 *How* [d] thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; *how* thou didst [e] afflict the people, and cast them out.

3 For [f] they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but [g] thy right hand, and thine arm, and [h] the light of thy countenance, [i] because thou hadst a favor unto them.

4 Thou art [k] my King, O God: [l] command deliverances for Jacob.

5 [m] Through thee will we [n] push down our enemies: through thy name will we [o] tread them under that rise up against us.

6 For [p] I will not

a 42: *title.*
b 22:31. 71:18. 78:3—6. 105:1,2. Ex. 12:24—27. 13:14,15. Is. 38:19. Joel 1:3.
c Num. 21:14—16,27—30. Job 8:8,9. 15 17—19.
d 78:55. 80:8. 105:44. 135:10—12. 136: 17—22. Ex. 15:19. 34:11. Deut. 7: 1. Josh. 10:42. 11:23. 21:43. Neh. 9:22—27.
e Ex. 23:28. Num. 13:32. Josh. 10:11. 24:12. 1 Sam. 5:6,7.
f Deut. 4:37,38. 8:17,18. Josh. 24:12. Zech. 4:6. 2 Cor. 4:7.
g 17:7. 20:6. 74:11. Ex. 15:6. Is. 63:12.
h 42:5,11. 80:16.
i Num. 14:8. Deut. 7:7,8. 1 Sam. 12: 22. Mal. 1:2,3. Rom. 9:10—15.
k 74:12. 89:18. 149:2. Is. 33:22.
l 42:8. Mark 1:25,26,31,41. 9:25.
m 18:39—42. 118:10—13. Is. 41:14—16. Phil. 4:13.
n Deut. 33:17. 1 K. 22:11. Dan. 8:4.
o 60:12. 91:13. 108:13. Zech. 10:5. Rom. 16:20. *Marg.*
p 20:7. 33:16,17. Hos. 1:7.

to the altar of God, must see to it that therein they come unto God, and draw near to Him with a true heart: we come in vain to holy ordinances, if we do not in them come to the holy God. 3. Those that come unto God, must come to Him as their exceeding Joy, not only as their future Bliss, but as their present Joy; and that not a common, but an exceeding joy, far exceeding all the joys of sense and time. The phrase, in the original, is very emphatical—*unto God the Gladness of my joy*, or of my triumph. Whatever we rejoice or triumph in, God must be the Joy of it; all our joy in it must terminate in Him, and must pass through the gift to the Giver. 4. When we come to God as our exceeding Joy, our comforts in Him must be the matter of our praises to Him as God, and our God. *Upon the harp will I praise Thee, O God, my God.* David excelled at the harp, 1 Sam. 16: 16, 18. and with that in which he excelled he would praise God; for God who is the Best is to be praised with the best we have.

V. As his never failing Hope, *v.* 5. Here, as before, David quarrels with himself for his dejections and despondencies, and owns he did ill to yield to them, and that he had no reason to do so; *Why art thou cast down, O my soul?* He then quiets himself in the believing expectation he had of giving glory to God; *Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him;* and of enjoying glory with God, *He is the Health of my countenance, and my God.* This is what we cannot too much insist on, for it is what we must live and die by.

Ps. XLIV. We are not told either who was the penman of this Ps. or when, and on what occasion, it was penned; on a melancholy occasion, we are sure, not so much to the penman himself, but to the church of God in general; therefore, if we suppose it penned by David, yet we must attribute it purely to the spirit of prophecy, and must conclude that that spirit (whatever he himself had) had in view the captivity of Babylon, or the sufferings of the Jewish church under Antiochus, or rather, the afflicted state of the Christian church in its early days, to which *v.* 22. is applied by the apostle, *Rom.* 8: 36. and indeed in all its days on earth; for it is its determined lot, that it must enter into the kingdom of heaven through many tribulations. And if we have any gospel-psalms pointing at the privileges and comforts of Christians, why should we not have one pointing at their trials and exercises? It is a Ps. calculated for a day of fasting and humiliation, on occasion of some public calamity, either pressing or threatening. In singing this Ps. we ought to give God the praise of what He has formerly done for his people, to represent our own grievances, or sympathize with those parts of the church that are in distress; to engage ourselves, whatever happens, to cleave to God and duty, and then cheerfully to wait the event.

V. 1—8. Some observe, that most of the Pss. entitled *Maschil, psalms of instruction*, are sorrowful Pss.; for afflictions give instructions, and sorrow of spirit opens the ear to them; *Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest and teachest.*

In these vs. the church, though now trampled on, calls to remembrance the days of her triumph in God, and over her enemies. This is very largely mentioned here, 1. As an aggravation of the present distress. The yoke of servitude cannot but lie very heavy on the necks of those that used to wear the crown of victory; and the tokens of God's displeasure must needs be most grievous to persons long accustomed to tokens of his favor. 2. As an encouragement to hope, that God would yet turn again their captivity, and return in mercy to them; accordingly he mixes prayers and comfortable expectations with his record of former mercies. Observe,

I. Their commemoration of the great things God had formerly done for them. In general, *v.* 1. Observe, 1. The many operations of Providence are here spoken of as one work; there is a wonderful harmony and uniformity in all that God does, Ezek. 10: 13. 2. It is a debt every age owes to posterity, to keep and to transmit an account of God's works of wonder to the next generation: thus shall *one generation praise his works to another*, 145: 4. the *fathers to the children shall make known his truth*, Isa. 38: 19. 3. We must not only make mention of the work God has done in our own days, but must also acquaint ourselves and our children with what He did in the times of old, long before our own days; and of this we have in the Scripture a sure word of history, as sure as the word of prophecy. 4. Children must diligently attend to what their parents tell them of the wonderful works of God, and keep it in remembrance, as that which will be of great use to them. 5. Former experiences of God's power and goodness are strong supports to faith, and powerful pleas in prayer under present calamities. See how Gideon insists on it, Judg. 6: 13. In particular, their *fathers* had *told* them,

(1.) How wonderfully God planted Israel in Canaan at first, *v.* 2, 3. not owing to their own merit, but to God's favor and free grace, Deut. 9: 5, 6. because He would *perform the oath which He sware unto their fathers*, Deut. 7: 8. not owing to their own might, but to God's power engaged for them, without which all their own efforts and endeavors had been fruitless. It was God that planted Israel in that good land, as the careful husbandman plants a tree, from which he promises himself fruit. See 80: 8. This is applicable to the planting of the Christian church, by the preaching of the gospel. Paganism was wonderfully driven out, as the Canaanites, not all at once, but by little and little, not by any human policy or power, but by the wisdom and power of God; Christ by his Spirit went forth conquering and to conquer; and the remembrance of that is a great support and comfort to those that groan under the yoke of anti-christian tyranny; for to the state of the church under the power of the N. T. Babylon, some think, (and particularly the learned Amyraldus,) the complaints in the latter part of this Ps. may very fitly be accommodated. He that by his power and goodness planted a church for Himself in the world, will certainly support it by the same power and goodness; and the *gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

(2.) How frequently He had given them success against their enemies, *v.* 7. *Thou hast*, many a time, *saved us from our enemies*, and hast put to flight, and so put to shame, *them that hated us;* witness the successes of the Judges against the nations that oppressed Israel. Many a time have the persecutors of the Christian church, and those that hate it, been put to shame by the power of truth, Acts 6: 10.

NOTES.

Ps. XLIV. The author, occasion, and time of this Ps. appear to be uncertain. Most, with *Henry* and *Scott*, make David the author; but while many, with *Henry*, refer the Ps. to the times of the Bab. captivity or of Antiochus, and think David was inspired with prophetic forecast to adapt it accordingly, *Scott* only, so far as I find, supposes, though it may be with good reason, that he prepared it 'for the *true church* in every age;' and many think it was composed by Hezekiah, or some other one of his time: *Mudge* thinks, it was prepared at the particular time of Rabshakeh's coming with blasphemy and threats. *Morison* seems inclined to refer it to the time of the captivity, were it not that 'some descriptions of the piety of the people, as in vs. 17, 18, and 20. do not correspond with the actual feelings of the Israelites during that time, as described by Daniel, ch. 9:5, 6, 10, 11, 13.' Ed.

Verses 1—3.

This Ps. does not fully suit any period in the history of the old-testament church: for even in the days of Hezekiah, under Sennacherib's oppression, or afterwards, under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, the *bulk of the nation* could not have made the solemn protestation contained in it; (17—22.) and it would have been still more unsuitable to the case of the Jews, during the Bab. captivity. It is therefore no very improbable conjecture, that David, or some other prophet, composed this Ps. for the use of the *true church*, in every age, when persecuted for conscience' sake.—The first verse is incorporated into our Litany, after a manner, suited to lead our thoughts to the triumphs of divine grace at the reformation, and in the age of the apostles.—*The people.* (2) Or *peoples*, the several nations inhabiting Canaan. (1 *Sam.* 12:22. *Rom.* 9:10—18.) Scott.

Verse 4.

This is a never-failing plea for the church under persecution, and for the believer when steadily resisting temptation, and for the minister in praying for success on his labors. (27:13. *Matt.* 6:13.) Id.

Verses 5—7.

God is frequently spoken of as a Horn, or as raising up for his church 'a Horn of salvation;' (*Deut.* 33:7. 2 *Sam.* 22:2, 3. *Luke* 1:67—75.) and the Psalmist, with allusion to that metaphor, says, 'Through Thee will we *push* down our enemies.' Id.

(5.) *Push down.*] 'Heb. *smite with the* horn; i. e. subdue and

trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.

7 But [q] thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast [r] put them to shame that hated us.

8 [s] In God we boast all the day long, and [t] praise thy name for ever. Selah.

9 ¶ But [u] thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies.

10 [x] Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy: and they which hate us [y] spoil for themselves.

11 Thou hast [z] given us [*] like sheep *appointed* for meat; and hast [a] scattered us among the heathen.

12 Thou [b] sellest thy people † for nought, and dost not [c] increase *thy wealth* by their price.

13 Thou [d] makest us a reproach to our neighbors, [e] a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.

14 Thou makest us [f] a by-word among the heathen, [g] a shaking of the head among the people.

15 [h] My confusion *is* continually before me, and the shame of my face hath [i] covered me.

16 For [k] the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of [l] the enemy and avenger.

17 [m] All this is come upon us; [n] yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we [o] dealt falsely in thy covenant.

q 140:7. 144:10. Josh. 1:5. 10:8—10, 42. 11:6. 23:9,10. Judg. 2:18. 7: 4—7. 1 Sam. 7:8—12. 14:6—10. 17: 47. 2 Sam. 7:10.
r 40:14. 83:1—18.
s 34:2. Is. 45:25. Jer. 9:24. Rom. 2: 17. 1 Cor. 1:29—31.
t 115:1,18.
u 43:2. 60:1. 74:1. 80:12,13. 89:38—45. Jer. 33:24—26. Rom. 11:1—6.
x Lev. 26:17,38,37. Deut. 28:25. Josh. 7:8,12. 1 Sam. 4:17. 31:1—7.
y 89:41. Is. 10:6,14. Jer. 15:13. 20:5.
z Jer. 12:3. Rom. 8:36.
* Heb. *as sheep of meat.* 14:4.
a Deut. 4:27. 28:64. 2 K. 17:6. Is. 11:11,12. Jer. 32:37. Ez. 34:12. Luke 21:24.
b Deut. 32:30. Is. 50:1. 52:3,4. Jer. 15:13.
† Heb. *without riches.*
c Neh. 5:8—12. Rev. 18:13.
d 79:4. 80:6. 89:51. Ez. 36:19—23.

II. The good use they make, and had formerly made, of this record of the great things God had done for their fathers.

1. They had taken God for their sovereign Lord, sworn allegiance to Him, and put themselves under his protection, *v.* 4. He speaks in the name of the church, as 74: 12. *Thou art my King of old;* or, for himself here; 'Lord, *Thou art my King,* Whither shall I go with my petitions, but to Thee? The favor I ask is not for myself, but for thy church.' Note, It is every one's duty to improve their personal interest at the throne of grace, for the public welfare and prosperity of the people of God; as Moses, '*If I have found grace in thy sight,* guide thy people,' Ex. 33: 13.

2. They had always applied themselves to Him by prayer for deliverance, when at any time they were in distress; *Command deliverances for Jacob.* Observe, (1.) The enlargedness of their desire; they pray for deliverances, not one, but many, as many as they need, a series, a deliverance from every danger. (2.) The strength of their faith in the power of God; *Command,* which denotes his doing it easily and instantly; *Speak, and it is done;* as the centurion, Matt. 8: 8. *Speak the word only;* it denotes also his doing it effectually; *Where the word of a king is,* there is power, much more the word of the King of kings.

3. They had trusted and triumphed in Him. As they owned it was not their own sword and bow that *had* saved them, *v.* 3. so neither did they trust to their own sword or bow to save them for the future, *v.* 6. no, *through Thee will we push down our enemies, v.* 5. relying only on thy strength, and not on the number or valor of our forces; and, having thee on our side, we will not doubt of success in the attempt.

4. They had made Him their Joy and Praise; *v.* 8. When their enemies boasted of their strength and success, as Sennacherib and Rabshakeh, they owned they had nothing to boast of, in answer thereunto, but their relation to God, and their interest in Him; and if He were for them, they could set all the world at defiance. *Let him that glories, glory in the Lord,* and let that for ever exclude all other boasting.

V. 9—16. The people of God here complain of the low and afflicted condition they were now in, under the prevailing power of their enemies and oppressors; which was the more grievous because they had always been used to win the day, and because those were now their oppressors, whom they had many a time triumphed over and made tributaries, and especially because they had boasted in their God, with great assurance, that He would still protect and prosper them, which made their distress and disgrace the more shameful. Let us see what the complaint is.

1. That they wanted the usual tokens of God's favor, and presence, *v.* 9. 'Thou seemest to have cast us off, and so hast put us to shame. Our armies go forth as usual, but they are put to flight, for Thou goest not forth with them.' Note, God's people, when cast down, are tempted to think themselves cast off, and forsaken of God; but it is a mistake. *Hath God cast away his people? God forbid,* Rom. 11: 1.

2. That they were put to the worst before their enemies in the field of battle, *v.* 10. as Joshua complained when he met with a repulse at Ai, Josh. 7: 8. 'We are dispirited, and have lost the ancient valor of Israelites; we flee, we fall, before those that used to flee and fall before us; and all our attempts to shake off the Babylonish yoke have been ineffectual, and we have rather lost ground by them.'

e 123:3,4. Jer. 48:27.
f Deut. 28:37. 1 K. 9:7. 2 Chr. 7:20. Jer. 24:9.
g 22:7. Job 16:4. Is. 37:22. Lam. 2: 15—17.
h Josh. 7:7—9. Ezra 9:6. Jer. 3:25.
i 69:7 71:13. 89:45. Jer. 51:51.
k 74:18,22,23. 79:12. Is. 37:3,4,17,23, 24.
l 8:2.
m Dan. 9:13.
n 20. 9:17. Deut. 6:12. 8:14. Is. 17: 10. Jer. 2:32.
o Jer. 31:32. Ez. 16:59. 20:37.

3. That they were doomed to the sword and to captivity, *v.* 11. They looked upon themselves as bought and sold, and charged it on God, when they should have charged it on their own sin, Is. 50: 1. However, thus far was right, that they looked above the instruments of their trouble, well knowing their worst enemies had no power against them, *but what was given them from above;* they own God *delivered them into the hands of the ungodly,* as that which is sold is delivered to the buyer. '*Thou sellest them for nought, and dost not increase in their price;*' so it may be read; 'Thou dost not sell them by auction, to those that will bid most for them, but in haste, to those that will bid first for them; any one shall have them that will.' Or, as we read it, *Thou dost not increase thy wealth by their price;* intimating, they could have suffered this contentedly, if they had been sure it would have redounded to the glory of God, and his interest be some way served by it; but it was quite contrary, Israel's disgrace turned to God's dishonor, see Is. 52: 5. Ezek. 36: 20.

4. That they were loaded with contempt, and all possible ignominy. In this also they acknowledge God, '*Thou makest us a reproach;* Thou bringest those calamities on us which occasion the reproach, and Thou permittest their virulent tongues to smite us.' They complain, (1.) That they were ridiculed and bantered, as the most contemptible people under the sun. (2.) That their neighbors, from whom they could not withdraw, were most abusive to them, *v.* 13. (3.) That the heathen, that were strangers and aliens, made them a by-word, and shook the head at them, as triumphing in their fall, *v.* 14. (4.) That the reproach was constant and incessant, *v.* 15. *My confusion is continually before me.* The church in general, the psalmist in particular, were continually teased and vexed with the insults of the enemy. To those that are going down, every one cries, 'Down with them.' (5.) That it was very grievous, and in a manner overwhelmed him; *The shame of my face has covered me.* He blushed for sin, or rather for the dishonor done to God, and then it was a holy blushing. (6.) That it reflected on God Himself; the reproach the enemy and the avenger cast on them, was downright blasphemy against God, *v.* 16. and 2 K. 19: 3. There was therefore strong reason to believe, that God would appear for them. As there is no trouble more grievous to a generous and ingenuous mind than reproach and calumny, so there is none more grievous to a holy, gracious soul, than blasphemy and dishonor done to God.

V. 17—26. The people of God, being greatly afflicted and oppressed, here apply themselves to Him,

I. By way of appeal, concerning their integrity, of which God only can infallibly judge and will certainly reward. Two things they call God to witness.

1. That though they suffered these hard things, yet they kept close to God, and duty, *v.* 17. 'We cannot deny we have dealt foolishly, yet not in thy covenant, so as to cast Thee off, and take to other gods: idolaters were our conquerors, but we did not therefore entertain any more favorable thoughts of their idols; we have not forsaken Thee.' The trouble they had been long in was very great; 'We have been among men as fierce, and furious, and cruel, as dragons; we have been under deep melancholy, and apprehensive of death; Thou hast thus broken and covered us, *v.* 19. yet we have not harbored any hard thoughts of Thee, but have not continued to trust in Thee; *our heart is not turned back,* we have not secretly withdrawn our affec-

destroy. The phrase is taken from Deut. 33:17. and is borrowed from horned beasts. Comp. 1 K. 22:11.' [and cut, Ex. 17:10.] POOLE.

Verse 8.

Or, 'Unto God we will give praise continually, and will confess thy name for ever. Selah.' 'Glorying in God' is generally expressed by another modification of the same verb. (*Is.* 45:25. *Jer.* 9:23. Heb.) SCOTT.

Verses 9—16.

Many of the verbs are in the future tense, in the original: and perhaps the Psalmist meant, that past calamities led the people to very doleful conclusions as to the event. SCOTT.

Verses 17—22.

(1—3.) The formalist commonly escapes persecution, by turning with the stream, and purchasing security with sinful compliances, or

18 [p] Our heart is not turned back, neither [q] have our * steps declined from thy way;

19 Though [r] thou hast sore broken us [s] in the place of dragons, and covered us [t] with the shadow of death.

20 [u] If we have forgotten the name of our God, or [x] stretched out our hands to a strange God;

21 [y] Shall not God search this out? for [z] he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

22 Yea, [a] for thy sake are we [b] killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.

23 [c] Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, [d] cast *us* not off for ever.

24 [e] Wherefore hidest thou thy face, *and* [f] forgettest our affliction and our oppression?

25 For [g] our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth.

26 Arise † for our help, and [h] redeem us for thy mercy's sake.

tions from Thee, neither have our steps, either in our religious worship, or in our conversation, *declined from thy way, v.* 18. the way appointed us to walk in.' When the heart turns back, the steps will soon decline; for it is the evil heart of unbelief that inclines us to depart from God. Note, We may the better bear our troubles, how pressing soever, if in them we still hold fast our integrity. While our troubles do not drive us from our duty to God, we should not suffer them to drive us from our comfort in God; for He will not leave us, if we do not leave Him.

For the proof of their integrity, they take God's omniscience to witness, which is as much the comfort of the upright in heart, as it is the terror of hypocrites, *v.* 20, 21. Forgetting God was a heart sin, and stretching out the hand to a strange god was often a secret sin, Ezek. 8: 12. But heart sins and secret sins are known to God, and must be reckoned for; for *He knows the secrets of the heart*, and therefore is an infallible Judge of the words and actions.

2. That *therefore* they suffered these hard things, because they kept close to God and to their duty, *v.* 22. In this, the Spirit of prophecy had reference to those who suffered, even unto death, for the testimony of Christ, to whom it is applied, Rom. 8: 36. So many were killed, and put to such lingering deaths, that they were in the killing all the day long; so universally was this practised, that, when a man became a Christian, he reckoned himself as a *sheep appointed for the slaughter*.

II. By way of petition, with reference to their present distress, that God would, in his own due time, deliver them. Their request is very importunate, *Awake, arise, v.* 23. *Arise for our help, redeem us, v.* 26. come speedily and powerfully to our relief, 80: 2. *Stir up thy strength, and come and save us.* They complained, *v.* 12. that God had sold them; here they pray, *v.* 26. that God would redeem; them there is no appealing from God, but by appealing to Him; if He sell us, it is not any one else that can redeem us; the same hand that tears, must heal, that smites, must bind up, Hos. 6: 1. They complained, *v.* 9. *Thou hast cast us off;* but here they pray, *v.* 23. '*Cast us not off for ever;* let us not be finally forsaken of God.' The expostulations are very moving; *Why sleepest Thou? v.* 23. He that keeps Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps; but, when He does not immediately appear, his people are tempted to think He sleeps. The expression is figurative, as 78: 65. *Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep;* but it was applicable to Christ in the letter, Matt. 8: 24.

And *lastly*, The pleas are very proper; not their own merit and righteousness, though they had the testimony of their consciences to their integrity, but they plead the poor sinner's pleas. 1. Their own misery, which made them the proper objects of the divine compassion, *v.* 25. '*Our soul is bowed down to the dust*, under prevailing grief and fear; we cannot lift up ourselves, and we lie exposed to be trodden on by every insulting foe.' 2. God's mercy; 'O redeem us for thy mercy-sake; we depend on the goodness of thy nature, which is the glory of thy name, Ex. 34: 6. and on those sure mercies of David, which are conveyed by the covenant to all his spiritual seed.

Ps. XLV. This Ps. is an illustrious prophecy of Messiah the Prince: it is all over Gospel, and points at Him only, as a Bridegroom espousing the church to Himself, and as a king ruling in it, and for it. It is probable our Savior has reference to this Ps. when he compares the kingdom of heaven, more than once, to a nuptial solemnity, *Matt.* 22: 2. 25: 1. We have no reason to think it has any reference to Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter; I would rather apply it to some of David's marriages, because he was a man of war, such a one as the bridegroom here is described to be, which Solomon was not. But I take it to be purely and only meant of JesusChrist; and to Him, *v.* 6, 7. it is applied in the N. T. *Heb.* 1: 8. nor can it be understood of any other. In singing this Ps. our hearts must be filled with high thoughts of Christ, with an entire submission to, and satisfaction in, his government, and an

PSALM XLV.

The excellency, dignity, and Deity of the Messiah, with his victories and dominion, 1—8. The Church, as espoused to Him; her attendants and ornaments; with co-incident exhortations and promises, 9—17.

To the chief Musician upon [a] Shoshannim, for the sons of Korah, ‡ Maschil, [b] A Song of loves.

MY heart § is inditing [c] a good matter: I

p 78:57. 125:5. 1 K. 15:5. Job 34:27. Jer. 11:10. Zeph. 1:6. Luke 17:32.
q 119:51,157. Job 23:11,12. 1 Cor. 15: 58. 1 Thes. 2:10.
* Or, *goings*.
r 38:8. 60:1—3. Jer. 14:17.
s 74:13,14. Is. 27:1. 34:13,14. 35:7. Ez. 29:3. Rev. 12:9. 13:2,11—13. 16:10.
t 23:4. Job 3:5. 10:21,22. Matt. 4:16.
u 17. 7:3—5. Job 31:5,&c.
x 68:31. Ex. 9:29. 1 K. 8:22. Job 11: 13.
y 139:1,&c. Job 31:4,14. 34:21,22. Jer. 17:10. 23:24.
z Josh. 22:22,23. Ec. 12:14. Rom. 2: 16. 1 Cor. 4:5. Heb. 4:12,13. Rev. 2:23.
a Rom. 8:36.
b 11. 79:2,3. 1 Sam. 22:17—19. 1 K. 19:10. Matt. 5:10—12. John 15:21. 16:2,3. 1 Cor. 4:9. 15:30,31. Rev. 11:3—9. 17:6.
c 7:6. 12:5. 35:23. 59:4,5. 78:65. Is. 51:9. Mark 4:38.
d 9. 74:1. 88:14.
e 10:1,11. 43:1—4. Deut. 32:20. Job 13:24.
f 74:19,23. Ex. 2:23,24. Is. 40:27,28. Rev. 6:9,10.
g 66:11,12. 119:25. Is. 51:23. Lam. 4:5.
† Heb. *a help for us*.
h 26:11. 130:7,8.
a 69: 80: *titles*.
‡ Or, *of instruction*.
b Cant. 1:1,2,&c. Is. 5:1. Eph. 5:32.
§ Heb. *boileth*, or *bubbleth up*. Job 32: 18—20. Prov. 16:23. Matt. 12:35.
c 49:3. Job 33:3. 34:4. Prov. 8:6—9.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The church of God is one incorporated body, from the beginning to the end of the world: and the benefits conferred on it in every age, will be acknowledged with gratitude by believers, through all generations, and even to eternity.—'Whatsoever things were written of old time, were written for our instruction' and encouragement; and parents should declare the work of God to their children, that they may learn to hope in Him. (78: 3—8. *Is.* 38: 17—20. *Rom.* 15: 4—7.)—The prosperity of the church has always been attended with the ruin of her enemies; therefore the most prosperous despisers and persecutors have cause to tremble, on account of the prayers of God's afflicted and despised people.—As human policy, power, and authority could never prevail against the cause of God; so they have been very little employed in promoting it: but, whatever instruments have been used, all real advantages have been gained by 'his right hand, his arm, and the light of his countenance, because he had a favor' to his people. They therefore give Him the whole glory of the past, and entirely confide in Him for the future; and they prosper in their spiritual warfare, when they depend on his grace and go forth in his name.—We have reason to be thankful, considering our frailty, for exemption from the more violent species of persecution; but let us be careful, that prosperity and ease do not render us careless and lukewarm. SCOTT.

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open apostasy; but the true believer cannot be prevailed on, by menaces, sufferings, or promises, to forget God, or deal falsely in his covenant: neither the malice, nor the subtlety, nor the poison, of the old serpent, and of his progeny, even when permitted to torment him grievously, can induce him to turn aside to idolatry, or to renounce his God and Savior. This has been proved in ten thousand instances, while the disciples of Christ have been covered as with the shadow of death, in their constant expectation of it; and have seen their brethren killed, by every tedious excruciating method, 'all the day long, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' (*John* 16:1—3. *Rom.* 8:35—39.) Their regard to the authority of their holy and heart-searching God effectually preserves them even from committing secret wickedness; and they make their appeal to Him concerning their integrity. And indeed so far from suffering for their iniquities, they are hated and killed for the Lord's sake; because they bear his image, profess his truths, adhere to his commandments, and seek his glory.—'The place of dragons,' or serpents, or monsters, gives the idea of a man cast into a situation, in which every hateful and dreadful creature surrounds him. Such are persecutors, and such are evil spirits who employ them. (*M. R.* s.) SCOTT.

(19.) *Broken in the place of dragons.*] I. e. 'most bitterly afflicted, as those who are torn and broken by being thrown to wolves to devour.' The word which in the plural is here rendered *dragons*, denotes a *wolf* or *wild dog*—the *jackal*, and is employed as an image for tyrants: or, as others, their *place* indicates some barren, horrid region of great suffering and distress, where wild beasts only might be expected to be found.' ROSENM.

Verses 23—26.

'There is a time, when the triumphs of the adversary, and the afflictions of the church, tempt men to think, that the eye of Providence is closed, or turned away, and that the Almighty hath ceased to remember their sad estate. But the truth is, that God only giveth his people an opportunity of feeling their own insufficiency; and waiteth, till, by fervent and importunate prayer, they solicit his help. For so the holy Jesus slept, while the ship was covered with the waves; until, awakened by the cries of his disciples, He arose to their assistance, and spoke the tempest into a perfect calm.' Bp. *Horne*. SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. XLV. In many respects this Ps. resembles the Song of Solomon; and it treats of the spiritual union between Christ and the Church un-

speak of the things which I have made [d] touching the King: [e] my tongue *is* the pen of a ready writer.

2 Thou art [f] fairer than the children of men: [g] grace is poured into thy lips: therefore [h] God hath blessed thee for ever.

3 [i] Gird thy sword upon *thy* thigh, [k] O *most* mighty, with [l] thy glory and thy majesty.

4 And in thy majesty [*] ride [m] prosperously, [a] because of truth [o] and meekness *and* righteousness; and [p] thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

5 [q] Thine arrows *are* [r] sharp in the heart of the King's enemies: *whereby* [s] the people fall under thee.

6 [t] Thy throne, [u] O God, *is* for ever and ever: [x] the sceptre of

[d] 2:6. 24:7—10. 110:1,2. Cant. 1:12. Is. 32:1,2. Matt. 25:34. 27:37.
[e] 2 Sam. 23:2. 2 Pet. 1:21.
[f] Cant. 2:3. 5:10—16. Zech. 9:17. Matt. 17:2. John 1:14. Col. 1:15—18. Heb. 1:3,4. 7:26. Rev. 1:13—18.
[g] Prov. 22:11. Is. 50:4. Luke 4:22. John 7:46.
[h] 21:6. 72:17—19. Phil. 2:9—11.
[i] Is. 49:2. 63:1—6. Heb. 4:12. Rev. 1:16. 19:15,21.
[k] Is. 9:6,7. Acts 10:36. Rom. 14:9.
[l] 21:5. 93:6. 104:1. 145:5,12. Heb. 1:3. 8:1. Jude 25.
[*] Heb. *prosper thou, ride thou.* Rev. 6:2. 19:11.
[m] 110:2,3. 1 Thes. 1:5. 2:13. 2 Thes. 3:1.
[a] 63:4. John 1:17. 14:6.
[o] Zech. 9:9. Matt. 11:29. 12:19,20. 2 Cor. 10:1.
[p] 2:9. 21:8,9. 110:5,6. Is. 59:17,18. 63:1—6. Luke 19:27. 2 Thes. 1:8,9. Rev. 6:16,17. 11:18. 19:17—21. 20: 15.
[q] 21:12. Num. 24:8. Zech. 9:13,14.
[r] 2:1—9. Luke 19:42—44. 20:18,19. Acts 2:37,41. 5:33. 7:54.
[s] 22:27. 65:3,4. Acts 4:4. 5:14. 6:7. Rom. 15:18,19.
[t] 89:29,36,37. 93:2. 145:13. Dan. 2: 44. Luke 1:32,33. Heb. 1:8.
[u] Is. 9:6,7. Jer. 23:5,6. John 1:1. 1 Tim. 3:16.
[x] 72:1,&c. 2 Sam. 23:3,4. Jer. 33:15, 16. Rev. 19:11.

earnest desire of the enlarging and perpetuating of his church in the world.

V. 1—5. Some make *Shoshannim*, in the title, to signify an instrument of six strings; others take it primitively for lilies or roses, which, probably, were strewed, with other flowers, as nuptial solemnities; and then it is easily applicable to Christ, who calls Himself the *Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the valleys*, Cant. 2 : 1. It is a song of loves, the holy love between Christ and his church. It is a *song of the well-beloved*, the virgins, the companions of the bride, *v.* 14. prepared to be sung by them; the virgin company, that attend the Lamb on mt. Zion, are said to *sing a new song*, Rev. 14 : 3, 4.

The preface *v.* 1. speaks, 1. The dignity of the subject. It is a good matter, and pity such a moving art as poetry should ever be employed about a bad matter. *The King* is Jesus. Note, Those that speak of Christ, speak of a good matter, no subject so noble, so copious, so fruitful, so profitable, and so well-becoming us; shame it is not more the matter of our discourse. 2. The excellency of the management. *My heart is inditing.* This is applicable to David's devout meditations and affections in his heart, out of the abundance of which his mouth spake. We then speak best of Christ and divine things, when we speak, from the heart, that which has warmed and affected us; and we should never be rash in speaking of the things of Christ, but weigh well beforehand what we have to say, lest we speak amiss. See Eccl. 5 : 2. The matter is well expressed; '*I will speak of the things I have made;* which I understand, and am affected with, not what I have heard from others; not by rote; but what I have myself studied.' Note, What God has wrought *in* our souls, as well as *for* them, we must declare to others, 66 : 16. He expresses himself with all possible cheerfulness, freedom, and fluency; '*My tongue is* as *the pen of a ready writer*, guided by my heart in every word, as the pen is by the hand.' We call the prophets the *penmen* of Scripture, whereas really they were but the *pen*. David not only spake what he thought of Christ, but wrote it, that it might spread the further, and last the longer: the pen of a ready writer lets nothing slip.

In these vs. the Lord Jesus is represented,

I. As most beautiful and amiable in Himself. It is a marriage song; therefore the transcendent excellences of Christ are represented by the beauty of the royal Bridegroom, *v.* 2. He proposed, *v.* 1. to speak *of* the King, but immediately directs his speech *to* him. They that have an admiration and affection for Christ, love to go to Him and tell Him so. Note, Jesus Christ is in Himself, and in the eyes of all believers, more amiable and lovely than the children of men. The beauties of the Lord Jesus, as God, as Mediator, far surpass those of the most amiable and excellent of men; there is more in Christ to engage our love, than is or can be in any creature. The beauties of this lower world are in danger of drawing away our hearts from Christ, therefore we are concerned to understand how much He excells them all, and how much more worthy He is of our love.

II. As the great Favorite of heaven. 1. He has grace, has it for us; *grace is poured into thy lips.* By his word, his promise, his Gospel, the *good will of God* is made known to us, and the *good work of God* is begun and carried on in us. He received all grace from God, all the endowments requisite to qualify Him for his work and office as Mediator, that from his fulness we might receive, John 1 : 16. It was not only poured into his heart, for his own strength and encouragement, but into his lips, that by the words and kisses of his mouth He might communicate light and holiness and comfort. From this grace proceeded those gracious words which all admired, Luke 4 : 22. *The spirit of prophecy is put into thy lips;* so the Chaldee. 2. He has the blessing, has it for us. Where God gives his grace, He will give his blessing; we are blessed with spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, Eph. 1 : 3.

III. As victorious over all his enemies. Now we have here,

1. His preparations for war, *v.* 3. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit; by its promises, and the grace contained in them, souls are made willing to submit to Christ, and become his loyal subjects; by its threatenings, and the judgments executed according to them, those that stand it out against Christ, will, in due time, be brought down and ruined. By it many Jews and Gentiles were converted, and, at length, the Jewish nation destroyed, according to its predictions, for their implacable enmity to it; and paganism was quite abolished. The sword here girt on Christ's thigh, is the same which is said to *proceed out of his mouth*, Rev. 19 : 15. When the Gospel was sent forth to be preached to all nations, then our Redeemer *girded his sword on his thigh.*

2. His expedition to this holy war; *He goes forth with his glory and his majesty*, as a great king takes the field with abundance of pomp and magnificence; his sword, his glory, and majesty. In his Gospel He appears transcendently great and excellent, bright and blessed, in the honor and majesty the Father has laid on Him: nothing external to charm men, or to awe them, but He *took upon Him the form of a servant;* it was all spiritual glory, spiritual majesty. There is so much grace, and therefore glory, in that word, *He that believes shall be saved;* so much terror, and therefore majesty, in that word, *He that believes not, shall be damned;* that we may well say, in the chariot of that Gospel, which these words are the sum of, the Redeemer rides forth in glory and majesty.

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der the allusion of a marriage. (*Eph.* 5:22—31.) Most expositors maintain, that it was written on Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter; but a great part of it is wholly inapplicable to that transaction: nor is there sufficient ground to support the decided opinion, that this was so much as *the occasion* of its being written, or that David composed it. Scott.—'That this Ps. is to be regarded as nothing more than an Epithalamium, or marriage song, composed on occasion of the nuptials of Solomon with the daughter of Pharaoh, is revolting to every principle of faith, and every feeling of devotion; and thus to fritter down a spiritual and prophetic allegory, which this Ps. unquestionably is, is, to say the least, dealing very irreverently with the office of the Divine Spirit. There is not, perhaps, in the entire book of Pss. a more direct or sublime prediction of Christ and the church, than the one embodied in this beautiful ode. To a mind that is spiritual, it will ever suggest thoughts of loftiest devotion.' Mor. *Rosenm.* accords with *J. H. Michaëlis*, among other interpreters, that this Ps. cannot be accommodated either to David, or to Solomon; and *Hengstenberg*, he says, has *replied* to the arguments by which *Paulus* and *De Wette* have opposed its application to the Messiah. Ed.

Shoshannim.] 'To understand this of *lilies* rather than of the *hexachord*, is preferable; since lilies and other flowers are well known to have been employed as garlands to deck the bride and her attendants.' Morison. Note, 22[1] *title;* and *Bush*, there. The *name* of this song was probably 'the Lilies.' *Gesenius*, in *Rosenm.* makes it a song of 'delight,' or 'delightful things,' i. e. 'a pleasant, delightful song.' Id.

'A wedding among the Jews was considered, not only as a sacred solemnity, but a mystical rite. This is the true foundation for explaining this Ps., the Canticles, and a few other sacred songs, of the union between Jehovah and the Jewish church, or Messiah and the Christian church. See Is. 5:1. Matt. 25:1—16. Eph. 5:25—32. It appears to us very probable that it was composed on the same or a like occasion, as the book of Canticles; but whether by David, Solomon, or Nathan, as Dr. *Hales* thinks, we have no sufficient ground to ascertain. One thing is certain, a greater than David or Solomon is here namely, king Messiah.' Williams.

Verse 1.

The inspiration of the Holy Spirit stirred up in the prophet's heart this meditation, as water bubbles up in a fountain: (*marg.*) so that he spoke freely of the things, which he had been considering, and had 'composed concerning the King,' the promised Messiah; and his tongue was guided by the Spirit of God, as entirely as the pen is by the hand of a ready writer, to express promptly and fully, 'the mind of the Spirit,' and nothing more. This seems the genuine meaning: for as the tongue utters more rapidly, than the readiest writer can note down the words; the clause, in the common interpretation, conveys no distinct idea. '2 *Sam.* 23:1, 2. *John* 16:14, 15. 1 *Cor.* 2 10—13. 1 *Pet.* 1:10—12. 2 *Pet.* 1:19—21.) Scott.

Verse 2.

See a beautiful application of this v. to Christ, (perfect, in his physical, animal, moral and intellectual character,) by *Horsley*, in *Bush's* Illustrations. Ed.

Verse 3.

See *Horsley*. The armor of kings was very splendid and dazzling, as would appear were the cuts, 2 Sam. 1: 9. 1 K. 22: 34. &c. colored (as in the monuments) to represent burnished steel, brass, silver and gold. *Glory.*] 'The Javanese deck themselves for battle in their richest attire, rings, jewels, and every valuable trinket.' *Raffles.* Id.

Verses 6, 7.

The victorious Conqueror is here introduced as placed on his royal throne: and the prophet celebrates Him not only as unspeakably surpassing all who were ever admired or extolled of men, but as being Himself 'God over all.' (*John* 20:11—17. *end. Is.* 59:20, 21. *Zech.*

thy kingdom *is* a right sceptre.

7 [y] Thou lovest righteousness, and [z] hatest wickedness: therefore [*] God, [a] thy God, [b] hath anointed thee with [c] the oil of gladness [d] above thy fellows.

8 [e] All thy garments *smell* of myrrh, and aloes, *and* [f] cassia, out of [g] the ivory palaces, [h] whereby they have made thee glad.

[*Practical Observations.*]

9 [i] King's daughters *were* among thy honorable women: [k] upon thy right hand did stand [l] the queen in [m] gold of Ophir.

y 33:5. 99:4. Matt. 3:15. Heb. 1:9. 7:26.
z 101:3,4,8. Matt. 7:23. Luke 13:27. Rev. 21:27.
* Or, *O God.*
a 89:26. John 20:17. Eph. 1:3.
b 89:20. Lev. 8:12. 1 Sam. 16:13. 1 K. 1:39,40. 19:16. Is. 61:1—3. Luke 3:22. 4:18—21. John 3:34.
c 21:6. Acts 2:28.
d John 1:16. Rom. 8:29. Col. 1:18,19. Heb. 2:14.
e Cant. 1:3,13. 3:6. 4:6,13,14. 5:1,5, 13. Matt. 2: John 19:39. 2 Cor. 2: 14—16.
f Ex. 30:23,24.
g 15. 1 K. 22:39. Am. 3:15. John 14:2.
h 16:11. Heb. 12:2.
i 13. 72:10. Cant. 6:8,9. 7:1. Is. 49:23. 60:10,11. Rev. 21:24.
k 1 K. 2:19.
l Cant. 4:8—11. John 3:29. Eph. 5: 26,27. Rev. 19:7. 21:2,9.
m 1 K. 10:11. Job 22:24.

In thy majesty ride prosperously, v. 4. This speaks the promise of his Father, that He should prosper according to *the good pleasure of the Lord;* that He should *divide the spoil with the strong*, in recompense of his sufferings. *Thy kingdom come!*

3. The glorious cause in which He is engaged; *because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness*, which were, in a manner, sunk and lost among men, and which Christ came to retrieve and rescue. (1.) The Gospel itself is *truth, meekness, and righteousness;* it commands by the power of truth and righteousness; Christianity has these, incontestably, on its side, yet it is to be promoted by meekness and gentleness, 1 Cor. 4: 12, 13. 2 Tim. 2: 25. (2.) Christ appears in it, in his *truth, meekness, and righteousness;* these are his glory and majesty, and because of these He shall prosper. Men are brought to believe on Him because He is true, to learn of Him because He is meek, Mat. 11: 29. the gentleness of Christ is of mighty force, 2 Cor. 10: 1. Men are brought to submit to Him because He is righteous, and rules with equity. (3.) The Gospel, as far as it prevails, sets up *truth, meekness, and righteousness* in the heart; rectifies mistakes, controls the passions, and governs the life.

4. The success of his expedition; '*Thy right hand shall teach Thee terrible things;* Thou shalt experience a wonderful divine power going along with thy Gospel, to make it victorious; and the effects of it will be terrible things.' (1.) In order to the conversion and reduction of souls to Him, terrible things are to be done; the heart must be pricked, conscience startled, and the terrors of the Lord make way for his consolations; this is done by the right hand of Christ. The Comforter shall continue, John 16: 8. (2.) In the conquest of the gates of hell, and its supporters, in the destruction of Judaism and Paganism, terrible things will be done, which will make *men's hearts fail them for fear*, Luke 21: 26. and great men and chief captains call to the *rocks and mountains to fall on them*, Rev. 6: 15. The next v. describes these terrible things, v. 5. *Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies.* Convictions are like arrows in the heart on which they fasten, and bring people to fall under Christ, in subjection to his laws and government. They that thus fall on this Stone shall be broken, Mat. 21: 44. Those that persist in their enmity are thus wounded, in order to their being ruined. The arrows of God's terrors are sharp in their hearts, whereby they shall fall under Him, so as to be made his footstool, 110: 1. (Luke 19: 27.')

V. 6—9. We have here the royal Bridegroom filling his throne with judgment, and keeping his court with splendor.

I. Filling his throne with judgment. It is God the Father that says this, v. 7. to the Son, as appears Heb. 1: 8, 9. where it is quoted to prove that He is God, and has a *more excellent name than the angels.* The Mediator is God, else He had neither been able to do the Mediator's work, nor fit to wear the Mediator's crown. Concerning his government, observe,

1. Its eternity; it is *for ever and ever.* It shall continue on earth throughout all the ages of time, and, in heaven, run parallel with eternity itself. Perhaps, even then, the glory of the Redeemer, and the blessedness of the redeemed, shall be in a continual, infinite progression; for it is promised, that not only of his government, but of *the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end;* Isa. 9: 7. even then, when the kingdom shall be *delivered up to God, even the Father*, 1 Cor. 15: 24. the throne of the Redeemer will continue.

2. Its equity; *The sceptre of thy kingdom*, the administration of thy government, is right, exactly according to the eternal counsel and will of God, which is the eternal rule and reason of good and evil: rights those that do suffer wrong, v. 7. By the holiness of his life, the merit of his death, and the great design of his Gospel, He has made it to appear that He *loves righteousness, and hates wickedness*, for never did God's hatred of sin appear so as it did in Christ's sufferings.

3. Its establishment and elevation; *Therefore God, even thy God*, (Christ, as Mediator, called God *his God*, John 20: 17. as commissioned by Him, and the Head of those that are taken into covenant with Him,) has *anointed Thee with the oil of gladness; therefore*, i. e. (1.) 'In order to this righteous government of thine, to qualify Thee for thine undertaking,' Isa. 61: 1. 11: 2. The Spirit is called *the oil of gladness*, because of the delight wherewith Christ was filled, in carrying on his undertaking. He was anointed with the Spirit *above all his fellows*, above all those that were anointed, whether priests or kings. (2.) 'In recompense of what Thou hast done and suffered for the advancement of righteousness, and the destruction of sin;' *because He humbled Himself, God has highly exalted Him.* Phil. 2: 8, 9. His anointing Him, denotes the power and glory to which He is exalted; He is invested in all the dignities and authorities of the Messiah; and his anointing Him with the oil of gladness, denotes the joy that was set before Him; so his exaltation is expressed, Heb. 12: 2. both in the light of his *Father's countenance*, Acts 2: 28. and in the success of his undertaking, which He shall *see, and be satisfied*, Is. 53: 11. This He is anointed with *above all his fellows*, above all believers, who are his brethren, and who partake of the anointing; they by measure, He without measure. But the apostle brings it, to prove his pre-eminence above the angels, Heb. 1: 4, 9. The salvation of sin-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—8. The difference of men's characters, before God, greatly consists in the thoughts which habitually occupy their minds. The lively believer has his memory, imagination, and affections, so stored with heavenly things, that he has commonly some good matter to meditate on, in those hours of solitude and leisure, which others waste in vanity, or employ in wicked and polluting speculations. (119: 113.) But no subject is so congenial to the heaven-born soul, or so replete with comfort and instruction, as the contemplation of the excellences of Christ our King.—In the Redeemer, the enlightened soul perceives unutterable goodness and beauty, which eclipse all the dim excellences, that it was wont to admire in the children of men.—All, who have seen his glory and tasted his grace, greatly desire to promote his cause: they rejoice in his former victories, and long to see Him 'ride forth in his majesty' to extend his conquests, and, by his Word and Spirit, to reduce enemies and strangers to a willing submission to his truth, and righteousness, and gentle dominion.—In proportion as we are conformed to his holy image, we may expect the gladdening influence of the Comforter, which is communicated from his fulness: and while his name is to us, 'as ointment poured forth;' the fragrancy of heavenly affections will recommend our conversation to the spiritually minded, and render us meet for his palace above. (*Cant.* 1: 3. 2 *Cor.* 2: 14—17.

SCOTT.

13:7. *John* 1:16. 3:27—36. *Eph.* 4:7—13.)—Various attempts have, in different ages, been made to explain away this decisive testimony to the Deity of Christ; but the manner in which the apostle quotes it, rather varied from the Sept. and made more energetic, is conclusive to all who admit his authority.—Some would render the words, 'God is thy throne for ever and ever.' Heaven indeed is the throne of God; but who ever heard of God being the throne of any of his creatures! (*M. R.*—*Note, Heb.* 1:8, 9.) SCOTT.

(6.) 'In *all* the anc. vers. the renderings support this passage as a proof of the proper deity of Christ.' MOR.—'The Psalmist calls the king, whom he addresses, *God*, not as a *magistrate*, for the Hebrews never dignified their kings with this title; but because he truly regarded Him as *super-human*, and because the mention of his *eternity* declares it; whence the Chal. has *Jehovah* instead of *Elohim*, and the apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews, being about to prove the supreme excellence and divinity of Messiah by many arguments, adduces, among others, this passage, Heb. 1:8, 9.' ROSENM

Verse 8.

'*Perfume* was considered in the E as the *finishing* of the dress of persons of condition, and so implies here every thing else of elegance and costly ornament.' Bp. *Horsley.* See in *Bush. Ivory palaces.*} 'The word rendered palaces here may be taken as a *proper name* [*Minni*], as appears from Jer. 51:27. where, as *Bochart* shows, it signifies a part of *Armenia;* whence the Chal. renders it, *from the land of Armenia;* so some interpreters expound the passage: "from the *ivory palaces of Armenia they exhilarate thee;*" i. e. the princes of Armenia are studious to please thee, and court thy favor, by gifts. Others understand by it, *Minæa*, a region of Arabia Felix, (Strabo,) and expound the passage, in the same way, of that country. Yet I know not whether a more elegant sense may not be derived, if we take the original word here as in a more rare form of the plural, which, (Ps.150: 4.) signifies *chords*, or *strings*, i. e. of instruments of music. So the sense would be: "*Musicians from the ivory palaces delight thee.*"' ROSENM.—The *Crit. Bib.* understands by it 'curious inlaid boxes of ivory,' and the more common idea is that of boxes, closets or apartments inlaid with ivory, always thus used in the E. ED.

Verses 9—11.

The King, now seated in majesty and glory on his throne, is next

10 [a] Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear: [b] forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;

11 [p] So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for he *is* [q] thy Lord; and [r] worship thou him.

12 And [s] the daughter of Tyre *shall be there* [t] with a gift; *even* [u] the rich among the people shall entreat thy [*] favor.

13 [x] The King's daughter *is* [y] all glorious within: [z] her clothing *is* of wrought gold.

14 [a] She shall be brought unto the king in [b] raiment of needlework: [c] the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.

15 [d] With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: [e] they shall enter into the King's palace.

16 [f] Instead of thy fathers shall be [g] thy children, whom thou mayest make [h] princes in all the earth.

n Cant. 2:10—13. Is. 55:1—3. 2 Cor. 6:17,18. 7:1.
o Gen. 2:24. 12:1. Deut. 21:13. Matt. 10:37. 19:29. Luke 14:26. 2 Cor. 5: 16.
p Cant. 1:8,12—16. 2:2,14. 4:1—5,7, 9,10. 6:4. 7:1—10. Is. 62:4,5. Zeph. 3:17. Eph. 5:26,27.
q 5. Is. 54:5. Jer. 23:5,6. John 20:28. Acts 10:36. Rom. 14:9. Phil. 2:10, 11. 3:8.
r 2:12. 95:6. Luke 24:52. John 4:21, 22. Rev. 5:8—14.
s Is. 23:17,18. Acts 21:3—6.
t 72:10. Is. 60:6,7. Matt. 2:11.
u 22:29. Is. 49:23. 60:3,10,11.
* Heb. *face.*
x 9,10. Cant. 7:1. 1 Pet. 2:9. Rev. 19:7,8.
y 1 Sam. 16:7. Luke 11:40. Rom. 2: 29. 2 Cor. 5:17. 1 Pet. 3:3,4.
z 9. Matt. 5:16. 22:11,12. Rom. 3: 22. 13:14. Rev. 3:18.
a Cant. 1:4. John 17:24. 2 Cor. 11:2.
b Ex. 28:39. Judg. 5:30.
c Cant. 1:3,5. 2:7. 3:8,9. 6:1,8,13. 8:13. Rev. 14:1—4.
d Is. 35:10. 51:11. 55:12,13. 60:19, 20. 61:10. Rev. 7:15—17.
e Is. 56:5. John 14:3. Rev. 3:12,21.
f Matt. 19:29. Mark 10:29,30. Phil. 3:7,8. Is. 49:21,22. 54.1—5. 60:1—5. Gal. 4:26,27.
h 1 Pet. 2:9. Rev. 1:6. 5:10. 20:6.

ners is the joy of angels, Luke 15: 10. but much more of the Son.

II. Keeping his court with splendor.

1. His robes of state are noticed, not for their pomp, which might awe the spectator, but for their pleasantness, and the gratefulness of the odors they were perfumed with, *v.* 8. *Myrrh, aloes, and cassia* were some of the ingredients of the holy anointing oil, Ex. 30: 23, 24. which was typical of the unction of the Spirit, which Christ, the great High-Priest of our profession, received, and to which therefore there seems a reference. It is the savor of these good ointments, his graces and comforts, that draws souls to Him, Cant. 1: 3, 4. and makes Him *precious to believers*, 1 Pet. 2: 7.

2. His royal palaces are said to be *ivory ones;* such were then reckoned most magnificent, 1 K. 22: 39. The mansions of light above are the ivory palaces, whence all the joys both of Christ and believers come.

3. In public appearances at court, when the pomp of it is showed, nothing is supposed to contribute so much to it as the splendor of the ladies, which is alluded to here, *v.* 9. and to whom, (1.) Particular believers are here compared. All true believers are born from above, are the children of the King of kings; these attend the throne of the Lord Jesus daily with their prayers and praises, which is really their honor, and He is pleased to reckon it his. The numbering of kings' daughters among his honorable women, or maids of honor, intimates that the kings, their fathers, should be tributaries to, and dependents on Him, and would therefore think it a preferment to their daughters to attend Him. (2.) The church in general, constituted of these particular believers, is here compared to the queen herself; the queen-consort, whom, by an everlasting covenant, He hath betrothed to Himself; she stands *at his right hand*, near to Him, and receiving honor from Him, in the richest array, *in gold of Ophir*, in robes woven with gold thread, or with a gold chain, and other ornaments of gold. This is *the bride, the Lamb's wife*, whose graces, which are her ornaments, are compared to *fine linen, clean and white*, Rev. 19: 8. for their purity; here to *gold of Ophir*, for their costliness; for as we owe our redemption, so we owe our adorning, not to corruptible things, but to the *precious blood of the Son of God.*

V. 10—17. This latter part of the Ps. is addressed to the royal bride. God, who said to the Son, *Thy throne is for ever and ever*, says this to the church, whom, on account of her espousals to the Son, He here calls his *daughter.*

I. He tells her of the duties expected from her, which ought to be considered by all those that come into relation to the Lord Jesus; 'Hearken therefore, and consider this, and *incline thine ear;* submit to those conditions of thine espousals, and bring thy will to comply with them.' This is the method of profiting by the Word of God; *He that has ears, let him hear*, hearken diligently; he that hearkens, let him consider and weigh it duly; he that considers, let him incline and yield to the force of what is laid before him. And what is here required?

1. She must renounce all others; '*Forget thine own people and thy father's house*, according to the law of marriage: covet not to return to them again; banish all such remembrance, not only of thy people, but of thy father's house, as may incline thee to look back.' This shows, (1.) How necessary it was for those who were converted from Judaism or Paganism to the faith of Christ, wholly to cast out the old leaven, and not to bring into their Christian profession, either the Jewish ceremonies, or the heathen idolatries, for these would make such a mongrel religion in Christianity as the Samaritans had. (2.) How necessary it is for us all, when we give up our names to Jesus Christ, to hate father and mother, and all that is dear to us in this world, in comparison; to love them less than Christ, and his honor, and our interest in Him, Luke 14: 26.

Here is good encouragement given to the royal bride, thus entirely to break off from her former alliances; *So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty;* which intimates that the mixing of her old rites and customs, whether Jewish or Gentile, with her religion, would blemish her beauty, and hazard her interest in the affections of the royal Bridegroom; but that if she entirely conformed to his will, He would delight in her: the beauty of holiness, both on the church, and on particular believers, is, in the sight of Christ, of great price and very amiable. Where that is, He says, *This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it.* Rev. 2: 1.

2. She must reverence Him, love, honor, and obey Him: *He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him.* The church is to be subject to Christ, as the wife to the husband, Eph. 5: 24. to call him *Lord*, as Sarah called Abraham, and to obey Him, 1 Pet. 3: 6. and so not only to submit to his government, but to give Him divine honors; we must worship Him as God, and our Lord; for this is the will of God, that *all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father;* nay, in so doing, it is reckoned that they honor the Father; if we confess that Christ is Lord, and pay our homage to Him accordingly, it is *to the glory of God the Father*, Phil. 2: 11.

II. He tells her of the honors designed for her.

1. Great court should be made to her, and rich presents brought her, *v.* 12. '*The daughter of Tyre*,' a rich and splendid city, 'the *daughter of the King of Tyre* shall be *there with a gift;* every royal family round about shall send a branch as a representative of the whole, to seek thy favor, and to make an interest in thee; *even the rich among the people*, whose wealth might be thought to discharge them from dependence at court, even they shall entreat thy favor, for his sake, to whom thou art espoused, that by thee they may make Him their Friend;' the Jews, the pretending Jews, who are rich to a proverb, shall come and worship before the church's feet in the Philadelphian period, and shall *know that Christ has loved her*, Rev. 3: 9. 2 Cor. 8: 5. Rom. 15: 16. When with themselves the Gentiles devote all they have to the honor of Christ, and the service of his kingdom, they then *come with a gift.*

2. She shall be very splendid, and highly esteemed in the eyes of all, *v.* 13. (1.) For her

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represented as surrounded with a splendid train.—The other attendants [besides kings' daughters and the queen] are either introduced, according to the customs of the times on such occasions, to keep up the allegory; or they may mean distinct churches or individuals who in succession seek to be admitted into this sacred relation. (12—15. *Cant.* 1:5, 6. 5:9.)—The whole church, composed of Jews and Gentiles, consists of such as were born in sin: and separation from all idolatry, iniquity, and self-dependence, and from all the carnal interests, pleasures, and attachments of an unconverted state, must make way for receiving Christ as their whole Portion and Salvation. (*Gen.* 12:1—3.) Scott.

Verse 12.

The accession of the Gentiles to the church may be here predicted, under the name of Tyre, a neighboring city, and at that time the mart of the world. (*Is.* 60:1—14. *Zech.* 8:20—23. *Rev.* 3:8,9.) *Thy favor.*] The pronoun is feminine, and the queen, the church, is especially meant. Scott.—*Tyre.*] 'As, at this time, Tyre was the greatest maritime and commercial city in the world, it may be here taken as representing those places which lay on the coasts of the sea, and carried on much traffic; such as parts of Syria, Egypt, Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, France, the British Isles, &c. which first received the gospel of Christ, and were the instruments of sending it to all other nations of the earth.' Dr. A. Clarke. 'Ancient Tyre was famous for her commerce, her wealth, her excellence in the fine arts, her luxury, the profligate, debauched manners of her people, and the grossness of her idolatry.' *Horsley.* Ed.

Verses 13—15.

The relation, in which the believer stands to the Lord, comprises in it every tie and affection; and the church is called his spouse, sister, or daughter, indiscriminately: or the title 'spouse,' or 'bride,' may express her relation to the Son of God; and 'daughter,' that to the Father. (1 *Pet.* 3:1—4. *Rev.* 19:7, 8.) When the church is thus prepared, this union is begun on earth, which will be completed and avowed in the King's palace above: while every individual, whose affection and dependence have been singly placed on Christ, shall be admitted as a guest at these nuptials, and likewise share for ever in the joy and honor of this sacred union. (*M. R.—Matt.* 25:1—13.) Scott.

Verse 16.

Instead of Jewish ancestors or kindred, there shall be an illustrious race of Gentile believers.—But the church renounces none of the Jewish race, except unbelievers, in exactly the same way, as she renounces unbelieving Gentiles.—Solomon had, as far as we know, no children by Pharaoh's daughter: and nothing can be less applicable to any one,

17 [i] I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations; [k] therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

PSALM XLVI.

The church exults in the assurance of protection and consolation from God, 1—5; recounts his wondrous works in her behalf, 6—9; and, while God demands submission from all the earth, she declares her confidence in Him, 10, 11.

To the chief Musician * for [a] the sons of Korah, [b] A Song upon [c] Alamoth.

GOD *is* [d] our Refuge and Strength, [e] a very present Help in trouble.

2 Therefore [f] will not we fear, [g] though the earth be removed, and though [h] the mountains be carried into the † midst of the sea;

3 *Though* [i] the waters thereof roar *and* be troubled, *though* [k] the mountains shake with

i 22:30,31. 72:17—19. 145:4—7. Is. 59:21. Mal. 1:11. Matt. 26:13. 1 Cor. 11:26.
k 72:17. Cant. 6:9. Is. 61:9. 62:3.
* Or, *of.*
a 84: 85: 87: *titles.*
b 48: 66: *titles.*
c 1 Chr. 15:20.
d 7,11. 72:7,8. 91:1—9. 142:5. Prov. 14:26. 18:10. Luke 13:34. Heb. 6: 18.
e 45:18. Gen. 22:14. Deut. 4:7. 2 Sam. 22:17—20.
f 23:4. 27:3. Matt. 8:24—26. Heb. 13:6.
g Gen. 7:11,12. Luke 21:9—11,25—28, 33. 2 Pet. 3:10—14.
h Matt. 21:21.
† Heb. *heart of the seas.*
i 18:4. 93:3,4. Job 38:11. Is. 5:30. 17:12,13. Jer. 5:22. Matt. 7:25. Rev. 17:15.
k 114:4—7. Judg. 5:4,5. 1 K. 19:11. Job 9:5,6. Jer. 4:24. Mic. 1:4. Nah. 1:5. Rev. 16:20.

personal qualifications, the endowments of her mind, which every one shall admire. Let us see here what is that true glory which we should be ambitious of, not that which *makes a fair show in the flesh*, but which is in *the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible*, 1 Pet. 3: 4. *whose praise is not of men, but of God*, Rom. 2: 29. (2.) For her rich apparel; though all her glory is within, that for which she is truly valuable, yet *her clothing* also *is of wrought gold;* the conversation of Christians, in which they appear in the world, must be enriched with good works, not gay and gaudy ones, like paint and flourish, but substantially good, like gold; and it must be accurate and exact, like wrought gold, which is worked with great care and caution.

3. Her nuptials shall be celebrated with great honor and joy, *v.* 14, 15. Gen. 2: 22. was a type of this mystical marriage. None are brought to Christ, but whom the Father brings, and He has undertaken to do it; none besides are so brought *to the king*, *v.* 14. as to *enter into the king's palace*, *v.* 15. This intimates a two-fold bringing of the spouse to Christ. (1.) In the conversion of souls to Christ; then they are espoused to Him, privately contracted, as chaste virgins, 2 Cor. 11: 2. Rom. 7: 4. (2.) In the completing of the mystical body, and the glorification of all the saints, at the end of time; then the *bride, the Lamb's wife*, shall be made completely ready, when all that belong to the election of grace shall be called in, and called home, and all gathered together to Christ, 2 Thess. 2: 1. Then is the marriage of the Lamb come, Rev. 19: 7. 21: 2. and the virgins *go forth to meet the bridegroom*, Matt. 25: 1. Then they shall *enter into the king's palaces*, into the heavenly mansions, to be ever with the Lord. In both these espousals, observe, to the honor of the royal bride, [1.] Her wedding-clothes; *raiment of needle-work*, the righteousness of Christ, the graces of the Spirit; both curiously wrought by divine wisdom. [2.] Her bride-maids; *the virgins her companions*, the wise virgins who have oil in their vessels as well as in their lamps; those who, being joined to the church, cleave to it and follow it, these shall go into the marriage. [3.] The mirth with which the nuptials will be celebrated; *With gladness and rejoicings shall she be brought;* when the prodigal is brought home to his father, *it is meet that we should make merry and be glad*, Luke 15: 32. and when the marriage of the Lamb is come, *let us be glad and rejoice*, Rev. 19: 7. for the *day of his espousals is the day of the gladness of his heart*, Cant. 3: 11.

4. The progeny of this marriage shall be illustrious, *v.* 16. *Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children.* Instead of the O. T. church, the economy of which was waxen old, and ready to *vanish away*, Heb. 8: 13. as the fathers that are going off, there shall be a N. T. church, a Gentile church, that shall be grafted into the same olive, and partake of its *root and fatness;* Rom. 11: 17. more, and more eminent, shall be *the children of the desolate*, than the *children of the married wife*, Is. 54: 1. This promise to Christ is of the same import with that, Is. 53: 10. *He shall see his seed;* and these shall be made *princes in all the earth;* there shall be some of all nations brought into subjection to Christ, and so made princes, *made to our God kings and priests*, Rev. 1: 6. Or it may intimate, that there should be a much greater number of Christian kings than ever there was of Jewish kings; those in Canaan only, these in all the earth, nursing fathers and nursing mothers to the church. They are princes of Christ's making; for *by Him kings reign, and princes decree justice.*

5. The praise of this marriage shall be perpetual, in the praises of the royal Bridegroom, *v.* 18. *I will make thy name to be remembered.* His Father has given Him *a name above every name*, and here promises to make it perpetual, by keeping up a succession of ministers and Christians in every age, that shall bear up his name; which shall thus *endure for ever*, 72: 17. by being remembered in all the generations of time; for the entail of Christianity shall not be cut off. 'Therefore, because they shall remember Thee in all generations, they shall praise Thee for ever and ever.' They that help to support the honor of Christ on earth, shall in heaven see his glory, and share in it, and be for ever praising Him. In the believing hope of our everlasting happiness in the other world, let us always keep up the remembrance of Christ, as our only Way thither, in our generation; and, in assurance of the perpetuating of the kingdom of the Redeemer in the world, let us transmit the remembrance of Him to succeeding generations.

Ps. XLVI. V. 1—5. This Ps. encourages us to hope and trust in God, his power, providence, and gracious presence with his church, in the worst of times, and directs us to give Him the

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 9—17. Next to the Redeemer's excellences, those of his espoused church are most worthy to be celebrated: not for what she was in herself; but for what He has made her, in consequence of his love and choice. (*Cant.* 4: 1—15. 6: 4—10. 7: 6—8. *Ez.* 16: 9—14.) If we desire to share these blessings, we must hearken to his Word, renounce our carnal and sinful attachments, pursuits, and connections, disavow other lords, and throw away all idols, that we may give Him our whole heart, and render Him unreserved worship, as well as seek all our happiness from Him alone. Indeed, the true believer's privileges, as well as the most estimable parts of his character, are *internal*, and undiscerned by an ungodly world: yet the holiness of his conversation proves the inward adorning of his soul, and that he is arrayed with 'the robe of righteousness and salvation.'—Those who are taught of God, however great in the world, will count it their honor to attend on Christ our King, and to employ their wealth and influence for the good of his church. And such as leave all for Him, shall be abundantly compensated even in this world, in new and spiritual relations, friends, and honors. To be a child of God, to be espoused to Christ, and made an heir of heaven, are the highest of all possible distinctions: this honorable race shall be continued and multiplied until the end of time, and at length shall possess and fill the earth; and thus shall the name of the Redeemer be remembered in all generations, and his people praise Him for ever and ever. Amen, and Amen. SCOTT.

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than v. 17. to her. So that if Solomon's marriage to her were at all intended, this part of the prediction especially wholly failed of being accomplished. (*Heb.* 1: 8, 9.) SCOTT.

Verse 17.

This v. shows, that Christ and the church were immediately and expressly intended throughout the Ps. The language is peculiarly emphatical; and can mean nothing less, than all successive generations to the end of the world, and likewise eternal ages in heaven. Either the Father Himself thus declared his purpose of glorifying his beloved Son, and his people with Him, for ever; or, as many explain it, the Psalmist foresaw, that this sacred poem would be used by the church through all generations, in celebrating the honor of the Redeemer, and in calling on others to do the same; and that it would thus be useful, in preparing the redeemed people of God for the exalted adorations of the eternal world.—There can be no doubt, that this will be verified by the event. (71:17, 18. 72:17—19.) ID.

NOTES.

Ps. XLVI. *Title.* As the sons of Korah were principal singers in the sanctuary through successive generations, the title alone does not determine the date of this Ps. It is not known by whom, or when, it was written: but the ancient opinion, that it was composed on occasion of the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib's invasion, is very probable; though some think it was composed by David, after his victories over the Ammonites and Syrians. (48:1.) It is, however, well adapted to the use of the church, especially on great emergencies, in every age. SCOTT.

Alamoth.] (1 *Chr.* 15:20, 21.) 'Alamoth is thought to be either some tune in common use, or some kind of musical instrument, [named like the *virginal* in modern times,] unknown to us; in which young virgins, as some fancy, took a peculiar delight, and were wont to learn to play upon it, which they make the reason and original of its name.' *Patrick.*—'Alamoth' signifies *virgins.* SCOTT.—'I lean to the conviction, that *alamoth* here means some particular tune, so called from its lofty key, resembling the shrill and sprightly harmony of a virgin band. But whatever opinion be entertained respecting this title, there can be but little doubt that the Ps. itself looks into futurity. *Calmet* thinks it was composed by some Israelitish bard on the return of the Jews from Babylon, when they were once more quietly settled in Jerusalem, and that the convulsions spoken of were those which took place in the *Persian empire* after the death of Cambyses, when the Magi usurped the government. Probably it alludes to certain awful visitations of Divine providence, whether by earthquakes or otherwise, which swept in terror over the surrounding nations, but which spared and even protected the chosen tribes.' MORISON.

Verses 1—3.

(27:1—3.) The clause, 'a very present Help in trouble,' may be rendered more literally, 'found exceedingly a Help in troubles;' or, 'a Help most readily to be found in troubles.' The Psalmist's experience,

the swelling thereof. Selah.

4 *There is* [l] a river, the streams whereof shall make glad [m] the city of God, [n] the holy *place* of the tabernacles of [o] the Most High.

5 [p] God *is* in the midst of her: [q] she shall not be moved: God shall help her, * *and that* right early.

6 [r] The heathen raged, [s] the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, [t] the earth melted.

7 [u] The LORD of hosts *is* with us; the God of Jacob *is* † our Refuge. Selah.

8 [x] Come, behold the works of the LORD, [y] what desolations he hath made in the earth.

9 [z] He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; [a] he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; [b] he burneth the chariot in the fire.

10 [c] Be still, and [d]

l 23:2. 36:8,9. Is. 8:8,7. 48:18. Rev. 22:1.
m 48:1,8. 87:3. 2 Chr. 6:6. Is. 37:35, 36. 60:14. Heb. 12:22. Rev. 21:2, 3,10
n Deut. 12:11,12.
o 91:1. 92:1,8. Ez. 5:8. Mic. 6:6.
p 68:18. Deut. 23:14. Is. 12:6. Ex. 43:7,9. Hos. 11:9. Joel 2:27. Zeph. 3:15. Zech. 2:5,10,11. 8:3. Matt. 18:20. Rev. 2:1.
q 62:2,6. 112:6. 125:1.
* Heb. *when the morning appeareth.* 30:5. 143:8. Ex. 14:24,27. Luke 18:8.
r 2:1—4. 83:2—8. 2 Chr. 14:9—13. 20:1,20—24. Is. 8:9,10. 37:21—36.
s Is. 14:12—16.
t 68:8. 97:5. Josh. 2:11. Is. 64:1,2. Am. 9:5,13. Nah. 1:5. Hab. 3:5,6, 10,11. 2 Pet. 3:10—12. Rev. 6:13,14. 20:11.
u 11. Num. 14:9. 2 Chr. 13:12. Is. 8: 10 Matt. 28:20. Rom. 8:31. 2 Tim. 4:22.
† Heb. *an high place for us.* 9:9. *marg.*
x 66:5. 92:4—6. 111:2,3. Num. 23:23.
y Ex. 10:7. 12:30. 14:30,31. Josh. 11:20. 2 Chr. 20:23,24. Is. 24:1. 34. 2,&c.
z Is. 2:4. 11:9. 60:18. Mic. 4:3,4.
a 76:3—6. Ez. 39:3,9,10.
b Josh. 11:6,9. Mic. 5:10.
c Hab. 2:20. Zech. 2:13.
d 33:18. 100:3. Ex. 18:11. 1 Sam. 17:46. 1 K. 18:36. 2 K. 19:19.

glory of what He has done for us, and what He will do: probably, it was penned on occasion of David's victories over the neighboring nations, 2 Sam. 8: and the rest God gave him from all his enemies round about. We may, in singing it, apply it, either to our spiritual enemies, and the encouragement we have to hope, that, through Christ, we shall be more than conquerors over them, or to the public enemies of Christ's kingdom in the world, and their threatening insults, endeavoring to preserve a holy security and serenity of mind, when they seem most formidable. It is said of Luther, that, when he heard any discouraging news, he would say, Come, let us sing the 46th psalm. The Psalmist here teaches us, by his own example,

I. To triumph in God, especially when we have had fresh experience of his appearing in our behalf, *v.* 1. Are we pursued? oppressed by troubles? or in distress? God is our *strength* and *refuge*, a *help*, a help *found*, so the word is, tried, Is. 28: 16. at hand, a *sufficient* help, a help accommodated to every case and exigence.

II. To triumph over the greatest dangers, *v.* 2. It is our duty, our privilege, to be thus fearless; an evidence of a clear conscience, of an honest heart, and of a lively faith in God, and his providence and promise. Though kingdoms and states be in confusion, embroiled in wars, tossed with tumults, and their governments in continual revolution; though their powers combine against the church and people of God, aim at no less than their ruin, and go very near to gain their point; yet will not we fear, knowing that all these troubles will end well for the church. See 93: 4. If the earth be removed, those have reason to fear who have laid up their treasures on earth, and set their hearts upon it; but not those who have laid up for themselves treasures in heaven, and who can expect to be then most happy, when *the earth, and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.* It is not any private concern of our own that we are in pain about; no, it is the city of God, *the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High;* the ark, for which our hearts tremble. But when we consider what God has provided for the comfort and safety of his church, we shall see reason to have our hearts fixed, and set above the fear of evil tidings. Here is,

1. Joy to the church, even in the most melancholy and sorrowful times, *v.* 4. *River* here alludes to the waters of Siloam, which *went softly by Jerusalem,* Is. 8: 6, 7. though of no great depth or breadth, yet were they made serviceable to the defence of Jerusalem, in Hezekiah's time, Is. 22: 10, 11. But this must be understood spiritually; the covenant of grace is the river, the promises of which are the streams; or, the Spirit of grace is the river, John 7: 38, 39. the comforts of which are *the streams, that make glad the city of our God.* God's Word and ordinances are rivers and streams with which God makes his saints glad, in cloudy and dark days. God Himself is to his church a Place of *broad rivers and streams,* Isa. 33: 21. The streams that make glad the city of God are not rapid, but gentle, like those of Siloam. Note, The spiritual comforts, which are conveyed to the saints by soft and silent whispers, and which come not with observation, are sufficient to balance the most loud and noisy threatenings of an angry and malicious world.

2. Establishment to the church, *v.* 5. God has assured his church of his special presence with her, and concern for her; therefore she shall not be moved, i. e. not destroyed, nor removed, as the earth may be, *v.* 2. The church shall survive the world, and be in bliss when that is in ruins. It is *built on a Rock,* and the *gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* Not disturbed, not much moved, with fears of the issue, God is for it.

3. Deliverance to the church, though her dangers be very great; *God shall help her;* help her *under* her troubles, that the more she is afflicted, the more she shall multiply; nay, *out* of her troubles, and that right early; *when the morning appears;* very speedily, very seasonably; then when things are brought to the last extremity, and when the relief will be most welcome. This may be applied by particular believers to themselves; if God be in our hearts, in the midst of us, by his Word dwelling richly in us, we shall be established, we shall be helped; let us therefore trust and not be afraid; all is well, and will end well.

V. 6—11. These verses give glory to God, both as King of nations, and as King of saints.

I. As King of nations, ruling the world by his power and providence, and over-ruling all the affairs of men to his own glory.

1. He checks the rage, and breaks the power, of the nations that oppose Him and his interests in the world, *v.* 6. comp. 2: 1, 2. Such a melting of the spirits of the enemies, is described, Judg. 5: 4, 5. and see Luke 21: 25, 26.

2. When He pleases to draw his sword, and give it commission, He can make great havoc, *v.* 8. See 66: 5. 111: 2. *The works of the Lord* include all his works of providence, in which must be noticed his attributes and purposes. Particularly, notice the *desolations He has made in the earth,* among the enemies of his church, who thought to have laid the land of Israel desolate. David carried the war into the enemies' country. Come and see the effects of desolating judgments, and stand in awe of God, 66: 3. Let all that oppose Him, see this with terror, and expect the same cup of trembling to be put into their hands; let all that fear Him, and trust in Him, see it with [hope,] and not be afraid of the most formidable powers armed against the church. Let them gird themselves, but *they shall be broken to pieces.*

3. War and peace depend on his word and will, (*v.* 9.) as much as storms and calms at sea do, 107: 25, 29. *He makes wars to cease unto the end of the earth;* sometimes in pity to the nations; both sides perhaps are weary of the war, [for both always suffer,] and willing to let it fall; or rather it may be meant of what He does, at other times, in favor of his own people. He makes wars waged

and that of all believers from the beginning, evinced it; and this encouraged his present unshaken confidence: whereas all who call on idols, or on any creature, to help them in trouble, are invoking the *absent,* as well as the helpless.—Earthquakes, and other terrible convulsions in nature, are often made emblems of great commotions in nations; but such desolations are not likely to be realized, in the full literal import of the terms here used, till the consummation of all things. SCOTT.

(2, 3.) 'Probably the earthquake referred to here means *political commotions,* and by *mountains,* kings, or secular states may be intended.—*Waters,* in prophetic language, signify people, and generally people in a state of political commotion, here signified by the term roar.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 4.

River.] '*Mudge* reads: "The holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High is a stream, the branches whereof gladden the city of God." In justification, he observes, that the temple is here considered as a *fountain,* whence issued streams of joy and support. Most commentators think the Kidron, and its two streams, Gihon and Siloah, are referred to; but I should rather think, with *Dathe,* that the peaceful state of the land of Israel, as contrasted with the agitated and convulsed situation of surrounding nations, is here figuratively set forth, by the calm and placid movements of a gentle and refreshing stream, as compared with the swelling, tumultuous and destructive ocean.' MORISON.—'It may refer to the Medo-Persian army and its divisions; those branches which took Babylon, and instead of ruining the poor Jews, preserved them alive and gave them their liberty. Thus the city of God and the tabernacle of the Most High were gladdened.' Dr. *A. Clarke;* but this seems quite precarious. ED

Verse 6.

Nothing can be more concise, energetic, and sublime than this v (*Ex.* 15:9, 10.)—Many deliverances afforded to Israel answer the description, especially that under Hezekiah: but the success of the Gospel, notwithstanding all opposition of every kind, and from every quarter, which melted away before the blessing of God on the preaching of the apostles and evangelists, was a singular accomplishment of it; and it shall ere long have a still more glorious completion, in the destruction of every antichrist, and the universal prevalence of genuine Christianity. SCOTT.

Verse 7.

EMMANUEL, GOD WITH US, is in every age the Refuge and Protector of his church. (*M. R.*) ID.

Verses 8, 9.

The Psalmist here calls on all people, to contemplate the wonders God had wrought for his people, and the desolations He had made among their powerful enemies. (2 *K.* 19:35—37. 2 *Chr.* 20:21—30.)—He will hereafter put an end to all wars, [among '*Christians*' as well as heathens, note, 72:7.] by the universal success of the Gospel of peace; and this event also may be foretold. ID.

(9.) *He maketh wars to cease.*] 'By the death of Cambyses, and setting Darius son of Hystaspes on the Persian throne, He has tranquillized the whole empire.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 10.

God Himself here speaks, and demands silent and adoring attention

know that I *am* God: [e]I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

11 The LORD of hosts *is* with us; [f]the God of Jacob *is* our Refuge. Selah.

PSALM XLVII.

The people are excited to rejoice in God, the universal Sovereign, who had given Israel victory and inheritance, 1—4. The ascension and kingdom of Christ are celebrated with fervent praises; and the conversion of the nations and their princes is predicted, 5—9.

To the chief Musician, * A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

O [a]CLAP your hands, all ye people; [b]shout unto God with the voice of triumph.

2 For the LORD most high [c]*is* terrible; *he is* [d]a great King over all the earth.

3 He shall [e]subdue the people under us, and the nations [f]under our feet.

4 He shall [g]choose our inheritance for us, the [h]excellency of Jacob, [i]whom he loved. Selah.

5 [k]God is gone up [l]with a shout, the LORD

e 21:13. 57:5. 1 Chr. 29:11. Is. 2:11, 17. 5:16. Ez. 38:23. Rev. 15:3,4.
f 1,7. 48:3. Deut. 33:27. Jer. 16:19.
* Or, *of.* 46: *title.*
a 98:8. 2 K. 11:12. Is. 55:12.
b 5. 98:4. 1 Sam. 10:24. 2 Sam. 6:15. 2 Chr. 13:15. Ezra 3:11—13. Jer. 31:7. Zeph. 3:14. Zech. 4:7. 9:9. Luke 19:37—40. Rev. 19:1.
c 65:5. 66:3—5. 68:35. 76:12. 99:3. 145:6. Deut. 7:21. 28:58. Neh. 1:5. Nah. 1:6,7. Rev. 6:16,17.
d 7. 22:27—29. 95:3. Dan. 7:13,14. Mal. 1:14. Matt. 28:18. Phil. 2:9—11.
e 18:47. 81:14. Deut. 33:29. *Marg.* Josh. 21:44. Phil. 3:21.
f 110:1. Josh. 10:24,25. 1 Cor. 15:25.
g Deut. 11:12. Jer. 3:19. Ez. 20:6. Matt. 25:34. 1 Cor. 3:22,23. Eph. 1:18. 1 Pet. 1:4.
h 16:3. Is. 60:15. Am. 6:8. 8:7. Nah. 2:2.
i Deut. 7:6—8. 33:3. Hos. 14:4. Mal. 1:2. Eph. 2:4,5. 1 John 4:9,10.
k 24:7—10. 68:17—19,24,25. Luke 24: 51—53. Acts 1:9. Eph. 4:8—10. 1 Tim. 3:16.
l 78:55. Num. 23:21. 2 Sam. 6:15. 1 Chr. 15:28.

against them to cease, breaks the bow drawn against them, Is. 54: 17. The total destruction of Gog and Magog is prophetically described by the burning of their weapons, Ezek. 39: 9, 10. which intimates likewise the church's perfect security and assurance of lasting peace, which made it needless to lay up those weapons of war for their own service. The bringing of a long war to a good issue, is a work of the Lord, for our wonder and thankfulness.

II. As King of saints, and as such we must own that *great and marvellous are his works,* Rev. 15: 3.

1. For his own glory, *v.* 10. *Be still, and know that I am God.* (1.) Let his enemies be still; threaten no more, rage no more, it is all in vain, *He that sits in heaven laughs at them;* in spite of all their impoteat malice, He will be exalted, among the heathen, among his own people, in the earth. Men will set up themselves, will have their own way, and do their own will; but let them know God will be exalted, He will have his way, will do his own will, will glorify his own name, and *wherein they deal proudly, He will be above them,* and make them know He is so. (2.) Let his own people be still; be calm and sedate, and tremble no more; the Lord is God, He is God alone, and will be exalted, will maintain his honor unaided, fulfil his counsels, support his interest. Though depressed, let us not be dejected, for God will be exalted, and that may satisfy us; He will work for his great name, and then no matter what becomes of our little names. When we pray, *Father, glorify thy name,* we ought to act faith on the answer to that prayer, when Christ prayed it; *I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it yet again.* Amen, Lord, so be it.

2. For his people's safety and protection. He triumphs in the former, *I will be exalted;* they triumph in this, *v.* 7. and again *v.* 11. It is the burden of the song. Let all believers triumph in this: God, a God of all power, the sovereign Lord, is with us, sides with us, acts with us, and has promised He will never leave us. We are under his protection, a God in covenant with us, not only able, but engaged in honor and faithfulness to help us. He is the God of Jacob, not only Jacob the person, but Jacob the people; nay, and of all praying people, the spiritual seed of wrestling Jacob; mark this, and take the comfort of it, and say, *If God be for us, who can be against us?*

Ps. XLVII. The scope of this Ps. is, to stir us up to praise God, to stir up all people to do it. Many suppose it was penned on occasion of bringing the ark to mt. Zion, which *v.* 5. seems to refer to; *God is gone up with a shout;* but it looks further, to Christ's ascension to the heavenly Zion, after finishing his undertaking, and to the setting up of his kingdom. In singing it, we are to honor the exalted Redeemer, rejoice in his exaltation, celebrate his praises, confessing He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

V. 1—4. The Psalmist, having his own heart filled with great and good thoughts of God, endeavors to engage all about him in the blessed work of praise; as one convinced that God is worthy of all blessing and praise, and as one grieved at his own and others' backwardness to, and barrenness in, this work. Observe, in these vs.,

1. Who are called on to praise God; '*all ye people,* of Israel; or, of the earth;' so it may be a prophecy of the conversion of the Gentiles; see Rom. 15: 11.

2. What they are called on to do; **O clap your hands,* in token of your own joy and satisfaction in what God has done for you; of your approbation, nay admiration, of what God has done in general,' and of your indignation against all the enemies of God's glory, Job 27: 23. '*Clap your hands,* as men transported with pleasure, that cannot contain themselves; shout unto God, to make all about you hear, and notice how much you are affected and filled with the works of God. Shout with the voice of triumph in Him, and in his power and goodness, that others may join your triumph.' Note, Such expressions of pious and devout affections as to some may seem indecent and imprudent, ought not to be hastily censured and condemned, much less ridiculed, because, if they come from an upright heart, God will accept the strength of the affection, and excuse the weakness of the expressions of it.

3. What is suggested as matter for our praise. (1.) God's awful majesty; *v.* 2. there are those perfections in God that are to be reverenced by all, and particularly that power, holiness, and justice, that are to be dreaded by all that contend with Him. (2.) God's sovereign and universal dominion; He is a King that reigns alone, and with an absolute power; a King over all the earth; therefore a great King; the King of kings. (3.) His particular care of his people, and their concerns, now and ever.

[1.] In giving them victory and success, *v.* 3. witness their planting in Canaan, and their continuance there unto this day. But this looks forward to the kingdom of the Messiah, to be set over all the earth. Jesus Christ shall subdue the Gentiles; bring *them in as sheep into the fold,* so the word signifies, not for slaughter, but preservation. He shall subdue their affections, make them a *willing people in the day of his power,* bring their thoughts into obedience to Him, and reduce them, which had gone astray, under the guidance of the *great Shepherd and Bishop of souls,* 1 Pet. 2: 25.

[2.] In giving them rest and settlement, *v.* 4. He had chosen Canaan to be an inheritance for Israel; see Deut. 32: 8. This justified their possession, and sweetened their enjoyment of it; they had reason to think it a happy lot, as Infinite Wisdom chose it for them. And the setting up of God's sanctuary in it, made it *the excellency,* the honor *of Jacob,* Amos 6: 8. a good inheritance God chose for him, as loving him, Deut. 7: 8. Apply this spiritually, and it bespeaks, 1. The

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Those who have received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and live in grateful obedience to Him, make the power, wisdom, truth, and love of God, their 'refuge and strength;' and in every urgent danger and trouble, they will find Him a ready and a present Help. If our faith were as strong as our security is good, we need fear no combination of enemies, no revolutions in kingdoms, and no convulsions in nature; but, in the most tremendous dangers, might triumph in the fullest assurance of security and victory. Let us then pray for increase of faith, and be careful to lay up our treasures in heaven: thus, when the earth and all its works shall be burnt up, we shall have nothing to fear, or to lose. Happy are they, in every case, who are enrolled citizens of the holy city of our God, in which He dwells as a Father, a Defender, and a Comforter of his people. But let the ungodly tremble at beholding the destruction of those, who have opposed the cause and people of God.—Let us pray [and act] for the speedy approach of these glorious days [of gospel-peace.]

SCOTT.

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and submission from the whole earth; and that they all should acknowledge, and bow down to, his universal, everlasting, and absolute sovereignty, if they would escape his awful vengeance. SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. XLVII. 'It appears by this and other Pss. that the public processions of the Hebrews were no less animated and noisy than those of the ancient heathens [especially in the E.] and nominal Christians: but in one important respect they differed; their rejoicings—their shoutings—were the voice of solemn praise, and not debased (so far as we know) by either intemperance or profaneness. The constant though distant expectation of the Messiah, seems to have sanctified their joy, and turned their songs of triumph into hymns of praise.'

WILLIAMS.

Verses 1—8.

This Ps. is generally ascribed to David, though his name is not affixed to it: and it has generally been applied to Christ's ascension. Thus the ancient fathers understood it, and on this account it is appointed in the Book of Common Prayer to be read on Ascension-day. —*Terrible.* (2) The same word is rendered *reverend,* 111:9. SCOTT.

Verse 4.

The goodly land of Canaan was selected for the inheritance of Jacob's posterity, who were especially favored by God, and raised to a pre-eminence above other nations; and comparatively they were the excellent of the earth. But they have long been excluded from that country; which typified the present privileges and chosen inheritance of the true Israel, who are in reality what the Israelites were in ex-

with [m] the sound of a trumpet.

6 [n] Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto [o] our King, sing praises.

7 For God *is* [p] the King of all the earth: [q] sing ye praises [*] with understanding.

8 [r] God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon [s] the throne of his holiness.

9 † The princes of the people are gathered together, *even* the people of [t] the God of Abraham: for [u] the shields of the earth *belong* unto God: [x] he is greatly exalted.

m 81:3. 150:3. Num. 10:1—10. Josh. 6:5. 1 Chr. 15:24. 16:42. 1 Cor. 15: 52. 1 Thes. 4:16. Rev. 8:6,&c. 11: 15.
n 96:1,2. 117: 149:1—3. Ex. 15:21. 1 Chr. 16:9. 29:20. Is. 12:4—6. Eph. 5:18—20.
o 145:1. Is. 33:22. Zech. 9:9. Matt. 23:34. 27:37.
p 2:8. Zech. 14:9. Rev. 11:15.
q 1 Cor. 14:14,15.
* Or, every one *that hath understanding.*
r 22:27—29. 93:1. 96:10. 97:1. 99:1. 110:6. 1 Chr. 16:31. Rev. 19:6.
s 9:4. 45:6,7. 48:1. 89:14. 94:20. Heb. 4:16. Rev. 20:11.
† Or, *The voluntary of the people are gathered* unto *the people of*, &c. 72: 7—9. 110:2,3. Gen. 49:10. Is. 11: 10. 60:4,5. 66:19,20. Rom. 11:25.
t Gen. 17:7,8. Ex. 3:6,15. Is. 41:8—10. Matt. 22:32. Rom. 4:11,12. Gal. 3:29.
u 89:18. *Marg.*
x 46:10.

happiness of the saints, that God Himself has chosen their inheritance for them, a goodly heritage: 16: 5. 1 Pet. 1: 4. This will be indeed the excellency of Jacob, for whom, because He loved them, He prepared such a happiness as eye has not seen. 2. The faith and submission of the saints to God. This is the language of every gracious soul, 'God shall choose my inheritance for me; let Him appoint me my lot, and I will acquiesce in the appointment. He knows what is good for me better than I do myself, therefore I will have no will of my own but what is resolved into his.'

V. 5—9. We are here most earnestly pressed to praise God; so backward are we to this duty, that we have need to be urged to it; so we are here, *v.* 6. This intimates, that it is a very necessary and excellent duty, a duty we ought to be frequent and abundant in; we may sing praises again and again in the same words, and it is no vain repetition, if done with new affections. Should not a people praise their God? Dan. 5: 4. subjects their king? God is our God, our King, therefore we must praise Him as those that are pleased with Him, and not ashamed of Him. But here is a needful rule subjoined, *v.* 7. *Sing ye praises with understanding*, with *Maschil.* 1. 'Intelligently; as those that understand why, and the meaning of the service.' This is the gospel rule, 1 Cor. 14: 15. only with the heart do we make melody to the Lord, Eph. 5: 19. It is not an acceptable, if it be not a reasonable service. 2. 'Instructively; as those that desire to make others understand God's glorious perfections, and to teach them to praise Him.'

Three things are mentioned in these vs. as just matter for our praises, and each will admit a double sense;

1. God's going up, *v.* 5. The ark being the instituted token of God's special presence with them, when that was brought up by warrant from Him, He might be said to *go up.* The emerging of God's ordinances out of obscurity, in order to their more public and solemn administration, is a great favor to any people, which they have reason to rejoice in, and give thanks for. In the ascension of our Lord, Acts 1: 9. *God went up with a shout*, the shout of a King, of a Conqueror, as one who, having *spoiled principalities and powers*, then *led captivity captive*, 68 : 18. He went up as Mediator, typified by the ark, and the mercy-seat over it, and was brought, as the ark into the most holy place, *into heaven itself;* see Heb. 9: 24. We read not of a shout, or the sound of a trumpet, at the ascension of Christ, but the sons of God then shouted for joy, Job 38 : 7. He shall come again in the same manner as He went, Acts 1: 11. and we are sure He shall come again with a shout and the sound of a trumpet.

2. God's reigning, *v.* 7, 8. God is not only *our* King, and therefore we owe our homage to Him, but He is *King of all the earth*, *v.* 7. and therefore, in every place, the incense of praise is to be offered up to Him. This may be understood, (1.) Of the kingdom of providence. God, as Creator, and the God of nature, disposes all affairs, as He pleases. See here the extent and equity of his government; even the *heathen*, that serve other gods, are ruled by the true God; and it is a throne of *holiness* He sits on, whence He gives warrants, orders, and judgment. (2.) Of the kingdom of the Messiah. Jesus Christ is intrusted not only with the administration of providence, but He shall set up the kingdom of his grace in the Gentile world, and rule in the hearts of multitudes that were bred up in heathenism, Eph. 2: 12, 13. This the apostle speaks of as a great mystery, that the *Gentiles should be fellow-heirs;* Eph. 3 : 6. all the administrations of his government are intended to show forth God's holiness, and to advance holiness [and happiness] among the children of men.

3. God's being *attended and honored by the princes of the people*, *v.* 9. This may be understood, (1.) Of the congress or convention of the states of Israel, the heads and rulers of the several tribes, at the solemn feasts, or to despatch the public business of the nation. It was the honor of Israel, that they were *the people of the God of Abraham*, as Abraham's seed, and in covenant; and, thanks be to God, this blessing of Abraham is come on the isles of the Gentiles, Gal. 3 : 14. Magistracy is God's institution, and He serves his own purposes by it in the government of the world, turning the hearts of kings, as the rivers of water, which way soever He pleases. (2.) It may be applied to the calling of the Gentiles, and taken as a prophecy, that, in the days of the Messiah, the kings of the earth and their people should join the church, and bring their glory and power into the New Jerusalem; should all become *the people of the God of Abraham*, to whom it was promised that he should be *the father of many nations*. The *volunteers* of the people, so it may be read; it is the same word that is used, 10 : 3. *Thy people shall be willing;* for those that are gathered to Christ are not forced, but made freely willing, to be his. When the *shields of the earth*, the ensigns of royal dignity, 1 K. 14 : 27, 28. are surrendered to the Lord Jesus, as the keys of a city are presented to the conqueror or sovereign, when princes [here called *shields. Ed.*] use their power for the advancement of the interests of religion, then Christ is greatly exalted.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The universal and absolute sovereignty of our holy God would be most terrible to every sinner, were it not administered by his incarnate Son from a mercy-seat: but now, it is terrible to the obstinate workers of iniquity alone.—While his peculiar people express their confidence, gratitude, and joy, by every token of external exultation, and animate each other in his service; let sinners submit to his authority, and accept of his salvation, that they may share in his holy triumph.—As angels and glorified saints worshipped the ascending Savior, and welcomed Him with shouts of joy and the trump of God: surely we on earth should join our praises with holy affections; and with understanding of his excellency and our obligations, that we may glorify Him and edify others also. Our backwardness to this reasonable service must be overcome by repeated exhortations; and when our hearts are attuned to this holy worship, we should call on all around to unite in it: may He hasten the time, when all kings and rulers shall serve Him, and use their delegated authority to his glory! Then will 'all the families of the earth be blessed in Him:' while, as the God of Abraham, He becomes their 'Shield, and exceeding great Reward.' SCOTT.

ternal character. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verse 5.

'God is gone up, by the special token of his presence, into the holy place, with shouts of joy and praise.' *Patrick.*—If, however, we consider this of Christ's ascension, the whole appears far more interesting, and becomes in the highest degree animated and appropriate, as introductory to the repeated call to fervent praises. (68:17—20, 24, 25. *Luke* 24:50—53. *Acts* 1:9—12. *Eph.* 4:7—10. *Phil.* 2:9—11.) ID.

Verses 6, 7.

Our King. (6) The Messiah is continually celebrated in the Pss. as Israel's King; it is therefore most natural to interpret this expression of Him in almost every part of them; which leads us to multiplied proofs that He is JEHOVAH, and the Lord of all. (2:4—6, 45:1—5. *Zeph.* 3:14—17. *Zech.* 9:9, 10. 14:6—9. *Matt.* 25:34—40.)—*Maschil.* (*M.—Note*, 32: *title.*) SCOTT.

Verses 8, 9.

The manner in which God's dominion over the nations of the earth is here mentioned, seems a clear intimation of the calling of the Gentiles into the church, in consequence of Christ's ascension. (*Rom.* 15: 12.)—All the principal persons, from the several tribes of Israel, 'the people of the God of Abraham,' assembled to remove the ark, leaving the protection of their houses and families unto God, who accordingly was the Shield of the land. Thus, when the princes and rulers join themselves to the Lord Jesus, and use their authority and influence for the benefit of the church; God is greatly exalted, in becoming the Shield and Defender of their dominions.—Some, however, interpret the last clause to mean the rulers themselves; who, belonging to God, having their authority from Him, and using it according to his command, become the *shields* of their people; and thus by their means God is greatly exalted and honored among men. *The heathen.* (8) Or, 'the nations;' over all the nations of the earth, and not only over Israel.—*The princes of the people.* (9) Or, 'of the peoples' (*plural*). The rulers of other nations must be meant, as uniting with those of Israel: and this leads us to interpret the passage, of the conversion of the Gentiles to the ascended Savior, rather than of the typical transaction of the removal of the ark. SCOTT.

(9.) 'The sense of this v. expressed in New Testament language, would be, "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever."' BP. HORNE.—*Shields*, &c.] 'By their office [in supporting and enforcing the law, rulers] are or should be the common parents and protectors of all their people, against all oppression and injury.' POOLE.—*Morison* introduces *Green's* translation of the v. which he decidedly prefers to *Boothroyd's* or *Horsley's*, 'both on account of its fine rendering of the original, and its strict adherence to the spirit of the Ps. which treats of the union of Jews and Gentiles under Christ. "The princes of the people are assembled With the people of the God of Abraham. For God is our shield: He is highly exalted over all the earth."' ED.

PSALM XLVIII.

The praises of God are celebrated, in connection with the beauty and security of Zion, and the deliverances wrought for her, 1—8. The church praises God, and rejoices in Him, and in her privileges, 9—14.

A [a] Song *and* Psalm * for the sons of Korah.

GREAT *is* the LORD, and [c] greatly to be praised [d] in the city of our God, *in* [e] the mountain of his holiness.

2 [f] Beautiful for situation, [g] the joy of the whole earth, *is* mount Zion, [h] *on* the sides of the north, [i] the city of the great King.

3 [k] God is known in her palaces for a Refuge.

4 For, [l] lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together.

5 They saw *it, and* so they marvelled; [m] they were troubled, *and* hasted away.

6 [n] Fear took hold upon them there, *and* [o] pain, as of a woman in travail.

7 Thou [p] breakest the [q] ships of Tarshish [r] with an east wind.

8 [s] As we have heard, so have we seen in [t] the

a 30: *title.*
* Or, *of.* 46: *title.*
b 86:10. 99:3,4. 145:3. 147:5.
c 89:1—7. Neh. 9:5. Rev. 15:3,4. 19:5.
d 46:4. 76:68. 87:3. Heb. 12:22. Rev. 21:2,10—22.
e 47:8. 99:9. Is. 2:2,3. 27:13. Jer. 31:23. Obad. 17. Zech. 8:3. Matt. 24:15.
f 50:2. Lam. 2:15. Dan. 11:16.
g Is. 60:15—20. 66:10. Ez. 20:6. Mal. 3:12. Heb. 12:22.
h Is. 14:13.
i 47:7,8. Mal. 1:14. Matt. 5:35.
k 76:1—5. 125:1. 2 Chr. 12:7. 14:9—15. 20:1,&c. Is. 4:5,6. 37:33—36. Zech. 2:4,5.
l 83:2—8. 2 Sam. 10:6,16—19. Is. 7:1. 8:8—10. 10:8. 29:5—8. Rev. 17:12—14. 19:19,20. 20:8,9.
m Ex. 14:25. 2 K. 7:6,7. 19:35—37.
n Ex. 15:15,16. Is. 13:6—8. Dan. 5:6.
o Is. 21:3. Jer. 30:6,7. Hos. 13:13.
p Ez. 27:26.
q 1 K. 22:48. Is. 2:16.
r Jer. 18:17.
s 44:1,2. 78:3—6. Is. 38:19.
t See on 1,2.

Ps. XLVIII. This Ps. as the two former, is a triumphant song; penned some think on occasion of Jehoshaphat's victory, 2 *Chr.* 20 : others, of Sennacherib's defeat, when his army besieged Jerusalem in Hezekiah's time; but for aught I know, by David, on occasion of some eminent victory in his time; yet not so calculated for that, but that it might serve any like occasion in after times, and be applicable also to the glories of the gospel-church, of which Jerusalem was a type, especially when it shall come to be a church triumphant, the *heavenly Jerusalem*, *Heb.* 12 : 22. *the Jerusalem which is above*, *Gal.* 4 : 26. In singing this Ps. we must be affected with our privilege as members of the gospel-church, and must express and excite our sincere good-will to all its interests.

V. 1—7. The Psalmist, designing to praise Jerusalem, and to set forth its grandeur, begins with praising God, and his greatness, *v.* 1. and ends with praising God, and his goodness, *v.* 14. Whatever is the subject of our praises, God must be both their Alpha and Omega. What is here said to Jerusalem's honor is,

I. That the King of heaven owns it; it is *the city of our God*, *v.* 1. He chose, out of all the cities of Israel, to put his name there; of Zion he said kinder things than of any place on earth, *This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it*, 132 : 13, 14. It is the *city of the great King*, *v.* 2. This our Savior quotes, to prove, that to swear by Jerusalem, is profanely to swear by God Himself, Mat. 5 : 35.

1. It is enlightened with the knowledge of God. In Judah God is known, and his name great, but especially in Jerusalem, the head-quarters of the priests, whose lips were to keep this knowledge. Happy the kingdom, the city, the family, the heart, in which God is great, in which He is uppermost, in which He is all. There *God is known*, *v.* 3. and where He is known, He will be great; none contemn God, but those that are ignorant of Him.

2. It is devoted to the honor of God; therefore called the *mountain of his holiness*, Zech. 14 : 20, 21. This is the privilege of the church of Christ, that it is a holy nation, a peculiar people; Jerusalem, the type of it, is called *the holy city*, bad as it was, Mat. 27 : 53. till that was set up, but never after.

3. It is the place appointed for the solemn service and worship of God: there He is greatly praised, and *greatly to be praised*, *v.* 1. Note, The clearer discoveries are made to us of God and his greatness, the more it is expected we should abound in his praises. All parts of the country brought offerings to Jerusalem, and herein Jerusalem typified the gospel-church; for what little tribute of praise God has from this earth, arises from that church on earth, which is therefore his tabernacle among men.

4. It is taken under his special protection: *v.* 3. He is *known for a Refuge*. They that know Him, will *trust in Him, and seek to Him*, 9 : 10. God was known, not only in the streets, but even in the palaces, of Jerusalem, for a Refuge; the great men had recourse to God, and acquaintance with Him. And then religion was likely to flourish in the city, when it reigned in the palaces.

5. On all these accounts, Jerusalem, and especially mt. Zion, on which the temple was built, was universally beloved and admired, *v.* 2. What made it beautiful, was, it was the mountain of holiness, for there is a beauty in holiness.

II. That the kings of the earth were afraid of it. That God was known in their palaces for a Refuge, they had had a late and very remarkable instance. Whatever it was,

1. They had had but too much occasion to fear; For *the Kings were assembled*, (*v.* 4.) the neighboring princes confederated against Jerusalem, for its ruin; their forces passed, advanced, and marched on, together, not doubting soon to master that city, which should have been the joy, but was the envy, of the whole earth.

2. God made their enemies to fear them; as the sight of the tents of Jacob frightened Balaam from his purpose, Num. 24: 2. *They saw it and marvelled, and hasted away*, *v.* 5. The sight of Jerusalem brought to mind what they had heard of the special presence of God in that city, and the divine protection it was under, and God impressed such terrors on their minds thereby, as made them retire with precipitation; *v.* 6. Note, God can dispirit the stoutest of his church's enemies. Their fright upon the sight of Jerusalem, is here compared to the throes of a woman in travail, sharp, grievous, and sometimes sudden, 1 Thess. 5: 3. which cannot be avoided, and which are effects of sin and the curse. The defeat hereby given to their designs on Jerusalem, is compared to the dreadful work made with a fleet of ships by a violent storm, when some are split, others shattered, all dispersed, *v.* 7. The terrors of God are compared to an east-wind, Job 27: 20, 21. *Who knows the power of God's anger?*

V. 8—14. We have here the good use and im-

NOTES.

Ps. XLVIII. *Hammond* styles this Ps. 'a hymn in honor of Jerusalem,' but when, and on what occasion it was written, seems not agreed. Dr. A. *Clarke* refers it to the time of the return of the Jews from captivity, and supposes it may have been sung at the dedication of the second temple:—*Williams*, to the age of David, and thinks he wrote it on his victory over the Syrians and their confederates, 2 Sam. 10 : 15-19.—*Horsley*, to the reign of Uzziah, because he augmented the fortifications of Jerusalem, 2 Chr. 26.—*Mudge*, to the time of Ahaz, when Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, came up against Jerusalem; and cites Is. 7. and 8. in support. Others, however, and most who agree in any particular reference, refer it to the time of Jehoshaphat, when Jerusalem was invaded by the Moabites, Ammonites and Idumeans. Of this opinion are *Patrick*, *Morison*, *Dathe*, *Rosenm.* For the history of the occasion, see 2 Chr. 20. Ed.

Verses 2—3.

The situation of Zion, with the adjacent region, was very beautiful, and the glory and joy of the whole *land*. Zion is supposed to have been situated on the S. side of the mountain; but the temple stood on the N. side of it, and was its peculiar honor and distinction. (*Is.* 14: 13.)—Scott. See the engraving, end of Mark. Ed.

(2.) 'Some difference obtains in the pointing of this v. Some have a *colon* after *Mt. Zion*; others a *semicolon*; and others still, a *comma* only. Most join "*on the sides of the N.*" to "*Mt. Zion*"; supposing, as *Henry*, Mt. Zion stood northward of Jerusalem, which they gather from Is. 14 : 13. Others much oppose this, and would have the words, *on the side of the N.* to belong to "*the city*," &c. These quote Josephus and others to prove that Mt. Zion stood S. and had Jerusalem, i. e. the chief part of the city, N. Others, again who maintain the same as to the situation of both, yet take the words *Mt. Zion* and *on the side of the N.* together; because, though Zion itself were southward, as they maintain, yet it had Jerusalem, the chief part of it, on the N. *On the* N. then, means not absolutely, in regard to itself; but with reference to Jerusalem.' *Assemb. Ann.*—'In the northern quarter are the buildings of the Great King, these buildings dedicated to Him, the temple with its ample precincts.' Bp. Horsley.—'The site of Jerusalem was principally on the N. side of Mt. Zion.' *Morison.*—'*The whole earth*, may signify nothing more than the land of Judea.' Ed.

Verses 4—7.

(*M. R.*) 'Illustrations of this kind are sometimes introduced, by the sacred writers, with the mark of comparison; and frequently, as here, without it. The meaning evidently is, that as the E. wind [note Job 15: 2.] shatters in pieces the ships of Tarshish, so the divine power struck the heathen kings with terror and astonishment.' Bp. *Horne.* Matt.

(7.) 'This is not reported as a matter of fact, for we read of no ships in those expeditions to which this Ps. relates, nor did any ships come near Jerusalem, because that was a great distance from the sea, and from any navigable river running into the sea; but only added by way of illustration, or allusion.' Poole. *Tarshish.*] 'A maritime place in Cilicia, Ex. 27:25. Jonah 1: 3. usually put for the sea, as 1 K. 10:22. 2 Chr. 9.21. Ps. 72:10. Is. 2:16. Jer. 10:9.' Id., after *Josephus.*—Or, as *Bochart*, in *Hammond*, '*Tartessus*, now *Cadiz* in Spain, a most opulent place, therefore turned by the poets into the *Elysian fields*, and by geographers called the *Pillars of Hercules*, beyond which was no passing.' Bochart, in *Hammond.*—*Prideaux* says, 'any place in the southern or greater Indian sea, at the distance of a then three years voyage from Elath, which can best furnish the merchants with gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks, may be guessed to be the Tarshish of the holy Scriptures.' Bp. *Patrick* refers here to 2 Chr. 20:37. for illustration respecting breaking the ships, and in confirmation of his reference of the Ps. to the time of Jehoshaphat. Ed.

Verse 8.

As a prophecy, this must mean that city of the living God, of which Jerusalem was but a type: (*Gal.* 4:21—31. *Heb.* 12:22—25. *Rev.* 21:) for Jerusalem was repeatedly taken, and at length given up to be 'trodden under foot by the Gentiles;' but the church of Christ is founded on

city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God: [a] God will establish it for ever. Selah.

9 We have [x] thought of [y] thy loving-kindness, O God, [z] in the midst of thy temple.

10 [a] According to thy name, O God, so *is* thy praise unto the ends of the earth: [b] thy right hand is full of righteousness.

11 Let mount Zion rejoice, let [c] the daughters of Judah be glad, [d] because of thy judgments.

12 [e] Walk about Zion, and go round about her: [f] tell the towers thereof.

13 * Mark ye well her bulwarks, † consider her palaces; [g] that ye may tell *it* to the generation following.

14 For [h] this God *is* our God for ever and ever: he will be our [i] Guide *even* unto death.

a 46:5. 87:5. Is. 2:2. Mic. 4:1. Matt. 16:18.
x 26:3. 77:10,11. 104:34. 105:5,6.
y 49:10. 63:3. Cant. 1:4. Luke 22:19, 20.
z 63:2. 77:12—14. 2 Chr. 20:5—13. Is. 26:8.
a 113:3. 138:2—4. Ex. 3:13—15. 34: 5—7. Deut. 28:58. Josh. 7:9. Mal. 1:11,14.
b 11:7. 45:7. 99:4. 145:17. Rev. 19: 2,11.
c 97:8. Cant. 1:5. 2:7. 3:5. 5:16. Is. 37:22. Zech. 9:9. Luke 23:28.
d 58:10. 137:8,9. Judg. 5:31. 2 Chr. 20:28,27. Rev. 15:4. 16:5—7. 18:20. 19:1—3.
e Neh. 12:31—40. Matt. 24:1,2.
f Is. 33:18—20.
* Heb. *Set your heart to.*
† Or, *raise up.* Is. 58:12. Am. 9:11. Acts 15:14—16.
g 71:18. 78:4. Deut. 11:19. Joel 1:3.
h 15:2. 31:14. 73:26. Lam. 3:24.
i 23:3,4. 25:9. 73:24. Prov. 8:20. Is. 58:11. John 16:13.

provement God's people are taught to make of his late glorious and gracious appearances for them.

1. Let our faith in God's Word be hereby confirmed. If we compare what God has done with what He has spoken, we shall find, that as *we have heard*, so *have we seen*, *v.* 8. and what we have seen, obliges us to believe what we have heard. As we have heard in the promise and prediction, so have we seen in the performance and accomplishment. In the great things God has done, and is doing, for his church, it is good to notice the fulfilling of the Scriptures; and this would help better to understand both the providence, and the Scripture.

2. Let our hope of the stability and perpetuity of the church be hereby encouraged. This was not fulfilled in Jerusalem, but has its accomplishment in the gospel-church, Matt. 16: 18. Is. 14: 32. And what we have seen, compared with what we have heard, may encourage us to hope in that promise of God, on which the church is built.

3. Let our minds be hereby filled with good thoughts of God, *v.* 9. All the streams of mercy that flow down to us, must be run up to the fountain of God's loving-kindness, of which we must think with delight, frequently, constantly, fixedly. What subject can we dwell on more noble, more pleasant, more profitable, especially when we attend upon Him in his temple!

4. Let us mention to the glory of God the great things He has done for us, *v.* 10. By the late signal deliverance of Jerusalem, God had made Himself a name; gloriously discovered his wisdom, power, and goodness, and made all the nations about sensible of it; and *so was his praise;* i. e. some, in all parts, would be found giving glory to Him accordingly. As far as his name goes, his praise will go; at least, it should go, and, at length, shall, when all the ends of the world shall praise Him, 22: 27. Rev. 11: 15. Some, by his *name*, understand especially that glorious name, *the Lord of hosts;* according to that name, so is his praise; for all the creatures, even to the ends of the earth, are under his command. But his people must, in a special manner, acknowledge his justice in all He does for them.

5. Let all the members of the church, in particular, take to themselves the comfort of what God does for his church in general, *v.* 11. '*Let mount Zion rejoice*, the priests and Levites that attend the sanctuary, then let all the daughters of Judah, the country-towns, and the inhabitants of them, be glad; let the women, in their songs and dances, as usual on occasion of public joys, celebrate with thankfulness this great salvation which God has wrought for us.'

6. Let us diligently observe the instances and evidences of the church's beauty, strength, and safety, and faithfully transmit our observations to those that shall come after us, *v.* 12, 13. *Walk about Zion.* Some think this refers to the ceremony of the triumph; let those employed in that solemnity walk round the walls, as they did, Neh 12: 31. singing, and praising God. In doing this, let *them tell the towers, and mark well the bulwarks*, all in their full strength, and none of them damaged; the palaces in their beauty, and none of them blemished; *v.* 4. *Tell this to the generation following*, as a wonderful instance of God's care of his holy city, that the enemies should not only not ruin or destroy it, but not so much as hurt or deface it: and thus they might fortify themselves against the fear of the like threatening danger, another time. So, (1.) We may understand it literally of Jerusalem, and the strong-holds of Zion, *v.* 5. Jerusalem was generally looked upon as an impregnable place, as appears, Lam. 4: 12. nor could any enemy have entered, if the inhabitants had not sinned away their defence. *Mark ye, set your heart to her bulwarks*, intimates that the principal bulwarks of Zion were objects, not of sense, but of faith; its bulwarks, mostly to be relied on, were the special presence of God in it, the beauty of holiness He had put upon it, and his promises concerning it. Calvin observes here, that when they are directed to transmit to posterity a particular account of the towers, bulwarks, and palaces of Jerusalem, it is intimated, that, in process of time, they would all be destroyed, and remain no longer to be seen; for, otherwise, what need was there to preserve their description and history? When the disciples were admiring the temple, their Master told them, in a little time one stone should not be *left on another*, Matt. 24: 1, 2. Therefore, (2.) This must certainly be applied to the gospel-church, that mount Zion, Heb. 12: 22. 'See it founded on Christ, what precious ordinances are its palaces, what precious promises its bulwarks; tell this to the generation following, that they may with purpose of heart espouse its interests, and cleave to it.'

7. Let us triumph in God, and in our assurances of his everlasting loving-kindness, *v.* 14. (1.) If God be ours, it is for ever, for it is the everlasting blessedness of glorified saints, that *God Himself will be with them, and be their God*, Rev. 21: 3. (2.) If He be our God, He will be our Guide, faithful, constant, to show us our way, and lead us in it;

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord is a great and glorious King, and worthy of universal and most exalted praises: but none on earth will render Him this due honor, except the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, who worship Him in the mountain of his holiness, as their God and Savior. (*Gal.* 4: 21—31.)—The Lord will always act in perfect consistency with those glorious perfections, which, by means of his Word, are made known and celebrated to the ends of the earth: the salvation of his people will be accompanied with righteous vengeance on his enemies; but every true believer may rejoice because of his judgments. Let us then diligently examine, and accurately mark, the security of the everlasting covenant, confirmed by the Word and oath of the immutable God: let us consider that 'his church is built on a rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail;' and let us meditate upon his exceedingly great and precious promises, and the privileges enjoyed by every true believer. SCOTT.

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a Rock, and God will certainly establish it for ever and ever. (125: 1,2. *Matt.* 16:18.) SCOTT.

Verse 9.

'We have waited, in silent contemplation and patient hope, for thy loving-kindness, with sacrifices and believing prayers presented at thy temple; trusting in thy aid, and not in our own power or valor.'—This was the conduct of Hezekiah, amidst the menaces and blasphemies of Rabshakeh and Sennacherib. (2 *K.* 18:17—37. 19: 2 *Chr.* 32: 1—22.) Yet the conduct of Jehoshaphat and his subjects seems more exactly to accord to these words, than even that of Hezekiah. (2 *Chr.* 20:1—30.) ID.

Verse 10.

The 'name' of God may, in this connection, either mean the glorious perfections by which He was known to his people, and distinguished from all the idols of the heathen; or his title, as 'the LORD of hosts, the God of Abraham, and the God of Israel.' (*M. R.* a.—*Ex.* 3:14,15. 34:5—7.)—In both respects, the powerful protection afforded his people, and the righteous vengeance executed by his right hand on their insolent and impious invaders, would tend to make his praises celebrated through the whole *land*, and indeed to the ends of the earth. (2 *K.* 19:14—19, *v.* 19.) ID.

Verse 11.

This v. is in the fut. and may literally be rendered, 'Mt. Zion will rejoice, and the daughters of Judah (the other towns and villages depend ent on Jerusalem) will be glad because of thy judgments;' as an anticipation, during the apparent danger, of victory and exulting praises, rather than as a subsequent exhortation. (2 *Chr.* 20:12—25.) SCOTT.

Verses 12—13.

This exact survey of Jerusalem's walls and fortifications, to be transmitted to posterity, might also intimate, that they were typical of more permanent privileges. (*Heb.* 12:26—29.) ID.

(12—14.) 'This address may be viewed, either as an exultation over the scattered, fallen enemies of Zion, or as a patriotic appeal to the inhabitants of the sacred city.' MORISON.

Verse 14.

This v. as the conclusion of a Ps. in which *temporal* deliverance, security, and privileges might *appear* to be exclusively celebrated, is a strong intimation, that spiritual and eternal blessings were also meant. It was before said, that God would establish Jerusalem for ever: but it is here added, in the most emphatical language imaginable, 'This God,' who protects Jerusalem, 'is our God,' or the Friend and Patron of his true people; and that 'for ever and ever,' or 'to all eternity' 'He will be our Guide unto death;' through all the sorrows and dangers of this world, to the eternal blessings of heaven. (23:1—4. 73: 23—28. *Heb.* 11:13—16.) SCOTT

PSALM XLIX.

The Psalmist calls on all mankind to attend to his instructions, 1—4. He shows that the righteous have no cause to fear in evil times, 5. He exposes the vanity of trusting in riches, 6—13. He contrasts the condition of the prosperous ungodly man, with that of the believer, especially in respect of death and the resurrection, 14—20.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm * for the sons of Korah.

[a] HEAR this, all *ye* people; give ear, [b] all *ye* inhabitants of the world:

2 Both [c] low and high, rich and poor, together.

3 My [d] mouth shall speak of wisdom; and [e] the meditation of my heart *shall be* of understanding.

4 [f] I will incline mine ear to [g] a parable: I will open my [h] dark saying upon the harp.

5 [i] Wherefore should I fear in [k] the days of evil, *when* the iniquity of [m] my heels shall compass me about?

6 They that [n] trust in their wealth, and [o] boast themselves in the

* Or, *of*. 46: 48: *titles*.
a 34:11. 78:1. Prov. 1:20—23. Matt. 11:15. 13:9. Rev. 2:7,11,17,29.
b 50:1. Is. 49:6. Mal. 1:11. Matt. 28:19,20. Rom. 3:29. 10:18.
c 62:9. 1 Sam. 2:7,8. Job 34:19. Prov. 22:2. Jer. 5:4,5. Jam. 1:9—11. 2: 1—7. Rev. 6:15—17.
d Deut. 32:2. Job 33:3,33. Prov. 4:1, 2. 8:6—11. 22:17,20,21. 2 Tim. 3: 15—17.
e 19:14. 45:1. 104:34. Matt. 12:35.
f 78:2. Matt. 13:35.
g Num. 23:7. Ez. 20:49. Matt. 13: 11—15.
h Prov. 1:6. Dan. 8:23. Luke 12:3. 2 Cor. 3:12.
i 27:1,2. 46:1,2. Is. 41:10,11. Acts 27:24. Phil. 1:28.
k Prov. 24:10. Am. 5:13. Eph. 5:16.
l 38:4. Prov. 5:22. Hos. 7:2.
m 22:16. 56:6,7. Gen. 49:17. 1 Sam. 28:20.
n 52:7. 62:10. Job 31:24. Prov. 10: 15. 23:5. Mark 10:24. 1 Tim. 6:17.
o Esth. 5:11. Jer. 9:23. Ez. 28:4,5. Hos. 12:8. Luke 12:19.

He will be so, even unto death, and will bring us to our rest. He will lead and keep us, even to the last. He will be our Guide *above* death, so some; death shall not hurt us: *beyond* death, so others; to conduct us safe to happiness, to a life in which there shall be no more death. If we take the Lord for our God, He will convey us safe to death, through death, and beyond death; down to death, and up again to glory.

Ps. XLIX. V. 1—5. This is the Psalmist's preface to his discourse, on the vanity of the world and its insufficiency to make us happy; and we seldom meet with an introduction more solemn; for there is no truth more certain, nor of greater weight, or advantage.

1. *Hear this*, and *give ear*, not only Israelites, but *all ye inhabitants of the world;* this doctrine is not peculiar to men blessed with divine revelation, but even the light of nature witnesses to it. All may know, therefore let all consider, that riches will not profit them in the day of death. Let not the high and rich be vain, nor proud, nor secure, but lay out their riches in doing good; let those that are poor and low be content, and not envy. Poor people are as much in danger from an inordinate desire toward wealth, as rich people from an inordinate delight in it.

2. He gives a good reason why his discourse should be regarded, *v.* 3. what he had to say was true and good; not doubtful but certain, not trivial but weighty, not a matter of nice speculation, but of admirable use to guide us in the right way to our great end. It was what he had himself well-digested, the *meditation of his heart;* as 19: 14. 45: 1. What ministers speak from their own hearts is most likely to reach the hearts of hearers.

3. He engages his own attention, *v.* 4. It is called a *parable*, not because figurative and obscure, but because wise, and very instructive: the same word is used of Solomon's proverbs. The Psalmist will himself incline his ear to it. This intimates he was taught it by the Spirit of God, and did not speak of himself; that he thought himself nearly concerned in it, and was resolved not to venture his own soul on that which he dissuaded others from venturing theirs upon; nay, that he would not expect others to attend to that, which he himself did not attend to as a matter of the greatest importance. Where God *gives the tongue of the learned*, He first *wakens the ear to hear as the learned*, Is. 50: 4.

4. He promises to make the matter as plain, and as affecting, as he could. Some understood it not, it was a riddle to them; tell them of the vanity of the things that are seen, and of the reality and weight of invisible things, and they say, *Ah, Lord God, doth he not speak parables?* For the sake of such, he would open this dark saying, and make it so plain, that he that runs might read it. Others understood it well enough, but it never affected them, and, for their sake, he would try the harp, to work upon, to win upon them. *A verse may find him who a sermon flies.* Herbert.

5. He begins with the application of it to himself, which is the right method to treat of divine things. Before he comes to set down the folly of carnal security, *v.* 6. he here lays down, from his own experience, the benefit and comfort of a holy, gracious security in God. *Wherefore should I fear?* he means, *Wherefore should I fear their fear*, Is. 8 : 12. the fears of worldly people ? (1.) 'Wherefore be afraid of them? all whose power lies in their wealth, which will not enable them to redeem their friends, or ruin me.' Great men of the world will not appear at all formidable, when we consider what little stead their wealth will stand them in. (2.) 'Wherefore be afraid *like* them?' The days of old age and death are the *days of evil*. In them, worldly, wicked people will be afraid; nothing more dreadful to them, than to think of leaving it; death to them is the king of terrors, because, after death, comes the judgment, when their sins will surround them as so many furies; but wherefore should a good man fear death, who has God with him? 23: 4. When the iniquities *of his heels*, or steps, compass him about, he sees them all pardoned, his conscience is purified and pacified, and then, even in the judgment-day, when the hearts of others fail them for fear, they can lift up their heads with joy, Luke 21 : 26, 28. Note, The children of God, though ever so poor, are in this truly happy, above the most prosperous of the children of this world, that they are well-guarded against the terrors of death, and the judgment.

V. 6—14. In these vs. we have,

1. A description of the spirit and way of worldly people, whose portion is in this life, 17: 14.—49: 6,11. It is taken for granted they have wealth, *v.* 6. houses and lands, which they call their own, *v.* 11. God often gives abundance of these things to bad men, who live in contempt of Him, and rebellion against Him, [but obey a part of his laws and receive the lower benefits, conferred by that partial obedience; Note, Job 34 : 1. 36 : 8—14. Ed.] by which it appears, they are not the best things in themselves, for then God would give most of them to his best friends; nor best for us, for then, *they* would not have so much of them, who, being marked for ruin, [ripen for it] by their prosperity, Prov. 1 : 32. [and note there.] A man may have abundance of wealth

NOTES.

Ps. XLIX. *Rosenm.* notes this Ps. as very similar to the 37th—*Poole*, to the 39th and 73d. Dr. *A. Clarke* thinks it was intended to be obscure, and that v. 8. probably, was the dark saying to be uttered. Yet to *Morison* 'there is nothing in it peculiarly recondite and perplexing;' and 'if it be hid from the wise and prudent, it is, nevertheless, revealed to those babes whom God teaches.' Dr. *A. Clarke*, from its resemblance to the book of Job, thinks it may have been once a part of that book; but *Morison* notes its resemblance to it as the more remarkable, only because it evidently belongs to a much later age.

Ed.

Title.] The author of this Ps. is not known. 'But whosoever composed it, . . . it is likely he had in his eye the unreasonable thirst of mankind after riches, and their insolence and haughtiness, when they have acquired them; which, it is possible, was a great discouragement to some pious but poor people in those times: and therefore . . . he indited this Ps. to check that vanity, by setting death before their eyes.' *Patrick.*—It is not improbable David wrote it, and gave it to the sons of Korah; though the title may mean, as many think, that it was written by some of the sons of Korah. (46 : *title.*)

Scott.

Verses 1—4.

His important and universally interesting instruction, being written in the sacred scriptures, has already been proposed to innumerable multitudes, and will at length be heard by all the inhabitants of the earth, whether of noble or ignoble birth, whether rich or poor. Id.

(4.) *Incline mine ear.*] 'The phrase is thought to be taken from the musicians, who lay their ear close to the instrument, when they tune it, and by their ear try how the voice and instrument agree.'

Poole.

Verse 5.

'There are no less than 17 or 18 several interpretations of the words, "*When* the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about." ' Assemb. Ann. '*Of my heels* seems to note, not the efficient or meriting *cause* of the iniquity, or punishment here spoken of, but the *object* about which this iniquity is exercised; so frequently: thus *the spoil of the poor*, Is. 3:14. is not that spoil made *by*, but *upon* them: and *the violence of the children of Judah*, Heb. of Joel 3:19. is that done *against* them as we tr. it. See also Dan. 4:27. Mat. 10:1. Acts 4:9.' Poole. *Heels.*] 'In the prophecy, Gen. 3:15. this is the part to be wounded, which conveys the idea of being *followed* for that purpose. It is a remarkable fact, that the *heel* in the E. *is the part* said to be wounded when a *treacherous* person, under the guise of friendship, has inflicted an injury: such an one is called "a heel-cutter." He who supplants or betrays another goes by the same name. A person disappointed by another's getting a situation he tried for, says, "Ah! I will yet cut his heel," i. e. by some stratagem have him turned out. The serpent Gen. 3:15. affected friendship. So did Judas. Jacob 'took hold on Esau's *heel*,' and, says Dr. *A. Clarke*, his name is from a word signifying to 'defraud, deceive, supplant.' [The etymology of *supplant* possibly indicates a putting the foot into the track of another, *under his heel* as it is raised.] Dan was to be a heel-biting adder. Job says "Thou settest a print on the heels of my feet;" so that treacherous people, or supplanters, might not find any difficulty in accusing him. The Psalmist's familiar friend 'lifted up his heel,' i. e. proved false to his professions. [Patrick] *Horne* and *Lowth* render at Ps. 49:5. *supplant. Parkhurst* says "of my heels," rather "of my *supplanters*." Jeremiah speaks of "*heels* made bare," i. e. uncovered so that their enemies might easily supplant them.' Ed. The old tr. seems to give the true sense of this v.: 'Wherefore should I fear in the evil days, *when* iniquity shall compass me about, *as at* mine heels.' In the judgment of the best critics, among whom is *Lowth*, the word, rendered as a substantive 'my heels,' is a participle signifying 'my supplanters.' 'The purport of the question is plainly this—Why should I give way to fear and despondency, in the time of calamity, when the wickedness of my wealthy and powerful adversaries compasses me about, to supplant and overthrow me?' Bp. *Horne*. Scott.

Verses 6, 7.

(*Notes*, 52:6, 7. 62:8—10. *Job* 31:24—28. *Jer.* 9:23, 24. *Mark* 10:17—31, *v.* 24. 1 *Tim.* 6:17—19.)—*A ransom.* (7) That is, *an atonement*,

multitude of their riches;

7 None *of them* can by any means redeem *his* brother, nor [p] give to God a ransom for him:

8 (For [q] the redemption of their soul *is* precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)

9 [r] That he should still live for ever, *and* not [s] see corruption.

10 For he seeth *that* [t] wise men die, likewise [u] the fool and the brutish person perish, and [x] leave their wealth to others.

11 [y] Their inward thought *is*, *that* their houses *shall continue* for ever, *and* their dwelling-places to [*] all generations: [z] they call *their* lands after their own names.

12 Nevertheless man *being* [a] in honor abideth not: he is [b] like the beasts *that* perish.

13 This their way *is* [c] their folly: yet their posterity [†] approve their sayings. Selah.

p Matt. 16:26. 20:28. 1 Tim. 2:6. 1 Pet. 1:18.
q Job 36:18,19.
r 89:48. Prov. 10:2. 11:4. Ec. 8:8. Zech. 1:5. Luke 16:22,23.
s 16:10. John 8:51,52. Acts 2:27,31. 13:35—37.
t Ec. 2:16. 9:1,2. Rom. 5:12—14. Heb. 9:27.
u 73:22. 92:6,7. 94:8. Prov. 12:1. 30:2. Jer. 10:8.
x 17. 17:14. 39:6. Ec. 2:18,19,26. 5:13—16. Jer. 17:11. Luke 12:20. 1 Tim. 6:6—10.
y 5:9. 64:6. Ez. 33:10. Luke 11:39. Acts 8:22.
* Heb. *generation and generation.*
z Gen. 4:17. 1 Sam. 15:12. 2 Sam. 18:18.
a 20. 39:5. 82:7. Jam. 1:10,11. 1 Pet. 1:24.
b Ec. 3:18—21. 9:12.
c Luke 12:20. 1 Cor. 3:19.
† Heb. *delight in their mouth.* Jer. 44:17. Luke 11:47,48. 16:27,28.

and be made better by it, thereby have his heart enlarged in love, and thankfulness, and obedience, and may do that good with it which will be fruit abounding to his account; therefore it is not men's having riches that denominates them worldly, but their setting their hearts on them as the best things: so these worldly people are here described.

1. They confide in their wealth, *v.* 6. depend on it as their portion and happiness, and expect it will secure them from all evil, and supply them with all good, and that they need nothing else, no, not God Himself. Their gold is their hope, Job 31 : 24. so it becomes their god. Thus our Savior explains the difficulty of the salvation of rich people, Mark 10: 24. See 1 Tim. 6: 17.

2. They take a pride in their riches; *They boast in the multitude of them*, as if they were sure tokens of God's favor, and certain proofs of their own ingenuity and industry. They boast that they have all they would have, 10 : 3. and can set all the world at defiance; *I sit as a queen, and shall be a lady for ever;* therefore they call their lands after their own names, hoping thereby to perpetuate their memory; and, if their lands do retain the names by which they called them, it is but a poor honor; but they often change their names when they change their owners.

3. They flatter themselves with an expectation of the perpetuity of their worldly possessions, *v.* 11. and with this thought they please themselves. All thoughts are *inward*, but this thought is deeply rooted in their minds. A godly man has thoughts of the world, but they are outward; his inward thought is reserved for God and heavenly things; but a worldly man has only some foreign, floating thoughts of the things of God, while his fixed, inward thought is about the world; that lies nearest his heart, and is on the throne there. There it is industriously concealed; they cannot, for shame, say they expect their houses to continue for ever, but, inwardly, they think so. If *they* shall not continue for ever, yet they are so foolish as to think *their houses* shall;—and suppose they should, what good will they do them, when no longer theirs? But they will not; for the world passes away, and the fashion of it : all things are devoured by the teeth of time.

II. A demonstration of their folly herein. In general, *v.* 13. *This their way is their folly.* Note, The way of worldliness is a foolish way, contrary both to right reason and to our true interest. God Himself pronounced him *a fool* who thought his goods were laid up for many years, and that they would be a portion for his soul, Luke 12 : 19, 20. And yet the posterity of the worldly approve their sayings, say as they say, and do as they do. Note, The love of the world is a disease that runs in the blood; men have it by kind, till the grace of God cures it.

To prove the folly of carnal worldlings, he shows,

1. That, with all their wealth, they cannot save the life of the dearest friend they have in the world, nor purchase a reprieve for him when under the arrest of death, *v.* 7—9. But this looks further, to the eternal redemption which was to be wrought out by the Messiah, whom the O. T. saints had an eye to as the Redeemer. Immortality is a jewel of too great a value to be purchased by the wealth of this world. We are *not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold*, 1 Pet. 1 : 18, 19. The learned Dr. Hammond applies vs. 8 and 9 expressly to Christ; '*The redemption of the soul shall be precious*, highly prized, cost very dear; but, being once wrought, it shall cease for ever, never need to be repeated, Heb. 9 : 25, 26.—10 : 12. And He, the Redeemer, *shall yet live for ever, and shall not see corruption;* He shall rise again before he sees corruption, and then shall live for evermore,' Rev. 1 : 18. Christ did that for us, which all the riches of the world could not do; well therefore may He be dearer to us than any worldly things. Christ did that for us which a brother, a friend, could not do for us, no not one of the best estate or interest; therefore those that *love father or brother more than Him, are not worthy of Him.* This likewise shows the folly of worldly people, who sell their souls for what would never buy them.

2. That, with all their wealth, they cannot secure themselves from the stroke of death. The worldling sees, and it vexes him to see, that the *wise* and the *fool*, the *brutish*, alike die, *v.* 10. Therefore he cannot but expect that he also must die : Some rich people are wise, but they cannot out-wit death, nor evade his stroke; others are fools: these, though they do no good, yet perhaps do no great hurt, in the world: but that shall not excuse them; they shall die, as well as the wise that did mischief with their craft. Or, by the wise and the foolish we may understand the godly and the wicked; the godly die, and their death is their deliverance; the wicked perish, their death is their destruction ; but, however, they leave their wealth to others. They cannot continue with it; that is a frivolous plea, though once it served a turn, Jer. 41 : 8. *Slay us not, for we have treasures in the field.* They cannot carry it away with them, but must leave it. They cannot foresee who will enjoy it when they have left it; they must leave it, but to whom, they know not, perhaps to a fool, Eccl. 2 : 19. perhaps to an enemy.

And as men's wealth will stand them in no stead in a dying hour, so neither will their honor, *v.* 12. We will suppose a man advanced to the highest pinnacle of preferment; yet then his honor does not continue, nay, he himself does not.

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or *expiation:* which the word literally means. (1 *Pet.* 1:17—21.) SCOTT.

Verse 8.

Precious.] 'Rare, or not to be found, as prophecy was precious in the days of Eli, 1 *Sam.* 3:1.' The price of redemption, whether of the life or soul, was too high for any mere man to pay: so that the ancient fathers referred the v. to Christ, in this sense, 'No man can redeem his brother, He alone excepted, who is also God.' (*M. R.*)—Even a Jewish interpreter 'understands these words of the King Messiah, who, having died for the redemption of his brethren, afterwards liveth for ever, as was predicted by Isaiah, *Is.* 53:10.' *Bossuet.* ID.

Verse 9.

'As long as the world endureth this will be a vain endeavor.—Let him attempt it, if he please, on himself. Can he prolong his own life, . . . that it shall be perpetuated and never dissolved.' *Patrick.* And if even this be a vain attempt, who can redeem or save his own immortal soul from the awful sentence of eternal punishment ?—*See corruption.*] 16:8—11. ID.

V. 7—13. 'O the dreadful folly of most men, who seek for, hold, delight in, and depend on, things of this world, as if they were their God, their ALL IN ALL! and yet how unavailable to ransom the soul, perpetuate the life, or preserve from hell ! To judge of things aright, we must weigh time with eternity. Happiness is found neither in wealth nor poverty, but in Christ's righteousness and grace. Hope in death comes only from redemption through his blood. Not their own vaunts, nor the world's admiration, but the Word of God adjusts men's real character; nor does what we have here, but what we carry into the other world, constitute true riches.' BROWN.

Verse 12.

The word rendered 'abideth,' signifies *to lodge all night.* (*Notes*, 20. 73:18—22. *Ec.* 3:18—21. 9:4—6. *Heb.* 9:27, 28.) SCOTT.—*Nevertheless*, &c.] 'The sense seems to be, "Man is perpetually restless, never satisfied with his present situation."' COTT. BIB.

Verse 13.

Some render the first clause, 'This their way is their confidence,' meaning a rash and presumptuous confidence. 'So close does this folly stick to mankind, that they that succeed in their possessions make no benefit of this observation; but are as very fools as themselves, and tread in the steps of those that went before them.' *Patrick.* Indeed, ungodly men, from age to age, not only copy the example, but imbibe the principles, and adopt the maxims, of those who went before them in this path, as admired dictates of wisdom. (*Matt.* 6:22, 23. *Luke* 16:14, 15.) SCOTT.

(13, 14.) The late venerable and excellent Dr. *Stillman* proposed a different punctuation here; 'This their way *is* their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings like sheep.' (I. e. follow one another heedlessly in the same track.) 'Selah. They are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them;' &c. ED.

(14.) The most powerful and prosperous are soon carried into the grave, as sheep into the slaughter-house. There death feeds upon them. The word, repeatedly translated *the grave*, is often rendered *hell*, and probably means the unseen state, whether of body or soul. (16:8—11.)—'Christ's coming is as the morning, when the elect shall reign, with Christ their Head, over the wicked.' SCOTT.

(14, 15.) 'They also, like sheep, are placed in hades: Death is their shepherd; And the upright, in the time of judgment, Shall have dominion over them, When their frames, wasted in hades, *Shall come forth* from their habitation. Surely God will redeem my soul; From the power of hades He will verily take me." BOOTHR. in *Mor.*—*In the morning.*] 'What *morning* can be meant after death, but the morning of the resurrection, the time of judgment! It was the custom to hold courts of justice in the morning, Job 37:13. *Boothr.* considers the passage as plainly teaching the doctrines of a future state of retribution, of a resurrection and final judgment, and of the ultimate happy lot of the righteous.' MORISON.

(15.) The Psalmist in this v. expresses a full confidence, both that his soul would be preserved from hell, and his body raised from the grave; being received by the Lord to be for ever with Him. (31:5. 73:23—28, *Luke* 23:39—43. *John* 14:2, 3. *Acts* 7:54—60. 2 *Tim.* 1:11,12.)

14 [d] Like sheep [e] they are laid in the grave; [f] death shall feed on them; and [g] the upright shall have dominion over them in [h] the morning; and [i] their * beauty shall consume † in the grave, from their dwelling.

15 But [k] God will redeem my soul from the ‡ power of § the grave: for he [l] shall receive me. Selah.

16 [m] Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when [n] the glory of his house is increased;

17 For when he dieth [o] he shall carry nothing away; [p] his glory shall not descend after him.

18 Though ‖ while he lived he [q] blessed his soul: (and *men* [r] will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself:)

19 [¶] He shall go [s] to the generation of his fathers; they shall [t] never see light.

20 [u] Man *that is* in honor, and [x] under-

d 44:11. Jer. 12:3. Rom. 8:36.
e Job 17:13,14. 21:13,26. 30:23. Ec. 12:7. Is. 38:10,11.
f Job 24:19,20.
g 47:3. Dan. 7:22. Mal. 4:3. Luke 22:30. 1 Cor. 6:2. Rev. 2:26,27. 20: 4,5.
h 30:5. Hos. 6:3.
i 39:11. Job 4:21.
* Or, *strength.*
† Or, *the grave* being *an habitation to every one of them.* Job 30:23.
k 31:5. 56:13. 73:24. Hos. 13:14. Rev. 5:9. 14:13.
‡ Heb. *hand.*
§ Or, *hell.* 16:10. 86:13. 89:48.
l Luke 23:46. John 14:3. Acts 7:59.
m 5. 37:1,7. Esth. 3:1—6. Prov. 23: 12.
n Gen. 31:1. Esth. 5:11. Rev. 21:24, 26.
o Job 1:21. Ec. 5:15. Luke 16:24. 1 Tim. 6:7.
p Is. 5:14. 10:3. 1 Cor. 15:43.
‖ Heb. *in his life.*
q Deut. 29:19. Hos. 12:8. Luke 12:19.
r 1 Sam. 25:6. Esth. 3:2. Acts 12:20—22. Rev. 13:3,4.
¶ Heb. The soul *shall go.* Ec. 3:21. 12:7. Luke 12:20. 16:22,23.
s Gen. 15:15. 1 K. 16:6.
t 56:13. Job 33:30. Matt. 8:12. 22: 13. Jude 13.
u 12. Esth. 5:11—14. 7:10.
x Job 4:21.

He tarries not all night; this world is an inn, in which his stay is so short, he has but a baiting-time; *He is like the beasts that perish;* he must as certainly die as the beasts, and his death will be as final a period to his state in this world, as theirs is; his dead body likewise will putrify as theirs do; and, frequently, (so Hammond,) the greatest honors and wealth, unjustly gotten by the parent, descend not to any one of his posterity.

3. That their condition on the other side death will be very miserable. The world they dote on, will not only not save them from death, but will sink them so much the lower into hell, *v.* 14. *Like sheep they are laid in the grave.* Their prosperity did but feed them like sheep for the slaughter, Hos. 4: 16. and then death comes and shuts them up in the grave, like fat sheep in a fold, *to be brought forth to the day of wrath,* Job 21: 30. Multitudes of them, like flocks of sheep, dead of some disease, are thrown into the grave, and there death shall feed on them, the second death, *the worm that dies not,* Job 24: 40. Their own guilty consciences, like so many vultures, shall be continually preying on them, with, *Son, remember,* Luke 15: 25. Death insults and triumphs over them. Is. 14: 9, &c. While a saint can ask proud Death, *Where is thy sting?* Death will ask the proud sinner, *Where is thy wealth, thy pomp?* and the more he was fattened with prosperity, the more sweetly will death feed on him. And in the morning of the resurrection, when all that sleep in the dust shall awake, Dan. 12: 2. *the upright shall have dominion over them;* shall be assessors with Christ in passing judgment on them, and shall applaud the justice of God in their ruin. Let us now judge of things, as they will appear at that day. And what will become of all the beauty of the wicked? Alas! it shall all be consumed in the grave from their dwelling; but the beauty of holiness the grave cannot touch, or damage; but what beauty can be there where is nothing but the blackness of darkness for ever?

V. 15—20. Good reason is here given to good people,

I. Why they should not be afraid of death. There is no cause for that fear, *v.* 15. He had showed *v.* 14. how miserable the dead are that die in their sins; here he shows how blessed the dead are that die in the Lord. The distinction of men's outward condition, makes none at death; rich and poor meet in the grave: but the distinction of men's spiritual state, though, in this life, it makes a small difference, where all things come alike to all, yet, at and after death, it makes a very great one; *Now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* The believing hopes of the soul's redemption from the grave, and reception to glory, to Himself, are the great support and joy of the children of God in a dying hour.

II. Why they should not be afraid of the prosperity and power of wicked people in this world, which, as it is their pride and joy, has often been the envy, and grief, and terror, of the righteous; which yet, all things considered, there is no reason for.

1. He supposes they will be under a strong temptation to envy the prosperity of sinners, and to be afraid that they, with their wealth and interest, will run down religion and religious people, and be found the only truly happy; for he supposes, (1.) That they are made rich, and so are enabled to give law to all about them. *Pecuniæ obediunt omnes et omnia—Every person and every thing obey the commanding influence of money.* (2.) That the glory of their house, from very small beginnings, is increased greatly, which naturally makes men haughty, insolent, and imperious, *v.* 16. (3.) That they are very easy and secure in themselves, and in their own minds, *v.* 18. Note, It is of great consequence to consider what that is in which we bless our souls; believers *bless themselves in the God of truth,* Isa. 65: 16. carnal people in the wealth of the world. Many precious souls lie under God's curse, who yet do bless themselves; they applaud that in themselves which God condemns, and speak peace to themselves, when God denounces war against them. Yet this is not all. (4.) They are in good reputation among their neighbors; '*Men will praise thee,* and cry thee up, as having done well for thyself in raising such an estate and family.' This is the sentiment of all narrow-minded, selfish worldlings, that those do best for themselves that do most for their bodies, by heaping up riches, though, at the same time, nothing is done [for the better nature,] for the soul, for eternity; and accordingly they *bless the covetous, whom the Lord abhors,* 10: 3. If men were to be our judges, it were our wisdom thus to recommend ourselves to their good opinion: but what will it avail us to be approved of men, if God condemn us? Dr. Hammond understands this of the good man here spoken to, for it is the second person, not of the wicked man spoken *of;* '*He, in his life-time, blessed his soul, but thou shalt be praised for doing well unto thyself.* The worldling magnified himself; but thou that dost not, like him, speak well of thyself, but dost well for thyself, in securing thy eternal welfare, thou shalt be praised, if not of men, yet of God, which will be thine everlasting honor.'

2. He suggests what is sufficient to take off the strength of the temptation, by directing us to look forward to the end of prosperous sinners; 73: 17. In the other world, they will be (1.) Never the better, for all the wealth and prosperity they are now so fond of, *v.* 17. The greatest and wealthiest cannot therefore be the happiest, because they are never the better for their living in this world: but those have something to show in the other world, for their living in this, who can say, through grace, that though they came corrupt, and sinful, and spiritually naked, into it, they go renewed, and sanctified, and well-clothed with the righteousness of Christ, out of it. (2.) Infinitely the worse, for all their abuses of their wealth and prosperity, *v.*

If this be left out, or indeed not distinctly and fully taken into the account, what does the solemn exordium of the Ps. introduce? (1—4.) For no other important distinction between the righteous and the wicked, in respect of happiness, is mentioned, or even intimated. SCOTT.

Verses 16, 17.

Worldly men count wealth and magnificence *their glory:* (*Gen.* 31: 1.) but holiness, being the moral image of God, is the true *glory* of our rational nature; and this will accompany us to heaven. ID.

Verse 18.

Mark in this v. the shortsightedness of worldly people, who would be thought the only practically wise. Mark the degeneracy of our nature. Man is so formed by his Creator, in reference to the universe, that obedience to the command, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' puts him in harmony with God's world, and prepares for him the greatest amount of real happiness. But how is the man laughed at as a visionary, who attempts to put this great law of his moral nature in practice, even too by professed Christians! Alas! how degenerate is that civilization, which exposes such an one to destitution and contempt, while that very selfishness, which its narrow philosophy eulogises as 'doing well' for its depraved practiser, is praised, and held up to our children, as an example of energy, enterprise, and practical wisdom. Wonderful wisdom, which has brought men to such misery as 'the creation groaneth' under! It has been well said—'That *virtue* which interests the whole human kind, is eminently superior to all the rest. True it is, indeed, that this is generally lost sight of altogether. In the appreciation of the virtues, the scale of their worth is commonly reversed. Most men think first of themselves, then of their families, then of their country, and seldom expend a thought upon humanity at large. There are even few who recognize the happiness of the species as the aim of man's existence, and the subordination of all else to this. Yet nature shows most evidently that she does all for the species; she universally sacrifices individuals to its preservation. Moreover, desire of self-preservation inheres in all animals, love of family and of country in a smaller number, but love of the entire species is a distinguishing character of man in his best estate. Is it to be expected that man will speedily practise the virtue of universal love? No; hitherto the happiness of countries has been sacrificed to that of families and of individuals; but general philanthropy is commonly decried and scouted as *an aberration of the understanding;* and this, too, in despite of the express command of Christianity.' *Spurzheim.* Nat. Laws. ED.

Verse 19.

'The soul shall go, &c.' (*M.*) Death will convey one generation after another from the *light* of this world; and how awful are the words, 'They shall not see light for ever!' (2 *Pet.* 2:17. *Jude* 11—13.) This fully proves, that the Psalmist was assured, the righteous would 'see light' after death, and for ever. (36:5—9.) SCOTT.

Verse 20.

He who in prosperity [takes no pains to know and practise God's laws] has no understanding, [knowledge, or wisdom,] to use the gifts of God to his glory, but abuses them in wickedness, willingly renounces the grand distinction between a rational creature, and the beasts that perish. As to this world, he gratifies his [lower appetites and inclinations, not subjecting them to the higher, and an enlightened intellect] and dies, as beasts do: but 'after death is the judgment.' (12.) SCOTT. ED.

standeth not, [y] is like the beasts *that* perish.

PSALM L.

The mighty God comes in awful majesty from Zion, to judge his people, in the sight of the assembled world, 1—4. He commands that the saints be gathered to Him; and declares that the heavens shall declare his righteousness, 5, 6. He delights not in legal sacrifices, but in spiritual worship, 7—15. Hypocrites are rebuked and silenced, 16—21. The ungodly are solemnly warned, and salvation is promised to the upright, 22, 23.

A Psalm [*] of Asaph.

THE [a] mighty God, [b] *even* the LORD, [c] hath spoken, and [d] called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.

2 [e] Out of Zion, [f] the perfection of beauty, [g] God hath shined.

3 [h] Our God shall come, and shall not [i] keep silence: [k] a fire shall devour before

y 73:18,19.
* Or, *for Asaph.* 73:—83: *titles.* 1 Chr. 15:17. 16:37. 25:2,6. 2 Chr. 29:30.
a 145:3—6. Gen. 17:1. Josh. 22:22. Neh. 9:6,32. Jer. 10:6. 32:19.
b 1 K. 18:21,36,37. Is. 37:20. 54:5.
c Is. 1:2. Am. 3:8.
d 49:1,2. 113:3. Mal. 1:11. Matt. 25:32.
e Is. 12:6. 26:21. Hos. 5:15. Hab. 2:20. Heb. 12:22—26.
f 48:2. 87:2,3. 90:17. Cant. 5:16. Zech. 9:17.
g 80:1. Deut. 33:2. Hab. 3:3,4. Rev. 1:16. 21:23.
h 49:14. 63:3.
i 21. 83:1. Is. 42:13,14. 65:6,7.
k 97:3. Ex. 19:18. Lev. 10:2. Num. 16:35. Deut. 9:3. 1 K. 19:11,12. Dan. 7:10. Nah. 1:5—7. Hab. 3:5. Mal. 3:2,3. 4:1. Matt. 3:12. 2 Thes. 1:8,9. Heb. 2:3. 10:28,29. 12:18—21, 29.

19. *The soul shall go to the generation of his fathers,* his worldly-wicked fathers, whose sayings he approved, and whose steps he trod in, his fathers who would not hearken to God's word, Zech. 1: 4. never to see light, never to have the least glimpse of comfort and joy, being condemned to utter darkness. Be not afraid then of their pomp and power; the end of the man that is in honor, if he be not wise and good, will be miserable; if he understand not, he is to be pitied rather than envied. A fool, a wicked man, in honor, is really as despicable an animal as any under the sun; he is *like the beasts that perish,* *v.* 20. nay, better be a beast, than a man that makes himself like a beast. Men in honor, that understand, that know and do their duty, and make conscience of it, are as gods, and children of the Most High. But men in honor, that understand not, that [remain ignorant of God's laws,] proud, selfish, sensual, oppressive, are as beasts, and they shall perish, like the beasts, ingloriously as to this world, though not, like the beasts, indemnified as to another. Let prosperous sinners therefore be afraid for themselves, but let not even suffering saints be afraid of them.

Ps. L. This Ps. as the former, is a Ps. of instruction, not of prayer or praise; it is intended, 1. As a reproof to the carnal Jews, both those that rested in the external performances of their religion, and were remiss in the more excellent duties of prayer and praise; and those that expounded the law to others, but lived wicked lives themselves. 2. As a prediction of the abolishing of the ceremonial law, and of the introducing of a spiritual way of worship, in and by the kingdom of the Messiah, *John* 4: 23, 24. 3. As a representation of the day of judgment, in which God will call men to an account concerning their observance of those things which they have thus been taught; men shall be judged *according to what is written in the books;* therefore Christ is fitly represented speaking as a Judge, then when He speaks as a Lawgiver.

V. 1—6. Probably Asaph was not only the chief musician, who was to put a tune to this Ps. but also the penman of it; for we read, that in Hezekiah's time they praised God *in the words of David, and of Asaph the seer,* 2 Chr. 29: 30.

1. The court is called, in the name of the King of kings, *v.* 1. *The mighty God, even the Lord;* El, Elohim, Jehovah, the God of infinite power, justice, and mercy, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. God is the Judge, the Son of God came for judgment into the world, and the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of judgment. All the earth is called to attend, not only because God's controversy with his people Israel might safely be referred to any man of reason; but because all men are concerned to know the right way of worshipping God, in spirit and in truth; because, when the kingdom of the Messiah should be set up, all should be instructed in the evangelical worship, and invited to join in it, see Mal. 1: 11. Acts 10: 34. and because, in the day of final judgment, all shall be gathered together, to receive their doom, and every man shall give an account of himself unto God.

2. The judgment set, and the Judge taking his seat. Here is allusion to that, Deut. 33: 2. When God comes to reprove Israel for their hypocrisy, and to send forth his Gospel to supersede the legal institutions, it is said here, (1.) *He shall shine out of Zion,* as then from the top of Sinai, *v.* 2. Because in Zion his oracle was now fixed, thence his judgments on that provoking people were denounced, and his orders issued for their execution, Joel 2: 1. *Blow ye the trumpet in Zion.* Sometimes there are more than ordinary appearances of God's presence and power working with and by his Word and ordinances, to convince men's consciences, and reform and refine his church; and then God, who always dwells in Zion, may be said to *shine out of Zion.* Moreover, He may be said to *shine out of Zion,* because the Gospel, which set up spiritual worship, was to *go forth from mt Zion,* Is. 2: 3. Mic. 4: 2. and the preachers of i were to *begin at Jerusalem,* Luke 24: 47. Christians are said to come unto mt. Zion, to receive their instructions, Heb. 12: 22, 28. Zion is here called *the perfection of beauty,* because it was the holy hill; and holiness is indeed the perfection of beauty. (2.) He *shall come, and not keep silence,* shall no longer seem to wink at the sins of men, *v.* 21. but shall show his displeasure, and cause that mystery to be published by his apostles, which had long *lain hid, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs,* Eph. 3: 5, 6. and that the partition-wall of the ceremonial law should be taken down; this

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The important truths, which relate to the eternal state of the righteous and the wicked, are equally interesting to all the inhabitants of the earth, 'both high and low, rich and poor, together.' Blessed be God, they are plainly proposed to us in his holy Word; and had it not been for man's dislike to such subjects, they would have been universally heard and understood.—We should, however, still endeavor to illustrate and enforce these important instructions, by every method which can soften prejudice, or gain attention: especially by showing their influence on our own hearts [in regulating and harmonizing our desires], in mortifying [their inordinateness, as] covetousness, ambition, envy, discontent, selfishness and sensuality; in raising us above the fear of man, and rendering us constant and cheerful in doing the will and professing the truth of God, amidst the successful enmity of persecutors or oppressors.—Had not the ransom of the death of Christ intervened, the body of every sinner must have finally been left in the grave, and his soul in hell; for 'the redemption was too precious' to be otherwise effected, and 'must have been let alone for ever.' (*Luke* 12: 15—21.)—Death alone can convince men in general of the folly of laying up treasures on earth: and were there no future state, the most wealthy and honorable would soon be levelled with the beasts that perish: but in the prospect of the resurrection, and of eternity, the most prosperous of the wicked are infinitely more wretched and base. In this light, let the believer view the riches and the children of this world, that he may not be tempted to envy or impatience, or to fear evil consequences to himself and to the church of God, when sinners grow rich and honorable. (1 *Cor.* 6: 1—6. *Rev.* 3: 20—22.)—Is there a rational creature, who can prefer the lot of the rich sinner to that of poor Lazarus? (*Luke* 16: 19—31.) yet is not this more than brutish stupidity universal to the human race, if left to themselves? [For brutes obey their Creator in obeying all the instincts given them, but men, the vast majority, (in fact Christ is the only exception,) will not, and place selfish acquisition for sinful indulgences above the happiness flowing from the activity of the better nature, which indulges the lower propensities only in harmony with the higher impulses. ED.] What need then have we of revelation, and of the teaching of the Holy Spirit; when, with all our boasted powers, we are prone to such infatuation, in the most important of all concerns! O Lord, deliver us from [disobedience, and] the love of the world, and teach us to set our affections on things above! (*Col.* 3: 1—4.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. L. This is the first of the 12 Pss. ascribed to Asaph; respecting which, compared with David's, some are wont to mark a difference as to style and elegance of composition, giving the preference to those of David, especially for smoothness, softness and delicacy.—*Patrick* refers this Ps. to the time of Hezekiah; others, of David; and others still to the time of the Babylonish captivity.—Some, as *Kimchi,* (though *Gill* says K. interprets it of the day of judgment,) and *Jarchi,* take occasion, from the first five vs. to interpret the Ps. prophetically of the coming of the Messiah, to redeem the people from their enemies; but *Rosenm.* noting the above, justly observes respecting these vs. that they are only an exordium, to awaken the attention of the reader or hearer.—And the Asaph referred to, he thinks, was undoubtedly the son of Berechiah. See 1 Chr. 6:24. 15:17. 16:4, 5. also *Rosenm.* ED. 'The imagery in the introduction seems borrowed from the giving of the law at Sinai, Deut. 33:2. only God's glory, instead of shining forth from the wilderness, is displayed from Zion. The scene is that of supreme judgment, but extends to Israel only, not to the world at large. Some have applied this Ps. to the day of general judgment; and others, as Bps. *Horne* and *Horsley,* to the promulgation of the Gospel in the end of the Jewish dispensation; but, in our view, the simple topic is, the danger of hypocrisy.' WILLIAMS.

Title.] (2 *Chr.* 29:30.) Some expositors are of opinion, that 'Asaph the seer' was a different person from Asaph the Levite, who was one of the chief singers in the days of David; (*M. R.*) that he lived at a later period; and that it is not unlikely he was contemporary with Hezekiah, and referred in this Ps. to the hypocrisy of the Jews in general, even during Hezekiah's reformation. SCOTT.

Verses 1, 2.

Here the mighty God, (or 'the God of gods,' *Josh.* 22:21—29.) JEHOVAH Himself is introduced with inexpressible solemnity. The words 'perfection of beauty' may be referred to God Himself; who appears in the Gospel, at once infinitely glorious and infinitely lovely. (27:4—6. 90:16—17. 2 *Cor.* 3:17, 18. 4:5, 6.) ID.

Verse 3.

(16—21.) God is said to 'keep silence,' when He exercises long-

him, and [l] it shall be very tempestuous round about him.

4 He shall [m] call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may [n] judge his people.

5 [o] Gather [p] my saints together unto me; those that have [q] made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

6 And [r] the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for [s] God *is* Judge himself. [t] Selah.

7 ¶ [u] Hear, [x] O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and [y] I will testify against thee: [z] I *am* God, *even* thy God.

8 [a] I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt-offerings, *to have been* continually before me.

9 I will [b] take no bullock out of thy house, *nor* he-goats out of thy folds.

10 For [c] every beast of the forest *is* mine, *and* [d] the cattle upon a thousand hills.

11 I [e] know all the fowls of the mountains:

l 18:7 -15. 97:4,5.
m 6. Deut. 4:36. 30:19. 31:28. 32:1. Is. 1:2. Mic. 6:1,2.
n 96:13. 98:9. Is. 11:3,4. John 5:22, 23.
o Matt. 24:31. 1 Thes. 4:16,17. 2 Thes. 2:1.
p 97:10. Deut. 33:2,3. Prov. 2:8. Zech. 14:5. 1 Cor. 6:2,3. 1 Thes. 3:13. Jude 14.
q Ex. 24:3—8. Matt. 26:28. Heb. 9: 10—23. 13:20.
r 97:6. Rom. 2:5. Rev. 16:5—7. 19:2.
s 75:7. Gen. 18:25. John 5:22,23. Rom. 14:9—12. 2 Cor. 5:10. Rev. 20:11,12.
t 7:3—5. 9:16.
u 81:8. Is. 1:18. Jer. 2:4,5,9.
x 81:10—12. Ex. 19:5,6. Deut. 26:17, 18. 1 Sam. 12:24—25.
y Deut. 31:19—21. 2 K. 17:13. Neh. 9:29,30. Mal. 3:5.
z Ex. 20:2. 2 Chr. 28:5. Ez. 20:5,7,19, 20. Zech. 13:9.
a 40:6—8. 51:16. Is. 1:11,&c. Jer. 7. 21—23. Hos. 6:6. Heb. 10:4—10.
b Is. 43:23,24. Mic. 6:6—8. Acts 17:25.
c 8:6—8. 104:24,25. Gen. 1:24,25. 2: 19. 8:17. 9:2,3. 1 Chr. 29:14—16. Job 40:15,&c. Jer. 27:5,6. Dan. 2:38.
d 104:14. Gen. 31:9. Jon. 4:11.
e 104:12. 147:9. Gen. 1:20—22. Job 38:41. 39:13—18,26—30. Matt. 6:26. 10:29—31. Luke 12:24.

shall now no longer be concealed. In the great day, *our God shall come, and shall not keep silence,* but shall make those to hear his judgment that would not hearken to his law. (3.) His appearance should be very majestic and terrible; *a fire shall devour before Him.* The fire of his judgments shall make way for the rebukes of his Word, in order to the awakening of the hypocritical nation of the Jews, that the sinners in Zion, being afraid of that devouring fire, Is. 33:14. might be startled out of their sins. When his gospel-kingdom was to be set up, Christ *came to send fire on the earth,* Luke 12:49. The Spirit was given in cloven tongues as of fire, introduced by a rushing, mighty wind, which was very tempestuous, Acts 2:2, 3. And, in the last judgment, Christ shall come in flaming fire, 2 Thess. 1:8. See Dan. 7:9. Heb. 10:27. (4.) As on Sinai He came with *ten thousands of his saints,* so He shall now *call to the heavens from above,* to notice this solemn process, *v.* 4. as Moses often *called heaven and earth to witness* against Israel, Deut. 4:26. 31:28. 32:1. and God by his prophets, Isa. 1:2. Mic. 6:2. The equity of the judgment of the great day will be attested and applauded by heaven and earth, by saints and angels, even all the holy myriads.

3. The parties summoned, *v.* 5. This may be understood either, (1.) Of saints indeed; to them the following denunciations of wrath do not belong; rebukes to hypocrites ought not to be terrors to the upright. Here is given as a character of saints, that they have made a covenant with God by sacrifice. Note, Those only shall be gathered to God as his saints, who have, in sincerity, covenanted with Him, taken Him to be their God, and given up themselves to Him to be his people, and thus joined themselves to the Lord. It is only by sacrifice, by Christ the great Sacrifice, that sinners can covenant with God, so as to be accepted of Him. There must be an atonement made for the breach of the first covenant, before we can be admitted again into covenant. Or, (2.) It may be understood of saints in profession, such as the people of Israel were, who are called *a kingdom of priests,* and *a holy nation,* Ex. 19:6. They were, as a body politic, taken into covenant with God, the covenant of peculiarity, and it was done with great solemnity *by sacrifice,* Ex. 24:8.

4. The issue of this solemn trial foretold, *v.* 6. *The heavens,* those heavens called to be witnesses to the trial, *v.* 4. the *people in heaven, shall say, Hallelujah. True and righteous are his judgments,* Rev. 19:1, 2. The righteousness of God, in all the rebukes of his Word and Providence, in the establishment of his Gospel, and especially in the judgment of the great day, is what the heavens will declare. (1.) It will be universally known, and proclaimed to all the world. (2.) It will be incontestably owned and proved. Even sinners' own consciences will subscribe to it, and hell as well as heaven will be forced to acknowledge the righteousness of God. The reason given, is, *for God is Judge Himself,* Rom. 3:5, 6.

V. 7—15. God is here dealing with those that placed all their religion in the observances of the ceremonial law, and thought those sufficient.

I. He lays down the original contract between Him and Israel, in which they had avouched Him to be their God, and He them to be his people, and so both parties were agreed, *v.* 7. Note, We may comfortably expect God will speak to us, when we are ready to hear what He says.

II. He puts a slight on the legal sacrifices, *v.* 8, &c.

1. As looking back to the use of these under the law. God had a controversy with the Jews; but not for their neglect of the ceremonial institutions; no, they had not been wanting in the observance of them, and these, they thought, would both expiate and excuse their neglect of the weightier matters of the law. Nay, if they had, in some degree, neglected these institutions, yet that should not have been the cause of God's quarrel with them, for it was but a small offence, in comparison with the immoralities of their conversation. They thought God was mightily beholden to them for their many sacrifices; but He here shows them, He did not need their sacrifices, *v.* 9, 10. and could not be benefited by them; nor, if they were in this matter righteous, was He the better, *v.* 13. *Will I eat the flesh of bulls?* It is said indeed of the demons whom the Gentiles worshipped, that they did *eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drink the wine of their drink-offerings,* Deut. 32:38. but will the great Jehovah be thus entertained? No, *to obey is better than sacrifice,* and to love God and our neighbor, *better than all burnt-offerings;* so much better, that God, by his prophets, often told them that their sacrifices were not only not acceptable, but abominable, to Him, while they lived in sin, see Prov. 15:8. Isa. 1:11, &c.—66:3. Jer. 6:20. Amos 5:21. They are therefore here warned not to rest in these performances; but to conduct themselves, in all other instances, toward God as their God.

2. This may be considered as looking forward to the abolishing of these by the Gospel of Christ. Thus Hammond understands it. When God shall set up the kingdom of the Messiah, He will no more have these to be *continually before Him, v.* 8, 9. For indeed He never appointed this, as that which He had any need of, or took any pleasure in; but only to prefigure the great sacrifice his own Son should, in the fulness of time, offer on the cross, to make atonement for sin, and all the other spiritual sacrifices of acknowledgment, with which God, through Christ, will be well pleased.

III. He directs to the best sacrifices of prayer and praise, as those which, under the law, were preferred before all burnt-offerings and sacrifices, and on which then the greatest stress was laid, and which now, under the Gospel, come in the room of those carnal ordinances imposed until the times of reformation. 1. A penitent acknowledgment of our sins: offer to God *confession;* so some, who understand it of the confession of sin, in order to our giving glory to God, and taking shame to ourselves, that we may never return to it, 51:17. If the sin was not abandoned, the sin-offering was not accepted. 2. Thanks for his mercies to us;

suffering, and does not immediately punish men for their sins. (*Is.* 42: 13—17, *v.* 14. 65:3—7. *Acts* 14:11—18. 17:30, 31.)—When [at last] Christ came among the Jews, though in the character of a Savior, they could not 'abide the day of his coming;' and his righteous indignation, like unquenchable fire, burnt up the chaff; i. e. He destroyed, by awful judgments, the bulk of the nation, which persisted in rejecting Him. (*Mal.* 3:1—6. 4:1. *Matt.* 3:7—12.) But his second coming to judge the world, to perfect the salvation of his people, and to punish the wicked, will be attended with still more tremendous displays of his power and justice, especially against such as neglect, oppose, or pervert and corrupt his Gospel.—'The Jewish rabbies affirm the subject of this Ps. to be, that judgment which will be executed in the days of Messiah:—ignorant, alas! that they themselves, and their people, are now become the unhappy objects of that judgment.' Bp. *Horne.*

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Verses 4—6.

The whole human race indeed must appear in judgment: yet the professed worshippers of God, who have his oracles and ordinances among them, are chiefly spoken of, in all the descriptions given us in Scripture of that solemn season; because these descriptions were especially given for their instruction, warning, or encouragement. (*Matt.* 25:31—46. *Rom.* 2:7—16. 1 *Cor.* 4:3—5. 2 *Cor.* 5:9—12. 2 *Thes.* 1:5—10. *Rev.* 20:11—15.)—As 'the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son;' it must be sufficiently manifest, who it is, of whom it is said, 'For God is judge Himself,' even Emmanuel, the second person in the sacred Trinity, 'God manifest in the flesh.' (51:16, 17. 96:11—13. *John* 5:20—27.)

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(5.) 'This v. is curiously rendered in *Luther's* Bible: "Gather me mine holy ones That regard the covenant more than offering."' MOR. *Gather.*] 'I. e. ye angels, gather, &c. but spoken poetically, not as if they were actually to do it, but only to continue the metaphor, and representation of the judgment here mentioned.' POOLE.

(6.) 'The earth was called v. 4. He mentions the heavens only because the most impartial and considerable witness. Angels understand things more thoroughly and certainly, and neither can nor will lie for God: therefore their testimony is more valuable. Or the meaning is, God would convince the people of his righteousness, and of their own wickedness, by terrible thunderings, and lightnings, and storms, or other dreadful signs wrought by Him in the heaven or the air.'

ID.

Verses 7—15.

The Israelites in general confided, and gloried, in their relation to JEHOVAH as *their* God. They were prone to place their chief dependence on legal sacrifices, without attending to their typical import, or offering them in a proper frame of mind. (*Prov.* 15:8, 9. *Is.* 1:10—15. 58:1—7. 66:3, 4. *Jer.* 7:1—7, 21—23. *Am.* 5:21—24. *Rom.* 2:17—29. *Heb.* 10:26, 27. *former part.*) To lead their minds therefore to an attention to the more inward and essential parts of religion, and to prepare them for a more spiritual dispensation; they were here instructed that the Lord's controversy with them would not be about the omis

and [f] the wild beasts of the field *are* * mine.

12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for [g] the world *is* mine, and [h] the fulness thereof.

13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?

14 [i] Offer unto God thanksgiving; and [k] pay thy vows unto the most High:

15 And [l] call upon me in the day of trouble: [m] I will deliver thee, and thou shalt [n] glorify me.

[*Practical Observations.*]

16 ¶ But unto [o] the wicked God saith, [p] What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or *that* [q] thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?

17 Seeing thou [r] hatest instruction, and [s] castest my words behind thee.

18 When thou sawest a thief, then [t] thou consentedst with him, and † hast been [u] partaker with adulterers.

19 Thou ‡ givest thy mouth to evil, and [x] thy tongue frameth deceit.

20 Thou sittest *and* [y] speakest against thy brother; thou [z] slanderest [a] thine own mother's son.

Offer to God thanksgiving, every day, often every day, *Seven times a day will I praise Thee*, and on special occasions; and *this shall please the Lord*, if it come from an humble, thankful heart, full of love to Him, and joy in Him, *better than ox or bullocks*, 69: 30, 31. 3. Performing our covenants with Him; *Pay thy vows to the Most High*, forsake thy sins, and do thy duty better, pursuant to the solemn promises thou hast made Him to that purport. Hammond applies this to the great gospel-ordinance of the eucharist, in which we are to thank God for his great love in sending his Son to save us, pay our vows of love and duty to Him, and give alms. 4. In the day of distress, we must apply ourselves to God by faithful and fervent prayer, *v.* 15. *Call upon Me in the day of trouble*, and not on any other god. Thus must we keep up our communion with God; meeting Him with our prayers when He afflicts us, and with our praises when He delivers us.

V. 16—23. God, by the psalmist, having instructed his people in the right way of worshipping Him, and keeping up their communion with Him, here directs his speech to the wicked, to hypocrites, whether Jewish or Christian.

I. The charge.

1. Invading and usurping the honors and privileges of religion, *v.* 16. This is a challenge to those that are really profane, but seemingly godly, to show what title they have to the cloak of religion, and by what authority they wear it, when they use it only to cover and conceal the abominable impieties of their hearts and lives. Some think it points prophetically at the Scribes and Pharisees, and the account our blessed Savior gives of them, Mat. 23: and that of Paul, Rom. 2: 21, 22. makes this expostulation here agree very well to them. But it is applicable to all those that are practisers of iniquity, and yet professors of piety, especially if withal they be preachers of it.

2. They are charged with transgressing and violating the laws and precepts of religion. (1.) With a daring contempt of the Word of God, *v.* 17. *Thou hatest instruction.* They loved to give instruction, and to tell others what they should do, for this fed their pride, and made them look great, and by this craft they got their living; but they hated to receive instruction from God Himself, for that would be a check and mortification. Thou hatest discipline. In their conversations they cast God's Word behind them, did not care for seeing that rule they were resolved not to be ruled by. This is despising the commandment of the Lord. (2.) A close confederacy with the worst of sinners, *v.* 18. See Rom. 1: 32. (3.) A constant persisting in the worst of tongue-sins, *v.* 19. '*Thou givest thy mouth to evil;* not only allowest thyself in, but addictest thyself wholly to, all manner of evil speaking;' lying, and slandering. *Thy tongue frames deceit;* thou art an overbearing judge, a deliberate slanderer, *v.* 20. *Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother.* Those that do ill themselves, commonly delight in speaking ill of others.

II. The proof, *v.* 21. Their sins will be proved on sinners beyond contradiction, in the judgment; '*I will reprove thee*, or convince thee, so thou shalt have not one word to say for thyself.' The day is coming when impenitent sinners will have their mouths for ever stopped, and be struck speechless. What confusion will they be filled with, when God shall set their sins in order before their eyes!

III. The Judge's patience, and the sinner's abuse of that patience. Note, The patience of God is very great toward provoking sinners, and the more wonderful, because the sinner makes such an ill use of it; '*Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself*, as weak and forgetful as thyself, as false to my word as thyself, nay, as much a friend to sin as thyself.' Sinners take God's silence for consent, and his patience for connivance; therefore the longer they are reprieved

[f] Is. 56:9. Ez. 14:15,16.
* Heb. *with me.*
[g] 24:1,2. 115:15,16. Ex. 19:5. Deut. 10:14. Job 41:11. 1 Cor. 10:26,28.
[h] 104:24. 145:15,16. Gen. 1:11,12,28—30. 8:17.
[i] 23. 69:30,31. 107:21,22. 147:1. Hos. 14:2. 1 Thes. 5:18. Heb. 13:15. 1 Pet. 2:5,9.
[k] 56:12. 76:11. 116:12—14,17,18. Lev. 27:2,&c. Num. 30:2,&c. Deut. 23:21. Ec. 5:4,5. Nah. 1:15.
[l] 77:2. 91:15. 107:6,13,19,28. 2 Chr. 33:12,13. Job 22:27. Luke 22:44. Acts 16:25. Jam. 5:13.
[m] 34:3,4. 66:13—20. Luke 17:15—18.
[n] 23. 22:23. Matt. 5:16. John 15:8. 1 Pet. 4:11,14.
[o] Is. 48:22. 55:6,7. Ez. 18:27.
[p] Prov. 26:7. Is. 1:15. 48:1,2. 58:1—7. Jer. 7:4—7. Matt. 7:3—5,22,23. Acts 19:13—16. Rom. 2:17—24. 1 Cor. 9:27. 2 Pet. 2:15.
[q] 25:14. 78:36—38. Ex. 20:37,38. Heb. 8:9.
[r] Prov. 1:7,28,29. 5:12,13. 8:36. 12:1. John 3:20. Rom. 1:28. 2 Thes. 2:10—12. 2 Tim. 4:3,4.
[s] Neh. 9:26. Is. 5:24. Jer. 8:9. 18:12. 36:23,&c.
[t] Prov. 1:10—19. Is. 5:23. Mic. 7:3. Rom. 1:32. Eph. 5:11—13.
† Heb. *thy portion* was *with adulterers.* Lev. 20:10. Job 31:9—11. Prov. 2: 16—19. 7:19—23. Jer. 5:8,9. Heb. 13:4.
[u] Matt. 23:30. 1 Tim. 5:22.
‡ Heb. *sendest.* 52:2—4. Jer. 9:5.
[x] 5:9. 10:7. 12:2,3. 36:3,4. 55:12,21. 64:3—5. Is. 59:3,4. Hos. 4:2. Rom. 3:13,14. Jam. 3:5—9. Rev. 21:8.
[y] 31:18. Matt. 5:11. Luke 22:65.
[z] Lev. 19:16. Prov. 10:18. 1 Tim. 3: 11. Tit. 2:3. Rev. 12:10.
[a] Matt. 10:21.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—15. The almighty and eternal JEHOVAH has spoken to men from mt. Sinai as a Lawgiver, and from mt. Zion as a Savior: and ere long He will speak to the whole human race from his righteous tribunal. Happy are they, who have acceded to the covenant of grace, by faith in the Redeemer's atoning sacrifice, and who have shown the sincerity of their love by the fruits of righteousness!—But let us beware of resting in any form: God will testify against his own professed people, who trust to their outward privileges; He demands the heart, and will not be put off with an unmeaning external observance.—We cannot offer unto God any thing, which He has not bestowed on us, nor any thing which can profit Him: so that the notion of *meriting* from Him is replete with ignorance, as well as arrogance. [See on 1 *Chr.* 29: 10—19. *Job* 22: 2.] As the Jews and their costly oblations were abhorred, when they rejected Him, of whom Moses and their prophets had written; so will attendance on the ordinances of Christianity be rejected, and even moral obedience itself, if substituted in *his* place: and no *spiritual* services can be performed, except by faith in Him, and by the supply of his Spirit. To be sensible of our own indigence, dependence, and unworthiness; to seek every thing from the all-sufficient God by faith and prayer; to render Him the tribute of a thankful heart; to perform the vows implied in baptism and the Lord's supper; (56: 12. *P. O. end;*) and to call on Him in every time of trouble, as our only Refuge and Friend; are reasonable sacrifices, and suited to Him, who 'is a Spirit, and seeketh such to worship Him, as worship Him in Spirit and truth.' (*John* 4: 21—24.) Those, who thus worship, 'glorify God:' and every answer to prayer, received with gratitude, forms an earnest of their eternal salvation.

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sion of sacrifices, except as that arose from perverseness and rebellion. On the other hand, a humble, thankful heart, disposed to worship and praise God, (to '*sacrifice* unto God thanksgiving,' *Heb.* 13:15, 16.) and to fulfil the engagements implied in the profession of being his people, as well as the vows made in the days of distress; and to confide in Him and seek help from Him in trouble, by earnest prayer, were sacrifices suited to his holy nature. This spiritual worship, springing from a penitent, believing heart, and connected with humble submission and obedience, was the grand substance of true religion, even under the Mosaic dispensation; and would be the substance of that which was about to succeed: and worshippers of this character would be accepted and delivered, and would render glory and praise to God for temporal mercies, and eternal salvation. (*M. R.* i—n.)—This passage was evidently intended as an intimation, that the ceremonial law would be abrogated at the coming of the Messiah; as well as an encouragement to prayer and praise.

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(8.) '*Boothr.* renders this very happily: "I do not reprove thee on account of thy sacrifices; For thy burnt-offerings are daily before me."'

MORISON.

Verses 16—21.

Multitudes of the strictest professors and teachers of the Jewish church were, not only superstitious and formal, (and so either blind guides or blindly led,) but even atrociously wicked; yet they cloaked their crimes with apparent zeal. (*Matt.* 23:14—33.) Thus in all ages many love the credit of being called Christians, and the dignity of instructers, who 'hate instruction;' and many discourse on the Word of God with their lips, who pour contempt upon it in their lives. Indeed, in this manner they often excuse their crimes, and even think they have compensated for them, by their earnestness in promoting what they suppose to be the cause of God. The whole of this strange delusion arises from a perverse construction put on the long-suffering of God: (*Ec.* 8:11—13. *Rom.* 2:4—6.) and a wilful mistake of his character and the intention of his Gospel: as if the methods of his grace, the doctrines of his Word, or the ordinances of his worship, were *substituted in the stead of a holy life*, and afforded men the license to indulge their lusts with impunity! But the Jews of old were reproved, convicted, condemned, and punished with the most dreadful severity, on these accounts: and so will all the superstitious, formal, hypocritical, enthusiastic, or antinomian abusers of the Gospel; when the day of judgment shall come, and the secrets of men shall be judged by Jesus Christ.—*Consentedst*, &c. (18) Or, 'Hadst pleasure in him.' (*Rom.* 1:28—32. *conclusion.*) *Kept silence.* (21) *Note*, 3.

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21 These *things* hast thou done, and [b] I kept silence; thou [c] thoughtest that I was altogether *such an one* as thyself: *but* [d] I will reprove thee, and [e] set *them* in order before thine eyes.

22 Now [f] consider this, ye that [g] forget God, lest [h] I tear *you* in pieces, and *there be* [i] none to deliver.

23 [k] Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me, [l] and to him that [*] ordereth *his* conversation *aright*, will I shew [m] the salvation of God.

PSALM LI.

David earnestly prays for mercy, humbly confesses his sins, and laments his original depravity, 1—6. He entreats forgiveness, sanctification, and renewed comfort, that he may glorify God and promote the conversion of sinners, 7—15. He shows, that God delights more in a contrite heart, than in legal sacrifices, 16, 17. He prays for the prosperity of the church, 18, 19.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, [a] when Nathan the prophet came unto him, [b] after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

HAVE mercy upon me, O God, [c] according to thy loving-

b 3. 109:1—3. Ec. 8:11. Is. 26:10. 57:11. Rom. 2:4,5.
c 73:11. 94:7—11. Num. 23:19. Is. 40:15—18.
d 8. Prov. 29:1. Rev. 3:19.
e 90:8. Ec. 12:14. Am. 8:7. 1 Cor. 4:5.
f Deut. 32:18. Ec. 7:14. Ez. 18:28. Hag. 1:5. Luke 15:17.
g 9:17. 10:4. Job 8:13. Is. 51:13. Jer. 2:32. Hos. 4:6.
h Hos. 5:14. 13:8. Rev. 6:16,17.
i 7:2. 2 Sam. 22:42. Is. 42:22. Am. 2:14. Mic. 5:8.
k 14,15. 22:23. 86:9,12. Rom. 12:1. 15:5,9. Gal. 1:24.
l 24:4,5. 25:14. 85:9. John 7:17. 8: 31,32. Acts 10:2—4. 11:14. 13:26.
* Heb. *disposeth* his *way*. Phil. 1:27. Jam. 3:13. 1 Pet. 1:15.
m 91:16. Is. 12:2. 45:17. 49:6. 51: 5,6. Luke 2:30.
a 2 Sam. 12:1—13.
b 2 Sam. 11:2, &c.
c 25:6,7. 109:21. 119:124. Ex. 34:6, 7. Num. 14:18,19. Dan. 9:9,18. Mic. 7:18,19. Rom. 5:20,21. Eph. 1:6—8. 2:4—7.

ed, the more are their hearts hardened; but, if they turn not, they shall see their error too late, and that the God they provoke is just, holy, and terrible, not such a one as themselves.

IV. The fair warning given of the dreadful doom of hypocrites, *v.* 22. '*Now consider this, ye that forget God;* consider that God knows, and keeps accounts of, all your sins; that He will call you to an account for them; that patience, abused, will turn into the greater wrath; that though you forget God, and your duty to Him, He will not forget you, and your rebellions against Him: consider this in time, before it be too late; for if these things be not considered, and the consideration of them improved, He will *tear you in pieces, and there will be none to deliver.*' Matt. 24: 51. Consideration is the first step toward conversion.

V. Full instructions given to us all, how to prevent this fearful doom. The conclusion of the whole matter, *v.* 23. directs us what to do, to attain our chief end.

1. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and we are here told, that whoso offers praise glorifies Him. We must praise God, and this He is pleased, in infinite condescension, to interpret as glorifying Him. Hereby we give Him the glory due to his name, and do what we can to advance the interests of his kingdom among men.

2. Man's chief end, in conjunction with this, is, to enjoy God; and we are here told, that those who order their conversation aright shall see his salvation. It is not enough for us to offer praise, but we must withal order our conversation aright. Thanksgiving is good, but thanks-living is better. Those that would have their conversation right must take care and pains to order it; to dispose it according to rule [to discover and obey all God's laws]; to understand their way, and to direct it. The right ordering of the conversation is the only, and sure way, to obtain the great salvation.

Ps. LI. David penned this Ps. on a very particular occasion, yet it is of as general use as any of his Pss.; it is the most eminent of the penitential, and most expressive of the cares and desires of a repenting sinner: we must come to the throne of grace in the posture of penitents, to confess our sins, and sue for the grace of God; and if therein we would take with us words, we can nowhere find any more apposite than here in this Ps. which is the record of David's repentance for his sin in the matter of Uriah, the greatest blemish on his character, 1 *K.* 15: 5. Those whose consciences charge them with any gross sin should, with a believing regard to the Mediator, again and again pray over this Ps.; nay, though we have not been guilty of any enormous crime, yet, in singing it, and praying over it, we may very sensibly apply it to all ourselves, which if we do with suitable affections, we shall through Christ, find mercy to pardon, and grace for seasonable help.

V. 1—6. The sin David laments, was adultery, a sin not to be spoken of, or thought of, without detestation. It is recorded for warning to all, that he who thinks he stands may take heed lest he fall. The repentance David here expresses, he was brought to by the ministry of Nathan, after he had continued above nine months (for aught that appears) without any particular expressions of remorse or sorrow for it. God may suffer his people to fall into sin, and to lie a great while in it, yet He will, by some means or other, recover them to repentance, bring them to Himself, and to their right mind, again. Herein, generally, He uses the ministry of the Word, which yet He is not tied to. But those that have been overtaken in any fault, ought to reckon a faithful reproof the greatest kindness, and a wise reprover their best friend. *Let the righteous smite me, and it shall be excellent oil.* Whither should backsliding children return, but to the Lord their God, from whom they have backslidden, and who alone can heal their backslidings? David drew up, by divine inspiration, the workings of his heart toward God, on this occasion, into a Ps., that it might be often repeated, and long after reviewed; and this he committed to the chief musician, to be sung in the public service of the church. 1. As a profession of his own repentance, which he would have to be generally noticed, his sin having been notorious: those that truly repent will not be ashamed to own their repentance. 2 As a pattern to others, both to bring them to repentance by his example, and to instruct them, in their repentance, what to do, and what to say. Being converted himself, he thus *strengthens his brethren*, Luke 22: 32. and, *for this cause, he obtained mercy*, 1 Tim. 1: 10. In these words, we have,

I. David's humble petition, *v.* 1, 2. which is much the same with that of the penitent publican in the parable; *God be merciful to me a sinner!* Luke 18: 13. David was, on many accounts, a man of great merit; had not only done much, but suffered much, in the cause of God; yet, when convinced of sin, he does not offer to balance his evil deeds with his good deeds, nor can he think his services will atone for his offences; but he flies to God's infinite mercy, and depends on that only for pardon and peace. He owns himself obnoxious to God's justice, and therefore casts himself on his mercy; and certainly the best man is undone, if God be not merciful to him. Observe,

1. His plea: 'For thy mercy's sake.' 'I have nothing to plead with Thee, but the freeness and fulness of thy mercy. There is in Thee not only loving-kindness, and tender mercies, but a free abundance of it, a multitude of tender mercies ready to flow forth for the forgiveness of many sin-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 16—23. If ignorant formalists, though not grossly immoral or profane, are under a dangerous delusion, what will be the doom of those, who understand, profess, and preach the truths of God; while yet they hate instruction, and despise [half or all] his commandments? Yet how many such professors and teachers of Christianity disgrace the present age! And how strangely are they connived at, and enabled to keep up their confidence, as if the Judge of the world were altogether such a one as themselves! Indeed their present impunity emboldens them to expect, that they shall always escape. But the Judge will come, and will strip off their masks, and reprove, convict, and condemn them. Let us then judge ourselves, and beware of hypocrisy: let ministers see to it, that they preach first to themselves, and love and practise their own instructions: let every one inquire, whether he be indeed 'allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel;' or whether he run without being sent. God now warns, that He may not punish: let us then thankfully embrace his Gospel, and praise Him for his mercy; and, endeavoring to glorify Him in word and deed, wait for his complete and eternal salvation.

SCOTT.

Verses 22, 23.

Ordereth his conversation. (23) M. 'disposeth *his* way.' In modern phrase, 'who aims to obey God's physical, organic, intellectual and moral laws;' guided by faith in his revealed will, he has temporal and eternal salvation.. Comp. John 7:17. ED.—The last clause may be understood, as prospective of their promised Savior. (7—15. 24:3—6.)—According to the concluding words of these vs. no man 'ordereth his conversation,' or conduct, 'aright,' who trusts in his own works, and does not seek 'the salvation of God;' none seeks that salvation properly, who is not conscientious in his whole conduct; and none, who unites the two, fails of salvation.—The Latin version of [Trem.] is very striking: '*Qui componit viam, faciam ut is fruatur salute Dei:*' 'Him, who disposes,' or regulates, 'his conduct, I will cause to enjoy the salvation of God.' The preventing grace of God leads a man, like Cornelius, to regulate his conduct piously and uprightly, and to wait for God's salvation in this way; and the promise ensures to such a person the enjoyment of that salvation. (*Acts* 10:1—8, 34, 35.)—What a noble view does this Ps. give of God and of Revelation! God stands forth as the Parent, the Lord, and the Judge of all, and the Savior of all who trust in Him; exercising a universal providence, soliciting us to make Him our Refuge, to worship and serve Him, promising us his reward and favor.—And in the O. T. itself, which enjoins so many ceremonies, how little intrinsic value is there ascribed to them, compared with spiritual worship, and ordering the conversation aright! SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. LI. *Title.* (*Notes*, 2 *Sam.* 11: 12:1—12.) When Nathan had delivered his message, we may suppose David retired to his chamber full of confusion, remorse, and anguish; and there poured forth his soul before God in unreserved confessions and fervent prayers. And considering his rank, age, and circumstances, it might have been thought expedient for him to be satisfied with these secret acts of contrition and devotion, and with 'bringing forth fruits meet for repentance:' especially as God had already remitted the sentence of temporal death, to which the law condemned him. (2 *Sam.* 12:13.) But he viewed

kindness; according unto [d] the multitude of thy [e] tender mercies, [f] blot out my transgressions.

2 [g] Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and [h] cleanse me from my sin.

3 For [i] I acknowledge my transgressions, and [k] my sin *is* ever before me.

4 [l] Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* [m] evil in thy sight; [n] that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear [o] when thou judgest.

[*Practical Observations.*]

d 5:7. 69:13,16. 106:7,45. Is. 63:7,15. *Marg.* Lam. 3:32.
e 40:11. 77:9. 145:9.
f 9. Neh. 4:5. Is. 43:25. 44:22. Jer. 18:23. Acts 3:19. Col. 2:14.
g 7. Ez. 36:25. Zech. 13:1. 1 Cor. 6:11. Heb. 9:13,14. 10:21,22. 1 John 1:7—9. Rev. 1:5. 7:14.
h 7. 19:12.
i 32:5. 38:18. Lev. 26:40,41. Neh. 9:2. Job 33:27. Prov. 28:13. Luke 15:18—21.
k 40:12. Is. 59:12. Jer. 3:25.
l Gen. 9:6. 20:6. 39:9. Lev. 6:2—7. 2 Sam. 12:9,10,13,14. Jam. 2:9—11.
m Gen. 38:7. 2 K. 17:17. 21:6.
n 50:4,6. Luke 7:29. Rom. 3:4,19.
o Acts 17:31. Rom. 2:5. Rev. 15:3,4. 16:5. 19:11.

I. David's penitential confessions, *v.* 3—5. 1. He was very free to own his guilt before God; *I acknowledge my transgressions;* he had formerly, as the only way of easing his conscience, 32: 4, 5. but he would again. Nathan said, *Thou art the man; I am,* says David; *I have sinned.* 2. He had such a deep sense of it, that he was continually thinking of it, with sorrow and shame. His contrition was not a slight, sudden passion, but an abiding grief; '*My sin is ever before me,* is ever against me;' (so some;) 'I see it before me as an enemy, accusing and threatening me.' David was, on all occasions, put in mind of his sin, and was willing to be so, for his further abasement. Note, The acts of repentance, even for the same sin, must be often repeated. It is good for us to have our sins ever before us, that thereby we may be kept humble, may be armed against temptation, quickened to duty, and made patient under the cross.

(1.) He confesses his actual transgressions, *v.* 4. *Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned.* The best men, if they sin, should give the best example of repentance. [1.] His confession is particular; '*I have done this evil,* this I am now reproved for, this my own conscience now upbraids me with.' Note, It is good to be particular in the confession of sin, that we may be the more express in praying for pardon, and so may have the more comfort in it. We ought to reflect on the particular deeds of our sins of infirmity, and the particular circumstances of our gross sins. [2.] He aggravates the sin he confesses; *Against Thee, and in thy sight.* Hence our Savior seems to borrow the confession He puts into the mouth of the returning prodigal; *I have sinned against heaven, and before Thee,* Luke 15: 18. It was committed against God. From this topic Joseph fetched the great argument against sin, Gen. 39: 9. and David here the great aggravation of it; *Against Thee only.* Some make this to bespeak the prerogative of his crown, that, as a king, he was not accountable to any but God; but it is more agreeable to his present temper, to suppose it bespeaks the deep contrition of his soul for his sin, and that it was upon right grounds. He here sinned against Bathsheba and Uriah; against his own soul and body, and family; against his kingdom, and against the church of God; and all this helped to humble him;

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—4. If the most eminent believer ceases to watch and pray, nay, becomes more remiss and formal, than he once was; Satan may at length obtain such advantages against him, that for the time he shall seem perfectly fascinated and stupified: but the Lord will at length, by sharp rebukes, or most painful corrections, bring him to himself; and the depth of his humiliation will be proportioned to the heinousness of his sins. But the hypocrite is durably callous; and his religious profession and opinions are perversely employed, in excusing his crimes, and buoying up his presumptuous confidence.—Our sins are the more aggravated, when committed against knowledge, mercies, and vows; when they do violence to the new nature, and the strivings of the Holy Spirit; and when they are inconsistent with our character and profession, and tend to dishonor the Gospel, and mislead our brethren.—The real penitent will be deeply humbled and afflicted; but he will not sink into despair.—While sinners conceal or palliate their sins, they are out of the way of mercy: but when they humbly and ingenuously plead guilty, and unreservedly confess their crimes; they may even plead that confession, as a reason why they should be spared: for this yields the point in contest; namely, that the Lord might justly punish, and that salvation must be all of grace.—When a load of guilt oppresses a man of a tender conscience; the recollection of his sins and their aggravations, follows him every where: so that 'his sin is ever before him:' but slight convictions, where the heart is not broken, are soon shaken off; and the wound is skinned over, but not healed. —The true penitent considers every sin as rebellion against the authority and infinite Majesty of heaven. Even if he has been preserved from those crimes which evidently injure society, he reflects with shame on the enmity and ingratitude of his heart against God; he takes the part of God against himself, and pleads guilty to the most humiliating charge in his Word, as true in his own case: while those, who excuse themselves, commonly venture to arraign and censure the decisions and proceedings of the Almighty. SCOTT.

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the subject in another light, when brought to reflect seriously on his conduct, and its probable consequences. The honor of God and of true religion was deeply concerned, and with it the best interests of very great multitudes: nor did there appear any other way, in which the bad effects of his crimes could be so thoroughly prevented, as by his publicly taking the deepest shame to himself, for having acted directly contrary to that holy religion he professed. He therefore seems to have resolved without delay, whatever might be the consequences to himself and his reputation, to publish to his family, his subjects, the world, even all future generations, the judgment he now entertained of his late behavior, and the way in which he sought forgiveness and salvation. Nothing, all circumstances considered, can be conceived more humiliating than such a measure; nothing could more decidedly show how much he preferred the honor of God to his own credit; in short, nothing could more decidedly manifest the depth of genuine repentance. (1 *Sam.* 15:30,31.) SCOTT. The title of this Ps. from a supposed want of correspondence with vs. 4,18,19. *Horsley,* Dr. *Kennicott, Mudge,* Dr. *A. Clarke, Paulus,* and *De Wette,* suspect to be mispiaced; and they refer the Ps. to the time of the captivity. Most commentators, however, agree with *Henry* and *Scott,* that it was from the pen of David, and on occasion as the title purports. Morison well observes, that 'it seems a very hasty criticism to conclude that the 4th verse is unsuitable to the circumstances of David, when he had so mournfully departed from God; and might be supposed to be so absorbed in the sense of the dishonor he had done to God and his cause, as almost to lose sight of every other consideration.' And as to any difficulty arising from the phraseology of v. 18. 'it must vanish,' he says, 'on the slightest reflection; as it contains a simple prayer, on the part of David, that God would perfect the walls and buildings of the sacred city, and especially that He would cause his temple to be reared and established within its hallowed enclosures, notwithstanding the deep stain which he had brought on every thing holy by his grievous transgressions.' *Morison* rejoices that the 'enlightened *Dathe*' and the 'judicious *Ainsworth*' are on the side of the commonly received opinion of this Ps. and he thinks 'any one who will read the 11th and 12th chs. of 2 Sam., and compare them with the melting acknowledgments which run through the whole of this Ps. will no longer be able to doubt that the history and the confessions refer to the same general facts in the life of David.'—*Rosenm.* agrees with the commonly received opinion. ED.

Verses 1, 2.

He does not once mention his former services in the cause of religion; or palliate his conduct, by the peculiar temptations of his high rank, and the customs of princes; or plead that he was inadvertently betrayed into it, and led on by imperceptible degrees, step by step: (1 *Sam.* 15:15,24,25. *Prov.* 28:13. *Luke* 15:17—19.) but, as a vile and miserable sinner, with many repetitions and an accumulation of words, energetically expressing his inmost thoughts and feelings, he dwells on the only cheering thought his case allowed of; and entreats, that God would, 'to the praise of the glory of his grace,' forgive his sins, as a debt which when remitted is blotted out. The language shows that the Psalmist fervently prayed to be cleansed from the *pollution,* as well as the *guilt* of his sins; that he was aware no outward forms or endeavors of his own could effect this cleansing; and that he sought this blessing through the redemption and grace of the promised Savior. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verse 3.

(*Notes* 32:1—5.) While David endeavored to cover his sins, to conceal or excuse them, he could not, sincerely and heartily, seek forgiveness from God, as an act of unmerited mercy and grace, and even contrary to his deservings. And this seems to have been his state of mind before Nathan came to him: but now 'being come to himself,' he is deeply conscious of his most heinous guilt; and confesses it openly and ingenuously, with all its aggravations. Thus he 'submits to the righteousness of God,' owns that he deserves to perish, and is prepared, if spared, to ascribe the whole honor of salvation to the rich mercy and grace of God alone. (*Notes,* 2 *Chr.* 33:12,13. *Job* 33:27—30. *Jer.* 31:18—20. *Luke* 15:17—21. 1 *John* 1:8—10.) ID.

Verse 4.

'I have sinned against men, but it is thy law that I have violated: in

5 Behold [p] I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother [*] conceive me.

6 Behold [q] thou desirest truth in [r] the inward parts; and [s] in the hidden *part* thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

7 [t] Purge me with hyssop, [u] and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be [x] whiter than snow.

8 [y] Make me to hear joy and gladness; *that* [z] the bones *which* thou hast broken may rejoice.

9 [a] Hide thy face from my sins, and [b] blot out all mine iniquities.

10 [c] Create in me [d] a

p 58:3. Gen. 5:3. 8:21. Job 14:4. 15: 14—16. John 3:6. Rom. 5:12. Eph. 2:3.
* Heb. *warm.*
b 26:2. 125:4. Gen. 20:5,6. 2 K. 20: 3. 1 Chr. 29:17. 2 Chr. 31:20,21. Prov. 2:21. Jer. 5:3. John 4:23,24. 2 Cor. 1:12. Jam. 4:8.
r 5:9. 1 Sam. 16:7. Job 38:36. Luke 11:39. Rom. 7:22.
s Job 32:8. Jer. 31:33. 32:40. 1 Pet. 3:4.
t Lev. 14:4—7,49—52. Num. 19:18—20. Heb. 9:19.
u Heb. 9:13,14. 1 John 1:7. Rev. 1:5.
x Is. 1:18. Eph. 5:26,27. Rev. 7:13,14.
y 13:5. 30:11. 119:81,82. 126:5,6. Matt. 5:4.
z 6:2,3. 38:3. Job 5:17,18. Is. 57:15—18. Hos. 6:1,2. Luke 4:18. Acts 2: 37—41. 16:29—34.
a Is. 38:17. Jer. 16:17. Mic. 7:18,19.
b 1 Col. 2:14.
c 2 Cor. 5:17. Eph. 2:10.
d 73:1. Prov. 20:9. Jer. 13:27. 32: 39. Ez. 11:19. 18:31. 36:25—27,37. Matt. 5:8. Acts 15:9. 1 Pet. 1:22.

but none of these were sinned against so as God was; therefore on this he lays the most sorrowful accent; *Against Thee only have I sinned.* This should greatly humble us for all our sins, that they have been committed under the eye of God, which argues either a disbelief of his omniscience, or a contempt of his justice. [3.] He justifies and honors God in the sentence passed on him, that *the sword shall never depart from his house,* 2 Sam. 12: 10, 11. thus Eli acquiesced in the like threatenings, 1 Sam. 3: 18. *It is the Lord;* and Hezekiah, 2 K. 20: 19. *Good is the word of the Lord, which thou hast spoken.* David published his confession of sin, that, when hereafter he should come into trouble, none might say, God had done him any wrong; thus will all true penitents justify God by condemning themselves.

(2.) He confesses his original corruption, *v.* 5. not in excuse, for that plea is false; with due care and watchfulness, and improvement of the grace of God, he might have helped it; so a true penitent never offers it. David elsewhere speaks of the admirable structure of his body, 139: 14, 15. yet here says it was shapen in iniquity, sin was twisted in with it; not as it came out of God's hands, but as it comes through our parents' loins. He elsewhere speaks of the piety of his mother, and pleads his relation to her, 116: 16.—86: 16. yet he here says *she conceived him in sin;* for though, by grace, a child of God, she was, by nature, a daughter of Eve, and not excepted from the common character. Note, It is to be sadly lamented by every one of us, that we brought into the world with us a corrupt nature, wretchedly degenerated from its primitive purity and rectitude; we have, from our birth, the snares of sin in our bodies, the seeds of sin in our souls, and a stain of sin on both. This is what we call *original sin,* because it is as ancient as our original, and because it is the original of all our actual transgressions. This is that foolishness which is bound in the heart of a child, the proneness to evil, and backwardness to good, which is the burden of the regenerate, and the ruin of the unregenerate; it is a bent to backslide from God.

III. David's acknowledgment of the grace of God, *v.* 6. both his good-will towards us, *Thou desirest truth in the inward parts,* and his good work in us, '*In the hidden part thou hast made,*' or *shalt make,* '*me to know wisdom.*' Note, Truth and wisdom will go very far toward making a man a good man. A clear head and a sound heart, prudence and sincerity, bespeak the man of God perfect. What God requires of us, He himself works in us, and He works it in the regular way, enlightening the mind, and so gaining the will. But how does this come in here? 1. God is hereby justified and cleared; 'Lord, Thou wast not the Author of my sin; I clear Thee.' 2. The sin is hereby aggravated; 'Lord, thou desirest truth; but where was it when I dissembled with Uriah? *Thou hast made me to know wisdom;* but I have not lived up to what I have known.' 3. He is hereby encouraged, in his repentance, to hope God would graciously accept him; for, (1.) God had made him sincere in his resolutions never to return to folly again; *Thou desirest truth in the inward part;* this is what God has an eye to, in a returning sinner, that *in his spirit there be no guile,* 32 : 2. David was conscious of the uprightness of his heart toward God, in his repentance, therefore doubted not but God would accept him. (2.) He hoped God would enable him to make good his resolutions, that, in the hidden part, in the new man, which is called the *hidden man of the heart,* (1 Pet. 3:4.) He would make him to know wisdom, so as to discern and avoid the designs of the tempter, another time. Some read it as a prayer; 'make me to know wisdom.' Where there is truth, God will give wisdom; those that sincerely endeavor to do their duty, shall be taught their duty.

V. 7—13. See here,

I. What David prays for;

1. That God would cleanse him from his sins, and the defilement he had contracted by them, *v.* 7. The expression here alludes to a ceremonial distinction, that of cleansing the leper, or those that were unclean by the touch of a body, by sprinkling water, or blood, or both, on them, with a bunch of hyssop, by which they were, at length, discharged from the restraints they were laid under by their pollution. But it is founded on Gos-

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that is my offence.' Bp. *Hall.*—Even before the law was given, God himself stated that the grand malignity of murder consisted in its being an assault on man, whom He created in his own image. (*Gen.* 9: 5,6.)—Crimes in civil society, which are injurious to individuals, are yet punished as violations of the laws of the land; thus high treason is the chief crime in every land. David indeed was not accountable for his conduct to any human tribunal: he had carefully concealed his transgressions from man; but he was sensible the Lord had witnessed the whole, and would bring it to light. He therefore found himself constrained to plead guilty, to the most humiliating charges of guilt and depravity, brought against mankind in general, which were contained in the Word of God; for he was convinced that *his* base conduct, after all his peculiar advantages and zealous profession of religion, would abundantly justify those declarations of the entire wickedness of the human heart; and fully confute the blasphemous censures, which ungodly men ventured to pass on the government of God, and on his denunciations and judgments, as if unjust and severe. Thus, in every sense, the case of David, when well understood, is suited to justify God in all his declarations, and to vindicate his whole government from every aspersion. (*Gen.* 6:5. 8:20—22. *Job* 15:14—16. *Rom.* 3:3,4.) Scott. *Against thee,* &c.] '*Street,* who thinks the corresponding history, 2 Sam. 12:12. *For thou didst it secretly,* explains the phrase, reads: "Privately against thee have I sinned." The sense, therefore,' he observes, 'of "*thee only,*" in this place, must be, that the crime was known, in the first instance, only to God.' Morison.—That *thou mightest,* &c.] 'The particle, *that,* is not taken *causally,* or *intentionally,* as if this were David's design; but *eventually,* as in Ex. 11:9. Ps. 30:12. Hos. 8:4.' Poole. *Boothroyd* observes very justly, that 'the common version makes David sin that God might be justified.' Morison. 'Therefore thou wilt.' Bp. Horne.

Verses 5, 6.

David was the offspring of lawful and honorable marriage; (86:16. 116:16.) yet, having received from his parents Adam's fallen nature, with all its evil propensities,* he confesses he was conceived and shapen in iniquity. (*M. R.*)—His late dreadful fall evinced the depravity of his heart: and in these instances he had only acted according to its corrupt bias; being in himself naturally prone to rebellion against God. (*M. R.* p. *Gen.* 5:3. *Job* 14:1—6.25: *Eph.* 2:3.) This he confessed in deep humiliation; yet it by no means followed, that the Lord should relax in his requirements, because of the depraved propensities of his apostate creatures.—His perfect law requires *entire* truth, purity, and love in the heart and conduct; and in this alone He delights; and *sincerity* from the inmost soul, in repentance, faith, and renewed obedience, is requisite, even according to the Gospel. This the Psalmist had been taught, before his transgressions: 'in the hidden part the Lord *had* made him to know wisdom,' which was a great aggravation of his guilt, in that he sinned against knowledge, conscience, and the peculiar obligations conferred on him. If we read the clause in the future tense, as in our tr. and as it stands in the Heb. it expresses the Psalmist's hope and prayer, that the Lord would, notwithstanding his guilt and depravity, graciously, and by his effectual inward teaching, communicate to him true wisdom, and enable him to know and do what He required and delighted in. 'So far from representing this' (my innate propensity to evil) 'as an excuse for what I have done; I confess that the consideration of it ought to have made me the more watchful and diligent, to suppress those bad inclinations, which I knew to be so natural.' . . . 'I am amazed at my folly, that I should be so careless; when I was not ignorant that Thou requirest us not to entertain, with the least kindness, those *first motions* which we find in our thoughts and desires after any evil, but uprightly to oppose them.' Bp. *Patrick.* (*Jam.* 1:13—18.) Scott.

(5) 'This v. is, both by Jewish and Christian, by ancient and later interpreters, generally and most truly understood of original sin.' Poole.—*I was shapen.*] 'Though it is perfectly plain the Psalmist here speaks of that original taint and pollution of nature which belongs to all the descendants of Adam, it is not so easy to determine whether the original here rendered, *I was shapen,* refers to *the act of begetting,* or to *the act of birth.* I confess I lean to the idea that the former is referred to; because such a view of the passage exhibits an antithesis between the act of *begetting* and that of *conception,* demonstrating the fact that both parents are equally concerned in the transmission of moral evil to their offspring. *A. Montanus* reads, either *formatus sum,* or *genitus;* and *Dathe* adopts the latter, "*I was begotten.*"' Morison. 'This cannot be understood of any personal iniquity of his immediate parents, since it respects his wonderful formation in the womb, and is the amazing work of God Himself, so much admired by the Psalmist, Ps. 139:13—16. and cannot design any sinfulness then infused into him by his Maker, seeing God cannot be the author of sin; but of original sin and corruption derived to him by natural generation; and the sense is, that, as soon as ever the mass of human nature was shaped and quickened, or as soon as soul and body were united together, sin was in him, and he was in sin, or became a sinful creature.' Dr. Gill.—'Notwithstanding all that *Grotius* and others have said to the contrary, I believe David to speak here of what is commonly called *original sin;* the propensity to evil which every man brings into the world with him, and which is the fruitful source whence all transgression proceeds.' Dr. A. Clarke. The language of David will be plain to such as believe, that, in the human nature, 'mental manifestation depends on physical organization;' and that man has physically, and of course mentally, degenerated; the original degeneracy commencing when Adam sinned: others prefer a mystical sense. Ed.

Verse 7. *Hyssop.*] 'Derived from the Heb. *esob,* marjoram, *origanum creticum.* Rauwolf found this on this Mt. of Olives, and between Ramah and Joppa.' Rosenm.

* Rather, propensities which, in legitimate exercise, are good, as God pronounced all his works to be; but abused, i.e. unrestrained, or in action unallowed by the higher nature, are bad. That, in all Adam's race, as a race, the lower propensities have come to be the ruling ones, will not be denied. *Ed.*

clean heart, O God; and [e] renew a [*] right spirit within me.

11 [f] Cast me not away from thy presence; and [g] take not thy [h] Holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore unto me [k] the joy of thy salvation; and [l] uphold me *with thy* [m] free Spirit.

13 [n] *Then* will I teach transgressors [o] thy ways; and sinners shall be [p] converted unto thee.

[*Practical Observations.*]

e Rom. 12:2. Eph. 4:22—24. Col. 3: 10. Tit. 3:5.
* Or, *constant.* 78:8,37. Josh. 14:14. 1 K. 15:3—5. Acts 11:23. 1 Cor. 15: 58. Jam. 1:8.
f 43:2. 71:9,18. Gen. 4:14. 2 K. 13: 23. 17:18—23. 23:27. 2 Thes. 1:9.
g Gen. 6:3. Judg. 13:25. 15:14. 16: 20. 1 Sam. 10:10. 16:14. 2 Sam. 7:15. Is. 63:10,11.
h Luke 11:13. John 14:26. Rom. 1:4. 8:9. Eph. 4:30.
i 85:6—8. Job 29:2,3. Is. 57:17,18. Jer. 31:9—14.
k 13:5. 21:1. 35:9. Is. 49:13. 61:10. Luke 1:47. Rom. 5:2—11.
l 17:5. 19:13. 119:116,117,133. Is. 41:10. Jer. 10:23. Rom. 14:4. 1 Pet. 1:5. Jude 24.
m Rom. 8:15. 2 Cor. 3:17. Gal. 4:6,7.
n 32:5,8—10. Luke 22:32. John 21:15 —17. Acts 2:38—41. 9:19—22. 2 Cor. 5:8—20.
o 25:4,8. Is. 2:3. Acts 13:10.
p 19:7. Is. 6:10. Jer. 31:18. Matt. 18:3. Acts. 3:19. 15:3. 26:18—20. Jam. 5:19,20.

pel-grace; *Purge me with hyssop,* with the blood of Christ applied to my soul by a lively faith, as water of purification was sprinkled with a bunch of hyssop. It is the blood of Christ, which is therefore called *the blood of sprinkling,* Heb. 12: 24. And if this blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin, cleanse us from our sin, then we shall be clean indeed, Heb. 10: 2. If washed in this fountain opened, we shall be whiter than snow; not only acquitted, but accepted; so those are, that are justified, Is. 1: 18.

2. He prays that, his sins being pardoned, he might have the comfort of that pardon. He asks not to be comforted, till first he is cleansed. (1.) The pain of a heart truly broken for sin, may well be compared to that of a broken bone; and it is the same Spirit who, as a Spirit of bondage, smites and wounds, and, as a Spirit of adoption, heals and binds up. (2.) The comfort and joy that arise from a sealed pardon to a penitent sinner, are as refreshing as perfect ease from the most exquisite pain. (3.) It is God's work, not only to speak this joy and gladness, but to make us hear it, and take the comfort of it.

3. He prays for a complete and effectual pardon. This is what he is most earnest for, as the foundation of his comfort, *v.* 9. Isa. 45: 22.

4. He prays for sanctifying grace; this every true penitent is as earnest for, as for pardon and peace, *v.* 10. He does not pray, 'Lord, preserve me my reputation,' as Saul, *I have sinned, yet honor me before this people.* No, his great concern is, to get his corrupt nature changed: the sin he had been guilty of, was, (1.) An evidence of its impurity, therefore he prays, *Create in me a clean heart, O God.* He now saw, more than ever, what an unclean heart he had, and sadly laments it, but sees it is not in his own power to amend it, and therefore begs of God, (whose prerogative it is to create,) that He would create in him a clean heart. He only that made the heart, can new make it; and to his power nothing is impossible. He created the world by the word of his power, as the God of nature, and it is by the word of his power, as the God of grace, that *we are clean,* John 15: 3. that we *are sanctified,* John 17: 17. (2.) It was the cause of its disorder, and undid much of the good work that had been wrought in him; therefore he prays, '*Lord, renew a right spirit within me;* repair the decays of spiritual strength, which this sin has been the cause of, and set me to rights again.' Renew a *constant* spirit within me; so some. He had, in this matter, discovered much inconstancy and inconsistency with himself, therefore he prays, 'Lord, fix me for the time to come, that I may never in like manner depart from Thee.'

5. He prays for the continuance of God's goodwill toward him, and the progress of his good work in him, *v.* 11. (1.) That he might never be shut out from God's favor and protection; but wherever he went, have the divine presence with him, be under the guidance of his wisdom, and in the custody of his power, and not be forbidden communion with God. He does not deprecate the temporal judgments God by Nathan had threatened to bring on him; 'God's will be done;' but, 'Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath. If the sword come into my house never to depart from it, yet let me have access to Thee in my distresses, and all shall be well.' (2.) That he might never be deprived of God's grace; *Take not thy Holy Spirit from me.* He knew he had grieved the Spirit, and provoked Him to withdraw; and that God might justly have said his Spirit should no more strive with him, or work upon him, Gen. 6: 3. This he dreads, more than any thing; we are undone, if God take his Holy Spirit from us. Saul was a sad instance of this. David knew it, and therefore begs thus earnestly, '*Take not thy Holy Spirit from me,*' see 2 Sam. 7: 15.

6. He prays for the restoration of divine comforts, and the perpetual communications of divine grace, *v.* 12. He finds two ill effects of his sin; (1.) It had made him sad, therefore he prays, *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.* By wilful sin, our evidences cannot but be clouded, and our hopes shaken; but when we truly repent, we may pray and hope that God will restore. They that sow in penitential tears, shall reap in the joys of God's salvation, when the times of refreshing shall come. (2.) It had made him weak, therefore he prays, '*Uphold me with thy free Spirit;* I am ready to fall, either into sin or into despair; Lord, sustain me; my own spirit is not sufficient, if I be left to myself, I shall certainly sink; therefore uphold me with thy Spirit. Thy Spirit is a free spirit, working freely, and makes those free, whom He works upon, for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.' He was conscious of having acted, in the matter of Uriah, very disingenuously, and unlike a prince; his be-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 5—13. When the heart is deeply humbled, the penitent is led to trace back the streams of actual sin to the fountain of original depravity; he compares the [propensions] of his heart, as well as his outward conduct, with the holy law and glorious perfections of God; and, perceiving the contrariety, 'abhors himself, and repents in dust and ashes,' feels his need of pardon and of holiness; longs for peace of conscience and purity of heart: and his experience of his own utter inability to obtain them for himself, puts vigor into his prayers to the Lord, to purge him by the blood and Spirit of Christ; and, pardoning all his sins, 'to create in him a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within him,' by his own almighty power; that for the future he may hate and flee from all sin.—Nothing so animates the soul to teach the ways of God to sinners, and to seek for their conversion, as a deep experience of the bitterness of sin, and of the consolations of the pardoning and saving love of God, and the freedom and pleasantness of his service; they therefore always form the most zealous preachers to others, who have themselves been most deeply humbled; and those are most earnest for the salvation of their fellow-sinners, who most value and rejoice in the salvation of God themselves. SCOTT.

Verse 10.

The production of a holy disposition in a sinner's heart,—the forming him to a spiritual judgment and taste, a submissive will, a pure imagination, and well regulated affections,—is a 'new creation:' even as if Satan, by almighty power, should again be made a holy angel. This state of the understanding and heart is '*a right* spirit,' it is reasonable and excellent, such as all intelligent beings should possess, and it is absolutely necessary to true liberty and felicity. Man originally possessed it; but it was lost by the fall: and where it is again produced, it is the '*renewal* of a right spirit.' This is begun in regeneration, carried on by progressive sanctification, and completed in glory. When the sinner is deeply convinced that such a change is necessary, and he unable to work it in himself; and when he reads the promises of God to this purpose, (*Ez.* 11:17—20. 18:30—32. 36:25—27.) he asks it from God: and every discovery of remaining sinfulness leads the believer to renew this supplication; and thus the change is gradually effected till it be finally completed.—The margin, however, renders it, 'Renew a *constant,* (Heb. *stablished*) spirit within me.' Holy angels are *established* in a right spirit; and so are 'the spirits of just men made perfect.' Even on earth, real Christians have, in a measure, this *constant, established* spirit: but hypocrites are *unstable.* David had experienced the *inconstancy* of his heart; and was sensible, that even if pardoned and restored, he should, in case he were left to himself, be again drawn aside; and he prayed earnestly for that *constancy,* which might enable him 'with purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord.' (12,13. *Num.* 14:24. *Josh.* 14:6—15. *Acts* 11:23,24. 1 *Cor.* 15:55—58. *Jam.* 1:5—8.) SCOTT.

Verse 11.

Eternal banishment from the gracious presence of God, under his wrath and curse, constitutes a principal part of the misery of hell: (*Matt.* 25:41—46.) and something like this misery may be felt on earth, even by the believer, when, excluded from comfortable communion with God, he finds his heart oppressed with the sense or dread of deserved wrath. This heaviest of all afflictions David deprecated.—The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, when he was rejected from being king, and an evil spirit from God troubled him: (1 *Sam.* 16:14.) and David feared the same sentence for his more atrocious crimes, as in some respects they certainly were. All his sufficiency, as the prophet of God, as his anointed king, and as the Psalmist of Israel, was derived from the Holy Spirit: and all his comfort and usefulness must terminate, if the Holy Spirit should be finally taken from him. It is indeed maintained, and, as it appears to me, on scriptural ground, that the spirit of life and sanctification is never finally taken from believers: but, even in this case, their comforts may expire in despondings, their credit in disgrace, and all their gifts and usefulness may wither, and be lost to the end of life; and they cannot, in such circumstances, distinguish themselves from hypocrites. SCOTT.

Verses 12, 13.

'The joy of God's salvation,' arises from a persuasion and perception of the mercy and grace of God, according to his promises; of the nature and glory of his salvation, as revealed in the Scriptures; of its suitableness to the sinner's wants, its freeness, and sufficiency; from a prevailing confidence of an interest in this mercy; and from communion with God, and the exercise of faith, hope, admiring, adoring, grateful love, and all other holy affections, as springing from the Spirit of sanctification. The raptures and ecstasies peculiar to the prophets were of a very different nature, and arose from the sublime discoveries made to them in dreams or visions, and they did not always imply holiness of heart: whereas 'the joy of salvation' is the common privilege of the regenerate, according to the degree of their faith and grace; and it belongs to no one else. (*M. R.* k.) The Holy Spirit may be called free, because He is *freely* bestowed on sinners, through the gracious Savior: but this epithet seems rather to mean, that the sanctifying Spirit sets the soul at liberty from sin and Satan, produces a

14 [q] Deliver me from [*] blood-guiltiness, O God, thou [r] God of my salvation: *and* [s] my tongue shall sing aloud of [t] thy righteousness.

15 [u] O Lord, [x] open thou my lips; and [y] my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

16 For thou [z] desirest not sacrifice; † else would I give *it:* [a] thou delightest not in burnt-offerings.

17 [b] The sacrifices of God *are* [c] a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, [d] thou wilt not despise.

18 [e] Do good in [f] thy good pleasure unto Zion: [g] build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then shalt thou be [h] pleased with [i] the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt-offering, and whole burnt-offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

q 26:9. 55:23. Gen. 9:6. 42:22. 2 Sam. 3:28. 11:15—17. 12:9. 21:1.
* Heb. *bloods.* Ez. 33:8. Hos. 4:2. Acts 18:6. 20:26.
r 38:22. 68:20. 88:1. Is. 12:2. 45:17. Hab. 3:18.
s 35:28. 71:15—24. 86:12,13.
t Ezra 9:13. Neh. 9:33. Dan. 9:7,16. Rom. 10:3.
u Gen. 44:16. 1 Sam. 2:9. Ez. 16:63. Matt. 22:12. Rom. 3:19.
x Ex. 4:11. Ez. 3:27. 29:21. Mark 7:34.
y 63:3—5. 119:13. Heb. 13:15.
z 6. Ex. 21:14. Num. 15:30,31. 35: 31. Deut. 22:22.
† Or, *that I should give* it.
a 40:6. 50:8. Prov. 15:8. 21:27. Is. 1:11—15. Jer. 7:22,23. Am. 5:21—23. Heb. 10:5,6.
b 107:22. Mark 12:33. Rom. 12:1. Phil. 4:18. Heb. 13:16. 1 Pet. 2:5.
c 34:18. 147:3. 2 K. 22:19. Is. 57:15. 61:1—3. 66:2. Ez. 9:3,4,6. Matt. 5:3. Luke 18:11—14.
d 22:24. 102:17. 2 Chr. 33:12,13. Am. 5:21. Luke 7:39—50. 15:2—7,10,21—32.
e 25:22. 102:16. 122:6—9. 137:5,6. Is. 62:1,6,7. Jer. 51:50. 2 Cor. 11: 28,29.
f Luke 12:32. Eph. 1:5,9. Phil. 2:13. 2 Thes. 1:11.
g Neh. 2:17. Is. 58:12. Dan. 9:25. Mic. 7:11. Zech. 2:5.
h 66:13—15. 118:27. Eph. 5:2.
i 4:5. Mal. 3:3.

had offended, much less speak to Him; his heart condemned him, therefore he had little confidence toward God: it cast a damp particularly on his praises; therefore he prays, '*Lord, open my lips*, put my heart in tune for praise again:' when our lips are opened, what should we speak but the praises of God, as Zacharias did? Luke 1:64.

II. David offers the sacrifice of a penitent, contrite heart, which he knew God would be pleased with.

1. He knew well the sacrificing of beasts was, in itself, of no account with God, *v.* 16. Here see how glad David would have been to give thousands of rams, to make atonement for sin. Those that are thoroughly convinced of their misery and danger, by reason of sin, would spare no cost to obtain the remission of it, Mic. 6:6, 7. But see how little God valued this! As trials of obedience, and types of Christ, He did indeed require sacrifices to be offered; but He had no delight in them for any intrinsic value they had; *Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not.* As they cannot make satisfaction for sin, so God cannot take any satisfaction in them, any otherwise than as the offering of them is expressive of love and duty to Him.

2. He knew also how acceptable true repentance is to God, *v.* 17. See here, (1.) What the good work is, that is wrought in every true penitent; a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart; a work wrought on the heart; that is what God looks at, and requires, in all religious exercises, particularly repentance. It is a sharp work wrought there, no less than the breaking of the heart; not in despair, but in a necessary humiliation, and sorrow for sin: it is a heart breaking with itself, and breaking from its sin; pliable to the Word of God, and patient under the rod of God; subdued and brought into obedience; a heart that is tender, like Josiah's, and trembles at God's Word. Oh that there were such a heart in us! (2.) How graciously God is pleased to accept of this; it is *the sacrifices of God;* not one, but many; it is instead of all burnt-offering and sacrifice. The breaking of Christ's body for sin, is the only sacrifice of atonement, for no sacrifice but that could take away sin; but the breaking of our hearts for sin, is a sacrifice of acknowledgment, a sacrifice of God, for to Him it is offered up; He requires

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 14—19. When the heart is humbled, and the conscience tender, renewed recollection of heinous transgressions again and again discourages the soul: but this excites more fervent prayers; and when mercy is bestowed by 'the God of salvation,' such penitents will most abound in thankful praises. Yet conscious guilt stops the mouth, and the humbled sinner is afraid or ashamed to speak of his God, as in times past, until the impediment be removed by some tokens of pardoning love, and the comforts of the Holy Spirit. Such a one would do any thing, or part with any thing, to obtain pardon and peace: (*Mic.* 6:6—8.) but human inventions are worthless; and even divine ordinances are no more than *means* of communicating the blessings, procured by the sacrifice of Christ; and which can be received only by a broken and contrite heart, with which God is well pleased.—No personal fears or troubles of conscience can render the soul of a true Christian forgetful of the interests of the church, or indifferent about them: the humble believer and faithful minister often fear, lest their own misconduct should blight their endeavors for doing good: and, whatever they may suffer, or whatever may become of them, they still desire and pray, that true religion may prevail, and that spiritual sacrifices may abound through Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God.—O Lord, give us true repentance, for thy mercies' sake; help us to offer the sacrifice of a contrite spirit; preserve us from hypocrisy and blood-guiltiness, especially that of occasioning the ruin of immortal souls by our example or neglect; and enable us, through the merits and mediation of thy Son Jesus Christ, to walk with increasing watchfulness, and to pray more fervently for our fellow-Christians and fellow-sinners.

SCOTT.

noble, ingenuous, and liberal disposition, and teaches us to serve and worship God, as children and not as slaves. (*Rom.* 8:1,2,14—17. 2 *Cor.* 3:17,18. *Gal.* 4:4—7. 2 *Tim.* 1:6—8.) SCOTT.

Verse 14.

David yet engaged to be open in vindicating the justice of God, even if connected with his own deep disgrace.—Some expositors indeed explain the words to mean, that he would celebrate that *righteousness*, by which sinners who believe are accounted righteous before God, or the faithfulness of God to his promises: but the former meaning appears to me more satisfactory. ID.

Verse 16.

Murder and adultery were by the law punishable by death; therefore no sacrifices were appointed to be offered by those who were guilty of them. ID.

Verse 17.

The legal sacrifices were continued above 1000 years after this time, as types of the Redeemer's atoning sacrifice. Indeed a broken heart can do nothing towards *meriting* forgiveness. But a humble spirit, *broken* off from all self-dependence and the love of sin, and crushed down into deep self-abasement and abhorrence, is a spiritual sacrifice pleasing and honorable to God: for he, who is enabled to present this oblation, unreservedly submits to the justice of God; casts himself, without plea or excuse, on his free mercy; thankfully accepts of his salvation; and will walk according to it, in all humble obedience, and patient submission to the will of God. This broken and contrite spirit man despises, as mean and contemptible; and the possessor is apt to deem it unmeet to be presented to his offended Sovereign: but God will never despise nor reject such an unequivocal effect of his own renewing grace. SCOTT.

Verses 18, 19.

David feared lest his guilt should render him as an *Achan* in the congregation of Israel: (*Notes*, and *P. O. Josh.* 7:10—18.) therefore he concluded his penitential prayer, with entreating God to protect and prosper Zion. (*M. R.* e, g.) The Lord delighted not in burnt-offerings, for their own sake; yet as they were sacramental prefigurations of the Messiah's atonement; acts of worship, and means of

PSALM LII.

David contrasts the deceit and malice of Doeg, with the goodness of God, 1—4. He predicts Doeg's ruin, and the joy of the righteous, 5—7. He professes confidence in God, and a full persuasion that he shall praise Him for ever, 8, 9.

To the chief Musician, Maschil, *A Psalm* of David, when [a] Doeg the Edomite came and [b] told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech.

WHY [c] boastest thou thyself in [d] mischief, [e] O mighty man? [f] the goodness of God *endureth* continually.

2 [g] Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; [h] like a sharp razor, [i] working deceitfully.

3 Thou [k] lovest evil more than good; *and* [l] lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.

4 Thou lovest all [m] devouring words, O * *thou* deceitful tongue.

5 [n] God shall likewise † destroy thee for ever: he shall take thee away, and [o] pluck thee out of *thy* dwelling-place, and [p] root thee out of [q] the land of the living. Selah.

6 The [r] righteous also shall see, and [s] fear, [t] and shall laugh at him:

7 [u] Lo, *this is* the man *that* [x] made not God his Strength: but [y] trusted in the abundance of his riches, *and* [z] strengthened himself in his ‡ wickedness.

a 54:3. 1 Sam. 21:7. 22:9—19.
b 59:7. Jer. 9:8. Ez. 22:9.
c 10:2,3. 94:4. Rom. 1:30. 2 Tim. 3:2.
d 7:14. 10:7. 36:3—6. Prov. 6:14,18. Is. 59:4. Mic. 7:3.
e Gen. 6:4,5. 10:8,9. 1 Sam. 21:7.
f 103:17. 107:1. 1 John 4:7,8.
g 50:19. 64:2—6. 140:2,3. Prov. 6:16—19. 30:14. Jer. 9:3,4. 18:18. Matt. 26:59. Acts 6:11—13. 24:1,5. Rev. 12:10.
h 57:4. 59:7. Prov. 12:18. 18:21.
i 109:2. 120:2. 2 Cor. 4:2. 11:13.
k Jer. 4:22. Mic. 3:2. Rom. 1:28. 2 Tim. 3:4.
l 62:4. Jer. 9:3—5,8. John 8:44. Rev. 22:15.
m 1 Sam. 22:18,19. Jam. 3:6—9.
* Or, *and the deceitful tongue.*
n 7:14—16. 55:23. 64:7—10. 120:2—4. 140:9—11. Prov. 12:19. Rev. 21:8.
† Heb. *beat thee down.*
o 37:35,36. Job 18:14. 20:6,7. Luke 16:27,28.
p Prov. 2:22.
q 27:13. 116:9. Is. 38:11.
r 37:34. 97:8. Mal. 1:5. Rev. 15:4. 16:5—7. 18:20. 19:1,2.
s 40:3. 119:120.
t 58:10,11. Is. 37:22.
u Is. 14:16,17. John 19:5.
x 146:3—5. Jer. 17:5.
y 49:6,&c. 62:9,10. Job 31:24,25. 1 Tim. 6:17.
z 73:7—11,18—20. Ec. 8:8. Hos. 12:7,8.
‡ Or, *substance.*

it, He prepares it, He provides this lamb for a burnt-offering, and will accept of it. The sacrifice was offered on the altar that sanctified the gift; so the broken heart is acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ; there is no true repentance without faith in Him; and this is the sacrifice He will not despise. More is implied than is expressed; the great God overlooks heaven and earth, to look with favor on a *broken and contrite heart*, Isa. 66: 1, 2. 57: 15.

III. David intercedes for Zion, and Jerusalem, with an eye to God's honor. See his concern,

1. For the church of God, *v.* 18. Zion, here, is all the particular worshippers in Zion, all that love and fear God. Those that have been in spiritual troubles themselves, know how to pity and pray for those that are in the like; or, *Zion* is here put for the public interests of Israel. David was sensible how he had wronged Judah and Jerusalem by his sin; how it had weakened the hands, and saddened the hearts, of good people, and opened the mouths of their adversaries: he was likewise afraid lest, being a public person, his sin should bring judgments on the city and kingdom; therefore he prays to God to secure and advance those public interests which he had damaged and endangered. Note, (1.) When we have most business of our own, and of greatest importance at the throne of grace, yet then we must not forget to pray for the church of God; nay, our Master has taught us in our daily prayers to begin with that, *Thy kingdom come.* (2.) The consideration of the prejudice we have done the public interests by our sins, should engage us to do them all the service we can, particularly by our prayers.

2. For the honor of the churches of God, *v.* 19. If God would show himself reconciled to him and his people, as he had prayed, then they should go on with the public services of his house cheerfully and thankfully. The sense of God's goodness to them would enlarge their hearts in all the instances and expressions of thankfulness and obedience. They would then come to his tabernacle with burnt-offerings, with whole burnt-offerings, which were intended purely for the glory of God, and they would offer, not lambs and rams only, but bullocks, the costliest sacrifices, on his altar. And God would *be pleased with them.* Note, It is a great comfort to a good man, to think of the communion that is between God and his people in their public assemblies; how God is honored by their humble attendance on Him, and they are happy in his gracious acceptance of them.

Ps. LII. David, no doubt, was in very great grief, when he said to Abiathar, (1 Sam. 22: 22.) *I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house*, which were put to death on Doeg's malicious information: to give some vent to that grief, and to gain some relief to his mind under it, he penned this Ps. In singing it, we should conceive a detestation of the sin of lying, foresee the ruin of those that persist in it, and please ourselves with the assurance of the preservation of God's church and people, in spite of all the malicious designs of the children of Satan, that father of lies.

V. 1—5. The title is a brief account of the story to which the psalm refers. David now, at length, saw it necessary to quit the court, and shift for his own safety, for fear of Saul, who had once and again attempted to murder him. Being unprovided with arms and victuals, he, by a wile, got Ahimelech the priest to furnish him both; Doeg an Edomite happened to be there, and went and informed Saul against Ahimelech, representing him as confederate with a traitor; on which accusation, Saul grounded a very bloody warrant, to kill all the priests; and Doeg, the prosecutor, was the executioner, 1 Sam. 22: 9, &c. In these verses,

I. David argues the case fairly with this proud and mighty man, *v.* 1. Doeg, it is probable, was mighty in respect of bodily strength; at any rate, he was, by his office, a *mighty man*, for he was set over the servants of Saul, chamberlain of the household; and he boasted, not only in the power he had to do mischief, but in the mischief he did. Note, It is bad to do ill, but worse to boast of it, and glory in it, when we have done. They that glory in their sin, glory in their shame; and then it becomes yet more shameful; mighty men are often mischievous men, and *boast of their heart's desire*, 10: 3. It is uncertain how the following words come in; *The goodness of God endures continually.* Some make it the wicked man's answer to this question; as if prosperity in wickedness were an evidence that there is no harm in it. But it is rather to be taken as an argument against him, to show the sinfulness and folly of his sin. 'Thou thinkest, with the mischief which thou boastest of, to run down and ruin the people of God; but thou wilt find thyself mistaken; *the goodness of God endures continually* for their preservation, and then they need *not fear what man can do unto them.*'

II. He draws up a high charge against him in the court of heaven, as Doeg had drawn up a high charge against Ahimelech in Saul's court, *v.* 2—4. He accuses him of the wickedness of his tongue; of malice, falsehood, subtlety, and love to sin. His tongue did mischief; scornful, bantering words would not content him: he loved devouring words, words that would ruin the priests of the Lord whom he hated. Before he had this occasion given him to discover his malice against them, he had acted very plausibly toward them; though an Edomite, he attended the altars, brought his offerings, and paid his respects to the priests, as decently as any Israelite; it was only of constraint, he was *detained before the Lord*, but thus he gained an opportunity of doing them so much the greater mischief. Or, it may refer to the information he gave against Ahimelech; for the matter of fact was, in substance, true, yet it was misrepresented; therefore he might well be said to love lying, and to have a deceitful tongue. He told the truth, but not all the truth, as a witness ought to do; had he told that David made Ahimelech believe he was then going on Saul's errand, the kindness he showed would have appeared not only not traitorous, but respectful to Saul. It will not save us from the guilt of lying, to be able to say, 'There was some truth in what we said,' if we pervert it, and make it to appear otherwise than it was. The more there is of craft and contrivance in any wickedness, the more there is of the devil in it.

III. He reads his doom, and denounces the judgments of God against him for his wickedness, *v.* 5. Sons of perdition actively, shall be sons of perdition passively, as Judas and the *man of sin:* especially shall persecutors be destroyed. Good men are transplanted from the nursery to take root in the garden of the Lord, but wicked men are *rooted up* for ever; as fuel to the fire of divine wrath.

V. 6—9. David here triumphs,

I. In the fall of Doeg. Yet, lest this should look like personal revenge, he does not speak of it as his own act, but the language of other righteous persons, who shall reverence God's justice in it, and to whom Doeg shall appear ridiculous and worthy to be laughed at, *v.* 6, 7. The fall and ruin of a wealthy, mighty man, cannot but be generally noticed, and every one is apt to remark on it; now this is the remark of the righteous on Doeg's fall, that no better could come of it, since he took the wrong method of establishing himself in his wealth and power: what ruined Doeg was, *He made not God his Strength*, did not think the continuance of his prosperity depended on God's favor, so took no care to keep himself

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grace, and thus subserved the interests of true piety; and as they were accompanied by other sacrifices of righteousness, He was pleased with them. (*M. R.* h, i.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. LII. *Title.* 'All the versions agree in this title, except the Syr., which speaks of the Ps. as directed against vice in general, with a prediction of the destruction of evil.' Verse 5. Dr. A. CLARKE.

An accumulation of most expressive metaphors is here used, to mark the certainty of that dreadful and eternal punishment, which awaited this prosperous and haughty persecutor; and which awaits all who bear the same character, however in other respects distinguished. SCOTT.

8 But I *am* [a] like a green olive-tree in the house of God: [b] I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.

9 [c] I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done *it:* and I will [d] wait on thy name; [e] for *it is* good before thy saints.

PSALM LIII.

The general corruption of mankind; the madness of persecutors; and the terrors which seize on them, 1—5. A prayer for the salvation of Israel, 6.

To the chief Musician upon [a] Mahalath, Maschil, *A Psalm* of David.

THE [b] fool hath [c] said in his heart, *There is* no God. [d] Corrupt are they, and [e] have done abominable iniquity: [f] *there is* none that doeth good.

2 [g] God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were *any* [h] that did understand, that did [i] seek God.

3 [k] Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become [l] filthy: *there is* [m] none that doeth good, no, not one.

4 Have [n] the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who [o] eat up my people *as* they eat bread: they have not called upon God.

a 92:12—14. Jer. 11:16. Hos. 14:6—8.

in God's love, made no conscience of [obeying his laws,] nor sought Him in the least. How wretchedly deceived! He thought his wealth would support itself; nay, thought his wickedness would help support it; he resolved to stick at nothing, to secure and advance his honor and power; he would get what he could, and keep what he had, and be the ruin of any one that stood in his way; and this, he thought, would strengthen him; they may have any thing that will make conscience of nothing, [as the courser is swiftest without the harness: and this is the secret of many people's 'greatness.'] But what comes of it?

II. In his own stability, *v.* 8, 9. 'This mighty man is plucked up by the roots; but I am established, planted and rooted, fixed and flourishing.' The wicked are said to flourish like a green bay-tree, 37: 35. which bears no useful fruit, though it have abundance of large leaves; but the righteous flourish like a green olive-tree, fat as well as flourishing, 92: 14. which with *its fatness honors God and man*, Judge. 9: 9. deriving its root and fatness from the good Olive, Rom. 11: 17. To be as green olive-trees, we must,

1. Live a life of [obedient] faith and holy confidence in God and his grace; a life of thankfulness and holy joy in God, *v.* 9. of expectation, and humble dependence on God. 2. There is nothing better to calm and quiet our spirits, when ruffled and disturbed, or to keep us in the way of duty, when tempted to use any indirect courses for our own relief, than to hope, and quietly *wait for, the salvation of the Lord*, Lam. 3: 26.

Ps. LIII. The scope of this Ps. is to convince us of our sins, and this we are with so much difficulty brought to, that there is need of line upon line. The Word, as a convincing Word, is compared to a hammer, the strokes whereof must be frequently repeated. Some little variation there is between *Ps.* 14. and this, but none considerable; between v. 5, 6. there, and v. 5. here; some expressions there used, are here left out, concerning the shame which the wicked put on God's people, and, instead of that, is here foretold the shame which God would put on the wicked; which alteration, with some others, David made by divine direction, when he delivered it the second time to the chief musician. In singing it, we ought to lament the wretched degeneracy of the world we live in, yet rejoice in hope of the great salvation.

V. 1—6. This Ps. was opened before, therefore we shall here only observe, in short, some things concerning sin, in order to increase our sorrow or and hatred of it.

1. The fact of sin; is that proved? Yes, God is a Witness to it, an unexceptionable witness; *v.* 2.

2. The fault of sin; is there any harm in it? Yes, it is iniquity, *v.* 1, 4. an unrighteous thing; what there is no good in, *v.* 1, 3. an evil thing, the worst of evils, what makes this world such an evil world as it is; it is going back from God, *v.* 3.

3. The fountain of sin; how comes it that men are so bad? Surely, because there is no fear of God before their eyes: they *say in their hearts*, '*There is no God*, none to call us to an account, none we need stand in awe of.' Men's bad practices flow from their bad principles.

4. The folly of sin; atheists, whether in opinion or practice, are fools, the greatest fools in the world. They that do not seek God, do not understand; man is distinguished from brutes, not so much by the powers of reason, as by a capacity for religion. The workers of iniquity, whatever they pretend to, have no knowledge; those may truly be said to know nothing, that do not know God, *v.* 4.

5. The filthiness of sin; sinners are corrupt, *v.* 1. their nature is vitiated and spoiled, [their faculties abused,] their iniquity is abominable, odious to the holy God, and renders them so; whereas otherwise He *hates nothing He has made.* What decency soever proud sinners pretend to, it is certain, wickedness is the greatest defilement in the world.

6. The fruit of sin; see to what a degree of barbarity it brings men at last; as if they were not only become beasts, but beasts of prey, *v.* 4. And

Rom. 11:24.
b 13:5. 33:18. 147:11.
c 145:1,2. 146:2. Eph. 3:20,21.
d 27:14. 40:1. 48:9,10. 62:1,5. 123: 2,3. 130:5,6. Prov. 13:10.
e 54:6. 73:25,28.
a 88: *title.*
b 14:1,&c. 92:6. Matt. 5:22. Luke 12:20.
c 10:6,11,13. 1 K. 12:26. Rom. 1:21, 28.
d Gen. 6:5,6,11—13. Job 14:4. 15:16.
e Lev. 18:24—30. Deut. 12:31. 1 K. 14:24. Ez. 16:47,51. 1 Pet. 4:3.
f Rom. 3:10,&c.
g 33:13,14. 102:19. Jer. 16:17. 23:24.
h 111:10. Deut. 4:6. Job 28:28.
i 10:4. 27:8. 1 Chr. 28:9. 2 Chr. 15: 2. 19:3. Is. 65:6.
k 14:3. 2 Sam. 20:2. Is. 53:6. 64:6. Jer. 3:5,6. Zeph. 1:6.
l Job 15:16. Ez. 36:25. 2 Cor. 7:1. Rev. 22:11.
m Rom. 3:12. 1 John 2:29. 3 John 11.
n 94:8. Is. 27:11. Jer. 4:22. Matt. 23:17,&c.
o 27:2. Jer. 10:25. Rev. 17:16.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Many mighty men have been ambitious of being distinguished, by doing extensive mischief with valor or crafty policy. Indeed, poets, orators, and historians have generally celebrated those as heroes, whose conduct has been the reverse of the divine goodness, and the very counterpart of Satan's malice, pride, deceit, and murder; who have abused superior advantages and endowments, to devise and execute plans of more extensive devastation; or who, by slanders and treachery, excite war and bloodshed among those who were at peace.—It is wonderful, 'that any man should value himself for being able to do mischief, when God esteemeth it his glory to do good;' (*Norris*, in Bp. *Horne;*) and his goodness will increase the condemnation of all those, who are emboldened by it in committing iniquity: but it forms the security of those, who depend on it, and copy it as their example. [Note, 49:18.] SCOTT.

Verse 8.

The Olive Tree is an evergreen, of which there are two kinds, the wild, and the cultivated. The latter is of a moderate height, its trunk knotty, its bark smooth and ash colored; its wood is solid and yellowish; its leaves are oblong, and almost like those of the willow. It puts forth, in June, bunches of white flowers. The fruit, which is oblong and plump, is first green, then pale, and, when quite ripe, black. The wild olive is smaller in all its parts. See *Encyc. of Rel. Knowledge.* 'The olive branch has ever been an emblem of peace, and the sacred writers frequently use similies taken from the olive tree;—in Jer. 11:16. the church is compared to it; see also Rom. 11:17, 24. The cherubim in the temple, as well as the doors of the oracle and the door posts of the temple, were made of the wood of this tree. 1 K. 6: In Hos. 14: it is said of Israel, "his beauty shall be as the olive tree." The Christian in a prosperous state and circumstances, fruitful in good works, is fitly compared to a beautiful olive tree, full of fatness, and bearing fair and goodly fruit. The engraving represents some of the wild olives growing in the garden of Gethsemane in 1834. This place was a favorite resort of our Savior, and is situated between the foot of the Mt. of Olives and the brook Kedron. The walls of Jerus. are very distinctly seen from it, on the extreme edge of a precipitous bank, and through the trees the bridge over the Kedron is clearly perceptible. Eight of the trees are so large, that they are said to have been in existence ever since the time of Jesus Christ. Although Titus cut down all the wood in the neighborhood of Jerus. yet it is not improbable that these trees (which are unquestionably of a very remote antiquity) may have arisen from the roots of the ancient trees, because the olive is very long lived, and possesses the peculiar property of shooting up again, however frequently it may be cut down These trees are of the species called *Olea Europœa:* they appear p[illegible]larded from extreme age, and their stems are very rough and knarled.' *Horne.* ED.

I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.] 'God shall destroy thee for ever.' (5) 'I will praise thee for ever.' (9) (145:1, 2. 146:2.)—Can any unprejudiced man conceive, that this language refers to nothing beyond this poor, perishing life on earth? SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. LIII. 'The compiler or compilers of David's Pss. had so great a reverence for their composer, whom they knew to be guided by divine inspiration, that they would not lose any of his fragments, and therefore repeated this Ps. with the variations he had made.' POOLE.—'Perhaps, by a perfect collation of existing MSS., modern as they are, it may yet be found, that the compositions [this and Ps. 14.] are, in all respects, identical.' MORISON.

Title. It is not known, nor has it been conjectured with much probability, on what account, or for what reason, the same sentiments are [here] repeated in almost the same words, as in Ps. 14. The variations, however, are sufficient to show, that the Ps. in one place was *intentionally* altered from that in the other; and it is probable, that it was in consequence of some change in the Psalmist's circumstances, or some events which had occurred subsequent to its first publication. The word *Mahalath* seems to denote a hollow instrument of music, a flute or pipe: and *Maschil*, or *instructing*, implies the scope of it, viz. an instruction or warning against impiety towards God, and rebellion against his anointed king. SCOTT.

Verses 1—4.

(14:1—3.) The only variations in these vs. are the change, in some instances, of one word for another of nearly the same import. ID.

(4.) *Have*, &c. 'Do not the workers of iniquity know, that they eat up my people, &c.?' Thus the v. is rendered in the old translation [printed at Geneva]. ID.

OLIVE TREES IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.—Psalm 52:8.

5 [p] There * were they in great fear *where* no fear was. for God hath [q] scattered the bones of him that encampeth *against* thee: [r] thou hast put *them* to shame, [s] because God hath despised them.

6 † Oh, that the salvation of Israel *were come* [t] out of Zion! When God [u] bringeth back the captivity of his people, [x] Jacob shall rejoice, *and* Israel shall be glad.

PSALM LIV.

David complains of his enemies, and prays for deliverance, 1—3. He glories in the help of God, predicts ruin to his foes, and vows sacrifices and praises, 4—7.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil, *A Psalm* of David, [a] when the Ziphims came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?

SAVE me, O God, [b] by thy name, and [c] judge me by thy strength.

2 [d] Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.

3 For [e] strangers are risen up against me, and [f] oppressors seek after my soul: [g] they have not set God before them. Selah.

4 Behold, [h] God *is* mine Helper: the LORD *is* with them that [i] uphold my soul.

5 He shall [k] reward evil unto ‡ mine enemies: [l] cut them off in thy truth.

6 I will [m] freely sacrifice unto thee: [n] I will praise thy name, O

see their contempt of God at the same time; they scorn to be beholden to Him.

7. The fear and shame that attend sin, *v.* 5. *the wicked flees when none pursues.* See the ground of this fear; God had formerly *scattered the bones of those that encamped against* his people; not only broken their power, and dispersed their forces, but slain them, and reduced their bodies to dry bones, l[ike] those *scattered at the grave's mouth*, 161: 7. F[ear] .20: 9. This enables the virgin, the daughter o[f] Zion, to put them to shame, and expose them, *because God has despised them;* to laugh at them, because He that sits in heaven laughs at them.

Lastly, The faith of the saints, and their hope and power touching the cure of this great evil, *v.* 6. There will come a Savior, a great salvation, a salvation from sin. Oh that it might be hastened! for it will bring in glorious and joyful times. There were those in the O. T. times, that looked and hoped, that prayed and waited, for this redemption. Salvations were often wrought, and all typical of the everlasting triumphs of the glorious church. Matt. 1: 21.

Ps. LIV. The key of this Ps. hangs at the door, for the title tells us on what occasion it was penned, see 1 *Sam.* 23: 19. 26: 1. The Ps. is sweet; the former part of it, perhaps, was meditated when David was in his distress, and put into writing when the danger was over, with the addition of the two last vs. which speak his thankfulness for deliverance, which yet might be written in faith, even in the midst of his fright. In distress, we may comfortably sing this Ps.

V. 1—3. We may observe here,

1. The great distress David was now in, which the title gives an account of. Never let a good man expect to be safe and easy, till he comes to heaven. How treacherous, how basely officious, were these Ziphims! It is well God is faithful, for men are not to be trusted, Mic. 7: 5.

2. His prayer to God for succor and deliverance, *v.* 1, 2. He appeals to God, and begs He would save him from his enemies, plead his cause, and judge for him. David has no other plea to depend on than God's name, no other power to depend on than God's strength, and those he makes his refuge and confidence.

3. His plea, taken from the character of his enemies, *v.* 3. The worst treatment may be expected from those who, having broken through the bonds of relation and alliance, make themselves strangers. Paul's greatest perils were by his *own countrymen*, and by *false brethren;* 2 Cor. 11: 26. and so were David's. What bonds of nature, friendship, gratitude, or covenant, will hold those that have broken through the fear of God? *Selah; Mark this.* Let us all be sure to set God before us at all times; if not, we are in danger of becoming desperate.

V. 4—7. We have here the lively actings of David's faith in his prayer, which assured him of a comfortable issue.

1. He was sure God took his part, *v.* 4. he speaks it with an air of triumph and exultation, *Behold, God is mine Helper.* If we be for Him, He is for us; and if He be for us, we need not fear any power engaged against us. Comp 118: 7. He means, 'The Lord upholds my soul.'

2. God taking his part, he doubted not but his enemies should both flee and fall, *v.* 5. The enemies we forgive, if they repent not, God will judge: for this reason, we must not avenge ourselves, because God has said, *Vengeance is mine.* But he prays, *Cut them off in thy truth.* This is not a prayer of malice, but of faith, for it only desires the performance of the Word of God. There is truth in God's threatenings, as well as in his promises, and sinners that repent not will find it so to their cost.

3. He promises to thank God for all the experience he had had of his goodness, *v.* 6.

4. He speaks of his deliverance as a thing done, *v.* 7. I will praise Thy name, and say, '*He has delivered me;* this shall be my song then.' What he rejoices in, is, a complete deliverance; *He has delivered me from all trouble*; and a deliverance to his heart's content; *Mine eye has seen its desire on mine enemies;* not seen them cut off and ruined, but forced to retreat; tidings being brought to Saul that the Philistines were upon him, 1 Sam. 23: 27, 28. All David desired was, to be himself safe; when he saw Saul draw off his forces, he saw his desire; *He has delivered me from all trouble.* With this thought David comforted himself when in distress. Or, With this he magnified his present deliverance, when the fright was over, that it was an earnest of his further deliverance. This may, perhaps, point at Christ, of whom David was a type. However, it is an encouragement to

p Lev. 26:17,36. Deut. 28:65—67. 1 Sam. 14:15. 2 K. 7:6,7. Job 15:21. Prov. 28:1.
* Heb. *they feared a fear.* 14:5.
q 141:7. Ez. 6:5. 37:1—11.
r 35:4,26. 40:14. 83:16,17.
s 2:4. 73:20. Is. 37:22,&c. Lam. 2:6.
† Heb. *Who will give salvations, &c.* 14:7.
t 50:2. Is. 12:6. 14:32.
u 85:1. 126:4. Job 42:10. Jer. 30:18. 31:23. Joel 3:1. Am. 9:14.
x 106:46—48. Ezra 3:11. Neh. 12:43. Is. 12:1—3.
a 1 Sam. 23:19,20. 26:1. Mic. 7:5,6. Matt. 10:21.
b 20:1. 48:10. 79:9. Ex. 3:14,15. 23: 21. 34:5,6. Prov. 18:10. Is. 30:27. Matt. 1:21,23. Acts 4:12.
c 26:1. 43:1,2. 99:4. Prov. 23:11. Jer. 1:34.
d 5:1—3. 13:3. 55:1,2. 130:2. 143:7.
e 69:8. 86:14. Job 19:13—15.
f 22:16. 59:3—5. Matt. 27:20—23.
g 16:8. 36:1. 53:4. John 16:3.
h 118:6,7,13. 1 Chr. 12:18. Is. 41:10. 50:7—9. Rom. 8:31. Heb. 13:6.
i Is. 42:1.
k 31:23. 137:8. 2 Tim. 4:14. Rev. 18:6.
‡ Heb. *those that observe me.* 5:8. 27: 11. *marg.*
l 89:49. 143:1,12.
m 68:13—16. 107:22. 116:17. Deut. 12:6,7.
n 7:17. 21:13. 140:13.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The folly of sinners greatly appears in their acting, as if they could escape the notice of Omniscience, prosper in defiance of Omnipotence, or be happy in rebellion against the Source of all felicity.—Those who go back from a religious profession, generally become most filthy, or most malicious persecutors, who of all sinners are most infatuated: for God 'hath despised,' and will confound and destroy them; as He has often scattered the bones of powerful armies, who have encamped against his church.—A guilty conscience and a dread of vengeance frequently fill the enemies of God with fears, where nothing formidable can be perceived; but at length their worst terrors will be awfully realized: (*Prov.* 10: 24.) and as the deliverance and prosperity of the church on earth will be attended with the ruin of all anti-christian opposers; so the eternal joys of the redeemed will be attended with the everlasting shame and misery of all their impenitent oppressors. (*Rev.* 19: 17—21.) SCOTT.

Verse 5.

This v. contains much more than 14:5. while v. 6. is wholly omitted. (14:4—6.) SCOTT.—*There were they in great fear*, &c.] The *Assemb.* (*Ann.*) think Aben Ezra's interpretation worthy of consideration; which is, that they shall be taken with a *great fear*; such as never was before, or as is described, Rev. 6:15—17. ED.

V. 6. *Note*, 14:7. SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. LIV. *Title.* Ziph was a village in the S. E. of Palestine, near Hebron. See *Rob. Calm.* ED.—'Perhaps the Ps. was composed at En-gedi, whither David fled for safety.' MORISON. See the Sacred Chron. inserted in this vol. ED.

Verse 1.

The honor of God, and of his holy name, was deeply concerned in David's preservation; as the Lord had expressly engaged to give him the kingdom. (7:8—11. 26:1. 1 *Sam.* 24:8—15.) His argument resembles that of Joshua:—'O LORD, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies? For the Canaanites shall . . . cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt Thou do unto thy great name?' (*M. R.—Josh.* 7:6—9.) SCOTT.

Verses 2, 3.

(*M. R.*) The Ziphites belonged to the same tribe as David; yet they acted as strangers: and Saul, the Lord's anointed king, and his party, were become most cruel and blood-thirsty tyrants: for they had 'not set God before them.' (3:1, 2. 36:1.) ID.

(3.) *Strangers.*] '*Mudge* and *Green* read: "The proud."' MOR. Bp. *Horne* reads 'aliens.' ED.

Verse 4.

(*M. R.*—11:1—3. 118:5—13. *Is.* 12:2.) *Uphold.*] Jonathan and some others adhered to David, and upheld his cause: but they were comparatively a small company. This however encouraged him, that 'God was with them, and would certainly both prosper and bless them.' (*Gen.* 12:1—3. 1 *Chr.* 12:16—18.) SCOTT.

Verse 5.

'The application to Christ and to Christians is plain and easy; for which reason the Anglican church hath appointed this Ps. to be read on Good Friday.' Bp. *Horne.* (21:8—12. 69:22—28. 109:6—20.) ID.

Lord, [a] for *it is* good.

7 For [b] he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and [c] mine eye hath seen *his desire* upon mine enemies.

PSALM LV.

[illegible] He describes the wickedness, and pushes the ruin of his enemies, [illegible] He intimates to persevere [illegible] 6—8

[illegible] Maschil, [illegible] Psalm [illegible] David.

[1] GIVE ear to my prayer, O God; and [2] hide not thyself from my supplication.

2 Attend unto me, and hear me: [3] I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise;

3 Because of the voice of the enemy, because of [4] the oppression of the wicked: [5] for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.

4 [6] My heart is sore pained within me: and [7] the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

5 [8] Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and [9] horror hath [10] overwhelmed me.

6 And I said, [11] Oh that I had wings like a dove! *for then* would I fly away, and be at rest.

7 Lo, then [12] would I wander far off, *and* remain in the wilderness. Selah.

8 I would hasten my escape from [13] the windy storm *and* tempest.

9 Destroy, O Lord, *and* divide their tongues: for [14] I have seen violence and strife in the city.

10 [15] Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof: [16] mischief also and sorrow *are* in the midst of it.

a 72:9. 92:1. 147:1.
b 34:19. Gen. 43:16. 2 Sam. 4:9. 2 Tim. 4:18.
c 37:34. 58:10,11. 59:10. 91:8. 92:11. 112:8.
d 6: 54: titles.
e 5:1. 17:1. 64:1. 80:1. 84:8. 1 Pet. 3:12.
f 23:1. 80:4. 143:7. Lam. 3:8.
g 13:1,2. 32:3. 38:6. 43:2. 102:9,10. Is. 38:14.
h 12:5. 54:3. 73:3. Lam. 3:34—36.
i 27:12. 35:11. 2 Sam. 15:3. 16:7,8. Matt. 26:59.
k 6:3. 69:20. 88:3. 102;3—5. Matt. 26:37,38. Mark 14:33,34. John 12:27. 2 Cor. 1:8—10.
l 18:4,5. 116:3. Is. 38:10—13. Heb. 5:7.
m 119:120. 2 Sam. 15:14. Job 6:4. 23:15,16.
n 42:6. 61:2. 88:15,16. Luke 22:44.
* Heb. *covered.*
o 11:1. 139:9. Rev. 12:14.
p 1 Sam. 27:1. 2 Sam. 15:14. 17:21, 22. Prov. 6:4,5. Jer. 9:2. 37:12.
q 18:4. Is. 17:12,13. Matt. 7:25—27.
r Gen. 11:7—9. 2 Sam. 15:31. 17:1—14. John 7:45—53. Acts 23:6—10.
s Jer. 6:7. 23:14. Matt. 23:37,38.
t 59:6,14,15. 1 Sam. 19:11. 2 Sam. 17:1,2. Hos. 7:6. Mic. 2:1,2. John 18:3,28. Acts 9:24.
u 2 Sam. 16:21,22. Is. 59:6—15. Ez. 9:4. Zeph. 3:1—3.

Ps. LV. It is the conjecture of many expositors, that David penned this on occasion of Absalom's rebellion, and that the particular enemy he here speaks of, that dealt treacherously with him, was Ahithophel; some will therefore make David's troubles here typical of Christ's suffering, and Ahithophel's treachery a figure of Judas's, because they both hanged themselves. But there is nothing in it that is particularly applied to Christ in the N. T. David was in great distress when he penned it. In singing it, we may, if there be occasion, apply it to our own troubles; if not, we may sympathize with those to whose case it comes nearer, foreseeing that there will be, at last, indignation and wrath to the persecutors, a salvation and joy to the persecuted.

V. 1—8. In these vs. we have,

1. David praying, *v.* 1, 2. Prayer is a relief under every burden. If we, in our prayers, sincerely lay open ourselves, our case, our hearts, to God, we have reason to hope God will not hide Himself, his favors, his comforts, from us.

2. David weeping, (in this a type of Christ, a man of sorrows, and often in tears, *v.* 2.) *because of the* menaces, oppression and insults of Absalom's party, that swelled, and hectored, and stirred up the people to cry out against David, and shout him out of his palace and capital city, as afterwards the chief priests stirred up the mob to cry out against the Son of David, *Away with Him, crucify Him.* They could not justly charge him with any mal-administration, found no iniquity in him, relating to his trust as a king, yet they *cast* all manner of *iniquity on* him, and represented him to the people as a tyrant fit to be expelled. This made him mourn, and the more, because he could remember when he was the darling of the people, and answered to his name, *David, a beloved one.*

3. David trembling, and in great consternation: [as we may well suppose] on the breaking out of Absalom's conspiracy, and the general defection of the people, even those he had little reason to suspect.

David was a man of great boldness, and in some very eminent instances had signalized his courage; yet, when the danger was surprising and imminent, his heart [weakened by remorse] failed him. The best are not always alike strong in faith.

He was very desirous, in his fright, to retire any whither to be far enough from hearing the voice of the enemy, and seeing their oppressions, *v.* 6. Much as he had loved Jerusalem, now it was become a rebellious city, he longed, like the prophet, for a wilderness lodge, Jer. 9: 2. This agrees very well with his resolution on the breaking out of that plot, *Arise, let us flee, and make speed to depart,* 2 Sam. 15: 14.

Observe,

How he would make his escape; he was so surrounded with enemies, that he saw not how he could escape but on the wing; therefore he wishes for wings, not to fly upon the prey, but to *be at rest, v.* 6, 7. Note, Peace and quietness, in silence and solitude, are what the wisest and best of men have most earnestly coveted, and the more when they have been vexed and wearied with noise and clamor. Gracious souls wish to retire from hurry and bustle, that they may sweetly enjoy God and themselves; and if there be any true peace on this side heaven, it is with such, in those retirements.

V. 9—15. David here complains of his enemies, and prays against them by the spirit of prophecy. Observe here,

I. The character he gives of them. They were the worst sort, and his description agrees very well with Absalom and his accomplices.

1. He complains of the city Jerusalem, which strangely fell *in* with Absalom and *off* from David, so that he had none there he could confide in, but his own guards and servants. *How is that faithful city become a harlot!* David himself saw, with his own eyes, and with a sad heart, nothing but *violence and strife in the city; v.* 9, 10. there were no remains of honesty or love among them; wickedness, all manner of wickedness, was in the midst thereof; deceit and guile, and all manner of treacherous dealing, *departed not from her streets, v.* 11. It may be meant of their base and barbarous usage of David's friends, and such as they knew were firm and faithful to him; they did them all the mischief they could, by fraud or force. Let us

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Those who ought to protect us may become our oppressors; and many professors of true religion will generally behave to believers, with malignity and treachery, which even heathens would avoid and condemn. So that, looking unto David betrayed by the men of Judah, and to Jesus betrayed by his apostle, and delivered to death by the Jewish rulers and people; what can we expect from any who 'have not set God before them,' except ingratitude, treachery, malice, and cruelty?—O Lord, help us to bear our cross without repining, and at length bring us to behold, and to share thy victories and glory. SCOTT.

Verse 7.

The words [illegible] in the original, either in this or in any of the similar passages. (92:11.) We may suppose David, as well as [illegible] [illegible] the world say. Thou knowest. (Jer. 12:3—13. 18:23. 20. *Hom.* 9:1—3.) But he was assured of God on his enemies, as well as the performance of his engagements to him. SCOTT.—*Mine eye hath* [illegible] Ps. was written *after the death of* [illegible] and the words might be translated, "*My eye hath seen my enemies*" [illegible] they have been so near, I could plainly discover them. So [illegible] I have seen them, [illegible] me. Dr. A. CLARKE.

V. 8. Some, as *Patrick* and *Hamm.* and Bp. *Horne*, agree with [illegible] after the manner, in considering Christ in his being betrayed, and Judas in betraying Him, as typically brought to view in some of the principal passages of this Ps. Others, as Dr. [illegible] and *Watson*, suppose this view and others still, as *Hammond*, [illegible] Jun. the Rosenm., understand the passages [illegible] of David, [illegible] without [illegible] whether they might be [illegible] [illegible] or not. *Watson* [illegible] 'a coincidence' as [illegible] of [illegible] as that both scenes were transacted on the same spot; both the sufferers referred to, were forsaken and persecuted; and both the traitors mentioned, experienced a similar fate of ignominy and shame;' so *Clarke*, quoting *Horsley*, says: 'the believer, accustomed to the double age of the prophetic style, in reading this Ps., notwithstanding its agreement with the occurrences of David's life, will be led to think of David's great *Descendant*, &c.' but further than this, they think the Ps. is not to be understood of any other than David. ED. 'It does not appear that Judas was ever remarkable for his wisdom, [as Ahithophel was,] or distinguished by his master above his other apostles, as was the case with Peter, James and John; nor did our Lord follow his betrayer with execrations, as David did Ahithophel and the other traitors, a circumstance that marks conspicuously the difference between the type and the antitype, between the Jewish and Christian dispensations.' WILLIAMS.

V. 6. 'The *dove* [especially the turtle-dove] is a bird of very rapid wing, [as Pliny remarks,] and some of them passing before David at the time, perhaps, suggested the idea expressed here.' Dr. *A. Clarke. Roberts* notes similar orientalisms. In connection with the characteristics of the dove, (comp. note 5:1.) the *name* by which Ps. 56 was familiarly known (note 22: *title*) is truly pleasing and poetical. ED.

Verse 9.

Thus the nation of the Jews, after they had rejected Christ, were

11 [s] Wickedness *is* in the midst thereof: [t] deceit and guile depart not from her streets.

12 For [u] *it was* not an enemy *that* reproached me; then I could have borne *it:* neither *was it* he that hated me, *that* did [x] magnify *himself* against me; [y] then I would have hid myself from him:

13 But *it was* thou, * a man, mine equal, [z] my guide, and [a] mine acquaintance.

14 † We took sweet counsel together, *and* [b] walked unto the house of God in company.

15 [c] Let death seize upon them, *and* [d] let them go down quick into ‡ hell: for wickedness *is* in their dwellings *and* among them.

16 ¶ As for me, [e] I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me.

17 [f] Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and [g] cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice.

18 [h] He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle *that was* against me: for [i] there were many with me.

19 God shall [k] hear and afflict them, even [l] he that abideth of old. Selah. § Because they have [m] no changes, therefore they fear not God.

20 He hath [n] put forth his hands against such as be [o] at peace with him: he hath ‖ broken his covenant.

21 [p] *The words* of his mouth were smoother than butter, but [q] war *was* in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet *were* they drawn swords.

not be surprised at the corruptions and disorders of the church on earth, but long to see the New Jerusalem, where there is no violence or strife, no mischief or guile, and into which no unclean thing shall enter, nor any thing that disquiets.

2. He complains of one of the ring-leaders of the conspiracy, that had reproached him, as if he either abused his power, or neglected the use of it,—such was Absalom's malicious suggestion; *There is no man deputed of the king to hear thee;* 2 Sam. 15: 3. And who was it? 'Not a sworn enemy, not Shimei, or any of the nonjurors; then I could have borne it, for I should not have expected better from them; would have stood on my guard, would have hid myself and my counsels; *but it was thou, a man, mine equal,*' *v.* 13. The Chaldee-paraphrase names Ahithophel, and nothing in that plot seems to have discouraged David so much, as to hear that he was *among the conspirators with Absalom,* 2 Sam. 15: 31. for he was *the king's counsellor,* 1 Chr. 27: 33. '*It was thou, a man, mine equal,* one whom I esteemed as myself, to whom I had communicated all my secrets; my guide, with whom I advised, my counsellor of state; my intimate acquaintance and familiar friend; this is the man that now abuses me.' All this must needs be very grievous to an ingenuous mind, yet this was not all; this traitor had seemed a saint, else he had never been David's bosom friend, *v.* 14. '*We took counsel together,* spent many an hour together, with great pleasure in religious discourse;' or, as Hammond reads it, '*We joined ourselves together to the assembly;* I gave him the right-hand of fellowship in holy ordinances, and then *we walked to the house of God in company,* to attend the public service.' We must not wonder, if we be sadly deceived in some that have made great pretensions to those two sacred things, religion and friendship; David himself, though a very wise man, was thus imposed on, which may make similar disappointments the more tolerable.

II. His prayers against them, which we are both to stand in awe of, and to comfort ourselves in, as prophecies, but not to copy into our prayers against any particular enemies of our own. This prayer (*v.* 9.) was answered in the turning of Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness, by setting up the counsel of Hushai against it. God often destroys the church's enemies by dividing them; nor is there a surer way to the destruction of any people than their division. This prayer is a prophecy of the utter, the final, the everlasting ruin of all who, secretly or openly, oppose and rebel against the Messiah.

V. 16—23. In these verses, I. David perseveres in his resolution to call upon God, well assured he should not seek Him in vain, *v.* 16. Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, in a right manner, shall be saved, Rom. 10: 13. They that think three meals a day little enough for the body, ought much more to think three solemn prayers a day little enough for the soul, and to count it a pleasure, not a task. As it is fit that in the morning we should begin the day with God, and in the evening close it with Him, so it is fit that in the midst of the day we should retire awhile to converse with Him. It was Daniel's practice to pray three times a day, Dan. 6: 10. and noon was one of Peter's hours of prayer, Acts 10: 9. Let not us be weary of praying often, for God is not weary of hearing.

II. He assures himself that God would, in due time, answer his prayers.

1. He is as sure of the deliverance as if it were already wrought. If He did not deliver him in victory, yet He delivered him in peace, inward peace; those are safe and easy whose hearts and minds are kept by that peace of God which *passes all understanding,* Phil. 4: 7. David, in his alarm, thought all against him; but now he sees many with him, more than he imagined, and of this he gives the glory to God; for it is He that raises us up friends when we need them, and makes them faithful. Though his subjects deserted him, yet God was with him, and the good angels With an eye of faith he now sees himself surrounded, as Elisha, 2 K. 6: 16, 17.

2. His enemies should be reckoned with, and brought down. He here gives their character, as the reason why he expected God would bring them down. *Because they have no changes,* no afflictions, no crosses, *therefore they fear not God,* but live in constant neglect and contempt of God and religion, which is the cause of all their other wickedness, and certainly marks them for destruction. They are treacherous and false, and will not be held by the most sacred and solemn engagements, *v.* 20. than which nothing makes men riper for ruin. They are base and hypocritical, pretending friendship while they design mischief, *v.* 21. Probably he means Ahithophel particularly. They smile in a man's face, and cut his throat at the same time, as Joab. that kissed and killed. Satan is such an enemy; he flatters men into their ruin; *when he speaks fair, believe him not.*

3. Their ruin. *God shall hear and afflict them,* even He that abides of old, who is God from everlasting, and world without end, and has always presided in the affairs of men, Hab. 1: 12. God shall bring them down, not only to the dust, but to the pit of destruction, *v.* 23. to the bottomless pit, called *destruction,* Job 26: 6. Those that are not reclaimed by the rod, will certainly be brought down; bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days, not half so long as men ordinarily live, as they might have lived, and expected to live. They shall live as long as the Lord of life, the righteous Judge has appointed; but He has determined to cut them off, by an untimely death: they were deceitful, and defrauded others; therefore God will cut them short, though not of what was their due, yet of what they counted upon.

III. He encourages himself, and all good people, to commit themselves to God with confidence

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[s] Ps. 22:1—12. Acts 7:51,52.
[t] 109:2,3. Is. 59:7. Jer. 5:26,27. 9: 3—5. Matt. 26:4.
[u] 41:9
[x] 35:26 38:16. Is. 10:15.
[y] Matt. 26:21—23. John 13:18. 18:2,3.
* Heb. *a man according to my rank.*
[z] 2 Sam. 15:12. 16:23. Jer. 9:4. Mic. 7:5.
[a] Job 19:13. Matt. 26:47—50. Mark 14:44,45. Luke 22:21,47,48.
† Heb. *Who sweetened counsel.*
[b] 42:4. 122:1. Is. 2:3. Ez. 33:31.
[c] 59:13. 69:22—28. 109:6—20. 2 Sam. 17:23. 18:9,14. Matt. 27:5. Acts 1:18—20.
[d] Num. 16:30—34. Matt. 26:24. Acts 1:25.
‡ Or, *the grave.* 9:17.
[e] 50:15. 91:15. 109:4. Luke 6:11,12. 22:37—44.
[f] 6:2,3. 119:62,147,148,164. Dan. 6: 10,13 Mark 1:35. 6:46—48. Luke 18:1—7. Acts 10:3,9,30. Eph. 6:18. 1 Thes. 5:17.
[g] Job 19:7. Lam. 3:8. Heb. 5:7.
[h] 3:6,7. 27:1—3. 57:3. 118:10—12. 2 Sam. 18:28. 22:1. Acts 2:53—36.
[i] 2 K. 6:16. 2 Chr. 32:7,8. Matt. 26: 53.
[k] 65:5. 143:12. 1 Thes. 2:15,16. Rev. 6:10,11.
[l] 90:1,2. Deut. 33:27. Mic. 5:2. Col. 1:17.
§ Or, *With whom* also there be *no changes, yet, &c.*
[m] 73:5,5. Prov. 1:32. Ec. 8:11. Is. 36:50. Jer. 48:11. Zeph. 1:12.
[n] 1 Sam. 22:17. 24:10. 2 Sam. 18:12. Acts 12:1.
[o] 7:4. 109:5. 120:6,7.
‖ Heb. *profaned.* 89:28,34,38. 2 Sam. 2:4. 5:3. 14:32,33. 15:10—12. Ec. 8:2. Ez. 17:16—19.
[p] 28:3. 57:4. 62:4. 64:3. Prov. 5:3, 4. 12:18. 26:24—26,28. Matt. 26: 25. Luke 20:20,21.
[q] John 13:2.

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destroyed by being divided; and Jerusalem, having become the scene of every enormity, was miserably desolated by the Romans. (*Matt.* 23:34—39.) SCOTT.

Verse 10.

'This and the following v. show the state of Jerusalem at this time. Indeed they exhibit a fair view of the state of any city in the beginning of an *insurrection.*' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 12—15.

This was foretold by David concerning Ahithophel, and by Jesus concerning Judas: for the words are in the future, and more naturally signify a prediction, than an imprecation. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verse 17.

Evening and morning, &c.] 'This was the custom of the pious Hebrews. See Dan. 6:10. The Hebrews began their day in the *evening,* and hence David mentions the *evening first.*—This was observed in the primitive church.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 18.

As this v. is in the past tense, while those which precede and follow it are future; the Psalmist seems to refer to his former experience, and thus to encourage himself and his friends. Thus our Lord said, 'Thinkest thou, that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?' And angels terrified and drove away the Roman soldiers, rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, and attended his resurrection and ascension. (*Matt.* 26:47—56. 28:1—6.) SCOTT.

Verse 19.

He 'who inhabiteth eternity,' hearing the prayers of his distressed servants, would certainly punish their persecutors; who had been hardened in impiety, by uninterrupted prosperity. Or, God would certainly afflict them, because *they would not turn* and fear Him. ID

Verses 20, 21.

Absalom, or Ahithophel, seems to have been here intended: but the

22 [r] Cast thy [*] burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: [s] he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

23 But thou, O God, [t] shalt bring them down into [u] the pit of destruction: [†] bloody and deceitful men [x] shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee.

PSALM LVI.

David prays for mercy, depending on the word of God, amidst the rage and malice of his enemies, 1—7. He comforts himself by thoughts of the Lord's providential care and gracious promises; and by praising Him for past deliverances, 8—13.

To the chief Musician upon Jonath-elem-rechokim, [‡] Michtam of David, [a] when the Philistines took him in Gath.

[b] BE merciful unto me, O God: for man would [c] swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me.

2 Mine § enemies would daily swallow *me* up: for *they be* [d] many that fight against me, O thou [*] most High.

3 [f] What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

4 [g] In God I will praise his word; [h] in God I have put my trust: I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

5 Every day [i] they wrest my words: [k] all their thoughts *are* against me for evil.

r 27:14. 37:5. *marg.* 42:10,11. 62:8. 63:8. Is. 50:10. Matt. 6:31—34. 11: 28. Phil. 4:6,7. 1 Pet. 5:7.
* Or, *gift.*
s 16:8. 37:24. 62:2,6. 1 Sam. 2:9. John 10:27—30. 1 Pet. 1:5.
t 7:15,16. 58:9. 59:12,13.
u Prov. 15:11. 27:20. Is. 38:17.
† Heb. *men of bloods and deceit shall not halve their days.* 5:6. 2 Sam. 3:27. 20:9,10. 1 K. 2:5,6.
x Job 15:32. Prov. 10:27. Ec. 7:17. Matt. 27:4,5.
‡ Or, *a golden* Psalm. 16: 57:—60: *titles.*
a 1 Sam. 21:11—15.
b 31:9. 57:1—3. 59:10. 69:13—16. 136: 10,15,17—20. 143:12.
c 21:9. 27:2. 35:25. 57:3. 106:17. 124:3. Prov. 1:12. Lam. 2:2,5,16. 1 Cor. 15:54.
§ Heb. *observers.* 54:5. *marg.*
d 3:1. 118:10—12. Acts 4:25—27. Rev. 16:14.
e 9:2. 91:1. 92:1,8. 93:4. Is. 57:15. Dan. 5:18. Mic. 6:6.
f 34:4. 55:4,5. 1 Sam. 21:10,12. 30: 6. 2 Chr. 20:3. 2 Cor. 1:8—10. 7: 5,6.
g 10,11. 12:6. 19:7,8. 119:89,90,160. 138:2. John 10:35.
h 27:1. 46:1,2. 118:6. Is. 31:3. 41: 10. Rom. 8:31—39. Heb. 13:6.
i Is. 28:20,21. Matt. 22:15. 26:61. John 2:19. 2 Pet. 3:16.
k 1 Sam. 18:17,21,29. 20:7,33. Jer. 18: 18. Luke 22:3—6.

Ps. LVI. It seems by this, and many other psalms, that, when in the greatest trouble and distress, David never hung his harp on the willow, but even then was still in tune for singing God's praises. He was in imminent peril when he penned this psalm, at least when he meditated it; yet even then his meditation of God was sweet. How pleasantly may a good Christian, in singing this Ps. rejoice in God, and praise Him for what He will do, as well as for what He has done.

V. 1—7. David, by his faith, throws himself into the hands of God, then when he had by his fear and folly thrown himself into the hands of the Philistines, in Gath, whither he fled for fear of Saul, forgetting the quarrel they had with him for killing Goliath; but they soon put him in mind of it, 1 Sam. 21: 10, 11. On that occasion he changed his behavior, but with so little ruffle to his temper, that then he penned both this psalm and the 34th. This is called *Michtam—A golden psalm.* So some others, but this has something peculiar in the title; it is upon *Jonath-elem-rechokim*, which signifies, *The silent dove afar off.* [Note, Ps. 22. *title.*] Some apply that to David himself, who wished for the wings of a dove on which to fly away. He was at this time driven from his nest, from the sanctuary, 84: 3. was forced to seek for shelter in distant countries, there he was like the doves of the vallies, mourning and melancholy; but silent, neither murmuring against God, nor railing at the instruments of his trouble; herein a type of Christ, who was as a sheep, dumb before the shearers, and a pattern to Christians, who, wherever they are, and whatever injuries are done them, ought to be as silent doves. In this former part of the psalm,

1. He complains to God of the malice and wickedness of his enemies, to show what reason he had to fear them, and what cause, what need, there was, that God should appear against them, *v.* 1. *Be merciful unto me, O God.* That petition includes all the good we come to the throne of grace for; it implies also our best plea, not our merit, but God's free, rich mercy: it we may flee [*], and trust to, and in faith pray for, when surrounded on all sides with difficulties and dangers. He complains, that his enemies were very numerous, barbarous, unanimous, powerful, subtle, crafty, spiteful, malicious, restless, and unwearied, hunting for the precious life. Such as this, is the enmity of Satan and his agents against the kingdom of Christ, and the interests of his holy reli-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The most excellent persons have always experienced the basest treatment in this evil world: and the more any mere man has resembled the Son of God, in heavenly zeal and purity; the more has he been traduced and hated by them, whose crimes he opposed, or whose hypocrisy he detected. Yet none was ever so overwhelmed with terror and anguish, as the holy Jesus was; when 'it pleased the LORD to bruise Him, to put Him to grief, and to make his soul an offering for *our* sins.' But in 'his agony He prayed more earnestly,' and was heard and delivered: and if we trust in his merits, and copy his example, we too shall be supported under all, and carried through all.—Those, who are most conversant with mankind, will see the most to disquiet, discourage, and disgust them, if they have a spiritual judgment, and are laboring to do good: yet no wickedness so distresses the believer, as that which he witnesses in the visible church of God: with anguish of heart he often perceives violence, discord and treachery in the congregations, where the Gospel of peace is preached and professed; by which the common cause is weakened, the truth disgraced, and far more mischief done than by all the fury of persecutors.—Though we must not pray for the destruction of our most treacherous injurers; yet we may warn them of the doom of those, who before them have trodden in the same path: and in every possible trial let us 'call upon the LORD, and He will save us.'—Our souls need spiritual nourishment at least as often as our bodies need food: but we generally starve in the midst of abundance; because we pray so seldom, so superficially, and so formally.—David had more loyal subjects than he expected; Christ more favorers than appeared, when the general cry was, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him:' and there are more true Christians, and believers have more real friends, than in their gloomy hours they suppose. If however God be for us, He will deliver our souls in peace from every conflict, whether few or many side with us: and it is better to have *changes* and afflictions, than to be hardened by uninterrupted prosperity, and thus emboldened to treachery and cruelty; which generally end in untimely death, and bring men down into the pit of destruction. SCOTT.

character and language of crafty flattering courtiers, and of malicious dissemblers, in all ages, is emphatically described. Thus Judas betrayed Christ, while he said, 'Hail, Master, and kissed Him.' (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verse 22.

'Whatever God has *given* or *allotted* thee, commit it all to his keeping by faith and prayer.' This is the way of peace and safety. (37:5—8. *Matt.* 6:25—34. *Phil.* 4:5—7. 1 *Pet.* 5:5—7.)—'He will not suffer the righteous to be moved for ever.' (37:27,28.) ID.

Verse 23.

Half their days.] (*M. R.—Notes*, 2 *Sam.* 17:23. 18:9,14.) ID.

NOTES.

Ps. LVI. *Title.*] 'David calls himself a *dove* for his innocency and folly, (see Hos. 7:11.) in casting himself into this snare; for his vexation and persecution by his enemies, those birds of prey; and for his sad and mournful posture.' POOLE. Note, 55:6. ED.

Verses 1, 2.

While David remained in the land of Judah, his countrymen fought against him; and at Gath the Philistines sought to slay him. Thus Jews and Gentiles united against Christ; and his disciples are 'hated of all men for his name's sake.' SCOTT.

(2.) *O thou most High.*] The clause may be rendered, 'There are many who fight against me *from* on high,' or, from a safe and fortified place. The original word is not the same, as is generally rendered, 'most High.' SCOTT. So nearly all the commentators. ED.

Verses 3, 4.

David was himself greatly alarmed, when at Gath; but in that day 'when he feared,' he determined still to trust in God; and to honor his word, and glory in it, as a full security in every possible danger. He especially referred to the promises of God, that he should be king over Israel. SCOTT.

Verse 5.

Wrest my words.] Or, 'They thwart me in all my concerns.' The words, in either sense, with the rest of this and the following vs., emphatically describe the conduct of the scribes and priests towards the Lord Jesus, which the insidious perverseness and disingenuity, with which Saul and his courtiers treated David, greatly resembled. (*M. R.*) ID.

6 They [l] gather themselves together, they [m] hide themselves, they [n] mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.

7 Shall they [o] escape by iniquity? [p] in *thine* anger cast down the people, O God.

8 Thou [q] tellest my wanderings: [r] put thou my tears into thy bottle: [s] *are they* not in thy book?

9 When [t] I cry *unto thee*, [u] then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for [x] God *is* for me.

10 [y] In God will I praise *his* word: in the Lord will I praise *his* word.

11 In God have I put my trust: [z] I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

12 [a] Thy vows *are* upon me, O God: [b] I will render praises unto thee.

13 For [c] thou hast delivered my soul from death: [d] *wilt* not *thou deliver* my feet from falling, that I may [e] walk before God in [f] the light of the living?

PSALM LVII.

In extreme danger, David fervently prays to be delivered from his cruel foes, 1—6. He encourages himself in praising God, and fervently prays that He may be universally glorified, 7—11.

To the chief Musician, * Altaschith, Michtam of David, [a] when he fled from Saul in the cave.

BE merciful unto me, O God, [b] be merciful unto me: for [c] my soul

l 2:1—3. 59:3. 71:10. 140:2. Matt. 26:3,4,57. 27:1. Acts 4:5,6. 23:12—14.
m 10:8—10. 64:2—6. Dan. 6:4.
n 57:6. 89:51. Job 14:16. 31:4. Jer. 20:10. Luke 20:20.
o 94:20,21. Is. 28:15. Jer. 7:10. Hab. 1:13.
p 55:9,15,23. Jer. 10:25. 18:19—23.
q 105:13,14. 121:3. Num. 33:2,&c. 1 Sam. 19:18. 22:1—5. 27:1. Is. 63: 9. 2 Cor. 11:25. Heb. 11:8,13,38.
r 39:12. 126:5,6. 2 K. 20:5. Job 16: 20. Rev. 7:17.
s 139:16. Mal. 3:16. Matt. 10:30. Rev. 20:12.
t 118:11—13. Ex. 17:9—11. Jer. 33:3.
u 18:38—42. 27:2. John 18:6.
x 46:7,11. Is. 8:9,10. Rom. 8:31.
y See on 4.—60:6. Gen. 32:11. Matt. 24:35. Heb. 6:18. 2 Pet. 1:4.
z 27:1. 112:7,8. Is. 51:7,8,12,13.
a 66:13,14. 76:11. 116:14—19. 119: 106. Gen. 28:20—22. 35:1—3. Num. 30:2,&c. 1 Sam. 1:11,24—28. Ec. 5: 4—6.
b 9:1—3. 21:13. 59:16,17. Is. 12:1.
c 86:12,13. 116:8. 2 Cor. 1:10. 1 Thes. 1:10. Heb. 2:15. Jam. 5:20.
d 17:5. 94:18. 145:14. 1 Sam. 2:9.
e 116:9. Gen. 17:1. Is. 2:5. 38:3.
f Job 33:30. John 8:12. 12:35,36. Eph. 5:8—14. Rev. 21:23,24.
* Or, *destroy not, a golden* Psalm. 58: 59: *titles.*
a 142: *title.* 1 Sam. 22:1. 24:3,8.
b 56:1. 69:13—16. 119:76,77.
c 9:10. 13:5. 125:1. Is. 50:10.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

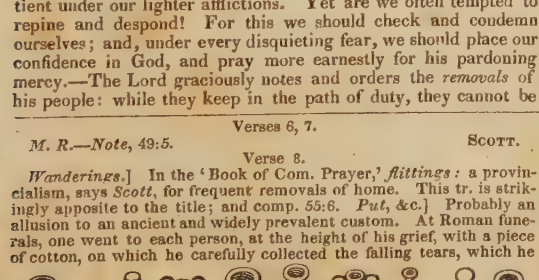
The heavy and continued trials, through which many of the Lord's servants have passed, should teach us to be silent and patient under our lighter afflictions. Yet are we often tempted to repine and despond! For this we should check and condemn ourselves; and, under every disquieting fear, we should place our confidence in God, and pray more earnestly for his pardoning mercy.—The Lord graciously notes and orders the *removals* of his people: while they keep in the path of duty, they cannot be driven from his gracious presence; and their tears of godly sorrow, and those which are extorted by persecution, or sympathy with the sufferings of others, will be reserved to be jewels in their crown of glory. Let us then be careful to discharge our own obligations; and if the Lord by his grace have delivered our souls from the death of sin, He will deliver our feet from falling, and bring us to heaven. SCOTT.

Verses 6, 7.

M. R.—Note, 49:5. SCOTT.

Verse 8.

Wanderings.] In the 'Book of Com. Prayer,' *flittings:* a provincialism, says *Scott*, for frequent removals of home. This tr. is strikingly apposite to the title; and comp. 55:6. *Put*, &c.] Probably an allusion to an ancient and widely prevalent custom. At Roman funerals, one went to each person, at the height of his grief, with a piece of cotton, on which he carefully collected the falling tears, which he



squeezed into a bottle, or *lachrymatory* (*urna lachrymalis*) of glass, or earth. They were preserved with the greatest care, and placed on the sepulchres of the deceased, as a memorial of affection and sorrow. See *Bush's* Ill. &c. A cut is given of many forms of these classical tear-bottles from *Montfaucon*. ED.

Verse 12.

Vows.] 'Reader, what hast thou vowed to God? 'To renounce the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful desires of the flesh; to keep God's holy word and commandment, and to walk before Him all the days of thy life. These things hast *thou vowed*; and these *vows* are *upon thee*. Wilt thou pay them?' Dr. A. CLARKE.

NOTES.

Ps. LVII. 'Very likely this Ps. was made to commemorate David's escape from Saul, in the cave of En-gedi. It is not improbable, when he found Saul providentially delivered into his hand, he might have formed the hasty resolution to take his life, as his companions counselled him to do; and that at that moment the divine monition came, *al taschith! Destroy not.* When, afterwards, he composed this Ps. he gave it for *title* the words he then received. See 1 Sam. 24:1.' Dr. A. CLARKE.—'Most of the fathers apply this Ps. to the sufferings and glory of the Savior; and if the accommodation be authorized, it is by no means unnatural.' MORISON.

Title. Al-taschith.] (*M. R.* a.—*Notes*, 1 *Sam.* 24:4—7.)—*Cave.*] *Notes*, 142: *title.* 1 *Sam.* 22:1, 2. 23:19—29. 24:1—3. SCOTT.

Verse 1.

M. R.—Notes, 36:5—9. 63:7, 8. *Ruth* 2:11, 12. *Is.* 26:20 21. *Matt.* 23:37—39. SCOTT.—In the 'climes of the sun,' the protection of *shade* is peculiarly grateful; and among the Egyptians, noted for their domestic affections, the solicitude of the parent bird, (particularly the vulture,) protecting its young beneath the *shadow* of its *wings*, was very early a favorite idea. Hence sculptures over and in the temples of

trusteth in thee: yea, [d] in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, [e] until *these* calamities be over-past.

2 I will cry unto [f] God most high; unto God [g] that performeth *all things* for me.

3 He shall [h] send from heaven, and save me * *from* the reproach of him that would [i] swallow me up. Selah. God shall [k] send forth his mercy and his truth.

4 My soul *is* [l] among lions: *and* I lie *even among* them that are [m] set on fire, *even* the sons of men, [n] whose teeth *are* spears and arrows, and their [o] tongue a sharp sword.

5 [p] Be thou exalted, O God, [q] above the heavens: *let* [r] thy glory *be* above all the earth.

6 They have prepared [s] a net for my steps; [t] my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen *themselves*. Selah.

7 [u] My heart is † fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: [x] I will sing and give praise.

d 17:7,8. 36:7. 61:4. 63:7. 91:1,4,9. Ruth 2:12. Luke 13:34.
e Is. 10:25. 26:20. Matt. 24:22. John 16:20. Jam. 5:10,11. Rev. 7:14. 21:4.
f 56:2. 136:2,3. Is. 57:15.
g 138:8. Is. 26:12. Phil. 1:6. 2:12,13. Heb. 13:21.
h 18:6,&c. 144:5—7. Matt. 28:2—6. Acts 12:11.
* Or, *he reproacheth him, that would, &c.*
i 56:2. Num. 23:24. Job 31:31. Mic. 5:2,3.
k 40:11. 43:3. John 1:17.
l 10:9. 17:12,13. 22:13—16. 35:17. 58: 6. Prov. 28:15. Dan. 6:22—24.
m Judg. 9:20. Jam. 3:6.
n 58:6. Job 4:10,11. Prov. 30:14.
o 55:21. 64:3. Prov. 12:18. 25:18. Rev. 19:15.
p 21:13. 108:4,5. 1 Chr. 29:11. Is. 2: 11,17. 12:4. 37:20. Matt. 6:9,10.
q 8:1. 113:4—6.
r 72:19. 148:13. Num. 14:21. Is. 6:3. Hab. 2:14. 3:3.
s 7:15. 9:15,16. 35:7,8. 140:5. 1 Sam. 23:22—26. Prov. 29:5.
t 42:6. 142:3. 143:4. Matt. 26:37,38.
u 108:1,2. 112:7.
† Or, *prepared.*
x 34:4. Is. 24:15. Rom. 5:3. Eph. 5:20.

together with Christ, and are made spiritually alive, we have reason to own that God has delivered our souls from death. This we should aim at in all our desires and expectations of deliverance both from sin and trouble, that we may [so much the better obey God, i. e.] do Him so much the better service, *without fear.*

Ps. LVII. This Ps. is very like the last; it was penned on a like occasion, when David was both in danger of trouble, and in temptation to sin; it begins as that did, *Be merciful to me*; the method also is the same: He begins with prayer and complaint, yet not without some assurance of speeding in his request; and concludes with joy and praise. Hence we may take direction and encouragement, both in supplications, and thanksgivings, and offer both to God in singing this.

V. 1—6. The title has one word new in it, *Al-taschith—Destroy not.* Some make it to be only some known tune to which this Ps. was set, others apply to it the occasion and matter of the Ps. i. e. David would not let Saul be destroyed, when now in the cave there was a fair opportunity of doing it, and his servants would fain have done it, 1 Sam. 24: 4, 6. Or rather, God would not let David be destroyed by Saul; as Satan might only *afflict*, not *destroy*, Job. David must not be destroyed, for *a blessing is in him*, Is. 65: 8. even Christ, the Best of blessings. Happy they that have such good thoughts as David's when in danger!

I. He supports himself with faith, hope and prayer, *v.* 1, 2. It was the publican's prayer, Luke 18: 13. pity any should use it slightly and profanely, should cry, *God be merciful to us*, or, *Lord, have mercy upon us*, when they mean only to express their wonder, or surprise, or vexation, but God and his mercy are not in all their thoughts. It is with much devout affection David here prays it. To recommend himself to God's mercy, he here professes,

1. That all his dependence is on God; *My soul trusteth in Thee, v.* 1. as the chickens take shelter under the wings of the hen, when the birds of prey are ready to strike at them; confident his troubles would end well, in due time. Our Lord comforted Himself with this, in his sufferings, Luke 22: 37. He was very easy under the divine protection, in the meantime. He comforted himself in the goodness of God's nature, by which He is inclined to succor and protect his people, as the hen is by instinct to shelter her young. God comes on the wing, to help his people, which denotes a speedy deliverance, 18: 10. He takes them under his wing, which denotes warmth and refreshment, even when the calamities are on them; see Mat. 23: 37. It may refer to the out-stretched *wings of the cherubim*, between which God is said to dwell, 80: 1. and whence He gave his oracles. God, by his promise, offers Himself to us, to be trusted; we by our faith must accept of Him, and put our trust in Him.

2. That all his desire is toward God, *v.* 2. In every thing that befalls us, we ought to see, and own, the hand of God.

3. That all his expectation is from God, *v.* 3. They that make God their only Refuge, and fly to Him by faith and prayer, may be sure of salvation, in his way and time. Some read it, *He shall send from heaven, and save me, for He has put to shame him that would swallow me up;* He has disappointed their designs against me hitherto, and therefore He will perfect my deliverance. God is good in Himself, and faithful to every word He has spoken, and so He makes it appear when He works deliverance for his people. We need no more to make us happy, than to have the benefit of the mercy and truth of God, 25: 10.

II. He represents the power and [inflamed] malice of his enemies, *v.* 4. But it was their destruction; the mischief they designed against David, returned on themselves; when Saul was pursuing David, the Philistines were invading him; nay, in the cave, when Saul thought David should fall into his hands, he fell into the hands of David.

III. He prays to God to glorify Himself and his own great name, *v.* 5. Thus God's glory should lie nearer our hearts, and we should be more concerned for it, than for any particular interests of our own. Thus the Son of David, when his soul was troubled, and He prayed, *Father, save Me from this hour*, immediately withdrew that petition, and presented this in its room, *For this cause came I to this hour; Father glorify thy name*, John 12: 27, 28. Or it may be taken as a plea; 'Lord, *send from heaven to save me*, and thereby thou wilt glorify Thyself as the God both of heaven and earth.' Our best encouragement in prayer, is taken from the glory of God; that therefore, more than our own comfort, we should eye in all petitions for particular mercies; for this is made the first petition in the Lord's prayer, which regulates and directs all the rest, *Hallowed be thy name, thy will be done.*

V. 7—11. How strangely is the tune altered here! This should make us in love with prayer, that, sooner or later, it will be swallowed up in praise. Observe,

1. How he prepares himself for the duty of praise, *v.* 7. My heart is *erect*, or *lifted up*, so some, which was bowed down, *v.* 6. *My heart is fixed*, with reference to God's *providences;* it is prepared for every event, being *stayed on God*, 112: 7. Is. 26: 3. Acts 20: 24. *My heart is fixed* with reference to his *worship, to sing and give praise.* It is implied, that nothing is done to purpose in religion, further than it is done with the heart: dull and sleepy devotions will never be acceptable to God; with a holy fire must that sacrifice be kindled, and ascend in a holy flame. David will be in the most lively frame, as one newly awakened out of a refreshing sleep.

2. How he pleases himself in the work of praise; so far from being ashamed to own his obligations and dependence, he resolves to *praise God among the people*, and to *sing unto Him among the nations*, *v.* 9. and bring all others to join him in praising God. David, in his Pss. which fill the universal church, and will to the end of time, may be said to be still *praising God among the people*, and *singing to Him among the nations;* for all good people

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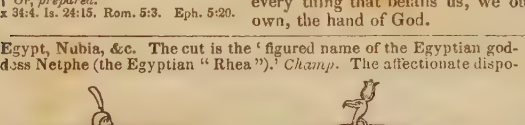
Egypt, Nubia, &c. The cut is the 'figured name of the Egyptian goddess Netphe (the Egyptian "Rhea").' *Champ.* The affectionate disposition of the Psalmist, could not but feel a peculiar delight in applying this idea to the true God, with all the fervor of a filial devotion; and we find it was a favorite expression with him. Our Savior has further hallowed it, by using it to denote the tenderness of his paternal love. Further, the idea of protection, as a prime quality in a ruler, must have early arisen in the ages of violence, when the weak multitude fled from the *cruel* to the *generous* strong, and put themselves under his *shade* or *shadow*, a synonyme for *protection.* Hence the umbrella was early used as a distinctive badge of sovereignty. See the cut, (?) Gen. 41: 42, 43. and the Persepolitan monuments, which frequently represent the Medo-Persian kings with this badge. The *parasol* is also so appropriated to the Emperor of Morocco, and in Persia, that the law forbids its use to any but the king. To fly to the *shadow* or *shade* of a great man, is still a common orientalism. The spread vulture is one of 18 exactly similar over the S. gate of Karnac temple-palace. ED.



Verse 2.

That performeth, &c.] David trusted in God, who had given him the promise of the kingdom, to perform all things necessary to its fulfilment in his own time and manner. (138:8. 1 *Sam.* 16:13. 24:4—7. 26:8—12. 1 *K.* 11:37. 12:2, 3. *Phil.* 1:3—6.) SCOTT.

Verse 3.

From the reproach, &c.] Or, *From the reproof of him that would swallow me up.* (56:1, 2.)—God would sooner send his angels from heaven to deliver his servant, than suffer his furious enemies to destroy him. (*M. R.*) ID.

Verse 4.

Set on fire.] 'He means those who are inflamed, or incendiaries, who inflame and irritate the minds of others by lies and calumnies.' *Robertson.*—The tongue 'setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of hell.' (*Jam.* 3:6.—52:1—4. 1 *Sam.* 22:9, 10. *Prov.* 16:27. 26:17—23. *Jam.* 3:3—6.) SCOTT.—But perhaps there is allusion to arrows, with combustibles tied to them, used by the ancients; or poisoned arrows, also used from the earliest times. See *Bush's* Ill. ED.

Verse 6.

Net, pit] Notes, Job 18:8, 9, 10, &c. SCOTT.

Verses 7—11.

This may with peculiar propriety be applied to Jesus, as risen from the dead, and exulting in the view of the glory which would redound

8 [y] Awake up, [z] my glory; awake, psaltery and harp; I *myself* will awake early.

9 [a] I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations.

10 For [b] thy mercy *is* great unto the heavens, and [c] thy truth unto the clouds.

11 [d] Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: *let* thy glory *be* above all the earth.

PSALM LVIII.

David reproves unjust elders and judges, 1, 2. He describes the odious character of the wicked, 3—5. He predicts their ruin, and the joy of the righteous, on beholding the just judgments of God upon them, 6—11.

To the chief Musician, * Altaschith, Michtam of David.

[a] DO ye indeed speak righteousness, [b] O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, [c] O ye sons of men?

2 Yea, [d] in heart ye work wickedness; ye [e] weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.

3 The wicked are [f] estranged from the womb: they go astray † as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

4 Their [g] poison *is* ‡ like the poison of a [h] serpent; *they are* like [i] the deaf § adder *that* stoppeth her ear;

5 Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, ‖ charming never so wisely.

y Judg. 5:12. Is. 52:1,9.
z 16:9. 30:12. 108:1—3. Acts 2:26.
a 2:1. 18:49. 22:22,23. 96:3. 138:1, 4,5. 145:10—12. Rom. 15:9.
b 36:5. 71:19. 85:10,11. 89:1,2. 103: 11. 108:4.
c Gen. 9:9—17. Is. 54:7—10. Heb. 6: 17,18.
d 5. 8:1,9. Rev. 15:3,4.

make use of his words in praising God. Thus John, in his writings, is said to *prophesy again before many peoples and nations*, Rev. 10: 11.

3. How he furnishes himself with matter for praise, *v.* 10. God's mercy and truth reach to the heavens, for they will bring all such to heaven as lay up their treasure in them, and build their hopes upon them. God's mercy and truth are praised even to the heavens, i. e. by all the bright and blessed inhabitants of the upper world, who are continually exalting God's praises to the highest, while David on earth is endeavoring to spread his praises to the furthest, *v.* 9.

4. The same words which he had used, *v.* 5. to sum up his prayers in, he here uses again, *v.* 11. In the praises of the church triumphant, Thou art exalted to the heavens, and in the praises of the church militant, thy glory is throughout all the earth; but Thou art above all the blessing and praise of both, Neh. 9: 5. therefore, Lord, exalt Thyself, (what can the best of us do,) *above the heavens*, and *above all the earth: Father, glorify thine own name: Thou hast glorified it, glorify it yet again.*

Ps. LVIII. It is the probable conjecture of some, (Amyraldus particularly,) that before Saul began to persecute David by force of arms, he formed a process against him by course of law, on which he was condemned, unheard, and attainted as a traitor by the great council, or supreme court of judicature, and then proclaimed *an outlaw*, whom any man might kill, and no man protect. The elders, to get favor with Saul, having passed this bill of attainder, it is supposed David penned this Ps. on the occasion. Sin appears here both exceeding sinful and exceeding dangerous, and God a just Avenger of wrong, with which we should be affected, in singing this Ps.

V. 1—5. David was not yet come to the throne, but as a prophet, he, in God's name, arraigns and convicts his judges. Two things he charges them with;

I. The corruption of their government. They were, perhaps, a congress or convention of the states, from whom one might have expected fair dealing, but who could be bribed, it seems, because the son of Kish could do that for them, which the son of Jesse could not, 1 Sam. 22: 7. He had vineyards, and fields, and preferments, to give them; therefore, to please him, they would do any thing, right or wrong: nothing vexed Solomon so much as to see, that, in the *place of judgment, wickedness was there*, Eccl. 3: 16. So it was in Saul's time.

1. The judges would not do right, would not protect or vindicate oppressed innocency, *v.* 1. 'You are *sons of men*, therefore we may appeal to yourselves, and to that law of nature written in every man's heart, *Do ye indeed speak righteousness?*'

2. They did a great deal of wrong; they used their power to support injury and oppression, *v.* 5. *In heart*, intimates they wrought with great plot, management, premeditation, and strong inclination, and resolution. The more there is of the heart, in any act of wickedness, the worse it is, Eccl. 8: 11. And what was their wickedness? It follows, '*You weigh* (cautiously adjust, ponder, cunningly lay together) *the violence of your hands in the earth, in the land; you frame it by rule and lines*,' so the word signifies, 'that it may effectually answer your mischievous intentions; such masters are you of the art of oppression: you do it under color of justice.' They held the balances (the emblem of justice) in their hands, as if they designed to do right; and right is expected, but the result is violence and oppression, under pretext of law.

II. The corruption of their nature. This was the root of bitterness, *v.* 3. *The wicked*, who, in heart, work wickedness, *are estranged from the womb*, estranged from God and his will, and all good, *alienated from the divine life*, and its principles, powers, and pleasures, Eph. 4: 18. A sinful state, is a state of estrangement from that acquaintance with God, and service of Him, which we were made for. Let none wonder these wicked men dare do such things, for wickedness they brought into the world with them, they have in their natures a strong inclination to it, they learned it from their wicked parents, and have been trained up in it by a bad education; they go astray from God and their duty as soon as possibly they can; the foolishness that is bound up in their hearts, appears with the first operations of reason. Three instances are here given of the corruption of nature:

1. Falsehood. How soon will little children lie, to excuse a fault, or in their own commendation! No sooner can they speak than they speak to God's dishonor; tongue-sins are some of the first of our actual transgressions.

2. Malice. Their poison was *like the poison of a serpent*, innate, venomous, and very mischievous, what they can never be cured of. We pity a dog that is poisoned by accident, but hate a serpent that is poisonous by nature. Such was the cursed enmity, in the serpent's brood, against the Lord and his anointed.

3. Untractableness. They are malicious, and nothing will work on them, no reason, no kind-

* Or, *destroy not, a golden* Psalm. 57: 59: *titles.*
a 72:1—4. Deut. 16:18,19. 2 Sam. 23: 3. 2 Chr. 19:6,7. Is. 11:3—5. 32:1. Jer. 23:5,6.
b 82:1,2. Num. 11:16. Deut. 1:15,16. 2 Sam. 5:3. Matt. 26:3. 27:1. Luke 23:50,51. Acts 5:21.
c 82:6,7.
d Ec. 3:16. Is. 59:4—6. Jer. 22:16,17. Ez. 22:12,27. Mic. 3:1—3,9—12. John 11:47—53.
e 94:20. Is. 10:1. 59:7.
f 51:5. Job 15:14. Prov. 22:15. Is. 48:8. Eph. 2:3. 4:18.
† Heb. *from the belly.* 22:10. Is. 46:3.
g 140:3. Ec. 10:11. Rom. 3:13. Jam. 3:8.
‡ Heb. *according to the likeness of.*
h Matt. 3:7. 23:33.
i Jer. 8:17.
§ Or, *asp.* Joh 20:14,16. Is. 11:8.
‖ Or, be *the charmer never so cunning.* Deut. 18:11. Is. 19:3.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Protection from man's *injustice* must be sought from the Lord's *mercy;* and the most eminent believers need frequently to reiterate the publican's prayer, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner.' But an inward consciousness, that our souls trust in the Lord, may enable us in the most imminent dangers, to expect, that our calamities will at length be over-past: and, in the meantime, by faith and prayer, we must make the shadow of his almighty wings our refuge.—If we have fled from the wrath to come unto Jesus Christ, we are interested in all his merits, grace, and victories; and in all the precious promises and glorious perfections of our God: and He, who has *performed* all things requisite to the salvation of his people, will in answer to our prayers *perform* all things for us, and in us, which are needful to our enjoyment of it

SCOTT.

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to God in the conversion of the Gentiles. [So Dr. *A. Clarke.*]

SCOTT.

(8.) *My glory.*] The Syr. reads, *my harp*, which I think likely to be correct. *Awake up, harp; awake, psaltery and harp. I will awake early.* Such *repetitions* are frequent in the Heb. poets. If we read *glory*, it may refer to his *tongue*, or more likely to his *skill in composition.* Dr. A. CLARKE. The lively orientals frequently address inanimate objects, as if they had intelligence. Thus a strolling musician will say, 'Arise, arise, my harp! and play sweetly before this great king, and well shalt thou be rewarded,' &c. *Roberts.* ED.

(9.) *Among the people.*] 'The *Israelites.*' *Among the nations.*] 'The Gentiles at large.'—Wherever the name of Christ is known, there is David's known also.

Dr. A. CLARKE.

NOTES.

Ps. LVIII. Most commentators seem undecided as to the time and occasion of this Ps., but *Patrick* agrees substantially with *Amyraldus* in *Henry;* and thinks this and the next Ps. precede, in order of time, the foregoing, according to the Heb. method of reading backward.

ED.

Verses 3—5.

All wickedness springs from the *alienation* of the heart from God, being 'estranged' from Him: and children very soon manifest evil tempers, and contract habits of lying and of other vices, [from early abuse of propensities natural and common to us all. ED.] The most hateful dispositions are found as natural to them, and as fatal to others, as the poison of a serpent.

SCOTT.

(4, 5.) 'There is great reason to believe the allusion here to charming the adder is founded in truth, as several naturalists pledge their veracity for it. Sir *H. Blount*, quoted by *Boyle*, says, "I saw in Grand Cairo a nest of serpents, of 2 ft. long, black and ugly, kept by a Frenchman, which, when he came to handle them, would not endure him, but ran and hid in their hole. Then he would take his cittern, and play upon it. They, hearing his music, came all crawling to his feet, and began to climb upon him, till he gave over playing, then ran away."'

6 [k] Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth; break out the great teeth of [l] the young lions, O LORD.

7 Let them [m] melt away as waters *which* run continually: *when* he bendeth *his bow to shoot* his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces.

8 As a snail *which* melteth, let *every one of them* [n] pass away: *like* [o] the untimely birth of a woman, *that* they may not see the sun.

9 Before your pots can feel [p] the thorns, he shall take them away [q] as with a whirlwind, [*] both living, and in *his* wrath.

10 [r] The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall [s] wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.

11 So that a man shall say, [t] Verily *there is* † a

k 3:7. 10:15. Job 4:10,11. 29:17. Ez. 30:21,&c.
l 17:12. 91:13. Num. 23:24. Is. 31:4. Hos. 5:14. Mic. 5:8.
m 22:14. 64:7,8. 112:10. Ex. 15:15. Josh. 2:9,11. 2 Sam. 17:10. Is. 13:7.
n 37:35,36. Matt. 24:35. Jam. 1:10.
o Job 3:16. Ec. 6:3.
p 118:12. Ec. 7:6.
q 55:23. 73:18—20. Job 18:18. 20:5, &c. Prov. 1:27. 14:32. Is. 17:13. 40:24. Jer. 23:19.
* Heb. *as living as wrath.* Num. 16:30.
r 52:6. 64:10. 68:1—3. 107:42 Judg. 5:31. Prov. 11:10. Rev. 18:20. 19:1—6.
s 68:23. Job 29:6. Rev. 14:20.
t 73:13—15. 92:15. Mal. 3:14. Rom. 2:5.
† Heb. *fruit of thee, &c.* Is. 3:10. Rom. 6:21,22.

ness, to mollify them, and bring them to a better temper, *v.* 4, 5. The Psalmist, having compared these wicked men to serpents, takes occasion thence, on another account, to compare them to the deaf adder or viper, concerning which there was then this vulgar tradition, that, whereas by music, or some other art, they had a way of charming serpents, so as either to destroy, or, at least, disable them, this deaf adder would lay one ear to the ground, and stop the other with its tail; it is only an allusion to the report of such a thing, to illustrate the obstinacy of sinners in a sinful way. God's design, in his word and providence, is, to cure serpents of their malignity; to this end, how wise, how powerful, how well-chosen, are the charms! How forcible are right words! But all in vain, with most men; and what is the reason? It is, because they will not hearken; none so deaf!

V. 6—11. In these vs. we have,

I. David's prayers against his enemies, in which he was actuated by a public spirit, in praying against them, as enemies of God and his people, and not by any private revenge.

He prays, 1. That they might be disabled for further mischief, *v.* 6. that they might not be able to make prey of others, 3: 7. 2. That they might be disappointed in the plots they had already laid, and might not gain their point, *v.* 7. 'Let them fall at the feet of the upright, and never come near the mark.' Let them be as the waters of a land-flood, which though they seem formidable for awhile, soon soak into the ground, or return to their channels; or, in general, let them be as *water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again*, but gradually dries away, and disappears. Such shall the *floods of ungodly men* be, which sometimes *make us afraid*, 18: 4. He prays, *v.* 8. they might melt as a snail, which wastes by its own motion, in every stretch it makes leaving some of its moisture behind. And he prays, that they might be *like the untimely birth of a woman*, which dies as soon as it begins to live, and never sees the sun, Job 3: 16. We may, in faith, pray against the designs of the church's enemies, as the prophet does, Hos. 9: 14. which explains this here.

II. His prediction of their ruin, *v.* 9. *Thorns* make a quick fire, and violent while it lasts, so that a pot is soon heated by them. Proverbial expressions are somewhat difficult, but the sense is plain; that the judgments of God often surprise wicked people in the midst of their jollity, and hurry them away of a sudden. Two things the Psalmist promises himself as the good effects of sinners' destruction:

1. That saints would be encouraged and comforted by it, *v.* 10. 73: 2, 13. When they see the judgments of God hurrying them away, and justice taken on them for all their mischief to God's people, they rejoice in the satisfaction to their doubts, and confirmation to their faith, thereby given in the providence of God, and his justice and righteousness in governing the world; they shall rejoice in the victory thus gained over tha temptation, by *seeing their end*, 73: 17. 68: 23. It shall be as great a refreshment to the saints, to see God glorified in the ruin of sinners, as it is to a weary traveller to have his feet washed. The joy of the saints, in the destruction of the wicked, is then a holy joy, and justifiable, when it helps to make them holy, and to purify them from sin.

2. That sinners would be convinced and converted by it, *v.* 11. The vengeance God sometimes takes on the wicked in this world, will bring men to say, *Verily*, or, *However it be*, so it may be read, *there is a reward for the righteous.* Any man may draw this inference from such providences, and many a man shall, who, before, denied even these plain truths, or doubted of them. Some shall have this confession extorted from them, others shall have their minds so changed, that they shall willingly own it, and thank God, who has given them to see it, and see it with satisfaction. Even in this world there is a reward for the righteous, [they shall have what is best worth having. Note, Job 36: 8, 14.] they shall be recompensed in the earth. They shall be noticed, honored, and protected, that seemed slighted, despised, and abandoned. God judges in the earth, presides in all the affairs of men, directs and disposes them according to the counsel of his will, to his own glory; and will punish the wicked, not only in the world to come, but *in the earth*, [for they throw themselves out of harmony with the laws of the universe. They forego the gratification of the better part of their nature, to indulge the worst, and their choice is their misery, temporal and eternal]. Thus the

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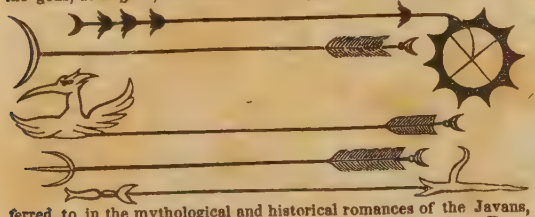
MOR. Similar representations abound, in modern travellers: and see *Bush*, Ill. &c. *Roberts* says, 'the *kuravan*, or serpent charmer, may be found in every village:' he plays on his instrument, and talks to them, and the reptiles creep out of his basket, and begin to mantle about with their heads erect, and their hoods [cuts, Gen. 3:15. Ex. 28:4. &c.] extended. From close observation, I am convinced that all these serpents, thus exhibited, have their *poisonous fangs* taken out; and the Psalmist seems to have had that in view when he says, "Break out their teeth."—v. 6.' ED. 'Mention is made of the *charming* or *enchanting* of serpents both in other places of Scripture, as Eccl. 10:11. Jer. 8:17. and in all sorts of authors, ancient and modern, Hebrew, Arabic, Greek and Latin, particularly Arabic.' POOLE.—'The deaf adder or asp, referred to here, may be a serpent of a species naturally deaf, [*Roberts* speaks of the 'beaver serpent, very deaf, and poisonous, one may approach very near without its perceiving,'] or one deaf by accident, or on account of its appearing to be so.' HARRIS. 'It is no doubt the *ba'en* of the Arabians. *Forskal* describes it as spotted with black and white, about one foot in length, nearly half an inch thick, oviparous, and its bite is almost instant death. It is the *aspic* of the ancients, and is so called by the literati of Cyprus, though the common people call it deaf.' [Comp. however, note, Job, 20.14. The Heb. here for *adder* is *phtn*; for 'serpent' *nachash*.] GREENF. ED.

Verse 7.

Cut in pieces.] So the Chal. the other versions have, 'weakened;' but in the ancient Hindoo mythologies, limbs are said to be '*cut* off' by arrows, and arrows with crescent-bladed heads, &c. are pictured as used by their gods, in the *drawings* from Ceylon, already mentioned. That ancient nation, the Javanese, had arrows, which would cut as well as pierce; see some of the forms in the engraving; these forms are very ancient, for, says *Raffles*, 'they are those represented as used by the gods, demi-gods, and heroes of antiquity, and are constantly re-



ferred to in the mythological and historical romances of the Javans, and exhibited in their scenic and dramatic representations.' ED.

Verse 9.

Their prosperous rage, (which resembled the crackling of thorns under a pot,) would soon be extinct, and produce no effect: while the Lord would hurry them into speedy destruction. SCOTT.

Verses 10, 11.

David's cause was that of true religion; and though he would not avenge himself, he knew the Lord would, and with terrible displays of his power and wrath. Both the word for 'God,' and that translated 'that judgeth,' are in the plural. (*Note, Gen.* 1:1.)—All this was most signally verified in the destruction of Jerusalem, after the Jews had crucified their Messiah: and it has had, and will have, repeated accomplishments, in the establishment of true Christianity on the ruins of its opposers: but the day of judgment will be its grand and final accomplishment. SCOTT.

(10.) *Wash, &c.*] This would not shock an age so familiar as David's with war and butchery. Indeed we, who are blessed with peace, little conceive what scenes of blood have been and still are enacted in this fallen world. How few years, since the memory of man, have been unstained with war! Blood has ever been shed like water, especially in the E. (Note, 72:7.) 'When Abdallah captured Delhi in 1761, he ordered a general massacre which lasted 7 days! his guards were not even then glutted with slaughter, but the stench of dead bodies drove them out of the city: a great part of the buildings were reduced to ashes; and thousands who escaped the sword suffered a lingering death by famine, sitting upon the ruins of their smoking tenements. Thus a city 34 miles in length, and with 2,000,000 inhabitants, became almost a heap of ruins. The historians of the day have handed down the most appalling descriptions of human suffering, of women and men whipped naked through the streets with wanton tortures,—citizens fleeing from their dearest friends as from beasts of prey, for fear of being devoured amidst general starvation: women feeding on their own children, and infants sucking at the breasts of their deceased mothers; fire and sword seemed to contend for preeminence in the havoc, the work of war and blood was perpetual, human heads piled in pyramids, and the streets of cities and towns rendered impassable by heaps of slain; the country in many places exhibiting few signs of being inhabited, save in the bones of murdered bodies, and the smouldering ruins of villages and temples; all law and religion trodden under foot, the bonds of private friendship as well as of society broken, and every individual, as if amidst a forest of wild beasts, could rely upon nothing but the strength of his own arm, or the deep villany of his nature.' *Martin*, 'Br. Colonies.' If war was like this in David's time, and we have reason to suppose it was not much better, we need not wonder that the Psalmist is not more delicate in the choice of expressions: nor if he does not always clearly distinguish between revenge and justice: let us rather wonder, that, in nations pretending to

reward for the righteous: [u] verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

PSALM LIX.

David, in great danger, prays to be saved from his enemies, complains of their cruelty, but still trusts in God, 1—10. He prays for and predicts their confusion and ruin, and resolves to praise God continually, 11—17.

To the chief Musician, * Al-taschith, Michtam of David; [a] when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.

[b] DELIVER me from mine enemies, O my God; † defend me from them that rise up against me.

2 Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and [c] save me from bloody men.

3 For, lo, [d] they lie in wait for my soul: [e] the mighty are gathered against me; [f] not *for* my transgression, nor *for* my sin, O LORD.

4 They [g] run and prepare themselves without *my* fault: [h] awake ‡ to help me, and behold,

5 Thou therefore, O LORD God of hosts, [i] the God of Israel, awake to [k] visit all [l] the heathen: [m] be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah.

u 9:16. 64:9. 67:4. 83:18. 96:13. Mal. 2:17. 2 Pet. 3:4—10.
* Or, *Destroy not, a golden* Psalm. 57: 58: *titles.*
a Judg. 16:2,3. 1 Sam. 19:11,&c. 2 Cor. 11:32,33.
b 7:1,2. 18:48. 71:4. 143:12. Luke 1:74,75. 2 Tim. 4:17,18.
† Heb. *set me on high.* 12:5. 91:14. Is. 33:16.
c 26:9. 27:2. 55:23. 139:19.
d 10:9,10. 37:32,33. 38:12. 56:6. 1 Sam. 19:1. Prov. 12:6. Mic. 7:2. Acts 23:21.
e 2:2. Acts 4:26,27.
f 7:3—6. 69:4. 1 Sam. 24:11. 26:18. John 15:25.
g 1 Sam. 19:12—24. Prov. 1:16. Is. 59:7. Acts 23:15. Rom. 3:15.
h 5:8. 35:23. 44:23. Is. 51:9.
‡ Heb. *meet.*
i Gen. 33:20. Ex. 3:15.
k Ex. 20:5.
l 9:15. 54:3. Is. 1:10. Am. 9:7. Rom. 2:28,29. 9:6.
m 7:12,13. 55:15. Is. 27:11. Ez 18. 27,28. Jam. 2:13.

Lord is known by the judgments He executes, and they are earnests of a judgment to come. *He is a God*, (so we read it,) not a weak man, not an angel, not a mere name, not (as the atheists suggest) a creature of men's fear and fancy, not a deified hero, not the sun and moon, as idolaters imagined; but a God, a self-existent, perfect, Being; He it is that judges the earth; his favor therefore let us seek, from whom every man's judgment proceeds, and to Him let all judgment be referred.

Ps. LIX. This Ps. is of the same nature and scope with six or seven foregoing Pss. all filled with David's complaints of his enemies, his prayers and prophecies against them, and his comfort and confidence in God as his God. The first is the language of nature, and may be allowed; the second of a prophetical spirit, looking forward to Christ and the enemies of his kingdom, therefore not to be drawn into a precedent; the third of grace and faith, which ought to be imitated by every one of us. As far as it appears that any of the particular enemies of God's people fall under these characters, we may, in singing this Ps. read their doom, and foresee their ruin.

V. 1—7. This Ps. was penned when Saul sent a party of his guards to beset David's house in the night, that they might seize and kill him; we have the story, 1 Sam. 19: 11. His hostilities were then newly begun against David, who had but just before narrowly escaped his javelin. These first eruptions of Saul's malice could not but be both grievous and terrifying to David, yet he kept up his communion with God, and such a composure of mind, that he was never out of frame for prayer and praise; happy they whose intercourse with heaven is not intercepted or broken in upon by their cares, or griefs, or fears, or any of the hurries, outward or inward, of an afflicted state. And thus earnestly should we pray daily, to be defended and delivered from our spiritual enemies, the temptations of Satan, and the corruptions of our own hearts.

David pleads here, 1. The bad character of his enemies; they are *workers of iniquity*, therefore not only his enemies, but God's; *bloody men*, therefore not only his enemies, but enemies to all mankind. 2. Their malice against him, and the imminent danger he was in from them, *v.* 3. They aim at my soul, my life; they are subtle, politic, all mighty, men of honor, and estates, and interest in court and country; confederate, united by league in counsel and action, very industrious, and actually gathered together against me, *v.* 4. He notices particularly the brutish carriage of the messengers Saul sent to take him, *v.* 6. [comparing them to dogs in pursuit of game, or picking up food.] Thus they raised an out-cry against him as a rebel not fit to live; with this they went about the city, as those afterwards who persecuted Christ, if possible to set the mob against him, at least, to prevent their being incensed against them, which otherwise they had reason to fear they would be, so much was David their darling. They belched out their malice in reproaches and slanders, and were continually suggesting what drew, and whet, Saul's sword against him. The sword, perhaps, had not been in Saul's hand, had it not been first in their lips. 3. His own innocency, not as to God, but as to what they charged him with; he had never said or done any thing to deserve such treatment, *v.* 3, 4. Note, The innocency of the godly will not secure them from the malignity of the wicked: for Christ's sake, they are hated of all men, as if noxious like serpents, and obnoxious accordingly. Yet our innocency will greatly support and comfort us under our troubles. The testimony of our conscience, that we have behaved well toward those that behave ill toward us, will much rejoice us in the day of evil. If conscious of our innocency, we may with humble confidence appeal to God, and beg of Him to plead our injured cause, which He will do in due time. 4. That his enemies were profane and atheistical, and bolstered themselves up in their enmity to David, with the contempt of God; *For who*, say they, *doth hear? v.* 7. Not God Himself, 10: 11.—94: 7. It is strange, if those regard what they say, who have made themselves believe that God regards not what they say.

He refers himself and his cause to the just judgment of God, *v.* 5. In this appeal, he has an eye to God, as *the Lord of hosts*, that has power to execute judgment, having all creatures, even hosts of angels, at his command; he views Him

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Injustice, established by law, and decreed by judges, is more malignant than any other.—While we behold the effects of natural depravity in the atrocious crimes of others; we should be humbled by recollecting, that the principles of them all are in our hearts also, [and liable every moment to abuse.] We ought therefore to be thankful to the Lord for merciful restraints; earnest in seeking renewing grace; watchful over ourselves; and patient under the effects of our fallen nature in others. We may see, in our children, the wickedness of the world in embryo: their dislike to religion, their ingenuity at inventing lies, their pride, obstinacy, vanity, envy, and anger, are rank weeds, which, if neglected, will overspread their minds, and prevent the growth of every good thing. It is our duty therefore to bestow much pains on their education; and above all to pray for converting grace to make them new creatures.—But, though the poison of a serpent is within us, we may prevent, in great measure, its breaking forth to the injury of others. When the Savior's instructions, reasonings, and persuasions are duly regarded, the very serpent becomes harmless and gentle like the dove. (*Note, Is.* 11: 6—9.) But those, who refuse to hear Him that speaks to them in strains of heavenly wisdom, must perish miserably and eternally; nor can all nature furnish images adequately to represent their dreadful doom. Though the righteous are not 'glad at calamities,' yet they must rejoice to see the cause of God triumphant, and men on every side convinced that there is a reward for the righteous, and 'a God who judgeth the earth.' They must therefore exult, on some occasions, in the ruin of terrible persecutors: they will in due time rejoice at the destruction of all antichristian corrupters of the faith: and at last, they will witness the perdition of ungodly men with unmingled joy,* and sing, 'So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD.' (68: 1—3. *Judg.* 5: 31. *Esth.* 8: 15—17. 9: 17—32. *Prov.* 11: 10, 11.) SCOTT.

* Each reader must judge of this expression in the light of the Gospel, referring to the full disclosures of the final judgment. *Ed.*

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refinement, war, under any pretext, should be tolerated. Each one of us has the elements of those propensities, whose triumphant excess has been recited. Watch, then, reader! lest thou enter into temptation. ED.

NOTES.

Ps. LIX. The time and occasion of this Ps. are regarded as uncertain. Besides the reference in the title itself, which some adopt, others, as Dr. *A. Clarke*, after *Calmet*, refer it to the time of Nehemiah, and the occasion of his building again the walls of Jerusalem. *Horsley* thinks, if it be not entirely mystic, and any history is referred to, it may be that, 2 Sam. 10: the *Syr.* refers it to the slaughter of the priests of Nob. ED.

Title. David's triumphant confidence in God in this extreme danger, and his anticipated fervor of gratitude, for the deliverance which he fully expected, show a peculiarly pious and happy state of mind, in such trying circumstances. SCOTT.

Verses 1, 2.

(*M. R.*) *Defend.* (1) Or, 'Thou shalt set me on high, &c.' The clause is future, and implies the strongest assurance of safety, and advancement above all enemies, grounded on the special promises of God. (*M. R.*) ID.

Verse 5.

Heathen.] *Nations, Gentiles.* (8. 10:16. *Is.* 1:10—15. *Jer.* 9:25, 26. *Am.* 9:7—10.)—*Be not merciful*, &c.] None of the [finally] impenitent will find mercy; and as far as it can be ascertained, that this is the awful case of any, we are not required to pray for them; nor forbidden to pray against them, that, by God's righteous judgment, they may be prevented from further mischief. (*M. R.*—1 *Tim.* 4:14, 15. 1 *John* 5:16—18. *Rev.* 6:9—11.) SCOTT.—*All the heathen.*] "*All such people.*" *Dathe* and others observe, that the Heb. cannot with any propriety be translated, "*all the nations*," or "*all the heathen*," unless in a figurative sense, which I have adopted.' BOOTHR.

6 They [n] return at evening: they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

7 Behold, [o] they belch out with their mouth: [p] swords *are* in their lips; for [q] who, *say they*, doth hear?

8 But [r] thou, O LORD, shalt laugh at them: thou shalt have all [s] the heathen in derision.

9 *Because of* [t] his strength will I wait upon thee: for God *is* my * Defence.

10 [u] The God of my mercy shall [x] prevent me: God shall [y] let me see *my desire* upon mine † enemies.

11 [z] Slay them not, lest my people forget: [a] scatter them by thy power; and [b] bring them down, O Lord, [c] our Shield.

12 [d] *For* the sin of their mouth *and* the words of their lips, let them even be [e] taken in their pride: and for [f] cursing and lying *which* they speak.

13 [g] Consume *them* in wrath, consume *them*, that they *may* not *be:* and [h] let them know that God ruleth in Jacob, unto the ends of the earth. Selah.

14 And [i] at evening let them return; *and* let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

also as *the God of Israel*, to whom He was, in a peculiar manner, King and Judge, not doubting He would appear on the behalf of Israelites indeed. He desires, i. e. he is very sure, God will awake to visit all the nations; there will be a day of visitation, Is. 10: 3. and to that he refers himself, with this solemn appeal, *Be not merciful to any wicked transgressors; Selah;* Mark that. 1. If David had been conscious of being a wicked transgressor, he would not have expected to find mercy; but as to his enemies, he could say he was no transgressor at all, *v.* 3, 4. As to God, he could say he was no *wicked* transgressor; he had transgressed, but he was penitent, and did not obstinately persist. 2. He knew his enemies were wicked transgressors, wilful, malicious, and hardened, in their transgressions, both against God and man, therefore he sues for justice against them; judgment without mercy. Let not those expect to find mercy, who never showed mercy, for such are wicked transgressors.

V. 8—17. David here encourages himself, in reference to the threatening power of his enemies, with a pious resolution to wait on God, and a believing expectation that he should yet praise Him.

I. He resolves to wait on God, *v.* 9. '*Because of his strength*,' either the strength of his enemies, the fear of which drove him to God, or God's strength, the hope of which drew him to God. This is our wisdom and duty, in times of danger, and difficulty. He hopes,

1. God will be to him a *God of mercy*, *v.* 10. It is very comfortable in prayer, to eye God, not only as the God of mercy, but as the God of *our* mercy; whatever mercy there is in God, it is laid up for us, and is ready to be laid out on us. Justly does the Psalmist call God's mercy *his mercy*, for all the blessings of the new covenant are called *the sure mercies of David*, Is. 55: 3. and they are *sure to all the seed.*

2. He will be to his persecutors a *God of vengeance.* His expectation of this, he expresses partly by way of prediction, and partly by way of petition, which come all to one; for his prayer that it might be so, amounts to a prophecy that it shall be so. Several things he foretells, in all which he should see his desire on his enemies, not a passionate or revengeful desire, but a believing desire, on them, *v.* 10.

(1.) He foresees that God would expose them to scorn, as they had indeed made themselves ridiculous, *v.* 8. Note, Atheists and persecutors are worthy to be had in derision. See Ps. 2. Prov 1: 26. Is. 37: 22.

(2.) That God would make them standing monuments of his justice, *v.* 11. He would not have them killed outright, lest the impressions of it should not be deep, and therefore not durable; hence he prays their execution may be gradual. Thus Cain was not slain, lest the vengeance should be forgotten, but was sentenced to be *a fugitive and a vagabond.* Note, God has wise and holy ends in the gradual proceedings of his wrath.

(3.) That they might be dealt with according to their deserts, *v.* 12. especially *the sin of their mouth, let them* for this *be taken in their pride*, even for their cursing others, and themselves, (a sin Saul was subject to, 1 Sam. 14: 28, 44.) and lying. Note, There is great malignity in tongue-sins, more than is commonly thought of. Cursing, and lying, and speaking proudly, are some of the worst of the sins of the tongue; and that man is

15 Let them [k] wander up and down ‡ for meat, and § grudge [l] if they be not satisfied.

16 But [m] I will sing of thy power; yea, I will [n] sing aloud of thy mercy [o] in the morning: [p] for thou hast been my Defence and Refuge [q] in the day of my trouble.

17 Unto thee, [r] O my

h 14. 1 Sam. 19:11.
o Prov. 15:2. *marg.* Matt. 12:34.
p 55:21. 57:4. 64:3—5. 109:2,3. Prov. 12:18.
q 10:11,13. 73:11. 94:7—9. Job 22: 12,13. Jer. 23:24.
r 2:4. 37:13. 1 Sam. 19:15,16. Prov. 1:26.
s 5. Matt. 18:17.
t 18:1,2. 27:1,14. 46:1. 62:5,6,11. Is. 12:2. 26:3,4. 40:31. Matt. 6:13.
* Heb. *High place.* 9:9. 20:1. 46:7. *marg.* Is. 58:14. Hab. 3:19.
u 17. 2 Cor. 1:3. Eph. 2:4,5. 1 Pet. 5:10.
x 21:3. 79:8. Is. 65:24. 1 Thes. 4:15.
y 54:7. 91:8. 92:11. 112:8. 1 Sam. 26:10. 2 Sam. 1:1,12,17. Jer. 17:16. Luke 19:41—44. Rom. 10:2,3.
† Heb. *observers.* 5:8. 54:5. *marg.* 56:6.
z Gen. 4:12—15. Judg. 1:6,7. Ez. 9:5. Ez. 12:15,16. 14:22,23.
a 44:11. 52:5. Lev. 26:33. Deut. 4: 27. 28:64. 30:3,4. Ez. 12:15. Luke 1:51,52. 21:24.
b Job 40:12.
c 3:3. 84:11.
d 64:7,8. 79:12. 120:3,4. 140:9,10. Prov. 12:13. 18:7. Matt. 12:36,37. 27:25, 63.
e 10:2. Prov. 6:2. 11:6.
f 109:17,18. Hos. 4:2. Luke 23:5.
g 11. 7:9. Num. 14:34,35. 32:13. Deut. 2:14—16. 7:22,23.
h 83:18. 135:5,6. 1 Sam. 17:46,47. 1 K. 18:36,37. 2 K. 19:19. Is. 54:5. Ez. 38:23. 39:7. Dan. 4:25,32—35.
i 6. 92:16.
k 109:10. Job 15:23. 30:1—7. Is 8:21.
‡ Heb. *to eat.* Deut. 28:48,53—58. 2 K. 6:25—29. Lam. 4:4,5,9,10. 5:9, 10. Matt. 24:7,8.
§ Or, *if they be not satisfied, then they will stay all night.*
l Is. 56:11. Mic. 3:5.
m 9,10. 21:13. 106:8. 145:11. Ex. 15:6. Job 37:23.
n 31:7. 36:5. 86:13. 89:1. 101:1. Rom. 15:9. Eph. 1:6,7.
o 5:3. 30:5. 143:8. 1 Sam. 19:11,12.
p 4:1. 61:2,3. 1 Sam. 17:37. 2 Cor. 1:10. Eph. 3:20.
q 77:2. 116:1—5. 138:7. Jer. 30:7. Heb. 5:7.
r 18:1. 46:1.

Verse 6. Note, v. 14. ED.

Verse 8.

(2:1—6.)—In this Ps. (*Note*, 5.) and in other places, the Israelites, who set themselves against the man 'after God's own heart,' are called 'the heathen:' and in like manner the Jews, when they had crucified the Son of David, and persisted in refusing to submit to Him, were excluded from the church of God, and have ever since been treated as a part of the Gentile world; except as marked with more striking indications of the divine displeasure. (*Is.* 65:13—15. *Hos.* 3:4, 5.) SCOTT.

Verse 9.

'The more strong and the more malicious Saul is, the more will I look unto Thee; . . . for Thou, O God, art my sure Refuge in my greatest distresses.' Bp. *Hall.*—Some, however, suppose that the Psalmist, when he says, 'Because of his strength,' refers to the almighty power of God, as the ground of his cheerful confidence. (*M.*—*Note*, 1, 2.) ID.

Verse 10.

David's conduct, when he heard of Saul's death, implies, that he had not *desired*, though he had foreseen, the woful day. (*M. R.*—54:7.) ID.

Verses 11—13.

The rejection of the Jewish nation, their long continued dispersion, and their preservation as a distinct people, reminding men all over the earth of God's vengeance on those who reject his Gospel, and proudly despise and blaspheme his Son; (while every successive generation allows the deeds of their fathers, by their enmity against Christianity;) form such a striking accomplishment of this passage, that we must conclude the Holy Spirit intended these events in them: though it is probable David meant the disgrace, degradation, and gradual extirpation of Saul's family, for their opposition to the Lord's Anointed, and all their imprecations and calumnies against him. Other obstinate opposers of genuine Christianity may also be intended. (*M. R.*)—'They shall be taken in their pride, &c.' (12) 'And they' (or *men*,) 'shall know, unto the ends of the earth, that God ruleth, &c.' (13) Had the nation of Israel been wholly extirpated for their crimes, especially for crucifying their Messiah, and their obstinate and persevering opposition to Him and his cause; or had they been incorporated with the Gentiles, among whom they were dispersed; the awful event would in time have been forgotten, and many important benefits to the cause of true religion prevented. But their continuance through successive ages, a separate people, scattered amidst all nations, has been, and is, a most important proof that Christianity is of God; and will doubtless make way for still more surprising events, in their restoration, and the consequences of it to the world at large. (*Num.* 23: 9. *Jer.* 30:10,11. *Hos.* 3:4, 5. *Rom.* 11:11—15, 22—32.) SCOTT.

(13.) *Consume them.*] 'Literally "*finish*," bring to an end, namely, the banditti. V. 11. he prays, "Slay them not:" i. e. take not away their lives as individuals; but put an end to the conspiracy.' COTT. BIB.

Verses 14, 15.

These vs. may mean, that the punishment of David's persecutors would be answerable to their crimes. (*M. R.*—*Note*, 6.)—The extreme famine in Jerusalem, when besieged by the Romans; and the state of the Jewish nation ever since, as destitute of the Bread of life, might be alluded to.—But some think, David here again describes the conduct of his enemies, as foretelling and rejoicing in their disappointment: and that, having repeated what he said before, he adds what should be translated, 'They wander up and down to devour *me:* and if they be not satisfied, they tarry all night.' The words are throughout in the future tense, and may properly be thus rendered: 'Surely they shall not be satisfied, though they tarry all night.' (*Title.*—*M.*) SCOTT.

(14.) To feel the force of this, we must bear in mind that dogs in the E. are generally without owners, and dependent for food on what offal they can pick up about the city, or what is furnished them by the chance hand of charity. Hence they are lean, cross, hungry, disgusting, noisy and fierce, especially when they collect in famished troops at night. See notes, 22:16, &c. and *Bush's* Ill. on 22:16. Scarce any similitude could better express the despicableness the Psalmist intended. ED.

Verse 16.

In the morning.] (*Note, title.*) David was confident, that in the morning, when his enemies expected to devour him, he should, in perfect safety, be loudly singing the praises of God. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.

Verse 17.

M. R.—*Note*, 1 *Pet.* 5:10, 11. ID.

Strength, will I sing: [s] for God *is* my Defence, *and* the God of my mercy.

PSALM LX.

David complains of the heavy judgments, which God had inflicted on Israel, 1—3. He takes courage from present successes to pray for more complete deliverance, and to exult in the prospect of subjugating all his enemies; according to the promises of God to him, 4—12.

To the chief Musician upon [a] Shushan-eduth, * Michtam of David, to teach; [b] when he strove with Aram-naharaim, and with Aram-zobah, when Joab returned, and smote of Edom in [c] the valley of salt, twelve thousand.

O GOD, [d] thou hast cast us off, [e] thou hast [†] scattered us, thou hast been displeased; [f] O turn thyself to us again.

2 Thou hast [g] made the earth to tremble; [h] thou hast broken it: [i] heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.

3 Thou hast [k] showed thy people hard things: thou hast made us [l] to

s 9.10.
a 80: *title.*
* Or, *a golden* Psalm. 59: *title.*
b 2 Sam. 8:3,12,13. 10:16. 1 Chr. 18: 3,12,13. 19:6—19.
c 2 K. 14:7. 2 Chr. 25:11.
d 10. 44:9. 74:1. 89:38. 108:11. 1 Chr. 28:9. Rom. 11:1,2.
e 59:11. 1 Sam. 4:10,11,17. 13:6,7,11, 19—22. 31:1—7.
† Heb. *broken.*
f 79:9. 80:3,7,19. 85:4. 90:13.
g 104:32. 114:7. 2 Sam. 22:8. Job 9: 6. Is. 5:25. Jer. 4:24. 10:10. Am. 8:8. Hab. 3:10. Matt. 27:51.
h 89:40. 2 Sam. 2:8,&c. 3:11—14. Is. 7:8. Jer. 14:17. 48:38. Hag. 2:6,7.
i 2 Chr. 7:14. Job 5:18. Is. 30:26. Lam. 2:13. Ez. 34:16. Hos. 6:1.
k 71:20. Neh. 9:32. Dan. 9:12.
l 75:3. Is. 51:17,22. Jer. 25:15. Lam. 4:21. Ez. 23:31,32. Hab. 2:16. Rev. 16:19. 18:6.

truly miserable whom God deals with according to the deserts of these, *making his own tongue to fall on him.*

(4.) That God would glorify Himself, as Israel's God and King, in their destruction, *v.* 13. Saul and his party think to rule and carry all before them, but they shall be made to know that there is a Higher than they, One who does and will overrule them. The design of God's judgments is, to convince men the Lord reigns; so that the greatest of men are under his check, and He makes what use He pleases of them. He *rules in Jacob*, and *to the end of the earth;* all nations are within the territories of his kingdom, even those that know Him not; but He rules *for* Jacob; so it may be read; He has an eye to the good of his church in the government of the world, Is. 45:4.

(5.) That He would make their sin their punishment, *v.* 14. comp. *v.* 6. Their sin was, hunting for David, to make a prey of him; their punishment should be, that they should be reduced to such extreme poverty, that they should hunt about for meat to satisfy their hunger, and should miss of it, as they missed of David, *v.* 15. *If they be not satisfied, they will tarry all night;* so that what people do give them, is not with good-will, but only to be rid of them. They should be insatiable, the greatest misery of all, in a poor condition; *greedy dogs which can never have enough*, Is. 56:11. and *grudge if not satisfied.* A contented man, if he has not what he would have, yet does not grudge, nor quarrel with Providence, nor fret within himself; but those whose God is their belly, if that be not filled, and its appetites gratified, fall out both with God and themselves. It is not poverty, but discontent, that makes a man unhappy.

II. He expects still and ever to praise God, *v.* 16, 17.

As we must direct our prayers to God, so to Him we must direct our praises, and must look up, making melody to the Lord.

Ps. LX. After many Pss. David penned in a day of distress, this comes calculated for a day of triumph; it was penned after he was settled in the throne, on occasion of an illustrious victory God blessed his forces with over the Syrians and Edomites: he was now in the zenith of his prosperity, and the affairs of his kingdom seem to have been in a better posture than ever before or after. See 2 *Sam.* 8: 3, 13. 1 *Chr.* 18: 3, 12. David, in prosperity, was as devout as David in adversity. In singing this Ps. we may have an eye both to the acts of the church, and to the state of our own souls, both which have their struggles.

V. 1—5. We have here,

I. A melancholy memorial of the many disgraces and disappointments God had, for some years put the people under. During the reign of Saul, especially the latter end, and during David's struggle with the house of Saul, while he reigned over Judah only, the affairs of the kingdom were much perplexed, and the neighboring nations vexatious. God sometimes shows even his own people hard things in this world, that they may not take up their rest in it, but may dwell at ease in Him only. He owns God's displeasure to be the cause of all, *v.* 1. Whatever our trouble, whoever the instruments, we must own the righteous hand of God in it. 'Thou hast *made us to drink the wine of astonishment;* we know not how to reconcile these dispensations with God's promises, and his relation to his people, nor what to do.'

Now this is mentioned here, *to teach*, i. e. for the instruction of the people. When God is turning his hand in our favor, it is good to remember our former calamities. Our souls must still have the affliction and the misery in remembrance, that they may be *humbled within us*, Lam. 3: 19, 20. Calamities serve as foils to joys.

II. A thankful notice of the encouragement God had given them to hope, that, though things had been long bad, they would now begin to mend, *v.* 4. 45:4. This *banner* was David's government, the establishment and enlargement of it over all Israel; the pious Israelites, who feared God, and had a regard to the divine designation of David to the throne, took his elevation as a token for good, and like the lifting up of a banner [note, and cut, 20: 5.] to them. It united and animated them, and struck a terror on their enemies. Christ, the Son of David, is given *for an Ensign of the people*, Is. 11:10. a Centre of their unity; to Him they seek, in Him they glory and take courage; his love is the banner over them, and under Him the church becomes terrible as an army with banners.

III. An humble petition for seasonable mercy.

1. That God would be reconciled, though He had been displeased. In his displeasure their calamities began, therefore in his favor their prosperity must begin. 2. That they might be reconciled to one another, though they had been broken and wretchedly divided among themselves, *v.* 2. ruinous breaches the folly and corruption of man makes, and which nothing but the wisdom and grace of God can repair, by pouring out a spirit

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When we suffer for well-doing, we are conformed to our Redeemer, and have an evidence of our acceptance with God. We should indeed greatly fear suffering as 'evil-doers, or busy-bodies in other men's matters;' but we ought not to be either afraid or ashamed of the hatred of the workers of iniquity, when 'they prepare themselves, and are gathered together against us, without our fault.' (*Matt.* 5: 10—12. 1 *Pet.* 3: 13—18. 4: 12—16.) —In vain did Saul and his mighty men seek the life of David: they could not prevent his advancement to the throne, but they occasioned their own ignominy and ruin. Nor could the rulers of the Jews, by crucifying Jesus, prevent his glorification; but they thus hastened their own destruction: and neither tempters nor persecutors can succeed any better, in lying in wait for the soul of the believer.—The predictions we read concerning the vengeance to be executed on all the implacable enemies of Christ and his kingdom, and on all the impenitent and unbelieving; and the accomplishment of many of them in this present world, should impress our minds with an awe of the Divine Majesty and purity, and with dread of all iniquity.—The destruction of Jerusalem, and the state of the Jewish nation for much above 1700 years, when viewed in connection with that awful imprecation on themselves and their children, which accompanied their malice and lying testimony against Christ, and with their cry, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him;' should make us tremble at the thought of lies and imprecations, which are the offspring of pride and hatred; (*Matt* 27: 19—25.) and still more, lest we should at last be found despisers or abusers of his Gospel. SCOTT.

NOTES.

Ps. LX. *Title.* 'Shushan-eduth' seems to mean, 'a Psalm of testimony set to an instrument of 6 strings.' The Ps. was intended to testify, and *teach*, the danger of opposing the servants of God, and the happiness of uniting with them.—*Aram-naharaim*, or *Syria of the two rivers*, i. e. Syria between the Tigris and the Euphrates, denotes Mesopotamia; and Aram-zobah, Syria to the W. of the Euphrates.—*Valley of salt.*] *M. R.* c. SCOTT.—'This title seems not to agree with the histories to which this Ps. is supposed to relate, 2 Sam. 8:13. and 1 Chr. 18:12. neither in the persons slain, who are *Edomites*, 1 Chr. 18:12, but *Syrians* here, and 2 Sam. 8:13; nor in their numbers, which are here only 12,000, and there 18,000; nor in the persons to whom the victory is ascribed, *Joab* here, *David*, Sam. 8:13, and *Abishai*, 1 Chr. 18:12. But these difficulties may easily be resolved. 1. *David* being king, and *Joab* lord-general of all his forces, and *Abishai* lieutenant-general, as to a considerable part of his army, the same victory may well be ascribed to any or every one of them, as is usual in like cases in the Grecian and Roman histories. 2. The *Edomites* and *Syrians* were united in this war. 3. 12,000 might be slain in the pitched battle, and the rest in their flight. 4. These several places may speak of several fights.' POOLE.—'There are those who have not the common confidence in the title of this Ps. Some, as *Houbigant*, *Venema*, and *Dathe*, refer it to the beginning of David's reign, and think it composed by him; others, as *Rudinger*, refer it to the times of the Maccabees.' ROSENM.

Verses 1—3.

When Saul and his sons were slain, the Philistines triumphed, and the Israelites were scattered and dismayed. (1 *Sam.* 31:7.) The setting up of Ishbosheth over the ten tribes, and the consequent division and civil war, made *the land* to tremble, broke its force, and exposed it to the common enemy. When the Israelites supported Saul, whom God had rejected, and persecuted David, the Lord's anointed; and when after Saul's death they, at Abner's instance, adhered to Ishbosheth, and carried on war against David, in direct opposition to the known will of God; they seemed to be perfectly infatuated, as if they had drunk some intoxicating poison, which had bereaved them of their senses, and so filled them with terror and amazement, that they knew not what they did. (2 *Sam.* 2:9, 12, 13. 3:17—21. 5:1, 2.) SCOTT.

drink the wine of astonishment.

4 Thou hast given [m] a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed [n] because of the truth. Selah.

5 [o] That thy beloved may be delivered, [p] save *with* thy right hand, and hear me.

6 [q] God hath spoken in his holiness; [r] I will rejoice, [s] I will divide [t] Shechem, and mete out [u] the valley of Succoth.

7 [x] Gilead *is* mine, and Manasseh *is* mine; Ephraim also *is* [y] the strength of mine head; [z] Judah *is* my lawgiver;

8 [a] Moab *is* my washpot; [b] over Edom will I cast out my shoe; Philistia, * triumph thou because of me.

9 [c] Who will bring me *into* the † strong city? who will lead me into Edom?

10 [d] *Wilt* not thou, O God, *which* • hadst cast us off? and *thou*, O God, *which* [f] didst not go out with our armies?

11 [g] Give us help from trouble: for [h] vain *is* the ‡ help of man.

12 Through God [i] we shall do valiantly: for he *it is that* shall [k] tread down our enemies.

of love and peace. 3. That thus they might be preserved out of the hands of their enemies, *v.* 5. They that fear God are his beloved, dear to Him as the apple of his eye; they are often in distress, but they shall be delivered; for they that have his heart have his hand; *Save them, and hear me.* Note, God's praying people may, with peculiar satisfaction, take public blessings, the general deliverances of the church, as answers to their prayers, in particular.

V. 6—12. The triumphs of the saints are not so much on account of what they have in possession, as in prospect, *v.* 6. 89: 35. God's word of promise, being a firm foundation of hope, is a full fountain of joy to all believers.

I. David here rejoices in prospect of two things:

1. The perfecting of this revolution in his own kingdom. God having promised it, he doubts not but the kingdom is all his own; *I will divide Shechem*, a pleasant city in mt. Ephraim, *and mete out the valley of Succoth*, as my own, *v.* 7. *Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine*, both entirely reduced. Ephraim would furnish him with soldiers for his life-guards and his standing forces; Judah, with able judges for his courts of justice. Thus may an active believer triumph in the promises, and take the comfort of all the good contained in them; they are all yea and amen in Christ, 1 Cor. 3: 22, 23.

2. The conquering of the neighboring nations, *v.* 8. Moab shall be put to the meanest drudgery; *The Moabites became David's servants*, 2 Sam. 8: 2. Edom shall be taken possession of, as David's own, signified by *drawing off his shoe* over it, Ruth 4: 7. As for the Philistines, let them, if they dare, triumph *over* him as they had done; he will soon force them to change their note.

But the war was not yet completed; a strong city, Rabbah, perhaps of Ammon, yet holds out; Edom is not yet subdued. David inquires for help to carry on and finish the war; and this he expects from God only. He notices the frowns of Providence they had been under; when defeated, they owned it was because they had forfeited God's gracious presence with them; yet they would not therefore fly from Him, but rather take so much the faster hold of Him. The Son of David, in his sufferings, seemed cast off by his Father, when He cried, *Why hast Thou forsaken me?* Yet, even then, He obtained a glorious victory over the powers of darkness and their strong city. The Israel of God, his spiritual Israel, are likewise, through Him, more than conquerors. A lively faith in the

m 20:5. Ex. 17:15. *Marg.* Is. 11:12. 49:22. 59:19.
n 12:1,2. 45:4. Is. 59:14,15. Jer. 5: 1—3.
o 12. 22:8. 108:6. Deut. 7:7,8. 33: 3. Matt. 3:17. 17:5.
p 17:7. 18:35. 20:6. 74:11. Ex. 15: 6. Is. 41:10.
q 89:19,35. 108:7—13. 132:11. 2 Sam. 3:18. 5:2. Jer. 23:9. Am. 4:2.
r 68:4. 119:162. 2 Sam. 7:18—20. Luke 1:45—47.
s Josh. 1:6. 2 Sam. 2:8,9. 5:1—3.
t Gen. 12:6. *Sichem.* Josh. 20:7. 24: 1,32.
u Josh. 13:27.
x Josh. 17:1,5,6. 1 Chr. 12:19,37.
y Deut. 33:17. 1 Sam. 28:2.
z Gen. 49:10.
a 2 Sam. 8:2. 1 Chr. 18:1,2.
b Gen. 25:23. 27:40. Num. 24:18. 2 Sam. 8:14. 1 Chr. 18:13.

* Or, *triumph thou over me* (by an irony). 108:9. 2 Sam. 5:17,&c. 8: 1. 21:15—22.
c Judg. 1:12,24,25. 1 Chr. 11:6,17—19.
† Heb. *city of strength.* 2 Sam. 11:1. 12:26,&c.
d 20:7. 44:5—9. 118:9,10. Is. 8:17. 12:1,2.
e 1. 108:11. Jer. 33:24—26.
f Deut. 1:42. 20:4. Josh. 7:12. 10:42. 1 Sam. 4:6,7,10,11. 1 Chr. 10:1,&c. g 25:22. 130:8.
h 124:1—3. 146:3. Is. 30:7. 31:3.
‡ Heb. *salvation.* 62:1.
i 18:32—42. 144:1. Num. 24:18,19. Josh. 1:9. 14:12. 2 Sam. 10:12. 1 Chr. 19:13.
k 44:5. Is. 10:6. 63:3. Zech. 10:5. Mal. 4:3. Rev. 19:15.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The anger of God against sin is the sole cause of all misery, [i. e. misery is the consequence of sin under God's laws or government; whether this misery be] personal or public, in families, churches, and nations; which has been, is, or shall be endured, in time or to eternity.—Professing churches are often cast off, and deprived of their privileges for their sins; nations tremble and are broken for the same cause;* yea, the earth, and creation itself, groans under the load of man's guilt. (*Rom.* 8: 18—23.) Even the true believer, when he commits iniquity, will sometimes be showed heavy things, and made to drink of the wine of astonishment, till anguish and dismay for a time seize on him. In all these cases, there is no remedy, but by returning to the Lord, [in dutiful obedience,] with repentance, faith, and prayer; and beseeching Him to return to us, and heal the breaches sin has made. He, who is in Christ a new creature, may rejoice in all the precious promises, God 'hath spoken in his holiness,' and by his Holy One; and may consider the whole ransomed inheritance as his own reversion: and the present privileges to which he is called, and the sanctifying and comforting influences of the Spirit which he experiences, are the sure earnests of heavenly glory.—Those who trust and pray to saints and angels, and expect salvation from them, will be overcome by the enemy, and finally perish. SCOTT.

* This is oftener asserted than believed, it would seem: else would rulers more refer themselves to God's laws, in matters of state. The following, while it startles, should warn. A popular British author, after stating that of 127 years (before 1815) England spent 65 in war, and 2,023 millions stg. says, 'Thus we are burdened with paying 30 millions stg. annually, as the price of the gratification of our ancestors' [lower] propensities. Had the 20th of this been spent in objects recognised by the moral sentiments, as education, penitentiaries, roads, canals, granaries, &c., how different would have been the present condition of the country. Every departure from the moral law carries its punishment from its first to its last moment; England needed reform, but clinging to the suggestions of the propensities, resisted it, and preferred to let them loose, for 23 years, on France, with headlong fury and fearful perseverance, not trusting to the efficacy of God's laws to explode the French infatuation. Do the consequences prove this conduct in accordance with the [moral] sentiments? This island [before 'the reform bill' alleviated some of the most flagrant evils] exhibits millions toiled to the extremity of human endurance, for a pittance scarcely sufficient to sustain life; weavers laboring 14 or 16 hours a day for 8d., (and even at that frequently unable to get work,) other artisans, exhausted almost to death by labor, who, if better paid, seek compensation and enjoyment in the grossest sensuality; employers anxious for wealth, now gay in hope, then suddenly sunk in despair and ruin; landholders and tenants now reaping unmeasured returns, then pining in penury, amidst an overflow of every species of produce; the government cramped by an overwhelming debt, and the prevalence of ignorance and selfishness on every side, so that it is impossible for it to follow, with a bold step, the most obvious dictates of reason and justice, for the countless prejudices and imaginary interests, every where obstructing the path of improvement. This much more resembles the punishment for transgression, than reward for obedience to divine institutions. Let every Briton reckon his own and his friend's pangs, in the vicissitudes of hope and fear, the denial (from taxation) of numberless little comforts, obstructions to fair industry, &c. &c., and he will discover the extent of responsibility attached by the Creator to national transgressions. The necessity of providing for the national debt, inflicts miseries equal to the most extensive natural calamities. . . Men have hitherto expected the punishment of their offences in the thunderbolt, or the yawning earthquake; and believed, that because the sea did not swallow them up, or the mountains fall upon them and crush them to atoms, Heaven was taking no cognizance of their sins: while, in point of fact, an omnipotent, an all-just and an all-wise God, had arranged, before they erred, an ample retribution in the very consequences of their transgressions. It is by looking to the *principles*, in the mind from which transgressions flow, and attending to their whole operations and results, that we discover the real theory of the divine government. When men shall be instructed in the laws of creation, they will discriminate more accurately than heretofore between natural and factitious evils, and be less tolerant of the latter.' *Combe*, Const. of Man. When will parents, teachers, divines, political economists, and rulers, think they have any thing to do with God's natural laws? *Ed.*

Verse 4.

David, as anointed by God and advanced to the throne, was a *banner* [or rallying point] given to the pious remnant of Israel. SCOTT.—*Thou hast given a banner.*] The giving of a banner appears to have been anciently considered as implying an obligation and a pledge of protection. See *Bush's* Ill. here. ED.

Verse 5.

Thy beloved.] The words in the original are plural, and evidently relate to Israel: (*M. R.*) and the v. contains the intercession of David for his subjects; prefiguring, in this, our heavenly Advocate, who never fails to plead in behalf of all, however heretofore rebellious, who bow to the sceptre of his grace, and come to God by Him. (*Heb.* 7:23—25. 1 *John* 2:1, 2.) SCOTT.

Verses 6—12.

God had, by ordering David to be anointed, as Saul's successor in the kingdom, virtually promised him the throne over all Israel; as He had to Israel the dominion over the adjacent countries. Shechem, Succoth, Gilead, and Manasseh, had been subject to Ishbosheth; who had also been supported by Ephraim, that powerful tribe, now become the guardian of David's government and person. (*M. R.* b.)—*Philistia.*] (8) This seems an ironical challenge and defiance. (*M.*) These conquests, however, were not yet completed. Bozrah [or *Petra*, see p. 3.] of Edom, or some other strong city, perhaps Rabbah, remained unsubdued. SCOTT.

(6.) '*Succoth* was in the tribe of Gad, not far from the lake of Genesareth.' *Boothr.*—'It may here be taken to express the whole of that district of country,' [the valley of Succoth which lay beyond Jordan.] MORISON.—'The expression seems proverbial,—"I shall divide the spoils of my enemies, as Jacob's sons portioned out Shechem, and measured out for their tents the valley of Succoth."' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(7.) *My lawgiver.*] Jacob's dying prophecy is here evidently referred to. SCOTT.—'The mention of Gilead and Manasseh intimates that all Israel had now submitted to David.' WILLIAMS.

(9.) *Strong.*] See the engraving in the frontispiece to this vol. ED.

NOTES.

Ps. LXI. Dr. *A. Clarke* thinks this Ps. was written about the close of the captivity, and says 'the most judicious interpreters refer it to that period;' yet *Hammond, Patrick, Poole, Horne Rosenm. Williams* and

PSALM LXI.

David encourages himself, by past experience, to persevere in prayer, 1—3. Because of former, and in the prospect of future mercies, he purposes to praise and serve God for ever, 4—8.

To the chief Musician upon [a] Neginah, *A Psalm* of David.

[b] HEAR my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.

2 [c] From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when [d] my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to [e] the Rock *that* is higher than I.

3 For [f] thou hast been a Shelter for me, *and* a [g] strong Tower from the enemy.

4 [h] I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: [i] I will * trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.

5 For thou, O God, [k] hast heard my vows: thou hast given *me* [l] the heritage of those that fear thy name.

6 Thou † wilt prolong the king's life: *and* his years as ‡ many generations.

7 He shall [m] abide before God for ever: O [n] prepare mercy and truth, *which* may preserve him.

8 So will I [o] sing praise unto thy name for ever; [p] that I may daily perform my vows.

a 4: 6: 54: 55: *titles.*
b 5:1—3. 17:1. 28:2. 55:1,2. 130:2. Phil. 4:6.
c 42:6. 139:9,10. Deut. 4:29. Jon. 2:2—4.
d 43:5. 55:5. 77:3. 142:3. 143:4. Mark 14:33,34. Luke 22:44.
e 18:46. 27:5. 40:2. 62:2,6. Is. 32:2.
f 4:6,7. 116:2. 140:7. Is. 46:3,4. 2 Cor. 1:10.
g 18:2. Prov. 18:10.
h 7. 15:1. 23:6. 27:4. 90:1. 91:1. 92:13. Rev. 3:12.
i 17:8. 63:7. 91:4. Ruth 2:12. Matt. 23:37.

* Or, *make my refuge.* 57:1. 62:7. 142:4,5. Heb. 6:18.
k 56:12. 65:1. 66:19.
l 16:5,6. 115:13. Mal. 3:16—18. Acts 10:35.
† Heb. *shalt add days to the days of the king.* 21:4,6. 72:15—17. Is. 53:10.
‡ Heb. *generation and generation.* 89: 36,37.
m 41:12. Is. 9:6,7. Luke 1:33. Heb. 7:21—25. 9:24.
n 40:11. 57:3. Gen. 24:27. 32:10. Prov. 20:28. Mic. 7:20. Luke 1:54 55.
o 30:12. 79:13. 145:1,2. 146:2.
p 65:1. 66:13—16.

p omise will assure us, not only that *the God of peace shall tread Satan under our feet shortly*, but that *it is our Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom.*

H. He prays in hope. *v.* 11. Even in the day of their triumph, they see themselves in trouble; for war is troublesome even to the prevailing side, and if God help not, the next engagement may result in a defeat; therefore, *Lord, send us help from the sanctuary.*

Their hope has two things in it. 1. A diffidence of themselves, and all their creature-confidences. Then only are we qualified to receive help from God, when brought to own the insufficiency of all creatures to do that for us which we expect Him to do. 2. A confidence in God, and in his power and promise, *v.* 12. Note, So far from superseding our endeavors, our confidence in God must encourage and quicken. Hope in God is the best principle of true courage; for what need they fear who have God on their side? It is only through God, and by the influence of his grace, that we do valiantly; and though we do ever so valiantly, the success must be attributed entirely to Him; for *He it is that shall tread down our enemies*, and not we ourselves. All our victories, as well as our valor, are from Him, therefore at his feet all our crowns must be cast.

Ps. LXI. V. 1—4. David, in this Ps. as in many others, begins with a sad heart, but concludes with an air of pleasantness; begins with prayer, and ends with praise. It should seem, David was banished when he penned this psalm, whether by Saul or Absalom is uncertain: some think by Absalom, because he calls himself *the king*, *v.* 6. but that refers to the King Messiah. But he resolves to persevere in duty, encouraged both by his experience, and expectations. So that, in singing this Ps. we may find what is very expressive both of our faith and hope, prayers and praises; some passages are very peculiar. Observe, in these verses,

1. David's close adherence and application to God by prayer, in the day of distress and trouble, *v.* 2. He will pray, notwithstanding his distance from the house of prayer. Note, Wherever we are, we may find a way open to the throne of grace. 'Nay, because in the end of the earth, in sorrow and solitude, therefore I will *cry.*' That which separates us from our other comforts, should drive us so much the nearer to God, the Fountain of all comfort. Neither shall dejection and despondency of spirit prevent his praying. 'Though *my heart is overwhelmed*, it is not so sunk, so burdened, but that it may be lifted up in prayer. Nay, because my heart is ready to be overwhelmed, therefore I will *cry unto Thee*, for by that mean it will be supported and relieved.' Note, Weeping must quicken, not deaden, praying; Jam. 5: 13. Ps. 102: title.

2. His particular petition; *Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I;* i. e. 'Lord, give me such an assurance and satisfaction of my own safety, as I can never attain to but by Thy special grace working such a faith in me.' God's power and promise are the rock higher than we. This Rock is Christ; they are safe that are in Him. We cannot get upon this rock, unless God by his power lead us, Ex. 33: 22.

3. His desire and expectation of an answer of peace. He begs in faith, *v.* 1. 'Let me have the present comfort of knowing I am heard, 20: 6. and in due time what I pray for.'

4. The ground and plea, *v.* 3. Past experiences of the benefit of trusting in God, as they should engage us still to keep close to Him, so they should encourage us to hope it will not be in vain, Prov. 18: 10.

5. His resolution to continue in the way of duty to, and dependence on, God, *v.* 4. David was now banished from the tabernacle, which was his greatest grievance; but he is assured that God, by his providence, would bring him back, because He had, by his grace, wrought in him such a kindness for his tabernacle, as that he was resolved to make it his perpetual residence, 27: 4. He speaks of abiding in it *for ever*, because that tabernacle was a type and figure of heaven, Heb. 9: 8, 9, 24. The grace of God and the covenant of grace shall be his constant comfort; *I will make my refuge in the covert of his wings*, as the chickens seek both warmth and safety under the wings of the hen.

V. 5—8. In these vs. we may observe,

1. With what pleasure David looks back on what God had done for him formerly, *v.* 5. God put Jacob in mind of his vows, Gen. 31: 13.—35: 1. Note, God is a Witness to all our good purposes, and all our solemn promises of new obedience. 'Prayers went along with his vows; those Thou hast graciously heard, and answered;' which encouraged him now to pray, *O God, hear my cry.* He that never did say to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye Me in vain, will not now begin to say so. Note, There is a peculiar people in the world, that fear God's name, and accommodate themselves to all the discoveries He is pleased to make of Himself to men. There is a heritage peculiar to that peculiar people, present comforts, earnests of their future bliss. God Himself is their Inheritance, their Portion for ever; what need we more?

2. With what assurance he looks forward to the continuance of his life, *v.* 6. This may be under-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When removed from other comforts, we should more earnestly seek consolation from God. No outward situation can exclude us from communion with Him through Christ; but without divine assistance, we can neither climb, nor take shelter in, that Rock of salvation: when therefore we perceive there is safety in Him and none in ourselves, we should pray fervently for the Holy Spirit of promise, that we may, by his gracious teaching and assistance, 'believe to the saving of our souls.'—When we have the opportunity, we should keep close to the ordinances of God: and remember, that if He have given us the goodly 'heritage of those that fear his name,' (106: 4, 5.) we shall have enough for ever and ever. SCOTT.

Morison, besides many others, refer it to David; and most, to Absalom's rebellion, while David was at Mahanaim. ED.

Verses 1, 2.

This Ps. seems to have been composed, when David was an exile by Absalom's rebellion. SCOTT.—*End of the earth.*] 'Extremity of the land of Canaan.' *Ainsw.* in *Boothr.* ID.

Verses 4, 5.

The Psalmist (*Note*, 27:4—6.) seems to have looked through the shadow of the earthly sanctuary, to 'the holy places not made with hands,' for it can hardly be supposed, he meant his temporal authority, which was given to him alone. SCOTT.

(4.) *For ever. For ages.* This must imply far more, than that one *age*, David lived on earth, drawing near to a close when this was written. (145:1,2. 146:2.)—*Wings.*] (*M. R.—Notes, Ruth*, 2:11, 12.57:1.) 'Wings of the cherubim,' say some. These indeed covered the mercy-seat. But they were placed in the holy of holies, and inaccessible to the worshippers, and were emblems of the angels looking into the mysteries of redemption, and joining in the worship of the redeemed. (1 *Pet.* 1:10—12 *Rev.* 5:11—14.) ID.

Verses 6, 7.

David might here mean himself, but the King Messiah seems to have been especially intended. (*John* 1:17.) 'The Chal. expounds this of Messiah only; "Thou shalt add days to the days of King Messias; his years shall be as the generation of this world, and of the world to come."' Bp. *Horne.* SCOTT.—(6.) There is some diversity of opinion, whether this v. should be understood exclusively of David, or as referring also, if not exclusively, to the Messiah. ED.

NOTES.

Ps. LXII. *Hammond* considers this 'a eucharistical hymn' of David, but fixes not the time, which Dr. *A. Clarke* thinks may have been Absalom's rebellion and when David fled from Jerusalem. *Rosenm.* refers it to Saul's persecution. ED.

Title.] Jeduthun was first chosen to be one of the chief musicians, when the ark was removed to mt. Zion: (1 *Chr.* 16:37—43. 25:1—6.) and, as this Ps. is ascribed to him, some have thought it relates to Absalom's rebellion, and not Saul's persecution. But, as several other Pss. which certainly were composed before David came to the throne, are ascribed to 'the chief Musician;' we must suppose, that when the

PSALM LXII.

David avows his confidence in God, and warns his enemies of their danger, 1—7. He exhorts the people to trust in the Lord; and not in men, nor in iniquity, nor in riches, 8—10: for power and mercy belong to God, 11, 12.

To the chief Musician, to [a] Jeduthun, A Psalm of David.

1 * [b] TRULY my soul † waiteth upon God: [c] from him *cometh* my salvation.

2 [d] He only *is* my Rock and my Salvation; *he is* my ‡ Defence; [e] I shall not be greatly moved.

3 [f] How long will ye [g] imagine mischief against a man? [h] ye shall be slain all of you: [i] as a bowing wall *shall ye be, and as* a tottering fence.

4 They only [k] consult to cast *him* down from his excellency; [l] they delight in lies: [m] they bless with their mouth, but they curse § inwardly. Selah.

5 [n] My soul, [o] wait thou only upon God; for [p] my expectation *is* from him.

6 He only is [q] my Rock and my Salvation: *he is* my Defence; [r] I shall not be moved.

7 [s] In God *is* my Salvation and [t] my glory: [u] the Rock of my strength, *and* my Refuge, *is* in God.

8 [x] Trust in him at all times; ye people, [y] pour out your heart before him: [z] God *is* a Refuge for us. Selah.

9 Surely [a] men of low degree *are* vanity, *and* [b] men of high degree *are* a lie: to be [c] laid in the balance, they *are* ‖ altogether [d] *lighter* than vanity.

10 [e] Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery; if [f] riches increase, [g] set not your heart *upon them.*

11 God hath [h] spoken

a 39: 77: *titles.* 1 Chr. 16:41,42. 25: 1,2.
* Or, *Only.* 2,5,6.
b 25:5. 27:14. 33:20. 40:1. 123:2. 130:5,6. Is. 30:18. 40:31. Luke 2: 25,38. Jam. 5:7.
† Heb. *is silent.* 37:7. 65:1. *marg.*
c 37:39. 68:19,20. 121:2. Is. 12:2. Jer. 3:23. Luke 2:30—32
d 6. 18:2. 21:1. 27:1. 73:25,26. Deut. 32:30,31. Is. 26:4. 32:2.
‡ Heb. *high place.* 59:9. *marg.*
e 37:24. Mic. 7:8,9. 1 Cor. 10:13. 2 Cor. 4:8,9.
f 4:2. 82:2. Ex. 10:3. 16:28. Prov. 1:22. 6:9. Jer. 4:14. Matt. 17:17.
g 21:11. 38:12. 140:2. Hos. 7:15.
h 73:18—20. 1 Sam. 26:10.
i Is. 30:13,14.
k 2:1—3. Matt. 2:3,4,16. 22:15,23,34, 35. 26:3,4. 27:1. John 11:47—50. Acts 4:16,17,25—28. 5:3. 119:163. Prov. 6:17. 13:5. Hos. 7:3. John 8:44. Rom. 1:32. Rev. 22:15.
l 58:3. 59:21. Luke 20:20,21.
§ Heb. *in their inward parts.* 5:9. 51: 6. Luke 11:39. Rom. 7:22.
n 42:5,11. 43:5. 103:1,2. 104:1,35. 146:1.
o 1. 27:13,14. 37:34. Lam. 3:24—26. Mic. 7:7. Hab. 2:3. Zeph. 3:8. John 6:67—69.
p 39:7. 71:5. Jer. 17:17. Phil. 1:20.
q 2. 18:31,32. Is. 45:17. Hos. 1:7.
r 16:8. 112:6. Prov. 10:30. 12:7.
s Is. 45:25. Jer. 9:23,24. 1 Cor. 1:30, 31. Gal. 6:14.
t 3:3. 4:2.
u 18:2,46. 94:22. 95:1. Is. 26:4.
x 22:4,5. 34:1,2. 46:1—3. Job 13:15. Is. 26:4. 50:10. 1 John 2:28.
y 42:4. 102: *title.* 142:2. 1 Sam. 1: 15. Is. 26:16. Lam. 2:19. Phil. 4:6.
z 46:11. Prov. 14:26. Heb. 6:18.
a 39:5,11. 1 Sam. 18:5—7. 23:12,19, 20. 2 Sam. 15:6. Matt. 21:9. John 19:15.
b 55:13,14. 118:9. 1 Sam. 18:21—26. 26:21—25. 2 Sam. 15:31. Rom. 3:4.
c Dan. 5:27.
‡ Or, *alike.*
d Is. 40:15,17.
e Job 20:19—29. Is. 28:15. 30:12. 47: 10. 59:4. Jer. 13:25. 17:11.
f 39:6. 52:7. Deut. 6:10—12. 8:12—14. Job 27:16,&c. 31:24,25. Mark 8:36,37. 10:23,24. Luke 12:15—21. 1 Tim. 6:17.
g 91:14. Prov. 23:5.
h Job 33:14. 40:5.

stood, either, (1.) Of himself; if penned before he came to the crown, yet, being anointed, and knowing what God had spoken in his holiness, he could, in faith, call himself *the king*, though now an outlaw; perhaps, it was penned when Absalom forced him into exile. Or, (2.) Of the Messiah, the King of whom he was a type. The Mediator shall abide before God for ever, for He always appears in the presence of God for us, and ever lives, making intercession; and because He lives, we shall live also.

3. With what importunity he begs of God to take him and keep him always under his protection; *O prepare mercy and truth which may preserve him.* God's promises, and our faith in them, are not to supersede, but to quicken and encourage, prayer. David is sure God will prolong his life, and therefore prays He would preserve it. We need not desire to be better secured than under the protection of God's mercy and truth. This may be applied to the Messiah; let Him be sent in the fulness of time, in *performance of the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham*, Mic. 7: 20. Luke 1: 72, 73.

4. With what cheerfulness he vows the grateful returns of duty to God, *v.* 8. Note, God's preservation of us calls on us to praise Him. We must praise God as long as we live, [not by flattering language, but by obedience also,] and then we shall praise Him for ever; *that I may daily perform my vows:* his praising God was itself the performance, and disposed his heart to perform his vows in other instances. Daily, constantly, receiving fresh mercies, if we think it much to do this daily, and constantly, we cannot expect to be doing it eternally.

Ps. LXII. V. 1—7. This Ps. has nothing in it directly either of prayer or praise, nor does it appear on what occasion it was penned, nor whether on any particular occasion, mournful or joyful. In singing it, we should stir up ourselves to wait on God. In these verses, we have,

I. David's profession of dependence on God, and on Him only, for all good, *v.* 1. *Truly my soul waiteth upon God. Nevertheless,* (so some,) or, '*However it be,* whatever difficulties or dangers I may meet with, though God frown on me, yet still my soul waits on God;' or *is silent to God,* as the word is; 'says nothing against what He does, but quietly expects what He will do.' We are in the way both of duty and comfort, when our souls thus wait on God; *Is not my soul subject to God?* So the LXX. So it is, certainly so it ought to be; our wills must be melted into his will. David doubts not but his salvation will come, though now he was threatened and in danger; and he expects it from God only, Jer. 3: 23. Ps. 121: 1, 2. We may apply it to our eternal salvation, called *the salvation of God,* 50: 23. from Him that comes; He prepared it for us, He prepares us for it, and preserves us to it, therefore let our souls wait on Him, to be conducted through this world to that eternal salvation, in such way as He thinks fit.

II. The ground and reason of this dependence, *v.* 2. Many a time, in Him have I found shelter, strength, and succor: even He that is the Rock of ages, is my Rock; the God of salvation, is my Salvation; the Most High, is my High Place; therefore I have all the reason in the world to confide in Him.

III. His improvement of his confidence.

1. Trusting in God, his heart is fixed. 'I may be perplexed, but not in despair,' 2 Cor. 4: 8. This hope in God will be an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast.

psalmody at the sanctuary was appointed, David delivered to the chief musicians the Pss. he had previously written, as well as those he afterwards from time to time composed. SCOTT.

Verses 3, 4.

The Psalmist, having avowed his confidence in God, expostulates with his enemies, warns them of their danger, and exposes their wickedness. He may refer to Saul and his party, or to Absalom and Ahithophel. (*M. R.*) SCOTT.—(3.) *Boothr.* r. 'How long will you yet plot against a man, And all of you attempt to break him down, Like a tottering wall, or a broken fence?'—The common vers. he says, makes the 2d and 3d line relate to David's enemies; but his, to David; and the next v. he thinks, supports his view.—*Rowing,* &c.] *Roberts* notes both the thing and saying as common in the E. ED.

Verses 5—7.

The repetitions, with some variation, of these vs. are peculiarly animated: and the Psalmist, by thus dwelling on the ground of his encouragement, baffled his temptations, and found his faith and hope invigorated. (1, 2.) SCOTT.

Verses 8—10.

The Psalmist, having risen above the disquietude and fear to which he had been tempted, next gives counsel and caution to the people in general, as he had before awfully warned his persecutors. (*M. R.* y. *Note, Job* 31:24—28.) 'He who is made vain and covetous by money, however honestly gotten, renders that a curse to one, which was designed a blessing to many; and drowns himself in the spring, which should have watered all around him.' Bp. *Horne.*—The old tr. of this last v. seems more literal than the present. 'Trust not in oppression, nor in robbery: be not vain: if riches increase, set not your heart thereon.' According to the construction of the pointed copies of the Heb. Bible, the v. seems more properly divided thus: 'Trust not in oppression nor in robbery; be not vain in riches, when they increase; set not your heart upon them.' ED.

(9.) *Weighed,* &c.] A seeming allusion to the Egyptian scene (common on the monuments and mummies) of weighing the character of the deceased, before permitting his honorable burial, i. e. entrance into the unseen world. The bad are sometimes represented as *driven away in their wickedness,* from the presence of Osiris, as Judge of the dead, and his conqueor gods. The person is presented, his deeds weighed, the result recorded, and the weigher ushers him to Osiris, &c. Note, Dan. 5:27. ED.

Verses 11, 12.

Dr. *A. Clarke* renders: 'Once hath God spoken;—these two things have I heard, that strength is the Lord's, and to Thee, Lord, is mercy;'—which *Carpenter* quotes, and *Morison* pronounces 'excellent and unexceptionable.' ED.

NOTES.

Ps. LXIII. *Calmet* refers this Ps. to the captivity, and some, as *Hammond,* and Dr. *A. Clarke,* with *Scott,* to Saul's persecution. But *Patrick, Dathe* and *Rosenm.* think v. 11. indicates it to have been penned not till after Saul's death, as till then David never claimed the royal dignity. They therefore refer it to Absalom's rebellion. ED.

Title. It is generally and probably supposed, that David composed this most fervent and devout Ps. when pursued by Saul in the deserts of Judah. (*M. R.*) Some, however, think it later; namely, when he fled from Absalom, before he passed Jordan. (2 *Sam.* 15:) SCOTT.

Verses 1—4.

'The true Christian dedicates to God "the sweet hour of prime."

once; twice have I heard this; [1] that * power *belongeth* unto God.

12 Also unto thee, O Lord, *belongeth* [k] mercy: for [l] thou renderest to every man according to his work.

PSALM LXIII.

David earnestly thirsts for God, and longs to behold his glory at the sanctuary, 1, 2. Regarding the love of God more than life, he determines to rejoice in praising Him, 3—5. By meditation and prayer, he rises to full assurance of protection, success, and exulting joy in God; and predicts the ruin of his enemies, 6—11.

A Psalm of David, [a] when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

O GOD, [b] thou *art* my God; [c] early will I seek thee: [d] my soul thirsteth for thee, [e] my flesh longeth for thee, [f] in a † dry and thirsty land where no water is;

2 [g] To see thy power and thy glory, so *as* I have seen thee [h] in the sanctuary.

i 68:34,35. Is. 26:4. Matt. 6:13. 28: 18. John 19:11. Rev. 19:1.
* Or, *strength.*
k 86:15. 103:3,17. Ex. 34:6,7. Dan. 9:9,18. Mic. 7:18.
l Job 34:11.—Prov 24:12. Jer. 32:19. Ez. 18:30. 33:20. Matt. 16:27. Rom. 2:6. 2 Cor. 5: 10. Eph. 6:8. Col. 3:25. 1 Pet. 1:17. Rev. 22:12.
a 1 Sam. 22:5. 23:14—16,23—25. 25: 1—3. 2 Sam. 15:28.
b 31:14. 42:11. 91:2. 118:28. 143:10. Ex. 15:2. Jer. 31:1,33. Zech. 13:9. John 20:17.
c 5:3. 78:34. Job 8:5. Prov. 1:27,28. 8:17. Hos. 5:15. Matt. 6:33.
d 42:1,2. 84:2. 119:81. 143:6. John 7:37. Rev. 7:16,17.
e 102:3—5. Cant. 5:8.
f Ex. 17:3. Is. 35:7. 41:18. Matt. 12: 43.
† Heb. *weary land without water.* Is. 32:2.
g 27:4. 105:4. 145:11. Ex. 33:18,19. 1 Sam. 4:21,22. 2 Cor. 4:4—6.
h 63:2. 73:17,18. 77:13,14. 96:6. 134: 2

service; and men of high degree, for their wisdom, power, and influence: but neither are to be depended on; nay, of the two, men of high degree are mentioned in terms more disparaging; for they are a lie, which denotes not only vanity, but iniquity: there is no depending on their wisdom to advise, or power to act for us, their good will, nor promises, in comparison with God, or otherwise than in subordination to Him, *v.* 5, 9.

2. Let us not trust in the wealth of this world; *v.* 10. where there is a great deal, it is commonly got by indirect scraping or saving; our Savior calls it the *mammon of unrighteousness*, Luke 16: 9. 'Trust not in the arts of getting riches.' He that *trusted in the abundance of his riches, strengthened himself in his wickedness*, 52:7.

2. He here gives a character of his enemies; and though they are mighty, numerous, unanimous, bitterly envious, false and calumniating, and untiringly malicious; yet he pronounces, as a prophet, their doom, and sets them at defiance, *v.* 3, 4. God's church is built on a rock which will stand; but they that fight against it shall be as a bowing wall [undermined by a stream, or rains] and a tottering fence, which, having a rotten foundation, sinks with its own weight, and ruins those that shelter themselves under it.

3. He is himself encouraged to continue waiting on God, *v.* 5—7. Note, The good we do, we should stir up ourselves to continue doing, and to do yet more and more, as those that have, through grace, experienced the comfort and benefit of it. The more faith is acted, the more active it is. The more we meditate on God's attributes and promises, and our own experience, the more ground we get of our fears, which, when they begin to fall, shall fall before us, and we be *kept in perfect peace*, Is. 26: 3. And as David's faith in God advances to an unshaken stayedness, so his joy in God improves itself into a holy triumph, *v.* 7.

V. 8—12. I. Here we have David's exhortation to all others to trust also in God, and wait on Him, as he did, *v.* 8. *Ye people*, i. e. All people, 65: 5. Ye *people of the house of Israel;* so the Chal.; they are especially invited, for He is the God of Israel. The good counsel is, 1. Confide in God; and this at all times. We must have an habitual and an actual confidence in God; must live a *life* of dependence on Him, and trust in Him on every *emergency*, to guide us in doubt, protect us in danger, supply us in want, and strengthen us for every good word and work. 2. Converse with God; *Pour out your heart before Him;* the expression seems to allude to pouring out drink-offerings. In a penitent confession of sin, our hearts are *poured out before God*, 1 Sam. 7: 6. But here it is meant of prayer; we must lay our grievances before Him, offer up our desires to Him, with all humble freedom, and then entirely refer ourselves to his disposal, patiently submitting our wills to his: this is pouring out our hearts. 3. His encouragement to us to take this counsel; *God is a Refuge for us;* not only my Refuge, *v.* 7. but a Refuge for all, even as many as will.

II. He cautions us against misplacing our confidence, Jer. 17: 5—9.

1. Let us not trust in the men of this world, *v.* 9. Men of low degree, one would think, might be relied on for their multitude, bodily strength and faithfulness; men of high degree are mentioned in terms more disparaging; for they are a lie, which denotes not only vanity, but iniquity: there is no depending on their wisdom to advise, or power to act for us, their good will, nor promises, in comparison with God, or otherwise than in subordination to Him, *v.* 5, 9.

2. Let us not trust in the wealth of this world; *v.* 10. where there is a great deal, it is commonly got by indirect scraping or saving; our Savior calls it the *mammon of unrighteousness*, Luke 16: 9. 'Trust not in the arts of getting riches.' He that *trusted in the abundance of his riches, strengthened himself in his wickedness*, 52:7. but, at his end, he will be a fool, Jer. 17: 11. Let none be so stupid as to think of supporting themselves in their sin, much less of supporting themselves in this sin. Nay, because it is hard to have riches, and not to trust in them; if they increase, though by lawful and honest means, we must take heed lest we let out our affections inordinately toward them; '*Set not your heart upon them.*' This we are most in danger of doing when they increase; when the rich man's grounds brought forth plentifully, he said to his soul, *Take thine ease*, Luke 12: 19. It is a smiling world that is most likely to draw the heart away from God, on whom only it should be set.

III. He gives a very good reason why we should make God our Confidence, because He is a God of infinite power, mercy, and righteousness, *v.* 11, 12. This he had heard once, yea, twice; heard it by the light of reason, which easily infers it from the nature of the infinitely perfect Being, and from his works both of creation and providence; heard it many a time, by the events that have concerned him in particular; heard it, too, by the light of revelation, by dreams and visions, Job 4: 15. by the glorious manifestation of God on Sinai, to which, some think, it especially refers, and by the written Word. To some God speaks twice, and they will not hear once; but to others He speaks but once, and they hear twice. Comp. Job 33: 14.

Ps. LXIII. This Ps. has in it as much of warmth and lively devotion, as any of David's, in so little a compass. A devout and pious soul has little need of direction how to sing it, so naturally does it speak its own genuine language; and an unsanctified soul, unacquainted and unaffected with divine things, is scarcely capacle of singing it with understanding.

V. 1, 2. The title tells us the Ps. was penned, when *David was in the wilderness of Judah*, that is, *in the forest of Hareth*, 1 Sam. 22: 5. or, *in the wilderness of Ziph*, 1 Sam. 23: 15. Even in Canaan there were wildernesses, places less fruitful, and less inhabited, than others. It will be so in the world, in the church, but not in heaven. The best and dearest of God's saints may sometimes have their lot cast in a wilderness, which speaks them lonely and solitary, desolate and afflicted, wanting, wandering, and unsettled, and quite at a loss what to do with themselves; but even then they must not be put out of tune for sacred songs; it is our duty and interest to keep up a cheerful communion with God: there are Pss. proper for a wilderness. David *stirs up himself to take hold on God*,

I. By a lively, active faith. In all addresses to God, we must eye Him as God, and our God, and this will be our comfort in a wilderness-state. '*Thou art my God*, by creation, therefore my rightful Owner and Ruler, mine by covenant, and my own consent.' We must speak this with the greatest pleasure to ourselves, and thankfulness to God, as resolved to abide by it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The lively believer can without hesitation avow, 'Truly my soul waiteth upon God.' Yet, however blamelessly he may conduct himself, he must expect a measure of the same enmity, with which the world treated his Savior. But the doom of David's persecutors, and of the crucifiers of Christ, may be expected by all, who endeavor to tempt his people to sin, or who vilify their characters. (*Rom.* 16: 17—20.) Let us, however, having fairly warned and expostulated with such infatuated persons, wait only upon God, and expect all our happiness from Him: then shall we not 'greatly be moved,' either to anger, to pride, or to despondency, by the malice or flattery of the ungodly: nay, when our faith grows strong, we shall be confident of *not being moved at all* to our real hurt: and meditation and prayer are blessed means of invigorating faith and hope. (*Acts* 20: 22—24.)—*Reliance* on increasing riches, however obtained, is idolatry, and totally inconsistent with the life of faith.—Yet the idea of increased wealth is associated with that of augmented felicity, in almost every human heart: [the very name is a synonyme with *weal*, or good:] and it is extremely difficult to possess riches without trusting in them, and setting the heart upon them. SCOTT.

He opens the eyes of his understanding together with those of his body, and awakes each morning to righteousness. He arises with an unextinguishable thirst after those comforts which the world cannot give; and has immediate recourse, by prayer, to the Fountain of the water of life, ever longing to behold the divine power and glory in the sanctuary above, of which he has been favored with some glimpse, in the services of the church below.' Bp. *Horne.*—Many explain the words, 'To see thy power and glory, &c.' of the ark, which was the symbol of the Lord's powerful, glorious, and gracious presence with his people. But the ark itself was concealed from sight; nor does it appear that, in the days of David, there was in general any *external* display of the divine glory at the sanctuary. It may therefore be supposed, that he referred to the *internal* and spiritual views, which, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, he had experienced, of the perfections and glory of God, while attending on those ordinances; which both commemorated the wonderful works of the Lord for his people Israel, and typified the salvation of the promised Redeemer. SCOTT.

V. 5. Can any candid man read this Ps. and then speak of true devotion, as merely *intellectual*, a *dispassionate* exercise of the understanding, without any warm emotions or vehement affections of the heart? Weighed in the balance of such phlegmatic Christians, the man after God's own heart must be numbered among enthusiasts: for, though his devotion was most rational, it certainly was most fervent and enraptured; and in fact the more rational on that very account. IO.

3 Because [i] thy loving-kindness *is* better than life, [k] my lips shall praise thee.

4 Thus [l] will I bless thee while I live: [m] I will lift up my hands in thy name.

5 [n] My soul shall be satisfied as *with* * marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise *thee* [o] with joyful lips:

6 When [p] I remember thee upon my bed, *and* meditate on thee in the *night*-watches.

7 [q] Because thou hast been my help, therefore [r] in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.

8 My soul [s] followeth hard after thee: [t] thy right hand upholdeth me.

9 But those [u] *that* seek my soul to destroy *it*, shall [x] go into the lower parts of the earth.

10 † They shall fall by the sword; they shall be [y] a portion for foxes.

11 But [z] the king shall rejoice in God; every one that [a] sweareth by him shall glory: but [b] the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

i 4:6. 21:6. 30:5. Phil.1:23.
k 30:12. 51:15. 66:17. Hos. 14:2. Rom. 6:19. 12:1. 1 Cor. 6:20. Heb. 13: 15. Jam. 3:5—10. 104:33. 146:1—3. 146:1,2.
l 134:2. 1 K. 8:22,&c. Hab. 3:10.
m 17:15. 36:7—9. 65:4. 104:34. Cant. 1:4. Is. 25:6. Jer. 31:4.
* Heb. *fatness*.
o 43:4. 71:23. 118:14,15. 135:3. 149: 1—3 Ezra 3:11—13. Rev. 19:5—7.
p 42:8. 77:4—6. 119:55,147,148. 139:17, 18. 143:5. Cant. 3:1,2. Lam. 2:19.
q 54:3,4.
r 5:11. 21:1. 57:1. 1 Sam. 17:37. 2 Cor. 1:10.
s 73:25. 143:6,7. Gen. 32:26—28. 2 Chr. 31:21. Cant. 3:2. Is. 26:9. Matt. 11:12. Luke 13:24. 18:5—7.
t 37:24. 73:23. 94:18. Cant. 2:6. Is. 41:10. 42:1. Phil. 2:12,13. Col. 1:29.
u 35:4,26. 38:12. 40:14. 70:2. 1 Sam. 25:29.
x 9:17. 55:15,23. 86:13. Num. 16:30 —33. 1 Sam. 28:19. Job 40:13. Is. 14:9,15,19. Ez. 32:18—32. Acts 1:25.
† Heb. *Make him run out*, like water, *by the hands of the sword*. 1 Sam. 26:10. 31:1—6. Jer. 18:21. Ez. 35:5.
y Ez. 39:4,17—20. Rev. 19:17,18.
z 2:6. 21:1. 1 Sam. 23:17. 24:20.
a Deut. 6:13. Is. 19:18. 45:23. 65: 16. Zeph. 1:5. Heb. 6:13.
b 31:18. Rom. 3:19. Tit. 1:10,11.

II. By pious and devout affections.

1. He resolves to seek God, his favor and grace. We must seek Him *early, earnestly*, with the *utmost* care; covet his favor as our chief good, and [in obedience] consult his glory as our highest end. This world is a *weary land*, so the word is; to the worldly that have their portion in it; to the godly that have their passage through it, a valley of Baca, they can promise themselves little from it. Observe his importunity for that presence of God. Gracious souls look down on the world with a holy disdain, up to God with a holy desire.

2. He passionately longs to enjoy God. *To see God's power and glory;* (1.) 'here in this wilderness, as in the tabernacle; in secret, as in the solemn assembly.' Note, When we want the benefit of public ordinances, we should keep up communion with God in retirements. A closet may be turned into a little sanctuary. Ezekiel had the visions of the Almighty in Babylon, and John in Patmos. (2.) 'To see it again in the sanctuary, as formerly there.' He does not say, as I have seen *them*, thy power and thy glory, but, *Thee*. We cannot see the essence of God, but we see Him, in seeing by faith his attributes and perfections. Those were precious minutes he spent in communion with God, he loved to think them over again; and with all gracious souls, laments their loss, and longs to be restored to them.

V. 3—6. How soon are David's complaints and prayers turned into praises and thanksgivings!

1. *Because thy loving kindness is better than life;* (lives;) life, and all its comforts; life in its best estate; long life and prosperity: spiritual life better than temporal, 30: 5. better, a thousand times, die in God's favor, than live under his wrath.

2. How he will praise God, and how long, *v.* 4. 'Thus as I have now begun; (the present devout affections shall remain;)' or, 'With the same earnestness and fervency with which I have prayed.' *While I live.* Praising God must be the work of our whole lives; we must in every thing give thanks; and not be put out of frame for this duty by any afflictions; for in this work we hope to spend a blessed eternity. We must eye God's name in all our joys, prayers and praises; we are to begin with *Hallowed be thy name*, and to conclude with, *Thine is the glory.* This we must have an eye to in our work and warfare; we must lift our hands to our duty, and against our spiritual enemies, 71: 16. Zech. 10:12. We must make all our vows in God's name; to Him engage ourselves, in dependence on his grace.

3. With what delight *v.* 5. The saints have a contentment with God, they desire no more than his favor to make them happy; and they have a transcendent complacency in God, in comparison with which all the delights of sense are sapless and without relish. He will praise God with outward expressions, of mouth and lips, both to excite his own devout affections, and edify others. We must address ourselves to the duties of religion with great cheerfulness, speak forth God's praises from a principle of holy joy. Praising lips must be joyful lips.

4. How he would entertain himself with thoughts of God when most retired, *v.* 6. *remembering* and *meditating* on Him; and thoughts of God must not be transient, but abiding, dwelling in the mind. Though wandering and unsettled, wherever he came, he brought his religion with him. On my *beds*, so some: being hunted by Saul, he seldom lay, two nights together, in the same bed; but, wherever he lay, if, as Jacob, on the cold ground, a stone his pillow, good thoughts of God lay down with him. When sleep departs through sickness, or any disturbance in the mind, our souls, by remembering God, may repose in Him: an hour's pious meditation may do us more good than an hour's sleep; see 16:7. 17:3. 4:4. 10:62. 134:1.

V. 7—11. David, having expressed his desires toward God, and praises, here speaks his confidence in, and joyful expectations from Him, *v.* 7. alluding either to the wings of the cherubim, or of a fowl, under which the helpless young have shelter, as the eagle's, (Ex.19:4. Deut. 32:11.) which speaks the divine power; and the young ones of the common hen, (Matt. 23: 37.) which speaks more of divine tenderness. It is a phrase often used in the Pss. 17:8. 36:7. 57:1. 61:4. 91:4. and no where else in this sense, except Ruth 2:12. where Ruth, when she became a proselyte, is said to *trust under the wings of the God of Israel.* It is duty to *rejoice in the shadow of God's wings*, which denotes recourse to Him by faith and prayer; having committed ourselves to God, we must be easy, pleased, and quiet from fear of evil. See,

I. The supports and encouragements of David's confidence: two things founded in the Word.

1. His former experience. 2. His present sense of God's grace carrying him on in these pursuits, *v.* 8. which speaks a very earnest desire, and a serious, vigorous endeavor to keep up communion with God; if we cannot always have God in our embraces, yet we must always have Him in our eye, reaching forth toward Him as our Prize, Phil. 3: 4. It is by God's power, i. e. his right hand, that we are kept from falling. This was a great encouragement to the Psalmist to hope He would, in due time, give him what he so earnestly desired, because He had by his grace wrought in him those desires, and kept them up.

II. What he foresees and foretells of his enemies.

1. They should be ruined, *v.* 9, 10. They *sought his soul to destroy it;* not only his *life*, but his *soul*, by banishing him from God's ordinances, so to starve it; and, by sending him to serve other gods, so to poison it, 1 Sam. 29: 19. But their enmity would be their death and damnation; they should fall by the sword; of God's wrath and justice; of man, Job 19: 28, 29. Rev. 13: 10. as fulfilled in Saul; either their corpses should be a prey to ravenous beasts, (Saul lay a good while unburied,) or their houses and estates a habitation for them, Is. 34:14. Such will be the doom of Christ's enemies, that oppose his kingdom and interest, Luke 19: 27.

2. That he himself should gain his point, *v.* 11. and be advanced to the throne to which he had been anointed. He calls himself *the king* because he knew himself so in the divine purpose and designation; thus Paul, yet in conflict, writes himself *more than a conqueror*, Rom. 8: 37. This applies to the glories and joys of the exalted Redeemer.

Two things would be the good effect; (1.) The consolation of his friends. Every one that swears *to* him, i. e. to David, that comes into his interest, shall glory in his success; or that swears *by* Him, i. e. by the blessed name of God, and not an idol; Deut. 6:13. and then it means all good people, that make a sincere and open profession of God's name; they shall glory in God. *If we suffer with* Christ, *we shall reign with Him.* (2.) The confutation of his enemies. Apply this to Christ's enemies, to those that speak lies to Him, as all hypocrites, or of Him, as persecutors. Matt. 22: 12.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS. The true believer is convinced, that nothing in this world can satisfy the desires of his immortal soul; and he therefore expects happiness from the eternal God, as his God and Portion. (*Deut.* 33:27—29.) When his soul is in a healthy and prosperous state, an inextinguishable thirst after the discoveries of the glory of the Lord, and the experience of his grace and love, lead him to seek Him early, every day, with the best of his time and the prime of his affections. He likewise values the loving-kindness of God more than life; and is even willing to depart hence that he may fully enjoy it. (*Phil.* 1: 21—26.) Then the pleasures of the world lose their attraction: 'for his soul is satisfied, as with marrow and fatness,' while joyfully praising and thinking upon God: and such contemplations at once excite his gratitude, increase his confidence, and animate him in seeking conformity and nearness to the Lord; aspiring after still greater attainments, as feeling himself upheld by the power of the Almighty.—To mount with David towards heaven, in these exalted strains of devotion and zeal, should be our holy ambition. Christians can, in some measure, and at some times, appropriate his emphatical language; but, alas! too commonly complain, that 'our souls cleave to the dust.' (119:25.) Let us then be more instant in prayer, that we may be quickened according to his Word of promise. SCOTT

Vs. 6—8. The fervor of David's devotion, whether pouring out his soul in earnest prayer, with vigorous exercises of faith and hope; or celebrating God's praises with admiring love, joyful gratitude, and glowing zeal for his honor and glory; seems especially to have procured him the honorable distinction of 'the man after God's own heart.' SCOTT.

Vs. 9—11. They would perish and go under the earth, as if swallowed up, with Dathan and Abiram; (*Num.* 16:28—34.) or, falling by the sword, be left unburied, food to [jackals] with which the land abounded: the case at Gilboa. [Comp. 68:14 and note, 58:10.] SCOTT.

(11.) *By him.*] 'I. e. the true God.' WILLIAMS. *Boothr.* renders 'Hath sworn by Him,' 'indicating the worship of Jehovah, Am. 8:14 Is. 19:18. 45:23, where swearing has this sense.' ED.

(CONTINUED IN VOL. III.)

SACRED CHRONICLE.

[Continued from Vol. I. p. 16.]

PERIOD IV. From the entrance into Canaan, to the death of David. (Continued.)

[To relieve the intricacy of the history, Chap. V. of this Period is repeated, with the subdivisions into *Sections*; for the notes, see p. 16. vol. I. The subdivisions will be continued, also, in all the subsequent '*Chapters*,' of the Chronicle. *Ed.*]

Chap. V. Government of the Judges. § I. *Servitude of E. Israelites, under Chushan-rishathaim. Othniel Judge.* Jud. 3: 5—11. § II. *Serv. of E. Israelites under Moabites,* 3: 12—30. § III. *Shamgar Judge.* 3: 31. § IV. *Serv. of N. Israelites under Canaanites. Deborah, the prophetess, Judge.* 4: 5. § V. *E. and N. Israelites enslaved by Midian. Gideon, Judge.* 6:1—6. Ruth 1. 2. 3. 4. Jud. 6: 7 to end. 7. 8. § VI. *Usurpation of Abimelech.* 9. § VII. *Tola, Judge.* 10: 1, 2. § VIII. *Jair, Judge.* 10: 3—5. § IX. *Philistines and Ammonites oppress Israel. Jephthah, Judge.* 10: 6 to end. 11. 12: 1—7. § X. *Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, Judges.* 12: 8 to end. § XI. *Gov't. of Eli. Philistines oppress Israel. Birth, marriage, exploits and death of Samson; birth and call of Samuel.* 13. 1 S. 1. 2: 1—21. 3. Jud. 14. 15: 1—19. 1 S. 2: 22 to end. Jud. 16. 15: 20. 1 S. 4. § XII. *Hist. of Ark after its capture.* 5. 6. 7: 1. § XIII. *Gov't. of Samuel.* 7: 2 to end. 8.[a]

Chap. VI. Reign of Saul. § I. *Saul made king.* 1 S. 9. 10. § II. *Wars of Saul.* 11. 12. 13. 14.[b] 15. § III. *David anointed secretly as the future king.* 16:1—13. § IV. *David overcomes Goliath.* 17: 1—40, 55, 56,[c] 41—55, 57, 58. 18: 1—4. Ps. 9.[d] § V. *Hist. of David till he flies from Saul's Court.* 1 S. 18: 5—9. 16: 14 to end.[e] 18: 10 to end. 19: 1—3. Ps. 11.[f] 1 S. 19: 4—17.[g] Ps. 59.[h] § VI. *David flies to Ramah.* 1 Sam. 19: 18 to end. 20.[i] § VII. *David flies to Nob, to Ahimelech.* 21: 1—9. § VIII. *David flies to Achish, k. of Gath.* 21: 10 to end. Ps. 56.[j] 34. § IX. *David flies to cave of Adullam.* 1 S. 22: 1 in part. Ps. 142.[k] 1 S. 22: 1 in part, 2. 1 Chr. 12: 8—18. 2 S. 23: 13—17.[l] with 1 Chr. 11:15—19.[m] § X. *David at Mizpeh.* 1 S. 22: 3—19.[n] Ps. 52.[o] 109; 17. 140. 35. 64. § XI. *David at Keilah.* 1 S. 23: 1. 22: 20 to end. 23: 6,[p] 2—5, 7—12. Ps. 31.[q] § XII. *David in wilderness of Ziph and Maon.* 1 S. 23: 13—23. Ps. 54.[r] 1 S. 23: 24—28. § XIII. *David in Engedi.* 23: 29. 24. Ps. 57.[s] 58. 63. § XIV. *Death of Samuel. David in wilderness of Paran.* 1 S. 25. § XV. *David in wilderness of Ziph.* 26. § XVI. *David flies to Achish; who assigns him Ziklag for a residence. Death of Saul.* 27: 1.[t] Ps. 141.[u] 1 S. 27: 2—7. 1 Chr. 12: 1—7. 1 S. 27: 8 to end. 28.[v] 29. 1 Chr. 12: 19—22. 1 S. 30. 31. 1 Chr. 10: 13, 14. 2 S. 1. with 1 Chr. 10: 1—12.

[a] The laws of Moses will appear to be drawn up with the most perfect wisdom. Knowing the changeableness of the human mind, he had anticipated the decision the people had now (1 Sam. 8:5.) come to by demanding a king. He specifies, therefore, (Deut. 17:14, &c.) the duties required of the king, and Samuel, at Saul's coronation, prepared a writing in which the powers and privileges of the sovereign were distinctly laid down; and this writing was carefully deposited in the sanctuary. See more in *Mich.* Comm. vol. 1. art. 54 to 63.

[b] V. 18. What was this ark of God, which Saul commands the priests to bring? The ark of the covenant was at Kirjath-jearim: and the Israelites had been already punished for removing it from Shiloh without permission. From the latter part of this 1 Sam. it appears, that during Saul's life, both Saul and David were possessed at the same time of the instruments of oracular consultation; of which the ark with the cherubic emblems formed an essential part. Mr. *Hutchinson's* opinion, then, that there were more emblematic arks than one, deserves great attention.

[c] At 1 S. 16:19. we read, Saul sent messengers to Jesse, saying, Send David thy son. Pursuant to this order, David played upon the harp before the king, when the evil spirit of melancholy was upon him. Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor-bearer, and resided constantly at his court; for Saul sent a second message to Jesse: 'Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favor in my sight.' Yet in v. 55. of the next ch. we read that Saul enquired of Abner, whose son was the conqueror of Goliath. He speaks of him as an entire stranger; and Abner, to gratify the king's curiosity, introduces David to him after the combat, with the head of the Philistine in his hand. Bps. *Warburton* and *Hall* suppose the encounter with Goliath took place before David was required to play the harp before Saul; and so *Horsley*, whose arguments are so satisfactory, I insert his own words. 'It appears, indeed, from many circumstances of the story, that David's combat with Goliath was many years prior to Saul's madness, and David's introduction to him as a musician. 1st. He was quite a youth when he engaged Goliath, (vs. 33, 42.), when introduced to Saul as a musician, he was of full age, (16:18.) 2dly. This combat was his first appearance in public life (v. 56.); when introduced as a musician, he was a man of established character. (16: 18.) 3d. This combat was his first military exploit (vs. 38, 39.). He was a man of war when introduced as a musician. (16:19.) He was unknown both to Saul and Abner when he fought Goliath. He had not therefore yet been in the office of Saul's armor-bearer, or resident in any capacity at the court. Now the just conclusion from these circumstances is, not that these 20 vs. are an interpolation, but that the last 10 vs. of the preceding ch. which relate Saul's madness and David's introduction to the court on that occasion, are misplaced. The true place for these 10 vs. seems between vs. 9 and 10 of ch. 18. Let these 10 vs. be removed to that place, and this ch. 17 be immediately connected with v. 13 of ch. 16, and the whole disorder and inconsistencies that appear in the narrative in the present arrangement will be removed.'

[d] Ps. 9 is inserted here on the authority of the Chal. paraphrast, who gives as its title, 'Upon the death of the man that came out between the two armies:' and *Lightfoot* tr. *muth labben*, (the Heb. title) 'upon the death of the champion;' whose decision I prefer.

[e] In confirmation of *Horsley's* arrangement (note, c.) it may be observed, that, probably, David might retire from court on discovering the jealousy excited in Saul's mind after the songs and dances of the women, (1 S. 18:6.) he might have gone home to his father, and returned to court only when the malady of his sovereign required his presence. The apparent capriciousness of Saul's conduct probably arose from the sudden returns of his disorder; and at other times from the suspicions he might entertain towards the anointed successor to his crown. [Notes, 1 S. 16:14. Ps. 7:2.]

[f] This Ps. seems to have been composed by David, when, to avoid Saul's evil designs, his friends advised him to flee to the mountains of Judea. *Edwards, Green, Calmet.*

[g] V. 11. The date of David's marriage with Michal is uncertain. *Hales* supposes 5 yrs. elapsed between his conquest of Goliath and his marriage, because that time appears requisite for the intervening events, and for the establishment of the popularity and character of David. The marriage is supposed, in the Bible chronology, to have occurred in the same year with the victory; probably, however, it took place sometime after; as David (so *Horsley*) returned home to his father, and was again invited to court, and made Saul's armor-bearer. This was a post of confidence and affection; and while David continued in it, he greatly distinguished himself in war, and ingratiated himself with the people. The affections of Saul, however, soon changed; but the son of Jesse still continued firmly established in the hearts of the people. It was attempted therefore to remove him by stratagem. The king's daughter was offered him in marriage, on condition that he killed a certain number of the enemy. But this exposure to danger, instead of the desired effect, only served to increase his fame; and he became the son-in-law of Saul. It is not probable that all these events could have happened in one year; but still 5 are not required; for if so long a space was given to his residence at the court of Saul, we should too much abridge the time assigned to his wandering in the wilderness, in the hill country, &c. I have on these grounds therefore rejected the date in the *Bib. chron.* as well as that of *Hales*; and allowed 3 yrs. from the victory over Goliath till the marriage, and flight, by means of Michal, from the court of Saul. See *Hales.*

[h] Ps. 59 is inserted here on the authority of Bp. *Horne* and Dr. *Gray.*

[i] V. 1. *Horsley* thinks Samuel died about this time, and that, at his death, David fled from Ramah; for in all his ensuing difficulties, David consulted Ahimelech and not Samuel, as had been his custom, (ch. 21.) or Gad (22:5.) or Abiathar (33:9, 12.) I have not, however, altered the Bible arrangement upon these conjectural reasons. Samuel was now 90 yrs. of age. He might have been rendered by infirmity incapable of directing David. In addition to which it must be remembered, that immediately on Samuel's death, we read that David fled to the wilderness, (1 S. 25:1.) The mere existence of Samuel, from the prophet's influence in the towns and cities of Israel, seems to have been a defence to David. *Horsley.* Bib. Crit.

[j] *Calmet, Gray,* and *Wells,* assign the date of these Pss. (56. 34.) to the persecution of David by Saul. The titles prefixed to them in the Heb. text, though they do not form a part of the Ps., and may possibly be spurious, are undoubtedly very ancient, and may be considered a better authority for the insertion of the Pss. in their respective places, than the conjecture of later authors. Pss. 56 and 34 are therefore inserted in this Section on the authority of *Lightfoot* and their titles. So *Kennicott* supposes Abimelech was a common title of the kings of Gath, and Achish an individual name. That David was an inspired prophet, is evident from the prediction in vs. 20, 21, that not a bone of Him, (the Messiah) shall be broken. The pious Jews were continually looking forward to the Messiah; and they must have been as well aware of the meaning of these passages, in the writings of those who were from time to time endued with the spirit of prophecy, as we ourselves are of the meaning of many of the predictions in the book of the Apocalypse. That is, their faith was kept in exercise by the glimpses given them of the future, though they could not entirely comprehend the precise signification of every figurative expression. Their faith, like ours, 'was the substance of things not seen;' and 'they walked by faith and not by sight.'

[k] Ps. 142. is inserted here on the joint authority of the Heb. title, *Lightfoot,* and *Travell;* if different conjectures supported by great names can be called authorities.

[l] Several passages of 1 Chr. and 2 Sam. relate the same events, and repeat the same catalogues of illustrious men, in nearly the same words throughout. The apparent discrepancies are beautifully reconciled by *Kennicott,* in his Diss. on state of Heb. text, by comparing the Heb. of both passages with the Sept. Comp. the passage at the end of this Section (1 Chr. 11:15—29.) with the par. pass. (2 S. 23:13—17.) and refer to both in K's. Dissert. [See also Table, p. 432.]

[m] This is the first parallel passage which occurs. Par. pass. will be placed at the end of the respective chs. or sections to which they belong.

[n] In 1 S. 2. 3. we read the prediction of the total ruin of Eli's house. Saul, in the blindness of his fury, orders 85 priests of the house of Eli with their families, and Ahimelech the high priest with his family, to be slain. This is another specimen of the way in which men pursue

their own schemes, whether of good or evil, and of the manner in which they are overruled to the accomplishment of the prophecies and purposes of God. The reflecting part of the Jewish nation must have observed this fulfilment of one part of the prophecies, and inferred from it the eventual accomplishment of the rest. The same observation will apply to many events in the subsequent history. See a large collection of the prophecies, with their fulfilment, in *Allix's* Reflections.

o Ps. 52 is here inserted on the joint authorities of its title—*Lightfoot*, *Calmet* and *Travell*.—Ps. 109 on the authority of Archdeacon Randolph, who observes, that probably Doeg the Edomite is particularly alluded to in it; as he had slain the priests, and endeavored to destroy him whom God had appointed to be king over Israel.—It is prophetic: and is applied by *Paul* to Judas.—Ps. 17 was composed, as *Calmet* remarks, during Saul's bitterest persecutions of David; which was certainly when the inhuman murder of the priests was committed. See *Horne's* Crit. Introd.—Ps. 140 is referred to this period by *Hammond*.—Ps. 35, from its contents, seems to have been composed by David when persecuted by Saul; and falsely accused by Doeg, and others. *Edwards*.—Ps. 64 was most probably composed by David, when persecuted by Saul, and his associates. *Edwards*.

p While the Philistines were fighting against Keilah, Doeg was executing the inhuman command of Saul, and murdering the priests at Nob. Abiathar at this time escaped and fled to David, with the ephod and the breastplate, with the Urim and the Thummim; thus transferring to David the means of consulting the oracle of God in the sanctuary, which had hitherto been appropriated to the service of Saul. To connect the history, the escape of Abiathar is inserted after the account which was brought to David, that the Philistines were plundering the country round Keilah. 1 S. 23:2. tells us, that David consulted the oracle; on the authority of *Horsley*, therefore, as well as from the internal evidence, v. 6 is placed before v. 2. See *Horsley*, *Patrick*, *Lightfoot*.

q David being pursued by his enemies, probably in his retreat from Keilah, entreats the Lord in this Ps. (31.) to deliver him. Dr. *Green* and *Calmet* place the Ps. among those composed during the persecution of Saul, but do not fix the exact period.

r Ps. 51 is inserted here on the authority of the ancient title, and *Lightfoot*.

s Ps. 57. David in the cave of En-gedi pours out his prayer in this Psalm, and entitles it, *Al-tashchith*, destroy not: for though he was invited by his soldiers to destroy Saul, yet he would not. *Lightfoot*. —Ps. 58. David, in the cave of En-gedi, implores the divine protection; in sure prospect of which he breaks out into grateful praise, in Ps. 57. The 58th Ps. is a continuation of the same subject, with complaints against the counsellors of Saul. *Calmet*.—Ps. 63, composed (title) in the wilderness of Judah, *Lightfoot* places in this part of the narrative, En-gedi being the most desert part of the wilderness.

t We have now arrived at the close of the persecutions of David. It is necessary to observe the order of the events related in this Section. Finding Saul to be still implacable, David resolved upon joining the Philistines, which appears to have been an unjustifiable mode of escape, when we remember the many difficulties from which he had been so mercifully delivered. [David, however, could better judge of this, in the circumstances, than we. Ed.] He fled to the king of Gath, with whom he continued 16 months. During this time he was joined by many of his own people, and made war upon the surrounding nations. In the meanwhile, the Philistines, to whom David had become an auxiliary, had declared war against Saul; and Achish, the protector of David, required him to fight against his own countrymen. From this dreadful necessity of deciding between gratitude to Achish, and the love of his country, he was relieved by the distrust of the Philistines. The two armies approach: Saul consults the witch of Endor: and according to the prediction of Samuel, who appears to him from the invisible world, he loses his throne and his life. This, of course, takes place at the conclusion of the 16 months of David's residence at Ziklag. Not having been permitted to join in the battle, David had returned to this city; but finds it burnt and plundered by the Amalekites. He pursues and defeats the invaders with great slaughter. After the battle, he generously divides the spoil between his soldiers, including those who were not able to attend him in the field. He distributes presents to the tribe of Judah, and secures the attachment of his friends: and on the death of Saul and Jonathan, being left without a rival, and alike distinguished [and far, very far, beyond his age] for courage, conduct, generosity, magnanimity and every virtue which can dignify and adorn a prince, every human mean seemed to combine to accomplish the promises of God. The tribe of Judah assemble, and elect him king; and their example is followed, after an interval of 7 yrs. by the rest of Israel.

u Ps. 141. David, being driven out of Judea by Saul, begs of God grace, that he may not sin against Him with his tongue, nor be drawn into any sinful compliances with idolatry, by living among the Philistines. He confides in God's help, and prays to be delivered from those who seek his ruin. He probably composed this Ps. just before his flight to Achish; when he had a second time spared Saul's life, but could trust him no longer. *Green*, Bp. *Horne*.

v This history of the witch of Endor has been made the subject of as much discussion as any in the O. T.; and the general concurrent opinion of both the Jewish and Christian churches, that the spirit of Samuel really appeared to Saul, has been treated with much ridicule by objectors; and it has been explained away, or otherwise interpreted by some, who think that a Christian may conciliate the skeptic, by yielding those points which appear mysterious in his religion. But if we at all believe in the existence of spirit, as something distinct from matter, there is no difficulty nor absurdity in this history. We know but little of the invisible world, or of the manner in which the disembodied spirit continues to exist; our understanding and our apprehension are so limited in this stage of our existence, that we cannot comprehend one half of those truths, which both our senses, our reason, and Revelation compel us to approve. Why then should it appear impossible that God should raise the dead? If Moses and Elias appeared from the invisible world, what greater difficulty can exist in supposing that Samuel did so? For the proofs that the spirit of the prophet was really made visible by the power of God in some mysterious manner to the woman, and for an inquiry into the nature of the objects which were to be answered by this manifestation of Samuel, see the various commentators, as *Patrick*, *Horne*, *Stackhouse*, and particularly *Hales*: Anal.

CHAP. VII. REIGN OF DAVID. § I. *David made king in Hebron—Civil War in Israel.* 2 S. 2. 3. 4. § II. [w] *David made king over all Israel* 5: 1, 2, 3. 1 Chr. 13: 1—4. Ps. 139. [x] 1 Chr. 12: 23 to end. 2 S 23: 8—12. 1 Chr. 11: 20 to end. 2 S. 5: 4—10 with 1 Chr. 11: 1—14 and 2 S. 23: 18 to end. § III. *Hiram congratulates David. Invasion of the Philistines.* 2 Sam. 5: 11 to end,[y] and 1 Chr. 14: 17 with 1—16. § IV. *Removal of the ark to Jerusalem.* 2 S. 6: 1—11. Ps. 68.[z] 1 Chr. 15: 1—14. Ps. 132.[aa] 2 S. 6: 12—19. 1 Chr 15: 15 to end. 16. Ps. 105.[bb] 96. 106. 2 S. 6: 20 to end, with 1 Chr. 13: 5 to end. § V. *David commanded not to build the Temple.* 2 S. 7.[cc] 1 Chr. 17. Ps. 2.[dd] 45. 22. 16. 118 110. § VI *War with the surrounding nations.* 2 S. 8: 1—12. 1 Chr. 18 12. 2 S. 8: 14 to end.[ee] 2 S. 8: 13. 1 K. 11: 15—20. Ps. 60.[ff] 108 with 1 Chr. 18: 1—11, 13 to end. § VII. *Kindness of David to Saul's house. War with Ammonites.* 2 S. 9. 10. Ps. 20.[gg] 21 with 1 Chr. 19. § VIII. *David's adultery.* 1 Chr. 20: 1 in part. 2 S. 11. 12: 1 to part of v. 15. Ps. 51.[hh] 32. 53. 103. 2 S. 12: lat. part of v. 15—23. 1 Chr. 20: lat. part of v. 1. 2 S. 12: 26 to end. with 1 Chr. 20: 2, 5. § IX. *Domestic hist. of David.* 2 S. 13: 1—20. 12: 24, 25. 13: 21 to end. 14: 1—7, 15, 16, 17,[ii] 8—14, 18 to end. 15: 1[jj]—29. Ps. 3.[kk] 2 S. 15: 30 to end. 16: 1—14. Ps. 7.[ll] 2 S. 16. 15 to end. 17. Ps. 42.[mm] 43.[nn] 55. 4. 5. 62. 143. 144. 70. 71. 2 S. 17. 19. 20: 3. § X. *Revolt of Sheba, and Famine.* 20: 1, 2, 4 to end. 21: 1—14. § XI. *Last war with Philistines.*[oo] 21: 15 to end. 22. Ps. 18. with 1 Chr. 20: 4 to end § XII. 2 S. 24: 1[pp]—9.[qq] 1 Chr. 21: 6, 7. 27: 23, 24. 2 S. 24: 10—15. 1 Chr. 21: 15, 16. 2 S. 24: 17. 1 Chr. 21: lat. pt. v. 17 to end. Ps. 30.[rr] with 1 Chr. 21: 1—5, 8—14. and 2 S. 24:16 and 1 Chr. 21 former pt. v. 17. and 2 S. 24: 18 to end. § XIII. *Hist of last 6 months of David's reign. Preparations for the temple.* 1 Chr. 22.[ss] *Adonijah's rebellion* 1 K. 1. *First Assembly of People.* 1 Chr. 23: 1. 28: 1—10. Ps. 91.[tt] *Probably towards end of David's life.* 145. *Preparation for service of Temple.* 1 Chr. 23: 2 to end. 24. 25. 26. 27: 1—22, 25 to end. 1 Chr. 28: 11 to end. Ps. 40. 41. 61. 65. 69. 78. 6. 8. 12. 19. 23. 24. 28. 29. 38. 39. 86. 95. 101. 104. 120. 121. 122. 124. 131. 133. *Second Assembly of People.* 1 Chr. 29: 1—19. Ps. 72.[uu] 1 Chr. 29: 20—25. *Charge to Solomon*, 1 K. 2: 1[vv]—9. *Last words of David.* 2 S. 23: 1—7. *Death of David.* 1 Chr. 29: 26 to end. 1 K. 2: 10, 11.

w This arrangement of § II. is made on the authority of the author of Chr.; who places the list of David's warriors, after the account of his being made king by all the tribes of Israel at Hebron. They are mentioned before the numbering of the people in 2 S.; but why, is not apparent. Their most appropriate place seems after the history of David's elevation; who was in a great measure indebted to their allegiance, among other human means, for the throne. There is some partial difference between the catalogues, 1 S. 22: & 1 Chr. 11. *Kennicott*, in a valuable and learned dissertation, has reconciled the apparent discrepances in the two lists by comparing both with the Sept.; and pointing out the manner in which it is probable the various minor changes of letters and words might have occurred. The passages (2 S. 23:18—17.) and (1 Chr. 11:15—19.) have been inserted above, ch. VI. § IX. See *Kennicott's* Diss.

x Immediately on David's accession to the throne of Israel, we read in Chr. he proposed fetching the ark up from Kirjath-jearim. His first thought was gratitude, and adoration to that God who had fulfilled his promises, and made him ruler over his people. On this supposition I have inserted Ps. 139th here, although its date and occasion are uncertain. On surveying the whole of his eventful life, David acknowledges the wisdom of Providence alike in his adversity and prosperity; he resolves to restore the ark to its place; proclaims the omniscience of God; and concludes his song of praise, with a prayer to be preserved from the *evils* and *dangers of prosperity*, and to be led in the way everlasting.

y The increase of David's family is here mentioned by anticipation. The narrative, however, must be preserved in its present order, as it is not possible to ascertain the birth of the various sons enumerated.

The invasion by the Philistines took place immediately on the dispersion of the several tribes to their own homes, after the meeting at Hebron.

z This Ps. was composed on the occasion of the [first] removal of the ark [from Kirjath-jearim to Obed Edom's house, 2 S. 6:1—11.]. It commences with the words constantly used when the ark was removed in the wilderness. (Num. 10:35.) It is quoted as prophetic by Paul, Eph. 4:8. As the ark ascended into Jerusalem, the city of the great King, so was Christ to ascend into the heavenly Jerusalem. *Lowth*, *Lightfoot*.

aa This Ps. was written [on the preparation for the second removal of the Ark, from Obed Edom's house to Jerusalem, 1 Chr. 15:1—14.] But *Calmet* supposes it a prayer during the Babylonish captivity. Others, by Solomon at the dedication of the Temple. I insert it here on the authority of *Lightfoot*, (its date being uncertain,) as an appropriate prayer of David only. He had once attempted to remove the ark, and, now prepares for a second time; and offering up a prayer for

himself in the third person, he repeats his vow that he would bring the ark to Jerusalem, and the prayer that he had made on the first attempt (v. 8.); and he concludes by pleading the promises of God, that his posterity shall sit for ever on his throne, and that from him the Messiah should descend: he considers the removal of the ark as the sign and pledge of the certain accomplishment of these promises.

bb *Removal of the Ark.* In 1 Chr. 16:7, we read, 'On that day David delivered forth this P., to thank the Lord, into the hands of Asaph, and his brethren.' The passage which follows is nearly the same as this Ps. 105. The variations are supposed to have originated from this cause: in 1 Chr. 16. we read the Ps. as it was composed for the removal of the ark. Ps. 105 is the same Ps. of praise corrected for temple worship.—Ps. 96. See 1 Chr. 16: This Ps. was composed on the same occasion, and varies from the original only as corrected for the temple service. See *Lightfoot.*—Ps. 106. On the insertion of this and the two preceding Pss., *Lightfoot* observes, 'These are the Pss. David then appointed; ordinarily, and well known, and read in the book of Pss. when Ezra penned Chr.; and therefore he giveth them so very short in that book.'

cc The par. pass. (1 Chr. 17.) is put in the same [conspicuous] type as this of 2 S. 7, that the reader may have the advantage of comparing one with the other, and of observing the very forcible language in which both are worded, as well as the light the different modes of expressing the same idea throw upon this *remarkable prediction* of the prophet Nathan. The sun of prophecy seems to be climbing higher in its celestial progress, when we read this passage. The *first part* announces the glory of Solomon. The *second* looks into futurity, to the final destination of the people of Israel, promising them a rest of such a nature as they have never yet enjoyed, though they have so long possessed the promised land. The *third part* predicts the future son of David, who is alluded to and described in terms applicable only to a greater than Solomon: and the passage, 'I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son,' is expressly applied by *Paul* to the Savior who should come into the world.

Upon hearing this prophecy, David, though commanded not to build the temple, proceeds to the sanctuary; and there acknowledges that he did not consider this prediction as referring to his immediate son, or to the building of a temple made with hands. The two par. pass. are thus interpreted by *Horsley;* 2 S. 7:9. 'And this (namely, what was said about his house in distant times) is the arrangement about the MAN, Oh Lord Jehovah.' And at 1 Chr. 17:17. 'And Thou hast regarded me in the arrangement about THE MAN that is from above, O God Jehovah'—i. e. in forming the scheme of the incarnation, regard was had to the honor of David, and his house, as a secondary object, by making it a part of the plan, that the Messiah should be born in his family.

This circumstance, of David's entering into the sanctuary, and acknowledging that he understood the meaning of the figurative language of the prophet, is a proof that other Israelites, who expected the future Messiah, comprehended the various predictions which announced, in still clearer terms, the nature, the person, the life, and the incarnation of the promised Savior. It shows us too, that the prophecies were of various degrees of clearness; and when the appointed number of inspired predictions contained in the O. T. was completed, so satisfactory and so perfect was the description of our blessed Lord, and so conclusive was the evidence that He was the Messiah, that wilful blindness alone prevented the Jews from acknowledging Him. They had determined to receive only a temporal Messiah, and the predictions of their prophets were every day in vain fulfilled before their eyes, by the spiritual and long-promised Deliverer. *Hales, Horsley, D'Oyly* and *Mant*, &c.

dd Ps. 2. V. 7 refers to the prophecy of Nathan: the Ps. is inserted here on the joint authority of *Hales;* and of its ancient Arabic title, 'A Prophecy concerning Christ the Lord, and the calling of the Gentiles;' and on its internal evidence, as corresponding with the preceding prophecy. The application of the Ps. to the Messiah was unquestionably the doctrine of the Jewish church. See *Hales.*—Ps. 45. The prophecies of Nathan and David form the basis of the admirable chain (column?) of prophecies in the Pss. on *Hales's* authority inserted here: each is quoted as prophetic in the N. T. Ps. 45 declares the divinity of Christ, and his exaltation above the angels; it is expounded, Heb. 1:8, 9. 1 Pet. 3:22. Eph. 1:22. Phil. 2:9—11. See, too, Horsley's Serms. on this Ps.—Ps. 22 predicts the sufferings and crucifixion of Christ. The Jews unwittingly quoted v. 8. against our Lord, when hanging on the cross; and as if to fix the undoubted [indubitable] application of the Ps. to Himself, Christ expressed the sufferings of the moment in using v. 1.; still further to prove it, John applies v. 18 to the parting of our Lord's garments among the soldiers.—Ps. 16 predicts the death and resurrection of Christ: and is so applied by Peter, Acts 2:25—31; and Paul, 13:35, 36.—Ps. 108 foretells his rejection by the Jews, his adoption by the Gentiles, and the establishment of his church. It is cited by our Lord, Matt. 22:42. It is expounded by Pet. Acts 4:11. 1 Pet. 2:4, 5; by Paul, Rom. 9:32, 33. Eph. 2:20,21; and by John, Rev. 20:10—14.—Ps. 110 declares the exaltation, the kingdom, and priesthood of Christ. It is applied by our Lord expressly to assert his divinity, as that spiritual Son of David, whom David calls Lord, or Jehovah, Matt. 22:44; by Peter, Acts 2:32 36; and by Paul, who hence explains the nature of his kingdom, 1 Cor. 15:25—28, and of his priesthood, Heb. 7:1—28. 8:1. See *Hales.*

ee The gradual fulfilment of the ancient prophecies of their ancestors must have made a deep impression on the minds of the reflecting Israelites.—By this conquest of Edom, the prediction of Jacob (Gen. 28:40.) was accomplished.

ff Ps. 60 is inserted here on the joint authority of *Lightfoot*, and the ancient title.—Ps. 103. 'After 1 S. 8:13, this Ps. is to be inserted, being the same in substance as Ps. 60: and as that doth tell in the title, that it was made on Joab's victory; so may it be well conceived that this was made on that of Abishai.' *Lightfoot.*

gg Pss. 20 and 21 are inserted here on the authority of *Calmet.* See *Horne's* Crit. Introd.

hh Ps. 51 is inserted here on the unanimous testimony of commentators.—Ps. 32, it is generally thought, was written by David, after pardon for his adultery. *Hales, Rosenm.* So was Ps. 33. *Hales;* and also 103, says the same great authority.—Although God, on David's repentance, pardoned his sin, yet we find a series of temporal judgments were inflicted upon him, both as a just punishment for his crime, and as a solemn warning to others. The remainder of his days was as disastrous as the beginning had been prosperous and flourishing. Rape, incest, murder, and rebellion raged among his children—he was deserted by his friends—reviled by his enemies—banished from his capital—and plunged into the deepest affliction, by the ingratitude and death of his favorite and rebellious son Absalom. *Hales.*

ii This arrangement of part of 2 S. 14, is made on the authority of *Horsley;* who observes, vs. 15, 16, 17, should intervene between vs. 7 and 8; being evidently part of the woman's speech about her own pretended affair; and v. 18 should immediately follow v. 14.

jj V. 7. 40 yrs. There is some difficulty in ascertaining what this means. Some read 4. *Lightfoot* dates the 40 from the first anointing of David, by Samuel; and this solution is certainly preferable to making any alteration in the text. *Hales* supposes, that the proper reading is 4 yrs. as being the time from the first fomenting of Absalom's conspiracy, till it broke out into open rebellion: but for this there does not seem sufficient evidence. *Hales, Lightfoot, Horsley, Patrick.*

kk Inserted here on the authority of the title. *Lightfoot.*

ll Ps. 7; see the title, comp. with the few preceding vs. of 2 S. 16

mm Ps. 42. In his flight from Absalom, David does not rest till he reaches the Jordan. While reposing on its banks, he composes Ps. 42., and remembers the Lord from the land of Jordan, (v. 6.) In contemplating the waters of its river, he affectingly alludes to his own misery: All thy billows and waves are gone over me. (*Lightfoot.*) That this Ps. was written at this time, is suggested by Dr. *Wells.*

nn This Ps. (43) in all probability was composed on the same occasion as Ps. 42. (See *Patrick.*) *Lowth* thought 42 and 43 were originally but one: and so more than 30 MSS. The 42 and 43 seem to have been composed at the same time; comp. their last vs. *Lightfoot.*—Ps. 55. *Lightfoot* and *Hales* refer this to Ahithophel's treachery: it is generally considered a prophecy of Judas's treachery, and is so quoted by Peter, Acts 1:20.—Ps. 4. was probably on the same occasion as Ps. 3. *Lightfoot* has a curious thought on v. 7. David is expressing his confidence in God; and proceeds to say, that his reliance on the providence of God affords him greater gladness of heart, than he felt at that moment when in the midst of his suffering and weariness, his own temporal wants, as well as those of his followers, were so abundantly relieved by the corn and wine of the three wealthy men at Mahanaim, 2 S. 17:27.—Ps. 5 is among those whose date and occasion are quite uncertain. Dr. *Edwards* conjectures it was composed when David was persecuted by Saul or Absalom. It is more applicable to the latter.—Ps. 62 refers to Absalom's unnatural persecution. *Calmet, Horne.*—Ps. 163. Written during the war with Absalom. *Wells, Calmet, Horne.*—Ps. 164. A thanksgiving for David's victories over Absalom, and other rebels. *Calmet, Horne.*—Ps. 70. Supposed to have been used by David continually during Absalom's rebellion. *Wells.*—Ps. 71. Generally thought to have been composed by David on occasion of Absalom's rebellion, when David was old and gray headed. *Wells, Calmet, Horne, Gray.*

oo At this time, when the Israelites had been weakened by two rebellions and three years of famine, the Philistines, thinking it a favorable opportunity of shaking off the yoke, renew the war; but are defeated in four engagements, and are finally subdued. After these deliverances it is probable that David, who had composed Ps. 18. at an early period of his life, when, according to the title, he had been delivered from the hands of Saul, now again applies it, on being rescued from the last assault of his enemies. This appears to account for the differences between this Ps. and the par. pass. in 2 S. 22. (*Wells*) So I have therefore inserted Ps. 18. after 2 S. 22. We learn by the title, that David recomposed it after all his deliverances, and of course after this last war of the Philistines.

pp David's motive for numbering his people was pride of heart. It is curious to observe the different phraseology of Scripture: in the v. it says, 'God moved him;' in another part, that Satan provoked him: and it is again decidedly spoken of as his own act, for which he was not only accountable, but punished.

qq In Sam. it is said, Joab numbered 800,000 for Israel, and 500,000 for Judah; and in Chr. that he numbered 1,100,000 for Israel, and 400,000 for Judah. In the former list the amount of the standing army is omitted; or, as appears from 1 Chr. 27:23, 24. the returns were completed that were sent in to the king, and the author of Sam. men tions the number according to the list actually given in; and the author of Chr. according to the list not laid before the king, or inserted in the public records, but generally known among the people. See *Patrick, Lightfoot, Hales.*

rr Ps. 30. *Calmet* supposes to have been composed on occasion of dedicating the threshing floor of Araunah.

ss The arrangement of the events related in this section varies considerably from their order as proposed by *Lightfoot.* The difficulty of placing them is very great; but the following considerations appear to warrant the present disposition of the text.

Solomon had been intended by his father, from his very birth, as the successor to the throne. It is generally supposed, that Nathan assured David his son would succeed him, when the name Jedediah, 'Beloved of the Lord,' was given him; and when he was commanded not to build the temple.

When David, however, was now very old and infirm, Adonijah began to assume the honors of royalty, and to consider himself as the successor. Adonijah was David's fourth son: Absalom and Amnon were dead, and his other brother Daniel, or Chileab, was born before David was king. According to the custom of the east, therefore, Adonijah considered himself the eldest son, and heir to the kingdom. *Lightfoot* ascribes his rash and ambitious schemes to his knowledge of his father's decrepitude; and so places 1 K. 1. before the account of David's address to Solomon. This however does not appear an adequate cause; for if Adonijah really supposed himself the destined heir, the very conviction of his father's infirmity ought to have induced him to remain quiet. Suspicion of David's determination to anoint Solomon as his successor, is more likely to have influenced his con-

duct. Adonijah, therefore, relying on the attachment of Joab the head of the army, and on that of Abiathar the high-priest, as well as on the silence hitherto maintained in public respecting Solomon, endeavored to form a party too strong for his father to oppose; and so prevent Solomon's advancement.

The promptitude and decision of David defeated this bold enterprise. Though confined to his couch by infirmities, (1 K. 1:47.) he ordered Solomon to be immediately crowned king, and declared partner of the throne: thus investing him with power to punish all conspiracies against the sovereign. This unexpected firmness entirely dispersed the adherents of Adonijah. David, however, not content with this, took another step, which secured the throne to Solomon. David summoned the princes and heads of Israel, and, leaving his couch, went to the assembly, presented Solomon to them as king, and declared the promise of God, that Solomon alone should build the temple, and establish the kingdom as his successor.

After this first assembly, more extensive preparations were made to build the temple: the priests and Levites are called together, and divided into their several courses; they do not appear to have been summoned to the first assembly. It is probable that the chief Pss. composed by David were delivered to the priests and singers. And when all the preparations for the objects David had in view, were completed, the congregation is summoned a second time—the magnificent presents of David to the intended building are recorded—the heads of the nation contribute to the work—a solemn festival was held, at which Solomon was again anointed—and all the princes publicly submitted themselves to him, as before to his father.

tt This Ps. (91) seems, from internal evidence, addressed to Solomon to encourage him to persevere in his allegiance to the King of kings. It describes the security, the reward, and the happiness of religion. I have inserted it, therefore, after David's charge to his Son. It is prophetic of Christ, and is quoted by Him as applicable to Himself. —Ps. 145. This fine hymn of praise was not improbably written towards the termination of David's life; on surveying the wisdom, mercy, and goodness of God both to himself and to all nature.

uu Ps. 72. This beautiful Ps. is generally supposed to have been written when Solomon was appointed king with his father. It is prophetic of the reign of the Messiah: it describes the peaceful glories of the Messiah's future reign; his righteousness; the universal worship to be paid to Him; the perpetuity of his dominion, 'whose name shall endure for ever;' in whom mankind shall be blessed, and whom all nations shall call blessed. *Hales, Travell.*

vv The charge of David to Solomon has been much misunderstood. He is not directed to put Joab and Shimei to death. These men had become the bitterest enemies to the throne of David and his son. Solomon, therefore, is desired to observe their conduct, and to punish any future treason with death. The expressions v. 6 and 8, 'do therefore according to thy wisdom,' and 'thou art a wise man,' refer to discretionary power which Solomon possessed, and which he was commanded by his father to use rightly.

PERIOD V. The reign of Solomon.

CHAP. I. Reign of Solomon before the Dedication of the Temple. § I. *Offering at Gibeon. Judgment of Solomon. Death of Adonijah. Return of Hadad.*[ww] 1 K. 2:12. 2 Chr. 1:1. 1 K. 3:3. 2 Chr. 1:2—6. 1 K. 3:5—28. 2 Chr. 1:13. 1 K. 2:13—38. 11:21, 22 with 3:4 and 2 Chr. 1:7—12. § II. *Prep. for Temple. Death of Shimei. Solomon's Marriage.* 1 K. 4:1[xx]—25.[yy] 2 Chr. 2:1—2. 1 K. 5:1—12. 2 Chr. 2:3—16. 1 K. 13 to end. 4 Chr. 2:17, 18. 1 K. 2:39 to end. 3:1, 2.

ww The events related in this §, took place within the first year after Solomon's accession. The narrative in 1 K., immediately on relating the succession of Solomon, proceeds to the account of Adonijah's death; that in 2 Chr. mentions the offering at Gibeon: which is placed first in the arrangement, as it is to be supposed that Solomon would convoke the people, and offer his sacrifices as soon as possible, after he had succeeded to the crown; and it is probable Adonijah would not desire to marry the Shunammite immediately on his father's death. It may appear strange, that the petition of Adonijah to obtain Abishag should be thought deserving of death; but in those times, the seraglio always descended with the crown, and it was considered as a step to the throne to marry the mistress of the deceased monarch. In requesting, therefore, permission to unite himself to Abishag, Adonijah, in fact, reasserted his pretensions to the crown. Joab, the most powerful military chieftain, and Abiather the high-priest, were implicated in the intended revolt; which it was necessary to check at the commencement. Adonijah and Joab, therefore, were condemned to death, and Abiather degraded from his office. See *Michaelis*, Comm. &c.

xx By this extension of Solomon's dominions, (v. 24.) the covenant made with Abraham, Gen. 15:18. was fulfilled. See *Hales*, and the commentators.

yy 'The matter,' says *Lightfoot*, 'of 1 K. 4: is not of determinate date, tied to any one year, but runneth through the story of many years, for it showeth the growth and continuance of Solomon's strength, establishment, and prosperity in his kingdom; and the evidencing of his wisdom; all the time till his declining to idolatry: and therefore as to the method and place of it, it might be laid any where,' &c. I have accordingly inserted the brief account of his horses, &c. in the section in which his greatness is related—of his wisdom, immediately preceding the book of Prov. and the last v. before the visit of the queen of Sheba.—There seem to have been two embassies to the king of Tyre: one for cedar and different kinds of wood; the other for skilful workmen in brass and gold, &c.—The Jews suppose, that Shimei was put to death prior to Solomon's marriage. *Lightfoot.*

Chap. II. Building of the Temple. 2 Chr. 3:1.[zz] 1 K. 6:1. 2 Chr. 3:2—9. 1 K. 6:4—8, 15—28. 2 Chr. 3: lat. part of v. 13, 14. 1 K. 6:29—36. 7:13—22. 2 Chr. 4:1. 1 K. 7:23—50. 2 Chr. 4:8—10. 1 K. 6:9—14. 7:51. 6:37, 38 with 1 K. 6:2, 3. and 2 Chr. 3:10, 11, 12, part of 13, 15—17. and 4:2—7, 11 to end.

zz It will be observed that the descriptions of the building of the temple in K. and Chr. differ. Circumstances omitted in one are mentioned in the other. I have endeavored to harmonize the two. The same may be observed of the prayer at the dedication.

Chap. III. Dedication of the Temple. 2 Chr. 5. 7:4[aaa]—7. 6:1—39. 1 K. 8: pt. of v. 50—61. 2 Chr. 6:40 to end. 7:1—3, 8—10. Ps. 47.[bbb] 97. 98. 99. 100. 135. 136 with 1 K. 8:1 to mid. of v. 50, 62 to end.

aaa V. 4. It was the custom both among the Jews, and, before them, among the patriarchs, to offer the sacrifice and then to make their prayer. Immediately after Solomon's prayer, we read that the fire descended and consumed the sacrifices: which, in compliance with the usual custom, must have been first offered. The events of this ch. 8, then, would have taken place in the order in which they are here arranged; the ark is removed into the temple—the sacrifices are slain—the prayer is made—and the fire descends, to prove that these services were accepted by the God of Israel.

bbb Ps. 47. On *removing the ark* into *Solomon's temple*, from Mt. Zion, (or into the tabernacle on Mt. Zion. See *Wells.*) I have inserted it here on the supposition that v. 5. appears to allude rather to the magnificent description in 1 Chr. 5:13.—It is uncertain when Pss. 97. 98. 99. 100 were composed. They are here inserted, from the apparent allusions they contain to the cloud which filled the temple, to the fire which consumed the sacrifices; and to the description in 2 Chr. 5:13.—Pss. 135. 136. The first was supposed to have been sung by the Levites on opening the gates of the temple. The second on the great festivals; one half by one half the choir, the other by either the other half, or by the whole chorus uniting in the words, 'His mercy endureth for ever.' As these Pss. were used in the temple service, and the precise time of their composition is not ascertained, it may be assumed that they were adopted at the beginning of that service, and were composed about this time.

Chap. IV. Other Buildings and Magnificence of Solomon. § I. *Building of House of Lebanon. God appears to Solomon.* 1 K. 7:1—12. 2 Chr. 7: 11 to end, with 1 K. 9:1—9. § II. *Conquests, &c. of Solomon.* 1 K. 9:10—14. 2 Chr. 8:1—11. 1 K. 9:24. § III. *Song of Solomon.*[ccc]

ccc Inserted here on the authority of *Lightfoot*; who observes, that it must have been composed after the building of the summer-house in the forest of Lebanon. He infers this from 4:8. and 7:4. The common opinion respecting this much discussed book, that it is a mystical allegory of the union of Christ and his Church, is supported by the best and most abundant evidence. No comparison is more general throughout the books of Scripture, than this of marriage, to express the love of God to his church. [None perhaps was better suited to sanctify the predominating propensities of that age: and hallow this *corner-stone of humanity* and of the social progress. The resisting and destroying propensities too, so predominating, were allowed to be consecrated to God in sacred songs. See Moses, the Pss. &c. Ed.] For a full account of this beautiful dramatic poem, the various opinions which have been entertained respecting it, and the division of its contents in the form of scenes, acts, idyls, see *Wells, Horne, Gray.* [*Rob. Calm.* and Pref. to Cant.]

Chap. V. Greatness of Solomon. Queen of Sheba's visit. 1 K. 9:15, 16. 2 Chr. 8:12—16, 25 to end, 17. 1 K. 10:14 to end. 4:26—28, 34. 10:1—13, with 9:17—22 and 2 Chr. 8:18. 9:13—28. 1:14 to end, and 9:1—12.

Chap. VI. Wisdom of Solomon. 1 K. 4:29—31. 4:33, 32. The Proverbs, in *five* parts[ddd] viz. Ist. Part, *chs.* 1—9. IId. Part, *chs.* 10—22 to v. 16 incl. IIId. Part, *chs.* 22. v. 17—*ch.* 24. IVth. Part, *chs.* 25—29. Vth. Part, *chs.* 30, 31.

ddd The 1st part is a kind of preface; it contains a series of admonitions, cautions, and encouragements to the study of wisdom.—The 2d part contains what may with more strictness be called Proverbs: i. e. unconnected sentences, neat, and simple, adapted to the instruction of youth. In part 3d the tutor is supposed to instruct his pupil as if he were present. He drops the style of proverbs, and exhorts in a more connected manner.—Part 4th is supposed to have been selected from a larger collection of Proverbs by the men of Hezekiah; i. e. by the prophets whom he employed to restore the service and writings of the church, as Eliakim, and Joah, and Shebna; and probably Hosea, Micah, and even Isaiah. All these flourished in the reign of Hezekiah, and endeavored to revive true religion among the Jews. Part 5th has only 2 chs. In ch. 30, are the wise observations and instructions delivered by Agur, the son of Jakeh, to his pupils, Ithiel and Ucal. Ch. 31. has the precepts delivered to Lemuel by his mother, supposed to have been a Jewess, married to a neighboring prince, and anxious to establish her son in virtuous principles, and unite him to a wife professing the same regard for religion. Others believe the mother of Lemuel to have been Abijah, daughter of the high-priest Zechariah, and mother of king Hezekiah; others, the mother of Solomon. See *Horne, Gray, Lightfoot.*

Chap. VIII. Offence of Solomon. 1 K. 11. 1—14, 23—40. Eccl.

[Dr. *A. Clarke* remarks, that in no character of Scripture are we so much disappointed, as in that of Solomon.] The best analysis of Eccl. except perhaps that of *Diodati*, (too long to insert here,) is that of *Des Voeux* [given in Pref. to Eccl.].

Chap. VIII. Death of Solomon. 1 K. 11:41—43. 2 Chr. 9:29—31.

End of Period 5. Chronicle continued in next vol.

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